Heritage in a globalized world. New notions and experiences from onward migrants

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Abstract

Globalization is creating other forms of social networking and perceptions of social and cultural spaces beyond national borders. Globalization is also changing migration patterns, in terms of fluctuations and sociological profiles, to the point that it is challenging globally our modern definitions of the nation as the container of one single culture. In this context, cultural heritage no longer has the ability to provide territorially-defined nation-states with distinctive identities and narratives for their citizens to feel a sense of unity. These lead to fundamental changes in our perceptions of culture, identity, and belonging, and accordingly to the role of heritage today.

In this paper I would like to introduce a vision of globalization and heritage that moves the focus from fixed essentialist categories to the flows and fluxes of people’s cultures, identities, and attachments. I will argue that because current globalism embeds deterritorialism from modern forms of social and cultural attachments (i.e. national and ethnic affiliations) and mobility has become a fundamental social issue, there should also be a shift in our approach to heritage. I argue that common or dominant notions of heritage cannot accommodate these cultural identities in a flow, created by and acting in a transplanetary, network socially connected and deterritorialized mobile world. Instead, other forms of collective memories would need to be recognized as more significant to global multiple migrants. To support my arguments I will describe “global nomads” as an example of onward migration, and describe how they recall other heritage places according to their shared collective memories as citizens in between cultures and places.