



# Discussing strategy in heritage conservation

## Living heritage approach as an example of strategic innovation

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### Abstract

**Purpose** – The purpose of this paper is to discuss the concept of strategy in the field of heritage conservation, with a focus on a new conservation approach that promotes the empowerment of local communities and sustainable development: a living heritage approach.

**Design/methodology/approach** – The approaches to heritage conservation are outlined: a material-based approach defines the principles of western-based conservation, a values-based approach expands these principles, while a living heritage approach clearly challenges the established principles. These approaches are, then, analysed from the perspective of strategy, and a living heritage approach is seen as an example of strategic innovation. The process by which ICCROM develops a living heritage approach at an international level is also examined.

**Findings** – Choosing the “appropriate” conservation approach depends on the specific conditions of each heritage place. Yet, for the cases of living heritage in particular (with communities with an original connection with heritage) a living heritage approach would be more preferable. Living heritage approach can be seen as an example of a strategic innovation in the field of heritage conservation: it proposes a different concept of heritage and conservation (a new WHAT), points at a different community group as responsible for the definition and protection of heritage (a new WHO), and proposes a different way of heritage protection (a new HOW).

**Practical implications** – A living heritage approach (presented in the paper) may potentially influence the theory as well as the practice of heritage conservation in a variety of parts and heritage places in the world, especially in terms of the attitude towards local and indigenous communities.

**Originality/value** – Developing a new approach is, in a sense, developing a new strategy. In this context, the paper aims at bringing the insight of business strategy into the field of heritage conservation.

**Keywords** Community participation, Sustainable development, Conservation theory and practice, Management of archaeological sites

**Paper type** Research paper

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## 1. Approaches to heritage conservation

Heritage conservation can be defined as the discipline “devoted to the preservation of cultural property for the future” (Muños-Viñas, 2005, p. 13). The main approaches to heritage conservation that have been developed since the birth of the discipline to date are: a material-based, a values-based, and a living heritage approach. These approaches, though appearing at different periods of time, are all applicable today.

It is important to note there can be no clear-cut distinction between these approaches, given that the approaches deal with similar and even the same issues (such as material/fabric, values, and communities) and unavoidably have certain aspects in common. Also, a lot depends on the application of the approaches on every heritage place according to the specific conditions in each place. This paper attempts to emphasize on the distinctive aspects of each approach that tend to differentiate it from the other approaches – it is these distinctive aspects that lead to different strategies and render living heritage approach an example of strategic innovation.

The paper focuses on a critique of the approaches. This is by no means an attempt to debase or devalue any of the approaches; the aim is to stress certain weaknesses or pitfalls of each approach that led to the development of the other approaches.

Emphasis is on key general principles of the three approaches. A detailed account of the development and the implementation of the approaches in different parts and heritage places of the world, as well as the exhaustion of the existing literature, are beyond the scope of the paper.

### *A material-based approach*

A material-based approach (or the so-called “conventional” approach, also referred to as “authorized heritage discourse”: Smith, 2006, p. 299) shows an extreme focus on the preservation of the material/fabric. Examples of a material-based approach are: the early approach to conservation marking the birth of the discipline in the nineteenth century and the early twentieth century (such as the Cambridge Camden Society, the “conservation movement”, and the work of philosophers like Alois Riegl: Jokilehto, 1986, pp. 295-298; 304-313; 378-381; Stanley-Price *et al.*, 1996, pp. 322-323; 309-310; 69-83; 18-21), and the development of the World Heritage concept and adoption of the World Heritage List (UNESCO, 1972; see also Simmonds, 1997; Byrne, 1991). A material-based approach is best epitomized in the Venice Charter (ICOMOS, 1964).

A material-based approach was originally formulated within the Western European world. The application of this approach contributed significantly to the rescue of monuments and the preservation of their fabric – a crucial need at the end of the nineteenth century and a large part of the twentieth century, mostly due to the long periods of political instability and armed conflicts and the out-of-scale reconstruction and development that followed.

The approach was then transferred, and even imposed, in other parts of the world, in the broader context of colonialism. Indigenous/non-western communities and cultures were envisaged through western eyes, leading to the suppression and even breaking of the communities’ connection with their heritage: the communities’ (traditional) knowledge, management systems and maintenance practices were abolished, and the communities were even physically removed from heritage places (Layton, 1989a, b, pp. 1-18; Ucko, 1990, pp. xv-xx, 1994, pp. xiii-xxiii). A characteristic example of a site that has suffered from the imposition of this western-based approach is Angkor, Cambodia (a World Heritage site). In the last decades, the heritage authorities have heavily promoted the tourism development of the site. The local

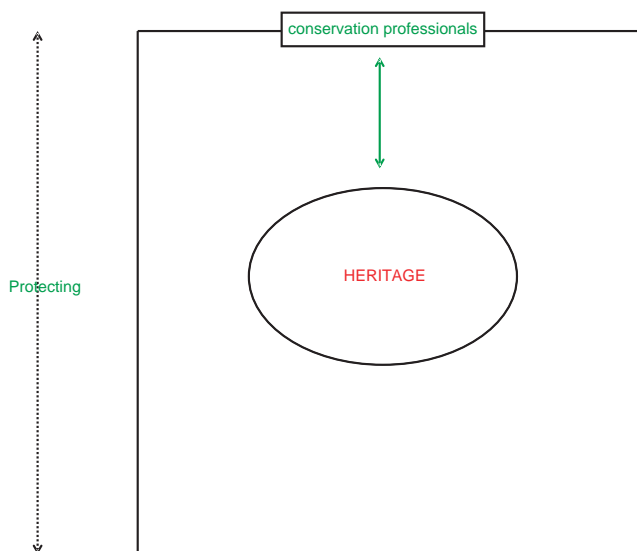
communities and the monks of the site have been gradually restricted in the site and occasionally even removed from it, and their connection with the site has been altered: the local villagers are now becoming increasingly interested in the financial aspect of the site through their involvement in the tourism industry, while becoming a priest is now seen as a form of investment (Miura, 2005).

A material-based approach is an expert-driven approach. The exclusive responsibility over the definition and conservation of heritage is in the hands of heritage authorities (mostly state-appointed), manned by political officials and especially conservation professionals/experts. Community is not taken into account (see UNESCO, 1988, 1992, 1994c, paragraph 14) (see Figure 1).

The significance of heritage, namely defined in archaeological/historic and aesthetic terms, is seen as inherent in the fabric. The use of heritage (by communities) is considerably limited to ensure its protection (by conservation professionals), and is conducted strictly with reference to modern, scientific-based conservation principles and practices (ICOMOS, 1964). The preservation of the fabric allows for only minimal interventions into heritage, with respect to the physical, material structure. Thus, fabric is seen as a non-“renewable” resource. The aim of conservation is to preserve heritage, seen as belonging to the past, from human practices of the present that are considered to be harmful, and transmit it to the future generations. In this way, a form of discontinuity is created between the monuments and the people, and between the past and the present. The development of the region of heritage based on the exploitation of heritage is sought exclusively in accordance with the interests of the heritage authorities.

*A values-based approach*

A values-based approach focuses on the values that society, consisting of various stakeholder groups, ascribes to heritage. A value can be defined as “a set of positive



**Note:** No community involvement

**Figure 1.**  
A material-based approach: conservation professionals and heritage

characteristics or qualities,” while a stakeholder group is “any group with legitimate interest in heritage” (Mason, 2002, p. 27; Mason and Avrami, 2002, p. 15; de la Torre, 2005, p. 5; de la Torre *et al.*, 2005, p. 77; on the concept of value and the development of value systems see also Darvill, 1995). An example of a values-based approach is the attempt of the World Heritage concept to evolve and open towards indigenous/non-western communities and cultures (UNESCO, 1994a, b, 1996, 1999, article 4, paragraph 14; see also Sullivan, 2004, p. 54). A values-based approach is largely based on the Burra Charter (ICOMOS Australia, 1999), and has been further developed and advocated through a series of projects of the Getty Conservation Institute (de la Torre, 1997, 2002; Avrami *et al.*, 2000; Teutonico and Palumbo, 2002; Agnew and Demas, 2002; de la Torre *et al.*, 2005).

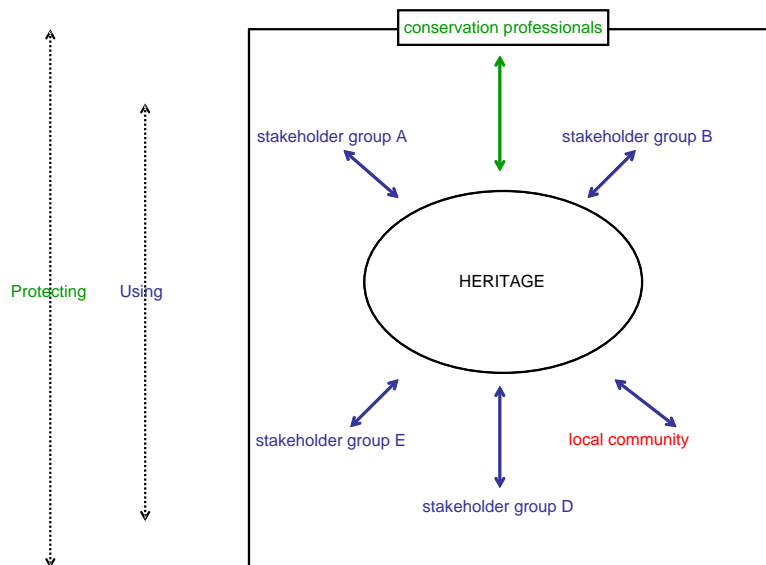
A values-based approach has been developed and applied mostly in places where indigenous/non-western communities question and confront a material-based approach (see de la Torre *et al.*, 2005). The application of this approach contributed significantly to the embracement of the (spiritual, religious) association of local, indigenous communities with their heritage places: the communities’ (traditional) management systems and maintenance practices were taken on board, and the communities were engaged in the conservation process. The approach is the current most preferred one in several countries such as Australia, USA, and UK (see de la Torre *et al.*, 2005), with a series of highly acclaimed examples of application such as Kakadu National Park in Australia (a World Heritage site) (Press and Lawrence, 1995; Sullivan, 1985, pp. 141-144; Flood, 1989, p. 87).

Yet, despite the intentions and efforts, there are cases in which the application of a values-based approach has not succeeded in embracing indigenous/non-western communities and cultures, as in the case of the attempt of the World Heritage concept to evolve and open towards these communities and cultures (Titchen, 1995; Labadi, 2005, pp. 93-99). A characteristic example of a site that may demonstrate the weaknesses of a values-based approach is the Chaco Culture National Historical Park, New Mexico, USA (a World Heritage site) (de la Torre *et al.*, 2005). The history of the site is inextricably linked to the presence of Navajo indigenous communities (local Indian communities), who established in the area in the late sixteenth or the early seventeenth century and developed strong family, cultural and religious ties to the site. In designating the site as a National Monument and as a National Historical Park in 1907, the Park authorities (following a material-based approach) recognized officially only the aesthetic and age values of the archaeological remains, and moved the remaining Navajo communities out of the designated Park area. In the last decades the Park authorities (following a values-based approach) have shown a consistent interest in the consultation and participation of Navajo communities in the conservation and management of the site, though within their rules and under their supervision and control: the management of the Park is based on a Joint Management Plan of the Park authorities and the Navajo representatives. The Park authorities, in consultation with the indigenous communities, have shown a consistent interest in the attraction of tourists in the site. In the 1980s onwards “new age” groups claimed the right to perform rituals within the site, which were yet seen by the Navajo communities as violating their own religious beliefs. Faced with this conflict between these two stakeholder groups, the Park authorities felt they had only two alternatives: either allow both groups to perform rituals or ban them totally. Favoring one group over another in religious issues would be considered discrimination on the basis of religion, according to the American Constitution. As a result, the Park authorities decided to

prohibit all religious ceremonies in places regarded as sacred. Therefore, despite the attempts on the part of the Park authorities in the last decades, the primary aim has always been the protection of the tangible remains of the site.

In the context of a values-based approach, through the concepts of stakeholder groups and values, community is considered to be placed at the core of conservation and conservation is seen as a social and political process. Heritage is not self-evident, with inherent values, as in a material-based approach; it is people that ascribe values to it, and thus define heritage. On this basis, the main aim of conservation is not the preservation of heritage itself, but the protection of the values imputed to it by the stakeholder groups (Mason and Avrami, 2002, p. 22, 25). A values-based approach tries to engage the whole range of stakeholder groups early on and throughout the conservation process, and resolve conflicts that inevitably arise between them assuring subjectivity and equity of conflicting stakeholders and different values – in this way, conservation is seen as a democratic process (Mason and Avrami, 2002, pp. 19-23; de la Torre, 2005, pp. 4-8; Demas, 2002, p. 49).

A values-based approach attempts to expand the concepts of a material-based approach, without yet substantially challenging them (see in detail Poullos, 2010a, pp. 172-175). Stakeholder groups are involved in the conservation process, yet in most of the cases within the framework and under the supervision of the conservation professionals (Demas, 2002, pp. 48-49; Mason and Avrami, 2002, p. 16). Thus, though in theory conservation professionals may be seen as one of the stakeholder groups, in practice they are the managing authority themselves, supervising the stakeholder groups (see Figure 2). Furthermore, new stakeholder groups such as local and



**Figure 2.**  
A values-based approach: conservation professionals, stakeholder groups and heritage

**Notes:** Stakeholder groups are equally involved in the conservation process, under the supervision of a strong managing authority, which is in most of the cases the conservation professionals. Local community is seen as one of the stakeholder groups

indigenous communities are also included (ICOMOS Australia, 1999, articles 12; 26.3), but the most favoured stakeholder groups tend to remain those associated with the preservation of the fabric (de la Torre, 2005, p. 7). Intangible values such as user or social value are also taken into account (see ICOMOS Australia, 1999, preamble; article 7.1; article 24.1-2), but their safeguarding is incorporated within and is serving the preservation of tangible remains (de la Torre, 2005, p. 8). The traditional care of heritage by the communities is also recognized (ICOMOS Australia, 1999, preamble; article 7.1; article 24.1-2) yet only to the extent that it does not undermine modern, scientific-based conservation principles and practices of conservation professionals. Heritage use (by communities) is generally accepted to the extent that it does not undermine heritage protection (by conservation professionals). More flexible recommendations are adopted in conservation practice such as varied approaches allowing reconstruction depending on the nature and values of heritage (ICOMOS Australia, 1999, preamble; article 7.1; article 24.1-2), yet it is mostly minimal interventions in the heritage fabric, with respect to the physical and material structure, that are allowed. Thus, the fabric is still preserved as a non-“renewable” resource (de la Torre, 2005, p. 8). Therefore, the aim of conservation remains the preservation of heritage, considered to belong to the past, from the people of the present, for the sake of the future generations (discontinuity). Development potentials based on the exploitation of heritage are sought in an attempt to serve the interests of the various stakeholder groups, yet with an emphasis on the interests of the heritage authorities and under their control.

#### *A living heritage approach*

A living heritage approach focuses specifically on living heritage[1]. The concept of living heritage is inextricably linked to the concept of continuity, and in particular: primarily the continuity of the heritage’s original function – the purpose for which heritage was originally intended; the continuity of community’s connection with heritage; the continuity of the care of heritage by the community as expressed through (traditional) knowledge, management systems, and maintenance practices; and the continuous process of evolving tangible and intangible heritage expressions in response to changing circumstances – in this sense, change is embraced as a part of the continuity (on the concept of continuity linked to living heritage see Wijesuriya, 2005; Poullos, 2008, 2011; Poullos (forthcoming); on the concept of change in relation to living heritage see Poullos, 2010b); Poullos (forthcoming). There is a specific community group that created living heritage and sustains the original function of heritage, retains its original connection with it over time and still considers heritage an integral part of its contemporary life in terms of its identity, pride, self-esteem, structure, and well-being, has a strong sense of ownership/custodianship for heritage and sees the caring for heritage as its own inherent obligation (see Poullos, 2011; Poullos (forthcoming); Wijesuriya, 2005, p. 30, 37). This community, referred to as “core community,” is seen as an inseparable part of heritage, and is thus clearly differentiated from the other community groups involved in the life of heritage, often referred to as the “broader community.”

A living heritage approach has been developed at an international level by ICCROM (Shimotsuma *et al.*, 2003, pp. 2-3; Stovel, 2005, pp. 2-3; Wijesuriya, 2007; ICCROM, 2012). ICCROM had been following a material- and a values-based approach. Since the mid 1990s, however, ICCROM has started showing a consistent interest in the living dimension of heritage, developing projects that concentrated on communities and communities’ connection with heritage, such as ITUC Programme. Since the early

2000s, ICCROM has been running the Living Heritage Sites Programme, which aims at developing and advocating a living heritage approach. Living Heritage Sites Programme started as part of ITUC Programme and was originally focused on the South-Eastern Asian region, while it has been gradually given a much broader perspective, also linked to other ICCROM programmes focusing on other regions. In 2012 ICCROM launched the Promoting People-Centered Approaches to Conservation: Living Heritage as one of its key programmes for the next years[2].

A living heritage approach has succeeded in embracing indigenous/non-western communities and cultures. Example of a site where a living heritage approach has been applied – and which has also influenced the aforementioned approach of ICCROM – is the Temple of the Tooth Relic in the city of Kandy, Sri Lanka (a World Heritage site) (Wijesuriya, 2000). The Temple, constructed in the seventeenth century, is today the most sacred Buddhist site and the most important heritage site in Sri Lanka, and one of the most significant international Buddhist pilgrimage centres. The Temple was significantly demolished in 1997 as a result of a terrorist bomb attack. The restoration of the Temple required the participation of all main groups under the supervision of the conservation professionals (following a values-based approach), but any decision would be subjected to the approval of the monastic community (i.e. the “core community” of the site) as expressed by the two high priests and the lay guardian (the officer) of the Temple (following a living heritage approach). In this context, the first priority of the restoration project was the revival of the living (religious) function of the Temple. The restoration solutions clearly favored the function of the Temple at the expense of the protection of its heritage significance, and generally run counter to conservation principles and practices (moving thus beyond a material-based and a values-based approach). Another example of a place where a living heritage has been applied – in the context of the Living Heritage Sites Programme of ICCROM – is Phrae, Thailand (Luk Lan Muang Phrae and SPAFA Regional Centre for Archaeology and Fine Arts in Thailand, 2009; see also SPAFA, Phrae Architectural Heritage Preservation Club and Luk Lan Muang Phrae, 2011). There the local community established its own (local) heritage management committee, Luk Lan Muang Phrae (“the Children and Grandchildren of Phrae”). Luk Lan Muang Phrae has set the following main objectives, on the basis of the community’s connection with heritage and in accordance with its needs and concerns: first, revive wisdom and pride in local heritage through different awareness activities. Examples: interviewing local house owners about the meaning and significance of their houses, organizing awareness programmes on local heritage preservation for children; second, organize a wide range of activities concerning the conservation and management of local heritage, based on traditional knowledge, management systems, and maintenance practices. Examples: establishment of an award programme for old house owners who take good care of their houses (owners are given certificate and a flag to place in front of the house, and the houses awarded are registered by the Provincial Cultural Office), formation of local museum and library, and conservation of the city wall; and third, seek development options. Examples: cooking local dishes, growing local vegetables, local pottery- and puppet-making and making products for sale. For the accomplishment of these objectives, Luk Lan Muang Phrae established over time collaborations with, and received support from, various heritage organizations operating at a local-regional, national and international level, such as SEAMEO-SPAFA Regional Centre for Archaeology and Fine Arts in Thailand, the Thai Fine Arts Department, and ICCROM. At present Luk Lan Muang Phrae is accepted as an important mechanism in coordinating and mobilizing people and activities as well as networking.

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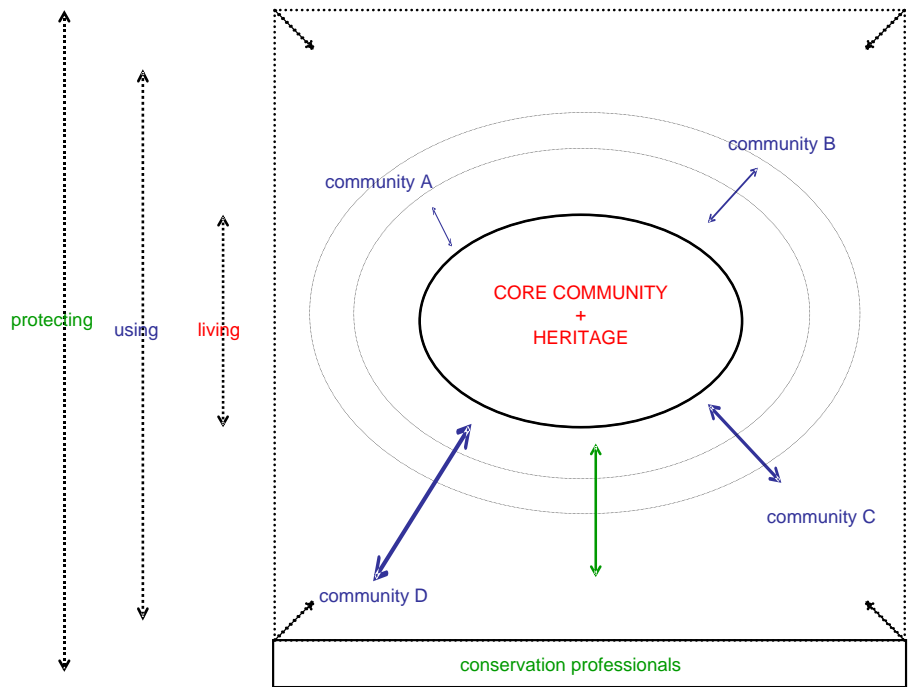
A living heritage approach concentrates on the community's original connection with heritage (continuity), and safeguards heritage within this connection. On this basis, a living heritage approach clearly differentiates itself from a material- and a values-based approach. More specifically, conservation in the context of a living heritage approach does not aim at preserving the fabric but at maintaining continuity, even if in certain occasions the fabric might be harmed. Emphasis is thus on the (intangible) connection of community with heritage rather than on the (tangible) fabric (Wijesuriya, 2005, p. 37). Given the changing nature of continuity, conservation also aims at embracing change over time, and thus guaranteeing the relevance of heritage to the contemporary society.

A living heritage approach is a clearly community-based approach. The core community is given the primary role in the conservation process. The core community does not simply participate in the process but is actively empowered: it has the ability to set the agenda, take decisions and retain control over the entire process. Conservation professionals and the broader community are given a secondary role. Conservation professionals provide an enabling framework of support, guidance, and assistance to the core community (see Figure 3). Thus, unlike a values-based approach, in the context of a living heritage approach, communities are not assigned equal roles in the conservation process, in accordance with their differing association with heritage – in this sense, conservation is not seen as a democratic process. It is also important to note that, in the context of a living heritage approach, the role of conservation professionals becomes different but is by no means debased: for example, conservation professionals may continue to be those who run the conservation process, as demonstrated in the cases of the restoration of the Temple of the Tooth Relic (implemented by conservation professionals) and the development of a living heritage approach (by a major heritage organization like ICCROM), or may actively participate in the conservation process run by the community, as in the case of Phrae (with the heritage organizations offering their support to the community).

According to a living heritage approach, conservation process is primarily based on the recognition and acceptance of the traditional care of heritage (by the community); modern, scientific-based conservation principles and practices assist, implement and are placed within the traditional care of heritage. An appropriate equilibrium is sought between heritage use (by the community and in accordance with the community's connection with heritage) and heritage protection (by conservation professionals), with emphasis often on use rather than protection. Although the fabric is generally preserved (as in the context of a material-based approach: see ICOMOS, 1964; Section 1.1), at the same time there is an increasing recognition of a whole series of practices towards heritage, with little respect to the material, physical structure (see Poullos, 2010a, pp. 176-179; Shimotsuma *et al.*, 2003, p. 21). Thus, in certain occasions heritage may be treated as a “renewable” resource. The core community seeks development potentials on the basis of its own connection with heritage and in accordance with its own concerns, with the support of the conservation professionals and the broader community.

Therefore, a living heritage approach calls for the safeguarding of heritage within the connection with the present community (continuity), by the present community and for the sake of the present community. Emphasis is on the present, since “the past is in the present” (Wijesuriya, 2005; Poullos, 2008). Present is seen as the continuation of the past into the future, and thus past and present-future are unified into an ongoing present (continuity).





**Figure 3.**  
A living heritage approach: core community and heritage, the broader community, and conservation professionals

**Notes:** Core community is seen as an inseparable part of heritage, and is clearly differentiated from the conservation professionals and the broader community. The “core community” of a living heritage approach is differentiated from the “local community” of a values-based approach, which is seen as one of the stakeholder groups: compare Figures 2 and 3. Core community is given the primary role in the conservation process, while conservation professionals provide an enabling framework of support, guidance, and assistance to the core community

## 2. The theory of strategic innovation

“Strategic Innovation” is the discovery of a fundamentally different strategy (or way of competing or business model) in an existing industry (Markides, 1997, 2000, 2008; Markides and Geroski, 2005; see also Kim and Mauborgne, 1997). Strategic innovation takes place when a firm identifies gaps (not covered sufficiently by other competitors) in an industry positioning map, goes for them, and grows them into big markets. These gaps have been identified as: a new WHO (customer) – emerging customer segments or existing customer segments that are not served sufficiently by other competitors; a new WHAT (value proposition) – emerging or existing customer needs not covered sufficiently by other competitors; and a new HOW (way of offering value proposition to the customer) – ways of promoting, producing, delivering or distributing existing or new products and services to existing or new customer segments. A strategic innovation is much more than the discovery of a radical new strategy on the part of a specific firm; strategic innovation must affect the existing industry as a whole, thus enlarging the existing economic pie – either by attracting new customers into the market or by encouraging existing customers to consume

more. It is important to note that a strategic innovation is not necessarily the discovery of new products or services; often it is the redefinition of existing products or services or the way these products or services are offered to the customers. A strategic innovation redefines the existing market in such a radical way (by emphasizing radically different product or service attributes to those emphasized by the established strategies) that challenges the long-established assumptions and rules in the market and makes it extremely difficult to imitate or replicate by its competitors.

Strategic innovation is usually applied to pure business settings. Yet, it can provide a useful way of understanding and structuring change more broadly. Reckhenrich *et al.* (2008), for example, discuss strategic innovation in the art world of Venice in the sixteenth century, in which the artist Tintoretto was able to create new market space in a “mature” industry dominated by the grand art master Titian.

### 3. A living heritage approach as an example of strategic innovation

In an attempt to apply the concept of strategy and the theory of strategic innovation (as defined above) from the business domain into the field of heritage conservation, the following remark is to be made: In the context of heritage conservation, WHAT is sensed as the meaning of heritage and the aim of heritage conservation; WHO refers to the community group that is considered responsible for the definition and conservation of heritage; and HOW means the way heritage is conserved by the relevant community group.

All three approaches deal with similar and even the same aspects such as material/fabric, values, and communities. More specifically: material/fabric is not taken on board only by a material-based approach, but also by a values-based and a living heritage approach. The discussion of values was not initiated by a values-based approach; values, particularly those related to the preservation of fabric (such as archaeological/historic and aesthetic ones), were also embraced by a material-based approach. Communities with an original connection with heritage were not taken on board for the first time by a living heritage approach, but by a values-based approach.

However, it is the different emphasis each of the three approaches places on these aspects that lead to different strategies. On the basis of this remark, the three approaches to heritage conservation reflect the following strategies (see Table I in detail). A material-based approach aims at the preservation of fabric (WHAT) by the heritage professionals (WHO), by allocating extreme power to the heritage professionals and with reference to modern conservation-based principles and practices (HOW). The general viewpoint is that a material-based approach is an expert-driven approach and is based on the concept of discontinuity. A values-based approach focuses on the maintenance of values (WHAT) but still with an emphasis on the fabric, by stakeholder groups (WHO) yet under the supervision of the heritage professionals, by involving the community but retaining the power in the hands of the heritage professionals and by placing traditional care within modern scientific-based conservation principles and practices (HOW). A values-based approach tries to be a bottom-up approach but often ends up being a top-down one, and is still based on the concept of discontinuity. A living heritage approach proposes a different concept of heritage and conservation, based on the community’s original connection with heritage/continuity (a new WHAT), with an emphasis on the intangible elements rather than the tangible ones; it points at a different community

**Table I.**  
The strategies of the three approaches to heritage conservation: a material-based, a values-based, and a living heritage approach

	Material-based approach	Values-based approach	Living heritage approach
The meaning of heritage and the aim of conservation ("WHAT")	Fabric	Values Tangible and intangible values, mostly separated from each other All values equal, but emphasis on the tangible ones (fabric)	Living heritage/continuity Tangible and intangible heritage expressions, seen as an inseparable unity Not equal heritage expressions; emphasis on the intangible ones
The community group responsible for heritage definition and protection ("WHO")	Heritage authorities (conservation professionals)	Stakeholder groups  All groups equal, but emphasis on those associated with the fabric	Core community (that retains its original connection with heritage/continuity) Not equal groups; priority to the particular community (continuity)

(continued)

	Material-based approach	Values-based approach	Living heritage approach
The way heritage is protected by the relevant community group ("HOW")	<p>Power in the conservation professionals- no community involvement</p> <p>With reference to modern conservation principles and practices</p> <p>Treating fabric as a non-"renewable" resource</p> <p>Limiting use to ensure protection</p> <p>Only minimal interventions to heritage, with respect to the material structure</p> <p>Development potentials on the basis of conservation professionals' interests</p>	<p>Community involvement under the supervision of conservation professionals</p> <p>Placing traditional care within modern conservation principles and practices</p> <p>Treating fabric as a non-"renewable" resource</p> <p>Adjusting use to protection</p> <p>Mostly minimal interventions to heritage, with respect to the material structure</p> <p>Development potentials on the basis of stakeholder groups' concerns, but under conservation professionals' control</p> <p>Expert-driven approach: community is involved, but power is in the conservation professionals</p> <p>Discontinuity: preservation of heritage considered to belong to the past, from the present community, for the sake of the future</p>	<p>Community empowerment, with the support of conservation professionals</p> <p>Placing modern conservation within traditional care</p> <p>Treating fabric as a "renewable" resource</p> <p>Seeking the appropriate equilibrium between use and protection; emphasis on use</p> <p>Even major interventions to heritage, with little respect to the material structure</p> <p>Development potentials on the basis of core community's concerns and connection with heritage, with conservation professionals' support</p> <p>Community-driven approach: power is in the community, with the support of conservation professionals</p> <p>Continuity: preservation of heritage as part of the present community, by the present community, for the sake of the present community</p>
The philosophy of conservation ("LOGIC")	<p>Expert-driven approach: power in the conservation professionals – no community involvement</p> <p>Discontinuity: preservation of heritage considered to belong to the past, from the present community, for the sake of the future</p>	<p>Expert-driven approach: community is involved, but power is in the conservation professionals</p> <p>Discontinuity: preservation of heritage considered to belong to the past, from the present community, for the sake of the future</p>	<p>Community-driven approach: power is in the community, with the support of conservation professionals</p> <p>Continuity: preservation of heritage as part of the present community, by the present community, for the sake of the present community</p>

group as responsible for the definition and protection of heritage, the core community (a new WHO); and proposes a different way of heritage protection, through community empowerment and through prioritizing traditional care over modern scientific-based conservation (a new HOW). Thus, it proposes a different philosophy of conservation practice, by being a truly bottom-up approach and placing conservation within continuity. Therefore, a material-based approach could be seen as the established strategy in the field of heritage conservation (having formed the principles of western-based conservation); a values-based approach expands the established strategy, but does not substantially differentiate from it; while a living heritage approach clearly challenges the established strategy.

A living heritage approach is much more than a new strategy on the part of a specific organization (ICCRUM), but affects the field of conservation as a whole. A living heritage approach broadens the existing concept of heritage and the practice of heritage conservation, by embracing (mostly indigenous/non-western) communities and cultures that could not easily fit within a material- and a values-based approach: communities that retain their original connection with heritage (continuity); heritage expressions of intangible rather than tangible form; traditional ways of valuing heritage; traditional management systems, which may be different and even contradictory to the modern, scientific-based ones; traditional approaches towards the fabric in which the physical and material structure may be given a lower priority.

As also noted above, a living heritage approach does not reveal anything completely new in the field of conservation. Communities and their (intangible) connection with heritage are also evident in a material- and especially a values-based approach. Nevertheless, a living heritage approach, by heavily emphasizing a specific community (core community) and its original connection with heritage (continuity), redefines the concept of heritage and the practice of heritage conservation as formerly defined by a material- and a values-based approach.

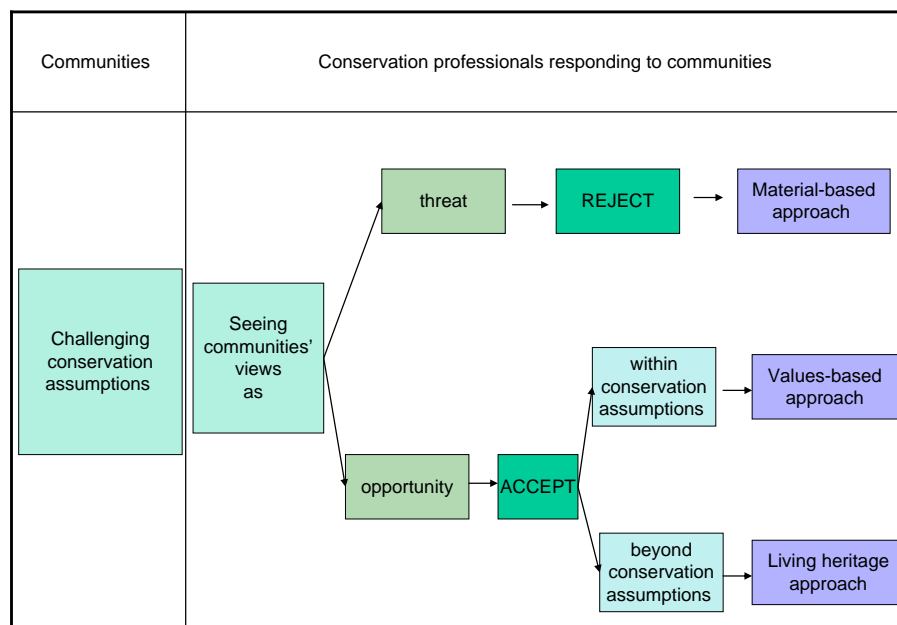
A living heritage approach radically redefines the existing concept of heritage and the principles of heritage conservation challenging very strong assumptions established over time in the field, which were developed along with a material-based approach and were maintained by a values-based approach. More specifically, according to a living heritage approach, first, the power in the conservation process is no longer in the hands of the conservation professionals, but passes on to the communities. Second, emphasis is no longer on the preservation of the (tangible) material but on the maintenance of the (intangible) connection of communities with heritage, even if the material might be harmed. Third, heritage is not considered a monument of the past that has to be protected from the present community, for the sake of the future generations (discontinuity); heritage is now seen and protected as an inseparable part of the life of the present community (continuity). Therefore, a living heritage approach marks the shift in heritage conservation from monuments to people, from the tangible fabric to intangible connections with heritage, and from discontinuity to continuity. By challenging these long-established assumptions in the field, a living heritage approach poses strong conflicts with the two other approaches.

A living heritage approach developed in a different way to a material- and a values-based approach. A material- and a values-based approach were conceived and formed by (mostly western or western-trained) conservation professionals, who should be given the credit for the establishment of the aforementioned assumptions in the field of conservation. Whereas, a living heritage approach did not commence with conservation professionals, but with communities: (mostly indigenous/non-western)

communities that had originally created the heritage, and managed to retain their original connection with the heritage over time (continuity) and protect the heritage through their (traditional) knowledge, management systems, and maintenance practices – communities that could not (easily) fit within a material- and a values-based approach, and challenged the views of the conservation professionals/the “experts.”

The challenging of these views by the communities met a diverse response from conservation professionals. At first, conservation professionals saw the views of the communities as a threat, as “disloyalty” to the conservation principles. As a consequence, in many cases conservation professionals moved against the communities: they suppressed communities’ connection with heritage, abolished communities’ (traditional) knowledge, management systems and maintenance practices, and even physically removed communities from heritage places. By rejecting the views of the communities, these conservation professionals insisted on following a material-based approach to date. However, there were conservation professionals who saw the views of communities also as an opportunity, as an “alternative” viewpoint that could potentially open up new perspectives in the field of conservation, moving away from the attachment to the fabric towards more intangible connections with heritage. Some of these conservation professionals decided to recognize and accept the views of the communities as long as these views would not undermine the established assumptions in conservation. This response led to the development of a values-based approach. Other conservation professionals considered taking on board the views of the communities beyond the established assumptions in conservation. This attitude opened the way for the development of a living heritage approach (see Figure 4).

ICCROM developed a living heritage approach in the following steps: first, as an enquiry towards an “alternative” viewpoint, within an existing philosophy and programme (the ITUC Programme operating in the context of a values-based



**Figure 4.**  
The development  
of a living heritage  
approach

approach); second, as an exclusive programme on living heritage (the Living Heritage Sites Programme) that was initially part of an existing programme (the ITUC Programme operating in the context of a values-based approach), leveraging thus the organization's considerable past experience with projects concentrating on communities and communities' intangible connections with heritage; third, as an exclusive independent programme (the Living Heritage Sites Programme) that focused on a specific region where elements of the new approach had already been in use (South-Eastern Asia); fourth, as an exclusive independent programme of a much broader perspective looking at other parts of the world, and also with links to other programmes concerned with other regions (still mostly in the context of the non-western world); and finally, as one of the organization's key programmes (Promoting People-Centered Approaches to Conservation: Living Heritage Programme) of an international perspective (expanding also in the western world).

#### 4. Concluding remarks

Three approaches to heritage conservation, all applicable today, are outlined: a material-based, a values-based and a living heritage approach.

Choosing the "appropriate" approach depends on the specific conditions of each heritage place. Yet, as a general view, for a broader range of heritage places a values-based approach would be recommended, while for the cases of living heritage in particular (with communities with an original connection with heritage) a living heritage approach would be more preferable.

These approaches reflect different strategies. A living heritage approach can be seen as an example of a strategic innovation in the field of heritage conservation, on the basis of the following remarks: first, it proposes a different concept of heritage and conservation, points at a different community group as responsible for the definition and protection of heritage, and proposes a different way of heritage protection (a new WHAT, WHO, HOW); second, it is not only a radical new approach on the part of a specific organization, but affects the field of heritage conservation as a whole; and third, it redefines the existing concept of heritage and the practice of heritage conservation in such a radical way that makes it very difficult to imitate. A living heritage approach commenced with communities that could not (easily) fit within a material- and a values-based approach and challenged the views of the experts, and was developed by conservation professionals that saw this challenging as an opportunity to move beyond the established assumptions in conservation. At an international level, a living heritage approach was developed by ICCROM, initially as an enquiry within on of its existing programme, then as an independent programme, and now as a key programme area-theme for the organization.

#### Notes

1. The concept of "living heritage", as sensed in the context of a living heritage approach, is different to that of "intangible heritage" (often referred to also as "living heritage"), as sensed in the UNESCO "Convention for the Safeguarding of the Intangible Cultural Heritage" (UNESCO, 2003): the former embraces both tangible and intangible heritage, while the latter focuses primarily on intangible cultural practices and performances.
2. The fact that ICCROM has been active in developing and promoting a living heritage approach, mostly through the aforementioned programs (Living Heritage Sites and Promoting People-Centered Approaches to Conservation: Living Heritage), does not mean that it exclusively follows the particular approach throughout its activities worldwide and has ignored the other approaches.

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