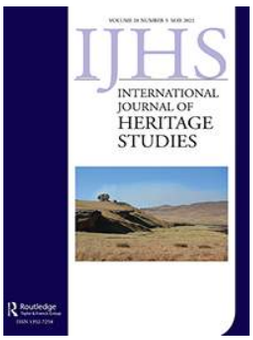

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The cross-sectoral linkage between cultural heritage and security: how cultural heritage has developed as a security issue?

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ABSTRACT

The understanding of cultural heritage as a growing issue in contemporary security has been described as a heritage-security nexus recognising the protection of cultural heritage as a cross-sectoral topic. It represents an urgent issue in international security politics and in the related field of heritage studies. This article shows how the protection of cultural heritage has found its way into rhetoric relating to security politics, thus placing it on political agendas. This development has had an important impact on the academic field of heritage studies. Therefore, this article seeks to identify the linkage between cultural heritage and security threats and the recognition of it as a new theme in academia during the last two decades. The study argues for a newly defined research field that combines heritage studies with security studies in academic fields such as political science and international relations. Finally, this article argues that the academic field of heritage studies, as well as the heritage institutions and related organisations, needs to have a critical approach to the securitisation process. Involved parties need to consider the intentions and causes of the securitising actors and how they usually benefit from security policies.

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Introduction

Conflict dynamics worldwide have shifted from state-on-state conflicts organised around the geopolitics of national borders and territories to increasingly focusing on cultural references and identity politics orientated towards cultural values. The understanding of cultural heritage as a growing issue in contemporary visions of security can be described as a heritage-security nexus (Rosén 2022). This nexus indicates a mixture of policy areas that used to be relatively separate and calls for a more cross-sectoral approach to addressing security issues related to cultural heritage. To understand this development and enable us to respond adequately to its challenges, this article examines how the discursive construction of cultural heritage destruction as a security threat has strengthened the link between heritage and security within research and in contemporary global politics.

Through an overview of key historical events and situations, this article investigates how views on cultural heritage in armed conflicts have developed. It shows that after the Second World War and especially the Cold War, the protection of cultural heritage has progressively been connected to goals of peacebuilding, conflict resolution, tolerance, societal resilience and reconciliation. These elements are similar to a broader peace and security agenda and define heritage protection as an inherent concept in human security as well as hybrid warfare (Rosén 2017, 2022). This development is closely

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connected to events of heritage destruction in conflict situations and has escalated with the massive, performative destructions and systematic lootings in the Middle East during the last two decades. This article shows how the protection of cultural heritage has increasingly found its way into rhetoric related to peace and security. This development has had an important impact on the academic field of heritage studies. Therefore, this article seeks to identify the linkage between cultural heritage and security threats and the recognition of it as a new theme in international politics and academia during the last two decades. The study argues for a newly defined research field that combines heritage studies with security studies in academic fields such as political science and international relations. The recognition of a heritage-security nexus and the interrelation between heritage and security studies is an important contribution to understanding a cross-sectoral approach to cultural heritage protection.

Cultural heritage as an issue in international security

Since the creation of the modern nation state and the development of national identities in many Western and Central European countries in the nineteenth century, cultural heritage has become a political resource vulnerable to attacks (Legnér 2016b). Historic events and national identities were given material expressions in cultural heritage symbols, made to represent cultural and national identities (Legnér 2016a). Cultural heritage became more targeted during the First World War and was even used as part of the propaganda machinery. Heritage professionals like archaeologists, especially in the Middle East, also became involved in different aspects of security and warfare, such as espionage, intelligence gathering and diplomacy (Meskell 2020).

During the Second World War, entire cities and historical sites were destroyed in bombings, battles, or due to deliberate demolition (Legnér 2016). The recognition of the tactical value of cultural heritage, together with the systematic looting of artworks in occupied territories, especially by Nazi Germany, placed the strategic significance of 'cultural intelligence' within security services. The response was to create intelligence capabilities with the help of civilian heritage professionals to collect intelligence for the acquisition, control and countering of abuses of cultural heritage (Nemeth 2011). After the Second World War, UNESCO was established in 1945, followed by ICOM (International Council of Museums) in 1946 and a few years later by the fourth Geneva Convention of 1949 which defined the guidelines for the protection of cultural property, still limited, however, by the wording of military necessity (Thurlow 2014, 159). In 1954, it was supplemented by the *Hague Convention for the Protection of Cultural Property in the Event of Armed Conflict*. The Convention introduced the concept of cultural heritage to the United Nations and made the concept more recognised (Legnér 2016b; Thurlow 2014). It also provided the international community with a definition of cultural property that is still seen as a cornerstone in policies, military manuals and reports today (O'Keefe 2006; Rosén 2017). Organisations relating to the protection of cultural heritage gradually created 'soft power' platforms. In this article, soft power will be understood as 'the ability to get what you want through attraction rather than coercion or payments' (Nye 2004, 256). This, coupled with the attempt to create international legislative instruments for the protection of cultural heritage, made cultural heritage into an international security issue. The two world wars brought international focus on heritage protection in armed conflict and emphasised the need to create an environment for the development of heritage organisations and legal guidelines.

Post-Cold War: heritage as an inherent concept in human security

During the Cold War, soft power strategies were increasingly used as a power resource in international relations, which resulted in cultural heritage becoming a platform for securing loyalty and alignment (Nye 1990; Winter 2015). The Cold War called for a reconceptualisation of security, a recognition of new security threats and the fact that states no longer were sole actors in matters of security and warfare' (Brauch 2008, 33).

In the post'-Cold War period, heritage and its connection to security developed further. Focus shifted from the physical survival and cohesion of the state towards a 'human-centered' security concept, in which security no longer referred just to the *state* but also to *people* – and the well-being of people – whether seen as individuals or as a global collective. Conflicts were now driven more by identity and culture than territory, economic motives or political-ideological systems (Laustsen and Wæver 2000), placing cultural heritage protection in the broader human-centred security concept. Alongside the period's dramatic processes of decolonisation, culture and identity politics framed a new set of political relations around culture and its governance (Winter 2015). Ethnic strife and political violence resulting in the destruction of cultural heritage sites made it clear that state military and non-state armed groups considered the strategic and tactical value of cultural heritage during conflict (Nemeth 2011).

The conflicts in the Balkans in the 1990s marked a shift where the intertwining of identity, ethnicity, religion, and culture as the war was largely driven by cultural and ethnic divisions (Legnér 2016a). The term 'cultural cleansing' emerged among commentators during the conflicts to describe the deliberate destruction of identity and memories of ethnic groups (Legnér 2017). The intentional destruction of cultural heritage affected the international community's perception of the war and provoked international condemnation followed by diplomatic and economic sanctions (Legnér 2017; Meskell 2018, 188). The attacks on the UNESCO World Heritage Site of Dubrovnik in 1991 and the Old Bridge in Mostar in 1993 became icons of how cultural heritage was targeted in wartime. These incidents were subsequently described by the international community as crimes against humanity (Meskell 2018, 188). This description was also used in the judicial aftermath of the conflict, where two senior commanders from the Yugoslav National Army and Navy were convicted by the International Criminal Tribunal for former Yugoslavia (ICTY) for the intentional destruction of cultural heritage in Dubrovnik (Legnér 2016a). Even though their convictions were primarily connected with atrocities committed against civilians, the ICTY also focused on the destruction of cultural heritage. The fact that Dubrovnik was on UNESCO's World Heritage List made the ICTY conclude that the attack was a 'crime not only against the cultural heritage of the region, but also against all of humanity' (Walasak 2015, 313). The consequences of the Balkan wars and the international aftermath defined the deliberate destruction of cultural heritage as a factor in human security because it was considered a crime against humanity. As a result, these events showed how culture is an inherent concept in human security.

The discursive framing of heritage protection in recent conflicts

The demolition of the Bamiyan Buddhas by the Taliban in Afghanistan in 2001 marked another turning point in heritage protection. It integrated the normative framework and accountability for 'crimes against humanity' and 'cultural terrorism' (Russo and Giusti 2019). It continued and strengthened the narrative created in the aftermath of the Balkan wars and consequently the destruction of cultural heritage was defined as terrorism.

The way the demolition was planned and carried out was very different from previous attacks on cultural heritage (Meskell 2018, 190). No crimes against humans were part of the destruction, and it was orchestrated like a strategic, well-planned and performative global media happening. The purpose was to get international attention to the situation in Afghanistan and the Taliban's dissatisfaction with different aspects of Western intervention and priorities (Meskell 2018, 190).

The destruction, looting and vandalising of archaeological sites and museums gained new momentum during the Iraq War in 2003. The looting of the Iraqi National Museum is a particularly strong symbol of the failure and indifference in the U.S.-led coalition forces in the protection of Iraqi cultural heritage. The forces were meant to protect Iraq´s cultural institutions and archaeological sites from the systematic destruction of cultural heritage, which was initiated to rewrite Iraq's history and reshape national identity after the fall of the Ba'athist regime (Isakhan 2011). However, the attention to cultural policy issues came very late in the conflict and the lack of

policies caused major damage to heritage sites, e.g. when coalition forces built military barracks and training camps on important heritage sites like Babylon and the Great Mosque of Samarra (Meskell 2018, 191). This led to a massive critique of the United States (Luke and Kersel 2012, 78). To counteract the critique, the U.S. government changed their funding initiatives to give more grants to rebuild and secure Iraq's museum and heritage organisations. The change of the U.S. Department of State's funding policy strengthened the position of cultural heritage in diplomatic relations (Luke and Kersel 2012, 79–87)

In the following years, the attacks on cultural symbols by armed Islamic radicals intensified in the Middle East and North Africa. The attacks were countered by several states, as well as regional and international organisations, by deploying legal instruments and policy interventions (Russo and Giusti 2019). The UN Security Council passed 'Resolution 2100' in 2013, integrating support of the protection of cultural heritage into the mandate of the UN stabilisation mission in Mali. The International Criminal Court's (ICC) case against Ahmad Al Faqi Al Mahdi for the destruction of World Heritage sites in Mali in 2012 reflected the deployment of legal instruments. Though the general focus of the court was on human rights violations, the ICC specifically charged Al-Mahdi with war crimes for destroying cultural heritage in Timbuktu (Russo and Giusti 2019). This was a marked difference from the previously mentioned case in ICTY, where the destruction of cultural heritage always featured alongside crimes against humans. Human rights violations echoed the perception of how 'cultural rights' related to identity, self-expression and creativity had a legal basis in international human rights instruments. According to Helle Porsdam, it empowered cultural rights, placing them in 'the center of human rights and in the center of law and humanities' (Porsdam 2019, 38).

The growing reports of ISIS's attacks and looting of archaeological sites in the Syrian warzone raised international concern. It peeked in May 2015, when the international media reported the seizure of Palmyra, which was followed by acts of plunder, destruction and public executions at the site. After the attack, international attention towards the destruction of cultural heritage increased and the global media reported many stories and images of damage done to heritage in their daily reports of ISIS and the war in Syria (Winter 2016). Thus, the international media created a narrative about Palmyra as a global icon of cultural destruction. ISIS's brutal murder of archaeologist Khaled al-Asaad, who worked as head of antiquities in Palmyra, added another dimension to the destruction of cultural heritage. The execution was carried out in front of the local museum and displayed at Palmyra's archaeological site (Syrian Observatory for Human Rights 2021). With the murder of Assad and the other public executions at the site, ISIS explicitly used the international attention of a UNESCO world heritage site in their warfare. This positioned cultural heritage in global politics and human security.

The issue of the destruction of cultural heritage, along with the atrocities committed at Palmyra, resonated in the international community. Heads of international organisations and states referred to the destruction of cultural heritage in Mali, Iraq and Syria and increasingly framed destruction of cultural heritage as an urgent and existential threat to global security. UNESCO's former Director General Irina Bokova (2009–2017) repeatedly associated the destruction of cultural heritage with 'cultural cleansing', 'war crimes' and 'crimes against civilisation' (UNESCO 2015a, 2015b, 2015c). After ISIS's attack on the museum of Mosul, she referred to the protection of heritage as not only 'a matter of cultural urgency, but also a political and security necessity' and described culture as 'a central consideration for any strategy for peace' (UNESCO 2014, 5). Bokova, representing an established and recognised heritage institution and UN organ, thereby creating a narrative of ISIS's attacks on cultural heritage in Syria and Iraq, consistently establishing a strong link between attacks on culture heritage and threats to human life. The language (Bokova and UNESCO's speech act) framed the attacks not only as strategic acts of war against the people of Syria and Iraq but also as attacks against modern civilisation. It clearly created exclusionary categories of 'them' and 'us', Western society against Islamic fundamentalists. It fitted into the narrative of terrorist acts threatening international peace and security and

entered the UN agenda with the adoption of the UN Security Council 'Resolution 2199' on threats to international peace and security caused by terrorist acts by Al-Qaida and associated groups in 2015. This discursive framing of heritage protection in powerful international organisations was further underlined when former UN Secretary-General Ban Ki Moon stated that ISIS's systematic destruction and looting of cultural sites in Syria and Iraq 'highlights the strong connection between the cultural, humanitarian and security dimensions of conflicts and terrorism' (UN Secretary-General 2016, 4).

The political recognition of and attention to cultural heritage as a political security issue and important element in modern warfare was further emphasised when UNESCO published *Protection of CP. Military Manual* (O'Keefe et al. 2016). The discursive escalation of heritage as a security issue reached a temporary climax with United Nations Security Council 'Resolution 2347', *Protection of Cultural Heritage in Armed Conflict* (2017). The resolution brought the connection of heritage protection and terrorism into legislation, thus legitimising the narrative. In NATO, an international organisation for political and military alliance and collective defence, heritage protection was also recognised as a security issue with the report *NATO and Cultural Property. Embracing New Challenges in the Era of Identity Wars* (Rosén 2017). This mobilisation of resources, initiatives and cooperation between states and international organisations showed that cultural heritage had become a central issue for international security. It underpinned cultural heritage as part of military geography, playing a role in both tactical and strategic considerations at all levels, and stimulated a cascading growth of awareness and concept across states, international organisations and professional milieus. In March 2021, the Office of the Prosecutor of the ICC published a draft Policy as part of a strategy that pays attention to crimes affecting cultural heritage. In the policy draft, crimes against cultural heritage are thought to suppress the culture of occupied communities, leading to feelings of insecurity and repression. With the draft, the Office will widen its network of partners naming NATO as one. Furthermore, the policy recognises the importance of United Nations Security Council 'Resolution 2347' (ICC 2021).

Cultural heritage protection as a transnational human security issue

This review of key historical events and situations has shown how the perception of loss connected to cultural heritage has changed from material expression of collective memories to tactical exploitation, terrorism and conflict escalation and therefore as an element in peace-building and security. Cultural heritage protection is becoming a transnational human security issue. Since the Cold War, there has been a shift in the organising of heritage protection, which has caused a mixture of sectors to interact around this protection. The protection of cultural heritage has increasingly been established as a cross-sectoral topic in conflict management and is linked to other traditional security issues such as the security of nations and people. In practice, this is reflected in ongoing politics and conflicts, where the destruction is part of the strategy of non-state armed groups to spread propaganda and to gain international attention. In addition, the damaging of heritage is used to erase unity or national identity (Rosén 2022, 6). Examples of this could be the ongoing conflicts in Crimea, Nagorno-Karabakh and Israel-Palestine. Paradoxically, these conflicts and the following destruction of heritage have not received the same attention and exclamations from the international society as the destruction in the Middle East. The lack of international outcry illustrates the political dimension of cultural heritage protection, where international politics and powerful states decide which acts of destruction get attention. The destruction by non-state armed groups in the Middle East fits very well into the existing narrative regarding 'the war on terror' and the tension between Western society and radical Islamic fundamentalist groups. Almost every state and politician without conflicting interests have been able to condemn the destruction, as it has fitted into the political strategy used to manage fears surrounding the security issue of terrorism.

Cultural heritage and security in academic research

The previous section summarises the connection between security and cultural heritage, how it has evolved since the creation of the modern nation-state, as well as the growing role of cultural references, identity politics and transnational communities. This has led to a mixture of sectors interacting around the protection and the associated narrative of heritage protection. Nevertheless, the linkage between cultural heritage and security threats as an explicit theme is a relatively recent phenomenon, which is also reflected in the academic literature of heritage studies. Several research paradigms are represented, reflecting the complexity and the mixture of interests in this field. One perspective is based in traditional heritage studies, drawing on research traditions from archaeology, conservation, etc. Another approach is anchored in fields like political science and international relations. This has created different views and agendas for the writing on heritage protection and its implications. One could argue that linking cultural heritage and security threats might benefit some heritage professionals and institutions, due to the public and political attention it generates and how protection initiatives are reflected in political trends. However, even though the academic literature does not have the same position as publications from NATO or UNESCO, which indicate an overall organisational development, the appearance of this linkage in the research agenda is an important expression of it becoming a theme in its own right.

In the academic literature of heritage studies, the linkage first appeared in the context of international relations, where Joseph Nye in his evaluation of power in the post-Cold War world formulated the term 'soft power' to describe the importance of heritage in

the context of cultural discourse and practice in international relations (Nye 1990).

In 2007 Erik Nemeth argued that the looting and trafficking of cultural property and the destruction of heritage as acts of political violence and terrorism underpinned the 'growing significance of cultural property in issues of international security' (Nemeth 2007, 21–26). Furthermore, Nemeth framed the concept of 'cultural security' as embracing research, analyses and strategies aiming to show the relationship between the field of heritage and the related international legislation and counterterrorism (Nemeth 2007, 20). In that sense, the research reflected the situation after the destruction of the Bamiyan Buddhas and the looting of the Iraqi National Museum, but also after '9/11' and the increased attention to the 'war on terror'. Nemeth drew attention to how the development in military technology had also increased the responsibility to protect cultural heritage, strengthening the link between cultural property and international security (Nemeth 2007). In his subsequent research, Nemeth claimed that human-intelligence networks in the art world, which specialised in trafficking of cultural property, had great importance for counterterrorism and therefore for the protection of national security (Nemeth 2008, 358). Furthermore, he pointed out that the destruction of cultural heritage in campaigns of cultural cleansing shows how integrated cultural heritage has become as an issue in international security (Nemeth 2008). Nemeth argued that recognising cultural heritage security or as he called it 'cultural intelligence' – the tactical and financial exploration of cultural property in conflicts – placed 'the protection of sites of cultural heritage into the context of regional security' (Nemeth 2011, 232), which supports national security and is therefore an asset to foreign policy and international affairs (Nemeth 2011). Simultaneously, Rama Mani argued that even though cultural repression is not considered a threat to international peace and security, it can be a breeding ground for disaster and therefore demands responses from both the UN Security Council and NATO (Mani 2011, 121–122). Again, culture was placed in relation to international security politics.

Casting the protection of cultural heritage as a security issue is also a component in Christina Luke and Morag Kersel's examination of cultural heritage policy in the U.S. following the Iraq war (Luke and Kersel 2012). Referring to Nemeth, Luke and Kersel examined U.S. efforts to use the security rhetoric of the protection of cultural heritage in policy, e.g. by encouraging U.S. embassies to create relationships with the relevant ministries of culture to secure cultural intelligence and prevent unrest (Luke and Kersel 2012, 80–81). Kersel and Luke concluded 'U.S. goals for

contributing to world stability through cultural heritage protection mimic other U.S. foreign and national policies on security' (Luke and Kersel 2012, 81). The entry of cultural heritage protection into foreign policy is expressed in the conceptual term 'heritage diplomacy', which aims to see decolonisation and cultural politics of contemporary international relations as components in cultural nationalism, international relations and globalisation (Winter 2015). According to Tim Winter (2015), heritage diplomacy not only pivots around mechanisms of soft power but also incorporates forms of hard power such as developmental aid and military intervention. In relation to soft power and its significance in heritage diplomacy and international relations, Natsuko Akagawa (2015) concluded in her study of Japan's heritage conservation policy and practice that conservation is used as a form of soft power. 'Through which [Japan] has been able to establish its international position in the global economy and international security arrangements' (Akagawa 2015, 185). Research on heritage diplomacy and soft power also came to reflect how the global media and international society reacted to ISIS's destruction of Palmyra with condemnation. As Mattias Legnér asked in his review of the use of cultural heritage in armed conflicts: who benefits from these condemnations? (Legnér 2016b). Answering this, Legnér argued that the primary aim is to show the proponents' position towards their opponents and to encourage others to take this position. Legnér concluded that the consequence is 'that cultural heritage is increasingly woven into political rhetoric and in [to] security policy strategies' (Legnér 2016b, 670). Legnér also discussed the connections between heritage and security and distinguished between *heritage in security* and *heritage as security* (Legnér 2017). Legnér argued that *heritage in security* is the aspect in which heritage is seen as an (active) object of interest in armed conflicts and thus 'treated as an agent capable of contributing to (in)security' (Legnér 2017, 8). This is exemplified by ISIS's destruction of heritage in the Middle East in 2015 and 2016 and the international reaction which created the narrative of destruction of cultural heritage as a threat to global security. It shows how heritage has been securitised (Legnér 2017). On the other hand, Legnér's *Heritage as security* referred to the interconnection between heritage and security with a focus on reconciliation and reconstruction in the aftermath of conflicts (Legnér 2017), which is nicely exemplified by the reconstruction of heritage monuments after the Balkan wars.

The active exploration of the role of cultural heritage in armed conflicts and as an agent in security was addressed by Thomas Weiss and Nina Connelly (Weiss and Connelly 2017). They explicitly called for extending the Responsibility to Protect (R2P) doctrine[1] to include heritage protection through military intervention (Weiss and Connelly 2017). Weiss and Connelly (2017, 20) highlighted how cultural heritage had 'benefited' from its association with threats to peace-building and security. Presenting this along with the list of resolutions passed by the UN Security Council (2100, 2199, 2253 and 2347), Weiss and Connelly proposed a shift in the discourse on international heritage protection, linking it to human security, comparable with other elements of mass atrocities and terrorism (Weiss and Connelly 2017, 21–22). They concluded that the protection of cultural heritage is a 'fundamental aspect of R2P' (Weiss and Connelly 2017, 45). The role of cultural heritage in military geography and as a tool in warfare is also recognised by NATO in the previously mentioned report, *NATO and Cultural Property. Embracing New Challenges in the Era of Identity Wars*, from the NATO Science for Peace and Security Project (Rosén 2017). The lack of cultural policy and military guidelines for the U.S.-led coalition forces in Iraq, along with the performative destructions of cultural heritage in the Middle East, set the scene for NATO to release such a report. Frederik Rosén wrote on heritage protection from a political science approach, emphasising how modern conflicts (identity wars) have cultural heritage as a symbol of identity and belonging, which makes the protection of heritage a security issue and a matter of politics to security communities (Rosén 2017). Rosén also commented on the mixture of sectors in heritage protection and argued how cultural heritage has migrated from the cultural sector to the security domain (Rosén 2017). This migration can be traced in Colin Atkinson, Donna Yates and Nick Brooke's study of counterterrorism security at museums in the U.K. (Atkinson, Yates, and Brooke 2019). Their study showed how heritage institutions like museums have implemented

counterterrorism security measures after consultation with security agents (Atkinson, Yates, and Brooke 2019). The paper referred to the attacks conducted by Islamic radicals on museums in Paris and London between 2017 and 2018, which pinpointed museums as terrorist targets. This underpins the link between cultural heritage protection and fighting terrorism and reflects how cultural heritage protection has become a matter of state security.

In Helen Frowe and Derek Matravers's response to Weiss and Connelly's suggestion that military intervention regarding heritage protection in the context of R2P is a necessity, they criticised the lack of moral analysis of heritage protection (Frowe and Matravers 2019). Frowe and Matravers drew attention to the proportionality calculations of the risk that military intervention in heritage protection poses to combatants and civilian lives (Frowe and Matravers 2019). The need for assessing how much heritage is worth, the ranking of its value and the comparison of the risk with the lives, which protects it, exemplifies the complex moral framework of heritage protection (Frowe and Matravers 2019). This debate reflects what happens when a traditional soft power issue like cultural heritage migrates into the sphere of security and peace. Consequently, this linkage between heritage and security threats requires the international community and heritage institutions to rethink their perception of the concrete value of cultural heritage and respond to these new issues.

The securitisation of cultural heritage and the heritage-security nexus

As the previous chapter illustrates, the conceptual understanding of the linkage between cultural heritage and security is relatively new in academia. It has inevitably fostered discussions on what happens when one sector migrates into another sector with a different normative framework. In academia, international protection of cultural heritage and the narrative threads created in the protection framework has been characterised as a *securitisation* of cultural heritage (Russo and Giusti 2019). This characterisation of the securitisation of cultural heritage has been important for subsequent research. In their article documenting the securitisation of cultural heritage, Alessandra Russo and Serena Giusti drew on a human-centred concept of security, which was expanded by the Copenhagen School of security studies, spearheaded by Barry Buzan and Ole Wæver (Buzan 1991; Wæver 1995; Buzan and Wæver 1997; Wæver 1997). In short, it can be said that the securitisation theory in its core assumes that there is no such thing as a predetermined security threat. Instead, security refers to certain activities that someone has to perform in a specific context regarding a specific referent object (Buzan, Wæver, and de Wilde 1998). Russo and Giusti adopted this analytical framework and the concepts further develop into a more sociological approach, embracing identity security, cultural security and ontological security of the state. Russo and Giusti viewed securitisation as a process where issues were framed in a security dimension and spoken of as demanding urgency and extraordinary measures, often in a fast-tracked and undemocratic process (Russo and Giusti 2019). Again, the demolition of the Bamiyan Buddhas in Afghanistan and ISIS's attacks on Palmyra in Syria were emphasised as turning points 'in the emergence of a securitarian narrative on the international protection of cultural heritage' (Russo and Giusti 2019, 5). It can be added that it is hard to say who took advantage of whom and what events in the situation in Syria between 2014 and 2016. Both ISIS and the international community, led by organisations such as UNESCO, used and reinforced the importance of protecting cultural heritage from destruction. They all addressed the common sentimental rhetoric associated with the 'world's common cultural heritage' and the values this has come to symbolise. Thus, Russo and Giusti argued that the 'leading figure' in the development of this security narrative was the former Director-General of UNESCO Irina Bokova. As previously mentioned, Bokova established a strong link between cultural heritage and security in her rhetoric. The discursive construction of cultural heritage destruction as a security threat increasingly infiltrated the language of other international officials and

national elites, creating a constellation of security rhetoric in heritage protection (Russo and Giusti 2019). The discursive security construction can therefore be traced back to Bokova and UNESCO pushing forwards the integration of this concept into the heritage protection rhetoric.

After the integration, the security narrative on heritage protection was used in a range of initiatives, partly to gain international legitimacy and cast donor politics in a positive light. This reflects the many different intentions behind securitisation and shows how the end-product of the discursive escalation has turned the protection of cultural heritage into a security issue and a political tool. This was also reflected in (Foradori, Giusti and Lamonica's 2018) study of cultural heritage protection policies at a time of securitisation. In their study, they found that the protection of cultural heritage had been 'elevated from the traditional sphere of cultural diplomacy – a subset of public diplomacy used to mobilise soft power – to that of a sui generis articulation of foreign policy' (Foradori, Giusti and Lamonica 2019, 98). This line of argument is in line with Nemeth's claim that the protection of heritage and cultural heritage security plays an important role in, and is an asset to, foreign policy and international affairs (Nemeth 2011). Foradori, Giusti and Lamonica summed up how the securitisation process had strengthened the linkage between heritage and security threats in contemporary global politics. This development was also reflected in Christophe Foultier's writing on how heritage is a political resource and an instrument in public policy (Foultier 2020, 13). Ayse N. Erek and Eszter Gantner added that the number of different actors involved in production or demolition of heritage in the last decade has multiplied (Erek and Gantner 2020, 153). The same pattern also applies to heritage protection, and one could argue that academia needs a critical approach to the many actors in the securitisation process. Thus, within the field of heritage studies, researchers should be careful in navigating between heritage and security, addressing who creates the discourse and which interests and intentions lie behind placing heritage protection as a security issue. This approach was seen in Sultan Barakat's critique of international resources and responses to post-conflict recovery of cultural heritage in the Arab World. He pointed out that international humanitarian and development actors in the last decade had come to recognise post-war reconstruction of countries emerging from a violent conflict as a key to achieving 'global security and eradicating 21st century poverty' (Barakat 2021, 432). Barakat also argued that the intention and starting point for the international actors often is opportunistic self-interest and related to concerns about Western security, including terrorism (Barakat 2021). His argumentation reflects the political perspective on making heritage protection a real security issue linked to fighting terrorism and the ideological perspective of 'the West against fundamentalists'. That is the result of the securitisation of cultural heritage, which started with Bokova and UNESCO's rhetoric around the destruction of heritage in the Middle East.

As examined in this section, the many actors involved in heritage protection and its relation to security concerns reflect the migration of the cultural sector to the security sphere. Even though this merging of sectors has not yet been institutionalised, a descriptive concept developed to refer to the framing of cultural heritage protection as a security issue has recently been introduced by Rosén (Finkelstein, Gillman and Rosén 2022). This concept frames the development from a political science perspective. The term 'heritage-security nexus' is used to describe the increasing cross-sectoral linkage between cultural heritage and security. It frames a development in heritage protection, reflecting similar connections of broader security issues in sectors such as climate change and migration (Rosén 2022, 11). In that sense, the heritage-security nexus emphasises the international communities' recognition of the interweaving of cultural heritage and security and reflects 'the broader peace and security agenda' (Rosén 2022, 6). This is illustrated in Barakat's argument about self-interest and concerns about Western security, which has been the red thread in the creation of a security narrative on cultural heritage protection. The heritage-security nexus as a research agenda deals with not only issues of security in conflicts between the West and Islamic fundamentalism but also other geopolitical tensions and manifestations of power. Furthermore, the nexus provides support for those general policy recommendations that combine heritage and security, aiming to change the heritage institutions in a more cross-sectoral direction.

Conclusion

In this article, the development of the cross-sectoral linkage between cultural heritage and security has been identified. The overview of key events and situations has shown how the tactical value of cultural heritage was exploited in the First and Second World War. This led to the creation of heritage institutions and conventions which established the concept of cultural heritage in the international community, thus using cultural heritage as a soft power platform and as a tool for creating international legal instruments. In the post-Cold War period, influenced by the conflicts in the Balkans and later in Afghanistan, the deliberate destruction of cultural heritage and framing of the destruction of cultural heritage as 'crimes against humanity', alongside the reactions and condemnation by international society, defined cultural heritage as an intrinsic concept in human security. Cultural heritage protection was connected to goals of peacebuilding, conflict resolution, tolerance and reconciliation – elements similar to a broader peace and security agenda. The organisation of the field of heritage protection shifted and caused a mixture of sectors to interact around protection. It escalated after the seizure of Palmyra, strengthening the position of cultural heritage in diplomatic relations and in the international community. This caused a number of states as well as regional and international organisations to deploy legal instruments and policy interventions which positioned the role of heritage in global politics and as a political security issue. Resultatively, cultural heritage protection is becoming a transnational security issue in contemporary world politics and armed conflicts. Since the 2000s, this has led to a growing development of a concrete linkage between cultural heritage and security. The purpose of cultural heritage protection has increasingly been connected to the security and protection of society and its people. In that way, securing a society and a population's cultural heritage has found its way into the political rhetoric, placing it in international relations, framed as heritage diplomacy. It has become an actor in human security and thus a matter of politics for security communities and security policy strategies.

Following this, the understanding of the linkage between cultural heritage and security has also emerged as a new research theme in heritage studies. Discussions have been developed on what happens when one sector migrates into another sector with a different normative framework, and a cross-sectoral perspective has been applied.

Over time, the narrative of cultural heritage as a security issue has been described as a securitisation of cultural heritage in research. This approach invites heritage studies to consider the intention behind the framing of cultural heritage protection in a security dimension. Research has shown how the representation of cultural heritage in security terms has been used as a political tool by a variety of actors from politicians to international organisations involved in heritage, heritage professionals and heritage institutions. Many actors have used the integration of the security rhetoric in heritage protection to their own benefit, to legitimise initiatives, gain attention and funding or as part of a strategy reflecting a certain political agenda. Based on the understanding of the interweaving of cultural heritage and security, the concept of a heritage-security nexus provides a framework for research on the protection of cultural heritage as a security issue.

This article finally argues that the field of heritage studies as well as the heritage institutions and organisations need to have a critical approach to the securitisation process. Furthermore, they need to consider the intentions and causes of the securitising actors and how those actors usually benefit from security policies. The recognition of the heritage-security nexus is part of institutionalising the protection of cultural heritage in armed conflicts and has changed views on cultural heritage as an issue in contemporary manifestations of security. The nexus also requires an understanding of security as a political struggle over authority, control and power and thus the role of heritage in this struggle. Further research could focus on the consequence of not having a more formal structure in international heritage protection and on how the heritage security-nexus development unfolds and affects heritage institutions, which are now becoming actors in global security politics and governance.

Note

1. The Responsibility to Protect is an international doctrine seeking to ensure that states and the international community take special responsibility for protecting civilian populations from mass atrocities such as genocide, war crimes, ethnic cleansing, and other crimes against humanity. The doctrine provides a coherent framework for preventing and stopping these types of assaults and points out actions for specific actors in the various phases of the conflict.

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