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Reclaiming Culture: The Heritage Preservation Movement in Fez, Morocco

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For travelers who arrive in Fez for the first time, unloading their luggage at either the train station or airport may come with the impression that this Moroccan city is not that different from their hometowns. With paved streets, apartment complexes, and the latest automobiles, Fez in appearance resembles other cities elsewhere. Yet, people's dress varies; some dress in Western fashions while the attire of others looks more like the traditional clothing a tourist would expect to see. The hassle of paperwork at the airport annoys more than usual because the sunny day outside beckons. The blend of spoken languages – English, French, and an Arabic colloquial – slightly intimidates the traveler who is comfortable with one language. Despite these cultural particularities, the experience seems familiar to everyone. Though the immediate culture feels different, the landscape of tall, modern buildings outside does not.

Visitors, just arrived in Fez, exit the airport or train station and stop a taxi. They tell the driver to take them to the old city, what is known as the Fez Medina. As they probably have read before leaving for Morocco, Fez is a metropolitan area of three distinct, but related, cities. The first is the Medina, which has roots dating back to the ninth century. The second is the Ville Nouvelle, the colonial French metropolitan creation that is a ten minute cab ride away from its medieval counterpart. The third is known as Fez Jdid, named in Arabic the “new city” to distinguish its thirteenth century birth from the Medina's ninth century one. The three cities, close neighbors, are all within walking distance of one another. Together they house a population of about one million. While the Fez metropolis reflects layers of history, foreign visitors naturally focus attention mostly on the Fez Medina and then somewhat on Fez Jdid. Curious to see the oldest city, just arrived travelers head in the direction of the Medina.

As the taxi winds its way through the Ville Nouvelle on its way to the Medina, visitors inside see streets of relatively new buildings, of large trees that line wide avenues, of a city

bustling with vehicles just like those found elsewhere. The cab driver, however, advises the travelers in the backseat to prepare themselves for a sight they cannot possibly conjure up. Getting closer to the Medina, the crowds on the street thicken and the buildings shift from a white to a brown exterior. The cab arrives before a tall, ornate entryway known as Bab Boujloud and stops. Dropped off before this “bab,” this gate to the old city, the travelers see the outline of a walled metropolis. That city retains a medieval structure where entry to the fortified urban area is only by way of this “bab” or others like it. Having preserved the street layout of centuries before, automobiles must stop at the gate, leaving pedestrians to wander inside and walk through the streets where only mules and horses will amble as well.

Passing through the gateway, first-time visitors pause. They recall the cab driver’s words and think he was right when he referred to the site of the Medina as unimaginable. They stroll through the narrow streets, making their way through crowds. Their eyes skim over the street-front shops, some of which are no wider than three or four meters and make the smallest of college dormitory rooms seem spacious. Each shop begins where the other ends to create a winding row of connected storefronts. A walk through the butcher’s market reveals a camel’s head hanging above. Past that market, some stores display traditional Moroccan footwear; others are Internet cafes or arcades. Following that is the vegetable market where men and women, some sitting on floor mats, sell produce out of straw baskets or wagons. Taking a turn off a main street that may have been three or four meters wide itself, they enter a residential neighborhood. Occasionally passages are too narrow to allow two persons to walk side by side. Visitors are reminded of the William Sartain painting, “Algerian Water Carrier,” in which a cobbled alley descends into a short tunnel that sustains the protruding rooms of the adjoining buildings. Here, in Fez, the cobblestone alleyways all look alike as they connect between the brown and beige

buildings that appear to have squeezed themselves into the walled area of the city. This sight rouses all visitors' curiosity. They begin to wonder how it is that a city with this much activity retained this urban plan during the course of centuries and how it is that Fassis, as the people of Fez are called, continue to maintain their Medina.

Added to the list of World Heritage sites in 1981, the Fez Medina was set to undergo a long process of conservation, during which the world would take interest in the old city and recognize its global value as a unique example of human development. The call for the Medina's conservation included plans to rehabilitate buildings, to move out polluting industries, to provide drinking water to a greater number of the Medina's residents, and to correct the electricity network so as to prevent fires, among many others initiatives. Despite high interest in the Medina's preservation, the challenge of working with a living city, one that continues to evolve and adapt to people's lifestyles, made the Fez Medina project one of the most difficult. Fez is the largest urban area in the world to exclude cars and is often considered the best preserved medieval Islamic city today. Though the absence of cars and its preservation status are benefits that help make the preservation project a more feasible one, Fez's social and economic condition presents a challenge for preservationists. The movement has made some progress since 1981 and yet in many ways it has not properly addressed the city's needs or its heritage. The movement's successes and failures provoke the following research question: What is the best way to preserve the Fez Medina?

Interviews I conducted while in Fez during the summer of 2007 and the literature I have since reviewed provide the basis for my analysis of the heritage preservation movement in Fez. In the following pages, I will begin with a discussion of the Medina's history and development. I will then explain why the Medina deserves and is in need of preservation and proceed with a

discussion and evaluation of the movement's accomplishments. Continuing with an explanation of different approaches to heritage preservation, I will end with suggestions for ways in which the movement could more effectively preserve the city's heritage.

The Medina

Fez's founding in the ninth century has inspired two myths. The older of the two, which records as early as the tenth century cite, credits the Arab migrant to the Maghreb, Idris the Elder, with having established a city on one side of the river. Following his death, his son is said to have founded the city on the other bank of the river. The second myth, dating back to the thirteenth century, attributes the founding of both cities to the younger Idris. It does not offer any justification for why he built two cities instead of one. Regardless of which account is the truth, both reveal that Fez came to exist as two parts divided by a river that cuts through the "tight little valley" where Fez is situated.¹ Some reports suggest that Arabs from Kairuan and families from Cordoba settled on opposite sides of the stream and thus created two districts to the city. Those two districts to this day characterize the ends of the Fez Medina.² Choosing plentiful water over defense, Fez sits in a valley instead of on top of a hill, a more common location for a medieval city.³ Under the influence of Almoravid and Almohad rule during the eleventh and twelfth centuries and into the thirteenth, Fez's two river banks overcame their rivalry and united into "one important commercial, administrative, and military city."⁴ Once again, Fez came to have an urban double when the Marinide leadership founded Fes Jdid next to the older city; "but this time it was no longer a question of two rival cities separated only by the width of a river bed. These

¹ Le Tourneau, *Fez in the Age*, 7.

² Burckhardt, *Fez: City of Islam*, 65-66.

³ Burckhardt, *Fez: City of Islam*, 66-67.

⁴ Le Tourneau, *Fez in the Age*, 10.

were two cities of different vocation destined to live side by side.” The original Medina emerged as a commercial and scientific center while Fez Jdid served as the administrative and military headquarters.⁵ This meant the Marinides had successfully expanded Fez without driving its districts into competition with one another. The Marinide regime then attempted to centralize the Medina by favoring the Karawiyeen Mosque as a way to hint that “at least in a religious sense,” Fez was going to be one city. And yet, these centralizing projects did not purge the “particularism, perhaps even the hostility, of the two banks.”⁶ The Medina continued to have two poles and to this day Fassis self-identify with one of the two city centers.

Designed as a walled area, the Medina can be accessed by entry through one of its eight main gates, all fairly evenly spread out around the city’s circumference. The basic structure of the ramparts dates back to the thirteenth century.⁷ Like its fortified walls, the city’s ground plan has remained essentially the same; “its network of winding pedestrian streets has never been altered.”⁸ The maze of zigzagging streets inside permits access to every part of the city while also directing traffic to the larger streets that allow for quicker travel in and out of the city. As such, the combination of streets draws attention to the bigger thoroughfares and thus grants the smaller passages in residential areas more privacy. Being built into a concave valley, the streets descend in the direction of the city center and ascend as they head out towards the walls. This attribute grants the city a natural guidebook-like nature, as a street’s incline is an indication of where it could take its traveler.

⁵ Le Tourneau, *Fez in the Age*, 12.

⁶ Le Tourneau, *Fez in the Age*, 18.

⁷ Le Tourneau, *Fez in the Age*, 19.

⁸ Radoine, “Conservation-Based Cultural,” 458.

The buildings, rather than the streets, determined the city's layout. The streets took their meandering shape in order to go around the structures that had taken root there. As such, the network of streets "apparently developed according to random circumstance and prior occupation of the land by private property owners."⁹ The buildings outlined the street system meaning the "enclosure of a series of contiguous or overlapping cellular structures, 'space containers'," determined the "urban fabric." The genius behind this spontaneous urban design is that structures retain their independence while also coming together "into a comprehensive fabric of both great unity and variety."¹⁰ An aerial view of the city shows the Medina's haphazard layout as the city's structures crowd each other almost as if in an attempt to squeeze into every available space in order to fit inside the city's border. Yet despite that lack of geometric order, the Medina is "one of the most harmonious urban environments ever created by man."¹¹

Within its walls, the Medina houses 13,385 buildings in its 375 hectares of space.¹² Of those buildings, preservationists have deemed 11,601 of them historic. During their research process, Fez preservationists collected data and found that slightly less than half of historic buildings were in decent condition. On the other hand, 41% were decaying, 8% were threatened with collapse, and about 2% were in ruins.¹³ The pre-preservation condition of these buildings demanded attention, particularly as the city's treasures included 143 mosques, seven medersas,

⁹ Le Tourneau, *Fez in the Age*, 25.

¹⁰ Bianca, "Conservation and Rehabilitation Projects," 49.

¹¹ M'Bow, "Appeal," 1980.

¹² Radoine, "Conservation-Based Cultural," 458.

¹³ Radoine, "Conservation-Based Cultural," 462.

and 64 fountains.¹⁴ Meanwhile, traditional artisanal crafts, monitored by guilds, struggle to survive. These artisans are responsible for the beauty of the city's structures and for the detailing found inside the structures, in its fountains, in its gardens, and embellishing its walls. These crafts face the danger, however, of extinction. "Today, the guilds are threatened by the modern economy and driven into a tight corner by the political trade unions; if they should ever disappear, something much more than a particular outward expression of professional solidarity would be lost."¹⁵ The perseverance of guild-monitored crafts serves as one example of the expansiveness of heritage preservation, which involves more than the rehabilitation of historic structures. The general sentiment in regards to the Medina is that history's influence, though always dynamic and changing, is the city's hallmark. The UNESCO director of cultural heritage for the Moroccan Ministry of Cultural Affairs, Abdelaziz Tour-i, writes, "At every corner of its streets, in every building, however modest, lies the mark of the past ... The morphology of its urban fabric, the network of its thoroughfares, and the vitality of its trading and craft districts still constitute, in spite of all the vicissitudes, the dynamism and survival of that heritage."¹⁶ Fassi heritage inspired the preservation movement to begin to tackle the host of challenges associated with such an extensive and complex project.

The Need for Preservation

The Fez Medina's addition to the World Heritage list invited others to acknowledge the old city's cultural value to the world. The notion of this type of global cultural value took on a "legal and administrative structure via the World Heritage Convention, adopted by the UNESCO

¹⁴ Genevieve Darles, "The medina of Fez – crafting a future for the past – old city in Morocco," *UNESCO Courier*, Oct. 1996

¹⁵ Burckhardt, *Fez: City of Islam*, 76.

¹⁶ Tour-i, "Fez: The Destiny," 10.

general conference in 1972.”¹⁷ King Hassan II, in a 1980 declaration, spoke of the reasons for the city’s preservation, saying, “Our duty today is to instill new life into it and to renovate it so that it may find its ancient traditions once again. We must work to ensure that the cracks are repaired and that life resumes its normal course.”¹⁸ A statement by the UNESCO Director-General Amadou-Mahtar M’Bow seconded that opinion. In his statement, he wrote that a millennium of time had not undermined the Medina’s urban fabric but that today’s “rapid transformations taking place throughout the world, and especially in the older cities, have had a direct impact on Fez.”¹⁹ Demographic and economic pressures, along with general neglect, combine to demand the city receive the greater care and attention it needs.

The Medina’s character itself brings about a treatment that is often neglectful. For one, the city is commonly regarded as an “open-air museum piece” that does not need much attention from any passer-by because it is not subject to change. Being like an artifact in a museum, the Medina is seen as being there for observation and adoration, but is not considered something to be handled or adapted. Because it itself does not evolve, its caretakers do not feel any responsibility towards it in terms of updating its infrastructure or modernizing the services provided to its inhabitants. It also often inspires treatment as a “sacrosanct object” that people neglect because they are anxious to handle it, fearing that their actions might cause unintentional harm to the Medina’s personality.²⁰

¹⁷ Benjamin Forgey, “Saving the World; Global Preservation from Taj Mahal to Yellowstone,” *Washington Post*, April 14, 1984 (final edition), C1.

¹⁸ Hassan II, “Declaration By His Majesty,” 1980.

¹⁹ M’Bow, “Appeal,” 1980.

²⁰ Radoine, “Conservation-Based Cultural,” 457.

Morocco's recent socio-political history also offers an explanation for the Medina's abandonment. During the French colonial period of the first half of the twentieth century, the French shifted most activity away from traditional city centers such as Fez to create new capitals and new urban communities. Under the influence of this colonial policy, urban areas like the Fez Medina "remained physically intact but were deprived of their economic, institutional, spiritual, intellectual, and social strengths." Diminished in importance, the Medina became one of the "poor, overpopulated 'dormitories' for the large number of immigrants from the countryside who were brought in to provide labour for the colonial industrial units."²¹ Later, after the French colonialists' departure from Morocco, Moroccan elites began to move into the newer cities, consequently giving them "social prestige" and further augmenting the old city's neglect. That trend continues as "most municipal funds are spent on the new city which the rich inhabit, and not on the medina where the majority live."²²

Leaving the working classes to fend for the Medina understandably led to the city's disregard. The Medina's new inhabitants found the city's large, palatial residences unaffordable and so began to rent by the room, "thus converting houses originally intended for one extended family into multifamily tenements," which put unreasonable levels of pressure on the buildings and thus sped up their decay.²³ Ali El-Fellali, a professor of Islamic Studies at the Karawiyeen University, spoke of the migration during the 1960s and 1970s of elites out of the Medina and rural villagers in. In his opinion, these villagers could not maintain the beauty of the houses they

²¹ Radoine, "Conservation-Based Cultural," 461.

²² Bianca, "Conservation and Rehabilitation Projects," 48.

²³ Bianca, "Conservation and Rehabilitation Projects," 50.

rented and unknowingly mistreated those homes. They also failed to maintain their original splendor by, for instance, replacing painted wood ceilings with plain, white cement ones.²⁴

Years of investment in the Ville Nouvelle during the colonial period also means infrastructure there now has an allure to it. Anyone with the “economic means to move” did then and continues to do so now.²⁵ That certainly was the case for Zahraoui, an Arabic teacher who finding the Medina unsanitary and unhealthy, finally decided to move to the Ville Nouvelle. While still living in the Medina and teaching at a school there, Zahraoui wrote a paper about the streets he traveled on his way from his home to work every morning. The trash he walked by and the donkeys that pressed up against him as he commuted on foot meant he showed up for work every day with a state of mind affected by all the contamination. That state of mind left him unable to teach as well as he said he could otherwise. He noted the dangers animal transport in the Medina caused by citing the example of his grandmother who, hit by a load-carrying donkey, fell to the ground and was sent to the hospital with a head injury. Zahraoui criticized the line of donkeys that traveled the Medina’s streets carrying tanned leather that dripped water on those forced to walk in close proximity. Affected by living conditions in the Medina, he wrote a poem in Arabic about the pollution and filth. The interview ended on his comment on the irony of his move: now living in the Ville Nouvelle, cars driving by spray more water on him than the donkeys treading too close to him in the Medina ever did.²⁶

The head of the Fez Culture Department’s Cultural Affairs Agency, Mohsin Al-Idrissi Al-‘Omri, who is very active in the Medina’s preservation movement, also no longer lives there.

²⁴ El-Fellali, personal interview.

²⁵ Porter, “Unwitting Actors,” 130.

²⁶ Zahraoui, personal interview.

He explained that his family moved out of the old city because of three particular concerns with living there: the Medina lacks adequate security, houses in the clean Medina neighborhoods are unaffordable, and the neighbors he would have in the affordable neighborhoods are not those with whom he said he would be comfortable associating.²⁷ Examples such as these of those able to care for the Medina choosing to relocate speak to the ways in which the Medina's neglect during the colonial period fuels further disregard for it today.

Recent demographic changes have contributed to the Medina's neglect. Population growth has turned some of the city's gardens into the residences that are in demand. Those previously green spaces have given way to tall, apartment complexes whose presence is a constant reminder of the population growth that is its cause. These gardens had "once compensated for the otherwise densely built-up structure." But now they yield to further urban growth, which, being part of a vicious circle, induces greater growth in population; "overcrowding in the old city has also been caused by the speculative redevelopment of formerly green areas within the city walls." Offering more housing space leads to population growth which then leads to the need for more housing. Of course, the increasing population density caused greater waste production which then put excessive stress on the "traditional river-discharge system." In response, the city created a second sewage system that directs waste to the Oued Boukhreab river and thus is responsible for greater environmental pollution.²⁸

Estimates of the Medina's population in the late 1990s placed it at 146,000.²⁹ Some sources point to a decrease in the Medina's population from 300,000 in 1980 to 200,000 in the

²⁷ Al-'Omri, personal interview.

²⁸ Bianca, "Conservation and Rehabilitation Projects," 50.

²⁹ Unit for Housing and Urbanization and ADER, "Case Study," 1.

early 1990s. And yet those sources note that population density continues to be a problem that “threatens to destroy” the city.³⁰ Another estimate puts population density at more than 1,000 persons per hectare.³¹ The problem of overcrowding, which leads several families to take up residence in a house originally intended for just one, has also caused the emergence of “complex property ownership and occupancy patterns,” which add to the preservation movement’s challenges.³² The reality that several people own or possess a single property engenders controversy over property rights. Before property owners can begin work on restoring their property, they “must first buy out co-owners, tenants, or other holders of primary and secondary rights.” This only increases in complexity when these property owners are required to abide by “tenant protection laws,” “widespread joint ownership,” and “legal caps on rent increases.”³³ But it is precisely these houses, single-family ones that have been converted into multi-family homes, which need rehabilitation. The overpopulation of these houses directly leads to the buildings’ decay. The house’s division into several individual units means residents begin to put in additional bathrooms, for one. These installations introduce extra water to the buildings that are then negatively affected by high humidity levels and unreliable pipes. Furthermore, dividing up the building into several sub-units often involves adding concrete walls, which put an excessive and destabilizing amount of pressure on the structure.³⁴

Population increases also engender growth in commercial activity. As a result, manufacturing production has expanded into residential areas and has absorbed more space

³⁰ Josh Martin, “Fez: Preserving a City,” *Saudi Aramco World*, May/June 1993, 20-27.

³¹ Tour-i, “Fez: The Destiny,” 10.

³² Unit for Housing and Urbanization and ADER, “Case Study,” 2.

³³ Unit for Housing and Urbanization and ADER, “Case Study,” 12.

³⁴ Serageldin, “Preserving a Historic City,” 240.

within the city's walls, "thus ending the traditional separation of production from residential areas."³⁵ But production in the Medina is also problematic because of the recent shift to increased mechanization of handicrafts. This is a danger to the health of the individual workers as well as to the purity of the Medina's water. Pollutants from the industrial waste seep into the water supply at increasing rates.³⁶ Shafi Abdel-Rahman, a researcher with the main preservation agency in Fez, noted that environmental studies have identified two polluting industries: leather tanning and brass working. Both release chromium into the stream that flows through the Medina's center. Abdel-Rahman estimated that only half of the forty one polluting brass workshops had been moved out of the Medina to the nearby industrial neighborhood of Ain Nokbi.³⁷ Relocating the polluting industrial activity from the Medina's interior to the external industrial neighborhood serves as only one instance of the overlap between the preservation movement's plan and Fassi economic activity.

The Medina's unusually high poverty levels demand attention. The results of a 1995 survey indicate that the situation in the Fez Medina was inferior to that found in almost every other Moroccan metropolis or in the Moroccan countryside. The survey concluded that 36% of the 150,000 Medina residents fell below the poverty line. That percentage was higher than the Moroccan average of 10.4% for urban areas and of 28.7% for rural ones.³⁸ Of that poorest third of Medina households, about 30% own their homes and most of them live in multi-family tenements where between 2.5 to 4.3 persons share a room.³⁹ The dearth of low-income housing

³⁵ Bianca, "Conservation and Rehabilitation Projects," 51.

³⁶ Serageldin, "Preserving a Historic City," 237-38.

³⁷ Abdel-Rahman, personal interview.

³⁸ Agostini, "Valuing the Benefits," 1.

³⁹ Unit for Housing and Urbanization and ADER, "Case Study," 24.

and of employment outside the Medina contributes to the city's overcrowding and widespread poverty as Fassis have no option but to move into the Medina to find a job and an affordable place to live.⁴⁰ In response, the preservation movement includes among its goals plans to create, with support from the World Bank, 10,000 jobs in fifteen years and to offer subsidized public housing outside the city as a way to mitigate the Medina's population density.

The enormity and complexity of the Medina's situation makes the preservation project a daunting one. A substantial amount of funding is needed because there are a large number of issues demanding attention. Meanwhile, 10% of the Medina's residential buildings are in ruins and 20% are close to following suit.⁴¹ Another reality that continues to challenge preservationists is the problem of devalued property. In many cases, a building's ruin frees up a plot of land that can be put on the property market for a higher price than if the building was still standing. Opportunists might purchase the building in order to use the land on which it sits for other purposes, which might involve demolishing the original building. Preservationists must consider that "from the viewpoint of the property owner, the (historic) building is devaluing the property, not enhancing it." That is another paradox the preservation movement must address.⁴²

The combination of these pressures puts the Fez Medina under threat of "losing the profoundly original quality which makes it one of the purest jewels of Islamic civilization."⁴³ The challenge of confronting these pressures and the need for the Medina's preservation are further marred by the migration patterns of the past several decades. These patterns have left the old city lacking a traditional elite that could guard the city's interests and "sustain its memory."

⁴⁰ Bianca, "Conservation and Rehabilitation Projects," 51.

⁴¹ Serageldin, "Preserving a Historic City," 237.

⁴² Serageldin, "Preserving a Historic City," 239.

⁴³ M'Bow, "Appeal," 1980.

Contemporary social trends have had the result that few with significant clout stand up to defend the city's treasures with the exception of particular "prestigious monuments." The most significant danger lies in the public's detachment from the preservation movement. The majority of the Medina's residents do not believe themselves to be participants in their city's rehabilitation.⁴⁴ Nothing suggests a disappointing success as much as the public's disengagement with the project that meant to change and should have improved their lives.

Heritage preservation's importance lies in the way it moves forward while appreciating the inherited particularities of a specific site. It respects the "patterns of a particular way of life and a particular culture patiently created over centuries."⁴⁵ Heritage preservation does not seek to weaken the bonds that hold members of society together. Nor does it want to challenge the past. It finds inspiration in the "collective memory" that buildings and monuments reflect and falls back on "the depth of the cultural memory contained within the city itself."⁴⁶ To tap into all of these sources of cultural information and to capture them all, heritage preservation reaches beyond the conservation of architecture. Historic preservation limits itself to the rehabilitation of urban structures while the more inclusive and ambitious heritage preservation grapples with behavior, customs, clothing, and the city's way of life in addition to restoring monuments.⁴⁷ This comes with the recognition, for instance, that preserving the city's treasured monuments will not be possible unless the work of traditional artisans is kept alive.⁴⁸ Some interpretations of heritage preservation suggest that the conservation of the Medina requires "maintaining or reviving

⁴⁴ Filali Baba, "The Specificity," 7.

⁴⁵ Bouchenaki and L&i-Strauss, "Urban Identities," 35.

⁴⁶ Bouchenaki and L&i-Strauss, "Urban Identities," 38.

⁴⁷ Porter, "Unwitting Actors," 127.

⁴⁸ Bianca, "Conservation and Rehabilitation Projects," 49.

cultural, religious, and commercial activities that were compatible with its morphology.”⁴⁹ And yet, since the colonial period, preservation has not assumed the right perspective. Conservationists often treated the city as if it was a lifeless “artifact” instead of a living city that demands that its current needs be addressed without forgetting about its “authentic integrity” and “historic memory.”⁵⁰ This is not, in the end, just a restoration project, but rather it is no less than urban revitalization. That involves reminding the Medina’s residents of their sense of place, reinvigorating the local economy, and also strengthening the old city’s connection to its younger neighbor.⁵¹ Proceeding with such a challenging project requires quite a bit of bravery.

The Movement’s Progress

In 1972, UNESCO dispatched two experts to assess the Fez Medina and the cultural heritage to be found there. These two concluded that no part of the Medina could be rehabilitated on its own; rather “preserving them would involve the entire old city, and the old city was in its turn part of a complete urban system.”⁵² The idea at this point was to craft a master plan for the city’s preservation project and UNESCO, working with Moroccan experts, set aside two years, from 1976 to 1978 for the drafting of that plan. When complete, the master plan proposed to found a neighborhood outside the Medina where more than 100,000 of the old city’s residents could be resettled. It also suggested conserving neighborhoods within the Medina through two pilot projects.⁵³

⁴⁹ Bianca, “Conservation and Rehabilitation Projects,” 52.

⁵⁰ Radoine, “Conservation-Based Cultural,” 461.

⁵¹ Unit for Housing and Urbanization and ADER, “Case Study,” foreword.

⁵² Bianca, “Conservation and Rehabilitation Projects,” 47.

⁵³ Bianca, “Conservation and Rehabilitation Projects,” 52.

The master plan's implementation failure, however, came about because the plan lacked the "detailed action studies or preliminary proposals that would have made the general guidelines more concrete."⁵⁴ Without giving attention to the particulars of the project, the plan did not have "a bridge to reality."⁵⁵ That first attempt at preservation also failed to launch because the Moroccan ministries bickered over which agency would have jurisdiction over the project. Because working on an international campaign brings along with it a degree of prestige, the ministries of culture, urbanism, and the interior all wanted to take part. Their "power struggles provoked deadlocks and fatal delays."⁵⁶ As such, any future attempts to preserve the Medina's heritage would necessitate "more professionalism and less bureaucracy."⁵⁷ UNESCO's involvement a few years later would bring about increased professionalism but would also make it more difficult to meet the wish for less bureaucracy.

The early 1980s saw Fez's addition to the World Heritage list. As such, UNESCO called on the world to participate in preserving the Fez Medina, declaring its care "a duty of all mankind." Naming Fez a World Heritage city inaugurated the International Campaign for the Safeguarding of the City of Fez. The campaign's projects, catalogued in a 1985 booklet the Moroccan Ministry of the Interior, UNESCO, and the UN Development Programme prepared, were divided into four categories. The first, that took the built environment as its focus, involved constructing alternative residential neighborhoods outside the Medina, conserving houses within the Medina, and resettling residents. The second category concentrated on economic projects, such as establishing an artisanal workshop quarter, restoring the copper market, and founding an

⁵⁴ Bianca, "Conservation and Rehabilitation Projects," 53.

⁵⁵ Bianca, "Conservation and Rehabilitation Projects," 54.

⁵⁶ Bianca, "Conservation and Rehabilitation Projects," 57.

⁵⁷ Bianca, "Conservation and Rehabilitation Projects," 59.

industrial quarter where polluting activities would relocate. The equipment category identified the goals of adding parks, improving the water and electricity networks, founding a hospital in the Medina, rehabilitating the city's different neighborhoods, and working on traffic and transport access to and within the old city. The final category of the natural and cultural environment set the goals of founding a museum, creating institutes for the preservation of arts and crafts or for Islamic studies, restoring the Karawiyeen library, and developing gardens within the city's walls. The campaign estimated the cost for each of the total forty-three listed projects and noted how much of that would be funded by the Moroccan government, by external grants, or by each individual project's beneficiaries. The price tag attached to the campaign was projected at that time to be U.S. \$541.67 million.⁵⁸

A look at three of the forty-three identified projects offers an idea of the campaign's scope and the diversity of its initiatives. Project Data Sheet No. 5 allocated resources to resettling residents of a shanty town outside the Medina's ramparts. That area, Douar Moktaa, home for 7,000 Moroccans, is "constantly threatened by falling stones and landslips." The campaign thus responded to the illegal growth of the Medina into these neighboring areas by seeking to create an alternative neighborhood. As such, it took on the goal of improving the quality of life for the residents. The bill for this project, involving the resettlement of just one shanty town, was estimated at U.S. \$3 million, with the residents themselves contributing two-thirds of that sum.⁵⁹

Project Data Sheet No. 15 notes the disorganized layout of the Medina's buildings and how that disorder "threatens its very operation." At a cost of U.S. \$33.5 million, of which nearly two-thirds would come from external sources, the project would restore structures, such as

⁵⁸ Ministry of Interior, UNESCO, and UNDP, "International Campaign."

⁵⁹ Ministry of Interior, UNESCO, and UNDP, "International Campaign."

mosques, hammams, ovens, and fountains. It would also establish libraries and create spaces for youth activity in the city. The data sheet observes the project's effect on the Medina's twenty eight quarters, which begin where independent residential neighborhoods intersect. Taking on the goal of restoring structures and then integrating them into the urban community, the project would work towards meeting the "present needs of the population" as they emerge daily.⁶⁰

Project Data Sheet No. 23 concerns the drinking water supply. Observing that only 30% of the Medina's inhabitants have access to potable water at their homes, the data sheet notes that the majority rely on public fountains, where city residents often allow the water to flow with abandon. That combines with leaks, resulting from the poor state of the water network, to waste water and accelerate structural deterioration. Noting that new, "controlled-flow fountains" were installed and that about 2,000 residents were added to the water supply network in 1983, the data sheet identifies the movement's goal of establishing a water purification station, adding secondary and tertiary pipelines to the water network and restoring the main ones. The estimated cost would be U.S. \$9 million.⁶¹

With detailed action plans available, the preservation movement had gained strategy and direction. Implementation would get a boost in the second half of the 1980s with the creation and empowerment of two significant authorities. The first, in 1985, granted the Medina its own municipal prefecture. Having its own headquarters changed the Medina "into a real city requiring care and administration and not just an isolated district belonging to the Ville Nouvelle."⁶² Its

⁶⁰ Ministry of Interior, UNESCO, and UNDP, "International Campaign."

⁶¹ Ministry of Interior, UNESCO, and UNDP, "International Campaign."

⁶² Radoine, "Conservation-Based Cultural," 464.

own prefecture would give the Medina the attention it needs and allow the city to provide more social services to the Medina's residents.

In 1989, the Moroccan government established the Agence pour la Dedensification et la Rehabilitation de la Medina de Fes, known colloquially as ADER-Fes, to manage the preservation of the Medina. ADER emerged as a semi-private institution that had various ministers, including the minister of the interior and the minister for cultural affairs, on its board of directors. It reports twice annually to the Ministry of Interior, but for the most part acts independently, Taleb Abdel-Salam, an ADER researcher, said.⁶³ The decision to make ADER a semi-private agency is significant in that it reflects a movement away from a reliance on public monies. Being semi-private, ADER would more effectively solicit the necessary dollars to fund the preservation movement.⁶⁴ ADER's director, Abdellatif El Hajjami, manages a staff of 160 specialized experts in order to research the Medina and each individual project and then monitor its progress.⁶⁵ Some observers, however, consider that ADER's primary function and the reason why it was established is to resettle tens of thousands of the Medina's residents in new neighborhoods created outside its walls.⁶⁶

ADER's work began in 1995 when its plan for the Fez Medina got underway. The plan was informed by the information collected during an extensive study of the Medina. The resulting database, the Geographical Information System (GIS), recorded data on the old city's 13,385 buildings in answer to thirty information needs, such as on the electricity and sewage plans, the quality of building material used, the structure's cultural value, the number of tenants,

⁶³ Abdel-Salam, personal interview.

⁶⁴ Radoine, "Conservation-Based Cultural," 463.

⁶⁵ Josh Martin, "Fez: Preserving a City," *Saudi Aramco World*, May/June 1993, 20-27.

⁶⁶ Porter, "Unwitting Actors," 131.

and the tenants' income.⁶⁷ ADER employees then transferred the information within the database to pixelated maps of the Medina. These maps offered the potential of setting up different levels of analysis. For instance, a map might be drawn up to show which houses are in good condition. Another might map out the homes by the tenants' income or by whether they are connected to the water network. ADER initiated the GIS data collection project with the understanding that in order to preserve the Medina, ADER would have to know more about it. The collection of that information then raised the question of how the agency would proceed to act on it.⁶⁸

A team of ADER specialists designed a credibly informed preservation plan for the Medina on which the agency embarked in 1995. The plan's strength was its commitment to acknowledging the Medina's dynamism, and thus the plan reflected an understanding that "the question of evolution is a central one, since the attachment of people to their heritage is not stagnant but evolving."⁶⁹ The plan began by identifying where each neighborhood within the Medina began and ended. It then determined all areas of historic value as well as all structures of architectural value. Then, the plan labeled the activities conducted in the city's different parts, noting where green spaces sit. Subdividing the Medina into its components allowed the team to describe "the nature of precise interventions" needed for each of the areas and for the buildings throughout the city. The resulting product would guide any work on Medina space and progress is currently supervised by the Agence Urbaine de Fes. Projects that the plan does not cover are studied, as they emerge, by a committee, but otherwise restoration is meant to proceed in accordance with the 1995 plan.⁷⁰

⁶⁷ Radoine, "Conservation-Based Cultural," 468-69.

⁶⁸ Abdel-Salam, personal interview.

⁶⁹ Radoine, "Conservation-Based Cultural," 468.

⁷⁰ Radoine, "Conservation-Based Cultural," 468-69.

The preservation movement witnessed a breakthrough following a colloquium that took place in Fez in 1993. The World Bank, one of the colloquium's attendees, subsequently developed a Medina project that built on the recognition that heritage preservation has its economic benefits, which extend beyond tourism to poverty relief.⁷¹ Working with ADER, the Fez-Medina municipality, UNESCO, and the Moroccan government, the Bank funded the Fez preservation project with two loans valued at U.S. \$14 million.⁷² The project design to be implemented with Bank funding had the three goals of improving the city's urban infrastructure, preserving the "historic assets" that are unique to the Medina, and enhancing the quality of life for the city's residents.⁷³ In addition to the impact the Bank's funding would have, its participation signaled a shift in thinking. The Bank's investment in Fez addressed previous assumptions that cultural heritage "is the domain only of artists, archaeologists, and architects," an assumption that had made it difficult to produce financial support.⁷⁴ By involving itself in the Fez heritage preservation movement, the Bank implied that investing in cultural heritage could stimulate the local economy. The Bank's monies would fund projects that would directly address living conditions for the 52,700 residents below the poverty line and for those Medina inhabitants who lived in overcrowded dwellings.⁷⁵ While economic returns on cultural heritage investments often incite thought of tourism, the Bank's focus was different.

Working also with the Harvard Graduate School of Design's Unit for Housing and Urbanization, the Bank's interest was "rehabilitating the city for local residents, not for tourists

⁷¹ Radoine, "Conservation-Based Cultural," 472-73.

⁷² "World Bank to finance rehabilitation of Fez old city," *British Broadcasting Corporation*, November 1, 1998.

⁷³ Cernea, "At the Cutting Edge," 71.

⁷⁴ Radoine, "Conservation-Based Cultural," 472.

⁷⁵ Cernea, "At the Cutting Edge," 71.

or visitors.”⁷⁶ In keeping with that focus, the Bank’s funding supported a variety of projects, including the following: repairing buildings in threat of collapse; making the Medina accessible to small, golf car-sized ambulances, police cars, and fire trucks; improving the solid waste gathering process; working with non-polluting business districts; and coordinating activities between the different Fez authorities that supervise the preservation movement so as to increase their efficiency. These goals also included creating themed tourist routes and restoring certain notable monuments.⁷⁷

The plan’s drafting took longer than usual, but the techniques used set a precedent that some expected would save time when working on future, similarly ambitious projects. One of the greatest difficulties the Bank faced during the drafting process involved having to negotiate with the different agencies and government offices involved. “Bureaucratic rigidities,” complicated financial patterns, and inexperience on the part of those involved challenged the Bank’s representatives who furnished in the end an innovative methodology “with high replication likelihood.”⁷⁸ Although these challenges took time to overcome, the Bank did what was best in choosing to devote resources to addressing them. Otherwise, had the Bank chosen not to participate in the Fez Medina project, “it not only would forgo new learning and fall back on misguided carbon-copy approaches to complex problems but also would fail to respond to country demands and needs.”⁷⁹ Instead, by contributing to the Medina’s preservation, the Bank initiated its first “culture-based initiative.”⁸⁰ The Bank deemed the model a success in its *Quality*

⁷⁶ Serageldin, “Preserving a Historic City,” 239.

⁷⁷ Radoine, “Conservation-Based Cultural,” 474.

⁷⁸ Cernea, “At the Cutting Edge,” 72.

⁷⁹ Cernea, “At the Cutting Edge,” 72.

⁸⁰ Hackenberg, “Closing the Gap,” 296.

at *Entry Assessment*, in which it wrote, “the panel finds the project *fully satisfactory* and wishes to congratulate the task team on the novel and replicable approach adopted for the rehabilitation of Fez.”⁸¹ Because of its stated success and the prestige its involvement gave to the Medina’s preservation effort, spectators predicted the Bank’s support would inspire other financial institutions to grant funding to the Fez project and thus help Fez move past the impasse of poor fiscal support that had held it back for almost two decades.⁸²

Among its most quantifiable benefits, the Bank’s intervention was projected to create an estimated 10,000 jobs in the Medina. With the project creating a need for labor in construction, construction support services, and micro-enterprises, in addition to any jobs created in response to consequent increased spending on consumer goods and services, the Bank’s contribution to the effort would generate activity over the course of fifteen years that would ameliorate unemployment, which was as high as 30% in the micro-enterprise and informal construction sectors.⁸³ Some of the projects might also hire graduates of the Institute of Traditional Building Crafts that ADER had established prior to World Bank funding. That institute served the purpose of training expert craftsmen who could then complete the restoration work needed while preserving the original artistic qualities of those monuments.⁸⁴ The growth in the construction, remodeling, and public works sectors would stimulate the entire economy of the Medina and begin to address the economic and demographic problems that challenged the entire preservation project.

⁸¹ qtd. in Radoine, “Conservation-Based Cultural,” 474-75.

⁸² Cernea, “At the Cutting Edge,” 72, 74.

⁸³ Unit for Housing and Urbanization and ADER, “Case Study,” 9.

⁸⁴ “Moroccan architect tackles restoration of Fez,” *Agence France Presse*, May 25, 1992.

Most recently, and since receiving the World Bank's support, the Fez preservation movement has also obtained funding from the U.S. Millennium Challenge Compact. Signed in August 2007, the U.S. and Moroccan governments agreed to a five-year plan to spur economic growth throughout Morocco. The agreement has five parts to it with each part giving support to a different project throughout the country. The total five-year plan comes at a cost of U.S. \$697.5 million, with an allocation of U.S. \$111.87 million earmarked for supporting the work of Medina artisans. The project's objectives include technology transfer to give Medina pottery makers kilns that do not pollute as much as traditional ones, helping artisans apply for financing from local banking and microcredit institutions, supporting a design competition that would generate ideas for enhanced ways to make use of certain Medina spaces, developing the industrial neighborhood at Ain Nokbi where copper workers would relocate, studying ways to improve safety and environmental conditions at traditional leather tanneries, and training ADER employees on how to manage these projects. Many of the agreement's initiatives would necessitate the individual artisans "buying-in" to the program by independently raising funds to cover some of the costs of the new technology they would seek to possess.⁸⁵ As such, the initiatives would retain "financial sustainability" and would not impose external influences or force unwelcome change on Medina artisans.

Since the Fez Medina embarked on the preservation project, the old city has witnessed a number of significant restoration projects that speak to the direction the movement has taken and the nature of the preservation process. One of the more renowned accomplishments is the restoration of Funduq Nejjarine. Historically, Nejjarine was a caravanserai where traveling merchants could stop for a night. Storage rooms and stables on the bottom floor were in close

⁸⁵ MCC, *Notice of Entering into a Compact*.

proximity to oversized scales used to weigh goods during commercial exchanges. That caravanserai's restoration "was not limited to one building but covered the whole Nejjarine complex," which included a market, a mosque, a few houses situated above the market, an elaborately decorated fountain, and a public square.⁸⁶ The project, paid for by the local Karim Lamrani Foundation, ended up converting the restored caravanserai into a woodworking arts and crafts museum that currently attracts a sizeable amount of tourist traffic.

The restoration of the Dar Adyal Palace took that site and converted it into the College of Andalusian and Maahlan Music. Serving also as a venue for concerts, Dar Adyal now belongs to the Moroccan government. Funded by the Italian government in 1993, its restoration was the first to finish under the UNESCO international campaign.⁸⁷ The Bab Mahrouk gateway, which Banque Populaire paid to restore, also serves as a venue for musical concerts during the annual Fez Festival of Sacred World Music, which attracts substantial foreign interest.

Other preservation projects have focused on less immediately visible achievements. ADER, in conjunction with the Fez Medina municipality rescued about 200 buildings that were in danger of collapsing. In the time span of a year and a half stretching from 2006 to 2007, ADER rescued thirty near-collapse structures and cleaned up after thirty four partially demolished ones.⁸⁸ During that process, ADER avoided having tenants temporarily relocate by erecting a "replacement wall" before demolishing the one it would substitute.⁸⁹ They also rebuilt absent portions of the Medina's peripheral wall using a dated technique of rammed earth. Additionally, the Arab Fund for Social and Economic Development, a finance organization

⁸⁶ Radoine, "Conservation-Based Cultural," 470-71.

⁸⁷ Barbato, "Pilot Project," 17, 19.

⁸⁸ Unit for Housing and Urbanization and ADER, "Case Study," 29.

⁸⁹ Unit for Housing and Urbanization and ADER, "Case Study," 15.

affiliated with the Arab League, supported the rehabilitation of seven kilometers of underground water networks. These water networks, in their poor state, had been “the main cause of building collapse.”⁹⁰ Permitting access to small emergency vehicles required making small adjustments to some building corners and installing ramps for the vehicles’ tires on streets that had a staircase-like build to them. That “emergency circulation network” would involve fourteen kilometers of streets; ADER insured that residential areas where alleys were too narrow for the vehicles would be kept within a 100-meter distance of the network’s route.⁹¹

Some skeptical observers thought ADER’s foundational function was to deal with the Medina’s population density problem, and that task was one of their responsibilities, though not an exclusive or a predominant one. Some of the preservation activity did in fact involve displacing residents or businesses from the Medina. The trade zone at Ain Nokbi, where polluting businesses are meant to go, also is the future site of a treatment plant for industrial waste.⁹² ADER has also participated in a housing subsidy program that seeks to reduce overpopulation. As part of that program, which is also supervised by the Ministry of Housing, families living in structures close to collapse are offered alternative housing at nearby districts Ben Souda or Sahreej Gnaoua, which are not part of the Medina. A treasurer with the Administrative Attaché for Fes Jdid, Hamed Al- Sariri, said the program started around 2003 and offers the relocating households a couple mortgaging options. A household could elect to pay a few hundred Moroccan dirhams monthly over the course of 25 years or pay 60% of the house’s

⁹⁰ Radoine, “Conservation-Based Cultural,” 471, 475.

⁹¹ Unit for Housing and Urbanization and ADER, “Case Study,” 4, 6.

⁹² Unit for Housing and Urbanization and ADER, “Case Study,” 16.

value up-front and secure full ownership at once. Al-Sariri said that to the best of his knowledge, the government covers the other 40% of the house's cost.⁹³

Overall, though the preservation movement's supervisors intend to promote private investment in the Medina and its rehabilitation by way of an incentive program, the state and local governments seemingly have devoted a substantial quantity of resources to the movement's projects. Al-'Omri of the Cultural Affairs Agency estimated that the Culture Ministry spent U.S. \$20 million in two years on preservation activities.⁹⁴ Understandably, a state's spending on its domestic projects should directly relieve its citizenry's afflictions. Yet, in Fez, the role of foreigners is apparent, and whether intentionally or by coincidence, the heritage preservation movement has attracted their attention. David Amster, the director of the American Language Center and the Arabic Language Institute in Fez, calls the restoration of historic houses his "first love." He admits that "Fez is one of the few places in the world where a foreigner can buy a historic building."⁹⁵ In addition to property's transfer into non-Moroccan hands, tourism also works to alter the Medina's culture. One survey estimated that each year, approximately 160,000 foreign visitors spend the night at Fez hotels.⁹⁶ In fact, on a national level, tourism is "second only to workers' remittances from overseas as a hard currency source."⁹⁷ Thus, while the investment in heritage preservation helps Fez Medina residents, it also arouses more non-

⁹³ Al-Sariri, personal interview.

⁹⁴ Al-'Omri, personal interview.

⁹⁵ qtd. in John Goddard, "Home improvements – Moroccans try to save part of their living history," *Toronto Star*, November 7, 2002, L01.

⁹⁶ Agostini, "Valuing the Benefits," 2.

⁹⁷ Hackenberg, "Closing the Gap," 291.

Moroccan interest in the old city and that may cause some subtle, and some not so subtle, changes in the Medina's culture.

The Heritage Movement's Side Effects

Though the movement's list of accomplishments is a lengthy one, a number of observers express some dissatisfaction with the way projects have been handled. One such observer, Philippe Revault, a town planner, architect, and professor, disapproves of the way vehicular access points to the edges of the Medina were created. At two prominent entrances, R'sif and Ain Azliten, cars are permitted access up to where the Medina's streets narrow and business activity increases. In both cases, the road, at the point where it meets with the traditional part of the Medina, morphs into a haphazard parking lot. The lots came about in response to the large, open space the roads' paving unintentionally created. Revault writes that these access points reflect shortsightedness on the part of policymakers in that the "approach reduces development to demolition work and paved roads enabling vehicles to enter the Medina" instead of a much more comprehensive approach. That shortsightedness, he remarks, might be the result of the management, which has not abided by the latest requests of it. The Group of Eight had suggested that a project bureau be founded; its absence "brings into question the existing institutional arrangements," Revault writes. He proposes that the project's management and the authorities monitoring the entire movement be made more easily distinguishable through the founding of a supervisory steering committee and a working group that would overlook the entire "range of related studies and interventions."⁹⁸

The way cars were brought into the Medina serves as another example of how the heritage preservation movement's mishandling is destroying the city's character. In 1995, a

⁹⁸ Revault, "Development Plan," 23-24.

group of international heritage experts heard about a proposed project that would involve directing three highways through the Medina's center. The group of experts recommended the proposal be reconsidered. They argued that "the life of the Medina was totally dependent on a complex and delicate balance between the ordered arrangement of urban space, the means of circulation, roads and passages within the city...and that some of these features were likely to be irredeemably altered by extreme and poorly designed town planning measures such as the building of highways." For Mounir Bouchenaki and Laurent L&i-Strauss of UNESCO's Cultural Heritage Division, such a decision would lead to "urbicide" and reflects the tendency to erroneously think the concepts "progress" and "modernization" are defined by changes such as that of introducing cars.⁹⁹ This tendency buys into the faulty idea that upholding tradition keeps society from advancing. Rather, Bouchenaki and L&i-Strauss see "the creation of public spaces that are almost entirely devoted to traffic and parking and which offer no opportunity for the normal development of social life and citizenship" as being a prime cause of loosened social bonds. These spaces, such as those that exist at R'sif and Ain Azliten, deny the past and the place's character. Instead, they arise "from a tabula rasa approach which ignores history, forms of social organization, ways of life and their symbolic representation in the physical world, and also from the destruction of the collective memory that they contain."¹⁰⁰ Fortunately, Moroccan authorities halted the plan to construct the three highways. Yet, the awkward parking lots at R'sif and Ain Azliten have already contributed to undermining the Medina's urban character.

A significant amount of criticism of the heritage movement could be directed at the way it fails to meet sufficiently the needs of the third of the Medina's population that lives below the

⁹⁹ Bouchenaki and L&i-Strauss, "Urban Identities," 35-36.

¹⁰⁰ Bouchenaki and L&i-Strauss, "Urban Identities," 38.

poverty threshold. By 2001, a number of sites had witnessed the start of restoration activity. Donors have invested in the rehabilitation of mansions, palaces, and other prominent projects such as installing “woven cane street coverings” that shade the Medina’s alleys. These sorts of restoration projects typically receive a substantial amount of attention. But when it comes to poverty relief, up until 2001, “the larger investments in sanitation and environmental protection that (would) more directly benefit the poor” had not yet begun.¹⁰¹

In regards to repairing residential structures in weak condition, the poor are once again not given the amount of attention they need. Of the 37% of Medina households that fall below the poverty line, 30% own their own homes. The majority of the remaining 70% live in multi-family tenements where an average of 2.5 to 4.3 persons share a room.¹⁰² The poorest Medina households cannot afford to cover the costs of rehabilitating their homes. While the Fez Rehabilitation Project offers some financial support to property owners prior to the renovation activity’s start, those grants only cover part of the repair costs. They are meant to “stimulate housing improvement and help minimize a displacement of poorer tenants engendered by the dynamics of the real estate market.”¹⁰³ However, because they fund only part of the renovation’s cost, families will either choose not to renovate or will be forced out of their homes by other buyers willing to cover all the repair work’s expenses. As it is, the project gives precedence to the “emergency repair of structurally unsound buildings fronting on improved roads and tourist circulation routes.”¹⁰⁴ This policy could potentially lead to the neglect of whole neighborhoods that are out of sight of those particularly prominent routes. A summary of the project also notes

¹⁰¹ Chavez, “Box 1. Status of project,” 243.

¹⁰² Unit for Housing and Urbanization and ADER, “Case Study,” 24.

¹⁰³ Unit for Housing and Urbanization and ADER, “Case Study,” 25.

¹⁰⁴ Unit for Housing and Urbanization and ADER, “Case Study,” 5.

that “rehabilitation will be mostly by property owners improving their own dwellings and by small developers buying, repairing, and re-selling renovated apartments.”¹⁰⁵ This admission reflects problematic planning in that leaving rehabilitation to the property owners or to those scavenging for quick and easy real estate profits is an inadequate way to handle the situation. Considering how significant of a percentage of Medina households cannot afford restoration, possibly even with the assistance limited funds provide, this policy will lead to negative consequences. Houses will be unfittingly restored using cheap or improper techniques, or those houses will be vulnerable to purchase, thus forcing the original Medina inhabitants to relocate. As it turns out, those results, and most visibly the latter, do materialize.

An apparently increasing number of Medina buildings are falling out of Moroccans’ hands and into those of foreigners. Upper-class Moroccans think of life in the Medina as beneath their social status and thus take up residence in the Ville Nouvelle. Meanwhile, the old city’s residential buildings do act like a magnet for foreign investors. One news report said “Fez’s profit-making potential, over time, looks promising.” As such, Medina properties put up for sale are picked up primarily by Europeans who think of living there themselves or of turning those properties into guest houses. Even “El Mokri, Fez’s most famous palace...is being haggled over by developers who want to turn the 21,000 sq. ft. building and its grounds into a luxury hotel.”¹⁰⁶ A recent release, the 2007 book *A House in Fez*, narrates an Australian couple’s experience buying and renovating a Medina residence. One review of the book by Suzanna Clarke says that Clarke’s account is “like some enchanted portal into life as it has been lived continuously since

¹⁰⁵ Unit for Housing and Urbanization and ADER, “Case Study,” 6.

¹⁰⁶ Zoe Dare Hall, “Fez is hard work, but he who dars wins,” *Sunday Telegraph*, July 22, 2007.

the fourteenth century.”¹⁰⁷ Yet though it evokes the beautifully exotic, that description might be hard to believe considering that the couple taking residence in the Medina has grown up elsewhere and thus has not developed a natural inclination to the Medina’s way of life and its habits. Furthermore, while it might appear as though there are no pragmatic problems with non-Moroccans holding the deeds to Medina property, the reality that they increasingly do does present problems for their Moroccan neighbors. It also chips away at the city’s claim to be a defender of its heritage.

In the opinion of Shafi Abdel-Rahman, an ADER researcher and GIS expert, the increase in foreigner-owned Medina property is a negative.¹⁰⁸ Ali El-Fellali, the professor of Islamic studies, said that foreigner-restored houses are another kind of preservation. He applauds their good work, but said he fears that too many residences will be sold to foreigners and then Moroccans will not be able to enjoy the Medina.¹⁰⁹ The Ghambo family, which has owned their plot of Medina land since 1968, worries that foreigners are buying property at inflated prices which then causes prices to increase for Moroccans as well. As more prosperous foreigners move into the Medina, not only do the houses become unaffordable for Moroccans, but everyday commodities, such as vegetables, also grow more expensive.¹¹⁰

Yet disenchantment with the preservation movement is not limited to just the influx of foreigners. According to a small and informal survey of public opinion based on comments made during interviews I conducted in the summer of 2007, Fassis seemed to have predominantly negative impressions of the heritage preservation movement’s progress. Siham, a computer

¹⁰⁷ Bron Sibree, “Building an understanding,” *Courier-Mail*, November 10, 2007.

¹⁰⁸ Abdel-Rahman, personal interview.

¹⁰⁹ El-Fellali, personal interview.

¹¹⁰ Ghambo family, personal interview.

engineering student, said she felt as if restoration work begins when a building is just about to collapse. She recalled a recent incident when one structure's collapse killed six people.¹¹¹ Zahraoui, the Arabic language instructor, said there had not been much progress on restoration work and said he felt that if Medina inhabitants lack contacts within the government, they will not see any benefits; the only beneficiaries are those with friends in the right places.¹¹² Ali El-Fellali, the Islamic studies professor, suggested that some of the funds earmarked for the restoration of houses close to collapse had not been used since the program they were meant to fund was stopped prematurely.¹¹³ Other scholars at Karawiyeen "speculated about the questionable future" of certain restoration projects, and the social historian Geoffrey Porter writes that a number of projects have been brought to a standstill. Doors to some monuments "are closed with a heavy chain and padlock" and in other cases the plaster coating has "been removed but (is) yet to be replaced."¹¹⁴ Another observer, the president of the Urban Community of Fez, Abderrahim Filali Baba, criticizes ADER whose work, he writes, has been "confined to minor operations which do not reflect its original purpose."¹¹⁵ Praise, if any, for the preservation movement has been limited for the most part to projects funded by the private sector.¹¹⁶ And yet Shafi Abdel-Rahman of ADER said that Medina inhabitants will never thank ADER for what the agency has done because they do not see themselves as sufficiently profiting from it.¹¹⁷ Perhaps,

¹¹¹ Siham, personal interview.

¹¹² Zahraoui, personal interview.

¹¹³ El-Fellali, personal interview.

¹¹⁴ Porter, "From Madrasa to Maison d'hote," 36.

¹¹⁵ Filali Baba, "The Specificity," 7.

¹¹⁶ Porter, "From Madrasa to Maison d'hote, 36; El Fellali, personal interview; Zahraoui, personal interview.

¹¹⁷ Abdel-Rahman, personal interview.

there is truth to that. Working with a “living city” that not only embraces quite a bit of activity but also changes with time is a challenge. Working with such a city and one that includes extensive socioeconomic problems, such as Fez, is a far more overwhelming undertaking.¹¹⁸ Yet if Fassis do not consider themselves among the project’s beneficiaries, that may also be because the movement has undercut their needs and inadequately served the Medina’s heritage. There continues to be room for improvement.

Heritage Preservation in Theory

As its first culture-based project, the Medina’s preservation indicated that the World Bank trusted that attending to cultural heritage could stimulate a local economy. Being a nontraditional approach to economic development, the cultural heritage mold of economic strategy “has been specifically subjected to remarks verging on ridicule.”¹¹⁹ Former U.S. treasury secretary Paul O’Neill voiced his opinion in 2001 that the World Bank had lost its concentration on the “core objective of raising income per capita.” He added that “cultural heritage projects that have peripheral development impact” are unconvincing.¹²⁰ Though there are its critics, such as O’Neill, supporters of the cultural heritage economic strategy make a persuasive case. In 1995, UNESCO’s World Commission on Culture and Development published a report, *Our Creative Diversity*, in which it contended that “development divorced from its human or cultural context is growth without a soul.”¹²¹ The report argues that “the prevalent model of development based solely on the narrow yardstick of economic growth is outmoded” in that it does not consider development’s environmental and cultural consequences. It also makes a case for using

¹¹⁸ Bianca, “Conservation and Rehabilitation Projects,” 47.

¹¹⁹ Hackenberg, “Closing the Gap,” 293.

¹²⁰ qtd. in Hackenberg, “Closing the Gap,” 293.

¹²¹ qtd. in Kreps, *Liberating Culture*, 119.

cultural heritage to inform the “production and marketing of new and unique products.” Furthermore, seeing cultural heritage as a “reservoir of knowledge and experience” can help when developing “sustainable approaches to using natural resources.”¹²² Thus, the report considers it wise to factor culture into “development equations,” which had previously been defined mostly in terms of traditional economic measures, such as gross national product. This approach marks a radical shift in thinking, particularly as economic development theory not only overlooked most “traditional” cultures but also thought they impeded development; they were “something to be overcome so the process of development and modernization could proceed unencumbered.”¹²³

Cultural-based development theory, however, is gaining adherents in the field of international development as it becomes increasingly clearer that “development is a profoundly cultural matter, in the sense that it is intertwined with and affects a people’s whole way of life.”¹²⁴ One expression of culture’s linkage with economic thinking is ethno-development, which by concentrating development planning around culture, marks a movement away from the “macro” level, “which assumed that western models of development were universally or generally applicable, to the ‘micro’ level where development efforts are adapted to a particular community’s own culture, needs, and circumstances.”¹²⁵ Applying ethno-development to heritage preservation is not difficult as both concepts share a similar understanding of culture. Cities can develop and prosper so long as they do not ignore the “depth of the cultural memory

¹²² Serageldin and Shluger, Introduction, xiii.

¹²³ Kreps, *Liberating Culture*, 116.

¹²⁴ Kreps, *Liberating Culture*, 116.

¹²⁵ Kreps, *Liberating Culture*, 117.

contained within” them.¹²⁶ That cultural memory provides a set of common references that build trust and cohesion within an urban community and accordingly empower that community’s residents to address issues of economic exclusion or hardship. As such, heritage preservation must “address the intangible values” that monuments and city plans symbolize. That requires attending to more “than the technical aspect alone.”¹²⁷ If that is appropriately completed, then the urban community will inherit “a sense of continuity that is an essential part of cultural identity.” Yet doing so appropriately requires preserving the city’s history “without falsification and misleading imitations.”¹²⁸ That can be a nearly impossible task to complete.

Some consider that there are inherent problems with heritage preservation, one of those being the way it tends to treat society as if it were a stagnant unit. Some critics go so far as to “view preservation movements as neocolonial attempts – at best well-meaning interference – by outsiders who would like to keep the poor as they are and to deny them modern technology.”¹²⁹ Though that explanation might exaggerate the objectives of preservationists, it does reflect one of the puzzles of heritage preservation: how does a movement preserve an urban community’s character without making it seem timeless? Common descriptions of the Fez Medina often invoke this mistaken notion of an invariable entity. A 1998 article in *The New York Times*, for instance, remarked about the Medina, “This is a city outside time.”¹³⁰ Such an impression of the Medina is detrimental to heritage preservation precisely because the opposite is true. Just as

¹²⁶ Lévi-Strauss, “Sacred Places and Historic Cities,” 381.

¹²⁷ Lévi-Strauss, “Sacred Places and Historic Cities,” 381.

¹²⁸ Sekler, “Sacred Spaces and the Search,” 354.

¹²⁹ Daifuku, “International Assistance,” 53.

¹³⁰ Michael Kimmelman, “Preserving a City’s Soul; Fez Repairs Monuments and Nurtures Its Residents,” *New York Times*, August 18, 1998.

change is inevitable everywhere else, the Medina evolves as well. Harold Williams, former president of the J. Paul Getty Trust in Los Angeles, explains the challenge of working with an entire urban community by contrasting a place like the Medina with a museum piece. “Unlike museums,” he writes, “in which the past is there to see but not to touch, historic cities are places in which life continues to be lived, in which cultural heritage is not protected behind barriers, in which it is part of a populated community making its living and making a life.” Just as it provides a challenge, preserving a historic city also presents an opportunity to improve living standards “for the growing populace who lead an ever more dismal existence in a rapidly deteriorating urban environment.”¹³¹ But accepting that challenge should come with the recognition that no city escapes age and the change age brings with it.

In the case of Fez, change means that the social life that supported the Medina in the medieval era no longer does in the same way. In response to the 1998 *New York Times* article on the Medina’s preservation, the social historian and Medina resident Geoffrey Porter wrote to the editor noting that “behind the restored facades, the loss of Fez’s former social life is apparent. Not one of the more than 50 residents on my street has lived in Fez for a generation. ...The revived city only has the form of a traditional society. The organic social networks that allowed the city to function as it once did cannot be re-created.” Of the Times article, Porter said it reflected “the official optimism” surrounding the Medina’s preservation, but that “residents, craftsmen, and religious scholars tell a different story.”¹³² One story Porter himself tells is that of how the Medina’s preservation leads to a static understanding of the city. Worse, it also leads to a reliance on colonial interpretations of the Medina; “The ‘bibliography’ submitted to

¹³¹ Williams, “Historic Cities: The Sense of Place,” 403.

¹³² Geoffrey D. Porter, “Restoring Fez’s Medina,” *New York Times*, August 22, 1998.

UNESCO's World Heritage Centre by the Moroccan Ministry of Interior in order to determine the 'original and subsequent characteristics' of Fez's Medina, relies heavily on a body of colonial literature." Using these sources means the "preservation campaign aims to bring to life' the "static and essentialist concepts" published in that colonial literature.¹³³ Thus, the entire preservation effort in Fez is tainted by the dependence on mistaken and biased impressions of the Medina. That the movement has empowered those impressions and institutionalized them in its preservation policy is especially problematic in that it now tries to bring about a recital of a past, which if it ever existed at all, can only artificially exist today.

The rhetoric of a moldable past that must be reclaimed found its way into the speech the former Moroccan monarch, King Hassan II, gave in 1980. Since then, the text of that address has been copied and distributed as part of the preservation campaign's literature. In the speech, King Hassan II calls for the Medina's preservation to "instill new life into it and to renovate it so that it may find its ancient traditions once again."¹³⁴ If preservationists treat the Medina, however, as an evolving entity, preservation should not be about finding traditions that are most likely no longer there in their natural form. King Hassan II's speech continues with an announcement that Moroccans "must work to ensure that the cracks are repaired and that life resumes its normal course."¹³⁵ Once again, the speech's words imply that life had taken a short break and that it was not pursuing its normal course. To do so, according to this understanding, Medina life must proceed amid the urban creation that is the preservation movement's end goal. This understanding, however, rejects the life that had evolved within the Medina's walls even when buildings were in disrepair and residents lived in overcrowded tenements. Preservation should

¹³³ Porter, "Unwitting Actors," 143.

¹³⁴ Hassan II, "Declaration By His Majesty," 1980.

¹³⁵ Hassan II, "Declaration By His Majesty," 1980.

not assume the goal of returning life to what is thought to have been its “normal course.” Rather, preservationists should hope their work alleviates the social hardships of Medina inhabitants and to update the city’s infrastructure to allow Fassis to continue to enjoy their historic city. The lifestyles within the Medina would always resume their normal course, regardless of how the Medina looks.

In some ways, false impressions of the past and the way it engages the present might always find their way into discussions of heritage preservation. James Marston Fitch of Columbia University writes, “In a certain mechanical sense, any conscious effort to preserve the past may be called ‘artificial.’ ...In each case, the artifact or theory has been removed from its life-context in order to study it.”¹³⁶ As such, preservation creates images of the past, but those images are products of the present. Trying to capture the past is impossible as every attempt to do so is based on contemporary, simplified images of it. This tendency becomes particularly problematic when it is left unchecked and heritage interpretation begins to pervade the study of history; “history is gradually being bent into something called Heritage, whose commodity values run from tea towels to the country house. ...Heritage is gradually effacing History, by substituting an image of the past for its reality.”¹³⁷ Not only does heritage yield to the manufacture of souvenirs, there is the danger that it will lead to social stagnation: “we cannot summon up the past to revive the present, for this obsession with heritage is ultimately entropic. It will lead to a state of inertia, where we are distracted from the present by ever-improving images of the past, and paralyzed by the thought of the future which can only, by comparison

¹³⁶ Fitch, “New Uses,” 15.

¹³⁷ Hewison, “Heritage: An Interpretation,” 21.

with these simulacra, be worse than the way we never were.”¹³⁸ But Fitch notes that heritage preservation continues to be valuable and that “errors such as these by no means invalidate preservational activities.” Instead, they show that current methodology for heritage interpretation needs improvement. According to Fitch, “artificiality and bowdlerization can be held to a minimum by the rigorous application of scholarly standards – scientific, historiographic, archaeological.”¹³⁹ Heritage can be looked to as a way to champion cultural identity. Yet “only the values and ideas that still have a meaningful function today are desirable” and preservation should avoid the “mistake” of indiscriminately reproducing the past.¹⁴⁰ “The past is not important in itself. It is the presence of the past and our attitude to it that matters,” such as traditional building methods and materials informing contemporary architectural styles.¹⁴¹ Finding inspiration and wisdom in the past, however, should not mean that contemporary society ignores the way culture has evolved. The ultimate goal of any heritage preservation campaign should be to “harmonize the old with the new.”¹⁴²

In addition to the ways that heritage preservation at times reflects a misguided approach to a contemporary urban community’s relationship with its history, the Fez Medina preservation movement faces some practical challenges to its application. Fez’s demographic and economic conditions add tasks to the campaign’s agenda that broaden its past basic restoration work and urban planning. To attend to the Medina’s entirety without neglecting its residents or focusing an

¹³⁸ Hewison, “Heritage: An Interpretation,” 22.

¹³⁹ Fitch, “New Uses,” 16.

¹⁴⁰ Laenen, “Looking for the Future,” 93.

¹⁴¹ Laenen, “Looking for the Future,” 94.

¹⁴² Laenen, “Looking for the Future,” 95.

excess of attention on particularly prominent monuments or tourist routes, the preservation movement will have to take a slightly different direction.

Policy Suggestions

The preservation movement could more effectively sustain the Fez Medina's heritage by ensuring that the buildings restored are reintegrated into the Medina's urban fabric and that the city's residents feel involved in the process of their city's preservation.

To begin with, restored sites should occupy a place in their communities that is meaningful to those living around it. The structures should take on their institutional roles. Instead of becoming a "mere building with a particular function," restored buildings should fit "in the daily life and movement of a community. It is through these institutions that people generate a cultural ethos apart from mere economic development." In this way, structures are reintegrated into the community and, by belonging to society, begin to symbolize it.¹⁴³ It is exactly this sense of belonging that is missing from many of Fez's newly restored structures. The buildings often lose their connection to Medina life and preservation converts them into tourist stops on a map of the city. The Funduq Nejjarine and the Bab Mahrouk gateway serve as two examples of that kind of transformation. For preservation to be effective, the campaign must give the restored monuments back to the Medina inhabitants who would then take ownership of the buildings. Rehabilitated structures must retain or recapture a relevance to those living in the city. If the built environment loses its communal significance, "history then runs the risk of being mummified and relegated to the department of the sciences." To ensure that historic sites retain their meaning, a preservation campaign must recognize that culture lives and changes and thus it avoids "opening an artificial gap in cultural continuity." If it had opened that gap, by neglecting contemporary cultural life, it would have fabricated an image of the past and imposed it on the

¹⁴³ Doshi, "Toward an Appropriate Living Environment," 136-37.

future.¹⁴⁴ Preservation movements can address the seeming paradox of having to keep heritage continuous while also allowing an urban community to adapt naturally by restoring sites so that they “remain connected to their sources and are supported by collective endeavor.”¹⁴⁵

Several other observers of the successes and failures of preservation campaigns draw similar conclusions. Norman Koonce, the executive vice president of the American Institute of Architects, writes that the continued use of restored buildings is important. According to Koonce, “history is not a gravestone; it is not a vault or a mausoleum. It is living, adding layers, staying vital and green. To be loved, our historic cities and sacred places must have friends. They must be used; they must be a part of the fabric of our lives.”¹⁴⁶ Michael Cernea, a World Bank senior advisor for social policy, also stresses the importance of maintaining continuity between phases of time. He suggests that “addressing the urban built heritage as a coherent continuum within its social context can prevent the pitfalls of ‘monumentalism’ at the expense of the surrounding socio-cultural fabric.”¹⁴⁷ The architect Michel Bonnette, chair of the ICOMOS Historic Towns Committee, asks the pertinent question, “Who wants to live in a museum?” He observes that “if we do not agree that historic cities are living bodies and if we do not allow them to change and adapt to new lifestyles and new standards of living, then we sentence them to die, to be disregarded as artifacts of an old age, an exhibit of objects from another era.”¹⁴⁸ Knowing that restored sites should reflect their city’s way of life raises questions as to the ways of doing that.

¹⁴⁴ Bianca, “Resources for Sustaining Cultural Identity,” 19.

¹⁴⁵ Bianca, “Resources for Sustaining Cultural Identity,” 21.

¹⁴⁶ Koonce, “Stewardship: An Architect’s Perspective,” 30.

¹⁴⁷ Cernea, “At the Cutting Edge,” 75.

¹⁴⁸ Bonnette, “Strategies for Sustainable Urban Preservation,” 131.

One of the biggest challenges of rehabilitating sites in Fez is integrating them into the life of a continually changing city. ADER's director, Abdellatif El Hajjami, admits to catering to the cultural context, speaking of Medina inhabitants, saying, "they attach more importance to a hammam than to a monument. If restoration is to be accepted, a new social function must be found for the monuments."¹⁴⁹ Mohsin Al-Idrissi Al-'Omri of the Cultural Affairs Agency commented on the role of restoration in giving a building a function. Al-'Omri said that without a purpose, a renovated building would easily fall into disrepair again.¹⁵⁰ If one considers the examples Al-'Omri and others typically cite of restored buildings endowed with new functions, one would realize that they are not functions that will take most Fassis there regularly if at all. For instance, the Funduq Nejjarine is one such project that receives frequent mention. Its current function, as a woodwork museum, does not address any of the daily needs of Medina inhabitants. One project, however, that did assume a function of relevance to everyday Medina life is that of the Bou Inaniya medersa, which now serves as a mosque open for weekly Friday noon prayers. In describing this monument, a 1998 *New York Times* article says it is one of those sites that are "considered practical parts of the community." As such, it is an example of a process where "what's old is made new through what's old."¹⁵¹

Architecture and urban planning must respond to the needs of the people, and the rehabilitation of Bou Inaniya, whether intentionally or inadvertently, serves as a good model of that. Other projects should involve designing buildings for the people rather than pushing people

¹⁴⁹ qtd. in Genevieve Darles, "The medina of Fez – crafting a future for the past – old city in Morocco," *UNESCO Courier*, Oct. 1996

¹⁵⁰ Al-'Omri, personal interview.

¹⁵¹ Michael Kimmelman, "Preserving a City's Soul; Fez Repairs Monuments and Nurtures Its Residents," *New York Times*, August 18, 1998.

into buildings.¹⁵² Plan developers might consider first restoring structures that do not require especially precise or careful restoration work so as to “allow for interventions that keep the site vibrant and vital and stimulate the needed turnover. The alternative is gaping holes and collapsing buildings – no matter what their touristic or historical value may be.”¹⁵³ Preservationists might also pursue “adaptive reuse,” which strategically matches clients with space in newly-rehabilitated buildings. That sort of real estate management is in the best interest of the Medina economy and also guarantees the “proper maintenance and utilization of the existing buildings.” Adaptive reuse was implemented with success in the Tunis Medina, where space in restored medersas was rented as office space to professional associations that then covered the costs of those sites’ upkeep.¹⁵⁴ Adaptive reuse could provide a cost-efficient way to reintegrate restored buildings into Medina life.

Secondly, I suggest that the Fez preservation campaign better involve Medina residents in their city’s rehabilitation. Currently, according to the assessment of the president of the Urban Community of Fez, the Medina’s population “does not feel involved in the urban renovation of the old city,” when ideally the campaign should mobilize it to “take over its own environment not only as users but as custodians of a heritage to be developed and passed on to future generations.”¹⁵⁵ Heritage preservation is meant to be a community initiative instead of a top-down government program; consequently, urban conservation, if done right, involves locals in a collaborative process.¹⁵⁶ Robert Hackenberg, a research scientist with the University of

¹⁵² Ul Haq, “Islamic Architecture,” 128.

¹⁵³ Serageldin, “Preserving a Historic City,” 241.

¹⁵⁴ Serageldin, “Financing the Adaptive Reuse,” 72.

¹⁵⁵ Filali Baba, “The Specificity,” 7.

¹⁵⁶ Bonnette, “Strategies for Sustainable Urban Preservation,” 136.

Arizona's Bureau of Applied Research in Anthropology, elaborates on what he calls the "policy generator." That term applies to the result of the interface between the government, international and national donors, and the local community and its members. For Hackenberg, this policy generator acts as "a perpetual-motion machine."¹⁵⁷ By making sure that a preservation campaign invites all three parts of the policy generator to participate, the campaign answers the question of "Who's in charge here?" correctly, because the right answer, Hackenberg writes, 'is either 'no one' or 'everyone'.'¹⁵⁸ As such, the only way to properly implement a cultural preservation campaign is to ensure the local community, one third of the policy generator, is not excluded. After all, if culture relates to how the public identifies itself and to the nature of a community's social bonds, overlooking the general public would subtract from the project's authenticity and vitality. No doubt, mobilizing community participation is a difficult task. But the overseers of the Fez preservation movement could implement what the Getty Conservation Institute did in Quito, Ecuador and in Ouro Preto, Brazil. During the urban rehabilitation campaigns in both of those Latin American cities, Getty surveyed the public early on; "the community defined the importance and significance of their historic center, what it meant to them, and how to plan for its future." The results of those public surveys informed the plans the institute put into action in both cases.¹⁵⁹ In contrast, the absence of such public surveys or any visible attempt to incorporate the public in decision-making keeps the Fez preservation project looking as if it is an exclusively top-down initiative.

¹⁵⁷ Hackenberg, "Closing the Gap," 294-95.

¹⁵⁸ Hackenberg, "Closing the Gap," 295-96.

¹⁵⁹ Williams, "Historic Cities: The Sense of Place," 404.

Conclusion

Heritage preservation involves recognizing the significance of the past's influence on the contemporary urban fabric as well as the ways in which the current urban community has evolved, accepting elements of that heritage and rejecting others. This process of preserving and rehabilitating a city such as that of the Fez Medina, one whose city plan retains a medieval layout, will not succeed if it does not also address the current social and economic needs of the Medina's inhabitants. Thinking about how the Fez Medina preservation campaign has been handled to date, I find two prominent shortcomings. First, many of the campaign's projects do not cater to the everyday lives of the Medina inhabitants and thus many of the restored sites are ones that are not reincorporated into average Medina life. This results in the city's loss of a genuinely Moroccan character as well as the suppression of the city's normal vitality to distractions, such as increasing tourism revenue. Second, Medina inhabitants often do not consider themselves active participants in the preservation movement largely because the campaign's supervisors have not taken sufficient measures to consult them and solicit their opinions or feedback. General impressions of the campaign range from complaints that it only helps those with contacts to concerns that resources are not managed efficiently. Slight restructuring of the campaign's governance as well as the implementation of public surveys could help address these concerns.

A common social problem in Morocco, as well as in other North African and Middle Eastern countries, is an overwhelming sense of alienation. Many Moroccans feel as if they are detached from the public body and from their government. Low participation rates in civil society and high levels of disillusionment combine with poverty to augment their sense of detachment. Heritage preservation ranks high among the initiatives that could ameliorate this

situation by visibly reminding Medina inhabitants of their shared heritage and of the traditions that unite them, thus generating an empowering sense of community. Unfortunately, in Fez, rather than correcting for detachment and disillusionment, heritage preservation contributes to the problem. Medina inhabitants often appear to be overlooked for the sake of visitors who carry more in their wallets. Restoration work on their homes is, in many cases, only partially funded. And with the most famous restored sites turning into museums or other places they are not likely to visit regularly, many Medina inhabitants do not consider themselves among the beneficiaries of these projects. These consequences indicate that the heritage preservation movement needs to reassess its priorities and begin to more actively pursue those projects that would directly address the needs of the Medina's neediest residents and improve the quality of life within the city's walls. If it began to move in that direction, it could serve as a powerful engine for the Medina's economic development.

The way the preservation movement is handled is important as it determines whether it will preserve the authenticity of its heritage or if the movement will distance that heritage from contemporary city residents' lifestyles. In many ways, a change in approach is no less than a shift away from thinking of "bringing the past to life" to thinking of "bringing real life into buildings from the past."¹⁶⁰ The latter way of thinking takes the past and makes it meaningful to the present on the present's own terms. This approach reflects the best in preservation movements, which succeed when preservationists strike a balance between the past, the present, and the future.

¹⁶⁰ Hems, "Thinking About Interpretation," 199.

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