World Heritage and/as placemaking: Learning from the Honghe Hani Rice Terraces in China

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AUTHOR'S NOTE

The paper is based on the Ph.D. research project of the first author, which is supervised by the second author. The first author designed the research, conducted fieldwork, analyzed data, and drafted the paper. The second author contributed to the conception and design of the research, and co-wrote the paper.

Introduction

1   As a central concept in geography, place is often understood as both material and meaningful (Entrikin, 1991; Relph, 1976), and in a perpetual state of "becoming" (Cresswell, 1996; Massey, 1994; Pred, 1984). Placemaking has been a fashionable word many scholars have used recently to refer to the ongoing multiple meaning-making and material reconfiguration of place (see Courage *et al.*, 2020; Dupre, 2019; Fletchall, 2016; Lew, 2017).

2   At World Heritage sites (WHSs), heritage and tourism can be seen as two intertwined processes of placemaking, creating new meanings and ideas for local places around different yet overlapping identities of WHSs and destinations. The heritage identity emphasizes the cultural significance coined by "Outstanding Universal Value" (WHS, 2019), prioritizes the western values and voice of heritage experts and authorities

(Smith, 2006), and is often based on a selective, partial, and distorting past (Harvey, 2001).

3 In addition, the official heritage discourse often differs from that of tourists or local communities (Dewi *et al.*, 2019; Yan, 2015; Zhu, 2018). In contrast, the destination identity highlights the potential of a place as having touristic value. It is composed of touristic imaginaries and the institutions that proactively guide the institutional practices that shape the destination (Saarinen, 2004).

4 Despite the different orientations of heritage and tourism, the process of heritage-making is closely linked to tourism because of its dual missions: preservation and valorization. A historical view often emphasizes the conflictive and coordinative relations of tourism and heritage (see Ashworth, 2000; Kirshenblatt-Gimblett, 1998), but increasingly, they are seen as going from opposition to coproduction (Gravari-Barbas, Bourdeau *et al.*, 2016). In the 21st century especially, tourism plays such an important role in creating and (re)affirming heritage that it can be seen as a "heritage producing machine" (Gravari-Barbas, 2018, p. 5).

5 Extensive literature discussing the creation of the official heritage narrative focuses on the procedures of nomination, the values the narrative represents, the negotiation among various stakeholders at international and local levels, and non-human factors that influence the nomination process. Di Giovine (2008) proposes Unesco's World Heritage Program as creating a global heritage-scape following a three-step ritual of "isolation-idealization-valorization" (Di Giovine, 2008, p. 198).

6 For Smith (2006), heritage represents a dominant and state-sanctioned way of defining it – "authorized heritage discourse" (AHD). Meskell (2013) observes the lack of indigenous peoples' involvement in heritagemaking and suggests alternative routes for indigenous representation and recognition in the World Heritage system. Labadi (2013) offers a nuanced discussion of the constitutive role of national understandings of a universalist framework, with examples from Asian and Latin American countries.

7 Similar to Labadi's observation, Zhang (2017) and Yan (2015) found that the heritage listing practice in China has resulted in "harmony discourse," tied to the Chinese national Communist Party's guiding ideology, the "harmonious society." The Chinese harmony discourse was often edited to fit in with the AHD in the nomination process (Zhang, 2017). Besides the human elements, Yan (2021) suggests that non-human factors also influence the inclusion and exclusion of places. In summary, in the existing literature, tourism is often seen as a purpose of nomination, little has been discussed to the role tourism plays in creating the official heritage narrative.

8 The co-production of World Heritage and tourism is now an established research area (Gravari-Barbas, Robinson *et al.*, 2016). The current literature addresses the relation as "handled variously between poles where tourism is accorded a role either as a disruptive or destructive phenomenon or as an instrument for development and intercultural engagement" (Gravari-Barbas, Robinson *et al.*, 2016, p. 2). Researchers are interested in the impact of heritage designation on tourism, for example, in Halpenny *et al.* (2016), Shieldhouse (2016), and Yunxiao and Williams (2021); the use or recreation of heritage for touristic consumption, for example, in Halpenny *et al.* (2016), and Sun *et al.* (2017); the change of heritage induced by tourism, for example, in Alobiedat (2018), Prat Forga and Cànoves Valiente (2015), and Ranwa (2021); and transmitting Unesco's meta idea in the heritage and tourism fields of production, as in Di Giovine

(2008). Despite the diversified focus of the heritage-tourism intersection, their co-production is more understood as heritage that is produced for and consumed in touristic value creation.

9   But what about the constitution of tourism in heritage production? Scholars have surely noticed the important role tourism plays before heritage designation. For example, the restoration of Mont Saint-Michel progressively responded to visitors' expectations rather than to historical facts (Lablaude, 1961, cited by Gravari-Barbas, 2018). In the case of the Honghe Hani Rice Terraces (HHRTs), tourism paved the way and put forward the agenda for heritage nomination (Zhou and Zhang, 2019). Its emergence as an international destination encouraged international scholars to visit the site. Nevertheless, the idea that tourism may be a (co-)producer of heritage is still considered as a heretical discourse (Gravari-Barbas, 2018), and literature discussing the touristic constitution of heritage production remains marginal.

10   This study is based on the understanding that heritage and tourism are two intertwined systems of placemaking. By using the HHRTs as a case study, we are interested in the process of creating the official heritage narrative and the role tourism plays in its formation before heritage designation. Our guiding hypothesis is that of a touristic-laden heritage-making process at the HHRTs, where the WHS inscription is based not only on features of their Outstanding Universal Value but on potential touristic qualities. We argue that there is a need to study the heritage-making as well as the placemaking process to understand how tourism and heritage are intertwined and produce places of different qualities. Theoretically, the paper confronts Di Giovine's (2008) ritual process with questions around what constitutes the site's official heritage narrative, and the procedures of creating such narratives. Instead of seeing it as a heritage-scape, we frame it as placemaking. We propose an alternative model to strengthen the dimension of placemaking as producing site-specific narratives, and then use the model to examine this process at the HHRTs and detect the touristic dimension of heritage-making.

The site

11   The HHRTs are in Yuanyang county in the Honghe prefecture in the southern Chinese province of Yunnan (Figure 1). The rice terraces in Yuanyang[1] (Figure 2) are the first to be developed as tourist attractions in Yunnan. Tourism existed long before the area became a World Heritage site, and the earliest record of visits by photographers can be traced back to the 1970s. In 1997, the Yuanyang local government started to develop tourism. In 2008, they tasked the state-owned Shibo Group to develop tourism. With the improvement of infrastructure and services, tourist numbers continued to increase over the years. A dramatic increase in tourists was reported in 2014 after the site was registered as a WHS. The site was reported to have received approximately 440,000 visitors[2] in 2019.

Figure 1. The Honghe Hani Rice Terraces landscape

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Figure 2. The location of the Honghe Hani Rice Terraces
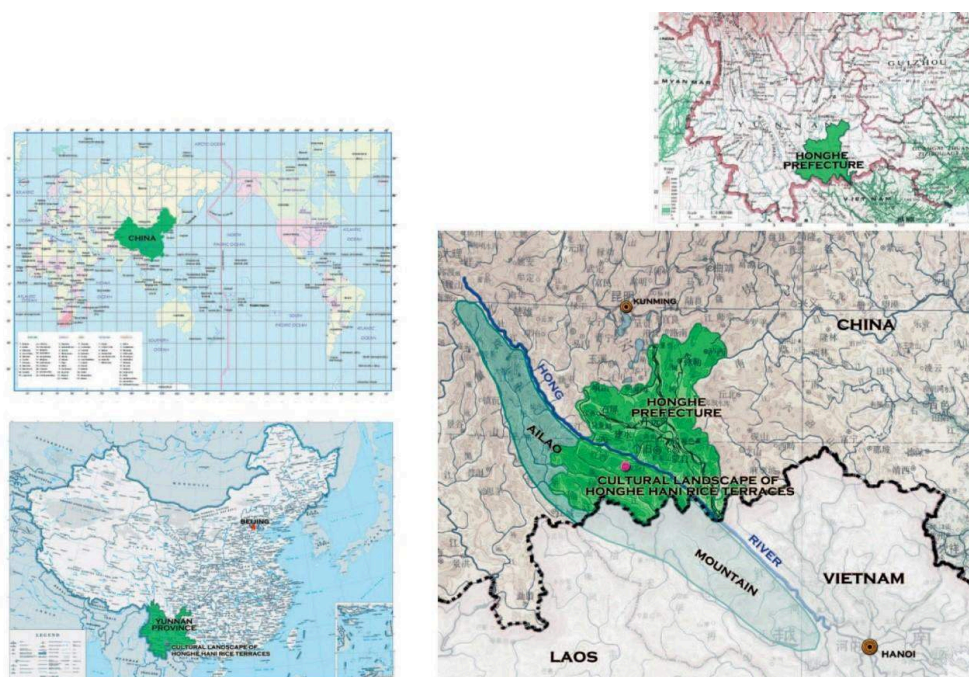
Source: Wang, 2021 based on SACH, 2013

12   The WHS nomination of the HHRTs took 13 years, from 2000 to 2013 (Qu *et al.*, 2018). The nomination was spearheaded by individuals, then managed by an expert group, before being eventually handed over to state authorities (Qu *et al.*, 2018). In 1995, the French anthropologist Jean Eugène suggested nomination during his visit to the site (Zhou and Zhang, 2019). Inspired by that, the local scholar Shi Junchao put forward the nomination proposal to the Yunnan government in 2000 (Zhou and Zhang, 2019). The idea was soon supported by the Honghe prefecture and the Yuanyang county government, with the aim to develop the tourism economy (Qu *et al.*, 2018). Later the

Yuanyang local government formed an expert team and established Terrace Administration[3] to be responsible for the nomination process. As a WHS, the HHRTs' property zone covers a total area of 16,603 ha (Figure 3). It includes one town, two townships, 18 administrative villages, and 82 natural villages[4]. It was inscribed based on the criteria (iii) "To bear a unique or at least exceptional testimony to a cultural tradition or to a civilization which is living or which has disappeared" (Unesco World Heritage Center, n.d.), and (v) "To be an outstanding example of a traditional human settlement, land-use, or sea-use which is representative of a culture (or cultures), or human interaction with the environment especially when it has become vulnerable under the impact of irreversible change" (Unesco World Heritage Center, n.d.). It was also flagged under the category of a "cultural landscape" representing the combined work of humans and nature.

Figure 3. Topographic map showing the boundary of the nominated property
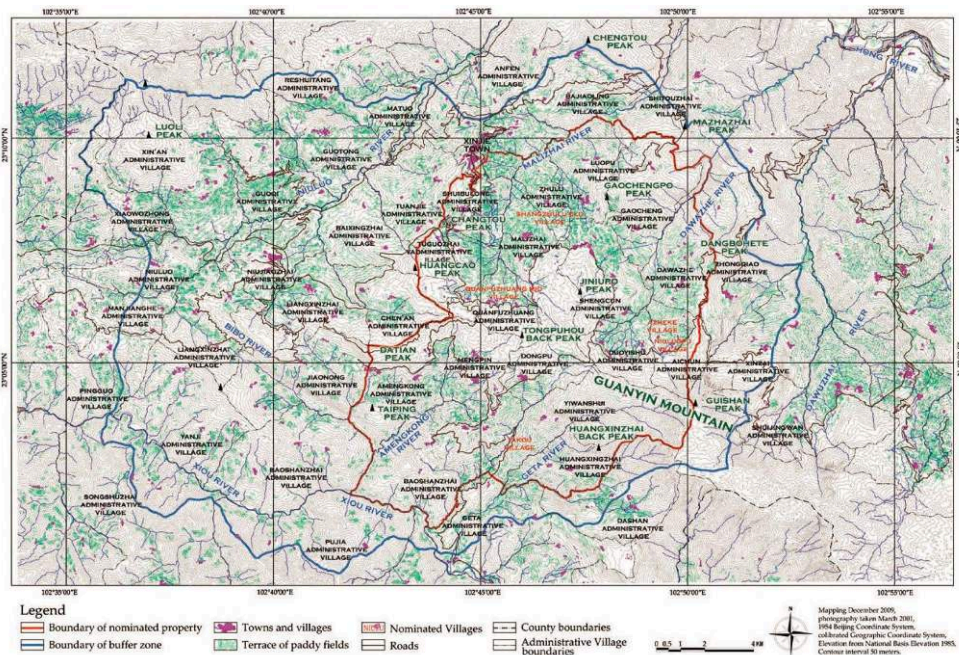
Source: Wang, 2021 based on SACH, 2013

Methodology

13   This study follows a mixed-method approach, with participatory observation, interviews, and discourse analysis. To collect data through personal contact, one of the authors arranged a one-month (from December 2018 to January 2019) internship at the Terrace Administration so that participant observation and interviews could be conducted onsite. The author accessed various documents (e.g., conservation regulations, planning documents, ongoing site management projects, and emails between SACH[5] experts who worked on the nomination file) and observed daily management activities. Such an immersive experience helped the author to gain an understanding of the post-inscription management of the HHRTs and to observe the way official heritage discourse was integrated at the local level. The author also collected information through daily informal conversations with Terrace

Administration staff about the nomination process and post-listing management activities. To obtain in-depth information about the nomination process, the three Terrace Administration sources[6] who participated in the nomination process were interviewed[7]. The questions included how the site was selected and how the boundary was defined. To protect the identity of participants, they have been anonymized in this article.

14 Discourse analysis was used to understand the meanings constructed around the site's heritage identity and how meanings were negotiated among experts and authorities on a textual basis. The main documents examined are the files collected from the official Unesco[8] website (including the nomination dossier, the ICOMOS evaluation, and the member state's response letter) and emails from the SACH expert collected from the Terrace Administration. The documents were scrutinized to find out how the member state used specific written communication skills to promote the site and to respond to the issues raised by Unesco and its advisory bodies.

Theoretical framework

15 With reference to Arjun Appadurai's model of a "*-scape*" (Appadurai, 1996), Di Giovine (2008) proposes that Unesco's World Heritage Program be seen as creating a global heritage-scape. This means a worldwide, imagined network of sites and narratives,

> not simply a mosaic of aggregate individual sites, a network of specially-delineated destinations with their own local social relations, but rather… [as] a unique place with its own social context that is constantly evolving and expanding as Unesco continues its activities, integrating increasingly more places, objects, and now even intangible customs within its nebulous boundaries. (Di Giovine, 2008, p. 41-42)

16 Di Giovine (2008) theorizes the process of heritage based on Turner's (1969) anthropological theories of the ritual process.[9] He constructs a three-step model of "isolation-idealization-valorization" (2008, p. 198) to explain the process that separates places from the region and then their reintegration into the heritage-scape.

17 In the isolation phase, a locality is distinguished from its environment through an institutionalized nomination procedure. The idealization phase is intended to turn a "common place" into an "ideal type" (Di Giovine, 2008, p. 207) that fits Unesco's predetermined typologies. The advisory bodies (ICOMOS, IUCN, and ICCROM[10]) scrutinize the file and evaluate how a site fulfills these criteria. They reformulate the statement and polish the locality into an "ideal type" that adheres to Unesco's larger claims. In the third phase, a locality is valorized when "it is inscribed on the heritage-scape" (Di Giovine, 2008, p. 209). A presentation based on the evaluation by the advisory bodies is made to the Word Heritage Committee, which then decides whether to designate the site or not. Once a locality receives an affirmative vote, it is added to the catalog and becomes part of the heritage-scape.

Figure 4. Di Giovine's model – the process of constructing an official heritage narrative by Unesco's World Heritage Program
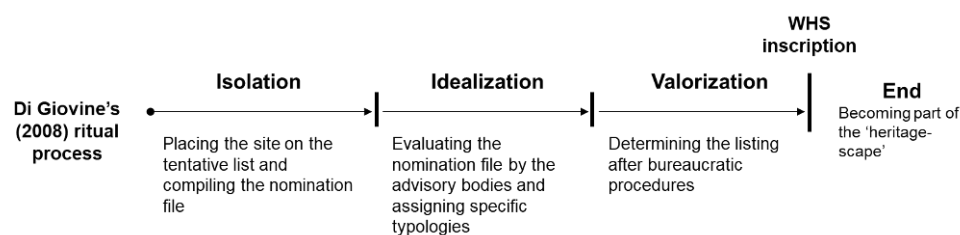
Source: Wang, 2021

18   Di Giovine's (2008) research interest lies in the understanding of a global community creating a heritage-scape, where imagined places have specific symbolic qualities of Outstanding Universal Value. However, instead of seeing heritage-making as producing heritage-scape, we frame it as placemaking – a process of creating an official heritage narrative tailored for each site. We therefore scrutinize the model with two questions: What are the components of a locality's official heritage narrative? Does the heritage-making process at each site end with the designation?

19   To answer the first question, the study refers to Unesco's *Operational Guidelines for the Implementation of the World Heritage Convention* (OG) (WHS, 2019). Linking that to the concept of place, understood here as a material and meaningful location (Entrikin, 1991; Relph, 1976), it is argued that the official heritage narrative can be categorized under two types. The first type of information is descriptive and defines **what** to nominate and defines the material aspect of the nominated place. The "description of the property" (WHS, 2019, p. 99) includes the geographical location, boundaries (the property zone[11]), and any elements that make the property significant. Another type defines **why** a site is qualified and signifies a qualitative change towards WHS identity. This includes the "justification for the inscription", "comparative analysis", and the "proposed statement of Outstanding Universal Value" (WHS, 2019, p. 100). Such narratives explain under which category the site is nominated, what criteria are met, why they are met, why a site has Outstanding Universal Value, and why a site is different from other similar places (through comparative studies). To gain a more qualitative understanding of the official heritage narrative, this study suggests that Di Giovine's (2008) theory can be adapted based on the two types of narratives.

20   For the second question, it is suggested that the construction of an official heritage narrative for each site continues even after designation. For Di Giovine (2008), the concept of ritual is used to explain how the places become part of Unesco's meta-narratives, the heritage-scape. The process is continuing in the sense that more sites are inscribed and become part of the heritage-scape. From the perspective of placemaking, we argue that Unesco continues to exert profound influence, even after inscription. The World Heritage Committee regularly reassesses conditions at the sites and intervenes if problems arise (Unesco World Heritage Centre, 2008).

21   To shift the focus from heritage-scape to the placemaking process, there is a need to revise the model to address two issues: 1) to redefine the phases based on two types of narratives constructed by the heritage movement, referring to the narrative that defines what a place is and why it fits the predetermined criteria; and 2) to recognize

that heritage-making continues after listing, meaning that the certified heritage narrative will be further incorporated at the site for management purposes.

22   In our study, we, therefore, work with a redefined model (Figure 5):

1. In this new model, step one is to locate the idea of heritage. It means locating the idea within certain geographical boundaries and selected elements. As part of the obligation to protect, each World Heritage property needs to be demarcated in space. Besides the boundaries, this phase also marks out the place by describing the material elements that constitute the heritage.

2. Another step is to idealize the heritage narrative. It means recontextualizing the site and formulating narratives regarding *why* a site fulfills Unesco's criteria. Producing this type of narrative involves communication between the member state and Unesco's advisory bodies in the nomination documents. The first two steps can be parallel processes since a site's boundaries, heritage components, and interpretations remain unfixed before inscription[12].

3. The final step is to reproduce the heritage narrative. The established meanings produced by experts and authorities follow a top-down path to be diffused, legitimatized, and enforced at the local level among the public and the local community.

Figure 5. A revised model – the process of creating an official heritage narrative by Unesco's World Heritage Program
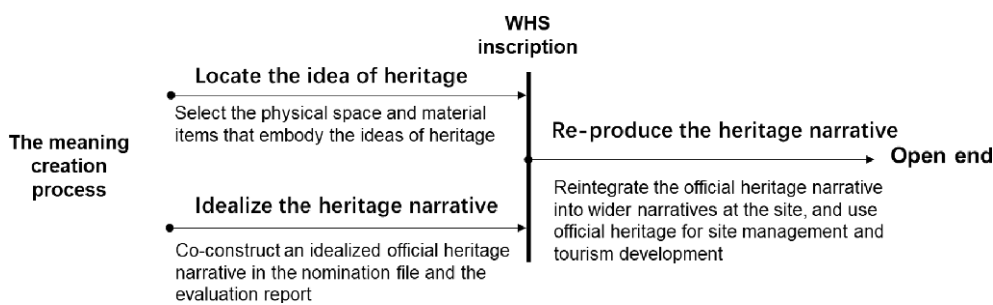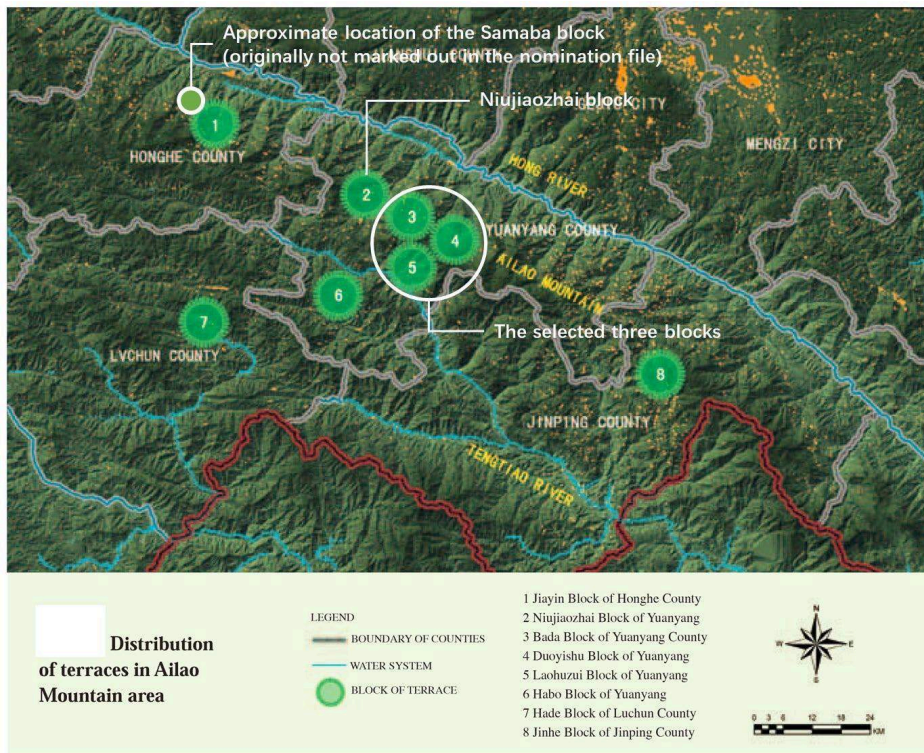

Source: Wang, 2021

The making of the Honghe Hani Rice Terraces (HHRTs)

1. Locate the idea of heritage

Locate rice terraces from the region

Figure 6. The approximate location of the Honghe Hani Rice Terraces and the distribution of terraces in the Ailao Mountain area

Source: Wang, 2021 based on SACH, 2013

23   The first step of locating was to narrow down the scope of nomination in a region where rice terraces have been a common landscape. Rice terraces do not only exist in Yuanyang county but also in the neighboring Luchun, Honghe, and Jinping (Figure 6). However, only three terrace blocks were nominated. As stated in the nomination file, the chosen rice terrace area "encompasses the three largest and most concentrated groups of terraced rice" (SACH, 2013, p. 28). But according to one source from the Terrace Administration who was involved in defining the heritage boundary, there were other concerns:

> At the beginning [the Honghe prefecture government] wanted to include the rice terraces in the surrounding regions... We finally decided to nominate this place because of its tourism potential. The tourism industry has been developing for some years, and the place has been very popular among tourists. It is also easy for tourists to reach compared to rice terraces in other regions... Samaba is also the largest rice terraces block... But it is too far from the other rice terraces block here and it would be hard to make it part of the scenic area...
> The rice terraces in Niujiaozhai were also initially included in the nominated zones... but a new road under construction destroyed a large area of rice terraces... it was not practical and would be too costly to restore those farmlands into water rice terraces...

24   The source's words revealed that tourism was a primary concern. Compared with rice terrace blocks in other regions, the rice terraces of the selected region already had a stable tourism market and could be made into a scenic area. The spatial proximity of the chosen three rice terrace blocks made them ideal for future tourism management. Samaba (Figure 6), was excluded because it is too far away. A second concern was governance. The nomination team chose rice terrace blocks in Yuanyang county as it is

easier to manage. The final factor was the condition of the landscape. The Niujiaozhao rice terrace block (Figure 6) was also spectacular and touristic but was partially damaged and hence was excluded.

Select components and define boundaries

25   After the rice terrace blocks were selected, other elements were selected based on an invented concept of "forest-village-farm-water," created by Shi Junchao, the leader of the nomination team. According to him, the rice terraces should be seen as "human-made wetland" – one among three types of ecological systems (ocean, land, and wetland) (Wang, 2008). He suggested that as a self-evident wetland ecosystem, rice terraces are supported by the forest, the village, and the irrigation system. This conceptualization was quite foreign to the local inhabitants. Apart from the staff from the Terrace Administration, the other locals that the author asked said they had never heard of the concept. The conceptualization however enabled the nomination team to locate other material components aside from the rice terraces. The nomination team registered all the villages that farm the terrace blocks (82 villages) and drew the property boundaries by including their administrative zones.

Select key villages

26   At the HHRTs, the selection also went to another level – the selection of the most representative villages. Only five out of 82 villages were chosen as the nominated ones (Figure 7): Quanfuzhuang middle village, Azheke village, Niuluopu village, Shangzhulu old village, and Yakou village.

Figure 7. Location of selected representative villages
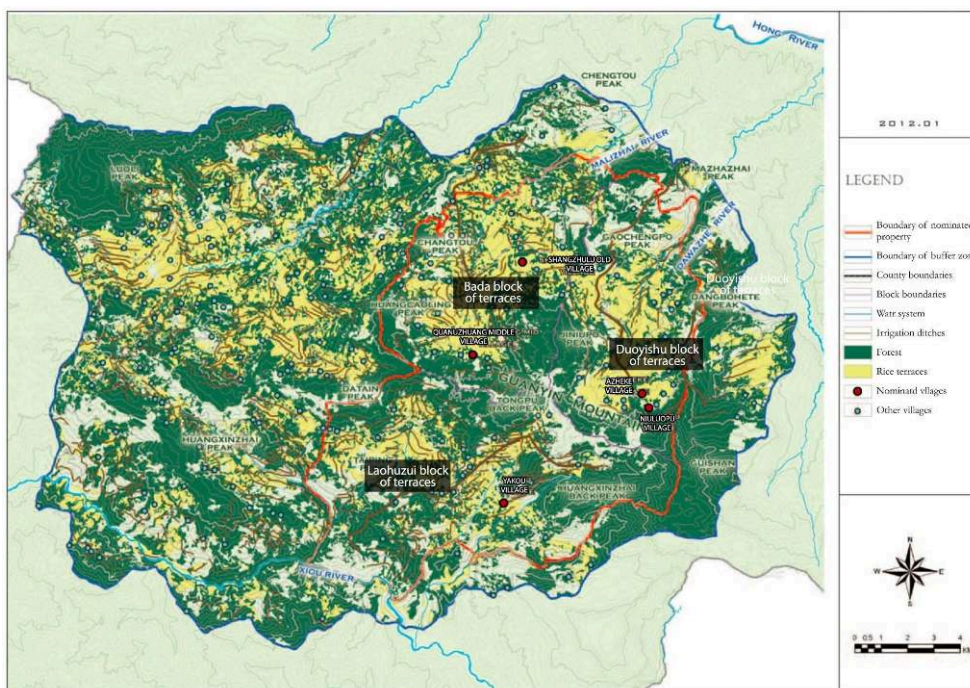
Source: Wang, 2021 based on SACH, 2013

27   According to the nomination file:

> Shangzhulu old village, Azheke village, and Yakou village have the largest number of well-preserved traditional residences in the blocks they belong to. Niuluopu village and Quanfuzhuang mid village represent the active and appropriate protection of traditional villages in competition with modernization to a certain and a consideration (considerable) extent respectively. (SACH, 2013, p. 74)

28   Officially, the five villages were chosen as they represented two typical situations all villages faced. Three villages had the most well-preserved buildings and were, therefore, seen as representative of the traditional type. Two other villages were representative of villages where the traditional space had been adapted to a modern context. However, according to one source, there were other considerations:

> If all the villages were declared as heritage, the follow-up management would be challenging… there are so many of them and it would be impossible for us to preserve all of them… We visited about 46 villages, excluding those in remote places. After the visit, we came with the idea to nominate a few as key villages… the chosen ones were easy to reach, considering that it would be easier for tourists to enter… Yakou and Azheke were small and had a substantial number of traditional dwellings that would be optimal for future tourism development…. Hetao village and Mali village had a lot of traditional residences…the bigger they were, the more difficult it would be for us to manage. (A member of staff from the Terrace Administration)

29   Those words suggested tourism and management capacity is key to selection. Less accessible villages were unlikely to be visited by tourists. Preserving villages was also costly, therefore, it was more economic to choose smaller ones.

2. Idealize heritage narrative

30   In the following section, we shift our focus to how the site was justified as an ideal fit for the predetermined criteria in the nomination file. We pay special attention to the methods and strategies the member state used to convince Unesco and its advisory bodies in this paper-based communication.

Tactful presentation through the nomination file

31   In the nomination file, the HHRTs were presented as a perfect fit in the "cultural landscape" category. The "justification for the inscription" from the nomination file can be summarized in three aspects:

1. **Justification of the criteria:** It argued that the site met five specific cultural criteria – (i), (iii), (iv), (v), and (vi) defined by Unesco.

2. **Statement of integrity and authenticity:** The application suggested that integrity was fulfilled since all four elements of "forests, water, terraces, and houses" were well-preserved.

3. **Comparative analysis:** The application pointed out that the site has unique visual and physical characteristics and intact traditional social-ecological elements compared to similar sites.

32   Interpreting the site as an ideal candidate means recontextualizing the information about the site through clear arguments, by using specific techniques and persuasive writing. The first tactic can be termed as positive interpretation. It involves presenting

the site in a promotional tone, targeting Unesco and its advisory bodies. For example, in describing the site's Outstanding Universal Value, the written text is:

> The Cultural Landscape of Honghe Hani Rice Terraces maintains great vitality nowadays, demonstrating a perfect model of good living created by people's extraordinary creativity, willpower, optimism, and respect for nature under extremely difficult living conditions... Formed in a special, grand mountainous environment, the Cultural Landscape of Honghe Hani Rice Terraces covers a magnificent area of the mountainous region and is just like a boundless, beautiful painting... (SACH, 2013, p. 003)

33 The mountain region was depicted as "grand" and "magnificent," the terraces were described as a "beautiful painting". Hani people were portrayed as creative, optimistic, and tenacious. Words like "great," "extraordinary," were used to accentuate such qualities.

34 The second tactic was to stylize facts. For example, it was stated in the nomination file:

> Local policies require all houses in the nominated property and the buffer zone to be maintained, rebuilt, or newly built in line with the traditional style and appearance, an idea that has been widely accepted and followed by local people. (SACH, 2013, p. 4)

35 Contrarily, the preservation of traditional dwellings was far from widely accepted. According to our source from the Terrace Administration, regulating building construction has been the most difficult work for the Terrace Administration, because "the villagers ignored the regulations" and "they destroyed (the traditional residences) as they wanted, and built (new houses) as they wanted."

36 The third tactic was to refer to the Chinese philosophy of harmony – an ancient concept that has been put forward and interpreted as the nation's vital social ideologies. The harmony conveys the idea of harmony between man and nature, harmony begats new things, and stresses long time interest. The notion of harmony has been widely reflected in policies and practices in the country's ecological progress from central to local governmental level. Like the nomination of Fujian Tulou (see Yan, 2015) and Westlake (see Zhang, 2017), the concept of harmony was also used in the HHRTs' nomination file. To justify that the site met criterion (v) as representing a settlement and being an outstanding example of human-nature interaction, the paragraph started with a quote from a famous philosopher, Zhuangzi[13], "I live in nature, nature and I are one" (SACH, 2013, p. 134).

37 In the following writing, the human-land relation was repeatedly positioned as harmonious:

> The ideal human inhabitation is the harmony and unity between human and nature. (SACH, 2013, p. 134)
> The well-designed terraces and villages are in harmony with local ecological environment which not only has created a healthy and harmonious lifestyle... the Cultural Landscape of Honghe Hani Rice Terraces features a perfect integration of the "forest, water system, village and terrace" four elements, showing a harmonious combination of human and nature. (SACH, 2013, p. 168)

38 Harmony has been the most cherished idea in Chinese culture (Li, 2006). It predates Confucianism and is conceived as a generative, creative process in which diverse elements are orchestrated into harmonious relations and evolve together (Li, 2013). In contemporary China, harmony has been the Communist Party's political guiding ideology. The notion of harmony has been part of the mainstream Han culture, rather

than the Hani minority at the HHRTs. But the concept of harmony was used in the HHRTs to interpret the relation of the Hani people to the environment. In doing so, it remarkably espoused not only the Communist Party's guiding ideology but also Unesco's definition of the cultural landscape – as combined work of human and nature.

39 A further technique was to provide scientific evidence. To justify that the site met criterion (v), the nomination file argued that the site had developed an ecosystem that "protected the ecological and biological diversity in mountainous areas" (SACH, 2013, p. 132). While admitting that "settlement and agricultural production are regarded as destructive factors or huge threats to the ecosystem of mountainous areas" (SACH, 2013, p. 132), the nomination file argued that the site had avoided the disadvantage of mono-cropping by intercropping rice and other crops.

Diplomatic response to the evaluation report

40 ICOMOS is the main organization that evaluated the file. According to the evaluation report, three of the five criteria were refuted, and two criteria – (iii) and (v) – were considered as having been met. As one criterion was sufficient, ICOMOS made the recommendation for inscription. A review of the letter suggested that two were pertinent to the site's official heritage narrative.

41 The first issue concerns *what* is nominated. ICOMOS suggested that the site's authenticity was deemed "vulnerable" (ICOMOS, 2012, p. 79). Considering that the loss of traditional dwellings in any village can endanger the site's authenticity, it suggested including all villages instead of only nominating five "representative villages". Another issue concerns *why* a site fits the criteria. ICOMOS criticized the fact that the comparative analysis was "limited mainly to the physical manifestation of the terraces" (ICOMOS, 2012, p. 78), and mentioned that a comparative study should focus on social, economic, and cultural aspects.

42 A review of the emails[14] among SACH experts showed that the member state showed compliance as a tactic. To deal with the first request – to include all the villages –, the expert suggested:

> ... never distinguish the five or eight villages from the majority of other villages in the heritage area... we should present them as equally important. Besides, it is advisable to submit more materials (regarding the villages' condition)... the more detailed the better, even if it is just a detailed table to show (that we have done the work). Once all the materials are in place, we can reconsider if there are texts that would lead them to revisit the site. If so, we can simply delete those texts...
> ... be alert that the letter from ICOMOS has many substantive requirements and requires a lot of data, facts, and work on planning and policy...
> ... all the villages will be protected equally. And protection will be explained from social, ecological, economic, cultural, and landscape perspectives...

43 Although treating all villages equally was unrealistic, the SACH expert suggested that the key is to convince the ICOMOS experts that their questions were treated seriously. It was, therefore, necessary to provide more paperwork (even if it was just a detailed table) to convince ICOMOS that all villages were exhaustively investigated and that the necessary protective measures were in place.

44 Therefore, the member state explained that the inscription of five representative villages was merely a "misunderstanding" (Li, 2013, p. 2) and that they "fully agree with the observation of our ICOMOS colleagues that the villages within the boundaries

constitute a core element of this cultural landscape" (Li, 2013, p. 2). The member state also attached a detailed document of necessary management measures to substantiate that conserving all villages was not only an empty claim.

3. Reproduce heritage narrative

45   After inscription, the official heritage narrative was certified and labeled. In this last phase, the official heritage narrative was reproduced onsite to maintain its status as a part of the WHS community. In the next section, our focus shifts to how the official heritage narrative was reproduced after designation, notably in two ways.

Promote official heritage narrative

46   The first means of production was to promote the official heritage narrative among tourists and the local population. An exhibition room was opened at the tourist center to inform tourists of its heritage values. A miniature replica of the rice terraces was placed in the middle of the room, explaining to tourists the geographical features of the site's four elements – "forest-village-farm-water." Books, maps, and videos were displayed. They presented information pertinent to the area's identity as a World Heritage site, such as its history, heritage values, agricultural practices, and indigenous cultural traditions.

47   More importantly, the official heritage narrative was used as a tool to communicate its importance to the local population and to win their support to preserve the site. The Honghe prefecture and the Yuanyang county government launched workshops to teach local people the World Heritage system, the heritage value of the HHRTs, etc. Billboards were put up at village entrances, with explanations of the value of the HHRTs as a World Heritage site, and the dos and don'ts of heritage preservation.

48   The promotion of heritage knowledge also took place at public gatherings. When officials from other provinces visited the site[15], the Terrace Administration hosted a performance by locals who performed traditional dancing and singing. This took place in the middle of the village as part of the reception for the officials, and the villagers were invited to enjoy the event (Figure 8). The host then took the chance promoting heritage discourse and promotional leaflets that explained good and bad building practices were distributed among villagers (Figure 9). Heritage classes were given at primary and middle schools.

Figure 8. Villagers gather around the public performances

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Figure 9. Leaflets with construction guidelines on the heritage site were distributed among villagers

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Reintegrate the official heritage narrative to guide the site's development

49   Another means of reproduction was the formulation of policies, legislation, and planning documents based on the official heritage narrative. These documents guided the institutionalized practices which ensured that the most important heritage elements stayed ideal, especially the rice terraces and dwellings. For example, the Yuanyang government compiled the *Hani Terraces Protection Management Regulations* and their implementation measures to regulate the use of heritage resources and preserve them, such as housing construction, building style, business operations, farmland use,

crop choices, and infrastructure development. More than 20 statutory plans[16] were developed, focusing on the preservation of settlements and traditional dwellings that have been endangered in the modern context.

Conclusion

50   This research investigates the creation of the official heritage narrative, and the role tourism plays. Seeing World Heritage as a placemaking process and based on a critical examination of Di Giovine's (2008) ritual process, it suggests that the formulation of an official heritage narrative can be theorized as following the three steps of locating the idea of heritage, idealizing the heritage narrative, and reproducing the heritage narrative. This model was applied to the case of the HHRTs to generate empirical insights. It explains the factors influencing the selection of the site's boundary and material components, identifies the methods and strategies the member state used in text-based communication, and presents the different means by which the official heritage narrative was reproduced after designation.

51   The empirical evidence substantiates our hypothesis that touristic considerations are built into the nomination file and are evident in the locating process. Not only is tourism an outcome and consequence of heritage-making – a phenomenon that is well-understood in the literature – but it is also part of the constitution of adequate heritage sites, due to accessibility and marketing issues. It supports the claim that we are on the threshold of a new heritage regime where tourism serves as a heritage-producing machine (Gravari-Barbas, 2018). The analysis of the other two phases complements the existing literature by highlighting the negotiation skills used in this text-based communication and identifying how the official heritage narrative was integrated at the local level.

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NOTES

1. In the nominated property, the Hani minority population is about 37,800, accounting for about 70% of the total population of 54,100 in 2013 (SACH, 2013, p. 35). Other ethnic groups include the Han (the majority group in China), and the Yi, Dai, Miao, Yao, and Zhuang minorities.

2. This data was provided by a government official and indicates the overnight stays registered in the Public Security Bureau system.

3. After the site was inscribed, the Terrace Administration became an official organization that manages the HHRTs.

4. An administrative village has a party branch and a village committee; a natural village is a naturally formed settlement of residents; a village is where people naturally gather to live together because of production and living. At the research site, one administrative village often contains more than one natural village.

5. SACH refers to the National Cultural Heritage Administration. The SACH expert guided the nomination team in drafting the nomination documents.

6. Including two officials and one staff member from the Terrace Administration.

7. The interviewees presented here are just one part of a larger research project in which a diverse range of stakeholders were interviewed, such as conservationists, local villagers, and tourism experts.

8. See: https://whc.unesco.org/en/list/1111/documents/. These include the nomination file (which contains text and images required for the nomination of the heritage site), the evaluation of Unesco's advisory bodies, the member state's response letter, and other appendices required by Unesco's World Heritage Committee.

9. Turner's ritual contains the steps separation, liminality, and re-aggregation.

10. The International Council on Monuments and Sites (ICOMOS) and the International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN) respectively provide the World Heritage Committee with evaluations of cultural and natural sites that are nominated. The International Centre for the Study of the Conservation and Restoration of Cultural Property (ICCROM) provides the committee with expert advice on the conservation of cultural sites.

11. The buffer zone complements legal restrictions placed on its use and development to give an added layer of protection to the World Heritage Site.

12. In some cases, those two steps continue after listing, for example, heritage sites can apply for extensions to include more places.

13. Zhuangzi (Chuang-tzu 庄子 "Master Zhuang" late 4th century BC) is the pivotal figure in classical philosophical Daoism.

14. In the email, written in 2012, the experts discussed the strategy to reply to the ICOMOS report.

15. The government of different regions in China often organize study trips or visits to facilitate exchange and learn from each other's best practices.

16. In China, a statutory plan is a legal document on which projects could be based and implemented.

ABSTRACTS

This study examines how Unesco's World Heritage Program creates the official heritage narrative and what role tourism plays in constructing the narrative. It is based on the hypothesis that touristic considerations are built into the heritage-making process. Theoretically, it confronts Di Giovine's (2008) ritual process. Instead of seeing heritage-making as producing heritage-scape, we frame this process as placemaking. We revisit his model by focusing on what constitutes a site's official heritage narrative, and the procedures for creating it. An alternative model of "locate the idea of heritage – idealize heritage narrative – reproduce heritage narrative" is proposed. The model is used to examine the Cultural Landscape of Honghe Hani Rice Terraces (HHRTs) in Yunnan in China. The empirical results 1) reveal the factors and process of defining heritage boundaries and selecting heritage elements; 2) present the methods and strategies the member state uses to idealize the narrative in this text-based communication; 3) identify two means by which the official narrative continues to reproduce after designation. The empirical observation also substantiates our hypothesis of tourism as a co-producer of heritage due to accessibility and management issues. It helps to understand that the very construction of a place as a World Heritage site (WHS) also entails tactics and compromises – that it is not simply about "pure" Outstanding Universal Value, but also about touristic meaning.

Cette étude examine la manière dont le programme du patrimoine mondial de l'Unesco crée le récit officiel du patrimoine ainsi que le rôle que joue le tourisme dans la construction de ce récit. Elle repose sur l'hypothèse que des considérations touristiques sont intégrées dans le processus de création du patrimoine. D'un point de vue théorique, elle s'oppose ainsi au processus rituel de Di Giovine (2008). Au lieu de considérer la patrimonialisation comme la production d'un paysage patrimonial, nous concevons ce processus comme un processus de création de lieux. Nous revisitons son modèle en nous concentrant sur ce qui constitue le récit patrimonial officiel d'un site et sur les procédures de création de ce récit. Nous proposons un modèle alternatif qui consiste à « localiser l'idée de patrimoine – idéaliser le récit du patrimoine – reproduire le récit du patrimoine ». Le modèle est utilisé pour examiner le paysage culturel des rizières en terrasses des Hani de Honghe (HHRT) dans le Yunnan, en Chine. Les résultats empiriques 1) révèlent les facteurs et le processus de définition des limites du patrimoine et de sélection des éléments patrimoniaux ; 2) présentent les méthodes et les stratégies utilisées par l'État membre pour idéaliser le récit dans cette communication textuelle ; 3) identifient deux moyens par lesquels le récit officiel continue à se reproduire après la désignation. L'observation empirique corrobore également notre hypothèse selon laquelle le tourisme est un coproducteur du patrimoine en raison des problèmes d'accessibilité et de gestion. Elle aide à comprendre que la construction

même d'un lieu en tant que site du patrimoine mondial implique également des tactiques et des compromis – qu'il ne s'agit pas simplement d'une valeur universelle exceptionnelle « pure », mais également de significations touristiques.

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AUTHORS

YAN WANG

PhD in Tourism Studies
Institute of Geography and Sustainability, Faculty of Geosciences and Environment, University of Lausanne (Switzerland)
Wangyanla[at]gmail.com

MATHIS STOCK

Professor
Institute of Geography and Sustainability, Faculty of Geosciences and Environment, University of Lausanne (Switzerland)
mathis.stock[at]unil.ch