

ABSTRACTS SELECTED

HERITAGE, (POST) CONFLICT AND CONFLICT PREVENTION

Michael Angelo V. LIWANAG

Ethical Guidelines for the Selection of UNESCO World Heritage Sites A Potential Conflict Prevention Measure for the World Heritage Committee.

The criteria and procedure for inscription on the UNESCO World Heritage List may be defined by the 1972 World Heritage Convention and its accompanying manual, the Operational Guidelines for the Implementation of the World Heritage Convention, but both documents still do not offer definitive parameters that the World Heritage Committee can refer to when deciding on nominated sites which are in dispute or under protest. Even in the absence of disputes or protests, neither document has guidelines that aid in averting the initiation or exacerbation of conflicts between local groups or States Parties as a result of approving nominations. As such, decisions by the World Heritage Committee are vulnerable to political pressure, and nominations have become a source of conflict on both local and international levels. This paper takes a critical view of the current approval process and examines cases that have led to conflict. It posits that including guidelines based on ethical principles in the criteria for selecting World Heritage sites can help the World Heritage Committee arrive consistently at decisions that judiciously take into account all parties involved; that using the lens of ethics in assessing both the outstanding universal value of nominated sites as well as possible ramifications of inscription can prevent conflict. This paper also explores how ethical guidelines can potentially balance competing histories asserted by former adversaries concerning sites relevant to past conflicts and human trauma, as well as ensure that the rights of all stakeholders are not sacrificed because of the World Heritage designation.

Michael Angelo LIWANAG, International Christian University

Michael is a 2012 Rotary International Peace Fellow and a 2013 Ethics Fellow for the Future of the Carnegie Council for Ethics in International Affairs. He holds an M.A. in Peace Studies from International Christian University in Tokyo, Japan, and a B.S. in Architecture from the University of the Philippines. His training includes an internship at the UNESCO World Heritage Centre in Paris, as well as certificates from the International Peace and Security Institute Symposium on Conflict Prevention, Resolution and Reconciliation at the Johns Hopkins School of Advanced International Studies in Bologna, and the United Nations Institute for Training and Research Series on the Management and Conservation of World Heritage Sites held in Hiroshima. In 2013, he was a consultant at the UNESCO Silk Roads World Heritage Serial and Transnational Nomination in Central Asia project meeting held in Tashkent, Uzbekistan. Michael's research focus includes ethics, heritage conservation, and conflict resolution.