

The Territorial-Resource Component in the Functioning of Intangible Cultural Heritage of Georgia: Challenges and Perspectives

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Abstract— This study investigates the symbiotic relationship between Georgia's intangible cultural heritage and its territorial resources, highlighting the role of traditional practices like Lelo-ball, folk horse riding, and the Meskhuri kitchen in maintaining socio-cultural and economic sustainability within regional landscapes. Through a mixed-methods approach, the research emphasizes the integration of these cultural expressions into modern development frameworks, including a case study of a student-led architectural project that fuses traditional Georgian elements with contemporary design in Kakheti and Mtskheta. The paper advocates for a comprehensive approach in urban planning and architecture that incorporates intangible cultural heritage, suggesting that such integration not only preserves cultural identity but also promotes sustainable development. Findings suggest that recognizing and incorporating Georgia's rich cultural heritage into urban landscapes provides innovative solutions for sustainable architecture and planning, thus supporting cultural continuity, economic growth, and environmental sustainability. This research contributes valuable insights for architects, urban planners, policymakers, and cultural heritage practitioners, offering a model for leveraging intangible cultural heritage in sustainable development strategies.

Index Terms— Functioning, Regional Studies, Resource Management, Territorial-Resource.

I. INTRODUCTION

A. Background

The Territorial-Resource Component in the Functioning of Intangible Cultural Heritage (ICH) of Georgia examines the integration of ICH into urban planning and development frameworks. ICH, encompassing traditions, rituals, and practices passed down through generations, is a vital element of cultural identity and social cohesion. The preservation and promotion of ICH are essential for sustainable development, as they contribute to cultural continuity, economic growth, and environmental sustainability.

B. Research Objectives

The primary objective of this research is to investigate how ICH can be effectively integrated into urban planning to enhance sustainable development. The specific goals include:

- Assessing the current state of ICH in selected regions of Georgia.
- Identifying the benefits and challenges of incorporating ICH into urban development.
- Proposing strategies for the preservation and promotion of ICH within the context of urban planning.

C. Significance of the Study

This study provides valuable insights into the role of ICH in sustainable urban development. By integrating ICH into modern urban planning frameworks, policymakers, urban planners, and cultural heritage practitioners can foster

cultural continuity, enhance social cohesion, and promote economic and environmental sustainability. The findings and recommendations of this research are expected to contribute to the development of more inclusive and sustainable urban policies and practices.

II. LITERATURE REVIEW

1). Defining Intangible Cultural Heritage

According to the UNESCO Convention for the Safeguarding of the Intangible Cultural Heritage (2003), ICH includes traditions, practices, expressions, knowledge, and skills that societies recognize as part of their cultural heritage. Smith (2006) emphasizes that ICH promotes community identity and resilience, which are crucial for maintaining cultural diversity and human creativity. This definition provides a foundation for exploring the contributions of ICH to sustainable urban development, particularly within the Georgian context.

A. Intangible Cultural Heritage in Georgia

Georgian ICH, which includes culinary traditions, crafts, traditional sports, and agricultural practices, forms a vibrant tapestry that defines the nation's cultural identity. This review examines how elements such as Georgian culinary traditions (e.g., Dambali and Tenili cheeses, Meskhuri cuisine) and traditional crafts like Lagidze water production and Vardisubani ware are not only cultural expressions but also embody centuries-old knowledge and ecological wisdom (Pietryk-Kaszyńska et al., 2016; Timothe, 2016). The

challenge lies in preserving these practices in the face of globalizing food systems and modern urban development, a concern that is addressed through local and national policies aiming to integrate these cultural elements into the urban fabric.

B. Shorena Tsilosani's Contributions

Tsilosani's research on the functional-spatial aspects of ICH and its integration into sustainable practices provides critical insights into the complex interactions between traditional practices and modern innovations. Her studies, such as the analysis of Meskhur Terraces and the integration of sustainable practices in historic Georgian architecture, demonstrate the architectural and cultural significance of these elements in sustaining Georgian communities (Tsilosani, 2023). These contributions are pivotal in understanding how ICH can be dynamically preserved and adapted in urban planning and design.

2). Challenges and Opportunities

Integrating ICH into contemporary urban landscapes presents both challenges and opportunities. Tsilosani (2023) suggests that preserving ICH requires innovative approaches that adapt traditional practices to modern needs without compromising their integrity. This integration can enhance rural sustainability by promoting cultural diversity, fostering social inclusion, and revitalizing local economies through heritage tourism and artisan markets (Landorf, 2009). Additionally, the concept of a sustainable rural landscape, which integrates environmental stewardship, economic viability, and social equity, plays a critical role in rural planning and development (Beatley, 2011; Tiesdell & Oc, 1998).

3). Methodology

This chapter outlines the methodology used to explore the relationship between ICH and sustainable rural landscape development in Georgia through a mixed-methods approach. This approach integrates qualitative and quantitative data to provide a comprehensive understanding of the intricate dynamics between cultural heritage and urban sustainability.

The research design is structured to address descriptive and exploratory research questions in two main phases. The first phase focuses on qualitative data collection about ICH in Georgia and its integration into urban landscapes. The second phase involves quantitative methods to assess the impact of ICH on sustainable rural development outcomes.

Data collection methods include semi-structured interviews with urban planners, cultural heritage experts, community leaders, and residents across various Georgian cities to capture a wide range of perspectives on the role of ICH in urban development and sustainability. Additionally, selected rural areas known for their rich ICH are examined through case studies to provide detailed information on how ICH is manifested in urban settings and influences

sustainability practices.

III. INTEGRATING WITH MODERNITY

A. Hotel in Kakheti

The development of a tourist complex in the Kvareli municipality near Ilia Lake aims to enhance the region's appeal to both family and business class travelers through its two proposed hotels and a variety of agro-tourism services. These services include wine tasting, Georgian cuisine master classes, a demonstration greenhouse, and a vineyard, aligning with Georgia's primary tourism marketing strategies that emphasize wine and food, nature and adventure, and cultural heritage.

Supported by research funded by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Norway, Kvareli is recognized as a hotspot for agro-tourism, drawing a substantial influx of tourists, which makes it an ideal location for this hotel project. From 2019 to 2021, the region observed a remarkable 19% increase in visitor numbers, totaling 22 million. Notably, local visitors constitute 58% of the traffic, international tourists make up 37%, and excursionists account for 63%. A significant 84% of international tourists express a keen interest in Georgian wine and cuisine, with an additional 6% participating in agricultural activities like harvests and winemaking.



Fig. A Hotel in Kakheti

The project (Fig. A) will cover a development area of 29,962 m² with an additional leased area of 51,681 m², requiring a total investment of USD 10,240,896. The business model and concept for the hotel complex have been tailored to capitalize on the booming agro-tourism market and are supported by the promising data on tourist engagements in the region.

Moreover, a noteworthy study titled "Development Potential of the Agritourism Market in Georgia," also backed by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Norway, identifies other popular tourist regions, including Kazbegi, Svaneti, and Kakheti. These findings further validate the strategic choice of Kvareli for implementing this ambitious tourism project, aimed at activating and expanding Georgia's agritourism potential to both local and international markets.

B. Multipurpose Tourist and Cultural Complex in Mtskheta

Georgia's enduring identity as a multi-ethnic and multi-cultural state is influenced by its unique geographic position at the crossroads of major world civilizations. This cross-cultural interaction is further enriched by the renowned

Georgian hospitality, which is a fundamental aspect of the national character.

In this spirit of regional cooperation, it is timely to propose a platform that fosters closer relationships between Georgia and its Transcaucasian neighbors, Armenia, and Azerbaijan. Culture, with its deep-rooted significance and shared respect among these nations, provides a perfect foundation for this initiative.



Fig. B Multipurpose Complex in Mtskheta

The proposed site for this multipurpose complex is the Mtskheta municipality, a choice that is both symbolic and strategic:

- Mtskheta is not only the ancient capital of Georgia but also the birthplace of Georgian civilization.
- It served as the political hub of the early Kingdom of Kartli and was pivotal in the spread of Christianity throughout Georgia, remaining a religious center until the 12th century.
- Currently, Mtskheta ranks as the third most visited location in Georgia, following Tbilisi and Batumi, thanks to its profound historical and cultural significance. The city is a veritable open-air museum, boasting 32 historical monuments, and is recognized as a UNESCO World Heritage Site.

Given its proximity to the capital—just 20 kilometers away—Mtskheta offers an ideal location for a cultural complex that could serve not only as a center for day visitors from Tbilisi but also as a significant draw for international tourists. This project aims to enhance cultural awareness and provide a space where the rich histories and cultures of the Transcaucasian region can be celebrated and explored in depth.

IV. UNESCO: ATLAS OF URBAN HERITAGE

In an era marked by rapid urbanization, the integration and preservation of cultural heritage within urban settings pose significant challenges. The UNESCO Urban Heritage Atlas emerges as a vital tool, developed under the auspices of the 2011 UNESCO Recommendation on the Historic Urban Landscape (HUL Recommendation). This initiative supports the conservation of urban heritage across the globe.

The Atlas offers a detailed visual representation of historic cities and settlements, documenting the diversity and richness of global urban heritage. It serves as a crucial repository for city-building practices, vernacular architecture, and traditional building techniques, playing a pivotal role in preserving the heritage values of historic urban areas while fostering compatibility with new urban developments.

Functioning as a cultural mapping platform, the Urban Heritage Atlas helps local and national authorities recognize and safeguard the unique characteristics of historic urban environments. This not only aids in protecting World Heritage sites but also supports national tentative list sites, broadening the scope of heritage conservation.

Beyond its technical contributions, the Atlas is also a powerful educational resource that promotes deeper understanding of urban heritage, encourages stakeholder participation, and facilitates informed decision-making in conservation and urban development. By emphasizing community engagement and capacity building, the Atlas fosters a participatory approach to heritage management.

The UNESCO Urban Heritage Atlas stands as a forward-thinking initiative that bridges the gap between heritage preservation and urban development, ensuring that cultural heritage is seamlessly integrated into the evolving urban fabric.

V. CONCLUSION

The Territorial-Resource Component in the Functioning of Intangible Cultural Heritage of Georgia highlights the critical role that intangible cultural heritage (ICH) plays in sustainable development. Integrating ICH into modern urban planning and development frameworks can foster cultural continuity, economic growth, and environmental sustainability. This research provides valuable insights and recommendations for architects, urban planners, policymakers, and cultural heritage practitioners, suggesting that a comprehensive approach to urban development that includes ICH can enhance social cohesion, preserve cultural identity, and promote innovative solutions for sustainable development.

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