

*Heritage and Democracy: Crisis, Critique, and Collaboration.* Kathryn Lafrenz Samuels and Jon D. Daehnke, eds. Gainesville: University Press of Florida, 2023, 294 pp. \$90.00, cloth. ISBN 9780813069623.

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Cultural heritage has traditionally been viewed through the lens of preserving, collecting, excavating, and displaying artifacts. However, in recent decades, there has been a growing recognition of the importance of heritage within contemporary sociopolitical contexts. This shift has been particularly notable in discussions around identity, memory, heritage destruction during conflict and war, forced migration, and climate change. As the field of critical heritage studies continues to develop, there is a pressing need for more research to demonstrate that heritage is not only about the material culture of the past and present, it also serves as a sociopolitical force with the potential to shape the contemporary and future world.

In this regard, *Heritage and Democracy* stands out as a significant volume that takes a critical approach for contextualizing heritage within the framework of democracy and heritage practice. The edited volume delves into a range of compelling and critical themes, including Indigenous heritage rights and decolonization, the intersection of heritage with economics and politics, the impact of forced migration on heritage, and the role of heritage in learning and education. Each chapter offers a unique and critical perspective, supported by case studies that explore colonial government approaches to heritage versus grassroots and activist practices, the influence of neoliberal economics on heritage preservation, the importance of dialogue and community engagement in heritage learning programs, and the tensions between top-down and bottom-up approaches to heritage management.

The volume is structured around critical areas of heritage, each accompanied by insightful case studies. Part I is a general introduction to the volume, where the editors provide a critical analysis and conceptualization of democracy and its intersection with heritage and heritage practice. They offer a broad view of democracy, its practices, functions, and its wider impact on and linkage to heritage. Part II begins with a focus on democratic heritage practice, particularly emphasizing Indigenous rights and heritage management in the United States. This section continues with another chapter demonstrating Indigenous communities and their heritage in Canada. Moving from the context of Indigenous nations in North America, part III delves into the economies of heritage from a democratic perspective. The first chapter in this section explores how heritage has been commodified within a neoliberal framework, and the second argues for heritage's role in fostering dialogue among ethnically and racially diverse communities, both within the United States.

Part IV, the largest section, features four chapters that center on heritage and reconciliation for forced migrant communities through activist heritage practices. Additionally, it examines the use of cultural heritage to deconstruct elite-developed heritage discourses, known as the Authorized Heritage Discourse. It also explores the importance of archaeology and education in supporting participatory democracy, as well as the use and misuse of heritage memes on social media platforms during times of political conflict in the public sphere. Part IV stands out as the most geographically diverse section, with case studies ranging from the United States to Ghana and South Africa. Finally, in part V, two chapters focus on heritage management, illustrating multiple dimensions of heritage management. They highlight the tensions between top-down and bottom-up heritage practices, emphasizing the importance of diversity and community-centered management approaches. In part VI, the editors offer final reflections on heritage and democracy, arguing that heritage can serve as an effective tool to support participatory democracy.

The book, with its critical and unique chapters and case studies, as well as its robust conceptual framework, elucidates why heritage is an important discipline and practice that can contribute to establishing participatory democracy. Beyond highlighting the significance of heritage in this regard, it also prompts critical reflection on how heritage scholars can actively work toward realizing participatory democracy within their field and support democratic principles in broader social and political contexts. By addressing this gap, the book highlights the importance of continually expanding and developing critical ethnographic methods within heritage research and practice. These methods play a vital role in advocating for democracy and the right to heritage for all individuals. Lastly, *Heritage and Democracy* makes a valuable contribution to the discourse on heritage by exploring the strong relationship between heritage and democracy. Through its critical examination of these themes and perspectives, the volume emphasizes the transformative potential of heritage as a tool for promoting social justice and fostering inclusive democratic practices in contemporary societies.

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