

ICOA1712: HERITAGE VALUES AS A TOOL FOR PROMOTING PEACE: ADDRESSING MODERN SCHOOLS IN CYPRUS

Subtheme 02: The Role of Cultural Heritage in Building Peace and Reconciliation

Session 1: Heritage as Peace Builder, Tying and Benefitting Community

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Abstract: Cyprus is currently facing the challenge of protecting and managing its modern architectural heritage. One of the most prevailing typologies of the local modern architectural production is schools. This paper presents the case study of school buildings in Cyprus constructed in the post war period, between 1945 and 1974. This time-frame covers two important periods of the twentieth century in the island: (i) the last fifteen years of the British colonial rule, 1945-1960, and (ii) the Independence period between the inauguration of the Republic of Cyprus and the island's division, 1960-1974.

Recent scholarship has demonstrated that school architecture in Cyprus in the twentieth century constituted a form of representation of processes of colonialism and post colonialism, independence, nation building, conflict and that designers and policy makers historically have used this medium for the creation of rival images of the Cypriot identity. Over and above, schools became physically involved in the conflicts of the twentieth century in Cyprus. Schools of the twentieth century in Cyprus, by being explicitly involved in identity politics and conflict constitute a kind of contested heritage. In this context the mobilisation of modern schools as heritage in favour of the construction of a peaceful and democratic society presents many challenges.

In light of a 'new paradigm' in the heritage field, heritage values have moved from the periphery to the epicentre of the heritage discourse. This paper argues that value based approaches present opportunities for tackling the challenges of contested heritage and mobilising heritage towards peace and reconciliation in conflict affected contexts. The opportunities were identified through the study of heritage policy documents and scientific publications on the subject of heritage values.

Key words: *Cyprus, conflict, modern architecture, schools, heritage values, peace*

Introduction

Currently, Cyprus is facing the challenge of protecting and managing its modern architectural heritage. Modern architecture developed during the most turbulent periods of the twentieth century in the island. The main period of the development of the local modern architectural movement has been identified by researchers between 1945 and 1974¹. This timeframe covers two important periods of the twentieth century in Cyprus: (i) the last fifteen years of the British colonial rule, 1945-1960, and (ii) the Independence period between the inauguration of the Republic of Cyprus and the island's division, 1960-1974.

This paper presents the case study of schools built between 1945-1974 as one of the most prevailing typologies of new buildings constructed during this period in the island. The modern architectural style was used extensively for their design during this period constituting them one of the main axes of the development of modern architecture in Cyprus. The local socio-political conditions of each period of the twentieth century, as well as the shifts from one period to another, all found representation in the schools themselves. School buildings became thus linked with the local processes of colonialism and post colonialism, independence, nation building, conflict, war and peace and became associated with different meanings for different groups of people, often conflicting. Within this framework this paper aims to address the following question: How can modern schools in Cyprus be mobilised towards the construction of a peaceful and democratic society through heritage²?

Schools in Cyprus built between 1945-1974

The education system in Cyprus had been historically segregated between the island's main communities, Greek Cypriot and Turkish Cypriot. This communal autonomy in education was sustained also during the most part of the British colonial rule in the island. Nevertheless, the colonial educational policy did not remain static for the duration of the colonial period. During the first decades of the colonial period, the educational policy in the island was characterised by very low interference levels by the British and preservation of the communal autonomy³. In this framework, each community was in charge of its own schools and teachers, and was free to define the level of interference by the colonial government in their education according to the funding it was claiming⁴. The Greek Cypriot, who had been developing nationalistic ideals since the first half of the nineteenth century considered critical to preserve their educational independence and achieved this through donations by the Church and other benefactors. Within this framework, the Greek Cypriots used school architecture as a representation of their desired national character using historical architectural quotation⁵. The Greek Cypriot school buildings at the time were built in Greek revival style⁶. During the same period the Turkish Cypriot community was not so concerned with proclaiming a different national identity. Turkish Cypriots maintained as much governmental funding as possible for their education in exchange with control over it⁷. Hence Turkish

¹Sierepeklis (Σιερεπεκλής), 1997; Fereos and Phokaides, 2006; Pyla and Phokaides, 2009; Pyla and Phokaides, 2011; Tzirtzilakis(Τζιρτζιλάκης), 2010); Docomomo Cyprus, 2014; Georghiou, 2015

² Based on the principles of the Faro Convention, Council of Europe, 2005

³Persianis (Περσιάνης), 2006: p.61-62, 67; Given, 1997: p.60-61; Kadioglu, 2009: p. 74 cited in Bilsel & Dinçyürek, 2017: p3

⁴ Given, 1997: p.60, 65

⁵Chatzidemetriou, 2002: p.292; Pyla & Phokaides, 2009: p. 40

⁶ Given, 1997: p.59

⁷Pavlou(Παυλου), 2015: p.370;

Cypriot school buildings of the period were designed and constructed by the Colonial Public works in typical colonial style⁸.

The British started to intervene in educational matters following the official annexation of Cyprus as a crown colony in 1925. Nevertheless, it was not until after a major anti-colonial uprising in 1931 that the British subordinated both education systems to the colonial administration and imposed extended educational reforms⁹. Over this period the Turkish Cypriot community also started developing its own nationalistic tendencies as a reaction to the Greek Cypriot nationalism but also influenced by the creation of the Republic of Turkey in 1923¹⁰. In order to counteract the rising nationalistic sentiments within the two communities the British used architecture as a tool for the construction and the promotion of their own interpretation of the Cypriot identity. Within this framework the ideologically charged schools of the ‘Cypriot Melange’ were created, an architectural intermingling and fusion of various earlier historic motifs, as Byzantine and Venetian¹¹.

This paper focuses on the post-World War Two period. During this period the effects of the war on British colonialism forced the colonial government to retreat its control over educational matters¹². Interestingly during this very turbulent time in the relations of the two communities when their rival nationalism was at its peak¹³, both demonstrated preference in the same architectural language for their school buildings: modernism. In fact, recent scholarship has highlighted that both communities were using the same modern architects for their school buildings, as in the case of the Greek Cypriot ‘First Urban School in Limassol’ and the Turkish Cypriot ‘Ataturk Primary School’ in Nicosia, both identical designs by the architects and engineers N. Rousos and I. Perikleous, built c. 1955 (Fig. 1 and 2)¹⁴. Noteworthy is also the design of the ‘Lykavitos Primary School’, designed by D. Thymopoulos and constructed in 1957 in Nicosia (Fig.3). The design of this school is considered as the founding stone to a new conception about school architecture in Cyprus¹⁵.

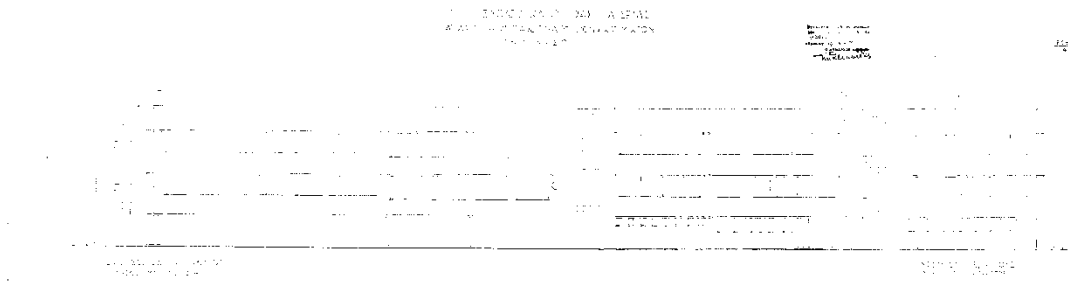


Fig.1– Primary School in Limassol (Limassol, Cyprus), 1954-1955, architects: Rousos&Perikleous (Ministry of Education and Culture, Republic of Cyprus)

⁸ Bilsel and Dinçyürek, 2017: p. 5

⁹ Persianis(Περσιάνης), 2006; Pavlou(Παυλου), 2015; Bilsel and Dinçyürek, 2017: p.2

¹⁰ Pavlou(Παυλου), 2015: p.95

¹¹ Given, 1997: p.59

¹² Bilsel and Dinçyürek, 2017: p.14

¹³ Hadjidemetriou, 2007

¹⁴ Georghiou, 2018: p. 273-275

¹⁵ Sierepreklis (Σιερεπεκλής), 1997



Fig.2– Ataturk Primary School (Nicosia, Cyprus), 1955, architect: unknown [profound design similarities with Rousos&Pericleous' design of Limassol Primary School are noted by C. Georghiou, 2018] (Press Information Office, Republic of Cyprus)



Fig.3– Lykavitos Primary School (Nicosia, Cyprus), (Docomomo Cyprus, 2014 from Personal archive of D. Thymopoulos)



Fig.4– Lefkoshia Turkish Boarding School for Girls (Nicosia, Cyprus) 1962, architect: Ahmet Bahaeddin (Docomomo Cyprus, 2014)

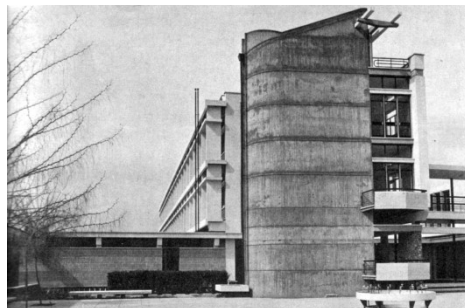


Fig.5– Kykkos High Schools (Nicosia, Cyprus), 1960-64, architects: J + A Philipou (Arhitektoniki, 58 (1966): p. 86)

In 1960, Cyprus became an Independent state with a constitution based on the cooperative management of the state's authorities by the two communities¹⁶. Within this framework, education kept its segregated character. Modern architecture was the preferred architectural style by both communities for the new

¹⁶Sierepreklis (Σιερεπεκλής), 1997

schools which were constructed across Cyprus in order to accommodate the educational needs and aspirations of the new state. Of the most notable examples of this period constitute the Turkish Cypriot Lefkosha Turkish Boarding School for Girls, built in Nicosia in 1962 (Fig.4), and the Greek Cypriot Kykkos High Schools, also built in Nicosia between 1960-1964 (Fig.5)¹⁷.

¹⁷Docomomo Cyprus, 2014

However, the complexity of the postcolonial constitution which was reflecting a range of outside interests and institutionalized ethnic rivalries led to a constitutional crisis by 1963. Following the crisis, the Turkish Cypriots abandoned their positions in all state institutions and retrieved in enclaves¹⁸. The events of 1963 had profound effects on the Turkish Cypriot education. The Turkish Cypriot community lost 79 schools and could not claim any governmental funding¹⁹.

The events of the turbulent years that followed eventually led up to the Turkish military operation in Cyprus in 1974 and the de facto division of the island²⁰. Researchers identify the end of the modern period in the island in the 1974 events, due to the dramatic change of the geopolitical context²¹.

¹⁸ Hadjidemetriou, 2007

¹⁹ Pavlou(Παυλου), 2015: p.384-390

²⁰ Hadjidemetriou, 2007

²¹ Fereos and Phokaides, 2006:p.19; Tzirtzilakis (Τζιρτζιλιάκης), 2010; Sierepekis (Σιερεπεκλής), 1997

Modern schools in Cyprus as contested heritage

Given, 1997 successfully managed to demonstrate how school architecture during the colonial period was facilitated as a form of representation, a carrier of ideologies and ideas of national identity, often conflicting²². Through the preference of modern architecture for schools between 1945-1974 the main local Cypriot communities expressed their rejection of colonialism and their aspirations for modernisation and westernisation. Nevertheless, in that specific political context when their rival nationalisms were at their peak, the same architectural vocabulary held also different meanings for each of them. The exact set of meanings linked with the selection and use of modern architecture for schools by the two communities at the time is yet to be examined and understood.

Over and above, during the same period schools got physically involved in the local conflicts. In many occasions communal schools faced sanctions by the colonial government for anti-colonial practices while schools which constituted colonial projects were repeatedly targeted and attacked because of the raising anti-colonial feelings²³. Moreover, during the 1963 and 1974 displacements of population many of the schools were used for accommodation of the displaced, of military personnel, as health facilities or even for the detainment of war captives. In this context, schools in Cyprus became contested heritage by association to the local conflicts but also by physical involvement.

Heritage for peace and reconciliation in Cyprus

Heritage in Cyprus has been facilitated in the framework of reconciliation efforts between the island's communities over the last forty years. Initially through the Nicosia Master Plan, a project initiated in 1979, and more recently through the projects of the Technical Committee on Cultural Heritage²⁴. Nevertheless, up to this point modern schools and other modern buildings remain unaddressed within this framework. This paper aims to address the following question: How can more contested aspects of our architectural heritage, as the modern school buildings in Cyprus, be incorporated in the efforts to promote peace and reconciliation?

The 'new paradigm' in heritage: towards value based approaches

Over the last twenty years the heritage field is experiencing critical changes which were identified and characterised as a 'new paradigm'²⁵. One of the fundamental components of this 'new paradigm' has been the decentralisation of the heritage-making processes from the groups of experts to the multiple stakeholders²⁶. The consideration of more stakeholders in the heritage processes was followed by a numerical explosion of the heritage objects²⁷. Concurrently, much more disciplines got involved in the study, safeguard, promotion and management of heritage²⁸. Furthermore, the intangible associations linked with heritage became increasingly recognised²⁹.

In the current climate that democratisation processes have fundamentally transformed the heritage field, heritage has been reconceptualised as a social process³⁰, and access and participation to cultural heritage

²²Given, 1997: p. 59-60.

²³Pyla and Sioulas, forthcoming

²⁴http://www.undp-pff.org/index.php?option=com_content&task=view&id=80&Itemid=140; TCCH, 2015.

²⁵Araoz, 2011

²⁶Worthing et al., 2008: p.74; Avrami et al., 2000: p. 68.

²⁷Araoz, 2011: p. 56, 57

²⁸Avrami et al., 2000: p. 8; ICOMOS, 1990; Worthing et al, 2008:p.76; Stephenson, 2005: p.128

²⁹Araoz, 2011: p. 56; Gibson et al, 2009: p.7

³⁰Avrami et al., 2000: p. 68;De la Torre, 2002: p.3,9,17,109; Bold and Pickard, 2013: p. 106; Smith, 2017

are recognised as a civil responsibility and a human right³¹, the heritage field gained a renewed interest for the consideration of heritage values and the development of value based approaches.

Opportunities in value based approaches

This paper argues that value based approaches present opportunities for addressing contested heritage in conflict affected contexts. The opportunities were identified through the study of heritage policy documents and scientific publications.

First and foremost, value based approaches encourage the involvement of all stakeholders in all stages of the heritage process. In line with the above, value typologies have been required to be inclusive and democratic³². In this manner values of all stakeholders involved with a heritage site, even conflicting, can be recognised. The involvement of all the related stakeholders and the consideration of all their values in the heritage processes are even more critical in a conflict affected context where peace is key to sustainable development and vice-versa.

In the framework of value based approaches, the consideration of intangible values has been evaluated as an important component³³. This allows for the consideration of values, meanings and associations related to notions of identity, nation or nationality, conflict etc. which, as the case study has demonstrated, are present in relation with modern buildings in Cyprus. Furthermore, value based approaches allow for the consideration of aims from the initiation of the process. This allows for including the aims of peace and reconciliation from the outset of the design of a heritage process. Within this framework, the identification of common values between stakeholders can be used as an opportunity for the promotion of peace, while concurrently conflicting values can be acknowledged, addressed and monitored in a risk mitigation process. The need for the identification of threats and opportunities in value based approaches has been highlighted by experts³⁴.

In addition, heritage values have been recognised to be time and context specific³⁵. The consideration of the factors of time and context in contested sites is important since, as the case study has demonstrated, shifts in the socio-political context or events in the history of the sites have impact in the associations and symbolic meanings related to architectural heritage. The need to include these factors in value based methods has taken an important place in the heritage values discourse³⁶.

Conclusion

In the current climate, heritage has been widely accepted as the source of important benefits for society, culture and economy³⁷. In this context addressing the heritage assets of Cyprus's contested heritage is more urgent than ever.

The consideration of heritage values presents many challenges and the development of widely accepted methodologies for their assessment is still pending. Nevertheless, the identified opportunities in value based approaches indicate that their incorporation into heritage practices in conflict affected contexts has

³¹Bold and Pickard, 2013: p. 106

³²Avrami et al, 2000: p. 8,68; Worthing et al, 2008: p.74; Stephenson, 2008: p. 129, 136-137; Fredheim and Khalaf, 2017: p.470, 476; De la Torre, 2002: p.14

³³Australia ICOMOS, 1999; Australia ICOMOS, 2013; Tomaszewski, 2005; Worthing et al, 2008; Gibson et al, 2009; UNESCO, 1972

³⁴De la Torre et al, 2002: p.25

³⁵De la Torre et al, 2002: p.15, 19; Fredheim and Khalaf, 2017: p.470, 476; Gibson et al, 2009: p.7

³⁶De la Torre et al, 2002: p.15, 19;Gibson et al., 2009: p.7

³⁷Avrami et al., 2000; Historic England [English Heritage], 2002-2015; CHCFE Consortium, 2015

the prospect of allowing for the mobilisation of more contested parts of heritage, as modern schools in Cyprus, towards peace and reconciliation.

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