

Research Article

Strategies Employed by the Locals in in the Process of Nominating Wat Phra Mahathat Woramahawihan Temple to be Inscribed on the World Heritage List

Vithaya Arporn^{*}

School of Languages and General Education, Walailak University, Nakhon Si Thammarat 80160, Thailand

Abstract

This study was intended by the overwhelming progress of nominating Wat Phra Mahathat Woramahawihan Temple to be inscribed on the World Heritage List. Such phenomenon intrigued me to investigate all involving groups in terms of their characteristics, differences from others, interconnection, strategies adopted for the nomination effort, related factors and their impacts on the nomination effort. A qualitative research design was employed through document search, observations, interviews a target group of 43 individuals, divided into two groups, namely the formal and informal. The study results revealed that dynamic of the nomination participation progressed in the midst of conflict between the formal also referred to as the government sector, or the civil society sector, each of which also harbor disagreements within the sector itself. The formal or government sector assumed the most prominent role because of its power and resourceful position. Its lead runs in alignment with the government's mechanism. However, owing to the fact that its strategies did not significantly emphasize engagement with communities, the communities devised strategies to negotiate with the nomination committee. Despite that, the power over a steering wheel still belonged to the government.

Keywords: Wat Phra Mahathat Woramahawihan, World Heritage, Participation, local community, the nomination effort

^{*} Corresponding authors:

Vithaya Arporn E-mail: avithaya@wu.ac.th

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1. Introduction

Thailand currently hosts three cultural world heritage sites registered one after another namely Historic Town of Sukhothai and Associated Historic Towns, Historic City of Ayutthaya and Ban Chiang Archaeological Site. In propelling the successful registration of these three historic sites, government played a significant role at that time. However, after that, such effort has never been demonstrated again for 30 years.

This study derives from a continued effort in having Wat Phra Mahathat Woramahawihan nominated to be inscribed on the World Heritage List first carried out in 2009 until the present (March, 2021) in which enormous progress has been made. This particular effort is made distinguished by it being symbolized by collective cooperation of locals within the community assuming a major role. This complies with the fact that World Heritage Committee currently prioritizes participation of communities than ever (Bongsasip, 2016; Nualmungsor, 2012; Posayanan, 2020; Srisuchart, 2020). This shift in the climate intrigues me in further investigating the groups involved in the recent efforts, the differences and similarities each group has, strategies practiced by each group, factors dominating the nomination process and the impacts generated.

This study was conducted under a qualitative research concept. Data were collected from documents, observations and focus group interviews of 43 participants divided into two distinctive groups including bureaucrats in the government sector who were from both the central and provincial offices, Nakhon Si Thammarat Provincial Administration Organization, Nakhonsithammaratcity Municipality, Member of the House of Representative, Committee on Wat Phra Mahathat Woramahawihan to be inscribed on the World Heritage List, ICOMOS Thailand, and those not on official capacity including the locals and members of Wat Phra Mahathat Woramahawihan community, temples located in the neighborhood close to Wat Pramahathat Woramahawihan, individuals in mosques and Chinese shrines, individuals engaging in trades with Wat Pramahathat Woramahawihan, others with interesting roles, individuals in the civic society sector and business sector including entrepreneurs, Provincial Chamber of Commerce.

This concept was employed to study participation of this nomination endeavor. The researcher took into account participation of the

diverse groups sharing different perspectives which resulted in conflicts in terms of thoughts and management practices of world heritage sites. Each of the groups seemed to also adopt different approaches both even within the group itself and from other groups. Thus, the participation has somehow placed its actions and progress upon ongoing disagreements and negotiations occurring on several levels. The figures in conflict can be divided into two main groups namely the bureaucrat or government sector accompanied by mechanisms of the World Heritage Committee and the civil society sector incorporating many groups including the local communities.

Researching into the occurrences during the height of the nomination effort to have Wat Phra Mahathat Woramahawihan inscribed on the world heritage list revealed the dynamics of participation of each sector progressing in the midst of conflict between the government sector and civil society sector. In the meantime, both parties seemed to harbor beliefs not shared by everyone within the group. However, the government was eventually in control of the nomination effort's dominant direction, concept and approach which will determine the committee's action directions, which is the main propeller enunciating executive functions underlining leadership. Equipped with not only power but also abundant resources, the government sector or bureaucrat assumes a leading role aligned with state's mechanisms and expects the returning benefits for every group.

The approach most appealing to the nomination committee is the approach not involving communities. Instead, the committee invested effort in having the site registered as soon as it could. Then, followed the successful registration will be the time for acceptance from the communities which is built upon a complete set of World Heritage Site's regulations. The fact that the nomination team's strategies does not stress on cooperation with the communities, nor getting into a dispute with them in order to avoid developing an unfavorable image of conflict affords the communities a chance to devise certain strategies to negotiate with the nomination team for the undeniable area restriction intended to narrow the site's parameter for the world heritage registration in order to ensure minimal fallouts on the communities.

This article will discuss four fundamental parts including local individuals joining hand in furthering the process, the nomination strategies employed by different groups in the midst of ongoing conflict, factors involved in determining the different groups' strategies and conclusion and suggestions.

2. Local individuals joining the nomination force

The local joining the nomination force can be categorized into two parts namely the government sector and the civil society section as follows:

2.1 The government sector

Thai bureaucrat administration consists of three administrative divisions including the central government, the provincial government and the local government. These two divisions have long coordinately propelling the registration effort.

2.1.1 Provincial government

A total of 34 government units including both the central government and provincial government is based in Nakhon Si Thammarat (Provincial Integrated Administrative Committee, Nakhon Si Thammarat Province, 2016). Among all of these, ten provincial government agencies involved in the nomination effort comprise Nakhon Si Thammarat's Governor, educational institutions and academics, Nakhon Si Thammarat Province Cultural Office, The 12th Regional Office of Fine Arts, Nakhon Si Thammarat, Nakhon Si Thammarat Provincial Office of Buddhism, Provincial Office for Natural Resources and Environment Nakhon Si Thammarat, Nakhon Si Thammarat Provincial office of Works and Town & Country Planning, Provincial Public Relations Office, Nakhon Si Thammarat, Royal Thai Police Headquarters, Nakhon Si Thammarat Provincial Office of Tourism and Sports, and other provincial government agencies.

Given such immense diversity of the provincial government agencies in the province, each one of them has presumably been committed to distinctive work plans, yet the operations still require profound harmony. Assuming the significant role is the governor of Nakhon Si Thammarat reporting to Ministry of Interior. The governor is also the one adopting policies and orders from Prime Minister so his absolute power is validated.

Nevertheless, Ministry of Interior, the governor's affiliation does not procure extensive budget to put those policies and order to practice. Likewise, provincial government agencies reporting to different ministries also conform to their own work plans and budgets which may not align with the governor's practice. Therefore, it takes a huge effort for each provincial government agency to adjust their work and budget plans accordingly as issued by the governor. As a result, Nakhon Si Thammarat governor plays a key administrative role in uniting all the agencies bringing in their workforce and financial support in order to be in complete sync with both the province's central development practice and their own original work plans. Commissioned by this task, the importance of the governor's role cannot be overstated as it remains so in the process of having Wat Phra Mahathat Woramahawihan registered as a world heritage site. Over certain periods, other obligations necessitating the governor's focus or simply failure to initiate cooperation of the aforementioned units may trivialize, defer or even suspend the entire process.

2.1.2 Local government

Local government units involved in the effort of having Wat Phra Mahathat Woramahawihan registered as a world heritage site comprise Nakhon Si Thammarat Municipality and Nakhon Si Thammarat Provincial Administration Organization. In the past, local government administration had immensely revolved around the concept of centralization until the local government administration reform was undertaken in 1997. Since then, power of local government administration was more decentralized to provinces and people such as election of mayor of Nakhon Si Thammarat Municipality and Chief Executive of the PAO of Nakhon Si Thammarat.

However, decentralization of central power to Nakhon Si Thammarat Municipality and Nakhon Si Thammarat Provincial Administration Organization (PAO) cannot be exercised to its fullest extent and is still under control of a governor and Ministry of Interior. Later, following the seizing or power carried out by Council for Peace and Order – NCPO in 2014 was the power of both Nakhon Si Thammarat Municipality and Nakhon Si Thammarat Provincial Administration Organization being

taken by the NCPO causing the two agents' inability to pursue their development practice directions according to the decentralization plan which would potentially have had the administrators genuinely listened to the voices of people putting them in the office. Hence, Nakhon Si Thammarat Municipality and Nakhon Si Thammarat Provincial Administration Organization's roles were still similar to that of the provincial government agencies. The governor of Nakhon Si Thammarat can easily request for cooperation, while this convenience may not prove true in certain areas in which the provincial government agencies are in a dispute with the people on the issue of architectural site and artefact, or world heritage site management. The government agencies were likely to side with or argue in favor of the people to sustain their stronghold. This situation, for example, has been found in Phra Nakhon Si Ayutthaya (Pat Tangpan, Interview, 3 March 2020)

2.2 Civil society

The civil society sector participating in furthering the registration includes organizations, networks, and individuals comprising the social activity network prioritizing Dhamma heritage over the world heritage, the hometown love club, Nakhon post news agency and The NST Chamber of Commerce. The individuals spearheading the progress are Mr. Jimmy Chawala and the communities. The contextualized civil society can be divided into two groups including those residing inside and outside the areas or resident and non-resident.

2.2.1 Non-resident

Members of the non- resident group comprises individuals enthusiastic about local enhancement. The educated, academics, entrepreneurs, former government officials and social activist are categorized in this group. What distinguishes this group is how it keenly spots defects of the government practices. Additionally, it is particularly keen to propose new innovations potentially proving effective in promoting local communities which might have been neglected by the government agencies, in correcting certain mistakes. The civil society sector in Nakhon Si Thammarat operates in two manners, one of which is by itself, for example, through acts of objection, proposing and campaigning the group's thoughts to the public and government

units, and the other relies on its coordination with government agencies.

Furthermore, the non- resident group's scope also extends to four directly affected communities near Wat Phra Mahathat Woramahawihan including the Lang Wat Phra Mahathat Community (community behind the temple), Chaiyosit Gate community, Hua Tha community and Na Phra That community and also other temples located nearby including Wat Na Phra Lan, Wat Na Phra That, Wat Sa Rieng and Wat Phra Nakhon. Both the communities and temples are outside the Buffer zone but are occasionally afforded an opportunity to partake in the meeting providing updates on progress and management of the nomination process. Nevertheless, it has been found that community members and temples are rarely kept in the loop of the progress causing anxiety and developing assumption contradicting the committee's anticipation.

2.2.2 Resident zone

This group resides within the Core Zone and Buffer Zone consisting of Wat Phra Mahathat Woramahawihan and nomadic peddlers not registered in the temple's system. This group literally lives in the area potentially facing both benefits and repercussions. Still, the principal committee led by government did not yet create any opportunities for them to actively participate, so the non- resident group somewhat received misinformed information and understandings which on occasions escalated into a hostile attitude toward the nomination effort led by the government. All in all, as warranted by the system, this group obtains relatively the smallest share of negotiation power. In addition, each of the groups is entangled in unresolved conflict, both that with the temple (Wat Phra Mahathat Woramahawihan) and that with the peddlers.

Conflict with Wat Phra Mahathat Woramahawihan: Conflict in this aspect stems from the temple body's resistance against possible change in terms of administration and management power within the temple' functions including landscape improvement, construction and archeological site and artefact management. It also concerns full authority over general administration tasks which may lead to the overlap of power between that from the government agencies involved and that deriving from being recognized as a world heritage.

Conflict with peddlers: Conflict in the dimension derives from concern over repercussions compelling the street peddlers to change the original way they have made making a living by if the temple is to become a world heritage site. This group comprises approximately 100 vendors living in the community near the temple such as Sri Thammasok Community, Na Wat Phra Mahathat Community (community in front of the temple), Ho Trai Community, Lang Wat Phra Mahathat Community (community behind the temple) etc. (Cheauthong, 2020; Tongmeaun, 2020; Muadchaitong, 2020). This group is constantly accused of destroying the image of Wat Phra Mahathat Woramahawihan especially the vendors selling flowers, incense, candles, offerings and bird food allegedly because of their annoyance causing sale behavior invol

Nevertheless, from the peddlers' point of view, circumstances are differently perceived in that they think they, impoverished peddlers, have been around selling items in the temple's area and all has a responsibility as a breadwinner. Some peddlers claimed that they did try to conform to the regulations to keep any impacts on the tourists or the temple's image at bay. That is because a decline in tourists' visits is equivalent to plummeting or even suspended sales, subsequently causing a shortage of income. The peddlers can be categorized into two sub groups including full-time peddlers and weekend or holiday peddlers. All too frequently, problems seem to originate from the latter group operating their businesses over weekends and holidays, the time when more tourists are present. When complaints are filed, the accusations by default extend their effect to the full-time peddlers as well, despite their claimed cooperation in complying with the rules issued (Intasila, 2019) Over the past, the peddler group has participated in the nomination effort relatively less and the group's opposing stance against having the temple registered as a world heritage site has been made clear.

3. The nomination strategies of each group carried out in the midst of conflict

Dynamic of the nomination process' s participation progressed in the midst of conflict between the authority or government sector and the civil society sector. In the meantime, there were also internal conflict within each of these two parties as well.

3.1 Strategies of the government sector: control of the nomination's main direction

The government sector assumes a profoundly strong role in furthering the process of having Wat Phra Mahathat Woramahawihan registered as world heritage site. As a government agency representing central government, the government sector is fully equipped with rightful authority and obligations as warranted by Thailand's the bureaucratic structure, so it successfully succeeded in gaining acceptance from several parties involved.

As can be observed, control of the nomination's main direction is centralized by Governor of Nakhon Si Thammarat holding absolute power in a provincial government agency and also receiving policies directly from prime-minister. In general, Governor proceeds in accordance with insights, interpretations put forward by the academics about determining the direction of the nomination process. Then, the proposed insights will be considered, adjusted and implemented as an operation plan for government agencies directly and indirectly involved such as Deputy Governor, Provincial Office for Local Administration as well as agencies of various ministries in the province. This also includes Nakhon Si Thammarat Municipality and Nakhon Si Thammarat Provincial Administration Organization which are local government units etc. it is also imperative that cooperation with the civil sector be formed so that all parties progress effectively in the uniform direction. Governor and the government sector can also cooperate with mass media organizations both inside and outside the government sector to publicize guidelines for the nomination in alignment with the government sector's guidelines, and to develop righteousness to the public in operating based on this guideline.

Crucial tools for Governor's action taking in order to establish the anticipated application is the recent "4-year Provincial Development Plan (B.E. 2561-2564) Nakhon Si Thammarat" enshrining the vision "City of Civilization, Good living and Tourism, Sustainable Agriculture and Industry "(translated from Thai) comprising 4 underlined strategies namely 1) agricultural and industrial management to be a one- stop standard and of ecofriendly nature 2) Tourism development based on the principle of Dhamma, nature , and tradition and culture 3) sustainable management of natural resources and environment and 4) development of

people, communities and societies based on the philosophy of Sufficiency Economy. The nomination goal to have Wat Phra Mahathat Woramahawihan registered as a world heritage is within Strategy two as one of the 34 projects in this particular strategy, officially referred to as Phra Borommabat Project: Dhamma heritage, world heritage connecting Srivijaya paths and opening doors to AEC (ASEAN Economic Community). It is also one of the 22 projects in Strategy 4 which is the Training/Seminar project on visiting world heritage sites (Provincial Integrated Administrative Committee, Nakhon Si Thammarat Province, 2016). The provincial development plan unites the focus and practices of all the involved government agencies originally adopting their own distinctive work approaches as informed by their affiliated ministries. There is also the budget allocated for the nomination actions carried out by the involved agencies from both the government sector and non-government sector and the civil society sector. These generates motivation for all the parties to act on their roles assigned by the government. Therefore, the government was capable of eliciting workforce, fund and right as approved by the system to support the nomination effort, and stimulating others to act as the government requires.

Following success in mobilizing cooperation from different parties, Governor implemented the next strategy aimed to establish a collaborative and solid work system by appointing a work group or committee to function as a propelling organization. The appointment notice has been signed since 2009. Up to the present, the office has been held by five governors and the committee has also been changed for five time. Each time of the alteration is made in response to each nomination mission accompanied by distinctive periodic focuses. On a few occasions, non-government members may be appointed as a committee but bureaucrats are usually dominant. As a result, the bureaucrats are the main propulsion generator. Likewise, those determining the progress's speed are the academics and the governor.

The committee's action guideline is apparently formulated in alignment with that the predetermined world heritage concept and is implemented among all the government agencies involved. Since optimal alignment with the world heritage committee's pre-existing set of rules was aimed for, the government agencies did not question or propose for any amendment of the

international rules set by the world heritage committee. Despite occasional disagreements both in theory or practice i. g. , rule interpretation concerning explanation of the state of authenticity, specification of a core zone, buffer zone and the concept of land improvement, this discord in ideas did not prove to be of a significant degree and could be easily resolved. Therefore, it was unquestionable that the government sector's concept decently harmonizes with that of the world heritage committee, so the nomination effort under the government's lead further emboldened the world heritage committee's concept and validates such concept as a sole just practice guideline. This, however, may come hand in hand with other potentially effective concepts and practices proposed by the civil society sector, which may propose something different from the world heritage committee, being taken out of the equation.

The World Heritage Committee's attempt to abide by the rules resulted in the committee's best effort to avoid getting in a dispute with those susceptible to the repercussions particularly the temple itself, peddlers and communities around the temple. That is because they may call into question the World Heritage Committee's rules. Therefore, the committee instead directed its attention to improvement of documents, landscape or other relevant conditions unrelated to the communities in order to accelerate the registration's success. The committee would utilize the world heritage's regulations to encourage participation or acceptance from the afflicted later.

Eventually, the bureaucrats or the government sector continually retains its privilege as a steering wheel controller of the nomination effort through the committee because the government sector is fully equipped with power and unlimited resources and led by the governor. Hence, it is hoped that benefits shall materialize in favor of every party involved which have mostly complied with the government's concept and practice.

3.2 Strategies of the Civil society sector: Diverse approaches for the nomination effort

3.2.1 Strategies of the non-residents

The civil society sector in Nakhon Si Thammarat is committed to the principle that if the group succeeds in negotiating for the group's

proposals to be considered and implemented by the government, that translates into the group's significant accomplishment because that is equivalent to the group's thoughts being heard by the public in general. As a result, on one hand, the civil society sector may disagree, be opposed to and demand to negotiate with the government sector. On the other hand, with the government's approaches harmonizing with the sector's, it is keen to cooperate with the government sector. The greatest limitations of the civil society sector are a lack of resources and rightful power as the government does. As a result, it has been seeking for the way affording a chance for cooperation with a provincial government agent holding absolute power which is simply a governor. As can be seen, the relationship between the civil society and government operates on a negotiation-cooperation basis.

For this time, Concept of the civil society participating in this recent nomination effort also demonstrated certain disagreements, most of which, however, did not come at a significant degree. They in fact concerns the aim of perfecting what the concept the government had already had. All in all, the non-resident civil society's notions fall into two types as follows:

Group 1: the civil society leaning toward the government's concept but also maintaining its own stance

In spite of certain disagreements with the government sector, none of them was up to the degree of collision. This phenomenon can be consistently observed in almost every civil society group. Upon the disagreement with the government, this group will employ a strategy of voicing opinions through a conventional committee mechanism in which they may also be in the committee as well. Some groups conduct other activities according to their held concept while others just appear nonchalant, not engaging in any of the activities or nomination effort. Some express themselves in writing by sending an objection letter to the committee. Majority of this group is in the middle-class individuals residing off the site and in favor of the nomination process which is the reason behind their active engagement. In contrast, those expressing disagreement are of the strong assumption that, for instance, having Wat Phra Mahathat Woramahawihan registered as a world heritage site will eventually do more harm than good, since the temple, in and of itself, embodies

value which does not necessarily requires official affirmation. On the other side of the coin, failing to pass the criteria for any reasons may somehow undermine the temple's value instead. Still, despite the pessimism, these opposers will offer a hand if any issues concerning the nomination effort arise. For those supporting the process, they perceive the process as a way to bring a heritage site into a systematic management system which is believed to generate positive changes in their groups and communities. However, due to a no-power and no-resource state, operating in coordination with the bureaucrats or government agencies is necessary. Further to that, some civil society groups residing off the site hope that the temple's entitled conditions after successful registration as well as adjustment of the government sector's mechanism which will evolve accordingly will come as a tool to create positive change for the locals later. Accordingly, the nomination process may be speedily propelled to success. However, this represents thoughts derived from the management's perspective which sometimes pays only little attention to participatory action with the locals. Both the concept and strategies of these people lean toward the government sector.

Group 2: The civil society sector keeping its concept in moderation

Individuals identifying with this group include those residing in the area or nearby communities. Although they are highly vulnerable to the repercussions, it has been found that their engagement in the nomination process has been relatively scarce. They also have little information causing diverse understanding of the subject and subsequently doubts about the nomination process as well as lack of confidence in what will become of them after successful registration. These eventually converge on making them either feel nonchalant or opposed to the nomination effort. Likewise, the community members shielded from direct effects, such as those not selling items within the temple's area, are likely to view the nomination attempt positively. However, they lack still understanding as to what good the successful registration brings. Some suspect whether this nomination attempt is being conducted in favor of any groups in particular. For example, it has been suspected that some groups undertake this as their duty and earn a salary, or it remains a doubt if

certain groups are benefiting from this or not. On a lighter note, there are those being oblivious to how to participate in the nomination process. Some just provide no cooperation. The fact that this group is oblivious to sufficient information concerning the process despite their position as a directly affected group may result from the main conductor's strategies determining to keep any acts of public objection at bay.

3.2.2 Strategies of the residents

The civil society sector resigning within the area is divided into two groups namely the Wat Phra Mahathat Woramahawihan and peddlers. Even though this group will undoubtedly face direct impact of the nomination effort, it possesses relatively little negotiation power because the cooperation between the government sector and non-resident civil society group weighs more. Nevertheless, now that the committee is spearheading the nomination process principally in alignment with the World Heritage Committee's regulations presently valuing local participation more, the committee is committed to the strategy of not getting in a dispute with the locals, which may disrupt the nomination process. Because of this, the temple and peddlers convert this into their negotiation conditions to increase their negotiation power. The author would like to elaborate on the strategies employed by the temple and the peddlers respectively as follows:

Strategies of Wat Phra Mahathat Woramahawihan: Despite being a religious place, temples operate under an administration system falling under government's structure assigning government agencies to oversee the temples' function. As a result, any suggestions different from the committee's predetermined guidelines cannot be openly proposed. Hence, the temple's common strategy is to negotiate for a determination of a world heritage site's narrowest boundaries. Negotiation aiming for such purpose has led to four times of the heritage site's boundary adjustment. The first was back in 2009 when a rough parameter of the area starting from Lan Prataksin to the Pagoda was specified as a core zone, making the area from Puttawas a buffer zone (Nuamungsor, 2012). The second boundary modification expanded the core zone to cover the area of Wat

Pramahathat's gates, and the buffer zone stretching from Mahachai intersection making up a 59.3 acre area (Sukarakarn, 2015). The third time resulted in expansion of the buffer zone as advised by the Fine Arts Department specifying the core zone as the entire temple's area of 13.61 acres. The buffer zone located stretching Na Mueang canal to the north, Ku Pai canal to the south, Sri Thammasok Road – Public irrigation ditch to the south, Tai Wang canal (the old moat) and Tung Prung canal to the west. All in all, the areas of ancient city including Mueang Phra Wiang and Mueang Nakhon Si Thammarat making up 521.8 acre area (Sukarakarn, 2015; Thinnakorn, 2018). The fourth alteration resumes the initial 1st specified boundaries making the area from Lan Prataksin to the Pagoda a core zone and the area in Puttawas a buffer zone. Eventually, the temple succeeded in negotiating for the narrowest boundaries possible as aimed for.

Nevertheless, other unclear details still causing concern are, for example, authority of the temple and the Fine Arts Department, future compliance between the World Heritage Committee's rules and regulations and some present crucial laws enforced through acts such as The Enhancement and Conservation of National Environmental Quality Act, B.E. 2535 (1992), Archaeological Sites, Antique, Artifact and National Museum Act of 1961, Order of Fine Arts Department on Benefit Management and Control of Construction within the Archeological Site Zone, B.E. 2523, Sangha Act, B.E. 2505, Ordinance of Nakhon Si Thammarat Municipality on Banning of Construction and Renovation of Certain Types of Buildings in the Ancient City Zone, B.E. 2551 (replacement of a former ordinance issued in 1995) (Manosong, 2020) etc. In addition, 10 model schemes were initiated including 1) Protection against flood Plan 2) Protection against windstorm and landslide plan 3) electricity, light and conflagration control Plan 4) Ground water and piped water plan 5) Termite, pigeon and pet Plan 6) Air and Noise pollution Plan 7) Waste control and Disposal Plan 8) Traffic Control Plan 9) Pagoda Subsidence Plan and 10) Coastal erosion and Tsunami Surveillance Plan. These are required to be submitted in support of the world heritage registration request.

Strategies of the peddlers: This group perceives that an approved world heritage registration will disrupt their long-practiced career causing a shortage of income. This group sustains little formal negotiation power and remains the particular group having been most pressured by the police and other authority units committed to the committee- proposed guideline. Peddlers were historically known to put up the most pressing fight in June (2013) (Rongpinij, 2015) to negotiate with the committee because they had acknowledged the committee's effort at avoidance of the image conveying an anti-registration process which can problematize the registration process (Muadchaitong, 2020). However, the peddlers' strategies proved to be a defensive rather than a proactive one since the committee's ease of exerting pressure on the peddlers. Take for example the event of the police being dispatched to pressure this group to sign an MOU in 2019.

4. Factors involved in strategy development of different groups

Extensive review of strategies the numerous local groups employed in their nomination effort in having Wat Phra Mahathat Woramahawihan registered as a world heritage site, compared to other sites, three crucial factors involved in determining strategies for world heritage site management have been revealed namely the international criteria factors, the state level factors and the local community level factors.

4.1 the international criteria factors

A decision whether each heritage site embodies sufficient qualifications to be recognized as a world heritage cannot be made by the site itself. On the contrary, conformation to the criteria set by the World Heritage Committee is a decisive basis, especially in comparison with the OUV (Outstanding Universal Value) and the Operational Guidelines. For the latter, it so happens that the guidelines frequently run counter to realities leading to as many as 20 amendments of the Operational Guidelines over the period of 40 years (Labadi, 2013). Up to the present, the original guidelines consisting of 30 paragraphs have been expanded to 290 paragraphs. In its essence, the Operational Guidelines states different guidelines for practices. It is not an overstatement to put that the crux and core of the World Heritage concept

specified in the Operational Guidelines is determination and interpretation of the Outstanding Universal Value or OUV. A series of the OUV amendments has resulted in alteration of content in other parts in the Operational Guidelines and the practical-leveled practice of each group involved.

The World Heritage Concept derives principally itself from western philosophy. Although many western philosophies exist, the most influential one of all is the concept of identifying intrinsic value seeking to find universal virtue (Labadi, 2013). This concept resolves that to conserve heritages, value should not be assigned to the superficial eventually prone to constant change but rather unchanged authenticity which is viewed as universal value. This philosophy has been taken into account for the determination of the OUV (Outstanding Universal Value) and the World Heritage Criteria in the 6 items in Criteria concerning Tradition. Therefore, when applied across the world, the guidelines have been causing some clashes on a philosophical level.

However, for the nomination effort in having the temple registered as a world heritage site, it was found that the committee responsible for prepping the site to measure up to the world heritage standard did not yet engage in the negotiation in line with the World Heritage Committee's rules. No negotiations had been conducted, despite some criticisms made by non-committees, for example, concerning relics being found at the pagoda's base. Followed this matter was the World Heritage Committee mechanism's note of caution regarding lack of authenticity. This questionability resulted in some people proposing that relics found at the Pagoda's base should be interpreted as a testimony to local identity and uniqueness representing the site's authenticity. Later, officials from Fine Arts Department, also in the registration nomination group, cracked open the base to take the relics out so that the site precisely met the International criteria. Furthermore, every activity of the nomination process conductors aims at one single goal which is to be in absolute harmony with the international criteria maximizing the site's chance to be registered, and to avoid mismatching any of the criteria. As a result, it could be seen that the locals' nomination process proceeded in the midst of continuing disagreements. Each party of the locals interpreted the criteria and determined strategies differently in the best interest of their party's maximum negotiation power.

4.2 The state-leveled factors

The nomination process of having Wat Phra Mahathat Woramahawihan registered as a world heritage site also conveyed that national politic was evidently associated with the way provincial government units acted in terms of the nomination process. If the central government was enthusiastic about supporting the nomination process, policies, budgets and also manpower would be allocated to keep provincial government units active about the process as well. This would increasingly raise a role of the government over that of a civil society. Former prime-minister Yingluck Shinawatra's government's adjusted attitude in favor of the nomination process resulted in appointing Mr. Wiroj Jiwarangsarn, simply known as a pro-government, Governor and allocating budgets to speed up the registration nomination process leading to quick progress, in spite of unclear effort and disagreement happening previously. Nevertheless, when a government became more devoted to the nomination process together with sufficient funds, its role grew more prominent than that of the civil society. As a result of this, those who went back and forth between agreeing and disagreeing fully turned to the first stance to the degree which successfully put Wat Phra Mahathat Woramahawihan in a primary name list in 2013. That was a truly significant change. Hence, as typical understanding goes, the civil society plays a huge role in making progress of the registration. Nevertheless, closer examination of details demonstrates that the achieved progress is in fact made as a result of the government's lead exerting its influence in a greater degree than the civil society which has been generally tied to strength development and active participation.

In addition, how Thailand's provincial government agencies use spend budgets depends on the central government or local government agencies. It also needs to comply with the Provincial Development Plan. As can be seen, the overall orientation is more toward Centralization and Deconcentration rather than Decentralization, especially after the NCPO's coup on 22 May 2014 up until now where obstruction of the Local Administration Organization's role is almost entirely committed. Therefore, only a truly decentralization-based governing structure shall allow opportunity for great diversity translating into increasing potential of cultural heritage management. A note of caution is, however, added to the centralization

of cultural society and it has been found that the decentralization-based administration structure increases the likelihood of both the civil society sector and local communities' participation in managing several types of cultural heritage. That undoubtedly empowers suggestions put forward by the locals who will be capable of arguing on universal issues on a universal level and really engaging in discussion about the World Heritage Committee's criteria without being preemptively dictated by higher power. (Pendlebury, Short, & While, 2009; Vicente, Ferreira, & da Silva, 2015; Waitt, 2000; Bachek, Zainudin, & Haron, 2014; Proust, 1993; Said, Aksah, & Ismail, 2013; Sing & Yoh, 2014; Steinberg, 1996)

4.3 The community-leveled factors

The extent to which the local civil society sector participate in the process still relies on how enthusiastic the civil society sector and local communities are about participation. This study suggested that active civil society sectors were frequently from the middle-classed individuals feeling a sense of relation or belonging to the subject and partook both as individuals and groups or organizations. Opposing sounds from the civil society sector is in fact a crucial act of participation. Accordingly, it is evident that the civil society sector's engagement is also present even if, in terms of world heritage management, the government absolutely takes the lead. That is because co-ordination with the World Heritage Committee based in Paris must be initiated and proceeded by a central government although, in some cases, world heritage management matters are proposed by a local government. (Daly & Winter, 2012; Fong, Winter, Rii, Khanjanusthiti, & Tandon, 2012; Hsiao, Foong, & Peycam, 2017; Hitchcock, King, & Parnwell, 2010)

Table 1 strengths and strategies of the locals and other groups involved

Groups	Strengths	Strategies
World Heritage committee	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - have authority which everyone has to obey - be the unit considering and making final decisions - No closeness with the area 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - operate through state representatives - Give advice
State	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Have authority - Have core plans and supporting budgets - have work mechanism - Be the unit officially coordinating with the World Heritage Committee 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - comply with the World Heritage committee's criteria - assume a leading role - with the governor taking the lead - rely on teams as a major mechanism of the nomination effort
Civil society: people not residing in the area	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Adopt various thoughts and experiences - have socially accepted personnel - No possession of authority in a context of the state with no adequate decentralization 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - present their thoughts through the state - mainly support the state - Occasionally criticize the state but not significantly in an opposing manner
Civil society: people residing in the area	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Face direct impacts resulting from change - Not receive a wide range of adequate information continuously - have relatively the least negotiation power in a context of the state with no adequate decentralization 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - utilize diverse passive strategies - follow the strategies of other groups: negotiation and opposition - focus on supporting and opposing on a criteria level of the World Heritage Committee in order to negotiate with other groups - Focus on narrowing the area to mitigate the impact

5. Conclusion and suggestion

Looking into conflicts concerning the nomination effort in having Wat Phra Mahathat Woramahawihan registered as a world heritage revealed participation of various groups, each of which adopts unique concept and strategies setting it apart from the others. As a result, when joining

the nomination force, one group's distinctiveness of ideas and strategies causes argument leading to negotiation to have the groups' thoughts accepted by others. Still, each possesses different degrees of negotiation power which necessitates some adjustment in which the groups equipped with more power are by default more able to lead the others.

Within this context, the author would like to propose some suggestions divided into three major phases, regardless whether the world heritage registration comes out successful or not. The suggestion comprises the impromptu phase, the middle phase and the long-term phase.

5.1 The impromptu phase

5.1.1 A management plan truly developed on a local community participation basis must be made. The plan should incorporate work mechanism designed to allow equal engagement of civil society sectors and local communities whether on an individual, organization or network level. Additionally, the mechanism developed must be able to prompt brainstorming on needs co comprehensively from every group, manage all conflicts and resolve for proper reconciliation, and afford opportunities for each group to bring out the best in them as appropriated. Besides, any decisions made must be participatorily approved by the civil society sector and local communities, especially activities likely to generate impact on a broader scale such as the Ordinance of Nakhon Si Thammarat Municipality.

5.1.2 A surveillance or prevention plan against potential economic, social and political problems which may unavoidably follow world heritage site management such as issues of equality and maintenance of balance between preservation and development based on preceded lessons from other countries.

5.2 The middle phase

5.2.1 Roles played by the civil society sectors and local communities should be increased to strike a balance with the roles of others such as bureaucrats, academics, and to promote the local communities to the leading role in the future.

5.2.2 World heritage site management mechanism should be designed to serve as a tool to strengthen local communities in terms of assembling, participating, and to increase economic, social and political solidarity.

5.2.3 Flexible organizations under Nakhon Si Thammarat Municipality should be commissioned to be directly responsible for managing world

heritage sites and the role of government agencies should be reduced and gradually transferred to the Municipality more.

5.3 The long-term phase

Structural problems must be solved and a government needs to increasingly decentralize its power to local agencies. Moreover, procedures of power transfer to the civil society sectors and local communities should be designed.

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