Preserving the heritage of humanity? Obtaining world heritage status and the impacts of listing
Aa, Bart J.M. van der

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Preservation of world heritage sites is the primary responsibility of individual countries in which the site is located. To quote one of the conditions of the convention: “by signing the convention, each country pledges to conserve... the world heritage sites situated on its territory” (UNESCO 2004a). At the same time the preservation of world heritage sites is for the benefit of all humanity: “the cultural heritage and the natural heritage are among the priceless and irreplaceable possessions, not only of each nation, but of mankind as a whole. The loss, through deterioration or disappearance, of any of these most prized possessions constitutes an impoverishment of the heritage of all the peoples in the world” (UNESCO 2004a). All countries that ratify the convention have the obligation to preserve listed sites outside their country. Moreover, a country can ask for international assistance when it is not able to preserve its world heritage sites.

International efforts to preserve the outstanding qualities of world heritage sites are welcome, as most world heritage sites have to cope with other conflicting spatial claims. Multi-use sites – often inner cities and landscapes, see also photo 5-1 – are significantly more threatened than single-use sites such as national parks and distinct buildings (table 5-1; see also Davis and Weiler 1992: 320; Shackley 1998a: 5-6; OCW 2001: 6). A world heritage listing of a historic centre such as Mexico City does not automatically guarantee the preservation of the entire historic city: “In practice, the entire area cannot be treated like a museum, since many important economic, social, political and cultural activities take place there” (Harrison and McVey 1997: 320).

The peripheral edges of single-use world heritage areas are especially endangered. Nimba mountains – since 1981 a natural world heritage site in Guinea and Ivory Coast – are threatened with the prospect of iron ore mining in the unprotected Liberian section of the park (Lamotte 1983: 175). And the fringes of Potsdam cultural landscape (Germany) are threatened by encroaching urbanisation (Haber et al. 1995: 374).

Table 5-1: Multi-use and single-use world heritage sites facing conflicting aims (number of sites, N = 51).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Sites facing threats</th>
<th>Sites facing no threats</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Multi-use heritage sites</td>
<td>36</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Single-use heritage sites</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>44</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note: P-value chi-square is 0.00.
Source: Own field study at various world heritage sites.

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5.1 Instruments for better preservation of world heritage sites

Four tools are available to preserve listed sites: international recognition, management plans and bodies, financial support, and the list of world heritage in danger.

1) International recognition

A world heritage designation is an international recognition that leads to obligations for sites, countries and companies alike, as world heritage sites are an international showcase (Kuijper 2003: 269). Such designation may make the site management officials more aware of the quality of the site, which may positively affect its preservation. The status can be used as an argument to deal more effectively with specific threats or to get support from outside (Musitelli 2003: 336). Countries that ratified the convention have “to take such steps as they deem appropriate at the national level” (Cookson 2000: 257, see also Gilbert 1997: 11). Countries may introduce national legal protection measures or make money available. And the existence of the convention also leads to more awareness among companies. Two corporations involved in natural resource exploitation have indicated that they will no longer operate in world heritage areas. The members of the International Council of Mining and Metals, including some the world’s largest mining and metal-producing companies (Engineering & mining journal 2003: 10) and the Royal Dutch/Shell Group (Earth island journal 2003: 7) have stopped exploiting world heritage sites.

2) Management plans and management bodies

A world heritage site’s preservation may benefit from the production of a management plan or the creation of a management body. Since 1988, a nominated site should “have… management mechanisms to ensure the conservation of the nominated… properties” (UNESCO 2004a). The World Heritage Committee has stipulated the necessity of management plans. Management plans are considered as useful tools to improve the preservation of sites, as different stakeholders work together (Young 2002: 4-5; Whitbourn 2002: 13; Smith 2002: 151; Orbašli 2000: 148). The following excerpt underlines this point:

“it brings the key players together to identify the key issues that have to be addressed in the world heritage site. Having an agreement on which issues should be addressed according to the local community and other stakeholders, we work together to address them. We do not produce management plans for
their own sake, but for a certain end. One only achieves a benefit when the site is really better protected and preserved.”

(Interview 31)

Management plans identify the responsible actor for the management of the world heritage site. New management bodies may be created, especially at multi-use sites.

3) Financial support
World heritage sites can receive international financial support from the World Heritage Fund, a fund that is meant to enable better preservation of listed sites. The budget of the fund has doubled between 1993 and 2004. The increase from $2 million to about $4 million is more or less in line with the increase in world heritage sites and sites in danger (Hoffman 1993: 58; UNESCO 2004a). In comparison, the total available budget to manage the world heritage convention – including personnel costs and activities such as promotion – was more than $11 million in 2002 (UNESCO 2003b: 123).

Countries finance the biggest proportion of the fund (table 5-2), accounting for the one percent of countries’ annual contribution to UNESCO. Countries, organisations and individuals can make voluntary donations (UNESCO 2004a; Paul 2001: 32).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Source of income</th>
<th>Amount ($)</th>
<th>Share of total (%)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Contributions from state parties</td>
<td>3,313,300</td>
<td>82.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Contributions, gifts or bequests from individuals</td>
<td>53,873</td>
<td>1.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Investment and proprietary income</td>
<td>178,033</td>
<td>4.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other resources</td>
<td>478,000</td>
<td>11.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>4,023,206</td>
<td>100.0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>


Money from the World Heritage Fund is allocated according to three principles: the importance of safeguarding a site, the urgency of intervention and the capacity of the country where the site is located (UNESCO 2002: 12). The most money has gone to the (poorer) African countries (twenty-six percent), while European and North American countries (fifteen percent) and Arab countries (thirteen percent) have received the least amount of money (UNESCO 2002: 21; Pocock 1997b: 383; Douglas 1982: 8).

4) List of world heritage in danger
There is a separate list of endangered world heritage sites. The natural and cultural-historical region of Kotor (Serbia and Montenegro) was first put on this list in 1979. Sites are removed from the list when they no longer face threats which endanger their existence. The list contained thirty-five sites in May 2004, with roughly the same number of natural and cultural sites. Almost half of the sites, sixteen, are in Africa (figure 5-1). Oceania is the only continent without endangered sites.

The threat of inscribing a site on the list of world heritage in danger is claimed to be the committee’s most powerful tool (Turrisi 2000: 15). The committee can use the list to spend money on endangered sites (Hinrichson et al. 1983: 203; Thorsell 2001: 35; Philips 2001: 10), is informed about the sites through annual monitoring reports

**Figure 5-1: Spatial distribution of world heritage sites in danger, 1978-2003.**

![Spatial distribution of world heritage sites in danger, 1978-2003.](image)

*Source: UNESCO (2004a), adapted data.*

### 5.2 Does world heritage designation help to preserve sites?

The four instruments impact on five fields of action to preserve world heritage sites better: dealing with threats and issues, legal national protection measures, management plans and bodies, available financial means, and the inscription on the list of world heritage in danger. The last three directly stem from the instruments within the convention (figure 5-2).

**Figure 5-2: Four world heritage instruments and five fields of action to preserve sites.**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Instruments</th>
<th>Fields of action</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>International recognition</td>
<td>Threats and issues</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Management plan and bodies</td>
<td>Legal protection</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Financial support</td>
<td>Management plan and bodies</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>List of world heritage in danger</td>
<td>Financial support</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>List of world heritage in danger</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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At the same time, any of these three fields of action can be influenced by world heritage site’s international recognition. International recognition can also become a ‘tool’ for sites dealing with threats and issues as well as in the introduction or strengthening the legal protection.

5.2.1 Dealing with threats and issues

World heritage sites included in the field study face diverse threats and issues that endanger their preservation, ranging from mining and agriculture to new infrastructure and from small ongoing changes and decay to new buildings. The world heritage listing helps to deal with these threats and issues at 55 field study sites, not at 40. The world heritage status may be simultaneously helpful and useless with regard to different issues affecting the same site. The management of Stonehenge (United Kingdom) has been able to use the world heritage status in their negotiation to protect the archaeological remains more effectively by restricting farmers’ ploughing activities through the Countryside Stewardship Special Project (Interview 28). But the site has also been “called a ‘national disgrace’ by the ‘public accounts committee’ of the House of Commons [for its fences and restricted public access], financial support from the ‘millennium fund’ has been refused, and arguments continue about how the site should be developed and protected” (Holloway 1998: 319).

1) Support depends on the local level

A world heritage listing is no guarantee for a better preservation of sites, as the support for threats and issues at sites depends on the local level (table 5-3).

Table 5-3: Scale level of support for world heritage sites to deal with threats and issues at centrally and non-centrally nominated sites (number of sites, N = 63).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Scale-level of support</th>
<th>Local</th>
<th>National</th>
<th>International</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Centrally nominated</td>
<td>33</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Non-centrally nominated</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>46</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note: P-value chi-square is 0.14.
Source: Own field study at various world heritage sites.

World heritage status leads to a greater awareness among the local community to preserve the site. As such, the world heritage status is a possible tool for better preservation, not a guarantee after listing:

“We here at the local level are aware of the responsibility that we have received. At the higher level, one is predominantly proud of the status... Now I understand that there is a long road between the world heritage designation of Teotihuacán and receiving advantages from this designation... You have to see the world heritage proclamation predominantly as an instrument to realise other, internal issues, such as reducing the number of street traders.”

(Interview 61, translated)
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Rather similar world heritage sites in the same country – such as the two Mexican colonial towns of Morelia and Zacatecas – face different circumstances, as much depends on local initiatives and abilities. Both cities, 400 kilometres apart and capital of their respective state, received the world heritage status in the early 1990s after the world heritage nomination had been prepared by local actors. In Morelia the world heritage status has been used as an argument to draw up a new city plan in 1999.

Photo 5-2: Streetscape of two Mexican world heritage cities: Morelia and Zacatecas.

The local municipality and the regional state of Michoacan largely financed the implementation of the plan, which ultimately led to the removal of street traders and a renovation of the buildings (Interview 71). Such changes have not been carried out in Zacatecas. Two ambitious projects were launched, but they failed due to lack of money. The world heritage status has not triggered more local awareness about the need for the site’s preservation (Interview 73). The changes made have transformed the appearance of Morelia, resulting in differences between what were originally rather similar colonial towns (photo 5-2).
Several authors have stressed the importance of the attitude of local stakeholders in preserving world heritage sites. See Pitts (1990: 259) on Avebury (United Kingdom), Royle (1997: 75) and Nickel (1989: 14) on the colonial city of La Habana (Cuba), Popp (2001) and Escher et al. (2001: 24) on some cities in the Magreb, and McMurtrie and Xueqin (2001: 51) for an overview of Chinese world heritage sites.

2) Absence of support from higher scale levels
Support from the national or international scale levels is largely absent when sites have to deal with issues and threats and about one-third of the respondents at the local level is disappointed about the lack of such support. A respondent in the city of Zacatecas (Mexico) made the following point:

“Some responsible within the municipality are aware of the improvements that have to be done, but we do not have the financial means to carry them out… Everyone should take his/her responsibility. Not only the municipality, but also UNESCO… We also never hear anything from INAH, even though they created the Dirección Patrimonio de la Humanidad. We do not want to blame these organisations, as their intentions have been good… Nonetheless, we would like to hear from UNESCO about the kind of support we could expect for Zacatecas. UNESCO may not be a very rich organisation, but it still is a powerful organisation.”

(Interview 73, translated)

National governments do not always support local sites, an example of which is Xochimilco (photo 5-3).

Photo 5-3: No national support at world heritage sites: Xochimilco and Malbork.

Also the management of the castle of Teutonic Order in Malbork asked for national support when they had problems with the owners of a boat and a disco that caused both visual and sound pollution and received none:

“I [appealed to] the Polish Commission for UNESCO [for their help in our dispute with the owners of a] particular boat and also a certain disco, which is in the zone of the castle… We expected much more, something like legal advice. We thought that they would help us much more with the advice, that they would ask
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lawyers what we can do, what is the procedure and so on. But there was simply no answer in fact… Only, just what diplomats say, ‘We support you with all our hearts.’”

(Interview 87)

3) Outside support restricted to centrally nominated sites
Centrally nominated, often nationally owned, heritage sites more often receive national and international support than sites whose nomination was originally started by an organisation from below the national level (table 5-3). National governments feel more responsible for centrally nominated sites than for decentralised nominated sites. Decentralised nominated sites have to rely on their local authority that has often applied for, or helped to obtain, the world heritage status. These sites may use the world heritage listing to get support from other scale levels, prompting a Polish respondent to comment, “Perhaps, it was sufficient that the Polish government has nominated Kalwarija Zebrzydowska for the world heritage list” (Interview 84, translated).

5.2.2 Legal protection
Most world heritage sites have some local or national protection. An analysis of the database of the World Conservation Monitoring Centre (WCMC 2003) shows that only 4 out of 149 natural world heritage sites have no other designation than the world heritage listing – Ha Long Bay (Viet Nam), Arabian Oryx Sanctuary (Oman), East Rennell (Solomon Islands) and Henderson Island (United Kingdom).
In most cases, the world heritage status, however, does not lead to stricter legislation. Legal protection has increased as a consequence of the world heritage listing at twenty-five sites included in the field study, but not at the other thirty-nine. A site’s world heritage nomination, however, may be preceded by national designations. The two Mexican natural parks of Sian Ka’an and El Vizcaíno became national parks in the year before their world heritage listing, as “you are indicating that you will preserve the site” (Interview 63).
The United Kingdom is the only case country where additional planning regulations have been introduced. World heritage status is a matter of consideration in the English planning policy guidance fifteen and sixteen since 1994. These constitute advice from the national government for local communities. A world heritage listing:

highlights the outstanding international importance of the site as a key material consideration to be taken into account by local planning authorities in determining planning and listed building consent applications, and by the secretary of state in determining cases on appeal or following call-in… Each local authority concerned, taking account of world heritage site designation and other relevant statutory designations, should formulate specific planning policies for protecting these sites and include these policies in their development plans… Development proposals affecting these sites or their setting may be compatible with this objective, but should always be carefully scrutinised for their likely effect on the site or its setting in the longer term.

(Cookson 2000: 688-698, italics added)
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The planning policy guidance does not automatically lead to more national interference in the management of world heritage sites. Local authorities, eventually assisted by national authorities in the event of appeal (Evans et al. 1994: 508), still determine sites’ planning applications. The governments in Wales, Northern Ireland and Scotland have drawn up similar provisions as in England (Interview 25 and 32).

In general, it was not world heritage listing, but conflicts over world heritage sites that seem to trigger the introduction of additional national legislation. In the United Kingdom, the national legislation was introduced in September 1994 (Wainwright 2000: 338), after dispute had arisen over two centrally nominated sites. The proposal for hotels and an Elizabethan theme park in the world heritage site of Avebury led to some controversy in 1990 and was only narrowly averted (Rutherford 1994: 380; Yale 1991: 227). And on 9 December 1993 the court forbade the plans for a mining plant at Hadrian’s Wall (Rutherford 1994: 383). The decision of the judge was not watertight, as there was no particular planning legislation for world heritage sites at that stage (Interview 37). These events triggered the introduction of a new planning legislation.

The federal government of Australia introduced the World Heritage Properties Act in 1983 (Pearson and Sullivan 1995: 42), which was replaced by the Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act in 1999. The 1983 Act largely resulted from the Commonwealth’s inability to influence state governments’ planning policies in world heritage areas, while the Australian government remained primarily responsible for them. The act was introduced after the development of a hydroelectric power station in the temperate rainforest of Tasmania was abandoned after a lawsuit in 1982. The act helped to stop the construction of a dam in Tasmania and enabled better preservation of Queensland’s wet tropical rainforest area (Pearson and Sullivan 1995: 42).

In the Netherlands, the preservation of world heritage sites is still facilitated through existing (mostly local and regional) judicial and financial instruments (VROM 2004: 44). Some stakeholders at world heritage sites have asked for more legal protection that would especially apply to world heritage sites (Interview 18). Such arrangements have not been introduced, as non-world heritage sites facing similar problems would be excluded from additional protection measures (OCW 2002: 5-6).

Cultural landscapes obtain the least benefit from the world heritage status as a tool to preserve the site. The world heritage listing does not add much due to inadequate national landscape protection (box 5-1).

Box 5-1: Inadequate national protection of cultural landscapes.

| Cultural landscapes have often to fulfill more functions than heritage alone. Some sites – such as Kalwarija Zebrydowska (Poland) and Las Médulas (Spain) – have especially sought a world heritage listing to ensure the protection of their landscape, as the world heritage convention was “the first international legal instrument to identify, protect, conserve and transmit to future generations cultural landscapes” (Rössler 2003: 12). In practice landscape protection does not increase after a world heritage listing as landscape protection is not properly managed in most countries (see Van Dockum et al. 1997: 28-29 for the Netherlands; Onofre 2003: 89 for Mexico; Prieur 2003: 150-153). The landscape of Atapuerca (Spain) that has the oldest archaeological findings in Europe faces a couple of threats: a nearby military zone, encroaching urbanisation from... |
surrounding villages and new windmills, while only a quarter of the site is protected as a national monument since 1987. Palaeontologists from the Universidad de Burgos actively backed the world heritage nomination, as they hoped that a world heritage nomination would lead to a better protection of the area. The extent of the nationally protected landscape has not been enlarged before or after the world heritage listing in 2001. The Spanish monuments law does not protect cultural landscapes and the World Heritage Committee did not insist on a better protection of the landscape when it inscribed Atapuerca on the world heritage list (Interview 97), even though “the convention’s effectiveness is never as strong as it is during the preliminary investigation of the nominations” (Pressouyre 1993: 48).

The legal protection of a world heritage cultural landscape is often restricted to the elements that already received national protection before the listing. The archaeological zones of Teotihuacán (Mexico) and Cahokia Mounds (United States of America) have never been extended after listing, even though they exclude some interesting parts. The entire Dutch Beemster polder, with more than two hundred typical regional farms (stolpboerderijen), is designated as a world heritage site. About fifty farms are national monuments (Beusekom 2000b: 5); the remaining 150 farms without a national designation do not receive additional protection (Interview 17; RIVM 2002: 128).

5.2.3 Management plans and management bodies

All nominated sites should have a management plan, but the field study shows that the availability of management plans differs between earlier and later listed sites, and per country. Thirty-one of the thirty-seven sites (more than eighty percent) that were put on the world heritage list before 1988 have a management plan, compared to six out of seventeen sites (thirty-five percent) listed after 1988 (table 5-4). This is striking as management plans were obligatory from 1988 onwards.

Table 5-4: Existence of management plans at sites listed before and after 1988 (number of sites, N = 54).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year listing</th>
<th>Plan before listing</th>
<th>Plan during or after listing</th>
<th>Without plan</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Before 1988</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>37</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>After 1988</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>17</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note: P-value chi-square is 0.00.
Source: Own field study at various world heritage sites.

Management plans are more often in place at natural than at cultural sites. All eleven natural case study sites have a management plan. The management plan was already drawn up at eight natural sites before the world heritage nomination and seven of them are located in the United States of America. It was common in this country to produce a management plan for parks in the 1960s and 1970s (Fitzsimmons 1979: 235). The world heritage listing, however, has never been a reason to update the plan.

All management plans for world heritage sites in the United Kingdom were made after listing. The 1994 planning policies encouraged local planning authorities “to work with owners and managers of world heritage sites in their areas, and with other agencies, to
ensure that comprehensive management plans are in place” (Cookson 2000: 734). The initiative for drawing up a management plan mostly comes from the national government and ICOMOS UK (Whitbourn 2002: 13). The national government’s policy is that all British world heritage sites should have a management plan. Plans began to be produced on a large scale after the Labour government came in power in 1997. At the end of 2003, fourteen out of twenty-two British sites had a management plan. Heritage sites with the world heritage status in the United Kingdom are often among the first sites to receive a management plan which sometimes is a higher quality. The world heritage city of Quebec was the first Canadian heritage site ever that received a management plan (Cameron 1994: 30). The National Trust for Scotland draws up management plans for all its properties, but that for St. Kilda:

“is far more detailed than the others… the last management plan produced for St. Kilda was much more rigorous… Basically the world heritage nomination asked us to do the things very rigorously. The world heritage convention was very keen on us to have an all-inclusive approach to the area.”

(Interview 39)

This detailed management plan is largely the consequence of the request for an extension of the world heritage site. Some site managers in the United Kingdom noted that the production of a management plan was the first consequence of their world heritage listing. The meaning of the world heritage site status has shifted from an honorific gesture to a concern for the quality of the site thanks to the production of the management plans (Whitbourn 2002: 12).

Management plans have not or have hardly been produced in any of the other four case countries. None of the six world heritage sites in the Netherlands have a management plan. The national government has made money available to this end in 2001 (OCW 2002: 6), but no management plan had been produced by 2004. It has been recommended once again that this will be done in the short run (VROM 2004: 44). The production of a management plan is both expensive and time-consuming (Pearson and Sullivan 1995: 281). Consultants coordinated the management plan for Stonehenge (Wainwright 2000: 338), but other sites lack the financial resources. Ironically, the countries where management plans have been produced (United States of America and United Kingdom) or are about to be produced (the Netherlands) are identified by Cleere (2000: 4) as the ones that least need a management plan.

The preservation of a site can also benefit from the creation of a new management body, although they are often not created (Feilden and Jokilehto 1998: x). A body is most helpful when there are various owners, something that applies to the majority of world heritage sites (Smith 2000a: 410). Most instances of new management bodies are found at more recently listed, multiply-owned landscapes, such as Las Médulas (Spain), the defence line of Amsterdam (The Netherlands), Vall de Boí (Spain), and the Loire Valley (France) (Musitelli 2003: 334). The creation of management bodies largely depends on local initiatives. A new management body would be helpful for the preservation of the cultural landscape of Kalwaria Zebrzydowska (Poland), as the cultural landscape is spread out over three municipalities. However, the Polish government has not responded to local requests for such a body (Interview 84).
5.2.4 Financial support

Money from the world heritage fund is mainly available for endangered sites in poorer countries, as the available financial resources are limited: “the resources under the world heritage fund all are too limited to assist the growing number of both… [countries] and sites” (UNESCO 2002: 3). The budget per site is insufficient to preserve all sites on the list of world heritage in danger (Musitelli 2003: 333). Wieliczka salt mine (Poland) was on the list of endangered sites between 1989 and 1997. Despite this status, the mine did not receive money when floods affected the mine in 1992, as “Poland was viewed as a country that could help itself without the support from UNESCO” (Interview 82, translated). The salt mine ultimately received $100,000 from the world heritage fund in the mid-1990s to install dehumidification equipment in the mine to deal more effectively with the moisture in human breath (Sherwood 1994: 24), an amount which was “very symbolic [but] not very large” (Interview 82, translated). The financial contributions of the Polish-American Maria Sklodowska-Curie fund and the Polish government were more substantial.

The lack of money in the world heritage fund results partly from the fact that “UNESCO is not predominantly an aid organisation” (Dutt 1999: 225). Countries that ratified the convention could have given more support by making voluntary contributions, but most countries prefer to spend money through bi- instead of multilateral cooperation (Dickson and Macilwain 1993: 293; Hindell 1986: 21). Bilateral cooperation can also be directed towards world heritage sites (Van Hooff 2002: 11), but the world heritage committee does not control or ‘evenly’ distribute these financial means:

“Countries simply do not make money available to the world heritage convention… countries can give voluntary contributions, and some countries like Italy and Japan have done so, but the United States has very rarely made additional contributions. Most of our assistance to world heritage sites goes through bilateral arrangements with other countries. We have a very active programme of cooperation with China, some of which extend to world heritage sites. That assistance is not directed through or counted as part of the world heritage programme… and more importantly, the world heritage committee does not control where they go. The US government decides where its support goes.”

(Interview 42)

The American National Park Service co-sponsored bilateral workshops at the three Polish world heritage sites of Białowieża, Kraków, and Warszawa in 1989 (Sherwood 1994: 23). Bilateral cooperation also exists between other countries and money is often invested in former colonies. Spain spends money on the colonial heritage in Latin America (see for example Suárez-Inclán Ducassi 1999) and the Netherlands in Surinam (WVC 1993: 184-185).

1) Most additional money comes from the local scale level

Managers at sites included in the field study mentioned that the world heritage status helps more often to attract money from other sources: 50 versus 34. Increased awareness among local policy makers for the Rietveld-Schröderhouse (the Netherlands) after the world heritage listing has led to more financial support:

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“Utrecht’s main focus was always on its medieval past... One has become aware of the works of Rietveld thanks to the world heritage designation. It has been an eye-opener for another possible identity of Utrecht. Policy makers see that the Rietveld-Schröderhouse measures internationally up to the cathedral in Utrecht, partly because the house is put on a par with Borobudur in Indonesia and the Pyramids in Egypt. Policy makers did not have such a standard before the world heritage designation. This rise of consciousness has contributed to the municipality’s aid to purchase another Rietveld house at the Erasmuslaan.”

(Interview 20, translated)

The world heritage designation often leads to a higher financial commitment from the region, such as the defence line of Amsterdam (Stichting Stelling van Amsterdam 2000: 3) and the Wouda steam pumping station (Chouchena and Van Rossum 1999: 27). Likewise, the regional authority made money available for the windmills of Kinderdijk after its world heritage designation (Bakker 1998: 40).

National governments normally do not make extra money available for world heritage sites. Most site managers in the United Kingdom and the Netherlands regard the world heritage listing as a non-funded mandate:

“At the moment, the world heritage status does not bring additional funds or enlarge the possibilities to get more money. It is a national or international recognition, but very often responsibility to look after the site falls upon the local community. And many of these local communities do not have the resources to do this properly. We have been arguing over the past few years that we should be helped financially at the national or international level to do our job, because we are not able to afford it from our own budget.”

(Interview 31)

The perceived lack of national and international support has led to the creation of national cooperation networks between world heritage sites. The UK Local Authorities World Heritage Sites Forum has been formed to share experiences (Pocock 1997b: 384). This cooperation includes “a dialogue between the world heritage sites and the UK government about financial support to help to manage these [world heritage] sites” (Interview 31). In the Netherlands, the World Heritage Platform has been created in 2002 (OCW 2002: 7). Local cooperation among world heritage sites led to more attention for the world heritage sites (OCW 2001: 4-5). More than €1 million have been made available for Dutch world heritage sites for the period 2001-2004. About one-third of the money was meant for producing management plans.

World heritage sites’ funding from the local level has the disadvantage that sites, also in poor regions, have to solve their own problems. A national law has been drawn up to better preserve the heavily polluted world heritage site of Lake Baikal (Russia). The new law affords better protection against pollution from the pulp and paper mills, but the lack of financial means make it difficult to implement the law (Wein 2002: 54). No country or international organisation has shown much interest in the Polish world heritage city of Zamość, even though buildings are dilapidated, the defensive walls falling apart and only the façades facing the main square are in a reasonable shape (photo 5-4).
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Photo 5-4: Backlog and decay in the Polish world heritage city of Zamość.

2) Outside financial support mainly for centrally nominated sites
Analogous to the scale level of support in issues and threats, national and international financial support predominantly goes to centrally nominated sites (table 5-5).

Table 5-5: Scale level of financial support for centrally and non-centrally nominated sites (number of sites, N = 61).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Scale level of support</th>
<th>Local</th>
<th>National</th>
<th>International</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Centrally nominated</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Non-centrally nominated</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>29</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note: P-value chi-square is 0.03.
Source: Own field study at various world heritage sites.

In Australia, centrally nominated sites receive more financial support from the national government than decentralised nominated sites: “the level of Commonwealth involvement in the [world heritage] listing process determines the level of Commonwealth support and resourcing of world heritage area management” (Corbett and Lane 1996: 40).
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At the international level, priority is given to world heritage sites when they request for funding from the Global Environment Facility, donors and the large development banks as “world heritage sites are ‘political hot-spots’” (Thorsell 2001: 35). Especially centrally nominated world heritage sites can count on this ‘international’ money in recent times. They do not only receive attention from international organisations thanks to their world heritage listing; they are also primary sites in their country. The world heritage site of Sian Ka’an receives money, among others, from the Global Environment Facility, the World Bank, the European Union, two United Nations’ programmes and the Nature Conservancy group as the following shows:

“We get more money than other natural areas in Mexico, but this is not a unique thing. Global Environment Facility started in 1994 and Mexico got a special budget for maintaining protected areas, and Sian Ka’an fell of course in this category, [as] it is one of the most important protected areas in Mexico.”

(Interview 63)

3) More support for publicly owned sites

National, regional and local governments are more inclined to pay for the maintenance of publicly owned world heritage sites than for private ones. This practice is prominent in world heritage cities, where private owners are hardly supported. The renovations after the world heritage designation of Puebla (Mexico) concerned initially only major civil buildings and monuments, not residential premises (Jones and Varley 1994: 27; Jones and Varley 1999: 1556). Later on, “property owners were instructed to maintain façades with approved materials, painting walls from a limited palette of ‘colonial’ colours. The municipality and INAH increased supervision of building codes” (Jones and Varley 1999: 1553). Private owners are partially compensated for their renovation efforts: “Not everything is compensated for… The façade is paid for, while the owner commits himself to pay for the renovation of the interior… This is comparable to the situation in other Mexican cities” (Interview 70, translated).

Owners are better able to pay for the renovation of their house when the inner city has gone through the process of gentrification. Hardly any historic world heritage city has entirely gone through this process, as world heritage areas are generally extensive:

“These [poorer] people just don’t renovate their property, because they do not have the financial means. When their houses are dilapidated, they break them down and build a new house at the same place. That’s what they prefer… There are 2,300 buildings in Puebla that have to be preserved, and we do not have sufficient money for that. All we can do is talk to these people and give them free technical advice.”

(Interview 70, translated)

The absence of financial support in other world heritage cities for private owners to renovate their building has also been pointed out, some examples of which are Bath (Interview 11), Warszawa (Interview 77), Paramaribo (Surinam) (Lotens 2002: 25), Willemstad (Bakker 2002: 31) and Venice (Orbaşlı 2000: 22). At the same time, property owners are sometimes hardly aware of the necessity of maintenance and repair of their house (see also Popp 2001).
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Photo 5-5: The renovation of buildings in historic cities is largely left to the owners: Toruń and Aranjuez.

Those who give financial support at the national or regional level hesitate to spend public money on the renovation of privately owned sites. Property rights take precedence over world heritage status as explained in the following:

“The Romanesque Catalan churches of Vall de Boí received a lot of money for their renovation, which enabled their world heritage nomination. In addition, their world heritage listing requires continued effort to maintain the site in a good condition. In contrast, the works of Antoni Gaudi or Lluís Domènech i Montaner are mostly privately owned. It is difficult to invest in these buildings with public means. This shows how difficult it is to gather general support for world heritage sites.”

(Interview 89, translated)

Box 5-2: Preserving world heritage sites in the United States of America.

The world heritage status may be a useful tool to better preserve a site, but this does not apply to most world heritage sites in the United States of America. The status has no impact on how a national park is managed due to the anti-United Nations attitude in this country: “There is some concern from people that the United Nations is taking over parks… and we do not manage it anymore. However, the status does not mandate specific actions in the park, and we do not manage the park any differently” (Interview 51). There is a small group of people in the United States of America, especially in the mid-West, who think that the United Nations has taken control over the world heritage sites in the United States of America. Blue helmets are supposed to train in the American national parks and black helicopters fly over the parks to control them. While in 1973 the United States Senate voted unanimously to accept the world heritage convention (Connally 1989: 4), it largely denies its existence today. The budgets for the national parks are annually determined by the federal congress and sites “do certainly not receive any of our budget… because we happen to be a world heritage site” (Interview 50). The world heritage status is no reason for priority funding, even though most American national parks need some renovation: “Mammoth Cave national park, like many national parks, was heavily developed in the 1950s and 1960s, and these buildings are now over fifty years old… There is a tremendous, a huge backlog in maintenance of about fifty years… The money we receive is enough to operate, not to do all the maintenance” (Interview 46).
5.2.5 The list of world heritage in danger

The World Heritage Committee’s threat of putting a particular site on the list of world heritage in danger has had some success. Ishwaran (2001: 22) reports two successes – Galápagos Islands (Ecuador) and El Vizcaíno (Mexico) – as it stimulated the respective national governments to take preventive steps (see also Maswood 2000: 366-367; Yale 1991: 227). The recognition as endangered site can also help to improve the preservation of sites, such as at Everglades National Park (United States of America):

“For many years we have been generally recognised as the most threatened American national park, and now even among world heritage sites the threats are recognised. We use that regularly for a variety of ways, particularly to request funding, to request particular decisions at higher policy levels, which help the park’s situation. We refer to it with discussions with our partner organisations active here in South Florida and its local community and in our interpretive programs, even beginning with the park brochure.”

(Interview 74)

The political support from UNESCO is claimed to have been an important factor in obtaining the attention of the Department of Environment in Northern Ireland (DOENI) to play a more active role in the development at the Giant’s Causeway:

“Once UNESCO started to show interest, DCMS [Department of Culture, Media and Sport] also started to show interest in the Giant’s Causeway. Then the DOENI started to realise its responsibilities… World heritage has been extremely important in all of this. DCMS has been asking questions to DOENI to assure that the UK as a whole meets its obligations to UNESCO in relation to its world heritage sites. DOENI started to realise its responsibilities after that.”

(Interview 24)

There have been questions about why there are only 35 sites on the list of world heritage in danger, while so many sites around the globe face threats that jeopardise their existence (Cook 1996: 4). McMurtrie and Xueqin (2001: 50) claim that about half of the Chinese world heritage sites are poorly managed, yet none of them is on the list of world heritage in danger. According to Kunich (2003) “there must be powerful disincentives at work that have artificially depressed the number of treasures… inscribed” (p. 646). There are two of such disincentives at work. A listing on the endangered list is sometimes regarded as a negative thing and the World Heritage Committee does not place a site on that list without prior knowledge and permission of the responsible country.

1) List of world heritage in danger as blacklist

The World Heritage Committee has made it explicitly clear that “inscription on the list of world heritage in danger should not be seen as a sanction, but as the acknowledgement of a condition that calls for safeguarding measures, and as a means of securing resources for that purpose” (UNESCO 1992: annex 2). Nonetheless, a listing in danger is often perceived as being put on a “blacklist of sites which are not…
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adequately protected by national governments” (Ishwaran 2001: 22), “as being placed on the dock of dishonour” (Pressouyre 1993: 56) or “a ‘red list’ that projects a negative image on the site and the country” (Van Hooff 2002: 10).

The district council of Xochimilco, Mexico City, is responsible for the floating gardens, a world heritage site since 1987. The council has been unsuccessful in its attempts to receive extra support from the Mexican government for the renovation of the area, primarily due to the difficult local political circumstances. The endangered status could possibly help to convince the Mexican government and the international community to invest money in the conservation of this site, but as a respondent pointed out:

“the local government regards a world heritage listing in danger not as a solution. We have always fought against being put on this list. Listing as such would be bad news for all Mexicans, government or not.”

(Interview 62, translated).

The negative connotation of the list of world heritage in danger is not always viewed as a stimulus. In Spain, an inscription on the list of world heritage in danger may produce adverse effects as explained in the following:

“It would be too tough here on the people, the administration. I am even not sure whether money would come… Money comes in Spain when you have a political advantage. If you want to renovate something, you want to get good publicity, not the other way around.”

(Interview 104)

It also took eight years until the Nepalese government was convinced of the validity of placing Kathmandu on the list of world heritage in danger (see Musitelli 2003: 328). The inscription on the list of world heritage in danger happens mostly in countries that are less reserved towards international cooperation. The countries that participated in the world heritage convention from the beginning can be labelled as being less reserved. More than half of the 44 sites ever listed as endangered were put on the ‘regular’ world heritage list between 1978 and 1983. Coincidentally or not, the 1989 inscription of Wieliczka salt mine on the list of world heritage in danger concurred with the end of communism in Poland.

2) Agreement of the state is necessary

Countries hardly ever ask for a listing of world heritage in danger for one of its sites. The World Heritage Committee mostly springs into action after it has been alerted by outsiders (ICOMOS 2002: 5). Four individuals – some of whom were involved in establishing the world heritage convention – and supported by a number of non-governmental organisations, asked the World Heritage Committee to put El Vizcaíno (Mexico) on the list of world heritage in danger (Brower et al. 2000: 24; Rosabal and Rössler 2001: 21). This working method “is criticised as reactionary rather than preventative. The problems have already taken hold and efforts to deal with them may be too little and too late” (Drost 1996: 481, see also box 5-3).
Theoretically, the World Heritage Committee can inscribe a site on the list of world heritage list in danger without the agreement of the country wherein the site is located, but it never does (Cameron 1992b: 20; Fontein 2000: 55). There are two practical reasons for asking a country’s consent. First, the home country also has to agree with the World Heritage Committee’s view on how to solve the identified problem (Maswood 2000: 368). And second, the World Heritage Committee prefers to keep the countries, as well as the site in question, inside the system. Maswood (2000) illustrates this for Kakadu National Park: “The decision to leave Kakadu off the list of threatened sites ensured that Australia remained compliant with the heritage regime… The World Heritage Committee could have acted to inscribe Kakadu on the endangered list but would have been unable to elicit Australian cooperation in protecting Kakadu from further mining operations” (p. 368). The World Heritage Committee remains dependent upon a country’s goodwill, which is most undesirable when the national government itself is the source of the danger (Aplin 2002: 176).

**Box 5-3: Reactionary approach of the list of world heritage in danger.**

In 2002 the municipality of Ávila (Spain) commissioned the demolition of two buildings at Plaza de Santa Teresa and constructed a new building (photo 5-6). This square, according to UNESCO (2003a), forms an integral part of the world heritage site: “The Plaza Santa Teresa has been included in the nomination file as part of the protected area… when inscribing the site in 1985… special mention was made of the Square of Santa Teresa as a high point within the world heritage site” (p. 63). The first nomination of Ávila in 1984 was rejected by ICOMOS, as the proposed site did not include the Romanesque churches of San Segundo, San Vicente, San Andres and San Pedro, which all lie outside the city wall (ICOMOS 1985). The new proposal, which was inscribed in the world heritage list in 1985, included these four churches and squares. Academics from the Universidad Católica de Ávila alerted UNESCO about the new developments in Ávila and the municipality has been asked to inform UNESCO about its future plans. The municipality is aware that it has contravened some agreements and conventions, but it will continue the project. The continuation is justified, as it is claimed that the square lies outside the designated world heritage area and an internationally well-known architect has designed the new building. Furthermore, the municipality stated, an inscription on the list of world heritage in danger is not an eminent danger, as Ávila still has many other beautiful buildings (Interview 102).

**Photo 5-6: Local developments at world heritage sites: Ávila and Auschwitz.**
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This case makes three things clear. First, there was confusion over which areas belong to the world heritage site and which areas do not. Second, local stakeholders sometimes intentionally break agreements without informing UNESCO. And third, the square had already been adapted before UNESCO was even informed. This case shares many similarities with the construction of a shopping centre in the buffer zone of Auschwitz. In both situations, the international community is rather helpless in ensuring better preservation of a world heritage site.

5.3 Concluding remarks

There are five fields of action to preserve world heritage sites more effectively: the status can be a useful argument to deal with threats and issues, national legislation, management plans and bodies, financial support, and the list of world heritage in danger. In practice these tools are no guarantee that world heritage sites are better preserved than without the international recognition. The effectiveness of these tools largely depends upon the willingness of countries to participate and the degree to which world heritage site managers can capitalise upon the status. The global situation is rather similar to Spain’s domestic situation, where the responsibility for preserving world heritage sites falls on the autonomous regions:

“I know, Aragón has created a unit on world heritage, and the large communities, like Catalunya, Andalucía and Galicia, they work very well on heritage in general, and... on world heritage, they are very conscious of that. [It is much harder for] small communities, like Cantabria, Asturias [to work on world heritage], since they do not have a large administration and not too many professionals.”

(Interview 104)

The level of preservation hardly increases after a world heritage listing, except for centrally nominated, and publicly owned sites. All humanity should be concerned about the preservation of world heritage sites, but this remains largely a local affair: “was man aus dem ehrenvollen Titel macht, wird vor Ort entschieden” (Overlack 2001: 64).