

Panel title: Heritagization: The Complexity of the Heritage Inscription

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Abstract:

UNESCO's Conventions and national laws inscribe heritage elements on natural features and products of human effort, both tangible and intangible. Heritage designations have been actively pursued as national projects and by regional, ethnic, and other communities within nation states. In addition to safeguarding and protecting heritage, the inscription is usually regarded as advantaging to the custodial community, but heritage designations sometimes produce unforeseen tension and sometimes result in damage to or distortion of the intended object of preservation, radically changing a cultural practice or transforming a sacred site into a crowded tourist attraction. The process of heritagization, which assumes the participation of several different stakeholders - state, community, organizations, and individuals—and the consequences of international conventions and laws may marginalize some stakeholders. At the same time, heritagization may promote the cohesion and empowerment of stakeholder groups as they strategize and promote their own heritage claims. The papers in this session explore the complexity of heritage inscription in Southeast Asia through several carefully-researched case studies of heritagization.

Single session panel