WAR ON CULTURE:

THE DESTRUCTION OF CULTURAL PROPERTY DURING CIVIL WARS

By

BEATRICE HELENA DATE NIELSEN

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A Thesis Submitted to the University of Arizona Honors College
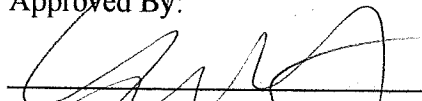
In Partial Fulfillment of the Bachelor of Arts degree
with Honors in

Geography

THE UNIVERSITY OF ARIZONA

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Approved By:

Dr. Jessica Maves Braithwaite
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ABSTRACT

Acts of violence against civilians during conflict is a topic that has been examined increasingly in the literature on civil war. However, a systematic study on the destruction of cultural and religious sites as a strategic means to achieve territorial control has not yet been explored. I examine this aspect of civilian targeting in this project, and I argue that in many cases, combatants use cultural property as a tool to gain territory, coerce civilians, public perception, and degrade the social fabric of a given religion or population. In preliminary research, I have observed that destruction of a population's cultural property indicates and precurses a willingness to destroy human lives. Through a cross-national empirical analysis of civil wars in Iraq and Syria after 1990, I anticipate that the destruction of culturally significant objects and sites is not collateral damage during civil war, but rather intentional actions through which combatants achieve and exert power.

STATEMENT OF PURPOSE

The destruction of cultural property during conflict is rampant throughout history. I collected data on the dynamics of conflict, situations during which destruction occurred, persons affected, and perpetrators across two civil conflicts. As conflict destroys culturally significant religious and historical sites, it is vital to understand the reasoning behind the destruction of cultural property—so that this type of violence may be better understood and thus diminished. In this paper, I will discuss militaristic justifications for cultural property destruction and introduce a preliminary data set on the topic area.

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War on Culture: The Destruction of Cultural Property During Civil Wars

"I feel humiliated, our sanctity has been violated. These houses of prayer are the most valuable things we own. I will resist them until the last drop of blood in my body."

      -Ali Wasi, resident of Kufa, Iraq, after his local mosque was shelled in 2004.

"…We recognize our place in the world by an interaction with the built environment and remembering these experiences and by being informed of the experiences of others: the creation of social identity located in time and place."

      -Robert Bevan

INTRODUCTION

The destruction of cultural sites during combat has long been considered an inevitable aspect of conflict, as collateral damage within the framework of a war. Shelling, defacement, looting, and razing of cultural monuments in regions affected by violent conflict is common. But intentional destruction of cultural property is also common—studies of ethnic conflict and genocide reveal a disturbing willingness to destroy not only human lives, but also the material and cultural goods which serve as symbols of a particular race, ethnicity, or religion. Religious spaces are especially sensitive—"the phenomenon of sacred space concretizes religion, giving it an earth-bound, material facet" (Hassner 2010). The "material facet" of a religion is a holy extension of a faith. "Destroying symbols is not unrelated to neglecting or destroying human beings; indeed, it is an announcement of both the intention to carry out the latter project in as efficient a way as possible," (Sells 2002). This theory, that destruction of cultural sites and symbols can indicate a disregard for human life, has been a pattern in history—the "campaign of cultural annihilation" prior to the Bosnian genocide (Sells 2002) and burning of sacred sites in

Guatemala (Grandin, Levenson, & Oglesby 2013) are instances in which physically destroying cultural sites went hand in hand with mass violence. "Appealing to religious absolutes, conflicts at sacred sites mobilize tribal, nationalist, and ethnic sentiments, inciting violence that spreads rapidly beyond the structure's physical boundaries" (Hassner 2006). The potential for escalation of violence at a cultural or religious space is higher—due to the ideological and sacred underpinnings of a location. Attacking a sacred space is akin to declaring, "Your beliefs and your history do not matter." It is a way to delete the past, and guide the future.

In this paper, I introduce a preliminary original dataset of destruction of cultural property in the Syrian and Iraqi civil wars between 1991 and 2012. I use the dataset to explore the ways in which cultural property was destroyed, what types of property were destroyed, utilized by military personnel and civilians alike, and how perpetrator claims of destruction varied depending upon the nature of attacks. Utilizing the data collected, I determine possible motivations for controlling and destroying cultural sites, and how these actions affect civilian populations as well as course of conflict.

Destroying cultural property during conflict is illegal under international law. The Hague Conventions of 1899, 1907, and the Washington Pact of 1935 established protection of cultural sites during wartime. Yet, we see countless historical sites and objects of cultural value destroyed during conflicts. After the devastation of World War II, during which Nazis looted and raided countless museums and destroyed sites and works of art deemed "degenerative," the international community established a framework for understanding the value of cultural objects as a part of the narrative of human history, and attempted to establish a system for protecting cultural sites and monuments. The 1954 Hague Convention for the Protection of Cultural Property in the Event of Armed Conflict defines cultural property as being:

"(a) movable or immovable property of great importance to the cultural heritage of every people, such as monuments of architecture, art or history, whether religious or secular; archaeological sites; groups of buildings which, as a whole, are of historical or artistic interest; works of art; manuscripts, books and other objects of artistic, historical or archaeological interest; as well as scientific collections and important collections of books or archives or of reproductions of the property defined above."

With this definition, it is possible to discern which buildings or objects are of outstanding universal value. While all architectural damage during wartime is negative for civilians, the history, religious function, and collective memory associated with sites fitting into this definition often make these sites charged with significance for a nation, ethnicity, religious group, or simply to humanity as a whole.

Many questions present themselves when analyzing military and rebel destruction of cultural property. It is unclear as to why governments and rebel groups destroy cultural sites, but as this phenomenon continues and insurgents and governments alike operate with impunity in destroying cultural heritage, the study of why and how cultural property becomes a pawn in the context of civil war is necessary.

With 21st century technology, it is possible to witness the ravaging effects of such destruction. In Syria, satellite images from 2011 compared with satellite images from 2014 exhibit the destruction of entire cities, including several sites designated as World Heritage Sites, sites of invaluable cultural and historical value, by the United Nations Educational, Scientific, and Cultural Organization (UNESCO). In Figure 1, it is possible to see the structural integrity of the Great Mosque of Aleppo in December 2011, before the civil war in Syria. This is compared to Figure 2, which displays damage incurred since fighting broke out. The damage was caused
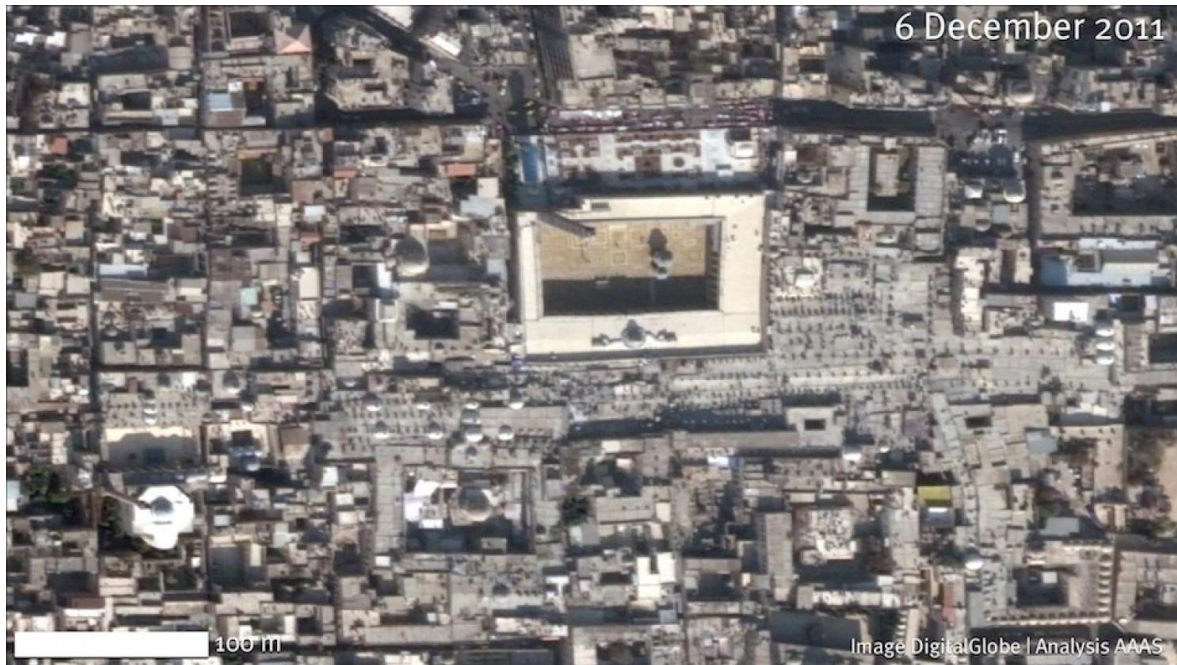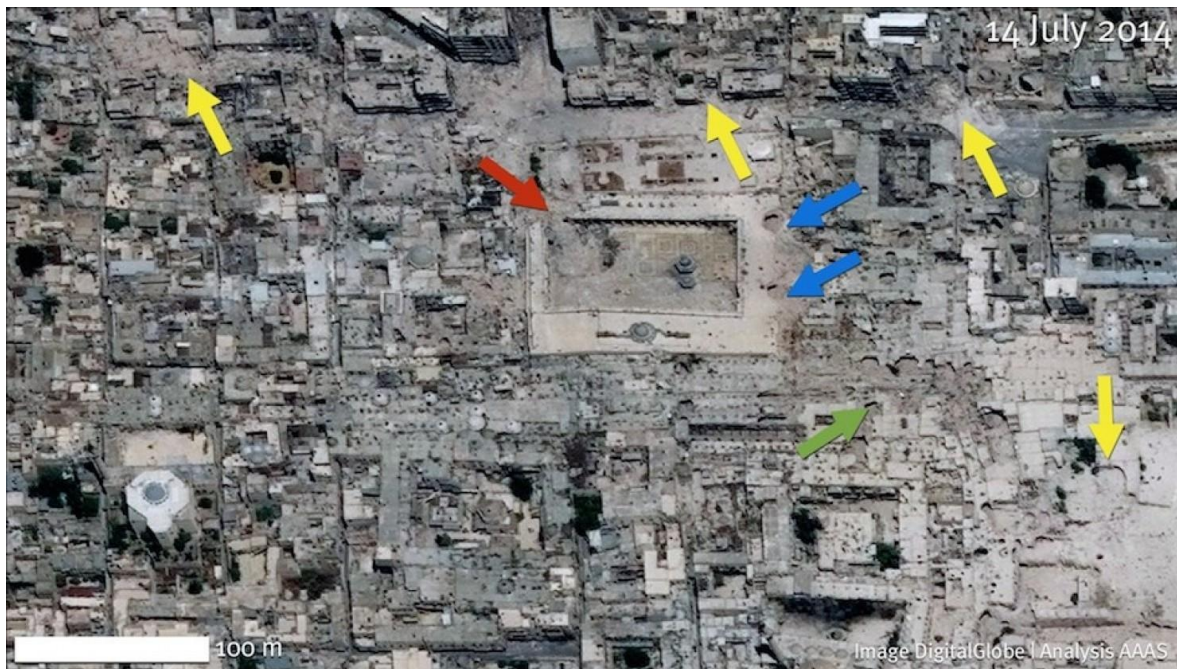
Figure 1

Figure 2 (arrows added to show destructed areas by The Washington Post)

by militaristic endeavors. Crac des Chevaliers, a castle in Syria's Homs province, withstood attacks from the crusaders in the 14th century. Today, Crac des Chevaliers has been shelled, used as a military outpost for both rebels and government forces, and has served as a place of refuge for civilians. In Iraq, the Shi'ite mosque of Imam Ali has been bombed by Al Qaeda, shelled by the Iraqi government, and served as a venue for battles between US coalition forces and rebels.

First I review the literature on violence against civilians, and then relate this targeting of people to the targeting of cultural sites in civil war. Second, I assess a brief set of cases in the Middle East and Central Asia to motivate some testable hypotheses about targeting cultural sites in civil war. Third, I discuss data collection and the research process. Finally, I present results and future research directions in the topic area of violence against cultural sites.

LITERATURE ON VIOLENCE AGAINST CIVILIANS

Violence against civilians during civil wars manifests in a multitude of ways; violence is used to coerce as often as it is used to achieve a battlefield win. Most existing data on civilian victimization and violence focuses on mass killings and genocide (Harff, 2003; Valentino, Huth, & Balch-Lindsay, 2004); rape and sexual assault (Wood, 2008; Cohen 2013; Cohen, Green, & Wood 2013); and on one-sided violence (Eck & Hultman 2007). Harming civilians does impact duration and outcome of civil wars; rebels are more likely to receive concessions from the government if they engage in violence against civilians (Kathman & Wood 2013; Hultman 2007). Unfortunately, data suggests that victimization of civilians pays "perverse dividends" to those combatants employing it (Kathman & Wood 2013). Indiscriminate violence, as laid out by Kalyvas, is a strategy used in conflict in which an area is razed—committing violence against a town, location, or group of people irrespective of who those people are or what the location is.

Selective violence, on the other hand, singles out persons or groups for violence and is often used as a method of coercion. When indiscriminate violence is used to crush counterinsurgencies, the rate of violence against civilians by insurgents increases (Wood 2010). Indiscriminate violence can have suppressive effects (Lyall, 2009) on civilians and insurgents—explaining the practice of this particular brand of violence by government forces. Violence is in many ways rationalized by strategic aims, such as an imbalance in zones of control (Kalyvas 2006). Violence against civilians can also be a result of disorganized rebel hierarchy (Humphreys & Weinstein 2006). While tactics employing a selective and coercive violence are used, they can have a negative net effect for rallying support. Coercive tactics canbe costly, and civilian support for combatants diminishes with the use of coercive tactics (Slim 2008; Valentino 2004; Valentino, Huth, and Balch-Lindsay 2004). Additionally, it is not in the favor of an insurgency to displace civilians— displacing civilians complicates the rebel group's ability to hide among civilians (Azam & Hoeffler 2002). Indiscriminate violence can actually suppress an insurgency (Kalyvas 2007: 167-71). Civilians, as creators, worshippers, and inhabitants of cultural and religious spaces, are targeted when a site is destructed. Violence against cultural sites has implications for civilians as well as military strategy.

VIOLENCE AGAINST CULTURAL SITES

When analyzing the framework of violence against cultural sites as a particular type of violence aimed at harming civilians, it is necessary to acknowledge the significance of religious, cultural, and social spaces for humans. The "conspicuous atrocity against civilians is used effectively to kill some, terrorize the rest to flee, and undermine the sense of society which could help to build peace again. This is a purposeful targeting of the enemy's "social capital" (Cairns 1997:17). In

effect, the destruction of cultural sites and property is a way in which governments and rebels can engage in intimidating and exerting power over populations without necessarily spilling blood. This section briefly examines a handful of cases of cultural destruction during civil wars to better understand how combatants engage in these behaviors strategically. The Baathist regime in Iraq made attempts to secularize and Arabize Iraqi history— largely as an effort to render Kurdish insurgencies ineffective—led to the devastating al-Anfal campaign against Kurdish Iraqis in 1988 ("Anfal in Iraq"). "During Anfal, every mosque in the Kurdish villages that were targeted for destruction was flattened by the Iraqi Army Corps of Engineers, using bulldozers and dynamite" ("Anfal in Iraq").

In Afghanistan, the Taliban demolished the Bamiyan Buddhas, of unquantifiable historical value. The Taliban throughout its existence has viewed other cultures as perceived threats, as entities worthy of concentrated destruction. By virtue of their extremist interpretation of Quranic law, the Taliban reject representational artwork—religious statues of humans, animals, or any representation of living things are considered to be idolatrous and not in keeping with the teachings of the Prophet Muhammad (Sells 2002). On February 26, 2001, Mullah Mohammad Omar, the leader of the Taliban, issued an edict that ordered the immediate destruction of "all non-Islamic statues" (Rashid, "After 1,700 years…"). Pleas from the United Nations Secretary General Kofi Annan and general international outrage did not stop the Taliban from acting upon their edict, and on March 12, 2001, the integrity of the Bamiyan Valley cultural site was compromised when the Taliban set off a string of explosives in the two standing Buddhas (UN General Assembly, "Press Release…")."Muslims should be proud of smashing idols. It has given praise to God that we have destroyed them," said Mullah Mohammed Omar post-Bamiyan Buddha destruction.
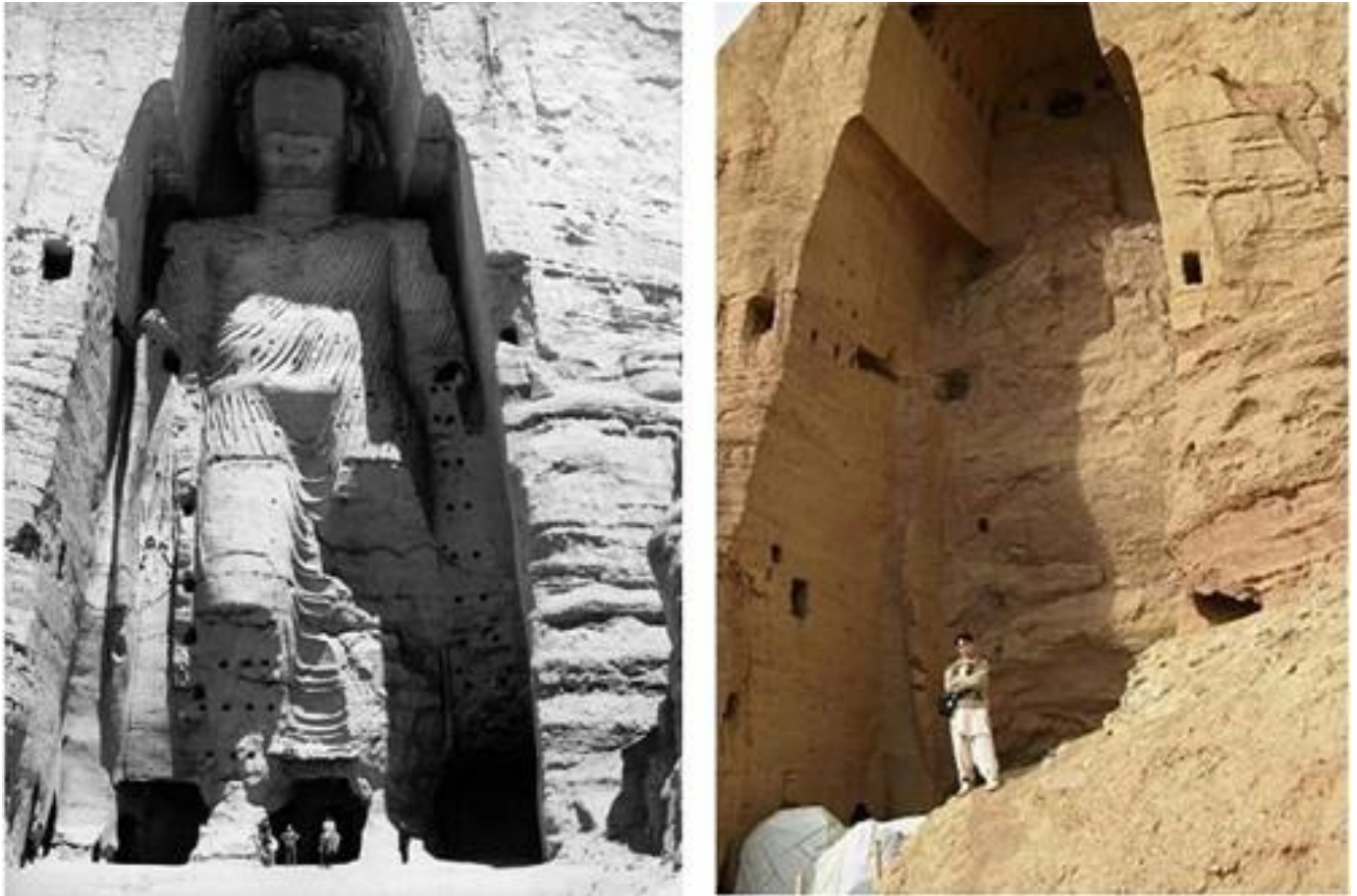
Figure 3: Buddha pre-destruction, and post-destruction (UNESCO)

The Taliban's professed aim was to destroy the symbols of other religions, figures they claim to be idolatrous. But a large percentage of the Buddhist sites in the area remain intact. The Taliban chose to fully destroy only the most visible and monumental Buddhist statuary. Indiscriminate destruction of the entirety of Buddhist sites and artifacts in the Bamiyan Valley would have been in keeping with the edict issued earlier in the year, and with the Taliban's anti-idolatry stance. In selecting the most visible and internationally recognized statues, rather than the entirety of Buddhist art in the Bamiyan Valley, the Taliban made a calculated political decision fueled by religious ideology. An article from the Economist just after the destruction of the Buddhas in 2001 speculates, "Perhaps they [the Taliban] just want to show that they are again firmly in control of Bamiyan, which they briefly lost earlier this year. It is more likely,

though, that the statues are victims of the Taliban's rage at failing in their bid to win international acceptance" ("The Afghan Iconoclasts"). The destruction of the Buddhas would then be political actions, making up for previous militaristic shortcomings—a bid to exert control and exhibit power.

On August 24, 2012, reports that a Sufi tomb in the Libyan town of Zlitan had been blown up surfaced (Al-Shalchi, "Libya Islamists"). The tomb dated to the 15th century and housed the remains of a Sufi scholar; a library in the same complex of shrines was also burned down. The assaults were perpetrated using bombs and bulldozers, and followed two days of "clashes between tribal factions in Zlitan which killed two people and injured 18," (Al-Shalchi, "Libya Islamists"). "The extremist Salafis took advantage (of the fact) that security officials were busy calming down the clashes and they desecrated the shrine," said a military official in Zlitan immediately after the sites were razed (Al-Shalchi, "Libya Islamists"). Violent protests and clashes led to a purposeful, concentrated destruction of a cultural site exemplifies a way in which conflict enables and encourages destruction of property—whether or not the situation was motivated by territorial claims or religious ones, the message is evident: destroying something important to a population of people is a bid for power.

In the case studies explored above, cultural sites were strategically targeted to gain political footing, to take advantage of discord, and to assert control over a historical narrative. My hypotheses about territorial gains and control over specified areas were derived from these case studies and the literature framework on violence against civilians.

CULTURAL PROPERTY AS A TOOL FOR TERRITORIAL GAINS

CONTESTED AREAS

Clashes between rebels and government forces in contested areas will spark indiscriminate violence; in attempts to "liquidate insurgents and undercut an insurgency's civilian basis," (Kalyvas, 2006) scorched earth and razing campaigns occur. The indiscriminate destruction of cultural sites is similar: if a historical site being used as a military base by rebels was shelled by government forces, violence against the site would be indiscriminate. In a contested area, this type of violence against sites will occur. Therefore:

H1: Indiscriminate destruction of cultural sites occurs in contested areas.

CONTROLLED AREAS

Whether rebels or government forces are in control of a given area, the selective destruction of a cultural site will occur in these controlled areas more frequently than in contested areas. Because selective destruction of sites is predicated on a motive to destroy the integrity of the site or persons affiliated, or to incite fear and engage in coercive activities, a controlled area is more effective.

H2: Selective destruction of cultural sites occurs in controlled areas.

REBEL DESTRUCTION vs. GOVERNMENT DESTRUCTION

Governments have the personnel and tools to commit indiscriminate violence against civilians (Kalyvas 2006). There is an overall trend of indiscriminate violence among government militaries; the practice of state-ordered indiscriminate violence is widely criticized yet incredibly persistent and frequent because this type of violence has suppressive effects on insurgencies (Lyall 2009). The arguments against the use of indiscriminate violence include its moral questionability and the possibility of driving civilians towards supporting rebels; targeting noncombatants indiscriminately has often been cited as a provocation for insurgent attacks (Kalyvas 2006; Lyall 2009). But military practices of scorched earth campaigns and razing

continue. The use of indiscriminate violence by the government has been observed, in a smaller range of studies, that in a case study in Chechnya "indiscriminate violence actually reduced the mean number of insurgent attacks relative to non-shelled villages" (Lyall 2009). Rebels have fewer resources available to them, lower physical capability, and largely depend on noncombatant population for support and to fill ranks. Government indiscriminate violence can present problems for rebels: "state violence reveals that the insurgency cannot credibly protect the population nor respond in kind, feeding the perception that the insurgency is both likely to lose and is endangering locals without bringing tangible benefits" (Lyall 2009). In order to avoid alienating already-vulnerable populations, as well as a lack of resources, rebels concentrate their resources and actions in more targeted attacks on cultural sites, rather than on indiscriminate site destruction.

H3: The majority of rebel destructive acts will be selective. Only the government can engage in indiscriminate destruction of cultural sites. Therefore:

H4: The majority of government-sponsored destructive acts will be indiscriminate.

RESEARCH DESIGN

Using cultural sites as the unit of analysis, I explored the destruction of cultural sites from 1991 to 2012 in Syrian and Iraqi civil wars. I created a series of questions to be applied to each site. For each instance of destruction, I collected data on the town in which the instance occurred, the date of the destructive act, and specific details about the site itself. I also recorded the name of the group committing the destructive act, whether or not this group claimed responsibility for the act, whether or not the aim of the attack was to kill civilians, or if the site was religious, if the attack occurred on a day in which people would congregate at the site. I also determined the status of fighting in the area when the attack occurred—was violence not present in the area,

ongoing, or mostly peaceful? I determined whether or not sites were used for military purposes, and if civilians ever used the site as a place of refuge from fighting; in some cases, sites were used as military bases and as spaces of refuge for civilians simultaneously.

In order to determine a comprehensive list of sites destroyed or harmed in Syria and Iraq, I utilized UNESCO's List of Cultural Heritage Sites in Danger, the Global Heritage Network and Foundation's database on cultural heritage under threat, and specifically for data on Syrian sites, I used the Association for the Protection of Syrian Architecture (APSA). APSA is a website run by Syrian civilians (journalists, archaeologists, and scholars) motivated to protect Syrian cultural heritage by shooting and uploading videos and photographs of violations of cultural property. For a comprehensive account of violations of Iraqi cultural property I referenced publications on destruction of cultural property in Iraq by Global Policy Forum and the Department of State. I then compiled a list of cultural heritage sites based on this information (see Table 1). This dataset includes sites with adequate information publicly available. Because the conflicts in Iraq and Syria are ongoing, it is impossible to gauge the full extent of damage done to cultural heritage.

In order to test my hypotheses, I determined territorial control of cultural sites by analyzing military and rebel territorial holdings on the date of the particular destruction (Table 2). If fighting in the area was ongoing, I determined that the area was contested. If there was little war-related violence at the time, or if fighting was not in the area yet, I determined that the government controlled the area. If the site was explicitly in an area of rebellion, had declared itself independent, or was being held by rebel forces, I considered it in possession of rebels. By analyzing the location, status of fighting, and data collected on how destruction or violation of cultural property occurred, I discerned territorial holdings.

Table 1

eventID	Country	Town/Region	Site Name	Year
1	Iraq	Samarra	Al-Askari Mosque	2006
2	Iraq	Ur	Ancient City of Babylon	2003
3	Iraq	Najaf	Imam Ali Mosque & Shrine complex	1991
4	Iraq	Karbala	Karbala shrine complex	2004
5	Iraq	Baghdad	Kazimiya Shrine	2004
6	Syria	Aleppo	Al Madina Souq	2012
7	Syria	Aleppo	Aleppo National Museum	2012
8	Syria	Aleppo	Dead Cities (Ancient Cities of Northern Syria)	2012
9	Syria	Aleppo	Old City of Aleppo	2012
10	Syria	Apamea	Apamea and Citadel of Qal-at al Mudiq	2012
11	Syria	Bosra	Ancient City of Bosra	2012
14	Iraq	Najaf	Imam Ali Mosque & Shrine complex	2003
15	Iraq	Khorsabad	Palace of Sargon II	2004
16	Syria	Homs Province	Crac des Chevaliers	2012
17	Syria	Daraa	Omari Mosque	2011
18	Syria	Ebla	Ebla ancient site	2012
19	Syria	Hama	Hama museum	2011
20	Syria	Damascus	Damascus Museum	2011
21	Syria	Homs	Khalid Ibn al Walid Mosque	2011
22	Syria	Palmyra	Palmyra	2012
23	Syria	Hama	Hama city	2011
24	Syria	Homs	Um el-Zenar Church (St. Mary's Church)	2012
25	Iraq	Karbala	Mukhaiyam Mosque and shrine complex	2004
26	Iraq	Najaf	Imam Ali Mosque & Shrine complex	2004
27	Iraq	Najaf	Wadi al Salaam cemetary	1991
28	Iraq	Karbala	Shrines of Hussein and Abbas	1991
29	Iraq	Najaf	Imam Ali Mosque & shrine complex	2004
30	Iraq	Kufa	Kufa Mosque	2004

Additionally, I collected data on whether or not the aim of the attack was to kill civilians; if fighting was ongoing in an area, and there were no reports of civilian deaths attached to a specific attack, I determined that the area was in contestation.

I define selective violence (SV) on cultural sites as being destructive acts that were motivated by a desire to kill civilians or to destroy a site without a clear military target, purely to destroy the integrity of the cultural property because of what it means to a population. I define indiscriminate violence (IV) on cultural sites as being violent acts that were not targeted at specific civilians or religious groups, and involve government forces committing violent action against a site.

RESULTS

In Table 2, I tracked the events listed in Table 1 and determined whether government forces, rebel forces, or both destroyed property. I then determined which combatants, government forces, rebel forces—were in control of the specific region in which the site is located. I also accounted for the site being in a contested area. Utilizing the definitions of selective and indiscriminate violence as listed above, I designated a site as being destroyed indiscriminately or selectively.

In Table 2, I analyze the type of violence, frequency, and perpetrator, in order to test my hypotheses. Indiscriminate violence occurred most frequently in contested areas, with 77.7 percent of indiscriminate attacks occurring at the hands of government forces, and 82 percent perpetrated by both rebels and government forces. This is in support of *H1*, that indiscriminate violence would occur in contested areas.

My second hypothesis asserts that selective destruction of cultural sites occurs in controlled areas. *H2* is supported by the data in terms of government control: 57 percent of

events in areas controlled by the government were selective. In rebel-controlled areas, only 33.3 percent of events in rebel-controlled areas were selectively violent. In government-controlled areas, selective violence by rebels was common: 100 percent of rebel attacks on government-controlled territories were selective actions. In accordance with *H3*, rebel physical manpower does not allow for indiscriminate destruction. Rather, rebel destruction was selective and concentrated on days in which many people gathered in an area, such as attacking during religious festivals or days of prayer.

H2 was not supported in rebel-controlled areas, selective violence was less likely—33.3 percent of cases saw selective violence—though there were much fewer cases in which the rebels were in control. Destructive acts by rebels were almost exclusively selective, unless the area was contested. Most government-sponsored attacks were indiscriminate, with over 77 percent of events being indiscriminate. That the selective acts were not in government-controlled areas but rather in contested or rebel-controlled areas was an unexpected departure from the literature.

H4 is supported in the data; government forces engaged in indiscriminate violence more often than rebels; rebels did not engage in indiscriminate violence unless the area was contested and the perpetrators of violence are indistinguishable in those situations.

To illustrate my first hypothesis, that the indiscriminate destruction of cultural sites would occur in contested area, I focus on event 29 in Najaf, Iraq in 2004. US coalition forces sent tanks into Najaf's cemetery, in the same complex as the holy Imam Ali Mosque. Shi'ite militant cleric Moqtadr Al-Sadr rebel forces positioned themselves just 100 meters from the shrine of Ali itself. As a result, heavy shelling and gunfire from both sides caused damage to the site. The shrine, which is considered to be the most sacred in the Shi'a faith, suffered minimal

Table 2

	GOVERNMENT CONTROL	CONTESTED	REBEL CONTROL	TOTAL % by perpetrator
GOVERNMENT ATTACK	event 2 (Iraq): IV event 3 (Iraq): IV event 16 (Syria): IV	event 6 (Syria): IV event 9 (Syria): IV event 22 (Syria): IV event 17 (Syria): SV	event 27 (Iraq): SV event 28 (Iraq): IV	SV: 22.2% IV: 77.7%
REBEL ATTACK	event 1 (Iraq): SV event 4 (Iraq): SV event 5 (Iraq): SV event 14 (Iraq): SV		event 26 (Iraq): IV	SV: 100% IV: 0%
BOTH		event 7 (Syria): IV event 8 (Syria): IV event 10 (Syria): IV event 11 (Syria): IV event 18 (Syria): IV event 21 (Syria): IV event 24 (Syria): IV event 23 (Syria): IV event 25 (Iraq): SV event 26 (Iraq): IV event 29 (Iraq): SV		SV: 18% IV: 82%
TOTAL % by territorial control	SV: 57% IV: 43%	SV: 21.4 % IV: 78.6%	SV: 33.3% IV: 66.6%	

Selective destruction in a government-controlled area occurred in Daraa, Syria (event 17), where the first protests against the Syrian government launched in 2011. The Syrian government targeted the Omari Mosque selectively. The Omari Mosque was a major gathering structural damage to its gilded dome—bullet holes and shelling. Rebels and US coalition forces each blamed the other party for the damage. point for protesters at the start of the war; an offensive on the site and protesters launched on April 25, 2011, and ended on May 5, 2011. The government went as far as hiding weapons inside the mosque to "prove" armed gangs were sheltered there. Because this incident occurred before widespread fighting, the government was still in control of the area. In accordance with *H2*, the data suggest that selective destruction of cultural property occurs in controlled areas, especially when the government is in control.

In a multi-city attack on Shi'ite mosques in March 2004, Al Qaeda in Iraq (designated as a rebel group in the Iraqi civil war) engaged in selective violence against civilians at the Kazimiya Mosque in Baghdad (event 5) and the Imam Ali Mosque in Najaf (event 29). Hundreds of civilians were killed in the bombings. The attacks occurred on the day of the Shi'ite festival Ashoura, a holiday during which thousands of pilgrims congregate at holy Shi'ite sites (Al-Issawi & Hendawi, 2004). At the Kazimiya Mosque in Baghdad, "The explosions came just one day after the Iraqi Governing Council established an interim constitution" ("Deadly Attacks"). In these particular cases, *H3* is supported. Rebels engaged in selective violence— without territorial control and resources of a government, it is necessary for rebels to engage in targeted and selective violent acts.

In February of 2012, the Syrian army occupied the ancient site of Palmyra (event 22). The army set up camp in the medieval citadel near Roman ruins, overlooking the city of Palmyra. Protests in the ruins occurred in December 2011, and by February, military forces

occupied the site. According to a Global Heritage Fund Report (Cunliffe, 2012), civilians reported that Syrian government forces were "shooting at anything that moved, looking for anti-regime rebels." The site was used strategically, and the fortifications built in the ancient site caused damage as well as encouraged looting of the site by troops.

In a similar situation, the US coalition forces in Iraq occupied the ancient site of Babylon, and indiscriminately damaged the site, one of the Seven Wonders of the Ancient world. Troops went as far as spray-painting "Semper Fi," the US Marines' motto, on a wall. Ancient bricks and limestone were broken down and used to fill sandbags. Government forces engage in indiscriminate violence more than they do in selective violence against cultural property, and more frequently than rebels, who do not engage in indiscriminate violence unless territory is contested and both parties are engaging in destruction simultaneously. The assertion in *H4*, that the majority of government-sponsored attacks would be indiscriminate, was supported—but government actions were still one-third selectively violent.

Support for hypotheses *H1*, *H2*, *H3*, and *H4* were found. *H1* was strongly supported by the data: disputed areas witness more indiscriminate violence; support for *H2* is strongest when the government is in control of an area. That rebels will engage most often in selective violence is true, as asserted in *H3*, but rebels did engage in indiscriminate violence in contested areas. Finally, *H4* is supported throughout the data—the government did engage in mostly indiscriminate violence. However, the government forces were more likely to engage in selective violence in government-controlled areas, as opposed to a tendency towards indiscriminate violence in contested areas.

CONCLUSIONS

The data suggest that indiscriminate violence against cultural sites in contested areas during civil wars occurs on a large scale. Instances of selective violence by government forces occurred in government controlled areas. Indiscriminate violence is more commonly found in contested areas, where the lines are blurred between rebels and civilians—razing is a more feasible and effective manner of weakening rebels and support in a given area. Selective violence against cultural property occurs when an area is controlled, irrespective of who controls the area. The most common type of violence against cultural sites is indiscriminate violence over contested areas, but the most deadly type of violence for civilians is selective violence against sites.

More comprehensive cross-national studies are necessary to determine definitive patterns of destruction across conflicts. Cultural property is repeatedly destroyed during conflicts; destroying symbols and sites occurs across a wide range of conflict types and by a variety of actors. I hope to expand this dataset to more conflicts in the Middle East and North Africa. Additionally, because the Syrian and Iraqi conflicts are not yet terminated, I hope to continue collecting data on these particular conflicts, and tracking how destroying cultural property affects conflict dynamics and violence against civilians over time.

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