



REACH BUDAPEST CONFERENCE MANIFESTOS

A world café discussion was held during the REACH project's Budapest conference in May 2018, which sought the opinions of attendees. After the conference, the outcomes of the discussions were summarised by the table chairs into a manifesto.

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RESILIENCE IN PRACTICE, INTERCONNECTEDNESS

Agenda

How can resilience of cultural heritage be attained, what are resilient practices? Participants at this table were invited to think about cultural heritage from a practice perspective. This shifts the analytical focus from individual action or institutions to shared and collective practices.

In contrast to positions in social theory focussing on individuals, structures or norms, practice theory conceives of the social as practices, i.e. doings and sayings that extend in time and space (Schatzki 2002, 2010). A practice perspective means looking at what people actually do and how these doings and sayings are shaped and connected. According to Anthony Giddens, social structure needs to be understood as „relationships [that] are stabilised across time and space“ (Giddens 1984: xxxi).

From this perspective, cultural heritage can be understood as a flow of practices and materialities through time, which is the object of specific practices of valuing, labelling and physical manipulation. Examples are practices of collecting, restoring and renovating, practices of displaying artefacts in a museum (tangible heritage), practices of performing traditions or rituals (intangible heritage), practices of evaluating and archiving, practices of narrating, interpreting and presenting, practices of teaching and learning, practices of managing, facilitating access etc.

What are characteristics of these practices and how do they connect and interweave? What kind of materials (artefacts, buildings, sites and media) are involved, which competences do practitioners need in order to perform the practices? Which materials and practices are required to stabilise these relationships and thus produce resilience?

In summary, not a singular object, not an isolated action, but a network of interconnections linking different times, places and diverse entities needs to be taken into account when thinking about resilience. Employing this perspective, participants were encouraged to discuss what the benefit of this perspective could be, what resilience means in these terms, where its prerequisites, challenges and dangers lie and what is to be done in order to build resilient networks for cultural heritage and communities.



Using these thoughts as a tool kit, participants were invited to contribute experiences from the area that they work in and write down ideas, keywords or questions. The discussion was organised in two sets of parallel groups, which were represented by people from various countries.

Outcomes of the discussion

I. What is resilience?

From a practice perspective, resilience is about connections in time and space that are stable *and* dynamic at the same time. A key issue for attaining resilience is to think about links between the tangible and the intangible aspects of heritage. Usages and narratives can change, adaptation is key to resilience. For example, “The People’s House”, the palace built by Nicolae Ceausescu in Bucharest in the 1980s, is stable as a material entity, but its narrative framework has changed. It is now related to different practices, to touristic practices and practices of the spectacle. There is often a tension between originality/authenticity and adaptability. Resilience can be seen as a capacity to accommodate different needs of a society.

II. What can be done to increase resilience?

The reflections of the tables on how resilience can be attained revolved around questions of usage, values and narratives. They started out from the idea that resilience of cultural heritage does not so much rely on the materiality of a place or a building itself, but on the practices surrounding it. The ideas can be summarised as follows:

1. Strengthening the communities: At the tables, there was a lot of discussion about dying communities, e.g. in former mining towns. When communities die, what happens to the places they care for? What can be done to build strong communities? One focus should be to start with the kids. In order to build a future, you need to look at the current generation. An idea could be to set up teaching programmes. Another way is to strengthen personal ties, either on the level of families and personal invitations or on the institutional level. For example, ritual events like annual open days help building new and bigger audiences. Institutions need to meet the public halfway. Aspects of community building link with discussions at the tables on social cohesion and social inequality.

2. Strengthening the current relevance: Raising awareness for heritage relies on its relevance. Making the heritage of people and places relevant means making it current. For example, museum displays sometimes stay the same for decades and thus are not adapted to contemporary perspectives. Museums need to be kept alive by adapting their display and their message.

3. Clarifying the values: Resilience is a question of value attribution. Value attribution in turn relies on finding narratives, which are shared by local communities and a wider public. The cultural and historical values of heritage can be connected (or in opposition) to other values like functionality, economic, environmental or health benefits.



4. Giving time: Accustoming to new values takes time; mentalities do not change very quickly. Understanding the lapse of time is important for understanding how to reach resilience. Do places sometimes need to be abandoned for a certain time in order to allow for giving them new meanings and thus making them resilient?

5. Increasing equality: Building resilient communities and heritage relies on increasing equality in terms of gender, ethnic representation, economic, social and cultural capital. This issue links with discussions at the tables on social cohesion and social inequality.

III. General questions

These questions and problems were raised at the tables. They can inform both research on heritage and reflection towards solving specific problems.

1. **Who decides?** Who are the stakeholders, who are the communities? Who is allowed to speak (and for whom)? Who defines the values and who narrates? What narratives are circulating and where do the fault lines of conflicts lie?

2. What is harder to keep: **tangible or intangible** heritage? Are institutions more or less resilient than communities when it comes to change? Trying not to fossilize objects, ideas or practices is key for making heritage resilient.

3. **Tourism** is a driving force of the heritage economy. Should it be seen as a support or as a threat for heritage? It generates economic values and thus is able to build strong connections, but it is also a destructive force to communities and the materiality of heritage sites themselves.

4. What are the roles and usages of **media and ICT**? A video or a digital database can provide an extension in time and space and can link a specific object or practice to other objects, practices and other communities. However, there is also the need of people to see (or even touch) original, authentic things.

5. How can better links between **political levels** (government, city and local community) be established? The different layers and scales of decision making need to be taken into account.

Please visit the REACH project website for further information: www.reach-culture.eu

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