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CONCEPTS OF INTEGRAGED CONSERVATION AS INROADS TO SUSTAINABLE MANAGEMENT LANDSCAPES

Abstract

The concept of integrated conservation rests in the 1970s' increased understanding of the importance of historical environments as resources in urban and land-use planning, rather than delimiting theme as a secondary issue in societal development. Sir Bernard Feilden defined the concept in 1986 as the dynamic management of change in order to reduce the rate of decay. Apart from more or less nature-given external and internal causes of decay, the most troublesome are the manmade causes such as fashion, wars, pollution, and not the least – stupidity. These factors drive landscape change, but other important factors also include, for example, technology development, market dynamics, urbanisation, 'silo planning', or policy interventions. Integrated conservation relates to notions of heritage and the lecture will discuss heritage research and operative practices and the relation between top-down and bottom-up processes. One significant question is whether it is possible to define a governance structure providing stewardship to operate managerial routines.

Keywords: Heritage practices, landscape, conservation, ecomuseum, landscape observatory

Abstrakt

Koncepti i ruajtjes së integruar qëndron në rritjen e ndërgjegjësimit, në vitet '70-të të rëndësisë së mjediseve historike si burime në planifikimin

urban dhe në përdorimin e tokës, çka nuk mund të kufizohet si një çështje dytësore në zhvillimin shoqëror. Sir Bernard Feilden e përcaktoi konceptin në 1986 si menaxhim dinamik i ndryshimit në mënyrë që të reduktojë shkallën e degradimit. Përveç shkaqeve pak a shumë të jashtme dhe të brendshme të degradimit nga natyra, ato më shqetësueset janë shkaqet e krijuara nga njeriu si: moda, luftërat, ndotja dhe po ashtu, marrëzia njerëzore. Këta faktorë nxisin ndryshimin e peizazhit, por i rëndësishëm është gjithashtu, për shembull, zhvillimi i teknologjisë, dinamika e tregut, urbanizimi, "planifikimi i siloseve" ose ndërhyrjet e politikave të ndryshme. Ruajtja e integruar lidhet me nocionet mbi trashëgiminë dhe ligjërata do të diskutojë rreth kërkimeve mbi trashëgiminë, praktikat operative dhe lidhjen ndërmjet proceseve nga lart-poshtë dhe nga poshtë-lart. Një çështje e hapur është nëse mund të përcaktohet një strukturë qeverisëse që siguron administrimin e një rutine menaxheriale.

Fjalë kyçe: Praktikat mbi trashëgiminë, peizazhi, ruajtja, eko muzeu, observatori i peizazhit

Introduction

This article focuses on the notion of integrated conservation as an approach to heritage practices, applied to improve the sustainability of planning and managing landscapes, and, in a wider perspective, enhancing the resilience of society. The problem underpinning this text is that heritage is often treated as a side issue, regarded as not necessarily affecting the 'normal' everyday life of people and societies.

This article rests on the value premise of 'heritage' being comparable with 'landscape' as defined in the European Landscape Convention (Council of Europe, 2000). The focus is therefore not explicitly on 'heritage landscapes' or 'cultural landscapes', but at landscape in the present, past, and future, where heritage is a fundamental resource for increasing the resilience of society (ICOMOS, 2016). A principal starting point is the definition of conservation, as the baseline for heritage practices, as *the dynamic management of change in order to reduce the rate of decay* (Rosvall and Aleby 1986, 23).

The article is organized into the following sections. *Integrated conservation* describes a phase when heritage was indeed identified as an element that needed to be integrated into societal planning processes. *Paradigms, stages, phases, in the development of practice* places that phase into the development of approaches to practice since the end of 19th century. *Stakeholder motivations for heritage formation* contextualizes this development within a schematic overview. The *cultural landscape* introduces the classic definition of cultural landscape.

Landscape and heritage expands this into a broader understanding of the landscape as the principal arena for heritage. *Heritage practice areas* describes the shortcomings of present practice and the possible potentials for improvement through landscape-based application of the seventeen United Nation' Sustainable Development Goals. A possible model introduces the concepts of ecomuseum and landscape observatory as means for operating the dual quality of heritage as an outcome, as well as a process, and an option for merging heritage, integrated conservation, landscape, and sustainable development into a holistic approach.

The article is based on a lecture within the framework of Materializing Modernity (MaMo) that is an EU-funded research project focusing on socialist rural architecture and landscape and its post-socialist legacy in the Albanian countryside.

Integrated Conservation

In 1975, the Council of Europe launched the year for European Architectural Heritage and concluded the initiative with a conference in Amsterdam by the end of the year. The outcome of the conference became known as *the Amsterdam declaration.* It stated:

> "The conservation of the architectural heritage: one of the major objectives of urban and regional planning.
>
> The conservation of the architectural heritage should become an integral part of urban and regional planning, instead of being treated as a secondary consideration or one requiring action here and there as has so often been the case in the recent past. A permanent

> dialogue between conservationists and those responsible for planning is thus indispensable. […] Regional planning policy must take account of the conservation of the architectural heritage and contribute to it. In particular, it can induce new activities to establish themselves in economically declining areas in order to check depopulation and thereby prevent the deterioration of old buildings. […] The full development of a continuous policy of conservation requires a large measure of decentralization as well as a regard for local cultures. This means that there must be people responsible for conservation at all levels (central, regional and local) at which planning decisions are taken. The conservation of the architectural heritage, however, should not merely be a matter for experts. The support of public opinion is essential. The population, on the basis of full and objective information, should take a real part in every stage of the work, from the drawing up of inventories to the preparation of decisions" (Amsterdam, Accessed, August 9th, 2021).

Another outcome of the 1975 theme was the publication *The Conservation of European Cities*, edited by Donald Appleyard. In his introduction to the book, which collects twenty-three articles describing restoration projects performed in a number of European cities, Appleyard concludes:

> "The conflicts brought out in the volume should not obscure the deeper meaning of conservation to all groups in society, to capitalist as well as Socialist societies. […] (The old cities) have become idealized, part of a common cultural heritage, that draws us all together in the effort to save them. On this we have some agreement. The difficulties lie in the realm of social conservation. Inner-city neighbourhoods are mysterious and heterogeneous places." (Appleyard 1977, 48).

The notion of integrated conservation can thus be understood as moving away from the 'monument' and its material authenticity, following the Carta Venezia of 1964, towards a broader, more complex approach to heritage and restoration/conservation comprising larger built environments as well as social perspectives and the need to engage and involve the

people concerned. This development also, in a more obvious manner, brought about the recognition that heritage is not only the material outcome, but rather also the process leading up to something being defined as heritage. Depending on the design and operation of the process, with a possible increased number of competences and value-based preferences included in the process, the outcome represents more the result of negotiations rather than older, traditional, expert-based statements.

Paradigms, stages, phases, in the development of practice

Gregory J. Ashworth (2011) has described a development of paradigms that can be identified indicating principles guiding heritage practices and how they change over time. He describes three different approaches, which, since the 1980s, coexist due to incomplete paradigm shifts. The preservation paradigm stems from the late 19th century and represents a traditional perspective on the past. The objective is to protect specific objects from change, development or other threats. In the 1960s, it was followed by the conservation paradigm where collections and environments were included together with specific objects and where the contemporary use were addressed in relation to an imagined future. Finally, the heritage paradigm was emerging during the 1980s and is based on how cultural values are constructed in the contemporary society and not something inherent in objects or environments. It also implies a shift from experts to how (ordinary) people use and value historic remains.

While the conservation paradigm might be a necessity to secure unique historical properties, the heritage paradigm might be equally or more important as a strategy for approaching questions pertaining to the framework of this article. Obviously, the cultural landscapes of Europa cannot be turned into museums. However, historically grounded skills, traditions, and small-scale agricultural economies could have the capacity to bring about cultural and historical properties and qualities while at the same time meeting modern needs.

Similar development of practice has been noted by Dean Sully (2013) where he characterises the three phases as materials-based conservation, value-based conservation, and peoples-based conservation. A clearer

planning perspective of the role of heritage in urban and land-use planning by Joks Janssen et al. (2017), also follows three-part division in identifying the stages of heritage and its role in planning as sector, factor and vector.

In Figure 1, the left-hand column represents the traditional top-down expert-based activity, which, in the middle column, starts to interact with other (expert-based) areas of society. The intentions and practice related consequences in heritage processes that are framed by these two columns have been branded by Laurajane Smith (2016) as Authorized Heritage Discourse (AHD) with the aim to secure heritage within the notion of the nation-state and concepts of 'national heritage'. Her principal critique of the AHD, is that it does not sufficiently employ a critical understanding of how history might be interpreted and narrated, and that it does not take as its starting point the life of the ordinary people that have seldom, if ever, been visible in the big historical pictures.

This critique, to some degree, has also led to the understanding that historical artefacts have no values or meanings *per se*, but rather that they acquire the heritage meaning within the conditions and limitations of contemporary society. Objects and phenomena previously collected, recorded, and displayed, are therefore representations of interpretations with cultural and political intentions, made within the context of earlier societies. As such, they do not necessarily provide data and information for historical research other than being symbols for a heritage practice lacking scholarly and scientific principles. Mátyás Szabó at the Nordic Museum in Stockholm stated already in 1986 that:

> "The supposition that data is not affected by age or lessening value, but that it lies in the archives and becomes more valuable every year, is one of the most dangerous assumptions of the museum profession. […] Different demands should beforehand be placed at the planning stage on forthcoming research material, including a basic formulated problem which has as its main aim the arrangement of data in a meaningful sequence." (Szabo, 1986, 10).

The critique of heritage as an outcome of AHD and its perceived negligence of diverse and alternate interpretations is therefore linked to a broader critique of society.

Ashworth	Preservation paradigm	Conservation paradigm	Heritage paradigm
Janssen et al.	Sector	Factor	Vector
Sully	Materials-based conservation	Values-based conservation	Peoples-based conservation
GOAL	Object	Ensemble	Message
	Monument	Contributer to the quality of a place	To provide spatial planning with historical narratives
	Conservation produce the 'true' object	Conservation produce the 'expected' object	Conservation produce a 'plausible' object
JUSTIFICATION	Keep	Adaptive reuse	Use
	Protect	Present-day needs in area development	Personal memories, genealogical links and scientific reconstructions of historical events impart a narrative structure to the past
	Athens Charter 1931 Venice Charter 1964 World Heritage Conv. 1972	Burra Charter 1979 Document on autenticity 1994	Conv. for the Safeguarding of the Intangible Cultural Heritage 2003
CRITERIA	Past	Past/Present	Present/Future
	The past as different from present	The past when adaptable for present needs	The intangible as important as the tangible
	Intrinsic value decoded by experts	Heritage values ascribed by experts in dialogue with stakeholders	Heritage values, context specific, defined by contemporary communities
PAST	Intrinsic	Preserve	Extrinsic
	intrinsic	Adaptable material quality	Peoples memories combined with scientific history
	There is a 'true' past	The past provides input to an expected outcome	The past, a reasonable background for local needs
FOCUS	Real	Given	Imagined
	The real monument as a symbolic backdrop to modern society	Support of conomic value and increase of cultural quality	Growing involvment leading to co-creation of heritage values
	Welfare of ***material*** heritage, precedence over contemporary needs of people	Welfare of ***material*** heritage, balanced with contemporary needs of stakeholders	Welfare of contemporary communities, precedencce over material heritage
AUTHENTICITY	Object	Compromise	Experience
	Monment	Compromise	The narratives
	Cultural significance based on expert values	Cultural significance guided by expert values, incl stakeholder values	Culturl significance determined by community values
CHANGE	Immutable	Adaptable	Flexible
	Immutable	Transformation is a necessity	The change is in focus
	Top-down decision-making by experts	Top-down decision-making by experts with stakeholder participation and dialogue	Community-led decision-making, people-up seeking locally appropriate solutions
ACTORS	Experts	Policy markers	Users
	Experts	A broader arrey of professional experts	Trans-disciplinary, academic / non-academic, locals / professionals
	Top-down decision-making by experts	Top-down decision-making by experts with stakeholder participation and dialogue	Community-led decision-making, people-up seeking locally appropriate solutions
VALUE	Value	Value/Reuse	Utility
	The value of the past in a therapeutic capacity	Historical values as assets in reuse	Constantly changing
	Universal values	Stakeholder values	Community values

Fig. 1 The different paradigms or phases, and a comparison of outcomes for a chosen set of keywords.

Societal challenges such as gender inequality, poverty, nationalistic movements, climate change, flows of refugees, etc., formed instead the frame for problematizing heritage. In the best cases, heritage becomes an instrument for change. More often however, the tendency is that the representations of the AHD practice in the form of preserved objects and monuments, becomes relativized as examples of outdated historical narratives. In most cases, this is a very relevant critical approach for reinterpreting historical source material and thus gaining a deepened understanding of processes in history. However, there are also more disturbing possibilities that can result in disowning scholarly/scientifically-based heritage research and knowledge.

Two extremes of this that seem to gain space are that these objects either create the scene for artistically based reinterpretations, wherein the historical material becomes completely relativized, or the arena for political right-wing parties favouring traditional heritage, out-dated interpretations and misconceptions of history and heritage. The severe problem in the latter, right wing case is that such political interest tends to make historical objects societally and culturally infected, resulting in problems for heritage professionals, which also leads to critical perspectives on the critique of AHD.[1]

When applying these different paradigms or stages on heritage processes within landscapes and built environments, it is obvious that they need to be combined and integrated into a comprehensive approach, based on the following facts:

- landscapes cannot be turned into museums although some areas and properties need to be preserved in a strict traditional sense,
- historically grounded skills, traditions, technical constructions, and functionalities of cultural landscapes and built environments represent cultural and historical properties to be adapted and used for modern needs, and
- heritage as a process integrated with sustainable development, becomes meaningless if it does not rely on stakeholder

[1] See for example: González-Ruibal et al., 2018.

management that promotes inclusiveness, engagement, opportunities, and creativity from a peoples-based perspective.

Fig.2 Saline di Trapani e Paceco, Sicily. Salt production facility with long historical traditions, and an example of the different paradigms: the windmills need to be preserved as monuments, the instrumental qualities of the site, i.e., continued salt production, need to be developed, and for both the preservation as for the potential development, the engagement of local people is necessary. (Photo: Bosse Lagerqvist).

Stakeholder motivations for heritage formation

To combine heritage operations in this way based on a peoples-based engagement, an awareness concerning the different motivations for heritage designation presents a possible socio-cultural based structure that needs to be understood and negotiated. Different interests and stakeholders might have quite diverse intentions for defining and valuing something as heritage, whether the reasons are emotional or knowledge-based or if they represent individual or collective interests. Figure 3 presents a possible schematic overview of different motivations driving the formation of heritage.

Two tensions – stretching from emotional to knowledge based respectively from individually to collectively oriented – positioned perpendicular to each other, thus creates four areas each representing a certain interest and motivation for heritage formation. To some degree, these areas also represent the historical development of heritage practices and into which we could position the characterizations made by Gregory J. Ashworth (2011), Dean Sully (2013), and Joks Janssen et al (2017).

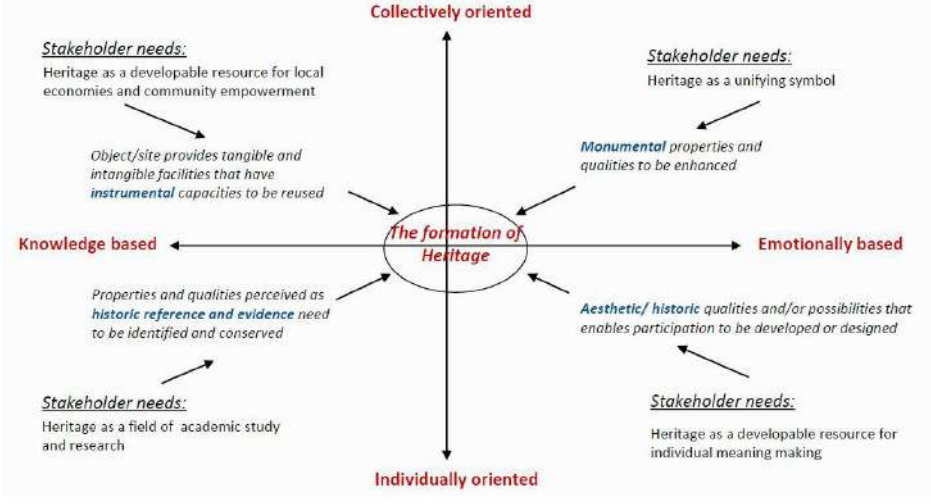

Fig. 3 Schematic overview of different motivations for heritage designation, often interlinked into each other.

The upper right area describes the early stages of heritage practices focusing on monuments, often linked to the creation of new nations during the 19th century. By the end of the century, the activities became to an increasing degree reliant on academic, scholarly based approaches, as illustrated by the bottom left area. These two diagonally positioned areas might also represent the stages described as the preservation paradigm (Ashworth 2011), materials-based conservation (Sully 2013), and heritage as a sector (Jansen et al. 2017). The upper left area describes the increasing instrumental needs for heritage to fulfil societal functions, specifically from the 1960s to 70s and onwards, and where we find the conservation

paradigm (Ashworth, 2011), the values-based conservation (Sully, 2013), and heritage as a factor (Janssen et al., 2017).

With the growing capacity of heritage to address options in societal development and be an asset for local end regional economies, an important success factor was the ability to engage people and the individual non-expert relation to heritage, as described by the bottom right area. In this corner of the Figure 3, rests the critique of AHD and we can place the heritage paradigm (Ashworth 2011), the peoples-based conservation (Sully 2013), and heritage as a vector (Janssen et al. 2017), in this area.

So, heritage practices, as this article argues for them, describe a creative combination of approaches and motivations as an everlasting community-based process creating the space for places, stories, activities, enhancing a creative, inclusive, and sustainable development where heritage are considered as assets and developable resources.

The guiding principle for the practice to be operated as a consequence of this understanding, has been exquisitely formulated by Sir Bernard Feilden at the conference "Air Pollution and Conservation" in Rome 1986:

> "Conservation may be defined as the dynamic management of change in order to reduce the rate of decay. […] Conservation requires comprehensive socio-economic, legal and cultural planning, integrated at all levels." (Rosvall and Aleby 1986, 23).

This principle within the combined approaches needs to be applied throughout the heritage practice area. This is hampered though, since its division into a number of sub-areas, i.e., artefacts, buildings, cities, cultural landscapes, and natural landscapes, characterizes the practice area. This will be explored further down but first something about landscape.

The cultural landscape

During the period from fall 2017 to the end of 2020, the conservation department at University of Gothenburg was running the Erasmus+ Strategic Partnership on Sustainable Management of Cultural Landscapes, comprising 13 partners from nine countries (SUMCULA, 2021). The

project aimed at formulating a joint master's level course to address the increasing demand for generalist managers furnished with sufficiently wide education based on a holistic system of natural sciences, social sciences, heritage studies and project management to satisfy the professional requirements of the management and conservation of cultural landscapes from an evolutionary perspective. Within the project, the concept of *cultural landscape* was defined as:

> "A cultural landscape is a geographic area, with all its cultural and natural resources, the wildlife and domestic animals, natural and artificial ecosystems, the built and intangible heritage therein, continuously shaped by historic and present-day evolutionary processes including the adverse or beneficial impacts of human activities, social relations and evolving cultures, which mirror the evolutionary trends of human society." (SUMCULA, 2018, 11).

When talking about cultural landscapes it is natural to refer to the classic definition given by the American geographer Carl Ortwin Sauer in 1925, stating that the cultural landscape is fashioned from a natural landscape by a culture group. Culture is the agent, the natural area the medium, and the cultural landscape the result[2].

Landscape and Heritage

Following the European Landscape Convention (Council of Europe, 2000) 'culture' is not explicitly addressed as in '*cultural* landscape' but is implicit within the notion of 'landscape' as a cultural expression manifesting the perception of the onlooker. The landscape can have a variety of unique or complex characteristics and attributes pertaining to the realms of nature, i.e., topography, geology, hydrology, and as well to

[2] See the Encyclopaedia Britanica entry titled: Carl O. Sauer, American geographer. https://www.britannica.com/biography/Carl-O-Sauer (Accessed, August 10th, 2021).

culture such as material properties (e.g., forestry, agriculture, constructed spatial structure), but also intangible qualities (e.g., memories, oral traditions), or other sensory qualities (sound, smell). Our ability to perceive one or several or all these diverse properties and qualities guides our capacity as social beings to identify landscape as specific phenomena.

Here there is to some degree a parallelism with the notion of 'heritage', which as previously described, according to present understanding gets its value and meaning through the eye of the beholder rather than being uncovered by an expert. In some circumstances, distinctions are made between cultural and natural heritage, but in analogy with the European Landscape Convention it is more relevant to just use 'heritage' since heritage is not neutral objects but the result of what we perceive and thus constitutes material and intangible effects of our activities as cultural beings.

To conclude: *landscapes* are materialised natural and cultural history with intangible qualities and phenomena, i.e., the *heritage* of landscapes. The reason for formulating and launching the European Landscape Convention is that the landscape, and hence the heritage of the landscape, is under threat. There are a number of driving forces that put pressure on the landscape in both the short and long term, such as markets and unsustainable economic development, urbanisation, technological development to name a few, and most of these are described by Feilden as drivers for the decay he urges conservators and heritage professionals to counteract or decrease. Originally based on a scheme by Plenderleith and Werner (1979), Feilden (2003) formulated a structure for understanding the different causes of decay, focusing on internal causes, external causes, and man-made causes. Internal decay implies factors inside buildings and comprises issues such as humidity, temperature, insects, and animals. The external situation is composed of climatic causes, natural disasters, and biological and botanical causes. Today we could perhaps put the climatic causes within the frame of man-made causes, which in Feilden' scheme consists of wars, politics, pollution, fashion, bureaucracy, economic interests, vandalism, and theft. To these we could include adaptive miss-use and, not the least, stupidity.

To work the landscape through a heritage perspective with the objective to manage these processes of change and address the severe challenges in order to decrease decay and increase sustainability, is in dire need of an integrated holistic approach. Instead, we find landscape issues normally subject for so called 'silo-planning' and the establishment of landscape observatories throughout Europe has the intention to improve this situation (Uniscape 2017; Council of Europe, 2013).

Heritage practice areas

A likewise fragmented area of heritage practices is obvious. Heritage (research as well as practice) is an issue of protecting, preserving, and managing the unique, as well as preserving, managing and developing the landscapes, the structures, the environments, which constitutes the contexts for the unique. This could be a city block, a townscape, a village, an agricultural landscape, or a transportation infrastructure, etc., and deserves the same attention to qualities and properties that applies for what is considered to be unique. This becomes a question of balancing between different stakeholder needs and implies that it is constantly performed in the realms of complex heritage dynamics (see Fig. 4). Mostly for historical reasons, the area is divided into a number of sub-areas like boxes within boxes according to 'typical' cultural heritage objects. These depends on differences in terms of social systems or contexts, such as laws, regulations, professions, economies and so on, (Fig. 4). There might be communication between the boxes to coordinate decisions and operations, but mostly activities operate independently in relation to neighbouring areas. In unfortunate situations, activities in one area might also be counterproductive or even destructive in other areas. The success of the different sub-activities in a broader societal context is dependent on more general attitudes to concepts such as preservation, recycling or circular economy, and these attitudes are in turn the consequences of ongoing socio-cultural processes in society that discuss and redefine the context for heritage work.

Rethinking heritage practice might start with identifying these boxes as problematic filters that hinder the ability to gain a more holistic perspective and thus what is needed is a model development based on an integrated approach. Such an approach would identify these boxes as interlinked sub-systems that are dependent on what attitude society as a whole takes toward memory, history, preservation and conflict resolution. In this way, the sub-systems might form one system – the heritage practices – that would continually integrate historical properties and qualities with contemporary needs and opportunities, underpinning a sustainable societal development. With increased integration and harmonisation between the sub-areas, the possibilities to drive socio-cultural processes in favourable directions could underpin heritage practices and heritage content as assets for sustainable development.

This typically concerns built environments and cultural landscapes created and shaped by the interplay between human activities, and the requirements, limitations, and possibilities provided by the natural landscape.

As a result, present day Europe has been provided with the broad array of landscapes in focus for the European Landscape Convention.

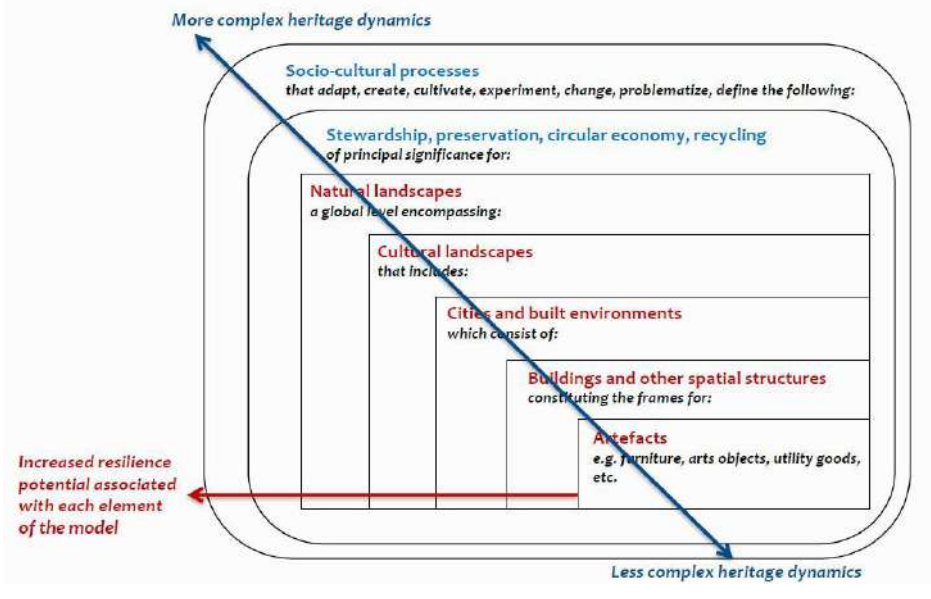

Fig. 4 The heritage practice area and the sub-systems.

As a hypothesis, the resilience of society will increase with increased integration of the different sub-systems, while at the same time this implies more complex heritage dynamics, following Feilden's definition of "dynamic management of change…" (Rosvall and Aleby, 1988, 23).

The Working Group 1 Contribution to the 6th IPCC Assessment Report (IPCC, 2021) stresses the importance of drastic measures to turn the development into a direction that might just provide the world with sufficient survival options, and an important strategic framework represents by the 17 SDG's by the UN.

Embracing these goals so as to include all the heritage sub-systems' goal and strategy formulations might be the incentive necessary to bring about an integration of the heritage practice area into a functioning holistic system, where heritage equals resilience, sustainability, and a hopeful future – and a survival of the landscape as the base arena for human creativity and interaction.

The UN SDGs has the potential to empower, in its positive sense, the different groups of the local society in place-specific and meaningful activities addressing the central challenges of our time (ICOMOS, 2016).

A possible model

Following Ashworth (2011), Sully (2013), and Janssen et al. (2017) we can clearly state that heritage is two-folded:

- As *processes* whereby objects, etc., derived from the near or distant past are continuously transformed, shaped, and re-transformed into experiences for the present. Heritage has in this perspective a process and organisational orientation where *decision rationales* are dependent on the societal context and ultimately dictates the outcome in terms of heritage content.
- As an *outcome*, a condition deliberately created in response to current social, political, cultural, or economic needs. Heritage is in this perspective content and outcome-oriented and represent thus

the *subject matter* for the decision rationales of the process orientation.

These two perspectives of heritage can be represented by two organisational models that through close cooperation might present a possible solution. The subject matter can be framed within the concept of *Ecomuseum*, and the decision rationales can be the driving motivation within a *Landscape Observatory*.

Ecomuseum

An ecomuseum is not an ordinary museum in the sense of a building with collections. Originally, the geographical territory was stated as the foundation for an ecomuseum, which has been criticised by Davis favouring instead the concept of 'place' where 'sense of place' represents the connection between the community and the place (Davies, 2011).

This has been further discussed and the notion of 'space' is proposed by Bowden for the geographic context of ecomuseums, arguing for a non-rigid interpretation of a place but rather the space as the totality of all possible histories, stories, memories, emotions, etc., linked to a place (Bowden, 2017). This notion of space builds on the work of Doreen Massey who describes space as socially constructed, contested, open and evolving where place is an event, a particular set of inter-connected stories as perceived by a person or a group at a given instant (Massey, 2005). The ecomuseum might thus become an extended, or complementary, sensitive assessment resource for a landscape observatory, see section below on landscape observatory.

The term *'éco'* refers primarily not only to ecology, but foremost to a holistic interpretation of cultural heritage made available with new, interactive methods of museum education, embracing the natural environment, the built heritage, and the intangible heritage in opposition to a traditional focus on passively presenting specific items and objects (Corsane et.al. 2007). Ecomuseums are important institutions through which a community can take control of its heritage and develop new approaches by conserving its local distinctiveness.

Ecomuseums have a very important role in the establishment of sustainable development, considering their role in public, non-formal education and in the progressive preservation and development of heritage assets through the engagement of the local communities. Community involvement and active participation is therefore essential for the functionality of ecomuseums:

An ecomuseum strives beyond a simple set course designed on paper; it is about designing strategies, activities, and operations in real life that have the ability to change and improve the society and the landscape, through community involvement. Community means all possible persons within the concerned local society.

Community involvement does not mean that local administrations, a unique historical heritage of European democracy, are irrelevant. On the contrary, their role is synonymous with engaging and involving people, going far beyond the narrow circle of "authorized personnel".

Preservation, interpretation, and management means the constant on-going interpretation, development, redevelopment, reconstruction and creation of heritage properties and qualities, as part of a basic everyday practice. Heritage is very close to the *Sense of Place*, including history of inhabitants, objects, and phenomena, the visible as well as the non-visible, both tangibles and intangibles, but also memories of the past and present and imaginations of the future.

Sustainable development is a central issue for ecomuseums and it also implies increasing the value of a place instead of diminishing it. Evidence from best practices identifies two key elements in this process: place-based development, and the improvement of local networks, where ecomuseums have to play a key role as catalysts of social capital development.

Landscape Observatory

The European Landscape Convention underlines that the landscape is a common asset and shared responsibility. The landscape meets many different values and assets - cultural, ecological, aesthetic, social and economic. Essentially, these interests in the landscape can interact in processes and through negotiation provide a basis for how the resources of

the landscape could be utilized and developed. Therefore, close cooperation is required between authorities, different organizations, civil society, companies, and individuals, in order to manage the diversity of values in a sustainable way (Uniscape 2017; Council of Europe 2013).

There is a basic feature of a bottom-up perspective in the convention in emphasising the social significance of the landscape, enhancing the importance of people actively participating in landscape valuation and management. Such a democratic aspect is also clearly identified in the convention's definition of landscape as "an area perceived by people whose character is the result of the influence and interaction between natural and / or human factors" (Council of Europe 2000). At the same time, there is a natural top-down perspective in that the landscape is a venue for national and regional exploitation interests, and where all plans and projects are not always necessarily coordinated with each other or with local interests.

A landscape observatory is an instrument for coordination, participation, and long-term perspective. However, all planning matters and implementation projects are not specifically subjects for a landscape observatory, but those with a high degree of complexity and opposing interests at several levels were nature and cultural values, as well as social and economic values should be weighed against each other, ought typically to be in the focus of a landscape observatory.

The rationales for the relation between the landscape observatory and the ecomuseum and decision-making rests on three principles: governance, stewardship, and management.

Identifying heritage as a process of integrated conservation provides the potential establishment of a governance structure, representing processes of interaction and decision-making among the actors involved in a collective problem that led to the creation, reinforcement, or reproduction of social norms and institutions. This is the role of the landscape observatory.

Through the governance structure the concept of stewardship will be enabled, carried by the principles of the ecomuseum and implying an *ethic* that embodies the responsible planning and management of resources, i.e., the acceptance or assignment of responsibility to shepherd and safeguard the valuables of others.

These structures and principles enable the frame for grounded, transparent, effective managerial *routines*, representing processes of dealing with or controlling things or people, handled by different local organisations.

Discussion and conclusions

The complexity to be addressed in approaching heritage, landscape, and sustainability can seek inspiration from Carl Ortwin Saur and his broad scholarly-scientific base. He stated in reference to the subject area Human geography that it exists because of the diversification in human ways and no approach to its questions is more rewarding than that of comparative culture history, soundly based on ecological and geographical principles and concepts (Parsons 2021). Following this, integrated conservation represents a viable starting point for defining needed research initiatives:

- The research is practice-led. Practice is the natural arena for inquiry and the methods of practice are applied as methods of inquiry.
- The research is cross-disciplinary, with the aim to explain and understand content, historical development, competing interpretations, procedures, and processes for bringing issues forward.
- The research is practice oriented. Operating research through exploratory methodologies and surveys includes the ability to execute procedures and control the processes.

The priority now, in terms of heritage and landscape studies and practices, is for interdisciplinary approaches with broad stakeholder inclusion, to align landscape character, landscape perception, and operationalised ecosystem services, leading to improved methodologies for assessment. Regarding the above proposed model, the *ecomuseum* comprises the subject matter of the landscape space, assessing, sampling, and interacting with histories, memories, intentions linked to people, objects and sites. The inclusive approach reducing social gaps and promoting

community feeling is important. Heritage processes preserves, maintains, develops and creates societal qualities and properties leading to employment opportunities and depopulation prevention. There is both an internal as well as external orientation in the activities of the ecomuseum, in the sense of addressing both the community and visitors to the area.

The *landscape observatory*, on the other hand represents support systems for decision rationales in all types of regional development and land-use planning, as receiver of subject matter made available through models applied for assessing the landscape space. The success factor rests on the ability to bring formal stakeholders, civil society organisations, the academia and school system, private businesses, and the general public, into joint processes for understanding the landscape providing informed decisions. The landscape observatory is in this way more obviously oriented towards internal functions compared with the ecomuseum.

There are similarities between the European countries in terms of structures for urban and land-use planning, as well as how heritage is protected and incorporated in societal activities, while at the same time there are significant differences (Petti et al., 2020). The establishment of landscape observatories across Europe shares the same incentive in terms of the ELC, however there are very different reasons, running periods, organisations and nature of activities represented by the observatories so far (Gotzman 2018). It is therefore a little early to try to compare results and effects from various activities in the subject field cross over the European continent. To date however, there has been no project or activity aiming at cooperation between the ecomuseum-principle and the landscape observatory structure.

To conclude: The division of the heritage practice area into sub-systems needs to be replaced with a holistic perspective on landscape as the arena for heritage, brought together by jointly addressing the 17 UN Sustainable Development Goals thus fulfilling the mission to manage dynamically the processes of change in order to reduce the rate of decay. The principles governing the practice brings together three stakeholder incentives:

- some areas, objects, properties, and phenomena need to be preserved in a strict traditional sense, while at the same time embrace a continued process of interpretation and re-interpretation,
- historically grounded skills, traditions, constructions, and functionalities of landscapes and built environments represent cultural and historical properties to be adapted and used for modern needs, and
- heritage as a process integrated with sustainable development, becomes meaningless if it does not rely on stakeholder management that promotes from a broad peoples-based perspective inclusiveness, engagement, opportunities, and creativity.

The *ecomuseum concept* could potentially frame a combination of studies, assessments, recordings, interpretations, creativity, development into heritage practice approaches, supplying a *landscape observatory* with means for facilitating decisions with an integrated conservation approach on sustainable development. To succeed in such venture, it is vital to understand landscapes from a holistic perspective as materialised natural and cultural history with present, past, and future material and intangible qualities and phenomena, i.e., as heritage, describing valuable assets and fundamental resources for increasing the resilience of society.

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