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## Between Imagined Communities of Practice Participation, Territory and the Making of Heritage

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# UNESCO's World Heritage Program: The Challenges and Ethics of Community Participation

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## 1 Introduction

In the nearly fifty years since the 1972 World Heritage Convention was ratified, UNESCO's flagship preservation program has transformed itself from an initiative valorizing primarily national parks and Western-style monuments to the keystone of a robust World Heritage Program that seeks to engage different communities with a common ethical narrative of "unity in diversity." Yet UNESCO has been critiqued for its politicized and elitist nature; its inability to protect its World Heritage properties from militias such as the Taliban in Afghanistan and Ansar Dini in Mali, or from adverse governmental policies in Germany, Syria and Oman; for a rather late engagement with the tourism industry; and for the 1972 Convention's historical marginalization of descendent and indigenous communities (cf. Prott 2011).

Yet this chapter posits that we should view UNESCO's 1972 Convention as part of a broader World Heritage Program, a coordinated set of initiatives born out of the World Heritage Convention, which seeks to fulfill the organization's ultimate, utopian goal of producing "peace in the minds of men" (UNESCO 1945) by cultivating in individuals an ethical orientation towards human cultural diversity, through the idiom of heritage. The World Heritage Program should be seen not merely as a preservation initiative – despite language suggesting this – but as a fundamentally ethical framework aimed at slowly cultivating a new, and ostensibly more peaceful,

world system by appealing to communities at a grassroots level to responsibly embrace and act on a particular conception of heritage. This chapter interrogates UNESCO's true objectives, and the ways in which its initiatives progressively work towards meeting or refining them. It also examines the primary target "audiences" of the World Heritage Program, and the ways in which UNESCO has changed in its mode of appealing to them. Last, the chapter also questions the ethics surrounding such participation at the local, grassroots level.

## 2 The World Heritage Program

As an intergovernmental organization composed of nation-states, it is clear that UNESCO is foremost a political organization. Founded in 1945, UNESCO is the self-described "intellectual agency" of the United Nations<sup>1</sup> whose aim is to structure and coordinate peaceful relations among nation-states. While the United Nations itself is involved in an exceptionally wide range of political activities, UNESCO is more focused on the promotion of policies and programs that aid in promoting peaceful relations through intellectual and cultural means (see UNESCO 1945). Furthermore, these programs are specifically intended to engage individuals at the grassroots, rather than simply the structural, level; the Preamble to UNESCO's Constitution (1945: 1) states that "a peace based exclusively upon the political and economic arrangements of governments would not be a peace which could secure the unanimous, lasting and sincere support of the peoples of the world, and that the peace must therefore be founded, if it is not to fail, upon the intellectual and moral solidarity of mankind." Yet while Cameron and Rössler call the World Heritage Convention "UNESCO's flagship program" (2013: 244) precisely for its visibility, popularity and manifest success in engaging individuals, it is argued here that the Convention represents just one component in a broader Program, an assemblage of legal, policy, and technical initiatives that deals with the designation, preservation, and presentation of particular heritage sites to satisfy UNESCO's ambitious goal of world peace.

By World Heritage Program, I mean the structured ensemble of interlocking initiatives by UNESCO which, through Conventions, declarations, proclamations, norms and projects, represent a coordinated and evolving effort by UNESCO to universalize the discourse and practices concerning heritage, its preservation, and its utilization, for the ethical aim of fostering "peace in the minds of men" through an active appreciation and internalization of the historical nature of human diversity. While in the years following the end of the Second World War there were a number of notable preservation and anti-looting initiatives by UNESCO (see, for example, UNESCO 1954, 1962, 1970a, 1970b), as well as by powerful nation-states such as the United States and Great Britain, for the purposes of this definition the World

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<sup>1</sup> <http://en.unesco.org/about-us/introducing-unesco> <accessed January 7, 2015>.

Heritage Program formally begins with the ratification of the 1972 *Convention Concerning the Protection of the World Cultural and Natural Heritage* ("World Heritage Convention"), and progressively reaches its fullest articulation in the ratification of the *Convention for the Safeguarding of Intangible Cultural Heritage* (UNESCO 2003a). Indeed, the conventions prior to 1972 were concerned with specific issues relating to the protection of cultural property, particularly in wartime, and did not include the same universalizing processes and ethical mandates as this Program does. Thus, unlike other analyses that see UNESCO's three heritage-related Conventions as separate, albeit related, initiatives, this chapter argues that we should view them as components of a broader program that gradually refine and shape the way in which UNESCO appeals to its constituencies or "audiences".

There are, of course, good reasons for viewing UNESCO's conventions as separate entities, not the least of which is that they themselves are three different international treaties that address different aspects of heritage. Indeed, only the 1972 Convention explicitly features the term "world" in it, though the others are written with similar ethical language concerning the "universal" imperative to safeguard heritage. Furthermore, each treaty is a historically situated product of evolving needs and worldviews of the international community, and, as separate political documents, States-Parties must ratify each one individually. While as of 2014, 191 countries have ratified the 1972 World Heritage Convention – two short of the total number participating in the United Nations general assembly – 161 states have ratified the 2003 Intangible Cultural Heritage Convention, and only 48 have ratified or otherwise "accepted" the 2001 Convention for the Protection of Underwater Cultural Heritage.

Based purely on the number of signatories, one could argue that the impact of these Conventions is unevenly distributed across the world. Yet uneven distribution of various components in a program does not in itself call into question the integrity of the whole; rather, each component can be viewed as an alternative instrument for targeting new and changing "audiences" for the project (including new demographics of domestic and international tourists), as well as addressing (or even reflecting) particular shortcomings in the project at the period in which the successive Convention was ratified. To wit, the World Heritage Convention greatly overrepresented Europe in its first five years of designating sites (1978-1982), while the previous five years (2010-2014) have seen a greater percentage of Asian and Pacific sites listed (see fig. 1).

This change corresponds to, on the one hand, an articulated shift in strategy for engaging diverse nation-states (see UNESCO 1994), while, on the other hand, it also reflects a more recent shift in the economic and diplomatic power of China, India and Southeast Asian countries on the world stage, as well as a concentrated effort on the part of these nation-states to capitalize on the valorizing effect of the World Heritage brand (Dewar et al. 2012; Ryan and Silvanto 2011; King and Halpenny 2014). It also corresponds to the boom in domestic and international travel in and from East Asia in the past five years – that is, a demographic shift in the primary

audience, or consumers, of World Heritage sites. Indeed, it was only in 2003 that China provided for free movement of its citizens outside of the Asia-Pacific region; only Turkey and Egypt had been approved destinations (Anderlini 2010). In the period between 2008 and 2014, Chinese outbound tourism has nearly doubled (UNWTO 2014: 89), and in 2012 Chinese travelers became the top spenders (\$102 billion), surpassing Germany (\$83 billion) and the United States (\$82 billion). According to the UNWTO (2013: 13), developing nations in general represented the highest growth rates in expenditure. Last, this shift in the percentage of World Heritage site designations from Asia also seem to mirror a general trend of global touristic “popularity;” the Asia-Pacific region has been since 2010 the fastest growing region in terms of inbound tourism, and China itself is now the third most popular destination in the world, surpassed only by France and the United States (UNWTO 2013: 6). These shifts are also related: Since travelers tend to visit destinations within their own region, as more Asians travel, Asian destinations increase in popularity, earning a higher share in tourism receipts (UNWTO 2013: 12).

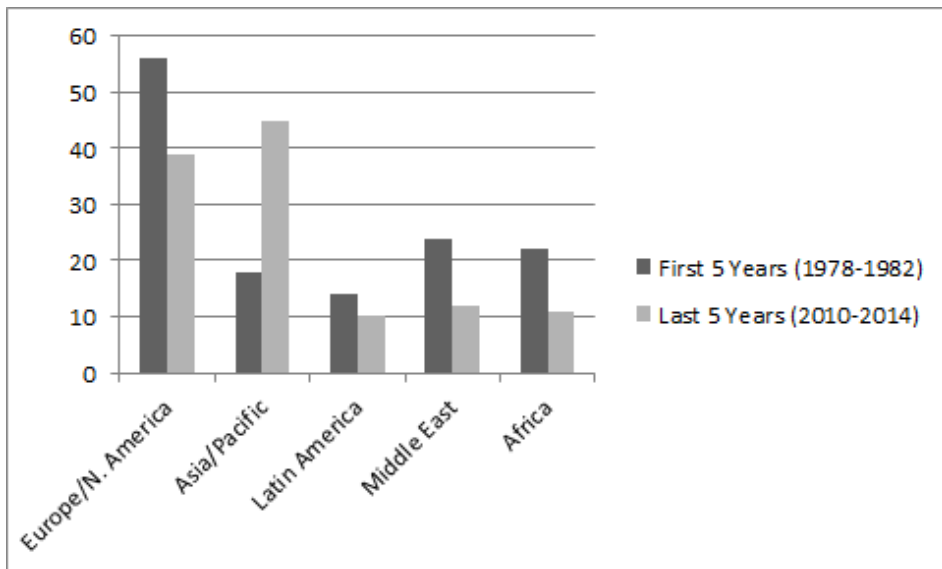


Fig. 1: Comparison of the number of world heritage designations by region in the first five-year period (1978-1982) and the most recent five-year period (2010-2014). Note: UNESCO counts Israel as Europe, rather than the Middle East.

Source: Author's elaboration of the WH List, <http://whc.unesco.org/en/list> <accessed January 7, 2015>.

As with any organization's ongoing programming, therefore, the World Heritage Program is subject to evolution according to the changing needs, attitudes, perspectives, and available resources of the group and its audiences. Heritage, too, is a continually evolving concept – one that is historically situated, reflecting the changing worldviews and operational necessities of those who employ it in discourse and practice. Originally adopted from the exclusionary, kinship-based concept of inheritance (Graburn 2001) to denote the patrimony of a “modern” nation-state (Harvey 2001), heritage has been appropriated by UNESCO as an ostensibly inclusionary concept that could appeal directly to individuals' post-modern proclivities towards experiential engagements with the past through artifacts, reconstructions, and, importantly re-enactments of rituals, historical events, and traditions (Harrison 2013). Although the process of selecting, designating, and listing some things and not others is inherently exclusionary (Hafstein 2009), I have argued that UNESCO's World Heritage Program is a “global placemaking endeavor” that attempts to satisfy UNESCO's goal of creating “peace in the minds of men” through “reordering individuals' sense of place the world over – so that no longer do they base their identities on conflictual territorial distinctions predicated on narratives of possession, but on the recognition and celebration of diversity at the individual level;” this new “imagined community” (Anderson 1991) I termed a global “heritage-scape” (Di Giovine 2009a: 33).

As an intergovernmental organization, UNESCO relies on nation-states and their community-specific instruments (such as legal treaties and policy briefs) to carry out the World Heritage Program's initiatives and governance, but the Program itself operates within a broader “field of heritage production” (Di Giovine 2009a: 9–15; cf. Bourdieu 1993). The field of heritage production is a structured, totalizing set of relationships, often in conflict, that order a diversity of “epistemic communities” (Knorr-Cetina 1999) – stakeholder groups that have their own knowledge bases, understandings, and needs – who struggle to stake their claim to, define, and ultimately utilize, the discourse of heritage or a particular crystallization of heritage in the form of tangible sites or intangible traditions. Rarely are these epistemic groups solely focused on the one site per se but rather have specific uses for it in their broader objectives; when their interests fall within the field of production, these groups will stake out claims, or positions, regarding the site in relation to the other groups. The multilayered, simultaneous acts of positioning and position-taking are dialectically dependent on one another; the internal struggles within each group depend on the correspondence they have with the external struggles within the broader field and, likewise, these macroscopic struggles often find their protagonists in certain dominant individuals within the various groups who put a public face to their group's position. Although these groups are in near-constant conflict (though to various degrees) they can also become “adversaries in collusion” (Bourdieu 1993: 79) when they align against the positions of other groups.

Fostering world peace is clearly utopian; it is a goal that could be attainable in the long-term, if at all, and seems to be incumbent on successfully ensuring – in the medium-term – the preservation of cultural heritage and sustainable development of

infrastructures that are conducive to perpetually consuming it. It takes, above all, navigating – and dominating – the field of heritage production. Yet to navigate this complex field, the World Heritage Program has increasingly evolved to appeal to diverse groups of individuals. Leaving aside the governmental bodies with whom UNESCO directly engages, its World Heritage Program counts its “target audiences” as: experts with whom they directly engage to carry out their preservation-oriented goals; heritage consumers (specifically tourists); and local peoples whose operational understandings and uses of heritage sites frequently conflict with UNESCO’s. How they appeal to these particular communities, and through what means, and to what ethical outcomes, will be examined in the next section.

### **3 Governmentality and Ethics in UNESCO’s World Heritage Program**

While UNESCO’s World Heritage Program is intended to appeal to the individual at the grassroots level, it is foremost a political organization. From an anthropological perspective, “politics” refers to the ways in which groups are structured according to power relations that subsequently impact and shape human affairs. It is often conceived in terms of what Michel Foucault called “governmentality”: the structured set of institutions, processes, and tactics of an administrative state or organization aimed at exerting power over a particular target population, often effected through “apparatuses of security” (1991: 102–103). Power can be both coercive and persuasive – that is, articulated through the ability of leaders or groups to compel people to act in a particular way, either through direct, physical means or through indirect influence. Indeed, Foucault, perhaps one of the most vocal theorists of power and politics, has argued that power should not be conceived solely in the remote and extreme sense as coercive, embodied in nation-states and its leaders, but also in the ways in which their influences affect “immediate everyday life which categorizes the individual, marks him by his own individuality, attaches him to his own identity, imposes a law of truth on him which he must recognize and others recognize in him” (1982: 781). It subjugates, yes, but it also makes subjects of individuals in their own right.

Governmentality is an organizational principle of UNESCO, which, it should be recalled, was founded in the wake of World War II and coincided with the implementation of the Marshall Plan and U.S. President Harry S. Truman’s (1949) famed Point Four policy, all of which were concerned with global reconstruction and development for international security interests. While these plans took an economics-heavy, top-down approach to development, UNESCO was to delve beyond traditional diplomacy and economically oriented programs, and engage with publics at more intangible levels:

For this specialized UN agency, it is not enough to build classrooms in devastated countries or to publish scientific breakthroughs. Education, science, culture and communication are the means to a far more ambitious goal: to build peace in the minds of men (UNESCO 2003c: 1).

In the past decade, a growing number of publications have looked at the macropolitics behind UNESCO's World Heritage Program, especially from the standpoint of governmentality. Ilcan and Philips (2006: 59, 61) in particular discuss how UNESCO's programs aimed at creating a "culture of peace" governs populations in terms of "rationalities of security," which are embodied in diverse declarations, programs of action, information-sharing practices and capacity-building initiatives that aim to "prepare minds and bodies for a particular notion of peace" that affects a wide array of political, social and cultural life. Schmitt argues, in fact, that the World Heritage Convention is an example par excellence of "global cultural governance" – "societal governance and regulation of cultural expressions and cultural orientation systems" (2009: 103). UNESCO does this by explicitly linking the preservation of tangible and intangible culture metonymic of a group's unique heritage with global security by essentially creating an international consensus of the sites' "universal value," and therefore of the collective responsibility for safeguarding them. It effects this through the engagement of experts – scientists, religious leaders, and politicians – who shape discourse and structure practices through normative laws, preservation and museological endeavors, and proving "technical assistance."

In theory, ensuring the security of these sites would ensure the peaceful recognition of "unity in diversity," and, therefore, of the broader security of the world order. Such multiculturalism internationalized on a global scale (Di Giovine 2015), in which reified (and politicized) notions of culture as a bounded entity – rather than a constantly changing set of beliefs and practices – are established through a combination of expert discourse and technocratic practice, have led scholars such as Wright (1998) to argue that UNESCO politicizes culture. Yet this process also necessitates a "scientization" of culture; rather than being a loose set of beliefs and practices, it is rendered something that can be deconstructed and reconstituted through expert intervention and technical training. Both of these come together to "responsibilize" populations (Ilcan and Phillips 2006: 64): UNESCO wishes to create publics who understand, and act in a responsible manner towards, cultural diversity. Yet the politicized nature of UNESCO may muddle these processes; a senior advisor to UNESCO commented that UNESCO's "main difficulty" was that the organization's "heterogeneity of the different constituencies," represented by member-states' "diplomats," impeded the development of a "truly independent and critical social science in UNESCO" (62).

Indeed, the hegemonic influence of powerful states and their knowledge systems is palpable. Bertacchini and Saccone (2011) have shown that wealthier countries nominate more sites, and have a better chance of serving on the World Heritage Committee (who ultimately decides on the nominations), than poorer or politically



unstable ones. Yet we should be careful not to equate this exclusively with “Western” countries. For example, Fig. 1 reveals that changes in the geographic composition of new sites reflects changes in geopolitical power relations; while in the twentieth century Western states dominated the designation of World Heritage properties, new and emerging nation-states – particularly China – seem to be creating new alliances within the selection committees that are producing results that diverge from those of the past. Furthermore, even though UNESCO may provide more space for minority voices than other U.N. organizations, Labadi (2013) points out that minority groups – especially women and indigenous communities – are still largely excluded from much of the heritage process.

However, most political analyses have failed to adequately emphasize the World Heritage Program’s ethical nature (cf. Omland 2006). In the most general sense, “ethics” concerns right or wrong action, “the moral correctness of specific conduct” (Ethics 2013). As McCabe states, ethics “is not simply about how to talk about being good, but is intended to make people good as well” (2005: 49). That is, rather than being descriptive, it is prescriptive and future-oriented. Ethics is what “ought” to be done, not what “is the case” or most acceptable, Preston argues. It is “concerned with how people *ought* to behave and suggest how social behavior can be improved” (2007: 16, emphasis in original).

Preston’s definition is applicable to analyses of UNESCO’s World Heritage Program on two levels: First, it is future-oriented, aimed at changing – and improving – global social relations, and second, it regards the regulation of interpersonal relations – how people “ought to behave” when they come into contact with each other – or, as UNESCO’s documents make clear, when they come into contact with cultural diversity (Di Giovine 2015). UNESCO’s Constitution reveals both of these aspects, particularly in its Preamble, which outlines the premises undergirding the foundation of UNESCO (UNESCO 1945; emphasis added):

- That since wars begin in the minds of men, it is in the minds of men that the defences of peace *must be* constructed; ...
- That the wide diffusion of culture, and the education of humanity ... constitute a sacred duty which all the nations *must fulfil* in a spirit of mutual assistance and concern;
- That a peace based exclusively upon the political and economic arrangements of governments would not be a peace which could secure the unanimous, lasting and sincere support of the peoples of the world, and that the peace *must therefore be founded, if it is not to fail*, upon the intellectual and moral solidarity of mankind.

These are not simply lofty statements, but an action plan for governance and the regulation of cultural expressions. To foster international security, the “intellectual and moral solidarity of mankind” must be cultivated through facilitating proper

communication among peoples, and inculcating an ethical “spirit of mutual assistance and concern” through the “wide diffusion of culture” – which it specifically considers a “sacred duty” (UNESCO 1945). In the case of the World Heritage Program, culture can be widely diffused through the creation of a global system of heritage sites and intangible practices – the heritage-scape. While the word “heritage” does not appear in UNESCO’s Constitution, Article I specifically notes that the “wide diffusion of culture” and education “concerning each other’s ways and lives” includes “assuring the conservation and protection of the world’s inheritance of books, works of art and monuments of history and science” (UNESCO 1945).

Furthermore, these words make it clear that peacemaking begins in the minds of individuals, rather than in the embassies of nation-states, and therefore the organization’s first goal is to produce and disseminate an appropriate body of knowledge that can later lead to the appreciation, safeguarding, and peaceful interaction with cultural diversity (see UNESCO 1972: 1). This is governance in the true sense of the term: the inculcation of a particular ideology, articulated through discourses of security, and regulated through norms and expert judgments. Evidence (tangible objects and intangible practices) of cultural heritage become vehicles for such a process.

#### **4 The History of the World Heritage Program: From Politics to Ethical Action**

The 1972 World Heritage Convention intimates that UNESCO had already been involved in a number of concrete initiatives concerning cultural preservation as outlined in Article I of the organization’s constitution, but they had been largely inadequate in fostering an ethical mentality towards culture among lay people across the world. These initiatives were primarily international treaties that utilized through top-down, legal approaches to protect cultural heritage in specific instances (see UNESCO 1954, 1970a), which built on earlier peace conventions. UNESCO recognized, however, that these treaties lacked true universality, a way to fulfill UNESCO’s overriding mission of producing and diffusing knowledge to individuals at a grassroots level (1972: 1). UNESCO’s 1962 *Recommendation Concerning the Safeguarding of the Beauty and Character of Landscapes and Sites*, which outlined best practices for conservation, was also inadequate; while it was the first document to truly articulate UNESCO’s stance on the universality of safeguarding properties (Di Giovine 2009a: 313), it was simply a policy statement with little capacity to affect change. So, too, was UNESCO’s impassioned treatise, *Protection of Mankind’s Cultural Heritage* (UNESCO 1970b). It thus became clear that it would be “essential...to adopt new provisions in the form of a convention establishing an effective system of collective protection of the cultural and natural heritage of outstanding universal value, organized on a permanent basis and in accordance with modern scientific methods” (UNESCO 1972: 1).

The World Heritage Convention's actual emphasis on the "collective protection," through scientific means, of certain sites that were universally recognized for their value, emerged from two early successes in public diplomacy in which UNESCO mobilized disparate groups to undertake costly, technologically advanced conservation efforts irrespective of the countries in which they were located. The first project was the now-well-known program to save the Nubian temples of Abu Simbel (created during the reign of Pharaoh Ramses II, 1303-1213 BCE), which would have been completely submerged underneath a reservoir for the Aswan High Dam if UNESCO had not spearheaded a \$42 million dollar project that involved cutting the temples into 20-ton blocks and relocating them atop a man-made mountain overlooking the original site. \$80 million were raised – nearly double the amount needed – from Egypt, the United States, and 50 other countries (Berg 1978). The episode of Abu Simbel had a profound effect on the future of World Heritage, and UNESCO proclaimed it "a triumph of international solidarity" (UNESCO 1982). For UNESCO, it revealed the strong emotional relationship that such heritage properties – and the prospect of their transience – could exert on the international community, irrespective of national origins, and brought nations and experts together for the common goal of researching, and preserving, these monuments. Today, despite their precarious location, Ramses II's temples at Abu Simbel are one of Egypt's main tourist attractions, with visitors traveling to the top of the mountain in buses, caravans and even private aircraft.

While the threats to Abu Simbel were man-made, and deeply implicated in Cold War politics, UNESCO's next preservation attempt was in response to a natural disaster: the devastating flooding of Florence and Venice in 1966. Following appeals from the Italian government for assistance, a resolution was passed founding the Campaign for Florence and Venice (UNESCO 1966: 64), in which UNESCO played an active role in raising international awareness for the city of Venice (UNESCO 1967: 17; Cuvillier & Thompson 1993: 7). As a result of its ongoing campaigns, fifty organizations would be formed, and UNESCO would carry out comprehensive sustainability studies, scientific research, and art inventories (UNESCO 1968; Cuvillier & Thompson 1993: 11–12); over twenty countries (predominantly from the developing world) would even issue "Save Venice" stamps with UNESCO's logo on them.<sup>2</sup> Although materially unsuccessful – proposals continued to be contested until the official groundbreaking of the MOSE project in 2003 – it has become one of the most enduring and financially profitable material conservation project in history, and has helped to found such well-regarded historic preservation NGOs as Save Venice, Inc. and World Monuments Fund.

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<sup>2</sup> A cursory search of stamps (primarily issued between 1971-1972) from the Save Venice campaign yields the following countries: Algeria, Bulgaria, Burundi, Cameroon, Chad, Cuba, Dahomey (current-day Benin), Gabon, Iran, Italy, Ivory Coast, Monaco, Niger, Pakistan, Romania, Senegal, Syria, Togo, Tunisia, Vatican City, and Yemen.

These two events bookended a White House conference called for the creation of a "World Heritage Trust" to engage the international community in the preservation of exemplary sites "for the present and future of the entire world citizenry" (qtd. in UNESCO 2008: 7). A plan of conservation was adopted which was similar to that of the U.S. National Parks service; in 1968, the International Union for the Conservation of Nature (IUCN) followed suit in adopting a similar framework for its membership. These proposals were combined in 1972, when delegates to the United Nations Conference on Human Environment in Stockholm called for a new Convention that could better ensure the safeguarding and management of cultural and natural properties. Later that year, it became the World Heritage Convention spearheaded by UNESCO; IUCN and two cultural heritage preservation organizations present at the conference, ICOMOS and ICCROM, were made expert 'Advisory Bodies'.

UNESCO's World Heritage Convention, ratified in 1972, deals squarely with Article I in the 1945 Constitution and addresses the responsible treatment of cultural heritage. However, the discursive model in its own Preamble is more complex than the 1945 document. It begins by listing its premises in the present-tense, which is more descriptive and conveys the immediacy of the various threats to the world's cultural and natural heritage. Monuments are "increasingly threatened," leading to their destruction which "constitutes" a universal impoverishment of culture. Coupled with these external threats are internal, structural ones: their protection "remains incomplete" because of nation-states' inadequate resources. In the next two points, it explicitly links itself to UNESCO's founding Constitution and its projects – in the process shifting from the present tense to the future-tense; it reminds readers that UNESCO's Constitution "provides" (present tense) that UNESCO "will maintain, increase and diffuse knowledge" (future tense) by assuring the conservation and protection of the world's heritage and creating international conventions which already "demonstrate" (present tense) the importance of preservation. It then ends by invoking a future-oriented idea of cultivating interpersonal relations: these sites "are" of interest and "therefore need to be preserved;" it is "incumbent on the international community to participate" in this convention which "will serve" to complement their present efforts. With these words, the World Heritage Convention builds on the ethical orientation of UNESCO's Constitution, and applies it to a concrete crisis. When it does utilize the future-tense, it is done to propose a specific ethical framework concerning the use of cultural heritage.

Compare this to the latest Convention in the Program, the Intangible Heritage Convention (IHC) (UNESCO 2003a) – which, in a nod to anthropological notions of culture as a group's set of behaviors and ideas that is learned and passed on, shifts focus from natural and built sites to more ephemeral traditions and behaviors and practices. The 2003 Convention does not utilize the future tense at all in its Preamble. Rather, it refers back to, and builds on, the tenets of the World Heritage Convention, as well as other declarations that focus squarely on the rights of individuals

and their cultural practices (such as “folklore”) – and associates them with the present-day, growing crisis concerning the perceived loss of traditional, intangible cultural practices and the marginalization of minority voices in the World Heritage Program. It explicitly links the “deep-seated interdependence between intangible cultural heritage and the tangible cultural and natural heritage” and cites the far-reaching initiatives of UNESCO, including the 1972 Convention, before launching into a similar declaration of the threat of globalization and social transformation on cultural heritage. Importantly, this statement is written in the present tense (“recognizing that...”), and utilizes terminology typically applied to material sites: “deterioration,” “disappearance” and “destruction”. It also twice states the Program’s ethical orientation: it must be the “common will of the international community” to protect these sites. However, where it explicitly adds to the discourse on universal cultural heritage is its statement on which communities are directly responsible for its safeguarding: “indigenous communities, and, in many cases, individuals” who produce these cultural resources. Lastly, it argues in two places that no effective instrument protecting this particular form of heritage exists thus far, despite the current need.

Thus, while the Intangible Heritage Convention clearly builds on, and complements, pre-existent instruments in the World Heritage Program, it still possesses an ethical framework; it is a major document that addresses a number of the most problematic aspects of the World Heritage Program to date – namely, how to expand the Program’s reach among diverse populations of individuals who, spread across the globe often espousing diverse ethical orientations, uses and conceptions concerning heritage. Indeed, the IHC can be seen as the culmination of a process of “opening up” and “democratizing” the concept of world heritage. That is, it is an elaboration, application, and even political articulation (see Hafstein 2009) of the Program’s ethical framework that already had been in the process of transformation, and that underlay the goals of the Program as a totality.

## 5 The World Heritage Program: Expanding its Reach

To understand the World Heritage Program’s gradual “opening up” or process of “democratization,” it is opportune to examine some of the major initiatives in the Program as a whole, which go beyond the promulgation of conventions. As fig. 2 shows, there have been a number of initiatives within the World Heritage Program that aimed to expand its reach, or “audience base,” both quantitatively and qualitatively. On the one hand, the roughly fifty years of the Program has seen initiatives aimed at designating higher numbers of cultural and natural heritage forms (tangible and intangible) in higher concentrations across more populations throughout the world; this can be thought of as quantitative or “horizontal” expansion – that is, an expansion of the breadth of the Program’s reach. On the other hand, it has been increasingly evident that horizontal expansion cannot engage all peoples in a given

geographic area equally; for this, qualitative changes that could diversify the Program's offerings would also be necessary. Such changes expanded the depth of penetration of the Program in a given area by reconceptualizing the very elements of heritage that could be considered to be universally valuable, thereby appealing to diverse populations within a particular geographic area.

DATE	INITIATIVE
1972	World Heritage Convention ratified
1978	First Operational Guidelines created to coordinate early additions to the WH List
1989	UNESCO issues its Recommendation on the Safeguarding of Traditional Culture and Folklore
1992	World Heritage Center created in Paris to oversee day-to-day organization
1992	Concept of "cultural landscapes" integrated by WH Committee
1992	Research leading to the Global Strategy begun
1993	Nara Document on Authenticity adopted
1994	Global Strategy adopted
1996	"Our Creative Diversity" – report on intangible cultural heritage – produced
1997	Proclamation of Masterpieces of the Oral and Intangible Heritage of Humanity program launched by UNESCO Research concerning a "standard-setting instrument" for ICH begun
1998	WH Committee votes to change the operational guidelines to allow for inclusion of "traditionally" managed site
1999	UNESCO holds its first workshop at the International Tourism Exchange (ITB)
2001	Creation of the World Heritage Sustainable Tourism Programme
2001	Convention on the Protection of Underwater Cultural Heritage ratified
2002	Budapest Declaration ("4 C's")
2003	Intangible Heritage Convention ratified
2007	UNESCO adds "community" to the Budapest Declaration's list of "c's"
2008	World Heritage Convention's 40 <sup>th</sup> anniversary celebrations: "Get involved- visit responsibly-volunteer"

Fig. 2: Major initiatives aimed at expanding audience participation in the World Heritage Program

The earliest and most self-evident form of the Program's expansion occurred (and continues to occur) at the quantitative level. While in its early years, the World Heritage Committee members contemplated putting a cap on world heritage sites (Cameron and Rössler 2013: 55–58), this was not adopted; rather, the tangible heritage list has exceeded 1000 sites, and other conventions such as the ICH convention has created even more lists without caps. By continuing its designation of sites, monuments, and now intangible heritage forms – all of which are given UNESCO's "brand" in some way or another – and diversifying the geographic distribution of these properties, the World Heritage Program could geographically expand its audience base. This at first necessitated an effort to increase the geographic distribution of sites by engaging, and at times assisting, new states-parties in their nomination procedures. Yet as Cameron and Rössler point out in their history of the early years of the World Heritage Convention, this became a major, time-consuming responsibility that the World Heritage Committee, established by the Convention, was ill-equipped to handle. As more sites were added every year, there became the need for greater targeted coordination by UNESCO itself. This included not only processing and coordinating the submission of nomination files from states-parties, but also ensuring that sites on the list were adequately and systematically monitored and protected. In response to this, the World Heritage Centre was founded in Paris in 1992. The foundation of the Center should be viewed not only as an important mechanism for coordinating the day-to-day activities of the Convention, but rather as the establishment of a crucial structure for the broader World Heritage Program. Indeed, as Fig. 2 shows, prior to 1992, the World Heritage Committee addressed needs that were procedural in nature (i.e., publishing and revising Operational Guidelines for carrying out the processes established in the Convention) or responses to individual needs of member-states. Yet the creation of the World Heritage Center provided the operational autonomy necessary to shape the Program's efforts at governmentality; today, the center coordinates over twenty separate initiatives – ranging from astronomical heritage to religion to youth volunteering – coordinates efforts at periodic monitoring of World Heritage sites (Cameron and Rössler 2013: 134), and serves as a highly visible public relations instrument.

Possibly the most important moment in the expansion of the World Heritage Program occurred in 1994, when the World Heritage Committee adopted its watershed *Global Strategy for a Representative, Balanced and Credible World Heritage List*, whose aim was to explicitly expand the reach, and therefore the credibility, of the World Heritage Program by reconceptualizing what constituted heritage that could be considered to be of universal value. This was the result of a two-year study, coordinated by the World Heritage Centre, which revealed a strong "geographic, temporal and spiritual imbalance" (1994: IIIa) in the World Heritage List, which was biased towards what could be called "monumental" or elitist heritage, located in an equally monumental past – a past that is remembered, and celebrated, as valorizing for civilization (as conceived predominantly by Westerners). Indeed, the study pointed out that the majority of cultural sites were European, Christian architectural remains.

It would not be enough, however, to simply state that the Program needed to diversify its geographic reach. To create a better geographic “balance” of heritage properties around the world, it would be necessary to qualitatively reconceptualize the aesthetic and temporal thresholds of the nominating criteria – that is, to rethink its emphasis on monumentality and “pastness” of a heritage property. On the one hand, objects that typically fall outside of elite Western aesthetic conceptualizations of universal value would now be included, such as industrial centers and coal mines; it could be argued that these places provided testament to an important turning point in the history of global civilization. On the other hand, it also allowed for the integration of sites from difficult aspects of the past that many would rather forget: “negative” or “dark” sites such as Hiroshima and Auschwitz, Robbin Island and the empty spaces where the Bamiyan Buddhas once stood. “Pastness” was also reconceptualized; the Global Strategy opened up the possibility of integrating structures from the not-so-distant past, structures such as the Sydney Opera house and the Sagrada Familia that were technically still works-in-progress, or elements of “living culture” that continued to be utilized by indigenous peoples.

While the credibility and balance of the World Heritage List would continue to be debated, UNESCO does point out that the Global Strategy laid the foundation for broader participation among nation-states across the world, producing a larger and more balanced geographic distribution of properties on the list.<sup>3</sup> Furthermore, it seems to have also laid the groundwork for the ratification of a separate Convention concerning the protection of underwater cultural heritage (UNESCO 2001a) that nevertheless shared the objectives of the 1972 World Heritage Convention – namely, the listing, designation, and protection of *in situ* material cultural heritage. The differences which necessitated a separate convention, however, is that such cultural heritage – material remains of vessels, objects, or even urban centers such as ancient Egypt’s Alexandria – are submerged underwater, and thus necessitate different and often urgent conservation activities (including safeguarding against treasure hunters) undertaken by a different set of experts, and may also fall outside of the legal maritime boundaries of any one nation-state.

But the ethical engagement of individuals entails more than simply raising awareness, or creating measurable opportunities for encountering the World Heritage brand by diversifying the geographic distribution of heritage “sites”. Rather, the Global Strategy reconceived the way in which various groups, who produce different cultural forms, could be included in the program. In short, it signaled a shift in the quality of the Program’s engagement with its primary audience, the local peoples whose minds UNESCO aims to mold into more ethical subjects. In particular, one notices a consistent movement towards addressing the concerns of local communities and indigenous peoples, and experts advocating on their behalf. In this sense, 1992 was particularly important. Not only was 1992 the year in which the UNESCO

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<sup>3</sup> <http://whc.unesco.org/en/globalstrategy/#efforts> <accessed January 7, 2015>.



study on its list's credibility and balance was completed, but because UNESCO created, within the accepted discourse at the time, a more nuanced category of sites called "cultural landscapes." Much lauded by UNESCO (see, for example, Rössler 2006), the concept of a cultural landscape articulated for the first time the anthropological argument that a rigid division between "nature" and "culture" was not universally recognized, but a Western conception; implicit in this is the contention that many indigenous peoples attach great cultural meaning to the natural world without marking such sites with material culture. Indeed, as Coombe (2012: 377) points out, according to insiders, this was "crucial for legitimating the heritage of local communities and indigenous peoples...that later became formalized in the ICH Convention." This interpretation is justifiable; while certainly the creation of the concept of a "cultural landscape" would quantifiably increase the number of properties on the list, for example, there was already the category of a "mixed site" that could have been used, and which was largely supplanted by the "cultural landscape" sub-designation.

Indeed, under the aegis of the World Heritage Centre, UNESCO's World Heritage Program continued to integrate more implicit and, later, explicit references to diverse "communities" of audiences within their operational procedures and declarations. This is important, as descendent communities began to make inroads in advocating for structural changes within the Program. The 1999 Operational Guidelines were changed to allow for the inclusion of an alternatively managed site in the Solomon Islands (UNESCO 1998: 26), and the much-lauded 2002 Budapest Declaration fashioned itself as an invitation "to all partners to support" the World Heritage Program by promoting key strategic objectives known as the "Four C's": strengthening Credibility of the List, ensuring effective Conservation of World Heritage sites, refine its Capacity-building measures, and increase Communication with the public. Of these four Cs, then, the last two speak directly to non-expert, locally based communities: local or indigenous heritage managers who need expert training, as well as the broader public of whom the Program needs support: tourists who will consume the sites, and locals who will cooperate with UNESCO's World Heritage initiatives. Two years later – following the ratification of the Intangible Heritage Convention – UNESCO would add the word "community" to its now-list of "Five C's" (UNESCO 2008: 8; cf. UNESCO 2007). By the 2003 IHC, the term "community" – so often associated with a global imagined community of the heritage-landscape, would become pluralized – such that "individuals" and indigenous "communities" are the primary stakeholders of their cultural heritage.

## 6 Paternalistic Ethics and Opening Up to Descendent Communities

It is clear that this gradual “opening up” to descendent communities represents a major force for building and establishing the “credibility” of the World Heritage Program and its brand. However, a tension exists in how the Program inculcates its ethical narrative of sharing responsibility for a culture’s survival among those cultures who are most affected by it. In the early days of the World Heritage Program, the responsabilization of preservation initiatives was imbued with a “paternalistic ethic,” which “sees archaeologists and preservationists assume an explicitly dominant position as both “experts” and self-defined stewards of cultural property over other epistemic groups that may lay claim to it” (Di Giovine 2015: 204); indeed, paternalism in general denotes behavior by individuals, organizations or political entities that limits the activities of other groups ostensibly because the latter will be “better off” or protected by harm (Dworkin 2010). Even the *Budapest Declaration*, which was proclaimed as a response to enhancing the credibility and safeguarding of World Heritage properties by acknowledging the multiplicity of the Program’s stakeholders, did little more than advocate better communication of its activities (i.e., the activities of its experts) to such communities, rather than call for an explicit collaboration.

There is, of course, good reason for this: The World Heritage Program operates through governmentality (cf. Coombe 2012): It engenders a particular ethical orientation through discourses of security. In the post-modern era – marked, as it is, by the embrace of sensory and experiential simulacra at the popular level (Baudrillard 1994) – power is invested in socially approved “experts” to ensure not only the security of the heritage properties (that is, ensuring its authenticity and integrity) but also in creating and disseminating the appropriate knowledge concerning a site’s value and use (Harrison 2013: 45, 84–88). However, scholars have pointed out that conservation by experts often denies a monument’s total life history, taking the site back to an idealized and historicized state that “tempts us to ignore our own influence on them” (Lowenthal 1998: 114), conserving only one of many possible narratives embodied in the structure through time and destroying or erasing others (Di Giovine 2009a: 359). In the name of conservation, site managers often prevent alternative uses by indigenous populations while at the same time paradoxically prohibiting those same populations to “modernize” their technologies or living practices in the name of preserving authenticity (see Di Giovine 2009b; Smith 2006), or to use the site in ways that are antithetical to traditional preservation activities, such as allowing for a cultural property’s natural decay, as some descendent communities wish.

There is a growing recognition of this power inequality, particularly by social scientists and museographers who often collaborate with UNESCO, but also among representatives of descendent communities themselves. On the one hand, such expert listings have the air of elitism, and implicitly marginalize those communities

whose cultural practices do not fall into acceptable rubrics. As Hafstein (2009) shows in his seminal behind-the-scenes work on the development of the Intangible Heritage Convention, advocates – particularly those under-represented, non-Western nation-states – were eager to eschew the elitism of the previous Conventions, particularly in how intangible heritage was conceived of, nominated, designated, and listed; the final product, in fact, represents a compromise between creating a selective list, yet eschewing the elitist language that often accompanies such registers. Rather than calling the intangible heritage designations “masterpieces” or “treasures”, they are considered “representative” illustrations of a particular culture (107).

On the other hand, many experts themselves advocate for more equitable collaborative partnerships with descendent communities in the form of co-curatorship (see Kreps 2003). In 1998, for example, at the insistence of the Director-General, Koichiro Matsuura, the Operational Guidelines for the WH Convention were modified to allow for the “traditional management” of world heritage sites (see Cameron and Rössler 93). This reflected a growing interest by museologists in “indigenous curation” that, in the words of Stanley, seeks “to embrace tradition in the name of modernity” (1998: 87-88), and which could foster more inclusive management of cultural property. Active participation in the management of intangible heritage is also strongly advocated in Article 15 of the 2003 ICH Convention: “each State Party shall endeavour to ensure the widest possible participation of communities, groups and, where appropriate, individuals that create, maintain and transmit such heritage, and to involve them actively in its management.”

Yet the trend towards co-curation or co-management of a material site or a manifestation of intangible culture often falls under the rubric of “multicultural ethics” (see Gnecco 2014) which “posits a distinctively explicit openness (if only superficially) to incorporating alternative or “minority” voices in acts of designating and preserving objects of cultural heritage” (Di Giovine 2015: 204). Yet, to paraphrase Asad (1993), multiculturalism still privileges the dominant power; it allows other voices to be heard, as long as those voices do not impinge on other groups’ rights to share in the cultural property’s consumption. Multiculturalism also politicizes the cultural Other, seeing it as something to be “clearly defined, delimited, separated” and stereotyped so as to facilitate its assimilation into the dominant culture under the rubric of “diversity,” which “masked its ideology of assimilation” (Gnecco 2003: 20). As a consequence, even well-meaning experts who attempt to mediate repatriation conflicts between tribal authorities and government officials may experience push-back from indigenous communities who distrust their underlying motivations and knowledge systems (see, for example, Meskell 2010: 852; cf. Shepherd 2003; Meskell and Masuku Van Damme 2007).

## 7 The Ethics of Engagement with the Tourist Community

At the turn of the millennium, it also became increasingly evident that the Program needed to reconfigure its approach to another major “community” of stakeholders – tourists. At the same time as tourism was embraced by the United Nations (as well as the World Bank and the International Development Bank), UNESCO's World Heritage Program either steered clear of discussing tourism, or mentioned its adverse impacts on the safeguarding of material sites, even as it promoted minimal initiatives that would enhance touristic engagement with its properties. On the one hand, the World Heritage Fund supports publicity campaigns by governmental ministries and industries involved in tourism, but, on the other hand, UNESCO requires its nomination file to include management plans that address adverse tourist impacts. While “tourism” is not mentioned in the World Heritage Convention at all, “tourist development projects” appears in the Convention only among a list of possible threats to World Heritage sites that could provide the basis for inscription on the World Heritage List in Danger (1972: 6). This ambivalence may stem from early failures by the UN and other inter-governmental organizations in tourism development, which became apparent in the 1970s (Di Giovine 2009b); to wit, in 1985 the European ministers of culture “found it a bit low and vulgar” to employ heritage for tourism development purposes (Cameron and Rössler 2013: 236).

While management issues relating to tourism were extremely rare in the early years of the World Heritage Convention, a World Heritage Center survey on tourism at natural sites in 1993 revealed that tourism was the key management issue, likened to a “disaster” (Cameron and Rössler 2013: 235). Something had to be done. Revealing a rapprochement with the tourism industry during the “sustainable tourism” turn of the mid-1990s (see Telfer 2002), in 1999 UNESCO hosted its first workshop at the International Tourism Exchange (ITB), one of the tourism industry's largest trade fairs; in 2001 the World Heritage Committee created a framework to “engage in dialogue and actions with the tourism industry to determine how the industry may contribute to help safeguard these precious resources” (UNESCO n.d.; see UNESCO 2001b: 63), and eventually founded the World Heritage Sustainable Tourism Programme (WHST) at the World Heritage Center in 2011 to better coordinate these efforts with states-parties (UNESCO 2010: 8–12).

Despite UNESCO's increased attention to tourism, many of the ethical issues concerning world heritage and tourism have not been resolved. While “sustainable tourism” has become an industry buzzword, its tenets are more aspirational than readily implementable. A number of “alternative tourism” forms interpret sustainability differently, yet all have been critiqued (Di Giovine 2009b; Smith and Eadington 1994). While early critiques (including those of UNESCO) centered on the tourist as the primary cause of damage to such sites, today it is understood that there is a more complex relationship between “host” and “guest” in which ethical relationships can be negotiated. Especially in this neoliberal era, critiques today seem to be more focused on the industry, which is accused of “green washing” for the sake of

marketing their product to unwitting consumers (Honey 1991: 47–55); to mitigate some of these unethical industry practices, Hultsman (1995) has even advocated making ethics courses a requirement for tourism management degrees. It is perhaps for this reason that when UNESCO finally created its World Heritage Sustainable Tourism Programme in 2011, it switched its emphasis from working with the tourism industry, as the original framework suggested (UNESCO 2001b), to working directly with individuals. In partnership with National Geographic, the United Nations Foundation, and Intercontinental Hotels, the WHST launched an online public exchange platform aimed at directly engaging tourists to protect World Heritage sites. Called “People Protecting Places,” its tagline states, “We’re not asking you to save the world. Just its greatest places.” It continues with a vague request appealing to tourists’ sense of responsibility: “World Heritage sites belong to us all, and depend on all of us. Join UNESCO in the new travel and tourism movement to help these irreplaceable treasures continue to inspire future generations.”<sup>4</sup>

The notion that tourism is a “democratizing” force is also questionable. While I have argued that, owing to tourism’s phenomenology as a perspectival interaction with place, theoretically “anyone, anywhere can be a tourist for a time” (Di Giovine 2014: 84), this does not mean that everyone has equal access to each World Heritage site. On the one hand, international travel certainly has its socio-economic and psychological constraints, excluding those without passports or who cannot dedicate the appropriate time, money, or even piece of mind to traveling certain distances or to certain regions of the world. On the other hand, and perhaps more importantly, international tourists frequently enjoy greater access to a site than others, for site managers frequently manage their destinations with tourist needs, desires, and expectations in mind, rather than those of locals. This includes removing local inhabitants at a site (Di Giovine 2009a: 215–259), and determining who gets access and at what cost. For example, Meskell (2010: 845) describes several South African cases in which the nation-state wrested land from indigenous groups, called it a national heritage site, and then issued lucrative contracts to foreign companies to develop the areas into luxurious tourist resorts.

But less nefariously, this also includes the “paternalistic” actions of experts and site managers who determine what behavior – and even what bodily senses (see Di Giovine forthcoming) – are acceptable for responsibly consuming a particular heritage site. Indeed, sightseeing is predicated on the museological “look but don’t touch” model that stems from Enlightenment-era ideas focusing on the artifact as the locus of knowledge that could be unlocked through expert viewing. The privileging of the optic above the other “proximate” senses (Synnott 1991: 70), which excludes many indigenous haptic and olfactory devotional activities such as bathing or anointing a statue with dyes or burning incense. But additionally, as MacCannell laments, sightseeing may well be the lowest denominator of engagement with locals; it is “an effort based on desire ethically to connect to someone or something “other”

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<sup>4</sup> From [www.peopleprotectingplaces.org](http://www.peopleprotectingplaces.org) <accessed January 7, 2015>.

as represented by or embodied in an attraction..., [a failure to] connect” in more meaningful or personalized ways (2011: 7). A pervasive “lack of passion” (7) and true engagement between tourists, the tourism industry, experts and locals may be the biggest impediment to fulfilling UNESCO’s imperative of fostering true interactions between cultures.

## **8 Conclusion: The World Heritage Program’s Ethics of Peacemaking**

This chapter argued that, in addition to being a political project, UNESCO’s World Heritage Program is primarily an ethical project, aimed at instilling a sense of collective responsibility towards cultural diversity through governmentality. Ethics is about doing what is just and right; it is future-oriented, aimed at bettering the social relations surrounding the decision-maker. Creating an understanding of shared ownership over cultural forms, instilling responsibility towards their protection, and facilitating their collective use through tourism all contribute to UNESCO’s long-term peacemaking objectives. But while UNESCO can at least attempt to shape these short- and medium-term goals through effective governance, it must rely on what can be considered “inspired action” – long-term, often subtle changes in the ways in which individuals and groups perceive the meaning and value of not only World Heritage sites, but the universality of cultural diversity for which these monuments illustratively stand (Di Giovine 2013).

Yet such inspiration can only come if the World Heritage Program is made relevant to individuals and groups at the grassroots level. Such a gradual “opening up” to descendent communities and tourists seems to represent a growing understanding of this by UNESCO. This is the great paradox of the World Heritage Program, but also one of its strengths: its power rests on the recognition and involvement of nation-states, while at the same time largely attempts to circumvent them by appealing directly for individual participation.

By understanding the ensemble of activities, norms, and practices by UNESCO associated with the universalization of cultural heritage as one unified World Heritage Program, we are able to see how the concept of world heritage itself has gradually evolved to better address the shortcomings of the 1972 Convention in its dealings with communities at the grassroots level – particularly descendent communities and tourists. While maintaining the same ethical framework, Conventions and projects in the years after 1972 aimed to increase the program’s qualitative, as well as quantitative, engagement with these stakeholder groups. Yet this requires a complex balance between many different stakeholders, and the ethical pathways are not always clear as diverse groups are given greater representation and voice within the Program.

Indeed, as with any organization, to remain viable, relevant and effective, its programming must continue to evolve to address its audiences changing needs and outlooks. In particular, who participates, how they participate, and in what areas can they participate, all continue to be important questions that UNESCO must continue to address as its World Heritage Program reaches its fiftieth anniversary.

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