

Call for Extended Abstracts

Conservation Theory and the Urban Realpolitik

Editor:

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Background

The book *Conservation Theory and the Urban Realpolitik* is inspired by a discussion series titled ‘*Universal Approaches in Local Circumstances: A Series of Discussions on the Policy-Practice Gaps in Urban Conservation*’, which were organised in November and December 2021 within the framework of the DFG project 431496196.

In accordance with the ongoing research at the Chair of Urban Management and the DFG Research Training Group 1913 at BTU, we invited 22 policymakers, academics, and conservation architects from six cities in South and West Asia. PhD candidates and postdoctoral researchers from BTU and other universities whose research addresses the scope of the event moderated the discussions. During the events, we discussed how conservation processes have unfolded within particular political, economic, and ideological circumstances in the presented cases.

Scope of the Book

In complex urban dynamics, the theoretical understanding of heritage values, international guidelines, and national legal systems is almost always influenced by urban realpolitik.¹ During the planning process, both the negotiated values and the involved actors (i.e., professionals, organisations, and civil society) can be influenced by powerful stakeholders. In addition, interdisciplinary communication is often lacking. In fact, a gap usually exists between what is formally targeted and agreed upon and what actually occurs on the ground. Of course, the size of this gap depends on the political and economic circumstances.

In this regard, it is the responsibility of academics to identify and explain the relationship between policy–practice gaps in heritage conservation and local power dynamics. The chapters of the proposed book, written by local scholars, will reflect on the disciplinary and sociopolitical aspects that tend to be game-changing in conservation procedures.

Furthermore, conservation scholarship calls for case studies that problematise universal conservation principles in local planning circumstances, particularly in countries from which modern conservation did not originate.² To contribute to this issue, the book’s focus will be narrowed to such countries in South and West Asia.

¹ Dobrucká, Lucia. ‘Reframing planning theory in terms of five categories of questions’, *Planning Theory* 15, no. 2 (2016): 145–161.

² Paolo Ceccarelli, ‘Past Is Not a Frozen Concept: Considerations about Heritage Conservation in a Fast Changing World’, *Built Heritage* 1 (2017): 1–12; Sharon Macdonald, ‘Transforming the Ethnographic’, in *Across Anthropology*, ed. Margareta von Oswald and Jonas Tinius, *Troubling Colonial Legacies, Museums, and the Curatorial* (Leuven University Press, 2020), 49–64; Helaine Silverman, ‘Heritage and Authenticity’, in *The Palgrave Handbook of Contemporary Heritage Research* (London: Springer, 2015), 69–88; Zongjie Wu and Song Hou, ‘Heritage and Discourse’, in *The Palgrave Handbook of Contemporary Heritage Research* (London: Palgrave, 2015), 37–51; Solmaz Yadollahi, ‘Reflections on the Past and Future of Urban Conservation in Iran’, *Built Heritage* 4, no. 1 (2020): 1–13.

The book's chapters will present case studies of conservation projects, legal processes of heritage protection, and heritage activism stories that illustrate the realpolitik of conducting conservation in complex urban situations.

South and West Asian case studies at the scale of monuments, urban areas, or historic landscapes are welcomed. Contributions should address policy–practice gaps in conservation as a result of

- complex urban socioeconomic and natural dynamics;
- the pressure of political and economic instability;
- the presence/absence of a powerful civil society;
- incompatible or rigid legal and institutional structures;
- rigid disciplinary presumptions.

Instructions for Authors

- Prior to submitting your full-text contribution, please send an extended abstract featuring the key themes of your proposed chapter. The extended abstract should contain a working title, the authors' name(s) and affiliation(s), an abstract, four keywords, and two to three main references (in the APA citation format). Please send the abstract in a single Word document of 600–700 words in length.
- The full-text chapter should be 5000–9000 words in length, including the abstract and references.
- The chapter can include up to three pictures and up to two maps/graphs. More detailed instructions will be provided upon acceptance of your abstract.
- The chapter contributions will undergo a double-blind peer-review process.
- Extended abstracts and full-text contributions must be written in the English language.

Publisher

The book will be published with Birkhäuser (De Gruyter) in the book series of the DFG Research Training Group 1913 "Cultural and Technological Significance of Historic Buildings" (<https://www.degruyter.com/serial/ktwhb-b/html>).

For information about abstracting and indexing, see [this link](#).

Timeline:

30th September 2022: Abstract submission deadline

31st October 2022: Abstract acceptance notification

30th April 2023: Full-text contribution submission deadline

Contact

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