

Community Involvement & Ecomuseums

Towards a Mutual Approach to Ecomuseology and
Landscape Studies

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Abstract

Ecomuseums are museums for, by, and about people at home in their own environment (Keyes, 1992). Since their establishment in 1971, community involvement has been a defining characteristic of ecomuseums. Such community involvement does not just preserve artefacts, but also protects and creates its own physical environment in the form of landscape. In ecomuseums, landscape is both a setting and a feature; however, there have been relatively few studies of landscape in ecomuseology. Furthermore, despite the centrality of community involvement, in many ecomuseums there is an overemphasis on economic development rather than community involvement in heritage protection and local development.

This thesis contributes to a new theoretical and interdisciplinary field of landscape research, focusing on the significance of involvement in ecomuseums. The connection between ecomuseum and landscape could serve to guide the work of ecomuseum management and landscape administrators. Various approaches, both quantitative and qualitative, have been used to elucidate different aspects and applications of the proposed theoretical framework.

The findings demonstrate the dual role of landscape, for it is not only conceptual or visual, observed from the outside, but also comprise the insider's landscape, with all its experience and local involvement. The dual role is also evident in the cultural and economic development of ecomuseums—the questions here being whose heritage is represented in ecomuseums, and who is in control of their economic development.

The findings show how heritage held in ecomuseums serves to create a sense of place, turning a conceptual space into a place of experience. Community development in ecomuseums is based on community involvement in administrative procedures, and not only involvement in the ecomuseums' cultural and economic development.

The thesis proposes a new theoretical field of ecomuseum landscape within an interdisciplinary approach. The thesis steps away from administrative, top-down approaches and instead adopts an open-ended process that involves different levels of involvement, encompassing volunteers, administrators, and researchers.

Keywords: community involvement, ecomuseum, ecomuseology, landscape

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Dedication

To people I love

Heaven, earth, and humankind would form a single, harmonious unit.

天人合一

Lao Zi

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List of Publications

This thesis is based on the work contained in the following papers, referred to by Roman numerals in the text:

- I Bigell, W. & Chang, C. (2014). The meaning of landscape: historical development, cultural frames, linguistic variation, and antonyms. *Ecozon@: European Journal of Literature, Culture and Environment* 5(1), 84-103.
- II Chang, C., Annerstedt, M. & Sarlöv-Herlin, I. (2015). A narrative review of ecomuseum literature: suggesting a thematic classification and identifying sustainability as a core element. *International Journal of the Inclusive Museum* 7(2), 15-29.
- III Chang, C., Annerstedt, M., Jakobsson, A., Lieberg, M. & Sarlöv-Herlin, I. (2012). Looking at ecomuseums through 'landscape lenses'. Examples from Suoga and Zhenshan, China. In S. Lira, R. Amodeda, C. Pinheiro, P. Davis, M. Stefano & G. Corsane (Eds.), *Ecomuseums 2012*. (pp. 39-48). Barcelos, Portugal: Green Lines Institute for Sustainable Development. ISBN 978-989-98013-1-8
- IV Chang, C., Peterson, A., Persson, E. & Ode Sang, Å. (2015). Using ecomuseum indicators to evaluate ecomuseum websites for community involvement and heritage tourism contents. Manuscript submitted for publication to *Journal of Heritage Tourism*.

Papers I-III are reproduced with the permission of the publishers.

The contribution of Cheng Chang to the papers included in this thesis was as follows:

- I Together with Werner Bigell, I planned the research project and wrote the paper. I was responsible for parts of data collection. I analysed and developed the collected data, and co-wrote the paper with Werner Bigell. I am the second author of the paper.
- II Together with Matilda van den Bosch and Ingrid Sarlöv-Herlin, I planned the review and the chosen method. I carried out the literature search, selected the relevant papers to be included, and analysed the collected data together with the co-authors. I am the first and corresponding author of the paper.
- III I introduced the approach, and together with Ingrid Sarlöv-Herlin decided upon the concept of the paper outline. I performed the literature study, following advice from Ingrid Sarlöv-Herlin and Matilda van den Bosch. I developed the theories and framed the topic contextually with assistance from my co-authors. I wrote the paper with feedback from the other authors. I am the first and corresponding author of the paper.
- IV I carried out the research design, conducted a website search, and literature search, and, together with Anna Peterson and Erik Persson, analysed the data on which the paper was based. I wrote the paper with feedback and input from Anna Peterson, Erik Persson, and Åsa Ode Sang. I am the first and corresponding author of the paper.

1 Introduction

1.1 Research background

An ecomuseum is a museum for, by, and about people at home in their own environment (Keyes, 1992). It is a setting for transmitting and protecting heritage as well as for the development of a place through a community approach. Since the term ecomuseum was coined in 1971 by Georges-Henri Rivière and Hugues de Varine at the 9th International Museum Congress in France (Su, 2008), there has been increasing interest in the concept, both from the public and the academy. The total number of ecomuseums in the world is approximately 400, with almost 350 of them in Europe (Borrelli & Davis, 2012). Ecomuseums have been researched as part of the academic field of ecomuseology, and ecomuseology has strong links to other fields such as anthropology, sociology, and museology. Within ecomuseology, research has so far addressed theoretical aspects (for example, Moniot, 1973; de Varine, 1985; Engström, 1985; Hubert, 1985; Mayrand, 1985; Rivière, 1985; Veillard, 1985; Stokrocki, 1996; Debary, 2004; Cai & Yao 2012), cultural studies and anthropology (for example, Nabais, 1985; Camargo & Moro, 1985; Collet, 2006; Rogers, 2012; Delgado, 2003), landscape studies (for example, Davis, 2005; Corsane et al., 2009; Davis, 2009; Borrelli & Davis, 2012; Coughlin, 2012), economic, ecological, and socio-cultural development (for example, Kinard, 1985; Norman, 1993; Galla, 2002; Howard, 2002; Ohara, 2008; Su, 2008; Galla, 2005), management in terms of different degrees of administration and management (community—region—government) and environmentally sustainable management strategies (for example, Gomez de Blavia, 1985; Lawes et al., 1992; Olsson et al., 2004; Schultz et al., 2004; Lloyd & Morgan, 2008) and evaluation (for example, I, 2006; Corsane et al., 2007a; Corsane et al., 2007b; Davis, 2008).

1.1.1 The importance of involvement in the ecomuseum

Ecomuseology has helped to shift the focus of museology from heritage objects to the conditions under which heritage is created in communities. This community focus is also found in more recent theories of landscape, seeing landscapes as intersections of natural heritage and the communities which inhabit an area. The link between community and heritage in the case of the ecomuseum, and between communities and their natural surroundings, is involvement.

Community involvement is one of the defining factors of ecomuseums (Davis, 2011), and much of ecomuseology focuses on understanding the role of local communities in heritage preservation and community development. De Varine (2005) states that the 'eco' in ecomuseum refers to the well-adjusted relationship between a society and its environment; equally, it means 'house' or 'living space' (Keyes, 1992). This means that ecomuseums are not just institutions which facilitate involvement in decision-making processes, but that they are places of daily life, and thus a wider concept of involvement is necessary. Eco may refer to both community and ecology, and this means that the ecomuseum integrates different approaches to heritage, to communities or lifestyles, and to ecology. The ecomuseum primarily serves the local community rather than catering for visitors or tourists (Maggi & Falletti, 2000; Perella et al., 2010). An important indicator for evaluating the authenticity of an ecomuseum is its level of community involvement and democracy (Corsane et al., 2007a). The focus on community involvement thus means that the ecomuseum is not primarily an institution for preserving heritage in the form of artefacts, but includes heritage in strategies of sustainable community development. This in turn implies that communities are involved in heritage preservation.

This wider idea of community involvement is in line with a number of conceptual models (Relph, 1976; Olwig, 1996; Arler, 2008) describing the development of the concept of a 'sense of place'. Here, sense of place is not solely meant as an individual attachment to one's environment, nor is it the sensation a special landscape creates in a visitor. Instead, sense of place means attachment generated by a community's interaction with its territory (Arler, 2008). Whether this territory has significance for a larger society (for example, in a national or regional sense) is not the primary concern. Since sense of place is generated by involvement, it could be argued that it exists in all human habitats. Therefore, the purpose of the ecomuseum is not to preserve outstanding places, but to include the question of heritage into this involvement. The idea of sense of place in this wider meaning is expressed by many authors using a variety of terminologies, highlighting its different

aspects. Relph's concept of place 'insideness' (1976) describes the degree of involvement, understanding, and concern that people have for a particular place. Relph (1981) argues that through experience of and action in a place, people would be motivated to protect an existing place, or to create a new one. Similarly, Arler (2008) argues that involvement turns a conceptual or abstract space into an inhabited place through place-making. With a focus on landscape, Olwig (1996) coined the term 'platial' (place-oriented, in an analogy with spatial or space-oriented) to describe a community's relation to landscape from multiple insider perspectives, in contrast to a singular 'spatial' outside perspective. While these approaches see landscape, community, and heritage as systems with many aspects, Arnstein's earlier model (1969) focuses on the administrative aspects of participation, creating a 'ladder' that distinguishes between different degrees of involvement, from feigned or symbolic involvement (such as a hearing that is not legally binding) to the highest degree of participation in the shape of 'citizen control' (being responsible for administration). These perspectives show that involvement is complex, involving many aspects of life, and that it exists on different scales (global, national, and local).

1.1.2 The importance of landscape relating to involvement

Community involvement has also led to a reconsideration of the concept of landscape, from having often being understood as the aestheticized and static view of an outsider to the involved insider's point of view. Examples include Olwig's notion of platial landscape (1996), but this shift can also be seen in the European Landscape Convention (ELC) (Council of Europe, 2000a). The ELC understands landscape as being created by community involvement, and thus it parallels the values of the ecomuseum. The ELC stresses community participation in the planning, management, and conservation of landscape. Also, in ecomuseums, landscape is both the main feature and the setting (Davis, 2011).

A community-oriented or platial understanding of landscape is an indispensable element of ecomuseums (Davis, 2011), where involvement with cultural and historical landscapes creates a sense of place and enhances local pride and place identity (Borrelli & Davis, 2012; Coughlin, 2012; Corsane et al., 2009; Davis, 2005; Davis, 2009). Ecomuseums have changed landscape perceptions, creating new patterns of human–nature interaction within landscapes (Magnusson, 2004). Ecomuseums are often established in cultural or natural landscapes under threat (Kimeev, 2008), thus turning them into strategies to reinvigorate a region's multi-ethnic culture within a suitable environment. Landscape in this sense is seen as the result of social conditions

and activities, and planned development is necessary to preserve landscape as the place of a community, and so create landscape identity (Perella et al., 2010). However, in spite of its centrality to ecomuseology, there have been relatively few ecomuseological investigations of landscape.

1.1.3 The challenges of involvement and landscape in the ecomuseum

Community involvement in ecomuseums and landscape may take several forms. Arler (2008) argues that landscape in the ELC is an arena for cultural, ecological, and social concerns, and also for economic use. The ELC, in particular, stresses the role of landscape as an economic resource for sustainable tourism (Council of Europe, 2000a). Both the community-oriented concept of landscape and the ecomuseum concept see economic development and its control as an important aspect of involvement. However, while economic development is necessary for communities living in landscapes, including ecomuseum communities, economic development in the form of tourism also raises the question of whose heritage is being protected and why, and what is regarded as being authentic in landscape and ecomuseums.

Economic development in ecomuseums frequently takes the form of tourism. Sustainable tourism or ecotourism often stresses the authenticity of a place. However, authenticity is a problematic term, suggesting an undisputed past, and, like sustainability, it is in danger of developing into a marketing term. An example here is Waller and Lea's study (1999), which found that tourists perceive a place as authentic when it corresponds to their prior expectations, thus confirming stereotypes rather than revealing realities. One solution to this problem is to link authenticity not to the past (how things really were) but to the degree of control local people have over their stories (as in heritage) and resources (such as tourism) (Gustavsson & Peterson, 2003). Authenticity can be also linked to scale. An ecomuseum, for example, is one thing for a visitor, another thing for a government or local authority official, and yet another for the local population. The community focus of the ecomuseum requires a concept of authenticity that is neither marked by the tourist gaze nor by any project to establish national identity.

Chambers (2000, p. 98) defines authenticity as the degree of local control over tourism activities, referring to

conditions in which people have significant control over their affairs, to the extent that they are able to play an active role in determining how changes occur in their social settings.

Besides control, Chambers also touches the aspect of scale when he states that

low-budget tourists have a more positive economic impact on the areas they visit than is often thought. They tend, for example, to rely much more on the local economy, seeking inexpensive meals and lodging that are more likely to have been provided by local entrepreneurs (2000, p.38).

Chambers' idea can be combined with Gustavsson and Peterson's concept (2003) of authentic place as 'an area with a number of people belonging to the place or actively linked to the place': here, authenticity stresses a sense of belonging. Gustavsson and Peterson (2003) mention the conflict between historical correctness and community involvement, and propose that authenticity should be linked to community involvement. They suggest considering authenticity as an important factor to communicate in action-oriented conservation, planning, and management procedures, linking the past to the future. Future-orientation, control over heritage and economy, sense of place, and a small scale are all elements which also define the concept of authenticity in ecomuseums.

Economic development such as tourism is considered to be beneficial for ecomuseums because it can create a public interest in heritage in the general public and generate funds for heritage preservation and community development (Jamieson, 1989; Ohara, 2008; Davis, 2008, 2010). However, an over-reliance on economic development may shift the focus of ecomuseums from community involvement to tourism development, potentially risking heritage protection and leading to unbalanced community development (Ohara, 1998; Galla, 2005; Su, 2008; Howard, 2002). A development only in terms of economics could distort the ecomuseum idea and turn it into a marketing device (Corsane et al., 2007a). This has been shown to be the case for some ecomuseums in a number of countries: for example, even though the idea of the ecomuseum aims at local democracy and development, the ecomuseum of Le Creusot and two others in the Cévennes (all in France) benefit tourists interests more than they support local development (Howard, 2002). Some developing countries emphasise the ecomuseums' role on the local community's living standards rather than heritage protection (Galla, 2005; Su, 2008).

1.1.4 Scope of the PhD study

The issues discussed above show that there is potential for a discrepancy between the core ideas of the ecomuseum movement with their focus on community involvement, local development, and heritage protection, and the actual ecomuseum practice. This thesis takes up the ambivalent role of tourism for ecomuseums.

The community involvement and landscape focus of this thesis aims at an interdisciplinary approach in the field of ecomuseology. While the focus on landscape may invite a new academic perspective on the ecomuseum, the connection to community involvement may contribute to framing and solving practical problems of the organization and administration of ecomuseums. In these practical terms, the thesis discusses the experiences and involvement of common people, challenging administrative top-down practices in landscape planning. In general the thesis sees landscape not as the result of an administrative process but as an open-ended process involving different levels, such as local volunteers, administrators, and researchers.

1.2 Objectives of the thesis

The overall aim of this thesis is to analyse the ecomuseum concept and approach from a landscape perspective, including the role of community involvement and how this could contribute to the development of ecomuseums.

Derived from this, the research was guided by the following research questions:

- What is the role of landscape in ecomuseums?
- What is the role of involvement in ecomuseums?

2 Theoretical background

This chapter presents and discusses three key concepts: ecomuseum, landscape, and involvement. The chapter also provides a suggestion of how these concepts are interrelated and how they are used and relate to one another in the included papers.

2.1 Ecomuseum

The 1960s saw a rise in environmental awareness that today has become part of the social and political mainstream, as for example seen in the attention given to the Rio Declaration on Environment and Development (1992). Environmental awareness has not just been a search for technological solutions to the environmental crisis, but in a larger frame asks questions about the relations between nature, culture, and community. This awareness, coupled with a new focus on empowering local communities, also reached the institution of the museum, asking what is meant by heritage, and how it is preserved, exhibited, and transmitted. There has been a revolution in museology, requiring museums to show concern for the needs of society, stepping beyond the traditional setting involving buildings, collections, and research. This museum revolution demanded that museums serve the needs of society, polity, and the environment (van Mensch, 1995).

Responding to the call to reimagine museology, George-Henri Rivière and Hugues de Varine coined the term ‘ecomuseum’ in 1971. The initial idea was to preserve heritage in its original environment (de Varine, 1985), the so-called *in situ* concept. The ecomuseum was not a new institution but a movement: Rivière spoke about the ‘evolving definition of the ecomuseum’ and described it as having ‘limitless diversity’ (Rivière, 1985), formed and activated by public authority and the local community. The most recent definition of ecomuseum is ‘a community-based museum or heritage project that supports sustainable development’ (Davis, 2007, p. 116). Davis’s definition stresses the

focus on local community involvement, which means that heritage can be seen as an aspect of sustainable community development. The ecomuseum collects, preserves, exhibits, and researches heritage, just as the traditional museum does (Jamieson, 1989); however, the ecomuseum also involves local communities in heritage protection and museum development. An important aspect of the ecomuseum is the way it displays heritage, namely *in situ*, leaving it in the context of the everyday life of the community (Davis, 2011). The difference between ecomuseums and open-air museums is that the latter do not include a community as part of the museum. And of course, even though ‘eco’ in ecomuseum primarily refers to community, ecomuseums also preserve natural habitats.

The fundamental difference between traditional museums and ecomuseums is how natural environment, local community, and heritage relate to one another (Fig. 1). Rivard (1984) has also graphically represented the differences between traditional museums and ecomuseums (Fig. 2). Whereas the traditional museum sees those elements as being separate, the ecomuseum sees heritage and its preservation as part of a local community, and the local community as part of a natural environment. This means that the ecomuseum sees itself less as an institution separated from daily experience and more as an integral part of the relationship communities have with their environment and their past. Since this relationship is not institutionalized, the ecomuseum depends on the involvement of the local community.

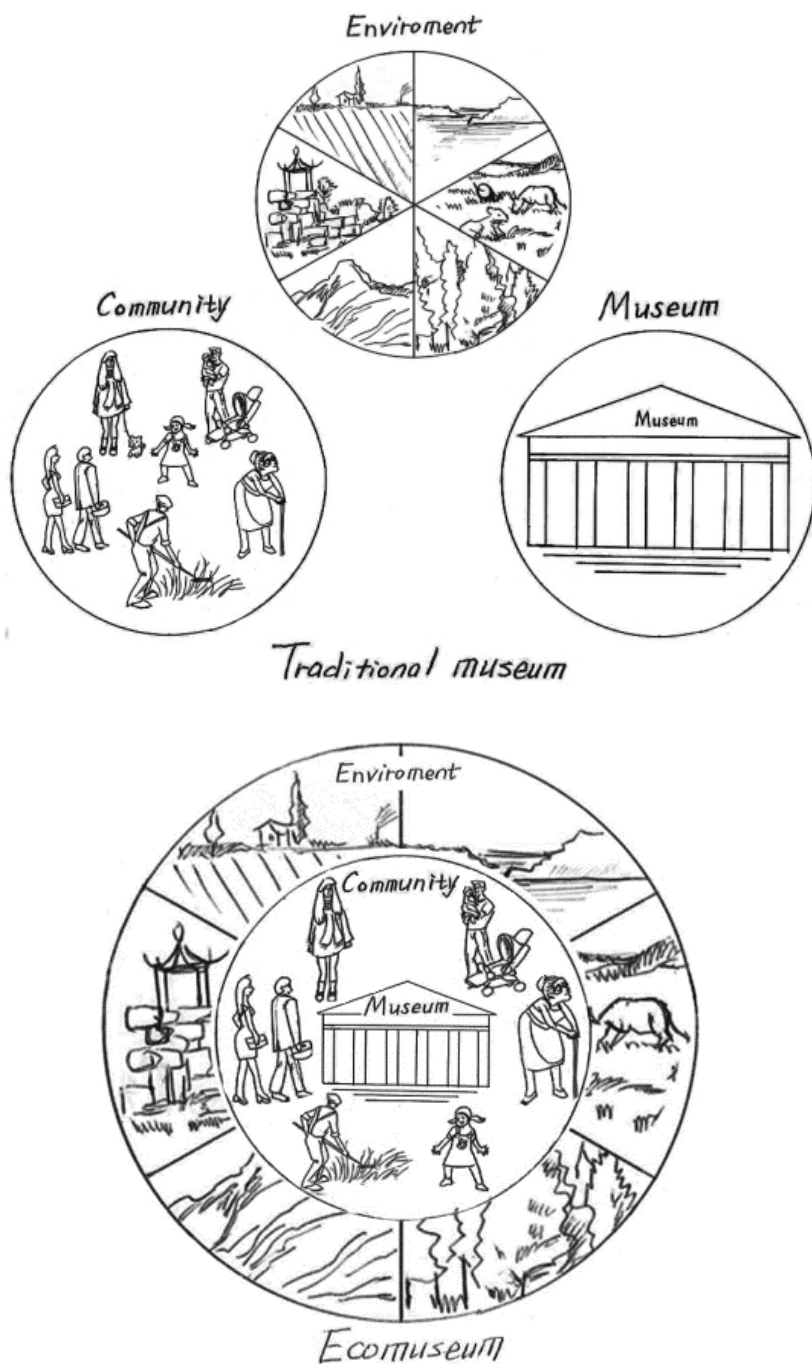


Figure 1. The differences between an ecomuseum and a traditional museum: The ecomuseum must be located within a local community and its environment (Cheng Chang, adapted from Davis, 2011).

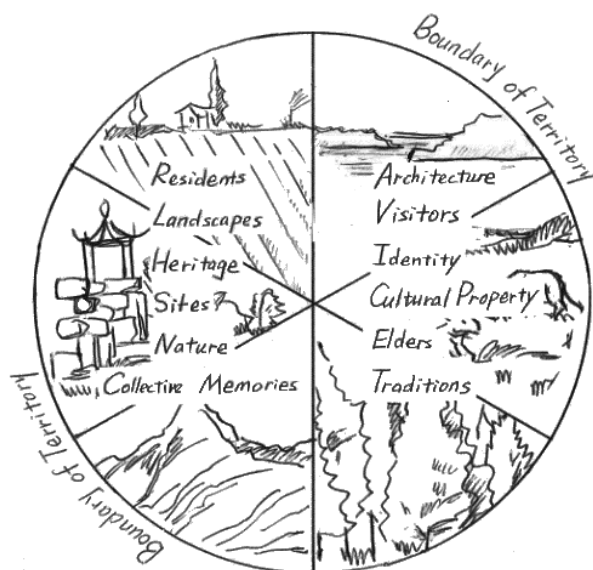
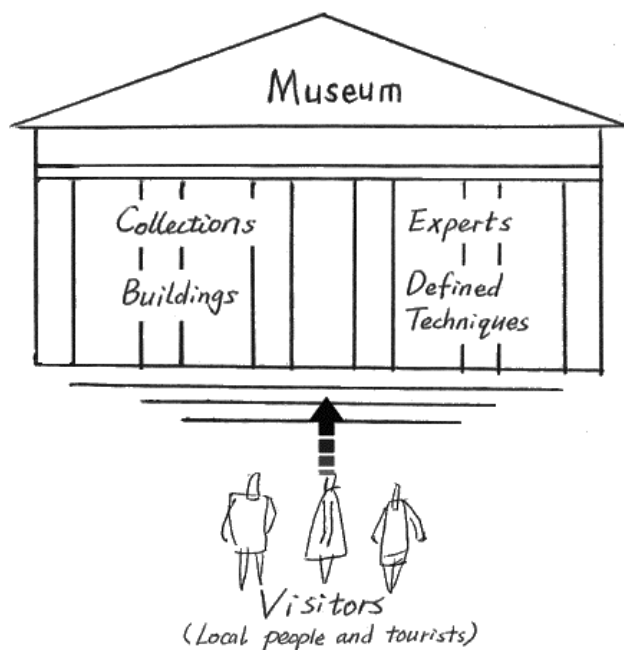


Figure 2. Representations of the traditional museum and the ecomuseum (Cheng Chang, adapted from Rivard, 1984).

The ecomuseum not only challenges the role of the community in museums as well as established forms of representation and display but also has the potential to challenge the notion of heritage itself. The traditional museum often represents the heritage of a larger society (national or regional), administered by the state and defined by experts. Involvement of the public can be a part of the administrative system, but because of its professional character, involvement is either symbolic or limited to predefined processes (for a discussion of the forms and degrees of public involvement see Section 2.3.2). This means that local communities are often represented in museums, but can only define the character of their representation to a limited degree. Similarly, nature is represented in museums (for example, in natural history museums), but the actual environment of the museum does not commonly form part of the museum itself. In ecomuseums, both the natural and the social environment form part of the museum, and representation of cultural identity through heritage forms a part of community life. This description of ecomuseums is to some degree an ideal, and in reality there are many different types of arrangements between local communities and the administration of larger political entities. This diversity of ecomuseum practices makes it necessary to define indicators (this discussed in Section 2.3.2).

Heritage in an ecomuseum is complex and dynamic. Although external administrative bodies may initiate and finance the ecomuseum, defining heritage is at least in part the responsibility of the local community. The definition of heritage is then the result of an ongoing process, involving debate and negotiation. Old manufacturing techniques may be revived, modern and traditional agricultural techniques may be combined, and history may be told from multiple insider perspectives (Bigell, 2012). There is, of course, the possibility that professional curators and locals will have different ideas about how to preserve and use historical buildings and artefacts, because for locals heritage also has a value in practical use (Bigell, 2012). Heritage in an ecomuseum is thus part of dynamic community development. Seen in this way, heritage is an element of a sense of place and identity. Since heritage is dynamic, it also allows the integration of new narratives, for example, those of formerly excluded groups or of migrants. As the elements of an ecomuseum are connected, the effects of community involvement in the natural environment also constitute a component of heritage in the form of landscape. Heritage thus encompasses both social and natural aspects of a locality, and it should be seen as an element of sustainable development because it is not simply a remnant of the past, but has a temporal dimension which also forms the basis for imagining the future (Murtas & Davis, 2009).

What Davis's illustration does not show is that the terms community, museum, and environment change their meaning in the two models. Whereas the traditional museum represents a larger society, the ecomuseum is the project of a smaller local community. Whereas the traditional museum preserves a defined heritage in a building, the ecomuseum produces artefacts *in situ*. The *in situ* principle is more than a question of the location of the artefacts—it also opens up the possibility for heritage to be defined by a local community, telling not just one story from an outside perspective, but multiple stories from an insider perspective. This means that the benchmark audience is the local community, not visitors and tourists, as in traditional museums (Maggi & Falletti, 2000; Perella et al., 2010). In a simple sense, the local community is made up of the people who live in a geographically defined space (the residents of Fig. 1). Community is different from society: the former is often based on personal relations, the latter on impersonal institutions and experts. A consensus on the differences between traditional museums and ecomuseums is that the traditional museum = building + collections + experts + visitors, while the ecomuseum = territory + heritage + memory + population (Gjestrum, 1992). A conceptual difference mirroring that between the museum and the ecomuseum is found in their respective relationships to landscape.

2.2 Landscape

Landscape is a part of the ecomuseum, linking social and natural environment, and recent definitions of landscape mirror aspects of the ecomuseum idea. Both the ecomuseum and landscape involve human beings in their environment.

2.2.1 Landscape in the European Landscape Convention (ELC) and the Faro Convention

The ELC emphasizes community involvement within a territory through the involvement of local actors in the planning, management, and protection of landscape, and it states that 'every landscape forms the setting for the lives of the population concerned' (Dejeant-Pons, 2006, p. 367). The ELC requires that the 'public is accordingly encouraged to take an active part in landscape management and planning, and to feel it has responsibility for what happens to the landscape' (Council of Europe, 2000b). The aim is to 'meet the aspirations of the people concerned' and of 'the communities concerned', and to avoid 'freezing the landscape' (Council of Europe, 2000b). The ELC encourages local self-government and emphasizes local social practices. In addition, it suggests a multilevel, bottom-up perspective, encouraging an insider's view of landscape throughout Europe. It becomes apparent that the ELC promotes the

same understanding of community, local power, and vernacular aesthetics as the ecomuseum. The landscape the ELC describes is not frozen in the past, but also plays a role as an economic resource, such as for sustainable tourism, as the preamble of the ELC points out (Council of Europe, 2000a).

Heritage has so far mainly been understood as cultural heritage. The Faro Convention, as the second convention of the Council of Europe after the ELC, expands the idea of the ELC, and focuses on the human aspects central to cultural heritage. The Faro Convention (Council of Europe, 2005) offers a broad concept of cultural heritage:

Cultural heritage is a group of resources inherited from the past which people identify, independently of ownership, as a reflection and expression of their constantly evolving values, beliefs, knowledge and traditions. It includes all aspects of the environment resulting from the interaction between people and places through time; a heritage community consists of people who value specific aspects of cultural heritage which they wish, within the framework of public action, to sustain and transmit to future generations (Council of Europe, 2005, p. 3).

This concept links heritage to citizen participation and quality of life and stresses the people's right to be involved in the community's cultural life and a living environment through democratic structures.

Thomas (2008) notices an increasing tendency on the part of communities to create democratic structures and be involved in heritage. Heritage organizations in the UK have begun to 'respond to the public's widening perception of what constitutes their heritage', involving the public in their community decision-making (DCMS, 2001, p. 25). The Heritage Lottery Fund gives communities more power and decision-making opportunities; it involves people in heritage decisions, and allows people to access, learn about, and enjoy their heritage (Clark, 2004).

The ELC and the Faro Convention are based on similar values regarding democracy and community participation: they share the same scope, concentrating on the local level. It is the differences between them that are key. While the Faro Convention stresses heritage, the ELC has a greater potential to include natural heritage, since the landscape involves both cultural and natural environments. The ELC and the Faro Convention are part of a political and cultural trend, which also includes the ecomuseum movement, with its focus on community and integrating cultural and natural environments into a systemic approach.

The ecomuseum idea, the ELC, and the Faro Convention all define culture in a way that includes local communities. This opens up the possibility to also

see a particular ecosystem as part of a community and a heritage. The concept of landscape has the potential to see cultural heritage, community, and the ecosystem as parts of a system.

2.2.2 Platial landscape

The ELC has shifted the focus of the landscape concept from that of the outsider to the insider view of the local community. This understanding of the landscape is not at all new. Olwig (1996) argues that the English term *landscape* is mainly aesthetic, a view from a singular perspective from the outside, while the German term *Landschaft* refers to both the visual and the territorial landscape. Historically, in the Germanic languages, landscape is a territory controlled by a local community, not the landowning nobility. Landscape in this sense involves the question of who controls and uses the land. Olwig argues for a recovery of a substantive (that is, not limited to the visual) and territorial understanding of landscape as a ‘place of human habitation and environmental interaction’ (1996, p. 631). He distinguishes between spatial landscape—a landscape viewed from an outsider’s point of view with a single perspective as part of a larger or national space, such as in ‘the Italianate tradition [which] emphasized the timeless geometrical laws of spatial aesthetics as expressed in natural scenes that were inspired by the ideal past of classical imperial Rome’—and what he terms ‘patial landscapes’ for the landscapes of communities, seen by the insider, from multiple perspectives, and with a vernacular aesthetic (1996).

2.2.3 Global landscape

Today, the most common outsider to view a spatial landscape is the tourist. Destinations and their landscapes are marketed as mainly visual experiences, and travel brochures and reports cater to the tourist gaze. Many destinations are marketed worldwide, and typical landscapes, such as the deserts of the American Southwest or the European Alps, become part of a global system of signification. MacCannell (1999) describes the aspects of this signification. On the one hand there are material sights, while on the other there are cultural images, which MacCannell (1999) calls ‘markers’, promoted in the media and in guidebooks. Although tourism appears to be spatial and global in character, it has the potential to develop and empower local communities; however, it also has the potential to alter or destroy the platial aspects of a place, a process which MacCannell (1999) calls ‘sight alteration’. The ecomuseological debate about the potential positive and negative effects of tourism for the ecomuseum must be seen in this context. This problem can be framed as a clash between platial and spatial perspectives. While local communities experience their

landscape as dynamic and with many, often contradictory, layers of meaning, tourism promotes an authentic experience that provides quick, stable, and predictable access to the essence of a place. This means that authenticity means one thing to local communities (a sense of place and involvement) and another to the tourist.

2.2.4 Landscape in ecomuseums

Traditional and modern communities have developed different aspects of landscape (Cosgrove, 2006). The traditional ones are built around production, such as agriculture, while the modern ones are built around consumption, such as tourism. It could be argued that ecomuseums often integrate both production, such as agriculture, agricultural techniques, and traditional crafts, and consumption, such as tourism and the on-site sale of local products. This means that the ecomuseum has the potential to integrate the local community's sense of authenticity, based on production, with the authenticity sought by tourists, which is based on consumption.

The terms 'sense of place' and 'environment' are closely related and are presented as important factors in ecomuseums (Davis, 2011). The concept of sense of place ties the natural and social environment to the local community, sharing the past and creating a common future, which is in accordance with the ecomuseum ideal. Massey (1995) argues that sense of place, rather than referring to an isolated territory, is a global concept: instead of isolation, place implies connections to the outside world. The particularity of a place thus stems not only from its own special qualities, but also its particular linkage to the outside world (Massey, 1994). However, in Olwig's platial meaning of landscape (1996), one finds a sense of place as something territorial, due to the tight connection between landscape and sense of place. This territorial line of thought contradicts Relph (1976) and Tuan (1977), who focus on how individual experience creates a sense of place. The double meaning of sense of place, being both territorial and part of a global setting, is also reflected in the role of the ecomuseum as attracting global tourist attention while remaining the place for a community. Authenticity (Chambers, 2000) can thus mean different things for those on the inside and those on the outside.

One factor that has aided the shift from seeing landscape in static terms to understanding it in terms of interactions between humans and nature is a growing environmental sensibility. Davis (2011) sees 'environment' as the sum of all animate and non-animate components of a particular place, and defines environment in ecomuseums as the combination of the natural landscape and the created landscape. As landscape, the concept of environment expresses a

link between natural and man-made structures, but with a stronger emphasis on natural components and their interactions, as in ecology.

2.3 Involvement

Involvement is a much-used term in the field of ecomuseology. The involvement of local communities also plays an important role in policy documents such as the ELC. In this thesis I deal with involvement in landscape in various forms, including administrative involvement and physical involvement. Below I describe the theoretical model I have used for the concept of involvement.

2.3.1 Involvement linked to landscape participation in the ELC

This section illustrates how the concept of involvement is linked to landscape. There appears to be a consensus that landscape and community should be understood systemically, as evidenced by the ELC (2000); by Olwig's concept of the platial landscape (1996); and by Relph's discussion of insideness (1976) as a condition of turning space into place.

The ELC considers local self-government and local social practices as the key factors, combining 'social needs, economic activity and the environment' (Council of Europe, 2000a). Furthermore, the ELC states that 'landscape is an important part of the quality of life for people everywhere' (Council of Europe, 2000a). This shows that the ELC sees local communities as the main factor in its understanding of landscape. Landscape and the local community create, involve, and influence each other. The ELC suggests a multi-level, bottom-up approach from a platial perspective and promotes this view throughout Europe.

Relph explains the function of space and how it is turned into place. He identifies modes of spatial experience that are instinctive, bodily, and immediate (1976), forming pragmatic space, perceptual space, and existential space. He also identifies modes of spatial experience that are conceptual, ideal, and intangible—for example, planning space, cognitive space, and abstract space. Conceptual space needs to be complemented by experience of space (through physical work and community, and also by learning). Involvement in space (conceptual and experiential) creates place, so ecomuseums exist in space but also create place. Space is the arena of place-making where 'insideness' is created.

Relph's understanding of place contributes to the maintenance and restoration of existing places and to the making of new places (1981, 1993). He argues that place needs to be understood in terms of its significance to people, and in terms of their intentions, experiences and actions, so that it becomes

possible to know how to maintain and restore an existing place and how to create a new place. Involvement in place is defined as insideness (Relph, 1976), marked by the degree of attachment, involvement, and concern that a person or group has for a particular place. Involvement can be conceptual (representation, involvement in planning) and experiential.

In a similar vein, Arler explains that space is what is interpreted by experts and scientists; it is an objective category, the 'result of a systematic abstraction from any involvement' (2008). Place, on the other hand, is more subjective and could be 'interpreted in different ways', resulting in attachment. Here, place is understood in a similar way to Relph's landscape of experience.

Because the relation between its three elements (environment, community, and heritage) is seen as a dynamic system, not a frozen representation (Davis, 2011), the relationship between the elements, enacted as involvement, has many different facets. Involvement in an ecomuseum does not only mean participation in single administrative decisions, it also has a creative effect, forming community and the natural environment, combined in what Olwig (1996) calls a 'substantive landscape'. In this thesis I define participation as belonging to the larger societal and conceptual level, while involvement belongs to the local and experiential level.

A classical representation is to be found in a frequently cited article which discusses different degrees of participation: Arnstein's 'A ladder of citizen participation' (1969). The ladder represents different stages of participation, from the absence of true citizen participation to citizen control. On the lower rungs of the ladder, citizen participation is rhetorical, not implying any real influence on planning, while on the higher rungs citizens have a strong voice in, or control over, decision-making and management. This shows how the involvement of citizens or communities, and their participation in administrative processes, can have various degrees, ranging from being manipulated to having full control.

2.3.2 Involvement related to ecomuseum

In order to understand the different forms of involvement in the ecomuseum, it is necessary to discuss their scale. Whereas traditional museums represent the heritage of a social entity such as a state or a municipality, the ecomuseum sees heritage as part of a community embedded in a natural environment. Whereas community relations on the wider state or municipal level are ordered by abstract regulations and processes, communities on the local level tend to be more informal, involve volunteers, and are often based on face-to-face contact.

Ecomuseums also involve higher levels, but ultimately are defined by community involvement: ecomuseums can be seen as part of a trend to focus

on local communities. In a similar way Relph (1976) describes the difference between a conceptual level of landscape perception and an experiential level. In other words, whereas traditional museums represent the conceptual heritage of a larger society and see regional and local variations as part of a larger narrative, ecomuseums see heritage primarily in local terms, as part of an experiential and dynamic local culture. The major objective of the ecomuseum is local empowerment. Local empowerment is seen in the demand for democratic structures in the ecomuseum. Davis (2011) states a true ecomuseum should be embedded within the local community, be placed within the local environment, and maintain the empowerment of the local community.

Ecomuseums are based on the idea of a democratic museum, where community involvement and participation are core elements (Nabais, 1984; Hubert, 1985; Rivard, 1985; Jamieson, 1989; Galla, 2002; Kimeev, 2008; Ohara, 1998, 2008; Davis, 2004, 2010). Democratic ideals can be realized through involvement in ecomuseum management, and new economic structures (tourism, revival of traditional forms of manufacturing) can also contribute to empowerment.

The ecomuseum requires management with local participation, where locals should lead their own development (Ohara, 1998). The pride of local communities in their own environment is emphasized as being a main element of the ecomuseum (Davis, 2005). Management specifically includes involving locals as curators with an inside perspective (Maggi & Falletti 2000; Perella et al., 2010).

The evaluation of ecomuseums is necessary because mechanisms of empowerment (management, tourism, sense of place) may empower only part of a local population, while excluding others (Corsane et al., 2007a; Corsane et al., 2007b). In order to evaluate whether forms of empowerment correspond to the main principles of the ecomuseum idea, ecomuseum indicators have been proposed. Corsane et al. (2007a) argue that the most important indicators for ecomuseum evaluation are local participation and democracy. The ecomuseum indicators (Corsane et al., 2004, 2007a, 2007b) should be based on the criteria of involvement and the strengthening of local inhabitants; the protection and interpretation of local heritage; and the strategy and management of local development. Corsane et al. (2007b, p. 225) point out that

the emphasis on a selected geographical territory and the in situ conservation and interpretation of selected features in that cultural landscape and the active involvement of local community in the selection and management of sites are considered particularly important features.

Corsane shows that involvement in heritage protection (identification, selection, and management) is part of a territorial understanding of community—a degree of local administrative control. This means that ecomuseum indicators not only refer to heritage preservation per se, but also evaluate the wider context of administrative involvement and the empowerment of local communities.

3 Methodology

Several approaches including both quantitative and qualitative aspects are used to shed light on the research questions from various angles. The thesis bridges landscape theory and ecomuseum theory, and so a considerable portion of it consists of conceptual discussion, definition, and review. The thesis is linked by the concept of involvement, connecting landscape and the ecomuseum, as well as heritage and community. Paper I provides an overview of the meanings of landscape found in different languages and cultures. In a review of the ecomuseum literature, Paper II notes the weak development of interdisciplinary approaches, and Paper III can be seen as an interdisciplinary contribution. Paper II also highlights a relative absence of quantitative studies in ecomuseology. Paper IV then uses quantitative methods to test hypotheses that were generated in conceptual discussions, with results that then lead to a further development of conceptual frames; the paper shows that websites could be included in the list of ecomuseum indicators. The methods used are as follows:

Conceptual research engages with the existing literature with the aim of creating suitable theoretical frameworks and terminology. Conceptual research permits a synthesis based upon previous work, which depends heavily on real-world description and explanation. This motivated a check on the validity of the research findings and helped to establish valid, useful theories (Meredith, 1993). Paper I provides an overview of the history and the conceptual use of the term ‘landscape.’ The advantage of the conceptual approach in this case is that it clarifies the different meanings of landscape. The disadvantage is that some issues and languages receive more attention than others. Paper III discusses the differences between two ecomuseums, based on a reading of the literature. The disadvantage is that the discussion is not based upon a case study, due to resource limitations.

A *systematic literature review* gathers empirical evidence according to pre-defined criteria and is inspired by the methods used for systematic review in

science (for example, Higgins & Green, 2008). Such a review is structured, transparent, and replicable. The restriction to peer-reviewed articles ensures the scholarly level of the review. In the case of Paper II, the articles reviewed are (a) published in international, peer-reviewed journals, (b) written in English, (c) dealt with the ecomuseum, (d) listed in predefined databases. In the first assessment, the articles are classified according to research themes. In the second, we categorize the research design or the method used in the articles. The advantage of a systematic review is that it provides an overview of the field of ecomuseology. The disadvantage is that particular detected themes such as landscape cannot be discussed in depth. The limitation to English also means that potentially different ecomuseum discourses, for example in Spanish and Portuguese, are not covered.

A *survey of websites*, like all surveys, is used to provide quantitative statistics about specific aspects of the research objects (Fowler, 1993). The leading technique is to collect data by asking questions and analysing the answers, usually only from a fraction or sampling of the research objects (Fowler, 1993). In our case the survey aimed to collect quantitative data on the function of websites. Paper IV collects data from the ecomuseums' websites worldwide in order to test whether they follow the ecomuseum idea in terms of involvement. The advantage of this method is that it is easy to access different ecomuseums worldwide and provides a map of how ecomuseum websites function. The disadvantage is that Paper IV is limited to official websites, and that the method cannot provide any reasons for its findings: detailed further studies are needed. The limitation to language to English, Chinese, Danish and Swedish means that potentially different ecomuseum concepts and practices, such as websites only in Portuguese or Spanish, are not covered.

4 Paper I – IV: methods and summary of the results

In this chapter, the methods and key results from each paper are presented.

4.1 The meaning of landscape (Paper I)

Paper I shows how the concept of landscape is bound by cultural factors, and compares the meaning of landscape in different languages. The interpretation requires different frames of reference, including political, historical, spiritual, and geological ones. The method used is a conceptual study of the meaning of landscape based on literature studies.

Special emphasis is placed on the development of the meaning of landscape in different European languages. Here Olwig (1996) describes the shift from an earlier platial (place-oriented) meaning, based on multiple insider perspectives of a local community, to the spatial outside perspective, which leads to a visual understanding focused on the individual observer (this is visible in much landscape painting and also observed in tourism). Recently, however, there has been a revival of the platial understanding of landscape, especially in the ELC (2000), where the term landscape has widened its meaning from being a view or setting to being an arena where humans interact with the natural world. However, also a spatial understanding of landscape exists in the modern world. Environmentalism has raised awareness of ecological interrelations and created global awareness. Also tourism has a spatial effect, incorporating landscapes into a global frame of reference. MacCannell (1999) distinguishes the ‘sights’, the material setting of a destination and the ‘markers’, the cultural narratives that can be used in marketing. The often found focus on the visual in tourism, as well as the one-dimensionality of marketing narratives about rather than by a community may cause a sensation of inauthenticity in some tourists.

4.2 The review of ecomuseum research (Paper II)

Paper II makes a structured and systematic search of research literature on ecomuseums. The overall aim is to determine which ecomuseum topics have been dealt with, which topics could contribute to the development of ecomuseum research and practice, and to identify other topics that could be included and developed. The method used is a systematic review of peer-reviewed articles written in English, using predefined inclusive criteria, restricted to the term 'ecomuseum'. The selection was performed through the use of the library search engine of the Swedish University of Agricultural Sciences. Based on these criteria, 61 articles are included in the review.

The results show that ecomuseum literature may be categorized into six themes: 'concepts and theories', 'landscape', 'culture and anthropology', 'development', 'management', and 'evaluation'. The articles on concepts and theories show that community involvement is at the heart of the ecomuseum idea, emphasizing local democracy. Landscape research covers the area of biodiversity, sense of place, pride of place, and environmental identity, and has the aim of creating conditions for democracy and sustainability. Culture and anthropology in ecomuseum research was focused on developing socio-cultural sustainability through heritage, self-identity, community involvement, anthropology, and ethnicity. Development covered the aspects of economic, ecological, and socio-cultural development, with a focus on how the goal of sustainability might be reached. Ecomuseum management studies covered aspects of sustainable management of both environment and industrial production. Evaluation shows an example of a practical approach to using ecomuseum indicators to evaluate an ecomuseum, and to identify a suitable objective approach for empirical studies.

Most articles addressed the ecomuseum from a positive perspective, highlighting the museums' roles in such issues as enhancing cultural identity and promoting sustainable development, a sense of place, and the suitable management of communities. However, there were also critical voices. While the ecomuseum idea aims to foster local expression, there is a danger that economic values will dominate and so risk heritage protection. A serious problem is reported in poor, rural areas of China. Here one local community was so eager to improve their living standard by building new tourist attractions that they neglected to protect their traditions and heritage. A contributing factor here was the difference in living standards between visitors and locals.

The review shows how cultural and transnational differences affected the establishment of ecomuseums, but the degree to which this takes place remains unknown. While ecomuseum research elucidates mainly conceptual,

theoretical, and descriptive aspects, exact numbers are rare, due to the lack of quantitative approaches and empirical studies.

4.3 Representing landscape on two Chinese ecomuseum websites (Paper III)

Paper III illustrates landscape representation in two Chinese ecomuseum websites, based on a view of the landscape as an interaction between people and their environment. The purpose is to address the role of the landscape in ecomuseums in a descriptive study of landscape representation. The method used was a survey of websites containing landscape representations of two Chinese ecomuseums, Suoga/Suojia and Zhenshan, in the form of images and text. Google and Baidu were used as the search engines in both English and Chinese.

The results show that the difference between the two Chinese ecomuseums is that the Zhenshan ecomuseum is more oriented towards commercial tourism, while the Suoga ecomuseum focuses on traditional agricultural production. Landscape is a link between present and past and between humans and their environment, and is the setting for social practices. In both ecomuseums, tourists participate in the landscape and impact the local population, creating a new commercial landscape. Local people are involved in local activities, agriculture, and maintaining a traditional lifestyle. As far as we could tell from the ecomuseum websites, the local populations do not administer or control these ecomuseums. When economic development dominates, there is a distinct risk of jeopardized heritage protection and the exclusion of local people.

4.4 Using ecomuseum indicators to evaluate ecomuseum websites on community involvement and heritage tourism contents (Paper IV)

Paper IV confirms that most ecomuseum websites are intended as marketing devices, although most of the ecomuseum websites are managed by the ecomuseums themselves. The method used was a survey of websites, selected from the ecomuseums mentioned in Davis's book (2011), and which define themselves as ecomuseums. A Google search is added to find ecomuseums not mentioned in Davis's book. For practical reasons, we only include ecomuseums' official websites in a language known by the authors: English, Swedish, Danish, and Chinese. In all, 38 websites were found based on this restriction. Paper IV uses Corsane's ecomuseum indicators (2004, 2006b) as the basis for evaluating the ecomuseums. These indicators were converted into

four indicator questions to fit in the focus of community involvement and evaluation of ecomuseum websites.

The results show that only 16% of the studied websites (figure 4) emphasize community involvement (figure 5). The lack of emphasis of community involvement is independent on who is responsible for, or creates, the websites (Fig. 6). Only 8% of the websites have a communication forum, and 79% of all websites have tourists as their main target group.

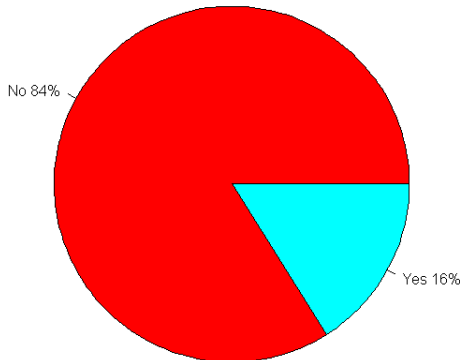


Figure 3. Percentage of websites emphasizing local involvement in total, n = 38, n (yes) = 16%, n (no) = 84%.

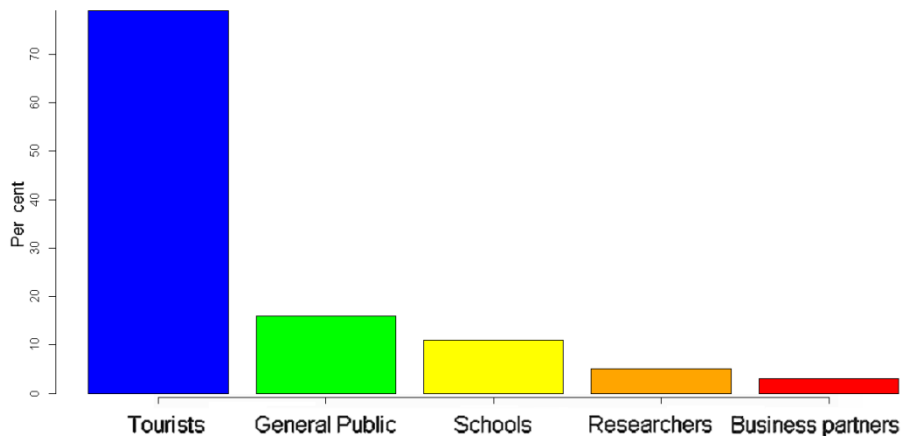


Figure 4. Target groups of ecomuseum websites, n=38.

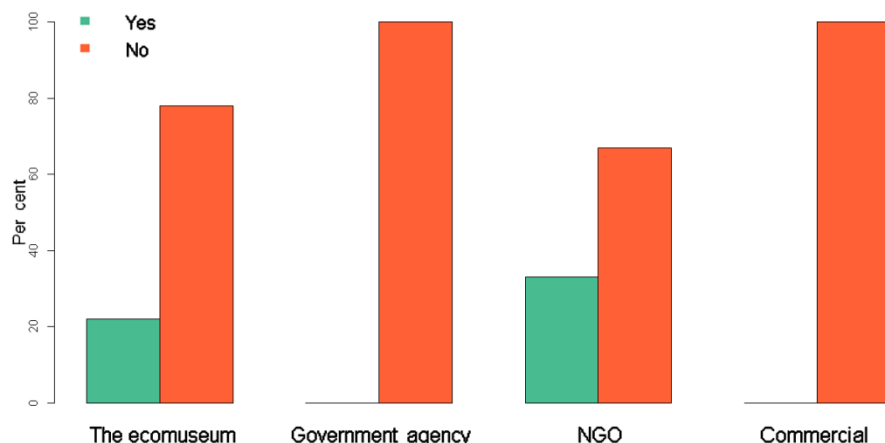


Figure 5. Percentage of websites emphasizing local involvement in relation to the organization that is responsible for or created the websites: n (the ecomuseum) = 53%, n (government agency) = 35%, n (NGO) = 9%, n (commercial) = 3%.

Referring to papers II and III, it is clear that these results indicate that ecomuseum websites have little focus on community involvement, while most of them concentrate on attracting tourism, even though most of the websites are administrated by ecomuseum themselves rather than tourist agencies. This finding strengthens the suspicion that a strong tourism focus can at least go hand in hand with a weak concern for community involvement. We exemplify our findings with one example of no community involvement from Belgium, one example of low community involvement from China, and one example of high community involvement from Australia. As a result, we propose to add ecomuseum websites to the list of ecomuseum indicators.

5 Discussion

5.1 What is the role of landscape in ecomuseums?

Papers I to IV identify the connections between landscape, the ecomuseum, and involvement, and also the dual role of landscape. On the one hand, there is an abstract, conceptual, visual, outside landscape; on the other, there is an inside landscape marked by experience, local knowledge, and involvement. This duality of landscape unites natural and social elements. In particular, Olwig's notion of the platial landscape (1996) makes the social component visible, with community seen as a force that creates and defines landscape (see Paper I). The role of the social aspect in platial landscape also means that different landscape perspectives exist, depending on the social perspective from which the landscape is viewed: for example, by a farmer, visitor, or landowner.

Arler (2008) discusses the role of landscape and uses the example of the ELC to ask who uses landscape and how. Landscape is important for 'cultural, ecological, environmental, and social issues', but it is also a 'resource favourable for economic activity'. This duality of landscape is seen in ecomuseums (see papers II, III, IV), where different forms of development (social, cultural, economic) sometimes coexist and sometimes interfere with one another.

Landscape in ecomuseums can house the heritage of a community (the *in situ* principle of ecomuseums) and it can be an element of the heritage in itself. However, in speaking of heritage one has to ask 'Whose heritage?' which leads to the question of scale. While a local community may wish to protect or recreate a traditional lifestyle, or elements of it, which means a setting that may change and be adapted over time, a curator representing the larger scale of the state may wish to protect an image of a historical landscape that is important for regional or national identity. In a similar way, the landscape of an

ecomuseum will be influenced by economic and cultural interests from the inside, and by external interests such as government agencies or tourism operators. The ELC and the Faro Convention, as well as ecomuseum theory, take a stance in this situation, favouring the local small-scale over state interests and cultural aspects over economic ones.

The question then arises of how local communities are involved in administrative decisions regarding their landscape. It is the idea of the ecomuseum that local communities should take responsibility for protecting, managing, planning, and developing their own landscape, largely based on their own citizen power for decision-making and management. However, according to Arnstein (1969), there are different degrees of involvement, from the symbolic and participatory to real administrative control. Whereas Arnstein focuses on administrative involvement, Paper II shows how involvement is implicated in different forms of development, and papers III and IV discuss cases where an apparent lack of involvement exists and chart its possible reasons.

5.2 What is the role of involvement in ecomuseums?

Involvement is the process of human beings relating to and changing their natural and social environment and this process creates landscape. Since involvement is a dynamic and creative process without a predefined aim, changes may occur in the perception of what is heritage, and how community and environment should be formed in landscape (see Paper I on historical changes and cultural conditions for involvement). Involvement's potential to also shape aesthetic sensibilities means that processes of landscape creation require a dynamic understanding of landscape design. Arnstein's model (1969) of how the general public are involved in decision-making is suitable when it comes to administration. However, Arnstein's ladder is less suitable when dealing with other forms of involvement such as involvement with heritage, cultural development, physical landscape creation, and the representation of community and landscape. Here involvement is defined in a wide sense which not only includes administration, but also other forms of involvement.

In ecomuseums, local communities take responsibility for protecting, managing, planning, and developing their own landscape, mainly based on their own decision-making and management powers as citizens. This primarily administrative involvement leads to other forms of involvement, such as defining and preserving heritage, processes of practical landscape creation, and creating new forms of economic activity, or reviving old ones. Involvement

then becomes the way to develop a sense of place, an attachment generated by community interaction with its territory.

It can be argued that ecomuseums realize Relph's understanding of place, in which insiders make new places (1981, 1993). The idea of the ecomuseum is to turn an abstract cultural concept (heritage) into the experience of space through involvement. Relph's model is also useful because it explains conflicts between planners (conceptual) and locals (experiential). The ecomuseum's idea is to bring heritage from a conceptual space to a space of experience and, through involvement, to create place.

Tourism can be an expression of community development, but it can also undermine it. The ELC (Council of Europe, 2000a) favours community development, but the question is debated in ecomuseology whether there is a danger that one aspect of development can dominate, thus undermining cultural development by turning culture into a commodity for tourists (see Paper II for different views of tourism, Paper III for two contrasting cases showing how tourism is integrated in the ecomuseum, and Paper IV for the tourism focus of websites). However, a focus on involvement allows us to avoid regarding the problem as a conflict between two forms of development (cultural vs. commercial), and instead to ask who controls economic development and who is involved in it. A sustainable community development needs economic development, but this should be characterized by control by the local community and a broad involvement of individuals in the community. A sense of place in this sense is not only marked by a feeling of belonging, but also by participation in administrative processes as well as cultural and economic development.

5.3 Reflections on the ecomuseum as an idea based on universal values

The ecomuseum idea is based on the assumption that local control of heritage and resources is a universal value. To my knowledge there has been no academic debate about the universality of local control of heritage and resources. Different cultures have different configurations in terms of local and central power, so the question is whether the ecomuseum idea can be applied in different cultures. In particular, this question is relevant when the democratic and local structures of the ecomuseum are applied in countries with a centralist political tradition marked by large power distance.

The aim of the ecomuseum is local empowerment and democracy (Davis, 2011), and the ecomuseum exists within different political systems with different traditions in terms of local empowerment and democracy. Different

cultural contexts may lead to differences in involvement, as in the case of Chinese ecomuseums. In the Chinese case, the ecomuseum idea changed when it was adapted (see Paper III). In China, ecomuseums are administered by the government, not by the local community, even though the idea of the ecomuseum was introduced and financially supported by Norway (Su, 2008). The explanation here is that China has had a hierarchical culture for more than two thousand years, from the feudal past to the present day, so in a Chinese cultural context, reduced community involvement and local self-government are to be expected. Another criticism of Chinese ecomuseums is that local communities are involved mainly in economic business such as tourism instead of local sustainable development (see papers II, III, IV). This could be explained by the fact that ecomuseums in China are in low-income, rural areas where local communities are primarily interested in achieving a better standard of life, and are less concerned with protecting their heritage. This problem has also been reported from other developing countries, such as Vietnam (Galla, 2005). Uneven economic development within a country may motivate local communities to be involved in economic development of their area whilst endangering their heritage through the excessive development of tourism, but the lack of local administrative control is based on different political and cultural configurations. Paper I argues that landscape perception is also influenced by the configurations of political power, as well as cultural and historical frameworks.

In the case of China, landownership has shifted from feudal landowners to the state, creating more equality, but maintaining a centralist structure. Political changes have not dented the centralist and hierarchical nature that characterizes the relations between regions and local communities and the urban centres of power. As these configurations are deeply rooted in culture, it must be assumed that the ecomuseum idea, with its platial understanding of landscape, might be more readily adopted in some countries than in others. To the best of my knowledge there are no studies on this topic.

At first glance, there seems to be a contradiction between the democratization of landscape access in China and the lack of local control. In fact this is not a contradiction—is a matter of scale. Landscapes exist at a local or platial scale, which becomes spatial if it represents a larger entity such as the state or nation. Furthermore, landscapes exist on the global scale for the tourism industry. MacCannell (1999) sees landscape in a tourist perspective. Landscapes are sights and have markers (in global tourist brochures, for example). Similarly, the UNESCO world heritage idea is a global idea, selecting landscapes for their importance for the world (World Heritage Convention, 1972). Landscape depends on scale: the ecomuseum and other

types of landscape have global levels, state levels, and local levels. Papers III and IV talk about two different scales: the global or national scales of tourism and the local scale of local communities. Different scales are also seen on ecomuseum websites, as is shown by Paper IV.

There is also a conflict of scale in the ELC. Arler (2008) explains the ELC's vagueness when it comes to defining concrete aims:

The authors of the Convention are very anxious to leave it to the authorities of the signing parties themselves to make assessments, and to identify the most significant features of their own landscapes. Or, rather, they wish to leave it to the public authorities, on a national or local level, to formulate their own set of quality objectives. The basic rationale is that the general democratic value of self-determination overrules all the specific landscape values in the sense that it becomes more important to preserve the democratic right of self-determination than to preserve some specified landscape features (Arler, 2008, p. 80).

In the ELC, self-determination does not mean local control, but control delegated to national governments (and not an international or supranational body such as the European Union). This means that the ELC promotes apparently universal and global ideas about the value of local landscapes in a platian sense, but leaves implementation to the national level. This means that all scales are involved in the ELC.

Landscapes exist at different scales or levels: the local level, the state level, and the global level. While public parks are an expression of the state level (including state planning), ecomuseums exist mainly on the local level. This means that in societies with a strong state level and a weak local level, it is to be expected that the ecomuseum idea will be modified or that ecomuseum projects will encounter problems.

Thus it could be argued that ecomuseums, with their strong local focus and their ideal of local control of heritage, are not universal, since the ideal of local control is culture-specific. In particular, it can be argued that it is a result of the process of integrating the countries of the European Union, where local and regional identity and control and supranational identity are stressed at the expense of national control and identity. The ELC here is ambivalent: it wants to empower local communities, but leaves the implementation of the ELC to national governments; it expresses a universal value or understanding of landscape but emphasizes national differences. Or, as it puts it, 'Where local and regional authorities have the necessary competence, protection, management and planning of landscapes will be more effective if responsibility for their implementation is entrusted—within the constitutional framework

legislatively laid down at national level—to the authorities closest to the communities concerned’ (Council of Europe, 2000b).

Whereas the ELC entertains a global vision of a platial landscape, Olwig (1996) does not claim that his platial view is universal; on the contrary, he shows how it is rooted in language and culture, originally limited to Germanic languages. There are cultural differences when it comes to the ecomuseum idea of empowering local communities in terms of heritage and administration: questions of scale and cultural or political differences should be considered in more depth in ecomuseum research.

5.4 Proposed future research

An interesting question for the future research is the cultural adaptability of the ecomuseum idea—the question of the degree to which it is possible to translate the ecomuseum idea into different cultures. The problem is that the ecomuseum is based on democracy and community-orientation, but many societies are not democratic or are hierarchically organized. The question is then whether the community-oriented and egalitarian ecomuseum idea translates to state-oriented or hierarchical societies. Further research should focus on the question of the ecomuseum’s political framework, as well as how it is embedded in cultures with different degrees of power distance and centralization and a different acceptance of hierarchies. A further area of study would be the cultural and political contexts of ecomuseums in a comparative analysis, for example, by showing how the idea was propagated by Scandinavian researchers in China and how it was adapted. In China, the challenge for the ecomuseum idea is found in uneven urban and rural development, as well as in a different cultural evaluation of administrative centralization. How can the ecomuseum idea be adapted to those cultural contexts while avoiding threats to heritage protection and community development? Here too, case studies of individual ecomuseums would be a way to proceed.

This thesis provides conceptual tools to study specific areas of ecomuseology. One such area is the impact of tourism on ecomuseums, looking in particular at the relationship between economic and community development. The conflict between tourism and heritage that is a feature of ecomuseology is in reality a question of involvement, namely whether the community as a whole and the individual members of a community are involved in economic development. This means that tourism per se is not a problem, but an insufficient level of involvement, a lack of local control, and exclusion of individuals. The representation of ecomuseums—as on websites—

is also connected to the question of involvement in economic development. We found that most ecomuseum websites are tourist-oriented, and future research could study the reasons for this finding, using more detailed case studies and looking at ecomuseum websites that create community-oriented inside communication. The representation of involvement could also be studied in other media, such as brochures, and its usefulness as an ecomuseum indicator should be assessed.

This thesis has focused on developing an understanding of involvement, and demonstrating its many aspects. Involvement is especially interesting if it creates landscape. It makes a contribution to ecomuseology, but also to other fields which analyse involvement in space. The ideas can be used for the study of issues such as community and allotment gardens, or for analysing the spatial and platial components of neighbourhood initiatives. In general, there is a need for ecomuseology to connect to the emerging interdisciplinary field of humanistic environmental studies. This would also attract more academic attention to ecomuseology.

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