The Other's Heritage: Constructing a Border Heritage between France and Germany in Strasbourg's Neustadt

Cathy Blanc-Reibel   Sandrine Bubendorff   Sandrine Glatron
(CNRS, Université de Strasbourg – UMR Dynamiques Européennes)
cathy.blanc.reibel@gmail.com   sandrine.bubendorff@gmail.com   sandrine.glatron@misha.fr

From urban project to open-air museum, the city oscillates between a need for modernization and a desire to preserve its heritage. In Strasbourg, the urban ensemble of Neustadt illustrates these two ways of looking at the city. The very term 'Neustadt', which translates literally as 'new city', resonates in a singular way because it conveys both of these modalities, which can be perceived as antagonistic. On the one hand, it refers to the 'modern' urban extension planned in 1880. On the other hand, it matches the official name used to promote this heritage and contribute to its inclusion in the World Heritage list (July 2017). In this context of heritagisation, the article aims to highlight both the points of convergence and the stumbling blocks of a heritage project concerning a border region. In support of a qualitative and quantitative investigation, sociological and historical data tend to shed light on the reasons for a fast valorization of heritage in view of the memorable weight of relations with Germany, including the traumatic effects of the annexations and the two world wars. We invite reflection on the characterization of the urban project and the appropriation of the inhabitants and the political heritage by the authorities.
Keywords: Heritage, Neustadt, appropriation, Franco-German relations, World Heritage List (Unesco).

Introduction

In Strasbourg (France), the German name 'Neustadt' has a special resonance. It refers both to an urban extension and to the promotion of a distinct local heritage. 'Neustadt' may literally translate as 'new city' but the namesake area of Strasbourg was built by the German imperial regime during the annexation of Alsace between 1871 and 1918.[1] While before the annexation the French had already drawn up extension plans,[2] the German administration implemented the large-scale project on the basis of the *Bebauungsplan*, adopted on 7 April 1880. The objective was twofold: first, Strasbourg was to be transformed as an architectural showcase for the Empire; second, the growing population, resulting in part from a new wave of German immigration, would be accommodated. At the time, this urban fabric was modern both in its conception and use of materials. It now tends to be historicised and endowed with a new value as heritage. Following an urban enhancement process launched in 2010, it was designated as a UNESCO world heritage site in July 2017.

In spite of a past fraught with Franco-German conflict[3] and still palpable emotions, a common effort to promote this urban space has recently emerged. It involves the Neustadt's residents and regular visitors, associations and political authorities. Here, we will consider which architectural elements and which historical events and processes are being foregrounded in the promotion of an urban fabric that was originally built by the 'enemy'. These questions are part of a broader examination of 'heritagisation' that addresses the legitimacy of heritage

---

[1] Following the War of 1870 between France and Prussia, the regions of Alsace and Lorraine were annexed by Prussia until 1918.

[2] Including Munch's plans, based on ideas by Schützenberger (1837-1848).

[3] We refer chiefly to the wars of 1870, 1914-19 and 1939-45, and to the annexations of Alsace and Moselle in 1871-1918 and 1941-1944.

(Laurajane Smith 2006), the practices of residents (Daniel Fabre 2010, Gravari-Barbas 2005) and heritage-induced emotions (Daniel Fabre 2013).

First, we discuss the paradoxes of an urban fabric that can be characterised in terms of several dualities: German/French, modern/old, scorned/promoted. Then, we focus on heritage practices, looking into the dialectics, actions and representations of the residents, of visitors and of the local authorities, and consider how they inform the heritage project. In the final section, we focus on the representations of the UNESCO designation among the city's residents and visitors.

Our study draws on data from a fieldwork survey launched in 2012, participant observation and fifteen qualitative interviews (2014-2017),[4] and on the responses to a quantitative questionnaire submitted on the initiative of the Eurometropolis of Strasbourg in 2016-2017 during Neustadt's application process for world heritage status.[5]

The Neustadt's Defining Dualities
A brief historical reminder will give the reader a better idea of the initial urban project and of the area included in the current heritagisation process. The destruction of fortifications allowed Strasbourg to expand, as in other European cities where large-scale constructions began in the late 19th century, under the helm of Hausmann in Paris (1853), Cerdà in Barcelona (1860) and Hobrecht in Berlin (1862). In Strasbourg, the massive project was managed by Otto Back, the Prussian municipal administrator (Pottecher Doucet and Haegel eds 2017). The 'new city' surrounded the medieval core of the so-called Grande-Île island, doubling its surface. It was structured by large squares and thoroughfares connecting the city to Germany. Unlike what happened in Paris, the extension project was mindful of the historical centre's morphology. For instance, specific attention was given to linking the new urban fabric and the medieval fabric playing with architectural perspective oriented to the Cathedral.[6]

To some extent, the implementation of the urban extension was also a means to compensate Strasbourg's residents for the damage resulting from the War of 1870.[7] Strasbourg's promotion as a new Land capital also contributed to its transformation. The city's public infrastructure grew considerably, as Alsace's change in status was followed by the construction of State institutions (the Imperial Palace, the Parliament building, the tribunal). Other large-scale facilities were also built in the fields of health and hygiene (municipal baths,

---

[4] Participant observation in public events was conducted in the Neustadt. Individual and group semi-structured interviews with neighbourhood residents were part of Cathy Blanc-Reibel's Doctoral research (started in 2012), supervised by Florence Rudolf and Sandrine Glatron.

[5] The questionnaires were submitted during the Journées du Patrimoine (Heritage Days event) to visitors in several central, pericentral and peripheral sites in Strasbourg (2016-2017).

[6] Examples include the Avenue de la Paix and the Avenue Schweighaeuser.

[7] The Summer siege of 1870 was particularly damaging. The old Dominican church, which hosted the municipal library and the seminar burnt down in the night of 24 August 1870. The Cathedral's roof, 12 public buildings and 333 private buildings were completely destroyed (Nohlen 1997: 27-30).

hospital buildings), education (the University, the University library, schools) and communication and transportation (postal buildings, the station, the port, and so on). A very large number of more ordinary buildings were also erected; to give an idea of the scope of this transformation, over 1,500 new private buildings were constructed during the 1880-1918 period — accounting for roughly 95 percent of the housing stock. As a result, the residential urban fabric expanded considerably (Rieger et al. 1991). For a long time, Strasbourg was regarded as a city designed by and for the 'Old Germans' — meaning long-time German nationals, as opposed to the Alsatians who had recently become German. Dating back to the early 20th century[8] and still expressed today, this view deserves to be reassessed in the light of recent scholarship. Based on painstaking archival research, Olivier Haegel has shown that over half of those who commissioned new buildings had an Alsatian background (Haege 2017).[9] This finding has a direct impact on the transmission of individual heritage, as these people have stayed in Alsace, unlike the Old Germans who were forced to return to Germany after World War I.

Over the course of a century, this originally modern urban fabric started to be considered as historic and is now liable to be promoted as such. This is due to the style of the buildings: while reinforced concrete was used liberally, their historicist facades harked back to another time. Thus, the Neustadt architecture appears virtually outdated compared to the city's other urban extensions that were developed during the so-called *Trente Glorieuses* years (1945-1974).[10] The large housing estates of that time embodied the new modernism, with their 'sanitary comfort, fairly unobstructed views, verdant surroundings and decent access by bus or car, making up for the sound of the neighbours heard through paper-thin walls' (Gyss 1996: 128). By contrast, the Neustadt modernity may appear less impressive. Thus, during the transition period between the end of World War II and the beginning of its institutional promotion in 1975, the Neustadt could be seen neither as historic compared to the medieval old town nor as modern compared to the new constructions. Currently, the latest large-scale extension '*Deux rives*, the new city on the Rhine' stretches across the border. Spanning 250 Hectares, this *Axe Deux Rives* project explicitly echoes the Neustadt; this is how the Municipality of Strasbourg presents it in its public communication materials, which read, 'Deux Rives is the largest urban project since the construction of the Neustadt between 1871 and 1918.'[11] The project has been referred to as the 'twenty-first century's Neustadt' and as the 'Neu Neustadt'.[12] In 2014, after a century since it was established, the Neustadt was still

---

[8] Georges de la Hache, the director of Strasbourg's municipal archives, reportedly expressed this view in 1923 (Jantzen 1997).

[9] Nationality was identified for 1,200 out of the 1,500 sponsors listed until 1918.

[10] This refers to the neighbourhoods of Esplanade Gustave Stoskopf (1958) and Hautepierre (Pierre Vivien) (1964-1981).

[11] See http://en.strasbourg.eu/en/great-projects/deux-rives/; accessed on 11 February 2018.

[12] A recent example was found in the local daily newspaper *Dernières nouvelles d'Alsace* (29 February 2017).

being described as 'sturdy' and 'modern'. Designed in a spirit of modernity, these buildings were originally appreciated for their convenience, and overall they have managed to keep up with contemporary lifestyles and meet current standards of habitability.

Today, the Neustadt still displays a striking architectural homogeneity. It has experienced few changes both in terms of housing and of the social makeup of its residents. The effects of gentrification in the Neustadt are limited, unlike in other European cities such as Berlin and Barcelona (Ter Minassian 2012). These buildings have always been occupied by homogeneous social groups, and their social morphology is now virtually identical to what it was at the time of construction. The most upscale neighbourhoods are still located in the heart and in the north-eastern part of the Neustadt; the less well-off still reside in the vicinity of the train station (*Quartier Gare*).[13] There are several reasons for this spatial distribution, including the sheer scope of the urban extension (384 ha), which circles the entire old town, the urban morphology and the functions initially attributed to different areas. The *Quartier Gare* has been experiencing some gentrification, but not quite to the extent of other more largely gentrified neighbourhoods, such as the pericentral Krutenau neighbourhood.

Since 2010, alongside its long-term appropriation by residents, the Neustadt has also been promoted in the framework of public heritage projects.[14] These projects take various forms: non-material, in the sense that they aim at increasing the recognition of the neighbourhood's distinct history, and material, in the sense that they introduce regulations based on classical tools of urbanism.[15] For the purpose of raising awareness and recognition of its history, the municipality of Strasbourg also applied to have the Neustadt designated as a UNESCO world heritage site — the French state officially submitted the application in January 2016 (Eurométropole Strasbourg 2015). In the application a request was made for an extension of the original UNESCO site (1988), which included the medieval old town (the *Grande-Île*), so that the Neustadt would benefit from the international recognition attached to the UNESCO designation.[16]

So far, the neighbourhood's institutional 'heritagisation' has not met with significant resistance. However, the perception of this urban fabric has changed. The annexation (1941-1944) by Nazi Germany remains a source of ambivalent views on the 'German neighbourhood'. As an interviewee explains,

> 'I have no issues with that whatsoever, but I've noted that it's not straightforward
> for a number of people, who maybe haven't researched the specificities of Alsace's

---

[13] Gerber writes, 'The Neustadt has indeed hardly been affected by the phenomenon, as it is made up of upscale buildings and has been home to a rather bourgeois population since the beginning.' (1999: 7).

[14] Several public bodies have been involved; especially the municipality and the Region.

[15] The building stock was inventoried in 2010-2016; a conversion and preservation plan (PSMV) is pending validation.

[16] The application for extension covered only parts of the Neustadt, especially around the main squares.

history and end up mixing up that period with the Nazi regime, although they were two completely different times.'

Two distinct historical periods may blend into each other and seep into representations of the neighbourhood. However, negative views of the neighbourhood relating to the Nazi period seem to apply only to a specific subset of its housing stock. While the trauma resulting from the wars between France and Germany should not be overlooked, the portrait of a little-known or unloved neighbourhood (Eberhardt 2015) conveyed by elected representatives and members of the public[17] appears ultimately unfounded. While public buildings, such as the *Palais du Rhin*, that symbolise the annexation and Nazi occupation were at some point targeted by destruction projects, we must distinguish between how residents view these emblematic constructions and the private residential buildings. The local residents do make a distinction between history and the personal (hi)stories of their buildings, the domestic memory of which is positive (Rautenberg 2003). The work they have invested in maintaining these buildings on a daily basis reflects, for instance, an affective connection to their heritage — buildings may be given a historical or sentimental value. Likewise, as the care put into maintaining the buildings listed in the UNESCO application shows, rental properties have not suffered negative perceptions because of their Germanity.

The different approaches to this urban fabric are related to the history of Alsace. The central issue of heritage can be broken down into the two following questions: Which history should be passed on? How should a paradoxical heritage be managed?

A Shared, Swift Heritagisation Process

The Eurometropolis of Strasbourg has recently shown a significant change in its approach to the annexation period (1871-1918), which involves the political choice of translating urban signage into German. The word 'Kaiserplatz' below the name 'Place de la République' and the subtitling of boulevards ('ring') reflect this new approach, whereby the reference to the past is openly displayed. Linguistically, the change in signage on the Place de la République is not about emphasising Alsatian identity; unlike in other bilingually signed streets, here the translation is in German, not Alsatian.[18] This new urban 'mark' (Veschambre 2008) symbolises the recent appropriation of that space and reflects the municipality's current policy. Veschambre argues that such 'marks' attest to a deliberate effort of heritagisation, as opposed to 'traces', which in Strasbourg include the sign, *Gas in allen Etagen* (Gas on all floors) on buildings, which date back to the time of construction and are still visible today. As Marie-Christine Périllon points out, in Strasbourg, street names have always been symbolically

---

[17] The phrase 'little-known for many years' (*demeurée méconnue de longues années*) used by Sophie Eberhardt, was picked up by some participants during the public meetings of the *Rendez-vous de la Neustadt* and in exchanges with public institutions. This vision reflects a broader narrative on the rediscovery of heritage.

[18] Alsatian is the local dialect, which was heavily used until the 1960s and began to experience a steep decline in the 1980s. German is the official language of Germany.

loaded. She points out that, 'The change in the denomination of the Avenue [de la Liberté] on five occasions is in itself a crash course in Alsatian history. Initially christened Kaiser-Wilhelm-Strasse in 1890, it became the Avenue de la Liberté in 1919, then Daladier in 1938, Rudolf Hess-Strasse in 1940, and finally back to its current name, Avenue de la Liberté, in 1945' (Périllon et al. 2012: 234). From the neighbourhood's construction to the present day, traces have been removed and a succession of marks has been made, which reflect a fraught history dotted with re-readings by the local authorities of the day. There are several other cases of bilingual signage in France; for example, in Nice, another city located in a border area, the old town's street names are also translated.

Franco-German history has been characterised by deep-rooted conflicts and local rifts, but also by displays of reconciliation and friendship. The Neustadt symbolises Franco-German relations, and its designation as a UNESCO world heritage site has been a defining moment in these relations. The question of what heritage is being promoted is a chronic concern. Is it the architecture of this German neighbourhood, which is particularly well preserved because unlike other Rhine and German cities Strasbourg was virtually spared from bombings during World War II? Or is it the very history of Alsace and its relations to Germany? In the latter case, the Wilhelmine architectural heritage would serve as a means of highlighting the history of Strasbourg at local, national and international levels.

Franco-German friendship, which officially began in 1963 when President Charles de Gaulle and Chancellor Adenauer signed the Élysée treaty, has allowed both former rivals to come to terms with their conflict-laden past in a consensual manner, exemplified by ongoing projects. The political effort to bring France and Germany together, which has recently materialised in a new neighbourhood on the border and in a new tramline, reflects the ties that bind the two countries,[19] but it also echoes the French residents' discourses on their neighbours across the Rhine. A convergence between the actors' representations can now be observed. For the residents and public authorities alike, discussing the Neustadt and its heritagisation requires expressing a position on the past and on Franco-German relations. These ties remain complex, and reflect dual visions of heritage: on the one hand, there is the history of the general interest heritage — the large buildings that are reminders of the German annexations; on the other, there is the personal, residential heritage, wherein German construction is seen as a guarantee of quality.

This political effort to shed light on the distinctive history of Alsace and Strasbourg is welcomed by residents, whose view of the heritage projects is largely positive. The UNESCO designation is, for instance, seen as a positive development by over 85 percent of our interviewees, some of whom believe that it will generate an influx of tourists (50 percent) as well as international exposure and recognition (41 percent). A 60-year-old woman living in the Neustadt sums up the residents' feelings on the benefits of the UNESCO status as she says,

---

[19] The new tramline was inaugurated on 29 April 2017. It reconnects Strasbourg with the German border town of Kehl (there was a transnational line in 1896).

> 'Tourists are going to venture out of the Petite France[20] and discover something
> different […] [this is] the recognition of Strasbourg's cultural diversity through the
> richness of its successive affiliations to Germany and France.'

These words reflect a desire to share another side of Strasbourg's history with visitors.

The protection and institutional recognition of the architectural heritage began around 1975, when a few Art Nouveau buildings were granted historical monument status.[21] The regulatory framework for conservation has since been consistently strengthened.[22] This shift towards heritage preservation partly results from the collective mobilisation that followed the 1973 destruction of the Maison Rouge hotel, erected during the Wilhelmine period,[23] in the city's main square (place Kléber).

In addition to this regulatory, therefore coercive apparatus, residents also took steps to preserve the neighbourhood's heritage outside the legal framework. Decisions taken by all residents ahead of the heritagisation process[24] contributed to keeping this urban fabric in a healthy state. Choices were made in the maintenance of these century-old buildings depending on the available resources, but also based on other values. As Nathalie Ortar puts it, 'renovating requires choices' (Ortar 2005); even the smallest decision ends up shaping a space. Residents implemented anonymous and heterogeneous heritage conservation practices at several levels — their own home, the communal areas and the façade. Their accounts collected in one of our studies attest to the multiple resources that were mobilised to maintain the private heritage (archives were consulted, heritage experts were approached for their advice). Several types of memory are invoked, from historical archives to domestic memory (Rautenberg 2003) drawn from personal experience, as in the case of the residents who have lived in the same building since they were children. Authenticity is the key word. For instance, when discussing the architectural features of the Neustadt buildings, a new resident in the Eurometropolis said,

> 'Authenticity really is […] well, we have façades that have remained untouched,
> because they haven't been around for 3,000 years, right? And to me it's important

---

[20] This is a picturesque area of Strasbourg's old town, designated as a UNESCO world heritage site in 1988.

[21] The *Commission des monuments historiques* is the national French authority for the protection of buildings.

[22] It is worth noting that the official buildings that symbolise the German annexation and German power only began to be classified in the 1990s (including the Palais Universitaire in 1990 and the Palais du Rhin — formerly the Imperial Palace — in 1993). This process is ongoing: the Café Brant was granted historical monument status in 2014.

[23] This incident was recently mentioned by Denis Lefebvre (2017).

[24] Since 2010, the local media, the municipal publications, urban ads, heritage days and various Neustadt-related events have been raising awareness of the neighbourhood's heritage among the general public.

to be able to preserve something that's […] really like a 100 percent witness, at least of the outside [of the building] […]'[25]

In the case of the Neustadt, another relationship to authenticity can be observed in relation to the spirit of modernity at work in the initial urban project. Renovations that might appear to be at odds with the requirement of heritage conservation, due to the use of contemporary materials, can actually be said to pay homage to the original spirit of the Neustadt. As a resident puts it when she discusses the renovation of her building's communal areas: 'It's modern in spirit, so we're improving it'. The entrance hall has been redone; a brightly coloured glass door in contemporary material has been picked to replace the older door so as to bring more light into the hall. This could be seen as an offence against the building's authenticity, but this resident describes it as a tribute to its identity, to the spirit of its conception and to the family tradition of modernity. Such a practice resembles one of the ways in which Le Corbusier's Radiant City was renovated, emphasising not conformity with the original design per se but with its spirit (Denefle 2005).

The role played by residents, which is sometimes decisive in the heritagisation process, is noted in the Dictionary of Strasbourg's streets: 'These constructions, most of which are century-old, require careful maintenance, sometimes beyond the owners' means' (Befort et al. 2012). The care put into maintaining the buildings is visible and recognised, to the extent that it was highlighted in the UNESCO application submitted by the French authorities, which noted,

> 'The attachment of all Strasbourg residents to their heritage […] It should be stressed that all owners have shown their concern for the quality of their city's heritage, by regularly maintaining the buildings and especially, whenever this was necessary, by conducting large-scale renovation work that has enabled the preservation and rehabilitation of hundreds of buildings.' (Eurométropole Strasbourg 2015).

In short, the Neustadt has been subjected to a twofold heritagisation process through appropriation and designation. This process has been nurtured by actions conducted by residents and institutions and by a widespread awareness of the neighbourhood's heritage and involvement in its conservation. Which values have driven this ongoing effort? Which shared representations have motivated these actors?

As we have noted, a variety of actors jointly participate in the construction of this heritage. On the one hand, at grassroots level, owners and residents appropriate it; on the other, public institutions are eager to promote it. Based on the findings of our fieldwork, we will document the ways in which different representations of heritage interact and allow the project to win support from residents and visitors in the neighbourhood and beyond. This, in turn, will offer insights into the consensus around the Neustadt's ongoing heritagisation process.

---

[25] Interview, 2017.

We attempted to assess what is considered as heritage drawing on the findings of our survey on the UNESCO project submitted to residents and visitors.[26] We asked the question, 'What criteria do you think justify the heritage label? Pick the three criteria you believe matter most in the following list: age, monumental architecture, state of conservation, local memory, aesthetics, personal/affective history, integrity, and authenticity'.[27] The responses highlighted the importance of monuments (61 percent), of the local memory (58 percent) and authenticity (51 percent). When the interviewee selected 'age', a second, more precise question helped us get a better sense of the temporal scale underlying this subjective notion. The 175 responses to that question suggest that the century is a prominent temporal boundary; specifically, 47 percent explicitly mentioned the century, 27 percent referred to longer timespans.

In discourses on heritage, considerations on age are reminiscent of the writings of the Austrian historian of art Aloïs Riegl on the cult of monuments and the cycle of their production. While the historical value of a monument is based on knowledge, its age value relies on visible traces of time (Riegl 1903). Building on Riegl's argument, Françoise Choay wrote: 'the invocation of the age value is immediately perceptible to each and every one of us. It may thus resonate with all sensibilities, be valid to all without exceptions' (Choay 1996: 125).

The patina of age is visible to the residents; the historical architectural form contributes to reinforcing this sense of a palpable age value. Several interviewees remarked that the neighbourhood is 'monumental' and has 'endured through many eras'.[28] Residents of Strasbourg and visitors share the vision of heritage promoted by the institutional memory traditions that surround monuments. Instead of competing, these representations converge around the notions of age and monumentality. Due in particular to the historical façades, the Neustadt's monumental architecture is indeed identifiable as old. The attributes of heritage are monumentality and age value — in this sense, laypeople's views and the Neustadt's defining characteristics are aligned.

The UNESCO Designation Process: Opposite Views on Heritage Revealed
The media exposure surrounding the world heritage site label leads local authorities to shorten heritage histories into executive summaries for communication or heritage marketing purposes.[29] The very choice of the name 'Neustadt' belonged to the framework of the promotion of an urban area. Although Strasbourg residents did not use this name, the

---

[26] We interviewed 219 individuals during the 2016 European Heritage Days and 175 individuals between Autumn 2016 and Spring 2017 when no heritage events were being held, in seven local squares (two in the centre; three in pericentral areas and two in the periphery).

[27] This list was drawn up jointly with the heritage department of the Eurometropolis of Strasbourg. While local authorities were adamant on including the items 'authenticity' and 'integrity' in the list (reflecting the UNESCO's explicit demands), we chose to select consensual criteria for cultural heritage (such as monumentality, age and the state of conservation) but also more subjective ones (such as aesthetics and personal/affective history).

[28] Interviews conducted during the qualitative survey in the Spring of 2017.

[29] See http://whc.unesco.org/en/list/495/documents/

municipality chose it in order to highlight both the urban extension and the German history. Other names could not be selected for political and ideological reasons. For example, *ville nouvelle* (new city) refers to a different period in the history of architecture; *quartier impérial* (imperial quarter) and *quartier allemand* (German quarter) were ruled out because they were too reminiscent of the annexation of Alsace and were considered as 'too restrictive, both in terms of chronology and in terms of stylistic and cultural references and influences.'[30]

The study that we conducted during the UNESCO designation process has brough out tangible elements on the terminology used by residents and regular visitors to the neighbourhood. Interviewees often mention metonymically to the central square, the place de la République, to refer to the neighbourhood. The neighbourhood's history also appears to play a key role in its current unofficial labelling as *quartier allemand*. The increasingly common use of 'Neustadt' relates directly to the publicity surrounding the official heritage project. While it is not yet widely used, meaning that its appropriation is incomplete, its dissemination has spread since we began our research. While only 16 percent of interviewees used the name when they were unaware of the city's project for the sector, 35 percent of those who knew about it did. In interviews, individuals directly connected the name to the heritagisation process: 'Neustadt is a heritage label that I can understand in historical terms, obviously, but it doesn't have a meaning in everyday life';[31] 'Neustadt is a new concept, it's interesting to see that […] a lot of people still call it the *quartier allemande*. It's even more common, I would say'.[32] Observations of life in the neighbourhood have given us glimpses of the progress in the name's usage, for instance, in property listings (sales and rentals). Previously seldom found on property search engines, the name 'Neustadt' has recently emerged as a historical descriptor, as in 'Neustadt-era' buildings. On the city's broader property market, geographical denominations are used: République, Quartier allemand, Contades, and so on. Only recently the name 'Neustadt' has been used in listings for seasonal rentals. Whether its usage will continue to spread after the UNESCO inscription remains to be seen.

The recent UNESCO inscription has also been a cause of concern.[33] Although the UNESCO enjoys a positive image among the general public, a study conducted on behalf of the municipality revealed that the representations of the impact of this labelling are ambivalent. The prospect of economic benefits for the neighbourhood is seen in a positive light. However, there are fears that it will bring more traffic and congestion; when asked about the impact of the designation, more than 30 percent of interviewees mentioned this issue. Concerns particularly revolve around tourism and the restriction of renovation permits for residents.

Regarding tourism, we note that the Grande-Île's initial designation as a World Heritage Site has contributed to attract more visitors to the old town and the Cathedral. Therefore, the second UNESCO area is just an extension of the first one, which means that the new label is

---

[30] Elements for the municipality's response to the letter of June 2014.

[31] Interview, 2014.

[32] Interview, 2017.

[33] The Neustadt was included in the World Heritage List on 12 July 2017.

not expected to be as disruptive as it would be in a small town or a previously unlabelled region. On the contrary, the Neustadt's inscription allows for a heritagisation that promotes an image of Strasbourg that goes beyond the picturesque half-timbered medieval buildings. As interviewees noted in their responses to the open questions of the UNESCO survey, the extension might actually encourage a less unbalanced distribution of tourist flows. They said, 'Tourists are going to step out the Petite France and discover something different', 'an under-visited neighbourhood [city]', 'a broader approach to tourism', 'an extended area to visit, more opportunities', 'For tourists: beyond the Petite France'. Likewise, one of the neighbourhood residents we interviewed said: 'I for one think it's nice that we have people coming to visit the city and walking around map in hand and looking up at the buildings [...] even around these parts'.

In spite of the positive reception that we noted among the local residents, the heritagisation of a neighbourhood resulting from a UNESCO designation can also be negatively received. On the one hand, the impact on the city, especially in terms of economic benefits and international exposure, is welcomed. On the other hand, multiple fears have been routinely mentioned as possible causes of decline in the residents' quality of life, including aired the fallout on the neighbourhood's daily life, pedestrianisation, congestion, the reorientation of local businesses to suit the needs of tourists rather than residents are.

People are ambivalent about the constraints that might result from the UNESCO designation. Some interviewees (21 percent) see it as a way to preserve the local heritage while others emphasise increased regulations on restorations (40 percent). Heritagisation can also be seen as a means to maintain the city, to make it a nicer, more 'presentable' place to live; reference to cleanliness and upkeep is frequently found in people's responses to the questionnaire's open questions. Urbanism regulations, particularly in the vicinity of historical monuments (within a 500m radius)[34] are, for instance, seen in a negative light by local residents. As this protection extends to surrounding buildings, it is sometimes seen as an obstacle in their everyday lives. When discussing the ageing population in her building, a resident explained,

> 'We'd like to put in an elevator, and we have a plan to add one outside the building — I'll show you. And now we're kind of on standby; for what reason, I don't know [...] I don't think it's detrimental to the whole in any way, I think sometimes interpretations are made. As of now we haven't been given reasons, we're going to need to know — is it because of the stained-glass window on the place de Bordeaux? Because the house isn't listed, it has nothing, it doesn't have any kind of character, right. I'm very aware of these things, if the house had a distinctive Neustadt character, there'd be no question about it. We wouldn't do it, but it's not the case here.'[35]

---

[34] A 1943 law established protected areas within a 500m radius of historical monuments.
[35] Interview, 2017.

Competing representations of heritage appear to be at work here. The heritagisation *by designation* implemented by the municipality in recent years sometimes clashes with the heritagisation *by appropriation* by the successive generations of neighbourhood residents. The fears voiced by residents as to their everyday lives in the newly designated neighbourhood relate to the very features that were instrumental in their appropriation of it. In other words, the qualities attributed to the neighbourhood's architecture (sturdiness, comfort and adaptability) are seen to be potentially offset by the restrictions resulting from heritagisation by designation.

Yet, the analysis of the data collected for the UNESCO survey highlights the spirit of moderation of residents and regular visitors to the neighbourhood; overall the case of Strasbourg has not been characterised by conflict. Several responses reflect the various tensions at work in the heritagisation process and the effort to weigh the pros and cons. Typically,

> 'Living in a museum city's always unpleasant, but it's good for pride'. Likewise, 30 percent of the individuals interviewed on the effect of the UNESCO designation on the everyday lives of local residents mentioned both pros and cons: '— Urbanism restrictions — Mobility restrictions [restricted car access] plus Enhancement of the built heritage.'

The UNESCO designation is seen as a way to raise awareness of local history and bring exposure beyond borders, and ultimately serves as a means to be proud of the city's Franco-German history. However, residents and regular visitors are concerned with its impact on their everyday lives, anticipating the risk of that the Neustadt's might experience a shift from an individual, affective heritage, to a globalised, impersonal Heritage — thus becoming yet another living museum for tourists.

Conclusion

Considering the loaded memory of Franco-German relations, the traumatic effect of the city's annexations and of the two world wars, the Neustadt's heritagisation has developed rather promptly. Recent developments in Franco-German history have led to an acceleration of the heritagisation process, embracing Strasbourg's binational history. This promotion of the heritage process has been characterised by an institutional effort to promote an internationally visible project and encourage the city's residents and regular visitors to appropriate the neighbourhood.

From its inception to the present day, the urban fabric of the Neustadt has been marked by a duality between past and present. At the time of its construction, its modernity initially lay in the fact that it preserved and enhanced the old town by adding new perspectives, an uncommon way to showcase the medieval town. Then, by becoming a UNESCO World Heritage Site and eliciting a surge of interest among scholars and heritage conservationists, this urban fabric became a historical centre and is valued as such. Over the course of one century, the neighbourhood's image has changed, from a non-invasive modern extension of the medieval town to a symbolic memorial of Franco-German reunification.

Previously regarded as underappreciated, this urban ensemble has been endowed with all the attributes of a historical heritage site. Its new function also raises long-term questions relating to the evolution and management of historical centres in terms of urbanism and to the cohabitation of residents' practices and touristic infrastructures in the heart of the Neustadt. So far, there have been no major stumbling blocks in the heritagisation process; the attention and care for a private, family-based heritage and the promotion of a wider, historical, if not universal heritage (as part of the UNESCO designation) have gone hand in hand.

From conservation to heritagisation, the case of the Neustadt illustrates the fact that participation does not occur only in dedicated spaces of institutional deliberation, it is also at work in more routine residential practices. In the Neustadt, residents are displaying a form of action that is typical of the new activists described by Jacques Ion (Ion 2001), which translates into a visible commitment to the painstaking upkeep of their homes. Their practices have built a bridge between individual heritage and the recently recognised world heritage.

References

Audrerie, D., Souchier, R. and Vilar, L. 1998. *Le patrimoine mondial* (Que sais-je ?)*.* Paris: Presses Universitaires de France.

Authier, J.-Y. 1995. Formes et processus de ségrégation dans les quartiers anciens centraux réhabilités : l'exemple du quartier Saint-Georges à Lyon. *Sociétés Contemporaines*, 22-23: 107-125.

Befort, P.-A., Holderbach, J.-M. and Jordan, B. 2012. *Dictionnaire historique des rues de Strasbourg*. Barr: Le Verger.

Callais, C. and Jeanmonod, T. 2013. Habiter le patrimoine mondial : « ville de pierre » et ville des hommes. Le patrimoine ordinaire à Bordeaux. *Espaces et Sociétés*, 152-153: 141-159.

Cassaz, D. 2010. La gestion des flux touristiques dans les sites inscrits : modalités et conséquence L'exemple de Strasbourg. In M. Gravari-Barbas and S. Jacquot (eds), *Villes Françaises Du Patrimoine Mondial et Tourisme, Protection, Gestion et Valorisation.* Unesco: 25-30.

Cassaz, D. and Eberhardt, S. (eds). 2013. *Strasbourg: de la Grande-Île à la Neustadt*. Lyon: Lieux Dits Éditions.

Choay, F. 1996. *L'allégorie du patrimoine, La Couleur des idées*. Paris: Seuil.

Denefele, S. 2005. Habiter le patrimoine du XXe : l'exemple de la « Maison radieuse » de Le Corbusier à Rezé Les Nantes. In M. Gravari-Barbas (ed.), *Habiter le patrimoine: enjeux, approches, vécu.*

Eberhardt, S. 2015. *Entre France et Allemagne, de la ville ancienne à la Neustadt de Strasbourg: la construction du regard patrimonial* (Thèse de doctorat). Lyon: Université Jean Moulin.

Eurométropole Strasbourg. 2015. *De la grande île à la Neustadt, une scène urbaine européenne. Dossier de candidature pour l'extension du bien inscrit sur la Liste du patrimoine mondial*. Strasbourg.

Fabre, D. and Arnaud, A. (eds). 2013. *Émotions patrimoniales*. Paris: Ed. de la Maison des sciences de l'homme.

Fabre, D. and Iuso, A. (eds). 2010. *Les monuments sont habités*. Paris: Éd. de la Maison des sciences de l'homme, coll. « Ethnologie de la France. Cahiers, ISSN 1150-3769 », 24 (1).

Gerber P., 1999. Processus de gentrification et demande sociale citadine. Exemple du centre-ville de Strasbourg. *Revue Géographique de l'Est*, 39: 2-3.

Gravari-Barbas, M. (ed.). 2005. *Habiter le patrimoine: enjeux, approches, vécu.* Rennes: Presses universitaires de Rennes.

Gyss, J.-L. 1996. *Strasbourg, urbanisme et architecture: des origines à nos jours*. Strasbourg: Oberlin Difal.

Ion J. 1997. *La fin des militants ?* Paris: les Éditions de l'Atelier - les Éditions ouvrières.

Lefebvre, D. 2017. La nouvelle ère de la sauvegarde du patrimoine. *Historia*, January.

Nohlen, K. 1997. *Construire une capitale, Strasbourg impérial de 1870 à 1918 : les bâtiments officiels de la Place Impériale*. Strasbourg: Société savante d'Alsace.

Ortar, N. 2005. Restaurer sa maison à l'ombre du patrimoine. In M. Gravari-Barbas (ed.) *Habiter Le Patrimoine : Enjeux, Approches, Vécu*.

Périllon, M.-C., Bogner, P., Hamm, C., Nussbaumer, F., Naegelen, B.J. and Zvardon, F. 2012. *L'invention perpétuelle de Strasbourg*. Strasbourg: Editions du Signe.

Pottecher, M., Doucet, H. and Haegel, G. (eds). 2017. *La Neustadt de Strasbourg : un laboratoire urbain : 1871-1930*. Lyon: Éditions Lieux Dits.

Rautenberg, M. 2003. *La rupture patrimoniale. À la croisée*. A la Croisee Eds.

Riegl, A. [1903] 2016. *Le culte moderne des monuments*. Paris: Editions Allia.

Rieger, T., Durand de Bousingen, D., Nohlen, D. and Blosser, J. 1991. *Strasbourg architecture: 1871-1918.* Illkirch-Graffenstaden: Le Verger.

Ter Minassian, H. 2012. *Patrimonialisation et gentrification : le cas de Barcelone.* Cahier Construction politique et sociale des territoires. ffhalshs-00681371: https://halshs.archives-ouvertes.fr/halshs-00681371/document

Smith, L. 2006. *Uses of heritage*. London: Routlege.

Veschambre, V. 2008. *Traces et mémoires urbaines: enjeux sociaux de la patrimonialisation et de la démolition*. Rennes: Presses universitaires de Rennes.