

Historic Preservation Ideology: A Critical Mapping of Contemporary Heritage Policy Discourse

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Historic preservation practitioners differ about definitions of the field. Often, those who have attempted to understand historic preservation have focused on one particular definition and argued that it is more central than others. However, based on empirical evidence more fully developed elsewhere (Koziol 2003), there are discernible lines of discourse between and among the different points of view.

Understanding how design practice—and by extension, historic preservation—is advanced in the development of public policy has largely been part of the tacit knowledge of practitioners (Schon 1985; Heylighen et al 2005; Hamilton 2006); however, this underlying knowledge is not necessarily inaccessible to analysis (Polanyi 1967). The purpose of this article is to advance a framework, or map, for critically analyzing both the processes of and constituencies for and against preservation. The map, empirically derived but not fully tested, is intended to provide a reference point for future research efforts. Two dimensions are developed and juxtaposed to provide a heuristic; one dimension critically frames an ongoing professional discourse on preservation policies that have existed since the nineteenth century; the other considers how “market ideology” has affected this debate and resulting practices.

Methodologically, the reference to discourse is intended to suggest that preservation policy develops by means of an exchange of ideas as to what constitutes its areas of concern (Smith 2006). Such boundary formations and breakdowns are articulated and expressed through collective texts (e.g., standards, laws, conventions, textbooks, conferences, websites, blogs, etc.). These texts are also part of broader contexts that relate historic sites to identity formation,

curatorial practice, property rights, and commercial enterprise. While discourse analysis remains a collection of research approaches, there is growing agreement around the concept of a qualitative method that “tries to explore how the socially produced ideas and objects that populate the world were created in the first place and how they are maintained and held in place over time” (Phillips and Hardy 2002, 6). Historic preservation and heritage studies professionals have largely accepted the value of critical discussion to their practices in a variety of areas; however, the discussion of market dimensions has been more difficult to assimilate (Avrami and Mason 2000; Torre 2002). Hence, the work presented here attempts to build upon the emerging scholarship on preservation discourse in its social and political context, while introducing how this relates to increased concern among preservation practitioners regarding financial and economic dimensions (Munoz-Vinas 2005; Smith 2006).

Ultimately, this analysis begins and concludes with a simple four-square matrix, the Preservation Discourse Matrix (PDM), through which further research is proposed (Fig.1).

PRESERVATION DISCOURSE MATRIX

The framework for analysis of preservation policy discussed here is an idealization of extremes intended to assist in the differentiation of empirically identified tendencies, such as debates about authenticity, sense of belonging, adaptive reuse, and economic development, among others. Abstracting along two dimensions affords a means for empirically mapping and explaining a variety of cases and specific practices (Fig. 1).

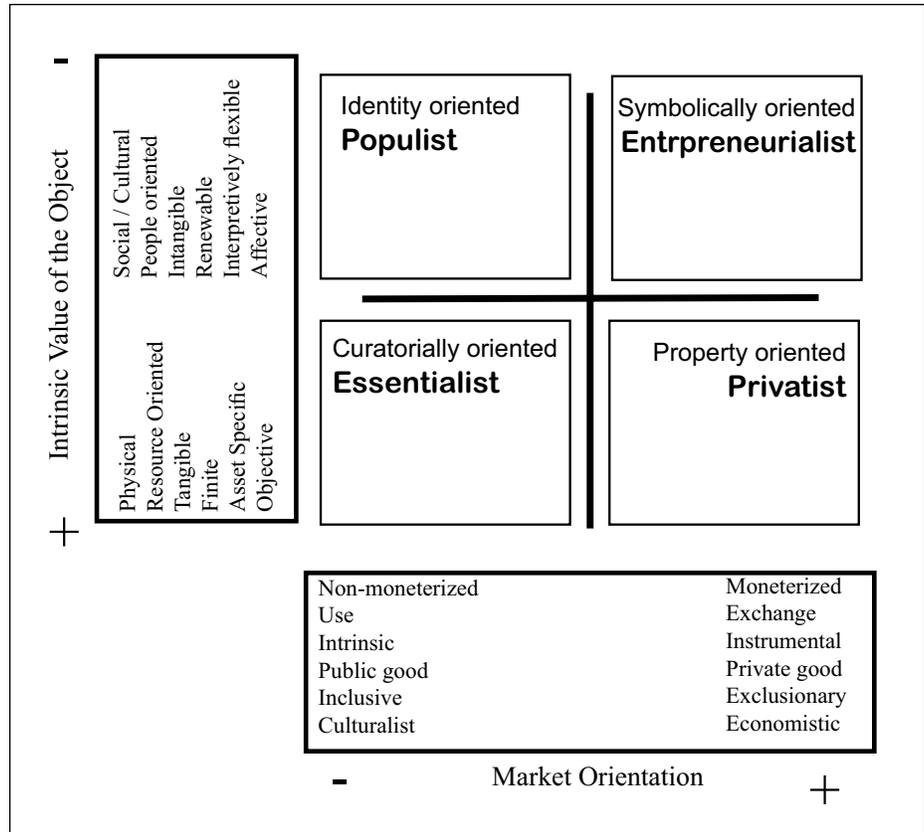


Fig. 1. Preservation Discourse Matrix (PDM).

The first axis assesses a standing debate among preservationists in a new way. Preservationists have long discussed whether a building, an artifact, or a site is more important for reasons intrinsic to that thing or because of the associational values brought to it by those doing the valuation. The debate between essentialists (intrinsic value) and populists¹ (associational value) has been documented before (Avrami and Mason 2000; Jokilehto 1999; Murtagh 2005; Page and Mason 2004; Stipe and Lee 1987), albeit not referenced in these terms.

Along the second axis, the established associational/intrinsic debate among those concerned with preservation and the role of heritage in society more generally has been supplemented by a new set of discussions in the literature on market-oriented measures of preservation activity (Hutter and Rizzo 1997; Peacock 1998; Throsby 2001). Many preservation advocates ensconced in the associational / intrinsic dualism appear to accept market-related preservation as important but as an epiphenomenon of recent policy shifts and budget shortfalls (Stipe 2003). Much current thinking has focused

on whether to see emerging political pressure to assign monetary values to preservation as an opportunity or as a threat.² If this idea of a “moneterized” notion of preservation is taken as an opposition to the established debate, a second dimension arises.

The two oppositions yield four distinct, albeit idealized, attitudes toward preservation. The identity-focused populist holds that the value of preserved objects lies in their ability to promote memory and attachment. Essentialists, focusing on the value of the object itself, promote and advance a curatorial agenda. The value of objects is clear to privatists, in the sense of what is intrinsic, but of equal importance is the property they own. Entrepreneurialists accept that there is marketable value in heritage but conclude that ownership is not always necessary. Table 1 summarizes in greater detail the two dimensions of the matrix—one along an axis from intrinsic to associational, and the other along an axis from moneterized to non-moneterized. Figure 1 describes these dimensions as the four categories of populist, essentialist, privatist, and entrepreneurialist.

Table 1. Two Dimensions of Value.

	Market indifferent Accepting non-monetary value	Market oriented Seeking monetary value
Associational value	The Populist holds that value resides in a relationship between artifact and beholder and cannot or should not be subjected to market forces.	The Entrepreneurialist agrees with the populist that value is in the eye of the beholder but has no qualms about commercializing the attachments people have for historic artifacts.
Intrinsic value	The Essentialist sees value as inherent in artifacts and not reducible to market valuation. Hence, they often see themselves as the specialists best able to identify value and ascribe appropriate policy action.	For the Privatist , a building, artifact, or site has intrinsic value, but unlike the Essentialist, the privatist believes that the titleholder can and should be able to exploit this value in the marketplace.

Populism

Both homegrown sentiment and the imported debates of Europe contributed to United States preservation thinking and policy (Lowenthal 1996; Lindgren 2004). Patriotism, as expressed through an interest in the founding fathers was an American variant of nationalistic expression so common to Europe (Anderson 1991). This particular form of identity politics instilled a sense of common heritage and common purpose. For example, Murtagh (1997) argues that in the mid- to late nineteenth century, "American preservationists held buildings to be worthy of attention for transcendent rather than intrinsic reasons" (p. 31). He goes on to refer to this brand of zeal as a naïve "chauvinistic fervor." However, in so doing, he suggests that such sentiment is no longer felt.

Eric Hobsbawm (1993) is more pointed in his general critique of the use of heritage.³ "Nationalistic" and "ethnic" are not always the same and have often proved to be in opposition. However, taken together, as applied to the study of heritage, they represent a "populist" dimension. "Populism" as it is used here, has a specific meaning, and its use is meant to encompass two usually distinct phenomena. Peter Burke (1992), a scholar of the history of popular culture, notes that European culture has long dealt with ambiguity in defining "the people." He argues

that two distinct definitions are each historically linked to differing politics. The first appeals to "identities of consensus" and is associated with nationalism. The second appeals to "identities of resistance" and has included both ethnically disenfranchised populations and the working class. Keeping in mind that these two definitions result in different political movements, they are here classified together as "populism," to designate an emphasis on the cultural politics of heritage.

Populism in preservation cuts across conventional ideological lines in a significant manner. On the one hand, from Pamela Ann Cunningham's Mount Vernon Ladies' Society to First Lady Laura Bush's Preserve America initiative, preservation populists attempt to construct "identities of consensus." On the other hand, populism is also about the "identities of resistance" (Hayden 1995; Tunbridge and Ashworth 1996). The Getty Conservation Institute (GCI) argues, "artifacts are not static embodiments of culture, but are rather, a medium through which identity, power, and society are produced and reproduced....Thus the meaning of heritage can no longer be thought of as fixed, as the traditional notions of intrinsic value and authenticity suggest" (Avrami and Mason 2000, 6).

Coming about 130 years after Cunningham's effort, Dolores Hayden's (1995) account of the importance of place in the politics of identity contributes to an understanding of how the physical landscape may

be used in shaping cultural identities opposed to the dominant interpretations of the past. Of the policy and planning scholars reviewed here, she comes closest to articulating a grassroots politics of preservation with her *Power of Place: Urban Landscapes as Public History*. She urges historians and designers to collaborate with residents “to locate where narratives of cultural identity, embedded in the historic urban landscape, can be interpreted to project their largest and most enduring meanings for the city as a whole” (1995, 13).

Diane Barthel (1996) makes a similar case in *Historic Preservation: Collective Memory and Historic Identity*. Describing the social alliance that supported preservation in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, she argues that the main divisions regarding preservation were not a simple distinction between classes. “Instead, interest in preservation was shared by two major status groups. Social elites looked back to the past to legitimate their present power and to maintain it in this new context, while culturally progressive forces, an identifiable status group of artists and intellectuals, saw in preservation an alternative to the human and natural costs of industrialization” (p. 33). Important to Barthel’s argument is the point that while each group’s specific interests were different, both were opposed to “the new industrial bourgeoisie,” a group with economic enterprises that were undermining both the traditional countryside and the established social hierarchy. So, what on the one hand could be seen as a preservationist “taste culture” might be serving different political and ideological purposes.

M. Christine Boyer, first in *Dreaming the Rational City* (1987) and then in *The City of Collective Memory* (1994), is less sanguine about “taste cultures” and more explicitly links the use of heritage to political objectives that are biased in favor not only of a traditional “ruling class,” but also, more interestingly, in support of an emerging professional class that uses science and technical expertise to advance its own interests. This notion sets the tenor for the distinction between the associational perspective of populism and the more object-oriented tendencies of essentialism.

Essentialism

In contrast to populism, essentialism presents an image of heritage as relatively autonomous from the production and reproduction of identity, power, and society. According to Danish philosopher Uffe Juul Jensen’s characterization, for “the essentialists, objects or kinds of objects acquire their identity from their inherent nature” (Jensen 2000, 41). Hence, unlike the populists, who are at least ostensibly open to some kind of democratic sorting of which parts of the accumulated heritage are worth preserving, essentialists are more attentive to defining objective criteria and in advancing preservation and policy processes that are able to differentiate mere sentiment from documented evidence (Stipe 2003). The upshot of this is that professionalism has become more important, at the expense of amateur and popular passions and enthusiasms (Pannekoek 1998). The resulting structure is both largely hierarchical and bureaucratic. The gist of this professionalization (and its limitations) is nicely encapsulated in Jensen’s presentation to a group of scholars assembled by the Getty Conservation Institute (2000). He refers to both the appeal to Ruskin and to positivist science as forms of an essentialism in which value is inherent.⁴ Aware that populist passions could be manipulated so as to become “dangerous ideological tool[s] embedded in myths and grand national narratives” (p. 38), Jensen argues that essentialists have adopted a strategy of limiting and officially recognizing tangible assets. He notes that this “will not work, however, because selection and presentation of artifacts of the past are never neutral” (p. 39).

Historically, Americans have also been ambivalent about extreme populism or extreme essentialism (Holleran 2004; Mason 2004). Not oblivious to either the chauvinistic excesses at home or the often incendiary nationalisms of Europe, nineteenth and early twentieth century American preservationists were quick to search for a less politically volatile basis for their endeavors. Volunteerism provided Americans with the most politically and ideologically agreeable approach; Michael Holleran (1998) cites early twentieth century New England. However, he also recognizes the rise of a kind of essentialism that he refers to as

“purist preservationism” in the work of William Sumner Appleton and the Society for the Preservation of New England Antiquities (SPNEA). Particularity and science were valuable supports for making this distinction. Moreover, the practices that focused attention on the authenticity, integrity, and significance intrinsic and essential to the artifact in question helped make legitimate preservation practice (Fitch 1980).

The federal government became involved⁵ with the passage of the Antiquities Act of 1906, which added scientific value to its definition of benefit, creating a distinction between popular initiatives and governmental actions based on science by way of the construct of what would be called “significance,” a property of artifacts interpreted by experts and professionals (Tainter and Lucas 1983). As the scope of the preservation project became broader than the stewardship of individual monuments, it was increasingly difficult to ensure collective action (Holleran 1998). This resulted in an increasing separation between an object-oriented preservation movement and those whose interests in controlling change were being better served through local land use and zoning restrictions.

Thus, while one can find adequate accounts of the preservation movement in chronicles such as Murtagh (1997), Lee (1992), and others, these often focus on “purist preservationism,” championing historic figures like Appleton and his successors while cursorily praising amateurs like Cunningham and altogether ignoring local land use controls as outside the preservationist’s purview (Holleran 1998). Essentialism, whether in its moralistic or scientific guise, creates a largely self-referential universe, where one must accept its rules and premises (Jensen 2000). However, in a market economy such ethereal concerns are lost; there must be verifiable measures.

Privatism

Robert Stipe (1987), in setting up his argument on how United States federal preservation policy is organized around carrots and sticks, contends that the American system of preservation is more easily understood if one accepts at the outset that the core of the problem “is

simply a matter of economics.” He bluntly declares, “If preservation efforts are to succeed, respect for what is called an owner’s bottom line is of paramount importance” (p. 5); this approach is particular to the United States.

Unlike many other countries, in which land tends to be regarded as a scarce resource to be treated with care and respect, Americans always tended to view real estate as a marketable commodity whose principal purpose is to provide capital gains or income to its temporary owner. This view of land tends to insure that most of our important buildings, and the neighborhoods in which they are located, are lost as the result of two extreme economic situations, each being equally damaging (p. 5).

These two extremes are an overheated market and a stagnant one, the former leading to demolition and land clearance, the latter to neglect and blight. While Stipe doesn’t label his approach as privatism, both the policy and programs he describes are clearly related to how Squires defines this phenomenon. “Concretely, the policies of privatism consist of financial incentives to private economic actors that are intended to reduce factor costs of production and encourage private capital accumulation, thus stimulating investment, ultimately serving private and public interests” (Squires 2002, 242).⁶ Squires following Warner (1987) helps explain how insidious the ideology of privatism is in setting a policy agenda and affords a perspective on how easy it is for local governments and organizations like the National Trust to incorporate “economic” justifications in more and more of their discussions of preservation.

The decisions to use investment tax credits for off-budget economic stimulation through the Tax Reform Act of 1976 and the Economic Recovery Tax Act of 1981 allowed for an expansion of preservation activity by the late 1970s. Cumulative statistics compiled by the National Park Service reveal that beginning with the Tax Reform Act of 1976 and continuing with subsequent legislation, by 2006, \$40 billion in economic activity has been leveraged by tax credits on 33,900 approved

projects. In 2006, the federal government afforded tax credits totaling \$817 million on 1,253 newly approved projects with private-sector investments of \$4,080 million (National Park Service 2008). The policy argument, following the logic of privatism, is that this incentive to private developers advances public purpose.

Schuster *et al* (1997), considering the use of policy tools for preservation, make a valuable distinction between direct and indirect incentives. A government grant, as in the case of the federal grant-in-aid program, is a direct incentive, whereas tax incentives, such as deductions, rebates, and credits, are indirect. The authors speculate that beneficiaries may be assumed to prefer indirect incentives for flexibility, whereas government officials may prefer direct grants to ensure administrative control. They also note that direct incentives may go beyond individual property owners, as when the public sector supports the programmatic activities of lower levels of government or non-governmental organizations. The relevance of this distinction became apparent in subsequent preservation policy.

Despite a less generous Tax Reform Act of 1986 and relatively fewer requests for tax credit certification during the 1990s, the National Park Service and State Historic Preservation Office (SHPO) staffs had already become as much reactive tax credit certification agencies as the proactive preservation survey and planning groups they seemed to be striving to become following the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966. While often trained in a tradition of essentialism and still often ideologically committed to this perspective, many preservationists working in government find themselves functionaries within a policy system oriented toward economic objectives.

The theoretical assumptions of welfare economics are used in much work focusing on the impact of preservation. The logic for this approach is set forward in the U.S. Advisory Council on Historic Preservation's report *The Contribution of Historic Preservation to Urban Revitalization* (1979), which argues that there are several types of public benefit, among them: the formation of new businesses, stimulation of private investment, stimulation of tourism, increase in property values, enhancement of quality of life and sense of

community pride, "dilution" of pockets of deterioration and poverty, increase in property and sales tax, and job creation (ACHP 1979).

By and large, economic studies grounded in this tradition have attempted to quantify the public benefit streams resulting from the incentive-based supports of private projects by inventorying spillover benefits to the local economy (Rypkema 1994; Listokin 1997). As such, they support the ideological premises of privatism.

Entrepreneurialism

One interesting development since the passage of the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966 is the growing sentiment among preservationists that not all market benefits accrue to the owners of historic properties. However, it seems these additional benefits are not fully public either. Rather, they are a form of direct economic benefit that can be realized by associating with a popular sentiment and exploiting it economically. In a policy environment where heritage tourism is a growing business sector, preservation "depends on how people combine the traditional economic factors of land, labor, and capital. But it also depends on how they manipulate symbolic languages of exclusion and entitlement" (Zukin 2002, 329). As used here, entrepreneurialism shares many of the characteristics of privatism, with one very significant difference. Entrepreneurialists seek to realize a gain not from direct property ownership but from using peoples' associations to heritage for economic gain.

Although the entrepreneurialist claim appears similar to the argument made by Stipe (1987, section on privatism regarding the "developer's bottom line"), the gist of his remark does not fully capture the economics of exploitation, or rent-capture, without property ownership. Apart from the welfare economics commonly employed by defenders of privatist investment in preservation, concepts borrowed from environmental economics are being used as a means of extending the understanding of welfare economics to account for benefits and costs not fully accounted for in market transactions or explained only as residual spillover benefits.

The Getty Conservation Institute (GCI), a major international non-governmental organization in the preservation field, became interested in the role of economics in thinking about heritage value. Through the Research on the Values of Heritage Project and its conference reports (Mason 1998; Avrami and Mason 2000; Torre 2002) and case studies resulting from this initiative, the GCI provides a valuable resource in understanding current discussions and controversies among preservation leaders. David Throsby, a key participant in the GCI Values project, has attempted to situate the economics of heritage in a wider social and political context through an additional concept, “cultural capital.” He describes such “capital” as “stores of cultural value—that is, as things that have been inherited from the past which are valuable in themselves and which yield value to those who enjoy them in one way or another, both now and in the future”(Throsby 2002, 101). The characterization as *stores*, rather than *flows*, is what is intended here as distinguishing heritage items in a way that Throsby claims may make for an enlightening economic analysis. American preservation practice has become deeply enmeshed in an ideology of privatism, and as a result, the value of heritage resources is often conflated with real estate valuation alone. As increased

demands are being made upon preservation by policy actors interested in tourism and “urban livability,” the language of preservation economics will need to expand.

THE RELATIONSHIPS AMONG THE FOUR CATEGORIES

Figure 2 shows the relationship among the four categories. A more recognizable and typical differentiation might use descriptors such as “economic development,” “old preservation,” “new preservation,” and “heritage industry.”⁷ However, the present schema may help in understanding the conventional descriptors as the products of various tensions and oppositions among preservation professionals (Koziol 2003). The dimensions suggested here, mapped and juxtaposed against the established terminology, frame the argument in a new light. For example, one of the principal tensions of historic preservationists throughout the twentieth century was that between impassioned amateurs and cool professionals (Glass 1980; Hosmer 1981; Chatfield-Taylor 1989). Figure 2 positions this tension as “old preservation” and situates this as a relationship

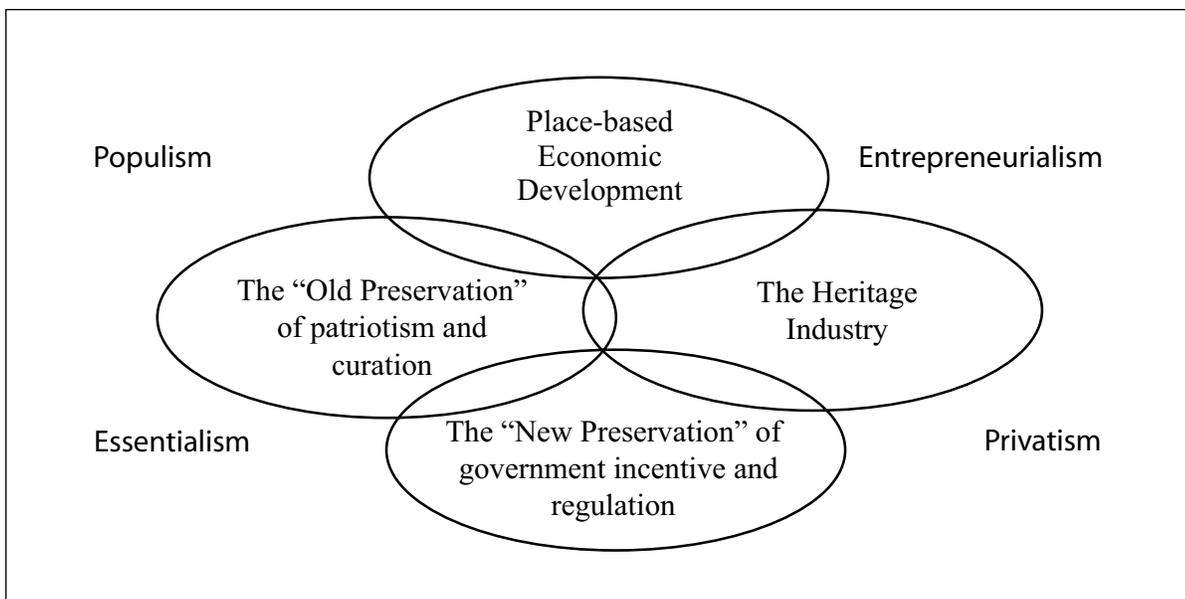


Fig. 2. Relationships between and among types of preservation.

between populists and essentialists. The Federal Tax acts of the 1970s and 1980s introduced privatist economic policy to the world of preservation, and to this day there remains a certain unease between preservationists trained as essentialists working in privatist influenced governmental programs. Recent discussions about the heritage industry may be reframed as an articulation between symbolically-oriented entrepreneurialism and privatism. Similarly, place-based economic development may be explored as the interface between populist community pride and entrepreneurialist local government.

The value of the categories and their relationships may lie in their usefulness in framing questions about relationships. Do privatists always associate with entrepreneurialists because of mutual interest in markets, or are entrepreneurialists as likely to ally themselves with populists? Do essentialists feel threatened by emergent tendencies to explore economic value? Will the essentialist-privatist alliance of the “new preservation” continue in the face of both populism and entrepreneurialism? These questions and others should be addressed empirically, relying on a guiding framework such as the proposed mapping.

EXTENDING THE PRESERVATION DISCOURSE MATRIX

While the nineteenth-century rise of professionalism and the curatorial ideal as espoused by Fitch (1980) is clear in the literature, how these beliefs influence both political discussion and policy outcomes is not. Within much of the existing literature specific to historic preservation, internally referential ideology is uncritically accepted as sufficient cause for decision making and policy implementation (Tainter and Lucas 1983). Among those who explicitly identify themselves as preservationists, the tripartite criteria of “context, significance, and integrity”⁸ are often held up as self-evident pillars of meaning and relevance.

Implicitly related to the argument made here, Graham, Ashworth, and Tunbridge (2000; also Tunbridge and Ashworth 1996) note that differing views of preservation contribute to “dissonance.” However, the

breadth of their concerns, which are literally global, and their intellectual grounding in the academic discipline of geography, leave lacunae in their considerations of individual national situations, including the United States, as does their lack of attention to the specific political and policy processes that involve dissonance.

Laurajane Smith (2006) explicitly introduces the concept of discourse into the consideration of heritage but creates what for the most part is a binary relationship between what she refers to as the Authorized Heritage Discourse (AHD) and all others. Her focus is on a single dominant discourse that she contends is inadequate in its representation of alternative perspectives (e.g., indigenous, working class). The implication is that there is a homogenous dominator, a perspective questioned by this paper’s PDM.

Finally, despite this apparent critical and reflective turn among a few preservation academics and an evolving scholarly exchange, many preservation policymakers and practitioners continue to be dependent upon accepted definitions, existing programs, and conventional approaches. The Preservation Discourse Matrix is intended specifically to engage academics and to apply to the analysis of actual preservation planning. At present, the PDM is a heuristic device, in need of further empirical investigation and refinement. However, by using this map (referenced to some of the literature) as a starting point, it is possible to more closely relate the concerns of preservationists to broader discussions in the humanities and the social sciences and to benefit from those discourses. Furthermore, this mapping (PDM) may be useful to practice in a pragmatic and applied tradition.

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ENDNOTES

1. The term “populist” is used here following Burke (1992), who defines “popular” to include both dominant ideologies, for example, patriotic and nationalist tendencies, and identities of resistance (e.g., class, gender, race, etc.).
2. Evidence of this dimension is less frequently discussed in the scholarly literature and is more apparent in informal professional forums, such as conferences of practitioners, “list serves,” and various grey literature reports.
3. “As poppies are the raw material of heroin addiction, history is the raw material for nationalistic or ethnic or fundamentalist ideologies. Heritage is an essential, perhaps the essential, element in these ideologies” (Hobsbawm 1993, 62).
4. “In the Ruskinian tradition – which is still alive – the particularity and value of an object inhere in the material used by the craftsman” (Jensen 2000, 43).
5. In 1889, the U.S. Congress made its first expenditure of public money for preservation, \$2,000 to protect the Casa Grande ruin in Arizona from “treasure-hunters.” In 1896, the U.S. Supreme Court ruled that an 1888 statute permitting condemnation of property for public use could be used for the purpose of preserving historic sites, but only if they were of value to the whole nation.
6. For example, the National Trust for Historic Preservation’s “economic turn” has principally taken the form of real-estate economics, as embodied in Donovan Rypkema’s Trust publication *The Economics of Historic Preservation: A Community Leader’s Guide* (1998). The Trust accepts federal preservation policy, which has developed a clear distinction between resources on public lands and those in private hands, thus ideologically reinforcing a form of privatism.
7. For example, preservation in the United States before 1966 was largely a discussion between “patriots” and an emerging class of “professionals.” The “new preservation,” brought about by the 1966 National Historic Preservation Act, can be seen as an alliance and tension between curatorial professionals and participants in a market-oriented rehabilitation industry (Glass 1980; Murtagh 1997)
8. Historic or prehistoric context, significance, and integrity are discussed further in the National Park Service’s National Register bulletins, particularly numbers 15, 16, and 39.

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Preserving Tangible Cultural Assets: A Framework for a New Dialog in Preservation

This paper reports on the emergence of a new type of historic preservation—the preservation of sites with cultural significance. The term cultural significance requires some definition. Almost all historic sites and buildings can be considered cultural. The Burra Charter defines cultural significance as having “aesthetic, historic, scientific, and social” aspects (Australia ICOMOS, 12). Using a narrower definition, this paper is concerned with those buildings or sites important for their association with ethnic cultures, marginalized peoples, or mainstream culture heretofore considered undistinguished, which are not generally preservable using current laws and methodology. The purpose of this paper is to begin a dialog around the questions of if and how these sites may be preserved. Some of New York City’s “places of significance” highlight the problem and serve as a case study.

The concept of wicked problems, which describes problems not susceptible to solution by ordinary methods, is described. A study of a related wicked problem—the development of both a consensus and a methodology for preserving intangible cultural heritage internationally through UNESCO—suggests that the framework may work equally well for preserving tangible cultural assets.

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Historic Preservation Ideology: A Critical Mapping of Contemporary Heritage Policy Discourse

Historic preservation practitioners differ about definitions of the field. Often, those who have attempted to understand historic preservation focused on one particular definition and argued that it is more central than others. However, based on empirical evidence more fully developed elsewhere, there are discernible lines of discourse between and among the different points of view.

The resulting patterns of meaning and discursive frames are critical to understanding the practice of historic preservation. These discursive frames are mapped along two dimensions, which are developed and juxtaposed to provide a heuristic to help critically frame the ongoing professional discourse on preservation: first, whether a building, an artifact, or site is more important for reasons intrinsic to that thing or because of the associational values brought to it by those who are doing the valuation; second, how “market ideology” has affected a debate that in the past frequently ignored both the political and economic context of practice.

This mapping resulted in a Preservation Discourse Matrix (PDM), where the two dimensions (or two axes) are analyzed as four categories: identity-based, curatorial, symbolic, and property-oriented. Moreover, this matrix illustrates the relationships among these categories. In turn, the mapping is intended to contribute to future practice by providing a better understanding of interests and meaning in historic preservation.

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