

Special Issue “Cultural Heritage, Sustainability and Entrepreneurial Mindset”

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The present Special Issue of *E-REI – E-Journal of Intercultural Studies* brings together a diverse and timely set of contributions addressing the dynamic intersections between cultural heritage, sustainability and the entrepreneurial mindset (Daspit, Fox & Findley, 2023). At a moment marked by accelerated globalization, environmental pressures and profound socio-economic transformations, cultural heritage – both tangible and intangible – faces unprecedented challenges, as well as new opportunities for reinvention and resilience.

This collection of articles emerges from the recognition that sustaining cultural heritage today requires more than preservation in its traditional sense. It demands innovative, adaptive and forward-looking approaches grounded in creativity, interdisciplinarity and, crucially, an entrepreneurial mindset. Such a mindset, characterized by opportunity recognition, risk-taking, problem-solving and resilience, extends far beyond conventional business domains, offering powerful tools for cultural actors, communities and institutions seeking to safeguard and revitalise heritage in meaningful and sustainable ways.

The contributions assembled here reflect a wide spectrum of disciplinary perspectives and methodological approaches, ranging from urban studies and tourism to cultural policy, innovation studies and intercultural research. Together, they explore how entrepreneurial thinking can foster sustainable models of heritage management, whether through adaptive reuse strategies, community-

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based tourism initiatives, digital heritage practices or creative industry applications. Particularly noteworthy is the emphasis on practice-oriented and case-based research, which grounds theoretical reflection in concrete experiences and lived realities.

A defining feature of this Special Issue is its commitment to amplifying underrepresented voices and perspectives, with special attention to contributions from and about the most diverse – and often complex – geographies. By foregrounding locally grounded initiatives, grassroots innovation and non-hegemonic narratives, the issue challenges dominant paradigms in both heritage and entrepreneurship studies, and highlights alternative pathways for cultural and economic sustainability. Equally significant is the intercultural dimension underpinning the volume. The articles engage with diverse cultural contexts and transnational dynamics, addressing themes such as diasporic entrepreneurship, hybrid cultural economies and cross-border collaboration. In doing so, they contribute to a richer understanding of how cultural heritage and entrepreneurial practices intersect across different socio-cultural environments.

By investigating grassroots digital archives created in contexts of conflict, “Framing War as Cultural Heritage: Entrepreneurial Mindset, Sustainability, and Underrepresented Grassroots Archives in a Four-Case Qualitative Study” reframes war as a challenge not only to human lives but also to cultural memory and heritage. Through a comparative analysis of Ukrainian and Palestinian initiatives, the article demonstrates how entrepreneurial thinking, digital innovation and community participation contribute to the preservation of collective identities, the promotion of resilience and the sustainable safeguarding of endangered cultural narratives.

The article “The Impact of Artistic Interventions on the Moroccan Public’s Response to Environmental Disasters: A Post-Earthquake Study” examines artistic practices as catalysts for public engagement and collective resilience following the 2023 Morocco earthquake. Drawing on data from volunteer and artistic associations, the study demonstrates how emotionally resonant, accessible and community-driven initiatives can enhance awareness, foster social cohesion and stimulate civic participation in post-disaster recovery processes.

“Community Participation and Sustainable Heritage Tourism: The Case of Cidade Velha, Cabo Verde” investigates the extent to which local participation shapes the governance of a World Heritage destination and contributes to sustainable tourism development. Employing a mixed-methods approach, the study identifies significant shortcomings in current participatory practices while demonstrating that stronger community involvement can generate social, economic and cultural benefits for residents and reinforce inclusive heritage management.

In “Virtual Preservation: Digitising the Rare Collection of the Saint Joseph Seminary Historical Library”, digital technologies are mobilised to preserve a significant ecclesiastical collection facing relocation and conservation challenges. Through the combination of virtual reality, digital documentation and AI-assisted three-dimensional reconstruction, the project illustrates how technological innovation can expand access to heritage resources while fostering new forms of cultural valorisation, education and community engagement.

In “Serious Games in Higher Education: Exploring Cultural Heritage in Microsoft Flight Simulator”, a commercial simulation platform is reassessed as a tool for cultural heritage exploration and educational innovation. By highlighting immersive environments, virtual tourism experiences and AI-supported interpretation, the article reveals the potential of serious gaming to enhance heritage learning, intercultural awareness and engagement with digitally mediated cultural landscapes.

“Bridging Cultures, Building Economies: The Portuguese Presence in Japan as an Entrepreneurial Tool” explores how centuries-old cultural connections between Portugal and Japan continue to influence contemporary economic and diplomatic relations. Framing intercultural understanding as a strategic resource, the article argues that cultural heritage and historical memory can support entrepreneurship, innovation and sustainable international cooperation in an increasingly interconnected world.

Addressing the relationship between heritage, memory and tourism, “Museums of Divided Memory: The German Internal Border as a Space of Cultural Innovation, Interculturality and Creative Industries” examines museums located along the former East-West German frontier. The contribution demonstrates how these institutions transform contested historical experiences into spaces of intercultural dialogue, cultural innovation and memory tourism, while simultaneously operating within the framework of the contemporary creative economy.

Taking a cross-cultural perspective on digital transformation, “Communication Technologies, Cross-Cultural Perspectives, and Urban Planning: Lessons from GIS Specialists’ Experiences” explores how communication technologies influence urban governance, citizen participation and spatial decision-making. Based on interviews with GIS professionals, the article highlights both the opportunities and challenges associated with the integration of digital tools in urban planning, emphasizing the importance of culturally responsive and inclusive technological strategies.

This Special Issue also stands out for the diversity of its contributors and editorial team. The authors represented in this volume reflect a broad geographical distribution that spans across three continents. Such diversity reinforces the intercultural scope of the dialogue between varied academic traditions, professional practices and cultural perspectives. Similarly, the editorial team embodies a strong international and inter-institutional collaboration. Bringing together scholars and practitioners

affiliated with six different institutions in three countries, the editors combine expertise in intercultural studies, entrepreneurship, sociology and applied research. This plurality of backgrounds has been instrumental in shaping a Special Issue that is both conceptually robust and practically relevant.

We hope that this collection will contribute to advancing scholarly debate and informing practice at the intersections of cultural heritage, sustainability and entrepreneurship. By bridging theory and application, and by fostering dialogue across disciplines and regions, this Special Issue aspires to inspire new research agendas, policy frameworks and innovative practices that support the sustainable future of cultural heritage worldwide.

Finally, we extend our sincere gratitude to all authors for their valuable contributions, to the reviewers for their rigorous and constructive feedback and to the editorial team of *E.REI – E-Journal of Intercultural Studies* for their continued support.

We invite readers to engage critically with the insights presented in this volume and to continue exploring how entrepreneurial thinking can open new pathways for sustaining and reimagining cultural heritage in an ever-changing world.

REFERENCES

Daspit, J. J., Fox, C. J., & Findley, S. K. (2023). Entrepreneurial mindset: An integrated definition, a review of current insights, and directions for future research. *Journal of Small Business Management*, 61(1), 12–44. <https://doi.org/10.1080/00472778.2021.1907583>