Antigua, Guatemala, has been a tourism destination for over a century, a fact that residents and workers there promote with pride. They are also proud that Antigua has been named a National Monument, a Monumental City of the Americas and a World Heritage site. These designations, however, come with burdens, including building codes, imposed ideas about what constitutes cultural heritage and the expectations of tourists.

The cultural management of Antigua—ranging from debates about building construction codes to the attitudes of those who live and work there—has increasingly come into dispute. Residents, workers and tourists have vested interests that do not always complement each other. Residents’ desires for a quiet, quaint town with modern amenities do not sit easily next to tourists’ desires to see decaying Spanish colonial architecture by day, and to drink and dance in the bars and discos at night. Historical conservationists, tourism-oriented business people and Maya vendors also disagree about the aesthetics and uses of the town. These groups often do not reach consensus among themselves. Simply put, Antigua is a contested place with respect to its designation as a historical site.

The conflicts and contradictions that result from the World Heritage site designation engender new forms of exclusion and inclusion for Mayas who work in Antigua. Because Mayas are considered to both beautifully adorn and pollute this contested city, their sociocultural place in Antigua can be ambiguous. Their material and ideological conceptualizations of Antigua offer an insight into how cultural heritage is defended and constantly remade, not as a uniform ideology and type of property, but as a shifting sociocultural field of power. One avenue to discuss this is to review the conceptualization of the Mayas in Antigua in relation to ladinos and tourists, attending to how Mayas think about heritage.
Like Alan Middleton in this volume, I offer an analysis of the political dynamics of public space within a heritage site designation. Both Quito and Antigua are cities in which indigenous vendors are marginalized and subjected to elected officials’ arbitrary decisions that are based on racist attitudes. Unlike in the Quito case, however, both Mayas and international tourists oppose the removal of indigenous people from Antigua. Despite the vision of Antigua as an indigenous-free Spanish colonial heritage site by ladino elites and politicians, tourists, tourist discourses and Mayas themselves consider Antigua an indigenous place where Mayas are literally part of the site’s heritage. This case also shares some parallels with Griet Steel’s chapter, as she too is concerned with how indigenous vendors in Cuzco do not always fit into the ideological projects of politicians and preservationists.

**Problems of cultural heritage**

It was a drab, rainy evening in June 2005 when residents, business persons and representatives of 23 civic and preservationist organizations gathered in the city hall of Antigua to meet with Mayor César Antonio Siliezar Portilla and a few of the city councillors to talk about common problems that confront the people of Antigua. As is typical of these meetings, crime, traffic and Maya handicraft vendors were discussed all together that evening.

Although the meeting was open to the public, my Maya vendor friends would not accompany me. ‘Go spy for us’, they said. ‘Let us know if you learn anything that can help us’. For two years, roughly 100 street vendors had met regularly with the mayor in order to be allowed to sell in specifically designated streets, plazas, parks and other public places. During the summer of 2005, they procured the support of the governor, a congress person, international labour and vendor organizations, and human rights lawyers for the UN in Guatemala and the Guatemalan government.

Although they rallied influential support, they still felt marginalized. Public meetings for residents and business persons were deemed *kichin ri mo’soi*, which,ironically,means ‘possessed by the foreigners’. This sentiment held by Mayas working and living in Antigua—namely that the non-Mayas running the city hall and the residents and business persons presenting grievances are foreigners—is suggestive of just how outside city politics Mayas feel. These feelings, however, do not mean