

Intangible Cultural Heritage and Tourism in Protected Areas

Minoo Hassani Esfehani

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Following the new paradigm of protected areas (PAs) most parts of the literature focus on the importance of the local community and their cultural heritage for a PA in achieving its conservation and development goals. However, few studies have addressed the intangible cultural heritage (ICH) of a local community living within a PA and its possible relationship with tourism. In addition, the notion of ICH is taken as a emerging topic in the academic environments; therefore, up to know there is little indication of the role and manifestation of ICH in tourism within the boundaries of PAs.

In many cases, tourism and the local community usually are considered as two fundamental aspects for the development and prosperity of a PA. Also, a considerable part of ICH of the local community living in a PA is linked to the surrounding natural features in many ways. Regarding these relationships, a tripartite interconnection between the concepts of ICH, tourism and PAs is identifiable.

With regard to this interconnection, a question arises about what the possible role and manifestation of ICH is in tourism in a PA. In fact, this question addresses the possible ways that ICH contributes to tourism within the territories of PAs. To answer this question and to fill a part of the gap in the literature, this research project is an attempt to explore the potential and possible role, and the manifestation of ICH in tourism in a PA from the perspective of locals and visitors.

The empirical phase of this research project was conducted in the first declared geopark in the Middle-East; Qeshm Island Geopark (QIG) is located in the Persian Gulf in the south of Iran. Applying an ethnography, qualitative semi-structured interviews and participant observation were used over six months to explore the research objective among the natural and cultural landscapes of QIG. Applying thematic network analysis to analyse the rich empirical information, two global themes supported by six organizing themes were identified. In general, intangible cultural asset is presented as a set of “opportunities” for a tourism setting in a PA. This thesis also outlines a set of “challenges” in the way of ICH promotion in tourism in a PA.

Abstract

Exploring the roles that the intangible aspect of local culture can take in a PA's tourism, as well as the existing, and potential challenges in the way, this thesis provides an avenue towards greater understanding of the area of the relationship between tourism in PAs and culture of the local community. Notably, this understanding supports the principles and objectives of the new paradigm of PAs. I believe that the implication of this research is transferable and applicable to different types of PAs across the world, PAs that are populated by a human community (ies), and also are open to tourism.

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Publications

During the process of researching and writing this PhD, some sections of this thesis have been published in revised and expanded form as a journal article and a book chapter. The suggestions from the anonymous reviewers have helped to improve my writing and clarify my conceptualization of the thesis. I also presented aspects of my scholarship at two international conferences in Finland (2015) and England (2016).

Peer reviewed publication. This article has been published based on the results presented on Sections 6.2 and 6.3 of this study.

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List of Abbreviations

CSV	Cultural spiritual values
EGN	European Geoparks Network
GGN	Global Geoparks Network
ICH	Intangible Cultural Heritage
ICHC	Intangible Cultural Heritage Convention
ICOMOS	International Council on Monuments and Sites
IUCN	International Union of Conservation of Nature
PAs	Protected Areas
QIG	Qeshm Island Geopark
TEK	Traditional ecological knowledge
TSBO	Tourism Small Business Owners
UNWTO	United Nation World Tourism Organization
WDPA	World Database on Protected Areas

1

CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

1.1 The Inspiration and the Introduction to the Thesis

It is very close to sunset. The pale autumnal sun is moving towards the west and the sky is turning orange and purple. I am leaning on a big piece of rock among the high and rocky Mountains of the World Heritage Site of Bisotun¹, very close to my hometown in the west of Iran. Bisotun, with its stunning natural landscapes and biodiversity, is also identified by the International Union of Conservation Nature (IUCN) as a natural protected area (PA) category V. I can see people climbing a narrow and steep path to get to Farhad-Tarsh, an unbelievably huge, long, and flat rock wall (36.200 meters) on the body of mount Bisotun (Figure 1.1). Local people believe that centuries ago a lover carved this wall on the rough rocks for his beloved. Sitting here, I am thinking that although this mountainous spot has no relation with what the folkloric tales and local beliefs say, many people who have already heard the story come here to visit up close the piece of rock art on the body of a rough mountain which, based on what the local oral tradition says, is a memorial of love.



Figure1. 1 World Heritage Site of Bisotun and a view of Farhad-Tarash rock wall
(Source: Majid Yasini)

Similar thoughts came to my mind a few years later when I was working as an ecotourism advisor on the remote island of Qeshm Island in the Persian Gulf, an island that is mostly known and protected because of its unique natural landscapes and exotic geoheritage. In addition, the island enjoys more than 2,000 years history of human habitation and a rich cultural context. Part of this old culture has helped people to adapt

¹ - For more information on Bisotun World Heritage please see <http://whc.unesco.org/en/list/1222>.

themselves to the arid geographical location of the island and, more importantly, to the crucial, and permanent problem of water shortage over the centuries. Working and living with local people, and as a person with tourism background, a passion for the notions of culture and PAs, I was constantly wondering if this various but unique local traditional knowledge, customs and beliefs could be applied and promoted in tourism in a location that is a defined protected area under a set of specific regulation systems mainly, a protection that preserves the existing natural resources. In the meantime, while keeping in mind the example of Bisotun and some other types of PAs with the same conditions; I was continuously absorbed with the thought of whether there is any possible relation between the non-material aspect of local culture and tourism development in the PAs.

Both personal examples above reflect that the interaction between culture and nature, and also how much and in which way(s) these two factors have affected each other over the history, has been always part of my interest, an interest mainly inspired from a deep internal passion I have for history. Having a tourism background and working in a PA ecotourism development consultancy, the question of how a local culture contributes to a PA's current issues from tourism perspective has become more evident to me. The question looked more interesting to me when it came to the contribution of the intangible part of each culture in the tourism sector in PAs. By developing this idea, I was addressing three main areas of my personal interests: culture and nature interaction, PAs, and tourism.

1.1.1 Linking Three Main Contexts: Intangible Cultural Heritage, Tourism, and Protected Areas

Culture is a complex concept and one that is difficult to define (Baldwin, Faulkner, & Hecht, 2006). Additionally, intangible cultural heritage (ICH) as a part of each culture is not easy to identify, measure, and experience (English, 2003; Lixinski, 2013). There is an old and tight linkage between the intangible cultural asset of the local community living within PAs and the natural landscapes available within these boundaries (Putney, 2003; Schaaf, 2006). Furthermore, tourism is in close relationship with both discourses of culture and PAs. Cultural tourism, including intangible aspect of each culture, is taken as underlying and growing part of global tourism (Smith & Robinson, 2006). In

addition tourism is recognized as a strong economic and sociocultural tool for PA development (Bello, Carr, & Lovelock, 2016). The relationships between and among the three contexts of ICH, tourism, and PA are illustrated in Figure 1.2.

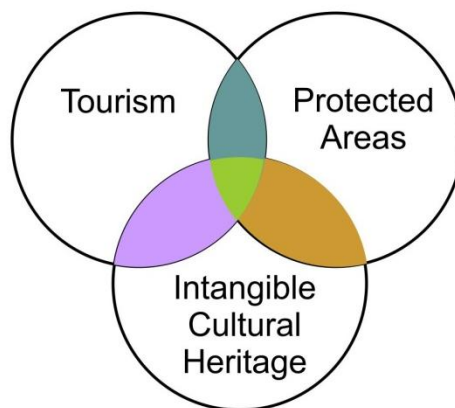


Figure1. 2 The interconnection between the three contexts of ICH, tourism, and PAs
(Source: Author)

The area of interest that this study engages with is associated with these three contexts. In this vein, the interrelationships between each two of them constitute the main contexts of this research. Referring to the existing gap in the literature, which will be outlined later, I question the overlapping area of these three contexts from a specific perspective. In fact, the main question of this research is situated through the tripod interconnection between three contexts of ICH, tourism, and PAs in order to explore the ways, potentials, and the possibilities that the ICH of a local community living within PAs could contribute to the tourism sector of these boundaries.

Taking an interpretive ontological position by which reality is considered as the production of a social actor (Bakas, 2014; Madden, 2010), the need to conduct empirical research for this study becomes evident, and necessary. The primary attribute of this research is that it is one of the few research studies that presents an in-depth and critical investigation of the interaction between ICH and tourism in PAs. What I intend to do in this research is to explore the interaction between the intangible cultural asset of the local community and the tourism sector of the PA. This goal leads me to design and develop the theoretical framework of this study on ethnography, and consequently borrow the relevant ethnography methods to conduct the empirical phase of this study.

The reason is that ethnography is an approach that studies the interaction with people in their natural environment, and in their particular social and natural settings (Creswell, 2007). In the meantime, ICH is in a close and constant relation with people's everyday lifestyle, and their daily situations and events (Cominelli & Greffe, 2012; Kleinman & Benson, 2006; Lixinski, 2013). Also, To study the relationship between ICH and tourism ethnography provides me with the chance to live as a part of the researched community for a while and gain the information through watching, listening, and collecting whatever useful is available on the fieldwork (Ching, 2009; Hammersley, 1995).

With regards to the location of the empirical research, my Persian cultural background, Persian language skills, my prior work experience as well as the personal emotional connection to my homeland, influenced my decision to undertake the fieldwork in Iran. Conducting fieldwork in Qeshm Island Geopark (QIG) in the south of Iran provides me with the position of acting as a "partial insider" during fieldwork context. The notion of my positionality in the fieldwork will be outlined in more detail in Chapter Five.

1.2 Research Contexts

1.2.1 Protected Areas and Intangible Cultural Heritage

This section outlines the relationship between ICH and PAs. It presents a revision of the definition of PAs, and the status of local community, and their cultural heritage in PAs. Then, more particularly ICH, and its relationship with PAs will be addressed. It is followed by a more in-depth investigation into understanding the relationship between ICH and PA in Chapter Two and Chapter Three of this thesis.

As the starting point, the establishment of PA is taken as one of the great innovations of human beings, which has continued to the present time. The aim of this movement is "transformation of using land and sea resources" (Lockwood, 2012a, p. xxiv) to conserve biodiversity through having specific restrictions on human activities (Di Castri, Hadley, & Damlamian, 1981).

There are many examples over the history that present the tendency of human civilizations to allocate some parts of lands and wildlife to protect them from the public for various cultural, spiritual, recreation or livelihood reasons. However, the more modern practice of protecting definite natural areas began in the late 19th century with the establishment of Yellowstone National Park in the United States in 1872 (Budhathoki, 2012; Chape, Spalding, & Jenkins, 2008; Phillips, 2003).

Since that time, the setting, definition, and establishment objectives of PAs have evolved significantly. Stolton (2010, p. 1) states that the term “protected area” has embraced a wealth of variety during its history. Following the “Yellowstone model” (Stevens, 1997, p. 28) the initial definitions and objectives of PAs were excessively focused on solid conservation of wilderness, regardless of the local communities’ needs and interests. Throughout time, though, it was gradually recognized that local communities living within the territory of PAs and their sociocultural setting are inseparable parts of each PA and crucial factors for each PA’s respective development. This perspective led to the understanding that nature protection needs to be taken as a part of a complex, broad, and integrated system of managing the different levels of the underlying human-nature interaction (Chape et al., 2008; Majnoniyan, 2001). The result was gradual moving from the old paradigm of PAs, which focused on an exclusionary management system of PAs (excluding the local community from PAs boundaries) towards the new paradigm of PAs which is based on the collaborative management (co-management) system. Throughout undertaking these changes, local communities are not excluded from the PAs’ setting, rather they are considered as an absolute part of the past, present, and the future of PAs. Following the new paradigm various aspects of a local community sociocultural values, interests, and cultural heritage which are usually deeply associated with the natural environment of PA are taken into account (Graham, Amos, & Plumptre, 2003; Lane, 2001; Phillips, 2003). Now, there is growing recognition of rights of local people and realization that the success of most types of PAs is highly dependent on the presence of these communities and their continuous support of PA’s resources (Chape et al., 2008; Stevens, 2014b).

The internationally accepted definition of a PA was presented by the IUCN as below which clearly indicates that the “cultural values” associated with natural resources are important in the “long-term conservation” process of nature in a PA.

“A protected area is a clearly defined geographical space, recognised, dedicated, and managed, through legal or other effective means, to achieve the long-term conservation of nature with associated ecosystem services, and cultural values.” (IUCN, 2014b)

Generally speaking, according to the principles of new paradigm what a PA is looking for are conservation, sustainable use of available resources and equal benefit sharing between PAs and the local communities (Juffe-Bignoli, 2014; UNEP, 2010). Here is a definition of local and indigenous community:

A group of people with the common identity who may be involved in an array of related aspects of livelihood. They often have customary rights related to the area and its natural resources, and a strong relationship with an area in one or many dimensions, such a cultural, social, economic, spiritual, and usually strong dependency on the area for their survival and identity. (Lindsey, Alexander, Mills, Romañach, & Woodroffe, 2007, p. 71)

Now, managing a PA is considered as “essentially a social process” (Lockwood, 2012b, p. 41). It is also accepted that there exist a synergic and traditional co-evolvement between local community’s cultural context and the bio-physical environment of their homeland (Ramakrishnan, 2003; Taylor & Lennon, 2011). In this vein, cultural value, and cultural heritage of the local community living within a PA are taken more seriously, and acknowledged (Lane, 2001; Scherl & Edwards, 2007; Stevens, 2014b).

The cultural heritage in PAs includes both tangible assets, such as historic buildings, as well as intangible assets such as oral traditions and spiritual values (Zeppel, 2009b). It is believed that, as with the term “culture”, defining “heritage” is also as difficult as defining beauty or art, because these terms link to people’s senses and emotions, therefore, they are indefinite (Lixinski, 2013, p. 7). According to Vecco (2010, p. 322), the first text that gives a definition of the concept of heritage is the International Charter of Venice (1964) on the conservation and restoration of monuments and historical sites. Cited in Vecco (2010, p. 322) the International Charter of Venice defines heritage as follows:

Imbued with a message from the past, the historic monuments of generations of people remain to the present day as living witnesses of their age-old traditions. People are becoming more and more conscious of

the unity of human values and regard ancient monuments as a common heritage. The common responsibility to safeguard them for future generations is recognized.

Later, to complete this definition, the United Nations Educational, Scientific, and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) emphasized that cultural heritage is not limited to the monuments and collections of objects; it also includes non-material aspects such as traditions inherited from our ancestors and passed on to our descendants (UNESCO, 2014d). This non-material aspect of culture was then introduced as ICH and defined as follows:

The practices, representations, expressions, knowledge, skills as well as the instruments, objects, artefacts, and cultural spaces associated therewith, that communities, groups, and, in some cases, individuals recognize as part of their cultural heritage. This intangible cultural heritage, transmitted from generation to generation, is constantly recreated by communities, and groups in response to their environment, their interaction with nature, and their history, and provides them with a sense of identity and continuity, thus promoting respect for cultural diversity and human creativity. For the purposes of this Convention, consideration will be given solely to such ICH as is compatible with existing international human rights instruments, as well as with the requirements of mutual respect among communities, groups, and individuals, and of sustainable development. (Di Giovine, 2009, p. 115)

This thesis, to investigate the specific area of the ICH and PAs relationship, first investigate the human and environment interaction that has been the subject of many areas of environmental social science studies (Moran & Brondizio, 2012; Shoreman-Ouimet & Kopnina, 2011). The linkage between human societies, their cultural context, and ecosystem has been argued about and focused on in literature, to the point that ecosystem is interpreted as, in part, a “socially constructed phenomenon” (Dudgeon & Berkes, 2003, p. 88). In this vein, Singh Negi (2010, p. 259) believes that there exists a “symbiotic relationship” between ecosystems and cultural identity, and that this relationship is a critical factor in ensuring sustainable human development. In the next

step, this thesis moves on to exploring the interaction between PAs and the ICH of the local community in PAs in more detail.

As mentioned briefly in the introductory paragraphs, ICH, and its interaction with biophysical resources of PAs are justifiable from various perspectives and examples. For instance, the local communities continuously practise and develop a set of traditional ecological knowledge (TEK), and traditional techniques in order to meet their needs as well as to value and maintain the surrounding environment (Dudgeon & Berkes, 2003; Lockwood, 2012b; Putney, 2003). Another broad area of ICH contribution to the setting of a PA is through sociocultural law systems, norms, and spiritual values, all of which have enormous impacts on shaping local community's thoughts and behaviour framework towards the natural resources of a PA (Carter & Bramley, 2010; Putney, 2000; Rolston, 2003; Schaaf, 2006). The relationship between intangible cultural assets of a local community and biophysical environment in a PA is discussed from different perspective in Chapter Three.

1.3 Tourism and Intangible Cultural Heritage Interaction in Protected Areas

It was mentioned in the introduction section of this chapter that the concepts of ICH, tourism, and PAs, and also the interrelationships between them constitute the main context of this research; therefore, apart from the notions of PAs and ICH interaction that was outlined in the previous section, it is also necessary to address how tourism interacts with the other two concepts.

Besides nature conservation, tourism and provision of recreation facilities has been taken as a part of the establishment objectives of PAs (Frost & Hall, 2012; Lane, 2001). Tourism sector is taken as “the most common uses of protected areas” (Bello et al., 2016, p. 2), and a strongly influencing economic and sociocultural tool for its development (Frost & Hall, 2012; Lane, 2001; Schaaf, 2006). However, the extent and quality of tourism development in each type of PA differs based on the establishment objective(s) of a PA explores. While Harmon (2003, p. 24) counts tourism as the “huge industry” in PAs, many scholars argue for both the positive and negative impacts that tourism may leave in a PA (Chape et al., 2008; Eagles, McCool, & Haynes, 2002;

Puhakka & Saarinen, 2013; WCPA, 2003). The potential tourism impacts on the biophysical and sociocultural structure of a PA, and the idea that a wise management system can considerably decrease the negative impacts, are all discussed in Chapter Four of this thesis.

Turning to the topic of tourism-ICH interaction, tourism notably has been in tight and continuous interaction with the concept of culture and cultural heritage since long ago. As such, cultural tourism constitutes an underlying section in global tourism development (Nasser, 2003; George, 2010). In this vein, cultural tourism is taken as a “growing segment of international tourism market” (Smith & Robinson, 2006, p. 5).

As each culture constitutes a range of both tangible and intangible assets, visitors might have the chance to experience the ICH associated with destinations during their visitation (Bowers & Jared, 2014; UNWTO, 2012). In this vein, visitors usually experience some aspects of ICH in person through their personal interaction with local people and their engagement with the local lifestyle, traditions, and customs. Currently, the importance of ICH is taken into more gradual consideration to the point that it is viewed as a “driver for the promotion of sustainable tourism development” (Giudici, Melis, Dessì, & Ramos, 2013, p. 105).

So far, it has been indicated that tourism, and the presence of the local community and their cultural heritage including ICH, are two fundamental aspects of PAs. Also, a considerable part of the ICH of the local community is traditionally linked to biophysical environment in PAs (Farsani, Coelho, & Costa, 2011b; Piccardi & Masse, 2007). Given the result of the existence of tourism sector and ICH resources within a PA boundary a tripartite interconnection between ICH, tourism, and PAs is identifiable. As mentioned earlier, this thesis is an attempt to question this tripartite interconnection from a particular viewpoint of the role and manifestation of ICH in tourism in PAs. (Figure 1.3). The question and objective of this thesis are addressed in the next section.

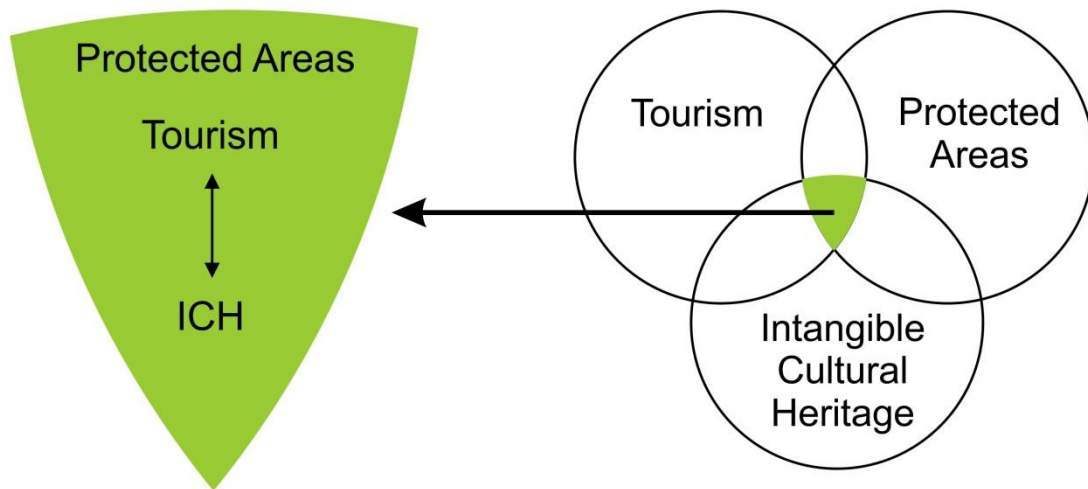


Figure 1.3 The tripartite interconnection between the three contexts of ICH, tourism, and PAs. The overlapping area indicated in this figure is the focus area of this research project (Source: author)

1.4 Research Aim and Objective

Addressing a gap in academic literature in the setting of ICH in tourism and ICH in PAs, this research project aims to produce knowledge on more particularly ICH and tourism interaction in PAs within a wider conceptualization of the tripartite interconnection between the three contexts of ICH, tourism, and PA (Figure 1.3).

Generally speaking, the scope of ICH is not considered as an old subject in the academic environment, especially when it comes to the areas of tourism and/or PAs. However, some studies have already addressed these areas from different perspectives (Esfehani & Albrecht, 2016; López-Guzmán & Santa-Cruz, 2016; Du Cros, 2014; Timothy, 2011) Gonzalez, 2008; Putney, 2003; UNWTO, 2012,). In this vein, studies on ICH mostly focus on what ICH is, as well as the notion of identifying and safeguarding the underlying examples of ICH across the world. Eoin and King (2013, p. 654) state that there is an obvious “lack of focus on what ICH does and what it can do”. On the other side regarding the practical shortcoming in the field of ICH implications and applicability, still very little is known about ICH in the setting of PAs. Notably, this inadequacy is much more evident when tourism as a development tool in

PAs (Staiff & Bushell, 2004) is also supposed to get involved. As explained earlier in this chapter, based on the principles of the new paradigm for PAs, most recent literature on PAs argues and emphasizes the importance of local people and their cultural heritage for a PA to achieve its conservation and development goals. However, a smaller body of the literature presents a straightforward, explicit, and more focused indication of the intangible aspect of the local community cultural context. From a tourism point of view, there also exists a big gap about the role(s) and manifestation of intangible cultural elements in tourism sector within the territories of those PAs that have been populated by a local community over time. Gonzalez (2008, p. 808) suggests that “there is a lack of studies concerning the interface between the tourist and intangible heritage”. Moreover, referring to United Nations World Tourism Organization (UNWTO) report (2012, p. 12) “limited interest have been shown by academics, particularly in the social sciences, in the relationship between tourism and intangible cultural heritage”. While among ICH elements “culinary heritage” has been relatively promoted in tourism, the other elements have been underestimated so far (UNWTO, 2012).

Motivated by my life experiences, my world-view, and taking the existing multifaceted gap into account, a principal, guiding, research question was devised in order to explore the IC1H and tourism interaction in PAs:

- What is the role and manifestation of ICH in tourism in a PA from locals’ and visitors’ perspectives?

To answer this question, and to fill a part of the gap that was just explained, this research attempts to explore an objective:

- The potential and possible role and manifestation of ICH in tourism in a PA from locals’ and visitors’ perspectives..

The aim of this research is to explore how the role and manifestation of different ICH features and elements in a PA are perceived and experienced in tourism by two groups of people: locals and visitors. Regarding locals, only those who are involved with the ongoing tourism activities inside the PA are considered. They include, first, the local

official of the PA, and second, the members of the local community who are running a tourism business, even if small. This group is called “small tourism business owners” (STBO). It is important that both groups are familiar with ICH of the cultural context of the community where they were born, and raised in. The reason behind selecting “visitors” as a group of participants is that while visiting a PA, they usually have the chance to visit and engage with the various elements of ICH of the local community living within that PA some extent. By “perceiving and experiencing” I refer to actual feeling, knowledge, understanding, practices, and engagement of participants towards the notion of ICH and its role in the tourism sector of the PA where they are either locals living and working or visitors.

While PAs are primarily known and advertised as natural based tourism destinations (Wray, Espiner, & Perkins, 2010), visiting and experiencing intangible cultural assets could also constitute a part of the tourism sector of these boundaries, therefore, it seems necessary to know more about different aspects and criteria of the ICH and tourism interaction in PAs. More knowledge on the ways, types, and characteristics of ICH contribution to PAs tourism could encourage decision-makers to give more serious conceptual and practical attention to the intangible aspect of each culture in the tourism development planning and management of the PA.

To explore the objective of this research only the natural PAs that have been inhabited by human societies over time and enjoy the existence of cultural resources of local communities are selected to be addressed; therefore, cultural-based PAs such as Cultural World Heritage Sites and those types of plain, natural PAs with no signs of human habitation are excluded automatically from the list of this research’s targets.

The terms “data” and “data collection” are widely used in different types of studies. However, the applied methodological approach of this research and the nature of interpretive, and non-numeric empirical knowledge that is foreseen to be collected, requires me to substitute the term of “information” for “data”, as in general, the term of “information” seems more compatible for the basic qualitative ethnographic nature of this research.

This thesis focuses on the role and manifestation of ICH in a geopark in Iran, a location that embraces several examples of nationally and internationally designated PAs within

its boundary. However, the contributions and relevance of this study go beyond geographical and disciplinary borders. This thesis contributes to the academic discussion on the role and the manifestation of ICH in tourism of PAs, and by empirical analysis it provides a new lens through which to observe a broader and more practical area of the linkage between the three contexts of ICH, tourism, and PAs. Therefore, the results of this research are somewhat applicable in settings much larger than Iran or geoparks. In accord with, considering the regulation structure and the objectives that the management system of different types of PAs explore, the results of this study can be transferrable to other types of PAs with a background of human habitation and tourism as a part of their defined objectives.

Furthermore, this thesis adapts thematic analysis network and written text to provide more understandable and holistic analysis, and by this way it partly makes a useful methodological contribution to the wider academic literature on tourism, ICH, and PAs. The following section outlines the form and structure of the thesis by providing a brief overview of each chapter and the key points they address.

1.5 Outlining the Thesis

My thesis is organized into eight chapters. Each one of them addresses a different part of the study, and all together provides the reader with a comprehensive account of the research journey, the findings, and resulting conclusions.

Chapter One provides a summarised guide to the rationale for undertaking this research, answering the questions “who, how, and why?” Through introducing the main contexts of this study which include ICH, tourism, and PAs, Chapter One discloses the existing gap in the literature. Also in this chapter are the research question and the objective that have raised issues of the role and manifestation of ICH in tourism in PAs.

Chapter Two explores the history and the philosophy of PAs establishment and its different definitions and types. Then it explains the current designation systems of PAs and the objectives that the management structure of each one of them may look for.

This chapter suggests that allocating a piece of land to be preserved by human civilizations relates back to ancient times, however, the creation of contemporary types of PAs created a set of crucial problems for local communities living in or around the PAs. Acknowledging the wide diversity of different types of PAs and designation systems in the present world, Chapter Two addresses and explains more specifically those types of PAs that are relevant to the case study of this research.

Chapter Three goes through the in-depth presentation of notions of culture, ICH, and PAs in two different but related parts. To explore the concept of ICH, part one of Chapter Three starts by discussing the complexity and multilayered definition of the term of “culture” and how the world developed its standpoint from a materiality aspect towards a non-materiality view to cultural heritage.

In part two of Chapter Three, I investigate how the old human-environment interaction is being considered in social environmental science. With regard to the importance of this interaction, this chapter moves forward to make a revision of the global perspective evolution from the old paradigm of PAs towards the new paradigm, an evolution from exclusionary management system to participatory management system in PAs. This chapter concludes by a discussion of importance of local community in PAs and the existing relationship between their cultural heritage, including ICH, and biophysical environment of PAs.

Chapter Four then narrows the focus of this study to the area of ICH and tourism in PAs by addressing the relationship between tourism sector and each discourse of culture and PAs. Here, I explore the intangible aspect of culture and its relationship with tourism. Challenges and opportunities associated with the notion are also discussed.

The main body of empirical research is presented in Chapter Five to Chapter Seven. Chapter Five explains the “how” of the thesis, while in Chapter Six and Chapter Seven, thematic analyses of the semi-structured interviews and participant observation experiences are well explained.

Chapter Five engages with the methodology of the study in two different parts. The first part presents the research philosophy and methodological beliefs that influenced the way I found out the most appropriate methods to conduct this research. In the

second part of Chapter Five the case study of this research, Qeshm Island Geopark (QIG), is introduced. Ultimately, thematic analysis network approach and five phases of conducting the thematic network are explained.

Chapter Six comprises detailed analysis of the first main theme of the findings which is *Opportunities* for tourism in PAs. It focuses on how participants have come to know and understand the role of ICH in tourism through the diverse experiences they had in their homelands (as the locals) or during their visitation in the PAs (as the visitors).

In the second analysis chapter, **Chapter Seven**, the global theme *Challenges* of implementing ICH in tourism in PAs is analysed. It focuses on developing the understandings of the cluster of concerns, issues, and challenges that can problematize the implementation and promotion of ICH in a PA's tourism sector.

I present my conclusions in **Chapter Eight**, drawing together results from the analyses chapters, to address the “so what?” of the research. This chapter summarizes the thesis through mapping the main findings and discusses their significances in terms of the research contexts, its objectives, and the literature.

Taking all aspects of this research into account, and arguing what is happening in the present world in terms of theory, and practice of the principles of new paradigm of PAs, I suggest some possible ways and policies by which ICH could get more useful attention and practical implementation in tourism sector in PAs. Lastly, Chapter Eight points to future avenues of research suggested by this study.



CHAPTER TWO

PROTECTED AREAS; FROM PAST TO PRESENT

2.1 Introduction

This study explores the manifestation and the role of ICH in tourism in special territories of land called PAs. Tourism, ICH, and PAs, and the interconnection between them constitute the main framework of this study. As a foundation, it is important to understand the notion of a PA, the history behind it, and the associated definition(s), as well as the types or categorizations of these boundaries in the world. It is also important to know for what reasons these pieces of land are established. I open this chapter by presenting the concept of PA, not as a new discourse in human society, but in fact as an old subject that relates back to centuries ago. The chapter moves on to make a brief revision of the challenges that the local communities have been confronted with since the contemporary types of PAs have emerged.

Addressing the sociocultural issues of PAs, Chapter Two presents the globally accepted definition of PA and the importance of cultural issues in this definition. The chapter goes on to outline the designation systems of protecting the environment at the international level. Then, geoparks are presented as one of the recent innovations for allocating some pieces of land to be protected from human interference through a specific protection system.

Chapter Two is an introductory section for the following two chapters in this thesis. It helps the reader to understand the theoretical framework of the two following chapters and respectively follow the research approach detailed in the methodology chapter. In fact, introducing the notion of PAs in this chapter is taking the role of opening the gate for developing the later discussion on the interaction of ICH, tourism, and PAs.

2.2 Protected Areas; an Old but Evolving Concept

One of the greatest innovations of human beings that happened in late 19th century, and has continued to the present is the “transformation of using land and sea resources” (Lockwood, 2012a, p. xxiv). By this innovation specific pieces of land are put aside as PAs to conserve biodiversity by restricting human activities (Di Castri et al., 1981, p. 2166). Nowadays, PA evolvment is taken as an important matter in environmental and socioenvironmental studies (Juffe-Bignoli, 2014; UNEP, 2010).

The contemporary history of PAs begins with the establishment of Yellowstone National Park in the USA in 1872. However, regarding the history of putting aside a specific part of the land for conservation, many other examples can be found to prove that old civilizations also made important decisions with respect to the use, and protection of natural resources. Over several hundred years BC, the old empires, such as Babylon, Persia, and Assyria used to allocate wildlife or forests they wanted to protect from the public for various reasons such as establishing hunting reservoirs or to protect sacred natural sites for spiritual reasons (Chape et al., 2008; Edwin, 2000; Graham et al., 2003; Miller, 1999). The existence of hunting reserves can be traced in ancient Babylonia and Sumer from 2,500 to 1,000 BC and to ancient Assyria in about 700 BC (Budhathoki, 2012; Shafe, 1999). In India, elephants were protected after their domestication in the 4th to the 3rd century BC. Also, the Qin Dynasty in China set up imperial hunting reserves in the mountainous area in the 3rd century BC. There are other examples of ancient types of PAs in Indonesia, Persian, and Mongolia (Budhathoki, 2012, p. 19). In the 19th century, European colonial countries started establishing big game reserves in Africa, among which Kruger National Park is famous. Lockwood, Worboys, & Kaa-lya del Gran (2008, p. 20) believe that what we know about PAs of the past is derived from the few written records that the powerful societies have left us. Therefore, there could be many other examples of smaller-scale societies who conserved specific places to ensure their food supplies, or to maintain them as sacred natural sites based on their faith (Dudley, Higgins-Zogib, & Mansourian, 2005). African tribes are taken as good instances for small-scale societies who have made local-sized efforts to preserve the natural resources surrounding their homeland. Pastoral groups in East Africa established grazing reserves close to water resources to help their small stock calves and sick animals survive the long dry season. In addition, many of African society's sacred groves, which have been often valued as burial sites, have preserved the high-biodiversity surrounds. Another instance is Caribou hunters who controlled their animal killing, insisting on the respect for prey. Also, indigenous fishing communities in the western US and sub-Arctic controlled fishing in specific seasons (Brockington, Duffy, & Igoe, 2012, p. 20).

Some of these small-scale PAs still exist as sacred natural sites, often highly valued by local communities. There are many other examples in Asia and Africa of small pieces of land that are locally protected and that are based on a community's cultural and

spiritual values (Shafe, 1999; Sponsel, 2011). Sponsel (2011, p. 42) suggests that some 150,000 of sacred natural sites still exist in India, covering a total of 33,000 hectares.

With regard to the abovementioned, it is safe to say that the notion of protecting natural resources has a far longer and more complicated history than the Yellowstone record in the late 19th century. Considering the more recent history of PAs, Prato and Fagre (2005, p. 33) indicate that the birth of PAs in the USA was gradual. It started in the 1860s, the time of “rapid exploitation and development of natural resources”, and ended with the identification and classification of the Yosemite Valley. Keiter (2013, p. 41) notes that first national park “gained official recognition in 1864, in line with the Yosemite Valley Act, when legislation designed to protect the scenically spectacular valley from transforming into a private land”. Following this movement, less than a decade later, in 1872, the first modern PA, which was called Yellowstone, was identified with official establishment of the first national park in the USA (Phillips, 2003, p. 10). Afterwards, the US national park system took the role of inspiring, and leading for other countries. The late 19th century witnessed declarations of some of known PAs such as Royal National Park in Australia in 1879, and New Zealand's Tongariro National Park in 1894. The latter is remarkable in the history of PAs because it has been a gifted land by Maori leader, Te Heu Heu, to Queen Victoria in order to protect the sacred mountains. Later, Banff National Park was declared in 1898 as the first in Canada (Brockington et al., 2012; Chape et al., 2008; Cobb, 1980).

Reviewing the existing literature on the history of PAs, one easily realizes that the process of establishing PAs across the world did not move on smoothly; rather, it appeared to confront local inhabitants of PAs and cause conflict for a large number of local communities who had been settling in or were close to newly introduced PAs around the world. Following the management perspective, called the Yellowstone model by Stevens (1997, p.28), early conservationists tended to view people as a problem for wildlife, because the core of their philosophy focused on rigorous protection through which no human community was allowed to live inside PAs (Brockington et al., 2012; Phillips, 2003). This traditional perspective shaped the basic thoughts supporting the old paradigm of PAs (Stevens, 2014c). As a result of thoughts derived from the old paradigm many of the traditional populations were forcibly excluded from PAs and their traditional homelands (Stolton 2010, p. 3). Apart from

being pushed out of their homeland the locals were even severely limited for using the natural resources for their daily livelihood such as fishing, and it often happened without any compensation (Borrini, Kothari, & Oviedo, 2004, p. 7).

Russia, at the time of Stalin (from the mid-1920s to 1953), is one example of “massive and brutal” (Budhathoki, 2012, p. 29) population eviction from PAs (Weiner, 1988). In this vein, Phillips (2003, p. 11) highlights that at least until around the 1960s, the climate in which PAs were established followed a top-down process by which local communities were ignored totally from any development plans for PAs. Finally, since 1980s’ world has taken a slight turning in conservation practices by raising the subject of the historic relationship of humans and nature in PAs. At this time some initial approaches were recommended to promote more local participation and sustainable use of resources (Brechin, Fortwangler, Wilshusen, & West, 2003, p. 9). Following this line, the old paradigm of PAs governance has given way to the new paradigm of PAs by which local residents and communities inside PAs are gradually being more considered at a global level. Consequently, they are viewed as an underlying and inseparable factor for PA prosperity. Shifting global views on PAs from an old paradigm to the new paradigm and the interaction between the local communities and PAs will be discussed in Chapter Three.

2.3 Definitions of Protected Areas

The concept of PA has been developed considerably in recent years and embodies many different ideas (Eagles et al., 2002, p. 10). The definition of PA is not a static. On the contrary, searching the existing literature reveals different active debates around the discipline of PA, debates that have caused the definition of PA and its objectives and roles to constantly evolve. Stolton (2010, p. 1) states that the term “protected area” has embraced a wealth of variety during its history. PAs can be defined in various ways based on the different reasons they have been established and protected, such as conserving biodiversity, science, safeguarding landscape, maintaining food resources, and respecting cultural values associated with nature such as sacred natural sites.

Brockington et al. (2012, p. 1) lists PAs as national parks, game reserves, national environments, forest reserves, and the myriad other places and spaces that are being protected from human interference through a special system.

In contrast to the initial definitions of PAs that were mostly based on conservation of nature without presence of local communities, at the present time the role of PAs is not restricted to only natural conservation. One of the recent emphasized subjects in this area addresses the relationship between culture and PAs. Including cultural issues in the PA framework, it is now acknowledged that many natural places in the world have been populated and influenced widely by human societies who have created different landscapes based on their needs and interests, and who are also willing to protect the natural resources (Nogueira & Flores, 2003; Taylor & Lennon, 2011). Consequently, this point of view led to the understanding that nature protection needs to be part of a complex, broad, and integrated system of management that considers the different levels of human-nature interaction (Chape et al., 2008; Majnoniyan, 2001)

Now it is emphasized that the PA's human-based activities and assets must be widely taken into consideration in its development programmes (Phillips, 2003). As a result, the debates around PAs presented by IUCN at the IV World Parks Congress in 1992 (Bushell & Eagles, 2007) were based on the realization that a protection system will be successful only if it addresses both natural resources and cultural context of the local community. Accordingly, the notion of cultural asset is clearly included in following definition of PA:

“An area of land and/or sea especially dedicated to the protection and maintenance of biological diversity, and of natural and associated cultural resources, and managed through legal or other effective means.” (Chape et al., 2008, p. 7).

Indeed, the International Union of Conservation of Nature's (IUCN) official website, presents that

National parks, wilderness areas, community conserved areas, nature reserves are all included a wide range of biodiversity conservation efforts around the world, while communities' livelihood is deeply linked to most of them especially at local level. (IUCN, 2014b)

Currently, the IUCN definition, presented in Chapter 1, is internationally accepted and practiced at regional and national levels (Chape et al., 2008; IUCN, 2014b). Referring

to that definition, there is a direct indication of the “cultural values” of the local community, which shows the fundamental importance of culture and cultural heritage in a PA. In the next section, I review briefly the various types of PAs in the world.

2.4 Types of Protected Areas

The definition of a PA is not static, but rather is an evolving concept, especially in terms of its interconnection with socioeconomic and cultural issues (Lockwood, 2012b). In general, PAs are identified and managed for many different purposes (Eagles et al., 2002), and they exist under dozens of names and management models. Figure 2.1 illustrates the main purposes why humans conserve nature and natural resources.

Regarding the variety types of PAs Chape et al. (2008) note that, almost fifty international environmental conventions, treaties, agreements and associated protocols now exist. Notably, this number indicates only those known designation systems at international level.

In addition to the international designation systems for protection natural and cultural heritage, there are also other nationally protection systems which focus on protecting the cultural, and natural asset within national boundaries. Lockwood (2012a, p. 96)

Main purpose of establishing and managing protected areas	Period				
	Ancient	Medieval	18-19 th century	20 th century	21 st century
Spiritual and cultural	←—————→				
Hunting	←————→				
Recreation			←————→		
Biodiversity conservation				←————→	
Sustainable Live Lihood and human well-being				←————→	

Figure2. 1 The main purpose of nature conservation in different periods of history (Budhathoki, 2012, p. 9)

states that national PAs have been called by many different terms based on “the sociopolitical histories of the region, the regulation and management system, and the types and amounts of permitted human activities”. Consequently, many of them have been developed in their unique, special manner (Phillips, 2003, p. 9). Chape et al. (2008, p. 106) count that, more than 1000 designation systems exist globally. He argues that although global agreement on the establishment of PAs has grown, the designation process is not necessarily considered consistent among countries because legislative systems differ. Notably, any types of national PAs may be overlaid by one or more in the international designation (Lockwood, 2012a, p. 97). A good instance is the case study of this research project is Qeshm Island Geopark (QIG), located in the south of Iran. The island is officially declared a national geopark. In the meanwhile, it shares its territory with the international wetland of Ramsar Convention, and a biosphere reserve in the Man and Biosphere (MAB) programme. There is also an Intangible Cultural World Heritage Site in this island (See section 5.5).

In addition to those PAs that are known at either international or national levels, there are other types of PAs at the local level that are yet to be recognized in any of the existing designation systems. In fact, they are unofficial, community-based PAs across the world that in many cases have historically been protected by local and indigenous communities (Budhathoki, 2012; Stevens, 2014b). Community-based PAs and sacred natural sites across the world are ideal examples for those types of small-scale PAs that are not considered as members of an official list of PAs. However, recently these boundaries are being gradually considered as new types of PAs at the international level. As Szabo and Smyth (2003, p. 1) express, indigenous PAs in Australia are relatively new types of PAs that are now managed collaboratively by “indigenous landholders and federal state and territory conservation agencies in Australia”. Notably, these Australian indigenous-based PAs and the other similar cases have not been declared in the known official PA designation systems at the international level.

In addition, and with regard to the management approach, PA management is supported and delivered by a wide range of institutions, communities, agreements and processes. Lockwood (2012a, p. 90) explains that dependent on “various jurisdiction where each PA is located” they are protected and managed at different levels and through various styles. They work within a framework provided by “the international conventions, national laws, and local regimes which are usually based on a “formal regulation, contractual arrangements or customary law” (Lockwood, 2012a, p. 43). In the same way, the number of different governance types covers a variety of private and community ownership patterns of PAs across the globe. Therefore, PAs could vary based on the main objectives of protection, management and governance approach, and each group of them are presented in different names. All of these regions, regardless of the level of protection or governance type, are taken as a member of a broader framework and a complex global system which aims to protect the natural and cultural resources around the world. Figure 2.2 shows a conceptual view of the universal values of each place of each type of PA. However, the main objective of presenting the pyramid in this study is to present a holistic view of the wide range of different types of PAs, both natural and cultural.

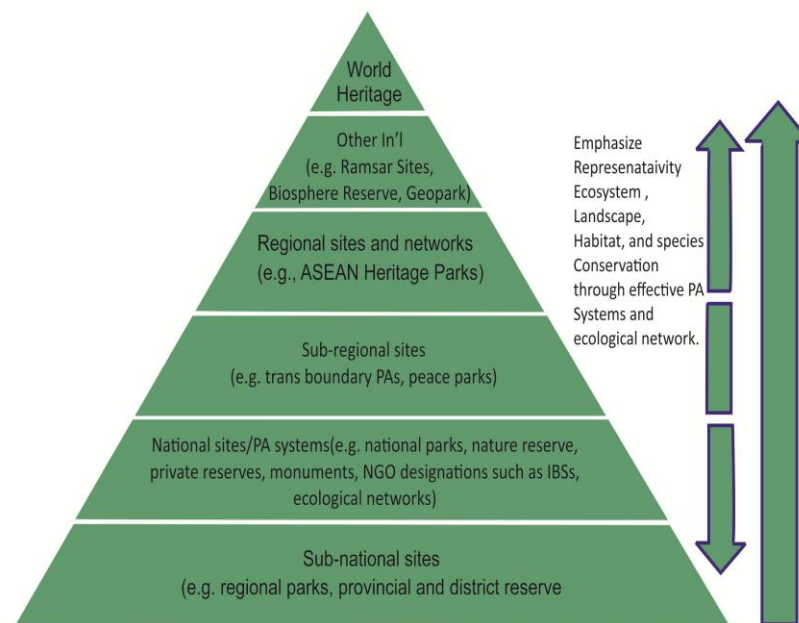


Figure2. 2 Different types of protected areas in the world (Adapted from (Chape et al. 2008, p. 26))

As the case study of this research, QIG in Iran, is a declared protected land which is classified in various national and international designation systems (See Chapter 5.5), the remainder of this chapter is devoted to introducing some important PA types and designation systems that exist within QIG and that contribute to the empirical phase of this study. It addresses the IUCN categorization for PAs, the designation systems of the World Heritage Convention, Ramsar Convention on Wetlands, MAB Reserves Programme, and UNESCO Global Geoparks.

2.4.1 IUCN Protected Areas Categories

To provide some structure and to help improve understanding and promote awareness of PAs, IUCN has developed a six-category system for PAs (Eagles et al., 2002, p. 7). At initial steps, in 1978, IUCN decided a ten-category classification for PAs. Later, in the 1980s, it was reduced to a five categories. Finally it was in 1994, that the present system of six categories was globally confirmed (Brockington et al., 2012; IUCN, 2014a). IUCN in its official website presents the categorization system as below:

IUCN protected area management categories classify protected areas according to their management objectives. The categories are recognised by international bodies such as the United Nations and by many national governments as the global standard for defining and recording protected areas and as such are increasingly being incorporated into government legislation. (IUCN, 2014a)

Classification by the IUCN is based on different combination of objectives that a PA might follow. Graham et al. (2003, p. iii) summarize all these objectives in four groups: nature conservation, science and education, tourism opportunities development, and needs of local and indigenous communities. The IUCN PA categories and a brief definition of each category are presented in Table 2.1.

According to “World Database on Protected Areas” (WDPA) currently, about two third of PAs are assigned to IUCN categories, covering over 80% of total area (Chape et al. 2008, p. 14). Following the previous section, Figure 2.3 illustrates that there is a

considerable amount of PAs in the world that are out of the IUCN official list and they are taken as non-IUCN categories. These groups of PAs is presented in Figure 2.3 under the name of “No Category” (Chape et al., 2008, p. 13)

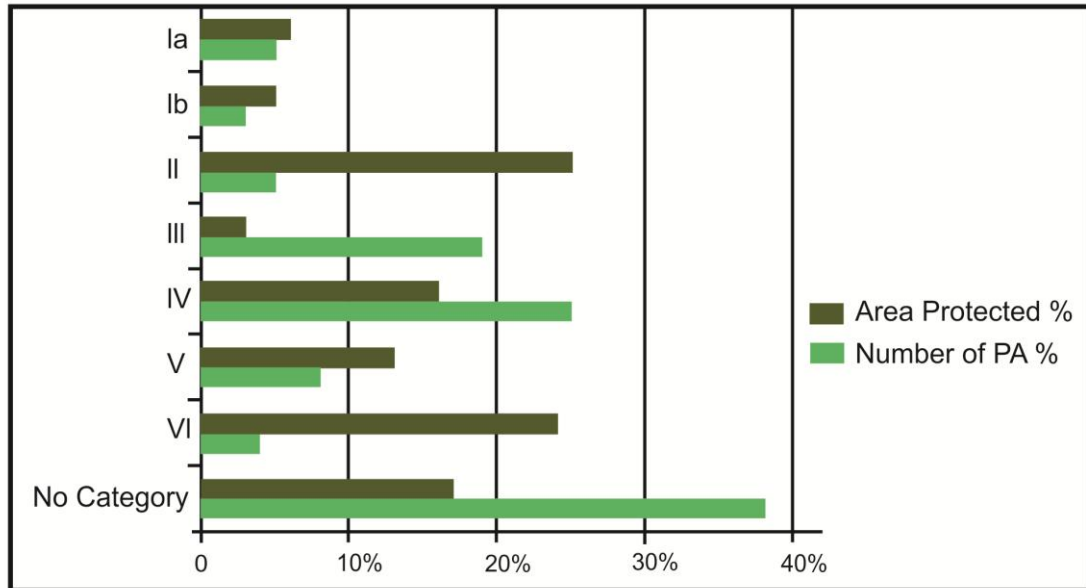


Figure2. 3 Global protected areas in IUCN Category (Adapted from (Chape et al. 2008, p.14))

Over the last decades the global importance of PAs, and also attention to the role of these boundaries in preserving the natural resources has increased dramatically. Figure 2.4 illustrates the growth of each of the IUCN management categories from 1950 to 2014 and their total extent.

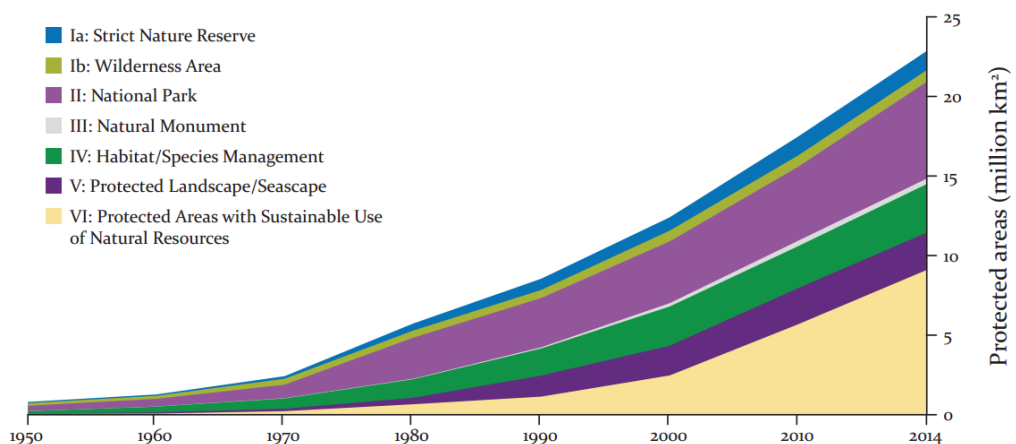


Figure2. 4 The growth and the total extent by area of PAs in each of the six IUCN categories between 1950-2014 (Juffe-Bignoli, 2014, p.13)

Table2. 1 IUCN five-categories of protected areas, (Adapted from (Prato 2005, p. 40))

Category and primary management objectives	Definitions
Ia. Strict nature reserve; science	Set aside to protect biodiversity and also possibly geological/geomorphological features, where human visitation, use and impacts are strictly controlled and limited to ensure protection of conservation values
Ib. Wilderness area; wilderness protection	Category Ib protected areas are usually large unmodified areas, retaining their natural character and influence without permanent or significant human habitation which are protection and managed so as to preserve their natural condition
II. National parks; ecosystem conservation and recreation	Category II protected areas are large natural or near natural areas set aside to protect large-scale ecological processes, along with the compliment of species and ecosystems characteristics of the area, which also provide a foundation for environmentally and culturally compatible, spiritual, scientific, educational, recreational and visitor opportunities.
III. Natural mountain or feature; conservation of specific natural features	Category III protected areas are set aside to protect a specific natural monuments; which can be a landform, sea mount , submarine cavern, geological feature such as a cave or even a living feature such as an ancient grove. They are generally quite small protected areas and often have visitors value.
IV. Habitat/species management area; landscapes /seascapes conservation and recreation	Category IV protected areas aim to protect particular species or habitat and management reflects this priority. Many Category IV protected areas will need regular, active interventions to address the requirement of particular species or to maintain habitats but this is not a requirement of the category
V. Protected landscape/seascape; sustainable use of natural resources	A protected area where the interaction of people and nature over time has produced an area of distinct character with significant, ecological , biological, cultural and scenic values; and where safeguarding the integrity of this interaction is vital to protecting and sustaining the areas and its associated nature conservation and other values

The global attention to the need to increase the number of PAs caused dramatic increasing in both number and extent of the world’s PAs. A statistical report from the WDPA in 2012 reveals that world PAs already covered 14.6% of the Earth’s land area and 9.7% of the Earth’s coastal waters, but only 2.3% of the global ocean area (BIP, 2014). This number increased by 2014, a year in which all designated PAs listed in the WDPA covered 15.4% of the Earth’s land area and 8.4% of the Earth’s marine and coastal waters under national jurisdiction, but still only 3.41 % of the global ocean area (Juffe-Bignoli, 2014). Figure 2.5 illustrates how the world PAs increased dramatically in size and number during 100 years, between 1911 and 2011.

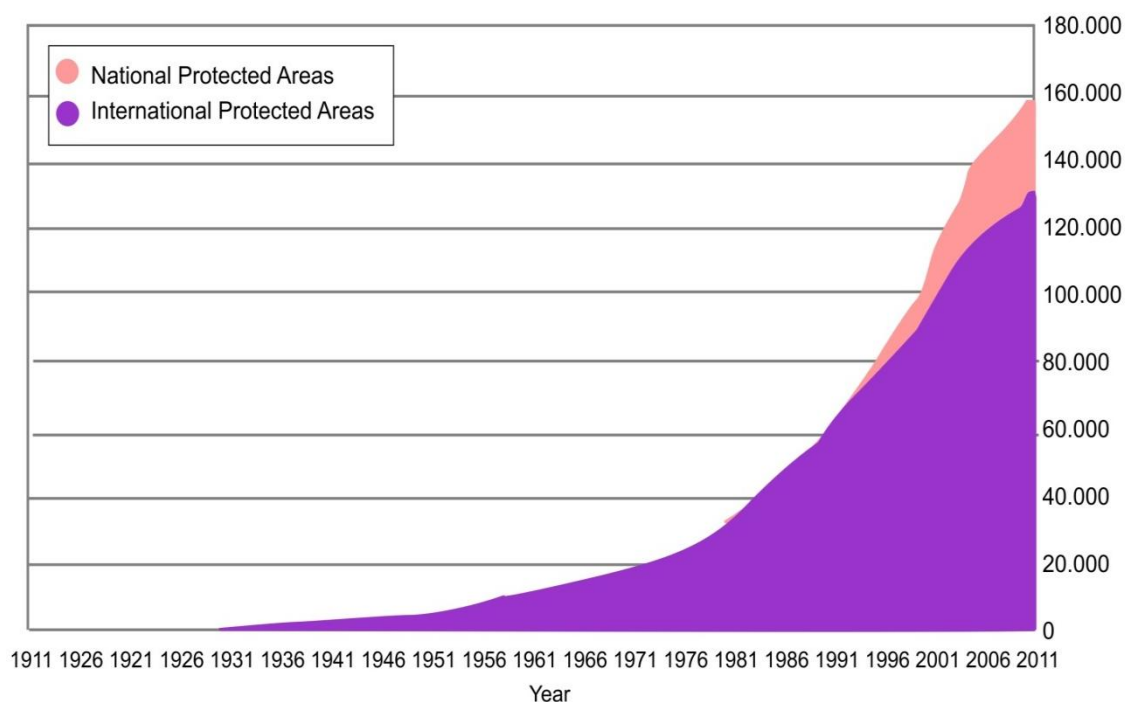


Figure2. 5 The growth in number of nationally and internationally designated PAs (Adapted from (Stevens (2014b, p. 28))

2.4.2 International Designations Systems

2.4.2.1 The World Heritage Sites

The World Heritage Convention, adapted by the general conference of UNESCO in 1972 and entered into force on 17 December of that year, is designed to identify, and protect outstanding examples of cultural and natural heritage (Hazen, 2008). Furthermore, this Convention is “widely internationally accepted as one of the most

effective tools to protect the heritage on the Earth” including cultural and natural heritage (Chape et al. 2008, p. 25). While many sites on the list are already protected under national legislation or even different international designation systems, World Heritage listing engenders a global profile, “fostering international security and providing cooperative mechanisms that support conservation management” (Lockwood, 2012a, p. 90). In this vein, Carducci (2008) explains that the main purpose of this Convention is to establish a protection system to support world cultural and natural heritage at an international level. To achieve this goal the Convention must be taken as a path of an integrated system of international stewardship, in order to support State Parties during their permanent process of identifying and conserving existing heritage (Carducci, 2008).

There exist three types of World Heritage sites: cultural sites, natural sites, and mixed sites that present both cultural and natural elements together. Referring to the World Heritage Convention, cultural heritage constitutes three general groups. First, all “monuments” that include “architectural works, works of monumental sculpture, and painting, elements or structures of an archaeological nature, inscriptions, cave dwellings and combinations of features, which are of outstanding universal value from the point of view of history, art or science”. Second, “groups of buildings” that are indicated by the groups of “separate or connected buildings which, because of their architecture, their homogeneity or their place in the landscape are of outstanding universal value from the point of view of history, art or science”. Third, “sites” including any types of “works of man or the combined works of nature and man” including archaeological sites that are of outstanding universal value from the “historical, aesthetic, ethnological or anthropological” point of view (Redgwell, 2008; UNESCO, 1972).

Natural heritage sites also constitute three types of elements. The first group includes all “natural features consisting of physical and biological formations or groups of such formations, which present of outstanding universal value from the aesthetic or scientific point of view”. The second group is about all “geological and physiographical formations and precisely delineated areas which constitute the habitat of threatened species of animals and plants of outstanding universal value from the point of view of science or conservation” and the third group comprises “the natural sites or precisely delineated natural areas of outstanding universal value from the point of view of

science, conservation or natural beauty”. Furthermore, the mixed World Heritage group is one that presents a range of both cultural and natural characteristics that were counted above (Redgwell, 2008; UNESCO, 1972).

“Outstanding universal value” is a keystone principle in the definition and identification of above three types of World Heritage. Outstanding universal value entails cultural and/or natural heritage significance which is so exceptional as to go beyond the national boundaries to become more global (Hazen, 2008), and is also deemed to be of importance for present and future generations of all humanity. As such the permanent protection of this heritage is considered as of the highest importance to the international community as whole (Carducci, 2008; Redgwell, 2008; UNESCO, 2015f).

2.4.2.2 Protected Areas of Ramsar Convention on Wetland

On February 3rd, 1971, in the city of Ramsar located in the north of Iran, the representatives of 18 nations agreed to the text of an important international treaty called the Ramsar Convention. It was the first modern tool “seeking to conserve natural resources at a global level” (Matthews, 2013, p. 4). As an intergovernmental treaty, the Ramsar Convention seeks the commitment of member states to conserve the wetlands of global importance through local, regional, and national actions and international cooperation in order to work towards sustainable development throughout the world (RCS, 2014). Prato and Fagre (2005, p. 47) state that the “Ramsar Convention is the first of the modern global intergovernmental treaties on the conservation and sustainable use of natural resources, and it is still the only one that addresses a specific ecosystem of wetlands”. Chape et al. (2008, p. 16) describe wetlands as follow

areas of marsh, fen, peat, and or water, whether natural or artificial, permanent or temporary, with water that is static or flowing, fresh, brackish or salt, including areas of marine water the depth of which at low tide does not exceed six meters.

The wetlands under the protection of the Ramsar Convention are all recorded in the Ramsar List of Wetlands of International Importance (Prato & Fagre, 2005) and the goal of this list is to develop and maintain an international network of wetlands which are important for the conservation of global biological diversity and for “sustaining

human life through the ecological and hydrological functions they perform” (Lockwood, 2012a, p. 90). In order to focus on the importance of wetlands, the Ramsar Convention requires that the contracting parties shall “formulate and implement their planning so as to promote the conservation of wetlands, included on the list, and ensure the wise use of wetlands in their territory” (Matthews, 2013, p. 29). The wise use principle seeks to find a balance between human need and the process of conservation of biodiversity to achieving the sustainable development (SPREP, 2009). Matthews (2013) expresses that the wise use of wetlands points to the conservation of wetland and ecosystems and meeting human needs at the same time within the context of sustainable development. It therefore has at its heart the conservation and sustainable use of wetlands and their resources for the benefit of present and future generations of humankind. According to the IUCN official website by 2015, 168 contracting parties and 2,186 designated wetlands across the world have been identified in the Ramsar Convention. So far, the total surface area of all these designated protected sites equals 208,674,247 hectares (RCS, 2014).

2.4.2.3 Protected Areas of Man, and the Biosphere Reserves Programme

As one of the critical scientific programmes of UNESCO, Man and the Biosphere Programme (MAB) was launched in 1971, and it focuses on human, and environment interaction (IUCN, 2012). This programme is a joint effort between the worldwide scientific communities (Kennea, 1975). The goal is to improve the harmonious relationship between people and nature for sustainable development through participatory dialogue; knowledge sharing; poverty reduction, respect for cultural values and increasing human society’s ability to cope with world’s change (UNESCO, 2015g). In this programme a biosphere reserve is defined as a “particularly flexible form of protected area” (GWS, 2015) that can include terrestrial and/or coastal-marine systems, which are internationally recognized for promoting and demonstrating a balanced relationship between people and their environment (Chape et al., 2008, p. 16). Providing a wide range of natural and human-related resources, it may also be used as a set of “field laboratories for environmental education and educational research” (Ola-Adams, 2001, p. 167).

Some MAB sites may simultaneously contain other types of PAs such as national parks or World Heritage Sites (Lockwood, 2012a, p. 93). However, Batisse (2001) presents that “the biosphere reserves are more than just protected areas, as their conservation objective is supported by research, monitoring, and training activities, and they are pursued by involving systematically the cooperation and interests of the local populations concerned”. Lockwood (2012a, p. 93) expands this discussion by dividing biosphere functions into two areas of conservation: “first a logistical support function for the MAB programme, and then a sustainable development function which helps, and benefits local inhabitants, and traditional users of biosphere territory”.

Three main goals are determined from the set of scientific projects linked to MAB programme. They are expected to decrease biological diversity loss across the world, increase public awareness on bio-cultural diversity and how the interplay of biodiversity and cultural diversity works, as well as to promote environmental sustainability through the World Network of Biosphere Reserves (GWS, 2015). Notably, biosphere reserves are nominated by national governments, designated internationally, and remain under national jurisdiction (Lockwood, 2012a, p. 92). Referring to the World Network of Biosphere Reserves, since MAB reserve programme launching in the early 70’s, 651 biosphere reserves in 120 countries have joined the programme network (UNESCO, 2015g). To be declared as a member of the network each biosphere reserve should contain three elements of core area(s) including a restricted natural resources conservation area, a buffer zone in which activities compatible with the conservation objective may occur, and an outer transition area that is a proper place to promote sustainable activities and practice sustainable development (Chape et al., 2008 ; Lockwood, 2012a).

As expressed earlier in this chapter, since the 1980s the notion of conservation has evolved to a broader perspective on human-nature interaction. This time the emphasis was placed on the sustainable use of natural resources in buffer zones and also on the role of the outer transition area for maintaining cultural values, ecosystem rehabilitation and development (Chape et al., 2008, p. 28). Following this new perspective, now the benefits of human societies within a biosphere and the protection of their cultural asset are linked to the core objectives of MAB sociocultural sustainable programmes. Meantime, the MAB programme is taken as a considerable tool for promoting social sustainability (Di Castri et al., 1981). Overall, the MAB programme is a great move for

all those who consider the mutual relationship between man and nature and who are concerned with the negative impacts of irresponsible use of the resources on the planet Earth (Batisse, 2007; Lockwood, 2012a).

2.4.2.4 Geopark; an Innovation in Natural Protection

The legal protection and preservation of natural heritage on the Earth is a combination of several international, national, and regional systems, aiming to protect the sites that are worthy of being conserved and transmitted to future generations because of their outstanding universal value (Redgwell, 2008, p. 66). Regarding all of these protection goals, Hose (2012) discusses the reason for creating a new designation system under the name “geopark”. He argues that not all of the significant geological, landscapes, and geomorphological features on the Earth could be taken as outstanding universal value, as defined in the World Heritage Convention (1972). Therefore, a new designation system is needed to identify and protect geological heritage and its associated values.

Reynard and Coratza (2007) argue that for many years geoheritage did not receive the attention it deserved in comparison with other ecological and cultural heritage. Therefore, the idea of geopark emerged with the main goal of maintaining geoheritage through a new protection system. Up to now, the studies contributing to the assessment of geoheritage are still young (Brocx & Semeniuk, 2009; Pralong, 2005), however, in the last two decades there have been growing efforts to protect geomorphological features along with other environmental resources. It has happened mostly through selecting and putting aside one or groups of geomorphological sites under the specific protection system of geoparks (Burlando, Firpo, Queirolo, Alessio, & Matteo, 2010).

The philosophy behind the concept of geopark was first introduced at the Digne Convention in 1991 as a means to protect geological heritage and promote sustainable local development through a global network of territories containing “geology of outstanding value” (Ngwira, 2015 p. 29). In 2000, representatives from four European territories met to address regional economic development through the protection of geological heritage and the promotion of geotourism. The result of the meeting was the creation of a regional network in Europe, called the European Geopark Network (EGN), to identify and protect geoheritage across this continent (Errami, Brocx, &

Semeniuk, 2015; Farsani et al., 2011b). In 2004, the first international conference on geoparks was held in Beijing, China, where the seventeen existing European geoparks joined eight new Chinese national geoparks to form a Global Geoparks Network (GGN) under the support of UNESCO (UNESCO, 2015d). The aim of this network was defined to provide a platform of cooperation between experts in geological heritage matters under the umbrella of UNESCO (Dowling, 2011; Frey, Schafer, Buchel, & Patzak, 2006; Ngwira, 2015).

On 17 November 2015, the 195 member states of UNESCO ratified the creation of a new title: UNESCO Global Geoparks (UNESCO, 2016c). This recent decision of UNESCO proves the global recognition of the importance of managing outstanding geological sites and landscapes in a more integrated and practical manner. To clarify this notion, UNESCO in its official website announced that

UNESCO Global Geoparks are single, unified geographical areas where sites and landscapes of international geological significance are managed with a holistic concept of protection, education, and sustainable development. UNESCO Global Geoparks strive to raise awareness of geodiversity, and promote protection, education, and tourism best practices. Together with World Heritage sites, and [MAB] Biosphere Reserves, UNESCO Global Geoparks apply bottom-up approach of combining conservation with sustainable development while involving local communities is becoming increasingly popular. (UNESCO, 2015c)

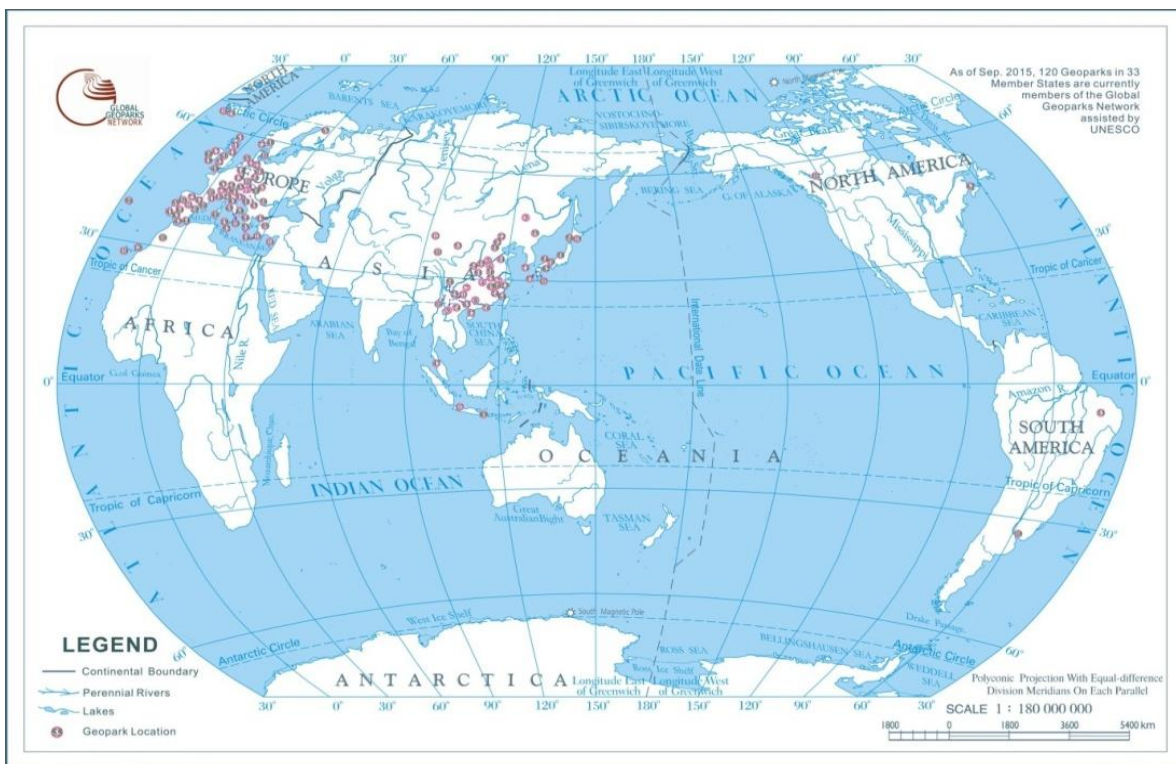
As indicated in the above quote, to work more effectively as a network of collaboration UNESCO Global Geoparks operate in close synergy with other world PA designation systems (Farsani et al., 2011b, p. 37). In accordance with, it may happen that a geopark shares its territory with other types of PAs under different designation systems. Furthermore, Farsani et al. (2011b, p. 32) state that ‘the term geo in geopark indicates more than geology, as it embraces geographical (both physical and human) and geomorphological earth systems’. Therefore, geoparks not only benefit from being geologically interesting locations but also from their various ecological, archaeological, historical, and cultural qualities or attributes (Errami et al., 2015, p. 29). Providing a broad perspective, geoparks aim to integrate the preservation of geological heritage into the strategy for socioeconomic and socioenvironmental sustainable development (Eder,

2008). Hose (2012, p. 21) discusses that the major benefit of geoparks is to focus attention directly on geological and geomorphological conservation and, at the same time, on the related issue of sustainable development.

Comparing with the histories of other types of PAs, geopark is taken as a young subject (UNESCO, 2015a). However, many countries have tried to establish a number of geoparks in international, regional, or even national lists. Therefore, the number of world geoparks has witnessed a rapid rise during last decade. Currently, there are 120 UNESCO Global Geoparks across 33 countries² (UNESCO, 2015a) (Figure 2.6).

It is worth mentioning that term geoparks is not a legislative designation, although the key natural and cultural heritage sites within geopark boundaries should be protected under local, regional, or national legislation (UNESCO, 2015e). In this vein, geoparks could be identified in, protection system in either regional or national levels.

So far, the European Geopark Network (EGN), founded in 2000, and the Asian Pacific



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Figure 2. 6 The distribution of the UNESCO Global Geoparks in the world (Source: Qeshm Island Geopark Archive)

² - This number is still the same at the time of submitting this thesis (November 2016)

Geopark Network (APGN), founded in 2007 have been established to support geoparks at the regional level. Furthermore, a number of countries, such as Brazil, Chile, and China, are currently establishing or have established local and national facilities for the coordination of geoparks (UNESCO, 2015b). A national geopark is run by a designated authority that follows a management plan with “adequate infrastructure” (Frey et al., 2006, p. 113) in order to protect the available resources and promote sustainable socioeconomic development. One of the objectives of the national geoparks network could be a submission of candidates for listing as a UNESCO Global Geopark, thus upgrading the geopark from national to international level. Notably, the establishment of the networks of national geoparks enables the exchange of experiences and best practice inside the country; thereby, those geoparks can each fulfil their common goal (Farsani, Coelho, & Costa, 2011a; UNESCO, 2015c). In general, geoparks as an innovation for the protection of natural and geological heritage (Farsani, Coelho, Costa, & Amrikazemi, 2014) follow three main goals: conservation, education, and development of the local economy through tourism (Dowling, 2011; Farsani et al., 2014). To achieve these three targets, geoparks educate, and teach the broad public about issues in geology and environmental matters (education). They provide a tool to ensure sustainable development (tourism), and they also preserve geological heritage for future generations (conservation) (Frey et al., 2006; Pforr & Megerle 2006). To sum up, it is important to consider that geoparks are not only about protecting the rocks, but that they are territories with particular geological heritages of importance and with sustainable territorial development strategies (Newsome & Dowling, 2010).

2.4.2.5 World Convention for the Safeguarding of Intangible Cultural Heritage

It was in 2003, when the international community recognized the need to raise awareness and attention about the intangible aspect of each culture. The result of this movement was the declaration of the Convention for the Safeguarding of Intangible Cultural Heritage (ICHC) by the UNESCO General Conference held in the same year (Alivizatou, 2012, Blake, 2007). The ICHC is today the most noticeable instrument defining ICH and stressing the need for preserving this type of heritage.

Article 16 of ICHC grants authority to the UNESCO Intergovernmental Committee for the Safeguarding of Intangible Cultural Heritage “in order to ensure better visibility of the intangible cultural heritage and awareness of its significance, and to encourage dialogue which respects cultural diversity” (UNESCO, 2003, p.7). The Convention and its importance in identifying and preserving ICH are explained in the next chapter from Section 3.2.4 to 3.2.6.

2.5 Summary

The notion of PAs constitutes one of the main research contexts of this research. Therefore, understanding the whole setting of the definition and the variety of PAs is an initial step for expanding the theoretical framework of this thesis. Chapter Two introduced the scope of a PA by reviewing the history of its establishment from the traditional to more contemporary style.

Then, with regard to the wide variety of types of PAs, different but related categorizations and designation systems were introduced. It was explained that there exist many types of PAs in the world, among which only those types that are associated with the empirical section of the study were presented in this chapter. In line with this idea, the notion of geopark was introduced as an innovation in the world of the lands that are being maintained through a specific protection system(s).

This research is an attempt to explore the role and manifestation of a specific type of cultural heritage (ICH) in PA tourism. The next chapter will address ICH, the second main context of this research, and the interaction between ICH and PAs. Chapter Four then focuses on the notion of tourism, as the third context of this research, and discuss the relationship between tourism, ICH, and PAs.

3

CHAPTER THREE
CULTURE, INTANGIBLE CULTURAL HERITAGE, AND
PROTECTED AREAS

3.1 Introduction

To explore the role of “intangible cultural heritage” (ICH) in tourism in PAs, one of the important subjects is to understand the concept of “culture” and “cultural heritage”, and more particularly the concept of “ICH” for the case of this study. Talking about culture automatically brings up the notion of people who are the creators and carriers of cultural heritage.

On the other hand, many of the PAs in the world are populated by local communities who are connected to the surrounding environment through their specific cultural contexts. Therefore, there is a linkage between local communities, their cultural heritage, and biophysical environment of a PA.

Referring to the abovementioned, Chapter Three opens by outlining the concepts of culture and of cultural heritage including both tangible and intangible aspects. Following this is an exploration of the emergence and evolution of the idea of the intangible cultural asset in the world. The World Convention on Safeguarding Intangible Cultural Heritage (ICH) is introduced as the most considerable global movement that takes the intangible aspect of each culture into serious consideration.

The second part of this chapter explains the old but unavoidable interaction between human and environment through a discourse of environmental anthropology. While the connection between culture and nature was largely neglected in the initial stages of the PA establishment through an implementation of the old paradigm of PAs, the gradual emergence of the new paradigm of PA has changed the global perspective towards the importance of the local communities in PA development. Introducing these two paradigms, Chapter Three continues to present a cooperative management (co-management) approach of PAs as a “substantial challenge to the old model of PAs” (Lane, 2001, p. 666); as a consequence of this shift, local communities and their cultural values are taken as fundamental drivers for PAs to achieve their goals. This chapter goes on to provide a critical view of the implementation of the new paradigm of PAs and of the co-management approach of PAs in the real and practical world. The final section develops a discussion on the relationship between a PA and the source of the intangible cultural asset of its local community.

Here I need to stress that of the three basic concepts this study focuses on (ICH, tourism, and PA) Chapter Three is an attempt to investigate ICH and PA, and the linkage between them regardless of tourism context. It starts with presenting a wider

picture of the concept of “culture” and then narrows to a picture that addresses more specifically the ICH. Notably, the ICH and PA interconnection from the tourism context will be completely addressed in Chapter Four.

3.2 Part 1: Understanding Culture: From Tangible to Intangible

Culture is an essential and meaningful social concept. The term “culture” is derived from the Latin *cultural*, which means agriculture, growing crops, and raising animals (Rojek, 2007, p. 5). Defining culture is an extensive task (Lixinski, 2013), and complicated as well. It is an important subject and concept in a wide range of social studies. Culture has been defined from various viewpoints of researchers; still, in many cultural and cross-cultural studies there is an uncertainty about the exact definition of culture, such that most users agree that the term of “culture” is not simply defined (El-Mansouri, 2010; Eliot, 2010). Usunier and Lee (2009) discuss that the conception of culture is far from concrete and has no clear framework. Jenks (2004, p. 1) cites from Williams (1976) that “culture is one of the two or three most complicated words in the English language”. Cited in Norton (2006, p. 14) Edward Tylor (1832–1917) defines culture as a “complex concept” that includes knowledge, belief, art, morals, custom, and any other capabilities and patterns acquired by human beings in the human society. McDowell (1994), a geographer, offered a broad definition of culture, mostly emphasizing the relation between society and culture. McDowell (1994) defines culture as a set of ideas, customs, and beliefs that shape people’s actions and their production of artefacts, including the landscape and the man-made environment (Norton, 2006). The number of definitions for the term culture from scholars in various disciplines reached 164 in 1952, and during the next fifty years, many more definitions were added to this list (CAI, 2008). Still, it seems that there is no one definition supporting the concept of culture. Reviewing several definitions of the “embracing word of culture” (Bowden, 2003, p. 56), it seems that there are some important characteristics and features that are shared by all of them.

Generally speaking, these shared characteristics are classified into three specific groups. First, culture is “shared” by members of a social group. It contains a range from morals and values to physical activities and social behaviour. People with the same or

similar social structure (Baldwin et al., 2006) usually share a mix of values, knowledge, norms, and group manners. It could also be related to their lifestyle and their traditional design for living (Selin & Kalland, 2003). Second, culture is “learned”. CAI (2008, p. 14) conveys the idea that what people need to learn in their social context is trained, emphasised, and transformed from one generation to another. This training is embedded in the social structure of the community who is sharing, and valuing them. Last, culture is “group based” (Selin & Kalland, 2003, p. 14). It generates and evolves within a community, either small or big, and it starts developing when people start practising their cultural asset. A complete and detailed definition of culture has been presented by Kroeber and Kluckhohn (1952) and cited by (Baldwin et al., 2006, p. 9) as below

Culture, consists of patterns, explicit and implicit, of and for behaviour acquired and transmitted by symbols, constituting the distinctive achievements of human groups, including their embodiments in artefacts, the essential core of culture consists of traditional (i.e. historically derived and selected) ideas and especially their attached values; culture systems may, on the one hand, be considered as products of action, on the other, conditioning elements of further action.

Considering the two terms “explicit” and “implicit” in above definition, culture is identified as a concept with two basic types of assets: material and nonmaterial. Material culture indicates to the material things in the physical world such as monuments and buildings. Besides, there is another set of cultural assets that are mostly nonmaterial, such as lifestyle, a system of values, and moral beliefs, which are symbolic representations of a way of life in different cultural groups (Baldwin et al., 2006; CAI, 2008). These two cultural-based assets are discussed in the following section.

3.2.1 Layers of Culture

Culture consists of two groups of material and non-material assets. It means that some parts of culture are not visible such as people's religious beliefs, or the knowledge they acquire. The onion diagram in Figure 3.1 presents the layers of each culture. Flags and monuments are taken as the examples, which consist of a visible aspect of culture known as the tangible cultural asset. Furthermore, another layer is located at the core of the onion diagram: cultural values. Unlike the first group, cultural values are not visible, however; they are usually linked and associated with the tangible aspects of culture.

Values are defined as what is valuable for people; something shared that is recognized and respected by them (Harmon, 2003). Cultural values refer to what the members of

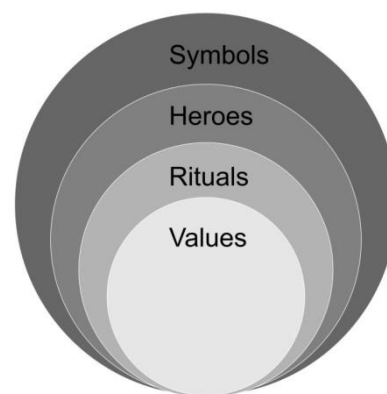


Figure3.1 The onion diagram; manifestations of culture at different levels of depth (CAI, 2008, p. 32)

the cultural group consider as goodness or desirability of certain behaviours or mindset (Bowden, 2003, p. 74). They constitute a set of intangible cultural assets of human societies. Based on these values, people prefer and select “a set of tasks and choices over others in their life” (CAI, 2008, p. 16). El-Mansouri (2010) states that, values are critical invisible drivers that shape and control the material part of culture such as symbols. Consequently, studying cultural values and the linked intangible and tangible heritage, is a critical step to understanding the meaning of culture.

Heritage is simply defined as what human societies usually inherited from the past. People value their heritage, and they have a deep tendency toward its maintenance and

transferring it to future generations (Kearney, 2009, p. 209). Kaminski, Benson & Arnold (2013, p. 5) believe that heritage is more than just an objective because it is linked to social meanings and system of values that are widely shared in human society. In this research, I intend to explore the role of this intangible cultural asset in tourism in PAs. As ICH is taken as one of the main contexts of this research, it is important to know and understand the background and the definition of this concept. Notably, how heritage was perceived in the past is not definitely the same as today; therefore the core definition of heritage and its associated perception have been evolving over time (Vecco, 2010). In the following section, I address this evolvement in more detail.

3.2.2 International Perspective Evolution on Cultural Heritage

Heritage today is an important subject of research (Timothy & Boyd, 2003) and a significant part of human everyday life. At present, as Lixinski (2013, p. 1) notes, the protection of cultural heritage is of growing international concern. Therefore, the interdisciplinary field of heritage studies is now well established in many parts of the world (Smith, 2008, p. xii). Attention to what we have as cultural heritage is taken as a considerable post-World War II social advance. The most notable global movement emerged from UNESCO through supporting a series of World Heritage initiatives, starting with tangible heritage, then natural heritage, and, most recently, intangible heritage (Kirshenblatt-Gimblett, 2004). With regard to the definition of heritage that I presented in Chapter One, what follows is an outline of the evolvement of the global understanding and the definition of the concept of heritage and cultural heritage over time.

Following the global movement on protecting heritage, the initial attention was mainly based on material heritage. That part of heritage, which was material and visible simply, was taken as human societies' entire cultural heritage. This perspective is evident in the UNESCO "Convention Concerning the Protection of the World Cultural, and Natural Heritage" in 1972 (Vecco, 2010, p. 232). In this Convention, the term of heritage is defined as ranging from monuments, building, sites (Abdulgawi, 2008, p. 23) to natural landforms that could meet the criteria of outstanding universal value from the point of view of history, art, or science (Di Giovine, 2009, p. 113) (See Section

2.4.2.).Also, those sites that could prove their parallel cultural and natural significances, such as Tongariro National Park in New Zealand, were declared as mixed heritage (Alivizatou, 2012).

In 1994, nearly 22 years after the first international Convention of World Heritage, the UNESCO World Heritage committee launched the “Global Strategy for a Balanced, Representative, and Credible World Heritage List” with the aim of ensuring that the List reflected the world’s cultural and natural diversity of outstanding universal value. At that time, it was widely acknowledged that the World Heritage List of 1972 World Heritage Convention lacked balance in two aspects; first in the type of inscribed properties, and then in the geographical areas of the world that were declared (Taylor & Lennon, 2011, p. 538). Among the 410 properties, 304 were cultural sites, only 90 were natural, and 16 were mixed, and the great majority were only located in developed regions of the world, notably Europe (Taylor & Lennon, 2011, p. 538).

As a result, by adopting the Global Strategy, the World Heritage Committee focused on the available definition of world heritage to make it broader and more inclusive. The goal was to present a definition that can cover the whole area of different types of heritage resources all over the world and to provide a comprehensive framework and operational methodology for implementing the World Heritage Convention (Taylor & Lennon, 2011). At this stage, UNESCO started taking into account that all heritage is not necessarily objective and material. Even the material side of heritage, regarding its history and function could interrelate with a set of embedded social values and cultural meanings that are not material (Di Giovine, 2009, p. 114). This new vision was seen as going beyond the materiality of heritage and understanding the existing non-material aspects in order to recognize and protect the heritage that are exceptional demonstrations of the human relationship with the land as well as human spirituality and cultural creative expression. In other words, the imbalance of world heritage sites representativeness, which clearly ranked Europe above every other continent (Taylor & Lennon, 2011), inspired the international organizations and their member states to seek alternative perceptions and global images of cultural heritage. One of the emerged results was the concept of cultural landscape (Alivizatou, 2012, p. 9) and the other broad concept was ICH. Both of these concepts are addressed in the following sections.

3.2.3 *Cultural Landscape*

Although the notion of “cultural landscape” has been introduced into the World Heritage Convention in 1992, it has been studied over the time socially, historically, and also for its intangible related aspects (Abbott, 2011, p. 72). In contrast to the Western vision, through which cultural resources are defined as having a physical aspect (Agnoletti, 2006), cultural landscape demonstrates the impacts of humans as the representation of culture on nature, and conversely the historical role of nature in shaping communities’ culture. However, as a category of cultural resources, the term cultural landscape is not so easily defined. Stoffle, Toupal, and Zedeno (2003, p. 99) explain that in cultural landscapes, culture is linked to the natural world in a way that other categories of cultural resources are not. This concept is derived from the notion that the land exists in the people’s historical mindset. (Howard, p. 13) defines cultural landscape as a landscape that owes its appearance significantly to human behaviour over history. In this way, Prato & Fagre (2005, p. 57) state that understanding cultural landscapes strongly depends on understanding cultural structure because landscapes are the expressions of culture and societies, and culture and societies are influenced by landscapes in which they operate.

Following this idea, Denyer (2013, p. 4) believes that apart from places of pristine nature, in one sense much of the world might be seen as a cultural landscape, since it reflects varying levels of human interaction. He explains that considering the alterations made to the landscape over many centuries by native people in Asia, Africa, America, and Australia, very few landscapes remain on the Earth that are not cultural landscapes. Generally, a cultural landscape is a manifestation of the evolutionary relationship between sociocultural values and the human use of landscape. In short, cultural landscapes present the combined work of nature and man (Agnoletti, 2006, p. xii). UNESCO (2014a) defines cultural landscape as “There exist a great variety of Landscapes that are representative of the different regions of the world. Combined works of nature, and humankind, they express a long and intimate relationship between peoples and their natural environment.”

Applying the notion of “outstanding universal value”, which I explained in section 2.4.2., today, UNESCO identifies and presents those cultural landscapes that are eligible to be inscribed as a World Heritage Site (Denyer, 2013). At the time of this

study, 88 properties on the World Heritage List have been included as cultural landscapes (UNESCO, 2016b).

3.2.4 Beyond Tangible; Touching Intangible

By introducing the historical integrity of culture and nature (Agnoletti, 2006) in the context of cultural landscape, the world has gradually come to this point of awareness that the conservation of cultural heritage can no longer be based on the object's intrinsic quality. The world came to this understanding that there exists a non-material aspect of cultural heritage which is difficult to measure or even identify (Arizpe & Amescua, 2013; Lixinski, 2013).

Considering the history of exploring African culture by Europeans, Abungu (2012, p. 59) notes that, far from a Western perception that only includes materiality of heritage, the African perspective include both the tangible and intangible culture, and the strong linkage between these two. It is explained that in an African cultural structure, often it is not the physical manifestation that matters but rather the meaning behind its forms and its associated histories and values. In such cultures the intellectual, psychological, emotional, spiritual and creative aspects of human existence are highlighted (Long, 2012, p. 43). Following this subject, UNESCO (2014d) emphasises that “cultural heritage does not end at monuments and collections of objects. It also includes traditions or living expressions inherited from our ancestors and passed on to our descendants” such as language, rituals, festive events, and knowledge.

Being traditional, and living at the same time, ICH, which is shared within a community, is constantly being “recreated, performed collectively, and often transmitted orally among its holders” (George, 2010, p. 380). In Alivizatou's (2012, p. 18) point of view, what is important about ICH is “its constant, and creative engagement with the past and its reflection on the contemporary identities”.

Moreover, some believe that tangibility can only be interpreted through the intangible (Byrne, 2008, p. 230). Furthermore, all tangible heritages therefore, have intangible values associated with it, but not all intangible heritages necessarily have tangible forms (Kearney, 2009, p. 210). Overall, regarding ICH as holistic (Kearney, 2009) the

importance of the non-material aspect of each culture is emphasized, as is the deep-seated interdependence between the intangible and tangible cultural heritage.

Understandings of cultural heritage, and taking the non-material aspect of heritage into account, were applied more formally, first in Asia from as early as the 1950s and 1960s. The Japanese and Korean governments adopted laws for the protection of traditional practices and ceremonies thought to be under threat from post-World War II modernization and globalization (Alivizatou, 2012; Kirshenblatt-Gimblett, 2004). At that time, a discussion gradually arose that the notion of heritage does not convey only its physical consistency. During the 1980s, legal issues were distinguished from preservation measures, and in 1989, the UNESCO general conference adopted the recommendation on the “Safeguarding of Traditional Culture, and Folklore” (Aikawa-Faure, 2009, p. 13) that aimed to provide a general framework for identification and conservation of a form of heritage, which at that time was called “traditional, and popular culture” (Skounti, 2008, p. 76).

The Intangible Heritage Section of UNESCO was set up in 1993, and this organization has adopted different measures, instruments, and programmes to promote intangible heritage (Kirshenblatt-Gimblett, 2004, p. 11). Finally, UNESCO, in its meeting in Paris in late 2003, introduced the term of “intangible”, and suggested this be applied instead of other equivalents which were common by that time such as non-material or invisible. The result of this meeting finalized the “Convention for Safeguarding Intangible Cultural Heritage” (ICHC) on October 17, 2003 (Vecco, 2010). The following section discusses the content and implication of the ICHC in more detail.

3.2.5 World Convention on Safeguarding Intangible Cultural Heritage

Referring to ICHC text I presented the definition of ICH in Chapter One of this study (Section 1.2.1). In this convention, ICH is manifested inter alia in the five different domains; (a) Oral traditions and expressions including language as a vehicle of intangible cultural heritage, (b) Performing arts, (c) Social practices, ritual, and festive events, (d) Knowledge and practices concerning nature and the universe, (e) Traditional craftsmanship (UNESCO, 2003, p.2).

Regarding five domains mentioned above, ICH constitutes a considerable and wide range of elements and features. Arizpe (2001), in Aikawa-Faure (2009, p. 25) lists the more common elements of ICH, which are presented in the following:

Life (birth, rites of ages and betrothal, wedding, and death), social (kinship, community, settlements, border, and nation), biodiversity (botany, zoology, pharmacopeia, agriculture), land (nature, beliefs, names, landscape, and property) symbolic (signs, representations, rituals, and flags), spiritual (cosmo vision, animistic beliefs, sacred books, liturgies), literary (oral literature such as legends, and epic stories, and printed literature), performing arts (high arts, and local arts), festive (season's calendar, games, religious festivals, school festivals).

Earlier in Section 3.2 I explained three main characteristics that are shared in the all of the existing definitions of the “embracing word” (Bowden, 2003, p. 56) of culture. Here also, knowing the five domains and the elements of ICH, four general characteristics are notable. First, ICH is “traditional, contemporary, and living at the same time” (UNESCO, 2014d). It bridges the past to the present through highlighting the inherited traditions that are practised in rural and urban areas among different human communities (Alivizatou, 2012). The second characteristic shows that ICH is “inclusive”. It means, in many cases, it does not belong to any specific community or part of the world. In this vein ICH does not give rise to questions of whether certain practices are specific to a culture, because they have been created, changed, and evolved by groups of people living, migrating, and settling in different regions (UNESCO, 2014d). In fact, ICH contributes to social integrity, encouraging a sense of identity and responsibility, which helps individuals to feel part of one community (George, 2010). Third, ICH is “representative”, which means ICH is not merely valued as a cultural good for its exclusivity or its exceptional value. It thrives on its basis in communities and depends on those whose knowledge of traditions, skills, and customs are passed on to the rest of the community, from generation to generation, or even to other communities (UNESCO, 2014d). Last, ICH is “community based”. It is created, evolved, and maintained in communities, groups or individuals who value it and try to transfer it to the next generations. UNESCO (2014d) emphasizes that without recognition of these people who are the real custodians of ICH, nobody else can decide

for them if a given expression or practice is their heritage (Di Giovine, 2009; UNESCO, 2014d).

3.2.6 Safeguarding Intangible Cultural Heritage

As a part of human cultural heritage that has been inherited from past to present, ICH importance is not the cultural product itself (Lixinski, 2013) but rather the wealth of knowledge and skills that are transmitted from one generation to the next. Kato (2006, p. 456) argues that ICH “is dynamic and cohesive”, and it is “constantly recreated by communities and groups in response to their environment, their interaction with nature, and their historical conditions of existence”. Lixinski (2013, p. 234) believes that if we protect ICH, it could lead us to “sustaining cultural diversity and promoting human creativity”. Also, it is important in “providing people with a sense of identity and continuity” (Kato, 2006, p. 459). Custodial communities and their rights on their intangible heritage are highly emphasized in ICHC (UNESCO, 2014d). Lixinski (2013, p. 146) argues that protecting ICH promotes the right to cultural identity for human communities and maintains the distinguishing aspects of someone’s culture. In short, protection of cultural identity and cultural asset of locals is considered as the powerful reason for justifying the safeguarding of ICH. Regarding the importance of protecting the intangible cultural asset of human societies, ICHC presents the safeguarding ICH as one of its main purposes. Safeguarding is defined as “Measures aimed at ensuring the viability of the intangible cultural heritage, including the identification, documentation, research, preservation, protection, promotion, enhancement, transmission particularly through formal and non-formal education, as well as the revitalization of the various aspects of such heritage” (UNESCO, 2003, p. 3).

The primary tool for safeguarding ICH is the creation of national and international inventories of intangible cultural assets (Alivizatou, 2012, p. 14), which can be used to identify special examples of ICH for nomination to the UNESCO’s representative list of the Cultural Heritage of Humanity and the List of Cultural Heritage in Need of Urgent Safeguarding (Blake, 2007; UNESCO, 2003). These lists intend to give ICH a cosmopolitan position in order to raise global awareness, to give respect to living traditions, and to protect this type of heritage in all parts of the world even in

marginalized and less-known areas. Hence, safeguarding ICH as an international effort must be founded on universally accepted respect for all cultures, human rights, and equity (Aikawa-Faure, 2009; Kreps, 2012, p. 178).

As mentioned before, custodial community gets a priority importance in the process of safeguarding ICH. In this sense, Aikawa-Faure (2009, p. 36) notes that since ICH is not static but it is developing constantly, its safeguarding should take a community-centered approach in order to ensure its viability and perpetuity. Giving a central role to local communities (Blake, 2008), ICHC focus on the requirement that local communities must get involved in all stages of either identifying or developing the process, and in measures for protecting their intangible heritage (Kreps, 2012, p. 178).

3.3 Part 2: People, Cultural Heritage, and Protected Areas

Regarding the objective of this study, which is to explore the role of specific aspect of culture, ICH, in tourism sector in a specific part of nature (PAs), it is important to first examine the relationship between two general concepts of culture and nature, and then go to discuss the relationship between the more specific and narrowed parts of these two contexts, ICH and PAs.

So far, earlier in Chapter Two and Chapter Three, the notions of both PA and ICH were separately discussed; while for each notion the local community is of significant importance. To explain the linkage between a PA and the ICH of a local community, first I look at the history of the interaction between those parts of the Earth that have been realized as PAs since the 1870s, and their old residents that are known as local communities. I believe that reviewing this part of PAs and human history is important because it explains how local communities and their cultural asset, including ICH, have been seen throughout the history of PA establishment.

3.3.1 *Human, and Environment Interaction*

The relation between human and the environment is an important field of study that crosses the boundaries of social and natural science as well as humanities. Many

scholars call this field environmental social science or human-environment interaction research (Moran & Brondizio, 2012; Shoreman-Ouimet & Kopnina, 2011). The emergence of the field is based on the idea that there is an underlying and on-going human-environment interaction. For instance, environmental anthropology, which is also known as the anthropology of the environment, studies the historic and current relationship between humans and environment. In general, it investigates the ways that human communities shape the surrounding environment and how that shaping affects the sociocultural, economic, and political situations of a community (Shoreman-Ouimet & Kopnina, 2011).

It is necessary to indicate that environmental anthropology includes both positive and negative aspects of this interaction. On one side, human interaction with the environment could preserve natural resources, for instance, through traditional ecological knowledge, which will be discussed later in this study. In the meantime, there are also a set of environmental issues derived from or affected by sociocultural organizations of human beings. In fact, this field of study also addresses the environmental problems and the relation between these problems and human societies from different perspectives (Moran, 2011). It is a common belief that environmental anthropologists can contribute to the study of our modern society by considering the environmental issues (Milton, 2013; Shoreman-Ouimet & Kopnina, 2011). In fact, “borrowing a non-Western viewpoint” (Orr, Lansing, & Dove, 2015, p. 158), environmental anthropology focuses its lenses on understanding the notion of the interaction between the person and environment (Ingold, 1992).

Regarding this interaction Singh Negi (2010, p. 259) believes that there exists a “symbiotic relationship” between ecosystems and cultural identity, and that this relationship is a critical factor in ensuring sustainable human development. Dudgeon and Berkes (2003, p. 88) note that ecosystems “are in part socially constructed”. As cultural assets can contribute to natural resource protection, nature is a good platform for inspiring cultures and for growing and retaining them. Tuan (1977) notes that it is through the experience with places that nature are made real and become part of human culture. In traditional societies, sustainable nature management is strongly linked to the cultural context of the communities. These communities developed a set of customary laws that regulate their use of natural resources (Lockwood, 2012b, p. 45). Besides, the framework of a local culture is strengthened through their intimate connections to the

natural environment (Garibaldi & Turner, 2004). Notably, as Pierotti (2012, p. 17) states, the local communities and indigenous people do try to understand nature exactly as it is so they can figure out how to adapt themselves to its changeable actions, hence survive and prosper. Consequently, natural environments affect types of human communities' behaviour and the diversity of their culture (Lockwood, 2012b).

3.3.1.1 Traditional Ecological Knowledge

A good instance of how people contribute to conservation is through applying the Traditional Ecological Knowledge (TEK), which is now known as one of the main criteria of ICH (Section 3.2.4). Over years, humans have acquired a wide range of knowledge about different aspects of nature, and now this knowledge is considered as a valuable bank of information which contributes widely to history, flora and fauna, human health and medicine, religion, rituals, customs, and many other cultural and scientific features (Berkes, Colding , & Folke, 2000; Ellen, 2003; Gulay, 2009). Since human life is directly dependent on natural resources, most of the environmental-based knowledge consists of biological information and traditional techniques which facilitate interact with the environment (Langton & Palmer, 2014, p. 85). Consequently, in many cases, cultural knowledge and its associated cultural behaviour have ensured the conservation of global biodiversity (Zeppel, 2009a, p. 260).

However, the amount and the subject of this knowledge are not the same in different parts of the world. TEK is distributed geographically among populations (Ellen, 2003), and the major part of this traditional knowledge, as part of the body of each culture (Booth, 2003), is transmitted and shaped by environmental and social forces which vary from one place to another (Selin & Kalland, 2003). Ellen (2003) states that it is now accepted that local knowledge is partly derived from how much people know the natural environment in which they are living. He adds that TEK is culturally and socially embedded, and only under specific conditions can it become modular and transferable. Considering environmental anthropology studies on TEK, usually this type of knowledge is applied for the wellbeing and livelihood of the local community, sustainable use of natural resources, environmental conservation, and the long term tracking of the ecological changes (Maffi, 2012). In short, TEK is taken as a notable example that clearly characterizes the relationship between nature and human cultural

assets. Notably, TEK is identified as one of the main elements of ICH (Section 3.2.4). Therefore, regarding PAs, their physical environment and the local communities, it is safe to say that there is a connection between PAs, their residents, and ICH of the residents. This connection is exactly where the environmental anthropology involves PAs (Trusty, 2011, p. 169).

Reviewing the history of PAs, the influencing role of the local community is identifiable. However, this role has been seen and treated in different ways over time. The remaining sections of Chapter Three address the status and importance of local communities in the past and present of PAs.

3.3.2 Local Community in Protected Areas; from Old to New Paradigm

We pastoral peoples have always considered our land what you call protected area. We have always embraced conservation not as a professional activity but as intimate duty and pride of every member of our tribes, as the heart of our livelihood, because our very subsistence depends on it. I hear you talk of ecosystem, and landscapes and connectivity. We have always known about this without using your terms. Our migration patterns transfer seeds. Our grazing patterns shape the landscapes. We subsist on our lands; we know and care for its diversity of plants and animals. We pray on this land, and we guard its many sacred places. For the land provides us also with spiritual well-being. But we can no longer do it alone. In the world of today, we need the concurrence of our governments and all the support that brothers can give. (The late Sayad Soltani, Council of Elders of the Kuhu subtribe of the Qashqai Confederation, Iran, an excerpt from the address to the Plenary of the World Parks Congress, Durban 2003) (Cited in Higgins-Zogib, Dudley, & Kothari, 2010, p. 169)

Culture, including tangible and intangible, is an influencing factor in PAs (Putney, 2000). Prato and Fagre (2005, p. 53) note that culture shapes people's attitudes and behaviour towards natural resources of PAs. Therefore, understanding culture is critical

for PAs: it presents the story of human and nature interaction over time. This section considers the old and new paradigms associated with PAs and their local communities.

PAs, declared in any types of protection system at various levels, are the original places of exceptional natural characteristics and rare features. They are rich in biodiversity, unique in natural landscapes and/or cultural asset which indicate the presence of human societies over time. Based on Chapter Two, today, there is a growing understanding that there is no distinction between a PA's role in conserving biodiversity and protecting cultural resources (Higgins-Zogib et al., 2010, p. 178). However, this understanding was not the case in the past (Section 2.2).

Yellowstone model was the initial management model for world PAs (Stevens, 1997). The model was based on excluding local communities and pushing them outside the borders of PAs. Furthermore, local and indigenous communities were seen as a critical problem for wildlife and the conservation system (Brockington et al., 2012; Phillips, 2003). This conservationist thinking which viewed traditional human cultures as a threat to the planet's environment (Maffi, 2012, p. 14) shaped the core of the old paradigm of a PA. Phillips (2003) notes that, the old paradigm, influenced by Western perspectives, and was shaped by the concept of conserving nature without human presence. Zeppel (2009a, p. 260) suggests that over 12 million people, mainly hunter-gatherers and pastoralists, have been removed from their ancestral lands to make way for nature conservation and tourism development.

Nevertheless, the old paradigm received fundamental changes over time. The relationship between local communities, their cultural asset, and PAs have, more recently, been taken into account by the international and regional organizations.

Considering local communities was taken into account at the IV World Parks Congress in Bali, Indonesia in 1982 (Phillips, 2003) (Section 2.3). However, international attention to the profound interaction between the locals and nature has increased more seriously since the 2000s. To reflect this, IUCN devised guidelines for member states to promote indigenous and local community involvement in managing PAs and community conservation areas (Bushell & Eagles, 2007). In 2000, the Durban Accord and Action Plan from the fifth World Parks Congress recognized the rights of indigenous people and other local communities of PAs with respect to biodiversity conservation (WCPA, 2003). Overall, all these actions prepared the path for the

emergence of the new paradigm of PAs through which local communities were considered as critical factors for the success of PAs. During this time, professionals in the field of PA management gradually moved away from the notion that the interests and rights of local communities were in conflict with the objectives of PAs (Scherl & Edwards, 2007, p. 72). From this perspective, the contribution of local people has been increasingly included in books and reports in the areas of a co-management approach in PAs, conserving biodiversity, park values, and heritage tourism in PAs (Brockington et al., 2012; Higgins-Zogib et al., 2010; Prato & Fagre, 2005; Scherl & Edwards, 2007). Regarding the new paradigm, several attempts have been made to clarify that classifying natural areas must not lead to the exclusion of people and their culture from their lands. From these perspectives, PAs are taken as the homelands of local communities that have been historically linked to community livelihood, cultural context, and lifestyle. Indeed, this paradigm also considers various aspects of a local community's sociocultural values and cultural heritage that are usually deeply associated with the environment and natural landscapes of a PA (Graham et al., 2003; Lane, 2001; Phillips, 2003). Table 3.1 presents the contrast between the old and new paradigms by showing elements such as the local community's rights, the establishment and designation systems of a PA, and a PA's management authority.

At the present time, there is growing international and national recognition of the rights of local people, and the realization that the success of most types of PA is highly dependent on the presence of locals, their cooperation, and their continuous support of the available natural resources (Chape et al., 2008; Stevens, 2014b).

Even the IUCN definition of a PA points to people and their cultural asset in the phrase of "associated cultural values" (Chape et al., 2008, p. 7) (Section 1.2.1), which obviously reflects a PA's active association with cultural elements and diversity. A PA can provide a platform with which to protect local cultural assets and to offer unique opportunities for the perpetuity of traditional lifestyles (Dudley et al., 2005, p. 167). Scherl and Edwards (2007, p. 73) state that the special nature of the relationship between PAs and local communities is based on "history, attachment, cultural, and social values, and economic interdependence, particularly when there are few of other alternatives". Therefore, local people traditionally have coevolved with their environment (Ramakrishnan, 2003, p. 30).

In the next section, I address the implication of the new paradigm's thoughts on a management system for a PA. In this vein, cooperative management (Co-management) of PAs is an approach that was influenced by the idea of considering the sociocultural features of local communities in PA development.

3.3.2.1 Cooperative Management of Protected Areas

The interaction between PAs and culture is a mutual process. A local community value natural resources of the PA by various means. On the other side the PA, if planned and managed properly, can support and maintain cultural assets of its residents. A local population's lifestyle and livelihood are influenced by a PA in different ways through its governance, its livelihood security, its cultural and spiritual integrity, and its psychological well-being, education, employment, and economic opportunities (Eagles et al., 2002; Geisler, 2003; Langton & Palmer, 2014).

Following the old paradigm, many countries in the world used the Yellowstone model (Stevens, 1997) to manage their PAs (Sections 2.2 & 3.3.2). The result was the failure of PAs in adapting their management approach to the sociocultural situation of the location. Along this line, two sets of problems and conflicts emerged. First, leaving critical social impacts on local population, and second, undermining the conservation process itself (Rao, 1990). In many countries around the world, the conflicts deepened between local communities and managers who were applying ecology-based management but ignoring the local people. Therefore, these conflicts constrained the management process of the PA to achieve the conservation goals (Field, 1997). Arguing these conflicts Lane (2001, p. 663) suggests that limiting conservation to a land on which human communities have been living was clearly not practical for our "increasingly populous world".

Hence, as a substantial challenge to the Yellowstone model a "cooperative management" (co-management) approach gradually emerged aiming "to minimize existing problems and to reconcile ecosystem protection and rights of local

communities and their cultural heritage” (Lane, 2001, p. 666). To mitigate conflicts in a peaceful manner, co-management is one of the primary strategies employed by PA decision-makers worldwide since the 1990s (Castro & Nielsen, 2001; Krüger, Cundill, & Thondhlana, 2015).

The co-management approach can be seen as one of the consequences that emerged and developed alongside the global and gradual shift from the old paradigm of PA to the new paradigm (Section 3.3.2). This shift strives to integrate the ecological perspective with a social situation and the cultural values associated with the PAs. In line with incorporating the cultural values, the management system in PAs links to the assertion that culture cannot develop independent of ecosystem nor do most ecosystems exist independently of human influence (Prato & Fagre, 2005, p. 55). Furthermore, as I highlighted earlier (Section 1.2.1), the reference to “associated cultural values” in the definition of PA, announced by the IUCN, reflects a perspective on conservation by which the local communities living in a PA is considered, and whose socioeconomic and cultural interests, values and rights receives attention (Beltrán & Phillips, 2000, p. 3).³ Alongside this perspective, a co-management approach points to “shared decision making between local resource claimants, and formally trained resource managers on policies guiding the use of protected areas” (Rao, 1990, p. 19).

Most human communities who have been living in PAs over history valued natural resources and landscapes around their homeland (Putney, 2003; UNESCO, 2006). People respect the land because nature inspires and heals them (IUCN, 2003, p. 1), and natural resources have provided them with sources of food, shelter, symbols, and values for their daily lives throughout history (Wearing, 2009, pp. 15). Now PAs are increasingly expected to deliver a wide range of social and economic benefits (Stolton 2010, p. 3). Nowadays, the preference is to plan PAs, and to develop them with the presence of human beings and their cultural assets. Following this, though, the co-management approach considers the local cultural context as a part of the whole system of a PA, and not separate from it. Therefore, through valuing a sociocultural asset, the co-management approach provides its first benefit which is reducing the negative social

³ - As a reminder from Chapter One I present the definition of PA again: “An area of land and/or sea especially dedicated to the protection and maintenance of biological diversity, and of natural and associated cultural resources, and managed through legal or other effective means.” (Chape et al., 2008, p.7).

Table3.1 Contrast between the old and new paradigm (ICCA indicates to Indigenous People and Community Conserved Territories and Areas) (Stevens, 2014b, p. 63)

	Old Paradigm	New Paradigm
Rights	No recognition of rights Rights are not considered relevant because protected areas are uninhabited and former residents have surrendered rights and claims	Rights are affirmed and foreseen Indigenous rights exist in all protected areas established in the customary territories of Indigenous people, including these they have been displaced from
Establishment	Unilaterally declared by states	Declared by or with Indigenous peoples with their free, prior, and informed consent
Design	Designed by government agencies and conservationists; nationally standardized	Designed by or with Indigenous people; diverse an site/culturally particularized
Tenure	Owned by the state	Owned by Indigenous peoples
Governance	Governance by the state agencies No participation by Indigenous peoples No recognition of ICCAs within protected area	Governance by or with Indigenous people Indigenous full and effective participation required, including when living outside of protected area ICCAs recognized as protected areas and the zones or jurisdictions whiten them
Management authority	State agencies hold sole management authority Conservation as conceived by conservation scientists	Management by and with indigenous peoples
Knowledge base	Western science	Diverse conception of conservation grounded in cosmovision and culture as well as in Western science Indigenous knowledge; Indigenous and Western science
Goals	Biodiversity conservation	Conservation, identity, cultural values ,livelihood security
Management category	IUCN categories I-IV, specially categories I-II/ emphasis on the single management goal	IUCN categories I-IV, May have different management goals in different zones
Management principles	Protect ecosystems unimpaired Preserve or restore uninhabited wilderness Protect and restore biodiversity Eliminate settlement ,migration and use of cultural and natural resources (or restrict natural resources use to authorized commercial use in case of national forest	Protect and restore ecosystem and cultural landscapes Maintain and restore cultural landscapes Maintain settlement, migration, use of cultural and natural resources, and land and marine management practices consistent with Indigenous people's wishes and rights and compatible with agreed-upon protected areas goals
Policy development	Tourism development only State developed, authorized, and imposed	Sustainable development Developed with the full and effective participation of Indigenous peoples and adopted with their free, prior, and informed consent
Settlement and resettlement	All settlement is banned; coercive displacement is justified, although voluntary resettlement may be preferred State developed, authorized, and imposed	Continued settlement (and return in the case of involuntarily displaced peoples) is recognized as a right No coercive displacement or relocation Free, prior, and informed consent to any relocation, with agreed on, equitable compensation and Indigenous in decision-making and planning
Equitable, benefits, obligations, and responsibilities	All revenues and other benefits belongs to the states or its designates, All responsibilities rest with the states or their delegates	Indigenous people have the right to an equitable share of all benefits, Recognition of Indigenous peoples' responsibilities, including those to their peoples, ancestors, beliefs, and values

and cultural impacts of a PA's establishment (Rao, 1990; Stevens, 1997). This management approach can be taken as the practical remedy of the first problem presented by Rao (1990) and was mentioned earlier in this section.

Lockwood (2012b, p. 41) notes “managing a PA is essentially a social process”. In this vein West and Brechin (1991) explain that people living inside or near a PA are a key element in conservation and in PA management. To emphasize this thought, the co-management approach, in fact, acts as a call for locals to participate in the planning of PAs, and for them to apply their skills and knowledge in the process of management. For instance, it provides an optimum condition for an application of traditional knowledge in preserving natural resources (Section 3.3.1). Hence, the second benefit of co-management approach is defined as providing the collaboration of TEK, and “Western scientific” (Lane, 2001, p. 665) approaches to the biosphere in the conservation mechanism of PAs (Section 3.3.1.1). Traditional governance methods and community cultural structure have affected the conservation of biocultural diversity inside territories of PAs. Therefore, involvement of local population in the PA co-management system is taken as an advantage for promoting the successful conservation of valuable natural resources (Beltrán & Phillips, 2000, p. ix) and for the preservation of cultural assets associated with PAs, and, consequently, to transfer them to future generations (Langton & Palmer, 2014; Maffi, 2012). In this way the co-management system can confront the second conservation issue discussed by Rao (1990) and was mentioned earlier in this section.

3.3.2.2 New Paradigm, and Co-management Approach in Practice

Shifting the global and institutional perspective from a solid conservationist approach in PAs to a more participatory and community-based approach is a great advantage for local communities living within a PA, however this advantage has not always been achievable.

Stevens (2014a, p. 292) states that the number of PAs that have already accepted the principles of a new paradigm is increasing; however, he also cautions that many of the PAs that have been represented as participatory and co-management based, “fall

significantly applying the new paradigm standards”. While this management system created high hope at the beginning, it could not meet all existing expectations; consequently, it raised a wave of criticism (De Pourcq et al., 2015; Krüger et al., 2015). Widespread criticism has suggested that “in practice, comanagement tends to gloss over the institutional complexities posed by the management of common-pool resources”(De Pourcq et al., 2015, p. 2). Also, some claim that this management approach could act as a source of new conflicts in PAs or cause the “old ones to escalate” (Castro & Nielsen, 2001). It was argued that when it comes to practice there are still some cultural, political, and regulation constraints that limit local communities from negotiating a co-management approach, and, as a result, it can limit their involvement in a PA’s arrangement (Castro & Nielsen, 2001; Stevens, 2014a). In many cases these constraints are hardly insurmountable (Castro & Nielsen, 2001).

It is important to know that the old paradigm assumptions continue to be held by many PA decision-makers and policy developers. The old paradigm attitudes “still dominate much international conservation programs” (Stevens, 2014a, p. 285). It has created a profound dissatisfaction and disappointment among the local communities and resulted in community opposition to the establishment of a PA in their homeland (Lane, 2001; Trusty, 2011). As such, many countries practise some aspects of the new paradigm but mainly at the local level, and yet the national law and administrative structure of those countries are implementing their central control (Brown, 2000; Castro & Nielsen, 2001). The following quote from the representative of a group of indigenous people, which was noted in in Convention of Biodiversity meeting in 2008, clearly represents this issues:

the continuous establishment of PAs in indigenous lands, and territories still violates human, and collective rights...the establishment of PAs continues to result in expropriation of our lands, territories, resources, and loss of our cultures, and livelihood. (Stevens, 2014a, p. 285)

In addition, and on the other side, it is accepted that bringing the theoretical aspects of the new paradigm perspective into the real world and making it practical is a difficult task. West (1991, p. xxiii) stresses that on the way of applying the principles of a new paradigm, “tragic dilemma, and wrenching choices will not go away”. Although, many scholars consider the following the principles of new paradigm and applying the co-management system as the optimal approaches to achieving sustainable development of

PAs, there are some shortcomings. The advocators believe, although in practice there have been failures, effectiveness of the co-management approach can be increased if proper institutional and legislation infrastructure and practical circumstances be prepared and developed (Bello et al., 2016; De Pourcq et al., 2015).

3.3.3 *Intangible Cultural Heritage in Protected Areas*

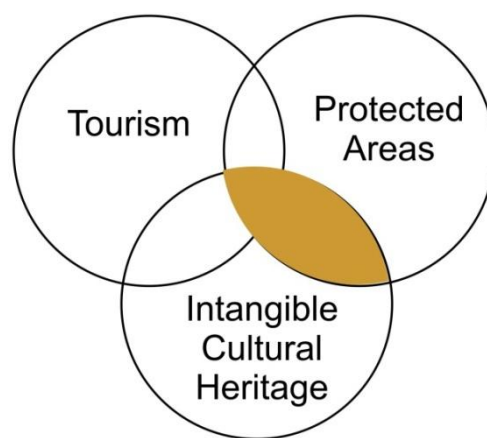


Figure3. 2 Interconnection between protected areas and intangible cultural asset

Many local communities inside PAs take the land as their ancestral homeland. Their traditions, as well as a set of their shared feelings, are deeply associated with their natural environment (Lockwood, 2012b; Taylor & Lennon, 2011). They value and respect Earth as their *Mother* who gave them everything they need to survive. Thus, most parts of the natural resources and landscapes in the PAs are linked to a special cultural context.

Cultural values of PAs refer to those sets of values that people assign to their surrounding natural elements (CSVPA, 2014). As noted earlier, the cultural asset in PAs could be tangible, such as monuments, and intangible such as artistic and spiritual values (Zeppel, 2009b, p. 270). Putney (2003) believes that three significant groups of values are identifiable and found in a PA: first, the cultural values that promote unity and help members of the community to stay together such as spiritual values; second, the personal values that include psychological or therapeutic benefits gained as the

result of being close to nature; finally, the societal values, which are those that bring different cultures close together (Putney, 2003, p. 6) such as are trans-boundary PAs, a proximity that can cause two or more nations to collaborate in many projects for preserving the piece of land they share. Holston (2008, p. 3) considers it as “a unique opportunity to celebrate the longstanding friendship between neighbours”. Table 3.2 presents two sets of tangible and intangible values associated with PAs.

Table3. 2 Values of protected areas (Zeppel, 2009a, p. 96)

Tangible Values	Intangible Values (Non-material)
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Conservation values (ecosystem service) ■ Economic values (tourism revenue) ■ Land values ■ Infrastructure values (building, roads, utilities) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Recreational and Therapeutical values ■ Spiritual and Culture values ■ Artistic and Aesthetic values ■ Educational and Scientific values ■ Peace values (equity and social justice) ■ Existence values and Identity values

Regarding, more particularly, ICH interaction with PAs, the historical interaction between PAs and intangible cultural values becomes evident in two different forms; first, sacred places that include sacred natural sites or sanctuaries, and second, the way people view nature and behave in it, which is mostly driven by a special set of sociocultural laws, norms, and knowledge (Harmon, 2003; Schaaf, 2006; UNWTO, 2012). As mentioned before, traditional communities respect for the environment. Accordingly, their traditional practices, including religious and spiritual values are the practical part of their contribution towards valuing and maintaining the environment (Lockwood, Worboys, & Kothari, 2012; Pierotti, 2012; Rolston, 2003; Stoffle et al., 2003) (Section3.3.1).

A good example in this area is those PAs in the world that include sacred natural sites within their boundaries. These sites are linked to the sources of traditional practices and beliefs of the local population, who revere spiritual sites for contemplation, meditation or even purification of the inner self (Schaaf, 2006). Prato and Fagre (2005) state that sacred natural sites give meaning to the local communities' lives and motivate them to follow their forefathers to care for the environment. Even for those people who are not religious, these sites could be taken as places of inspiration and symbols of identity (CSVPA, 2014). A relevant instance is Himalayan traditional communities, and the strong linkage between their sacred sites with mountains and the mountainous ecosystem conservation (Edwin, 2000). Singh Negi (2010, p. 43) discusses the relationship between traditional practices of local communities in central Himalaya and biodiversity conservation. He asserts that no one can think of ecology in the Himalaya without religion and sacred natural sites. An Islamic tradition is the "hima" system, which is a practical example of culturally based management system, through which religious beliefs act as the critical factor for protecting the land and promoting the sustainable use of resources (Higgins-Zogib et al., 2010, p. 146).

Another aspect of the contribution of a local community's ICH to a PA is the criteria of TEK. How locals apply and develop these types of knowledge and techniques to preserve the surrounding environment over time is considerable. While local people change the landscape, they also maintain it through applying a range of information, knowledge, and techniques that include traditional ways of knowing and interacting with ecosystems (Dudgeon & Berkes, 2003, p. 76). The wide range of TEK, distributed geographically among populations (Ellen, 2003), proves the old interaction between ICH and those pieces of land that are known as a PA.

So far two aspects of the religious and spiritual values, and TEK, have been explained. However, the interconnection between PA and ICH is not limited only to the two above examples. Rather, it could also encompass more criteria of ICH such as oral tradition and handicrafts. Each local community enjoys its specific lifestyle that supports special manners and social behaviour as expressed by, for example, clothing, culinary, and food habits, and handicrafts production. Each local cultural context trains and reinforces a set of group or individual behaviours that is presented to the world as

customs and creative performances. Moreover, most of the local communities, including those in PAs, speak in dialects and enjoy the wealth of their oral traditions.

It is worth mentioning that in general, each local community follow some kind of sociocultural law and values systems and norms which leave enormous impacts on shaping their thoughts, and behaviour framework towards the natural world around them (Putney, 2000; Rolston, 2003).

Notably, these sociocultural systems embrace the intangible cultural asset of the local community. ICH associates with environment of a PA in various ways, although the amount and quality of the interaction between each element of ICH with a PA differ among different communities. To work in this line, the IUCN has established a research-focused body named the “Specialist Group on Cultural, and Spiritual Values of Protected Areas” (CSVPA), which is working on the intangible cultural aspects of PA with more focus on cultural and spiritual values that promote environmental protection. Cooperating with World Commission on Protected Areas (WCPA), this group seeks to define, and provide guidelines for identifying and managing the cultural, and spiritual dimensions of a PA in order to improve the protection system of the PA (CSVPA, 2014; Putney, 2000)

3.4 Summary

Following the previous chapter which discussed the contexts of PAs this chapter explored the interaction between ICH and PAs. To do so, the chapter was presented in two separate parts. The first part looked at the concept of culture and then the intangible side of each culture (ICH). Here, the global process of identifying intangible aspects of culture, its evolution, and the Convention of Safeguarding ICH were presented sequentially.

The second part discussed the relationship between the cultural heritage, and nature, and later, more specifically, the interconnection between ICH, and PAs. Then introduced is environmental anthropology, an interdisciplinary field of environmental social science, which discusses PA issues by focusing on the human-environment

interaction. Last, and to situate the subject of environmental anthropology within the context of PAs, the emergence of the old to the new paradigm is discussed.

Chapter Three went on to look at a narrower and more delicate relationship between local communities and PAs, through justifying the interconnection between a specific aspect of each local cultural context, ICH, and a PA's setting.

So far, the notions of PA, ICH, and the interaction between these two have been addressed in the last two chapters of this study. Regarding the objective of the research, exploring the role and manifestation of ICH in tourism in PAs, the following chapter will address the tourism discourse and examine the notion of ICH and PA interaction from a tourism perspective.

4

CHAPTER FOUR

INTANGIBLE CULTURAL HERITAGE AND TOURISM IN PROTECTED AREAS

4.1 Introduction

Tourism as one of the main contexts of this study is also the focus of Chapter Four. The chapter starts by going through the interaction between tourism, and PAs, which traced back to the establishment of the first PAs in the world. The importance of tourism for PAs development and the impacts that tourism leaves on PAs will then be addressed. While, a range of both constructive and harmful impacts of tourism on PAs are discussable, the key aspects of the expected profits are going to be explained.

PAs' involvement in tourism activities is increasing, because of people's growing inclination to experience the natural resources of PAs. Regarding the different attractions that a PA offers to tourism, the chapter goes on discussing that ICH of the local communities could constitute a part of visiting experience in PAs. Based on this idea, any likely interaction between tourism and ICH in PAS is presented.

To do so, I initially start exploring the relationship between culture, and tourism through cultural tourism. Then I focus on the tourism and more particularly ICH interaction. This notion is followed up by examining any possible challenge, and opportunity that may exist in this area, which among them the notions of authenticity, commodification, and over commodification of intangible cultural elements are more highlighted.

4.2 Tourism in Protected Areas

Natural and cultural resources in PAs such as biodiversity, landscape, and recreational values, monuments, and traditions of the local community are important drivers for developing tourism. Tracing the history of first PAs in the world, protection of the natural features of the area, as well as providing recreation public facilities constituted the main principles of establishing these boundaries (Frost & Hall, 2012; Lane, 2001). Therefore, the link between tourism and PAs is as old as the history of PAs establishment (Puhakka & Saarinen, 2013, p. 2) (Figure 4.1). This link becomes stronger with the passage of time to the extent that Eagles et al. (2002, p. xv) claims that today PAs need tourism for its perpetuity, and tourism also needs PAs. However, exploring the establishment objectives of each type of PAs reveals that the extent and the objectives that tourism follows within these boundaries vary.



Figure4.1 Interconnection between protected areas and tourism (Source: Author)

It means that in some types of PAs such as national parks promoting tourism is taken as one of the basic management and developing goals. However, there are other types of PAs, like Category Ia in IUCN classification; the Strict Nature Reserve, in which tourism is not as serious as other defined objectives such as biodiversity conservation or scientific aims (Table 2.1). While the core purpose of designation of Category Ia is undertaking scientific projects (Lockwood, 2012a), tourism receives the least attention. However, the majority of global PAs, with the exception of a few strict conservative and scientific reserves permit public access and promote tourism activities in their territories to various extents (Stolton , Dudley, & Kun, 2010).

Tourism is taken as one of the “few permitted and one of the most common uses of protected areas that generates economic, and sociocultural benefits, and its significance is increasingly being recognised worldwide” (Bello et al., 2016, p. 2). In addition, with the growth of various types of nature based tourism activities in PAs, and the businesses associated with these activities, many PAs now are widely known as tourism destinations. In this way, Karanth and DeFries (2011) argue that recently even the less known PAs, mostly located in developing countries are getting involved with growing number of visitors. It shows that tourism development in PAs is not limited only to a specific region in the world, but it taken as a global and growing process. Harmon (2003, p. 24) explains that tourism in PAs is a “huge industry”, which is now appreciated with governments, policymakers, and managers to the point that in many cases PAs are planned in a way to promote tourism activities in order to increase the benefits they receive from tourism. Tourism also, in the majority of PAs is acting as an

important mean to “justify, and legitimize conservation system” (Brockington et al., 2012, p. 131). The key profits of tourism development in PAs will be discussed later in this section.

Increasing demands from public side to visit the unique natural resources has led to more attention to tourism sector of PAs by global institutes, and organizations (Prato & Fagre, 2005; Graham Worboys, Lockwood, & De Lacey, 2002). Aligned with this , PAs are increasingly becoming the means by which people get close to nature and interact with wilderness (Cater, 2006, p. 611)

However, the relationship between tourism and PAs has never been without problem (Section 3.3.2). Eagles et al. (2002) note that while tourism gifts PAs, and its local communities many financial, and employment chances, it is not without drawbacks. In this vein, Brockington et al. (2012) argue different aspects of tourism in PAs and concludes that the interaction between tourism and PAs are highly complex. More recently Whitelaw, King, and Tolkach (2014) consider the evolving relationship between PAs and tourism highly challenging through which potential costs and benefits are identifiable.

4.2.1 Tourism and Protected Areas in World Parks Congress

Reviewing the history of the World Parks Congress⁴ a fluctuating process of identifying the importance of tourism in PAs structure is evident. Tourism was introduced as a constructive tool to increase support for PAs in World Parks Congress in 1992 (Putney, 2000; WCPA, 2003). Later it gradually turned out as a set of activities which apart from its benefits it could also leave negative impacts. This notion was opened up many arguments during the following World Parks Congresses. In the Vth IUCN World Parks Congress, in South Africa in 2003 tourism was presented “as a vehicle for conservation, and support of protected areas on condition that it is managed and developed accurately” (WCPA, 2003, p. 6). In the last World Parks Congress in Sydney in 2014 there were at least 125 tourism related presentations, and parallel tourism meetings. These presentations were mostly focused on major tourism themes and some of the

⁴ - The World Parks Congress, organized by the World Conservation Union (IUCN), is held every ten years to appraise the state of protected areas (PAs) and set an agenda for PAs for the upcoming decade (WCPA, 2003, p. 1).

innovative practices from across the world. Spenceley (2015, p. 1115) states that “while tourism was not a stand-alone stream or theme, it was widely crosscutting, and many of sessions were held on tourism related issues across the Sydney World Parks Congress.”

4.2.2 Tourism Management in Protected Areas

Tourism if managed properly and by the right people can act as an effective tool “to bring parallel conservation and development for PAs” (WCPA, 2003, p. 6). Now, based on the existing literature, many scholars believe that the threats from tourism development and its possible negative impacts on PAs can be controlled and mitigated by implementing an adequate planning as well as practical, management (Bello et al., 2016; Puhakka & Saarinen, 2013; Worboys & Winkler, 2012).

On the other side many caution that without effective management and responsible actions, tourism growth in PAs can lead to environmental deterioration and provide few and short term benefits for the host communities (Chape et al., 2008; Puhakka & Saarinen, 2013; WCPA, 2003). The poorly planned tourism in PAs affects all existing natural and cultural resources. As a result, when tourism inadequate management and is applied in a PA, a range of ecological, cultural, and social consequences are evident in many ways (Bushell & Eagles, 2007; Eagles et al., 2002). Referring to human, and environment interaction, discussed in chapter Three (Section 3.3.1), development of mismanaged tourism in PAs can distract, hurt or change the old and systematic interaction between human societies and the biophysical environment of their location.

On the contrary, wise development of tourism is associated with a set of benefits for both natural and cultural resources of PAs. In the follow, I present the key areas that well-managed tourism can work in favour of PAs prosperity. First, tourism activities are an underlying source of revenue for PAs. The financial support generated from tourism can be used to promote development in PAs and more importantly to promote the conservation programs. Second, tourism provides the optimal platform in PAs for local community participation in management system. As explained in Section 3.3.2.1 the co-management system which also focuses on tourism is aimed to maximize the local community benefits through increasing their involvement in tourism development. Public participation in tourism decision making is regarded important for successful

tourism planning in PAs. Third, developing tourism infrastructure in PAs creates jobs for different groups of the local community including women. Financially supporting the members and families in the local community, tourism acts as an influencing driver for poverty alleviation in PAs. Finally, tourism is a mean that encourages sustainable use of biocultural diversity in PAs. PAs provide unique tourist attractions. Most of natural and cultural resources of PAs are or could be promoted as tourism attractions. Obviously, in order to develop tourism and keep receiving its advantages, the available resources in PAs must be preserved properly and protected over time. In this vein, tourism is also a way to increase public (visitors, and locals) awareness about the values, and importance of preserving the available resources in PAs (Bello et al., 2016; Bushell & Eagles, 2007; Hamilton, 2000; IUCN, 2003; McCool, 2009). Furthermore, economic benefits are often complimented by range of social benefits through appropriate tourism activities. According to literature, the social benefits derived from cultural tourism development are various. Some of common examples include strengthening community frameworks, and the enhancement of community identity, pride, and stability among members of the community, and creating imperatives to preserve, and maintain cultural assets (UNESCO, 2008; Vincent, 2002; Zeppel, 2006).

Regarding the tourism demand, people's desires to choose a PA to visit are widely various (Harmon, 2003). Thinking about PAs, people usually remember various landscapes that are associated with concepts such as beauty, space, and "getting away from it all" (English, 2003, p. 43). These unique natural resources are regarded as the primary tourism attraction in PAs. Putney (2003, p. 7) indicates that a majority of PAs' visitors are nature-based tourists who usually choose PAs in order to get close to nature, visit first-hand sightings and wildlife, and learn about nature or just enjoy the quiet and relax. Besides, a wide range of nature based service that PAs offer, the visitors in PAs also have the opportunity to visit cultural heritage inside the PAs, if any exists, such as historic monuments or villages. Notably, the cultural heritage in a PA includes intangible cultural asset as well (Section 3.3.3). During visiting a PA visitors interact with locals and their life style in close. They are likely to find some opportunities to experience some available elements of ICH such as attending ritual practices or visiting a traditional performance. Following this subject, next section addresses the relationship between tourism and ICH.

4.3 Tourism, and Intangible Cultural Heritage Interaction

The relationship between discourses of tourism and cultural heritage is not just a present day phenomenon. since “Romans or even before that” (Kaminski et al., 2013, p. 3) people have been travelling because of several cultural, and religious reasons like pilgrimage or visiting a sacred sites they have believed in and respected (McKercher, & duCros, 2012). Furthermore, people are always curious to explore other cultures and visit what has remained on the earth from past societies. Therefore culture, and cultural assets of human communities, which potentially creates a wide range of differences and attractions around the world constitute underlying various products and marketing tools in tourism (Nasser, 2003; George, 2010). Arguing this relationship Di Giovine (2009, p. 48) refers to a “uniquely modern linkage” between tourism, and heritage that emerged as a result of development of globalization in our time and providing more effective travel infrastructure in the world. With regard to this idea, one of the meanings that the term of heritage “carries is deeply associated with tourism and the global tendency to visit the heritage remained from the past” (Peckham,2003, Cited in Bendix, 2008, p. 253).

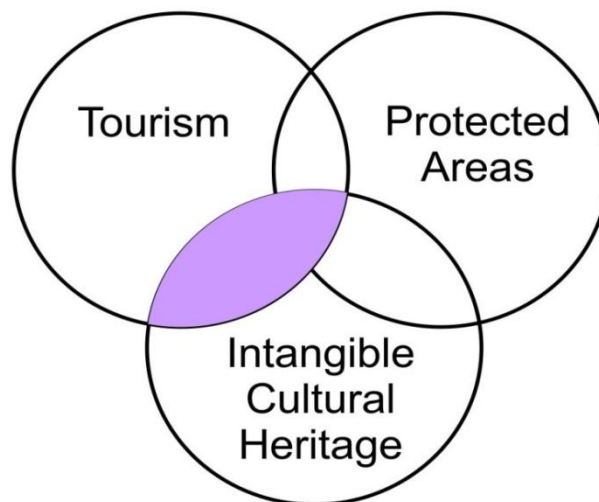


Figure4. 2 The interaction between Intangible Cultural Heritage and tourism (Source: Author)

In tourism typology, “cultural tourism” is regarded as a type of tourism which emerges from the historic relationship between tourism and culture. However, the setting of cultural tourism, in spite of its long history, “has only been addressed seriously in

academic since the 1980s, when the International Council on Monuments, and Sites (ICOMOS) Charter of Cultural Tourism recognized it as a separate tourism category” (UNWTO, 2012, p. 12). In terms of the definition of cultural tourism, it worth mentioning that many believe there is no single and agreed definition for cultural tourism (Leslie & Sigala, 2005; Silberberg, 1995). Even the United Nation World Tourism Organization (UNWTO) “hasn’t presented any official definition for cultural tourism” (UNWTO, 2012, p. 1). Leslie and Sigala (2005, p. 5) believe that Richards’s definition of cultural tourism presented in 1997 is one of the best conceptual definitions of cultural tourism. Leslie and Sigala (2005, p. 5) cite Richards’s definition as “the movement of the person to cultural attractions away from their normal place of residence, with the intention to gather new information and experiences to satisfy their cultural needs”. In line with this idea, more recently, Smith (2009, p. 17) applies this definition in her book; “cultural tourism is a passive, active, and interactive engagement with culture(s), and communities whereby the visitor gains new experiences of an educational, creative, and/or entertaining nature”. What is evident in both above definitions is that the term cultural tourism mainly refers to that segment of tourism which put special emphasizes on culture and cultural heritage attractions as well as the process and activities related to tourism engagement with the cultural offering.

Overall, cultural tourists are categorized as an important set in tourism typology, as today, “the quality of the cultural offering is a significant factor in determining tourist choice of destination” (Kaminski et al., 2013a, p. 4). With regard to the tourism global market Smith and Robinson (2006, p. 5) indicate that cultural tourism is “a growing segment of international tourism” as the distinctive characteristics of cultural heritage resources allow them to play an unparalleled role in tourism development.

Visitors, interested in cultural attractions, are willing to experience cultural diversity in the world. They are seeking more and more “novel cultural experiences and authentic cultural heritage in the new emerging destinations” (Giudici et al., 2013, p. 104). Meantime, regarding both tangible and intangible aspects of each culture, cultural tourism provides the visitors with a wide range of culturally based events, phenomena,

Table4. 1 A typology of cultural tourism attractions (Smith, 2009, p. 17-18)

<p>Heritage tourist</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Visits to castles, palaces, country houses <input type="checkbox"/> Archaeological sites <input type="checkbox"/> Monuments <input type="checkbox"/> Architecture <input type="checkbox"/> Museums <p>Arts tourist</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Visits to the theatre <input type="checkbox"/> Concerts / Galleries <input type="checkbox"/> Festivals, carnivals, and events <input type="checkbox"/> Literary sites <p>Creative tourist</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Photography <input type="checkbox"/> Painting <input type="checkbox"/> Pottery <input type="checkbox"/> Dance <input type="checkbox"/> Cookery <input type="checkbox"/> Crafts <input type="checkbox"/> Creative industries (e.g. film, TV, architecture, fashion, design) <p>Urban cultural tourist</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Historic cities <input type="checkbox"/> Regenerated industrial cities <input type="checkbox"/> Waterfront developments <input type="checkbox"/> Arts, and heritage attractions <input type="checkbox"/> Shopping <input type="checkbox"/> Nightlife 	<p>Rural cultural tourist</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Village tourism <input type="checkbox"/> Agro or farm tourism <input type="checkbox"/> Eco museums <input type="checkbox"/> Cultural landscapes <input type="checkbox"/> National parks <p>Indigenous cultural tourist</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Hill tribe, desert, jungle, rainforest or mountain trekking <input type="checkbox"/> Tribal villages <input type="checkbox"/> Visits to cultural centers <input type="checkbox"/> Arts, and crafts <input type="checkbox"/> Cultural performances <input type="checkbox"/> Festivals <p>Experiential cultural tourist</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Theme parks <input type="checkbox"/> Themed restaurant <input type="checkbox"/> Shopping malls <input type="checkbox"/> Pop concerts <input type="checkbox"/> Sporting events <input type="checkbox"/> Film, and TV locations <input type="checkbox"/> Celebrity-endorsed products
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activities, and attractions. Table 4.1 lists a typology of cultural tourism. It shows the various types of activities the cultural tourists may get involved during their visitation.

According to an international report conducted in 2009 the cultural tourism product is responsible for “influencing approximately 40% of global international trips” (Raj, Griffin, & Morpeth, 2013, p. 6). It means that, as a part of the tourism product development cultural heritage is coming to take a key role in tourism market (Du Cros, 2014, Ashworth & Tunbridge, 2013,). In a broader view, the convergence between cultural heritage and tourism has largely affected both the production, and the consumption patterns of cultural tourism (Kaminski et al., 2013). In addition, culture is deeply embedded in both aspects of supply and demand in tourism, as some argue that tourism would not exist without culture (Jafari, 1996), and what we know as cultural heritage.

Culture is a whole system which consists of both tangible and intangible assets (Section 3.2). Therefore, in addition to the physical cultural asset visitors have the chance to experience and visit the ICH associated with destinations (UNWTO, 2012). Regarding the history of ICH the global attention to intangible aspects of cultures is a recent movement in cultural studies framework (Sections 3.2.4). From the tourism perspective, products of ICH such as songs, dance, traditional knowledge, and culinary have gradually become a “charming attraction in cultural tourism” (Bowers & Jared, 2014, p. 203). Additionally, “increasing understanding and appreciation of ICH such as customs, and traditions, as a tool in order to ensure quality in tourism experiences are being more focused at international level” (Giudici et al., 2013, p. 105).

In this vein, Giudici et al. (2013, p. 111) discuss that visiting intangible cultural asset can be a “driver” for the promotion of sustainable tourism development, through tourists’ involvement with intangible aspects of each culture. Generally speaking, visitors usually engage with local traditions, and customs through visiting communities, and experiencing some aspects of their intangible cultural elements in person. In these cases, they could perceive the core meaning, and function of intangible cultural assets more effectively, and appreciate it (López-Guzmán & Santa-Cruz, 2016; UNWTO, 2012,).

4.3.1 Tourism & Intangible Cultural Heritage; Challenges, and Opportunities

Regarding the relationship between ICH and tourism, tourism has the potential to generate both positive and negative impacts on the intangible body of each culture. The possible constructive role of tourism in safeguarding ICH, and the benefits that tourism can provide for the custodial communities as well as the harmful impacts on communities and their ICH culture have been taken into account (Bendix, 2008; UNWTO, 2012; Ennen, 2013; Lixinski, 2013). UNWTO (2012, p. 11) discusses tourism as “a powerful catalyst for local culture reproduction and revitalisation” however, at the same time, it could increase the risk of “over commodification” for those parts of ICH which the communities wish to consciously protect and maintain for next generations.

There is a frequent perspective in the literature that tourism can become a threat to culture by turning it into a commercial product resulting in a loss of authenticity of the culture, and hurt the human’s relation with the core of culture (Giudici et al., 2013, p. 105). When a community’s cultural structure, which is based on a specific set of principles and values, is “transformed into the product available in the market” (Ennen & Van Maanen, 2013, p. 47), it actually turns into a kind of “economic product” (Bendix, 2008, p. 253). Under this process, that is called commodification, traditions might be destroyed through “altering or even corrupting its original expressions” (Pietrobruno, 2009, p. 230) and lose its core meaning. Some parts of each culture are essential to maintain their original values because they are taken as the critical cultural elements for the life of the community (Ennen & Van Maanen, 2013, p. 47). Uncontrolled visitation, and any inappropriate treatment from tourism sector can accelerate the commodification by undermining the local traditions and ignoring the values associated with each tradition (Kaminski, Benson, & Arnold, 2013b; Lixinski, 2013). Subsequently, culture is transformed and reconstructed into a different entity which is less similar to what it used to be. At this time, the old community and the local value system are usually suppressed by a new perspective which is more compatible with the consumer value system. As a result, lack of a comprehensive management system and inappropriate use of cultural resources with less attention to their authenticity can create altered system over which a community has little or no control (George, 2010; UNWTO, 2012). Overall, commodification affects the whole body of

each culture; either tangible or intangible heritage. Considering the intangible features of each culture Mc Cannell (1973) argues that if over commoditization happened for ICH it destroys not only the authenticity of cultural products for the local community but also it decreases dramatically the attraction of ICH for the tourists.

Meanwhile, it seems that commodification is unavoidable to some extent when it comes to the matter of tourism and ICH relationship. It seems contradictory that while tourists are looking for more novel and pristine cultural products their visitation could play a destructive role in maintaining ICH authenticity. Following this line, Eoin and King (2013) note that ICH requires a certain degree of commodification in order to be accessible, and useable as a tourism product. Throughout this process, what once formed the sociocultural framework of the community, and was inherited by previous generations could simply be transformed into different products for exchange in a tourism marketplace (George, 2010; Duxbury, 2012). Hence, there exists an underlying concern which emerges from the danger of losing cultural authenticity through over commodification of ICH in the tourism (Pietrobruno, 2009; Lixinski, 2013; UNWTO, 2012).

Authenticity is about the meaning of objects, the soul for inanimate objects and the sense of life which is associated to convey the sense that an old monument not only has a life history but also a life (Di Giovine, 2009). It means that people who visit a historic attraction can feel its soul and understand its life (Di Giovine, 2009; UNESCO, 2003). In accord with, several authors and scholars have already affirmed and developed this idea that people can make connections with the authenticity of historical places to some extent (Giudici et al., 2013; Bramley, 2010; Lee, 2000; George, 2010).

In addition, based on the synergies between material cultural assets like monuments, and their associated intangible values, it seems important to note that the perceived authenticity is a critical factor, not only for appreciating the material heritage but also for understanding ICH. Naoi (2004, p. 45) believes that when visitors come into evaluating a historical place, the perceived authenticity plays a critical factor in their final feeling, and their personal evaluation about the site. Giudici et al. (2013, p.105)

follow this idea and claims that visitors can easily recognise a “fake product from the representation of the authentic and original one”.⁵

So far, only the potential harmful aspects of tourism and ICH interaction were addressed here. However, it is worth to mention that tourism- ICH relationship is not only about leaving destructive impacts on the ICH. Conversely, it can bring some important advantages for the local community as well as their cultural heritage.

Lixinski (2013, p. 16) argues the merits of tourism for each culture with a more particular focus on ICH. He notes that promoting ICH product for tourism will empower communities economically. Also, tourists visiting ICH could enhance the importance and value of heritage for the individuals and communities (Bowers & Jared, 2014, p. 201), as more often locals feel pleased and proud of their own traditions and lifestyle once it is visited and valued by the visitors. Besides, tourism must be taken as a powerful incentive for preserving, and promoting ICH, since the money it generates can be channelled back into the custodial community and then re-invested in projects in order to help ICH long term survival (Bushell, 2007; UNWTO, 2012).

Turning to the concerns derived from tourism and authenticity, it must be noted that there also exist some positive discussable aspects in this area. In this vein, Cohen (1988, p. 373) argues that “authenticity is not primitive or static, but a negotiable meaning which depends on tourist’s experiences of visiting cultural product”. Tourism interacting with ICH authenticity does not necessarily leave disruptive impacts. Incorporating ICH in tourism can provide an opportunity for the custodial community to re-practice their customs, focus more practically on their traditions, or even revitalize some of the disappeared elements of their intangible culture (UNWTO, 2012; Bowers, 2014).

Another possible benefit of tourism for ICH is more applicable to those older cultures, and small communities in which traditional cultural practices are more valued and

⁵ - Regarding the notion of authenticity of cultural heritage in tourism, postmodernism argues that postmodern visitors have become less concerned and more flexible with authenticity of the cultural heritage they visit (Wang , 1999). “Fakeness” is more acceptable now to the point that even in some cases many visitors “today are looking for inauthenticity” in their visit of cultural heritage (Ritzer & Liska, 1997, p. 107).

practiced by elders as “majority of young people feel careless about acting committed to their traditions” (UNWTO, 2012, p. 11). Tourism encourages youth to engage with the old lifestyle through offering them job and another benefits presented above.

In general, considering the both negative and positive impacts that tourism can leave on ICH, a set of relevant guidelines, trends and measures are needed in order to decrease the threats and concerns and increase the benefits in this area. It must be noted here that the number of studies in the field of tourism and ICH interaction are considerably few. Up to now, most of studies have addressed culture as a general subject, and they failed to consider ICH as an independent theme. Besides, the notion of the various aspects of the relationship between ICH and tourism also is far underestimated.

Whereas one of the very few available studies is the book titled “Tourism and Intangible Cultural Heritage”, published by UNWTO. To maintain ICH authenticity, and to avoid over commodification UNWTO (2012) focuses that maintaining the balance between supply, and need is critical.

It is argued that the possible risks of over commoditization can be considerably minimised through applying adequate management methods (Stefano, Davis, & Corsane, 2012; UNWTO, 2012). To achieve this proper management method, one of the most advocated approaches is the one discussed by Nasser (2003). In his argument he focuses on community and culture-led agendas. He argues that tourism in cultural places must be planned and managed initially concerning sociocultural needs then economic revenues, with continuous attention to protection of all types of available heritage. It indicates to the fact that transforming a cultural asset into a tourism product must follow a detailed and practical management program through which the close and constant involvement of local stakeholders is guaranteed (Nasser, 2003; Hamilton, 2000; UNWTO, 2012). Overall, when an intangible cultural element becomes appealing in tourism this approach in management is truly applicable in the process of promoting and marketing that element as a tourism product (UNESCO, 2008).

4.4 Summary

Chapter Four started with the presenting that the PAs are in an old connection with tourism because public access was defined as one of the initial objectives for establishment of these boundaries. This chapter argued that tourism is a strong tool to support PA, its local residents and justify conservation system. However, the negative impacts that tourism may leave in PAs is also a serious matter of concern. The chapter moved on presenting that applying an adequate participatory management approach is a useful approach to decrease the negative impacts of tourism development in PAs and increase the expected benefits.

Then, the old relationship between tourism, and culture in form of cultural tourism were presented. It was explained that ICH as a part of the whole body of each culture has been recently taken into account in the tourism area. In the meantime, there is a set of challenges and opportunities in the way of ICH implication in tourism which was addressed in this chapter.

In general, Chapters Two, Three, and Four have provided the theoretical context of the framework for this project of research. Attention now turns to the research approach and methods applied to collect the empirical material and information. Chapter Five will explain the linkage between the theoretical framework and the interpretation and analysis of empirical information.

5

CHAPTER FIVE

THE RESEARCH APPROACH; WHERE? AND HOW?

5.1 Introduction

This chapter links the four previous chapters to the following two empirical chapters in order to explain the interpretive ethnographic methods that I applied when collecting information in the field. In explaining the above, first the interpretive paradigm and the question of the need for reflexivity within the study are introduced in the first part of this chapter.

The second part introduces in more detail the case study of this research, which is Qeshm Island Geopark (QIG) located in the south of Iran. It also presents the reasons for choosing this location as the appropriate site for conducting the empirical phase of this research. It is followed by explaining the methods that I applied in the field to explore the determined objectives.

Some part of the information is presented in separate Boxes. These Boxes which are named “a snapshot of the fieldwork” address the setting of fieldwork of this research from different angles. They provide a set of information which seems irrelevant to be included as a part of the main text, but they are necessary for more clarification and understanding of the situation.

In the next step, the ethical considerations are explored. The ethical considerations should be taken into account to protect both the researched and the researcher from harm. Finally, thematic network analysis is introduced as a tool by which information constructed from fieldwork is converted into narrative.

5.2 Interpretive Paradigm

This research investigates the role and manifestation of ICH in tourism in PAs. It is based on the participants' experience, both locals and visitors, and their interpretation of the different aspects of the ICH contribution to tourism-related activities in a PA. Talking of a local community cultural context and tourism, this research can be taken as a part of the social science interpretive paradigm.

Historically, the dominant paradigm of social science research was positivism. Positivism embraces a view of the world as being guided by scientific rules that explain a phenomenon through causal relationships (Jennings, 2001, p. 35). This paradigm has often been used in tourism research, giving a focus on the analysis of tourist patterns and the examination of their behaviours (Riley & Love, 2000). However, Phillimore (2007) argues that positivism fails when trying to consider the social world's complexities, while referring to Denzin (1989) to understand and investigate the social world the interpretive approach is more applicable.

On the other side, interpretivism is based on a philosophy that people naturally interpret their worlds, hence social science research must seek to relate these interpretations to the everyday life of people and their daily situations and events (Burns, 1997; Wiersma, 1995). Based on the ontological assumptions of the interpretive paradigm, the world as an object of focus is not separable from those who observe it. Instead of considering the world objectively as independent observers, interpretivists emphasize that the world is subjectively known, thus subjective characteristics reflect the observer's interpretation of the world. Interpretivists also argue that there is no single interpretation because every interpretation is subject to the influences and perspectives of different observers (Padget & Allen, 1997; Patton, 2002). Since the underlying ontological assumption of an interpretive paradigm constitutes more than one interpretation of the world, there is, logically, more than one reality. "This attitude comes from the idea that truth is partial, not absolute" (Madden, 2010, p.22). It suggests that reality is not objective, and single but socially constructed, multiple, and contextual (Ozanne & Hudson, 1989).

Regarding this study, one must bear in mind that intangible cultural assets are defined as a live part of human culture which is not static. They are continuously evolving and changing among the custodial communities (Cominelli & Greffe, 2012; Kleinman & Benson, 2006; Lixinski, 2013). "The nature of tourism is also receiving changes over the time" (Walmsley, 2003, p. 66). Therefore, regarding the changing nature of ICH and tourism any possible interaction between these two is not easily predictable. On the other side, how individuals perceive and interpret ICH-tourism interaction in PAs can be influenced through many personal factors such as each person's previous experience(s) and interest as well as knowledge background about each one of the three

main contexts of this study including ICH, tourism, and PAs. In addition, from another perspective an individual's personal experiences of interaction with the physical location of the PAs are also subject to different interpretations, as the way people communicate with a PA's environment, and the way they view and perceive it is largely different. For example, a PA reflects special values and meanings for those people who were born and grew up in that piece of land because "they view the PA as their homeland" (Taylor & Lennon, 2011, p. 549). This is not the case for a group of travellers who visit and stay in the PA only for short period. Subsequently, more flexible and subjective approaches are required to fit with the changing nature of ICH-tourism interactions and, the possible influences each one of them might leave on the other. Hence, an interpretive paradigm is suggested to be the proper approach for this research.

Moreover, I accept that reality is socially constructed, thus the investigation will be a self-critical, creative process that aims to reveal some aspects of hidden realities, and bring up doubts, discussions, and questions. During the investigation, I am part of the setting, rather than a "fly on the wall" as in positivist research (Macdonald, 2002, p. 136). More specifically, to investigate the role of ICH in tourism in the actual world of PAs, I take the position of a qualitative researcher who is "a part of the qualitative text not separate from it" (Creswell, 2007, p. 215). The next section will discuss the state of my reflexivity and positionality in the field.

5.3 Reflexivity

Reflexivity refers to the "sense of positioning oneself in one's research" (Williams, 1990, p. 254), and subsequently involves subjectivity and self-consciousness about how the researcher could influence the findings of the research. It also allows for the "acquisition of insider knowledge" through interviews, participant observation, interaction, and informal interviewing (Eyles, 1988, p. 2). According to Jennings (2005) in qualitative research the researcher assumes a subjective position and as a consequence of this stance will engage in reflexivity throughout the entire research process. Furthermore, reflexivity is the process by which the researchers reflect on the

impacts of their past experiences (Creswell, 2007), personal subjectivity, and their participation upon the research process. Madden (2010, p. 21) notes that in ethnography reflexivity takes a “central role in the process of the researcher’s reflection on research process”.

Regarding this study, the voice of “*I*” is essential. I view myself as the one who has chosen “*what to*” research, and “*how to*” write about it. My social and historical identity influences the creation of the text of this research. Indeed, taking the role of reflexivity into account, it is necessary that my beliefs and background can be seen and heard because they are part of the research process of constructing knowledge with the participants on the field. Besides the voice of participants, I am a person whose voice is heard rather than playing as a neutral observer, and separate interpreter of events (Fine , Weis, Weseen, & Wong, 2000).

In general, the state of reflexivity in this research facilitates the integration of my situated knowledge and my life experience related to three main contexts of this study; ICH, tourism, and PAs. In this line, in many ways my personal intrinsic interest on any notion related to history, to local and small communities, and, more importantly, to intangible aspects of old cultures can be felt and heard constantly through the research text.

Research Design: Collecting Information

5.4 Ethnography; the Theoretical Structure

The theoretical framework of this study is based and developed on ethnography. Ethnography is commonly used in qualitative studies in the culture, travel, and tourism areas (Bruner, 1995; Geertz, 1973).

In comparison with other approaches, such as for example grounded theory, an interpretive ethnographical approach has direct implications for this research and the specific objective it is exploring. This research studies how a set of a specific cultural

asset (ICH) of a cultural group (local community living in QIG) could work in a particular phenomenon (in this study tourism). To describe and interpret the manifestation(s) and role(s) ICH in tourism in PAs, I asked people about their real experiences in their particular natural environment. This goal requires an “intensive interaction with people in their cultural and natural setting” (Creswell, 1998, p. 32).

Notably, among other approaches, it is ethnography that enables me properly to immerse in a social setting for a period in order to “understand the shared and learned pattern of values, behaviour, beliefs, and language of a cultural sharing group” (Creswell, 2007, p. 68) from the tourism perspective. It is acknowledged that there are some overlaps between the whole processes of conducting grounded theory and ethnography. For example, the discipline background of both of them traditionally is being drawn from sociology while ethnography is tightly linked to cultural anthropology as well (Goulding, 2005). Also, interview and observation are the most common methods for collecting data in both approaches (Denzin & Lincoln, 2011; Goulding, 2005). However, some underlying differences are identifiable, the differences which make the ethnography more fit to this study than grounded theory.

Language in grounded theory is usually objective and sometimes scientific. While in Section 5.3 I explained why it is essential in this study that the voice of “I” to be heard. Unlike grounded theory, ethnography highlights the subjectivity of the researcher and the importance of the “self” (Denzin & Lincoln, 2011; Cohen, Manion, & Morrison, 2000). In this vein, Shweder (1996, p. 24) argues that “instead of gazing upon the researched as either exotic, or objectified” true ethnographers are able to represent the other as different, and not odd” through describing what they have personally observed, heard and experienced.

Moreover, “the time to collect data in ethnography is extensive, involving prolonged time in the field” (Creswell, 2007, p. 72), while it is not always applicable in grounded theory. Ethnography involves “prolonged direct contact with group members in an effort to look for rounded, holistic explanations” (Goulding, 2005, p.299). In the case of this study, I applied 6-month extended participant observation to study the activities of people and cultural processes in their actual everyday life (Ching, 2009). Living with the community and engaging with their daily lifestyle to observe their normal everyday social interactions in tourism context is the method that simply justifies me to position

myself as a researcher in ethnography field with some anthropological perspectives. Overall, as a “grounded in fieldwork” approach (Palmer, 2001, p.301) ethnography enabled me the best to “watch, listen, and collect whatever was available” (Hammersley, 1995, p. 2) in the field to explore the issues with which I dealt with.

Although the ethnographic approach is most commonly based on studying cultural disciplines, Palmer (2001) reflects that it also work well in tourism studies. In this vein, MacCannell (1976) suggests that an ethnography approach can be applied in the modern world of tourism. It is true not only to study the tourists themselves but also their interaction with the local community and the environment surrounds (MacCannell, 1976).

Talking about the methods, the methods I use in this study are those of semi-structured interviews and participant observation. Using the technique of semi-structured interviews, participants are asked to answer a set of questions linked to the objective of this research and discuss them from different perspectives (Section 5.7). In participant observations, I traced the social life of the local community and their interaction with visitors. As well I observed the typical visitors’ activities while visiting the PA in order to gain insight into possible role, and manifestation of ICH in tourism in PAs (Section 5.8). In the following sections, I discuss the process of conducting the empirical phase of this research by applying the defined methods.

5.5 Where? The Ethnography Site

This research was conducted from late December 2014 to the end of June 2015 in Qeshm Island Geopark (QIG), located on the biggest island in the Persian Gulf, Qeshm Island, in the south of Iran.

The main prerequisite for choosing an ethnographic site to answer this study’s question regarding the role and manifestation of ICH in tourism in PAs was to choose a PA, where it is both populated by local community and is known as a tourist destination. I was to find participants who were members of a local community who had been living in a PA over time, and as a result were familiar enough with the local cultural context of the PA. Hence, QIG was selected; a touristic island in the south of Iran that have

been constantly populated for many centuries. Also, I have a previous familiarity with cultural and tourism context of this island.

More than two thirds of the area in Qeshm Island was declared as a Global Geopark in 2008 by UNESCO. It was taken out from Global Geoparks Network (GNN) in 2013 for a number of reasons such as not meeting the requirements for physical development of the geoparks. However, it has continued its life as a national geopark, and its territory developed to the size of the whole island also including the mangrove forest in the north and Hengam Island in the south (Figure 5.2).

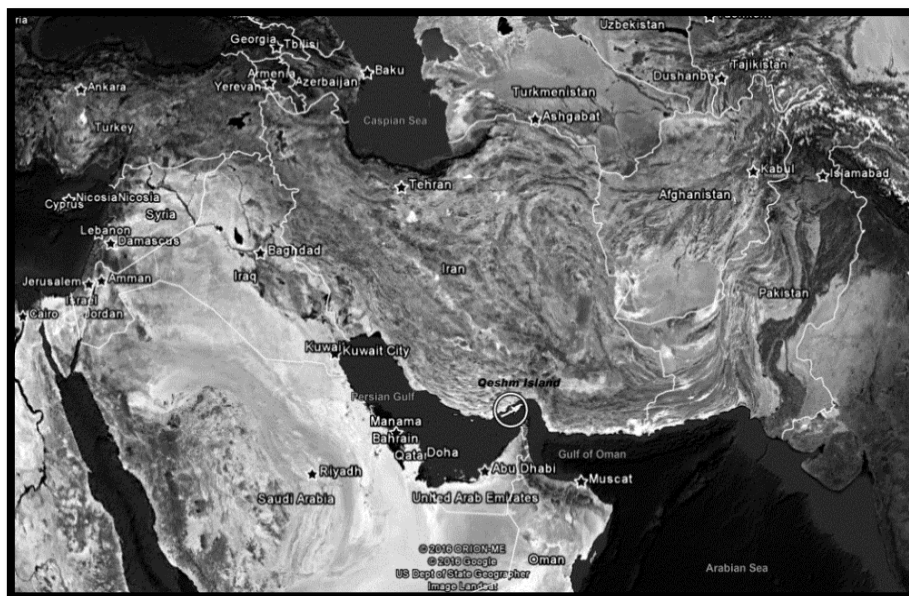


Figure5. 1 Map showing location of Iran and the ethnographic site within Iran (Source: Qeshm Island Geopark Archive)



Figure5.2 Map showing the territory of Qeshm Island Geopark, including the whole of Qeshm and the mangrove forest in the north and Hengam Island in the south (Source: Qeshm Island Geopark Archive)

Figure 5.1 shows the geographical location of Iran and the location of the QIG within Iran that is indicated by a circle. The later provides the map of the island and territory of the geopark, which covers all of Qeshm Island, including the mangrove forest on the north coast and a small island in the south, Hengam Island (Figure 5.2).

Archaeological findings show that a large population of people were living on Qeshm Island in 1000 B.C. (Negahban & Jamadi, 2011, p. 10), and since that time the island has been continuously populated by various communities (Kasraian, 1997; Wilson, 2012). Qeshm Island's ancient history becomes highly important in the creation of a rich cultural context and, consequently, a considerable variety of the cultural landscapes and cultural heritage.

Although the stone bed of the cultural context of Qeshm Island is defined as Iranian, it has been influenced by other cultures like African and Arabic because of the long history of sailing and trading, and also because of historic events in the Persian Gulf region such as wars. For instance, people on this island speak Persian with their own dialect, however, many Arabic, Hindu, Portuguese, and English words are identifiable in their language. Also, some African music instruments are played and Arabic music is enjoyed. Influenced by Indian, Arabic, and African cuisine, local food ingredients and techniques are unique to this part of Iran (Farsani, Coelho, & Costa, 2012, p. 42). Finally, ceremonies are the representation of Iranians, Indians, and Africans from Zanzibar (Dezhgani, 2007; Kasraian, 1997; Wilson, 1954). Regarding ICH, nearly all of the ICH five main domains as defined by UNESCO can be found in QIG (Section 3.2.5). Along this line, "Traditional skills of building, and sailing Iranian Lenj boats in the Qeshm Island" are included in the 2011 UNESCO's List of Intangible Cultural Heritage in Need of Urgent Safeguarding (IUCN, 2014c) proves the great importance of Qeshm Island's past and present culture in respect of its intangible cultural asset. Lenj is the local name for the wooden handmade vessels historically built on Qeshm Island. Today, there are still a number of traditional active workshops across QIG (Figure 5.3).

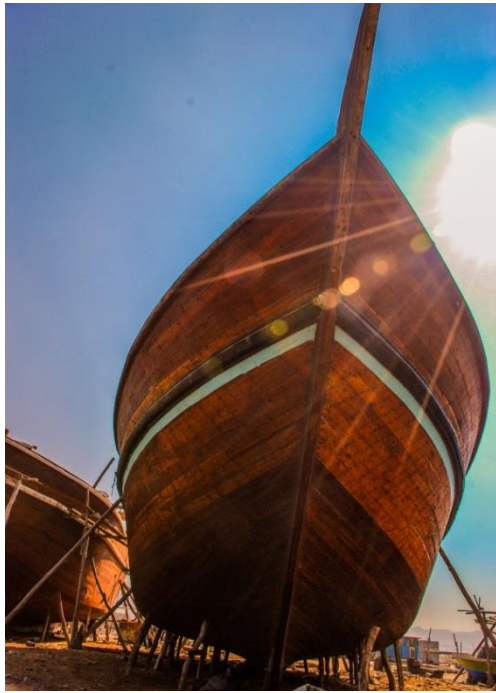


Figure5. 3 Lenj vessel (Source: Majid Yasini). This handmade vessel and its associated traditional knowledge and techniques are known as World Intangible Cultural Heritage by UNESCO.

The population of over 120,000, which mostly follows a rural lifestyle, is deeply attached to the rich and multifaceted traditions of the area. People in QIG are strongly committed to their traditions and sociocultural values. The local people wear traditional clothes and speak Persian with their specific dialect. Local women still use henna, a type of temporary tattoo, on their bodies to make up. Trading and fishing are the main jobs of the people living inside the geopark territory. Meanwhile, the number of small tourism businesses is increasing in respond to the growing number of visitors in the island. Notably, the number of small tourism businesses is increasing and people who work tourism related areas is increasing in respond to the growing number of visitors in the island.

Tourism, both domestic and international, has been growing in Qeshm Island in the last decade. The reputation of this island among visitors is not derived only because of its

old history or even the declaration of it as the first geopark in the Middle East. In this location, the valuable treasures of biological resources and ecosystems in addition to unique marine and terrestrial landscapes have caused recognition of several types of PAs under different conservations systems. Qeshm Island is known as a complex of different types of PAs at international and/or national level. Among them, Hara mangrove forest⁶ and Namakdan salt complex⁷ are more noteworthy. Apart from several unique geological landforms of QIG, Hara mangrove forest and Namakdan salt complex are two protected areas that attract many visitors to the island.

Hara mangrove forest is located on the northern coastal strip of Qeshm Island (Figure 5.4). As the biggest mangrove forest in the Persian Gulf, the Hara mangrove forest is located within a larger PA of Ramsar site (100,000 ha) and was designated as a Wetland of International Importance under the Ramsar Convention in June 1975. It was also declared as a UNESCO Man and Biosphere Reserve (MAB) in June 1976. (QIGP, 2008, p. 6). Indeed, based on IUCN categories, it is also identified as a PA in Category V (WDPA, 2014) (Section 2.4).

Namakdan salt complex is another notable natural PA in QIG at the national level. The significance of this complex is that the world longest salt cave, the Namakdan Cave (6,500 metres), has been recorded in this salt complex (QIGP, 2016 p:11) (Figure 5.5). The PA of “Turtles’ Nesting Beach” is another exemplary protected area at national level, where hawksbill turtles on the IUCN’s critically endangered list (IUCN, 2015) annually choose to build their nests. With the effort of geopark local officials and local community cooperation, a stretch of ten kilometres of beach in the south of the geopark has been declared as a PA to conserve the turtles’ habitat (QIGP, 2008, p. 7).

Additionally, nine other spots on the island, including those geosites with unique geological landforms, have been added to the Iranian National List of Natural Heritages. This national list aims to identify and protect the unique natural resources and landscapes across the country and preserve their ecological variety. All in all,

⁶ - “Herra” is the term that the local people in Qeshm Island use for mangrove forest. This PA has been designated under the name of “Hara” by IUCN. For more information please see <http://www.protectedplanet.net/search?country=358&q=hara>.

⁷ - Namakdan is a Persian term for saltshaker.

Qeshm Island is not only the land of QIG; rather it is a good example of a complex that perfectly embraces different types of natural PAs.



Figure5. 4 Two views of internationally protected area of Hara mangrove forest located in Qeshm Island Geopark (Source: Majid Yasini)



Figure5. 5 Two views from inside the national protected area of Namakdan cave; the world's longest salt cave in Qeshm Island Geopark (Source: Qeshm Island Geopark Archive)



5.6 How? Participants Selection

Three groups of participants were interviewed to explore their perspectives and interpretations on the role and manifestation of ICH in tourism in QIG. Five participants among government local officials (Group One), seven participants among the local small tourism business owners (STBO)⁸ and, finally, fifteen participants among domestic, non-local visitors⁹ composed the twenty seven participants of this study (Table 5.1).

Table5.1 Participants' categorization and total number of participants in each category

Participants Group One	QIG government local officials	5 persons
Participants Group Two	Small tourism business owners	7 persons
Participants Group Three	Domestic visitors	15 persons
		Total number 27

In this research, all members of the first two participant groups, regardless of their jobs, either a member of the geopark's body of officials or STBO, are referred to as the "local participants". These participants were born and grew up in Qeshm Island and are still living there. Therefore, the intangible cultural asset of QIG constitutes a part of their cultural and historical identity.

⁸ - STBO refers to those members of the local community who are involved with tourism. They own and run different types of small-sized tourism business such as traditional guesthouses, traditional restaurants or offering the visitors the transportation and guiding service across the island.

⁹ -Participants Group three were selected among Iranian visitors who were originally from parts of Iran other than Qeshm Island.

Group one participants are all employed and working in the central office of QIG. I was looking for a group of geopark local officials whose job positions are closely related to at least one of the areas of either “culture in the PA” or “tourism in the PA”. The central office of QIG is small with a total of ten employees. At time of conducting the fieldwork of this study, two of ten employees were recently recruited, as a computer expert and a web designer; therefore, their positions did not fit this research requirement. Another member of staff was a secretary who was originally from Tehran, not Qeshm Island. Finally, five of QIG employee whose job and academic background seemed more related to the aims of this study were selected, and interviewed. In the group of the local officials each participant’s job position, and background is associated with at least one of the main contexts of this study; culture, tourism, PAs. Below is more information on each one’s job and academic credentials:

1. A biologist and expert in environmental conservation of PAs
2. An Iranologist whose work is focused on the Persian Gulf cultural heritage
3. A tourism development expert, more specialized in sustainable tourism development and ecotourism
4. A tourism planning advisor specializing in increasing local community participation and awareness
5. A handicraft expert working on several tourism and handicraft projects in QIG

Group two consists of seven participants who are working in different sections of the tourism sector in QIG. Not many of the members of the local community of QIG work full-time in tourism, although the numbers of them is growing. Therefore, at the time of conducting the fieldwork of this research only a few locals’ main job was involved directly and totally with the tourism. Some of them are famous in the geopark such as Nakhoda, the owner of the first traditional guesthouse in the island (Amini Guesthouse). Leili, a local woman in charge of the only geopark’s handicrafts workshop, is another one. In this line, based on the total number of STBO and also my previous familiarity with QIG, spotting the locals who are working in tourism sector was not difficult. Finally and luckily, the people I found covered a reasonable range of occupation variety in tourism (Table 5.2). I found that the local respondents, both STBO and the geopark officials, were passionate about being part of this research, as it is partly focused on their homeland, Qeshm Island and the island’s cultural assets. They

viewed this research as a chance to present and discuss their homeland's existing cultural issues regarding tourism.

The third group of participants is composed of QIG's domestic visitors. Fifteen visitors from a range of occupations, age, and both male and female (Table 5.2) were interviewed in Amini guesthouse where I lived for six months.

As one of the main selected ethnography sites of this research, Amini guesthouse will be more explained later in section 5.8.1. Similar to the local officials, most of the visitors had university degrees, while nearly all of local STBO, except two of them, had only high school education. Overall, this study covers a wide range of education level of participants from basic high school to advanced university levels. Table 5.2 shows more demographic information of all the participants.

It is worth mentioning that the aim of this research is specific; therefore, the use of the purposive selection of interviewees is considered strength rather than a limitation.

Table5. 2 Overview of research participants' characteristics (Source: Author)

	No	Name	Origin	Age/Gender	Educational Level	Occupation
Officials	1	Hamid	Local	45/M	University	Geopark Employee
	2	Seyyed	Local	47/M	University	Geopark Employee
	3	Mitra	Local	35/F	University	Geopark Employee
	4	Sharif	Local	48/M	University	Geopark Employee
	5	Fozi	Local	45/F	University	Geopark Employee
Small Tourism Business Owners (STBO)	6	Saleh	Local	34/M	High school	Boat skipper (Mangrove Forest Guide)
	7	Pedram	Local	33/M	High school	Traditional Restaurant Owner
	8	Lili	Local	44/F	University	Handicraft Maker
	9	Hashem	Local	25/M	University	Local Guide
	10	Nakhoda	Local	60/M	High school	Guesthouse Owner
	11	Abdoo	Local	67/M	High school	Village Local Guide
	12	Deirri	Local	63/M	High school	Traditional Restaurant Owner
Visitors	13	Ati	Non-local	33/F	University	English Teacher
	14	Ali	Non-local	34/M	University	Film Maker
	15	Majid	Non-local	55/F	College	Web Designer
	16	Mehri	Non-local	66/M	University	Retired
	17	Mahsa	Non-local	28/F	University	Engineer
	18	Sara	Non-local	28/F	University	Engineer
	19	Babak	Non-local	38/M	University	Travel Agency
	20	Somi	Non-local	33/F	University	Journalist
	21	Keivan	Non-local	27/M	University	Engineer
	22	Maryam	Non-local	41/F	College	Photographer
	23	Samad	Non-local	50/M	University	School Teacher(biker)
	24	Vahid	Non-local	47/M	University	Tour Leader
	25	Pari	Non-local	65/F	High school	Housewife
	26	Saeed	Non-local	22/M	College	Carpenter
	27	Soofi	Non-local	30/F	University	Salesperson

5.7 How? Semi-structured Interviews

Social life is dependent on conversations, so that in order to investigate sociocultural issues, in-depth conversations are necessary. Seidman (1998, p. 3) explains that at the root of interviewing is “an interest in understanding the experience of other people, and the meaning”. Jacob and Furgerson (2012) argue that the qualitative researchers interested in the ethnography and oral history of the field collect people’s life stories to study various aspects of the human experience, and the primary way they gather stories is by interviewing people. Therefore, the use of interviews is seen as a proper method of gathering information in this research as an example of a qualitative research which is to explore the experiences and interpretations of the participants on the role and manifestation of intangible cultural assets in tourism in PAs.

Semi-structured interviews involve the implementation of a number of predetermined questions. However, interviewers are “allowed the freedom to explore further beyond the predetermined questions and seek clarification of issues” (Ching, 2009, p. 94). According to Jennings (2001, p. 104), the use of semi-structured interviews is associated with the interpretive paradigm “which holds an ontology that recognizes multiple perspectives in regard to the research focus”. Importantly for the gaining of confidence and trust of the respondents, the use of semi-structured interviews in the context of the subjective interpretive paradigm, enables a rapport to be established with the interviewees (Jennings, 2001). Subsequently, this method allows the researcher to build up a rapport with the interviewees to discuss complex issues such as the intangible aspect of a culture and its linkage with tourism within the boundaries of a PA.

Language and oral tradition is one of the considerable elements of the intangible heritage of each society (Section 3.2.4). Regarding this research, I realized that one of the effective ways to explore and know about the oral tradition is to simply ask about it, let people talk about it, and listen carefully to what they say. Interacting with the local people through interviews gave me a valuable chance to listen to a range of oral cultural features that were less recorded anywhere else. For instance, it happened several times that during interviews the local interviewees started singing a folkloric poem in their local dialect or telling a local legend. Then, it was the proper time for me to expand the

conversation towards the questions that I wanted to ask on the likely relation between tourism and local oral tradition. I realized that the local people like to tell me about their old culture, and they usually enjoy talking about it. Hence, I believe that conducting interviews, through which I gain a wide range of useful information, was the proper method that could fit the aims of this research.

I used three sets of different questions for each group of participants: the local government officials, local STBO, and the visitors (Appendix B). Each set of questions focused one aspect of experiences and personal background that the participants might have. In each interview 8–14 open-ended questions were asked. Interviews tended to last between one to one and half hours.

Interviews requirements with each one of the participant groups were different. Interviews with the local officials were often shorter because they were usually busy and had tight schedules during their working days. On the contrary, talking with local STBO often took longer because they had more free time and were mostly interested in talking about their lifestyle, their traditions, and customs. However, it was less true when I interviewed the visitors who mostly were following a tight itinerary to visit the most of the geopark in the few days of their stay on the island. Therefore, interviewing the visitors usually didn't take as long as talking with the locals.

To develop a respectful relationship in which the participants felt that their opinion was valued when engaging in interviewing during fieldwork, I stressed how participants should regard me as a curious person who did not know much and who was interested to know about their experiences and thoughts. I practised it regularly to elicit replies that were as free as possible from power imbalances, and in effect encouraged them to view me as a “young and ignorant newcomer” (Cameron, 2001). In order to give participants the ability to express what they thought was important, and whilst I did have a set of questions, I encouraged our conversations to follow a natural course without me interrupting. In fact, I acted mostly like a curious listener during the interview rather than a leader, unless I realized that the conversation was likely to divert to a different area.

Another notion emerging from the fieldwork was that I found that understanding the subject of this research and communicating some of the questions was not that easy for

all of the participants. At the first impression, the topic of this research seemed to be either a simple or a repeated topic to many of the participants. This was because the topics were about familiar subjects such as of culture, and travelling and also about the geopark, a geographical place where all participants were either living or visiting at the time of conducting the fieldwork. However, their perception gradually changed in practice as soon as I started narrowing down the topic to the specific role and manifestation of ICH in tourism in QIG, and expressing more detailed questions. I realized that making a rational relationship between the concepts of tourism, ICH, and QIG and communicating the three of them in a large frame at the same time, and finally talking about what was on their minds, was not an easy job for all respondents. It was more evident among the group of local STBO with less education levels; whereas, it happened less among QIG officials and visitors. This notion could be related to their education background as all of the officials and most of the visitors had college or university degrees with at least basic information about each one of the main contexts of this research (Table 5.2).

Furthermore, during the interview, it happened several times that participants started talking about the influences of tourism on intangible cultural assets of the community rather than the role of ICH in QIG tourism. It seemed that distinguishing the role of tourism and intangible culture was not an easy job because of the very close relationship between these two concepts. In other words, drawing a sharp and separating line between the position and the role of each one of these two concepts (tourism, and culture) in some cases was impossible (Box 5.1).

Additionally, as it is important for interviewees to feel relaxed (O'Reilly, 2012). In order to provide an open exchange of views, participants were interviewed in a location that was suggested by them. Also, they determined the date, time, and duration of the interview. Prior to conducting the interview, participants' consent was verbally obtained so as not to pressure them to sign any papers initially, which would unnecessarily formalize our relationship. With regards to the method of recording the interviews and necessity of ethics in ethnography research, all participants were asked if they consented to be voice-recorded, which all accepted. Finally, they were asked to sign the Consent Form that I had already translated into Persian (Appendix A).

In addition to semi-structured interviews, participant observation was applied to collect the information on the field. In the follow, I explain the method of participant observation.

Box 5.1 A snapshot of the field; closeness of the main contexts

ICH is a broad and comprehensive topic. It indicates to a wide range of human's life aspects, behaviour, and attitude. Also, there is a close relationship between tourism and different aspects of culture (Section 4.3). So when asking participants to think and talk about the role of ICH in tourism, in fact, I was asking them to narrow down their thoughts and expressions about ICH and talk more specifically about its role in tourism. I noticed that the participants often generalized the answers of the questions to the other related areas, and expanded the topic towards the general connection between tourism and ICH. After undertaking a few interviews, I realized that it was better to let the interviewees talk about the general mutual relationship between intangible cultural features, and tourism in QIG, rather than asking them to just focus on a specific area associated with this relationship. Finishing each interview, it was my job to explore the information and derive the related themes that I was looking for from the transcripts.

5.8 How? Participant Observation

Besides semi-structured interviews, interpretive ethnography is also typified by the use of the participant observation method. Cook (1998, p. 167) describes participant observation as a method by which a researcher gathers information by “deliberately immersing themselves into [a community’s] everyday rhythms, and routines”, in order to “develop relationships with people who can show, and tell them what is going on there”. In this line, Belsky (2004, p. 277) explains that participant observation refers to “the method used by researchers making observations in the course of taking part in the activities of the people they study”. Besides, Madden (2010, p. 100) asserts that “observation is a key element of ethnography research”.

Participant observation is “a systematized form of looking at others” (Madden, 2010, p. 101), which can be simply explained as the process of participating in events, and recording them by applying techniques such as taking notes and voice or film

recording. One reason for employing participant observation method in most ethnography researches is because interviewees are not always able to articulate their experiences, understandings, and their feelings throughout the interviews for many reasons such as being shy or simply not liking to talk explicitly about the phenomenon being explored with an interviewer. In other words, participant observation comes to assist where there are inadequate words to express experiences (Goulding, 2000). One of the main benefits of using participant observation as a method is that a deep understanding of how meaning is created can be gained. Even though, being able to participate in participants' lives is often difficult because the researcher may lack the skills needed in order to participate (Crang, 2007). It has been argued that participant observation requires interpretation, understanding, and empathy, and not only observation and a watching people's behaviour (Creswell, 2007; Madden, 2010; O'Reilly, 2000).

A major reason for me to apply participant observation was to observe in what ways and how much visitors get attracted and then contribute to the elements, features, and different expressions of ICH of the local community in QIG. Indeed, the interaction between local community members, as the creators of ICH (Lixinski, 2013), and visitors was observed to explore the possible relationship between visitors and the intangible aspect of local cultural context. Another reason was that as explained earlier in this chapter, the scopes of ICH and PAs are not familiar subjects for people to talk about easily. It is even truer for ICH which is in many cases even difficult to identify in the physical world (English, 2003; Lixinski, 2013). Hence, observation provided me with the in-time and in-place engagement with the participants to gather information without limiting or confusing them with leading questions through conducting interviews.

Whilst participant observation is a key characteristic of ethnography, there is debate surrounding the balance of ethnography with participant observation. Ethnographers can play several roles within the participant observation from being a "complete observer" to a "complete participant" (Junker, 1960, p.71). Forsey (2010, p. 560) suggests "engaged listening" is to be used for instances when the researcher is not fully involved in participating, but at the same time is not a neutral "observer". Relevant to this research, I have taken the "participation as observer" approach (Descombe, 2007,

p. 218) which means that the researcher's role is openly recognized, and people under observation have knowledge that they are being studied and know what the topic of the research is (Ching, 2009; Junker, 1960). This approach requires the researcher to engage in regular interaction with people and participate in their daily lives. Next section explains how I applied and practised this approach in the real life of observation.

To make sure that the observational information is recorded in detail as much as possible, I always had a small notebook and pencil handy during all hours and days of observation. At the end of each observation day, I spent some time to revise and complete the notes related to that day, to ensure that all the observational details were documented accurately in that notebook. This procedure is advocated by Holliday (2002) as a means of creating a dialogue between the researcher and the research setting. Following this procedure provided me rich observational information that was counted and analysed along with interview information at analysis phase of this study.

5.8.1 Participant Observation Sites

Participant observation in this study was undertaken in four different spots in QIG including Amini guesthouse, Stars Valley geosite, Chah-Kuh Geosite, and Hara Mangrove Forest Geosite. Figure 5.6 shows the distribution of these four observation sites across QIG.

These four spots were selected mainly because of the association of their natural landscapes with different elements of ICH and also that these elements are constantly being presented to visitors in these sites. According to Table 5.3 each one of these sites is linked to at least four out of six defined categories of ICH¹⁰, and they are presented to tourism in various ways. For instance, there is usually a local music group playing

¹⁰ - In this table "gastronomy and culinary practices" is taken as a separate category for ICH, while it is not counted separately as one five main domains of ICH in the 2003 UNESCO Convention which is presented in Section 3.2.5. "Gastronomy and culinary practices" is usually considered as a part of the domain of "social practices". However, UNWTO (2012, p:3) considers it separate from the "social practices" category and explains that gastronomy and culinary practice, which can be used as a single category of ICH, is a major and separate part of cultural tourism activities in many countries. Regarding

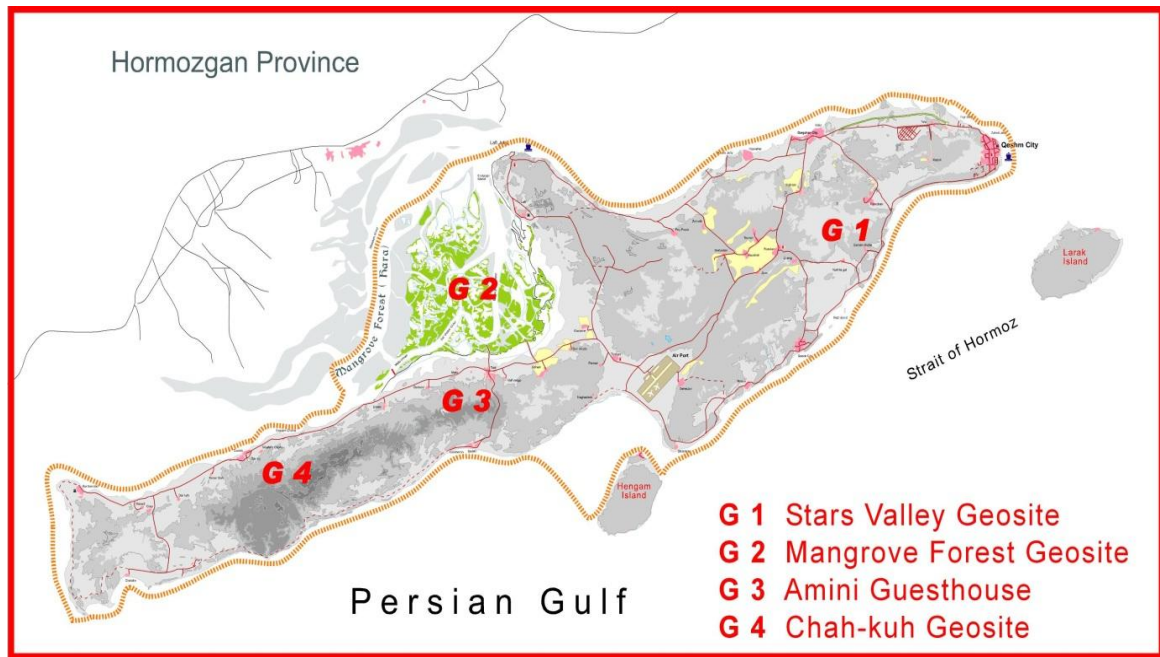


Figure5. 6 Distribution of the four observation sites in Qeshm Island Geopark (Source: Majid Yasini)

traditional instruments by the entrance of the mangrove forest. When visitors are walking towards the entrance to buy the ticket for boats to the mangroves, they can see the group playing and singing in the local language and sometimes also performing a group dance. Observing these four sites enabled me to trace more effectively and

Table5. 3 Contribution of the observation sites to each category of intangible cultural heritage (Source: Author)

ICH Sites	Oral tradition & expressions	Performing arts	Social practices, ritual & festive events	Knowledge and practices concerning nature and universe	Traditional craftsmanship	Gastronomy and culinary practices
Amini guesthouse	<input type="checkbox"/>		<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Stars valley geosite	<input type="checkbox"/>			<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Mangrove forest geosite	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>		
Chah-kuh valley geosite	<input type="checkbox"/>			<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

this explanation, I think this table that represents six categories of ICH provides more understandable information, and fits the purpose of this section of this study well.

practically the relationship between tourists and ICH elements associated with the biophysical environment of QIG. I observed the visitors in their on-site activities to find out how they interact with the surrounds' social and natural environment they were visiting at that time. I was close to them, listening, and observing, when they were talking to the local guides or other local people around at the geosite.

Before heading to the geosites, I first approached the visitor(s) on the day of their arrival to their accommodation at Amini guesthouse. I introduced myself and my project's intention and interaction and asked them if I could accompany them to visit the aforementioned sites (Table 5.3). Fortunately, all of the individuals and groups I talked to welcomed me to be a part of their trips to the geoparks. Depending on the visitors' length of stay in geopark, and regarding the distribution of observation sites across the Qeshm Island, the participant observation accomplishment requires various durations from three days to one week. To clarify in more detail the scope of participant observation, I present two examples in the follow.

Box 5.2 A snapshot of the field; The geosite of Stars Valley and a local legend

“Once upon a time a star hit this specific spot of the earth. As a result of this collision the stones and soil were thrown in the air and become frozen right away. All of the strange geological structures and unusual landscapes in Stars Valley are the results of that accident”.

This is the core of the legend that local people say about the geosite of Stars Valley. In the local language, the name of this geosite is “Estalah-kaftah” which means “the fallen star”. Besides, people believe that this valley could be a piece of another planet, because of its different landforms and strange geomorphological landscapes. There are local beliefs regarding the presence of ghosts in this valley at dark. Elders usually tell stories about visiting ghosts in the valley when they were young.

Visitors are being informed about the linkage between the geosite physical environment and local oral tradition on information boards and also by the local guide.

The first example refers to the visitor's interest and willingness to know the meaning of the names of each geosite and the reason(s) that the locals have assigned those specific names for those places. Some of the names are associated with oral tradition such as the name locals have assigned for the geosite of Stars Valley and its linkage with a legend that local people believe about it (Box 5.2). As a part of conducting the participant observation I was present there at Stars Valley geosite, listening to conversations between visitors and local guides to figure out whether during their visit they made any implication about the name which doesn't look to fit the geological site with not even a small indication to sky or stars. Participant observation provided me enough chances to observe the visitors when I was close to them in the same site and find out if they became interested in the odd names that some of the sites are called with.(Figure 5.7).



Figure5. 7 Two views of Stars Valley geosite
(Source: Majid Yasini)

The second example comes from observations in Amini's guesthouse about how visitors interact with culinary techniques and traditional gastronomy knowledge. I observed visitors usually when they were served in the public area of the guesthouse: the front yard. Also, in some cases I sat at the same table or around the same sofreh¹¹ with visitors and ate the same food they had ordered which was usually the traditional seafood of the island; either prawn Berryani or stuffed fish with Arabic spices that are less known in other parts of Iran. This meal is always served with dates from the island and also homemade pickle followed by a cup of tea. I observed if visitors had any

¹¹ - A piece of cloth in different patterns and colours (usually white) that traditionally Iranian place flat on the ground and sit around to eat.



Figure 5.8 Amini's guesthouse front yard (left). Nakhoda's daughters baking bread using the traditional equipment and techniques (Source: Majid Yasini)

questions or expressed attention to the traditional cooking techniques, ingredients, recipes, or history of the food and drinks they were having in the guesthouse (Figure 5.8).

Living among the local community, and with visitors in the same guesthouse, provided me with a chance to start a conversation with different people: locals or visitors, men, and women, also both individually and in groups. In addition, apart from the formal observations that I undertook with specific groups of the visitors, I was constantly involved with a kind of informal everyday observation when staying in QIG. Therefore, it is safe to say that I never stopped observing the society and surrounding environment during undertaking fieldwork. Informal conversations and informal observations enriched the information I collected to answer the main question this research is exploring.

However, there were some challenges and also rewards that I experienced during six months of conducting the empirical phase of this research. Section 5.10 is devoted to explaining these ups and downs in more detail.

5.9 How? Informal Conversation and Informal Observation

In addition to the 27 formal interviews, during my stay in QIG, I had a range of social conversations with people from all three groups of participants whose names are not included in table 5.2 because all these conversations happened informally.

All of them helped me to extend my perspective on some aspects of ICH-tourism interaction, which was not mentioned directly or discussed separately in the interviews. These accidental conversations took place at different times and places across the geopark. For example, I found the jetty in the village a suitable place to find a group of the local mangroves boat guides, join their community, and start a normal chat, or just listen to their conversation as a part of an informal observation. These local men usually gather on the after evening prayers to have a cup of tea together, chat, and play cards after a long and probably hot working day. Moreover, helping women in the guesthouse with their kitchen chores provided me with an ideal opportunity to develop a friendly conversation with them about their experiences and opinions about their culture and tourism.

Informal conversation with visitors usually happened during their rest time after lunch or dinner. It was easy to find visitors in the front yard of the guesthouse, tired after one day walking and climbing in the geopark. We usually had an interesting conversation while having a cinnamon-flavoured cup of tea sitting in the shade of old palm trees. Most of the visitors were curious to know more about what I, as a solo woman, was doing in that remote part of Iran, with very specific cultural context, and obviously far from the modern life of big cities. Also, nearly all of them were interested to know why I went back to Iran to undertake fieldwork rather than doing it in New Zealand. So the conversation with visitors was mostly a mix of mutual questions and answers, and a general discussion in which I could usually pick up what I was looking for.

The informal conversation was likely to happen anywhere that at least one of the STBO, local officials of QIG were available under the condition that they were also interested in having a chat. However, the informal observation was possible almost anywhere in the geopark. I could say that apart from those organized times when I was undertaking the formal phases of the semi-structured interview and participant observation, most of the remaining time of the six-month fieldwork largely contributed to the informal conversation and also to informal observation of the human society in the physical environment of QIG. The result of both the formal and informal information collection was a rich source of information. The analysis procedure of all this information is outlined in Section 5.13.

5.10 Collecting Information; Challenges and Benefits

Accessing each one of the participants involved different issues. Most of these issues related to timing and time management. For instance, setting, and finalizing an appointment with each one of QIG officials needed long-term planning because of their tight work schedule. Also, the nature of their job requires them to work outdoors close to geosites rather than being in the office all day. I needed to constantly follow up with the central office of the geopark to arrange and confirm the final appointments with the local official I wanted to interview. In this vein, I had to wait for about one month to meet the manager of QIG.

Similarly, when arranging interviews with visitors, I encountered nearly the same issues. QIG is large and its touristic attractions vary. Most visitors try to make the most of their time by visiting as many as possible of the available attractions, which are distributed in different spots across the geopark, in the limited few days of their travel. Therefore, time is what they usually are very sensitive about. Initially, I intended to find visitors at the entrance gate of the busy geosites such as Hara mangrove forest. But after few weeks I was totally disappointed. The visitors' answer to my request to have an interview was "no". However, it seemed reasonable to me that they refused to spend their time taking part in an interview while they were following their tight itinerary to move from one site to another. Hence, I changed the plan and returned to Amini guesthouse, where both the visitors and I were living.

Changing the strategy to spotting the visitors in Amini guesthouse and convincing them to take part in an interview turned out to be totally successful. All of the 15 interviews with visitors were conducted after dinner time, while they were sitting or lying down on the handmade traditional mat on the ground and in the shade of old palm trees in the front yard the guesthouse. Also, interviews were all undertaken in the last evening/night before their departure from QIG, when they already had concluded their experience of visiting QIG.

Because of the dense population distributed over all parts of the island and richness of local cultural heritage, all visitors usually find chances to visit and experience intangible cultural assets of the local community in person while they are visiting and moving around the geopark. Therefore, on the last night of their stay in the geopark

they usually had enough to talk about the relation between ICH of the local community and tourism in the geopark they had just visited.

During the fieldwork, my Persian cultural background, and Persian language skills allowed me to be a partial insider and provided me certain advantages (Fife, 2005; Madden, 2010). For example, sharing a common language with participants gave me the ability to engage with them easier and faster. Lacking Persian language skills, communication on an advanced level would have been impossible as the majority of participants spoke limited or no English. In fact, regarding the need of maintaining reflexivity in ethnography research, I, as the ethnographic researcher, was supported by my ethnicity (being Iranian) and also by my pre-fieldwork familiarity with the phenomenon that was being explored. These factors influenced approaching participants, developing rapport, and making a trustful relationship with participants in different ways (Creswell, 2007; Madden, 2010).

As an insider, I had fewer challenges in gaining locals' trust and conducting interviews with them. Many of locals whose jobs were related to tourism had already known me as a person who was working in QIG as a tourism advisor for at least three years until the time I left Iran aiming to study Ph.D in New Zealand. However, they knew me not as a researcher but as a young Iranian woman who had chosen to live in one of the small and remote villages of the geopark named Tabl Village. . In my previous life and work experience in QIG, I did my best to gain enough familiarity with the local cultural context and adopt it. I already knew that to be able to work on such a small island with a very traditional cultural context, I had to be extremely careful to know, respect, and follow what was important for them, and to observe the social dos, and don'ts.

About one and half years later, I returned to the same island and same village but this time with the identity of a researcher who, based on her prior experiences, was partly taking the role of an insider in the setting of the geopark's culture and tourism (Madden, 2010; DeLyser, 2001). Referring to Madden (2010, p. 111) "outsider, and insider are not conflicting situations; rather they are simultaneously created as part of ethnographic fieldwork". In fact, the "distinction between insider and outsider is not simple" (DeLyser, 2001, p. 442). Therefore, although my originality as an Iranian and also my prior experience of close interaction with the Qeshm Island's local community

strengthen my position as an insider, I realized several times that I was more a person from the outside. This situation provided me with the opportunity to fluctuate constantly between being an insider and an outsider during fieldwork. In fact, influenced by condition, my position in the field was shaped in the “space of betweenness” (Katz, 1994, p:72) (Box 5.3).

It is worth mentioning that being an outsider didn't cause me many problems and

Box 5.3 A snapshot of the field; an outsider female researcher

Acting and feeling like an outsider was another aspect of fieldwork experience. Two factors were an influence on forming this type of experience; local accent of the community and my appearance.

My participants and I were all Iranian Persian speakers and it reflected my presence in the field as an insider. However, the story changed when it came to talking Persian in the Qeshmi local accent. People in Qeshm Island speak Persian with a specific accent that has been affected by Arabic and Indian languages. Pronouncing many of words in the Qeshmi accent is different from the typical Persian accent that I talk. Therefore, the way that I speak Persian easily represented me as an outsider in the field.

Besides accent, my external appearance as a woman easily proved me as a person from outside their community. Women on the island dress differently from the typical social dressing manner of Iranian women. The differences are apparent in dress style, colour, and pattern. Thus women from outside the island are easily differentiable. With that in mind, I was so careful to observe the social rules related to women's dress codes on the island in order not to look very different or odd. For example, I didn't put on make-up or wear tight pants, yet it was easy to identify me as a non-local woman on the first impression.

concerns during my research undertaking. I realized that many of the locals whom I interviewed had some familiarity with the setting and the process of undertaking research projects, a familiarity that was the result of the other research projects usually running on Qeshm Island close to the local community. Qeshm Island is specific from different perspectives: its history, culture, and tourism, as well as holding the title as the first geopark in the Middle East, a geopark presenting a complex of natural PAs. Thus, the presences of researchers from outside the island, and in various disciplines, are very common from the locals' eyes. For example, during my six-month stay in QIG, I came across another Ph.D. student whose project was focused on the vernacular architecture

of one of the oldest villages of the Island. Simultaneously, there were two other groups conducting two separate research projects: the first one on the local community awareness of tourism and Huckbill Turtles, and the second one on the geopark.

Overall, as a researcher, I feel indebted to the participants for allowing me into their lives and devoting their precious time speaking to me. Therefore, in line with an applying ethic, on any occasion that I could, I helped them with whatever they asked me for help. For instance, I usually was asked to act as a translator when they had non-Iranian guests in the guesthouse. During my stay in the guesthouse, it happened a few times that I helped women in the kitchen to serve tourists when the guesthouse became busy at dinner time. On weekends, when the guesthouse got busier, I tried to spend few hours helping the local family to deal with tourists, mostly non-Iranians who preferred someone who could speak English. I used any chance to talk with local STBO and tried to persuade them that they needed to improve their English language vocabulary and to build their own bi-lingual (Persian-English) websites in order to improve marketing their small tourism business. I behaved the same with the visitors I interviewed. They usually realized that I had already travelled to nearly all parts of Iran, so they started asking questions about other unknown natural and interesting places in Iran and any recommendation I might have for their next trip.

5.11 Ethics

Ethical issues are important to be considered seriously by researchers. Ethical issues relate to the ethics of safety, respect, honesty, and responsibility to participants, and researchers. In doing ethnography “there is a constant need for the ethnographer to manage and maintain the ethics of gathering and representing ethnographic information” (Madden, 2010, p. 33). In general, this research attended to the basic list of ethical issues in research that researchers must take into account. It included such matters as; (a) research contribution, worthiness, and integrity; (b) Competence of the researcher to undertake the study; (c) Participant information, consent, and what risks they may be subject to; and (d) Issues of privacy, and confidentiality (Farminer, 2013; Paterson, 2005). More specifically, for this study, Category A ethics approval was received from the University of Otago Human Ethics Committee (Appendix A). Documents for approval were submitted including an informed consent sheet and an information sheet for participants to read in order to decide if they wanted to participate in the study. In addition, in these documents, the voluntary aspect of participation was stressed.

5.11.1 *Applying Ethics in this Research*

In undertaking this research project, I found the potential respondents initially in the places in which I thought it was more likely to find them. For example, I met the visitor participants in the guesthouse where they were staying. Local public settings, such as after-prayers gathering on the jetty and at pre-arranged meetings in QIG central office, were the other places I found local STBO and local officials respectively. The initial meeting was a form of introductory meeting when I introduced myself and my project objectives to the individuals, and it usually didn't take a long time. The introductory meeting concluded with the person indicating whether he or she was willing to participate in my project.

Formal consent was obtained by means of a written Persian Consent Form that was signed by all participants during their formal interview (Appendix A). Whilst much literature stresses the importance of securing participants' anonymity, all participants in

this study were keen to be named in the text and made visible in the pictures. Besides names, I collected some demographic information like gender, age, education level, and their job title. The participants all agreed on being presented in the text by their real names and demographic information by signing the Consent Sheet as a part of the University of Otago Ethics requirements. This Consent Sheet is presented in Appendix A.

In the meantime, I believe that having the consent of all participants to be presented in this text by their real information, including name and their demographic information, as well as their picture, was a big advantage in doing this research project, because considering the researched phenomenon, the case study, and its cultural features, in many cases maintaining anonymity was neither applicable nor possible. As Lincoln and Guba (1989) state, whilst one of the main promises of the informed consent sheets is to protect the confidentiality of the participants, in some cases this is virtually impossible. I personally found it true, specifically within the small communities such as QIG's local community. This was especially pertinent for two groups of participants including local officials of QIG and STBO of the geoparks, as each one of them constitutes small groups in the QIG. The total number of STBO on the entire Qeshm Island is few (Section 5.5). Hence these people, their businesses, and the location of their businesses are already known to all the members of the community. It is also true for the local officials of the geoparks whose job requires them to be in close and constant interaction with the local community. Therefore, regarding this condition, recognizing QIG is not difficult.

In this line, recognizing key places and key people is not difficult in the small community of QIG. For example, Tabl Village is unique in its location, which is close to two of the most known and busy geosites of QIG and it is also famous for having the oldest local guest house on the island. The family who is running the guesthouse, Mr. Amini's family, is famous as well since they were the first family on the island to start this business. Even if I changed the name of the places or allocated fake names to participants, many of them would be easily identifiable. As a result, besides participants, the original names of places have been maintained in this research project.

5.12 Thematic Network Analysis; Interpretation and Analysis of the Empirical Information

Different researchers have interpreted analysis in different ways. Hatch (2002, p. 148) describes analysis as an attempt to explore the meaning from data:

A way to process qualitative data so that what has been learned can be communicated to others. Analysis means organising, and interrogating data in ways that allow researchers to see patterns, identify themes, discover relationships, develop explanations, make interpretations, mount critiques, or generate theories.

The process of analysis in this research used an inductive approach to enable participants' meanings to emerge from the information (Hatch, 2002; Patton, 2002). "The process of qualitative data analysis takes many forms" (Maykut & Morehouse, 1994, p. 121). Taylor and Bogdan (1998, p. 140) state that "all researchers develop their own ways of analysing qualitative data". In this research, a thematic network analysis is used to analyse the empirical qualitative ethnographic information. In the rest of this section, I explain and illustrate the thematic analysis network characteristics and the rationale for this tool's appropriateness to being applied in this research.

Referring to Braun (2006, p. 79), thematic analysis is a method for "identifying, analysing, and reporting patterns (themes) within information". Thus, thematic analysis uncovers themes in a text and constructs a web-like network to facilitate the structuring and interpretation of the identified themes. Thematic analysis is a practical tool that can provide the researcher a set of rich and detailed information, which is complicated as well (Braun, 2006). It is a process of bringing order to the information, organizing information into themes, subthemes, and sub-sub-themes, and looking for relationships within information. Notably, this process does not necessarily depend on quantifiable measures but rather on whether it captures something important in relation to the overall research (Braun, 2006 254). Walters (2016, p. 116) argues the appropriateness and flexibility of using thematic network analysis in tourism studies while she notes that "yet to date, this method has been underutilized".

In the thematic network, themes are identified by bringing together components or fragments of ideas or experiences into higher level themes that share similarities, and often they seem meaningless when viewed alone. For instance, putting together similar ideas that are derived from interviews lets the researcher compare and contrast between the different interviewees and their expressions. Coherency, and following a rational flow, in a way that it makes sense for the reader, in the process of doing the comparison, and contrast are two principles in the thematic analysis that a researcher need to attend (Leininger, 1998).

To conduct the analysis of this research, the thematic network analysis method seemed suitable; one reason for using a thematic analysis is that it contributes to the production of interpretively rich information (Braun, 2006; Guest & MacQueen, 2008). This research project is focused on three broad contexts of ICH, tourism, and PAs, and their relationship from a specific perspective. Regarding the volume, complexity, and richness of empirical information collected in the fieldwork, thematic analysis helped me to break down the wide range of information and classify them into few but narrower and more meaningful and understandable themes. It was explained in the theory section of this research that none of the main contexts of this research is taken as a static and stable phenomenon. Also, the concepts of culture, heritage, and ICH are presented as multifaceted concepts which are dramatically difficult to define (Section 3.2). With regard to these intrinsic characteristics of this research, the thematic network is the ideal choice for it, as the thematic network is “suitable to the interpretation of a slippery, complex, and dynamic concept exhibiting temporal variation” (Walters, 2016, p. 109).

Another advantage of thematic network analysis for this research is associated with the visual representation of the information. In the thematic network, the information is usually organized in the shape of a diagram, which is prepared based on the empirical information of the research study. The derived themes are placed in the web-like diagramme hierarchically as global themes, organizing themes, and basic themes. The graphic network then becomes a very helpful tool for the researcher through reflecting, reporting, and describing the findings, and also allows the reader to understand the flow of the text and how it is interpreted (Attride-Stirling, 2001; Walters, 2014). Figure 5.9 illustrates the thematic network with a global theme, two organizing themes, and five basic themes. As a result, the main themes captured through applying thematic analysis approach in this research project reflected ideas that are relevant to the research objective which is exploring the role and manifestation of ICH in tourism in PAs.

Furthermore, in applying a systematic thematic analysis, verbatim transcripts are the norm when it comes to the raw information analysis. Simultaneously, an important requirement in qualitative research is using verbatim quotes, and, in fact, quotes are taken as the stars of qualitative research (Bakas, 2014; Chenail, 1995). Quotes bring the raw information and the participants' words to the reader, and connect the participant words to the interpretation generated by the researcher (Chenail, 1995; Guest & MacQueen, 2008). To achieve this goal of presenting verbatim quotes Guest and

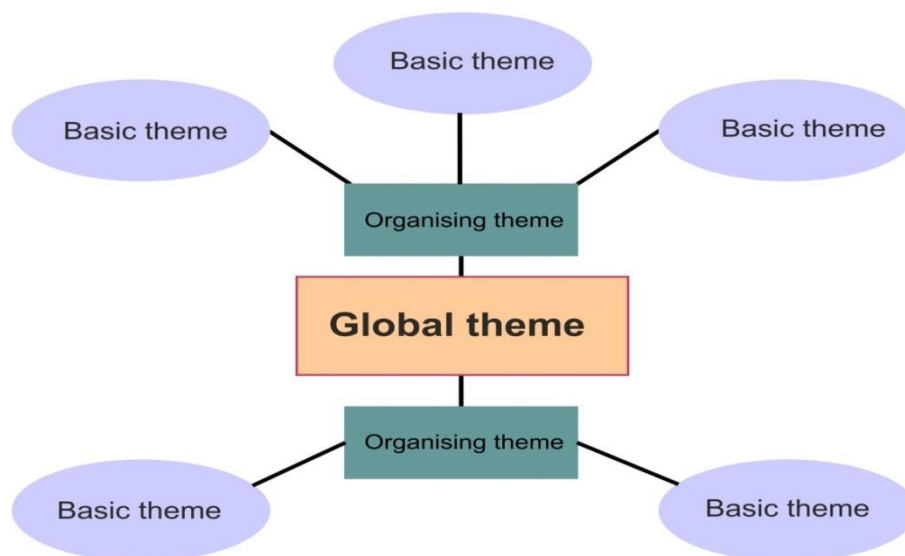


Figure5. 9 Illustration of a sample of a thematic network anchored by a global theme and supported by two organizing themes and five basic themes (adapted from (Campbell-Price, 2014))

MacQueen (2008) strongly recommend audio recording in fieldwork.

Fortunately, I used the benefits of audio recording in all interviews that helped me significantly in applying verbatim transcription and then verbatim translation. In this research, the translation was applied with a strong consideration to produce verbatim quotes from Persian to English. I believe that applying verbatim translation has increased the precision and accuracy of the translation. It was applied as a tool to make sure that in the phase of translation of the transcriptions the core areas and important themes have been kept precisely and correctly. More importantly, as mentioned before, being a bilingual speaker of Persian and English, and my prior familiarity with the local cultural context acted as two critically effective factors to ensure that the final translation was an accurate reflection of what has been expressed by participants.

In applying thematic network analysis, special steps were needed for exploring the codes from the information and then defining and categorizing all related patterns into global themes, organizing themes, and basic themes. The following section addresses these steps and describes how they have been used through developing the analysis phase for this research project.

5.13 Conducting Thematic Analysis Network

To apply thematic network analysis in this research, three best-practice articles by Attride-Stirling (2001), Braun and Clarke (2006), as well one by Walters (2016) have been used. Walters (2016) adapting the previously publications presents a 6-phase guidance that clearly illustrates conducting thematic analysis step by step (Figure 5.10). To analyse the interview and observational information of this research, I applied these six steps one by one. In doing so, both types of empirical information including the interview transcription and observational information were considered together. In the following, each step is described in detail. Aligned with it, a sample of the organising theme of *Secondariness* is used to illustrate the process of thematic analysis implication in this research project.

5.13.1 Phase One: Initial Reading of Texts to Gain Familiarity

The most important requirement for this step was the transcription of all the interviews. The time needed to do the transcription differed considerably from one interview to another, and it mainly depended on the length of the interview and its content. Repeated listening to the audio records of the interviews and completing the transcription of each one of them required me to go through the content of each interview several times.

In some cases, the transcription was completed after listening to the record more than three times, while usually after each time listening new points were added to the original transcription. After concluding one transcription I re-read the written text to make a connection with the text and increase the level of my familiarity with it. To gain the sense of wholeness, I did the same when the transcription of all 27 interviews was done.

This research asked participants to talk about three broad areas of ICH, tourism, and PAs. The complexity and broadness of the topic sometimes made the participants generalize the topic and not focus on the main question (Section 5.7). Participants generalizing the main idea of this study, made the process of gaining familiarity with the written information more time-consuming, as some parts of the transcription were not relevant to what I was looking for.

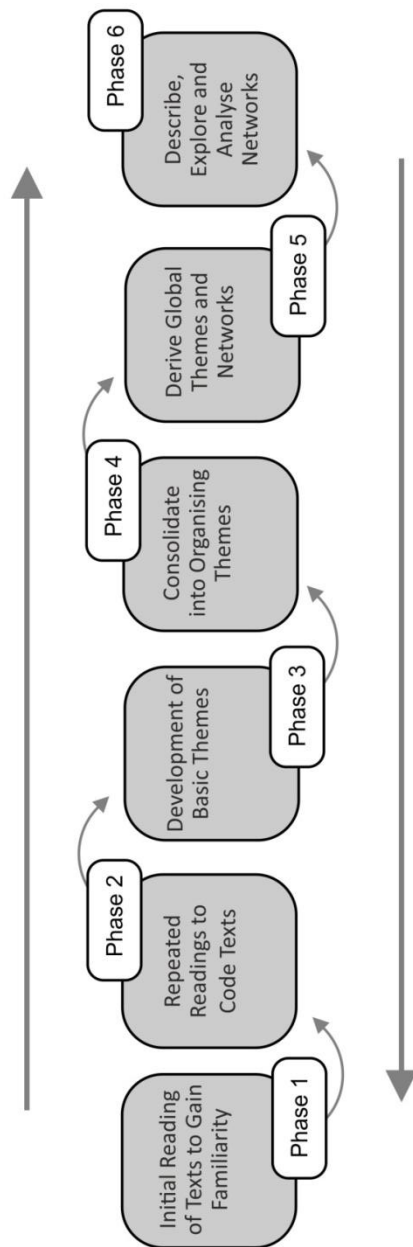


Figure5. 10 6-phase of conducting the thematic analysis step by step (Adapted from (Walters, 2016, p.110))

It is worth mentioning that I conducted the first phase of the thematic network in the Persian language. There is a lack of information in the literature on the notion of translation in the thematic network. In fact, there is no indication of this matter that if the empirical information of the research has not been collected in English, in which phases of conducting thematic network the translation must be applied. In the cases of this study, I applied translation from Persian into English, at the end of phase two, when I had already gained a reasonable familiarity with the text and also achieved creating the codes.

Phase one is based on “gaining familiarity with text” and gaining familiarity with any written text usually happens easier and faster if the original text is in the researcher’s mother language. Also, the result of focused reading to understand the core ideas of the text and extract the codes is more reliable when the text is organized in one’s mother language. In general, based on what I experienced of conducting thematic network, I believe that, if translation is needed, it is better to apply it when phases one and two of the thematic network are already done.

5.13.2 Phase Two: Repeated Readings to Code Texts

In this step I took a more focused reading of the empirical information in order to find out the key ideas of the participants that were related fully or partly to the objective of this research. I sought for similarities and common points that were expressed by participants. In this line, any keyword, phrase, expression, and idea that were repeated or focused on were highlighted and put on a separate table. In this way, basic codes were emerging gradually from the text. Noteworthy at the first stage, the number of initial codes that emerged from the information was considerable. However, listing them in a separate table gave me a more practical way for classifying the ideas, expressions and codes. Therefore, at the end I had the benefit of a shorter list of codes, which was more understandable, rational, and easy to follow.

I believe tabling the extracts of ideas and the emerging codes was a useful strategy that I applied in conducting the thematic network. The table was shaped and developed as

long as I was reading the text; therefore, it led me to follow a more logical and organized strategy to categorize those rationally similar parts of the text that later generated the themes. The table and how this table developed to generate the basic and organizing themes are outlined in the next section.

Turning back to the idea of translation, after extracting the codes and finalizing them based on the original Persian text, it was the time to start translating them into English. It means that the translation section for this study was conducted after emergence of the codes, a step that was almost at the end of phase two.

5.13.3 Phase Three: Development of Basic Themes

Developing a thematic network is an iterative process (Walters, 2016, p.109). Themes are drafted and developed as a result of repeating ideas through an intensively focused reading which usually repeats several times.

As mentioned earlier I listed the similar ideas of the text in a table with separate columns. This table included the extract of the “issues discussed” and also the “codes” that were generated from them (Table 5.4). To move to step three, to identify the “basic themes” and develop them to the “organizing themes“(phase four), applying a colour-based table was largely helpful. Because of the richness of the empirical information and the high number of codes, colour-based coding helped me significantly to follow the similarities of the text visually and easily. After a while developing the table, each colour became the representative of a cluster of similar ideas that led me to identify the themes. This phase of the thematic network is time-consuming and also critical, as the success of the final analysis rested upon the attention to detail paid to the colour-based listing of information. I needed to ensure that each part of the textual material was placed in the correct colour group. It was, therefore, important that it was not hurried (Attride-Stirling, 2001; Braun, 2006; Walters, 2014). At phase three, first “basic themes” emerged by collating together all codes that seemed similar and conveyed similar ideas or meanings in the same colour group (Attride-Stirling, 2001; Braun, 2006). Notably, those codes that did not seem to fit with any

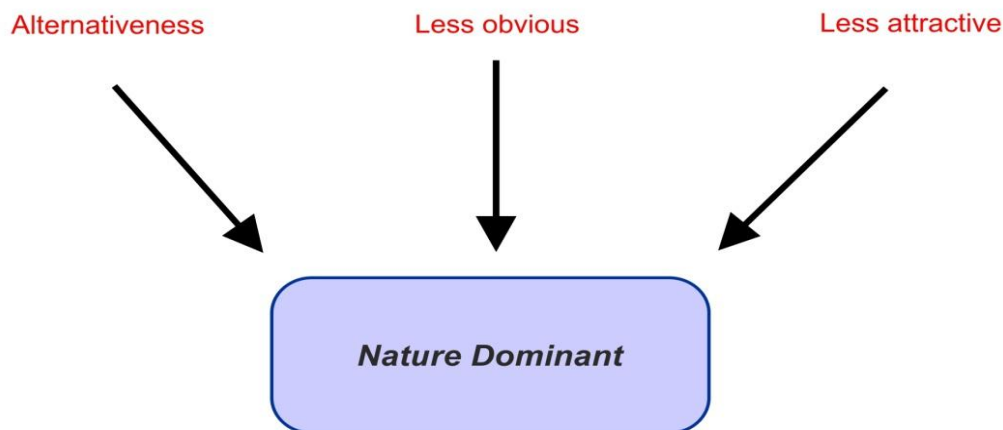
theme (colour) at this point were not discarded; rather, they were filed as miscellaneous (Braun, 2006, p.90).

Table5.4 Identification of the codes and basic themes by applying the colour-based table (Source: Author)

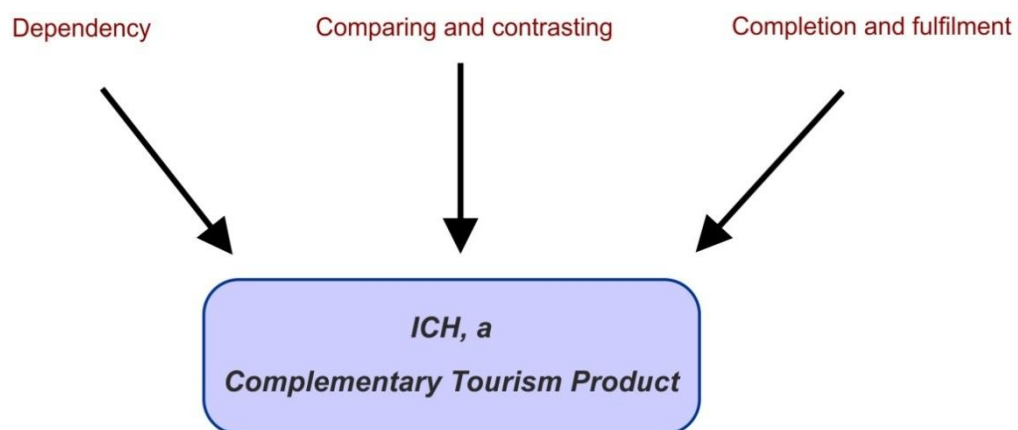
Codes (Step 2)	Issues Discussed	Basic Themes Identified
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> (1) Dependent (2) Alternative (3) Compare and contrast (4) Complete/fulfil (5) Less obvious/visible (6) Less attractive 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Not all types of visitors in QIG are interested in ICH; they have other priorities to visit - Nature has higher importance for QIG authorities - ICH is not visitable easily; while natural features are totally apparent - Natural beauty is noticed everywhere in QIG; (cultural beauty is not evident everywhere) - What attracts the visitors to QIG is its natural landscapes - ICH in QIG is not considered as an independent tourism product - Comparing natural and cultural resources, nature is winner - Geopark without ICH misses something - The presence of local community and their lifestyle complete the attraction of geopark - QIG is more attractive when ICH is added to it - ICH strengthens the attraction of PA for visitors 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ICH is less Dominant (Theme : Nature Dominant) Theme: ICH as a Complementary Tourism Product

To continue with the sample from this research, the process of generating the organizing theme of *Secondariness* and its linked two basic themes are outlined in the following and illustrated in Table 5.4 shows six different codes generated from the focused reading of the text information. The extract of the discussions that these codes were derived from are also presented as “issues discussed”. Merging and consolidating all the codes with similar messages resulted in formation of the basic themes. As shown, according to the colour-based coding two colours emerging at the end leading me to two different basic themes.

The codes referring to alternativeness (2), being less obvious (5), and being less attractive (6) combined together, and formed the basic theme of *Nature dominant*.



In the same way, the codes referring to dependency (1), comparing and contrasting (3), and completion and fulfilment (4) combined together and formed the basic theme of *ICH, a complementary tourism product*.



5.13.4 Phase Four: Consolidate into Organising Themes

The basic themes were then condensed into higher-level themes. At this level, the resultant organising themes were clearly defined and named (Attride-Stirling, 2001; Braun, 2006). Thus, the above basic themes, Nature Dominant and ICH as a Complementary Tourism Product, were combined into the organizing theme of *Secondariness* (Figure 5.11). At this point, the entire homogeneity of the themes must be ensured. To this end I carefully checked the whole process of generating the themes from codes to make sure that there was a rational coherency between the organizing themes and all the information and extracts that contributed to making up the themes. In some cases, previously miscellaneous codes were then able to be meaningfully incorporated into the revised themes at this stage (Braun, 2006).

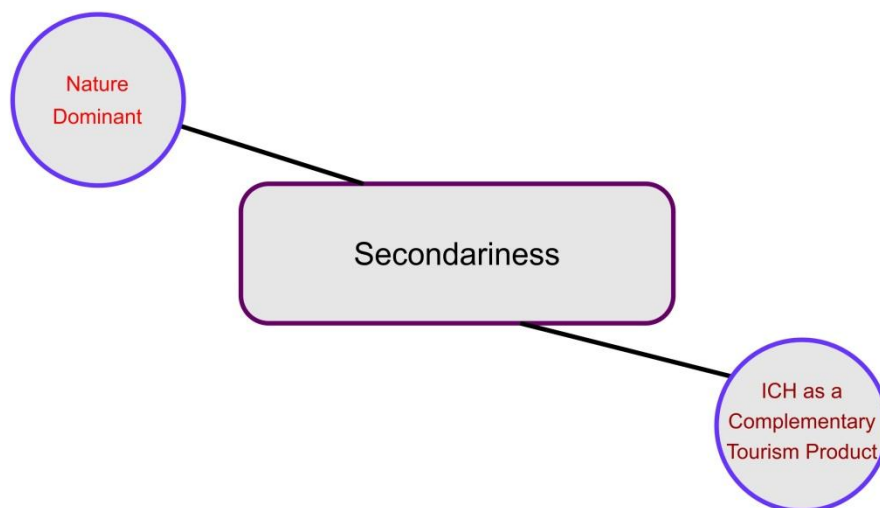


Figure 5. 11 The organising theme *Secondariness* with its two contributing basic themes: *Nature dominant* and *ICH, a complementary tourism product* (Source: Author)

5.13.5 Phase Five: Derive Global Themes and Networks

In the fifth phase, a deeper analysis revealed main global themes that could be derived from the organising themes, whilst maintaining their internal homogeneity and mutual exclusivity (Braun, 2006; Walters, 2016). Furthermore, at this stage, the basic themes,

organising themes, and global themes could be visually represented in a whole thematic network. Here, the organising theme of *Secondariness* contributes to a bigger thematic network surrounding the global theme of *Challenges*.

Similar to the previous two phases, in this phase the themes were constantly checked for their coherency with the coded extracts and to make sure that both the global themes and the thematic networks worked in relation to the extracts. Walters (2014, p. 129) names this stage of thematic network analysis “going back, and forth”, because “it involves going through the codes, the basic themes, and the tentative organising themes” until a cohesive argument is made for each global theme, such that they could be defined and named (Braun, 2006). This resulted in some movement of data extracts to other themes or repositioning of the themes (Campbell-Price, 2014). For instance, in the case of this study, at the first place three global themes emerged. However, through “going back, and forth” between the codes and initial information, I realized a similarity and kind of overlapping between two of them. Rigorous re-checking of the themes, and giving further consideration to the appropriateness of the location of each basic theme and its relationship to the organizing and global themes, finally resulted in combining those two global themes and creating one broad and comprehensive global theme under the title of *Challenges*.

By the end of phase five, and after conducting the final systematic combining of all the emerged themes, two global themes of *Opportunities* and *Challenges* have been drafted. The final thematic network of this research project, which is presented in Figure 5.12, constitutes two global themes, six organizing themes, twelve basic themes, and three sub-basic themes.

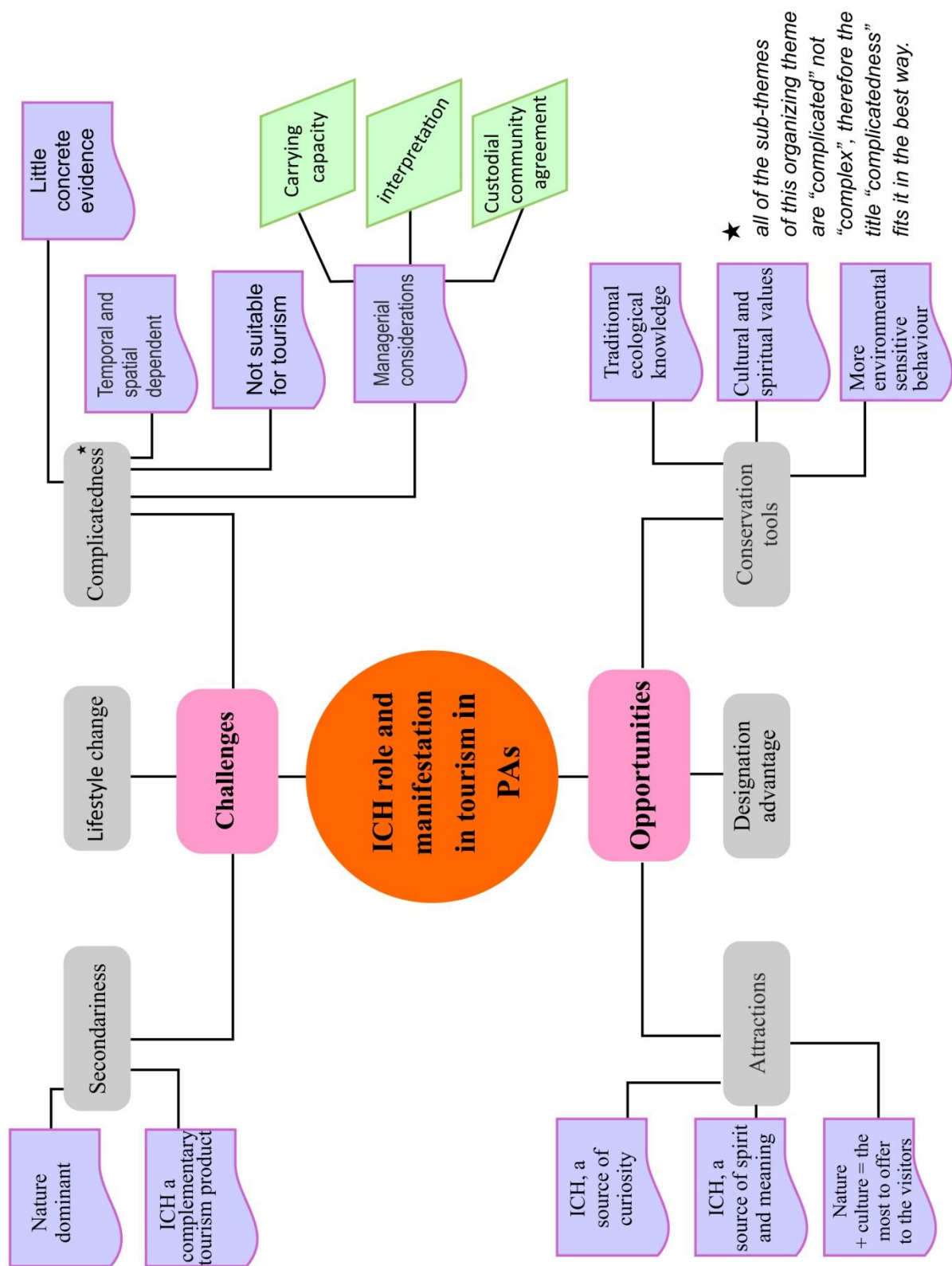


Figure5. 12 Two global themes *Opportunities* and *Challenges* with six constituent organising themes and their respective basic and sub-basic themes

5.13.6 Phase Six: Describe, Explore, and Analyse Networks

Placing global themes at the centre of the thematic network provided a visual tool for describing, refining, and analysing the empirical material in a way that was transparent and easy to understand. Each one of the two global themes is focused and analysed separately in the following two chapters. In fact, the process of writing the two empirical-based chapters enabled each global theme to be investigated in depth and separately. A range of vivid examples from the empirical information is presented to present, develop, and justify each global theme. Careful decisions are made to ensure that sufficient description and verbatim-translated quotations are included to “contextualize the situation, and of the people” and to contextualise the environment being represented (Campbell-Price, 2014, p. 119). As such, the analysis stage of this research is grounded and developed in “thick description” rather than to “be so ‘thin’ as to remove context or meaning” (Patton, 2002, p. 503).

5.14 Summary

In this chapter, methodology and methods used in answering the study’s research question were discussed in terms of their suitability for this purpose. This research is to explore people’s experiences, understanding, and perceptions in their actual daily sociocultural structure. Partly focused on the contexts of culture, I endeavour to study the reality of people in their daily situations and events. Following this objective, it was presented in this chapter that this research is based on the ontological assumption of the interpretive paradigm, by which the world is taken not as separate and isolated from those people who observe it. Keeping this in mind, I applied a qualitative ethnography approach to undertake the empirical phase of this research. Semi-structured interviews of 27 participants among locals (local officials of QIG, and TSBO), and visitors, as well as participant observation, were applied to collect the required empirical information from the field. Then, the notion of researcher reflexivity in the ethnography field was discussed in this chapter.

Chapter Five moved on to introduce QIG as the case study where I undertook the six-month fieldwork and discuss the rationale for choosing this place.

All stages of this research journey were treated with the notion of “ethics of care” (Preissle, 2004; Preissle, 2004). This notion of the importance of ethical considerations in an ethnography approach and then how the ethical needs are achieved in this study were discussed in detail. Ultimately presented is the analysis tool of this research, which is thematic analysis network, and the rationale that makes thematic network appropriate and compatible with this research project. It was presented that the thematic network is modified in this study to create a transparent, descriptive, and detailed interpretive analysis of the information. Consequently, the 6-phase guidance for thematic network implication was introduced, textually and graphically.

The following two chapters address the in-depth analysis of the thematic network by describing, interpreting, and analysing the themes generated from the thematic network.

INTRODUCTION TO THE EMPIRICAL CHAPTERS

The thematic analysis of interview and observational information resulted in two global themes. Each one of these two global themes acts as an anchor for their own separate thematic network which presents a separate set of organizing, and basic themes. Figure A shows the global themes, which will be explained respectively in two following chapters.



Figure A Two global themes *Opportunities and Challenges* illustrating how they address the overall research topic; role and manifestation of intangible cultural heritage in tourism of protected areas

Chapter Six presents the first global theme that focuses on *Opportunities* for tourism in PAs. This chapter explains that the advantage that ICH brings to a PA is defined in three distinctive ways. Firstly, ICH could take the role of a source of attractions to promote tourism in PAs. Secondly, different features of ICH act as a tool to preserve natural resources which are considered as the basic tourism resources for a PA. Lastly, ICH is an influential designation advantage for PAs.

To clarify more this global theme, Chapter Six presents how participants interpreted ICH as sources of life, meaning, and spirit to a PA and how this idea can affect the tourism sector. In addition, it illustrates how they perceived ICH as a tool that stimulates visitors' curiosity while also it can create the most of attraction if being presented alongside the available natural resources of the PA. Moreover, ICH is

interpreted as an advantage which benefits the natural resources of a PA through preserving them.

Chapter Seven focuses on the second global theme: *Challenges*. Three organizing themes *Secondariness, Complicatedness, and Lifestyle change* were derived from the information. These three themes develop the notion that there are a set of various difficulties, worries, and challenges in the way of implicating, and promoting intangible cultural asset of local community in tourism sector of a PA.

6

CHAPTER SIX

OPPORTUNITIES

6.1 Introduction

Chapter Six examines the first global theme of *Opportunities*. The perspectives of three groups of the participants (QIG local officials, STBO, and the visitors) are highlighted to illustrate how participants interpret the intangible cultural assets as an advantage for tourism in QIG. This global theme encompasses three different organizing themes; *Attractions*, *Conservation tools*, and *ICH as a designation advantage*. Further six basic themes complete this thematic network (Figure 6.1).

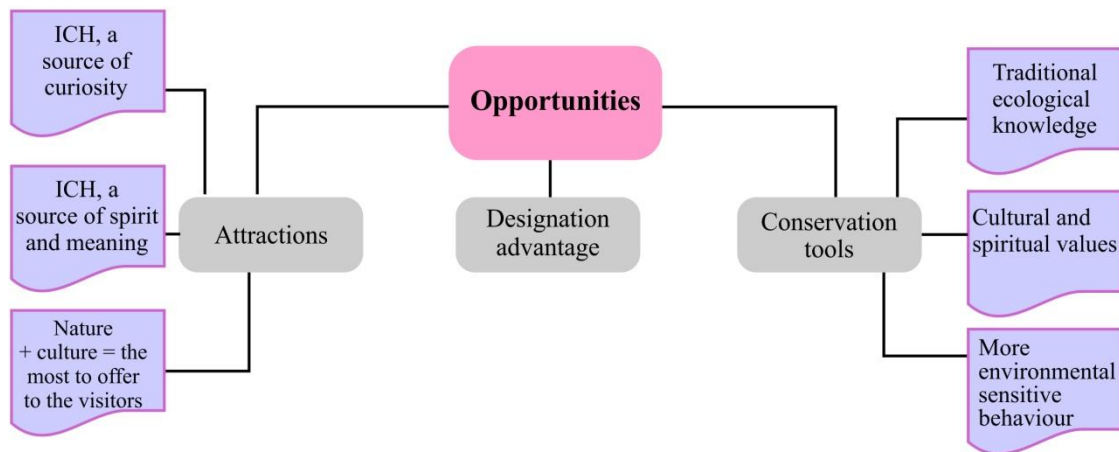


Figure 6.1 Global theme *Opportunities*

6.2 Attractions ¹²

Culture composes a significant set of the values that can be identified in PAs. Additionally, ICH in PAs includes a range of various features from values to customs, knowledge, and techniques. ICH influences how each community within a PA perceives, behaves, and affects the environmental surrounds (Harmon, 2003; Schaaf, 2006; UNWTO, 2012) (Section 3.3.3). On the other side, the visitors more likely find the chance to visit some elements, and features of the intangible cultural asset of the

¹² - The content of this result section has been used in the publication mentioned in page VII

local community living within a PA (Bowers & Jared, 2014)(Section 4.3). Because local communities and all of their cultural assets are part of an integrated system of each PA (Stevens, 2014c), the interaction between tourism, and ICH within these boundaries seems unavoidable.

Regarding tourism-ICH interaction in PAs, many of the participants perceive ICH as a tool for promoting tourism in PAs. ICH as a source of *Attractions* is a common interpretation among both locals and visitors. Three related basic themes constitute the organizing theme *Attractions*. It is reflected that ICH in PAs is a source of life, spirit, and meaning for the visitors (Sections 6.2.1). Also, ICH is presented as a source of curiosity for the visitors (Section 6.2.2). Participants also reveal that a PA has the most to offer to its visitors when its natural attractions are integrated with the cultural asset of the local community and consequently both of them are presented in tourism together (Section 6.2.3)(Figure 6.2). The rest of this chapter is devoted to presenting and analysing the organizing theme of *Opportunities*, and its three basic themes respectively.

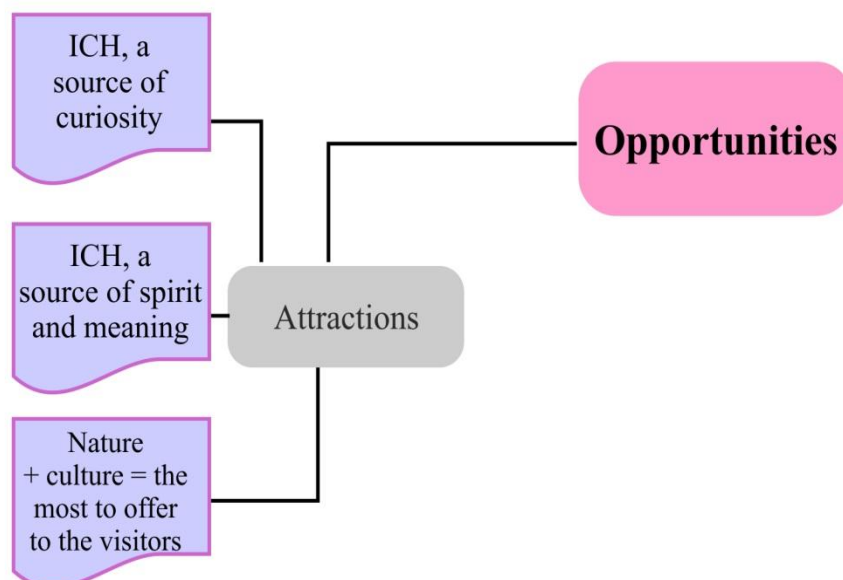


Figure6. 2 Organizing theme *Attractions* and its three supporting basic themes

6.2.1 Intangible Cultural Heritage, a Source of Spirit, and Meaning

I found that many of participants, regardless of which group they were from referred that intangible cultural asset of the local community in QIG act as “*a kind of soul for the material body of the QIG*” (Pedram). As a result it provides the geopark’s biophysical environment with a “*sense of life*” (Ali). This “*sense of life*” is what the local people of QIG, as the creators and carriers of ICH (Lixinski, 2013) are living with, and practicing it in their daily life. In fact, it is part of the local cultural context which is integrated with biodiversity of QIG (Stevens, 2014c).

ICH as a source of spirit and meaning is perceived by both groups of the visitors as well as the locals. It was reflected frequently in the interviews when a variety of terms such as spirit, meaning, soul, alive, life, and evolving were applied. In the following two statements, Mitra and Hashem two members of the local community explained that some of the natural landscapes in QIG are pictured like living creatures by the locals. Such as, the local culture pictures the rocks, and hills as an animated phenomena rather than just inanimate parts of the wilderness.

Most of the geological landscapes in the geopark are linked to our culture. It is interesting that while we value a group of natural elements, we are also sort of afraid of the others, and stay away from them. Based on this, either the inanimate elements of nature, such as rocks or sea, are presented as animated creatures [in our culture], and this is exactly the place from where people view the natural elements as a group of living, and evolving creatures of God, rather than some dead, and static natural features. (Mitra, local employee in Qeshm Island Geopark)

Legends or religious beliefs give meaning, and a kind of spirituality to nature.[For example] we respect Chah-kuh geosite, we respect the sea, we are afraid of the strange geological landforms in Stars Valley at dark, and we don’t break the branches of a young trees because it brings bad luck to our families. People traditionally give the nature meaning, and value through linking them to legends and beliefs. (Hashem, a local guide in Qeshm Island Geopark)

Apart from locals, some of the visitors also talked about this notion. Ali and Keivan were two of the visitors whom I met both in the last day of their stay in the geopark. Ali acknowledged that without visiting, and knowing the local community’s culture, his trip to Qeshm Island would stay incomplete. He took some aspects of the intangible heritage of local people as a

source of “variety, and sense which are associated with natural sources of geopark”. In the same way, Keivan was happy that he had the chance to visit the local people and their cultural heritage. He perceived ICH as what made his trip to the geopark “alive, and meaningful”.

The natural landscape of QIG is really stunning; however I think without local people, the [Qeshm Island] geopark would lack something important. Local life style, their customs, and traditions strengthen the attraction of QIG for visitors, and provide the geopark with more variety, and sense of life. (Ali, a nonlocal visitor)

I realized that nature in this beautiful Island is not separated from people who are living here. People’s behaviour s, their beliefs, food, or even colour and patterns of their cloth are all linked to the natural environment surrounding them. Cultural heritage makes QIG alive, and this is what makes QIG different from for example Lut desert [natural protected area]¹³. Local culture made my trip much different, and of course meaningful in comparison to other trips I have had so far... I learned a lot, and I am so happy about that. Thanks to the nice people of Qeshm Island. (Keivan, a nonlocal visitor)

It is evident in above quotes that ICH is picked up as a tool which associates widely with a sense of life, spirit and meaning in QIG. It is in line with the idea that local culture asset including ICH associate with and affect the natural landscapes around a PA (Harmon, 2003; Schaaf, 2006; UNWTO, 2012) (Section 3.3.3). What that turns QIG from being as a pure, solid, and tough collection of wild geological landforms, such as Lut PA, into a softer and more meaningful piece of land in visitors’ eyes is in fact the deep and historic interaction between human culture, and nature.

6.2.2 Intangible Cultural Heritage, a Source of Curiosity

Nowadays, tourism is characterized by the willing to explore new experiences, and emotions. Based on Giudici et al. (2013) visitors are seeking to experience different aspects of local communities’ culture emotionally and practically. While ICH composes a very considerable part of each culture with a wide range of variety (Section 3.2), it could provoke the curiosity and the sense of “willingness to know more” in the visitors who usually don’t know much about the local cultural context of the place they visit.

¹³ - Lut is the name of a desert protected area in central part of Iran

The visitors' tendency and their willingness to know more towards the local culture is reflected in the following short quote from Pedram, a member of the local community, whose job as a traditional restaurant owner requires him a constant interaction with the visitors in QIG.

...the visitors like to experience living with us and do what we do in our daily life. Even they are willing to pay more to attend our cultural events or buy our local products...they always like to know more about us.

While interacting with the local community in QIG, the visitors like to learn about local lifestyles, and experience it personally. The visitors usually ask and explore to find out more of hidden aspects of local culture because they are simply curious about it. The following quotes discuss the role of more particularly the intangible cultural elements in creating, and promoting the sense of curiosity in visitors while they are visiting QIG. Sharif believes that culture in QIG is enjoying a unique structure “because it has been created, and evolved in a unique physical environment of the Island”. He noted that this “uniqueness” is exactly what makes visitors curious about the local culture and any possible culturally characteristic that makes Qeshm Island’s cultural heritage different from what exists in modern big cities.

Human communities who are living in the territories, that we now call them PAs, are enjoying a unique style of life because all aspects of their life are deeply affected by a natural environment which is unique by itself. I would like to point at this fact that cultural asset of communities inside Qeshm Island Geopark, is unique because these communities are historically living in an environment with unique natural features, and landscapes. Their cultural structure is totally different from what people in big cities have. Therefore, this cultural asset usually acts as a source of curiosity for people who come from outside the local cultural framework. For instance, visitors in Qeshm Island Geopark regularly ask about our customs in the island. Visitors like to know if our customs or religious events are similar to other cities in Iran. It becomes more interesting for them after they find out that in most cases their answer is “no”! This big “no” could naturally cause more curiosity for them to explore the local culture more. (Sharif, an employee in Qeshm Island Geopark)

Hamid expanded this subject more. He explained the relationship between the intangible cultural asset in QIG and visitors' curiosity from a different perspective. He noted that the answers for many of questionings and curiosity exist and embedded in the local intangible culture.

Visitors usually ask the local guides a set of similar questions about our intangible culture. For example, they are usually interested in knowing about the meaning of the local names each geosite is called wit. Also they want to know about the local wedding custom and dressing codes especially the women's typical dress in the island. They are curious to know how life is going on in this remote island. Interestingly, the answers to most of their questions are rooted in our culture. I see our custom and tradition as a source of both curiosity and attraction for people from outside the geopark. (Hamid, an employee in Qeshm Island Geopark)

Hamid gave an example to prove that considering the visitors' sense of curiosity and responding it could influence tourism development in the geopark. He noted that ICH can attract more visitors because *"they [visitors] often want to know about those aspects of culture which is not as evident as the material heritage in the island"*. He discussed an example which conveys that even the mythical ideas and folkloric tales associated with a geosite can attract interested visitors who usually have questions about the cultural asset associated with the natural landscape and its application in the local community daily life:

For example, Chah-kuh is one of our most visited geosites. Today what visitors see in this geosite is a stunning deep and narrow canyon, shaped and eroded with water and wind over million years. Also there are a couple of manmade wells around the valley...I wonder how much their [visitors'] experience of visiting the geopark would change if they would be told that this site, based on an ancient mythology, used to be a natural sacred site because of the continues availability of water in the wells? It is said that that in the past men were forbidden to enter the valley and only women were allowed to get close to the wells. This is another interesting story that can attract a group of curious visitors. (Hamid, an employee in Qeshm Island Geopark)

Another example that was reflected by a group of participants evolved around the local women and their dressing styles. The appearance of local women and the way they dress up in their daily social life is significantly different from other parts of Iran (Figure 6.3). This different dress codes and style usually raise questions among those who visit QIG. In the rest of this section I will expand this subject firstly through a quote from Hashem, a member from the local community. Later, Majid, talking from a visitor's perspective, reveals more about the role of the female aspects of ICH in promoting curiosity among the visitors in QIG.

I know that visitors like to know about our women. Maybe because [local] the women's appearance and clothing look totally different from Iranian women in other cities. I know that visitors usually like to talk with girls and women in villages. They always ask to take some pictures with women in their local dress. However, their request is often rejected by women. As a local guide, I spend lots of time with visitors and I have found that they are so interested to visit handicrafts workshop in which they can meet groups of local women working Asking about the handicrafts and also the history of each product are the most typical questions the visitors ask when they visit the [handicrafts] workshop. I have realized that while talking with local women visitors also raise subjects that they think women probably could answer better than men such as the local food and recipes, the custom of wedding and the Henna tattoos. Women and female related stuff always constitute an important part of visitors' questions. (Hashem, Qeshm Island Geopark local guide)



Figure6. 3 Dressing styles of local men and women in Qeshm Island. This style of women's dressing is unique only for Qeshm Island in Iran (Source: Qeshm Island Geopark Archive)

The traditional lifestyle in QIG requires women to get involved with ICH significantly. Women are continuously dealing with and practising various elements of intangible culture in their daily chores and responsibilities. Notably, in QIG two main domains of ICH are mainly produced and managed by women; culinary, and handicrafts which are both two interesting subjects for visitors. In the above quote, Hashem stated that most visitors are curious to know particularly about local women, and female aspect of ICH such as culinary, wedding ceremonies, and doing house chores.

Hashem also indicated that the visitors' request to take picture with local women is usually rejected. Regarding this notion, the analysis of the empirical information further suggest that culturally it is not accepted that a local woman communicates with strangers particularly if the woman is young, single or walking alone in the village. This cultural norm becomes even stricter when the stranger is a man. It is worth mentioning that many of young women in QIG are taking university degrees or they had already been graduated. I met some local women who are working as a teacher or a bank clerk; therefore they are naturally in daily interactions with both men, and women. However, each one of these women, when return back to the village from their work places, automatically shift their role to a typical woman in a bigger work society to a female member of a small local community. As a member of local community she is committed to her cultural setting and follows the society norms .When return to the village after work, a local woman changes her typical work uniform into the local and traditional dress. Therefore, following the social norms when she is walking in her village in local appearance, she refuses to communicate with the strangers especially male strangers.

Majid has travelled to QIG several times. Also, he has the experience of working in the geopark for few years and he is familiar with the local cultural context to some extent. He expressed his perspective on why the visitors usually become curious to know more about the local women in QIG:

I think people in the geopark are introvert to some points. Because of that, what goes on inside of their houses is different from what one can see from outside. I guess women take a strong role in managing their homes but they don't usually turn up in the social activities of the village. This is exactly opposite to what I saw in the West of Iran in Kurdish society, where women feel free to socialize outside their houses. Every evening,

Kurdish women in the rural areas usually get out of the house, gather in groups of four to five in the shade of trees in the alley, chatting, spinning, and watching their kids playing around... if a stranger asks a question or starts talking to them they behave more receptive, friendly and welcoming...Indeed, in Qeshm Island Geopark those parts of ICH that are related to men such as knowledge about fishing or Herra¹⁴ forest is more presented and naturally visible in social life rather than women related intangible cultural asset. This situation makes visitors become curious about the hidden and kind of unknown life of local women in Qeshm Island Geopark. (Majid, a visitor in Qeshm Island Geopark)

Comparing Kurdish local women living in the west of Iran to geopark's local women Majid suggested that many of the questions about women life in QIG emerged from the fact that the local women in QIG avoid socializing with visitors. He used the term of "introvert" as significance for cultural context in QIG, while it is probably more applicable for the case of local women communicating with people they don't know, like visitors.

All in all, there are two reasons which make visitors more curious about women's life in the geopark. On the one hand, the local women don't appear frequently in the village social activities like communicating with village visitors. On the other hand they are always in glittering and colourful dresses with entirely different patterns and styles from the typical dressing style of Iranian women.

In addition, with regard to the relationship between ICH and women a notable notion was derived from the information that there exist a close linkage between women and creation and preservation of ICH. The rest of this section justifies the female aspect(s) of ICH in QIG and how visitors interact with it. It was observed that some parts of ICH in QIG are produced and managed mostly by women. In QIG, women are particularly responsible for culinary, handicrafts, and the traditional knowledge associated with each one these two elements. For instance, all of the crafts makers in QIG workshops are women, not men. Women deal with all processes from purchasing the basic material, designing, producing the crafts products as well as managing the handicrafts workshop, and store. It was explained earlier in this section that visitors are interested

¹⁴ - "Herra" is the term that the local people in Qeshm Island use for mangrove forest.

in visiting and knowing about local handicrafts in the geopark. It is also true when it comes to food and culinary techniques.

Observing the visitors in Amini guesthouse, I witnessed the visitors' willingness and curiosity to know more about the local food they were served (Section 5.8). Visitors usually ask different questions about the ingredients, special spices, traditional techniques, and equipment of making food and tea which both taste, flavour, and are served in a different way from typical Iranian food and tea. In the Amini guesthouse Mr. Amini, the owner of the guesthouse and sometimes his older daughter explain the visitors about the local food. After eating, visitors often ask if they could talk to the woman working in the kitchen. Women visitors usually are allowed to get in the kitchen and ask their questions. However, because of the reasons explained earlier that *"following the social norms, local women don't interact with men foreigners easily"* (Fozi) men visitor are not given the chance to visit the kitchen in close and the intangible cultural asset associated with culinary.

Another reason that men are refused to enter the kitchen is the notion of Hijab. Following Islam rule, women in QIG cover their head (Figure 6.3) in front of a male stranger. Obviously, men visitors entering the kitchen put women into trouble and inconvenience while doing their job. In this vein, Nakhoda said:

Unlike men, women can easily visit the kitchen, but if a man visitor enters the kitchen our women need to wear Hijab and it puts them into trouble... I'd like women to feel safe and free while working in my guesthouse (Nakhoda, a guesthouse owner)

In general, as Sharif stated earlier in this section, the local community in a PA enjoys the uniqueness of their cultural asset in many ways which is influenced the unique environment they are living in. The empirical information of this study reveals that the visitors show interest and curiosity to know more about this uniqueness. Analysing the information suggests that this curiosity and the sense of "know how" among the visitors, if planned purposively, can attract more number of visitors and promote tourism in PAs.

6.2.3 Nature plus Culture Has the Most to Offer to the Visitors

Lockwood (2012b, p. 41) states that “managing a PA is essentially a social process” which is affected by the local community’s histories, culture, institution, economic circumstances, and politics. There are a common implication in many of interviews that the natural attractions in QIG plus intangible cultural features offer the most of beauty and wonders to the visitors. The rest of this section explains this theme in more detail.

It was discussed that the interaction between PAs and the cultural context of local community living in the place is an imbedded and longtime phenomenon. Culture affects the environment of PAs and the physical environment of the PA plays as a source of inspiration and evolving for different aspects of culture (West & Brechin, 1991) (Section 3.3).

In addition, tourism interacts with the available cultural asset including ICH of the community living in a PA (Section 4.3). The notion of visitors visiting various elements of intangible culture was highlighted in the information. Some of the visitor participants expressed that in addition to the natural beauty of QIG they also enjoyed visiting various aspects of the intangible heritage of the local community of the geopark like local daily life, and customs. Some of the visitor participants also focused that what they admired about the QIG is that it provides them with a wide range of natural and cultural attractions together at the same time and in the same place. In fact, in line with Stevens (2014c) many of participants of this study perceived QIG as an integrated system of natural and cultural attractions and the interaction between them.

Sara was visiting QIG for the second time. As the below comment reveals, her reason for traveling to QIG was mostly because of her passion for visiting the local lifestyle, and their cultural products. Sara disclosed that besides the natural beauty of QIG, which she had already missed, some aspects of people life was also of great appealing for her. It was to the point that she decided to travell to the geopark for the second time mostly because she was interested in learning about the techniques of making the small handmade dolls which are made by local women in QIG.

Two years ago I travelled to Qeshm Island for the first time. At that time visiting the breathtaking geological landforms of the geopark like Namakdan Cave and also the beautiful beaches of the Persian Gulf were an absolutely unique and amazing

experience for me. Also, living with a local family in a guesthouse and getting to know their lifestyle which is totally different from ours in Yazd¹⁵ was a very impressive experience...what made me come here this time is ,in fact, the beautiful dolls that local women make using small and colourful pieces of fabrics... I am here to see if I can learn the techniques and make my own dolls. I will probably buy some of them as a souvenir for my friends. Besides, back in Tehran, I had really missed sitting on the beach and watching the sunset behind the Persian Gulf. I think Qeshm Island Geopark has everything that a visitor like me is looking for. Nature and culture together. (Sara, a nonlocal visitor)

Leili is a local woman who is living in a village and working as the manager of a handicraft workshop, and the handicraft store next door. Because of her job and her daily interaction with visitors in the workshop she had a lot to tell me on how much visitors become absorbed and impressed with the local handicrafts and the traditional techniques associated with each one of product.

They [visitors] are usually attracted to the fine and delicate techniques we [local women] use to produce handicrafts. When visitors enter the workshop they usually start looking everywhere and checking all of our products one by one so carefully. They ask several questions mostly about the traditional techniques and the materials we use. For example, they pick a dress and ask how much it costs for us to make that dress. I can see in their faces, especially in female visitors, that they enjoy of how colourful and shiny our fabrics are in compare to the plain and mostly dark colours they wear in big cities.

We also let visitors try on a dress for a short time...it is always the most fun part of the story. Visitors look totally different in our local dresses. I understand that they absolutely like and enjoy visiting our workshop and our products. Maybe, because we are very close to Stars Valley ... it is just few minutes' walk from the valley to get here. The visitors enjoy being here and hearing a little bit about our culture as well after visiting those strange things [landforms] in Stars Valley... Most of visitors buy something as a souvenir before leaving the store. Sometimes, they are also willing to

¹⁵ - The name of a big and old city in centre of Iran

pay more than the defined price because they believe that these products are a piece of art and worth more.

The handicrafts workshop and store is located on the way to the most well-known geosite in QIG; Stars Valley (Figure 6.4). All visitors have to pass by the store and most of them stop by after noticing the sign and colorful fabrics hanging out of the store. Leili's quote indicates that the visitors are usually happy to visit the handicrafts shops after visiting Stars Valley because this place provides the visitors with an experience of learning about handicrafts traditional knowledge right after they have learnt some about the natural asset in the geopark. Being able to visit the natural and ICH elements together is perceived as a unique and enjoyable experience for visitors.



Figure6. 4 The small handicraft shop on the way to Stars Valley geosite (left) and a view of Stars Valley geosite

Another point emerged from the information is that the intangible cultural assets of QIG could be attractive for a wide range of visitors with different tastes of travelling. Qeshm Island is a known destination for trekking, and mountain biking. There is some exceptional spots in the geopark which are suitable for nature lovers who are interested in less travelled natural areas far from the human population. I was able to interview with Samad who has spent most of life traveling in mountainous regions. Samad is a professional mountain climber; he traveled to QIG to cycle the available tracks in the geosites. He told me about his unique experience of cycling one of the remote and unknown areas, called Shour geosite. He described the geosite as “*a huge salty land where nobody ever dared to settle down*”. However at the same time he couldn't stop

himself from appreciating hospitality of locals in QIG villages and the attraction of their culture:

I have cycled in most parts of Ira, and some other countries in the mountain, desert, alongside the beaches, and etc. I consider myself as a nature lover and I do my best to plan my trips to stay close to nature, far from residential areas. However, visiting Qeshm [Island] was a different experience for me. People here have a wonderful and valuable culture. It is the first time I am really absorbed by a specific culture.

At first glance, local clothing, especially women clothing, was so interesting for me. Likewise, before my trip, I had been told about the unique taste of local cuisine of this island. That the food is prepared with lots of spice is so tempting for me.

Also, people are kind and friendly. Upon my arrival to the island, when I was trying to carry my bicycle and other heavy stuff with me, I found local people quite helpful. They kindly took off all my stuff out of the ferry while I was busy moving my bicycle.

After two days, I decided to change my plan a bit this time. I rented a room in a guesthouse in heart of the geopark and I would like to tell you that it was a wonderful experience that I cannot describe. Not only, I was close to main sites that I intended to visit but also I enjoyed the local people's hospitality, cuisine, and traditions. These people are faithful Muslims who are so kind and respectful to the visitors. Valuing guests is part of their culture and I guess it is the biggest attraction of their culture and obviously a good advantage for the geopark to attract more visitors. (Samad, a nonlocal visitor)

The above quote reveals that even a traveller with a high passion to stay close to nature, like Samad, could be attracted to the cultural assets of the geopark to the point that he decided to change his routine cycling plan and stayed in a local guesthouse instead of camping in the wild.

Fozi explains this notion more:

The owners of the guesthouses and traditional restaurants have learned that the local food and traditional internal decoration of their houses are very interesting for the visitors. During last ten years, the number of visitors started to increase in the island and it encouraged most of the guesthouses' owners to add few rooms to their

guesthouse to make the building more spacious .They used the modern decoration items in the new rooms which were totally different from what they used to have traditionally. After a while they realized that to attract more visitors they must change the decoration of their guesthouses and restaurants toward more traditional style rather than the modern style. They have found that people come to geopark to visit geoheritage and also experience a different traditional lifestyle. (Fozi, an employee in Qeshm Island Geopark)

In general, above quotes suggest that different types of visitors can enjoy visiting QIG if they are given chance to visit both natural and some aspects of ICH such as local lifestyle together, and at the same time. Not only the visitors but also the STBO have already realized that togetherness nature and ICH is a considerable attraction in tourism. While visiting QIG, the visitors enjoy their visit the most when geopark offers them the chance to experience the beauty of the natural landscapes and the ICH together.

6.3 Conservation Tools ¹⁶

Three related basic themes constitute the organizing theme *Conservation tools*. According to the empirical information, two areas of the intangible cultural elements

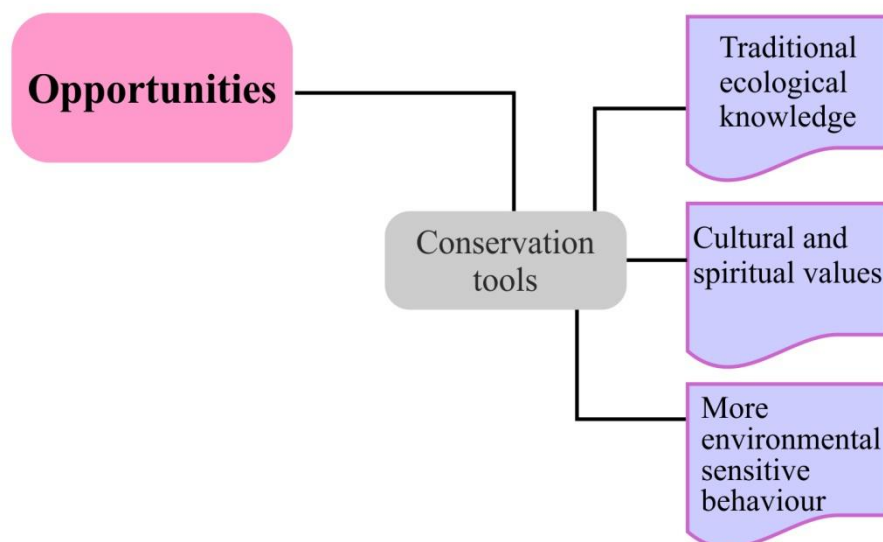


Figure6. 5 Organizing theme *ICH as a Conservation toll* with its three basic themes

¹⁶ The content of this result section has been used in the publications mentioned in page VII

contribute more significantly to the conservation of the existing natural resources in a PA; traditional ecological knowledge (TEK) and cultural and spiritual values. In addition, the basic theme *More environmental sensitive behaviour* illustrates the participants' perception of the role of ICH to promote environmentally friendly behaviour in the tourism sector towards the natural environment of a PA (Figure 6.5).

Culture creates an attitude, and set of behaviours which can support nature in many ways. Zeppel (2009a) notes that culture and cultural based behaviours have guaranteed biodiversity conservation in many cases in the world. It is true in those PAs where natural environment has strong cultural meaning, because local residents living within these territories usually and based on different aspects of their cultural context, value nature surround within their territories (Putney, 2003; Wild, McLeod, & Valentine, 2008).

With regard to the linkage between culture and conservation of nature, so far the existing literature has mostly addressed culture as a broad topic including tangible and intangible elements together. While this section of this research, focuses on the intangible aspect of local cultural context. This section discusses the ways that the intangible cultural asset contributes to preserving nature. It is presented that ICH in general, is reflected as a tool that acts positively in protecting natural resources of PAs. The constructive role of ICH in supporting nature was evident to the point that it was frequently mentioned by both local participants who are familiar with the cultural context of their homeland and also some of the visitors. During conducting the fieldwork in QIG it was observed that different domains of ICH link to preserving the natural resources of the geopark in many ways. Sometimes these linkages between ICH and preserving nature are more visible when a set of cultural values or traditional techniques were applied by members of the local community to protect nature. Through the history people have applied the local culture in order to support nature (Putney, 2003). However, the role of ICH in this area is to the point that in some cases even very delicate handicrafts techniques can be applied to preserve nature. The below example clarifies this notion.

A few years ago a conservation project was started in the QIG which aimed to support Huck-bill turtles; a rare species of turtles live in the geopark. Through this project,

Huck-bill turtles have been provided with a protected breeding area alongside the southern beach of QIG. At the same time, a handicraft project was running. This project aimed to support geopark's Huck-bill turtles through the revival of traditional handicrafts techniques. By applying old handicrafts techniques the Huck-bill turtles turned on as a common logo on many of handmade products produced by local women in QIG. In this way, an element of the intangible cultural asset of the local community was applied to stress the value and protect of one of the endangered animal species in QIG. The linkage between craftsmanship and turtles can be taken as a good example to prove how ICH could support wildlife conservation. Figure 6.6 shows examples of the turtle design on local handicrafts which are also part of geopark's souvenir which are presented to visitors.



Figure6. 6 the logo of Huck-bill turtles on the handicrafts product in Qeshm IGeopark (Source: Qeshm Island Geopark Archive)

6.3.1 Traditional Ecological Knowledge

Traditional Ecological Knowledge (TEK) refers to the wide range of knowledge about nature that is now considered as a valuable source of information on the history of flora, and fauna, human health, and medicine, religion, rituals, customs, and many of other cultural, and scientific features (Berkes et al., 2000; Ellen, 2003; Gulay, 2009). Importantly UNESCO (2003) considers the range of “knowledge, and practices concerning nature, and the universe”, including TEK, as one of the five main criteria of ICH (Section 3.2.5).

In QIG the ways that locals apply TEK in their daily lives, and its effects on the geopark’s natural environment is considerably evident. During interviews local people, when talking about their ICH, referred to TEK and the techniques associated with it repeatedly. Some expressed that they have *“inherited this special knowledge from their ancestors”* (Hashem). Also, it was stressed several times that TEK *“was more practiced and valued in the past when people still were following the traditional system of fishing and cattle raising”* (Sahrif). Further analysing of the empirical information revealed that two traditional techniques related to mangrove forest usage and water management were exemplified and highlighted more than other parts of TEK.

Saleh, a young skipper from the local community, is working as mangrove guide in the geopark. He takes the visitors to the forest during high tide to show them the floating trees of the mangroves and the wildlife around especially birds. Saleh’s life has been always linked to the mangroves. As a little boy he used to go fishing in the water canals of the forest with the other boys in the village. Now he is working in tourism as a boat guide and still in the mangroves. He explained to me some of the aspects of TEK associated with the mangroves:

We use Herra leafs to feed our cattle at home. Every week men boat among the trees in Herra to gather leafage. They know how to do it and how much is enough not to hurt the trees. In fact, this is an old knowledge that we have learned from our fathers. For example, we don’t cut the branches in late winter and early spring, because the trees start to blossom. This is also the time that migratory birds arrive at the forest, and bees also start making hive among young branches... we also know that cutting off the old

branches in winter will help the trees to grow and bloom better in next spring.... in fishing we consider the same rules in Herra. First, everyday each fisherman fish as much as they need to feed their families and sell the rest of it in the village market on the same day. Secondly following our [traditional] fishing calendar fishermen stop fishing during the time of spawn...we stop hunting prawns for two months per year when it is the breeding time for fish and prawns.

As mentioned in section (chapter 5.5) the mangrove forest is a critical ecosystem for the region. It is of high importance at the national and international level and also for QIG in various aspects. In the above quote, Saleh explains how local people have adapted themselves to the ecological condition of mangroves through applying a set of practical knowledge that they inherited from their fathers. This illustrates that, while meeting their needs the local people try not to hurt the mangroves ecosystem by timing fishing throughout the year and considering other creatures living within the forest like migratory birds and bees.

Another example of the interaction between ICH and preserving nature refers to water, and water management systems. Qeshm Island is located in a hot and arid area. It rains very rarely in this part of Iran. At the same time evaporation happens constantly because of the long hours of intense and hot sunshine (QFA, 2014). As a result, water has been always the most primary need and crucial life element in the Island. The traditional techniques that locals have applied to adapt themselves to this difficult geographical situation and to save water are taken as a considerable TEK and as an important part of their intangible cultural asset.

Among participants locals indicated to water based TEK more than the visitors. It was likely because locals were more familiar with these techniques and their functions than visitors. However, this part of TEK is considerable in the geopark history and it is common in the current daily life of the community. Therefore water based TEK was also noticed and highlighted by some of the visitor participants. Abdoo, a 67-year old local man who is working as a local guide in his village, told me about the knowledge and the traditional techniques related to water and water saving. He noted that: *“here [in the Qeshm Island] rainwater is threatened by being missed soon after a short while it flows. Therefore, we store them under the ground in a series of handmade wells across the island and also many Aab-anbars that our fore fathers have left us”*.

Aab-anbars are roofed underground water cisterns developed in Iran as part of a water management system in the area reliant on seasonal rain (Holod, 1982) (Figure 6.7). There are many of Aab-anbars across the geopark. Some of them are still being used by locals especially to save rain water in spring to be used during hot months. Hamid, another local participant noted that Aab-anbars have been built based on “*very specific architectural techniques in order to keep the air under the dome cool, and prevent the water from evaporating*”.

Besides, it was reflected that Aab-anbars are associated with a range of cultural beliefs associated with the valuing water and water reservoirs in the local community. People in QIG value water to the point that as Mitra said “*people avoid damaging the building of Aab-anbar, and pollute the water*”.

The quote below is based on one of the visitor’s experiences of visiting a local family in QIG. This quote illustrates that the traditional knowledge about water management was interesting for Mehri as a visitor who was not familiar with this knowledge and its function. Mehri’s quote expresses that there exists special knowledge and more importantly a wide range of public awareness about water usage and water management in the daily life of locals in geopark. As a visitor, who was totally unaware about the local lifestyle, Mehri was impressed with the practical methods local people are applying to save water in their houses, and villages. Then she realized that all behaviours, techniques, and knowledge about valuing, and saving water are deeply embedded in the cultural context of the local community:



Figure6. 7 Architecture of outside and inside of an Aab-anbar (Source: Majid Yasini)

It was the first day that my nephew and I arrived in Qeshm [geopark]. We settled in Hassan guesthouse¹⁷. We arrived at lunch time, and I was so curious to visit around the guesthouse. Everything looked different there. So after having food I decided to take some of the dishes back to the kitchen before Hassan [the owner of the guest house] get back to take them... I entered a big kitchen where three of local women in those pretty dresses greeted me warmly... I noticed something that surprised me a lot. The way they washes the dishes were different from what we do. All dishes were soaked for a while in a very big basin of warm water and dishwashing liquid. Then, they rinsed the dishes under the tap water with low pressure. At that day I had no idea about the reason of doing the dishes in such a different and of course difficult way. But as soon as we started traveling around the geopark I found that it was the most effective way that local women could apply in their kitchens to minimize the water usage while doing the dishes... I saw the small building of Aab-anbar in all parts of Qeshm Island Geopark, and it's very interesting that how these people have acquired the incredible knowledge of saving water in such a rough and arid land in a way that they have a sufficient water supply in all months of a year. You know that water is taken as a "respected natural element" among us [Iranians], but now I could say that these people respect water much practically and more than other Iranians by doing their best not to waste it in their daily lives. (Mehri, a nonlocal visitor)

During observation I found another good example of the traditional techniques and knowledge that locals have been applying over time to manage the little water resources that they have. Three hundred and sixty-five handmade wells which are called Tala Wells were dug about 2000 years ago in Qeshm Island. It was the ruler's order to dig the wells equal to the number of days in a year. It is said that people opened one of the wells each days to use its water. In this way they could manage effectively to have enough water for all a year (QFA, 2001, p. 12) (Figure 6.8).

Sharif, a biologist from the local community who is working in the QIG central office, presented a wider perspective on the role of ICH in preserving nature. He expressed that TEK is essential in saving not only some specific natural elements such as water but also the whole current ecosystem of the geopark.

¹⁷ -Mehri spent the first three days of her trip in a local guesthouse that is called Hassan guesthouse.



Figure 6. 8 The historic complex of handmade wells in Qeshm Island Geopark (Source: Qeshm Island Geopark Archive)

TEK is not only about us, human being to survive. Interestingly, it considers all creatures that live in the Qeshm Island and need fresh water to survive. From our forefathers, local people know how to save water for hot months of a year, so they will have enough water for themselves their plants and cattle. The point is that other living creatures are not ignored either. For instance, in Chah-kuh geosite we are still using handmade wells. Just next to each well you see few small handmade holes in rocks in the shade of cliffs. Locals, who usually go to this geosite to take water from wells, always check that the holes are full. They re-fill the holes especially at noon when it gets too hot to make sure that bird and insects nesting around have access to water. I think this is only one of the small but interesting examples of how the clever traditional techniques of the local community support the ecosystem diversity and in general the “life” in the geopark. (Sharif, an employee in Qeshm Island Geopark)

The above quote outlines TEK protects the geopark’s ecosystem and the life of animals which are living in the geopark. In this way, one of ICH elements (TEK) acts very effectively in conserving some of the important natural elements resources in the QIG such as the valuable ecosystem of mangrove forest which was also reflected earlier in Saleh’s quote. Sharif’s conclusion on the role of TEK in supporting “life” in geopark is along the same lines of what Maffi (2012) discusses when suggesting that traditional

knowledge influences the wellbeing of local communities, sustainable use of natural resources, and environmental conservation (Chapter 3.3.3).

In addition, the notion of protecting nature through applying a set of cultural values was also reflected in the information. For instance, it was mentioned that locals value water as a respectful natural element in a way that they neither waste water nor pollute it. The next section addresses this subject; the linkage between cultural and spiritual values of the local community, as a part of their ICH, and preserving natural resources.

6.3.2 Cultural and Spiritual Values

The way people view nature and treat it is affected significantly by a special set of faith, moral beliefs, religious customs, spiritual mainstreams, and sociocultural values (UNWTO, 2012; Harmon, 2003; Schaaf, 2006). Most of participants in this research acknowledged that since long ago religion and also cultural and spiritual values of locals have linked strongly to preservation of the biodiversity of those pieces of land which now are known as a PAs. Notably, this linkage has not just happened recently but it has been practiced repeatedly by people over decades, and centuries (Alivizatou, 2012).

Although the cultural context of the Qeshm Island is basically Iranian, it has been affected through sailing and trading with India, African, and Arab countries, as well as various historic events in or close to the Persian Gulf such as different wars. This variety has enriched the cultural context of QIG and its intangible cultural asset. At the same time, people living in QIG are religious Muslims. The Islam-based mindset has been added to a wide range of other historic contributions to shaping a cultural context which acts in most cases respectful and considerate towards the environment (Section 5.5).

One of the interesting examples derived from interviews reflects the interface of a set of cultural values in QIG and the birds living in the mangrove forest and neighborhood area. *“There are varieties of bird species that live permanently, in mangrove forest, and their population is always the same because people like them to live there in peace, and*

safety” said Sharif; a local biologist. Emphasizing the culturally based behaviour of the local community, Nakhoda, who used to fish in the mangrove forest before establishing a guesthouse, explains the role of cultural values in preserving QIG natural resources and more specifically its wildlife:

I know that you [the researcher] worked and lived in Qeshm Island Geopark for few years. Have you ever seen somebody hunting in Herra? ... unlike people in the north of Iran, we never hunt birds while they are available all over the Island and most of them are Halal and Islam lets us eat their meat .Traditionally, we go to Herra two or three times a week but we have been told by our fathers that these birds shouldn't be hunted... I think even the birds have realized that nothing is threatening them here because they are not afraid of us when we get close to them boating among the trees. (Nakhoda, a guest house owner)

I asked Nakhoda the reason that locals avoid hunting the birds while birds could provide a permanent and cheap food resource for local families especially poor families. More importantly, there is no religious restriction for locals to eat birds because they are Halal. Nakhoda replied by referring to the sociocultural beliefs and cultural based behaviour by which guests are highly valued and respected in the local community cultural setting:

I used to go to Herra with my father since I was a little boy. I remember he kept telling me that the birds nesting and flying among trees in Herra are our guests and we shouldn't hurt our guests. He told me God gives us our food from the sea and it is enough for us, so we don't need to hunt our guests [the migratory birds]... I have already told my children what my father told me about our bird guests on the island....birds and we have been living together peacefully for many years.

Saeed was one of the visitor participants who talked about his chat with an old man of the local community about their culture. As a visitor who was not familiar with the cultural value of the local community he was impressed with what the old man told him about local beliefs and its close interaction with environment in QIG. In the following quote Saeed reported the experience that made him believe that the intangible

culture of the local community has actively contributed to preserving wildlife of QIG in subtle and invisible ways:

I think cultural beliefs and customs in small communities or even sometimes their superstitions, which might seem nonsense, and irrational to us [the visitors] are applied largely to support special parts of nature. For example, here in Qeshm Island Geopark the elders traditionally don't kill swallows because they believe that your grand mom will die right away if you kill a swallow intentionally. I heard this from a very old fisherman whom I met in the jetty. It was very interesting to me that these people have used clever and invisible tools to protect some of the wildlife species living on the island such as swallows. (Saeed, nonlocal visitors)

Fozi, a local woman, employed in the QIG central office, claimed that she is personally interested in this topic and had already asked the elders of her family for more examples in this area. She believes that her forefathers did not hunt birds because they took some species of birds as highly valued species based on the cultural beliefs of local community:

We don't know exactly why local people in the Qeshm Island Geopark don't kill the birds. Actually, nobody has been that curious about it so far like you. According to what I have heard from elder people believed that migratory birds bring luck and happiness with themselves to the Island. Also, it was likely cursed to kill these birds for any reason. The best example could be the case of flamingos. They are always around, especially during winter but nobody hurts them because people take flamingos as blessed birds that carry luck everywhere... pregnant women in the village, keep feeding sparrows every day until their baby is born. They believe that feeding sparrows help their baby to stay healthy... I myself did it several times when I was pregnant.

In addition, I, as a person who was born and grew up in Iran know that white storks live peacefully almost in all parts of Iran because of a strong cultural belief that supports them. In Iran, people believe that storks are travellers flying back from Hajj. Referring to Persian oral tradition, there is a folkloric fiction which says white stork makes a pilgrimage to Mecca every year and they return back with the arrival of spring. The

reason could be related to the plain white colour of their feathers which reminds of the plain white dress of pilgrims in Mecca. Based on this oral intangible heritage, nobody even could think of hurting these birds. As pilgrims return back from Hajj are highly respected in Iran.

While some animal species are protected in the local cultural context because of being the carriers of good luck, sometimes it happens because of an opposite reason. In these cases, people don't dare to hurt an animal because they are simply taken as bad luck carriers. How people in QIG treat the Egyptian vulture, an endangered species in IUCN red list, is a good example in this area.

Unlike many of other species, vultures are taken as carriers of bad luck in the geopark to the point that *“if one kills a vulture he would face bad luck and misfortune”* (Seyyed). In many cases labelling an animal as a carrier of bad luck doesn't act as a harm for them; in fact, it is only a *“different cultural trend that local people choose to support nature”* (Fozi). In the case of Egyptian vulture, the local cultural beliefs are obviously working in line with the internationally perspective of protecting IUCN red endangered species (IUCN, 2015).

Overall, the above examples prove the close relation between the cultural beliefs, and culturally based behaviours and protecting the natural resources. Lockwood (2012b, p. 45) notes this relationship is shaped based on a set of unwritten rules which he called them “customary laws”. This set of rules derived from the local cultural context which might not be recorded anywhere but all members of the community respect it. It includes the cultural education that local people usually receive from their families and society since childhood. These unwritten rules usually ask, encourage, and make people consider the environment and protect the ecosystem of their homeland in many different ways (Dudgeon & Berkes, 2003; Seeland, 1997). I say “to different extent” because further analysis of information shows that two underlying factors are affecting the function and quality of culturally based protection of the environment. First, nowadays the constructive interaction between cultural and spiritual values (ICH) and nature is being threatened increasingly through “changing the local lifestyle”. This notion will be discussed in detail in Section 7.4. Second, there are some cases of culturally based behaviour and beliefs (ICH) which undermine the nature instead of supporting it. The following example addresses this role of ICH elements towards the environment.

While many participants, especially locals, were interested in talking about how their culture preserves nature, I became curious to know if there were any opposite examples as well. Only one example came up from the interviews; it indicates to a local belief associated with lizards in QIG. *“The only thing that comes to my mind now is that Qeshm Islanders don’t like the lizards. My mom and all of the women in the family kill the lizards right away if they spot one of them somewhere in or around house” (Hashem).*

In the next statement Seyyed opened it out:

If people see a Lizard at home, especially around the kitchen, they will kill it right away. This ruthlessness is embedded in an old belief which says that all lizards are poisonous, and they are the animal of bad luck. Actually, our culture treats kindly with nearly all species of animals except poor lizards!!(Seyyed, an employee in Qeshm Island Geopark)

As Mitra goes on to say:

Regardless of fishing, killing animals is prohibited and taken as bad behaviour in our culture. Hunting for food happens rarely on the Island. Even in the past, the traditional hunting techniques and tools in the island were so limited. Some religious people believe that hunting is a big sin when God provides them with enough food resources from the sea. But it is so weird that exactly the same people who treat wildlife so kindly, view lizards as a big enemy! The enemy which is so dangerous for their children and safety... Many of lizards and some other reptiles in similar look are being killed by locals in the Island.

The contradictory behaviour of the local community towards lizards in compare with other species of Qeshm wildlife was reflected in both above quotes. How the local community in QIG behaves towards a specific reptile species indicates that in spite of acting as a conservation tool in many cases, such as the case of all birds' species in QIG, ICH can also leave some negative effects on nature. However, it is worth mentioning that, referring to all interviews and observational information, I found only one example that shows the cultural and spiritual values of the local community is working against the environment. I think it was likely less possible that any of local

participants would indicate or remember to indicate to the case of lizards, if I didn't ask directly about it. The reason is that either it didn't come to their minds, as it was the only one negative example among many other positive ones, or the locals were not willing to bring up and open up this subject. The notion that sometimes the locals are not interested in presenting some part of their ICH will be addressed in Section 7.3.4.

Turning to the idea of tourism in PAs, the role of ICH in preserving biophysical resources of QIG through TEK and Cultural and spiritual values contributes largely to the tourism issues of QIG. In fact, in spite of acting as a source of *Attractions* for tourism in a PA (Section 6.2) ICH takes another role in tourism section of these boundaries.

Tourism activities in protected areas are mostly natural based activities and nature is taken as the main attraction resource for tourism in these areas (Stolton et al., 2010; Wray et al., 2010). Putney (2003, p. 7) indicates that a majority of visitors in PAs are nature based tourists who usually choose PAs in order to get close to nature, visit firsthand sightings, and wildlife, learn about nature or just enjoy the quiet and relax. Thinking about PAs, people usually remember various landscapes that are associated with concepts such as beauty, space, and "getting away from it all" (English, 2003, p. 43) (Section 4.2). Therefore tourism in these areas depends on the existence and the quality of the available natural resources. Consequently, any deterioration of natural resources in these nature based tourism destinations will affect negatively the tourism sector and its expected benefits. Regarding this fact, the theme of *Conservation tools* illustrates the constructive role of ICH in tourism section of PAs, when it acts to protect nature, and natural landscapes which are, in fact, the core attractions of PAs. Although the way that the conservation role of ICH contribute to tourism section in these boundaries may seem to be indirect and implicit, it must be noticed that its impacts on preserving natural landscapes of PAs have been evident and understandable enough over time. To conclude, it is safe to mention that the role of *Conservation tools* is crucial for maintenance and perpetuity of the natural resources of a PA and promoting its tourism.

6.3.3 *More Environmental Sensitive Behaviour*

Tourism as an effective socioeconomic tool for PAs (Brockington et al., 2012; Bushell & Eagles, 2007; Farsani et al., 2011b), shapes a considerable part of the social activities inside most types of these areas. Now in QIG tourism is a part of local's daily life, especially in those villages that are close to the known geosites such as Tabl Village; where I lived during fieldwork. Most of the local people are now used to meet nonlocals around either while they are shopping in the small stores in their villages or when they are out for picnics with family.

Moreover, it was discussed in Section 4.2 that the relation between PAs and tourism is usually aligned with a set of problematic issues. Tourism aids PAs with economic revenue as well as sociocultural benefits while at the same time it can leave negative impacts on the natural and cultural landscapes (Brockington et al., 2012; Whitelaw et al., 2014). This section addresses the contribution of ICH to tourism in PAs from a different angle by introducing the theme ICH filters and channels tourism behaviour towards *More environmental sensitive behaviour*. In fact, focusing on the problematic area between tourism and PAs, this theme presents how ICH can contribute to mitigating these problems.

This theme derived from a rich part of the information which reflects the role of ICH in decreasing the negative impacts of tourism through filtering the visitors' behaviours and channelling them towards environmental sensitive behaviour. The contribution of this theme to tourism in QIG is can be discussed from two different point of views. In this vein, ICH can act either as a motivator in tourism to increase the environmental sensitive behaviour or as a preventer to decrease negative impacts of tourism on the environment. Both of these two implications are outlined in the rest of this section.

The following quote from Saleh reflects that giving the visitors enough information about TEK associated with the mangrove forest, and reminding them the importance of mangrove trees for local livelihood usually can encourage the visitors to pick up more careful and conservative behaviour toward mangroves ecosystem:

When we [the boaters] take visitors to Herra we tell them about the historic linkage between our life, and Herra, and also the importance of sea forest as a source of food

for our families. While boating in Herra canals visitors are usually absorbed deeply to the beauty of the floating tree, and the wildlife around. I can see it obviously in their face, and in their silence. This is a good time for me to stress the fact that traditionally we [local community] protect Herra and that we want it to be preserved for our children as well.

Then Saleh made some example of preserving mangroves by TEK (Section 6.3.1)

I think reminding visitors of the statu, and the importance of Herra for us would encourage them to respect these trees, and its wildlife as long as they are visiting Qeshm Island Geopark (Saleh, a local boater in the mangrove forest).

To follow this line, the two quotes below point at a specific set of cultural rules, and social norms in QIG which teach the visitors the vital value of water resources in the Island and lead or make them to have more responsible behaviour towards the little water resources in the geopark, and any material heritage associated with water, such as water reservoir buildings. Staying in local guesthouses in geopark provides the visitors with the chance to witness in close the normal challenges a local family in QIG faces for providing and saving water. Nonlocal visitors highlighted that after a short time of their stay in the geopark they realized the importance of water for life perpetuity, and its considerable value in local cultural context. They perceived that this awareness about the value of water for local community made them be more careful about on water usage during their short stay in geopark:

After a few days staying in the local guesthouse I realized that these people respect water through doing their best not to waste it ... Since then, anytime I was showering in the guesthouse or washing my shoes after visiting a muddy geosite, I remembered the critical role of water in the life of these people. I also think about the sociocultural endeavour of this community to save water in order to survive on this island. It has really affected me to use water more carefully in rest of my life back home. (Mehri, nonlocal visitors)

I think that QIG can be supported by visitors if we introduce them our cultural principles and limitations. Some parts of our intangible culture such as traditional

techniques can train visitors the values of natural resources, and how to know nature, and protect it. For instance, through getting involved with local daily life and some of our customs, the visitors would learn that water is valuable for us. There are many traditional techniques, tales, and legends that our ancestors have applied to encourage people to save, and protect the little [drinkable] water in the Island. During their visitation, visitors become familiar with this part of our culture, and it will make them more conscious and sensitive about the geopark natural resources more specifically water. (Mitra, an employee in Qeshm Island Geopark)

Many nonlocal visitors have no idea about the very crucial shortage of water in Qeshm Island before their visitation. Knowing that the local community in Qeshm Island, unlike the other parts of Iran, has to buy water, either drinkable or non-drinkable surprises the visitors. Buying desalted water directly from the factory and save it in the house is a far away notion for Iranians because drinkable tap water is supplied everywhere in the mainland of Iran, even in faraway small villages. Therefore ICH is playing an important and influencing role in increasing the visitors' awareness, and consequently their sense of responsibility in terms of water saving in QIG.

Some participants reflected the role of ICH either to encourage or to make the visitors preserve the nature they visit. In this line, Seyyed noted that *"If we [Qeshm Island Geopark officials] could transfer the link between culture and nature to visitors, it will encourage them not to hurt intentionally the nature of the geopark"*

Maryam who visited the geopark for one week is a good example, and her statement is in line with Seyyed's quote above. Maryam reported that visiting the geopark was like an educational class for her where she learned a lot about QIG environment.

The geopark and its people were amazing. I enjoyed listening to Abdo [the village local guide] while he explained about the architecture and the historic role of Aab-anbars.... I have learned about how local people has maintained the geoheritage in chah-kuh valley as a sacred site... all these things made me watch my behaviour towards the places I visited in the geopark. One reason could be related to the values of these natural elements and their importance for local people. (Maryam, a nonlocal visitor)

Some aspects of ICH such as cultural values, customs, and social norms influence people's attitude, and behaviour towards natural environment. For example as Sherpa (2006, p. 70) notes local people "generally try to avoid activities such as quarrelling, disturbing, polluting, and other negative manners within the holy or respected areas". It is totally true the in case of the place where Aab-anbar is located in QIG. Above section suggests that ICH can probably influence the visitors' attitude and manner in the relatively similar way. Because the cultural setting of local the community can encourage, inspire, and ask the visitors to follow locals' daily cultural rules, social norms, and customaries. As a result, visitors automatically are asked and channelled towards more environmental friendly activities with less threatening impacts while they are visiting the geopark.

Moreover, as mentioned earlier in this section it was also reflected that ICH features are not applied to only "encourage" visitors to watch their behaviour toward nature but also in some cases it turns up as taboos, restricted cultural norms or strict social rules which "pushand force" members of community towards a specific behavioural pattern (Lockwood, 2012b; Verschuuren, 2012). The following quotes reveal that these firm social rules address not only the locals but also the visitors of QIG.

Ali a 34-year visitor explained his experience of visiting a holy local shrine located in the geopark. He was stopped from entering and visiting the shrine, and taking a picture of the very old and huge Prosopis tree in the front yard. The reason for this behaviour is a custom by which only women can visit inside that specific shrine. It is also the duty of women to take care of the Prosopis tree. Ali said that "*It was all fine with me... I understood that it was a social norm that I, as a foreigner, must respect*". These types of social limitations sometimes are applied to protect the natural elements of the place in many ways. As Ali mentioned

Unlike the small building of the shrine that looked too old the tree looked so fresh, and green. Apparently, these social rules have done a good job to support the old tree to survive successfully in this arid island...there are not many tress like this one around the island.

How the cultural limitations, and rules affects the visitors' behaviour is reflected clearly in the two quotes below:

Visitors should consider daily social norms of the locals while visiting a place ... in geopark people like these trees [mangrove forest] and don't hurt the birds nesting there. Visitors must respect it and behave respectfully towards everything that locals respect. (Soofi, a nonlocal visitor)

ICH imposes a list of dos and don'ts to the local people towards the environment of their location. Most visitors will respect the environment of Qeshm Island Geopark if they get aware about this part of ICH and if they are asked to respect culturally based behavioural restrictions that locals follow in order to preserve the environment. Notably, in some cases the social restrictions include dos rules. It means that foreigners, such as visitors have to follow those dos rules in any condition otherwise they wouldn't allow getting close or visiting that specific natural site. For example, those visitors who like to visit main Aab-anbars in close are strongly asked not to pollute the water or leave litter near Aab-anbar building. (Sharif, an employee in Qeshm Island Geopark)

There is a direct indication in Sharif's statement that in some cases visitors have to observe and follow behavioural rules that are linked to cultural beliefs. He highlighted the cultural rules associated with local water reservoirs (Aab-anbar). All the cultural rules associated with Aab-anbar aim to save water as valuable natural elements in QIG through making people not pollute and waste.

Furthermore Stolton et al. (2010, p. 190) argues that while tourism in PAs includes mostly natural based activities, the terms nature or nature based activities imply no clear indication of how nature is used, and "can thus include a set of destructive practices towards nature". According to the above, in those PAs which has been inhabited over history, and their natural resources are linked to cultural resources of local community, applying ICH in tourism could act to mitigate those "destructive practices" that Stolton et al. (2010) mentioned. QIG is a good example in which the intangible cultural assets of the local community have been constantly applied in order to lead visitors to behave more responsible towards nature, and leave less harmful impacts as long as they stay in geopark. It was emerged from information that this process happens in two different ways. Firstly, it happens when ICH is applied by locals mostly to encourage the visitors to preserve the nature. This notion reflected in Saleh's statement earlier in the beginning of this section when local tour guide (Saleh)

keep reminding visitors of the value of the mangrove ecosystem to inspire, and encourage them respecting the mangroves. Secondly, it happens when ICH acts as a pushing tool with a set of dos for the visitors. This doesn't indicate to ask or encourage the visitors; rather it indicates to firm sociocultural rules that all people, either locals or the visitors must follow it. An example of these strict local limitations was explained by Sharif where people using or visiting Aab-anbar are strictly asked not to pollute water, and damage water reservoirs otherwise they won't be allowed to visit or even get close to it.

6.4 Intangible Cultural Heritage as a Designation Advantage

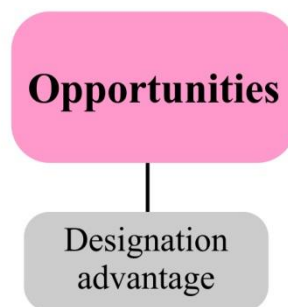


Figure6. 9 Organizing theme *intangible cultural heritage as a Designation advantage*

Following the new paradigm of PAs, people and their culture are taken as a critical asset in PAs. Today, the importance of local people in PAs is to the point that local communities, and their cultural values are mentioned directly or implied in the definition of many types of PAs such as Category V of IUCN calcification of PAs (Taylor & Lennon, 2011) the PAs of Biosphere Reserves (UNESCO, 2015g) or the geoparks (UNESCO, 2015a) (Section 2.4). This perspective is critical to the success of PAs in achieving their determined goals, and their development (Chape et al., 2008; Stevens, 2014c). Some of the participants of this study took even one step backward, and express that regarding the designation process presence of the local community and their cultural context on a piece of land is an influencing parameter in identification, and designation of that piece of land as a PA at national, regional or international level.

Following this idea, some of the participants, especially local officials of the geopark, mentioned frequently that the local community living in the geopark and the historic integration of their culture with geoheritage has largely benefited the process of QIG declaration as the first Middle-East global geopark in 2006 (Section 5.5). Indeed, by talking about culture as a designation advantage, participants mostly meant different elements of intangible assets rather than material cultural heritage such as historic buildings or monuments. To highlight the importance of ICH in declaration process of a geopark it is worth mentioning that, one of the topics which is required to be explained precisely, and clearly in Application Form for UNESCO Global Geoparks is “listing, and description of other sites of natural, cultural, and intangible heritage interest, and how they are related to the geological sites, and how they are integrated into the proposed geopark” (UNESCO, 2014b).

Regarding the case study of this research, the officials of QIG have already had the experience of preparing QIG application proposal to be declared by UNESCO as a Global Geopark in 2005-6. Therefore, they are aware of the guidelines and principles which are officially required for a national geopark to be designated as UNESCO Global Geopark. Also, some of the officials have attended some related conferences, and training workshops in previous years, and also have visited other geoparks in other countries. They expressed that based on their personal experiences QIG is almost unique in terms of the richness of ICH of the local communities who have inhabited this Island over history. They took this as a beneficial factor in the process of re-declaration of QIG at the global level. This perception is clear in the following quote from Hamid:

I think regarding geoheritage and landform characteristics, Qeshm Island Geopark is not that old or extraordinary in compare with some other known geoparks in the world. But, what makes us different is the very long history of human settlement on this island and its connection with the current geopark...interestingly, most parts of our cultural heritage in Qeshm Island Geopark are considered as intangible cultural assets. As you see, there is very few notable historic building, monument or other types of material heritage in the geopark. What we have in terms of cultural heritage mostly constitute our intangible cultural assets such as our local lifestyle, our religious beliefs, customs,

and language. In my perspective, all of these non-material elements of our culture were taken as a beneficial factor for Qeshm Island Geopark in its global designation.

Hashem, a local guide in the geopark noted “...I believe that the social behaviour of these people [local community in QIG] have been always working in favour of the existence of QIG...it was what UNESCO advisor couldn't ignore when they were visiting QIG”. Following this topic, Seyyed who has been working in the QIG central office for more than 15 years explained that realizing that the natural resources of QIG are tightly linked to its cultural asset is not difficult for visitors, including the representatives of international and national organizations. In his eyes, this linkage is more evident especially in intangible aspects of culture:

In the process of investigating the island in 2006, the advisors visited a few of villages. While resting in the guesthouse and having local food they had time to get familiar with local lifestyle of our people. Local cuisines and the way that the food was served to guests were so interesting for them. Furthermore, the normal dressing code of the island was attractive for them...I could say that this part of local culture is always the most interesting part for people who visit geopark on behalf of international organizations. They always come across many questions and wonders about the lifestyle in the island, local people traditions, and our religious custom. (Seyyed, an employee in Qeshm Island Geopark)

Seyyed's comment reveals that cultural assets of QIG are always of high interest, and importance in official, and institutional visits. Notably, Seyyed, and Hamid both tended to emphasize that the main reason for QIG dropping off from the list of GGN in 2013 was mismanagement and it didn't relate to the lack of natural or cultural resources in the geopark. (Section 5.5)

The importance of ICH in the designation of QIG was also reflected in interviews with STBO mostly based on their jobs that make them interact with geopark visitors regularly. The following account illustrates a local guide's (Hashem) sentiments arising from knowing the importance of intangible aspect of the local culture such as beliefs and traditions in the designation process. They realized the value of their cultural asset in the process of their homeland (QIG) being also declared as a geopark:

Yes, there are some amazing geological landscapes in our island. Books say these geological landforms can be found only in this part of Iran, and some of them like “Namakdan Cave” are globally unique because it is one of the two longest Salt Caves, most probably the longest in the world. But we, local people don’t look at these landforms as only a pure geological phenomenon. Each one of them is associated with a legend, belief or a specific tradition for us. For instance, we respect sea and its related landforms such as beaches because sea provides us food... I guess all of the experts from national and international organizations who have visited Qeshm Island have realized this fact easily. On the other hand in local guide training courses, we have been told that local culture of our people is important for the life perpetuity of QIG. Therefore, I think our culture has probably been taken as a big advantage for introducing our island as the first [global] geopark in the Middle –East. (Hashem, Local Guide in Qeshm Island Geopark)

At the time of undertaking the fieldwork of this study, the local officials were preparing QIG’s proposal to resubmit to UNESCO five years after it was dropped off the GGN list.¹⁸ Fozi is hopeful that their local cultural asset could underpin the whole process of re-declaration of QIG as a member the UNESCO Global Geopark network. She expressed that:

It is a shame that the only global geopark in the Middle East was taken out of [global] network list... However, I believe that we will be successful to upgrade it to international level again. This time many of the weak points and shortages have already been cleared. Indeed, we still have our geological heritage as well as our precious cultural background which are both important advantages for us.

All above quotes of this section present and expand this idea that the cultural context of the local community such as their lifestyle, traditions and knowledge can benefit the lands to be declared as a PA.

¹⁸ - After Qeshm Island Geopark dropped off from the Global List in 2013, the officials of this geopark re-submitted the application to UNESCO in 2016 to upgrade Qeshm Geopark from national to international level. At the time of submitting this thesis (November 2016), the list of approved 2016 UNESCO Global Geoparks has not been announced yet.

6.5 Summary

Chapter Six focused on explaining and justifying one of the main global themes emerged from the empirical information of this research; *Opportunities*. Three organizing themes of *Attractions*, *Conservation tools*, and ICH as a *Designation advantage* were outlined respectively in this chapter. It was discussed that many of participants viewed local people, their daily lifestyle, and customs as a tool that makes the biophysical environment of a PA more meaningful and presents it with a sense of life, and livingness. Following, it was addressed that different features of ICH can provoke and promote the curiosity of the visitors about PA. Besides, it was explained that ICH and nature together can offer the most of the beauty and attraction to tourism.

The chapter was followed by another organizing them which reflect ICH as a mean to preserve natural resources of a PA. To expand this idea, two specific areas were highlighted. First, the way that local community implements their TEK to preserve the natural resources and landscapes surround. Second a set of cultural and spiritual values that the local community applies in order to preserving nature.

The chapter went on justification how ICH acting as *Conservation tools* links to the tourism section in QIG. The last organizing theme was addressed in the last section of Chapter Six, where ICH is introduced and discussed as an influencing factor to benefit a piece of land in the process of being declared as a PA (designation process) . In general Chapter Six was organized to examine and analyse all aspects of the first global themes of this study; *Opportunities* for tourism in PAs. Next chapter will focus on the second global theme entitled *Challenges*



CHAPTER SEVEN

THE CHALLENGES

7.1 Introduction

Having analysed the interpretation of participants on the theme *Opportunities* in the previous chapter, this chapter focuses on the potential challenges and problematic issues in the way of applying intangible cultural assets of the local community in tourism in PAs. The theme *Challenges* with its three related organizing themes of *Secundariness*, *Complicatedness*, and *Lifestyle change* is the second significant global theme that emerged from the empirical information. Each one of these organizing themes is supported with a group of basic themes which are all shown in Figure 7.1 and are discussed in this chapter.

Through the thematic network of *Challenges* the idea that implementing ICH in QIG tourism is a complicated path is critically examined. It explores the different aspects, and reasons that make this path complicate, and challenging. This chapter opens up with addressing the organizing theme *Secundariness* which tends to explain in compare to natural attractions of geopark intangible cultural asset are usually perceived and positioned at the second priority by visitors. Nature and its related resources constitute the core attraction of PAs (Putney, 2003; Wray et al., 2010) and it is what most of the visitors of PAs are looking for. Regarding this fact, ICH is discussed as the secondary and also complementary tourism product which makes its application in tourism challenging.

The chapter goes on justifying the theme *Complicatedness*. This theme discusses that the intangible cultural asset is naturally complicated. The main reason is that ICH is not able to be identified, measured, or visited easily (Arizpe & Amescua, 2013; Lixinski, 2013). This intrinsic characteristic of ICH challenges the process of applying and promoting ICH in tourism.

ICH is considered to be “of less obvious value than the tangible” (Arizpe, Amescua, C, 2013, p. 37) consequently, there are *Little concrete evidence* and visit-able elements of ICH that can be presented easily in tourism. It is discussed that in compare to material heritage it is not easy to promote the heritage with little visibility in tourism. Furthermore, analysing the empirical information shows that gaining *Custodial community agreement* in applying any element of ICH, considering *Carrying capacity* for intangible cultural features, and promoting ICH

based *Interpretation* are three main and *Managerial considerations* which affect the process of implementing ICH in tourism in a PA. The necessity and the challenges associated with each one of these factors are discussed broadly in this chapter.

What comes next addresses the notion of local community *lifestyle change* and the modification and even in some cases, loss of the intangible cultural asset. According to interviews and observational information, modernization is threatening the life and perpetuity of ICH. In this research modernization conveys to more contemporary lifestyle, and its consequences, which are currently inevitable, and out of control to some extent. The rest of this chapter emphasized on this area that ,in fact, Lifestyle change is threatening the development of ICH based tourism and in general tourism section in PAs.

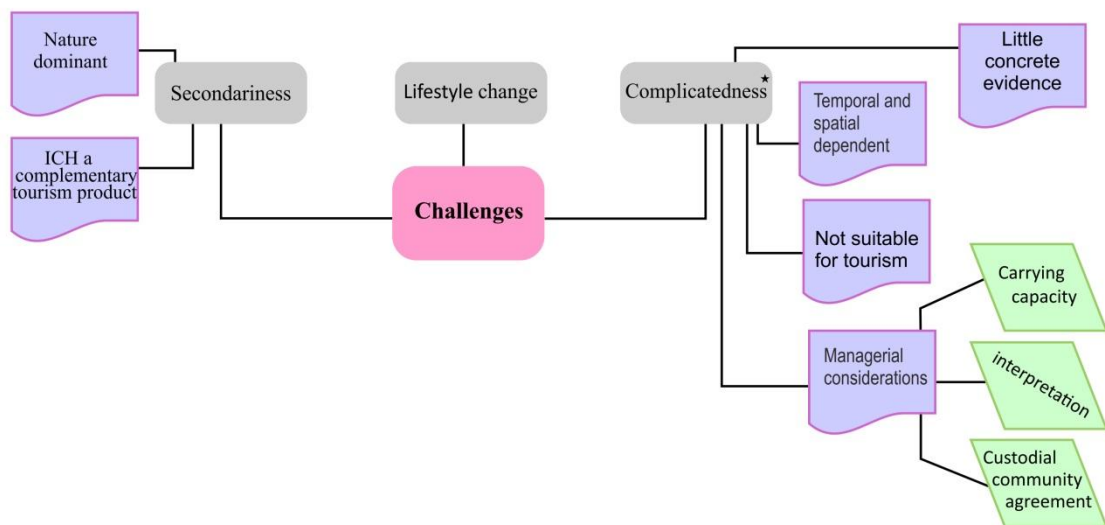


Figure7. 1 The global theme *Challenges* and its four contributing organizing themes, and their basic themes

7.2 Secondariness

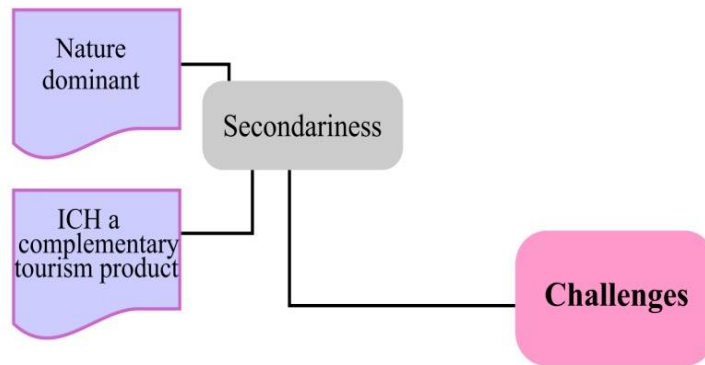


Figure 7.2 The organizing theme *Secondariness* and its two contributing basic themes

Cultural assets and cultural values of the local community living within a PA are taken as a tourism attraction for PA (Bowers & Jared, 2014; Zeppel, 2009b). These cultural attractions include intangible cultural asset as well (Section 6.2). Also, there is a historic symbiotic interconnection between the ecosystem of PA, and cultural identity of local people (Dudgeon & Berkes, 2003; Singh Negi, 2010). In addition, looking from tourism perspective it was discussed in Section 6.2.3 that the natural attractions plus cultural attractions can offer the most of the attraction to tourism in a PA. However, analysis of the information of this research disclosed that when it comes to comparison of the material natural resources of QIG to its intangible cultural asset the natural elements are taken as more attractive and appealing resources from the perspectives of both visitors, and locals. Consequently, ICH, in spite of all its variety in attractions, acquires the second place of attractiveness in QIG tourism after the available natural asset. Counting the challenging issues in the way of applying ICH in tourism in PAs development, *Secondariness* was the one that participants highlighted frequently. To illustrate the organizing theme *Secondariness* two different basic themes are considerable: *Nature dominant*, and *ICH, a Complementary product* in tourism section. These two basic themes are addressed sequentially in following two sections.

7.2.1 Nature Dominant

Many types of PAs in the world are known because of their natural resources and natural landscapes.¹⁹ Nature is defined as a core concept in the global definition of these PAs (Chape et al., 2008; IUCN, 2014b) and nature is considered as the most appealing tourism attraction in these boundaries. It was explained in section 4.2 that tourism in PAs is recognized as mainly natural based tourism. It means that people travel to PAs mostly for its natural attractions (Putney, 2003; Wray et al., 2010). Therefore, the concepts such as nature, biological variety, conservation, natural beauty, and natural uniqueness are deeply embedded in the life of PAs. In general everything in these boundaries, including tourism, is focused around nature, and its related issue.

It is true about the case study of this research as well. There is a frequent indication in the information of this study that although QIG is rich in cultural heritage, the geological landscapes and natural beauty of geopark is the primary factor which attracts most of the visitors to the geopark. This notion is evident in Hashem's statement:

Well, people know geopark mainly for its geological beauties and its unusual landforms. Culture in Qeshm Island is very interesting for visitors; however what attract them here [to geopark] at the first place is mainly the wonderful natural sceneries. I have seen that during one-day tour visitors usually rather stay close to natural geosites than villages. Sometimes, they ask me to take them again to some of the geosites in a special time in a day like early morning. Most of them like to go back to western coasts of the island again to watch the breath-taking moments of sunset behind the Persian Gulf. (Hashem, QIG local guide)

Saeed a nonlocal visitor stated that “*geopark is a wonderful place with many beautiful geosites and interesting cultural sites so close together... but for me, the geosites sound more attractive*”. The following statements discuss this subject more. Notably, there is a general implication in all of the below statements that nature is more dominant in tourism in QIG, and that staying close to the natural attractions is the number one preference for the visitors.

¹⁹ - By PA this thesis refers to natural PAs, therefore culturally protected areas such as World Heritage Sites are excluded. For more information of typology of protected areas please see Section 2.5

Qeshm Island Geopark has a mix of everything that visitors like me expects to visit. I always enjoy spending time with local communities especially those ones who live in remote areas far from big cities. I enjoy experiencing their cultural authenticity, and luckily I found it here [in QIG]. Also, I visited very amazing natural sites like Chah-kuh geosite; a real “Wow” site. All in all, I view Qeshm Island Geopark as an absolutely wonderful place primarily because of its natural beauties and natural uniqueness. (Vahid, a nonlocal visitor)

The bird species I watched in the geopark were various and interesting. Some species are found only in this region of Iran. Being in Qeshm Island Geopark was a great chance for me to add new species to my bird watching notebook list and it was the most enjoyable part of my travel. I plan to come to the Island early next autumn when I probably can see more birds. (Ati, a nonlocal visitor)

Based on more than 15 years working in tourism on this island I think in most cases the natural environment and wildlife of geopark are more attractive for visitors. Especially because some of our natural assets such as the warm sea, Namakdan cave, and also some species of wildlife can be found only in this part of Iran, and it makes geopark's nature more attractive, and memorable. (Mirta, an Employee in QIG)

In all above statements visiting natural resources was identified at the first priority for the visitor to travel to QIG. However, common in all above quotes is the suggestion that even if the QIG enjoys very old history of human inhabitant, which makes it capable of presenting numerous examples of ICH and although the local communities and their cultural asset are deeply emphasized in geopark's planning and management (Farsani et al., 2012; Errami et al., 2015; UNESCO, 2014) still participants emphasized that "geopark is geopark, mainly because of its amazing ecosystem and its unique landscapes" (Majid, a nonlocal visitor). Therefore, it is safe to say that regarding ICH and natural attractions of a PA, visitors are more attracted to natural resources because nature is more dominant in the tourism sector of PAs. This idea can be also linked to Section 7.3.1, where it will be discussed that the visitors make a faster and easier connection with natural elements rather than invisible features ICH.

7.2.2 Intangible Cultural Heritage as a Complementary Tourism Product in Protected Areas

In the previous section, it was discussed that intangible cultural assets are taken as the secondary tourism attraction in PAs. Very close to the theme *Nature dominant*, another theme *ICH, a complementary product in tourism* in PAs emerged from information. This new theme points to the idea that ICH in PAs is mostly perceived not as a core tourism product but more likely as a complementary product in the tourism package in a PA. In this vein, all other tourism resources, including ICH based products, are perceived to complete the whole attraction of PAs' natural based tourism packages. The below statement discloses this idea:

We already have started presenting more aspects of intangible cultural heritage to visitors. But we are aware that the most important tourism product we have is the natural resources of the geopark....First unique natural landscapes and then the interrelationship of this nature with the cultural asset is what most visitors are interested in. (Seyyed, an employee in QIG)

Although natural resources we have in the island is enough to create an attractive geopark I believe that without cultural heritage which is mostly intangible, Qeshm Island Geopark would not be as appealing as much as it currently is... seems that ICH is an important part of geopark body to accomplish its beauty. (Sharif, an employee in QIG)

It was so joyful that after having a busy day of visiting natural geosites, we returned back to local guesthouse feeling tired where we were served with fruit juices and cinnamon flavoured tea. I loved those moments of a day when we were resting in the shade of palm trees in the yard, the kids were playing around in local colourful dresses, and spicy scent of local dinner was in the air, while I was thinking about the wonderful geological landforms we just visited during the day... You know what I am trying to say? For me, the guesthouse with all its cultural beauties was the best place to complete the joy of a visiting day in geopark. (Maryam, a nonlocal visitor)

For me, local people, customs, and traditions, and local food were not as important as the physical natural features of geopark .But I am sure that without those cultural features my travel to Qeshm Island Geopark wouldn't fulfil, and it probably lacked something nice. (Ali, a nonlocal visitor)

There is an interdependent relationship between the natural resources of a PA and cultural asset of the local community to the point that in some cases nature and culture shouldn't be taken as two separate parts in PAs (Dudgeon & Berkes, 2003; Singh Negi, 2010; Zeppel, 2009a). However, it seems that there are some slight differences between these two sources of attractions from tourism perspective. In tourism, it is the natural beauties of a PA which are taken as number one priority for visitors to travel to PA (Section 7.2.1). Natural resources are also considered as the foundation that constitutes the core platform of PA's attraction. In a way that any intangible cultural asset is perceived as a accompanying and complementary tool which can accomplish all attraction of the PA. The above statements reveal that while most of the visitors choose a PA mainly because of its natural beauties, they consider intangible cultural asset as something which completes their experience and fulfils their joy of their visit.

ICH is an aspect of cultural heritage that is difficult to measure or even identify because it is simply non-material (Arizpe & Amescua, 2013; Lixinski, 2013). This characteristic makes ICH application in tourism complicated. This subject was a frequent implication in the empirical information of this research. The result of analysing this part of the information was the emergence of them *Complicatedness*.

I consider *Complicatedness* as an important theme in this study which addresses some of the issues that make the process of implementing and promoting ICH in tourism section in a PA challenging from various angles. Following, this theme is presented through more detailed basic themes. The basic themes include *Little concrete evidence*, *Managerial considerations*, *Temporal and spatial dependent*, and *Not suitable for tourism*. The basic theme *Managerial considerations* constitutes of three sub-basic themes of *Carrying capacity*, *Interpretation*, and *Custodial community agreement*.

7.3 Complicatedness

7.3.1 Little Concrete Evidence

Many features of ICH contribute to values and also knowledge which are neither material nor visible. As Brauch (2013, p. 37) states most of ICH can be understood in contrast to tangible heritage because they are considered “of less obvious values”.

For human beings, making a connection with concrete, touchable, and visible things is easier than invisible things (Arizpe & Amescua, 2013). In this vein Mitra made a good example of how complicated it is to present traditional knowledge associated with handicrafts to visitors as a tourism product. In the first part of her statement, she indicated to the invisibility of ICH and the difficulty of attracting visitors to that. She explained the challenges they have had in attracting visitors to the intangible aspect of handicrafts products that mainly includes presenting a range of traditional knowledge and techniques associated with each handicraft product:

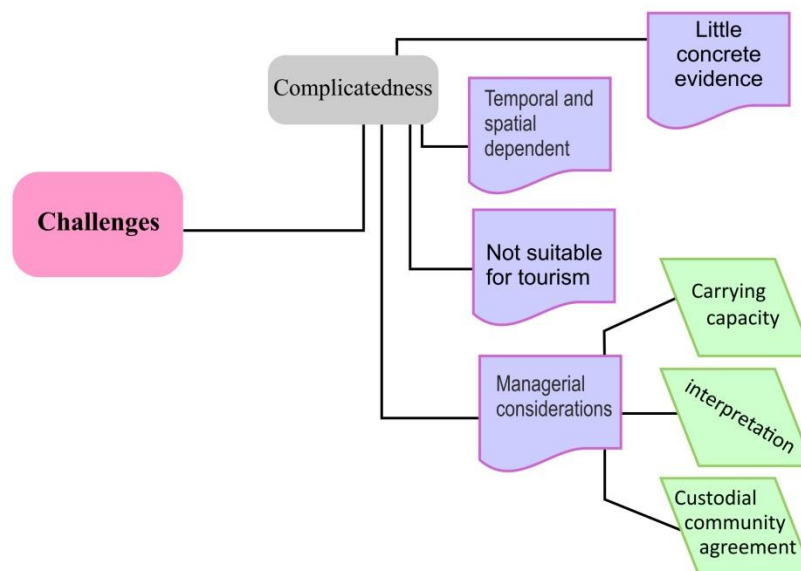


Figure 7. 3 The organizing theme *Complicatedness* and its basic and sub-basic themes

I am the manager of the project of "Geopark Handicrafts Revival for Tourism Development" which has started five years ago. In this project, as you might guess we aim to link the local handicrafts to tourism...however it is not an easy job at all...I found that it is so difficult to talk to the visitors about the techniques of needlework in an attractive way. It seems that sometimes the history or even the techniques of each one of products is quite boring for visitors...I wonder how we can make the intangible aspect of our handicrafts more attractive for our visitors... Now, after five years of working on this project, I am sure that introducing the natural geoheritage of Qeshm [Island Geopark] to visitors is an easier job than presenting the old handicrafts local techniques .(Mitra, an employee in QIG)

Fozi another member of the same project noted:

I think to make the traditional knowledge of handicrafts more attractive to visitors we need to prepare more concrete features of all historic techniques we have. I myself usually enjoy visiting material things more than something which is not visible in the real world, because making relationship with something that I can see and touch is easier. It is interesting that I have seen the same reaction in most visitors visiting handicrafts workshop in geopark. For instance, since we have started producing scarfs that are designed with "Golabetun Doozi"²⁰ nearly all visitors show interest to know about "Golabetun Doozi". Now they can see, and touch several samples of this specific technique available in the workshop. First they see in close that how delicate and artistic these products are and then it is usually the beginning step for them to ask different questions about the history and technique of these types of handicraft. Whereas, before putting "Golabetun Doozi" on scarfs visitors hardly showed any interest to know about this technique ...Changing traditional knowledge into more concrete features in order to make it more understandable for visitors is not impossible but it is very complicated. (Fozi, an employee in QIG)

²⁰- Persian silk brocade with golden thread produced particularly in southern provinces of Iran

Fozi explained the importance of the visible evidence of ICH by the example of “Golabetun Doozi” (Figure 7.4). Based on Fozi's quote the visitors became more interested in knowing about a traditional knowledge when some material samples of this technique on pieces of fabrics like scarfs are presented to them. Consequently, changing an invisible aspect of ICH into visible and visit-able products is a successful trend to attract visitors' attention to a specific intangible local asset. In accordance with, Pedram also explained his personal experience in using food related ICH to promote his business which is running a traditional restaurant:

Now after about five years of running a traditional restaurant I can surely say that the visitors are not interested in just hearing about our local culinary techniques. If they see how the local food and drinks are prepared, they will surely like to test many of them. But it is a difficult job to show them all the traditional culinary techniques in close... All the food in my restaurant is prepared by local women and here in the island few of women agree to be visited by foreigners while they are working²¹ . On the other hand assuming that local women agree to cooperate, I would need special space, equipment, and facilities to present culinary information to the visitors in a practical and proper way. I need enough physical space, time, and of course enough money.



Figure7. 4 Shows the traditional technique of “Golabetun Doozi” on a piece of craft

²¹ - See section 6.2.2

Let me give you an example. You know, we have different types of bread and traditional baking methods in the island. I used to explain orally about these methods to the visitors who got in my restaurant. Well to be honest it didn't seem very attractive to them. Then, I changed my method. After consulting with Qeshm Island Geopark [central] office, I designed a tiny place in the corner of my restaurant with a traditional fire oven which is dug in the ground. I hired a woman to sit there and just bake local bread. It increased my sales considerably. The reason is that now the visitors can easily watch the whole process, techniques, and traditional tools of baking ...it is when they start asking many questions and I see how interested they become...Well, I think I was partly successful increasing my sales through showing the visitors food techniques, but it was surely a difficult and expensive way. (Pedram, traditional restaurant owner)

Pedram pointed at three aspects of ICH *Complicatedness* in order to become a tourism product. Firstly, the invisibility of traditional knowledge associated with local food in the QIG and the fact that visitors in his restaurant were not that much interested in merely hearing about it without seeing it in the real world. The traditional knowledge became more appealing for visitors when they were able to see the outcome of the traditional knowledge which was the bread and its baking equipment. The next aspect of this *Complicatedness* is related to the *Custodial community agreement*. As explained in chapter six (Section 6.2.2) following the sociocultural norms in QIG local women who are largely dealing with food related issues prefer to work indoor and far from visitors' eyes especially male visitors. In fact, Pedram needed the womens' agreement it made the process of ICH implementation in tourism more challenging for him. The role of custodial community agreement in complicating this process will be discussed in Section 7.3.2.1. Finally, Pedram as the owner of small tourism business needed a special facilities to present invisible aspects of ICH in an attractive way in tourism. Preparing this infrastructure, even if in small size, could be difficult, expensive or even out capability of a STBO.

Generally, common in all above statements is that one reason for ICH *Complicatedness* to be presented in tourism in a PA is that it has fewer concrete features and visible evidence in the actual world. Another considerable reason, which also was mentioned by Pedram is that for intangible cultural assets to become applicable in tourism, a STBO often encounters a specific set of requirements. These requirements are

presented and discussed in the following section under the title of *Managerial considerations*.

7.3.2 *Managerial Considerations*

Different types of tourism, mostly natural based tourism, has attracted a wide variety of facilities, and infrastructures to PAs (English, 2003; Wray et al., 2010). ICH, to be presented and developed as a tourism product in PAs also needs its special facilities. This subject constitutes one of the basic themes that emerged from further analysis of the information in this research. The theme *Managerial considerations* indicates to three important factors which are required to promote tourism ICH based products in a PA. These factors are *Custodial community agreement*, *Carrying capacity*, and *Interpretation*. (Figure 7.3)

7.3.2.1 *Custodial Community Agreement*²²

Tourism development in PAs is tightly linked to the local community. Tourism to be developed needs to use both the natural and cultural heritage which are taken as a part of locals' homeland, their history and identity (Gonzalez, 2008; Di Giovine, 2009; George, 2010; Graham et al., 2003; Lane, 2001). Regarding ICH, it must be taken into account that local community is the real owner of the intangible cultural asset in a PA. ICH has emerged, practiced, and evolved among the generations of the local community while these people support and develop what of ICH they have inherited from their ancestors (Corsane, 2012; Lixinski, 2013; Stefano et al., 2012). Therefore “*Custodial community agreement is a fundamental requirement to use any element of intangible cultural heritage in tourism development*” (Hamid, an employee in QIG).

In QIG, on the first impression, the local community welcomes warmly any person who enters their island. The reason is “*because of their commitment to the manner of hospitality and what they have learned about the social respect to their guests*” (Hamid, an employee in QIG). Actually, the “*manner of hospitality*” is taken as a part

²² The content of this result section has been used in the publication (book chapter) mentioned in page VII

of ICH in QIG that contributes positively to tourism. However, on the other side, there are also some other parts of the same cultural context that challenge the process of applying ICH in tourism development. It means that while the local community in Qeshm Island values visitors culturally, they also feel sensitive, and cautious about presenting some of their specific sociocultural customs and religious norms to tourism. Women and any issues related to them are taken as one of those culturally sensitive areas. Earlier in this research some aspects of the relation between ICH, local woman, and tourism in QIG were presented and outlined (Section 6.2.2). In this section, this subject is addressed from a different perspective.

Local people in the island are welcoming and well-mannered to visitors. In my opinion, one of the important intangible cultural assets of these people is their hospitality toward visitors. They take all geopark's visitors as the guest in their villages... But tourism is not all about hospitality. Sometimes some aspects of traditions and cultural beliefs act more like obstacles for tourism development in the geopark. We are totally aware that they [that part of traditions, and cultural beliefs] must be considered, and respected. For example, one of the problematic areas arises from any things related to local women. For instance, you hardly can find a local woman in the village who agrees to take a picture with a visitor in her traditional dress. It is definitely impossible unless you go to the local guesthouses or touristic places where a few women are employed to work in their traditional cloth. (Seyyed, an employee in QIG)

I wish I could talk to local women more during my visit of Qeshm Island Geopark. I think local women clothing must be presented as a very important cultural attraction in this island. In terms of intangible culture, they [women] are the producer of important products such as clothing handicrafts, and cfood. Also, I could tell that they know a lot about oral tradition and local techniques of water managing at home. But, they usually refuse socializing with visitors especially if the visitors are men. (Vahid, a nonlocal visitor)

Both above statements imply that visitors in QIG confront some issues interacting with local women as producer, and carriers of some special elements of ICH. As explained in Section 6.2.2. sociocultural norms are the main reason that require girls and women

not to communicate with visitors easily, while they are out of their official job framework. The following quote illustrates that QIG's officials have had a range of problems to gain local women's agreement in order to promote those female aspects of ICH which need the practical involvement of women in tourism. However, so far they have had some good progress.

Traditionally, local women stay at home most hours of a day. When we asked them to enter the project of "Qeshm Island Geopark Handicrafts Revival for Tourism Development" most of them refused. At first, it seemed weird and bizarre for them and their families. They accepted to produce handicrafts at home but we were looking for a group of local women who could work in the workshop and interact personally with visitors. ... We talked to each one of women individually and also to their families for several hours to persuade them to make crafts in the workshop instead of inside their houses. (Mitra, an employee in QIG)

Other examples were given by other participants who focused more on the custodial community agreement as an influential factor for promoting ICH based tourism in QIG. In accordance with, visiting wedding celebration which is one the most traditional and attractive celebrations in the geopark was exemplified several times.

During last few years the number of geopark's visitors increased dramatically. Local community's leaders decided not to let the visitors participate the wedding customs because of the disturbance that visitors usually caused to Zorvan²³. We knew that wedding celebration is of high attraction for visitors so we decided to talk to local leaders, and ask them to let the visitors visit the customs but this time under specific restrictions... It was not an easy job to re-establishes trust between local community, and tourism sector of QIG but luckily it happened finally. (Hamid, an employee in QIG)

It must be noted that the need for the community's agreement is not limited only to visiting local cultural heritage. It also could include the natural sites surrounding the local community's locations. It is more applicable for those geosites which are linked

²³- The name of the traditional group dance, music, and song performed in most of local celebrations in the Qeshm Island Geopark

to one or more aspects of ICH; ICH such as oral traditions or spiritual values. The best example in QIG is the geosites of Stars Valley (Figure 7.5). Based on an old legend, people of the village close to this valley believe that this location is a unique piece of the earth because once upon a time a star fell down from sky and hit the earth exactly at this specific spot. The result was the creation of a strange valley with its exotic geological landform (Box 5.2 & Section 5.8.1). Locals believe that humans being should avoid entering the valley after sunset. Because, it is the time when ghosts go around the valley; if people enters the site at night they will bring bad luck to the village. Based on this legend locals don't let visitors enter the Stars Valley geosite at night. In this vein, Hamid noted that *"Stars Valley is one of our most attractive geosites. Its beauty is unique and amazing at some special hours like at the sunset or sunrise... We could plan special tours for visiting the valley at these hours ...but so far the [local people of] village didn't let the tour get close to the valley there after sunset"*.

Local officials of PAs need to develop trust between the tourism sector and local community (Bello, 2016; Whitelaw, 2014). However, above examples reveal that local officials of a PA might face some difficulties in establishing this trust, and in some cases they may not success.

For each case of ICH that is planned to be introduced or developed in tourism, we need to apply a new and different strategy to gain locals' agreement...sometimes achieving their agreement is easy but in some cases such as the case of local women working in handicrafts shops, it requires a long time and a complicated process. (Mitra, an employee in QIG)

Establishing trust between the local community and authorities in PAs becomes urgent when it comes to ICH implementation in tourism. As Mitra mentioned it is not an easy task but obviously local community's agreement and their accompaniment is one of the main *Managerial considerations* that requires to be considered seriously in order to develop ICH based tourism in PAs.



Figure7. 5 The Stars Valley geosite and a view of its unusual geoheritage (Source: Majid Yasini)

7.3.2.2 *Carrying Capacity*

Carrying capacity was one of the most repeated themes that most of the participants expressed when they were asked to talk about different aspects of the role of ICH in QIG tourism. When they started talking about the interaction between ICH and tourism, usually they automatically ended up explaining the necessity of carrying capacity in applying ICH in QIG tourism. Carrying capacity is a concept that was used in tourism “as early as the 1960s” (Salerno et al., 2013, p. 116) to focus on the need to establish a limit on tourist activity in order to decrease the negative environmental and social impacts on destinations. It is defined as the maximum number of visitors which an area can sustain without unacceptable deterioration of the physical environment, and without considerably diminishing user satisfaction (Mathieson, 1982; Prato, 2001). The concept of carrying capacity is not limited to environmental issues. Sociocultural carrying capacity has also become important as the awareness of the negative impacts that tourism may leave on human society and cultural context. Sociocultural carrying capacity indicates the threshold at which the local community experience “declining of the quality of life as a result of growing tourism activity” (Mansfeld & Jonas, 2006, p.585).

In this research, by applying the concept of carrying capacity, participants mainly meant carrying capacity in relation to the local cultural context, traditional lifestyle, and different features of ICH. They usually didn't necessarily use the exact term of carrying capacity but they conveyed it when they were talking about the quality of ICH when implicated in tourism, the number of people that must visit ICH in a specific period, and the amount of changes that each type of the intangible cultural element could accept. However, all of QIG officials and few of the visitors, those with related university degrees, were familiar with the term carrying capacity to some extent and used it without change. The following comments reveal participants' opinion on the concept of carrying capacity with more focus on ICH:

I believe that cultural asset is same as the biological resources that we have in the geopark. As we consider biological carrying capacity, it is very critical to think about cultural carrying capacity as well. Clearly, tourism uses the available resources, but this usage must be to the point that it remains the least negative impacts on the resources. The material and non-material assets of Qeshm Island Geopark are being used now in tourism but we should decide how many visitors could visit each one of them. It will help to maintain the cultural and biological variety in the island. In another language, we need to make sure of the survival of all geopark's asset regardless of being cultural or natural. (Sharif, an employee in QIG)

Sharif as a biologist viewed this concept from a biological perspective, and linked ICH carrying capacity to biological carrying capacity. Hamid who is more expert in cultural areas pointed at the need of taking ICH carrying capacity into account from a tourism management perspective:

We are talking about very sensitive parts of human culture. Intangible Cultural Heritage in Qeshm Island Geopark is deeply fragile. Also, the local community is sensitive about what they have inherited from their forefathers as cultural asset. We don't want tourism hurts what is important for locals.... In this case, people won't trust us [the geopark's officials] anymore while we definitely need custodial community's trust in order to implement their ICH in tourism. Evaluating carrying capacity for

geopark's ICH is a step to achieve that trust, and it must be of high priority for Qeshm Island Geopark main office management. (Hamid, an employee in QIG)

In the next quote, Fozi considers the importance of carrying capacity to the point that it can likely protect the local culture from changes it may receive from tourism development. This notion was addressed by Deirri from a different perspective; that limiting the number of visitors will help to perform the customs in the way that it has always been.

The best way to control the negative impacts of tourism is to limit the number of geopark visitors. I think entering strangers to this island with the name of visitor has affected the local culture during last few years to some extent. To prevent this process and in order to maintain our cultural asset almost the same as before, there is no other option rather than limiting the number of incoming visitors especially during peak months. (Fozi, an employee in QIG)

Hospitality is an important part of our culture. We have learned to value our guests. For us all visitors in geopark are like our guests. We try to welcome them in the best way. But, I wonder how many is the maximum number of guests that we can serve properly for example in a local wedding ceremony... sometimes the number of visitors is too many and it causes an interruption in the ceremony performances and consequently locals' dissatisfaction. Maybe, Qeshm Island Geopark main office should restrict the number of visitors and solve this problem. (Deirri, traditional restaurant owner)

All of the above comments reflect the need for evaluating the ICH carrying capacity in the geopark. Carrying capacity can act as a planning tool (Mathieson, 1982) to preserve intangible cultural asset of the local community more effectively against the negative impacts of tourism development especially during peak seasons (Figure 7.6). Besides members of local community the visitor of geopark also expressed the same idea.

Implementing restrictions on the number of visitors who visit intangible cultural features, like those who attend the local ceremony, would lead in supporting both geoparks, and its cultural heritage. (Maryam, nonlocal visitor)

To expand this idea Saeed pointed at the biggest Iranian cultural celebration which is Nowruz²⁴.

The number of visitors in Qeshm Island Geopark during Nowruz is unbelievable. Everywhere is fully packed. While I am sure two months later when the weather gets warmer, the number of visitors decreases dramatically. Isn't it better that the local officials find a way to spread a large number of Nowruz visitors during all seasons of the year. I know it is difficult to attract people to the island in warmer weather but I guess there must be a way. (Saeed, nonlocal visitor)

Babak was very interested in this topic. He is studying tourism planning at university, and he was one of the visitors who used the exact term of carrying capacity in his interview. Below is his opinion on ICH carrying capacity:



Figure 7.6 Shows the crowdedness of visitors of QIG in high season (from Qeshm Island Geopark Archive)

²⁴ - Novruz, Nowruz, Nooruz, Navruz, Nauroz or Nevruz marks the New Year and the beginning of spring across a vast geographical area covering, inter alia, Azerbaijan, India, Iran, Kyrgyzstan, Pakistan, Turkey and Uzbekistan. It is celebrated on 21 March every year, a date originally determined by astronomical calculations (UNESCO, 2016a). In Iran Nowruz holiday takes 13 days.

The number of visitors more than capacity will affect people's daily lifestyle, and their traditions. It could happen intentionally or unintentionally but it would be steady, slowly and gradually. Sometimes local people change what they have been doing for many years to meet the visitor's needs and consequently, earn more money; they do it intentionally ... but sometimes cultural changes occurred slowly and during many years, in a way that nobody notices or even cares about it at that time. I think applying carrying capacity would probably decrease the second type of changes that I've just explained...I mean carrying capacity must be taken as a tool to preserve intangible features of heritage from unnecessary, and unwanted changes (Babak, a nonlocal visitor).

Mohammad brought up a point about the nature of ICH and its changing character:

Intangible cultural heritage is invisible. They are not as clear, and touchable as a for example a historic building... I think the process of changing intangible heritage is intangible as well. For example, if a historic building in Qeshm Island Geopark hurts physically everybody would realize it right away, and report it to the central office [of geopark]. But how many of people would realize the intangible heritage modification? Local people custom, beliefs, traditions, and lifestyle are continuously being affected and altered by tourism, and maybe many other things... I think the modification of intangible [cultural] heritage will accelerate if geopark receives more than a specific number of visitors. (Mohammad, a nonlocal visitor)

In both above quotes, the participants focused on an important point that ICH, confronting tourism, could change gradually over time in sometimes even subtle and invisible ways. At the present time, modification of intangible cultural asset is inevitable to some extent, and maintaining the authenticity and originality of this type heritage seems to be impossible (Nasser, 2003; Cohen, 1988) (Section 4.3.1). However, based on all above quotes ICH based carrying capacity must be applied as a mean which can control, and mitigate the negative impacts of tourism on ICH products in a PAs, and maintain them in the best possible conditions and quality.

7.3.2.3 Interpretation

Interpretation is defined as a form of communication in which information flows between the visitor, interpreter, and the attraction itself. It is considered as a tool that encourages and asks the visitors to behave in a certain way as long as they are visiting a specific site. It also enhances the visitors' information and enriches their experience of visiting an attraction (Ham, 1992; Puczkó, 2006). On the other side, regarding tourism development in a PA, interpretation is taken as a necessary tool in order to make the visitors aware of the cultural and environmental sensitivity of the area, and decrease the negative impacts of tourism (Delgado & Pazos, 2013; Eagles et al., 2002; Ham, Sutherland, & Meganck, 1993). Delgado and Pazos (2013, p. 300) note that heritage interpretation is a “strategic communication process that can facilitate the management of protected areas” because it enables people to create “emotional, and intellectual connections” with the attraction they visit.

In this study, participants indicated to a special type of interpretation based on existing ICH in a PA. The need for ICH based *Interpretation* was a theme that emerged from a large number of interviews with all three groups of interviewees. Participants expressed that informing the visitors is an influential factor that is needed to be promoted in order to implement the intangible cultural asset of the local community as a tourism product in QIG. However on the other side it was also reflected that *Interpretation* of ICH is a challenging task.

A visitor who doesn't know about our traditions and customs must be informed. We shouldn't expect an unaware visitor to follow our cultural rules and understand our tradition. (Hashem, QIG local guide)

A good example in this area is the wedding celebration in the geopark and the interaction of tourism with this old tradition. As mentioned before it is part of local hospitality culture to welcome warmly any person who enters their wedding celebration. They usually leave the door of their houses open all the day while they are celebrating the wedding of a member of a family. Those groups of visitors who attend a wedding with a local guide have already been told about the general cultural rules of the wedding in advance. But, there are many of visitors who travel independently to

geopark. This group of visitors may face some confusing challenges while they are visiting a special cultural event because they don't know how to behave to look respectful, and polite to the local community. Following is a story of a group of visitors in geopark who attended a local wedding celebration without a local guide. This story reveals the importance of ICH based *Interpretation*, and most specifically the need to provide all visitors with enough information about the general cultural norms and any behavioural codes related to visiting ICH in the PA.

When we were visiting natural geosites of Qeshm Island Geopark, like the Stars Valley geosite, we were asked to consider information boards and keep walking in the path. In fact, local guides, signs, and brochures all informed us in advance about the geological features of the geopark, its fragile ecosystem, and also the safety warnings. Sadly, it was totally opposite when we enter a wedding ceremony for the first time. Upon arrival I felt afraid because I had no information about any sociocultural norms of attending such a different ceremony in this remote part of Iran. Upon entering, I realized that everything was different from typical Iranian wedding. No woman was seen around; all who were performing ceremony were men. Although, they welcomed us with a smile, and fruit juice, Mahsa [the participant's fellow traveller], and I who were the only females in that big group of men found ourselves as a stranger there... it was awkward and bizarre. We had to watch our behaviour very carefully, constantly, and nervously. Later, even Keivan ,the only guy with us, claimed that he also had pretty much the same feeling. (Sara, a nonlocal visitor)

We had no information about the cultural rules of wedding celebration in Qeshm Island. It caused us missing a very interesting part of local culture. While Sara [the participant's fellow traveler] and I were confused about finding ourselves in a totally boring male party, there was a big female wedding party just next door. Later, I found that there are a set of special customs that are performed only in a female wedding party like putting Henna tattoos, baking house made cookies, singing local songs about the bride, and dancing. I wish I knew, and could have visited the female part of the local weddings. (Mahsa, a nonlocal visitor)

Sara's statement reflects that in comparison with the natural touristic sites in QIG, intangible cultural assets are presented with less or no information to visitors. Based on the above quote Sara, and her fellow travellers, after attending the wedding realized that their experience would have been much different if they had had enough information about visitors' behavioural codes in a local ceremony. Sara and Mahsa found themselves like strangers in that party because they were the only women there. They had no idea, and nobody had told them that in the QIG women, and men celebrate a wedding separately in two different houses. In the second quote Mahsa, the second female member of this group sighed that she had missed visiting a real local wedding celebration that was holding next door, only because they didn't know about it. In fact, nothing, and nobody had informed them about the women party that was just next door. After listening to Sara, and Mahsa I became curious to know how Keivan, the only male in this small visitor group, explains his experience of attending a local wedding ceremony, without any previous information:

It was a paradoxical experience for me; awkward but interesting. Upon arrival, we found ourselves in a big male party. All of them in white and long dresses. The performer group was sitting in the middle and the other guys rounded them. It was very cool... I didn't want to behave disrespectfully; however, I absolutely had no idea about what exactly I must do in that situation to follow their [cultural] rules, and not to look impolite... we wondered if we should sit or remain standing on the corner of that big yard watching the ceremony... I liked the local fruit juice they served us upon arrival but I was not sure if it was polite to ask for another glass of that fruit juice... You know, in fact, we knew nothing about their culture. I think we should have read about the local wedding ceremony in the QIG before attending such a traditional and specific ceremony. Surprisingly, there was nothing useful in guide brochures or on the guide boards across the geopark. (Keivan, a nonlocal visitor)

Of particular attention in the experiences of participants was the lack of information about the general cultural rules and social norms associated with these types of ceremonies. It is clear from few previous statements that Sara, Mahsa and Keivan would more likely have had a better experience if they had been informed about the the custom and the way visitors are expected to behave in these events . This notion is in

line with what was presented from Hashem earlier in this chapter that if the visitors get informed about the local cultural norms they would respect and follow them more and in a better way. Below quote stress this idea:

Upon the arrival of new visitors to our guesthouse, I politely talk a bit to them about some very general things that we like our guests care about as long as they stay here...I ask men not to enter the kitchen at all because my wife and my daughters are usually working there not in proper dressing [Hijab]... Luckily we have had no issues so far... because we keep reminding and telling the visitors what they must do in an respectful way and all of them always consider it. (Nakhoda, a guesthouse owner)

In this line, QIG main office approves that developing interpretation about the behavioural codes while visiting geopark and villages is “a must” for tourism in QIG. However, the wide variety of intangible cultural assets across QIG and sometimes the variety of the dos and don'ts associated with each one of them would make this process more complicated. The below three participants from the central office of QIG explained the *Complicatedness* of interpreting ICH in tourism.

QIG is located in an ancient location. Because of historical sail trading our culture now is an interesting mix of Persian, Arab, African, and Indian. This characteristic has made our culture so rich in terms of intangible cultural heritage... we know that there is very little information about our intangible [cultural] asset on interpretation products across the geopark. Many signs across the geopark have been designed to give information to visitors only about the geological features and ecosystems. Sadly, only two or three of them are about the intangible cultural asset of our people. We know that what we need to do to support our culture in this island is to aware both the local community and visitors about it ... Surely, this is part of our plan but on the other hand, we are quite aware that it is not an easy job and it will probably take time. (Mitra, an employee in QIG)

The intangible cultural asset of our community exists in all parts of Qeshm Island Geopark. As soon as visitors steps in Qeshm Island, they probably find chance to confront and experience the various elements of our intangible cultural heritage.

Clearly, it is difficult to inform all visitors about all parts and details of ICH .However, we, in Qeshm Island Geopark central office, believe that we can manage the connection between visitors and local intangible [cultural] features through increasing visitors' awareness.(Fozi, an employee in QIG).

Visitors must become familiar with geopark's customs..., and a set of dos and don'ts that are related to local community's everyday life. The main goal of Qeshm Island Geopark's interpretation program is to provide visitors with more useful information on how to visit the intangible aspect of local culture and how to preserve it. (Hamid, an employee of QIG)

What has been outlined so far in this section revealed two layers of the idea of ICH based *Interpretation* in PAs. First, *Interpretation* of ICH is an influential factor in tourism in a PA. The local officials of QIG highlighted that increasing ICH based *Interpretation* in tourism is a “must” for developing tourism in geopark. This necessity is to the point that, even the owners of small tourism businesses in the geopark have already found that they must give their customers some information about the customs, and the traditional knowledge they apply in their job. They have already realized that it will attract more visitors or make them happier with their experience of visiting ICH related to their business. For example, it was explained earlier (Section 7.3.1) that a traditional restaurant owner (Pedram) has provided interesting information about the local food recipes, traditional cooking techniques, and equipment. In fact, Pedram has applied and developed ICH *Interpretation* as a factor that helped him to improve his tourism business.

The second layer of this subject is that, although considering this factor is important for tourism in a PA, interpretation for the intangible cultural asset is not as easy and doable as it is regarding the tangible cultural asset. There is usually a challenging, complicated, and a long way ahead of the PAs officials because of the wide variety of history, types, functions, and structure of intangible cultural asset in each local community living within a PA. I noticed that local officials of QIG have already started a program to promote the interpretation relates to visiting the handicrafts workshop, and the local women working there. However, considering the variety of ICH available in QIG this program should be taken as a very specific and small sized project.

Another point that stresses this challenge refers to the notion of how visitors make connection with different types of tangible and intangible heritage. Below Hamid explained this notion by comparing interpretation for a tangible cultural heritage, and an intangible one:

We are quite aware that for people who know nothing or a little about local culture in geopark it might be difficult to understand the meaning of the ceremonies or the important role of traditional knowledge in the daily life of these people...if we want to give people information about one of the old houses in the geopark we will simply tell them about it's the location, history, and architecture, or even any interesting story about the building... Seems quite easy...but what exactly we should tell visitors to help them make connection, understand, and respect the sacredness of an old tree and more importantly enjoy their visit. I think between the cases of the old house and the sacredness of a tree the first one is much easier, straightforward, and doable.

Sometimes it is not even the matter of difference between tangible and intangible asset and how visitors connect with them. Considering the wide variety of intangible cultural features, I realized that it is usually visitors connect and understand some particular elements of ICH quicker, and easier than the other elements. For example, most visitors understand and appreciate anything associated with food, and local culinary practices easily. While usually traditional knowledge or oral tradition are not easily understandable for visitors who are mostly unfamiliar with local cultural context. As Hamid implied in the above statement, this subject makes the promoting *Interpretation* of ICH in PAs more challenging and complicated.

7.3.3 Temporal and Spatial Dependent

ICH is dealing with the daily life and lifestyle of the local community in a PA. It associates with their usual customs, and the traditions they practice in their group in the community (Arizpe & Amescua, 2013; Lixinski, 2013; Stefano et al., 2012). It is notable that although ICH is practiced regularly and evolved constantly in the daily life of locals, some parts of it are largely time and place dependent. It means that they are

implemented, practiced, and performed only during a specific period of time, and/or in a specific place. *Temporal and spatial dependent* indicates to the nature of ICH; the nature that could act as a problematic issue in promoting tourism activities in PAs. Actually, this characteristic could make some of the ICH tourism products more complicated to be introduced and applied properly in tourism. It can minimize the chance of visiting a particular ICH based product when visitors cannot manage to be present at the right location, and at the right time.

The idea of *Temporal and spatial dependent* was positioned in many of interviews in different ways. For instance, the local festival of Nowruz Sayyad (Figure 7.7) in QIG was reflected more frequently especially by participants group three; the visitors. Based on the empirical information, there is a big problem in the way of planning this festival as a tourism product. This problem derived from the time of holding this festival which is exactly in mid-summer day²⁵, few hours before sunset. In mid of summer the temperature usually gets to more than 38 Centigrade, and humidity hits more than 80 percent in the island, which often makes being outdoor excessively difficult especially for nonlocals who are not used to this weather. However, the locals persist that they cannot change the time of the festival because “*according to the local fishing calendar, middle of summer is the correct time for performing this festival*” (Hamid). I found that, based on their oral tradition, locals believe that mid-summer is a specific day when all rivers strive to reach the sea (they mean the Persian Gulf), and it is the day when the sea rest. To value water and all aqua creatures, no fisherman goes to the sea for fishing on the day of Nowruz Sayyad festival. Apart from the time of this festival, another condition is that it must be held on the beach, and close to the sea:



Figure7. 7 Shows the local and symbolic festival of Nowruz Sayyad in QIG (Source: Majid Yasini.)

Since the summer begins, we prepare ourselves for Nowruz Sayyad festival. Everybody, local people and officials of Qeshm Island Geopark, help to provide us with what we need. This is a very important festival for us, when we can pray to God and thank God for giving us the uncountable blesses from the sea... We have been asked constantly by visitors, and tour operators to change the time of this festival, and hold it in winter instead of summer. But we definitely cannot. It is the way Nowruz Sayyad has been inherited to us from our forefathers. In fact, we are not permitted to change either the time or the place of holding this festival. (Abdoo, a village local guide)

From tourism perspective, it must be noted that the time of holding this festival has influenced ICH tourism in geopark directly. Although Nowruz Sayyad is a unique local festival in Iran, many interested visitors miss it because of the unpleasant weather condition of the geopark at that time:

My plan is to return back to geopark in June to visit the Nowruz Sayyad festival. I know it is crazy to be in Qeshm [Island] in the middle of hot summer when it is said that the temperature gets to over 40 Centigrade, but it is exactly the time of this old festival. Many visitors of Qeshm Island Geopark miss this amazing festival just because of the time of it...But , well, I think if people like to visit a very unique festival like Nowruz Sayyad they must be here [in the geopark] at the right time and be prepared for any annoying condition even if it is 45-degree. (Samad, a nonlocal visitor)

Besides Samad, eight of fifteen participates from visitor group indicated that they wished they could manage to visit Nowruz Sayyad but the hot weather seems unbearable for them at that time. As Ati said “*it is a shame that they hold this festival only once a year when even the rocks start melting in the island ... I surely cannot stand such a horrible hot weather*”.

Festivals and local customs are not like natural attraction of geopark. Geographical landforms of the geopark are always available and visitors can visit them easily at any time of a year. But some of customs like Nowruz Sayyad or our religious Eids²⁶ happens only once or twice a year...another example is that locals don't celebrate wedding during Ramadan because of fasting... visiting Qeshm Island Geopark in

²⁶ -Eid or Eed is a Persian word for celebration or feasts.

Ramadan equals missing the attractive custom of local wedding... I think realizing the correct time for travelling to geopark to visit festivals and other events is very important. (Keivan, a nonlocal visitor)

Keivan's quote highlights that while many of natural attractions in the a PA are available for visitors to visit regardless of time, some of ICH elements are being presented to tourism only in a specific time of a year. Therefore, the concept of *time dependency* challenges the tourism sector in PAs.

In addition to the factor of right time (*Temporal dependent*), another underlying factor of right place (*Spatial dependent*) was also reflected as the factor that interferes with ICH tourism in QIG. Some of the intangible cultural elements are able to be visited only in one specific geographical location. A good example in QIG is the geosite of Stars Valley (Figure 7.5) and its association with a part of the local oral tradition. It was explained in Box 5.2 that there is an old legend about the unusual geological landforms of this geosite. This legend is about only this particular location; therefore in order to understand it and why the locals have raised such a legend over time, the best way is to be present physically in that specific geological location in QIG that is named Stars Valley. Below is what two of visitors said after they visited Stars Valley geosite.

Before visiting the [Stars] valley I had read the legend on the brochure. At that time the legend seemed funny and nonsense to me...But now [after visiting the Stars Valley] I can understand the meaning linked to this legend...we had time to walk among the landforms and it was when I figured out why local people have made this tales about this strange area. (Babak, nonlocal visitors)

I had been told that local people believe that this valley is not like the other parts of the Earth ...when I came here I realized that the landforms look very exotic and bizarre. In my eyes, this place is strange to the point that when you are here you think you are walking on the moon! This feeling doesn't happen to you unless you come here in person, step on this land, walk on this land and see how cool and different the landforms are when you get close to them. (Maryam, nonlocal visitors)

Both above quotes stress the importance of the concept of “place” in promoting ICH tourism in a PA. In line with this, Pari, a 65-year old visitor in the QIG, gave me another example when she was talking about the challenges she had in visiting ICH in geopark:

Before travelling to Qeshm Island Geopark, I had read about its different attractions. It became even more interesting when I found that the “Lenj-sazi”²⁷ is one of Iranian Intangible World Heritage, and probably the biggest handicraft in the world. But when I got to geopark, I realized that to visit “Lenj-sazi” workshops I have to travel to the other side of the island and I couldn’t. I read some more stuff about the process of building such a huge boat in QIG museum but I am sure visiting the workshop, workers, and the boats in its real place would be a different experience. (Pari-, a nonlocal visitor)

The “Lenj-sazi” workshop is located in the most suitable beach point for launching the new-made Lenj vessels (Figure 5.3). Thus, “since hundreds of years ago, this traditional workshop has been active only in this specific location on the Island” (Abdo). Fozi made another example which clarifies more the dependency of promoting the ICH tourism on the factor of the *Right place*.

There is a famous sacred natural site in Qeshm Island Geopark which is, in fact, an old tree. This tree is located close to a famous complex of water wells in Laft [name of a village]. Local people hold some interesting customs next to the tree ... But the fact is that if visitors want to visit these customs and rituals associated with that tree, they have to be present at that specific location by the tree and not at any other place in the geopark (Fozi, an employee in QIG).

²⁷ -Iranian Lenj vessels are traditionally hand built and are used by inhabitants of the northern coast of the Persian Gulf for sea journeys, trading, fishing and, pearl diving” (UNESCO, 2014c) (Figure 5.3). “Lenj-sazi” in Persian language indicates to the place where the Lenjes are made.

In general, the information of this section outlines the importance of the factor of *Temporal and spatial dependent* in implementing intangible cultural elements in tourism in a PA. It was mentioned that changing the time and place of ICH may not be possible for different reasons such as local community agreement, and this situation can put the visitors into trouble to visit a particular element of the local intangible heritage. Overall, the factor of *Temporal and spatial dependent* is one of the challenging areas of promoting ICH tourism in PAs.

7.3.4 Not Suitable for Tourism

Some ICH features of the local community in Qeshm Island Geopark are better not to be introduced in tourism. (Seyyed)

It is what Seyyed told me when we were talking about introducing different aspects of ICH in tourism in QIG. This short quote reveals a basic theme which addresses the Complicatedness of ICH implementation in tourism from a new perspective. Sometimes applying ICH in tourism becomes limited or challenging because some aspects and elements of ICH are not in priority for the locals to be promoted as a tourism product. Hamid explained it more:

We think that some parts of Intangible [cultural] heritage are better not to be applied in tourism development of the geopark, as they do not present a good image of our old and rich culture.... Jen-giri is a good example. (Hamid, an employee in QIG)

“Jen-giri” is the Persian term for exorcism; *“it is a custom of expelling the evil spirit from the body of a person who is suffering from a chronic disease” (Seyyed)*. Islam considers Jen-giri as a big sin, therefore the religious leaders in Qeshm Island warn people strongly about it. However, there are still some people, especially among elders in the community, who believe in it. They practice this custom mostly hidden. The QIG central office policy is to prevent presenting this ICH element to tourism because it is perceived as a *“superstitious custom with negative impacts on tourism in geopark” (Hamid)*.

Jen- giri is a bizarre custom in our island which could attract its special fans. But in general, it doesn't present our island and our culture in a good way. I think it doesn't make sense that we present such a stupid, superstitious custom while there is an abundance of meaningful cultural values, nice behaviours, and other interesting [cultural] events in the QIG. (Leili, a local handicrafts maker)

Leili and Hamid both grew up in Qeshm Island. The above quotes clearly reveal their concern about some elements of the local customs which could present the wrong message to the visitors about the whole cultural body of QIG. Nakhoda, who is an old man mentioned that *"I, myself don't believe in Jen-gir. It is a very shallow and meaningless custom"*. In this line, Hamid indicated that *"it is very small part of our ICH that might not show a good image of the local culture"*. Through interviews, I realized that the local participants who were familiar with the cultural context of their community usually don't like that particular *"very small part"* of their culture to be introduced to visitors. They prefer to hide it to some extent and rarely talk about it; because it shows the visitors neither a rational nor the pleasant aspect of their culture and cultural heritage.

Information shows that another reason for not presenting that *"very small part"* of ICH in tourism is that usually there isn't a reasonable demand for these types of customs from tourism side.

Why should we focus on this part of our culture, which is not interesting for many of visitors at all? Why shouldn't we offer the other side of local cultural context in Qeshm Island Geopark which is more attractive and interesting? (Leili)

In this line Sharif indicated that *"Regarding the variety of other ICH attractions in QIG, even if, we decide to promote Jen-giri in tourism, I am not sure if we will have enough demands for it"*. Hashem explained a real experience of a group of visitors visiting the custom of Jen-giri in geopark and that at end it was not pleasant experience for them at all:

Once, a friend of mine asked me to take a couple of visitors to visit Jen-giri and I accepted. At first, I explained to them that upon they enter the room they are not allowed to leave it. It means that they have to stay there until Jen-giri is over. They

accepted right away. When Jen-giri proceeded they panicked excessively. I could see the sign of extreme scare in their faces but they had to remain seated in the room until the end... later they confessed that it was not a pleasant experience for them at all. Since that time, I realized why the central office of Qeshm Island Geopark doesn't appreciate visitors to attend Jen-giri custom ...I think it is not a proper part of our culture to be offered to strangers and more probably many of the visitors would not like it either. (Hashem, QIG local guide)

Besides the custom of Jen-giri, there is another example which was given by some of the local participants. This example shows how the locals behave ruthless to lizards in the island following “*a set of nonsense traditional belief that introduces the lizards as harmful animals*” (Mitra). In the following quote Derri explained this belief more:

All animals and plants are creatures of God. Islam asks us not to hurt them and let them live on the Earth... but in the Qeshm Island people kill lizards anywhere, and anytime. I am an old man. Visitors usually ask me about our customs. Well, I do not tell them that we kill lizards, instead, I rather tell them about the friendly behaviour of my people with birds and mammals.

While local community in QIG behaves kindly to different species of animals, killing the lizards is taken as a rare instance of local destructive culturally behaviour towards the environment (Section 6.3.2). Furthermore, the fact that the local community in a PA is not happy to introduce some particular elements of its ICH to tourism can be linked to one of the previous sections of this study where the influential factor of *Custodial community agreement* was discussed (Section 7.3.2.1). For example, the case of exorcism custom in QIG could be potentially suitable to be presented as a product in dark tourism as it has been done in some other places in the world (Hong-yan, 2008; Simpson, 2007). However, because the custodial community in QIG doesn't agree, promoting this intangible cultural element to a tourism product becomes complicated or even impossible.

Overall, that some elements of ICH in a PA are not taken *Suitable for tourism* is because either the custodial community doesn't agree on it, or it doesn't seem to be considerable demands from tourism side for that particular element in compare to other elements of ICH.

7.4 Lifestyle Change

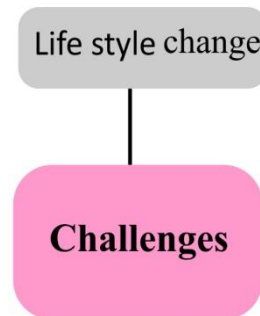


Figure 7. 9 The organizing theme *Lifestyle change*

There is a global growing concern that old human lifestyles and local traditions will disappear in near future as a result of modernization which has increased mostly after World War II (Alivizatou, 2012; Kurin, 2004). Modernization and its consequences are introduced as a threat which can change the framework of cultures and also accelerate losing human cultural resources (Corsane, 2012; Kreps, 2012).

The concept of modernization in this study conveys the ongoing process of the transition of cultural context, and local lifestyle of the society, here the local community in PAs, from its traditional style into the more contemporary version. In this research, some of the participants applied the term modernization, and to clarify their talk they usually made different examples of modification traditional lifestyle and its evident consequences in the community. One of the related examples is losing part of traditional fishing techniques in QIG as a result of emerging the modern fishing equipment and techniques.

In the process of changing local lifestyle, the body of cultures could change considerably to the point that they lose their original meaning or authenticity (Lixinski, 2013; UNWTO, 2012) (Section. 4.3.1). Cominelli and Greffe (2012) state that “we are at the time when the loss of cultural diversity uniforms different lifestyles”. Furthermore, lifestyle change affects ICH features directly and in different ways. ICH is mostly about the living aspects of each culture which is presented and shared in the daily life of members of a community. It is an attitude and behavioural patterns and practices which associate with a set of values, and knowledge that all together shape the

framework of that special type of lifestyle (George, 2010; Alivizatou, 2012; Lixinski, 2013). Therefore it is safe to say that lifestyle change is tightly linked to ICH modification. In this regard, throughout the process of this change many elements of ICH such as traditional techniques, and their associated traditional knowledge, cultural values, and oral tradition would disappear over time.

Turning to the case of QIG, it is not difficult to realize that changing the traditional lifestyle towards more contemporary version has already affected the available ICH of the geopark in many ways. I am familiar with different aspects of this ongoing change in QIG because of my previous work experience (Section 5.10). Conducting six months fieldwork in QIG, and living with a local family in a local guesthouse provided me with more clear examples of how the body of traditional life in Qeshm Island is being constantly affected by different means, and features of a more contemporary style of life. Internet access is one of the most evident examples.

It is not more than four years that the internet is accessible in nearly all houses in the village. In the evenings, one can see that young boys sit in the alleys in groups of three or more while they are deeply busy with playing games in their cell phones individually. *“They [youth] barely play team games; the games which were more common until a few years ago before entering Wi-Fi to their homes” (Pedram)*. I also realized that young girls are more willing to dress up in modern Iranian style rather than traditional colourful and handmade dresses that their mothers wear. In addition, in some case elders indicated that these changes are threatening the local customs, and cultural values, because youth show more interest to the new lifestyle rather the traditional one. In this vein Abdo, a village local guide expressed that *“I have seven grandchildren, and I can see that they are less committed to our religious beliefs and our traditional practices”*. Mitra, another local participant, presented another example:

I feel so sad when I see the young brides in the village are more willing to wear the modern bride gown instead of the traditional one...they prefer to put on the new make-up style that they probably have seen on TV rather than having Henna tattoos on their bodies. (Mitra, local employee in QIG)

What is happening in the small community of QIG is alongside with what is going on in the wider context, and at the global level. In many of small communities traditional

cultural practices, values, and in general the traditional lifestyle is significantly undertaken by elders, while young regeneration shows less attention for traditional, and rural lifestyle (Cominelli & Greffe, 2012; UNWTO, 2012).

Based on the local participants, the lifestyle change has already influenced many aspects of ICH such as oral tradition, culinary habits, and techniques, and religious values. Nakhoda is 60 years old. In the below quote he illustrated that how satellite, as a big product of modernization, has affected his relationship with the younger members of his family, including his grandchildren. He made an example of storytelling which used to be an important inter-family relationship mean. But it is not taken amusing any more since satellite has been introduced to the village. Nakhoda's quote illustrates the impacts of changing traditional lifestyle on ICH more particularly oral traditions, and the fact that many aspects of oral tradition would disappear by near future as the result of lifestyle change. (Kurin, 2004; Lixinski, 2013; Nas, 2002)

Many things have changed in people life. The way that youth live now, is different from the way we used to live in the forty, fifty years ago. I have two teenage sons, and a young daughter at home.²⁸ I can see that their behaviour has been affected by what they see in the satellite [programs], and the internet. Personally, I am not interested in satellite programs at all, as they are not always in line with our religious beliefs and cultural values. But, my children follow the programs every day. We didn't have the satellite in our island about ten years ago, but now satellite is in almost all houses. I think it is the main reason for changing our culture...When my children were younger I used to entertain them by telling legends, and old tales. We used to play some of the group games that my wife and I knew from the past. Unfortunately, now my grandchildren are not interested in those old tales anymore because they are busy watching satellite programs every day. (Nakhoda, a guesthouse owner)

Sharif made another example from the different perspective. As a local biologist, he discussed the notion of physical development on the island, as a sign of modernization, and it's evident consequences on the local culture especially ICH :

²⁸ - He meant that they are not married yet and they live in Nakhoda's house.

Uncontrolled modernization has brought a set of uncontrolled development for us. During less than thirty years the geographical landscapes of Qeshm Island have changed significantly. Roads developed in all parts of the island, and the number of cars increased. New imported building materials have changed the appearance of our houses. I think it is a big threat for local knowledge behind our vernacular architecture techniques...I agree that modernization could bring several positive things to remote areas like Qeshm Island; however I believe any type of development must be implemented through a proper management system, in order not to change what we have been so far ... unfortunately; these changes have hurt the local cultural context, especially intangible cultural asset. (Sharif, an employee in QIG)

Sharif made an example to outline the negative impacts of uncontrolled physical development on ICH of the local community who live in the island. Notably, this particular example was also later mentioned by two other local participants.

I remember that when I was a child my sister, and I used to play in the shade of Konar²⁹ garden that was located exactly there [he pointed to the place just across from the cafe where we were sitting] on the other side of the road. Trees are important in our culture because we are living in an arid and hot island with few trees around. Meanwhile, Konar is the most important endemic trees in this island. Lots of folkloric tales, and local beliefs, and techniques are associated with Konar tree in our culture. For example, we are the only people in Iran who know how to make food with Konar fruit. Unfortunately, that Konar garden was destroyed during the construction process to build this ugly asphalt road [He pointed at the road by the cafe we were sitting]. I could say that most of the cultural asset associated with Konar trees has been ruined too. (Sharif, an employee in QIG).

Sharif believes that the uncontrolled physical development such as road building is a part of a new lifestyle which has resulted from what he calls modernization. Mismanagement and lack of strict controls have caused negative impacts on both natural heritage (Konar tree in the above example), and the ICH associated with it (in

²⁹- The local terms for the Prosopis tree. This tree is an endemic species in the southern coastal line, and, Island, , s in Iran.

the above example it is the oral tradition, culinary techniques, and traditional knowledge associated with this tree species). Later in his interview, Sharif also indicated that *“If we still had that garden, it could have been one of the main tourist attractions in the Island. Because of our island is one of the very few places in Iran where Konar grows easily.”* Sharif’s last quote leads us to consider this notion from the tourism perspective, which is one of the main contexts of this study. Obviously, he took mismanagement in the process of modernization as a mean to change the resources of the intangible cultural asset. While, these intangible cultural assets are the potential resources that can be planned and presented in tourism in a PA (UNWTO, 2012). Notably, the lifestyle change links to and affects tourism in a PA. It was reflected frequently by locals, especially the SBTO in various ways. They believe that visitors are mostly interested in visiting aspects of local lifestyle, and the traditions which exist in a PA.

I think most of them [the visitors] like to visit what they usually can’t find in their big cities. For example, local food, and our daily activities such as fishing in Herra are interesting for them. It is interesting to me that sometimes they ask me if they can have a look inside a local house the rooms. They are mostly curious to see how the internal decoration of our houses looks with traditional furniture...Generally speaking for those visitors who are interested in the cultural things; our traditional lifestyle is very attractive. (Hashem, QIG local guide)

This subject can links to section 6.3.2 where it is explained that some of the owners of traditional guesthouses on the island have already realized that there are more tourism demands for staying in guesthouses with traditional decorations, not those ones which have been redecorated with modern style.

On the other side, the signs of changing local lifestyle were taken seriously by visitors as well, to the point that they usually talk and ask about these changes during their visitation of QIG. For instance whilst living at the Amini guesthouse I heard one of the visitors (Soofi) asked Mr. Amini’s wife *“Why supermarkets in the village are full of canned tuna while there is abundant of fresh fish in the village?”*. This question triggered me to have a more careful look on three big supermarkets in the village. I realized that Soofi was right. Meantime, besides canned fish a variety of different canned food, either made in Iran or imported ones was available in all three

supermarkets. Surprisingly, in that very small and remote village I found different canned food in colourful packages, as much as I could probably find in a populated and modern city such as Tehran. I observed that while shopping the local women usually pick some of the canned foods as well. Returning back to Mr. Amini's wife and his daughters and also during an informal conversation that we had in the big kitchen of the guesthouse, when they were all busy cooking lunch for their guests, I found that eating canned food is a new manner among village families which has been increased considerably during last five years.

Soofi, who first brought up this subject took this canned food as a sign of modernization arrival to even the most remote regions in Iran where "*cultures have been remained almost untouched so far*". As a visitor in QIG, Soofi considers local food as an important part of a destination's attraction. It seemed weird to her to find out that local people use canned fish in their daily diet while they have been traditionally fishermen and fish is their main daily food. She expressed that modern life has changed the traditional food diet and food consumption patterns of local families. She viewed it as a threat for those ICH features which is associated to food knowledge, and culinary:

If we want to apply the intangible heritage in tourism we must maintain it for our children. For me, tasting the local fresh and homemade food is very enjoyable. I wonder what will happen to the knowledge and culinary arts of the local women if they keep buying canned fish instead of fresh fish. Eating canned fish while one is living by the sea looks funny!! I think it is a cultural problem that small, and traditional villages are changing what they have had so far, in order to become more, and more similar to big cities. In this way, it is less likely that in near future any rural livelihood and traditions remain... traditional lifestyles in an old country like Iran will die... So, there would be less intangible cultural heritage in a place like Qeshm Island Geopark to be presented to interested visitors like me! (Soofi, a nonlocal visitor)

Locals also have the same concerns as Soofi's and it is obvious in Abdoo's quote. Abdoo is a 67-year old member of the local community in QIG who presented his concern towards oral tradition. He is worried about the oral tradition of the village to be disappeared totally in near future; "*After I die, how could the young local guides of*

village tell these folk tales to the visitors when they themselves know nothing about them?”

Overall, it seems that changing traditional lifestyles is acting as a serious problematic area for implementing and promoting ICH as a tourism product in two different levels. At the first level, in some cases it modifies ICH in different ways and to different extents. It is true in the case of replacing fresh fish with canned fish food in locals' diet. In this special case, fish is still the main food of the village and also the main food which is presented to visitors but, unlike the past, at the present time people rather buy canned fish instead of fresh ones. Another example refers to the traditional wedding celebration in the QIG. Nowadays young brides avoid putting Henna tattoos as an important part of wedding customary. However, the wedding celebration is being held the same way that it has always been. In these two examples, ICH has not been changed totally however it received some changes from specific aspects and to different extents. At the second level, the threat from lifestyle change is even more serious to the point that ICH disappears forever. This notion is evident in the case of the Konar garden and that all the cultural values, knowledge, and oral tradition associated with it have been destroyed through the changes resulted from the consequences of the more contemporary lifestyle.

Regarding *Lifestyle change* from the tourism perspective, I discuss two groups of ICH and their implication in tourism in PAs. First, there are a group of ICH elements that have already been affected by lifestyle change to some extent. These elements are alive and practicable in the body of local culture. Consequently, they can still be applied and presented in tourism of PA. The second indicates to those elements of ICH that have been disappeared and lost forever as the result of lifestyle change. In another language, change in the traditional lifestyle could destroy some parts of intangible cultural assets of the local community living in a PA. Notably, all of these cultural assets are taken as the potential tourism resources of PAs. If ICH stays alive, even partly like the first group, it can be used in diversifying tourism activities, and promoting tourism inside the PAs boundaries (Izzati, 2013; UNWTO, 2012; Giudici et al. 2013).

In addition, based on the empirical information it seems that at the present time lifestyle change is influencing mostly ICH rather than material heritage. Material heritage is meant to be protected through different effective and well-defined protection systems, world conventions, and declarations in last few decades. These regulation and

protection systems have been implemented towards any types of available material heritage. While it seems that, protecting ICH against the ongoing and increasing traditional lifestyle change is not taken as serious as it is for the material heritage. It could be because the international debates on the importance of ICH, and all the institutional attention to ICH are nearly recent in the world. As explained completely in Section 3.2.5 it was only in October 2003 when the World Convention of Safeguarding ICH it was finalized and entered into force on 20 April 2006 (Kurin, 2004; Pietrobruno, 2009; Vecco, 2010).

Moreover, more careful analysing of the information brought up another aspect of the relation between lifestyle change and ICH tourism which is worth discussing here. I found that lifestyle change is acting contradictory regarding ICH and its implementation in tourism in PAs. On one side, as discussed earlier in this section, lifestyle change is acting as a challenging factor that threat and limit ICH tourism development. However, on the other side, it takes a helpful role to mitigate some special problematic issues and at the same time also promote ICH related infrastructure. For instance, below quote says that the local women from the small and remote community of QGI now are showing more interest to work outside the house to present those female based elements of ICH to tourism such as female dressing and handicrafts. Actually, changing local attitude towards women working outside the house must be taken as a positive change in local lifestyle; a change that is working in favour of promoting a part of ICH tourism in QIG.

There is an obvious change in the way that women and their families used to react a few years ago.... Now more of young women come to us and ask if they can have a job in handicraft workshop... seems that there are fewer issues to stop women from working in tourism... I quite enjoy it when I see some of our women communicate with visitors easily while they are in their traditional beautiful dress and having Henna tattoos on their hands... although I should say that the number of these families and women are few for now but I am sure it is a social move that has been already started and will make more changes in near future. (Mitra, an employee in QIG)

Another example contributes to this fact is that now some of the STBO in QIG are using the internet to advertise their business and introduce the cultural and natural

heritage of their island. Although entering the internet to the remote PAs affects the lifestyle of the young generation, and it is threatening the existing of some aspect of ICH such as traditional team games or oral traditions (based on the quotes presented earlier) it is also being applied to promote tourism and local tourism businesses. Overall, lifestyle change could play negative and positive; threatening and helpful role in implementing and promoting ICH in the body of tourism in PAs.

7.5 Summary

Chapter Seven focused on the potential challenges and problematic issues in the way of promoting ICH in tourism of PAs. All participants perceived that in order to apply ICH in tourism in QIG, we need to overcome some problematic issues and deal with some existing challenges. The global theme *Challenges* was described and discussed through its three contributory organizing themes, and also the basic themes of each organizing themes.

The first organizing theme was the theme *Secondariness* which illustrated that the main and number one attractions in QIG are its nature and natural based attractions. Many visitors noted that they have chosen QIG, primarily to visit its strange geoheritage attraction and experience its natural beauty. For them, the cultural attraction in QIG, including ICH, was positioned as the second priority in their visitation. Moreover, either local official or STBO noted that nature is more evident and more dominant in geopark. They presented that in compare with available natural attractions; intangible cultural asset of QIG usually takes the complementary role to accomplish the activities of the tourism packages in QIG.

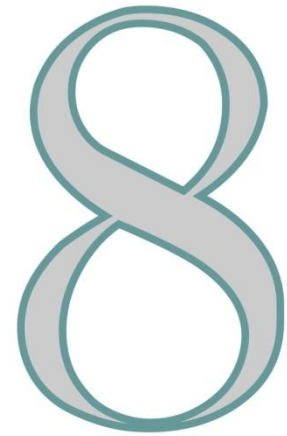
Many participants believed that using ICH in tourism of PAs is not an easy job, because of the complicated nature of ICH itself. The theme *Complicatedness* was indicated very frequently in interviews. In some cases, people cannot visit and touch ICH directly and easily in the actual world; in the same way when they visit a material attraction. It was outlined that many of visitors enjoy visiting the material natural attractions of geopark more than the intangible cultural asset, as making the connection and understanding

ICH is not that easy especially when it comes to traditional knowledge, techniques, beliefs or oral tradition.

Besides, in the next section it was discussed that there are some *Managerial considerations* that affect the process of ICH implementing in tourism in PAs. While ICH is considerable in terms of variety and function the local officials are facing the challenge of gaining local *Community agreement* for each element of ICH that is supposed to be applied in tourism. This is true while the considerable variety of ICH is also mixed with a range of sociocultural norms and rules associated with each cultural element. It can make the process of gaining local community agreement more challenging for the local officials. Evaluating *Carrying capacity*, as well as promoting *ICH Interpretation*, was argued as two necessary factors for ICH tourism development in PAs. It was discussed that applying these two factors are accompanied by special range of challenges and problems.

On the other side, *Temporal and Spatial dependency* are two elements that play important role in the process of using ICH in tourism in PAs. Some types of ICH products are time or/and place dependent. In these cases, if visitors can't manage to achieve the right time and right place they will miss the chance to visit that particular ICH. It makes the availability of ICH tourism products and the chance to present them in tourism limited.

The last organizing theme was the *Lifestyle change* in local communities which is was seen as an ongoing threat for intangible cultural resources, because it is influencing what local community has inherited from their ancestors over the time. In some case, some parts of ICH totally disappeared during the process of what is called modernization which, in this research, mostly indicates to more contemporary local lifestyle. Participants recognized that while old local communities is moving towards a new lifestyle many aspects of ICH ,which are in fact the current or the future potential tourism attractions in the PA, are automatically being modified to some extent. Sometimes they even disappeared totally. *Lifestyle change* and its consequences were presented as a concerning and challenging area for promoting ICH based tourism products and in general tourism sector in PAs.



CHAPTER EIGHT

CONCLUSION, POLICY RECOMMENDATIONS, AND DIRECTION FOR FUTURE RESEARCH

8.1 Introduction

The conceptual framework of this study was designed on the synergistic and multidimensional facets of the interconnection between three phenomena of culture, tourism, and PA. The main objective was mainly focused on the role and manifestation of intangible aspect of each culture (ICH) in tourism sector in of PAs.

In order to better understand the different layers of the interconnection between the three contexts of ICH, tourism, and PA two perspectives were applied, argued, and interpreted in each of Chapter Two, Three, and Four of this research. The first perspective was addressed through the new paradigm of PA that highlights the status of the local community and the importance of their cultural heritage in the current philosophy, considerations, and mind-set that move around PA settings in the present world. The second one was developed through the area of environmental anthropology that focuses on the close linkage between humans and nature and the importance of environment in social science disciplines.

The argument of this study developed from these two theoretical perspectives while keeping in mind that there is also an independent relationship between tourism and each concept of culture and PA. This argument was based on the requirement and importance of exploring the role of the intangible aspect of each culture in a PA tourism setting and how ICH is manifested within these boundaries. The literature review revealed a remarkable gap in ICH-related fields as well as the fields of interaction between ICH and two other discourses of tourism and PA. It was the reason that ICH and its relation with tourism in PAs was chosen as the core of the conceptual and empirical construction of this research.

Chapter Eight provides a summing up of this research project titled “Intangible Cultural Heritage and Tourism in Protected Areas” and does so by mapping the study from conceptualization to completion (Figure 8.1).Then, it moves on to revisiting the questions, outlining the findings, and stating the overall contribution of this study to the knowledge.

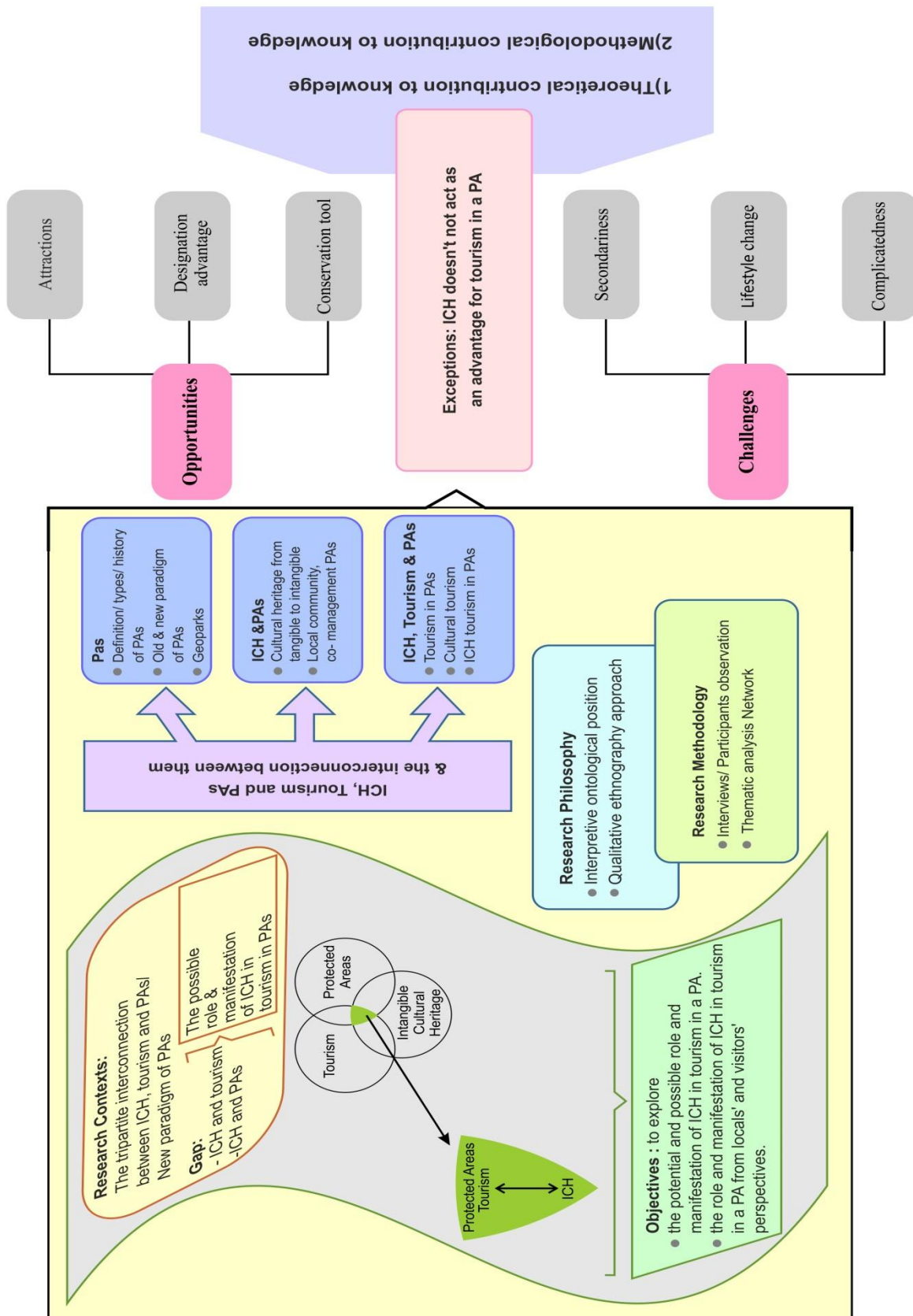


Figure8. 1 Illustration (map) of the research process of the study from beginning to end (research contexts, conceptual framework, research methodologies, thematic analysis)

Finally, it concludes with a set of recommendations for policy makers and also discusses the aspects of the findings that have potential for further study for future researchers interested in the areas of ICH, tourism, or PAs.

8.2 Re-visiting the Research Question, and Objective

This research speaks of the interconnection between a specific part of human cultural heritage (ICH) and a specific type of human activity (tourism) in a specific part of the biophysical environment (PAs) (Figure 1.3). The main aim is determined to explore the role and manifestation of ICH in tourism in PAs. While the tourism sector in PAs is considered as natural based tourism, this research is an attempt to discover the role and the manifestation of intangible cultural asset of a local community in tourism settings in PAs.

The research question of this project:

- What is the role and manifestation of ICH in tourism in a PA from locals' and visitors' perspectives?

To answer this question and to fill the existing gap this research attempted to explore the below objective:

- The potential and possible role and manifestation of ICH in tourism in a PA from locals' and visitors' perspectives.

Applying thematic network analysis, the identification of two global themes *Opportunities* and *Challenges* shows a multi-layered representation of ICH in tourism in PAs, and how ICH is manifested in these boundaries. The theme *Challenges*, in fact, emerged without prior anticipation, during analysis of the empirical information of this study. I view this theme as a nuanced but broad demonstration of a set of potential and de facto problematic issues, uncertain areas, and concern, all of which associate with the process of implementation and promotion of ICH in PA tourism. To meet the

objective of this study the two main themes *Opportunities* and *Challenges* are addressed, and argued broadly in Chapter Six and Chapter Seven.

Chapter Six discusses the existing of intangible cultural features in PA as a tool that can benefit tourism in PAs in different ways. In line with this, ICH is portrayed as an *advantage* for the tourism structure within the territory of a PA.

First, the role of ICH is discussed directly from the point of view of the tourism context, where ICH is represented as an attraction in PAs. It is found that different aspects, elements, and features of ICH act as a bridge that connects visitors to the solid biophysical resources of PAs, while also it can trigger and develop people's curiosity to travel to PAs to explore their "know how" about local lifestyle up close and in person.

Second, another role of ICH in this area is viewed from an environmental standpoint and conservation perspective, when ICH comes to underpin and support ecosystem. Up to now, the influence of some aspects of ICH, such as traditional ecological value (Houde, 2007) or cultural and spiritual values (CSVPA, 2014) for protecting environment have been addressed efficiently; however, this research adds some insights to this area by considering it particularly from the tourism perspective. It is argued that TEK and CSV, which are derived from the depth of local cultural context (CSVPA, 2014; Schaaf, 2006; Taylor & Lennon, 2011), are taken as two ICH elements that are constantly playing their role in tourism in PA by maintaining the available touristic natural attractions.

Finally, Chapter Six outlines that the presence of different elements of ICH across a piece of land is an important factor, which can be taken into account when declaring that piece of land as a PA. Chapter Seven discusses the second global theme that unexpectedly emerged from the information. The themes *Challenges* in the first place may not seem to be related to the main focus of this research, which is the role and manifestation of ICH in tourism PAs. Nevertheless, it contributes directly to the quality and types of the role that ICH could take in the tourism sector of a PA. The theme *Challenges* addresses comprehensively the potential challenges, and difficulties, and concerns in the way of ICH implementation in PA tourism.

A review of literature shows that ICH presentation in tourism is growing (Giudici et al. 2013; UNWTO, 2012; George, 2010). However, Chapter Eight highlights that

implementation and promotion of ICH in tourism within a PA's boundaries are associated with a set of problems and concerns. In this line, three types of challenges are identified and discussed in depth and separately throughout Chapter Eight.

The first part of these challenges was mostly justifiable from a tourism perspective by the theme *Secondariness*. This theme presented that the most typical type of tourism in PAs is nature based and tourism is mainly planned in these boundaries to develop nature-based objectives.

As such, referring to Chapter Six of this study, although ICH is taken as a source of attractions for PAs, it is usually positioned and perceived as a secondary and complementary tourism product. Consequently, ICH is usually placed as the second priority of attractiveness and appeal after the natural resources. For instance, even though in the case study of this research QIG offers a considerable variety of intangible cultural assets to tourism, the existing natural resources are still perceived as largely more dominant in its tourism sector. As such, geopark is mostly introduced and perceived as a territory with a range of unique geoheritage that could also be accompanied, in case of availability, by various archaeological, historical, and cultural qualities or attributes (Errami et al., 2015). Generally speaking, "nature and natural resources" are presented and defined as the primary priority of a PA. This is clearly evident in the official definitions of various types of PAs. With regard to this notion, "culture and cultural resources" are respectively seen as dependent features to those unique natural resources that acquire second place of priority in comparison with nature. Discussing the setting of geoparks, Hose (2012) clarifies this subject more. He notes that the major benefit of geoparks is to focus attention directly on geological and geomorphological conservation, but in the ideal situation geological interest is to be allied to some archaeological, cultural, or historical interest together.

The second group of the challenges are associated mainly with some part of the intrinsic characteristics and core individualities of ICH itself. ICH constitutes the non-material aspect of each culture. Besides a non-material nature, ICH is usually difficult to identify, measure, or visit directly and easily (Arizpe & Amescua, 2013; Lixinski, 2013). These characteristics, which are inherited in the core nature of ICH, stress the complexity of ICH and shape the theme *Complicatedness* in this research. Notably, the theme's *Complicatedness* is the broadest and the most comprehensive global theme of

this research, a theme that anchors three organizing themes, six basic themes, and three sub-basic themes. This theme conveys a broader understanding of the existence and aspects of intangible cultural elements, and their interference with tourism in PAs. Participants reflected their opinions or described their experience of confronting ICH *complicatedness* in various ways. They reflected that the intangible aspect of each culture is complicated because, unlike tangible cultural heritage, it is often not able to be represented and visited easily in the material world (*the theme Little concrete evidence*). Besides, ICH's dependency on time and place (*the theme Temporal and spatial dependent*) minimizes the possibility of visiting intangible cultural elements easily, even in some cases this theme turning visits to ICH into totally impossible. This is interpreted as one of those areas where practising the role of ICH as a source of *Attractions* in a PA encounters a serious challenge. Furthermore, another set of challenges arise when it comes to the subject of promoting intangible cultural features in tourism: it requires either a specific infrastructure or preparation factors (*the theme Special infrastructure*) or those features are not recognized and not nominated to be applicable in tourism for different reasons (*the theme Not suitable for tourism*).

The third group of challenges is reflected in the theme *Lifestyle change*. This group of challenges is being constantly created, developed, and imposed because of the continuous change of local lifestyle. To follow up this subject, it is argued that the continuous change in the general structure of the local lifestyle automatically results in ICH modification or even its disappearance over time. Some arguments have already arisen in the literature on the notion of tourism, lifestyle change, and authenticity of cultural heritage (Chapter Four and Chapter Eight). However, this thesis contributes to the literature by expanding the existing argument and discussing how changing local lifestyle is affecting the type, quality, and authenticity of the cultural heritage of the local community, including tangible and intangible asset. The growing process of alteration in ICH, and in some cases even the complete disappearance of intangible cultural elements, challenges the presentation of ICH in the tourism sector of PAs.

In general, this thesis has provided an in-depth exploration of the understanding, perception, and personal experience of 27 participants on the multidimensional role and manifestation of ICH in tourism in PAs.

Analysing the rich empirical information, I realized that there are some significant differences and similarities in how locals and visitors perceive ICH and its role in tourism in PAs. There are some points that are highlighted mostly by either locals or visitors. However, in some cases the expressions of both locals and visitors about a special subject are very similar and their understanding and perception overlap to some extent.

Generally speaking, the locals (both local officials of QIG, and STBO) exemplify and consider different aspects of the theme *Challenges* more than do the visitors. Hence, the theme *Challenges* emerged mostly from the information that was collected from the locals' side. The visitors also focus on the theme *Challenges* in different ways but in less frequency than the locals.

On the other side, the theme *Attractions* is more reflected by the visitors. As such, it is mainly the group of visitors who extended the basic theme *Nature plus culture has the most to offer to visitors*, through which they reflected that PAs have the most to offer in tourism when or if ICH and natural attractions are integrated and presented at the same time.

It seems that the challenges, concerns, and difficulties of promoting the intangible asset of culture in tourism are more tangible, identifiable, and understandable for the locals rather than the visitors. Locals know their culture as they are in everyday interaction and constant confrontation with their traditional lifestyle, practices, beliefs and customs. This complete familiarity has provided the locals with an ability to identify and track even the fine details in the process of relationship between their intangible cultural asset and tourism in their hometown. However, visitors did not all stay neutral about the challenges. For instance, the theme *Soconadariness* and its two linked basic themes (Figure 7.2) are reflected and discussed by visitors more frequently than the locals. The empirical information presents that for locals the differentiation areas between cultural and natural asset of their homeland are not that sharp and significant. While visitors, knowing less about the strong connection between local ICH and natural surrounds, usually view and consider each concept of nature and culture individually and independent of each other. Therefore, visitors easily come to the idea to rate and classify the cultural and natural heritage as primary or secondary sources of attraction.

The scope of *Lifestyle change* is repeatedly indicated and highlighted by both locals and visitors. It could reflect how much evident and easily recognizable are the signs of lifestyle change in a small local community such as those on Qeshm Island. However, the visitors speak more straightforwardly about the effects of lifestyle change on tourism. In fact, they stress what they personally have witnessed, experienced, and felt about the changing local lifestyle, and how much the lifestyle change is evident in the cultural body of QIG from a non-local perspective.

Moreover, the subthemes of the need to develop ICH *Interpretation*, and also the theme that reflects ICH with *Little concrete evidence*, are perceived and repeated mostly by visitors. On the other side, the locals focus more on those features and elements of ICH that are *Not suitable* or not meant from the locals' perspective to be presented in tourism. In addition, regarding the themes supporting the idea of *Complicatedness* of ICH, gaining *Custodial community agreement* is significantly more highlighted by locals themselves while it is almost undervalued by visitors.

Figure 7.2 shows that the organizing theme *Complicatedness* is considerably broad, comprehensive, and various. Both groups of locals and visitors contribute effectively to deepening and expanding this particular theme and making it more understandable by presenting various empirical and useful examples.

Generally speaking, regarding the analysis, and interpretation of all interview and observational information, the contributions of this research are presented in Chapter 8. However, some limitation areas are also acknowledged. First, participant selection in this study is limited to domestic visitors and does not involve international visitors. The reason is that with regard to visitors' prior familiarity with a cultural and geographical context of Qeshm Island, there appear to be great differences between domestic and to non-Iranian visitors' views, perspectives, and interpretation of the local heritage in this island. Therefore, including the views of non-Iranian visitors and those of domestic visitors in the same research may lead to a shallow presentation and weak interpretation of both sets of perspectives. I believe that the non-Iranian visitors' perspective would need to be captured using a different research design and method.

Second, a group of participants (Group three; visitors) was found and interviewed only in Amini guesthouse, and it did not include the other guesthouses and sites in the

geopark. I rented a room in Amini guesthouse because, based on my previous familiarity with the geopark, even during low tourism season in summer, this guesthouse is usually fully booked in advance. Also, as the oldest one in the island (Section 5.6 and 5.8) Amini guesthouse keeps a good reputation for the reasonable price for local food, hospitality of the owner family and being a safe accommodation for all groups of travellers. Therefore, this place provided me with more chances to access a large group of both gender participants in various age, occupation and education.

The third limitation comes from the fact that this study addresses only a specific group of PAs and not all of them. Acknowledging the wide variety of PAs in the world that was shown in Figure 2.2 this study covers only the natural based protected areas, regardless of cultural PAs, that are open for public visitation and have been inhabited by human communities over time. Accounting the profound difference between the nature and type of natural and cultural PAs, an independent research is needed to study the relationship between ICH and tourism in cultural PAs.

The Thesis and its Contribution to Intangible Cultural Heritage, Tourism, and Protected Areas Knowledge

8.3 Theoretical Contribution

This thesis makes two strong contributions to literature regarding “tourism in PAs”, and “cultural tourism” with a particular view to ICH. Where previous studies have addressed the importance of the local community and their culture in PA tourism (Sections 3.3.2-3) this research has adopted an alternative focus and nuanced exploration on how a specific part of the locals’ cultural heritage, which is, in fact, intangible (ICH), is manifested and conceptualized throughout the growing tourism within these boundaries. The role of the non-material aspect of cultural heritage in tourism of PAs has been less addressed in literature, more likely because it is a recent subject in both PAs and tourism discourses. Besides, I believe that there exists another

reason associated with this ignorance. This reason is justified and explained in the follow.

ICH constitutes an important part of the whole body of the cultural context of a human community. It is usually considered alongside, in accompany, and linked to material heritage. It is more evident in the tourism discipline, where so far culture has been studied mostly as a whole figure with much less attention to the its intangible part. Acknowledging that tangible and intangible aspects of each culture and their associated asset are deeply interweaved (Byrne, 2008; Di Giovine, 2009; Kearney, 2009), this research project argues that ICH enjoys its own special characteristics and intrinsic ethos, which certainly influence its presentation and manifestation in tourism. In addition, this thesis makes this contribution to the literature that there exists a special set of challenges that are definable in the case of implementing ICH in tourism, while they are of less material consideration or even not applicable for the case of tangible cultural heritage. Therefore, I believe that the discourse of ICH is well deserved as an individual and independent study, and from a specific angle in the tourism area. In doing so, this thesis focuses on the role and manifestation of the intangible group only of cultural heritage (ICH) in tourism in PAs. This thesis presents a set of theoretical information, concrete forms, and understandable empirical examples of which so far have been less noticed in literature.

8.3.1 Opportunities

The first main contribution is undertaken through the global theme *Opportunities*. This theme examines the different ways that ICH takes different roles in favour of tourism in PAs. Among the three organizing themes and six basic themes that support *Opportunities*, three of them more specifically expand the argument on the three contexts of “Cultural Tourism”, “Tourism in PAs”, and “ICH Studies”. These three themes are presented in the box below and are explained in the following.

Table8. 1 The areas of theoretical contribution of the theme *Opportunities*

The theme: ICH as an advantage

Contribution to the contexts of “Cultural Tourism”,
“Tourism in PAs”, and “ICH Studies”

- Source of spirit and meaning
- Environmentally sensitive behaviour
- ICH as a designation tool

The finding of *Opportunities* intersects with a number of related areas of the conceptual literature that posit, in the first instance, the importance of ICH of the local community in PAs. It also stress that a local community’s cultural-based attitude and behavioural pattern deeply affect the natural environment of the PA (Harmon, 2003; Schaaf, 2006). In fact, this theme, through applying a more focused view on ICH, is working to extend an argument derived from the new paradigm of PAs on the importance of local community in the life, perpetuity, and success of a PA.

- Source of spirit and meaning

This section conveys how ICH can benefit tourism in PAs by increasing their attraction in visitors’ eyes. Here, ICH is perceived as a tool that, in spite of being non-material and sometimes hard to visit, can efficiently provide the material body of the PA with a sense of life and spirit. This sense improves a PA from being visited as a solid piece of pure wilderness to a piece of natural land that is actively connected to the life, lifestyle, and identity of a local community and variety of their cultural heritage. Here, the live part of the local culture, ICH, acts like a bridge between visitors and biophysical environment to provide visitors with an easier and deeper connection with the PA. This connection is realized and appreciated by different types of visitors, even including those nature lovers who are always looking for wild and untouched parts of nature. In

this way, the thesis shows that visitors’ personal interaction with ICH elements usually makes their visitation experience of the PA richer, more diverse, and more meaningful.

- Environmentally sensitive behaviour

Furthermore, the theme *Environmentally sensitive behaviour* contributes to the theoretical knowledge and understandings of how ICH preserving nature over time (Section 6.3) contributes to tourism.

As mentioned earlier in this chapter, the influence of traditional ecological knowledge and cultural spiritual values in supporting the environment has been efficiently addressed in the literature, whereas this research took a new and more tourism-led position towards this notion. As such, this research argues the connection between ICH (not the culture in general) and preserving natural resources of a PA from the tourism perspective. It presents that by growing tourism in PAs, these two elements of ICH prove their incorporation in tourism by supporting the natural elements that are the main tourism resources in PAs. How ICH elements of TEK and CSV interconnect with tourism sector in PAs is illustrated in Figure 8.2.

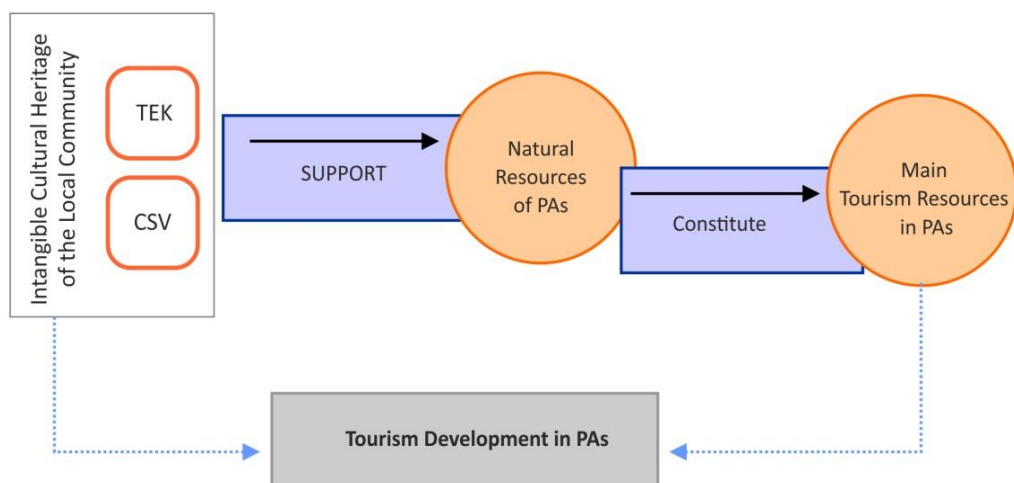


Figure8. 2 How intangible cultural heritage affect and contribute to tourism sector in a PA through preserving the natural resources

- ICH as a designation tool

The contribution to the knowledge of the theme ICH as a *Designation advantage* basically associates with the notion of the importance of ICH in the process of PAs establishment and its links to the tourism setting in these boundaries. Figure 2.2 in Chapter Two shows types of PAs in the present world, many of which are nature-based PAs. Obviously, developing PAs-based tourism depends strongly on the establishment, existence, and quality of different types of boundaries that are already identified as PAs by a range of various systematic regulations.

The themes ICH as a *Designation advantage* reflects the existing literature that the availability of diverse intangible cultural asset within a PA adds a specific range of values to land. These values could benefit the nominated piece of land through the process of its declaration as a PAs. In fact, possessing ICH increases the chance of a piece of land being finally identified and declared as a type of PA. With regard to this finding, and following the principles of new paradigm of PAs, which focuses on the absolute need for attending the local community, to the general structure of PAs (Phillips, 2003; Stevens, 2014c), I believe that taking ICH into more attention by various PAs' designation systems in near future is expected. In this case, ICH will be able to cooperate more significantly and effectively in the global system of PAs' establishment. Regarding this growing argument, and evolving positive thoughts on the linkage between PAs and culture, this thesis suggests that the ICH role is gradually receiving more attention in the PAs designation systems.

The significance of all the above fresh insights lies in their contribution to PA tourism where they represent the ICH role in a multilayered and mostly constructive way. However, some areas of exceptions on the constructive role of ICH in PA tourism have also been achieved, which will be explained throughout the next section.

8.3.2 Challenges

Through multidimensional exploration of the interaction between ICH and tourism in PAs, the theme *Challenges* reflects and interprets the area and the setting in which ICH implementation and operation in tourism in PAs confront some difficulties, worries, and even, in some cases, constraints.

Developing the theme *Challenges*, this thesis open up and extends a new argument on the role of ICH in tourism from a different angle, while there are noticeably few indications of this theme in previous studies. Among the few, for instance, the notion of tourism and authenticity of cultural heritage have been taken into more account (Section 4.3.1). In addition, the theme *Managerial considerations* has been discussed in the tourism literature as a general topic. Nevertheless, the themes *Carrying Capacity*, *Interpretation* and *Custodial Community agreement* in ICH-based tourism settings have been underestimated up to now.

Generally speaking, the theme *Challenges* presents a set of special issues and problematic zones in implementing ICH in the tourism sector of PAs, challenges that must be considered more seriously. This contribution tries to broaden the understanding of ICH implication in tourism, in order to fill the existing, large gap in this area. To clarify the whole contribution of the theme *Challenges*, I present it through three general contributions (GC) (Table 8.2).

Table 8. 2 Three areas of theoretical contribution of the theme *Challenges*

The theme: Challenges

Contribution to the contexts of “Cultural Tourism”, “Tourism in PAs” and “ICH Studies”

- GC1:** The intrinsic characteristics of ICH:
 - Little concrete evidence
 - Right time and right place
 - Not suitable for tourism
- GC2:** Secundariness
- GC3:** Shortage in ICH-based tourism theoretical and practical knowledge

- **GC1³⁰**: The intrinsic characteristics of ICH (*Little concrete evidence, Temporal and spatial dependent, and Not suitable for tourism*)

The first general contribution of the theme *Challenges* explains that some of the defined challenges in the way of ICH operation in tourism within a PAs' territories associate with a set of intrinsic and core characteristics of ICH. These intrinsic features are mostly interpreted through three themes of *Little concrete evidence, Temporal and spatial dependent, Not suitable for tourism*.

The themes of *Little concrete features* expands the argument made by Arizpe and Amescua (2013) that for human beings, making a relationship with concrete, material, and visible things is easier than non-material, and intangible things. Following this subject, the theme *Little concrete evidence* conveys that ICH cannot easily be connected and understood in tourism because of its less visible evidence in the actual world. Previous studies have mainly addressed the growing presentation of some features of ICH such as festivals and handicrafts in tourism (UNWTO, 2012; Giudici et al., 2013; George, 2010). Following this notion, this thesis brought up a new insight that, while some elements of ICH such as festivals and handicrafts are easily presentable in tourism, intangibility has made promoting some other elements of ICH to a tourism product a complicated task. Values, knowledge, beliefs, and oral tradition constitute part of these challenging elements.

The knowledge of the theme *Temporal and spatial dependent* made a totally fresh contribution to literature, through presenting that ICH affects tourism activities because it is time dependent, and/or place dependent. These two factors can minimize the availability and function of ICH products in long-term tourism planning in PAs. It was found that tourism, in terms of applying ICH, becomes limited when it engages with the dependency of ICH to two concepts of "time" and "place".

To complete the first general contribution of the theme *Challenges*, the theoretical contribution of the theme *Not suitable for tourism* must be discussed. This theme informs that, although earlier in this thesis ICH features were introduced and justified as sources of attraction, spirit, and life for a PA (Section 6.2.1); in some cases ICH

³⁰ -GC1 stands for First General Contributing

elements are not considered appropriate to be represented in tourism for various reasons. Silberberg (1995, p. 362) argues that not every cultural heritage is “willing, ready or able to attract tourists”. With a more specific view on the intangible asset of each culture, this thesis argues that ICH inappropriateness for tourism emerged from either, the local community’s disagreement and unwillingness to let the visitors visit that special element of their ICH, or because of not enough demands from the visitors’ side. It must be noted here that “the degree of motivation for visiting cultural heritage varies among visitors” (Silberberg, 1995, p. 362) and this variation could be even more considerable among those visitors who travel to a natural PA.

The theme *Not suitable for tourism* in this study partly indicates those elements of ICH that are perceived unpleasant or less attractive. That the local community of QIG keeps killing the lizards following a culturally based belief (Section 6.3.2.&7.3.4) is a proper example in this area. Another part of the theme *Not suitable for tourism* also associates with the theme *Local community agreement*.

The theme *Temporal and spatial dependent* intersects with *Custodial community agreement* where it comes to the importance of maintaining the originality and authenticity of ICH by avoiding unnecessary changes to its original time and place. However, in the theme *Not suitable for tourism*, I argue the locals may not like and let ICH be promoted in tourism because of the negative image or incorrect message it could transfer to visitors about cultural heritage of the local community. This subject will be outlined in detail in the next section.

- **GC2: Secundariness**

Secundariness is the second general contribution which supports the global theme Challenges. *Secundariness* addresses the historic and symbiotic interconnection between the biophysical environment of the PA and cultural context of its local people (Dudgeon & Berkes, 2003; Singh Negi, 2010) through a tourism perspective. This theme shows that in tourism sector of a PA, nature and natural attractions are prioritized to culture. It was already discussed in Chapter Six, and through the theme *Nature plus culture has the most to offer*, that togetherness of natural and cultural attractions in a PA makes the most of the attraction and appeal in tourism. However, in Chapter Eight

the theme *Secondariness* provides the new insights to the relationship between nature and culture in a PA from tourism perspective. Here, the theme *Secondariness* suggests that from a tourism perspective, nature in comparison to culture is considered more dominant in PAs (Theme *Nature dominant*). Along this line, intangible cultural features of a PA are perceived less appealing and attractive than the natural features. In this vein, ICH is reflected as a secondary and/or complementary product in the PA tourism package that acts to complete the whole attraction of the PA.

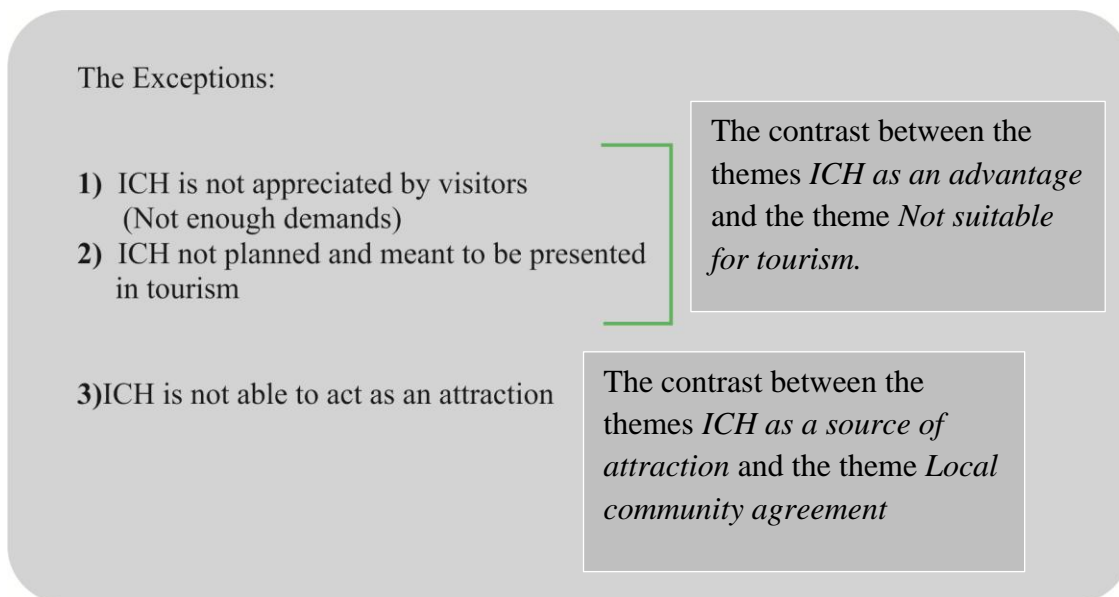
- **GC3:** Shortage of tourism in ICH-based theoretical and practical knowledge

The third general contribution of the global theme *Challenges* is identifiable by considering this theme and all its supporting themes as a whole comprehensive thematic network (Figure 7.1). All themes of this network together show that there is a critical absence of knowledge and practical information about ICH implementation in tourism. It is true that the network of *Challenges* in the first place presents a set of challenges that exist in the way of applying ICH in tourism in PAs. However, simultaneously, through providing various empirical examples, it also highlights the evidence of a serious shortage of knowledge in the literature on how to confront, deal with, and overcome these challenges in the actual world of tourism in PAs.

Each theme in this network of *Challenges*, from evaluation of ICH *Carrying capacity* to dealing with the impacts of *Lifestyle change*, or developing ICH-based *Interpretation*, provides a nuanced indication of a critical lack of practical knowledge, measures, indicators, and guidelines in the ways of implementing and promoting each domain of ICH in tourism in PAs. So far, many scholars from various disciplines have argued that there is a lack of knowledge associated with ICH (Eoin & King, 2013; Lixinski, 2013; Staiff & Bushell, 2004). This research is one of the very first to reflect and discuss this shortage in tourism and PA contexts.

8.3.3 Overall Look at the Thematic Network

Table 8.3 The exceptions emerged from the contrast between two global themes *Opportunities* and *Challenges*



This thesis provides a multilayered and multidimensional exploration about the role and manifestation of ICH in the tourism in PA. The main areas of contribution are individually demonstrated and interpreted through two global themes of *Opportunities* and *Challenges*. Indeed, there is a subtle connection between some of the sub-themes of these two global themes (Figure 5.12). Therefore, some aspects of the contribution of this thesis to the knowledge is discussable by applying an overall view on the whole thematic network and by taking the both global themes into consideration at the same time.

This study also highlights that the role of ICH being an attraction in tourism is truly applicable most of the time, but there are also some exceptions in this area. In this vein, some exceptions prevent ICH from a role in advantage for tourism in a PA. According to the findings of this research, the exceptions of *Opportunities* are partly arguable through the theme *Challenges*, and this is exactly the place where these two global themes connect strongly. While the areas in which ICH is not able to be implemented and promoted in tourism have not been addressed in the literature explicitly, this study presents and discusses these areas using three various categories (Table 8.3).

This exception emerged from the contrast of the themes *Opportunities* with the theme *Not suitable for tourism*. Sometimes, ICH elements do not take the role of attraction for tourism in PAs because they are not capable of being appreciated by visitors. In short, these elements of ICH are less or not attractive for visitors of PAs. Therefore, it is less likely that they receive enough demands from the tourism sector. It is evident in the case of exorcism (Jen-giri) in QIG that the visitors usually show little tendency to visit and experience it (Section 7.3.4).

Like the first one, the second exception also emerges from the contrast of the themes *Opportunities* with the theme *Not suitable for tourism*. In this case, ICH is not planned, and meant, to be presented in tourism for reasons such as presenting a dark or negative image of the local community. The best example of this is the locals of QIG killing the lizards (Sections 6.3.2 & 7.3.4) In this case, neither local officials of QIG nor TSBO like this belief to be introduced in tourism in QIG.

The third group of exceptions is more justifiable through looking at the general contrast between the themes *Attractions* with *Local community agreement*. In some cases, the intangible cultural asset is not able to act as an attraction because the local community agreement has not been gained. A good example from the case study of this thesis is that local people do not allow tours to enter Stars Valley geopark at sunset because of the local community's cultural beliefs.

8.3.4 ICH in Geopark Context

As mentioned in Section 2.4.2.4, geopark is a recent but evolving innovation in the context of PAs. It was explained that local communities and their cultural heritage are taken as underlying elements in geoparks' principles and development policies.

Referring to the existing literature, some ICH-based research has been conducted in different geoparks across the world. However, many of them are local sized, small projects with less integrated perspective to the relationship between ICH and geoparks. A relevant example in this area is a research project that focused on the potential of

local indigenous knowledge in geoparks sustainable development. The sample of this study, conducted in 2014, was 18 members in the European Geopark Network (EGN) (Section 2.4.2.4). The results confirm the positive impacts of indigenous knowledge on conserving local heritage, enhancing the local economy and developing tourism in geoparks (Pásková, 2015). Addressing only one type of ICH in the context of geoparks (traditional knowledge), this study fails to present an integrated view of various elements of ICH. In addition, in 2014, research was undertaken in Katla Geopark, aiming to explore how keeping ICH “alive, valued and passed through to future generations, may be transmitted out to the wider geoparks network” (EGC, 2015, p.93). Looking from a specific perspective, this paper suggests that ICH in Katla Geopark must be applied as a mechanism through which geoparks converge with other UNESCO programmes and tools (EGC, 2015).

Unlike the majority of the existing literature, this thesis applied a wider and multi-faceted perspective to the interconnection between ICH and geoparks framework. As a result, this research took a significant step in adding some in-depth insights to the existing knowledge. The findings contribute to the wider geoparks context by presenting the roles that ICH can take in assisting geoparks to achieve their determined fundamental goals of conservation, education, and tourism, along with more focus on conservation (Section 2.4.2.4) and tourism.

With regards to the shortage of the research and guiding case studies in the field of geoparks, the findings of this research can be applied in integrating ICH into geoparks planning and management structure and the promotion of cultural tourism in these territories. More specifically, this research presents new visions on the practicality of ICH in the establishment and development of geoparks. It also explains the likely problematic issues (challenges) and managerial concerns that policy and decision makers may encounter in developing tourism in geoparks.

8.3.5 Managerial and Marketing Contribution

In those PAs that are populated with human communities, tourism management links tightly to the lifestyle and cultural context of the local community. The cores focus of

this research is on the manifestation(s) and role(s) of ICH of the local community in developing tourism in PAs. Counting the results of this study some managerial and marketing contributions is identifiable.

Natural PAs are recognized as natural resources carrying a set of significant values. Preserving these natural resources is the primary goal that the management system of the PA seeks. For tourism to become more sustainable there needs to be a change in the patterns of behaviour from the visitors' side (Miller, Rathouse, Scarles, Holmes, & Tribe, 2010). Therefore, to protect the fragile ecosystem of each PA, promoting environmentally friendly behaviour among the visitors must be taken as a serious and vital management matter. One of the managerial contributions that this study associates with addresses decreasing the negative impacts of tourism in a PA by integrating ICH into tourism management. The theme *Environmentally sensitive behaviour* presents and discusses ICH as an effective managerial tool to develop less impact tourism in PAs in the accessible ecosystems.

This idea is supported by the empirical examples presented in Section 6.3. These stress that ICH acts as either a motivator or preventer to manage visitors' behaviours. It means that various aspects of locals' ICH, most specifically the sociocultural customary system and TEK, if applied properly in tourism management can encourage and inspire the visitors to take more environmentally sensitive behaviour (motivator). At the same time, ICH can make or push the visitors to behave appropriately and display respectful manners to avoid hurting those parts of natural resources that are usually of high value in the local cultural context (preventer). ICH acting as a preventer, results in decreasing the harmful impacts of tourism on environment.

The general result of this discussion is that ICH, both in the role of motivator or preventer, is filtering visitors' behaviours and facilitates a PA to move towards sustainable tourism management through stressing more environmentally sensitive behaviours (Figure 8.3). This cultural filter can be constructively applied in PA management alongside the other typical policies and techniques that are used to achieve the conservation objectives.

The theme Designation advantage also reflects a managerial contribution but from a

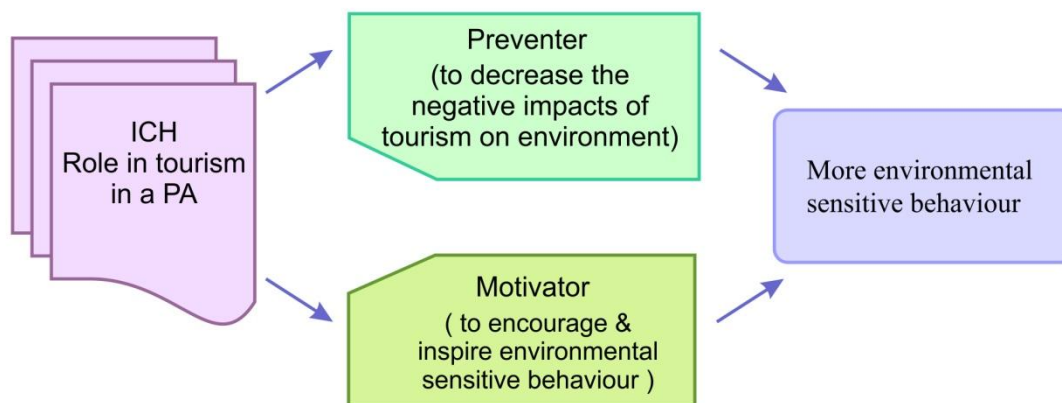


Figure 8.3 The role of intangible cultural heritage in promoting environmental sensitive behaviour in tourism in protected areas

different angle. The management of a PA could benefit from local ICH to draw more international or regional attention to the PA through increasing the chances of being designated by different protection systems, and consequently being able to attract more financial and non-financial services and facilities. Receiving more supportive and useful resources would help the PA's policy and decision makers to achieve their conservational goals. In fact, it was found in this study that an intangible cultural asset of a local community could increase the value and the necessity of a land to be protected.

For instance, in the case of this study, the presence of a wide range of ICH has been taken as a supplementary merit for the Qeshm Island to be identified not only as a geopark but also as a member of international protection systems of MAB program and Ramsar Wetland Convention (Section 2.4.2.2. and 2.4.2.3).

In addition, analysing the theme Challenges reveals that most of the identified themes anchored to this global theme, presented in Figure 5.12, associate with the management issues of tourism in PAs in various extents. Meanwhile, the theme Challenges mostly reflects the problematic areas that the policy makers may confront in managing ICH tourism in a PA. In Section 8.3.2 it was argued that Intangibility and non-materiality are embedded in ICH, which makes experiencing this type of cultural asset challenging and even in some cases impossible for visitors.

To deal with this matter, management is required to apply significant techniques and strategies to be able to promote ICH tourism. One of these strategies is ICH based education. To make intangible cultural asset more attractive and also understandable, tourism management must focus more on the notion of “education” in tourism development in a PA. To do so, management should apply various attractive educational policies and informative activities that provide the visitors with a range of interesting information about ICH, a range of information that the visitors may not be able to find easily in a normal visit to a PA. For example, some interesting pieces of local oral tradition like an old tale or a song can be translated in different languages and be presented in tourism in PA. What is obvious is that there is no single remedy for all PAs, as each PA has its own cultural resources and characteristics. Based on the type, availability, and accessibility (Section not suitable for tourism 7.3.4 & agreement) of intangible cultural asset the educational service could vary.

Another underlying managerial issue for a PA is to determine when (right time) and where (right place) the visitors should visit ICH (Theme *Temporal and spatial dependent*) (Section 7.3.3). The new paradigm of PA emphasized that the right of the local community to their cultural asset must be recognized in PA management system. Here, the tourism management may confront some issues in keeping the ICH flexible in terms of time and place to make it more accessible for the visitors whilst at the same time gaining the custodial community’s agreement. In the case of this study, the intersection of the two themes of *Temporal and spatial dependent*, combined with *Custodial community agreement* is perceived as an underlying challenge for QIG officials aiming to introduce and promote a new ICH product in tourism. Tourism management needs to seriously consider that before applying any change in the time or place of ICH, gaining custodial community agreement is an inevitable must (Section 7.3.2.1).

Remarkably, the cumulative contribution of the above themes addresses the tourism management literature that goes beyond the PAs context. As a generalised example, a custodial community agreement for developing ICH in tourism is taken as a crucial but helpful policy to mitigate the likely issues regarding tourism development in a traditional community. However, managers should remember that, as discussed in Sections 7.3.2.1, 7.3.4, achieving custodial community agreement might be easily

achievable but it still needs patience and time. In challenging cases, gaining custodial community agreement on some sensitive parts of ICH may seem totally impossible.

As shown in Figure 5.12 the theme Managerial Contributions is one of the main themes that is anchored by three other basic themes. This theme directly addresses the ICH tourism management issues and raises some less- studied areas in ICH tourism such as the importance of applying ICH *Carrying Capacity* and ICH *Interpretation* in PAs tourism management. The concepts of *Carrying Capacity* and *Interpretation* have been addressed widely in the tourism management literature (Sections 7.3.2.2 and 7.3.2.3). Nevertheless, how tourism management could apply them more particularly for the intangible asset of each culture like beliefs and oral traditions needs more attention in future studies.

It is worth mentioning that the objectives of this study were not originally addressed from a marketing point of view, so that the marketing contribution of this study is not as large and various as the as management contribution. However, generally speaking, the theme of *Attractions* indicates that while natural attractions are the primary marketing focus of PAs (Section 6.2), ICH elements can also be used as potential tools for marketing and developing tourism in these territories. In accordance with, ICH can act as either an independent and individual source of attraction for the tourism sector or a tool that is incorporated with the natural resources to increase a PA's attraction and develop tourism sector.

Generally speaking, by exploring the roles that ICH takes in tourism in PAs and the potential challenges in the way, this thesis provides an avenue towards a greater understanding of the area of interconnection between tourism management and culture of the local communities. Notably, this understanding is in line with the principles and objectives of the new PA paradigm. Therefore, I believe that the implication of this research is transferable and applicable to other types of PA populated by human communities with tourism is a part of the development plan.

Each PA is likely to be subject to a unique set of sociocultural and ecological inadequacies. I believe that, with regard to the regulation and management system that each PA uses, the multi-layered arguments that have been developed in this research (and the diverse results) could contribute to decreasing the problematic issues and

increasing the capability of the management system to achieve its objectives, especially sociocultural ones.

Additionally, as highlighted before, the findings of this research also contribute to general ICH studies including the area of Tourism Management and ICH. Some of the results for the implication and promotion of intangible cultural assets are applicable not only in PAs but also in other types of tourism destinations. In fact, those findings associated with ICH are applicable to ICH-tourism management studies, both in theory, and in practice.

8.4 Methodological Contribution

In addition to theoretical contribution, this thesis provides some fresh insights that are discussable from a methodology perspective. A part of the methodological contribution relates to the empirical phase of this study that took place in a QIG in south of Iran. Another methodological nuance arose when conducting the analysis phase of applying the thematic network. These two aspects of methodological contribution of this thesis are outlined in the following.

8.4.1 Fieldwork Relations; Gender and Ethnicity

Whilst the literature on ethnographic techniques rarely goes into the “technical details” of how, for example, access to participant observation can be achieved (Bakas, 2014; Schensul, 2012) my work in a small local community as a “woman researcher” provided some nuanced insights and fresh experiences. Taking the positionality and reflexivity of the researcher into account, two dynamics of “gender”, and “ethnicity” considerably affected the quality of the fieldwork of this thesis. So far, the role of gender and ethnicity in undertaking fieldwork has been discussed several times (Belur, 2014; McKeganey & Bloor, 1991; Orrico, 2015; Wax, 1979), however, few have been undertaken in tourism-related fields of studies.

Among two factors of “gender” and “ethnicity”, the factor of “gender” more effectively formed my experience of undertaking the empirical phase of this thesis. As such, in

many cases my femininity facilitated and assisted me to approaching people and gaining the trust that I needed. Regarding approaching the participants, the existing literature about the settings of female researchers in fieldwork has presented a certain set of gender-based advantages based on “stereotypes of women as unthreatening or good listeners” (Orrico, 2015, p. 474). Nonetheless, it should be noted that the empirical phase of the present research has provided me an experience far away from this stereotype. This experience composes one of the significant methodological contributions of this research to tourism ethnography studies.

It was explained before that ICH links to daily routines and lifestyle of people, and anything that shapes that lifestyle from attitude to behavioural patterns. Studying the role and manifestation of ICH in tourism surely requires the researcher to get close to the body of that local lifestyle and engage with the community from inside the walls of their houses. Sometimes, the researcher intends to study the local community through those aspects of collective attitudes and behavioural patterns that the community may not like to share with strangers from outside their community (here the researcher).

Undertaking an ethnography research in the small Muslim community, my gender and authenticity as an Iranian female researcher provided me a valuable vantage point in accessing the places as well as the participants. I found that in a Muslim community a female researcher, regardless of her nationality, has considerably more chances to get close to local social gatherings and family structure. Therefore, automatically she finds more convenient access to the wider range of participants, including men and women, especially women, and kids who are not usually easily accessible for a male researcher in these small Muslim communities. Based on what I experienced personally, I believe that a small Muslim community would barely give this advantage(s), for example, to a male or a non-Iranian researcher. In the rest of this section, I describe my claim by using an example.

In a small Muslim community a woman researcher is privileged by easier access to the participant because of her gender. The reason is derived from one of Islam’s basic social rules about social interaction between men and women. According to this rule no preceding preparation is needed to be done by the locals when a woman stranger (here the researcher) enters a private place (like a private home or a family party). In fact, when a woman, even if she is a stranger, enters a family party, the routine everyday

setting will remain unchanged. Consequently, in this circumstance, approaching potential participants happens easier and faster, as the group of potential participants has already accepted the physical presence of the researcher in their place (es). Besides, in this condition the researcher gains more chance of observing the participants in their actual everyday lifestyle setting.

In contrast, the same scenario acts much different for a man researcher whose research requires him to participate in one of these social- and family-based gatherings. He never can take this step without conducting a set of advanced arrangements to gain permission from and acceptance by the community. The reason is that following the aforementioned Islamic rule, before a man stranger (here the researcher) enters a place, the local women must have enough time to do some to prepare their dress and wear their hijab. In this case, accessing the defined places and people may take longer or even sometimes turns out to be impossible for a male researcher. Another important point is that considering all these situations, he (McKeganey & Bloor, 1991) has limited chances of observing the local lifestyle and its setting (people and places together) in the way it usually is day to day.

It must be focused on here that this notion may not be that applicable in big Muslim cities with more modern lifestyles, where people are less committed to religious rules. However, this can be the matter of great consideration for those researchers who plan to undertake tourism research that may require them to confront local members in small Muslim communities and engage with their social activities.

Apart from being a “female”, my “ethnicity” as an Iranian researcher also benefited me significantly. My mother tongue is Persian; the language of the people in QIG, but in a local accent which is understandable to me. Besides, I was born in Iran and grew up in an Iranian cultural context. Although, as explained before, my dressing style is totally different from the typical style of women in Qeshm Island (Box 5.3), there are still many signs at the first impression that easily prove that I am an Iranian woman. Regardless of knowing the Persian language, Iranians can easily identify me as an Iranian person from the colour of my skin and hair, big black eyes, the loose way of wearing Hijab, and knowing and applying the Iranian norms in social interactions, for example, greetings. In general, being an Iranian was another advantage that facilitated

me to be accepted in the local community easier and gain the trust I needed to approach my participants.

I bring attention to this subject here to highlight the important role of fieldwork dynamics when conducting a tourism ethnography fieldwork and the quality of the empirical information that the researcher collects. In addition, it must be noticed that applying a non-Western research perspective and research framework, in both theory and practice, will fundamentally affect the fieldwork completion and, consequently, the result of the tourism project conducted in Middle-Eastern communities. Given this, I wonder how much, to what extent, and in what ways the information that was co-constructed between me, my participants, and the physical environment of this research project would differ if I was, for example, a Western male researcher. Investigation of such methodological questions could provide a more nuanced insight into how social relations in the tourism field operate and how they influence the quality of information presented in studies.

8.4.2 Conducting Thematic Network Analysis

The thematic network is not common in tourism studies where “content analysis is more frequently used” (Walters, 2014, p. 303). Up to now, the numbers of tourism studies that have used the thematic network are few. Walter’s Ph.D. thesis (Walters, 2014), released in 2014, and also her article (2016) are two of the most recent researches in this area. Regarding this evident shortage, this study adds some knowledge, new insights towards the method, and steps for using thematic network analysis in the tourism context. Applying an ethnography approach, this thesis analyses the role and manifestation of ICH in tourism in a PA by using the thematic network. Therefore, this thesis can be taken as a proper and practical example of how the thematic network could be applied effectively, not only in tourism studies but also in the area of social environmental science.

Overall, applying the thematic network, this thesis develops two methodological contributions by discussing the notions of “translation” and “colour-based table”. The rest of this section is devoted to explaining these two notions.

- Applying Translation

While six-phases guidance for conducting thematic network is known, presented, and developed by previous studies (Attride-Stirling, 2001; Braun, 2006; Walters, 2014) there is no indication of the notion of “translation” throughout those six phases (Section 5.13.1)(Figure 5.10). It is obvious that translation is an inevitable step in those studies with non-English raw data/information. However, it seems that the previous studies on conducting the thematic network either have ignored totally the notion of the translation or they have considered it as a step that must be undertaken before the researcher even precedes with the first phase of undertaking the thematic network. It seems that the scholars have assumed that all phases of the thematic network must be applied in English from the start to the finish.

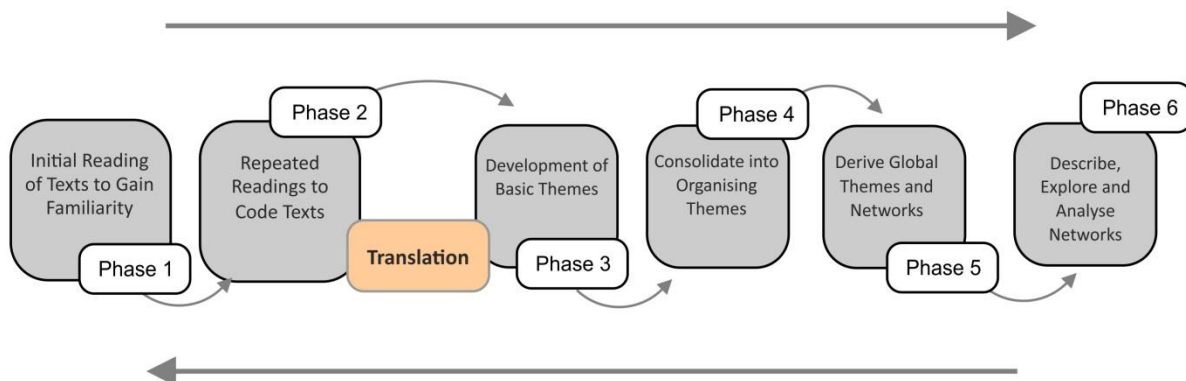


Figure 8. 4 The six phases in an iterative thematic analysis (Adapted from (Walters, 2016, p.110)). It suggests the step of conducting translation at the end of the second phases and before starting phase three.

This thesis suggests that for those research projects for which the raw data/ information is not in English, the translation will be more reliable and practical, not from the beginning, but at the end of phase two of conducting the thematic network, when the two critical stages of “gaining familiarity with information”, and “finding the codes” are already done (Figure 8.4).

In the case of this study, the translation was an inevitable stage, as the original information was all in Persian. Throughout conducting the thematic network in this research, I undertook the first two phases of the thematic network using the Persian language. As explained in Section 5.13 this decision is justifiable because when I am using my mother language I can become familiar with the information to extract and identify codes easier, faster, and, importantly, more reliably. This thesis suggests conducting translation from the original language into English at the end of phase two, particularly for those research projects with a large amount of information where gaining familiarity (phase one) seems confusing, and time-consuming.

- colour-based table

In addition, to conduct the phase one to three of the thematic network properly using the technique of colour- based table is suggested in this thesis (Section 5.13.3). This technique is applied and developed as long as the researcher goes through the first phase until the basic themes are identified (phase three). To apply this technique, the researcher uses one specific colour to highlight all of those expressions and information that seem to have a similar message and have some points in common.

For example, once I started initial reading of the empirical information to gain familiarity (phase one), I realized that the notion "changing local lifestyle in QIG" was reflected frequently by many participants and in different ways. I started using yellow to highlight any part of the information that indicated or even implied "lifestyle change in local community"; finally, all of them were listed in a column of a table. At the same time, I used pink to highlight any indication that "ICH provides a PA with spirit, soul, and meaning", and placed all of them in a separate column in the same table. Following this technique, at the end of phase one I had a colour-based table in which each colour in each column presented a meaning to me. The next step was to identify the codes and then extract the themes mainly through exploring the information in each column with the same colour.

Using a colour-based table is suggested, particularly for those research projects with a large amount of data/information from different discourses. In the meantime, as the thematic network is considered as a "going back, and forth" process (Walters, 2014, p.

126), the colour-based table is a visual tool that assists the researcher in applying “going back, and forth” continuously and more accurately, and settles the final thematic network.

8.5 Policy Recommendations

Taking into consideration the main conclusion of this thesis presented earlier in this chapter, various policy recommendations are made which are outlined below. These policy recommendations are made with regard to the main contexts of this research project that is designed and based on ICH, tourism, and PAs, and the relationships among them.

1- To facilitate a better understanding of the role of ICH in tourism in PAs, it is recommended that policies are created to better know, represent, and, in general, focus more on the intangible cultural asset of the local community in the institutional, theoretical, and practical framework of PAs. Policies are needed to promote the recognition of ICH in the setting of PAs, and its consideration in planning, and management implication.

The new paradigm of PA has already emphasized the crucial position of local cultural heritage in PAs, yet as (Stevens, 2014a) notes, it is more theoretical and less practiced in the actual world. However, in practice, and more particularly from the tourism perspective, policies are needed to assure, at least to some extent, the consideration of ICH in a PA’s tourism development plan. In this vein, a general guideline that clarifies the situation and presents a definition and workable framework for implementing ICH in tourism in PAs will be largely useful. In the meantime, this guideline could be modified and practised with regard to the different variety of PAs in terms of their tourism objectives and management systems.

2- Policies in the PAs’ tourism development programmes that offer more incentive to the custodial community to present more of their ICH to tourism. These programmes must understand, adapt and deal with the distinctive characteristics of ICH, and also the

plurality of the challenges associated with implementing ICH in PA tourism.(Section challenges 8.3.2)

The goal of these policy-based programmes is to mitigate the tourism-related existing challenges between PAs and the local communities living within these boundaries. It also must build a set of efficient and useful infrastructure that enables the available intangible cultural asset to be promoted as the tourism product and at the same time to be preserved properly over time.

3- Marketing policies to increase the involvement of ICH in the tourism market of PAs. So far, tourism in PAs is known as natural based tourism mainly because it has been advertised in that way. Regarding the critical importance of local people and their cultural heritage, tourism in a PA must include and present both natural and cultural resources. A set of integrated and holistic tourism marketing strategies need to be considered where advertising the historic and valuable interconnection between culture and nature is taken more seriously, rather than neglecting one of them totally or presenting them individually and independent from the other.

8.6 Future Research Recommendations

The relationship between three contexts of ICH, tourism, and PAs was explored and discussed in this research project from a specific angle: the role and manifestation of ICH in tourism in PAs. However, there is scope to gain more insights by conducting further research into some of the identified opportunities. These opportunities are addressed in four different areas as below:

1- Understanding and Promoting ICH-based Tourism

There is great potential for further exploration of understanding the conception of the relationship between the intangible aspect of culture and tourism. “How” and “in which ways” each one of the five domains of ICH can be applied, presented, and promoted in tourism, both in theory and practice, deserves greater attention in future researches. As explained before, some criteria of these five domains have been already addressed in

the tourism literature, however, regarding the variety of the intangible cultural elements, a large part of these five domains have remained under evaluated.

In this vein, the actual and potential challenges in the way of promoting ICH in tourism, and the possible ways to mitigate and overcome these challenges, also deserves a great attention in future studies.

There is also a potential for further insights into how the role and manifestation of ICH are perceived and understood by different types of tourists and in different types of tourism destinations.

The subject of carrying capacity for ICH was reflected in this thesis to some extent (Section 7.3.3.2). There is a place for future research to study how carrying capacity for the intangible cultural asset can be evaluated and applied in the tourism context.

2- Cultural Heritage and PA Management

In general, there is a consensus on the importance of local community and their cultural heritage in PAs. However, the argument on the quality and extent of integrating the PAs' management practices and planning frameworks with the existing cultural asset is still open. While the focus of this study was only on the specific aspect of cultural heritage (ICH), it raises questions on the reflection of various types of cultural heritage in PAs and the practicality of how cultural heritage is considered in the present PA management systems.

3- Developing ICH Research Area

As a recent subject, ICH deserves wider investigation and greater attention in future researches. To enrich the existing knowledge on ICH, more attention to the core characteristics of ICH and their functions in different disciplines is needed. For example, there is an indication in this thesis that a part of ICH is more female based a part of cultural heritage that has been mainly created, practised, and preserved by women over history. It would be interesting to study the scope of gender and its contribution to creation, evolution and preservation of ICH specifically in today's world. Similar studies seem necessary to widen and deepen the understanding of ICH and its historic and current contributions to other research areas.

4- Methodological Development

As the final reflection, I suggest that it would be more satisfying to have included thematic network analysis more in tourism future research. This thesis is an example to show the practicality and efficiency of the thematic network as an analysing tool when undertaking ethnography research projects. Therefore, I offer this suggestion that thematic network can be applied more commonly, not only in tourism and ethnography studies but also in different disciplines of environmental social science. By doing so, the relationship of humans and nature can be studied and analysed.

Appendix A



University Of Otago Human Ethics Committee Application Form: Category A

Form updated: May 2014

Please ensure you are using the latest application form template available from:

<http://www.otago.ac.nz/council/committees/committees/HumanEthicsCommittees.html>

and read the instruction documents provided (Guidelines for Ethical Practices in Teaching and Research and Filling Out Your Human Ethics Application).

1. University of Otago staff member responsible for project:

Dr Tara Duncan

2. Department/School: Department of Tourism

3. Contact details of staff member responsible

Department of Tourism / Otago Business School

tara.duncan@otago.ac.nz

03 479 3498

4. Title of project:

Intangible Cultural Heritage and Tourism in Protected Areas

5. Indicate project type and names of other investigators and students:

Student Researchers

Name: Minoo Hassani Esfehani

Level of Study (PhD, Masters, Hons): PhD

6. **Is this a repeated class teaching activity?** NO

7. **Fast-Track procedure** NO

8. **When will recruitment and data collection commence?** December 2014

When will data collection be completed? August 2015

9. **Funding of project**

Travel costs between New Zealand and Iran will be funded by the Department of Tourism's PhD research allowance. While in Iran, living costs and local transport will be partially covered with funds that researcher received from "Asian Migration Theme Centre" in University of Otago and it is the responsibility of the research student to pay for other expenses. If commercial use will be made of the data, will potential participants be made aware of this before they agree to participate? If not, explain:

The data will **NOT** be used for any commercial purposes

10. **Brief description in lay terms of the purpose of the project** (approx. 75 words):

This research seeks to understand the contributions, role and manifestation of ICH in promoting tourism in a naturally protected area. The purpose of this project is to understand the role of intangible cultural heritage (ICH) in tourism in protected areas (PAs). ICH means the invisible practices, representations, expressions of a culture as well as its knowledge and skills. This can include music, oral traditions and dance, as well as the instruments, objects, artefacts and cultural spaces associated with the culture. These are all elements that communities, groups and in some cases individuals recognize as part of their cultural heritage. ICH is an increasingly growing area of study and is closely linked with aspects of tourism and protected areas development.

11. **Aim and description of project**

This research intends to extend research into intangible culture within heritage sites, in particular by looking at 'protected areas'. There is a strong link between many protected areas and local and indigenous peoples who live around these areas and their cultures. The past and current cultures of many of these peoples have supported the

existence and conservation of the land that is now recognised as a protected area. For many protected areas, visitation and recreation are some of the main reasons behind the designation of this space to protected area status. Tourism is one tool that has been utilised to try and link visitation to these areas with the needs of the communities and natural environments. There is, therefore, a historically strong interdependence between protected areas, culture and tourism.

The question is devised in order to explore the ICH and tourism interaction in PAs:

- What is the role and manifestation of ICH in tourism in a PA from locals' and visitors' perspectives?

To answer this question, and to fill a part of the gap that was just explained, this research attempts to explore an objective:

- The potential and possible role and manifestation of ICH in tourism in a PA from locals' and visitors' perspectives.

12. Researcher/instructor experience and qualifications in this research area

The PhD researcher has experience of conducting qualitative research in a tourism setting whilst completing her MSc Tourism fieldwork in Iran. The participants of her research were selected from Lar National Park's guards and also families from the nomadic communities who live in the park.

Academic Qualifications:

Ph.D. Candidate, Tourism Department (2013-present), MSc in Geography and Tourism Planning (2011), Eight years of experience in teaching tourism and heritage.

The researcher is an Iranian citizen and so is fluent in the Persian language and has a broad understanding of Iranian culture. Having worked on a National Tourism Development Project in the area where the research will be conducted, the researcher has knowledge of the local language, customs, and traditions.

13. Participants

13(a) Population from which participants are drawn:

This study will be undertaken in Iran; Qeshm Island Geopark. All participants will be approached in Qeshm Island Geopark that is located in Qeshm Island in the South of Iran. This island is a famous and peaceful recreation destination for large numbers of domestic and also international tourists. The population of over 120,000, which mostly follows a rural lifestyle, is deeply attached to the rich and multifaceted traditions of the area. People in QIG are strongly committed to their traditions and sociocultural values. The local people wear traditional clothes and speak Persian with their specific dialect. Qeshm Island Geopark is under management of Qeshm Free Industrial Zone which is an important, famous and absolutely safe trade and navigation channel for vessels in the Persian Gulf.

Three groups of participants will be interviewed to explore their perspectives and interpretations on the role and manifestation of ICH in tourism in QIG. participants among government local officials (Group One), participants among the local small tourism business owners (STBO)³¹ (Group Two) and, finally, participants among domestic, non-local visitors³²(Group Three)

- The first two groups will be selected among members of local communities, including local authorities of the Qeshm Island Geopark, local tourism enterprisers and local tourism experts. This group will generally consist of people who were born and grew up on the island and live there permanently.
- The second group of participants are visitors. These participants are those travellers whose main reason for travelling to Qeshm Island is visiting Qeshm Island Geopark.

13(b) Inclusion and exclusion criteria:

Inclusion criteria:

³¹ - STBO refers to those members of the local community who are involved with tourism. They own and run different types of small-sized tourism business such as traditional guesthouses, traditional restaurants or offering the visitors the transportation and guiding service across the island.

³² -Participants Group three were selected among Iranian visitors who were originally from parts of Iran other than Qeshm Island.

- 1) Local people of rural areas of Qeshm Island, whose jobs are related to tourism will be included in interviews. They must work and live within the Geopark.
- 2) Tourists/travellers who come to the island mainly to visit Qeshm Island Geopark.

Exclusion criteria:

Qeshm Island is an Industrial and Commercial Free Zone. Therefore, a large number of people who travel to this island are only “shopping” visitors and they usually don’t visit Qeshm Island Geopark. This group of travellers will be excluded from the participant population of this study.

13 (c) Estimated numbers of participants:

As this is an ethnographic study, it is difficult to determine the exact number of participants, but an estimate is between 10-15 for the local people (both local officials and TSBO and the same for the visitors.

13(d) Age range of participants:

Participants will be aged 18 or older.

13(e) Method of recruitment:

- I will find visitors in one of local guesthouse in a village inside geopark. This guesthouse is the most famous local guesthouse in the geopark which is introduced and recommended in international guide books such as Lonely Planet as well as domestic ones. Lots of domestic tourists who are interested in experiencing a traditional and more authentic environment and prefer to be close to geosites, decide to stay in this local guesthouses across the geopark.

13(f) Specify and justify any payment or reward to be offered

No payment will be offered

14. Methods and Procedures:

The researcher's experience of working with the Qeshm Island Geopark Central Office on a tourism project will allow her the opportunity to work close to local people and get involved with their culture. She will rent a room and stay inside the Geopark in one of the local houses, located in one of the touristic destination villages of geopark called "Tabl".

The methods I will use in this research are described in details follows:

- Semi-structured interviews with local tourism experts, geopark authorities and the visitors.
- participant observation
Observations will consist of going around geo-sites to observe how visitors get involved with ICH elements. Observations will try to gain an understanding of how much the tourists are interested in ICH during their visit to a PA.
- All interview participants will be given an information sheet and asked to sign a consent form. The aim of all types of interview is to know how participants think about the relationship between the intangible parts of culture and the process of tourism development. With the participants of the local community, I intend to ask if they think intangible heritage is a proper resource to attract more visitors. In addition, I intend to ask how willing they are to include their cultural assets in the tourism planning process and the tourism products offered in the future. .

I will ask the visitors how much they get involved with intangible cultural assets when they are visiting Qeshm Island Geopark and what they think about the value and function of ICH in tourism development of a protected area. I will ask them to explain any memorable, different or challenging experiences they have had about ICH during their visitation. I want to know their opinions about ICH which is mostly difficult to identify, because of its intangibility, as a tourism product in comparison to other more tangible assets of a protected area such as natural landscapes and recreation facilities.

- All interviews will be recorded using a voice recorder (after participant agreement). Hand written notes will also be taken during observation.

15. Compliance with The Privacy Act 1993 and the Health Information Privacy Code 1994 imposes strict requirements concerning the collection, use and disclosure of personal information. The questions below allow the Committee to assess compliance.

15(a) Are you collecting and storing personal information (e.g.name, contact details, designation, position etc) directly from the individual concerned that could identify the individual?

General demographic data (name , age , aducation) will be collected but will not allow identification of individual participants.

15(b) Are you collecting information about individuals from another source?

No

15(c) Collecting Personal Information

- **Will you be collecting personal information (e.g. name, contact details, position, company, anything that could identify the individual)?** (I will ask about their names and jobs)
- **Will you inform participants of the purpose for which you are collecting the information and the uses you propose to make of it?**

YES – all participants will be given an information sheet describing the study and why it is being conducted. Both the information sheet and consent form will be available in the Persian language.

- **Will you inform participants of who will receive the information?**

YES – Participants will be made aware that information will be used in the analysis of my PhD thesis and they will be made aware that part of this may be published as an academic paper.

- **Will you inform participants of the consequences, if any, of not supplying the information?**

YES – there will be no consequences whatsoever if they do not supply information. They will be first informed of the project fully, and then asked if they consent to be participants and told that they can answer as much or as little as they want if they do consent to participate.

- **Will you inform participants of their rights of access to and correction of personal information?**

YES – They will be asked if they want to see a final version of the research which I can send them in electronic form.

If you are NOT informing them of the points above, please explain why:

Not applicable for this research

15(d) Outline your data storage, security procedures and length of time data will be kept

During the fieldwork and the process of writing the dissertation, all fieldwork material will be accessible only by the student researcher and supervisors and kept secure in the student's University of Otago Office which are accessible by a password locked computer. In accordance with the University of Otago research policy, the fieldwork material will be securely stored in the Department of

Tourism for 5 years. After this period all information related to this project will be destroyed by the department secretary.

15(e) Who will have access to personal information, under what conditions, and subject to what safeguards? If you are obtaining information from another source, include details of how this will be accessed and include written permission if appropriate. Will participants have access to the information they have provided?

Names of the participants will be kept anonymous unless the participants agree their names to be presented in the research. The student researcher will conduct the interviews and enter the data. It is intended to share the final research with Qeshm Island Geopark central office, at the end of the research. Most of those participants who are local residents of the Qeshm Island have already known the researcher and know her contact details.

15(f) Do you intend to publish any personal information they have provided?

No

15(g) Do you propose to collect demographic information to describe your sample? For example: gender, age, ethnicity, education level, etc.

Yes, I will gather basic demographic details.

15 (h) Have you, or will you, undertake Māori consultation? Choose one of the options below, and delete the option that does not apply:

(Refer to <http://www.otago.ac.nz/research/maoriconsultation/index.html>).

NO

If not, provide a brief outline of your reasons (e.g. the research is being undertaken overseas):

The fieldwork is not taking place under Māori jurisdiction or on a Māori-related subject.

16. Does the research or teaching project involve any form of deception? NO

17. Disclose and discuss any potential problems or ethical considerations:

No problems are foreseen. Qeshm Island is one of the famous recreation destinations in Iran and in the Persian Gulf countries. The safety, natural beauty and cultural distinctiveness of Qeshm Island attract lots of people who travel to this Island for shopping, relaxing and visiting Geopark. Also, several international projects, mostly on environmental conservation, have been done and some of them are still ongoing in Qeshm Island Geopark.

In addition I have obtained a research permit from the Central Management Office of Qeshm Island Geopark from an agent which coordinates conservation and tourism research across the Qeshm Island Geopark. The permission is attached to this form. Also, I have arranged with National University of Tehran in Tehran and Tourism Department of National University of Hormozgan to use their academic resources if needed during the time I am in Iran.

18. *Applicant's Signature...



Name (please print): Tara Duncan.

Date: .4.9.14

*The signatory should be the staff member detailed at Question 1.

19. Departmental approval: *I have read this application and believe it to be valid research and ethically sound. I approve the research design. The Research proposed in this application is compatible with the University of Otago policies and I give my*

consent for the application to be forwarded to the University of Otago Human Ethics Committee with my recommendation that it be approved.

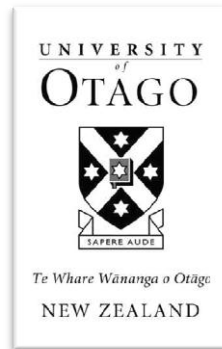
Signature of **Head of Department:

Name of HOD (please print):

.....

Date:

**Where the Head of Department is also the Applicant, then an appropriate senior staff member must sign on behalf of the Department or School



INFORMATION SHEET FOR PARTICIPANTS

The Role of Intangible Cultural Heritage in Tourism Development in Protected Areas: Insights from Qeshm Island Geopark, Iran

Thank you for showing an interest in this project. I am an Iranian student studying at the University of Otago in New Zealand, with an interest to find out the role of intangible heritage in the tourism development in protected areas such as this Qeshm Island Geopark. Intangible Cultural Heritage indicates to the invisible practices, expressions of a culture as well as its knowledge and skills. This can include music, oral traditions and dance, as well as the instruments, objects, artefacts and cultural spaces associated with the culture. These are all elements that communities, groups and in some cases individuals recognize as part of their cultural heritage.

Please read this information sheet carefully before deciding whether or not you like to participate. If you decide to participate we thank you. If you decide not to take part there will be no disadvantage to you and we thank you for considering our request.

What is the Aim of the Project?

This project is being undertaken as part of the requirements for a PhD at the University of Otago, New Zealand. This project aims to find out the role of intangible and non-material cultural heritage in Tourism development within natural protected areas. This research will explore how intangible culture contributes to tourism development in areas that are already under protection because of their unique and valuable natural assets.

What Type of Participants is being sought?

Participants of this research consist of two groups:

- 1) The first group will be members of local communities, including local authorities of the Qeshm Island Geopark and tourism small business owners(TSBO).
- 2) The second group of participants are visitors. These travellers have the main purpose of travelling to Qeshm Island to visit Qeshm Island Geopark and its related protected areas such as the Mangrove Forest.

What will participants be asked to do?

Participation to this study is voluntary. Should you agree to take part in this project, you will be asked questions about intangible culture and its contribution to tourism in natural protected areas like Qeshm Island Geopark. This will take place in a location and at a time convenient to you and should take about 30-45 minutes of your time. Our discussion will be recorded using a voice-recording device if you agree.

What Data or Information will be collected and What Use will be made of it?

The general line of questioning includes questions on the insights, viewpoint or any experiences you have had about the contribution or implementation of intangible heritage in tourism issues. Consequently, although the University of Otago Human Ethics Committee is aware of the general areas to be explored in the interview, the Committee has not been able to review the precise questions to be used. In the event that the line of questioning does develop in such a way that you feel hesitant or uncomfortable you are reminded of your right to decline to answer any particular question(s) and also that you may withdraw from the project at any stage without any disadvantage to yourself of any kind.

Some parts of what is said during an interview will be typed up and translated into English to be used in my PhD thesis and perhaps some subsequent articles. You are most welcome to request a copy of the results of the project if you are interested. Only I, as the university researcher will have access to your interview, which will be stored securely. Any personal information held about you, such as contact details, audio or video tapes, will be destroyed at the completion of the research. All copies of your interview (hard copy and digital) will only be kept on file for a maximum of 5 years, and then destroyed. The results of the project may be published and will be available in the University of Otago Library (Dunedin, New Zealand) and every attempt will be made preserve your anonymity.

On the Consent Form you will be given options regarding your anonymity. Please be aware that we will make every attempt to preserve your anonymity.

Can participants change their mind and withdraw from the project?

You may withdraw from participation in the project at any time and without any disadvantage to yourself of any kind.

What if participants have any questions?

If you have any questions about our project, either now or in the future, please feel free to contact either:-

Minoos Hassani Esfehiani /Department of Tourism

University Tel No: +64 (0)3 479 8107 /+64 22 41 61 135

Email: hasmi319@student.otago.ac.nz

Or

Dr Tara Duncan / Department of Tourism

Email: tara.duncan@otago.ac.nz

This study has been approved by the University of Otago Human Ethics Committee. If you have any concerns about the ethical conduct of the research you may contact the Committee through the Human Ethics Committee Administrator (ph. +64 (0)3 479 8256 or email gary.witte@otago.ac.nz). Any issues you raise will be treated in confidence and investigated and you will be informed of the outcome.

.....

(Signature of participant)

.....

(Date)

.....

(Printed Name)

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Appendix B: Semi-structured interview questions

Questionnaire One: Local Officials in Qeshm Island Geopark

- 1- Can you explain the relationship between “Culture” of the local community and “Qeshm Island Geopark”(QIG) – can you give any example(s)?
- 2- How do you explain the relationship between "Intangible Cultural Heritage" (ICH) of the local community and QIG?
- 3- Regarding the different tourism activities in QIG, does ICH contribute to tourism activities in QIG – can you explain how?
- 4- Considering the previous question, can you tell me, which elements of ICH in QIG is being more introduced to geopark visitors?
- 5- In your perspective which tourism activities in QIG are directly or indirectly involved with ICH – can you give an example?
- 6- Regarding that a geopark is a place which is known for its unique and beautiful geoheritage, how much do you consider the intangible side of culture (ICH) as a tourism attraction for QIG?
- 7- What are the advantage sand disadvantages of implementing more of intangible cultural elements of the local community in tourism in QIG?
- 8- Have implementation of various elements of ICH been taken into account in Tourism Development Plan of QIG – if yes, can you explain with an example.
- 9- Are there any guidelines or measures regarding implementation of ICH in a geopark – if yes, is this guideline at international, national or local level?
- 10- So far what project (s) has been done in QIG to promote ICH in tourism – were they successful?
- 11- ‘Lenj-sazi’ is one of the Iran’s UNESCO Intangible World Heritage which is located in QIG territory – can you tell me if the central office of QIG follows any plan to introduce this part of ICH to geopark’s visitors?
- 12- What do you think about local communities’ reaction if different features of their ICH asset are tended to be applied widely and more seriously in tourism – do you foresee any challenge and particular issue in this way?
- 13- In general, how do you perceive the relation between ICH and protecting environment of QIG?

14- Do you think ICH implementation in tourism would contribute to decreasing the negative impacts of tourism on geopark environment and natural resources– can you explain with an example?

Questionnaire Two: Small Tourism Business Owners (STBO) in Qeshm Island Geopark

1- Regarding that your job is related to tourism, do you think the ICH of your community such as customs, religious beliefs, ceremonies and oral traditions are attractive for visitors in QIG – can you explain for what reasons and give an example?

2- Have you had any interesting or different experience/story about the visitors visiting ICH in QIG, and why they are memorable for you?

3- Based on your experiences of working in tourism, which part do you think is more attractive for the visitors; natural resources of geopark, ICH of the local community or both of them together?

4- So far what has been done in QIG to promote ICH in tourism – were they successful?

5- How easy/difficult is introducing intangible cultural elements of QIG to the visitors who come from outside the Qeshm Island and are not usually familiar with these elements?

6- How do you feel/think about introducing more of your ICH like customs, religious beliefs, rituals, and handicrafts to the visitors who come from outside of Qeshm Island?

7- Is there any part of your ICH that you do like/dislike to be promoted in tourism – can you explain for what reasons and give an example?

8- Do you think applying more elements of your ICH in tourism is an effective way to attract more number of visitors to QIG and develop the career of STBOs in the geopark– can you give any example(s)?

9- Generally speaking, what are the advantages and disadvantages of implementing more of intangible cultural elements in tourism in QIG?

10- Do you think tourism in QIG can contribute to preserving the intangible cultural asset of the local community – can you explain for what reasons and give an example?

11- In general, how do you perceive the relation between ICH and protecting environment of QIG?

Questionnaire Three: Visitors in Qeshm Island Geopark

1- How and how much did you interact with the local community and their ICH while you were visiting QIG?

2- Do you have any special experience about visiting ICH in QIG – why are these stories/experiences so memorable for you – what is it about them, positive or negative, that keeps them memorable?

3- How much did you find ICH interesting and attractive in compare to the natural attractions of QIG such as the geoheritage and beaches?

4- What was the influence of ICH of the local community in QIG on your experience of visiting QIG – can you explain with an example?

5- As a non-local visitor, did you like/wish to have more chance and time to know or experience more of intangible cultural asset of the local community in QIG – such as attending their traditions and ceremonies – can you explain for what reasons?

6- Do you like to come back and revisit QIG later – can you explain for what reasons?

7- After leaving QIG will you recommend QIG to your family and friends to visit– can you explain for what reasons?

8- How do you think implementing of ICH of the local community of QIG can contribute to tourism development in this island?

9- Regarding the previous question, what are the advantages and disadvantages of implementing more of intangible cultural elements of the local community in tourism in QIG?

10- How do you think tourism can affect the intangible cultural asset of the local community in QIG?



Qeshm Free Area



ISLAMIC REPUBLIC OF IRAN

Date: 2014/08/27

Ref.No: 4094/MG

Att. : _____

To whom it may concern

Research Clearance for Minoo Hassani Esfehni

The Qeshm Island Global Geopark Office has recommended research clearance of the above mentioned researcher ,who intend to do research on "The Role of Intangible Cultural Heritage in Ecotourism Development of Protected Areas", Insights from Qeshm Island Global Geopark ,Iran.

With this letter we are kindly requesting you to assist the candidate accordingly.

Yours sincerely,

Qeshm Island Geopark Office

Eghbal Zobieri

Manager

Consent Form for Photographs and/or Graphic Images

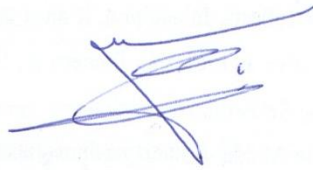
I, Majid Yasini, give consent to Minoos Hassani Esfehiani to use my photographs/images in her PhD thesis titled "Intangible Cultural Heritage and Tourism in Protected Areas".

These rights in no way restrict publication of the photograph/image in any form by me or others authorized by me.

Majid Yasini

Address

Email: majidyasini91@gmail.com

A handwritten signature in blue ink, consisting of several overlapping loops and a long horizontal stroke extending to the right.

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