

Correcting the Imbalance of the World Heritage List: Did the UNESCO Strategy Work?¹

by Lasse Steiner, University of Zurich and Bruno S. Frey, University of Warwick/University of Zurich/Center for Research in Economics, Management, and the Arts—Switzerland

The official intention of the UNESCO World Heritage List is to protect the global heritage. However, the imbalance of the distribution of world heritage sites according to countries and continents is striking. Consequently, the World Heritage Committee launched the global strategy for a balanced, representative, and credible world heritage list in 1994. To date, there have not been any empirical analyses conducted to study the impact of this strategy. This paper shows that the imbalance did not decrease but rather increased over time, thus reflecting the inability of the Global Strategy to achieve a more balanced distribution of sites.

The UNESCO World Heritage List

The UNESCO world heritage list (hereafter “list”) is generally considered an excellent contribution to saving the globe’s common history in the form of cultural monuments and landscapes worth preserving. The origin of the list dates back to the 1920s, when the League of Nations became aware of the growing threat to the cultural and natural heritage of our planet. In 1959, UNESCO launched a spectacular and successful international campaign to save the Abu Simbel temples in the Nile Valley. In 1966, UNESCO also spearheaded an international campaign to save Venice after disastrous floods threatened the survival of the city. To institutionalize these efforts, the General Conference of UNESCO adopted the *Convention Concerning the Protection of the World Cultural and Natural Heritage* at its seventeenth session in Paris in November 1972. The convention “seeks to encourage the identification, protection, and preservation of cultural and natural heritage around the world considered to be of outstanding value to humanity.”² To date, 187 state parties have ratified this convention, and the list currently has 911 world heritage sites (hereafter “sites”), 704 (or 77 percent) of which relate to culture; 180 to nature; and twenty-seven of which are mixed, combining cultural and natural heritage.³ The list has become very popular and many regard it as “the most effective international legal instrument for the protection of the cultural and natural heritage” (Strasser, 2002, p. 215).

Accompanying the increasing popularity of the list, a large social science literature on world heritage and the UNESCO program has emerged. Some studies analyze in-depth why cultural heritage should be preserved. It is argued that the past is important to understanding and

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2. <http://whc.unesco.org/en/about>, accessed 20 January 2011

3. Data is after the thirty-fourth ordinary session of the World Heritage Committee, held in Brasília, 25 July–3 August 2010. Only two sites have been delisted since the implementation of the list. UNESCO, world heritage list, <http://whc.unesco.org/en/list>, accessed 20 January 2011.

appreciating the present, and the past is an important part of the identity of a nation, region, or local unit, as well as of the people living therein (Alan Peacock, Rizzo, 2008). Several noteworthy contributions in cultural economics try to capture the impact of heritage sites on individual utility, as well as on the utility of preserving the past for future generations (Klamer, Throsby, 2000; Alan Peacock, 1978; Alan Peacock, Rizzo, 2008). Other studies concentrate on more specific aspects, such as the consequences for tourism of being included in the list. It has been demonstrated that once sites are placed on the list, they experience a significant increase in tourists. While this is welcome for firms offering tourist services, hotels and restaurants in particular, there is some concern that too many tourists may negatively affect the heritage sites (Cochrane, Tapper, 2006; Anna Leask, Yeoman; Tunney, 2005). While it is clear that more people visit these sites that now belong to the “common heritage of mankind,” it is unclear whether, and to what extent, there is substitution from other nonlisted heritage sites.

The impact on tourism and prestige gained from site nomination are factors that incentivize applications, potentially distort the process of designation, and contribute to the imbalance of the list (Cleere, 2006; Harrison, Hitchcock, 2005; Millar, 2006). For example, the large share of sites in Europe (see below) raises the question of whether the sites selected for the list adequately reflect the common heritage of mankind (Byrne, 1991). Recent studies empirically analyze the determinants of getting on the list. They show that political and economic factors unrelated to the value of heritage have an impact on the composition of the list (Bertacchini, Saccone, 2011; Frey, Pamini, Steiner, 2011).

We focus on the highly unequal distribution of sites according to countries and continents. Although 46 percent of the sites are in Europe, only 9 percent are in Africa. Only ten countries have a large number of twenty sites or more, whereas, on the other hand, thirty-eight member countries of the convention have no sites at all. This imbalance of sites according to continents and countries has been present from the beginning, and it has become a subject of major concern within the World Heritage Commission, the World Heritage Centre, UNESCO, and other organizations. The director of the World Heritage Centre, Francesco Bandarin, even went so far as to call the world heritage list “a catastrophic success” (Henley, 2001).

As a reaction to this imbalance, in 1994, the UNESCO World Heritage Committee started the global strategy for a balanced, representative, and credible world heritage list (hereafter “global strategy”),⁴ which intends to raise the share of non-European sites on the list. Despite this explicit new strategy and intended strong action, “the immediate success of these efforts is questionable” (Strasser 2002, p. 226).

This paper analyzes the unbalanced representation of continents and countries on the world heritage list. We further address the question of whether the international organization UNESCO is effective in achieving the goal of its own formally ratified resolution. In particular, we test whether the global strategy has reached its goal of reducing the inequality in the distribution of sites.

In order to lay the groundwork, Section II discusses the process of selecting sites and introduces the political actors involved in the nomination process. The existing literature usually discusses the strategy for a more balanced list and the strategy’s outcome without referring to empirical evidence. This paper fills the gap by presenting statistics on the highly unequal distribution of sites across countries and continents (Section III). The Gini coefficient as a measure of the inequality in the distribution of sites across the world is increasing over time, depicting an increasing concentration of sites in a few countries. Further, we analyze the global strategy’s objectives of reducing the imbalance between cultural and natural sites as well as reducing the share of sites located in Europe and more developed countries. The results suggest that the imbalance of the list has not decreased after the introduction

4. <http://whc.unesco.org/en/globalstrategy> accessed on 26 January 2011

of the global strategy; if anything, it has increased further (Section IV). We briefly discuss previous attempts to reform the list (Section V) and Section VI concludes.

Selection Aspects of the World Heritage List

Nomination Process

The advisory bodies to the World Heritage Committee used a somewhat ad hoc method to determine the sites to be initially included on the list. The convention's criterion of "outstanding value to humanity" is noble but proved to be almost impossible to define clearly. An important development has been the establishment of ten criteria for inclusion in the list, which are specified in detail in the *Operational Guidelines for the Implementation of the World Heritage Convention* (UNESCO, 2005). Nominated sites must meet at least one of the ten criteria, which are applied in connection with three comprehensive aspects: uniqueness, historical authenticity, and integrity. Six criteria refer to "cultural" and four to "natural" sites. The former must "represent a masterpiece of human creative genius" (Criterion i). The latter should "contain superlative natural phenomena or areas of exceptional natural beauty and aesthetic importance" (Criterion vii). If a site meets at least one cultural and one natural criterion, the property's classification is a mixed site.

The list is composed by three different bodies: the state parties that nominate the sites, the two advisory boards that evaluate and propose the sites for inscription, and the committee that formally decides on inclusion in the list. The World Heritage Committee meets once a year and consists of representatives from twenty-one of the member countries. The general assembly elects the members of the convention for terms of up to six years. The intention of the convention is an equitable representation of the world's regions and cultures on the committee (UNESCO, 2005, Art. 8 [2]). However, the convention nowhere specifies the means to achieve this goal. The committee is the final decision-making body whose responsibilities include the World Heritage list, the list of World Heritage in Danger, administering the World Heritage Fund, and deciding on financial assistance. Member governments must propose the sites to be included on the list. Mayors, district governments, or heritage experts may only make proposals for inclusion on a tentative list. The World Heritage Convention differs from many other international conventions because all substantive powers are designated to the committee and not the general assembly. The Heritage Committee is advised by the International Council on Museums and sites (ICOMOS) for cultural sites, by the International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN) for natural sites, and by the International Centre for the Study of the Preservation and Restoration of Cultural Property (ICCROM). It has been claimed, "the scrutiny of these systems by the two Advisory Boards is now rigorous" (Cleere, 2006:xxii).

International Organization Research

The central task of the World Heritage Convention is to protect the global public goods of "world cultural and natural heritage" and at the same time to achieve some measure of representatives among continents and countries. This task links up closely to various topics analyzed in international organizations research.

The list is compiled by an organization within UNESCO, the World Heritage Center in Paris. It is supported by the World Heritage Committee, which is in turn advised by several councils. The goal is to safeguard and preserve a global public good, the heritage of mankind. This closely links to research in the theory of international organizations. The role of international organizations in the provision of global collective goods or global commons, the respective international cooperation, international regimes and international institutions are examined, for example, by Keohane (2003), Koremenos, Lipson, and Snidal (2001). These studies point out both the necessities and the difficulties of providing public goods in a global context. As long as there is no world government with effective sanctioning power, the provision of global public goods such as preserving mankind's common heritage is uncertain and unstable. In the case of heritage, many

nations make a strong effort toward having their national heritage sites put on the list, as they can derive substantial commercial benefit as well as prestige from such listings. However, the question is whether the resulting list really presents a balanced picture of world heritage. This question is a central aspect of this paper's analysis.

International organizations are not necessarily working as intended but may be dysfunctional in regards to the official purpose (Grant and Keohane, 2005; Martinez-Diaz, 2009). The incentives that actors in these organizations face may lead them to pursue their own interests, or the interests of pressure groups, rather than the official goal of the organization (Peterson, 2010); Carpenter, (2007) in the context of advocacy frameworks and civil society). This is an imminent danger in an organization such as the World Heritage Center, which does not have to report to the UNESCO General Assembly. Even if it had to, there would still be strong forces inducing the decision makers to deviate from the organization's official goal.

The political influence of the national representatives in international organizations has been the subject of studies by, for example, Oatley and Yackee (2004) and Dreher, Sturm, and Vreeland (2009). They demonstrate that the career patterns of the national representatives significantly influence their behavior. As long as they are part of the national civil service and aspire to rise in its ranks, they have an incentive to put the interests of their own country first. For the case of world heritage, it has been empirically shown, indeed, that factors unrelated to the value of heritage, such as membership on the UN Security Council, have a systematic impact on the composition of the List (Frey, Pamini, and Steiner, 2011).

Political Economy of the World Heritage List

From the point of view of political economy, it may be argued that the selection of the sites is questionable, because it is subject to rent-seeking by experts and politicians (Buchanan, 1980; Frey, 1984; Frey, et al., 2011). Politicians in their respective countries and expert representatives on the advisory groups ICOMOS and IUCN strongly influence the selecting of cultural and natural sites for the list. In most cases, the committee follows the experts' recommendations. Technical experts rely on their knowledge as art historians and conservators, but this "concept . . . has never been the object of a truly operational definition" (Musitelli, 2002:329).

Some scholars go so far as to question the legitimacy of the list. Meskell (2002) argues that the concept of "world heritage" is flawed by the fact that it privileges an idea originating in the West, which requires an attitude toward material culture that is distinctly European. Affluent countries seem to have benefited most from the convention. According to a Report of the World Commission on Culture and Development, the list "was conceived, supported, and nurtured by the industrially developed societies, reflecting concern for a type of heritage that was highly valued in those countries" (Olmland, 1997). Moreover, many countries do not have the necessary conservation infrastructure that allows them to prepare nominations for the list at a sufficiently sustained pace to improve its representativeness (Strasser, 2002: 226–27). According to the convention, the state parties must identify and delineate the property (UNESCO, 2005, Art. 3); in addition, they must ensure the identification, protection, conservation, presentation, and transmission to future generations (UNESCO, 2005, Art. 4). These requirements put a heavy burden on countries wishing to put a site on the list. In order to avoid a negative decision, state parties often withdraw a nomination if the committee or its bureau is likely to decide unfavorably.

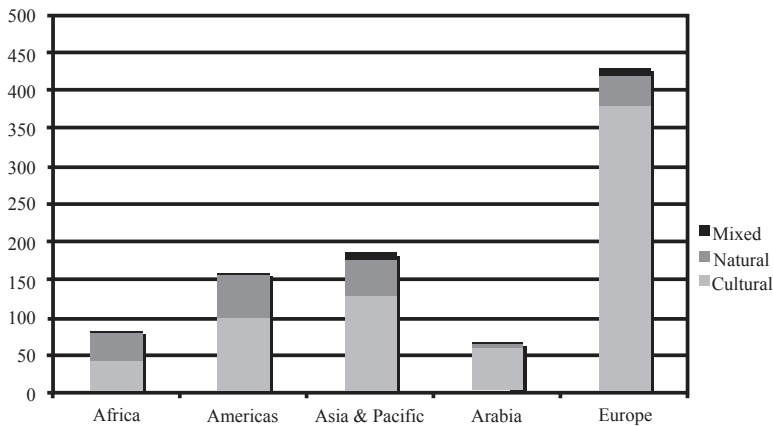
Being on the list is highly desired by many as it brings prominence and monetary revenue. The attention of donors and for-profit firms is attracted, and there is a positive relationship between the number of sites and the number of tourist arrivals per country (Lazzarotti, 2000; Yang, Lin, Han, 2009). One may even speak of a "heritage industry" (Johnson, Thomas, 1995). Indeed, inclusion on the list is considered to be a great honor for the respective nation and, accordingly, gets much attention by the press, radio, and TV (Van der Aa, 2005). It has been highly politicized as many political and bureaucratic representatives of countries consider it a worthwhile goal from which they personally profit. Consequently, the selec-

tion is subject to political pressure, and it is not solely determined by the ten official criteria deemed to be “objective.” Although the goal of the whole project is to protect sites of central importance for humanity, national interests dominate global interest: “The rhetoric is global: the practice is national” (Ashworth, Van der Aa, 2006:148). Some countries try more actively to secure sites to be included on the list. Twenty-one nations participating in the convention have a seat on the World Heritage Committee. However, these members nominated more than 30 percent of the listed sites between 1978 and 2004 (Van der Aa, 2005:81). This relationship was confirmed by econometric estimations of Bertacchini and Saccone (2011). They find a clear, positive, and statistically significant correlation of membership in the committee and the number of listed sites. One example of a questionable selection occurred in 1997 when ten Italian sites were included to the list all at once, and the committee chair at that time was a compatriot. In addition, the location within the country where the committee holds its annual meeting seems to have an impact on the number and kind of nominations. Indeed, the 1997 meeting was held in Naples, Italy (Cleere, 1998). Francesco Bandarin, director of the World Heritage Centre, acknowledges, “Inscription has become a political issue. It is about prestige, publicity, and economic development” (Henley, 2001).

Distribution of Sites

The distribution of sites on the list across continents is highly unequal, with 47 percent of the sites being in Europe.⁵ The European predominance is larger for cultural sites (54 percent) than for natural sites (22 percent). In contrast, Sub-Saharan Africa has less than 9 percent of all sites, and Arabian countries have 7 percent. The Americas and Asia-Pacific are better represented with 17 percent and 20 percent, respectively (see Figure 1).

Figure 1
The World Heritage List according to Types of Heritage and Continents 2009



Note: 21 Heritage Sites go across two countries each, one site goes across 10 countries. This and all further tables count sites as many times as the number of countries involved. We do not count the Old City of Jerusalem (ID 48), because it is associated with no country. Sites given to the Socialist Federal Republic of Yugoslavia are still counted under Serbia, although they now are listed under Croatia, Macedonia, Montenegro, and Slovenia. Ichan Kala (ID 543) is counted under Russia, because in 1990 Uzbekistan still was part of it. We do not count the Bialowieza Forest (ID 33) for Belarus, because in 1979 neither Belarus nor the USSR was in the World Heritage Convention. We do not count the Historic Center of Rome (ID 91) for the Holy, See, because in 1980 it was not yet a member of the World Heritage Convention.

Source: based on <http://whc.unesco.org/en/list> (accessed on August 30, 2010).

The distribution of sites across countries is also highly skewed. If we look at the world, we see that some countries have a large number of sites; others have a few sites, and a considerable number have none. Only ten countries have twenty sites (a large number) or more. On the other hand, there are thirty-eight countries with no sites at all. Some of these countries have been part

5. Continents follow the UN definition.

of the convention for a long time.⁶ As a measure of statistical dispersion a Gini coefficient of 0.55 in 2009 reflects the highly unequal distribution. A completely equal distribution (each country has the same number of sites or a Gini coefficient of 0) could be supported by the argument that every country should have the same importance with respect to its contribution to the heritage of humankind. This point of view emphasizes that every country should be of equal worth to an international organization, such as the UN and its agency UNESCO. This applies to culture in its broadest definition but also to nature; each country can be considered to have aspects of cultural and natural sites worth preserving. This particular point of view refrains from any attempt to compare the sites between countries. Clearly, this is an extreme position because it does not take into account the size of a country as measured by population or geographical extension.

A second position considering the relevant unit of the list is the size of the population per country rather than countries as such. This point of view seems to be most appropriate with respect to cultural sites. Each person of the world may be taken to have the same capacity to produce cultural goods. These goods may be of extremely different types and forms and would certainly not correspond to what are sometimes called high cultures, such as those of classical Egypt, Greece, or Rome. However, the cultural production may have occurred far back in the past when the population size was quite different from that of today. This historical population size varies from country to country; therefore, we focus on sites according to present population size. Taking the distribution according to the population as a reference, Europe is still on top with fifty-two sites per 100 million persons followed by the Arabian countries, the Americas, and Sub-Saharan Africa with twenty-three, eighteen, and eleven sites per 100 million inhabitants, respectively. The Asia–Pacific region has much less, five per 100 million inhabitants.

A third approach is a balance distribution that relates to the country's size as measured by area in square kilometers. The larger a country is, the more likely it is to find some site worth including on the list. This argument seems to be more convincing for natural sites. Most likely, a large country has more different landscapes than does a small one, some of which may fit the UNESCO criteria. The distribution of sites per square kilometer is also clearly headed by Europe with nineteen sites per million square kilometers, whereas all other continents possess between four and five (see Frey, Pamini, 2010).

The imbalances in the list according to continents and countries have been present from the very beginning. Inequality does not necessarily mean, of course, that the selection is incorrect. However, a strongly unequal selection may indicate that inappropriate aspects play a role. UNESCO accepts this point, and the imbalance has become a subject of major concern within the World Heritage Commission and Centre, UNESCO, and beyond.

Impact of the UNESCO Global Strategy

In 1994, twenty-two years after the adoption of the convention, UNESCO determined the list lacked balance in the type of inscribed properties and in the geographical areas of the world represented. "Among the 410 properties, 304 were cultural sites and only ninety were natural and sixteen mixed, while the vast majority is located in developed regions of the world, notably in Europe."⁷

Three objective criteria for a more balanced list are available: the distribution according to cultural and natural sites, the distribution according to a country's development, and the distribution according to continents. The operational guidelines stipulate in several propositions that a balance in the number of cultural and natural sites should be achieved (UNESCO, 2005, paras. 6, 15, and 58). Concerning the distribution of sites, we focus on successful inscriptions on the list instead of applications. If more applications are made by European countries (whether they have more potential sites or better resources to apply), more European coun-

6. For example, Guyana since 1977 or Monaco since 1978; however, larger countries such as Jamaica (since 1983) or countries with an important heritage, like Bhutan (since 2001) with its Djongs, have been disregarded.

7. <http://whc.unesco.org/en/globalstrategy> accessed on 26 January 2011

tries will be represented than countries from other continents. However, state parties often withdraw a nomination if there is a chance that the decision might be negative, leading to a distorted selection.⁸ To avoid such biases, we do not follow this approach but rather analyze only successful applications.

UNESCO further observed an imbalance with respect to the character of sites. A global study carried out by ICOMOS from 1987 to 1993 suggested that, in Europe, historic towns, religious monuments associated with Christianity, historical periods, and “elitist” architecture (in relation to vernacular) were all overrepresented on the world heritage list; whereas, all living cultures—especially traditional cultures—were underrepresented.

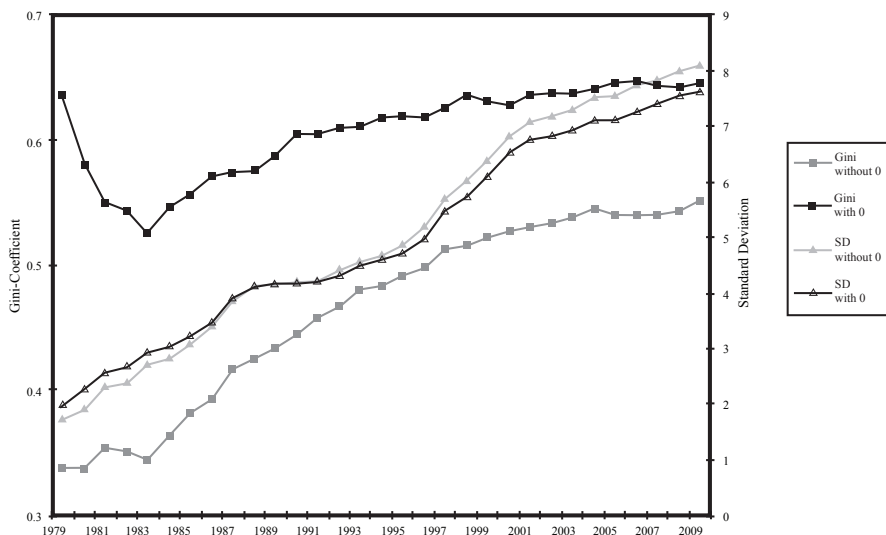
To support the global strategy in achieving greater balance, UNESCO intended to encourage countries to become state parties to the convention, to prepare tentative lists, and to advance the nominations of properties from categories and regions currently not well represented on the list. UNESCO intends to raise the share of non-European sites as well as the share of living cultures included on the list.

Inequality over Time

The global strategy is intended to lower the imbalance, increase the representativeness, and reduce European dominance. The time has come to empirically evaluate the outcome of the global strategy.

A first indicator of the imbalance is the Gini coefficient as a measure of statistical dispersion. As seen in Figure 2, the Gini coefficient of the distribution of sites across countries has risen almost monotonously over time from 0.34 in 1979 to 0.55 in 2009. The distribution of sites is increasingly concentrated in countries that already have many sites. The calculation does not include countries with no sites, to avoid biases by countries that become members of the convention and start with no sites. Another way to reduce the bias produced by new member countries is to include countries with no sites but only if they have been members of the convention for at least two years. The minimum amount of time the committee needs to decide on a nomination is twelve

Figure 2
Dispersion of World Heritage Sites according to Countries 1979–2009



8. Furthermore, data on applications available on the UNESCO homepage is incomplete.

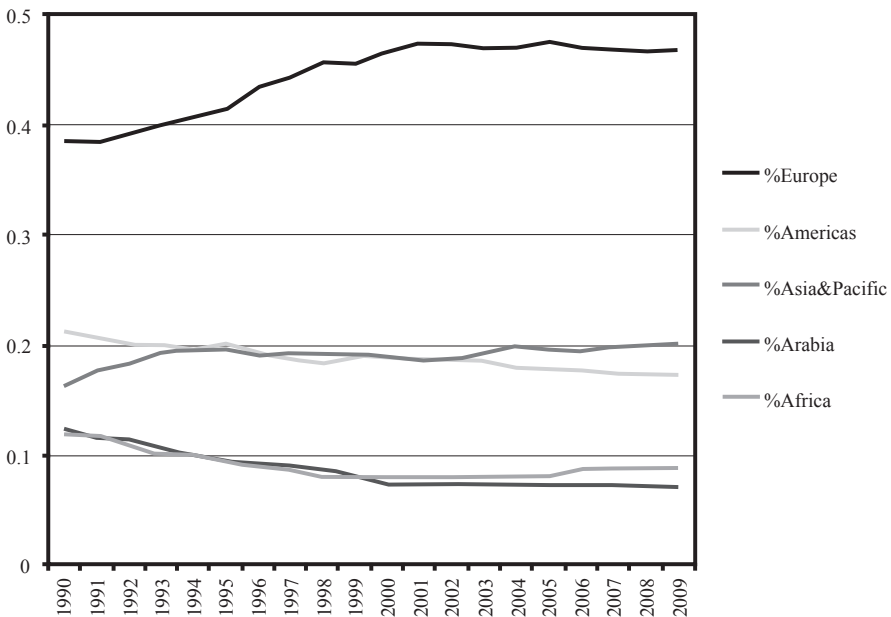
months (Aanna Leask, Fyall, 2001). When including the zero observations, the Gini coefficient is higher; it increased from 0.52 in 1984 to 0.65 in 2009. However, it is increasing less strongly than the Gini coefficient that does not include countries without sites.⁹

Another measure of dispersion is the standard deviation of the number of sites per country. The standard deviation has risen from around 2.0 to 7.6 with the mean increasing from 1.2 to 4.9 sites per country in the same period. Here the different calculation methods have little effect on the results. Both dispersion measures suggest the new global strategy clearly did not help to reduce the inequality of the distribution among countries, i.e., relatively fewer countries obtain a larger share of sites over time.

The number of sites on the list has continuously grown over time. On average, about thirty properties have been added to the list each year. The growth rate has even accelerated, from twenty-six sites per year from 1978 to 1994 to thirty-six sites per year afterward. The e-list now contains over 900 sites. As shown in Figure 1, today, the European countries hold almost half of all sites. This European dominance was one of the reasons for launching the global strategy. Surprisingly, the number of new European sites per year exhibited a strong increase after 1990, which lasted until the year 2000. Even recently, the European countries have been granted more additional sites in almost every year than have all the other continents. Consequently, the share of total sites belonging to Europe rose even after the introduction of the global strategy (see Figure 3).

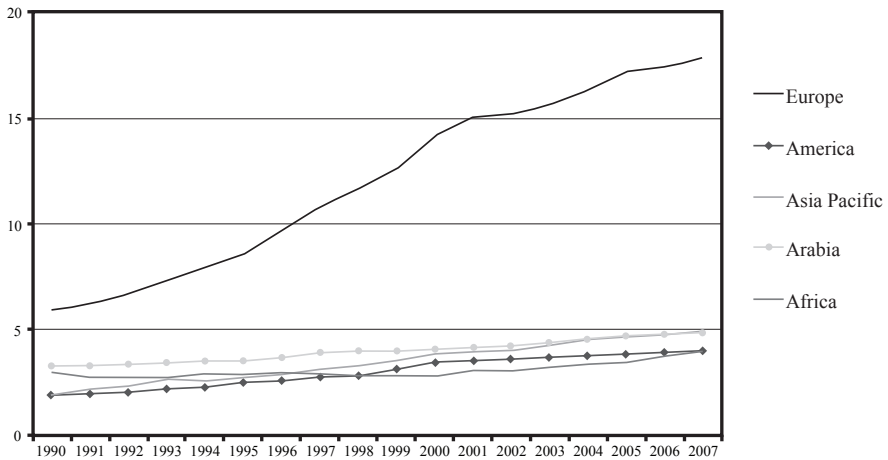
As argued above, the relevant unit for consideration on the list could be the size of the population or area per country. Figure 4 shows the number of total sites per one million square kilometers for each continent.

Figure 3
Share of Total Sites per Continent 1990–2009



9. The decrease in the beginning can be explained by the many countries that had no sites when the convention was launched but soon obtained at least some sites.

Figure 4
Number of Sites per Area and Continent 1990–2007

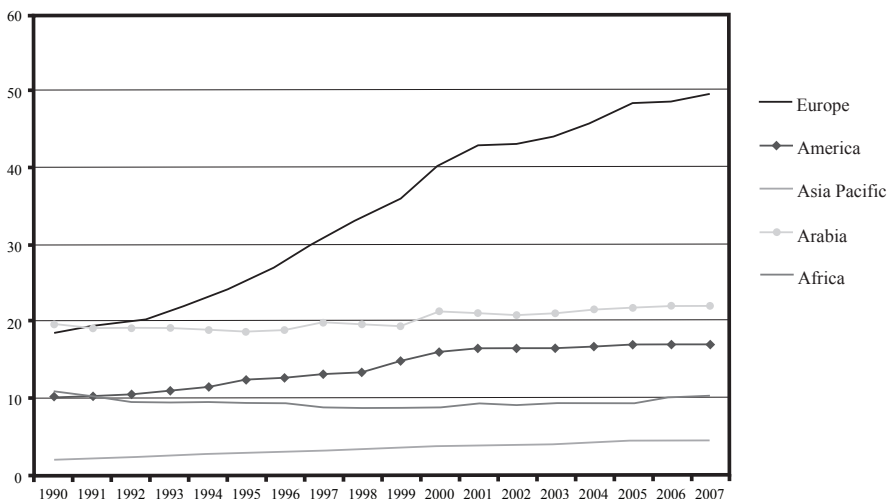


Europe by far has the most sites per area, and Europe's number of sites compared to all other continents is increasing over time. Here, we show the development after 1990 when the last major change of the area occurred after the USSR joined the convention in 1988. It is also the most relevant time range for our analyses. There are no indications that the introduction of the global strategy in 1994 had any effect. The European countries also lead the distribution of sites per person. As shown in Figure 5, in 2007, the European continent had about fifty sites per 100 million persons, whereas all other continents ranged between five and twenty-three sites per 100 million persons.

Distribution According to Cultural and Natural sites

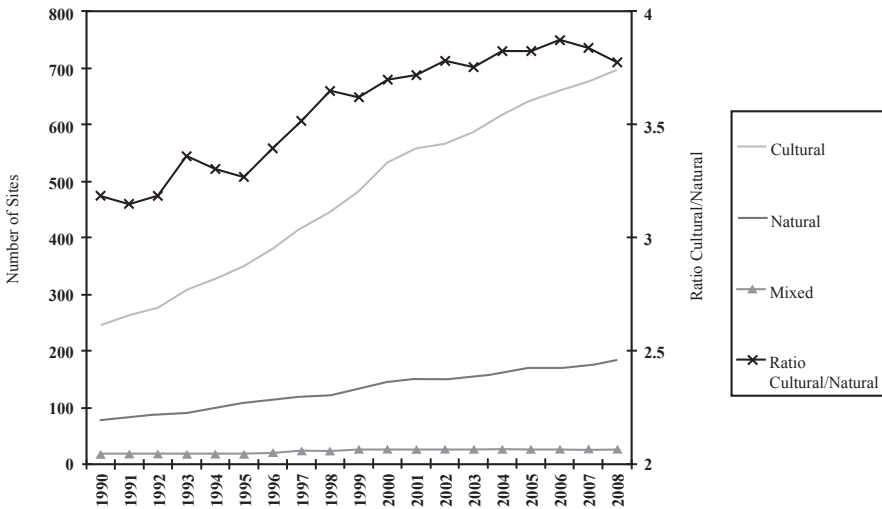
The distribution of sites according to cultural and natural sites is very unequal. Today 77 percent of the sites are cultural and only 20 percent are natural. This imbalance clearly favors the

Figure 5
Number of Sites according to Population and Continent 1990–2007



European countries, which are more successful in obtaining cultural sites than are countries from other continents. The operational guidelines stipulate an equal distribution of cultural and natural sites should be achieved (UNESCO, 2005). In 1980, the U.S. delegate to the committee suggested establishing a working group on the balance of cultural and natural sites (Strasser, 2002). One goal of the global strategy is to approximate the share of these two types of sites. Figure 6 depicts the development of the number of cultural, natural, and mixed sites. Although the number of mixed sites has increased the least, the number of cultural sites has increased much faster than the number of natural sites. In relative terms, the ratio of cultural to natural sites tends to increase monotonously over time. This reflects an increasing share of cultural sites—even after the introduction of the global strategy.

Figure 6
Development of Number of Cultural, Natural, and Mixed Sites 1990–2009



Simultaneous Analysis of the Impact of the UNESCO Strategy

The next step is to investigate the impact of the global strategy on the distribution of sites by simultaneously controlling for different factors. Here, we focus on two factors explicitly mentioned in the global strategy: the European predominance and the impact of the development level of a country on the number of sites.

First, we perform cross-section regressions to estimate the impact of the continents and GDP per capita (1,000 USD per capita) as a measure for economic development. The dependent variable is the total number of sites a country had before the global strategy (1993) and the number it had fourteen years later (2007). Because the number of sites is a count variable, we use negative binomial regressions to estimate the partial correlations.¹⁰ We control for the factors introduced above: area (one million square kilometers), as a proxy for natural potential, and population (100 million persons), as a proxy for cultural production potential. As a technical control variable, we add the number of years that a country has been part of the convention, limiting its potential to get sites (tenure). Table 1 shows the estimated coefficients for the years 1993 and 2007 and for the new sites obtained in the period between 1993 and 2007.

10. For count data, one can also estimate Poisson regression models. In our case, these models lead to qualitatively and quantitatively very similar results. In Stata, count data models can be compared with the “countfit” command. A comparison of the mean differences, the sum of the Pearson statistic, and the AIC and BIC statistics suggest applying negative binomial regressions to our data. Thus, we only show the results of these estimations.

Table 1: Determinants of World Heritage List Inclusion

	sites per country 1993	sites per country 2007	Growth of sites per country 1993–2007
	(1)	(2)	(3)
AREA	0.0803** (2.083)	0.0887** (2.511)	0.0950** -2.035
POPULATION	0.165** (2.275)	0.184*** (3.041)	0.191** -2.46
TENURE	0.130*** (7.150)	0.0839*** (8.147)	0.0411*** -3.255
GDPPC	0.00858 (0.676)	0.0212*** (2.738)	0.0296*** -2.933
AFRICA	-1.284*** (-4.272)	-1.283*** (-5.479)	-1.324*** (-4.412)
AMERICA	-0.933*** (-3.477)	-0.965*** (-4.416)	-0.956*** (-3.398)
ASIA-PACIFIC	-0.565* (-1.939)	-0.805*** (-3.744)	-0.942*** (-3.476)
ARABIA	-0.999*** (-2.911)	-1.084*** (-3.591)	-1.554*** (-3.500)
EUROPE	(reference continent)		
Constant	-0.0930 (-0.357)	-0.145 (-0.550)	0.173 (0.546)
Observations	127	166	166

Note: Cross-section estimations. z-statistics in parentheses: *** p<0.01, ** p<0.05, * p<0.1

Although the coefficients of area and population remain similar, the coefficient for tenure decreases, which reflects the increasing number of countries in the convention. The more years a country has been a member of the convention, the more sites it obtains. This relationship was less strong in 2007 than in 1993 because of new member countries with more recent tenure obtaining sites.

With Europe as a reference category, the coefficients of most continent dummies have not changed in a statistically significant way between 1993 and 2007. Even when controlling for the size of a country and tenure in the convention, non-European continents did not catch up with Europe in terms of the number of sites. The only continent that shows a significant change is Asia–Pacific but in the unintended direction; countries on this continent obtained even fewer sites compared to Europe than before the global strategy was started. The size of the coefficients can be interpreted by computing the exponent of the estimated coefficient to get the so-called incidence rate ratio (IRR), which indicates the factor change in the expected count of sites for a unit increase in the independent variable. In column 2, the African countries have, for instance, an $IRR = e^{-1.283} = 0.277$. This means that being located in Africa is accompanied with a relative decrease of the expected number of sites of $IRR - 1 = -72.3$ percent compared to the European countries.

Moreover, the global strategy is intended to increase the share of sites in less developed regions. When GDP per capita is used as a measure for economic development, the estimated coefficients reveal that the global strategy also failed with respect to this objective. Although in 1993, before the introduction of the global strategy, the coefficient of GDP per capita was not statistically significantly correlated with the number of sites, fourteen years later the correlation was positive and significant. More developed countries obtained more sites after the introduction of the global strategy. An increase in GDP per capita by 1,000 USD leads to a relative increase

of 2.14 percent in the expected number of sites. We also estimate the impact of the determinants mentioned above only for the sites obtained after 1993. The results in Table 1, column 3, support our previous results.

In a second step, we test for a structural break by using the panel structure of the data and introducing a global strategy dummy taking the value one after 1993. Interaction effects of the global strategy dummy and the determinants reveal whether the slope of these determinants changed after 1993, which would be an indicator for the success of the global strategy. Again, we use the total number of sites of a country up to a certain year as the dependent variable with panel data structure and random effects.¹¹ In the basic setting without interaction effects, the results from the cross-section estimations hold (see Table 2, column 4).

In Table 2, column 5, we introduce interaction effects. The global strategy dummy is positive and significant. Sites are almost never delisted, so the stock is increasing continuously after 1993. The interaction coefficient of the global strategy and tenure is negative and statistically significant, which indicates that after the global strategy was introduced the relationship of tenure and total sites is less positive than before (but still positive in absolute terms). This reflects the increasing number of member countries. Because the growth of the list is limited, more countries induce a slower increase of the stock per country. The interaction term of strategy and GDP per capita is positive and strongly significant. After the global strategy was introduced, the sites distribution became increasingly biased toward the more developed countries. The interaction effects with the continent dummies of Africa, the Americas, and the Arabian countries are significant and negative. The sites distribution became increasingly biased toward European countries after the global strategy was introduced.

A somewhat different approach is to use the new sites per year a country gets as a dependent variable. These estimations of the flow of sites confirm our previous results (see Table 2, column 6). The only difference is the negative coefficient of tenure. Countries that have been members for a longer time obtain fewer sites per year. However, in this specification, the only significant interaction-term coefficient is the one of the global strategy and tenure (see Table 2, column 7). This coefficient is positive and significant, indicating that after the global strategy was introduced the more tenured countries obtained relatively more sites than did countries with lower tenure. This is contradictory to UNESCO's aim to support countries that recently joined the convention.

Overall, our results indicate that the global strategy did not help to increase the balance and representativeness of the list with respect to continents and development. If anything, the distribution of sites has become even more biased, considering the objectives set by UNESCO.

Reforming the List

Some of the shortcomings of the list have been noticed by the convention, and proposals for reform have been discussed. One shortcoming is the unbalanced distribution of sites, which was the aim of the Global Strategy, as discussed above. UNESCO intends to increase the representativeness of the list but struggles to find appropriate criteria (e.g., chronological periods, cultural criteria, or regional distribution). However, underrepresented state parties are encouraged to apply to change the composition of the list. Considering the imbalance of the list, UNESCO has developed a priority system, which prefers state parties with no sites. Moreover, the number of sites per country and year is limited to one, in an effort to decrease the imbalance (Strasser, 2002). However, these measures have not had a significant effect so far. In addition, Van der Aa (2005) proposes opening the nomination process; every country, organization, or individual should be allowed to nominate sites. Many more sites would be nominated, so the selection process within a country would probably be less biased. However, the evaluation by the committee would have to be much stricter.

11. The total number of sites in year t is correlated with the number of sites in year $t-1$. However, the Random Effects model permits serial correlation in the model error.

Table 2: Testing for a Structural Break in 1994—Panel Estimations of Stock and Flow Determinants

VARIABLES	sites up to year t	sites up to year t	sites per year	sites per year
	(4)	(5)	(6)	(7)
AREA	0.207*** (2.787)	0.230*** (2.858)	0.125*** (4.102)	0.141*** (4.073)
POPULATION	0.0805** (2.572)	0.0622 (1.108)	0.149*** (3.386)	0.120** (1.982)
TENURE	0.0588*** (33.92)	0.121*** (29.12)	-0.0157*** (-2.769)	-0.0377*** (-2.625)
GDPPC	0.0129** (2.364)	-0.00971 (-1.057)	0.0231*** (3.122)	0.0197 (1.470)
AFRICA	-1.374*** (-4.878)	-1.312*** (-4.280)	-1.118*** (-5.318)	-0.891*** (-2.879)
AMERICA	-1.047*** (-3.425)	-1.081*** (-3.299)	-0.724*** (-3.788)	-0.498** (-1.990)
ASIA-PACIFIC	-0.946*** (-3.264)	-0.967*** (-3.139)	-0.891*** (-4.531)	-0.642** (-2.171)
ARABIA	-0.959*** (-2.668)	-0.981** (-2.558)	-0.989*** (-3.985)	-0.675** (-1.982)
EUROPE	(reference continent)			
STRATEGY		0.924*** (12.50)		-0.00749 (-0.0312)
Strat*Area		0.00211 (0.249)		-0.0266 (-1.064)
Strat*Pop		0.00622 (0.428)		0.0364 (0.819)
Strat*Tenure		-0.0757*** (-18.63)		0.0278* (1.759)
Strat*Gdppc		0.00956*** (2.689)		0.00302 (0.252)
Strat*Africa		-0.350*** (-4.261)		-0.378 (-1.118)
Strat*America		-0.134** (-2.005)		-0.409 (-1.641)
Strat*Asia		-0.0968 (-1.237)		-0.371 (-1.230)
Strat*Arabia		-0.164* (-1.948)		-0.545 (-1.375)
Constant	17.01 (0.145)	16.91 (0.139)	-0.246 (-1.266)	-0.228 (-0.883)
Observations	3,458	3,458	3,458	3,458
Number of id	176	176	176	176
Log likelihood	-5339	-5116	-1818	-1813

Notes (Table 2) : Dependent variable (4) & (5): Accumulated total number of sites of per country up to year t.
 Dependent variable (6) & (7): Total number of new sites per Country in year t.
 Random effects estimates 1978-2007.
 z-statistics in parentheses: *** p<0.01, ** p<0.05, * p<0.1

A second major shortcoming is that the number of sites on the list has continuously grown over time. The convention does not set a numerical limit for the list, and this overextension of the list imposes problems whereby the committee has to monitor the state of conservation and management of the sites (Benhamou, 1996). Imposing a time restriction or making a reevaluation after a certain time obligatory would mitigate this problem because these changes simplify the delisting of sites. This sunset clause is successfully applied within the European Diploma for Protected Areas. The convention discussed this proposal, but it received little support. In 2003, a maximum number of total new sites per year (thirty) were introduced.

Another suggestion for reform is to introduce an overall maximum number of sites. Doing so would solve the problem of overextension. Monitoring the sites would be facilitated significantly. Sites would be listed according to their quality but also according to their state of maintenance. Compared to the actual situation, a competition for the best protection would arise in order to be listed (Frey, Steiner, 2011).

Conclusion

The effort of UNESCO through the World Heritage Commission to establish a world heritage list containing the most treasured sites of humanity's culture and landscapes constitutes a great step forward toward preserving one of the most important global public goods on our planet. The list now contains more than nine hundred sites, and its number has been steadily increasing since its establishment almost forty years ago.

The selection of sites, however, is questionable. It is subject to rent-seeking, not only by the national interests pursued by politicians and bureaucrats but also by the commercial heritage industry. To mitigate the high imbalance of the list in 1994, UNESCO launched the global strategy for a balanced, representative, and credible world heritage list. Three of the main goals mentioned by the global strategy were lowering the overrepresentation of developed countries and the European continent and increasing the share of natural compared to cultural sites.

Although there is some literature about the global strategy and the unequal distribution of sites, there is a lack of empirical evidence evaluating the development of the imbalance, the impact of the global strategy, and, therewith, the effectiveness of this particular international organization to achieve a more balanced distribution. This paper intends to fill this gap. Surprisingly, all indicators suggest the list has become, if anything, even more imbalanced since the global strategy was introduced. The share of cultural to natural sites has continued to increase, exacerbating the goal of a balanced distribution of these categories. The Gini coefficient reveals the distribution of sites is now more concentrated than ever. The number of sites in Europe compared to other continents continued to increase after 1993. Moreover, economically more developed countries obtained relatively more sites. Furthermore, in contrast to the intention of the global strategy, countries with more tenure obtain relatively more sites per year. Possible measures to lower the imbalance of the list include limiting the number of sites per country and year or opening the nominations to everyone until the imbalance is reduced.

The positive effects of the list on global heritage protection cannot be doubted. However, the striking imbalance of the list reflects a biased nomination process. It is very likely that not all sites deserving this label are a part of the list. The fact that the decision makers of UNESCO itself realized the unequal distribution and launched the global strategy supports this view. However, as we show empirically, the global strategy was not successful in reducing European predominance. This paper intends to attract attention to the persisting imbalance of the list, and it can serve as a starting point for further discussion about possible reforms to protect our global heritage.

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With regard to the second issue, Kofi Annan presented the idea of “three pillars” on which the work of the UN should be based. In his report “In larger freedom: towards development, security, and human rights for all” (A/59/2005), Annan stated that development, security, and human rights (i.e., the three pillars) are all imperative, interdependent, and mutually reinforcing, and that “we will not enjoy development without security, we will not enjoy security without development, and we will not enjoy either without respect for human rights” (United Nations 2005a, para. 17). The report called for high level and sustainable UN engagement in human rights; a more active role for the high commissioner for human rights in the deliberations of the Security Council and of the proposed peace-building commission; and the incorporation of human rights into decision-making and discussion throughout the work of the organization (United Nations 2005a, para.144).

In my view, the “three pillar” concept constituted an unprecedented attempt to integrate human rights into the work of the UN on an equal footing with security and development and to provide the human rights machinery with conditions for operating in the mainstream of the UN activities, in close correlation with the Security Council. If implemented, that concept could have created the conditions for a consolidated, systemic UN approach to human rights in all their dimensions and included enacting of the provisions on the R2P.

However, this was strongly opposed by the supporters of the traditional concept of “security,” perceived as the top priority for the organization, as well as the opponents of the protection of human rights and the perception that they are necessary for ensuring lasting peace. Indeed, the concept encountered firm resistance from some member states as well as some entities in the UN system fearing the loss of their traditional “turfs,” and so it was never formally considered.

UN Reform and the UN Human Rights Machinery

Although the concept of “three pillars” has gradually faded away, some parts of the human rights machinery have benefited from some of its principles and have been considerably strengthened in the process of UN reform.

Some of the newly established entities do in fact bear the legacy of its philosophy. The Commission on Human Rights was converted into the Human Rights Council (HRC) in 2006, with a slightly revised mandate; the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights (HCHR) gained more visible role and the activities of his/her office (OHCHR) were extended to the UN peace operations and field offices.

For many years, in my contacts with the then Commission on Human Rights (CHR) and the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR) in Geneva, I have heard complaints from member states, human rights NGOs, and the public about the politicization of the commission’s work and selective targeting or praising of states. The east–west divide, replaced in the early nineties by the north–south divide has not made the work of the commission any easier. Moreover, a number of states with poor human rights records, including Libya (which ironically served as chair in 2003), Sudan, and Sierra Leone, had at various times been members of the CHR, which undermined its credibility. This concern was reflected in the report of the UN’s “High-Level Panel on Threats, Challenges and Change” stating:

Standard-setting to reinforce human rights cannot be performed by states that lack a demonstrated commitment to their promotion and protection. We are concerned that in recent years states have sought membership . . . not to strengthen human rights but to protect themselves against criticism. (United Nations, 2004).

In addition to having elections that made it possible for human rights violators to come on board, the body came under further criticism for its short annual meeting times, too numerous membership, its inability to call emergency sessions and respond to gross human rights violations, and its overall inefficiency (Lauren 2007, Alston 2006, Annan 2005).

It is difficult to assess the impact of the reform on the performance of the human rights machinery. Though I do believe that would require a comprehensive evaluation by an independent board, here I outline some elements of my personal, insider's opinion on this matter.

The Human Rights Council (HRC)

In establishing HRC in June 2006, as the successor to the Commission on Human Rights, the General Assembly (Resolution A/60/251, 15 March 2006) mandated the council to serve as the forum for dialogue on human rights protection and promotion with the primary task of preventing human rights violations and responding to human rights emergencies, with additional monitoring and advisory functions (see Ramcharan 2008).

What has changed in HRC's work in comparison to its predecessor? It should be clear that some elements of continuity remained, such as the critical role in establishing human rights standards⁴ and the overall substance of the complaints procedure.⁵ Moreover, HRC continued to make use of special procedures: Ad hoc mandates given to individuals or working groups to study cases and patterns of rights abuses. Special procedures, with both thematic mandates looking at categories of rights (for example, torture, summary executions) and country-specific mandates (i.e., Liberia) constitute another opportunity to bring to the attention of the council gross violations of human rights or thematic areas of structured discrimination and violence. The special rapporteurs, in particular in such areas as torture, extrajudicial executions, enforced disappearances, arbitrary detentions, and violence against women, are particularly well placed to assess the facts on the ground and suggest means of prevention or action. Special procedures allow for mandate holders to visit the countries, engage in dialogue with respective governments, make public statements on the issues, collect data, request fact-finding on the ground, denounce violators, and demand an emergency session of the council.

The shortcoming of the procedure is that the country visits require an invitation, or at least consent of the host country, and the council has the last word in appointments of special rapporteurs and extension of their mandates. Thus, those who antagonize the member states have low chances for being reappointed. That, however, is the shortcoming of all elective governmental bodies, including HRC and the human rights treaty bodies.

4. Since its establishment in 1946, the CHR's most notable achievements were the elaboration of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (1948); the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights (CESCR, 1966); and the International Covenant on Political and Civil Rights (CPCR, 1966); which together with the two Optional Protocols to the CCPR constitute the International Bill of Human Rights. It also played important role in assisting in elaboration of other human rights treaties and supporting their monitoring mechanisms.

5. The commission implemented mechanisms to allow for the discussion of human rights violations. The 1,235 procedure allowed for public discussion of a pattern of rights violations in a state, while the 1,503 mechanism gave an avenue for individuals and NGOs to make confidential (though not anonymous) complaints about patterns of rights abuses in a particular country or region.

However, HRC differs from its predecessor in various ways, which I find to have both positive and negative effects:

First, the time allocated to its work was significantly expanded to no fewer than three sessions per year for a total duration of no less than ten weeks (para. 10), with the possibility of holding special sessions in addition, if supported by one-third of the council's membership.

Second, its membership was slightly reduced from fifty-three to forty-seven. Although its members are elected by secret ballot, directly by the GA's majority vote, the strict distribution of the number of seats among all regional groups leaves to their discretion, whose candidacy they put forward for voting. That, in my view, along with the lack of tangible criteria of what human rights record is required from the candidate-states, does not ensure a qualitative change in the composition of HRC, compared to its predecessor. Since its creation in 2006, such countries as Libya, Egypt, Sri Lanka, and Saudi Arabia were and/or are its members.

The only requirement stated in the GA res. 60/251 in this respect is the reference that in electing council's members their contribution to the protection and promotion of human rights and their voluntary pledges should be taken into account; further, if the member of HRC commits "gross systemic violations of human rights" (para. 8) the GA can by the same procedure suspend it from the council. To the credit of the council, this provision has been applied to Libya by the adoption of a precedent-setting resolution A/HRC/Res/S-15/1, on 25 February 2011.

Third, the council's increased ability to respond to gross human rights violations constitutes its major and unprecedented achievement. That, however, would not be possible without strong leadership of the UNHCHR, assisted by the office with staff spread across the globe.

Lastly, was the introduction of a Universal Periodic Review (UPR), which was rightly considered an important positive change in the work of HRC. Because the main criticism levied against CHR had been its politicization and lack of clear criteria of membership and performance, it was unsurprising that one of the first acts of the Human Rights Council was to establish a mechanism that would allow for a more objective, comprehensive review of the human rights situation in all UN states called the Universal Periodic Review (UPR). The review takes place every four years according to the following procedure. The country under review submits its report; other "stakeholders," including NGOs and other member states, provide relevant information to be summarized by the office of the high commissioner for human rights in a ten-page report. Subsequently, the UPR working group, consisting of the HRC members, engages in a dialogue with the country under review, other UN member states who choose to attend the review, and other speakers, including NGOs and members of the secretariat, eligible to attend the meeting. A *troika* of three states selected from HRC by the drawing of lots serve as rapporteurs who manage the review session (limited to three hours, the first portion of which is reserved for the state under review to make its presentation) and prepare the outcome document that includes a series of recommendations to the state under review. The state has the opportunity to accept or reject the recommendations; the recommendations and the responses are to be included in the final report (OHCHR, 2008).

Although UPR is generally considered the biggest achievement of the reform, the results seem to be mixed, and we should not rush to judgment. On the positive side, it could be noted

that all countries have gone, by now, through the review and that it provided comprehensive material on all aspects of human rights in these countries creating solid bases for the comprehensive discussion. Some countries have taken the process seriously, while others have been less concerned or tried to manipulate it. Such practices as mobilizing friendly speakers and “regional” solidarity, submission of reports of government-friendly NGOs, and attempts to suppress regime critics have been observed (Sweeney and Saito 2009). Thus, certain aspects of UPR reminded me of the practice in the Commission on Human Rights. For example, China rejected out of hand most recommendations and admitted almost no areas of concern in the country report (Human Rights Watch 2009). China also demanded that the recommendations and comments rejected by the state under review should not be included in the final report. On the other hand, the U.S., under the administration of President Obama, accepted most of them and opened up the outcome of the review to a broad, civil-society-led discussion. During the review of Tunisia under the “old” regime, out of sixty-five statements, fifty were favorable and made mainly by African and Middle-East countries while the most critical observations of the human rights situation in the UK were made by non-Western countries (Abebe 2009: 19–20). Both Russia and Libya received some positive comments on their reports, praising their commitment to the review requirements. The statements, however, overlooked the grave, although distinct violations of human rights in both countries. In the case of Russia, most states seemed to “overlook” the ongoing gross human rights violations in the North Caucasus that had begun in the 1990s; as regards Libya, HRC drastically reversed its assessment later on, by recommending suspension of their membership in February 2011.

Although UPR provides a nondiscriminatory venue to “blame and shame” for human rights violations and some of the sessions were very tense, I am not sure if it had any tangible impact on the countries with oppressive human rights systems. They seem to protect successfully their domestic sphere from the international scrutiny. It is to be seen to what extent the second review can be built on the outcomes of the first one; deepen the focus on the weaknesses which had emerged and follow on the declared plans and promises of states, to check if they were fulfilled in four years; and, above all, to ensure that final reports include full records of the debate.

The Role of the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights and that Office (OHCHR)

The post and office of the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights (HCHR) was established by GA Res. 48/141 in 1993. The mandate of HCHR and the office has not changed since then but has been substantively strengthened through a number of internal decisions in the context of the UN reform.⁶ The size and budget of the office was significantly increased; human rights field presence was established in all UN peace missions in conflict and post-conflict countries and in all UNDP offices (currently UN integrated field offices). I saw in these changes, which rescue the main spirit of Kofi Annan’s efforts to create a “three pillar” system, a reflection of the former secretary-general’s view that had the work of the organization been better coordinated and its presence in the field stronger in the nineties, the massacres of Srebrenica

6. Its mandate focused on the promotion and protection of human rights throughout the world and prevention of human rights violations; human rights education and their mainstreaming throughout the UN system; monitoring human rights situation world-wide and reporting thereon to the HRC and GA; and, in some situations to the SC (i.e., as briefings by HCHR on the human rights situation in countries under SC consideration; outcomes of special inquiries, like the recent one on Syria). The office also acted as the secretariat of CHR (now HRC).

and Rwanda could have been prevented, and his conviction of the need for a greater human rights field presence during times of crisis to provide timely information to UN bodies so they could prepare a crisis response.

The position of the UNHCHR became more visible and significant due to its increased exposure to the global media, and raising sensitivity of the public to the human rights abuses and larger participation of the civil society in various human rights activities worldwide, including monitoring of the UN bodies. Governments of countries with relatively democratic systems have to take into account the views of their electorates; other countries want to refrain from being publically blamed and shamed. All these factors open the opportunities for HCHR to ensure a higher profile of the office, broader outreach to mass media and the civil society and, consequently, more flexibility and independence. Moreover, as HCHR members were elected directly by the general assembly, they were less susceptible to the direct pressures of the great powers.

The new demands and opportunities had impact on the quality of the candidates appointed to the job. When I recall the first two HCHRs, both men, coming from the governmental structure and UN bureaucracy respectively, Ayola Lasso of Ecuador, and Ibrahim Fall, a UN high ranking official, and the three women with strong legal backgrounds and leadership qualities who succeeded them, I am amazed by the difference in the visibility, style, and the ability to make a mark on the work of the human rights machinery by the latter. Moreover, I remember the occasions when female HCHRs took strong stands on the issues, disregarding the risks of antagonizing some governments and other power brokers.

Mary Robinson (1997–2002), a former president of Ireland, was a strong advocate of the human rights of women, equal rights for gay and lesbian, and historical and legal reassessment of all human rights violations related to the slavery. She also dared to speak up against gross human rights violations in Chechnya by Russia, as one of a few voices at the international arena and, for sure, the only one at the UN.

Louise Arbour of Canada (2004–08), a former chief prosecutor for ICTFY, strongly advocated the “three pillar” concept and accountability for all through ending impunity for past and ongoing human rights violations. She also created a rapid response unit in her office to step up efforts to ensure timely and systematic response to human rights violations requiring urgent action (UNHCHR 2001). I know from my field experience, that such priorities were not welcomed by supporters of compromises with local warlords and the advocates of the priority of the peace process over justice. Also unpopular among the local authorities and some heads of UN field offices was her demand for public reporting on the human rights situation in various states where human rights offices were located.

The role of the current HCHR, Navi Pillay of South Africa, a former judge of ICC and ICT for Rwanda, became particularly visible during the “Arab Spring.” She supported strongly, although not always successfully, independent investigations into the gross human rights violations in Libya, Syria, Yemen, and Bahrain, and made numerous interventions thereon to HRC and the Security Council. She also made her voice heard requesting inquiry into the disturbing circumstances of Colonel Khadafy’s death, unlike some Western diplomats who claimed that he “got what he deserved.”

REPORTING FROM THE FIELD ON HUMAN RIGHTS SITUATIONS

The issue of reporting on human rights situation deserves, in my view, a broader reflection. During the term of Louise Arbour as UNHCHR, and in accordance with the secretary-general's policy committee decision 2005/24 on human rights in integrated missions, human rights components in DPKO integrated peace missions began thorough periodic and thematic public reporting on the human rights situation in host countries. These reports, shared with local authorities and the public were often launched at press conferences. If the head of the UN peace mission feared that a given report could negatively affect his/her relation with the host country, the reports were issued under the name of UNHCHR. There were also many discussions as to the format of such reports, often too bulky, not sufficiently analytical, and always perceived as objectionable by the host country.

As the director of the Human Rights Section at the United Nations Mission in Liberia (UNMIL) and representative of UNHCHR in Liberia (2004–07), I was responsible for such reports. Although they addressed all aspects of the human rights situation in the country in a given period, they excluded, to my dismay, the alleged human rights violations and misconduct by the members of the international community, including the UN staff. These incidents, although committed by a very small percentage of the staff (mainly military and policemen), were highly visible and deeply resented by the local population. There was the sense of prevailing impunity and double standard, as the alleged perpetrators have been quickly sent home, with no tangible consequences, due legal process open to the victims, or any form of legally defined retribution or properly assessed compensation. Although the cases of misconduct and human rights violations by UN staff were not part of the mandate of UN human rights field offices but various parts of the mission's administration (the code of conduct unit, the office of personnel, and offices of various contingents' commanders), and were subject to different reporting lines, much less visible, this issue affected the credibility of UN reporting in some countries and made my role even more difficult.

With time, OHCHR redefined the format of public reports, making them shorter, more concise and analytical, focussing on the issues rather than individuals (i.e., ministers, or other individuals/institutions on the ground) responsible, thus less irritating to the local authorities. It remains to be seen if these reports had any practical impact on the development of human rights in the country. I also wonder if their content has been used in the relevant SC debates or as an element of the early warning system.

HUMAN RIGHTS ENTITIES AND THE "ONE UN"

Another change introduced in the context of UN reform is the "one UN" policy aimed at consolidating UN field presence in the country under common leadership of a UN resident coordinator (humanitarian coordinator in DPKO peace-keeping missions). Currently, OHCHR is represented in all UN peace missions and fifty-four country teams. Some mandates, in particular in the DPKO integrated missions, are very comprehensive and include, in addition to reporting, some aspects of transitional justice, support to victims of human rights violations, training, and advocacy. While the concept of one UN country team has numerous advantages (consolidation of resources, better coordination of work among various agencies, reduction of overlaps), its impact on the protection and promotion of human rights should be carefully

assessed. I know, for example, that in post-conflict countries, the cases involving human rights abuses by influential politicians, often create a tension between the human rights officers' attempts to end impunity and the UN political leadership's to refrain from antagonizing local authorities and promoting the peace process. On the other hand, I am also aware of cases in which the work of human rights units benefited from support by the political leadership of the UN in the field, as high-level involvement with the local authorities paved the way for accepting otherwise unpopular findings or actions. Thus, the role of human rights officers and units in the framework of "one UN" should be revisited to bridge better between the two areas of security and human rights.

The Arab Spring as a Test for the New UN Human Rights Machinery

One of the critical questions defining the credibility of the UN, including its human rights machinery, is how the system responds to gross violations of human rights. In my opinion, the record is mixed but improving.

While it seems that in the first years of its existence HRC had not been able to address gross human rights violations efficiently (for example, in the case of Darfur), it has revived and sharpened its focus since the beginning of the "Arab Spring." Not only has it managed to call a special session to discuss the situation in Libya, condemning the atrocities committed on her citizens, but, in view of the lack of positive respond from Libya, HRC called for Libya's suspension from the council. The GA acted accordingly and Libya was suspended on 25 February 2011, without a vote and by consensus (A/HRC/Res/S-15). The High Commissioner for Human Rights (HCHR) also reported on the alleged gross human rights violations by the Libyan authorities to SC and emphasized the need to protect civilians. Subsequently, UNSC adopted resolution 1973 (17 March 2011) which, invoking the R2P principle, led to a military action by NATO.

The UN human rights machinery has been less successful in the case of Syria, but it has been persistent in its efforts pressuring SC. HRC held two special sessions in April and August 2011, drawing attention to the violation by Syria of its protection obligations, due to ongoing gross violations of human rights of its citizens. It also appointed a fact-finding mission that concluded that the scale of violations amounts to crimes against humanity.⁷ HCHR briefed SC members of these outcomes, calling for their referral to ICC. However, as SC had not taken any decisive action, HRC established another Commission of Inquiry in August to investigate crimes against humanity in Syria. The new commission reiterated conclusions of the previous report and transmitted a preliminary report to all relevant UN bodies, including SC, in December 2011 (United Nations 2012).⁸ Still, SC has not decided on any action due to the opposition of its two permanent members, Russia and China. The traditional security and sovereignty concerns once more prevented the action aimed at protection of human lives.

Despite the efforts of HCHR and some delegations, encouraged by the pressure from the public, HRC failed to take a comparable action in the cases on Bahrain and Yemen. Although the atrocities are similar, the initiatives met the opposition from a number of countries,

7. As Syria had refused the team access to the country, the report was based on a variety of other sources. See Report on the Fact-Finding Mission on Syria pursuant to HRC res. S-16/1 of 29 April 2011.

8. The final report will be presented in March 2012.

including the United States. Like SC, HRC is a political body, and its actions are dependent on and limited by the will of the member states.

Conclusions and Recommendations

Mediating between the two elements of the UN's dual focus on peace and security has proven a difficult balancing act, reflecting what some perceive as competing rather than complementary agendas. Moreover, the practical test offered by the Arab revolutions of 2011–12 has returned mixed results. Five years after the major reform of the UN human rights machinery, it is time to take stock of how the system performs, to analyze if and to what extent it fulfils the expectations of the reform, and, foremost, whether it contributes to the improved protection and promotion of human rights worldwide.

Such evaluation, in my view, should concentrate on selected critical issues only, such as:

1. The role of the human rights machinery in preventing and addressing gross human rights violations:
 - What is the interrelationship between SC and HRC and how does it manifest in times of crisis? How can the human rights machinery quickly alert UNSC? How can the connection between the two councils be further facilitated and strengthened, including improved access of HCHR?
 - What is the role of the human rights machinery, HRC and HCHR in particular, in the R2P related cases: The assessment of the situation in the country, participation in the decisive SC deliberations, presence on the ground during and after the intervention?
 - What is the role of special procedures in this respect?
2. Changes in the work of HRC compared to CHR, with special emphasis on:
 - Its membership and current criteria of election. Can more coherent criteria be introduced?
 - UPR, after completion of the first cycle of reviews (four years, 174 countries)—its shortcoming and advantages and the way forward.
3. The role of human rights offices/officers in the field in the context of “one UN” (peace-missions and RCs offices):
 - Their mandate, place, role, budget, and reporting lines in the country office.
 - Reporting its quality, independence, addressees, and impact on the host country.
 - Practical possibilities and ways of addressing politically controversial issues (for example, high level corruption, abuse, and impunity).

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REVIEWS

Monitoring Compliance: Practice and Procedure at a UN Human Rights Expert Body

by René Rouwette, Netherlands Institute of Human Rights (SIM)

Tyagi, Yogesh (2011) *The UN Human Rights Committee: Practice and Procedure*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, ISBN 978-0-521-11593-3

In his book the *United Nations Human Rights Committee: Practice and Procedure*, international law professor Yogesh Tyagi gives an extensive and thought provoking overview of practices and procedures of the Human Rights Committee; this expert body within the UN is established to monitor the compliance of the state parties with the UN International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights. Tyagi offers the reader over eight hundred pages of plain text, almost one hundred pages of annexes, and chapters related to the three official supervisory procedures of the Human Rights Committee entitled “the reporting procedure,” “the inter-state communication procedure,” and “the individual complaint procedure.”

Far too often, and without good reason, the Human Rights Committee has been neglected by academics; even more, it has been confused with the political Human Rights Commission or its successor the Human Rights Council. In fact, academic literature on the Human Rights Committee is fragmented in the sense that authors typically deal with one aspect of the body, either its procedures or its outcome documents. On top of that, existing academic books and articles are typically written from the perspective of an international legal scholar. Whereas traditionally, political scientists and historians have focused merely on practical work and functioning, international legal scholars in publications like this have quite often preferred to rely on their understanding of procedure. Interestingly, over the last years cross-fertilization has become more popular. Legal scholars include in their analysis political dynamics and effectiveness, while a new movement within the social sciences has appropriately reemphasized the importance of institutional design. With respect to the Human Rights Committee, a more comprehensive interdisciplinary approach would be very welcome.

Despite claims in the introduction that this book only deals with procedural aspects of the Human Rights Committee, it makes an attempt to give us the comprehensiveness we need. In the last chapter on limitations and effectiveness, the author deals with many individual complaints cases from the *Dutch Social Security Cases* of the 1980s via the *Korean Trade Union Leader* case of the 1990s, to the *Belgian Terrorist Suspect* case of 2009. Tyagi analyzes the relationship between procedural questions and individual cases as well as the interesting human rights characteristics of the cases.

Yet, if one focuses on effectiveness, as is done in the last pages of the book, a more elaborate, structured, and empirical approach would have been beneficial—an approach that focused extensively on the effectiveness of the Human Rights Committee within the UN and the international legal framework, as well as on the effectiveness within states. Only a thorough analysis can explain when and why states comply with treaty bodies.

Exciting new academic questions are brought up in the last chapter. They are touched upon only briefly, but offer great perspectives for a second edition of the book. One example is the way the European convention on human rights is treated by each actor involved in the treaty body process. Even more interesting is the way the systems and procedures interrelate and collide, and the way different actors comply with, use, and bend the procedures in relation to the substance of human rights law and human rights violations and the composition of the treaty body. Tyagi's comment that Roger Errera (France), Bernhard Graefrath (German Democratic Republic), Torkel Opsahl (Norway), and Christian Tomuschat (Federal Republic of Germany) played a remarkable role in the Human Rights Committee in comparison to their successors begs for more information, research, and in-depth analysis of the (confidential) internal treaty body consultation, as well as the identification of more Human Rights Committee key figures. New streams in historical research, history-based political science, and legal philosophy have focused on the role of international legal experts in judicial and quasi-judicial bodies, and a forum like the Human Rights Committee would be an interesting case study for this.

An element of a more thorough analysis on effectiveness for the second edition of the book could focus on the number of times the Human Rights Committee's dialogues and outcome documents have been an inspiration for discussion by civil servants within the ministries, parliaments, media, NGOs, and civil society organizations, and courts of a particular state party. With this, it is interesting and relevant to analyze in which context these discussions took place. Interestingly, following the number of times a state has been referred to by Tyagi in his book as "a state under supervision of the Human Rights Committee," the self-proclaimed human rights pioneering state of the Netherlands would provide a perfect case for a pilot study on the effectiveness of the work of the committee.

In the end, Tyagi succeeds in addressing the target groups he mentions in the introduction. The book is extremely useful for people who deal with the committee for professional reasons such as lawyers, state party officials, NGOs/CSOs, and UN Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights staff. Moreover, the book is published in time to assist those who are involved in the review of the treaty bodies, which is now going on within the UN. However, the book is less appealing for those academics in need of a general UN or international organizations theory, historical context, or a more academically/analytically focused approach to the work of the committee. Reading the sections of this book carefully, Tyagi does provide the reader with a lot of analysis next to description; however, a general narrative or *leitmotif* is lacking.

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Empire of Humanity: A History of Humanitarianism by Michael Barnett

by Davide Rodogno, The Graduate Institute of International and Development Studies, Geneva

Barnett, Michael (2011) *Empire of Humanity: A History of Humanitarianism*, Ithaca: Cornell University Press, ISBN 978-0-8014-4713-6

Empire of Humanity is, to my knowledge, the first attempt to include the history of humanitarianism in a single-authored, single-volume book. This is a very courageous effort and the author, political scientist Michael Barnett, should be commended. Barnett has facilitated immensely the task of the current as well as the next generation of scholars, historian and non-historians, as he provided them with a starting point. *En passant* it is worth noting that if a political scientist felt the need to write such a book, it is largely because historians (myself included) have not been up to the task.

As any other historian, a book covering two centuries of Western humanitarianism in less than three hundred pages intrigued me. I was curious to see if such a *tour de force* could be accomplished in a consistent and coherent way. In fact, the reader quickly finds out that Barnett's book deals with a number of topics related to humanitarianism and its history: Humanitarian as an ideology, as a profession; humanitarianism and its relation with the state and various international systems; humanitarianism and religion (Christianity) and faith-based organizations; the history of humanitarian organizations. In his introduction and in a public conference at the Elliot School of International Affairs on 5 April 2011, Barnett admitted that his book is like humanitarianism: It began fairly modest, and it expanded beyond his wildest dreams.¹ This statement reveals how Barnett perceives the history of humanitarianism as well as the ambition of Barnett's research. Contrary to the allegedly self-expanding nature of humanitarianism, this review leaves aside Barnett's analysis of moral, ethical, and other normative statements and focuses on the historical analysis.²

The fact that the author places terms like "Empire" next to "humanity" and "humanitarianism" undoubtedly renders the title provocative. Barnett argues that "humanitarianism more closely resembles empire than many of its defenders might like, but because it is an emancipatory project, this accusation does not fit quite as well as many of its harshest critics suggest" (p. 8). The reader then finds out that Barnett has not written a history of humanitarianism since the late eighteenth century, but a history of Anglo-American humanitarianism since the Abolitionist campaign. The book claims to be global and transnational, although what Barnett often means by global is a broad level of analysis. Transnational it might be, because

1. *Empire of Humanity: A History of Humanitarianism*, <http://media.elliott.gwu.edu/video/208> (latest access on 23 January 2012).

2. Readers curious to know more about the ethical and philosophical arguments mentioned in the conclusion, can consult a review article published on the *Nation* by David Rieff. It is very clear Barnett has left Rieff unconvinced (Rieff, David (2011) "The Wrong Moral Revolution: On Michael Barnett," the *Nation*, 24 October 2011, available online, <http://www.thenation.com/article/163800/wrong-moral-revolution-michael-barnett> (latest access on January 23, 2012).

the author focuses on a particular variety of humanitarianism whose actions were undertaken beyond national borders. However, Barnett often overlooks the national and local history of humanitarianism. And, clearly, humanitarianism in Europe and in Northern America did not emerge, thrive, or fail identically. Moreover, defining U.S. humanitarianism as imperial, at least before the war against Spain at the end of the nineteenth century and the occupation of Cuba and the Philippines, would have benefitted from further explanation. For instance, the humanitarian endeavors of white U.S.-Americans with respect to “Negro Education” could in fact be defined as imperial, though they are not mentioned in this book. The reader is left wondering about the connections between humanitarianism and charity, voluntary associations, welfare, and educational programs set up and active at the national level and the “empire of humanity,” as well as the reasons why humanitarianism went transnational at various ages in the nineteenth and twentieth century. Perhaps, the author should have clarified that he intended to focus on Western or Anglo-Saxon humanitarianism of the transnational or international variety, admitting that other forms of humanitarianism, even within the West, never trespassed national frontiers. There was nothing ineluctable about the expansion of humanitarianism as an ideology, a profession, or a movement. In fact, in English and in French, the adjective “humanitarian” maintained a negative connotation for almost the entire nineteenth century. In the early 1800s, Wilberforce and his abolitionist Clapham Sects were derisively labeled, “the saints” by fellow Britons. As far as the English language is concerned, “humanitarianism” was rarely used before the 1900s, even by those who, by today’s standards, were performing humanitarian actions.

As any historian dealing with the *longue-durée*, Barnett pays attention to the ruptures and continuities. The more Barnett learned, he writes, the more convinced he became that the 1990s were hardly unprecedented—indeed they contained some well established patterns (p. 5). Humanitarianism was not a wholly private affair before the 1990s. At that time, no longer satisfied with keeping alive the “well-fed dead” and feeling obligated to help traumatized societies find peace and justice, many aid agencies embraced post-conflict reconstruction, human rights, development, democracy promotion, and peace-building. In the 1990s, humanitarian organizations ventured into the formerly taboo territory of politics, whereby they cooperated and coordinated with intervening states. In doing so, moments of destruction were treated as opportunities for political change and adopted functions that had once been the exclusive preserve of governments. This story, Barnett convincingly argues, despite the historical amnesia of humanitarian practitioners, was not new. Unfortunately, despite having put forward such a promising argument, he pays less attention to the inherent tensions and unintended consequences of the ideas and actions that individuals, groups of people, or institutions sought to impose on foreign peoples and communities living beyond national borders.

It is worth noting that Barnett’s analysis of paternalism could have offered a fruitful link between national and transnational humanitarianism. He defines paternalism as the interference with a person’s liberty of action justified by reasons referring exclusively to the welfare, good, happiness, needs, interests, or values of the person whose liberty is being violated. Humanitarian action is dedicated to helping others, and it frequently does so without soliciting the desires of those perceived to be in need. If Barnett had conducted a systematic exploration of paternalism

in the various “humanitarian ages” included in the book, it could have represented the thread of a promising and persuasive *longue durée* analysis. Especially because he convincingly argues that paternalism did not disappear with the beginning of the twentieth century or with decolonization. Unfortunately, as is the case with some of the other themes, issues, and analyses addressed, paternalism is dealt with unevenly.

Barnett argues that three ages of humanitarianism have taken place one after the other. He does not explain why a new “age” came into being and what persisted from the previous into the new age. I have several reservations regarding what Barnett has identified as the first age, the age of “imperial humanitarianism,” encompassing the late eighteenth century to the end of the Second World War. The author does not explain why this lengthy period has been encompassed in a single age. What did Wilberforce and his contemporaries have in common with Phil-Armenian groups³? What did the latter have in common with Nansen and the League of Nations? And what did Nansen have in common with CARE or Oxfam? Barnett does not explain that the perceptions held by the Britons and Russians of humanitarianism were not necessarily identical. He does not mention that, not surprisingly, Leopold II King of Belgium and E. Morel and Roger Casement defined themselves as humanitarians and allegedly acted on behalf of Congolese populations. He does not mention Islamic charities that were active beyond national and imperial borders as well as Jewish humanitarian and philanthropic organizations active in Europe and beyond, since—at least—the early nineteenth century.

The second age, “neo humanitarianism,” spans from the end of the Second World War to the end of the Cold War. It is hard to grasp how and why this age is less “imperial” than the previous one. Although European empires collapsed and died, Western humanitarianism continued to thrive through nongovernmental and governmental organizations and alongside the humanitarianism of the Soviet and/or Communist brand. This is an aspect that is overlooked by the author. In Barnett’s book, the third age of “liberal humanitarianism” goes from the end of the Cold War to the present day. As far as Great Britain and the U.S. are concerned, this age is as liberal as the first “age.” However, Barnett explains, once again, that after 1990 humanitarians began considering how to build peace after war and slipped into building states. Unfortunately, he has not studied the undertakings and programs of several humanitarian groups that had similar ambitions during the late nineteenth century, within European colonial territories and beyond them, such as the multilateral interventions and territorial occupations of Ottoman Crete and Macedonian provinces. As far as the interwar period is concerned, Barnett overlooks the work and ideology of European organizations such as Save the Children as well as organizations such as the American Near East Relief (later renamed the Near East Foundation). This organization set up rehabilitation and reconstruction programs and focused on educational programs that were intended to “educate” the future leaders of that region of the world to enhance peace and international cooperation.

Barnett emphasizes the differences between “alchemical” and “emergency,” which seems to represent the *trait-d’union* between the three ages. He argues that the principles, nature, methods, objectives, scopes, and actions of various humanitarian groups, during the three

3. Phil-Armenian or Pro-Armenia organizations were advocacy groups acting nationally or transnationally on behalf of Ottoman Armenian populations. The reason why these groups were referred to as Phil- or Pro-Armenian is related to another very well known movement: The Phil-Hellenic movement that had been active since the 1810s in various European countries and in the U.S. on behalf of the Ottoman Greeks.

ages can be divided into these two categories. The emergency type of humanitarian limits itself to saving lives at risk, whereas the alchemical kind adds a desire to remove the causes of suffering. The tension between these types of organization is, per se, a topic of at least another monograph. Barnett could have provided his readers with examples of when, since the nineteenth century, emergency turned (or did not turn) into alchemical humanitarianism. Had Barnett chosen to expand his research on this front, he could have explained how development and modernization became intertwined in doctrines of anticommunism during the Cold War. He would have certainly noted that *ante-litteram* “development” predated the Cold War period and were undertaken by several U.S. (and some European) organizations on a large scale. These organizations, as well as their European counterparts put forward a well-known discourse on “modernization”—admittedly articulated in several forms. Anti-communism also played a role during the interwar period, which goes unnoticed in this book even if many humanitarian programs of the 1920s and the 1930s, including the settlement of refugees and needy population far away from urban centers were enhanced with the aim of keeping pauper populations away from Communism.

Barnett’s efforts to explain why humanitarianism emerged at the end of the eighteenth century (Chapter Two) are laudable. He relies on a solid historiography and has made a sensible synthesis. Unfortunately, his focus on the intellectual history of humanitarianism, its religious and enlightenment roots, and in general humanitarian thought disappears in the following chapters and is replaced by a focus on the history of humanitarian actions and of humanitarian actors (mainly organizations). As to the generalizations concerning the slave trade and the early nineteenth century, what is true about British humanitarianism is not necessarily true for many other European countries. Hence, if the objective of the book were to write a history of international Western humanitarianism, it would have been appropriate to compare and contrasts various countries.

The International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC, Chapter Four) is Barnett’s archetypical example of “emergency humanitarianism.” Although this is a solid chapter, it does not expand on the reasons of the successes and failures of ICRC with respect to so many other alchemical organizations. This chapter also marks the transition from intellectual history to the history of humanitarian organizations. Chapter Six presents an institutional history of various NGOs. The criteria of selection should have been explained in more detail. Nonetheless, the aim successfully highlights some of the fundamental tensions in the relationship between NGOs and sovereign-states and the increasing role of the state since 1919 and more particularly after 1939. Barnett also explores the differences, similarities, and tensions between faith-based and secular organizations, including the competition for resources, which would become one of the crucial problems determining the survival or the death of NGOs after 1990. Chapters eight to ten cover the period from the end of the Cold War through to the present. Barnett’s attention shifts toward humanitarian intervention—a topic that has hardly been dealt with in historical perspective. It would have been better to engage with this topic in the introduction, and avoid devoting a chapter, which does not do justice to such a complex issue.

Barnett’s book shows how important it is for social scientists to discuss topics such as “humanitarianism” and how the work of a historian could be enriched by the insights,

conceptualizations, and reflections of political scientists, sociologists, and anthropologists (and vice versa). Among the weaknesses of the volume, the unevenness of his structure and a number of thematic and chronological choices need to be mentioned. Ruptures and continuities between these three alleged “ages” of humanitarianism are not consistently pinpointed. Barnett ended up writing the history of self-proclaimed humanitarian actors, such as NGOs. This book resembles more a history of some (a selected few, some secular and some faith-based, generally Anglo-Saxon) humanitarian organizations. The book floats in a limbo where operational—humanitarian and imperial—projects of the nineteenth century are ignored, and an intellectual history approach is forgotten for the twentieth century. Finally, Barnett’s claim that humanitarianism’s history is modern international history is debatable. At most, humanitarianism is an intriguing feature in modern international history, one that should be critically examined from a pluri-disciplinary perspective.

On the Origins of the United Nations: When and How Did it Begin?

by Klaas Dykmann, Roskilde University

Mazower, Mark (2009). *No Enchanted Palace: The End of Empire and the Ideological Origins of the United Nations*, Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2009, ISBN 978-0-691-13521-2 Plesch, Dan (2011). *America, Hitler, and the UN: How the Allies Won World War II and Forged A Peace*, London: I.B. Tauris & Co., ISBN: 978-1-848-85308-9

The mainstream narrative of the United Nations has long been that its creation in 1945 was an almost revolutionary act that constituted a seminal answer to the atrocities of World War II and the Holocaust and must be seen as an unprecedented universal (even though U.S.-led) attempt to achieve world peace and guarantee human rights (see Amrith and Sluga 2008). In this context, the positive accounts on the UN's history in recent years seem to be due to the "New World Order" proclaimed by former U.S. President George H.W. Bush and the intellectual reaction to Goerge W. Bush's unilateralism in order to show that the UN does matter (Mazower 2009: 5). Apparently, however, not only historians, also international relations (IR) scholars failed to appropriately address the complex nature of the ideas and ideologies constituting the basis of the UN (Mazower 2009: 9).

The British historians Mark Mazower and Dan Plesch have initiated interesting debates about the origins and thus, implicitly, the very nature of the United Nations organization. Here, two main questions shall guide us: To what extent do we have to contest the narrative that the creation of the United Nations in 1945 constituted a radical shift in world history? And secondly, did the UN rather perpetuate colonial ideas or was it, in contrast, designed to end colonialism?

While Plesch argues that 1942 was the birth date of the United Nations, Mazower observes some continuity since the early twentieth century and the League of Nations. Both authors approach the subject quite differently: Dan Plesch provides an archive-based narrative of a UN already established during the war, and Mazower illustrates the ideological origins of the organization with the intellectual setting of its leading figures. Mazower looks at specific persons he considers as key figures: The South African Prime Minister Jan Smuts, the English internationalist Sir Alfred Zimmern, the Jewish emigrants Joseph Schechtman and Raphael Lemkin, and last but not least the first Indian Prime Minister Jawaharlal Nehru. In contrast to Mazower, who in comparison rather tends to neglect the most obvious documents and meetings, Plesch focuses very much on the Atlantic Charter (1941), the talks at Dumbarton Oaks (1944), as well as the conferences in Yalta and San Francisco (1945) that led finally to the establishment of the United Nations organization.

According to Plesch, the "wartime UN" has largely been forgotten, because "it needed a new start in 1945, a UN born out of the 'ashes of war'" (Plesch 2011: 8). The political climate in the United States changed in the late 1940s, when it had become inopportune to argue that the

U.S., the British, and the Soviets had been planning the UN together (Plesch 2011: 9). Nonetheless, it was on 28 December 1941 when Roosevelt came up with the idea to use “United Nations” instead of Associated Powers to depict the alliance fighting Nazi Germany, fascist Italy, and Japan (Plesch 2011: 32). Already in early 1942, Roosevelt and Churchill made military and political plans. While the former were naturally held as secrets, the political arrangements “had a vital public dimension in rallying domestic and international support for the war effort” (Plesch 2011: 31). The assessment of a contemporary advocate of the UN supports Plesch’s thesis: “The Declaration of the United Nations [of 1942, K.D.] . . . brought the United Nations into being” (Straight 1943: 62).¹ After Roosevelt had led political “celebrations” internationally, “The ideas of the United Nations became embedded in wartime civilian culture, especially in the USA” (Plesch 2011: 31). The outlook of the wartime “United Nations” was debated mostly between the U.S., the United Kingdom, and the Soviet Union. Once, it was accepted, military communiqués and official statements in the U.S. and Great Britain frequently referred to the United Nations (Plesch 2011: 32, 36, 40ff). Plesch stresses the discussions between Roosevelt, Stalin, and Churchill with regard to a new post-war world order, based on the British–U.S. American Atlantic Charter of 1941. The idea emerged that these three great powers should, together with China, manage world affairs as the “four policemen” (Plesch 2011: 82). Plesch further regards the focus of wartime United Nations initiatives (food, relief, health care etc.) on the social, economic, and humanitarian dimensions as proof for the United Nations’ encompassing approach to global security and global governance within World War II (Plesch 2011: 87/88).

With regard to Plesch’s argument that the creation of the UN can be dated back to 1942, we must ask: Is it appropriate to consider this “wartime UN” as much more than a public relations invention to guarantee public support? Some argue that it was rather the success of the propaganda strategy to label the Allies, led by the U.S., Britain, and the USSR, as “United Nations” to support their cause morally (Mawdsley 2012). This was deemed necessary by Roosevelt to convince the isolationists and the public in the U.S., particularly with regard to the Lend-Lease agreement, with which the U.S. supported the United Kingdom, the Soviet Union, China, and other Allies with material. The important question seems to be the level of institutionalization and perspective beyond the war-related public relations and public diplomacy dimension of the “United Nations” notion. And there were institutions: The better known was certainly the UN Relief and Rehabilitation Administration (UNRRA, founded in 1943 by forty-four nations), but also the London-based UN War Crimes Commission (also created in 1943 by seventeen countries) is worth mentioning. The author emphasizes that “as part of the cooperative process under the United Nations framework, the UN War Crimes Commission and the UN Relief and Rehabilitation Administration, both internationally staffed and funded, were up and running in 1943. They began to turn the political rhetoric of the United Nations about the postwar world into something tangible that the public could relate to” (Plesch 2011: 99). So we could argue that besides the wartime rhetoric tool, the United Nations also seemed to have been embedded in an institutional framework. This is an important aspect, although I tend to interpret these institutions as

1. Michael Straight, a US citizen who served in the Air Force during World War II, then became editor of *The New Republican*, but was also a KGB informant, expressed Plesch’s main arguments already in 1943: the UN was founded in 1942 and it should support decolonisation and human rights. Maybe a Mazower-style analysis of persons like Straight may have enriched Plesch’s book further.

temporary, as these central wartime agencies, once the UN was created in 1945, ceased to exist in their own right.

Another aspect that can be mentioned against the wartime UN is actually presented by the author himself. Plesch admits that the idea of a general United Nations organization for the coordination of military and economic matters encountered resistance from the United States, Great Britain, and the USSR until shortly before the end of the war:

Until late in the war, the idea of making a general organization of the United Nations to coordinate military and economic affairs was resisted by the Big Three. Roosevelt regarded it as creating an unnecessary target for his opponents at home and did not publicly endorse the idea until after D-Day had succeeded. Churchill was more concerned with US-UK bilateral agreements, and sought to elevate Australia and Canada as auxiliaries of the Empire and arrange regional rather than global structures. Stalin, having given strong support to the League of Nations, was now more concerned to secure a territorial buffer zone against further attacks from Germany” (Plesch 2011: 166).

So, again, was the tale of the “United Nations” before 1945 rather a propaganda success story than the birth of the United Nations Organization? Plesch certainly has a point, although to date back the UN as we know it to 1942 would be a bit too adventurous. The planning of the United Nations Organization certainly can be traced back to 1942, but then also the ideas of the League of Nations must be considered as ideological background for the UN—and this is what Mark Mazower does.

In his introduction, Mazower sharply analyzes the deficiencies and blind spots of existing accounts on the UN’s origins as mixed motivations that had rather been neglected and international cooperation as such taken for granted as something basically positive:

Their guiding assumption seems to be that the emergence of some kind of global community is not only desirable but inevitable, whether through the acts of states, or non-state actors, or perhaps through the work of international organizations themselves, staffed by impartial and high-minded civil servants (Mazower 2009: 5) (see Iriye 2002).

Mazower’s main argument is that in contrast to repeated laudations of the UN as the only authentic world organization with idealistic goals (and, on the other hand, categorical repudiations and assessments of the overall failure of the United Nations), the UN’s origins trace back to old-fashioned national and great power interests and imperial motives, but then developed in a different direction as its mostly Western creators had anticipated. Mazower manages magnificently to exemplify his narrative of the UN as a creature of U.S. global power ambitions and particularly British colonial interests. He does so by examining the convictions and motives that drove Jan Smuts and internationalist Sir Alfred Zimmern (both had already played a significant role in designing the League of Nations) in the UN’s establishment, supplemented by the impact Mazower attributes to the Indian independence hero and first prime minister Jawaharlal Nehru with regard to the unexpected non-Western orientation.

Mazower challenges two important interpretations of the UN’s history: He concludes that the UN was not so different from the League of Nations and that it was not, as often assumed, a mostly U.S. American enterprise only (see, for example, Schlesinger 2003). Both theses are supported by a closer look at the relationship between empires—with the British empire in

particular—and connected ideas of global order, and the respective intellectual origin of the League of Nations and the UN (Mazower 2009: 14). Also, Plesch discusses briefly Churchill’s “flirt” with the idea of an Anglo-Saxon world empire (Plesch 2011: 165). In contrast to other authors who certainly acknowledge some heritage of the League in the UN (see, for instance, Kennedy 2006, or MacKenzie 2010: 53), Mazower goes further and identifies a clear continuity between the two institutions.

Mazower’s first two chapters deal with Jan Smuts and Alfred Zimmern, with which the author illustrates the ideological roots of colonialism and the racist belief in the superiority of the white man as essential aspects of the internationalism that inspired the League’s foundation. It seems contradictory that Smuts, who spoke on behalf of equal rights in the UN context, increasingly followed a more racist line in his South African Apartheid regime. But from a contemporary reading of internationalism, it was not such a paradox, argues Mazower. Smuts and Zimmern envisioned the British Commonwealth—and then the League as a variation of it—as the institution with which the (white) civilization should be spread throughout the world.

Plesch takes a very different stand on the question whether the UN was a new form of empire. While World War II historians have long paid little attention to colonial repression, it is obvious that European colonialism based on the conviction of European supremacy, which also found expression in the subjugation of African-Americans in the United States. Therefore, in Plesch’s opinion, Roosevelt’s resolve to apply the Atlantic Charter principles worldwide—including the right to self-determination—was volatile in colonial nations and in the U.S. itself:

Roosevelt’s anti-colonial policy did not outlast him and it is not properly acknowledged. The main achievements were the promotion of an Asian nation, China, to great power status and the inclusion of India as a separate country in the Declaration of January 1942 and in the wartime UN conferences (Plesch 2011: 88).

In Plesch’s view, the missing set-up of a schedule for the end of British and French colonies was the main lost opportunity, although Roosevelt tried to push it (Plesch 2011: 89/90). Roosevelt came up with a plan that envisioned several regional commissions with representatives of the colonizers and the colonized to deal with the independence process—but it did not convince Churchill. Plesch concludes that “the post-war world would well have been more peaceful and prosperous had this declaration been pursued as Roosevelt intended” and judges Roosevelt’s declaration as a vision of the “end of empire,” which would have included fixed dates (Plesch 2011: 90/91). At the same time, it meant a radical shift that China was elevated as one of the four big powers: “Back at the time of the creation of the League of Nations, the white nations had refused to include language on racial equality, humiliating delegates from Japan and elsewhere” (Plesch 2011: 89). Plesch thus regards China’s elevation and the plan for a scheduled end of colonies as the reinforcement of “the anti-imperial origins of the UN” and explicitly distances this narrative from Mark Mazower’s interpretation of the UN’s ideological basis. However, as Plesch continues, after his death, Roosevelt’s anti-colonial ideas and economic policies to endorse the “developing world” soon became obsolete when President Truman took office (Plesch 2011: 91). Plesch thus

strengthens the argument that the United Nations was designed to become a major anti-colonial force—unlike Mark Mazower.

Mazower's book questions the all too uncritical Western belief in the UN as a truly universal and global caretaker that despite a Western dominance at its origins pursued international goals for the best of all. Mazower presents how this belief was anchored in a perpetuated civilizing mission of the colonial powers and now also the United States. It was then Jawaharlal Nehru and increasing anti-colonialism that challenged the UN's colonial heritage—to the surprise of the Western powers. Nehru turned the UN into an anticolonial forum that nevertheless then converted into a defender of national sovereignty again. Here one of the decisive differences between the league and the UN comes into play: The UN gave the "great powers" much more say, even a de-facto veto right, so all rhetoric praise of human rights protection, for instance, seemed in reality nothing more than lip service as these big countries did not imagine to be subject to any meddling in their domestic affairs. This sacrosanct principle of sovereignty then became important again and was revived with the entry of all the newly independent countries that turned the UN—at least the General Assembly—into a Third World forum rather than a great power concert.

While the "Eleanor-Roosevelt narrative" that human rights at the UN were mainly a consequence of the war cruelties and the Holocaust in particular, has already been appropriately demystified (see, for instance, Normand/Zaidi 2008), both authors shed some new light on the issue. Mazower looks at two Jewish emigrants, Raphael Lemkin and Joseph Schechtman, and thereby shows the transition from the league's minority rights system to the rather loosely defined right of self-determination of peoples in the UN. While Mazower convincingly illustrates the role of these activists in the making of universal rights, Plesch demonstrates that the United Nations War Criminals Commission (UNWCC, created in 1943) merits more attention and could possibly be seen as more important than even the Nuremberg and Tokyo trials on the way to the establishment of the International Criminal Court. He describes the UNWCC as the "main legal response to Nazi crimes during the war" that laid the groundwork for the Nuremberg trials. It further implicitly seems to prove that the Allies were aware of the Holocaust (*The Jewish Chronicle* 2011). UNWCC, with a secretariat in London, was promoted mostly by smaller countries that had been invaded by Germany, as well as by civil society and some "principled" officials from the U.S. and British governments but less so by the great powers (Plesch 2011: 101, 102, 116). Here, Mazower is more skeptical about the "troubled history" of UNWCC as it seemed unlikely that the great powers would promote an international criminal law (Mazower 2009: 127).

In conclusion, while Plesch argues that the UN was planned already in 1942, Mazower would identify its ideological roots in the League of Nations and the British desire to perpetuate empire. Thus, Mazower argues that the UN's creation stood for a continuation of colonialism by other means that ended surprisingly with the action taken by Nehru and his allies later on. In contrast, Plesch interprets the UN as designed to terminate colonialism and eventually only Roosevelt's death prevented it to set exact dates to "end empire."

In sum, these are very inspiring books, which not only show that common narratives of the UN are too simplistic and often idealistic, but also in more general terms, how the general study of international organizations can also benefit from historical accounts.

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