

- identification, definition and clarification of the different values that make heritage significant for today's society;
- examination of the mechanisms and processes that affect these values; and
- elaboration and implementation of the policies, programmes and actions that we need to undertake to preserve, enhance and recover heritage values to make them relevant for present and future generations (Medina-González, 2009).

ICCROM SCD 2006 not only provided essential information about value-laden conservation approaches, but it also deepened my understanding regarding the importance and the difficulties of stating the significance of a site, object or collection. Furthermore, many of the course's visiting scholars shared their expertise on value-laden conservation initiatives, in which the participation of different professional and social agents was of special relevance. This anthropological perspective regarding heritage conservation expanded my own perspectives on how conservation practice in Mexico should evolve, particularly in an archaeological context related to indigenous communities. In addition, the course taught me the importance of incorporating risk evaluation, preventive conservation and dissemination into integrated conservation projects. It also provided insight into the close relationship between strategic thinking and decision-making in heritage conservation practice.

In spite of the fact that conservation is very much about making decisions, heritage professionals have hitherto paid rather limited attention to the issue of decision-making. One of the most relevant innovations of ICCROM SCD 2006 was its systematic, informed and critical analysis of all the decision-making processes that are invariably involved in the identification, valuation, study, preservation and intervention of cultural heritage. This approach actually responded to my own longstanding concerns regarding the role of the professional conservator, and his/her professional identity in today's multidisciplinary environment (Medina-González & Villegas Yduñate, 2006). Indeed, ICCROM SCD 2006 provided comprehensive psychological and sociological foundations for understanding the complex variables that are at stake when we make decisions. Some lectures, for instance, examined how explicit and implicit information substantiates and influences heritage/conservation phenomenology. In this respect, it is worth pointing out that recent literature (Caple, 2000; Varoli-Piazza, 2007a, 2007b, 2007c) suggests that the practice of conservators is very much defined by decision-making stages. Taking this argument into consideration, I have further proposed that planning, executing and supervising conservation initiatives greatly depend on the conservator's 'ability' to make well-informed, coherent and consistent decisions – a skill that is acquired through experience and training (Medina-González, 2011).

Theoretical thinking about the decision-making process is scarce in the conservation field. Therefore, one of the major strengths of