

1. What are the various existing definitions of “public spaces” used in national legislation or proposed by international mechanisms, experts and civil society organizations?

The codex of the Department of Town Planning and Housing, operating as the designated authority of the Republic of Cyprus under the jurisdiction of the Ministry of Interior, includes a policy tool for the public consultation of the design of new developments as well as of city master planning and the planning of public space (defined as squares, open air space, communal spaces in urban environments as well as in town and rural environments) (codes 1/2000 and 4/2008). Also there is formally instated and operating a committee for the aesthetic, architectural valuation of the built environment which oversees any planning and development permission process to control the impact of new constructions on the built environment and its operation (code 2/2008). However, despite the necessary policies being in place, the current application of privatisation-oriented ‘aggressive’ (of high risk for the public good) strategies by the government, with the aim to fuel the stalled construction industry of the country, has enabled internationally-driven capital investment decision making in real estate and large scale developments across the country which led to impoverishment of the social inclusiveness and the minimization of the plurality of social group engagement in consultation and public dialogue with regards to public space.

Are other terms used such as “civic space” and “public domain”? What is the scope of the concept of such public spaces?

See text at the end of the questionnaire.

2. What are the diverse legal frameworks, trends and practices at the national level that either promote or impede actors from across the cultural ecosystem, including women and persons with disabilities, from accessing and using public spaces?

In Cyprus, the capital investment in real estate, the unsustainable model of the construction industry, the abandonment of the historic city centres – or the gentrification of important assets and resources of the city (urban commons), such as coastal boardwalks in Limassol, or the moat of the old city of Nicosia, impede the users and inhabitants of the cities to access them, relate with them, appropriate them in meaningful ways.

What strategies are most useful in overcoming such challenges?

See text at the end of the questionnaire.

What are the specific characteristics of public spaces that either are conducive to the realization of cultural rights, including of women and persons with disabilities, or are an impediment to them, including in relation to issues of discrimination, equal access, accessibility, availability, and adequacy?

See text at the end of the questionnaire.

3. What could be the contents and contours of a possible “right to public spaces”, and of legitimate restrictions that could be made to it, in accordance with international standards? Is this concept employed in your country or in your work?

Inclusive approaches that facilitate, promote and enable access to public space are largely employed in our work. A recent example is the application of co-creation methodologies and advanced ICT tools for the engagement of citizens and inhabitants of Nicosia in the management of a part of the moat of the old city as a public space, with the support and collaboration of the authorities (namely, the Department of Antiquities and the Municipality of Nicosia), see the document “BETHA series.pdf” attached here. *For more see our activities presented below.*

Is it helpful?

These approaches are extremely important to be employed and are very helpful, especially in the context of safeguarding cultural rights in relation to heritage in contested cities hosting multicultural social groups and multinational communities and immigrants, such as the divided capital of Nicosia. *For more see our activities listed below.*

4. [What is the role of cultural rights in ensuring the existence, availability, accessibility, and adequacy of public spaces that are conducive to widespread participation in cultural life, the realization of citizenship, cultural democracy, as well as the realization of other human rights?](#)

Recognizing and safeguarding cultural rights in our contemporary historic cities in Europe which are challenged by rapid urbanization, gentrification, overtourism and population movement due to migration, can be a catalyst for ensuring equity in accessing public space and permissiveness of other cultures. *For more see the text in the end of the questionnaire.*

5. [What is the impact on the enjoyment of cultural rights of trends regarding privatization, which may affect a variety of public spaces?](#)

Privatization and the globalization of investment capital in real estate are posing a serious threat to permissiveness and equity in accessing freely public space, which in turn accelerate gentrification and impact negatively the social resilience of our cities. *For more see the text in the end of the questionnaire.*

6. [What recommendations should be made to States and other stakeholders concerning these topics?](#)

- a) Promote change/update of policies and tools of stakeholders and authorities at the local level to enable more ‘urban acupuncture’ interventions at public space, integrating design thinking, ICT and co-creation methodologies for extended engagement of local social groups in the development and management of public space.
- b) Promote cultural heritage, heritage economics and sustainable heritage to enable more inclusive policies for the appropriation and protection of public space. *See our activities listed below.*

Data Analytics of Common Spaces

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Rapid urbanization, migration and economic challenges impact European territories with ever-growing plurality of cultures and identities that must now adapt to a new concept of European citizenship that celebrates multiplicity, diversity, openness and inclusiveness. In addition to these demanding new conditions, a new challenge is emerging from the globalization of digital media, capital investment in real estate, mobility and ease of accessing information. Numerous historical cities of the European South are facing a nexus of challenges that relate to the complex nature of managing the built environment of their urban territories. Relevant stakeholders start to realise that heritage buildings, monuments and archaeological sites in urban environments:

- when are over-exploited, they threaten the social cohesion of the urban fabric due to over-tourism, the impact of networked hospitality businesses on neighbourhoods (such as the phenomenon of the AirBnB), and the consequent gentrification of the surrounding area (Herman 2019; Guttentag 2018);
- when are sacredly safeguarded, they challenge the contemporary everyday life of citizens, by turning the historic city into a mausoleum, transforming it into an open air museum.

On the contrary, built heritage:

- when is not appreciated and safeguarded, it is threatened by rapid urban development that competes with or covers archaeological remains and historical architecture, changing the historically established or emerged links with the urban fabric; while,
- when is neglected, it is facing rapid decline due to conflicts and, mostly, people's indifference that makes its maintenance and conservation unsustainable.

The complexity of the above challenges is further magnified by contemporary fracturing of national and cultural identities and boundaries, and is exacerbated by global economic and political crises, and consequent intensifying migrations of people. In Europe, these complex realities impact historic cities which are now facing acute cohesion challenges of physical, sociopolitical and cultural division. Within the above fragile conditions of historic built environments, the integration of existing and 'other' cultures, migrants and settlers is arguably making the management of heritage one of the most pressing challenges, Europe is facing in our era.

A process of migration involves change in space and environment, and the transformation of one's territory. People from various cultures meet in new 'interface' sites and this event intensifies their awareness of diversity. Players in this 'arena' embody emergent practices that associate their original territories with the new ones, while at the same time they are bringing along their cultural identities. Tension and social friction are characteristics evident across Europe, and common among its urban environments. **Urban space is considered as the matrix of intangible divisions, that is, as the host of tensions that citizens of a city are experiencing in their everyday use of its resources**, for example, cultural heritage and historic sites, squares, public spaces, parks and green spaces, walkways.

1 SAFEGUARDING HERITAGE AND SOCIAL RESILIENCE OF CITIES

According to the "Conclusions on cultural heritage as a strategic resource for a sustainable Europe" of the Education, Youth, Culture and Sport Council meeting in Brussels (2014), cultural heritage plays an important role in creating and enhancing social capital. Leveraging the role and positive impact of cultural heritage, as identified above, our research contributes to the creation of a new approach to open civic engagement and community-building that is based on data - using collaborative methodologies that enable the co-creation of new heritage perspectives. It is expected that this approach will foster a new paradigm for the sustainable management of historic cities that integrates technological innovation and social dimension in one process, while making city users and inhabitants the engine of this change. The implementation of effective participative

cultural heritage management can be the solution to current conflicts in identity formation in Europe.

Building on this approach, our **research aims to listen to the people who perform the interface between the immaterial and tangible heritage in their everyday lives**. In this context, and studying historical space and human culture *together* (in an interdisciplinary approach), our research exploits the data sharing capacities of Information Communication Technologies to explore how do people use existing built heritage in their territory, and how different communities use and appropriate the same common ground.

2 THE SPATIAL DYNAMICS AND EVER-CHANGING CULTURAL APPROPRIATION OF HERITAGE

We acknowledge that cultural heritage not only incorporates anything inherited, selected and used in identity formation, but also rearranges these entities into complex assemblages, which are in constant dialogue with the everyday. Furthermore, cultural heritage can be defined as a set of localized narratives that relate to a given group of people in a particular place, at a specific time. Underlying the value of these assemblages that we call cultural environments, is the space in which they are hosted or rooted. Our research approaches **cultural landscapes as the complex system of the built heritage, its inhabiting social networks and the respective cultural phenomena that are hosted in space**. In this context, we explore the spatial relation between these cultural environments and the social events and activities that they stage, as these are transmitted by individuals and through generations via heritage. Here heritage is approached as a process, a performance (Crouch, 2010), an act of communication (Dicks, 2000) and a set of relationships with the past undertaken at certain sites and places.

Responding to the needs identified above requires a contemporary understanding of the role of archaeology and its practices (Gonzalez-Ruibal 2013) for the study of culturally-valuable spatial artefacts of the recent past, the appropriators and cultural bearers of which are still alive and carrying memories of their interaction, association and identification with the heritage under study. Notably, in many cases, new communities appropriate ephemerally built environments, which may be considered as culturally-valuable assets (Casper and Rellensmann 2017). These built environments then are assigned new meanings and new identities by their new users (Matthes 2018).

2.1 *Whose Heritage matters and, for the inheritance of what, are we talking about?*

Today, in many European cities, social and spatial segregation have created a vicious circle of neglect for some historic areas in which marginalised and vulnerable groups have found refuge – and in parallel to the gentrification of other territories. In the wake of rising social activism, groups are expressing their considerations about the roles cultural heritage identified with specific communities plays in their everyday lives, and are promoting difficult conversations about changing values, and therefore challenging contemporary needs of safeguarding it. In the current understanding of cultural heritage, more recent artefacts or urban areas can represent, from the perspective of the social and cultural practices of the local cultural heritage community, as much value as their oldest buildings, monuments or a historical urban quarter.

Our research puts this approach into practice to study how sites, objects, and their histories can simultaneously belong to more than one of the local communities, while at the same time these heritage sites are undergoing appropriation by those groups and individuals who practice their everyday cultural expressions. In doing so, we consider every cultural edifice and artefact in the historic city as “heritage-to-be”, i.e., an assemblage of found products of past human actions and newly expressed cultural activities that is spatially appropriated.

3 DATA-DRIVEN TOOLS

In these conditions, we need to explore how we can leverage the capacities of data-driven co-creation methods and the affective, and inclusive, power of spatial narratives and place-making, to revisit the notion of cultural values and built heritage, in order to change and achieve more

sustainable societies that will be founded on cultural dialogue. More information about our work towards this goal can be found at the Hybrid systems Culture and Computer Science 2018–Hybrid Systems, Berlin, book publication, see the document “KUL18_INKA.pdf” attached here. This is an effort we started in the context of the COST Action TU1306, such as the WAY CyberPark (<http://cyberparks-project.eu/app/monitoring-tool>) and EthnoAlly (<http://cyberparks-project.eu/app/ethno-ally>) applications, which allow for social network data analytics and interactive data visualization, for the interpretation of meanings that individuals assign to heritage and public space.

Also, in the context of the COST Action TU1306, we organised International Training Schools in many European countries, with exemplar case the “Hybrid Heritage-scapes as Urban Commons in Mediterranean Cities: accessing the deep-rooted spatial interfaces of cities”, convened at The Science and Technology in Archaeology Research Center of the Cyprus Institute, in Nicosia, Cyprus. A book was produced with contributions from the local stakeholders, authorities and international experts (see: <http://cyberparks-project.eu/news/167-cyberparks-announcing-newly-released-book-ict-and-cultural-heritage>); while the general approach to open air public space was further discussed on a Springer publication (see the document “Springer_Cyberparks.pdf” attached here). We expanded the discourse through the organization (and chairing) of a dedicated session at the Architecture Humanities Research Association’s international conference 2018 at Eindhoven (see: <https://www.smartness-discoursepractice.org/smartness-1>), with the kind participation of a representative of the JPI Urban Europe which offered us the opportunity to discuss the pressing need for an update of policy tools in many cases directly with the policy makers. JPI Urban Europe are currently in the process of updating the Strategic Research and Innovation Agenda, with indicator the UN Agenda 2030 target SDG 11’s overall objective of ‘leaving no one behind’.

Our approach has been employed experimentally in many European cities, from Lisbon to Nicosia, and we are currently working in further developing our methodology through the coordination of a new Working Group in the Digital Research Infrastructure for the Arts and Humanities (DARIAH) European Research Infrastructure Consortium (<https://www.dariah.eu/2018/11/13/meet-the-new-working-group-on-digital-practices-for-the-study-of-urban-heritage/>). More at: <https://www.dariah.eu/activities/working-groups/digital-practices-for-the-study-of-urban-heritage/>. This Working Group (WG) aims to identify how the extensive scale of digital archives, repositories, museums and heritage sites across Europe can contribute to reflective processes which will result in the creation of legible and enjoyable places in contemporary cities, helping to integrate the urban experience of dwellers old and new and shape inclusive communities with a stable sense of identity. The WG aims to unearth emergent and informal, local conditions that illustrate the common future of Europe, which can be actualized through the coexistence of their differences and irregularities, indicating the convergence of the citizens’ passages through the city into the ephemeral occupation of a common space. Significantly, our WG was invited to participate and present work at the next World Congress of the International Union of Architects which is going to take place in 2020 (see <https://www.uia2020rio.archi>).

Concluding with another relevant activity, we are employing the digital tools we developed for staging dialogue about and promoting the cultural value of buildings, by means of immersive interactive visualisation for user engagement, in the context of providing support to a Creative Europe-funded project with the title Mapping and Archiving Public Spaces co-operation activity, see <https://nonument.org>.