

(un)Global Heritage Sites

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Global cities literature and UNESCO heritage sites often promote a hierarchical view of cities, which fuels city-to-city competition for status and prestige. Cities can attain prestige by promoting their cultural heritage in an instrumental way. This is undergirded by the theoretical and economic construct of the dominant global city model and its application to heritage preservation. My paper explores this phenomenon, illuminating practical problems for heritage sites because of the combination of global cities logic and UNESCO practices. Importantly, the hierarchical logic poses problems to global heritage sites even beyond the global city itself, suspended between the nexus of international institutions, state and city governments, and local actors. I argue that moving beyond this hierarchical conception will better preserve global cultural heritage, emphasizing cities' mutual interconnections and the local embeddedness of sites.

Introduction

“I have built a synagogue here, an institute for you to dwell in for eternity, in the year 1675” reads a stone plaque on the wall of the Tomb of Nahum.¹ Ironically, this ‘eternal’ structure stands at the risk of crumbling today due to time and terrorism, with no nation-state or party able to take ownership of its preservation. Contemporary institutions and provisions are not only inadequate to salvage sites like this but are exacerbating the issues surrounding marginalized heritage sites. I argue that the mutual constitution of the hierarchized and economic logic stemming from global city ideology, as well as UNESCO’s role in heritage, facilitate problematic practices in heritage sites. The rigid categorization, de-emphasis on the non-global cities and influence of the capitalist growth machine (i.e. influential coalition of elite actors) create a set of conditions that are exclusionary and produce problems on the ground for heritage

¹ Matthew Omolesky, “UNESCO in Ruins: Anti-Semitism and the Perversion of Cultural Heritage Preservation,” *The American Spectator* (2017).

conservation. There is thus a need for an ideological disruption to better address the plurality of heritage and its practices beyond the hierarchy of global cities.

The paper's focus is to expose two dominant theories that undergird heritage practices, and how their intersection damages heritage preservation efforts. The first section unpacks the contemporary definitions of the global city theory and its hierarchical models, derived from Sassen's construct. Second, common ideas of heritage espoused by the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) are explained, outlining its scientific and technical rhetoric that seems objective. Third, I address how the global city model and UNESCO form an objective and hierarchical conceptualization of heritage that produces a problematic series of practices. Its effects go beyond global cities and crosses multiple scales, shaping international discourse. The last section proposes alternative reconceptualization of heritage ideology that avoids the pitfalls of contemporary practices.

The Global City

The global city theory is the dominant lens to understand the contemporary city, underpinned by agglomeration theory, which has reified the popularity of city hierarchies. Sassen's model proposes a new city typology through case studies of New York, Tokyo and London; these cities have gone through massive and parallel socio-economic changes since the 1960s in spite of different historic, political and cultural circumstances prior to this time period.² She argues that contemporary globalization is marked by unprecedented geographic dispersal of economic activity with an integrated financial market spanning the globe.³ Instead of the previous Fordist mode of centralized production, symbolized by Henry Ford's assembly line, these manufacturing processes have since been dispersed. As a result, firms are now linked together in increasingly complex manners, which requires particular forms of management and control.⁴ "Producer service firms" that comprise professionals like lawyers and accountants thus collectively coordinate and control tasks over dispersed networks.⁵ She then applies the agglomeration logic to producer services firms that choose to locate in global cities.⁶ A globally affiliated network with strong cross-border city-to-city interactions is created, which refer to interconnected hubs for producer services firms to manage critical tasks in the post-Fordist production system.⁷

² Saskia Sassen, *The Global City: New York, London, Tokyo*, 2nd ed. (Princeton, New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 2001), 4.

³ *Ibid.*, 3.

⁴ *Ibid.*, 5.

⁵ *Ibid.*, 90-91.

⁶ *Ibid.*, 126.

⁷ *Ibid.*, 8.

Building on this model of interconnected cities, Peter Hall explains how internationalization, concentration and intensity of producer services can lead to a ranking of cities.⁸ He highlights the work of the Loughborough group that considers an inventory of world cities, classifying them based on three indicators: global competence of service firms, the aggregate of each city's global service centers and different degrees of corporate service provision.⁹ These indicators are used to rank 122 cities: 10 cities are Alpha, 10 cities are Beta, 35 are Gamma, and the remaining 68 falling into the gray zone below Gamma.¹⁰ The Loughborough group's project defines these indicators as the central relationship defining the success of global cities, built upon the spatial concentration of producer service firms in global cities established by Sassen's model and its agglomeration underpinnings. Here, the order is clearly based on the economic power the city commands (or does not). At the same time, this excludes cities that do not match the selected criteria. The 122 cities are privileged based on their economic functions alone, which excludes the unquantifiable aspects of a country's or city's economy, and neglects its political, social and cultural dimensions (which are themselves entangled). By quantifying relationships between cities and ranking them based on numerical indicators in competitive hierarchies, the group is reproducing the competitive inter-city, inter-country, and inter-regional aspirations that necessarily devalues and excludes cities that do not apparently measure up.

Operationalizing the global cities' hierarchical logic, Shanghai invests an enormous amount of capital in pursuit of economic revenue and prestige. Kong's study on global cities describes how "Shanghai itself has clear and overt aspirations to be part of the race for global city status."¹¹ This is portrayed in the huge amounts of capital invested in urban infrastructure, where a city map had to be printed every three months on average in the late 1990s to keep up with the immense changes in the urban landscape.¹² Buildings like the old Shanghai Club, Cathay Hotel, and other historic structures are part of Shanghai's cultural strategy to assert its cosmopolitan reputation.¹³ It aspires to not just be the best in China, but the best in the world.

Additionally, the investment of capital into restructuring the city for a global city landscape is driven by nostalgia and rivalry; Shanghai wishes to regain its status as a leading center, which it possessed in the 1920s, and outshine Beijing.¹⁴ Shanghai's marketing strategy

⁸ Peter Hall, "Global City-Regions in the Twenty-First Century," in *Global City-Regions: Trends, Theory, Policy*, ed. Allen Scott (New York: Oxford University Press, 2001), 59–77.

⁹ *Ibid.*, 65.

¹⁰ *Ibid.*, 71.

¹¹ Lily Kong, "Cultural Icons and Urban Development in Asia: Economic Imperative, National Identity, and Global City Status," *Political Geography* 26, no. 4 (2007): 383–404, 387.

¹² *Ibid.*, 387–388.

¹³ *Ibid.*, 388.

¹⁴ *Ibid.*, 387, 394.

shows the internalization of the hierarchy's importance, attempting to rank up or get ahead in the race to be a "better" city occurs both domestically and internationally. The hierarchy is more than a diagnostic tool, producing a sense of competition among cities to want to outshine the other, which then affects their development and built environment. Further, Shanghai is not the classic case study of a global city, which demonstrates the influence of hierarchy and competition induced beyond global cities.

UNESCO's Role in International Heritage

Parallel to the global cities ideology is UNESCO's heritage practices, which are based on apparent objectivity and grounded in a scientific and rational mode of managing heritage. The term "Outstanding Universal Value" is commonplace in heritage preservation discourse, stemming from UNESCO's definition of "cultural heritage."¹⁵ According to UNESCO, it refers to "cultural and/or natural significance which is so exceptional as to transcend national boundaries and to be of common importance for present and future generations of all humanity."¹⁶ The transcendence of national boundaries in this case and the homogenization of *all* humanity display how UNESCO undertakes a universalist application of heritage. This forms the basis of an internationally-accepted definition of heritage, which is the foundational criteria for a site to be listed on UNESCO's World Heritage list.

Further, UNESCO's central importance in heritage preservation is strongly grounded in technoscientific and rational ideas. Logan notes that organizations like UNESCO:

"lay down international standards for professional practice—'world's best practice'—in the cultural heritage field, as well as influencing thinking in those fields in less direct ways. In these respects, UNESCO and its associated bodies may be said to impose a common stamp on cultures across the world, creating a logic of global cultural uniformity."¹⁷

Accordingly, the idea of cultural heritage is conceived from a highly technical order, which emphasizes standards, professionalism, and practice. This leads to a scientific mode of preserving heritage sites, adding to UNESCO's legitimacy as a neutral arbitrator to advise and grant countries world heritage status. Hence, ideas of heritage are cemented by a central regime, which dictates what heritage can or should be in a depoliticized and highly scientific manner.

¹⁵ UNESCO, "Operational Guidelines for Implementation of the World Heritage Convention (Paragraph 49)," 2005.

¹⁶ *Ibid.*

¹⁷ William Logan, "Globalizing Heritage: World Heritage as a Manifestation of Modernism and the Challenge from the Periphery," *Twentieth Century Heritage: Our Recent Cultural Legacy: Proceedings of the Australia ICOMOS National Conference 2001, 2002*, 51–57, 52.

This mode of justifying heritage sites smooths over political contestation. Preah Vihear (supposedly) in Cambodia illustrates this phenomenon. It is a Shaivite temple dating back to the 9th century, which has come a hotly contested site between Thailand and Cambodia.¹⁸ It is well preserved due to its isolation and its exceptional carved stone ornamentation, appealing to “outstanding universal value.”¹⁹ The site became a flashpoint in the political tensions between rivaling factions—the Yellow and Red shirts—in Thailand. The Yellow Shirts were protesting UNESCO’s involvement in Preah Vihear, which seemed to privilege Cambodia.²⁰ The party is a domestic faction in a fractious nation-state, campaigning for the site as a symbol against its oppositional faction. Preah Vihear does not have universal appeal in this sense, appealing to only one side of a polarized country and being re-appropriated as a political symbol rather than for its heritage qualities. This contradicts the objective criteria and OUV that was designated by UNESCO. The site appropriates its label for apparently universal heritage value into political capital that the Yellow Shirts push against. Therefore, the UNESCO-shaped discourse is not as objective as its scientific and technical rhetoric suggests.

Problematic Implications from Dominant Global City and Heritage Practices

The legitimating exercise that UNESCO grants from its scientific perspective reinforces the global city ideology and its developmentalist hierarchy. My critique of this is three-fold: (1) UNESCO-based categories generate problems due to their rigidity, not allowing for space between tangible/intangible and global/local dichotomies, which create on-the-ground issues, (2) cities are then undervalued based on the scientific and developmentalist logic, and (3) key stakeholders’ growth mindset results in long-term problems for cities by privileging economic revenue at the expense of use value. Consolidating these points, there is an ideological overemphasis on UNESCO’s modes of categorization that de-emphasizes the “local,” which benefits the capitalist growth machine.

First, UNESCO’s categorization of sites is detrimental because it does not leave room for the middle ground between the tangible/intangible and global/local dichotomies, which then causes problems for heritage preservation itself. UNESCO’s categories of tangible (e.g. built sites and monuments) and intangible forms (e.g. group dance and traditional crafts) of heritage do not open up space for sites with both forms—where tangible and intangible heritage forms might be mutually constitutive. Governments and cities aspire to create and curate their sites to fit one of these categories. The focus on built heritage form ignores the social implications of

¹⁸ Brendan Borrell, “The Battle Over Preah Vihear,” *Archaeology* 66, no. 2 (2013), 55.

¹⁹ *Ibid*, 54.

²⁰ *Ibid*, 58.

their site and renders them secondary to secure their UNESCO heritage listing. The opposite focus on intangible heritage elides its relationship to the built environment or spatial cosmic forms, and leave a historically static slice of heritage. However, with the rapid urbanization of much of Asia and the world, these questions continue to be a pressing issue—what lies between these categories and how do we address heritage in this gray zone? The global cities ideology and hierarchy drives large cities to pursue the aesthetic function of heritage without consideration for their processual importance. Its ideological impetus is to get ahead of other cities and aspects of heritage that cannot be instrumentalized for this end would be left behind.

UNESCO's categories also do not allow for space between the global and local. In Singapore, the idea of "local" is reduced to a stable articulation of a group in opposition to some the foreign 'other' that complements that state narrative, resulting in its de-emphasis to promote global heritage. Chang et al. argue that the Singapore River is a complex integration of the globalization-urbanization dialectic, where local forces work together with global influence to produce the river's landscape.²¹ Nevertheless, their definition of local refers to the level of country or city, which is too general.²² One subsection of this 'local' population, the heartlanders, was evicted with the growth of exorbitant private condominiums and hotels which drove land prices up.²³ Singapore's attempt at curating an aesthetic image of the Singapore River as its icon of a global city alienates a huge part of its own 'local' population. Hence, heritage has been instituted from a top-down, non-organic perspective, which has prioritized the global city ideology at the expense of local users of space.

Extending UNESCO's rigid modes of classification that are incapable of capturing the fluidity and dynamism of heritage sites, especially in Asia, they have also entailed on-the-ground heritage malpractice. As explained above, UNESCO features as a technocratic, universalizing body that global cities aspire towards and use to project a more prestigious image of itself. However, when applying UNESCO's ideas to the site, there are clear issues on the ground. For instance, the materials and building technology of different places impact the types of preservation techniques required.²⁴ Traditional wooden houses in Korea and East Asia differ from wooden buildings, as they did not use iron nails but were put together like jigsaw puzzles.²⁵ Toxic chemicals like ethylene oxide used in the Ajanta Caves, a UNESCO heritage site, have

²¹ T.C. Chang, Shirlena Huang, and Victor Savage, "On the Waterfront: Globalization and Urbanization in Singapore," *Urban Geography* 25, no. 5 (2004): 413–36, 433.

²² *Ibid.*, 425.

²³ *Ibid.*, 426.

²⁴ Kecia Fong et al., "'Same Same but Different?': A Roundtable Discussion on the Philosophies, Methodologies, and Practicalities of Conserving Cultural Heritage in Asia," in *Routledge Handbook of Heritage in Asia*, ed. Patrick Daly and Tim Winter (Routledge, 2012), 43.

²⁵ *Ibid.*, 43.

obliterated the existence of traditional, non-toxic methods and destroys the site.²⁶ By placing sites like the Ajanta Caves in UNESCO's classifications, its on-the-ground heritage management has damaged the site. The UNESCO-based approach that does not execute context-specific practices of its constituent member-states may not be the ideal mode of enabling equitable forms of heritage preservation. These problems from rigid categories like tangible/intangible, local/global and the import of western-based techniques of heritage are exacerbated by the global city hierarchical model.

My second critique addresses another form of rigid categorization based on national boundaries, which have consigned some cities off the grid, excluding and devaluing non-global cities and their heritage. Sassen's global city model created the theoretical starting point for the Loughborough group's classification. The metric only investigates the producer services sector in each city's economy, premised on a limited set of economic activities as defining features of each global city. An "Alpha" city is labelled as such because of the strategicness of advanced producer services in the city. Admittedly, this is an important economic aspect to unpack the industrial relationships in and across cities. Nevertheless, the assumption that this can ascribe a city to "Alpha" status on this virtue alone is problematic in terms of assuming an overly important role. As a result, it elides the importance of other factors in the city and assumes that the integrated global city system will continue to hold in a dynamically shifting world economy.

This mode of economic ranking also consigns other cities to irrelevance along a developmentalist spectrum that implies a continuum of value. Hall claims that the logic of stratifying cities is "simple," assigning arbitrary numbers according to the outcome of the advanced producer service firms metrics.²⁷ Its simplicity belies a more sinister devaluation of other cities. Although Sassen states that her approach cannot account for many cities that have not experienced these developments, she explains that Lusaka is not a player in major economic processes within the global market.²⁸ Robinson disagrees, citing how Lusaka's copper exports and its other economic activities display key functions in national and regional centrality.²⁹ These relate to how Lusaka remains a significant market for goods and services from across Zambia and the world.³⁰ However, when viewed through the lens of hierarchized global cities, it is irrelevant and invisible. Friedmann reinforces this concept in building his world city paradigm, stating that over 50% of the Brazilian population is "economically irrelevant" when

²⁶ Ibid, 48.

²⁷ Hall, "Global City-Regions in the Twenty-First Century," 70.

²⁸ Saskia Sassen, *Cities in a World Economy* (Thousand Oaks, CA: Pine Forge Press, 1994), 198.

²⁹ Robinson, *Ordinary Cities*, 101.

³⁰ Ibid, 101.

looked through the lens of global capitalism.³¹ Therefore, the global city hierarchy has not just created a spectrum of value that increases according to economic power but also rendered a theoretical void that swallows much of the world's urban population and their claim to heritage(s).

UNESCO's operations defined by nation-state boundaries and the global cities' emphasis on the city itself also render regional hinterlands as backwards and invisible. For instance, Batam is in Singapore's hinterland but does not have its own heritage site. Instead Singapore is the focus of heritage for the city-state, even though its influence exceeds its borders. The urban morphology in places like Batamindo, built by Jurong Town Corporation, is distinctly of Singaporean origin. Nevertheless, places like Batam will not have its own heritage, as Singaporean capital for heritage will only be channeled towards cultivating its own global city ambitions. The ideological impetus to pursue heritage in the global city is what Kong calls "urban boosterism," which automatically assigns the non-urban and hinterland to a lower status.³² Places like Batam where Singaporean infrastructure is planted show the influence of a global city to grow its own investment portfolio by leveraging on regional markets and space, but unwillingness to cultivate cultural capital in these areas. Hence, the competitive drive behind inter-country and inter-city competition that privileges economic indicators renders places like Batam invisible, viewed as a hinterland without the need for its own heritage development.

The third critique focuses on the capitalist logic underlying the global city ideology, which privileges exchange value over the site's use value. To differentiate between the ideas of use and exchange values, one can think about the idea of a building. The building provides residents with a home (use value), whereas it simultaneously generates rent (exchange value) for its owners.³³ In cities, there is a coalition of actors from a wide range of elite groups who push for the city as a growth machine to increase aggregate rents and trap related wealth for themselves to benefit; they eliminate alternative visions for the local and meanings of the community.³⁴ This means that processes like gentrification would be prioritized under the mantra of urban growth and development. As a result, issues like heritage get sidelined.

Hoi An's heritage situation places it squarely at the center of this conflict between exchange and use values. Its inclusion on UNESCO's World Heritage list has caused severe issues, which do not seem immediately solvable. Its touristification caused by its inscription has

³¹ John Friedmann, "Where We Stand: A Decade of World City Research," in *World Cities in a World-System*, ed. Paul Knox and Peter Taylor (New York, NY: Cambridge University Press, 1995), 21–47, 41.

³² Kong, "Cultural Icons and Urban Development in Asia: Economic Imperative, National Identity, and Global City Status," 386.

³³ John R. Logan and Harvey L. Molotch, *Urban Fortunes: The Political Economy of Place* (Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 2007), 1-2.

³⁴ *Ibid*, 50-51.

resulted in a wild pace of development and gradual destruction of Hoi An 's heritage features.³⁵ Local people have changed their mode of production to adapt to the growing number of international tourists, where they turn their fishing boats into tourist boats and *xích lô* tricycles now carrying tourists.³⁶ However, there are severe threats to the sustainable development of tourism in Hoi An on economic social and cultural grounds.³⁷ The issue here was that the UNESCO officials knew about it but had no power to implement changes, and the Vietnamese officials would not want to do so at the risk of impacting tourist revenue.³⁸ As a result, the exchange value of the world heritage site is privileged against its use value, where the coalition of actors including the Vietnamese state officials will not deviate from pursuing an increase in capital even when the site itself (and the very premise on which the capital is being generated) is at risk. The drive from ideological developmentalism of inter-city competition to generate higher tourist appeal with UNESCO's "objective" branding of Hoi An creates a situation where generating revenue from tourists is an unsustainable priority at the demise of its own heritage. These three critiques illustrate UNESCO's influence underlies and legitimates the global city ideology's hierarchy of inter-city competition and focus on exchange value, rendering some sites as invisible and deprioritizing the importance of site preservation.

Alternative Approaches to Heritage

While critical of the problems from the status quo of heritage practices, driven by the combined influence of global cities and UNESCO, this paper also provides two reconceptualizations for heritage: namely the need for a new lexicon for global cities/heritage and a movement away from the developmentalist *telos*. First, Brenner and Schmid's recent work on planetary urbanization offers a possible pathway to combat inherited assumption.³⁹ They argue that sociospatial arrangements and infrastructural networks beyond metropolitan cores are integral parts of the worldwide urban condition.⁴⁰ Thinking beyond the city to the concept of city-region and beyond provides a more accurate lens of understanding issues related to heritage. The example of Batamindo and Singapore's presence on non-Singaporean territory creates a set of heritage-related issues that do not fit neatly into any form of UNESCO categories. By adopting a broader scalar lens to understand the rapid rates of contemporary urbanization and heritage-related issues,

³⁵ Nir Avieli, "The Rise and Fall (?) Of Hôi An, a UNESCO World Heritage Site in Vietnam," *Journal of Social Issues in Southeast Asia* 30, no. 1 (2015): 35–71, 58.

³⁶ Ibid, 53.

³⁷ Ibid, 61.

³⁸ Ibid, 62.

³⁹ Neil Brenner and Christian Schmid, "The 'Urban Age' in Question," in *Implosions-Explosions*, ed. Neil Brenner (Berlin: Jovis, 2014), 310–37.

⁴⁰ Ibid.

UNESCO would then be able to adapt its fetishization of categorization based on nation-states boundaries to address the multiplicity of heritage spaces, publics and city icons.

This works in conjunction with a rejection of the developmentalist approach, removing inherited assumptions that stem from colonial and reductive perspectives. Massey's *For Space* re-imagines and presents an alternate approach to space.⁴¹ She specifically rejects the modernization theory, which refers to first world countries being ahead on a teleological path.⁴² She argues that countries occur and exist simultaneously, with power relations produced through the relational constructions of space.⁴³ Rethinking the hierarchy of global cities and the power relations heritage stakeholders, Massey's work provides a productive avenue to destabilize the hierarchized and simplistic thinking that global cities have created.

Massey's work echoes Robinson's *Ordinary Cities*, which presents an important post-colonial critique, asserting that all cities are best understood as ordinary.⁴⁴ She highlights their dynamism and diversity, produced by its people's inventiveness. Instead of Western notions of global or modern cities in opposition to their Third-World counterparts in a larger system of a priori analytical hierarchies or developmentalist frameworks, Robinson argues for a comparative and cosmopolitan approach to understanding cities. In other words, she advocates for cities to be analyzed as unique assemblages dynamically interacting within and between each other.⁴⁵ By grounding future policy outlooks in non-inherited forms of city hierarchies, there can be more productive modes of heritage preservation strategies.

Further, cities would not be rendered invisible nor feel the need to "catch up" to other "global cities." In doing so, issues of the local/localisms are addressed because the local and the global do not come up as an oppositional binary, where the global is privileged. As a result, the plurality of heritage's syncretic multiplicity and dynamic simultaneity can be explored through consultative processes of preservation.

Conclusion

Global cities' totalizing rhetoric is bolstered by UNESCO's scientific and technical discourse, producing and entrenching problems in heritage conservation. Many global cities instrumentalize their UNESCO heritage sites as part of the touristic appeal. London has four UNESCO world heritage sites that include the Palace of Westminster and Westminster Abbey, the Tower of London, the Maritime Greenwich, and the Royal Botanic Gardens in Kew.

⁴¹ Doreen Massey, *For Space* (London, UK: Sage, 2005).

⁴² Ibid.

⁴³ Ibid.

⁴⁴ Robinson, *Ordinary Cities*, 1.

⁴⁵ Ibid, 109.

Moreover, in other commonly cited global cities: Tokyo has Ogaswara Islands and Le Corbusier's architectural work, Paris has its Seine River banks, and New York City has the Statue of Liberty. The value in driving tourist demand and international cultural appreciation embodied by these sites are crucial for the global city. Nevertheless, these modes of heritage conservation produce a set of exclusionary practices, relying on western modes of thinking or practice, that result in the devaluing of many other sites.

This applies to the global cities and beyond. The rhetoric and touristic claims, generated by global city competition, transcends the physical boundaries of the global city. The ideological impetus similarly affects local, national and regional scales beyond urban governance. The reproduction of the developmentalist trajectory is an outmoded form of exclusion, premised on narrow economic indicators. A new lexicon around these heritage or global city processes has yet to be formed, as the very contested ontologies of these two concepts make them increasingly difficult to define with existing vocabularies. However, the pitfalls of modernist and development practices can be avoided through alternative ideologies. Moving forward, critical consideration by policymakers, practitioners and important stakeholders of these conceptual naturalizations can enable the avoidance of pitfalls in heritage preservation.

Further study at a specific scale or through alternative hierarchies can extend or complicate my arguments. An in-depth analysis of one global city, its relationship to other global cities, and various policies on its heritage would provide productive ways to complicate my arguments. Here, Harvey's argument for urban governments' shift from managerialism to entrepreneurialism, which focuses on the scale of urban governance, can be a productive interlocutor.⁴⁶ Assertions on inter-city competition can be traced through these relationships and the political economy driving heritage in various contexts. One could also explore the correlation between hierarchized lists of global cities based on cultural sites, its economic counterpart, and the number/type of sites in each global city. This would generate a quantitative and empirical basis to nuance the proposed theoretical disruptions.

Today, the tomb of Nahum is still crumbling; it remains in the untouched gray zone between UNESCO, nation-states that are unwilling to claim it, and ISIS' terrorist antics. Global city thinking and UNESCO entrenches the inaction around this site, where UNESCO's supposed rational and scientific prowess cannot solve the political tensions surrounding the tomb. Meanwhile, global cities continue investing in its own heritage sites and other cities internalize those aspirations. Will the tomb of Nahum then continue to fall between the cracks of UNESCO's categories? Will the promise of the tomb standing for eternity be forever dashed?

⁴⁶ David Harvey, 'From Managerialism to Entrepreneurialism: The Transformation in Urban Governance in Late Capitalism,' *Geografiska Annaler. Series B, Human Geography* 71, no. 1 (1989): 3-17.

Acknowledgements

This space of representation is an intellectual debt to the community and Urban Studies department at Yale-NUS College. Thank you to Dr. Aditya Ranganath and my classmates for walking through its crafting, as part of the Global Cities class, and Serena for being an excellent peer reviewer. Professor Jane Jacobs and Professor Nick Smith have been instrumental and inspirational, facilitating a program that acknowledges these very contestations both in theory and in practice.

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