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On Keeping and Selling
The Political Economy of Heritage Making in Contemporary Spain

by Jaume Franquesa

In recent years, heritage has become a hegemonic idiom helping to legitimize, but also resist, the gentrification and private appropriation of urban space in a global conjuncture dominated by neoliberal policies and voracious real estate pressures. Through the analysis of a conflict around a historical building in a gentrifying neighborhood in Palma (Spain), and drawing on recent contributions analyzing the processual character of cultural heritage as well as on Annette Weiner’s theoretical insights analyzing the processual character of cultural heritage as well as on Annette Weiner’s theoretical insights on inalienability, the article explores the economic logic that underpins this hegemonic character of heritage. My analysis shows that the loose articulation of developers, gentrifiers, preservationists, expert discourses, and municipal policies is made possible by and enforces an objectifying definition of heritage as an enclosed, incommensurable sphere. This definition, even if detrimental to individual developers, is consistent with the abstract yet differentiated space the marketization of the area requires. In an urban policy context characterized by progressively weaker regulations, this dominant discourse works as an unlikely arbiter capable of effecting a piecemeal, contingent coordination between the particular and general interests of developers, while diffusing the struggles of those actors who, by connecting heritage to everyday practices and to broader issues of political economy, may challenge those interests altogether.

In Palma, the capital city of the Mediterranean island of Majorca, Spain, heritage is everywhere. Local residents routinely encounter it in diverse forms in variegated everyday situations: in the local media, where it is given a regular section; in the discourses of politicians and business leaders, where it stands as the key element that will allow the development of an ever-promised, redemptive turn to “cultural tourism”; in the signposts of the ongoing real estate developments that promise future buyers a life of “luxury and history”; or in the form of a license, the permit that property owners must struggle to get from the heritage bureau every time they want to introduce any minimal alteration to their houses. In Palma, cultural heritage (patrimoni cultural, in Catalan) seems to possess an undisputed legitimacy, achieving the status of uncontested goal. In this conjuncture, all agents strive to mobilize heritage to attain their objectives. Realtors use it to “add value” to their property, tourist agents to sell tourist packages, local authorities to legitimize their policies, and preservationist and residents’ associations to oppose real estate developments.

This situation is far from exclusive to Palma and is captured well by what Choay (1992) called “heritage inflation.” The term describes the quantitative increase of elements designated as heritage, and even more incisively the dramatic widening in the temporal, spatial, and thematic scope of heritage witnessed since the 1970s (Guillaume 1980; Lowenthal 1999 [1985]). This process, which for Choay emerges in response to the extension of market activity and commodification into new spaces and fields of social reality, is evidenced by the proliferation of labels (industrial heritage, ethnological heritage, intangible heritage, etc.) aimed at designating new heritage domains. Another manifestation is the multiple, disparate demands that are placed upon heritage, as Meskell (2012) and Di Giovine (2009) have recently documented for the cases of South Africa and Vietnam, respectively, where it is invoked as the cornerstone to economic growth, local community empowerment, national reconciliation, and international recognition. Perhaps most importantly, this inflation may also be observed in the global expansion of the idiom of heritage. Such a global expansion is particularly well illustrated by Herzfeld (2010), who shows how analogous discourses and practices of heritage conservation operate in urban historic centers of Greece, Italy, and Thailand. This leads him to argue that the discourse and practice of heritage conservation have become a global hegemonic idiom helping to build, conceal, and legitimize but also resist gentrification and, by extension, the neoliberal marketization and private appropriation of historic centers.

While the anthropological literature on heritage has expressed relatively little interest in the substantive analysis of the relationship between heritage and the market (but see Bunten 2008 and Ferry 2002), the available ethnographic evidence in historic centers shows multiple variations: heritage...
is used in historic city centers either to support hegemonic projects aiming to expand market relations and commodification (Herzfeld 2006; Ramirez Kuri 2006) or to bolster counterhegemonic projects striving to resist them (Breglia 2008a; Herzfeld 2009; Mitchell 2002). It is this latter situation that we encounter in Palma. Indeed, the ambivalence and omnipresence of heritage in Palma is most clearly expressed in a series of localized heritage conflicts springing up in the old center since the beginning of this century. In these struggles, groups of preservationists and residents with diverse agendas and definitions of heritage have used the idiom of heritage to oppose real estate developments, claiming the inalienability and affective qualities of certain buildings and places. This move is, however, a paradoxical development, for heritage is also precisely the means through which real estate capital, in collusion with local government, has tried to conquer and commodify new areas of the city in order to extract profits from them. Drawing on Herzfeld’s (2010) insight, I argue that such a paradox can be explained if we consider that, over the past decade or so, heritage has become a hegemonic idiom in Majorca. Given the context of Palma, the notion of hegemony is here mobilized, following Roseberry (1994), to interpret the articulation of conflict:1

I propose that we use the concept not to understand consent but to understand struggle; the ways in which the words, images, symbols, forms, organizations, institutions and movements used by the subordinate populations to talk about, understand, confront, accommodate themselves to, or resist their domination are shaped by the process of domination itself. . . . The common material and meaningful framework is, in part, discursive: a common language or way of talking about social relationships that sets out the central terms around which and in terms of which contestation and struggle can occur. (Roseberry 1994:360–361)

Through the analysis of a specific case, the struggles around the preservation of a historic building known as the Towers of the Temple, this paper analyzes the hegemonic role the idiom of heritage plays in Palma. Simply pointing to the singularity and extramercantile value of what it designates, the category of heritage appears in Palma as an open, almost empty category that is put at the service of contrasting, often conflicting projects and interests of different groups of actors, including preservationists, developers, gentrifiers, and local residents. These disparate strategies are underpinned by diverging notions of what heritage is and should be, including (political) contests over the relationship that heritage, a category usually seen as belonging to the cultural field, should maintain with the economic domain. Indeed, the main heuristic advantage offered by the notion of hegemony is, Gavin Smith (2004) argues, “connectivity.” The concept of hegemony allows the researcher to establish relationships between fields (the “political,” the “economic,” and the “cultural”) that appear as separate domains in people’s minds and are thus generally approached as discreet fields by the researcher. It is this connective capacity that makes the concept of hegemony especially appropriate to the main objective of this paper, namely, an exploration of the economic logic that underpins the hegemonic, political quality of heritage as an idiom capable of articulating conflict and also of diffusing it.

In contrast to the vantage point that the notion of hegemony offers, heritage, as a concept, idiom, and discourse, tends to cut connections, establishing its own domain as an incommensurable sphere and thus obscuring the relationship it maintains with other fields of social reality, most notably, at least for the scope of this article, with economic structures, relations, and practices. To put it in the terms of Roseberry’s quote, we see heritage being used as a hegemonic idiom to talk about social relationships, but it does so in a way that tends to conceal those very relationships. In fact, the situated analysis of heritage strategies I present below will show that heritage is not a neutral category open to endless manipulation in a perfect pluralist society but a hegemonic, ideologically loaded notion operating in interlocking social fields fraught with power differentials and inequalities tending to reinforce these power dynamics. In other words, heritage is not only a hegemonic idiom articulating hegemonic and counteregemonic projects but also an idiom of hegemony, framing conflicts in terms that, by concealing their connection with broader issues of political economy, are advantageous to dominant groups. In order to escape the compartmentalization imposed by the notion of heritage and explore these connections, I will draw on the insights of several economic anthropologists, especially Annette Weiner’s work on inalienability, supplemented by that of Maurice Godelier. The main advantage of Weiner’s framework, built around the notion of keeping, is that it allows us to understand through one single heuristic two paradoxical characteristics of heritage: first, its double existence as object (product) and process (production) and, second, its paradoxical, ambivalent relationship with exchange and the market, apparent in the way heritage is claimed both to resist and lubricate market expansion. These ideas will be further developed in the next section, where I situate Weiner’s work in relation to the heritage literature.

1. Crehan (2002) identifies two broad tendencies in the anthropologists’ use of Gramsci’s notion of hegemony: on the one hand, a tendency paying attention primarily to how conflict pervades political processes and conjunctures, in which we would include Roseberry’s approach; on the other hand, a more static and consent-oriented tendency, deeply influenced by Raymond Williams’s work (esp. 1977) and centrally concerned with the orchestration and maintenance of consent. While aligning myself with the first tendency and taking it as my point of departure, I want to pay attention to the articulation of both consent and conflict through the distinction between heritage as a “hegemonic idiom” and heritage as an “idiom of hegemony.”

Laurajane Smith (2006) begins her book on the uses of her-
The main conclusion stemming from these observations is that heritage is a category that conceals rather than illuminates the analysis of social processes. The corollary of such a conclusion is the need to find heuristic categories that allow us to analyze both heritage in process and the ambivalent relationship it maintains with the world of commodities. Indeed, Herzfeld (2010) reminds us that the roots of the concept of heritage lie in Western notions of inheritance and kinship, as the terms used for it in Latin-based languages (*patrimonio, patrimonio, patrimonii*) attest.

2. It must also be noted that, despite its current global reach (Di Giovine 2009), heritage is a Western category. Therefore, Herzfeld’s (2010) approach prevents the narrow identification of heritage with a specific range of objects (i.e., the monumental) and invites us to look at heritage as a political field, paying attention not only to how heritage is produced or, to paraphrase Hobsbawm (1979), invented, but also to the more interesting question (Dominguez 1986) of how those processes are part of the often competing strategies of different social groups and put into the service of their hegemonic or counterhegemonic projects. On the other hand, the hegemonic quality of this discourse is based on a narrow definition of heritage that abstracts it from social relationships, hence concealing its processual nature. This idea is reminiscent of Herzfeld’s (1991) distinction between social and monumental time. Monumental time is the reductive, generic time of heritage (or of its hegemonic discourse, as Smith would put it), mainly concerned with official interpretations of the past, denying a social time that is “the grist of everyday experience” (10). We can thereby establish a connection between the objectification of heritage and its hegemonic discourse. Since in most societies the prerogative of ultimately sanctioning what is heritage is held by the state through what Kopytoff (1986) appositely calls “public institutions of singularization”—guarded by experts holding a hegemonic objectifying discourse of heritage and deeply influenced by the views of dominant groups—we can go a step further and suggest that it is this hegemonic discourse that equips heritage with the capacity to function as a hegemonic idiom and an idiom of hegemony.

Thus, even if in recent years some scholars (De Cesari 2010; Eidson 2005; Tucker 2000) have documented alternative, non-hegemonic ways of heritage making, it must be born in mind that these strategies always coexist, and usually proceed within, broader hegemonic practices and definitions of heritage (Collins 2008a; Herzfeld 2010; Rautenberg 2003). It is this circumstance that helps explain why the dramatic increase in the temporal, spatial, and thematic scope of heritage witnessed in the past 4 decades has not implied a substantive reworking of hegemonic practices and definitions of heritage but rather the replication of the classic objectifying process into new fields of social reality (Breglia 2006; Choay 1992; Guillaume 1980). In this respect, Smith’s (2006) admonition to approach heritage as a process rather than a thing, although highly relevant, must nonetheless be qualified. While such an approach prevents the narrow identification of heritage with a specific range of objects (i.e., the monumental) and invites us to focus on the loosely articulated and often conflicting practices and discourses through which certain parts of reality are cut, labeled, interpreted, and managed as heritage, we run the risk of forgetting that these practices, whether they are hegemonic or not, always involve a certain degree of objectification. Heritage, in sum, is a process, but it is a process that produces objects.

I argue, as a first approximation to the ambivalent relationship between heritage and the market, that the double existence of heritage, as a process and an object, is centrally connected to that ambivalence. In an oft-quoted article, Kopytoff (1986) elaborates on the deceptive relationship that heritage, those objects that are claimed to be singular and read through that singularity, maintains with the economic domain. Their singularity, apparently excluding commensurability and thus exchangeability, opposes them to common objects, the paradigm of which are commodities. The fact, however, is that singularizing these objects and putting them outside of the market, for instance by making them heritage, is often a mechanism through which these objects can achieve a higher value in the market later in their lives. As authors like Bourdieu (1979) or Kirshenblatt-Gimblett (2001) point out, cultural heritage, like art, is produced and legitimized as a separate, autonomous sphere of knowledge, value, and circulation standing in opposition to the market, exchange value, and the sphere of commodity circulation. Yet it is by denying the market that heritage plays a role in it, a connection concealed by the categorical repulsion through which it can be constructed as a legitimate autonomous sphere containing discrete objects. Thus, paradoxically, the economic content and dynamics of heritage are premised upon objectification, the abstraction of the heritage object from its relationships, including economic ones.
“possessions imbued with affective qualities that are expressions of the value an object has when kept by its owners and inherited within the same family or descent group” (1985: 210; my emphasis) already suggests the analogy between inalienable possessions and those objects that fit into the notion of heritage. Even more relevant, Weiner, as Myers (2001) points out, pays particular attention to process and strategy, putting her emphasis “less on things being inalienable and more on the production of inalienability and on the strategies and work of keeping or resisting exchange” (15). For the purposes of my analysis, therefore, the value of Weiner’s framework is that it focuses on process, fundamentally the process of “keeping,” a notion that points to the double action of preserving the object from the hazards of time and of maintaining it out of circulation. Relying on cosmological narratives, this double action of keeping “authentifies” the value of the object by connecting it to the past, to its specific history. Inalienable possessions, therefore, stand as unique objects with a unique identity whose value, in polar opposition to the commodity, is conserved and even enhanced through time. A second characteristic that makes Weiner’s approach so relevant to our analysis is her emphasis on thinking the dialectical, ambivalent relationship between inalienable possessions and exchange, and more specifically to the multifarious strategies through which groups and individuals are able to meet the obligations of reciprocity while simultaneously maintaining the possession of precious objects. The ambivalent relationship between keeping and exchange gives place to the “paradox of keeping-while-giving,” an expression that captures the variegated, critical ways in which “keeping” and “giving” both support and undermine each other.

In the following sections I draw on Weiner’s framework to analyze the strategies of diverse groups of actors articulating in Palma around the preservation of the Towers of the Temple; the analysis will be supplemented with Godelier’s (1999 [1996], 2002) own notion of “keeping,” since it provides a distinctive emphasis that is particularly relevant to our case. Nonetheless, a caveat must be introduced before proceeding onto this analysis. While Weiner’s and Godelier’s concepts stem from their research in societies based on reciprocity, my aim is to apply their insights to a context where, to put it in Polanyian (1968 [1957]) terms, market exchange operates as the mode of “economic integration.” My exploration of the relationship between inalienability and exchange, therefore, will not focus on giving (gift exchange) but on selling (commodity exchange).

3. In a superb article, Ferry (2002) similarly analyzes the ambivalent relationship between heritage and commodities in a Mexican mining cooperative through the framework of inalienability, although her analysis draws only tangentially on Weiner’s work.

4. This shift in focus from gift exchange to commodity exchange is entirely compatible with Weiner’s approach. Although Weiner’s theorization on inalienability is overwhelmingly concerned with so-called gift economies (a category she criticizes) and is thus articulated around the paradoxical relationship between “keeping” and “giving,” throughout her work Weiner offered scattered yet consistent remarks (see, e.g., Myers and Kirshenblatt-Gimblett 2001:310–311; Weiner 1992:6, 35, and 1994: 400–401) that make it clear that she considered this paradox to be operative in societies where market commodity exchange prevailed (“Capitalism only served to heighten the dependency on the connections between alienable and inalienable possessions”; Weiner 1992:35). It is also remarkable that in these scattered remarks she uses examples (the Parthenon, the Crown jewels, rain forests, museum collections, contemporary art) that are generally included within the category of heritage (interestingly enough at some point she called this kind of objects “paradoxical objects” [Myers and Kirshenblatt-Gimblett 2001:298]). Godelier established the connection between his discussion on inalienability and contemporary economic trends in an even more explicit way. Indeed, L’énigme du don (1999), his main work on these issues (directly inspired, he acknowledges, by the reading of Weiner 1992) is directly framed as an argument against the current capitalist tendency to see everything as exchangeable, evident in the emphasis he puts on the analysis of money, the instrument that makes widespread exchangeability possible.

5. Admittedly, this theoretical displacement involves more than a terminological replacement. Bloch and Parry (1989) suggest that in capitalist societies there is an inversion of the relationship between keeping and exchange (or, as they put it, between the sphere of long-term circulation oriented to reproduction and the sphere of short-term circulation oriented to private gain). While ethnography shows that most societies have a tendency to circumscribe exchange, relegating it to a gregarious position, these authors contend that capitalism is historically novel in that it inverts the articulation between these two poles, constructing the domain of keeping as a contained sphere subordinated to the requirements of exchange. This hypothesis is consistent with my understanding of the current role heritage plays in contexts dominated by market exchange. As I outline in the conclusions, a crucial characteristic of the hegemonic discourse, practices, and definition of heritage would then be that it frames heritage as such a closed, subordinated compartment.
profits. This path was none other than the building of distinct “spatial fixes” (Harvey 1982), that is, geographical solutions capable of (temporarily) escaping economic contradictions by providing a new ( provisionally) stable spatial framework for accumulation. On the one hand, the big Majorcan hotel conglomerates started looking for possibilities of expansion overseas, in search of new touristically undeveloped territories where they could replicate their business model, eventually converting the Spanish-speaking Caribbean into their main area of investment (Buades 2006). On the other hand, Majorcan authorities envisaged a restructuring of the island’s tourist landscape along three interconnected lines: first, promoting an upgrade of the tourist model, putting the emphasis on “tourist quality,” thereby mobilizing new labels such as cultural tourism, heritage tourism, environmental tourism, and so forth; second, fomenting the specialization of Majorca as a location for seasonal residences for an affluent northern European clientele; and third, stimulating the location of new investment in areas historically peripheral to tourist investment deemed to be rich in environmental and cultural qualities, such as the island’s agricultural interior and Palma’s old center. In this conjuncture, by the mid-1990s, the qualities of the old center of Palma, its idiosyncratic particularities, were rediscovered and extolled by a good number of commentators who saw the area as an opportunity to be exploited. Such a perspective is well represented by a locally well-known architect who would later become actively involved in public and private projects to develop the old center:

In the face of this [coming] 21st century we have to become aware that these old cities [i.e., the center of Palma] contain an enormous unexploited richness; they are true unexploited mines. The richness to be found in this sense . . . is huge: to know how to value these positive qualities these old centers have as places of evasion, that is, for sensual and magical enjoyment. If we become aware that in these places one can live in a very different way, with a much superior quality of life than that offered by any other space, I think these cities will be able to be valued [podrán ser valorizadas]. (García-Delgado 1995:71; quoted in Morell, forthcoming)

The qualities of the old center—its medieval layout, secluded ambience, and, above all, heritage landmarks—are assimilated into a hidden treasure from which to extract profits. The analogy with the “unexploited mine,” however, equating those qualities with a raw mineral needing to be unearthed and cut into precious jewelry, points to the fact that the value (both cultural and economic) of the area was to be found in a potential state: in order to realize that potential, the particularities of the old center had to be “authenticated,” elevated to the status of unique objects with incommensurable value, thus becoming, borrowing Benjamin’s (1968 [1955]) expression, objects with “aura.” In other words, a whole series of urban spaces and architectural elements had to be produced as cultural heritage, that is as objects with a socially recognized cultural value that could then be somehow translated into economic value and ultimately converted into profits. Indeed, most of the measures that the municipality implemented in the old center of Palma throughout the 1990s were linked to this task of authentication: subsidies for facade renovation, construction of new cultural facilities (notably, a museum of modern art and a theater), restoration and international promotion of historical landmarks, creation of heritage itineraries, public space beautification, an explosion in buildings with heritage designation, and so on. This rediscovered emphasis on culture and heritage helped build a new authoritative narrative for the old center as a unique, culturally meaningful, romanticized landscape. Gentrification was the means through which cultural value, raising the desire among upper-middle classes to buy a house in the area, was to be translated into economic value and, ultimately, profits. This strategy proved highly successful. In the early nineties, several members of the Majorcan elites pioneered the gentrification process of certain areas of the old center widely seen as marginal followed in the midnineties by a handful of Majorcan developers who started buying and restoring some properties in those areas. By the turn of the century, and in the context of the Spanish housing bubble, the old center saw the massive arrival of big developers, mostly from the Spanish mainland. During these 2 decades, real estate prices in the old center quadrupled, becoming the highest in the island and among the highest in Spain.

The impact of this process was especially dramatic in working-class neighborhoods (barri populars), where the gentrification process was especially striking. The production of these areas as valuable assets for the tourist-cum-real-estate industry denied and neglected the experience, memories, and rights of the traditional residents of these neighborhoods in two ways. First and foremost, the new orientation of municipal policies, involving gentrification and thus the displacement of many poor tenants, replaced the redistributive approach that had defined urban policies in the 1980s mainly concerned with ensuring the right of residents to stay in place and to improve their living conditions. These latter policies were adopted by the municipality in response to the demands of neighborhood associations, left-leaning organizations of residents that played a key political and organizational role in the highly politicized period of the transition (1975–1985) from dictatorship to democratic institutions (Franquesa 2007). Second, the mu-
nicipality focused on certain landmarks—aristocratic palaces, baroque and gothic churches and monasteries, military elements—favoring a monumental, medievalizing narrative alien to the working-class experience of traditional residents (Morrell 2009).

Heritage and Real Estate Development: Fernando and Tomas

In 2002, Fernando, a developer from Madrid, purchased a building called the Towers of the Temple located in the popular neighborhood of Sa Calatrava, in the throes of gentrification. The operation was a clear example of the newfound interest of real estate capital for heritage and the old center of Palma. The building consists of two bridged towers built in the eleventh century as the gate to an Arabic fortress. In the thirteenth century, with the Christian conquest of the island, the Catalan-Aragonese crown transferred the fortress to the order of the Templars, hence the current name of Temple popularly used nowadays to refer to the whole block the fortress used to occupy. Together with a small, little-known Romanesque church, the towers are the only remaining part of the fortress and are considered one of the most outstanding vestiges of the period of Muslim rule of the city and the island. Fernando’s investment and his designs on the property unleashed a long conflict around the fate, meaning, and status of the building, a conflict that will allow us to understand the complex tensions and sets of alliances structured around the idiom of heritage in the old center of Palma.

As the new owner of the Towers of the Temple, Fernando started working to convert the building into nine luxury apartments. This job involved two main tasks: restoring the building and getting rid of the tenants. At the time of the sale, the building was divided into three housing units, one per floor, plus a kiosk on the ground level. Fernando bought the building from a couple of aged sisters living on the third floor and immediately reached an agreement with the tenants on the second floor. However, Lydia, an American cellist who had lived in the first floor since 1985, and Antonia and Manuel, a married couple who ran the kiosk, rejected the developer’s monetary offer to leave the building. While carrying out negotiations with the three tenants, Fernando started working on the restoration of the two upper floors where he committed two kinds of “irregularities” that would trigger the conflict. First, as I discuss below, he was accused of taking advantage of his access to the building to harass the tenants. Second, Fernando introduced unauthorized structural modifications to the building that contravened the heritage regulations stipulated by the municipality. It is important to highlight that these alterations were linked to his business strategy. Indeed, his plan of dividing every story into three units in order to maximize profits pushed him to partially destroy the building’s baroque coffered ceilings. These alterations, crucial for understanding why the conflict ended up being framed mainly in terms of heritage, provide a privileged insight into the ambivalent relationship Fernando maintains with heritage.

On the one hand, heritage was of central importance to Fernando’s economic calculations, clearly depicted in a 2007 newspaper article devoted to the old center of Palma, tellingly titled “A Palace Revolution in Historic Palma,” where Fernando figures prominently:

The Spanish developer moved on to converting palacios—grand townhouses—in the Majorcan capital of Palma, a property market that quietly thrives amid a broader picture of Spanish volatility. Fernando’s own Palma home, a painstakingly restored 13th-century palacio with high, carved wooden Arabic ceilings and original frescoes, serves as a blueprint for his latest project. . . . “These palacios reflect the history of the city . . .” says Fernando. “Even now, most developers will throw out valuable items, not realising they are original pieces of Arabic architecture.” Buyers are more appreciative. “We’ve already sold six apartments at Can Sans, to British buyers who really know their history,” he says.8

Fernando’s business model, scattered in historical centers all over the world, is based on selling houses with “historical character” to a northern European upper-middle-class public. In Palma, where he had the bulk of his investments from 2000 to 2008, his strategy consisted of buying baroque and medieval houses and, as he says, “rescuing their historical value,” trusting that this historical value, central to the distinction he sells, would elevate their economic value and his profits. On the other hand, however, Fernando was far less considerate of heritage when it stood in the way of his profit calculations. In other words, if heritage prevented him from dividing the Towers into nine units, if it stood as an obstacle to his profits, then he had no qualms in destroying it. Fernando thus preserves, and only preserves, heritage if it facilitates his strategy of selling. While extolling the heritage character of their promotions in order to enhance their value, we find among developers the paradoxical tendency, especially acute among the big development companies that started arriving in Palma at the turn of the twenty-first century, to get rid of those heritage elements that stood in the way of their profits, often supported by the silent acquiescence of political authorities. This dynamic is of central importance to my argument, since even if, as we will see, the concern for heritage among Palma’s civil society organizations goes beyond a mere reaction against that destruction, it is not possible to understand the proliferation of heritage conflicts in the old center of Palma without considering the direct action of destruction against heritage elements carried out by developers.

Civil society organizations were not alone in opposing the destruction of heritage, however. Tomas, a Majorcan developer with strong personal connections to Majorcan elites—

especially aristocratic families, big owners of real estate in the area—started his business activity in the old center in 1994 while still in his twenties. Over the course of his career he has rehabilitated about a dozen buildings, most of them in the area surrounding the Towers of the Temple. His operation is small, and he never works on more than one building at a time, specializing in the expensive restoration of big historical buildings and catering to an extremely affluent northern European clientele as seasonal residences. Tomas describes his business approach as follows: “minimal intervention, permanent supervision, respecting heritage as the great value of the building and therefore accepting the limitations it poses. For instance, respecting the integrity of coffered ceilings, but then I cannot divide the house, so the houses I do end up being very expensive.” When talking about his job, he highlights the ambivalent relationship between heritage and commodity: “Business and heritage are opposed; the value of heritage is not measurable. I mean, if I think in terms of price per square meter my numbers don’t round up. There is no possibility of comparison, each building is unique, singular.”

Tomas therefore prefers to see his activity as “half business, half artisanal work” and contrasts his approach to that of the big real estate companies, such as Fernando’s: “if you dismiss the artisanal component,” he elaborates, “and you simply go for the business, then the two things don’t match and you behave like a bull in a china shop (un elefante en una cacharrería). A bad rehabilitation is as destructive as degradation, and in recent years there’s been a lot of this around here, especially since the arrival of big companies in the last years.” Consistent with this view and his “love for heritage,” Tomas has denounced multiple developers to heritage authorities and to the courts during the past decade, including two complaints in 2005 against Fernando’s destruction of heritage in the Towers of the Temple.

Keeping-for-Selling and Place-Embedded Commodities

The picture that I have presented on the activity of developers in the old center of Palma is strongly reminiscent of the paradoxical dynamic of keeping-while-giving elaborated by Weiner. Drawing upon wide ethnographic evidence from Melanesia and Polynesia, Weiner observed that individuals and groups put great efforts in keeping certain precious objects (valuables) they possessed out of the circuits of reciprocity exchange. This set in motion a series of paradoxical, dialectically related processes: it augmented the value of those inalienable possessions and consequently the prestige and status of their possessors; higher prestige granted these possessors advantageous positions within the very circuits of exchange they seemed to be fighting against; these advantageous positions translated into an increase in the stream of gifts flowing to the possessors, thus building up pressure on the possessors and jeopardizing their ability to retain the precious object, eventually forcing its alienation out and into circulation. Weiner referred to this double-edged, paradoxical dynamic with the expression “keeping-while-giving.” I want to stress the agonistic, frantic, and somewhat tragic character of the picture we are offered: individuals and groups, striving to outcompete their rivals and resist the deleterious effects of time and exchange, appear as maximizing agents embarked in a perpetual struggle to keep in order to exchange (and exchange in order to keep) that is ultimately doomed to fail, just to restart again.9

The analogies with the developers’ machinations between heritage and market in Palma are obvious. On an individual level, the painstaking task of keeping-while-selling (and selling-while-keeping) is clearly illustrated in Tomas’s efforts to preserve, restore, and enhance the historical elements of his houses. It is through this task of keeping that the houses become precious objects, achieving a unique character that then enters exchange. Once it is sold, the unique character of the house, which now is not only heritage but also a commodity, is bestowed as prestige and status onto the owners and translated into reputation and profits for Tomas. Tomas thus keeps in order to sell, and this happens not despite his emphasis in separating heritage from commodity, artisanship from salesmanship, keeping from selling, or love from profit, but thanks to it, since the status of his houses as precious objects, their authentication as heritage, is premised upon a denial of exchange, the market, and profit seeking. On a general level, the overall picture of the real estate activity in the old center of Palma appears as a paroxysmic, almost grotesque modality of the agonistic circuit, now turned spiral, described by Weiner. While capital tries to harness heritage to its own advantage to construct the exchange value of real estate, heritage also puts limitations on capital’s activity and its expansionary tendency, standing as an obstacle to profits that developers will try to overcome. The increasing capacity of heritage to assign advantageous market positions to developers therefore translates, paradoxically, into an increasing pressure upon heritage, experienced as an obstacle to exchange, thus leading to an uncontrollable, frantic spiral eroding the pole of “keeping” that reaches its telos in the wholesale destruction of heritage elements. The double-edged, agonistic dynamic of keeping-while-giving described by Weiner as a contradictory yet precariously balanced, perpetually retrofitting mechanism of keeping-while-giving mutates here, thus, into an unbalanced, autodestructive dynamic of keeping-for-selling.10

9. Weiner is quite clear in this respect. Keeping is ultimately impossible, and all inalienable possessions eventually end up entering exchange: “[Inalienability is] a process and it’s practically not achievable, and yet it may be achievable for a generation. In some societies, a generation is spectacular. Imagine in New Guinea that you could keep a shell out of circulation for twenty years! This is an unheard of accomplishment” (Myers and Kirshenblatt-Gimblett 2001:290).

10. Although Weiner’s notion of keeping-while-giving emphasizes the permanent interaction and tension between the two poles of keeping and exchanging (as shown in the fact that she sometimes uses the expression “giving-while-keeping” as synonymous with “keeping-while-giving”), she observes that in gift-based societies, keeping tends to hold primacy and
Keeping-for-selling, therefore, engenders a contradiction that tendentially threatens its very continuity, and with it the reproduction of accumulation: the more heritage is celebrated, the more central it is in the developers’ ability to sell, the less heritage elements there are to celebrate. This is a dangerous contradiction for developers as a whole, since it ultimately points at the erosion of the basis upon which they build their accumulation, undermining their general interest as a group. It is this contradiction that we find at the heart of the clash between Fernando and Tomas. In order to explore this contradiction we must turn our focus to one of Weiner’s central contributions to exchange theory, namely, her attention to how the *materiality* of objects frames and constrains the ways in which they can be kept and exchanged. In Palma the objects whose inalienability is claimed are always ultimately places (elements of the built environment such as buildings, archaeological sites, public spaces, whole neighborhoods), and the objects that are exchanged are always part of real estate, that is, place-embedded commodities.\footnote{11} However obvious, a central characteristic of place-embedded commodities is their contingency: the value of a given place-embedded commodity, say a house, is influenced by, and to a certain extent held hostage to, the quality and value dynamic of nearby properties (Harvey 1973). This is where we must locate the quibble between Fernando and Tomas. Tomas worried that the destruction of heritage elements carried out by Fernando and other developers behaving like “bulls in a china shop” would erode the uniqueness and historical value of the whole area and, ultimately, of the houses that Tomas was trying to sell. At the same time, Tomas resented Fernando for benefiting from his own careful restorations without having to shoulder the real costs of preservation. With his allegations, thus, Tomas was not simply looking to increase Fernando’s costs in order to reduce his competitive advantage; his strategy also involved getting big developers to keep in order to preserve the value of his own properties.

It is important to emphasize, however, that, despite their clash, Fernando and Tomas share an analogous comprehension of the relationship that heritage maintains with the market. They both participate of the logic of keeping-for-selling, a mechanism aimed at operating a displacement from the qualitative (heritage value) to the quantitative (exchange value), that is, at making heritage measureable. It is not different logics that we see here but rather specific marketing strategies and competing individual interests as well as, more profoundly, the structural contradiction affecting the whole of the real estate activity brought about by the agonistic tendency of keeping-for-selling. True, Tomas voices a more balanced approach to keeping-for-selling, an awareness of its agonistic and autodestructive character, a willingness to find an equilibrium between keeping and selling. However, this is not the manifestation of a different logic; it rather expresses the fact that Tomas’s business strategy—with an exclusive and longer-term commitment to Palma, and a specialization in heavily singularized rehabilitations for the very upper classes—is more sensitive to the general contradiction unleashed by the wholesale logic of keeping-for-selling. Finally, the fact that the contradictory interests of these two developers got expressed as a direct clash between them in the form of legal actions, does suggest a crucial point: the municipality is not able or willing to implement mechanisms orchestrating the conflicting interests of developers, harmonizing the contradiction between the general and particular interests of developers by working out some balance between keeping and selling. This absence is, I argue, the consequence of a neoliberal approach, so deeply concerned in providing good business opportunities for individual developers that it fails to address the long-term reproduction of accumulation.

Objectification and Lived Experience: Gentrifiers and Tenants

Although, generally speaking, gentrifiers did not get involved in the conflicts around heritage, it is important to understand their relationship to heritage, summarized in the following words of Tomas: “[My clients] value the house almost as a work of art, they have an object-like relationship (una relación muy objetual) with it, they have it for reasons of social relationship, of prestige. Also, you must take into account that these are business people (empresarios), persons who always have other houses.” This objectified relationship, the idea of heritage-as-artifact, is, as we have seen, linked to hegemonic discourses of heritage. Indeed, Guillaune (1980) points out that these discourses are a form of “heterologic knowledge”
and underlines their syntactic analogy with the process of capital accumulation: it is by making heritage a discrete thing, abstracting it from surrounding social relationships, that it can be possessed and accumulated. In contrast to this objectified relationship, for old-time residents the affective, extra-mercantile value of the buildings they live in is linked to their lived experience. For gentrifiers, on the other hand, the value of their buildings stems from a monumental time, akin to the medievalizing, romanticized narrative constructed by the municipality that involves, and indeed is premised upon, denying and looking down on the social time of local residents’ everyday lives. This antagonistic relationship is enacted in the narratives of gentrifiers such as Angela. A member of a prominent aristocratic family with extensive property in the old center, in the early nineties Angela bought a seventeenth-century house in the derelict margins of Sa Calatrava at a very cheap price. She describes her arrival to the house and how she made it valuable as follows:

If you saw this house fifteen years ago, when we bought it, you wouldn’t recognize it. People told me I was crazy. “You bought a house over there?” This area was very degraded, the buildings were falling down, most people were very ignorant, and here in this square there were people trafficking with drugs... a lot of work to get this house to be what it is now... For instance, do you see these gothic arches here [inside the house]? I discovered them; they were covered in plaster. I started investigating the history of this house, [and discovered that] very reputed carpenters who had trading connections with America had inhabited it, and this demonstrated that the beams were very valuable, great woodwork.

Illegal activities, the dereliction of the built environment, “ignorance,” poverty, and “fake” architectural elements are lumped together as dirty elements that stand as an obstacle to the realization of the historical value of the house. They all belong to a social time that prevented a valuable monumental time to emerge. Also, the knowledge that allowed Angela to appreciate and “make value emerge” had no relationship with the everyday experience of living in Sa Calatrava. It is important to note, on the other hand, that Angela belongs to a very specific class with a crucial pivotal role in the transformation of the area, a class with extensive real estate interests in the old center that is very well represented, as we will see, in preservationist organizations. Indeed, the idea of Majorcan aristocratic elites far exceeds their direct involvement as gentrifiers in the gentrification process, numerically dominated by northern Europeans and, to a lesser extent, mainland Spaniards. In fact, Majorcan aristocracy played a part on both sides of the gentrification process, as it may be appreciated in the fact that while Angela was looking for a house in Sa Calatrava, her family was, in parallel, selling some of the houses they possessed in the more central, aristocratic quarters of the old center. While Majorcan aristocracy experienced progressive impoverishment and loss of power throughout the second half of the twentieth century, they largely maintained the ownership of their landed property, together with the social capital and prestige associated with their class status, allowing them to play a pivotal role in the articulation of the whole process. In particular, some members of this social class played a bridging role between aristocratic families and developers, working as intermediaries in the negotiations between these two groups, between real estate owners and real estate investors.

Tenants, on the other hand, conveyed a very different experience and a very different understanding of the value of heritage compared to gentrifiers.12 As mentioned earlier, according to the three rebellious tenants, Fernando took advantage of his access to the Towers of the Temple to harass them. Indeed, in 2003 and 2004, Lydia, Antonia, and Manuel denounced all kinds of outrageous actions: their apartments were flooded, concrete was poured on top of Antonia’s car, strangers entered into Lydia’s apartment at night on multiple occasions, household objects were misplaced while the tenants were not in the building, and so on. As a consequence, the tenants filed a lawsuit against Fernando and, in parallel, sought support from several organizations, most notably the Neighborhood Association of Sa Calatrava. In contrast to the gentrifiers’ perspective, for the tenants the value of the Towers of the Temple emerged in connection to their social time, their lived experience, and more generally to the residents’ everyday experience of living in the area, as Lydia’s vital trajectory and positioning in the conflict clearly illustrates. Lydia is a US musician who was a left-wing militant in the sixties and seventies, deeply committed to the political struggles of her country of origin. Immediately prior to the death of Franco, she moved to Barcelona. Disenchanted with US politics, she believed that if the revolution was going to happen somewhere, it would be in Spain. Once she realized the revolution would not happen, and needing a steady job, she accepted a position as a cellist in the recently created symphonic orchestra of Palma in 1981. From the moment she set foot in Majorca, Lydia explains, she felt uncomfortable and isolated on an island that she characterizes as right-wing and ultra-catholic. She thus planned to stay in Majorca just for the time necessary to improve her skills and gain the professional experience that would allow her to move to a better orchestra on the mainland. She soon realized this dream would never come true, that she was trapped, condemned to remain in a mediocre orchestra and on an island where she would never come true, that she was trapped, condemned to remain in a mediocre orchestra and on an island where she
was not at ease. It is in this context that in 1985 she moved as a tenant to the Towers. The relationship she developed with the building must be understood in connection with her biographical trajectory: “In that moment I felt Majorca was hostile to me but I felt this building protected me. I have a very strong relationship with this building.”

In addition to filing a lawsuit against Fernando for harassment, the three tenants documented the illegal heritage alterations the developer introduced and, with the help of the Neighborhood Association, brought the case to several preservationist organizations. Lydia became personally very involved in the struggle for the preservation of the Towers, organizing press conferences and making multiple appearances in the media, activities that were crucial in boosting the profile of the struggle on the island. Although the developer, as well as some heritage experts and municipal bureaucrats, considered the tenants to be using heritage for merely instrumental reasons and out of personal, extrapatriominal concerns, I argue that these judgments emerge from a narrow, hegemonic notion of heritage. Indeed, if we listen to Lydia, her struggle against Fernando’s development and her claim to the inalienability of the building stand as two inseparable aims connected by her lived experience: “People ask me how I can be here, with the owner doing these things to me, like stealing from me and so on, but it is because I feel that the building is on my side; we are friends. Also, I am sure that this building has spirits, and they don’t like Fernando, and if he does his nine units he’s going to have a bad time.”

During my fieldwork I found that, like Lydia, many residents frequently made reference to supernatural forces (spirits, ghosts, sacred entities, etc.) when complaining about the activity of realtors and developers in the old center. As we can see in Lydia’s case, these supernatural forces express in a hypothesized way the inalienable character of the relationship between object (i.e., place in this case) and people and their social time. In other words, for Lydia the mobilization in terms of heritage was a defense of the inalienability of the link between lived experience and the building that was the object of heritage claims.

Fighting against Commodification: Neighbors and Preservationists

Created in 1987, the Association for the Revitalization of the Ancient City (or ARCA, the Catalan acronym) is the most popular and influential preservationist association in the city. Its more than 500 associates represent a mixture of Majorcan traditional elites (many, like Angela and her family, with landed interests in the old center), middle-class heritage connoisseurs and professionals (academics, archaeologists, architects, tourist guides), and, to a lesser extent, developers (both Fernando and Tomas, for instance, have at some point been members of ARCA). It is the second group, heritage connoisseurs and professionals, that tends to occupy the executive and more public roles within the organization. Considered a mildly left-leaning association, its capacity of influence over public matters is linked to that of its associates and also to the public credibility and institutional power acquired over the years. In this respect the fact that ARCA holds a permanent seat on the Heritage Committee (Ponència Tècnica de Patrimoni) is especially important. The committee is an appointed consultative body formed by heritage experts that informs the decisions of the Heritage Commission, the regional government agency in charge of making all decisions around heritage issues in Majorca.13

Once the Neighborhood Association brought evidence (i.e., pictures and oral testimony) of Fernando’s alterations, ARCA, already involved in other similar struggles, took the lead to claim the inalienability of the Towers. ARCA organized a campaign to demand that the heritage status of the building be upgraded to the category of monument, the highest category in Majorcan legislation. Through an intense campaign including press conferences, political lobbying, the collection of signatures, and informative presentations, ARCA’s aim was to sensitize local public opinion and authorities about, and thus authenticate, the historical value of the Towers. The Neighborhood Association, as well as the tenants, got involved in this heritage campaign, for example, by actively collecting signatures. Nevertheless, the notion of heritage mobilized by neighbors and preservationists was rather dissimilar, a distance parallel to that between old-time local residents and gentrifiers.

The link between object and current social practices underlies the notion of heritage defended by the Neighborhood Association of Sa Calatrava. For the association, the struggle against Fernando’s development was a struggle against real estate pressure in the area and more specifically against what they considered to be the conversion of the neighborhood into what they called “an inner luxury suburb” (barri dormitori de luxe). The expression captures two meanings: on the one hand, Sa Calatrava was gentrifying, becoming an area for rich people (“luxury”) and thus threatening traditional residents with displacement; on the other hand, “suburb,” as opposed to neighborhood (barri), refers to the fragmentation of neighborhood networks and a general decrease of sociality, especially evident in the progressive disappearance of locally owned stores, serving local residents, that were incapable of competing with more profitable residential uses. Opposing Fernando’s development and fighting to keep the tenants in place was thus part of their battle against displacement and commercial desertification. The crucial point for us is that, as we saw in Lydia’s case, for the association, real estate pressure was not only fragmenting the neighborhood, but as Ramon, the president of the association, explained, in so doing it was undermining the meaning and value of its heritage elements:

13. It is very telling of the critical role heritage plays in the political economy of the island the fact that this agency depends on the regional ministry of urbanism, and not, say, on the ministry of culture.
Developers are putting strong pressure on this neighborhood. They are interested in transforming every element of the neighborhood into a profitable element, and that means housing. And given that we are on a privileged location, on the waterfront, and with this huge historical value, these are luxury developments. And there is an interest in the inhabitants of these luxury houses not to be disturbed by the traditional inhabitants and their activities. The neighborhood is dying. Not only its social fabric but even its architectural and historical elements, together with the identifying threats [seitas de identidad] that still survive, lose their raison d’être [se muere su razón de ser]. . . . Heritage is usually taken as an object [el patrimonio suele objetualizarse mucho] when it should be something alive, it should be an element of connection between people and their history, between their reality and their identity. And what happens in Sa Calatrava is that the neighborhood is very clean and cute, but the relationship between people and these things that constitute the neighborhood gets lost.

The value of heritage stems from its connection with neighborhood life. Since real estate developments such as Fernando’s were seen as eroding that life, struggling against them was the only way to preserve the area’s inalienable value. On the other hand, ARCA’s understanding of the value of the building, and hence of what makes it worth preserving and being considered heritage, was exemplified by the document accompanying the petition, entitled “The fortress of the Temple: A monument that must be preserved for the city.” The short text consisted fundamentally of a brief explanation of the history of the building until the early nineteenth century, emphasizing the building as “one of the few architectural jewels remaining in our city from the Islamic medieval period.” ARCA argued that the building should be preserved, kept, because it was connected to, and indeed materialized, the identity of Majorca and the Majorcans. Evoking a monumental time and a hypostatized Majorcan identity, ARCA managed an objectifying notion of heritage with no actual connection with current practices and struggles. Indeed, the text made no mention at all to the situation of the neighborhood, the tenants, or to Fernando’s plans.

**Keeping-against-Selling**

The way neighbors and preservationists frame the relationship between heritage and the market calls for a differentiated approach to keeping and selling. During the past 2 decades, Godelier has contributed a series of works (most notably 1999) addressing the issue of inalienability. While his approach is complementary to Weiner’s and largely draws from it, Godelier provides a distinct emphasis. Whereas Weiner focuses her attention on *precious objects* held by individuals and social subgroups, Godelier centers his analysis around *sacred objects* held by specific societies at large.14 Analyzing the efforts of their owners to keep precious objects that end up at some point entering exchange, Weiner focuses on transaction, on the movement of these objects, that is, on how individuals and groups negotiate the threshold between the porous, dialectically related circuits of keeping and exchange following a maximizing strategy oriented toward the establishment, preservation, and enhancement of privileged status positions. Godelier, instead, adopts a nontransactionalist perspective, focusing his attention on those sacred, inalienable objects that remain unalienated. Godelier, therefore, is not so much interested in the porosity (that he does not deny) between the spheres of keeping and exchanging but in their changing articulation, on the societal arrangements through which they are exchanged as commodities (Godelier makes it clear that “sacred objects” are not only “inalienable” but also “unalienated”). On the other hand, I would like to clarify that Weiner’s and Godelier’s respective emphases (but not exclusive attention) on precious and sacred objects is a rather epiphenomenal expression of deeper theoretical differences between these two authors, briefly discussed in n. 15.

14. Weiner uses the term “valuables” instead of the synonymous expression “precious objects.” My inclination to use the latter, which is the common term in Latin-based languages (Godelier, for instance, talks of *objets précieux*), is simply based on its evocative power (with resonances in expressions such as “precious metals” or “precious minerals”) and the preference for a more elegant, symmetric distinction “precious objects”/”sacred objects.” The primary attention that Godelier puts on “sacred objects” may be clearly appreciated in the closing remarks of the introduction to *The Enigma of the Gift*: “No society, no identity can survive over time and provide a foundation for the individuals or groups that make up a society if there are no fixed points, realities that are exempted (provisionally but lastingly) from the exchange of gifts or from trade. What are these realities? Are they merely the sacred objects found in every religion? Is there not a some more general political relationship between political power and something called ‘the sacred,’ even in secular societies in which power is not conferred by the gods but comes from humans who have founded it on a constitution they have given themselves? But what is contained in a sacred object?” (1999[1996]:8). Since there is a certain ambiguity in the way these two authors deal with the issue, it may be argued that Weiner and Godelier do not pay attention to different kinds of objects but rather to different aspects of them, or even, since in both cases the objects eventually enter circulation, to different moments of their “social life” (Appadurai 1986). However it may be, the most important difference is that while precious objects’ (valuables) do not lose their value once their possessors are not able to “keep” them anymore, “sacred objects” do lose their sacred character once they are exchanged as commodities (Godelier makes it clear that “sacred objects” are not only “inalienable” but also “unalienated”). On the other hand, I would like to clarify that Weiner’s and Godelier’s respective emphases (but not exclusive attention) on precious and sacred objects is a rather epiphenomenal expression of deeper theoretical differences between these two authors, briefly discussed in n. 15.

15. I am not trying here to construct a strong opposition between Weiner’s and Godelier’s approaches but rather to build upon, and to a certain extent stretch the distance between, their differing emphases for the sake of my own case-based analysis. On the other hand, while this is not the place for a full discussion of the differences between these two authors, I believe that their somewhat diverging concerns can be to a good extent traced back to the different notions of value underpinning their analyses. Thus, the marginalist undertones that pervade Weiner’s analysis, observable in her depicting of subjects as maximizing agents, originate in the “rather Simmelian understanding of value articulated in Weiner’s conception of inalienable possessions” (Myers 2001:10). As Appadurai (1986) states, Simmel’s notion of value can be summarized in the idea that “economic exchange creates value” (3), from what follows that “exchange is not a by-product of the mutual valuation of objects, but its source” (4), being thus germane to the marginal utility neoclassic approach. Indeed, Ferguson (1988) argues that the main problem of...
which the line between them is permanently reinstated and the sphere of “keeping” is protected from the expansionary tendencies of exchangeability (primarily represented by money): “[My shift] from things that are given to things that are kept . . . illuminated the nature of that universally familiar thing which seems to endanger the practice of gift-exchange and to penetrate the sacred only to profane it: money. Such is the strange itinerary that enabled me to work back to those things that are repressed [i.e., ‘kept’] and whose repression is perhaps the condition of life in society” (1999:9).

While the image of maximizing subjects depicted by Weiner fits well with developers like Fernando and Tomas, Godelier’s attention to the efforts put in reproducing the sphere of what is kept dovetails with the struggle of neighbors and preservationists to preserve the Towers as a sacred object linked to their identity that must not be sold under any circumstance: “Selling means completely separating the thing from the person. Giving means maintaining something of the person in the thing given. And keeping means not separating the thing from the person, because in this union resides the affirmation of a historical identity that must be passed on” (Godelier 2002:34). We could describe the logic governing the approach of neighbors and preservationists to the Towers of the Temple in terms of keeping-against-selling, an effort to assert the inalienability and sacred character of the building in opposition to the market, its value being framed in terms of radical alterity to exchange value.

Both ARCA and the Neighborhood Association were then guided by an analogous logic of keeping-against-selling and held a comparable understanding of heritage as radically opposed to the market. Nevertheless, in order to comprehend the paradoxical outcome of the struggle, described in the next section, we must pay attention to the way in which their differing definitions of heritage affected the way they imagined the relationship between heritage and the market, a question that will bring us back to the issue of hegemony. For preservationist organizations like ARCA, the value of the building as a source of identity is alien to economic value and any sort of commercial activity, keeping being conceived of as incommensurable with selling. The preservationists claimed that heritage was a watertight compartment separated from economic considerations, but their very claim concealed that heritage was being purposefully used by developers like Fernando to enhance their profits, thus obscuring the connection of heritage with broader political and economic dynamics. This concealment is consistent with the objectifying notion of heritage held by the preservationists that abstracted it from actual social relationships. This notion, equivalent to the notion held by gentrifiers like Angela, is the hegemonic notion of heritage in Majorca, contained in the heritage legislation of the island or in the medievalizing narrative, so useful to developers’ objectives, promoted by the municipality. For the Neighborhood Association, in contrast, the clash between preservation and commodification was not a logical contradiction stemming from an abstract incommensurability between heritage and commodity, as two predefined “regimes of value” (Appadurai 1986). It was, instead, an actual political opposition occurring on the ground between the interests of developers and the social time of the neighborhood, that is, the everyday life and reproductive practices of local residents that stood at the center of the association’s notion of heritage. Keeping necessarily involved, and was actually coterminal with, struggling against the very specific selling practices and accumulation strategies of developers. Premised upon a monumental time that conceals and denies social time, the hegemonic definition of heritage runs against the neighbors’ definition, deactivating its counterhegemonic potential. As we will see in the next section, the hegemonic definition of the preservationists undermines the struggle of the neighbors by framing it in terms that can be lined up with the interests of dominant groups, making keeping compatible with selling.

**Pyrhic Victory**

In late 2005 the Heritage Commission ruled Fernando’s development to be illegal and upgraded the heritage status of the Towers, obliging the city to acquire the building. The tenants and the Neighborhood Association received the news as a victory, but time would prove this victory to be pyrrhic. In 2006, the municipality reached an agreement with Fernando wherein the Towers were to be exchanged for an undeveloped municipally owned plot of land on the outskirts of the city. In addition, the municipality considered the new heritage status of the Towers to be incompatible with residential use, rezoning the building as a cultural facility. The rezoning implied that Lydia, Antonia, and Manuel had to leave the building, receiving compensation from the city. In 2010, a team of archaeologists hired by the municipality started working on the rehabilitation of the Towers and its immediate surroundings. In 2007, the lawsuit filed by the three tenants against Fernando went to court. The judge ruled in favor of the plaintiffs, obliging Fernando to pay damages. The tenants, however, never received this money, since Fernando filed for bankruptcy in 2008. Indeed, Fernando left Spain, leaving behind a whole host of unpaid creditors, and moved to Lima where he was received by local authorities and the media as a savior of that South American city’s old center. In 2012, despite the numerous rumors that filtered during the 6 years since the acquisition of the Towers, the municipality had yet...
to determine the final use of the building. The most insistent rumor, however, is that the building will host a new museum devoted to Madina Mayurqa, the medieval Muslim Palma.

For the preservationist organizations that led the legal battle to highlight the historical meaning and upgrade the heritage status of the Towers, the campaign was a total success. They are also enthusiastic about the possibility of a new museum emphasizing the historical value of the old center. For the Neighborhood Association and the tenants, on the other hand, the outcome of their struggle is, to say the least, paradoxical. The neighborhood suffered the loss of three committed residents and one of the few remaining stores, deepening its commercial desertification and thus advancing its conversion into an inner luxury suburb. In addition, the creation of a new cultural facility will strengthen its cultural, historical value, thus reinforcing real estate prices and the process of gentrification. Indeed, the struggle to preserve the Towers, to claim its inalienability, raised the public awareness about a building whose historical value was only known to a handful of local specialists.

The struggle has thus worked as an authentication process enhancing the heritage value of the building and, by extension, of the whole area, a value that can now be used by nearby developers to bolster the historical value of their properties and build their profits. This process is evident in the marketing of a luxury development one block south of the Towers. Although built in a historicist fashion and publicized through the catchphrase “luxury and history,” this development, containing 19 housing units, was built entirely from scratch. The developing company, however, placed much effort into wrapping the commodity in history, stressing that it was “located in Palma, the heart of Mallorca, the jewel of the Western Mediterranean,” and delving into the grandiloquent language often used by realtors: “[Palma’s] historic centre is among the best preserved in Europe. Beautiful facades speak of God and power; sober exteriors hide the splendours of a privileged privacy.” And this discourse, together with the historical and economic value of the development, is authenticated by surrounding heritage landmarks, such as the rediscovered Towers of the Temple: “Few areas locate so much history as that surrounding Palacetes Pelleteria [i.e., the new development]. Within a 200 metre radius there are six churches, two monasteries and numerous mansions and stately homes of aristocratic origin. . . . One block down stands the last remaining defence tower from the Arab era. And hidden just behind is the church of the Templar Knights.” We can observe in this quote how surrounding properties, even when they lack heritage elements, circulate, using Mauss’s (2000 [1924]:134) apt expression, as “satellites” of certain central heritage landmarks such as the Towers that remain unalienated, kept as repositories of a historical value that authenticates the surrounding properties, thus liberating developers, at least to a certain extent, from the task, and more crucially the costs, of keeping.

We can see, therefore, that the strategies of the preservationist organizations, developers, and gentrifiers ultimately reinforced each other. While the preservationists understood the value of heritage as incommensurable to economic value, their claims ended up reinforcing the latter. In fact, these three groups hold an analogous, hegemonic notion of heritage as artifact: a mystifying notion of heritage detached of social relationships that conceals the social processes that construct it. As we saw in the case of Angela, heritage is already there, it just has to be discovered, made to emerge. For the preservationist organizations, the need to keep must be alien to economic considerations, yet by holding a notion of heritage as something purely cultural they conceal their connection with the power structures and struggles that are at the heart of heritage making. It is this hegemonic notion of heritage that allows for keeping-against-selling to be compatible with the broader interests of realtors.

Indeed, the tendency of most developers to favor selling to the detriment of keeping goes against their general interest as a group, since it is only by keeping that they are able to sell—keeping-for-selling. Pushed by the preservationist organizations, the legal apparatus of patrimonialization is capable of effecting, in the absence of powerful regulatory mechanisms, a piecemeal harmonization of the general interest of realtors, achieving an ever-precarious balance between keeping and selling. As shown in the differing emphases of Weiner and Godelier, “keeping” can run either in favor or against commodification and market expansion, thus explaining the contradictory uses of heritage in Palma and historic centers elsewhere. The control that dominant groups hold over the definition of heritage, at least in the case of Palma, ensures that the struggles around heritage can ultimately be reconciled with the workings of the market.

Conclusions: Heritage Making and Market Expansion

This article has sought to explain the economic logic that underpins the hegemonic character of the idiom of heritage in the old center of Palma. Drawing on Weiner’s and Godelier’s theoretical insights on inalienability, I have shown that . . .


17. The expression “satellites” is found in a footnote of the Essai sur le don where Mauss, discussing the relationship between the Kwakuitl copperers that circulate in potlatches and those that remain kept as treasures within clans and tribes, observes that the former circulate as “satellites” of the latter, from which they derive their value. Both Weiner and Godelier stress the importance of this footnote, pointing at it as a source of inspiration for their own work on inalienability.

18. In this respect it may be worth pointing out that in 2005, at the peak of the struggle, Angela, who is a friend of both Tomás and Fernando, visited the association that claims to represent the heritage of the Templars in Spain to persuade them to purchase the Towers from Fernando to convert the building into a museum devoted to the history of the Templar order.
the ambivalent relationship heritage maintains with market practices explains why heritage claims are legitimately used both in order to expand capital and to resist that expansion. As a specific cultural modality of “keeping”—claiming the inalienability of certain objects and withdrawing them from exchange in order to preserve and enhance their value—heritage making may be guided either by the logic of keeping-for-selling, which feeds and accelerates market exchange, or keeping-against-selling, which radically opposes market exchange. The analysis, through the lens of inalienability, of the strategies around heritage of diverse groups of actors with conflicting interests struggling for hegemony has thus allowed me to illuminate the connection between domains (i.e., “political,” the “cultural,” and the “economic”) that are usually presented as separate, watertight compartments. However, the denouement of the story of the Towers of the Temple shows precisely how this connectivity is finally cut by a hegemonic discourse of heritage premised upon the irreducible incommensurability of heritage. I argue that it is this dominant idea of heritage as a sui generis domain, held in Palma by different actors with diverse agendas, that makes heritage not only a hegemonic idiom articulating conflict but also an idiom of hegemony framing conflicts in terms advantageous to dominant groups. While we observed that the strategies of preservationists, developers, and gentrifiers are not coordinated, and indeed they may be guided by opposing logics, they are ultimately compatible with one another through a hegemonic expert notion of heritage, guarded by legal apparatuses and expert discourses, that lines up their respective interests and disarms counterhegemonic projects irreconcilable with dominant relations. This loose articulation of gentrifiers, developers, preservationists, expert discourses, municipal policies, and legal mechanisms indeed enforces an objectifying definition of heritage that, even if it may be detrimental to individual capitalists, is consistent with the logic of capitalist accumulation and the abstract yet differentiated required to build profits and, at least in the medium term, reproduce accumulation.

Whereas heritage is only one of the mechanisms through which inalienability is asserted and keeping is organized in market societies, the hegemonic discourse of heritage, constructing it as an enclosed, unconnected sphere, makes it especially suited to the midterm needs of selling, functioning in Palma as an unlikely arbiter negotiating the conflicts between the particular and general interests of capital while diffusing the struggles that, by connecting heritage to everyday practices and to broader issues of political economy, may challenge those interests altogether. This idea may help explain why the past 4 decades have been characterized both by an expansion of capital and commodification into new domains of social activity and by heritage inflation, the quantitative growth and qualitative diversification of the field of heritage. While this inflation may well be regarded as the result of the resistance to market expansion, as to a good extent happened in the case analyzed of the Towers of the Temple, we should also consider why this seems to be a privileged mechanism to forge that resistance and draw the lines between keeping and selling. The case of Palma suggests that the response to this question lies in the ambivalent power of the dominant practices and discourse of heritage: by cutting the connection between heritage and the economic sphere, this discourse paradoxically makes resistance consistent with the logic of keeping-for-selling that the market requires.

Comments

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Today’s vibrant and ever-growing field of heritage studies offers us evermore insightful critical analysis of an increasingly diverse array of properties, artifacts, landscapes, and traditions. Franquesa’s is a vivid case study of heritage politics in gentrifying neighborhoods of the urban city center of Palma. The Majorcan case illustrates several of the key issues at the forefront of contemporary heritage studies—tensions between preservation, conservation, and development; struggles over ownership of and access to heritage properties; debates over the meaning and significance of “heritigized” pasts; and the divergent visions of heritage futures. These multiple and intertwined concerns converge, at their heart, a singular preoccupation that has become a dominant paradigm in the field of heritage studies—conflict. This tendency toward finding conflict in heritage exists not only within the quotidian practices and experiences of heritage on the ground but also with the more abstracted machinations of the global heritage apparatus.

Oftentimes we are tempted to reduce social, political, and economic complexity to “conflict” when we encounter competing agendas colliding and even colluding in the spaces of heritage. Analyses of heritage centered on conflict, nuanced as they might be, tend toward creating a false sense of dualism—either/or, good/bad, and even right or wrong. The conflict at the center of Franquesa’s case study avoids this dualism. The conflict at the Temple of the Towers is wrought not only among social actors (namely, developers and tenants) but also between competing notions of the valuation of heritage. The suspects in this heritage conflict are not unusual. On the one hand, we find developers. They use “heritage” to add market value to the properties in question. On the other hand, we find the residents. They draw on everyday lived experience to create relationships with the built heritage environment.

These two sets of social actors must negotiate a third: the category of heritage itself. We can add to this complex the fact that this negotiation must use the heritage’s own terms
As both are well aware, "heritage" is of heritage is inextricably connected to the value of property. Indigenous communities in the midst of archaeological ruins and, on the other hand, big business bank deals. Whether for contradiction is the false distinction between qualitative and tions. In the case of the Towers of the Temple, the sustained gemony of heritage, I am wondering if the seemingly op-
gerated by and generative of a singular logic. This is where heritage cease to be so flexible?

Franquesa is interested in the malleability, the wiliness, if you will, of heritage as a category. In the urban center of Palma, heritage is a go-to category, granted a convenient flex-
bility that surely only neoliberalism can guarantee. Heritage is everywhere and everything. It is used to both legitimate and resist. By operating as such an expansive category, heritage must necessarily be an empty category. But where does her-
tage as a category finds its limits? In other words, when does heritage cease to be so flexible?

Heritage shows its limits where it shows itself to be generated by and generative of a singular logic. This is where Franquesa’s micro-level portrait of the heritage politics in the Tower of the Temple offers its most significant contributions. Given exactly what Franquesa himself identifies as the hegemony of heritage, I am wondering if the seemingly op-
positional positions in this heritage conflict are somehow just two sides of the same neoliberal coin. Heritage, produced under the logics of neoliberal capitalism, sustains contradic-
tions. In the case of the Towers of the Temple, the sustained contradiction is the false distinction between qualitative and quantitative values.

Thus any conflict is, in a sense, false. Yet the stakes are still high for, on the one hand, individual and community identity, and, on the other hand, big business bank deals. Whether for indigenous communities in the midst of archaeological ruins or urban residents in the throes of gentrification, the value of heritage is inextricably connected to the value of property. As both are well aware, "heritage" is very real estate. And the logic of neoliberalism—which is itself what makes heritage into real estate—is what, in the final summation, collapses any truly oppositional nature of the positions in the Towers of the Temple case.

This is a refreshing piece, commendable for displaying and analyzing the multiple voices and interests around cultural heritage and not just zooming in on the official discourses that are often such an easy target for deconstruction. It also convincingly shows how opposed forces unwittingly subscribe to the same notion of socially disembedded heritage that ends up sidelining the neighborhood association, which is the one body that wants to preserve social and not just built fabric. I find many parallels to what I observed in another historic city, in central Kyoto, where there is also architectural animism around the kyô-machiya, the traditional houses, which residents see as somehow alive (Brumann 2009:288–289, 2012:152–153). And there too, people debate the relative merits of Tomas-style artisanal perfectionism versus the less ex-
acting Fernando-style commercial renovations that have been spreading lately (Brumann 2012:116–129, 335–337), encour-
aged by the general fact that with urban heritage, there is often more tolerance for creative appropriations and a diversity of approaches (Brumann 2009:291–293, 2012:246–251). Until very recently, however, discussing renovation styles was a side debate, as most of the conservationists’ efforts went into fighting the advance of run-of-the-mill high-rise buildings that—in contrast to Palma—were the most common, lucrative, and perfectly legal way of urban redevelopment (Brumann 2012: 68–90).

That they could, and that it is still possible to, tear down top-class traditional town houses in Kyoto when the propri-
ers prefer to annihilate intimate family space and cede it to stranglers leads me to my only point of contention. This could not be better introduced than by a famous quote by John Ruskin (1819–1900), inspirer of the arts and crafts movement and one of the founding fathers of modern conservation: "It is . . . no question of expediency or feeling whether we shall preserve the buildings of past times or not. We have no right whatever to touch them. They are not ours. They belong partly to those who built them, and partly to all the generations of mankind who are to follow us” (Ruskin 1920 [1849]:206).

The postulated moral duty to preserve is less interesting here than the idea that there is not just a single owner for past buildings. In effect, Ruskin postulates co-ownership be-
tween the current proprietor and the builders and future genera-
tions, and this is what the idea of public heritage conserva-
tion is all about. And here, it appears to me that the heritage-loving protagonists of Franquesa’s story are less con-
cerned with alienability than with co-ownership and with the fact that the likes of Fernando are not submitting to its re-
quirements. I find keeping-while-giving not quite transferable to Tomas’s case, since the things he keeps (structural and decorative details) and sells (the restored flat) are different things, not the same as in Weiner’s account. Also, buying and selling listed buildings appears to be entirely fine in Palma,
as it would be in Japan or in Germany, and that the Tower ends up as public property appears to be welcomed for its protective effect, not as an end in itself. But in the case of heritage designations, the public in effect co-owns private buildings, most often the exterior only but sometimes also the historical parts of the interior (so that when the consent of the proprietor is a prerequisite to listing, as in Japan, hardly any privately owned building gets listed at all). What belongs to this special co-owner is always kept and never bequeathed or sold since the public, as a collective entity, simply lives on. Alienation is usually impossible, which is not quite the same thing as inalienability in the Trobriands, however. Also, when a building loses heritage status, for example by becoming so dilapidated that it is a public hazard, the property becomes entirely alienable again. That such co-ownership is a partial dispossession of the legal proprietor is recognized and compensated for by public subsidies and tax exemptions in most heritage regimes. Heritage co-ownership is a very specific one that does not, say, entail the right for the public to enter and stay in the house at will or violate any of the constitutional protections of private domiciles, but it does entail the right to keep its material side from willful change, such as Fernando’s rabid renovations.

I see Franquesa’s point about the similarity of heritage with inalienable valuables in Melanesia, and one could also think of Bourdieu’s analyses of how gift exchange (1977:171–177) or high art (1983) likewise rest on the fiction that they are exempt from the commercial sphere and mundane calculation. Like these other things, heritage is “priceless” and must be defended as such whenever assailed by narrow utilitarian considerations—to only become all the more profitable as a result, as Franquesa shows. But the rationalizations typically given rest on co-ownership, not inalienability: “we” all co-own the Tower, or at least some of its significant aspects, morally if not legally, and it is thus our right to have the Tower kept the way it materially is and to stop the Fernandos, however much they might insist on their property rights.

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Jaume Franquesa’s ethnography of real estate markets, neighborhood associations, and individuals’ claims upon buildings offers a nuanced analysis of the ambiguous effects of urban cultural heritage management. I appreciate his attention to how this technology, which supposedly insulates architecture from market-based alienation, may instead facilitate speculation by incorporating difference into the production of abstract space and monumental time. In Majorca and elsewhere, then, tensions surrounding “keeping and selling” underscore how landmarking does more than stem the march of capital, inhabitants’ dispossession, and the destruction of community treasures.

Since I agree with much of the analysis, and because it brings together critiques often enunciated in piecemeal fashion, I focus on objectification and abstraction as they relate to interpretive frameworks that emerge from and contribute to the capture of value. Franquesa’s clarification of the extent to which inalienability supports the market by blinding citizens to its effects is important to theorizing accumulation today and thus in sharpening understandings of cultural commodification more generally. Nonetheless, such an emphasis on conditions of interpretability turns on a rather well-developed approach, and most ethnographers I know agree that heritage, like property more generally (Verdery 2003), takes form as a thing and a process, and its misrecognition as a purified object girds its ideological functions. I find it unsurprising, and yet important, that Franquesa advocates locating heritage more clearly in a range of political economic processes. Thus it seems helpful to hold onto this move while expanding what it does.

For Franquesa, circumcision, enclosure, and abstraction instrumentalize the social. Yet such sanctioning of the market—a perspective with which I am entirely sympathetic—raises a number of issues: I am not convinced that objectifications, when historicized and examined closely, necessarily amount to a simplification or distortion of the quotidian (Brumann 2009). Even more basically, a nostalgia for the prelapsarian naturalizes everydayness, a modern condition produced via specific operations under capitalism (Lefebvre 2008). At times Franquesa avoids such a reduction by reading stories of ghosts and spirits as hypostatizations that gird misinterpretations of the true shape of accumulation. At other times he seems to accept that patrimonialization isolates its objects from social relations beyond the narrowly economic. But what counts here as properly, or even improperly, economic in a “pastified” (Price 2006) space in which gestures, bathing, dances, and even sexuality and morality may serve as economic goods? Even objectified signs are material entities whose attempted purification generates additional, unexpected, and yet oftentimes denied, entanglements (Keane 2007). This insight needs to be taken all the way down into Franquesa’s analysis rather than being directed at those representations most obviously circumscribed by markets or heritage protocols.

A community’s transformation into a musealized space does seem to present, especially in retrospect, a simplification of social life. But might exploring a “heritage grid” (Hall 2007) linking international experts, local bureaucrats, and specific segments of a citizenry at different scales also mean that we might “reassemble the social” (Latour 2005) and its analysis in ways that go beyond critiques of the fetishization at the heart of such recent instrumentalizations? And does a grid necessarily divide the social into falsely concrete abstractions with neat borders (Taussig 2004)? If one takes seriously the extent to which additional signifieds attach to objectified signs...
of history and community, then the boundaries between and around supposedly abstracted entities are blurry in ways that require more than de fetishization. Is the assemblage that emerges from a developer’s relationship to northern European buyers and the construction workers, caretakers, police, musicians, street vendors, and bureaucrats who maintain a heritage zone, really an extraction from the social in favor of the market? Might roiling abstractions and troubling objectifications be treated as something other than misdeeds that require proper contextualization?

To be fair, Franquesa’s argument is more sophisticated than the assertion that patrimonialization homogenizes social life. Nonetheless, I find something paradoxical about an analysis that brings to the fore, and yet leaves relatively unexamined, the life of the peoplehood whose struggles animate the market. Concerns with vitality are central to heritage. Thus while Franquesa is interested in how people misrecognize exploitation, my comments are intended to encourage a more hybrid analysis. In my research I have found that residents of heritage zones employ iconoclastic means of tying themselves to the commodity form to generate surprisingly clear analyses of the harnessing of the quotidian in the name of economic value (Collins 2008b, 2011). Yet their insights do not involve a direct de fetishization reliant on established notions of the economic.

The trick, then, is to hold onto what has long been accepted as the “political economic” without letting this moral narrative about the proper relations between people and buildings overshadow novel responses to alienation. Franquesa reveals brilliantly how this takes place in relation to markets. But in doing so he repeats certain of his interlocutors’ moves in ways that simplify how the social space of everydayness may itself obscure objectification and the workings of capital. After all, hegemony turns on speaking through particular categories. Thus, rather than arguing about a misuse of the social via commodification, why not explore what such an “economic” logic really is in a capitalist present full of strange formulations like “cultural” labor and “intangible heritage”?

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Franquesa’s article is a fresh, thought-provoking, and much-needed contribution to contemporary anthropology. His research deeply invigorates theoretical debates in heritage and urban studies, tourism, and material culture by developing a novel epistemological trilogy to think about heritage and why heritage matters today. Combining Annette Weiner’s classical paradox of “keeping-while-giving,” Herzfeld’s conceptualization of heritage as idiom, and William Roseberry and Gavin Smith’s understanding of hegemony, Franquesa’s ethnography convincingly shows how heritage is shaping contemporary urban everyday struggles and fueling market expansion into new spheres of social reality.

Thinking dialectically about the ambivalent relationships between heritage and the market through one particular urban struggle in Palma (Spain), Franquesa’s work opens up heritage to political debates about social justice agendas and space production. In this sense, his work connects with and contributes to wider discussions in the realm of public anthropology and, more specifically, with ideas about the transformative potential of the discipline (Borofsky 2004). In this regard, Franquesa’s work is especially timely both in Spain and in the rest of Europe, where the subsistence of the discipline depends more than ever on proving the value of applied anthropological research and where his analysis can provide crucial insights for emerging social movements reclaiming the “inalienable” character of public space and the need to resist growing pressures of marketization and commoditization.

Franquesa’s arguments are in line with another contemporary theoretical preoccupation within the discipline, that of neoliberalism and its limits—“neoliberalism” understood here as another anthropological catchword in need of much rethinking. Although I fully agree with Franquesa’s focus on the hegemonic idioms of heritage and the market, I think his arguments could benefit from some of the insights the author has developed in previous works regarding the idioms of neoliberalism and the market (Franquesa 2007). Reading his piece, I kept wondering: what would happen if the same processual analysis, the same decentering efforts that are here applied to heritage as a concept and as an idiom, were also applied, in future research, to neoliberalism and to the market as objects of anthropological inquiry? Although it is possible to read between the lines how the author’s analysis transcends a plain conceptualization of neoliberalism, I sometimes felt that some arguments were still trapped in the language that takes for granted the market, or the neoliberal regime. I think that Franquesa’s case study clearly illustrates the complexity of those terms by illustrating how they actually take place in practice. If we were to move beyond a reification of neoliberalism or the market as faits accomplis, we could see how the agents and connections that the author brilliantly describes in his ethnography are good illustrations of how neoliberalism is not a single, homogenous force but, instead, a collection of “projects with totalizing desires but whose totalizing desires (against heritage performative ones we could add) are rarely fully realized because (they) never operate in vacuum” (Kingfisher and Maskovsky 2008:118). Following this interpretation, the case of Palma stands for a very particular and complex site-specific form of neoliberalism accomplished through past and present heritage discourses. More specifically, Franquesa’s work would also exemplify the need to move beyond the dichotomy of advancing “and/or” resisting neoliberalism by exemplifying how the idiom of heritage in Palma together with its appeal to the inalienable nature of objects and buildings qua heritage reveal a set of
competing governance projects aiming to advance different interests and agendas (e.g., Brenner and Theodore 2002). The result of these struggles is not so much just to advance and reproduce the hegemonic and inexorable logic of the market but rather to produce a particular and site-specific form of market logic, one that places take through the double processes of keeping-for-selling and keeping-against-selling and that entails the agonistic production of new spatial configurations, new forms of individual and collective political subjectivities (as those embodied by gentrifiers, preservationist associations, and neighbors), as well as new modes of social and political organization (as those represented by the shifting coalitions and power balance among residents, developers, preservationist agencies, and the local government).

Read in this way, Franquesa’s work would not only help us to “un-black-box” the empirical reality behind the idioms of neoliberalism and the market but also invites us to explore the opportunities and novel forms of political action that these idioms can unintentionally foster.

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The Very Real Business of Heritage Framing

“Heritage” is everywhere in some places and not in others. World Heritage designations notwithstanding. Of course, all people and all places have pasts, some of it known, much of it unknown, some of it narrativized as history, some as culture, some as folklore, some as tradition, and some even as (intellectual) property. That some is clearly spotlighted, objectified, sold, bought, consumed, promoted, displayed, and embraced has caught the attention of observant historians, anthropologists, political scientists, and sociologists over the years. And so is its corollary–that some is discredited, disavowed, and even denied, as those denying the Holocaust and those believing in people without histories well illustrate.

Franquesa adds to that literature and offers extensive evidence of yet another case of such framing(s) of pasts, but it is his suggestions about its ties to contemporary markets in the context of neoliberal capitalism that warrant attention by a much wider readership, whether or not we agree with his take. Put differently, this essay is about “value” and, in particular, about what adds value to real estate today. That claims about national or singular patrimony are central in Majorca (Spain), contribute to the marketing of tourism there, and increase the profit margins of many even indirectly tied to the tourist and vacation industry in these Spanish islands seems clear. But Franquesa urges us not to take that for granted nor even to frame it just in terms of cultural tourism or international relations. At the heart of his essay is a fight over hard, expensive real estate, and the key figures are the developers who buy, build, renovate, invest, and profit significantly from their business—of real estate holding (indeed a form of “keeping”), real estate developing (clearly a form of keeping-for-selling in a market economy), and real estate flipping (my translation of Franquesa’s stress on process and not just object). Local authorities, organized preservationists, and consumer/dissidents play a role, but I am primarily struck by what Franquesa sheds light on, namely, the enormous, clever use of “heritage” as an added value in business.

How common is this, and how well understood is this in the scholarly community (and perhaps even in anthropological circles)? Are the scholars lagging behind the activists, protestors, local authorities, and preservationists who are deeply immersed in these battles in Spain and elsewhere and are quite aware of the “big bucks” these battles entail and what I might call the use and abuse of history, temporality, memory, meaning, culture, folklore, and indeed heritage (borrowing from Marshall Sahlins’s late 1970s insightful The Use and Abuse of Biology [1977])? Must our reaction be closer to cynicism or to motivated action? Is this just another example of the seemingly unfettered march of contemporary neoliberal capitalism into, through, and out of every arena of most contemporary and at least partly globalized societies?

I have some doubts about Franquesa’s slant here, especially the way he employs hegemony as if it were different or unusual in this setting, when I mostly see similarities in how it plays out in this arena and in many others in Europe, the Mediterranean, and elsewhere. It is Franquesa’s point about hegemony operating when the idiom of heritage is used to conceal political and economic relationships that I refer to. I believe he offers an excellent example of hegemony at work, just not an unusual case of it. Note that he writes “that heritage is not a neutral category open to endless manipulation in a perfect pluralist society but a hegemonic, ideologically loaded notion operating in interlocking social fields fraught with power differentials and inequalities tending to reinforce these power dynamics.” Yes, indeed.

But perhaps it is the nature of the property that ought to be our central focus—its enormous materiality, immovability, commodification, and role in the business of heritage making, profit making, space making, and claims to inalienability. Do we study that enough when, as a profession, we tend to favor the underempowered? Do we, in looking at related battles over meaning or culture or silenced histories, so favor the nonhegemonic that we fail to be as nuanced as needed in looking at the hegemonic? Do we pay sufficient attention to many inherent paradoxes of property (some of which Franquesa highlights here and ties to discourses and conceptions of heritage), especially when not focusing on the consumer goods whose border-crossing lives and exchange-prone social lives command so much current anthropological and cultural studies attention? The scale of the “added value” here reminds me that there is still much anthropologists do not tackle, or
do not tackle well enough, visibly enough, or courageously enough.

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In his excellent article analyzing struggles over heritage in Palma, Mallorca’s real estate market, Jaume Franquesa defines two uses of heritage: keeping-for-selling and keeping-against-selling. The first, mobilized especially by real estate developers (and preservationists), draws on supposedly unique and irreplaceable connections to the past to fashion a distinctive object/commodity. The second, claimed more frequently by tenant activists, posits heritage as intrinsically opposed to commodity exchange. Both claims draw on the notion of inalienability—the idea that a given form of wealth should be preserved and passed down to future generations of a collective (Weiner 1992).

After tracing a lively debate over how the historic building called the Towers of the Temple is claimed by diverse groups through idioms of heritage, Franquesa concludes rather dismally that “the control that dominant groups hold over the definition of heritage, at least in the case of Palma, ensures that the struggles around heritage can ultimately be reconciled with the workings of the market.” He is careful to insert the caveat that this statement may not apply beyond Palma, but the article as a whole aims at a more general claim concerning the politics of inalienability in a capitalist context. Persuaded by Franquesa’s assessment of his own case, and without suggesting a “free market of idioms,” I wonder if this conclusion cuts off prematurely the ongoing nature of the politics of heritage by suggesting that heritage is intrinsically, inevitably, and finally encompassed by market logic.

My own work in a Mexican mining cooperative provides a useful comparison (Ferry 2002, 2005). In that instance, heritage is frequently associated with the Mexican postrevolutionary state and thus with the public good and not the market. Antimarket claims to heritage in Mexico have drawn their legitimacy not primarily from a discourse of preservation (relatively reconcilable with market logic) but rather one of inalienable sovereign resources (considerably less so). Antimarket struggles in Mexico based on claims of inalienability do not always or even usually win out, but they do sometimes.

Franquesa’s conclusion draws our attention away from a central feature of inalienability—its relationship to the making, maintenance, and disintegration of collectivities. Weiner teaches us that the process of making inalienable possessions creates not only objects but collectives with more or less legitimate claims to those objects (1992:33). Thus the process of making heritage is never disconnected from the social and political, even though the objects created may appear as such. As Franquesa deftly shows us, Lydia, the tenant activist, claims the building as her heritage (and enlists the building’s spirits on her side), while developers claim it on behalf of the city of Majorca. But these aspects of the case could be explored more deeply. Further attention to the ways heritage making works to shore up or challenge particular collectives and collective projects would show more clearly the unstable nature of hegemonic politics. For the dynamic, open-ended nature of heritage lies in these claims to different collectivities (though usually not on a level playing field, of course).

In conclusion and on a somewhat broader canvas, I would like to comment on the article as an example of what I would call “neosubstantivism.” Substantivism, as formulated by Polanyi and his followers, is premised on the difference between economies embedded in institutions and the “disembedded” market (Dalton 1971; Polanyi 1968 [1957], 2001 [1944]; Sahlin 1972). This strategy yielded a wealth of useful studies but was somewhat justifiably critiqued as romanticizing (Cook 1966). And as anthropologists dismantled the very idea of fundamentally different societies (Fabian 1982), the premise became less workable. More recently, scholars have turned their attention to hybrid economic forms (Ferry 2002; Hutchinson 1992; Rogers 2005) and to questioning the very idea that price-setting markets or corporations are disembedded (Benson and Kirsch 2010; Ho 2009; and see Granovetter 1985 for an early, brilliant example). By importing Weiner and Godelier’s work on reciprocity to a market context, Franquesa’s article joins this trajectory.

However, Franquesa points out that “[what was] described by Weiner as a contradictory yet precariously balanced, perpetually retrofitting mechanism of keeping-while-giving mutates here, thus, into an unbalanced, autodestructive dynamic of keeping-for-selling.” His analysis of this mutation recalls Polanyi’s “double movement” concerning market expansion and reactions to it (2001 [1944]). But by locating inalienability within rather than outside capitalism, Franquesa’s article has the potential to move beyond a Polanyian analysis. In doing so, his work would join others in a new approach I am calling “neosubstantivism” (see also Caliskan 2010:6) to draw attention to the fact that it grows out of the subdiscipline’s roots, now informed by the systemic view and critical stance of political economy. This retrofitted, newly critical substantivism has begun to bring economic anthropology in from the margins, particularly in the wake of the 2008 crisis (Graeber 2011; Hart, Laville, and Cattani 2010; Tett 2009). To achieve this potential, we need a view of struggles over heritage as part of an ongoing process of building and dismantling hegemony. Such a view recognizes the power of markets without closing off the possibility of challenges to them.

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Ostensibly about a dispute over real estate in a small Medi-
terranean city, this paper engages with a number of important issues both for guild anthropologists, geographers, historians, and also for the role of “history” in the politics of the present. Circling around the thorny question of heritage Franquesa actually explores uses of the notion of hegemony; class relations in a case of contemporary ethnography; and the fields of force arising in contemporary capitalism, especially in respect to the constitution of urban space and place.

Franquesa asks why the disputes over heritage have expanded so vastly over the past decades. One answer lies with what the late Eric Hobsbawm (2005) called “the memory boom.” By associating the boom with what he called “in-group histories,” Hobsbawm seemed to imply that it was the result of a bottom-up groundswell, guild historians only being drawn into the fray later. And yet the balance in initiatives appears to vary from one country to another. Professionals in the culture industry played a key role in Spain’s Law of Historical Memory (2007), but the groundswell that preceded that law and the evidence we get here about one of Madrid’s “peripheries” suggests a more complicated dialectic.19

In this case, the hegemonic field that made heritage the narrative frame for increasing property prices, on the one hand, and for pushing back against developers, on the other, is surely not wholly removed from Spain’s (and its regions’) version of the memory boom. Nonetheless, this should not encourage us toward the image of a balanced conversation between equal force and counterforce. As Franquesa suggests, quoting Roseberry (1994), we need to think here of a “social order characterized by domination,” and the current features of Spanish capitalism, seen in terms of a political economic interpretation, encourage us to explore just what form such domination has taken historically. The current crisis is a direct result of the particular form Spanish capitalism took beginning with the period in the mid-sixties when Franco turned from autorregia to the “technicians” who set the terms for what came to be known as the Spanish Miracle (see Narotzky and Smith 2006). Those terms eventually gave rise to the toxic combination of the role of real estate developers, on the one hand, and the role of finance capitalists, on the other.

Spain offers an extreme case of the manipulation and adjustment of regulations that produced this form of capitalism. The labeling of this as “neoliberalism” seems to rather miss the point. It increasingly became the project of a class bloc that prioritized the garnering of surplus value through rents and credits over exploitation through production via the wage relation (or its surrogates; Smith 2014, chap. 7). This in turn meant a specific way in which the reproduction of capital effectively integrated the population into the Spanish social formation.

Where the means for resolving the tension between profits

and wages at the height of industrial capitalism lay in advances in productivity, the resolution with the increasing dominance of finance capital lay with the advancing of credit (see especially Duncan 2012). Both forms relied on movement in very much the same way in which Franquesa explains circulation (especially in his use of Godelier). Both likewise rely on capturing movement, or at least the channeling thereof. Under both forms of capital, then, there is a perpetual tension between moving valuable things around and hanging onto them. With industrial capital, things have to be moved into the arena of production, kept there while production is going on, and then, crucially, captured again for the capitalist at the moment of sale and brought back as surplus value to repeat the cycle of (expanded) reproduction.

Finance capital by definition does not garner its profits through this cycle. Capture—through rents and credits—becomes paramount. The faster and unfettered the circulation, the greater the rewards for capture. This is, of course, an especially speeded up version of keeping-for-selling, to which Franquesa refers. It would be interesting to think about how the current dominance of this form of what Lefebvre and Harvey would call “mobile capital” shapes the possibilities for using heritage for keeping-for-selling among those tied to the fixed nature of real estate.

The proliferation in uses of heritage to enhance value through capture then, reflects the morphing of Spanish capitalism over the past 50 years, which was crucially tied to real estate development (and foreign investment) and came increasingly to rely on credit. It is precisely through the richness of Franquesa’s argument that it becomes possible to add these broader reflections to his fascinating ethnographic material.

Reply

I have learned much from this rich set of commentaries. All are pertinent and significant, and they engage with both the analysis of the specific case as well as the broader theoretical points discussed in the paper. While most, if not all, of the comments agree with and validate the main thrust of the article, there are also notable disagreements and rich points of tension. The latter cluster around three levels of analysis covered in the paper. The first one is the notion and, more notably, the politics of cultural heritage and its current effects in urban historical centers worldwide. A second, more general area of concern has to do with the need but also the limitations to understand both the expansion of market-driven practices of accumulation and the resistance to this movement through a single, coherent analytical framework. The third level of contention connects with a theoretical and conceptual concern long central to political economy and economic anthropology: how to grapple with, and make sense of, the
blurry contours of what we call “economic.” My reply focuses on these three broad points of discussion.

One of the central goals of my article was to bring the analysis of heritage to the mainstream of anthropological thought. This attempt stems from what I perceive as a risk of “ghettoization”: the growing number of rich, nuanced, ethnographically grounded analyses revolving around the processes of heritage making is giving place to a burgeoning subfield of “heritage studies” but is having a very limited impact on the anthropological discipline as a whole. While anthropologists working on heritage issues are certainly not the only ones to blame for this marginal position, it would be foolish to relieve us of all responsibility. There is a tendency for discussions to remain thematically and conceptually internal to heritage, and to speak in the discourse of heritage, thus isolating them from broader debates. I believe this to be one of the central reasons why anthropologists, as Virginia Dominguez asserts, are lagging behind in their analysis of the “big bucks” involved in the “use and abuse of history, temporality, memory, meaning, culture, folklore, and indeed heritage.” It is in reaction to this tendency that I decided to focus on the economic logic surrounding heritage making and to do so from a position that is both politically engaged and methodologically critical.

It is with this context in mind that I read Christoph Brumann’s comments. While generous in his overall appreciation of the article, Brumann launches a series of criticisms: fundamentally, that I should think in terms of co-ownership rather than inalienability; I should distinguish between those architectural elements explicitly protected through heritage legislation and the buildings (or more generally, I would say, spaces) where those designated elements are located; I should be more generous in my take on those developers who, like Tomas, are respectful with the built environment and clearly distinguish them from the “destructive” ones à la Fernando. All these criticisms have one thing in common: they are launched from, and make sense within, the internal logic, discourse, and legal apparatus of heritage (as Brumann’s reliance on a quote from Ruskin reveals). In contrast, my point of departure is that heritage must be first approached from outside of its own web of practices and discourses. As I discuss in the opening section of the paper, this position does not only stem from programmatic motivations but also from methodological concerns: I argue that heritage, an ideologically loaded notion striving to conceal its own workings, is methodologically critical.

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My attempt to dispel easy dichotomies while remaining anchored within the central tradition of economic anthropology is generously (I hope not too generously) acknowledged by Elizabeth Emma Ferry when she praises the article for being an example of “neosubstantivism” or “critical substantivism.” I deeply appreciated Ferry’s thoughtful com-
ments, and I do take note of her suggestions regarding the analysis of the case, such as the need to explore more fully the relationship between inalienability and the making of collectivities (a point also raised by Collins). Ferry also rightly notes that my conclusion that “the struggles around heritage can ultimately be reconciled with the workings of the market” does not apply to her own research with Mxican mining communities. Here, however, I wonder if the disagreement is not primarily related to the fact that we are speaking of two connected but quite different meanings of “heritage” or “patrimonio” (patrimonio). My analysis is concerned with patrimonio cultural, a category whose construction is premised upon the denial of its economic character. Ferry’s analysis is instead concerned with patrimonio, a category with deep roots in Roman law that fundamentally identifies the inherited wealth or assets of a collectivity. This wealth, this patrimonio, is very often considered inalienable, but its economic character is hardly ever disputed.

Ferry’s discomfort with the pessimism of my conclusions is nonetheless relevant. As I mentioned earlier, the article is built from a position of political engagement, a point that Matilde Córdoba Azcárate highlights by situating the paper in the context of “emerging social movements claiming the ‘inalienable’ character of public space and the need to resist growing pressures of marketization and commoditization.” I should perhaps clarify my position here. My point is that in order to be transformative, heritage struggles need to be more than just heritage struggles. The struggles I analyzed see their transformative potential limited because they remain trapped within a heritage discourse that is ultimately a dominant and dominated discourse that produces discrete objects, thus cutting the processual character of these struggles and their connection with broader social processes and agendas. At its most abstract, my argument is that the left must unleash processes rather than produce and cherish objects that close off that processuality, a tendency that Lefebvre (2009 [1979]) critically labeled “abstract utopianism” (see De Angelis 2007 for a similar critique). As we see in Palma, it is developers who are just too keen on valorizing, as Virgina Dominguez puts it, “hard, expensive real estate” objects.

When I first read this set of comments, I must admit that I was surprised by their emphasis on “neoliberalism.” The term is used in the article (if only rarely) to label sets of (urban) policies oriented to attract capital and remove obstacles to profit making and value extraction. On the other hand, the comments tend to use the term to identify the current phase of capital accumulation and/or the ideology that motivates it. These commentators raise important questions around issues of class formation, path dependency, and market expansion, clustering around two polar positions: for Lisa Breglia “neoliberalism” explains everything, while for Matilde Córdoba and Gavin Smith “neoliberalism” is an over-used category that more often than not conceals both the place- and time-specific workings of the market and the general characteristics of capital accumulation. I lean toward the second position. The article argues that heritage is a “friendly barrier” to the market, an internal outside that can never be fully interiorized but offers venues for expansion and opportunities to manage opposition and internal contradictions, something that, to align the argument with the topic at hand, is especially convenient in a context of (neoliberal) market expansion. Pushed to its limit, this reasoning may be reconcilable with Breglia’s understanding of both heritage marketization and the opposition to it as the product of neoliberalism (although Marc Guillaume already made a similar argument in “pre-neoliberal” times). I cannot agree, however, with Breglia’s suggestion to consider any struggles around heritage to be ultimately false and, even further, to do away with any analytical approach based on the notion of conflict. Explaining everything as the result of an overarching, faceless neoliberalism is a theoretically problematic position that can all too easily make our ethnographies appear irrelevant and unnecessary.

Smith’s contribution is not so much interested in the effects of these struggles but on the “historical” (and here the term has to be understood in its full form) processes that made these possible. Smith masterfully condenses in a few paragraphs the historical formation since the 1960s of a Spanish form of capitalism governed by an extractivist and rentist logic that is put at the service of the interests, and has been crucial in the consolidation of, a specific class bloc. I could not put it better myself. I would just add, first, that the 1990s was the stage of a series of processes of economic restructuring and political reconfiguration that crucially reinforced that form of capitalism, its infamous consequence being the real estate boom of the beginning of the century and the ensuing crisis. Second, as I show in the paper, it is necessary to take into account the regional conjuncture, for it played a crucial role all over Spain in the dynamic reproduction of the economic and political privileges of the class bloc. As I argue at length elsewhere (Franquesa 2013), by understanding the specific political and economic historical conditions through which the quintessentially extractivist logic of the real estate boom flourished in Majorca since the mid-1990s, we can grasp the critical role that heritage played in adding value and, as Smith emphasizes, “capturing” it. It is in this capture that the agonistic dynamic of keeping and selling comes to the fore, a dynamic whose analysis I pursued with the objective of understanding both the internal contradictions of accumulation and the apparently paradoxical circumstance that those who opposed this process fought against it with the weapons that dominated them.

—Jaume Franquesa
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