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Ours or yours? Localizing the 'mixed sites' concept for the sustainable preservation of heritage in Africa: the case of Chongoleani Peninsular, Tanzania

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ABSTRACT

Heritage scholars, professionals, and practitioners continue to debate the separation of nature and culture and their linkage. The discussion, however, centres on World Heritage Sites (WHS) but not those valued locally, some of which are on the national register. This practice threatens many local heritage sites that would have benefited from having a management plan that treats nature and culture as interconnected and interlinked. For example, in north-eastern Tanzania, a Wall Enclosure, namely Chongoleani, was declared a National Monument in 1961. A hundred metres away from the enclosure, there is a Sacred Grove the local people value and protect using customary laws. Whereas the Government of Tanzania considers the Wall Enclosure a national monument, the Chongoleani local community does not regard it (the Wall Enclosure) as necessary for protection. Instead, they have let it deteriorate. While the Wall Enclosure continues to decline, the Sacred Grove enjoys complete protection from the local community. For the two assets' sustainable preservation, the current paper proposes a decolonial approach that considers the localisation of UNESCO's World Heritage 'mixed sites' concept. We argue in this paper that, had the two properties been declared together as one national monument, valuing one heritage over the other would have been minimised.

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Introduction

Categorising heritage sites as either natural or cultural, tangible or intangible, is hotly debated by almost all heritage scholars worldwide. For example, a few scholars (see, e.g. Lilley 2013; Harrison 2015; Larsen and Wijesuriya 2017; Egberts 2019) have centred their discussion on considering the links between nature and culture as a strategy to ensure the sustainability of both cultural and natural heritage locales. Such discussions build on initiatives by the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO), International Council on Monuments and Sites (ICOMOS) and the International Union for the Conservation of Nature (IUCN). These three organisations recognise World Heritage Sites (WHS) as either natural, cultural, or mixed. On the other hand, the authorities protecting the landscape are more concerned about the relationship between people and nature. For instance, Lilley (2013, 13) argues that heritage managers should not separate nature and culture; she proposes a holistic approach. Larsen and Wijesuriya (2017) have similar views and recommend that natural and cultural heritage sites should not be regarded as separate, for the relationship between the natural and cultural is intertwined.

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Debates on the nature/culture links have been in the literature for over half a century now. Its initial discussion can be traced between the 1960s and 1970s, when many African countries underwent economic changes, involving the setting up of new socio-economic infrastructures, one negative impact of which was the destruction of archaeological and heritage sites on the continent. For example, the construction of the Aswan High Dam in Egypt in 1968 destroyed hundreds of artefacts, which Ichumbaki and Mjema (2018) hypothesise raised global attention. Consequently, UNESCO adopted the Convention for the Protection of Natural and Cultural World Heritage Sites in 1972. This Convention is the most effective global medium of heritage management and continues to serve the same purpose in countries that have ratified it and follow its guidelines. Based on this 1972 UNESCO Convention, many African nations adopted what constitutes heritage and its components needing protection. However, UNESCO's definition of heritage confines to the heritage's visible aspects and ignores the invisible ones that local people value most (Zazu 2011; Munjeri 2004).

Regardless of whether it is cultural heritage or natural heritage, the international and national framework of heritage identification has continuously focused on 'eye pleasing' aspects. For the case of natural heritage, for example, a focus is either on animal and plant species or natural landscape without consideration of the 'spiritual world' the plant and animal species or natural landscapes hold to the local people. According to Webber Ndoro (2001), focusing on the 'eye pleasing' aspects, from the technical point of view, is due to failure to understand the cultural significance or values of the heritage sites from the perspectives of local communities. Such a scenario is perpetuated by the western perception whose interests have always been to delink people from their heritage with the view to introduce western values such as Christianity (Schmidt 2017). The colonial operation to delink people from their heritage, however, started to receive opposition after many African countries after they became independent in the 1960s, 70s, and 80s. Despite realization of the heritage sites in nation building and promoting identity, yet, international and national forms of operations, notably for the case of Tanzania, continue to ignore the values local communities attach to certain heritage sites and their perspectives on the same. Because of this perspective, it is not surprising that the national authorities legally mandated to care heritage sites decide on what to and not to include in the national register without consulting members of a local community. As it will become apparent in this paper, deciding on what to declare as a national monument without consulting local community members results leaving out heritage locales that are key from the local people's point of view. This situation needs reconsideration, hence, a decolonial approach.

As part of proposing a decolonial approach to declaring heritage sites as national monuments, the current paper focuses on the mixed site's category and uses two examples from Tanzania. The article is part of the outcomes of an environmental and social impact assessment study for the East African Crude Oil Pipeline (EACOP) project jointly implemented by the governments of Tanzania and Uganda. The EACOP project seeks to lay a pipeline to transfer crude oil from the Hoima region in Uganda to Chongoleani Peninsular in Tanga region, on the northern coast of Tanzania. In Tanzania, the pipeline will traverse 24 districts in eight regions, covering an estimated distance of 1100 km. The impact on cultural heritage is likely to be greater at the Chongoleani Peninsular, the termination and the location of storage facilities. A baseline study to determine the effects of EACOP at the peninsular recorded archaeological materials. The recorded artefacts indicate ancient settlements spanning from the Stone Age and Iron Age periods. During the baseline study, the local communities' most valued heritage sites were old graves, sacred trees and forests, and spiritual places. Some of these sites are within the project footprint; the project will affect them. Other heritage sites, including a sacred grove with a shrine and the community-protected area, are outside the project footprint, hence, likely to survive. Beyond the project boundaries and near the community-protected area, there is a stone-built Wall Enclosure. On the 6th of January 1961, it was gazetted and declared a national monument through Government Notice (GN) number 5. The Wall Enclosure registered by the Government as a defence wall is protected under Tanzania's Antiquities Act No. 10 of 1964 amended to Act No. 22 of 1979.

Very close to the Wall Enclosure is a 'sacred grove', which the local people protect and value more than the enclosure. While the monument is protected by the Antiquities Act No. 10 of 1964 (Cap 333, regularly revised), the surrounding community covers the sacred grove using customary laws. This scenario means informal and formal management systems protect the sacred grove and the Wall Enclosure. The closeness of the two heritage sites managed differently, one by the Government of Tanzania and the other by the local communities, is the focus of the current paper. We compare the local community's readiness to protect the two types of heritage sites: the sacred grove and the defensive wall that fall under different jurisdictions; the local community members look after one through customary laws and the other through the Tanzania Antiquities Act. As it will become apparent in this paper, we support the idea that nature and culture are linked, particularly locally.

The 'mixed sites' concept

In 1968, the International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN) developed proposals to protect 'the world's great natural and scenic areas and historic sites' and presented them in the 1972 United Nations (UN) conference on Human Environment held in Stockholm, Sweden. Following up on this desire to preserve both nature and culture, on the 16th of November 1972, the UN General Conference adopted the recommendation concerning the protection of cultural and natural heritage (UNESCO 1972). Consequently, UNESCO introduced the 'mixed sites' concept to mean the assets containing elements of both natural and cultural significance or 'the results of the combining culture and nature'. Despite such recognition of nature/culture interlinkages, the involved partners especially IUCN, ICOMOS, and UNESCO were not convinced with the use of and application of the concept. This dilemma resulted in formulating a taskforce to advice on how to handle the situation where nature and culture, in (Leitaão 2017, 199) view, married. Consequently, there was a high recognition of the localities where humans had close interaction with the environment (UNESCO 1985). This notion of 'mixed sites', however, has continuously changed to the extent of being replaced by the expression of cultural landscape (Leitaão 2017, 197). The idea of cultural landscape emphasises the symbiotic connection between human actions and the surrounding environment (i.e. rural, urban, natural etc.) (Leitaão and Badman 2015; Luengo and Rössler 2012). It aspires to interpret WH sites not only on the bases of strict categories (i.e. natural and cultural) but also through a more flexible and inclusive conception of WH sites. It makes ample room for the role of local communities for shaping heritage values, through traditional habits and spiritual relationships with both the cultural and natural environment. Recognition of local communities and their ritual practices happening in the heritage sites is currently missing in Tanzania; we propose their recognition, hence, a decolonial approach.

The UNESCO's recognition of the need to expand the World Heritage List (WHL) by including sites with topical and geographical diversity (Lilley 2013; Larsen and Wijesuriya 2017) aimed at broadening the definition and categories of WHS by including what UNESCO and ICOMOS call 'cultural landscape' and IUCN calls 'protected area'. As we write this article in 2022, Africa has 96 WHS listed in the WHL, 53 of which are cultural, 38 are natural and five are mixed. Indeed, the introduction of 'cultural landscape' and 'mixed sites' concepts has been one of the strategies to solve the problem of recognizing nature/culture interaction (Aplin 2007). For example, the Ngorongoro Conservation Area (NCA) in the United Republic of Tanzania was firstly nominated and listed as a natural WHS in 1979 based on UNESCO Criteria VII, VIII, IX, and X. However, a re-evaluation conducted in 2010, thirty years later, made NCA be ratified as mixed WHS under Criterion IV, a landscape illustrating significant stages in the human journey. Today, NCA is a mixed WHS based on UNESCO Criteria IV, VII, VIII, IX and X.

Ratifying NCA as a Mixed WHS to recognize the importance of both nature and culture had two impacts on the cultural heritage properties. First, the Ngorongoro Conservation Area Authority (NCAA) reorganized its operations to include a Department of Cultural Heritage in its organogram, and second, caring for cultural heritage sites was no longer the responsibility of the Department of

Antiquities only but also of NCAA. For instance, the number of employees caring for the cultural heritage increased, a state-of-the-art museum was established at Oldupai/Olduvai Gorge, and Mary Leakey's Camp was converted into a living museum. Furthermore, initiatives to uncover the Laetoli footprints are still in progress, rules to guide research on archaeology, heritage, palaeontology, and geology in NCA have been formulated, and access roads to Nasera rock shelter, Laetoli, and Oldupai/Olduvai Gorge are being maintained, making these sites more accessible to the public. Based on authors' visits and discussions with staff at these sites, a balance between nature and culture is ensured alongside improving local people's livelihoods.

A similar scenario is observed at the Maloti-Drakensberg Park WHS, which is composed of the uKhahlamba Drakensberg National Park (uDP) in South Africa and the Sehlathebe National Park (SNP) in Lesotho (Duval and Smith 2013; IUCN 2013). At the beginning in 2000, the uDP was declared a WHS under Criteria I and III. With this declaration, UNESCO and the State Party conserved its biological diversity consisting of superlative flora and fauna (IUCN 2013; Ndlovu 2016), but not the beauty and meaning of the rock arts. Thirteen years later, in 2013, the uDP was declared a Mixed WHS under Criteria I, III, VII, and X (IUCN 2013). Because of this revised declaration, 97 rock art sites were included, a great impact on both the natural and cultural heritage. First, the division of responsibility for protecting and managing the site became clear, as legislation mandated that any development within or outside the site must be preceded by an assessment of the environmental impact on the cultural heritage. Second, ensured collaboration between the authorities in Lesotho and South Africa. Third, the parties collaborated over organising training programmes for those involved in managing both the natural and cultural heritage. Lastly, there was an increased cooperation in the management of invasive species and outbreaks of fire to control the threat to the ecological integrity of the site, hence sustaining both nature and culture.

Based on these two examples, we argue that separating the natural from the cultural at heritage sites is unlikely to result in their care at local, national, regional, and international level. However, while examples are given of how combining the two works at WHS (see, e.g. Lilley 2013; Harrison 2015), there are only a few examples of what works and what does not work at the local and national level. This is what this paper seeks to provide by using Chongoleani as a case study to contribute to the ongoing global discussion on linking the natural and cultural heritage at the national and local level. Specifically, the case we provide intends to inform that UNESCO's concept of mixed sites should not apply at WHS only. It needs localization to local heritage sites regardless of whether they have been declared as national monuments or not. Before, we concentrate on our case study; however, we provide a brief detail on how sites are nominated to become national monuments in Tanzania. Such brief description aims to put in context why consideration of mixed sites at local scale is important.

Heritage management in Tanzania: a need for decolonial approach

Like many other African countries, Tanzania was colonised century first by the Germans during the 19th and later on by the British during the 20th century. Such colonisation changed many aspects of communities' lives, including the caring of heritage – both cultural and natural. Elements such as traditional religions and accompanying values, oral traditions, and other restrictions that used to be at the centre for heritage protection changed due to colonialism. The social consciousness characterised by belief in gods, spirits and other supernatural forces, and the accompanying systems of ideas, rituals, practices, and institutions local communities used to care for heritage sites stopped operating in present-day Tanzania following German colonisation (Mulokozi 2005, 280). To put it otherwise, the colonisation of Tanzania intervened in the beliefs, behaviour, thoughts, actions, arts, rituals, ceremonies, and other daily experiences/activities, all of which took place within what has become known as either natural, cultural, or mixed sites. To delink people from their culture–nature interactions, the colonial government introduced various ordinances majority of which were contextually unfriendly. Some of these ordinances which limited human-environment interactions

included Wildlife Ordinance (1989), Land Ordinance (1923), Monument Preservation Ordinance (1937), and the Forest Ordinance (1957), among many others. The ordinances were enacted based on colonial views and perspectives without hearing what the local people had to say regarding their nature–culture interactions.

While one would expect the situation to have changed after independence, unfortunately, it has not changed today. For instance, regarding cultural heritage, the powers to declare specific sites as national monuments in Tanzania resides in the hands of the Department of Antiquities (DoA), Ministry of Natural Resources and Tourism (MNRT). The DoA was established in 1957 to undertake two tasks: to ensure the security and conservation of the historical monuments and, from the archaeological point of view, to investigate the history of Tanzania (Tanganyika by then). Being the first government body to deal with cultural heritage sites in the country (Tanzania), the Department implemented relevant strategies to ensure heritage wellbeing. One primary method was to list, gazette, and declare cultural heritage sites as national monuments. Consequently, for the first two decades of its establishment, the DoA facilitated the enactment of the Antiquities Act (1964) and its amendment (1979), gazetted over 50 monuments, declared some historic towns as a conservation area, and established a National Fund for Antiquities (Biginagwa 2020; Ichumbaki 2016).

Among the above initiatives, one crucial aspect which could guide our argument is the cultural heritage sites gazettement process. Unfortunately, in Tanzania, there are no written procedures that the DoA or any other stakeholder follows to nominate a particular cultural heritage site to become a national monument. The existing two cultural heritage policies of 1997 and 2008 give no clues on declaring sites as national monuments. Reporting specific cultural heritage sites as national monuments, for over 60 years now since independence, is usually done by a will of the Director of Antiquities who proposes to the Minister of the respective ministry, a legally mandated person to declare a particular site a national monument. In line with this scenario, Section 2(2) of Tanzania's Antiquities Act (1964), read together with Section 2(2) of the amendment Act (1979), informs that '… the Director [of Antiquities] may from time to time, by notice in the Gazette, publish lists of monuments, conservation areas and the inclusion of any place, site or structure in any such list for the time being in force …, that the same is a monument within the meaning ascribed to that expression …'. Building on the same, Section 3(1) of the Principal Act (1964) read together with Section 3(1) of the amendment Act (1979), states that 'the Minister may, by order in the Gazette, declare any place, site or structure of historical interest to become a national monument …'.

Unfortunately, neither the Principal Act (1964) nor its amendment (1979) allows the local community to decide what to declare; local people are not consulted. The only chance they have, as per Section 4(1) (c) (i), is getting a written notice of 48 hours when the place under nomination is an ordinary habitation or occupation. According to Section 3(2) of the Act, read together with Section 3(3) of the amendment Act, members of the local community or any other person 'aggrieved by an order [of declaring a site as a national monument] … may apply [or appeal] to the Minister for a review of the order'. Yet, the decision of the Minister is final. It is probably because of this situation that, despite having over 130 sites declared as national monuments, there has never been an appeal from the community. This is because, first, the responsible Minister is final and second, there are no clear guidelines to make the appellant bank on to challenge the Director of Antiquities and Minister's decision.

Generally speaking, and for the Tanzania perspective, lacking specific guidelines and procedures to declare cultural heritage sites as national monuments is a significant concern regarding what to include in the nomination. It is a problem in that, as we will see in the following sections, what the local community considers necessary for protection is excluded from the gazettement. Thus, there is a need to turn to a decolonial approach where local voices become central before declaring sites as national monuments. Although we discuss this later, in the next section, we present our approach to researching the heritage at Chongoleani Peninsular in Tanzania, followed by the Wall Enclosure and

Sacred Grove and how these two are linked. In our discussion and conclusion, we show how the Tanzanian Government's decision to declare the Wall Enclosure a National Monument without considering the Sacred Groves a few metres away was a mistake that requires immediate attention.

Researching the heritage at Chongoleani Peninsular

The major concern of this paper is to localize the concept of Mixed Sites to ensure an inclusive heritage care especially at the local level in Africa. The data presented in this article were gathered at Chongoleani Peninsular during fieldwork undertaken between 2018 and 2019, through in-depth interviews, focus group discussions, a physical survey and community mapping and observation. The research aimed to answer the following questions: 1. What 'things' does the local community at Chongoleani perceive as their heritage assets they wish to see protected? 2. How were these things used in the past and how are they currently being used, has this changed or not? 3. How does the local community value the 'things' they protect in comparison with the Wall Enclosure the Government of Tanzania protects as a national monument? To answer these questions, we interviewed village leaders, the local people aged 50 years and over, and local government authority leaders. Interviewing these local collaborators intended to explore the extent to which the local community is engaged in preserving the local heritage. To find out whether the local leaders are aware that the Wall Enclosure is a national monument or not. With interview also, we intended to document the customary laws used to protect the sacred groves in the area.

To supplement the data collected from the interviews, we conducted focus group discussions with men and women aged from 18 to 45 in separate groups. The focus group discussions intended to get the ideas of younger people accused by older ones of not caring about their traditions and history. The discussions revolved around finding out what objects and sites were important to the community, what activities were conducted there and who was involved in protecting the site, which revealed what the group members felt about the cultural heritage objects and sacred sites found on Chongoleani Peninsular.

The discussions were followed by conducting a survey to locate the site the local collaborators had mentioned as important heritage, combined with participatory mapping, a practice that transfers power to the local community who are also heritage custodians (Frenierre 2008). This community-based approach was effective in facilitating collaboration between authors as academic researchers and the community (Schmidt 2017), from which the authors learnt that the living heritage brings opportunities and creates a relationship between cultural properties and communities (see, e.g. Chirikure and Pwiti 2008; Schmidt and Pikirayi 2016).

Collaboratively, the authors and their local collaborators located a sacred grove, measured its spatial coverage, used a hand-held GPS to record its geographical coordinates, and with the permission of the custodians, photographed it. The authors did also ask what the site was used for and why it was valued. Furthermore, we documented the cultural materials and objects found there to get a better understanding of its use and how this has changed over time. During the survey, the authors observed and documented ritual activities taking place there, involving sacrifices offered to the ancestors' spirits. This enabled authors to determine the value that local people attach to this site against what is being protected by the government under the Antiquities Act.

Wall enclosures along the Swahili coast

The so-called Swahili coast is a term used by archaeologists, historians, and anthropologists to mean the coast of East Africa, which extends from Mogadishu in Somalia to Inhambane in Mozambique, covering about 3000 km (Kusimba 2000; Ichumbaki 2016; Ichumbaki and Pollard 2021). It also includes the islands of Comoro, Zanzibar, Mafia, and northern Madagascar. The Swahili coast is rich and diverse in people and ethnic groups (Ray 2018; Ichumbaki and Pollard 2021). For almost 2000 years, it has been connected to the Middle East, Asia, and Europe (LaViolette 2008; Kusimba and

Walz 2018; Ichumbaki and Pollard 2021) through the exchange of goods such as gold, pottery, shell beads, ivory, and copper coins (Pollard and Kinyera 2017; Ichumbaki and Pollard 2021). As a result, stone towns with houses made of coral stones bonded together with lime mortar were built (Wynne-Jones 2016). Some of these towns and individual buildings were surrounded by defensive walls presented in this article as Wall Enclosures, which in some places are near sites where ritual practices take place (Ichumbaki 2015). While the enclosures have been gazetted and declared national monuments, ritual places are not cared for by the Government. Still, they are looked after by the local community using customary laws. The link between the wall enclosures and the nearby ritual places is the focus of this article.

Although there are many defensive walls along the Swahili coast, this article focuses on the Usegeju wall enclosed in Chongoleani village (Figure 1) situated on the Chongoleani peninsular in northeast Tanzania. The Wasegeju built the enclosure to prevent the Maasai from stealing their cattle (Said 2020). In terms of size, the Chongoleani wall measures 297.41 m in length and 247.79 m in width in the orientation of NE and NW, respectively. In SW and SE, the Chongoleani Wall Enclosure measures 188.97 m and 104.96 m, respectively. Thickness-wise, the wall ranges from 0.46 m to 0.61 m. The northern part of the wall has a hole, which the local people believe was a viewing point to monitor enemies. The authors' 2019 survey recorded 90 houses with 390 people residing inside the enclosure. In a few open spaces in the enclosure are scattering of archaeological materials, mainly ceramics and glass beads. Most of the ceramics are local, dating between the 15th and 18th centuries AD, but a few are European, dating between the 17th and 18th centuries AD. Other properties found in the enclosure that are of cultural importance are an ancient mosque, stone-built tombs, historic wells, and a baobab tree used for ritual practices.

Local people maintain that the enclosure served two purposes. First, like a seawall to prevent water from destroying their houses, and secondly as a safe place to conduct rituals, celebrate and offer animal sacrifices to the spirits of their ancestors. One ritual practice carried out at the end of



Figure 1. Chongoleani village aerial view.

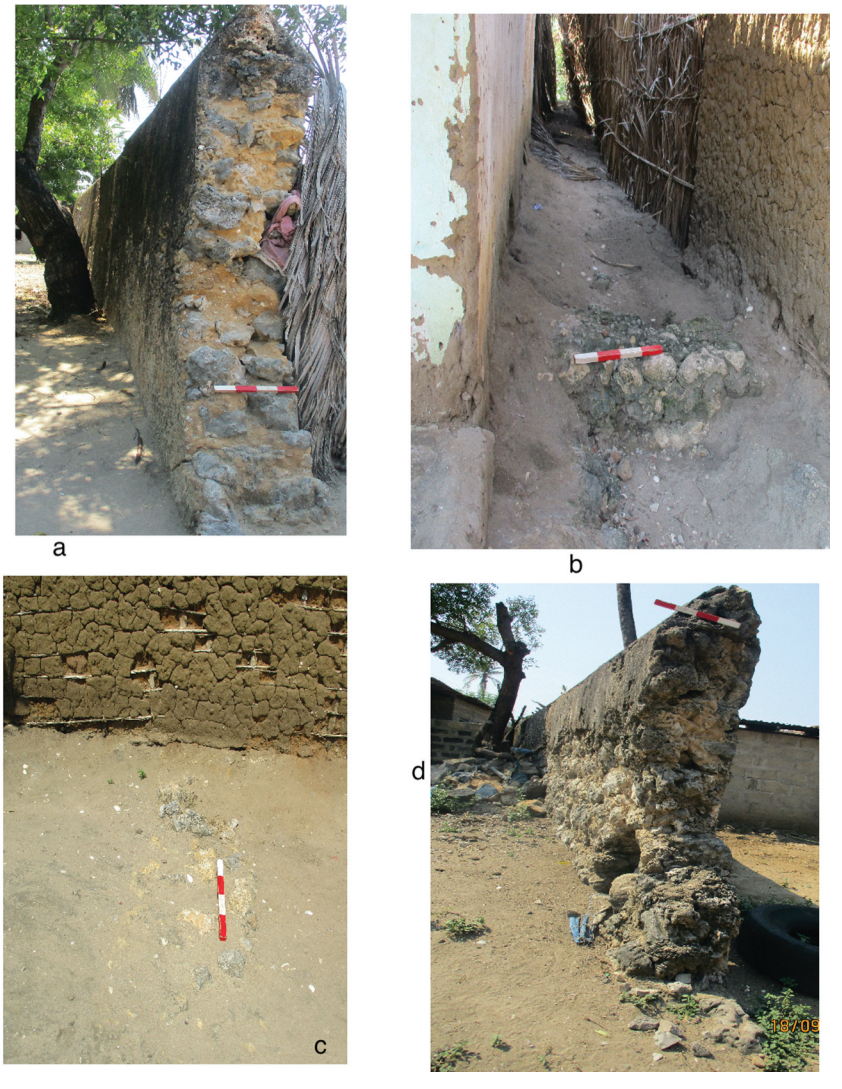


Figure 2. Various remaining sections of the Chongoleani wall enclosure.

each year involved everyone in the village walking around the enclosure four times as a sign of seeking protection throughout the following year. They gathered at the baobab tree to perform more spiritual practices. Although the baobab is still standing in the enclosure, ritual practices that bring everybody together no longer exist, except for offering sacrifices and dancing to local music. Each year, some people still provide gifts at the baobab tree to solve sickness, infertility, and poor harvest problems. Therefore, to avoid this, they hammer nails into the baobab as a sign that these problems will not occur as they have been transferred from the community to the baobab tree for the spirits to control. Although over seventy per cent of the wall has collapsed (Figure 2), some ritual practices still occur under the baobab tree, evidenced by the nails hammered into it, signifying that people have left their problems there. In the next section, we describe the ritual practices in the nearby sacred grove. Although the focus is on the holy grove called Sinjari about a hundred metres away from the Chongoleani wall enclosure, we briefly reference other sites on the Chongoleani Peninsular with similar meanings and interconnected uses.

The sacred grove at Chongoleani

The Sinjari sacred grove is in between Chongoleani Primary and Secondary Schools. The area surrounding the sacred grove is both clean and green as opposed to other places surrounding the two schools, full of paper and plastic bags. Generally, there is no litter in the area near this sacred grove, although it is close to both schools, as it is a valued heritage site. Customary laws empower a young gentleman to protect the grove and is responsible for caring for it. Local people appreciate the grove, as it is the home of ancestral spirits where rituals and other practices take place, necessary for curing multiple diseases, which is why these customary laws protect it.

For instance, one can visit this sacred grove to conduct spiritual practices, but not on Tuesdays or Fridays because the ancestral spirits conduct their own ritual practices. Anyone visiting the site at the proper time should be an approved clan or family member who knows the site taboos. On entering the grove, one must use particular words when asking for permission to enter, repeated three times. Loosely, they say, '. . . it is us teachers who are your obedient slaves; we are coming, kindly accept us.' The cultural materials found at the site, notably huts built with sticks and thatched with coconut palm, pieces of local pottery, and pieces of a white, black, and red cloth, as well as plastic and glass bottles, unbroken ceramic plates, pots, and three stones reflecting the cooking place, confirm that it is used for ritual activities. In some of the pots, ashes and other materials were found, which local collaborators referred to as medicines. Like what Ichumbaki (2015) observed in Kunduchi and Kaole and the villages of Mkadini, Batini, and Winde, we recorded remains of incense and incense burners. Below, we describe the other sacred groves that local people use for ritual purposes.

The *Faki Malaika* sacred grove is situated on a small island about 800 m from Chongoleani Wall Enclosure but separated from it by a lagoon. It is easily accessible on foot, especially at low tide. This grove contains different tree species, but a dominant one is the beefwood tree. It has an entrance and core area. The entrance, which spiritual practitioners call the reception, has a small hut, and in this sacred grove is another hut, which is the core point for spiritual activities. Like the *Sinjari* sacred grove, specific days for visiting it are Mondays and Thursdays, unless there is an emergency. The specific time to visit is 10.00am, which the local people said is an appropriate time for the spirits to listen to problems, probably because the tide is low, making it easy to cross the lagoon.

Several restrictions need to be observed to enter this sacred grove. For instance, a pregnant woman and those menstruating are not allowed to visit it. A woman visiting the grove must cover her hair, and no-one is allowed to enter it wearing shoes. On entering the *Faki Malaika* grove, the traditional custodian speaks the exact words as those entering *Sinjari*. The tangible materials we documented in the *Faki Malaika* grove are huts, pieces of ceramic and incense sticks. The core area has two huts covered with white, red, and black cloth. Other objects observed in the glove were complete pots in which sacrifice materials, such as sugar, rice and honey, which illustrates how much the local people value and respect the grove.

Ashrafu is another sacred grove about 500 m from Chongoleani village office. It also contains a giant baobab tree under which ritual activities occur. A person needing the services of the ancestral spirits sits on a traditional stool made of wood and string. Cultural materials observed in the core area were two complete ceramic bowls, fresh pieces of sugarcane, and pieces of wood covered with white, red, and black cloth. Like *Sinjari* and *Faki Malaika* sacred groves, spiritual practices regularly take place at Ashrafu shrine but not on Friday.

During fieldwork, authors took part in one of the ritual practices at *Ashrafu* site. The ritual practitioners welcomed authors to sit on a traditional chair and introduced them to ancestors. The practitioners slaughtered a chicken for sacrifice and sprinkled the blood around the site. The spirits of *Faki wa Malaika* and *Ashrafu* are connected such that one cannot visit *Faki wa Malaika* before being welcomed at *Ashrafu*. Thus, the journey begins by being introduced to the Ashraf spirit before going on to *Faki wa Malaika* for further services. Suppose the problem is too complicated and cannot be resolved by the spirits at Ashraf or *Faki wa Malaika*. In that case, the matter is then taken to the *Sinjari*

sacred grove considered to have more powerful spirits, showing its relevance to those who visited it. For instance, a teacher from another area wanted to burn rubbish piled up near the grove but was prevented in case the fire damaged it.

It is not only the local people from Chongoleani, who use Sinjari and the associated sacred groves. People from farther regions such as Iringa, Dodoma, and Dar es Salaam visit the shrine to resolve infertility, marriage conflicts, unemployment, and misfortune problems. Local collaborators maintained that when these people's issues are resolved, they always come back to acknowledge the treatment they received. Thanksgiving ceremonies take place each September or December under the baobab tree inside the Wall Enclosure. During this ceremony, locally known as *Mfungo Nne*, local people perform traditional dances (*dogoli*). There is, therefore, a connection between the sacred grove outside the Wall Enclosure and the baobab tree inside it; the two areas are connected. Whereas spiritual practices are conducted in the sacred grove, appreciation of the spiritual help received is celebrated under the baobab tree inside the enclosure through sacrifices being offered to the spirits of the ancestors.

Discussion: sacred places as local communities' official heritage

The current research sought to answer the questions 'what things do local people in Chongoleani Peninsular value the most and wish to see protected'? The research documents five heritage features that local people on the Peninsular value most and continue to protect using customary laws: sacred groves, baobab trees, the Island itself, the stone-built tombs, and graves. They value the sites linked to their spiritual practices more than the historical monument (Wall Enclosure) valued and declared as a national monument by the Government of Tanzania. Although the Wall Enclosure is a national monument, local people do not appreciate it much, going against what is expected by the Government, which protects it as part of its mandate to preserve heritage sites declared as national monuments. Evidence of local people not valuing the Wall Enclosure is their continuing mining of stones from the foundations with which to build new houses while refraining from cutting trees and littering the sacred grove. However, local people also require firewood and could cut down trees in the sacred grove in the same way as they mine stones from the wall, but they do not, because they protect the sacred grove, they use to resolve their socio-cultural problems, which the Wall Enclosure cannot do.

A key issue that the data from Chongoleani peninsular reflect and need to highlight is the intangible heritage values embedded within the wall enclosure and the nearby sacred groves. There is a baobab tree within the wall enclosure at which the local people conduct spiritual practices. They also do the same practices surrounding the enclosure and within the sacred grove very close to the wall. Unfortunately, neither the baobab, the sacred groves, nor the spiritual practices in the area were considered part of the wall enclosure, a property declared as a national monument. The Government focused on the wall enclosure without considering other local heritage associated with the enclosure. Indeed, this scenario has resulted in not caring the enclosure for the side of the local community and has also created a separation of interconnected and interlinked heritage values located in the same cultural landscape.

Not considering the immaterial heritage that is linked to the wall enclosure is nothing but a result of colonialism. From the colonial point of view, spiritual practices, rituals, treatment of problems such infertility, madness, chasing away evils, etc. is something impossible and only an educated people can believe in it. The solution to this, from the coloniality point of view is to abandon these practices and make people believe in either Christianity or Islam; the colonial government went further to enacting a law that would limit people from engaging in such practices. While one would have expected such views to change after independence, it is very unfortunate that the situation has not yet changed. Tanzania's principal Antiquities Act of 1964 and its amendment Act of 1979 do not recognize the spiritual practices and other immaterial aspects embedded in monumental structures such as the Chongoleani wall enclosure. There are

also no initiatives to integrate other intangible heritage that outside the boundaries of the monument though interlinked to each other as the Chongoleani case shows. This scenario has indeed caused a mismatch between what the government and the local community consider heritage and wish to see it protected.

A similar situation is reported at Phiphidi falls in South Africa (Zazu 2011) and Lumbini in Nepal (Nyaupane 2009), which the governments regard as a tourist attraction, while the locals (Ramunangi clan and Buddhists respectively) consider them a holy area, of great spiritual value. While the South African and Nepali governments want to protect the sites from enhancing tourism, the local people want to see them covered as they consider them sacred. Thus, the tension between the Ramunangi clan and Buddhists and the tourism developers may be due to both parties' failure to acknowledge the relationship between the natural and cultural aspects of heritage resources and how this determines the value and desired use of the Phiphidi Falls and Lumbini site. Likewise, in Zanzibar, local communities perceive the Kuumbi cave as the home of the spirits of their ancestors and as a centre for communicating with them (Chami and Chami 2020).

Similarly, at Mongoni wa Kolo site in Kondoa, central Tanzania, the Warangi and Waasi use the site of the rock paintings to conduct ritual practices to resolve their socio-cultural problems, including requesting their ancestors for rain. While they value these practices most and want them to continue, the Government keeps prohibiting them from doing so, which has caused conflicts between the site managers and the local community (Bwasiri 2011). Furthermore, local people conduct spiritual practices under the baobab trees in Kunduchi ruins in Tanzania, at a stone-built tomb, near the ruined mosque and in the forest close to the burial site (Ichumbaki 2015). Due to the governments not paying attention to the cultural practices of local people, as highlighted above, conflicts have emerged over how to manage the sites.

Despite the above situation whereby local people value certain things they consider their heritage, which is different from what the Government has declared, a few efforts have been made to link them to preserve these heritage sites. Research outputs from elsewhere in Africa and beyond reveal that integrating the cultural and spiritual value of sacred natural sites plays an essential role in ensuring the sustainable preservation of the heritage and management of the ecosystem (Verschuuren and Mallarach 2007; Khan and Tripathi 2008). There is also widespread evidence that sacred natural sites effectively conserve biodiversity (Verschuuren and Mallarach 2007; Khan and Tripathi 2008; Cardelus et al. 2013; Alohou et al. 2017). This is revealed at Kuumbi cave in Zanzibar, where local people use taboos, norms, threats, and customary laws to ensure its sustainability (Chami and Chami 2020). As presented in this paper, the sacred groves on Chongoleani peninsular are well preserved, while nearby areas are burned regularly and recklessly. This reveals the need to listen to local voices if the conservation of natural resources in which ritual practices are an integral part of diverse cultures is to succeed.

Local communities support the conservation and management of heritage areas for various cultural reasons significant to their daily lives. Conversely, cultural heritage reports indicate absence of sacred sites in the designation of protected areas, site management plans, policies, or legal frameworks (Verschuuren and Mallarach 2007). In Tanzania, for example, the Antiquities Act No. 10 of 1964 and its amendment, Act No. 22 of 1979, as well as Cultural Heritage Policy of 2008, do not recognise sacred sites as cultural heritage to protect (URT 1964, 1979, 2008), whereas local communities are active in managing and conserving them. It is unfortunate that the state agencies mandated to look after cultural heritage sites, such as Tanzania's Department of Antiquities, do not contribute to preserving sacred groves. In addition to policy insufficiency, this may be due to insufficient funds to engage local communities, the lack of baseline data on sacred groves in general, and a lack of understanding of how the spiritual value attached to the formal heritage contributes to conservation (Mgumia and Oba 2003). Because the state agencies responsible for preserving the heritage are not looking after sacred places, most sacred groves conserved by different local communities in Tanzania are not documented (ibid). Although Tanzania's Forest Act (2002)

recognises that community forest reserves and private forests are used for cultural practices, community forests, and their sacredness are not considered, which means that they are not managed in an integrated manner.

The lack of integrated heritage management and conservation in Tanzania results from a continued dependence of colonial approaches to heritage protection. There is a need to decolonise the practice and adopt a decolonial approach to solve heritage preservation challenges. Adopting a decolonial approach will consider local people as essential collaborators and as key caretakers of the heritage sites on the ground. Engaging the local people will allow conservators of antiquities to gain a deeper understanding of the overall significance of the property. Hence, helping to strengthen governance and management arrangements in ways that could potentially lead to better conservation outcomes of both the wall enclosure and sacred grove. The decolonial approach is also likely to bridge the divide between natural and cultural and tangible and intangible heritage, making their care a complex attempt. Currently, the wall enclosure, like many other sites declared as national monuments, has no antiquities officer to look after these properties. An existence of this serious problem notwithstanding, Section 22 of the Principal Act gives powers to the Director of Antiquities to 'appoint fit and proper persons . . . for the purpose of assisting in the carrying out of the provisions of this Act and, in particular, but without prejudice to the generality of the foregoing, in the prevention and detection of offences under this Act'. Should the consultation and discussion take place between the local community and the Director of Antiquities, then, the acute staffing problem facing the DoA would have been minimized by appointing what Section 2(1) of the Principal Act terms as *Honorary Antiquities Wardens*; a person appointed by the Director as per Section 22 stated above.

Conclusion

In Africa, especially from the perspective of local communities, the management of sacred groves is their responsibility (Mgumia and Oba 2003). In practice, however, a few selected groups of people or families usually take charge of enforcing the rules and use traditional knowledge to create cultural materials to honour their forefathers. Spiritual practitioners use these sacred sites to heal people and resolve their social problems. Community members also use the sacred groves in Chongoleani to communicate with the spirits of their ancestors through undertaking ritual activities and performing traditional dances to ask them to protect the whole village. Although the data from in-depth interviews, focus group discussions and our physical survey show that the ritual activities performed these days have changed somewhat, local people still believe in what they are doing. However, we observed in Chongoleani that some of our local collaborators, particularly young people and those who seem to be devout Muslims, view spiritual practices as offensive to God, indicating the influence of Islam.

In Tanzania, as is the case in many African countries, the cultural heritage laws are silent regarding sacred sites and the local strategies for preserving them. Although Tanzania's cultural heritage policy (URT 2008) identifies spiritual sites as critical, the Principal Act and its amendment (URT 1964, 1979) do not regard sacred groves as part of cultural heritage to protect. Such neglect is due to the law's definition of protected heritage, such as monuments and relics. In implementing the Antiquities Act No. 10 of 1964, the Government of Tanzania declared the Wall Enclosure a national monument, which means that an authorised person should be stationed there full time. However, this has not been the case, as it was left unattended at the time of the current research. The local people in Chongoleani were not bothered, as caring for the Wall Enclosure was unnecessary. However, they still remember that the former village chairman stressed that it needed protecting, not because it is valued as a heritage but for security.

This paper has shown that the views of local people on Chongoleani peninsular on the Wall Enclosure differ from those of the Tanzanian Government, which declared it a historical monument. Still, local people only value it as something that protects them. One collaborator

commented during the interview that it would be better to protect the sacred grove, which resolves their social problems, than preserve the Wall Enclosure from which they get no benefits. There is every possibility that if the Government of Tanzania had recognised both the Wall Enclosure and sacred groves as a national monument and empowered local people to look after the site, the care of both properties would have been achieved. Unfortunately, because the Government declared only the Wall Enclosure and there has never been an antiquities' official to look after it, the monument has collapsed, and its stones removed. On the other hand, the nearby sacred grove continues to enjoy the full protection of the local people. Based on this example of Chongoleani peninsular, we propose that policymakers, heritage practitioners, and researchers consider localising UNESCO's concept of 'Mixed Sites' if local heritage care is a concern. Our proposal emanates from what we observed at Chongoleani peninsular. We argue that the co-existence of nature and culture is not unique to heritage sites of global importance. It is now time to use the concept of 'Mixed Sites' to protect both nature and culture and tangible and intangible heritage assets in the same landscape. Let us localise the 'Mixed Sites' concept.

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