

ABSTRACTS SELECTED

ENGAGING STAKEHOLDERS?

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Public perception towards the conservation of Alexandria's built heritage.

The appreciation of cultural heritage is the outcome of a dynamic process, consisting of the interplay of varying factors including socioeconomic statuses, political associations, business interests and cultural contexts, which results in conflicting perceptions of heritage. As such, heritage conservation needs to take into account these variant understandings of heritage as their reconciliation is vital for its sustainable management. The built heritage of Alexandria, Egypt has been facing a wave of degradation and destruction, which has significantly intensified following the 2011 revolution with over 30 listed buildings being demolished in the past three years. Among the major contributors to this wave are the conflicting perceptions of the value of built heritage. Professionals in the field commonly believe that the public in Egypt do not value modern heritage, which is the main constituent of Alexandria's built heritage. Contrary to this belief, when protest stands were organized by a pressure group concerned with saving Alexandria's built heritage (Save Alex), the number of participants exceeded expectations. Accordingly, in an attempt to find the underlying causes of these different public perceptions of Alexandria's built heritage, a field survey will be carried out by sampling three buildings, of different listing category (national, city and locals levels). Interviews, targeting inhabitants of the neighborhoods around these buildings as well as passers-by, and personal observations, will be analyzed using narrative and critical analysis respectively. This study will serve as a starting point towards the formulation of a sustainable management plan for Alexandria's fast-degrading built heritage.

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Yomna Borg is a full time volunteer in Save Alex; an initiative committed to protecting and enhancing Alexandria's built heritage within the wider urban context of the city. She gained her bachelor degree in architecture from the Faculty of Fine Arts, University of Alexandria, and has recently earned a Professional Master's degree in Cultural Heritage Management, from the French University in Egypt (UFE) in Collaboration with University of Paris I: Panthéon-Sorbonne.

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