

Protecting *the Weak*

Entangled Processes of Framing, Mobilization and Institutionalization in East Asia

Heritage Making, European Standards, and Gastronationalism

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Heritage does not exist prior to its making. An object or practice becomes 'heritage' in the process of heritage making, a process which reconfigures it in accordance with expert knowledge, technical specifications and legal regulations. The selectivity that is inherent in heritage making, valuating certain artefacts as worthy of preservation and letting others fall into oblivion is understood to be a politicized process, catering to the interests of governments and markets. The case study presented in the paper looks at the heritage effects that occur when local food products are discursively marked and politically regulated as heritage according to EU-generated legislation. Since 1996, the European Union is giving official recognition to regional culinary traditions by extending copyright protection to so-called origin foods. Ultimately, the origin food programme's emphasis on diversity and quality has helped to create a market for high-end culinary specialties domestically, but also to strengthen Europe's position vis-à-vis the global food market. At the same time, however, conflicts ensued between and within EU member states over the right of producers to use particular food product designations. Increasingly, non-European food producers are also deploying the EU quality label programme to gain access to European markets. In my presentation, I will try to open up avenues for probing the relationships between what social anthropologist Sharon Macdonald calls 'the European memory complex', and those forms of heritage protection that are emerging in non-European modern societies.

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