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Panel 62

Networks and heritage: what are the issues?

Our research work in the field of critical heritage studies (Smith, 2006; Harrison, 2013; Isnart, 2016) in Tunisia, respectively in the disciplines of anthropology and architecture, has made it possible to highlight the centrality of the network. This observation can be observed both in the questions of methodology, making the fieldwork more difficult, but also in the analysis of the processes of patrimonialisation. We were confronted with the polysemic nature of this concept (Denord, 2020), and this is what we wish to work on and question during this workshop. At first glance, the theory of the network actor (Callon & Latour, 1991) seems to apply perfectly in the framework of processes of patrimonialisation, if we admit the following analogy: the science to be produced is in our case the heritage to be made (Heinich, 2009). Thus, although the impacts of patrimonialisation on the network have already been studied (Fabre, 2010), what about the influence of networks on this process? Questioning it through heritage development also involves analyzing its openness in this process of reorganizing the balance of power. So what does his study tell us about the internal tensions between the different social groups before and after patrimonialisation? What about the democratic use of space? How does the network(s) appropriate, manage, conserve and preserve the space? These are the questions that we would like to lead during the workshop.

Person in charge and discussant : Batita Iman (UPHF-UMONS)

Program

Benedjma Iqbal (University Constantine 3, department of architecture and town planning)

Owners mobilized for the defense of an «ongoing» heritage: the de-densification operation of the Souika district of Constantine 2005.

In Constantine, the question of the built heritage of the old city has long been the subject of various interests and successive sometimes contradictory public policies. The old town presents itself to public actors as well as a town center to be modernized, a precarious whole to be de-densified, as a historic center to be heritage. Faced with these actions, the inhabitants, structured or not, react to each situation according to different logics, thus making heritage a conflicting object of mobilization and often «frontal» opposition (Legros, 2008). The purpose of this communication is to come back to a public operation to de-densify the Soukia district in 2005, a period when the old town was experiencing a dynamic of heritage development. This operation, which provided for the destruction of 190 houses, led the owners to form a network to put pressure on local and central actors and stop the destruction. Thus, we are particularly interested in the mechanisms and skills of residents to build networks and the effects of this mobilization on the public action undertaken.

Bielawski Mathilde (University Lumière Lyon 2, LADEC)

The network of «heritage preservation associations», the key necessary for the practice of heritage anthropology in Tunisia.

It is through the case study of my ethnography of the Tunisian cultural heritage that I propose to question the problem of the network in the processes of patrimonialisation. When I started my fieldwork on these processes in 2014, I made an observation: for a large majority of renovation, restoration and «heritage enhancement» projects, there always seems to be, alongside the State, the presence of an association called «heritage preservation». Indeed, even if this associative world is represented by only a handful of them, it is quite possible to note its omnipresence. Moreover, the quasi-systematic collaboration seems invariably just as true after the revolution of 2011. This observation proves all the more accurate since I needed, for the progress of my research, to access a new contact, a new site, new sources, etc. The doors that I found closed immediately became wide open when I passed through this associative network. It will then be a question of addressing the role of the network of so-called «heritage preservation» associations in Tunisia, and of asking the following question: does not carrying out anthropology of the «Tunisian cultural heritage», at present, in some way lead to carrying out a study of the «associative network»?

McGuiness Justin (American University of Paris, Department Communication Media and Culture)

The conservation of urban heritage in Tunisia: the case of the association for the safeguard of the Medina of Tunis, towards an institutional chronology.

Created at the end of the 1960s, the Association for the Safeguarding of the Medina of Tunis quickly established itself as a central actor in the protection of the architectural and urban heritage of Tunis. This intervention proposes a chronology of the safeguard actions carried out by the association, situating them in their social, political and institutional context. The 1990s and 2000s saw an expansion of the districts considered worthy of preservation with several interventions at the level of the architectural heritage of the 19th and 20th centuries. On the other hand, the decade following the 2010/2011 revolution saw a sharp drop in the number of projects entrusted to the association by the State or local authorities. Faced with the numerous unauthorized interventions on the accompanying architecture, the conservation of the urban heritage of Tunis would seem compromised. In the post-authoritarian political context, where elected officials would be accountable for results to their fellow citizens, the safeguarding of heritage seems to be marking time. This intervention proposes to explore this paradox.

Ouaaziz Sara (Paris 1 Panthéon-Sorbonne/Marrakech Cadi Ayyad, IREST)

Networks and tensions around the private museums of the medina of Marrakech

In recent years, the medina of Marrakech has seen a growth in the number of private museums housed in traditional houses or riads. Indeed, since 2014, a private museum has been created per year, sometimes two as in 2018. From 1996 to today, we count a total of 10. After the presentation of these museums as cultural spaces and tourist spaces, we will be interested in the analysis of the profiles and life trajectories of their owners. Whether they evolve individually or in groups, these actors, also called "heritage development entrepreneurs" undeniably play a role in the inheritance process of the highly touristic and hyper-competitive space formed by the Marrakech medina: gentrification, urban reorganization, catering …. How and through which networks do they intervene? Is there a model of intervention common to all? In addition, private museums are considered as sources of conflict and tension by the local population who see them as «exclusively reserved for Western tourists». The feeling of disappropriation and neglect that some residents suffer pushes them to withdraw into themselves or even to flee their neighborhood of origin. Under these conditions, how is the private museum perceived by the different social groups? And how does the cohabitation between them operate in the medina of Marrakech?