CRITICAL PERSPECTIVES ON THE VALORIZATION OF INTANGIBLE CULTURAL HERITAGE: GLOBALIZATION, POWER, AND COMMUNITY DYNAMICS

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Resumo | Abstract

This paper examines the concept of «valorization» within intangible cultural heritage (ICH), which makes cultural practices visible, recognized and valued socially, culturally and economically. While the 2003 United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) Convention for the Safeguarding of the Intangible Cultural Heritage (ICHC) does not explicitly mention valorization, its emphasis on visibility, promotion and transmission has led scholars to consider it central to heritage practice. Using Meissner's model (2021), based on Bourdieu's «Theory of Practice», this study views valorization as a cycle that includes transmission, objectification, institutionalization and capital conversion.

Within this framework, this paper analyzes four interconnected dimensions: globalization, power relations, cultural and intellectual property and community involvement. Globalization is examined as a process of objectification; whereby local cultural practices gain global visibility but may also face commodification. Power relations are explored through institutionalization, showing how control over heritage is negotiated among experts, states and communities, often within the constraints of the Authorized Heritage Discourse (AHD). Cultural and intellectual property are explored as mechanisms of capital conversion, where cultural knowledge becomes economic and legal assets, raising questions of ownership and benefit-sharing. Community involvement is highlighted as the basis for transmission, underscoring the role of participation in sustaining heritage.

The paper argues that valorization is not a neutral or linear process but rather a dynamic and often contested one, shaped by global, institutional, legal and social factors. It highlights the importance of visibility, authority, ownership and participation in how cultural value is produced.

Palavras-chave | Keywords

Intangible cultural heritage (ICH); Valorization; globalization; power relations; community participation.

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Resumo biográfico | Short biography

Ahmed Abodora is a PhD candidate in Heritage Studies at Brandenburgische Technische Universität (BTU) Cottbus-Senftenberg in Germany. His study focuses on critically examining intangible cultural heritage discourses within the dominant framework of the Authorized Heritage Discourse. His main interests are heritage governance, postcolonial and decolonial theory and qualitative research methods like ethnography and oral history.

Ahmed earned his Master's degree in Heritage Conservation and Site Management from BTU Cottbus-Senftenberg, where he researched ways to protect traditional vernacular architecture, in the context of Siwa Oasis in Egypt. He also has a Bachelor's degree in Architecture from Alexandria University, Egypt.

Ahmed has worked on heritage documentation and conservation projects in both Egypt and Germany, including fieldwork in Cairo and community projects in Siwa Oasis. In addition to his research, he takes part in academic governance and student activities at BTU Cottbus-Senftenberg.