Management and Interpretation of World Heritage through Community Engagement

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Tools for Engagement: The Participatory Culture Model

Heritage studies are increasingly engaged in publicly interactive research involving interpretation programs that are a collaboration between archaeologists and other heritage specialists and the lay public. During the last two decades, globalization forces created a need for contextualizing knowledge in order to address complex issues and collaboration across and beyond academic disciplines, using more integrated methodologies that include the participation of non-academics and increased stakeholder involvement. Successful programs empower (or share power), as well as motivate, lay persons to more active involvement in not only archaeological fieldwork but also interpretation and dissemination processes. The resulting collaborative relationships generate "multivocality" within a participatory culture model. In these cases, participatory approaches often apply public/professional mediation within established principles of public presentation and interpretation. At times, this complements the academic perceptions of the past, but in others it challenges or replaces them. Cultural heritage specialists should embrace these collaborative opportunities that ultimately strengthen public support and appreciation of archaeology and cultural heritage (Jameson and Eogan 2013; Jameson 2013).

Community Activism and Collaboration

Application of a participatory culture model and cultural specialist/lay person collaborative relationships are central components of effective interpretation of cultural heritage sites. An active role by the community in the Interpretation of material culture is an essential ingredient of community archaeology that gives non-archaeologists power to interpret the past. Practice shows that people can ascribe new relationships with sites, with technical or scientific interpretation being just one of many variations of meaning.

What we call "community archaeology" ascribes to a participatory model of stakeholder interaction. The term has been thoroughly deliberated in recent years, largely eclipsing the older banners of "public archaeology" and Cultural Heritage Management that have dominated the lexicon of archaeological practice since the 1970s. Community archaeology goes beyond traditional descriptions of outreach and public engagement to more critical and reflexive actions and thinking. Practitioners of community archaeology recognize a growing interest in voluntary activism in archaeological research and interpretation and seek to create a platform for discussion about the effectiveness and importance of such work. They encourage collaboration between scholarship and politics, people and institutions, and a blending of interaction with and among various communities at local, regional, national, and international levels. They seek empowerment for diverse communities and incorporate multiple, inclusive, and at times conflicting perspectives on heritage, while striving to include voices of professionals, constituents, collaborators, mass media, and others.

Community archaeologists create projects that give the community a major role in the interpretation and dissemination of archaeological information. Moreover, community participation is not relegated to the interpretation of findings but also includes non-archaeologist contributions to any aspect of archaeology, including research design, project goals, and theoretical approaches. However, in many cases worldwide, only a small portion of communities is involved in the participatory process; those with higher education and and other forms of cultural capital.

Development of New and Innovative Narratives

Funari et al. (2016) have dealt with the question of using material culture (artifacts) to change perceptions of people and empower them. Their work illustrates the importance of collaboration between universities and communities and shows how, through collective research and the use of museum material, participative principles can guide us in the construction of more pluralist narratives, raising issues of memory, exclusion, and empowerment. Targeting their work to children and youth helps schoolchildren to question the notion of archaeology as something pertaining to the world of adventure and the sensational, enabling them to understand the importance of material culture in constructing less normative notions of the past and a more pluralist present. These experiences show how material culture is fundamental for power sharing and for questioning the status quo. These projects deal with archaeology, material culture, and heritage in a progressive way, aiming at social inclusion and encouraging youth to respect and appreciate diversity.

In several parts of the world, indigenous populations have adopted the works of tourist art to create new interpretive narratives that imply a transformation in the appreciation and revaluation of

indigenous archaeological sites. In the case of Maya architecture in Chizten Izta, the rebuilding of a new pyramid emphasizes the importance of the physical site to the ancient Chichén Itzá community, helping to demonstrate the need for continued preservation, allowing for acknowledgment of the past while moving toward the future. Here, commercialization and tourism have generated a new way to visit the distant past, where the spectacle of restoration catches the visitor's eye through illuminating the pyramid at night. The economic power of tourism dominates the scene. Maya people accept this discourse and have made it a part of their culture today (Barry 2014, 2016). Conversely, in the American Southwest, traditional decorative design elements of pottery collected by 19th century archaeologists have inspired modern indigenous potters to replicate the designs in the production of tourist art, resulting in a rediscovery of an important aspect of their traditional culture as well as an appreciation of the economic power of tourism.

Elitism and Political Power

The issue of the disconnect between local communities and site management can be traced to two main causes: elitism of officials and academics, and the politics of power. Sandes (2010), in her comparative study of categories of stakeholders, summaries community stakeholders into the five general categories, not necessarily at play at the same time: (1) Cultural heritage professionals; archaeologists and site conservation specialists who deal with heritage as an intrinsic part of its profession; (2) Development professionals, people and organizations involved in projects; (3) Politicians, those in positions of political power or those who have some political concern about having a site either conserved or demolished to support their cause; (4) The "interested public," those who have a concern for archaeological sites and cultural heritage but for personal rather than directly professional reasons; and (5) The "uninterested public," the significant number of people who have no interest or conscious involvement with cultural heritage, nor consider it relevant to their daily lives. The first three categories we can label the educated and culturally privileged, with power to exercise discretion on the treatment of cultural heritage.

It is in the last two categories, the "interested public," and "uninterested public," generally lacking in authority and power, that most members of local communities fall. In our heritage management and interpretation efforts, we try to reduce the number of uninterested public through participative processes within more reflexive social environments. In heritage management, differentiating stakeholders is essential in creating effective bottom-up decision-making processes. In adopting this category scheme, we need to define the makeup of the uninterested public within demographic settings (i.e, locals, transients, tourists). One of the questions we should address in relation to the uninterested public is whether we are dealing with issues related to a miss-valuation of heritage and

lack of participative projects, or, if we are dealing with a passive society that just reacts when they perceive they are deprived of benefits (Pastor Perez, 2016). Our challenge is to turn significant numbers of the uninterested public into an energized and engaged public. Partnerships between professionals and energetic communities can foster local care and management. In such scenarios, professionals can take the lead in activities such as training, mentoring, monitoring, and capacity building, but honesty and trust are vital if such approaches are to succeed. The archaeological profession can use this model of partnering in community orientated projects to create a more public-facing profession which acts **less as *mitigator* and more as *mediator***, where local communities are recognized as genuine stakeholders in archaeological practice

The Hindering Effects of Authorized Discourses

In most countries, the authorized heritage discourse (AHD) has dominated interpretation at managed sites reflecting an elitist narrative, displaying and requiring technical knowledge and insight to be comprehended. In many cases, the interpretation is very classical with a romantic vision that highlights the aesthetic, monumental, and "spectacular" aspects of sites at the expense of other significant features. Laurajane Smith (2012) has examined the consequences this discourse has for archaeological practices associated with community engagement and outreach. Smith maintains that the AHD frames archaeology heritage practices and works to conceive heritage as specifically 'archaeological heritage'. The archaeological discipline owes much to the existence of this discourse, which privileges expert values over those of community and other sub-national interests and which works to constrain understandings of heritage as primarily material, neglecting the intangible values. The political dominance of this discourse can hinder productive and critical community engagement. Archaeologists need to engage in self-conscious and explicit challenges to this discourse to facilitate meaningful community partnerships.

In many parts of the world, manifestations of AHD have caused people to see World Heritage and archaeology as a brand or etiquette without any historical or cultural value. These perceptions are important to understand in the framework of early planning stages of site management and interpretation. For example, in the case of the Çatalhöyük site in Turkey (Apaydin, 2015, 2016a, 2016b), a small percentage of local people visits the site because they "don't agree" with the scientific interpretation. Despite all efforts made, the integration between the international team and the local community has not been as effective as it should be. Nevertheless, our primary goal in these cases is to enable local communities to take an active role in the diagnosis and management of the heritage site. In areas facing problems of environmental degradation, urban insecurity, and high

rates of unemployment, local education is paramount as an enabler for strengthening community identification with the site.

Official Documents, Guidelines, and Charters

At the same time, a number of international guidelines, although they address the need for community engagement, also serve to promote the agendas of the educated and privileged, carrying some form of AHD. For example, the Convention on the Value of Cultural Heritage for Society (Faro Convention, 2005, Council of Europe) states that the community must be involved in cultural heritage management. The ICOMOS Charter on the Interpretation and Presentation of Cultural Heritage Sites (the 2008 Ename Charter) also addresses the importance of local community involvement. These and other international guidelines, however, tend to be optimistic and positivist, in the sense that they reflect the definitions and engineering of the heritage domain through top-down instruction of archaeologists or heritage managers. As an example, Barry (2016) outlines the challenges of the Tell Balata Archaeological Park project in Palestine, where it is almost impossible to comply with such professional standards and to follow the 2008 ICOMOS Charter due to the political, social, and economic situation and a lack of recognition of, and respect for, multiculturalism (Jameson, 2014).

Developing Community Relationships

The relationship between community participation and interpretation of the sites is an important topic for current and future research. We are only beginning to evaluate our results and experiences. In these endeavors, we need to work with our social science colleagues in such fields as sociology and social psychology in developing methodologies (surveys, focus groups, interviews, ethnographic observations, etc.) that can be applied to studies of archaeological heritage. We need to complement these studies with innovative ways to identify, and receive input from, stakeholders. We need to develop marketing and social media skills. We need also to work with our communication partners such as interpreters, guides, exhibit designers, and site managers in developing collaborative relationships.

In our community archaeology deliberations and reflections, we work in the context of a juncture of archaeological, heritage, and community values. Those of us in resource management positions seek to empower, and share power, with diverse communities of defined stakeholders interacting in a variety of social contexts. In our interactions with and within communities, however they are defined, we need to recognize that community archaeology is always going to be an intervention

into an existing social context where people are already actively producing and negotiating identities and where the past is plural and contested. Community archaeology may well contribute to social cohesion; i.e., using fieldwork to counter a spike in crime and disorder in school-aged populations, but "we should also recognize that outcomes are not invariably positive and beneficial; once archaeologists engage with the heritage process they are engaging with the politics of recognition. And recognition and inclusion must, by definition, also differentiate and exclude" (Smith 2012; Nevell and Redhead, 2015).

We should also recognize that there may be a complex play between individual motivations and benefits and any sense of community. Participation in projects may primarily be to augment the school curriculum or as parts of therapeutic practices. Recognizing the importance of individual motivation has led to new and significant forms of evaluation, pioneered by the Dig Greater Manchester project in the UK that found that "volunteers and participants usually have more personal reasons for engaging with community projects: to gain confidence, for the enjoyment of working with others, and for the empowerment that comes from giving the present more meaning. Simply by taking part in the process and engaging in these activities, individuals can acquire new life-skills at the same time that some of our larger academic questions are being addressed" (Nevell and Redhead, 2013).

We know that funding is always a challenge, both because resources are increasingly scarce, and because funding schemes can impose their own rules and conditions, that, in themselves, make the relationships between communities and professional archaeological practice more complicated. We have seen the reduction of major funding sources, such as the National Science Foundation in the U.S. and the Heritage Lottery Funding in the UK, and a draining away of support from universities, exacerbating the problem.

Given these vulnerabilities, broad political support for the objectives and practice of community archaeology is essential. Experience has taught us that constant vigilance is needed within the day-by-day issues of local politics. A failure to embrace community-based possibilities will result in the loss of society's curiosity concerning our shared heritage and ultimately this will cost us support. Despite these tensions, but also because of the vibrancy and relevance that they create, there is evidence, seen in the case studies and examples shared in this volume, that is positive about community archaeology and its future (Nevell and Redhead, 2015).

Conclusions

Today, application of a participatory culture model and cultural specialist specialist/lay person collaborative relationships are central components of effective interpretation of cultural heritage sites

Innovative participatory approaches, avoiding the pitfalls of authorized and elitist heritage discourses, are raising the potential of cultural resources to heighten public sensitivity to the rich cultural heritage these resources represent. These approaches serve to connect multiple perceptions of the past, all equally important, that must be transmitted or facilitated by the cultural heritage manager.

Many argue that the incorporation of local knowledge is important to the survival of archaeology as an academic discipline. Community involvement serves to end the elitism and exclusive control that archaeologists have had over the material past, resulting in a "decolonized" archaeology, giving non-archaeologists a shared role in interpreting the past. The degree of interpretive control that communities have in archaeological projects can vary from using interview and consultation data to producing academic publications written by community members based on community identified research questions. Project success requires investing the requisite time and resources to develop rapport and mutual respect with the local community. Today, experience has taught community archaeologists to plan for long-term collaborations beginning at project inception (Nevell and Redhead, 2015).

The common theme of the chapters in this volume is that they show alternative and innovative participatory approaches in cultural heritage management and interpretation. They also reveal a need to develop effective and sensitive interpretation in all communities.

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