



CZECH ASSOCIATION FOR SOCIAL ANTHROPOLOGY

Is happy to invite you to the

LADISLAV HOLY LECTURE 2015

by

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*The Heritage Games: North against South
in the UNESCO World Heritage Arena*

12 December 2015 from 16.00

Venue

AV ČR, Puškinovo náměstí 447/9, 160 00 Praha-Bubeneč

The Heritage Games: North against South in the UNESCO World Heritage Arena

While much of its substantive debate circled around the threat of war to cultural and natural heritage, the 2015 annual session of the World Heritage Committee was the most peaceful affair, and turbulent years with heated conflicts between members states and expert bodies seem to be over. Does this mean that the World Heritage system has superseded its long-deplored Eurocentrism and opened itself fully to demands and perspectives from the Global South? Based on ethnographic fieldwork in 2009-2015, I argue that this is not the case. Nation-state wishes, North or South, have a much better chance to be heard now but expert advice retains a considerable Northern bias. Also, the remaining divisions cut across the North-South divide, with the stronger and larger states uniting to defend their vested interests. This development mirrors those in other UN and global bodies such as the World Bank, the IMF, or the G20, suggesting national sovereignty as the supreme guideline of the new, multipolar world order. With its sensitivity to North-South issues, I argue that anthropology can contribute to explaining the power shifts in global governance, not leaving this task to other disciplines alone.