

RESEARCH DIRECTIONS

Culture and Conflict Resolution

Dr Tim Winter from the Centre of Cultural Research is exploring what cultural changes societies face when they are recovering from war and other violence. This research is supported through an Australian Research Council Discovery Grant.

'Since the Cold War, there have been a rising number of conflicts around the world' explains Dr Winter. 'War and conflict almost always involve destruction and devastation on a human and social scale. With much attention focused on the political and economic aspects of reconstruction, the cultural damage can often be neglected. Moreover, given that it is not only politics that impact how a society rebuilds itself, this research brings into focus the often neglected cultural challenges and the role of cultural heritage in the rebuilding process.'

The project will build a social-scientific framework through a series of international case studies. The framework will advance our understanding of how cultural heritage impacts and affects conflict transformations and post-conflict societies. Within each case study, the project will focus on understanding how culture is endangered or destroyed by conflict; what role governments play in maintaining culture; how material securities (shelter, food etc..) can be advanced through the prospect of non-material securities (e.g. culture); how localised culture can create a sense of ownership and how the reconstruction of cultural heritage is integrated into a society. Four societies will be examined across these analytical themes: Kashmir, after more than fifteen years of conflict and violence; Sri Lanka following the long standing civil war; Cambodia after the clash over the temple complex of Preah Vihear; and Croatia after the conflict of the 1990s. In Croatia, for example, the project will examine how tourism and cultural heritage have played a part in reconstructing the country's post-conflict national/cultural identity.



Recognising and accepting different cultures that are in need of international assistance following conflict across the globe will help build a stronger aid and peace keeping system that can react in a culturally sensitive and stable fashion. Australia is at the forefront of international aid, and with a stronger understanding of the cultures of those in need, aid can be provided in a more beneficial and respectful manner.

Project Title: The Role of Cultural Heritage in Conflict Transformation Societies

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