Abstract: Since UNESCO’s inscription of the first World Heritage Sites in Southeast Asia in the early 1990s, heritage tourism has become big business. What trajectories would tourism development follow in Cambodia without Angkor, or in Malaysia without Melaka, or in Thailand without Ayutthaya and Khao Yai? When UNESCO inscribes a heritage site and bestows on it global importance, it usually becomes an immediate tourist attraction and is subject to the pressures of increasing numbers of tourists and the development of the facilities and infrastructures which tourists demand. But what happens to those areas, cultures and communities which are excluded from this privileged status, on the margins of an international heritage site? Do they benefit or suffer economically, culturally and environmentally because of the arbitrary delineation of heritage boundaries? Case-studies are taken from Cambodia, Thailand and Malaysia to explore the dilemmas created by an increasing preoccupation with the internationalization of heritage.

Keywords: UNESCO, world heritage sites, margins, heritage-scapes, non-heritage spaces, Southeast Asia.

Introduction

This paper continues to develop some of the issues which were examined in a comparative study of the processes, negotiations, policy-making, planning and problems involved in the creation, inscription and management of UNESCO World Heritage Sites (WHS) in Southeast Asia (King 2013; 2016a). Some of the specific issues which were addressed were the trans-national and national contexts within which WHS are constructed, developed and operated, including the engagement of international and domestic tourists in the rapidly expanding field of cultural, ecological and heritage tourism, and the encounters between the several stakeholders or actors with interests
and active involvement in these sites defined as of “universal human value”. Most importantly the research considered the local communities which live in and around the sites including their representatives, as well as the tourists and tourist industry agencies, national and provincial/local government institutions and their representatives, international organizations including UNESCO and its partners, non-governmental agencies and civil society organizations, and a range of academic researchers and conservationists. In this regard, our comparative research addressed some of the complex interactions, negotiations, discussions and debates (embracing relations of cooperation, collaboration, complementarity, association, conflict and opposition) between stakeholders and interest groups. This exercise in turn required an investigation of the different perspectives, interpretations, understandings and meanings which are brought to and generated by World Heritage Sites (see, for example, King 2016a; 2016b; 2016c; King and Hitchcock 2014; King and Parnwell 2010; 2011).

However, this research and many of its outcomes in findings and publications focused primarily on the sites themselves, though keeping in mind that they are embedded in a local, national and international social, cultural, economic and political environment. But they are intimately connected to and intertwined with the immediate neighboring populations and territories which are not included within the inscribed heritage sites and buffer zones under UNESCO’s jurisdiction. The interrelationships between heritage sites and non-heritage spaces are also founded on, and maintained and transformed by “mobilities” across artificially constructed boundaries, whether or not tourist visitors realize they are crossing demarcated zones.

In this regard the developing field of study which emphasizes flows of people, capital, goods, ideas, knowledge and images is clearly important in understanding the characteristics, transformations and trajectories of UNESCO WHS (see, for example, Cohen and Cohen 2012; 2015a; 2015b; Urry 2000; 2007). It provides a context for what is happening on the ground; it helps us understand the complexities produced by these flows. Yet the “mobilities” approach does not, to my mind, furnish us with the full range of analytical tools to enable us to engage appropriately with the form and content of interactions generated by movement. I would argue that the additional concept of “encounters” does assist us, in a complementary fashion, to carry forward our understanding of what is happening socially, culturally, economically and
politically in these heritage sites and in neighboring spaces (King 2015). It
does so in close association with other approaches including “performativity”
and “actor-network theory” (Cohen and Cohen 2012a).

Nevertheless, there has been relative scholarly neglect of those populations
and areas which surround or are on the margins of inscribed World Heritage
Sites. Once a site is inscribed by UNESCO and the artificial boundaries are
established, then an opposition between “celebration and indifference” is
established (Esposito 2016). Usually the margins gain economically in that
they serve the needs of tourism in the core heritage site, but they are invariably
subject to a rather different political economy and much less official and legal
protection. For example, they receive financial investment which is often not
subject to the controls exercised in the delimited heritage area. Esposito, in her
detailed study of the relationships in Cambodia between the WHS of Angkor
Archaeological Park and the satellite urban area of Siem Reap, which lies
outside UNESCO’s purview, has formulated the concept of a “non-heritage
space” to capture and analyze the predicament of marginal spaces (2011;
2016). She argues, in the case of Siem Reap, that once a monopoly of heritage
concerns is established by the UNESCO World Heritage Committee in the
form of a WHS, then the policies and plans devoted to protection often prevent
the preservation and conservation of “other forms of legacy” in neighboring
spaces which are, sometimes in a rather ad hoc management fashion, excluded
from this elevated status and “from being recognized as valuable” (2016, p.
10; and see 2011, p. 243-281; 2014). The meanings, knowledge and aesthetics
which might be applied to social and cultural dimensions of a non-heritage
space are at best devalued or at worst ignored. What also happens is that a
different political economy operates in the margins, which is embedded in the
national economy focused on economic growth in which tourism increasingly
plays an important part and in which patronage, political influence, corruption,
speculative investments, unplanned projects and the intervention of external
actors thrive. Some of the ideas and processes involved in this demarcation
of space and its consequences coincide with the early work of Henri Lefebvre
(see, for example, 1991).

It should be noted here that though there are elements of the concept of “non-
heritage space” which relate to Marc Augé’s concept of “non-place” in that
both are products of globalization and post-modernity, they are nonetheless
different in several respects (Augé 1992). Subsequently, Norman Backhaus
used the notion of “non-place” in his analysis of tourism in the Malaysian WHS of Gunung Mulu in Sarawak and Mount Kinabalu in Sabah (2003). Backhaus conceives of these UNESCO natural sites as places of “globalized understanding”, drawing parallels between Malaysian jungles and Augé’s “globalized” airports, international hotels, theme parks and shopping malls. The purpose of his excursion into non-places is to argue for the importance of clear and readable signs to which a globalized, transitory audience will respond in that “Tourists are semioticians, looking for relevant signs in their destinations” (2003, p. 154). In other words, sites are constructed; they do not speak for themselves. But these globalized non-places are clearly not marginalized spaces, and though “non-heritage spaces”, in Esposito’s terms, contain globalized elements they are rendered as a non-place because they are situated as a marginal location in opposition to a site which is considered to be core or central to the heritage enterprise.

Heritage-scape

Another concept which is relevant to the discussion here is that of “heritage-scape”. It was popularized, using Southeast Asian case material, by, among others, Michael A. Di Giovane in his book *The Heritage-scape: UNESCO, World Heritage and Tourism* (2009, and see 2011; and see Ong 2010; Garden 2006). Arising from the work of Arjun Appadurai on globalization and the cultural economy (1996) and expressed in Appadurai’s concept of “-scapes” – “ethnoscapes”, “mediascapes”, “technoscapes”, “finanscapes” and “ideoscapes” – Di Giovane examines fields of heritage and tourism production in UNESCO’s global mission. In developing his concept of “heritage-scape” he also refers to Pierre Bourdieu’s work on the “field of cultural production” which locates culture within the social conditions of its production, construction and consumption (1993).

As Ong indicates, in a review of *The Heritage-scape*, Di Giovane’s focuses on UNESCO’s role in a “global reordering and placement process aimed at creating a peaceful and transnational cultural utopia” (2010, p. 245). In a subsequent paper, Di Giovane reinforces this dimension of UNESCO’s mission in arguing that its world heritage programme is designed to produce “peace in the minds of men” (2011, p. 57-58). What UNESCO does is generate a “standardized diversity” engaging in a “meta-narrative of ‘unity in diversity’” (2011, p. 57-59). This globalized process is one which appropriates...
and demarcates heritage sites; evaluates, compares and discriminates between them according to globally agreed criteria; and then inscribes and orders them (selecting some, rejecting others, and returning some submissions for revision and resubmission) on a nation-state-based list according to the global categorization of “cultural”, “natural” or “mixed sites”. Sites submitted for consideration are then evaluated using the Operational Guidelines for the Implementation of the World Heritage Convention, using ten criteria (whc.unesco.org/en/criteria). UNESCO keeps an inscribed list of WHS, as well as approved Tentative Lists indicating which sites a given state-party might submit for nomination within the next five to ten years; the Tentative Lists should be reviewed at least every ten years; there is also a World Heritage in Danger list and a “delisted” category (King 2016b; UNESCO 2017d; UNESCO 2017e). Where feasible UNESCO will also not only institute zoning and boundary-making, but, in some cases, introduces buffer zones as “a kind of aura” to provide an additional means of protection for the main site; corresponding ideas about protective spaces can be found in discourses about “greenbelts”, “border zones” and “demilitarized zones” (Turner 2009, p. 15-18). UNESCO’s agent for making decisions on its behalf is the World Heritage Committee which meets annually; its main administrative agency is the World Heritage Centre located in Paris.

The “imaginary”, “mass-mediated” character of these global sites detached to some extent from local and national geographical and socio-cultural contexts is conceptualized by Di Giovane as a “heritage-scape”; he also uses Benedict Anderson’s widely quoted work on “imagined communities” (1991/2006; Di Giovane 2011, p. 57-59). Appadurai’s concept of “-scape” then seems to offer some positive prospects in analyzing a “global cultural form” (Di Giovane 2009, p. 29). The concept has caught on and generated subsequent work (see for example, Gillot et al. 2013; Winter 2015). This body of work focuses on such processes as “heritage-making” and heritage as contingent rather than as a fixed entity or “legacy” passed on unchanging from one generation to another (Hitchcock and King 2003); In this connection, Esposito refers to the processes of “l’invention” and “la fabrication” in her detailed study of Siem-Reap-Angkor (2011). In this approach, heritage and heritage sites are conceptualized as a focus of negotiation, contention, conflict, accommodation and marginalization (and see Logan 2012; Daly and Winter 2012). These processes have subsequently been captured in the concepts of “patrimonialization” and “heritagization”, comprising historically situated projects and procedures with the purpose of
capturing something that is defined as a legacy from the past but transforming places, sites, locations and the peoples associated with them into “heritage” (Gillot et al. 2013). Unfortunately, the complex interactions between the stakeholders in designated places or sites which are perceived as something to be valued and protected, and in the margins of these sites, are rarely studied in detail (Ong 2010).

Several issues have been raised in relation to the utility of the concept of “heritage-scapes”. Di Giovane highlights their character as “amorphous” and “imagined”, related obviously to the fluid and ever-changing nature of heritage sites and his proposal that as “heritage-scapes” they are in some sense unbounded and undefinable; they are in other words extensive and expansive, like a “landscape” from which the notion of other “-scapes” is derived. For me, this is a problem. A landscape is a material phenomenon which is unbounded; it is a terrain, an environment, a selected piece of scenery or countryside, a topography, a visible and physical presentation of aesthetically arresting features, often, but not necessarily, in part or wholly constructed through human intervention.

Moreover “heritage-scapes” are, in my view, rather different from UNESCO heritage sites which are demarcated, controlled, monitored and subject to globally negotiated procedures, rules and regulations; they are not “-scapes” in the sense that I understand them. They are bounded units which contain, rather like a social laboratory, interactions or encounters between stakeholders and interest groups, and they provide an arena which captures flows within their boundaries and generates flows beyond them. In his earlier seminal volume, Di Giovane did not investigate these encounters in detail.

The framework of “heritage-scape” does draw our attention to the different ways in which a site is perceived. In other words, in John Urry’s terms, it is a focus of different ways of gazing, though it is also subject to other sensory engagements (1990). But Di Giovane does not really take forward his percipient commentary on the spatially defined dimensions of sites in that the discourses which surround them, including those which tourists construct, are “built around arbitrary yet clearly demarcated boundaries that gain precision when defined in binary opposition to each other” (2011, p. 61-62). In my view, the notion of “-scape” which conjures images of magnitude, expanse, timelessness and imagination, and is concerned with UNESCO’s mission of
world peace through a globalized cultural convention between nation-states, does not capture this precisely demarcated, globally determined definition of heritage. These delimited heritage and tourist spaces, and the implications of spatial zoning, boundary-setting and territorial segregation need to be investigated.

**UNESCO in Southeast Asia**

In a comparative study undertaken in 2014-2015 on World Heritage Sites in Southeast Asia in which I was involved, there were 36 sites as of July 2014: the first ASEAN country to sign the World Heritage Convention was the Philippines in 1985 and the last and remaining member of ASEAN to ratify the Convention was Singapore in 2012 (King 2016b, p. 28-29). Now all 10 ASEAN nation-states in the region are signatories. The number of WHS in each country as of July 2017 was 38; they are presented sequentially according to the year of ratification of the Convention as follows: Philippines (1985), 6 [3 cultural, 3 natural]; Lao PDR (1987), 2 [2 cultural]; Thailand (1987), 5 [3 cultural, 2 natural]; Vietnam (1987), 8 [5 cultural, 2 natural, 1 mixed]; Malaysia, 4 [2 cultural, 2 natural]; Indonesia (1989), 8 [4 cultural, 4 natural]; Cambodia (1991), 3 [3 cultural]; Myanmar (1994), 1 [1 cultural]; Brunei Darussalam (2011), 0; Singapore (2012), 1 [1 cultural]; of the 38 sites, 24 are cultural, 13 natural, and 1 mixed (UNESCO 2017b).

The major changes since 2014 have been the updating and revision of the Tentative Lists for several Southeast Asian countries. As of July 2014, there were 92 sites on the Tentative Lists; there are now 80. Several countries have undertaken a review since 2014 (UNESCO 2017c). The major changes have taken place in the Philippines and Indonesia with a significant reduction in both their lists.

1. The Philippines had 29 sites; it now has 19 from its review submitted in 2015; the last review was concluded in 2009; in 2015 it deleted 11 sites, and added three new ones, the Mayon Volcano Natural Park, Mt. Mantalingan Protected Landscape, and the Turtle Islands Wildlife Sanctuary.

2. The Lao PDR added a further site, the Hin Nam No Natural Protected Area, making three sites, following its review concluded in 2016, updated from 1992.
(3) Thailand submitted a review in 2015 from its last revision in 2012. From its four sites in 2012 it added one more: The Monuments, Sites and Landscapes of Chiang Mai, Capital of Lanna; and in a recent review of 2017 it added the further site of Phra That Phanom, and its related historic buildings and associated landscape.

(4) Vietnam concluded its recent reviews in 2014 and then 2017 and added three more properties to bring its total to seven sites: The Complex of Yen Tu Monuments and Landscape, Ha Long Bay-Cat Ba Archipelago, and Ba Be-Na Hang Natural Heritage Landscape.

(5) Malaysia concluded its latest review in 2017 from its last review in 2014; it added three sites: FRIM Selangor Forest Park, Gombak Selangor Quartz Ridge and Royal Belum State Park, bringing its total to four.

(6) Indonesia, in its reviews of 2015 and then 2017 from its last review of 2009, reduced its list from 26 to 19 properties. It deleted 14 properties, re-designated one property, and added a further six in 2015: Semarang Old Town, the Old Town of Jakarta, the Traditional Settlement at Nagari Sijunjung, Sangkulirang-Mangkalihat: Prehistoric Rock Art Area, The Historic and Marine Landscape of the Banda Islands, and Suwahlunto Old Coal Mining Town, and a further one in 2017, the Historical Centre of Yogyakarta.

(7) Cambodia has not reviewed its list since 1 September 1992; eight properties remain on its list.

(8) Myanmar last reviewed its list in 2014 and it has 14 sites listed which remain unchanged.

(9) Brunei Darussalam has no properties listed.

(10) Singapore reviewed its list in 2012; its sole tentative property, the Botanic Gardens, was subsequently submitted for inscription, and was inscribed in 2015.

World Heritage Sites are an obvious tourist attraction; a few rough-and-ready statistics give us some sense of their importance. For example, without the 12th-century Hindu-Buddhist temple complexes of Angkor, the political and religious capital of the ancient Khmer empire, the tourism industry in Cambodia would be a modest one. Most international tourists entering Cambodia do so to visit Angkor and its gateway Siem Reap. It was stated by the management of the site that there were some 2.1 million visitors to Angkor Archaeological Park in 2015 (Phnom Penh Post 2015); in 2016 growth in visitor numbers
increased modestly to 2.21 million (ASEAN travel 2017; TAT 2016a). The pressures on the areas neighboring the temples and the Angkor Archaeological Park itself have increased dramatically during the past decade.

The monumental remains of the Historic City of Ayutthaya, the Theravada Buddhist WHS complex in Thailand, founded in the mid-14\textsuperscript{th} century and sacked by the Burmese in 1767, has annually received visitor numbers of around five million. In 2011 the visitor numbers were recorded at just under 4.9 million (Knoena 2011); within a relatively short distance from central Bangkok, these figures are obviously significant underestimates; Ayutthaya receives a large number of domestic visitors, particularly at weekends, who are excursionists or day-trippers and their numbers are not easily recorded. Khao Yai National Park, like Ayutthaya, receives a high level of domestic visitors, given the close proximity to Bangkok. In 2007 the numbers reached 1.8 million, and these were overwhelmingly domestic tourists (TAT 2016b). A figure for 2010 suggests 750,000 visitors (Phumsathan and Nepal 2012, p. 94), but again this appears to be a very significant underestimate. Anecdotal evidence suggests that the Park may receive 30,000 to 50,000 visitors during weekends, which suggests a high annual figure of well over 2 million.

The pressures generated by tourism are also increasingly being felt in the WHS of Luang Prabang in Lao PDR. In 2016, visitor numbers are said to have reached 600,000, and again this is probably an underestimate, given the difficulties of recording visitors to an urban site Laotian Times (2016). Numbers are expected to rise to at least 700,000 by 2018.

Another monumental site in Southeast Asia, the 9\textsuperscript{th}-century Mahayana Buddhist temple complex of Borobudur in Magelang, Central Java, attracted almost four million visitors in 2016, and the management has recently imposed restrictions on the number of visitors allowed onto the monuments (these are restricted to tours comprising 15 visitors at any one time) (ASEAN travel 2016).

The most recent addition to the Southeast Asian WHS inventory, the Botanic Gardens in Singapore, has a similar level of interest in that in 2016 the site attracted 4.5 million people. It is in an important sense a national monument.
Probably one of the most visited WHS in Southeast Asia is Melaka in Peninsular Malaysia which along with George Town in Penang comprises the Historic Cities of the Straits of Malacca. In 2015, Melaka received 15.7 million visitors; this applied to the state of Melaka which is much more extensive than the historic core of the World Heritage Site (Tourism Melaka 2016). The proximity of Melaka just off the main highway between Kuala Lumpur and Singapore gives the WHS easy access for visitors, and the state of Melaka provides a wide range of tourism services not only for heritage tourists but for pleasure-seekers (The Star 2014).

**Country Case-studies: Cambodia (Angkor), Thailand (Ayutthaya and Khao Yai) and Malaysia (Melaka)**

Each of the country case-studies demonstrates the complex interactions between global and local processes, but in all cases the state and its agencies intervene to ensure that the country’s WHS are pressed into the service of the nation-state. In Cambodia, the political elite has relied heavily on tourism to develop the economy and construct a national identity from the destruction of war and the trauma of the Khmer Rouge’s “killing fields”; the international tourist market focuses overwhelmingly on the Angkor Archaeological Park (Winter 2003; 2007; 2008). The resurrected ruins of this ancient temple complex have been deployed to embody and express the origins of Cambodian nationalism.

Cambodia is a particularly interesting case because the country has only relatively recently opened its doors to cultural globalism, although it should be noted that the French, in their establishment of a Cambodian protectorate from the late nineteenth century, imbued its people with an identity which was expressed through an all-pervasive Angkorian legacy (Winter and Ollier 2006, p. 5; Winter 2007, p. 47; 2008). For the French, captivated by the splendors of Angkor, the rediscovered and restored sacred ruins were used as the symbol of the unity of its newly-created protectorate. As Winter has argued, tourism plays a crucial role not only in contributing to Cambodia’s socio-economic development, but is also being brought into service “in defining and valuing what is Cambodian [identity] in a post-conflict era” (2007, p. 37). In this project of national renewal, Angkor is presented to the outside world as that which defines Cambodia; it serves as the outstanding, indeed over-represented symbol of the country’s glorious and ancient past.
Not unexpectedly, in a country in which a once-powerful state experienced decline and left its capital to the jungle from the mid-fifteenth century, and which after political independence practically destroyed itself in military conflict and then practiced genocide on sections of its population, a major theme adopted by the Cambodian government is one of national, ethnic and cultural revival and restoration. The reconstruction of Cambodian identity in which memories of Angkor and the celebration of its greatest material achievements play a central role has been a major project of the political elite, and one which both serves to develop but also draws strength from international tourism (Winter 2007). In post-conflict Cambodia in the early 1990s, Angkor, inscribed in 1992 and then immediately put on the World Heritage in Danger list until it was removed in 2004, was recognized as a few of the treasures left to Cambodians and the rest of the world. Among the numerous temples and monuments, the importance of Angkor was increasingly emphasized but it has been a focus for diverse, often conflicting values and perceptions (Winter 2003). This grand temple complex with Angkor Wat at its center is one of the most sacred and unifying sites for Cambodians; it is also a highly-valued tourism asset; it serves as an educational and cultural center for Buddhists and local populations, where the ashes of their ancestors remain, local guardian spirits reside, and important rituals take place.

Moving to Thailand, it demonstrates, most of all out of the three country-based case-studies, the vital importance of the national symbolic dimension and the significance of domestic tourism as against international tourism (King and Parnwell 2010; 2011). In other words, although Thailand (along with Malaysia) has by far the largest international tourism industry in Southeast Asia, domestic interest is crucially important in heritage tourism. Two sites, Ayutthaya, among the first of the Southeast Asian sites to be inscribed in 1991, and Dong Phayayen-Khao Yai Forest Complex (including Khao Yai National Park) inscribed in 2005, are within easy reach of the extended metropolitan area of Bangkok. They are therefore the focus of package tours, overnight stays or weekend visits organized by hotels and tour agencies in Bangkok for international and domestic tourists. They are also favorite destinations for residents of Bangkok and surrounding urban areas for day-trips. Ayutthaya is only one hour’s drive from the capital city and Khao Yai is two hours away by road. Both sites therefore endure the pressures of sustained tourism interest, particularly from domestic tourists.
The heritage sites, including parks like Khao Yai, are arenas of national symbolism, national identity formation and, in the case of the cultural site of Ayutthaya, national religious affirmation and pilgrimage (where they are part of living cultural landscapes). The Tourism Authority of Thailand (TAT) locates its World Heritage Sites in the role that they play in giving expression to the Thai nation and its invented past. We find that the “ancient Thai kingdom reaches back thousands of years” and that these “national treasures” serve as “dignified reminders of a glorious past” (TAT 2008a, p. 5). The roots of the modern Thai nation are traced back some seven hundred years to the foundation of thirteenth-century Sukhothai, also a WHS, and then on to its successor and major international trading capital, Ayutthaya, founded in the mid-fourteenth century and flourishing until 1767 when it was invaded and sacked by the Burmese. Although modernity and globalization are acknowledged, in tourism terms what is emphasized are the essential elements of “Thai-ness” which are continually reinforced in the government tourism promotional literature. The Thai government began to give serious attention to the protection of its cultural heritage and the promotion of cultural tourism from the 1970s, and Khao Yai was established as a national park as long ago as 18 September 1962 (and see Peleggi 2002). Peleggi makes the important point that “urban Thais are keener than foreign tourists in their longing for the quaint or nostalgic aspects of a pre-industrial Thai lifestyle and certainly more receptive than they [sic] to festivals, national celebrations and heritage attractions that exploit the folk patrimony and the repertoire of historical and nationalist symbols” (1996, p. 437). Natural heritage is also given some profile in presenting Thailand as a land of lush tropical vegetation with an exotic, diverse tropical fauna and flora; the country has “more than 60 national parks” (TAT 2008b, p. 4).

In the case of the Federation of Malaysia, in contrast to Cambodia and Thailand, issues of heritage and historical discourse are rendered much more problematical since Malay(si)an independence in 1957 and 1963. The Federation of Malaysia is a radically plural, multicultural nation-state, and the Malay political elite which has directed government policy and ideology for the whole of the post-colonial period has transformed urban and other landscapes in their nation-building policies in support of a Malay-Islamic-dominated vision of the country. Yet the primary urban areas which are the focus of these policies usually give visual, demographic and economic prominence to the established Chinese and, to a lesser extent, Indian communities. Urban areas therefore express and embody sub-national ethnic identities whilst the
government seeks to transform them for national ideological purposes and economic development. In the case of Melaka (and in a somewhat different way its twin city of George Town, Penang) inscribed in 2008, this has generated an ongoing tension between, on the one hand, the need to protect and conserve a historically and culturally important site and, on the other, to promote national political and economic imperatives.

The importance of Melaka as a UNESCO WHS is the fact that the success of the nomination had been achieved by including the ancient fifteenth-century Malay-Muslim trading emporium along with the British colonial creation of George Town, Penang as “historic cities” of the Straits of Malacca. Moreover, the ways in which Melaka has been developed and expressed in national terms tells us much about its place in Malaysia’s post-colonial history in contrast to George Town. Above all, Melaka demonstrates the tensions between nation-building in a multicultural state and the need to modernize and promote economic growth through tourism.

The focus of much of the recent research on Melaka has been on the central position which it occupies, as a former global port, in the history and the cultural symbolism of the Muslim-Malays in maritime Southeast Asia (Sandhu and Wheatley 1983, p. 566-567). The strategic and commercial importance of the Straits of Malacca had generated in Melaka a center of “cultural transformation, economic power and political leadership” (Cartier 2001, p. 193). Melaka’s economy came to be founded on “the centralized collection and exchange of goods produced elsewhere” from Asia, the Middle East, the Americas and Europe (Cho and Ward 1983, p. 624).

Nevertheless, given the increasing domestic interest in these global heritage sites, visitor numbers are generating problems of sustaining the heritage infrastructure. In the case of Melaka, the site is being used, in part at least, to legitimize a Malay-Muslim political agenda and reclaim the role of the Malays and the sultanate system in Malaysian history within a post-independence ideology of multiculturalism. Different parts of the Melaka WHS express different segments of Malaysia’s plural society – in this case primarily Malay-Muslim and hybrid (peranakan) Chinese communities. The state of Melaka is also subject to the government policy of promoting economic growth through tourism and the development of the service sector (hotels, leisure and retirement accommodation, retail outlets, and offices).
**Zoning and marginalization**

Let us now turn to the consequences of the demarcation and zoning of UNESCO WHS. Research was undertaken periodically on the sites in Thailand and Malaysia from 2009 through to 2014, with updates from 2014 to 2016; the Cambodian material has been accessed primarily through the work of Adèle Esposito and Tim Winter extending back to the mid-2000s.

**Angkor and Siem Reap**

The concept of a non-heritage space has crucial importance in the case of Angkor Archaeological Park and the “gateway” to Angkor of Siem Reap. Esposito, in her doctoral thesis (2011), and in her recent manuscript (2016) has explored the consequences for areas conjoining global heritage sites. What is of special interest are the effects of zoning and boundary-making, creating different priorities, conceptions and institutions in the management of space. In the case of Angkor, the *Zoning and Environmental Management Master Plan* (ZEMP) instituted in 1993 has had a profound influence on issues of heritage, tourism development, and planning.

![Figure 1. Angkor as a tourist site. Source: the author.](image)
The plan served to separate the monumental and archaeological reserves subject to international heritage requirements, from such spaces as Siem Reap which were not. The consequences were inevitable, given the global attention which Angkor attracted. Rapid hotel development and the expansion of tourism facilities in Siem Reap resulted in uncontrolled urban growth; there was very little control of investment and construction, fuelled by the activities of real estate developers and speculators (with finance coming not only from within Cambodia, but also Thailand, China, Russia, Japan, Malaysia, Singapore, Taiwan, the USA and Europe). From 12 hotels in 1993 there were 137 by 2008, and more have been built since (Esposito 2011, p. 143-147, 161-167; 2014; 2016). Siem Reap also attracted large numbers of migrant workers without the requisite accommodation and other facilities to receive them. Esposito documents these changes in her chapters “Projeter une ville touristique: cadre normative et planification” (2011, p. 66-142) and “Processus de fabrication urbaine: la ville de Siem Reap, terrain de jeu des acteurs privés” (2011, p. 143-219).

One of Esposito’s major contributions is her analysis of the architectural expressions and physical transformations of Siem Reap during the past two decades (2016). In addition, there is a sustained engagement with the relationships between what are termed “representations” and the material expressions of these in specific tourist-focused projects (hotels, bungalows, guest-houses, theme parks and museums). On the one hand, the imaginative and discursive processes which have given expression and significance to
Angkor are addressed, and, on the other, the tourist-related actions, events and projects which have materialized in neighboring Siem Reap. However, these distinctions and oppositions are not hermetically sealed and the Cambodian conceptualization of heritage and the past has been influenced both by the foreign-dominated discourse, driven by UNESCO, focused on heritage conservation and the protection of built forms, as well as the Western touristic-oriented discourse of the “grand hotel” and the “bungalow”. Furthermore, the artificial UNESCO-imposed distinction between the ancient site of Angkor and the town of Siem Reap is one that was created during the French protectorate period from 1925, when the principle of zoning was introduced to separate “historic monuments” considered to be authentic and in need of protection from those areas considered to be marginal to those concerns and ripe for development.

The principle of zoning resurfaced from 1992 with UNESCO inscription. This in turn has created all kinds of ambiguities in what precisely we understand by both the concept of Angkor and how Siem Reap has been conceived, planned and transformed. The non-heritage space of Siem Reap has become a central focus for an increasing number of consulting firms since the 1990s, often financed by international aid: providing ideas, models, and patterns for developing a sustainable tourism hub close to a global heritage site (Esposito 2014, p. 143-154). As “cultural brokers” the firms have provided and disseminated planning tools, including the mechanisms of zoning and inventories. However, engagements and negotiations between different public and private stakeholder interests, and particularly between political elites and property developers, who exercise considerable power and leverage, have led to the undermining of most of these urban plans. In Cambodia, those responsible for the development of Siem Reap as a non-heritage space have managed to by-pass the laws and regulations of the state and the requirements of international organizations. Broadly speaking, Angkor has been subject to protected tourism, with some reservations, and Siem Reap exposed to uncontrolled tourism.

*Ayutthaya (Phra Nakhon Si Ayutthaya)*

Ayutthaya was the successor to Sukhothai as the capital of Thailand from 1350 to 1767 when it was laid to siege and destroyed by the Burmese. Once referred to as the “Venice of the East”, surrounded and interpenetrated by rivers, canals, and moats, it was subject to seasonal flooding; it was established at the
confluence of three rivers (the Chao Phraya, Pa Sak and Lopburi) and a canal was cut across a meander of the Chao Phraya to create a fortified artificial island. Canals were also laid out across the island for ease of communication, along which monasteries, temples, stupas (*chedi*), palaces and other royal dwellings as well as commercial and residential areas were established (TAT 2008a, p. 18-19).

Following defeat at the hands of the Burmese, the Thai forces fled and regrouped under Taksin, a former Ayutthayan military commander, who reunited the kingdom in 1776 at Thonburi, further south on the western bank of the Chao Phraya. Following a palace coup by a group of senior officials, Taksin was replaced by another military leader, Chakri (Rama I) who came to the throne in 1782 and established his new capital opposite Thonburi on the east bank at Bangkok and founded the Chakri dynasty (TAT 2000; 2007; Keyes 1987, p. 39-40). Ayutthaya was in effect abandoned until the mid-nineteenth century, and the city wall and some of the temples were demolished by the Thais because of the need for construction materials for the new capital during the reigns of the first three Chakri monarchs (Fine Arts Department [FAD] 1996, p. 33). Left abandoned, the temples, halls, walls and Buddha images were also the target of looters. But many of the stupas and parts of the walls of monasteries and other buildings survived. Subsequently new monasteries were founded there, particularly during the period of restoration and patronage under King Mongkut (Rama IV) and King Chulalongkorn (Rama V) from the mid-nineteenth century, and are the focus of ritual and monastic life today. It was King Chulalongkorn who declared Ayutthaya a nationally protected site, and surveys, excavations and restoration work were commissioned from the second half of the nineteenth century. The Chakri kings wished to establish a direct connection and lineage between their new capital at Bangkok and its predecessor, Ayutthaya. Even from 1976 the Fine Arts Department had drawn a boundary around the most important historic areas to be protected and had commenced the Ayutthaya Historical Park project in 1982 with the development of a *Master Plan* in 1987 (FAD 1996, p. 36).

However, zoning and boundary-marking have been especially difficult in Ayutthaya because of the way in which urban development has encroached on the site. It was especially problematic to establish a buffer zone between the historic core of Ayutthaya and the surrounding urban areas in that, even in the
The inscription of the World Heritage Site in 1991 gave protection to the major monumental remains in the western part of the island, which could be more easily segregated and demarcated, but not in the eastern districts where there are monumental remains but where there had been considerable urban growth. Even so, there had to be some relocation of residential communities and commercial and industrial activities from 1991 considered not in keeping with the historic site, as well as improvement of infrastructure and landscaping.

One possible solution to continued urban encroachment, still in process of discussion in UNESCO, is to extend the boundaries of the protected site to the whole island, but there remains the problem of ensuring that the resident populations can continue to pursue their livelihoods, which under UNESCO regulations will place considerable constraints on them, with the possibility of demolishing some buildings and relocating some residents (UNESCO 2017f). Issues of flooding and uncontrolled urban development in the eastern parts of the island have also posed major problems for UNESCO, and recent concerns have been expressed in the international press, under such headings as “Urban sprawl threatens Thailand’s Ayutthaya world heritage site” (Reuters 2016). The uncontrolled character of urban expansion has undoubtedly contributed to the problems of serious flooding of the heritage site which reached unprecedented levels in 2011 under such further dramatic headings as “Thailand floods: Ancient capital Ayutthaya is ‘swamped’” (BBC 2011). There were also serious floods in 1995.

There is also a range of tourism-related activities which have developed in and around Ayutthaya: from elephant and ox-drawn cart rides, elephant camps, snake shows, annual Buddhist festivals, arts and crafts fairs, handicraft centers, shopping for souvenirs, river cruises, homestays and bicycle tours. Tourism-related urban development on the margins of the historic site has invoked protest from conservationist groups about inappropriate buildings, including hotels and leisure facilities, near to the ancient sites and the encouragement given to mass tourism by both government agencies and private tourism operators (Peleggi 1996, p. 438). These pose major problems for conservation in ensuring that the intervening and neighboring landscapes are appropriate for a global heritage site.
Government funds were released in 1994 to support the management programme, although the level of financial provision fell short of what was specified in the plan of the Department of Fine Arts, and the need to address the impact of urban encroachment, uncontrolled local stall-owners and traders operating within the park precincts, and very importantly the increasing tourism traffic and pressure of visitor numbers. Research undertaken in 2006-2007 on local perceptions of the impacts of tourism development in Ayutthaya, though generally positive, had already indicated the negative environmental effects of tourism (volume of traffic, pollution, exhaust fumes, vibrations caused by heavy and fast-moving traffic, parking problems and road safety) (Ongkhluap 2012, p. 31-55). Control of the site and the marginalization of surrounding areas in heritage terms continue to present problems for Ayutthaya.

**Khao Yai National Park**

Khao Yai (Big Mountain) was Thailand’s first national park, designated in September 1962 (and declared an ASEAN Heritage Park in 1984, and inscribed by UNESCO in 2005 as the Dong Phayayen-Khao Yai Forest Complex), located to the south of the provincial center of Nakhon Ratchasima and to the north-east of Bangkok. Khao Yai National Park (KYNP) is part of a much larger forest complex spread along the rugged Dong Phayayen upland range and covers an area of just over 6,150 square kilometers. This forest complex is spread between three geographical regions: Prachin Buri in the east, Nakhon Nayok and Sara Buri in the central region and Nakhon Ratchasima, Buri Ram and Sra Kaew in the north-east region (TAT 2008a, p. 26-27).

Its protected status has acted to prevent some encroachment into the foothill areas bordering the Park. But now along the main approach roads and around the perimeter there has been extensive, mainly Bangkok-generated leisure developments including resort hotel complexes, spa resorts, guest houses and lodges, golf courses, restaurants and steakhouses, souvenir shops and retail outlets, horse-riding farms and vineyards with organized wine-tasting tours. Often those visitors staying in the surrounding hotels and guesthouses will spend a half-day or one day in the Park. Khao Yai has therefore become a magnet for a range of leisure developments catering mainly to the weekend and vacation needs of Bangkok’s burgeoning middle class. But it also serves as a convenient weekend spot for residents of nearby provincial settlements.
like Nakhon Ratchasima and Sara Buri; and the cursory engagement of the new Thai urban classes with nature (Cohen 2009; King and Parnwell 2010; 2011).

There has been a massive expansion of these leisure facilities during the past 25 years; new resort hotels are constantly under construction along the perimeter of the Park. Some of the resorts have also created a Western, or specifically a Mediterranean flavor in their resorts; within close proximity the traveler can move from Italianesque golf resorts like Toscana, to the retail outlet of Primo Posto, reminiscent of a Hollywood film-set staged in the hills around Florence, to the vineyard of Granmonte and its upmarket Vincotto restaurant, to the French-designed hotel and restaurant of Chateau de Khaoyai. The approaches to the Park therefore suggest something entirely out-of-keeping with a protected tropical forest complex, and again some of the surrounding areas of the Park, important ecologically, have succumbed to uncontrolled leisure developments.

The crucial issue is whether the burgeoning tourism, urban consumption-related developments and local farming and other activities around the demarcated perimeter of Khao Yai are creating unmanageable pressures for heritage conservation. The Park was initially zoned for “intensive use”, “outdoor recreation”, “special use”, “forest regeneration”, “strict nature reserves” and “primitive areas”. But there have been problems which are difficult to manage. First, before designation as a National Park, and for some time afterwards, local people have made use of the forest and the resources it provides. In the early 1990s, for example, some 195 families held disputed tenure certificates to land inside Khao Yai, and there are still several villages inside the Park’s borders; local people argue they have rights of access to the forest and that the resources there are being protected for the benefit of the leisured urban middle classes at a cost to their livelihoods (Wong 2008, p. 201). It is also very difficult to keep people out of the Park in that they enter at will across unguarded borders: “Khao Yai is like an island, surrounded by a sea of villages”; there are 104 villages around the Park (Tassanee 2006, p. 1). A major road also runs through the middle of the Park (Wong 2008, p. 202). In such a large natural site, close to major urban conurbations, subject to the expansion of leisure activities at its margins and a place which local farming communities still enter, use, and in some cases, where they reside, then the efforts of UNESCO in boundary-making are compromised.
Melaka as one of the Historic Cities of the Straits of Malacca

Melaka and George Town, Penang, were inscribed as a combined WHS in 2008. Melaka’s historic core originally comprised two areas totaling 38.62 hectares with 930 buildings: (1) St Paul’s Hill Civic Zone (almost entirely given over to heritage tourism and administration, including government buildings, museums, churches, an urban square and the remains of the European fortress); and (2) the Residential and Commercial areas on the opposite side of the Melaka River with more than 600 shop-houses (Malaysian State Party 2008, p. 5). The heritage zone is mainly a Chinese residential area, with smaller numbers of Malay and Indian residents (Japanese International Cooperation Agency [JICA] 2002, p. 5). UNESCO also designated a further 134.03 hectares with 948 buildings as a surrounding buffer zone (Malaysian State Party 2008, p. 5, 13). Subsequently, the WHS boundaries were modified and then confirmed by the UNESCO World Heritage Committee in 2011. There was an obvious concern about the level of protection in a site under intense tourist pressure: the core zone was therefore extended to 45.3 hectares and the buffer zone to 242.8 hectares (BBC 2011).

However, the main buildings in the protected zone, clustered around the river and on and around St Paul’s Hill are primarily colonial in origin. The most iconic buildings are Dutch: the Stadthuys, the official residence of Dutch governors, built between 1641 and 1660; the British inherited this building and continued to use it as government offices. The Dutch-Reformed Christ Church, consecrated in 1753, was re-consecrated as an Anglican Church in 1838 (King 2016c, p. 145). Equally iconic is the surviving Portuguese gate (Porta de Santiago) of the fortress A’ Famosa, built from September 1511 and completed in January 1512. Following the British arrival in 1795, the Portuguese-Dutch fortifications were to be demolished in 1807 under a plan to deter any future European settlement, particularly a hostile takeover by Britain’s enemies, though the gate was saved with the intervention of Thomas Stamford Raffles. Remains of St Paul’s Church survive, originally the Portuguese Church of Our Lady of Annunciation; it was subsequently incorporated into the Dutch fortress and became a Dutch burial ground. It was renamed St Paul’s by the Dutch but gradually fell into disuse after the Dutch built Christ Church and then subsequently abandoned it during British rule (King 2016c, p. 145-146). Other buildings within the WHS are located in the residential and commercial district, primarily Chinese, comprising one- and two-story, high
density terraced shop-houses of food outlets and markets, *kopi-tiams* (coffee shops), antique, souvenir and tourist shops, art galleries, artisan dwellings for goldsmiths, ironsmiths, tinsmiths, apothecaries, woodcarvers, coffin-makers, pottery-makers, and printers, shops selling Chinese ritual, funerary and prayer items, as well as legal firms, interspersed with ancestral temples, club-houses, and clan and guild buildings (Cartier 2001, p. 207).

Cartier suggests that the mobile, cosmopolitan population of Melaka has been progressively re-ordered since Malay(s)ian independence, which she sees as a major problem in presenting Melaka to a wider audience: its roots in a dynamic, open, hybrid trading enterprise have been replaced by a narrower, inward-looking nationalist agenda of ethnic communalism (2001, p. 194). The complexities surrounding the ways in which Melaka has been “imaged” derive from its singular position in Malay-Muslim history and its role in the construction of the identity of a Malay-dominated post-colonial state (Worden 2010, p. 132). The political elite chose Malay-Muslim-centered symbols, including the institution of the sultanate, which harked back to an “imagined tradition” and an unbroken connection with the past. Here Melaka played a vital role as the source and legitimacy of the newly-created Malaysian state. Yet there were two contradictions in this post-independence project. First, there were no physical remains left of the Malay-Muslim sultanate in Melaka’s historic core; they had been destroyed by the Portuguese. Secondly, the need to promote economic growth within the context of the New Economic Policy (NEP) so that it could be harnessed to a redistribution strategy in favor of the indigenous population required state-directed economic development. The tension and contradiction between heritage and modernization has been a persistent theme in the recent history of Melaka. Wacker, in his critical review, points to “a focus on short-term projects instead of long-term conservation efforts” (2007, p. 23), and even in the protected area and the buffer zone there have been “building approvals for inappropriate buildings, in terms of form and scale” (UNESCO 2017g).

In the wider state of Melaka, major tourism projects were established at the margins of the historic core from the early 1980s. The WHS is now surrounded by high-rise developments. Beyond the core heritage area and the buffer zone there has been an explosion of mass tourism-related construction and development. Even with the increasing shift of the Malaysian government to the support of heritage tourism, it has not precluded a strong commitment
to large-scale leisure-related projects. Outside the historic core the focus on megadevelopment and the uncontrolled way in which projects are agreed and supported have resulted in the destruction of Melaka’s harbor and waterfront – its historic raison-d’être – to be replaced by a large swathe of reclaimed land at Mahkota Melaka and Taman Melaka Raya on which have been constructed high-rise buildings, hotels, offices, apartments, shopping malls, and a sea world amusement park. The reclamation work continues and has had serious consequences for the hybrid Portuguese community and its former sea-based livelihood in that its coastal location has been transformed into an inland one. Cartier argues that parts of Melaka’s heritage have been destroyed and urban development has compromised any attempt “to advance an authentic tourism imaging strategy based on the historic port” (2001, p. 201). She concludes by drawing attention to the crucial role that tourism plays “in the larger development process” and in this environment “the conservation status of historic landscapes limits their development potential and, in the era of megadevelopment projects, marginalizes their significance in the state’s tourism profile” (1998, p. 171). The tension between conservation and development is acute. The policy to bring commercial, retail and leisure activities onto reclaimed land makes sense, but it has separated the sea and harbor from the historic core of Melaka.

**Concluding remarks**

World Heritage Sites in Southeast Asia, and especially those easily accessible from international airports, major highways and large urban conurbations are an obvious attraction. But to protect them and to accommodate the regulations which UNESCO imposes, its policies are based on zoning and boundary-setting. This territorialization then deflects the effects of mass tourism to the margins of these sites where different rules and administrations apply. There is no easy answer to this dilemma. Heritage tourism will always be in tension with the demands of economic growth and the reliance on tourism development and revenue. UNESCO, though it can apply sanctions and constrain some of the excesses of national government ideological and economic ambitions, is but one player and stakeholder in a complex and ever-changing game of cultural politics. However, out of the concerns expressed in this paper, it is proposed that much more attention and research are required to shift the focus to the problematical margins of global heritage and away from the core areas. The margins are where the extreme pressures of tourism development are to
be found and where what heritage they possess, whether cultural or natural, is undervalued, unprotected and either already lost or in grave danger of disappearing.

Notes

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