

IIAS Reports

Heritage Conserved and Contested: Asian and European Perspectives

Report of the first IIAS Summer Programme in Asian Studies 20-25 June 2011, Leiden, the Netherlands

THE SUMMER PROGRAMME in Asian Studies, *Heritage Conserved and Contested: Asian and European Perspectives*, took place in Leiden, the Netherlands, from 20-25 June 2011. Directed by Professor Michael Herzfeld (Harvard University) and Professor Nira Wickramasinghe (Leiden University), the seminar brought together twenty-four doctoral and master's students from fifteen countries across Europe, North America, Asia, and Australia. The aim of the program was to shed light on the various definitions, interests, and practices associated with cultural heritage in Asia and Europe.

The interdisciplinary field of heritage studies has grown remarkably in the past decades, attracting researchers from across the social sciences and humanities. Increasingly governed by state agencies and international organizations, heritage policies and practices retain an explicit socio-political dimension, often placing the field at the cusp of collective values and identity negotiation. Co-director Nira Wickramasinghe, Professor of Modern South Asian Studies, began her introductory lecture by quoting Lowenthal: "Heritage is not an inquiry to the past, but a celebration of it" (*The Heritage Crusade and the Spoils of History*, 1997). Exactly how, why, and by whom heritage is celebrated were just a few of the questions investigated by this year's participants.

Renowned scholars, researchers, institutional leaders, and students considered a broad spectrum of interdisciplinary approaches to heritage studies and practices. Lecture topics ranged from urban heritage and housing politics to international cultural policy and its local application. Excursions to the National Museum of Ethnology (Museum Volkenkunde) and The Netherlands Institute for Heritage (Erfgoed Nederland) provided additional opportunities to explore how case studies and theory may be linked with institutional demands and heritage management practices.

The IIAS summer programme was concluded with a dinner; with IIAS director Philippe Peycam in the forefront and Professor Herzfeld heading up the table and showing his approval.



Thematic undercurrents of the program included state power and the view of heritage as a constructed, socio-political phenomenon. Participants explored how heritage policies are often used to negotiate power relations and legitimize official state narratives. In such contexts, competing narratives and alternative management strategies may be neglected or actively suppressed. "Heritage and corruption are two sides of the same coin," argued co-director Michael Herzfeld, Professor of Anthropology. In many ways, Professor Herzfeld explained, heritage can be seen as "the elevation of the fallacy of misplaced concreteness to the level of official policy." Considering such circumstances, participants agreed that heritage scholarship has a special responsibility to scrutinize political categories, claims of authority, notions of authenticity, and state/organizational methods.

The final two days of the program consisted of an international doctoral conference, where fifteen PhD students from eleven countries had the opportunity to present their work and gain feedback from the directors of the program and their student peers. Topics presented at the conference ranged from minority cultures and authenticity, to post-colonialism, conservation, and the institutionalization of collective memory.

Participants concluded that the concept of cultural heritage has taken on increased political urgency in recent years, as the processes of globalization continue to raise questions about identity, economy, power relations, and collective memory across Asia and Europe. Participants of the summer program *Heritage Conserved and Contested: Asian and European Perspectives*, continue their work and dedication to cultural heritage issues through research and practice.

Next year's Summer Programme in Asian Studies, *World Wide Asia: Asian Flows, Global Impacts*, will take place from 27 August through 1 September 2012 and will be organized in the context of the IIAS research cluster Global Asia.

More information on all the IIAS Summer Programmes can be found at www.summerprogramme.asia
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Institutional Voids and the Governance of Developing Economies

Report of the symposium held on 16 May 2011, Rotterdam, The Netherlands.

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A common problem faced by many developing countries is the presence of institutional voids. While it is an established wisdom that institutions matter in development, most developing economies are characterised by the absence of much-needed institutional arrangements to regulate market exchange, mobilise economic resources, and coordinate social activities. The aim of the symposium was to explore the phenomenon of institutional voids and to locate the actors, source of entrepreneurial agency, organisational principle of firms, nature of government-business relations, structure of social order, and the wider socio-political context that are conducive to new forms of governance that fill those institutional voids.

The presentations covered different regions, perspectives and approaches. The regional aspect included England, China, Indonesia, Brazil, India, Bangladesh and Ghana, providing a wide perspective on institutional issues. Such issues were tackled through a variety of academic lenses, including historical analysis, institutional entrepreneurship, ethnography, political economics, development economics, elite studies, management science and industrial organisation. Strongly driven by empirical evidence, this symposium has resulted in a set of insights and questions for further research.

- Going beyond the state-market dichotomy
- Weak state as a condition for non-state actors to take over institutional functions
- Limitations of formal property rights explanation in economic development; rather emphasis on self-organising systems
- Creation of fully functioning markets, a so-called state in a state, although organisations do not become states but encroach into the realm of the state by providing public services
- States may expropriate successful new institutional practices

- Importance of experimentation for filling institutional voids. The context of experimentation matters a lot. For instance, there may be an extent of planned ambiguity in the context that allows for experimentation
- Political embeddedness may be a strategic choice in the pursuit of filling voids rather than a given, as in the interpretation of Granovetter's social embeddedness
- The importance of time and historical continuity in explaining and filling institutional voids while at the same time practices may be reinvented into different roles, limiting the continuity
- Institutional creation as a variation of practices that opens up new areas of practice. Filling the institutional void involves incremental organisational and institutional change
- Non-state agencies can set up programs to create legitimacy for a new institutional practice (such as venture capital)
- Importance of distinguishing between the accumulation versus distribution side of institutions

Questions for further thought:

- How to measure a need for institutions in a situation of institutional void?

- Why are certain organisations able to develop institutional capabilities?
- How are new institutional practices institutionalised?
- What are the boundaries of a state or market institutional void?
- How to conceptualise institutional voids?
- How to measure and empirically identify an institutional void?

General concluding remarks:

There should be a move away from normative explanations, from functional assumption of institutional supply. Voids should be understood as an absence of certain mechanisms – not necessarily a full vacuum. Institutional voids are a good heuristic to connect different academic fields that discuss similar problems.

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PRCUD Palembang Forum on Climate Change

THE PACIFIC RIM COUNCIL ON URBAN DEVELOPMENT (PRCUD) held its most recent Roundtable Forum in Palembang, Indonesia, 24–27 July, 2011. This was the eleventh such Forum organised by PRCUD since the series was initiated in Kaohsiung, Taiwan, in 1998. PRCUD itself was founded in 1989 in Los Angeles and has evolved over time into a global network of professionals who bring their expertise to bear on a range of urban development challenges throughout the Asia Pacific region.



Crucial support for the event was provided by the European Commission-funded EUforAsia programme under the auspices of the International Institute for Asian Studies. This event was the first collaboration between IIAS and PRCUD as part of the institute's Asian Cities research cluster; other such forums are likely to be organised with the new UKNA programme (Urban Knowledge Network in Asia).

This Palembang Roundtable Forum was tasked with advising Deputy Minister Max Pohan, and others at the National Development Planning Agency (*Bappenas*) of the Republic of Indonesia, on how best to integrate local perspectives into a national strategy to respond to the challenges of Indonesia's urban areas posed by global climate change; the host city Palembang, under the proactive leadership of *Walikota* (Mayor) Eddy Santana, offered itself as a live case study and common reference point.

The event began with a field excursion to sites that brought the forum topics into full relief, including visits to informal settlements along the banks of the majestic Musi River to review efforts by Palembang to provide improved services and basic infrastructure for those who live there. It also included a visit to a middle-class neighbourhood that has won many awards for its innovative approaches to creating a pro-green environment at a neighbourhood scale.

The following two days were devoted to the roundtable sessions, all with a focus on the national strategy on urban climate change: (i) community engagement, (ii) vulnerable populations, (iii) effective local institutions, (iv) the national-local nexus (v) next steps. Simultaneous translation throughout helped foster direct communication between local and international participants.

Several key points emerged. Participants noted that Indonesia has a fairly well established practice of neighbourhood level organisations, and this should be built upon. It is essential to engage the community to help identify the nature of the challenges, but also to enlist them as part of the solution. The forum recommended greater efforts on eliciting a broader awareness of climate change issues at these local levels, with more systematic connectivity between neighbourhood and municipal level organisations.

Vulnerable populations face greater exposure to the adverse impacts of climate change – yet the most effective mechanisms for addressing

these concerns might not always be "climate change" policies per se. For example, broader programmes to reduce income inequality, to improve land use regulations, or to provide essential infrastructure improvements may be the key to effective climate adaptation and/or mitigation. This underlines the importance of having more effective local institutions, and of the need for targeted training and other capacity building efforts.

The forum also highlighted the potential benefits of having a more finely tuned interaction between national and local level government institutions. Leadership at the national level is essential for promoting best practices and for coordinating across jurisdictional boundaries. In the end, however, policies to address urban climate change in Indonesia and elsewhere must be translated to on-the-ground programmes in specific localities.

Go to <http://sites.google.com/site/prcudweb/> for the final PRCUD report, photos, background materials, and additional details about the Palembang Forum.

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