



Regina F. Bendix, Aditya Eggert, and Arnika Peselmann,  
eds., *Heritage Regimes and the State*

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*HERITAGE REGIMES AND THE STATE* is a significant, timely volume that features a who's who of contemporary heritage studies. A comparative exploration of the intersection between the international heritage regime and processes of state implementation, it is a product of two European heritage conferences held in 2011, the first at the University of Göttingen, Germany, by the interdisciplinary research group The Constitution of Cultural Property, and the second at the Villa Vigoni in Loveno di Menaggio, Italy, by the French-German-Italian research group, Institutions, Territoires et Communautés: Perspectives sur le Patrimoine Culturel Immatériel Translocal (Institutions, Territories and Communities: Perspectives on Translocal Intangible Cultural Heritage).

The volume sets out to explore the impact of international heritage conventions, particularly the UNESCO World Heritage Convention (1972) and UNESCO Intangible Cultural Heritage (ICH) Convention (2003), upon existing local, regional, and state cultural conservation efforts. The first comparative study of its kind, *Heritage Regimes and the State* presents seventeen case studies across four regions, namely Europe (France, Germany, Italy, Ireland, Lithuania, Russia, Spain, Switzerland), Africa (Mali, Mauritania, Morocco), Asia (China, Uzbekistan), and the Caribbean (Barbados, Cuba). Emphasizing the meta-cultural operations of heritage construction and translation—how cultural monuments, landscapes, or intangible cultural practices are transformed into authorized heritage—it illuminates the diverse ways in which international governance interfaces with state governance, with an international heritage regime serving to create a number of unequal heritage regimes worldwide.

In exploring these issues, authors were asked to consider two sets of questions. The first set of questions concerned heritage nomination processes, selection procedures (including potential exclusion), the actors and institutions allowed to participate in the process, and other elements of heritage governance. The second set of questions concerned the implementation of a successful UNESCO heritage nomination, the actors and institutions given permission to participate in the process, issues surrounding user rights, and the effect of heritage-making on both selected cultural forms and their constituent communities. While each author chose to incorporate the questions most relevant for their particular ethnographic study, the resulting diversity of case studies and reflections well complement one another and provide the reader with crucial insights into the multiple ways in which international heritage policy is being implemented at both state and local levels.

With twenty-three total contributions, evaluating each essay individually is beyond the scope of this review. I will instead focus upon the sections and themes more broadly. In the introductory section, alongside the introductory chapter by the volume's editors that outlines the issues described above, Kuutma's essay further engages the theme of heritage as a process of cultural production through exploring

the relationship between heritage, engineering, and arbitration. Supporting the call for multi-sited ethnographic research of heritage regimes, she stresses the importance of considering not only the negative but positive effects of heritage regime interfaces, those “moments of empowerment, real instances of emergent agency, and situations where local actors partake in grassroots policy-making” (33). The next section, entitled “The Reach of (Post-)Colonial Sentiment and Control,” considers heritage regimes in a number of postcolonial nation-states, addressing issues such as the colonial conceptual legacy within international, state, and local heritage value systems; the relationship between heritage, hegemony, and global justice; and cosmopolitanism, nation branding, cultural resistance, cultural amnesia, and competing agendas in processes of classification and implementation. The section entitled “Layers of Preservation Regimes and State Politics” spans ethnographic contexts across Europe and Uzbekistan while examining UNESCO nomination processes, the dynamics of inclusion and exclusion, the multiple strategies used by actors in competing heritage regimes, the changing relationship between UNESCO, the state, and local stakeholders over time; the cultural practice of state heritage bureaucracies, the impact that relationships between UNESCO personnel and state politicians have upon artisan communities and the items they produce; and the relationship between heritage and human ecology. The following section, “States and their ‘Thing’: Selection Processes, Administrative Structures, and Expert Knowledge,” considers heritage regimes across Europe and China. It addresses issues spanning changes to national heritage policy and practice following ratification of the UNESCO ICH Convention, increased national interest in and control of previously regional cultures, political and bureaucratic mechanisms shaping national ICH programs, the changing role of heritage and tradition within wider sociopolitical spheres, and how UNESCO ICH recognition is changing the relationship between the state and local economies. Finally, the volume’s closing commentaries are made by renowned scholars Donald Brenneis, Rosemary Coombe, and Laurajane Smith, with a final comparative assessment by Chiara De Cesari. These provide a number of insights into the ongoing negotiation processes of heritage regimes themselves, shifting configurations of knowledge and power, the need for an ongoing critical reflection upon the nature of heritage discourses themselves, heritage regimes as emergent regimes of power modeled upon neoliberal governmentality, and the potential impact that academic publications may have on the local cultural understandings within these new regimes.

The single critique I have of the volume is one already acknowledged by the editors in the introduction, namely that the majority of the case studies presented are European. The volume does, however, make an admirable effort to counter the hegemony of Anglophone scholarship by including the work of non-Anglophone scholars, albeit translated into English.

Overall, *Heritage Regimes and the State* represents a major contribution to heritage literature, providing the first in-depth comparative look into the relationship between the international heritage regime and state heritage regimes around the world. It should be of considerable interest to heritage professionals, constituent communities, and scholars across a wide range of fields including anthropology, folklore, archaeology, heritage studies, international studies, and area studies.

Leah Lowthorp  
Harvard University