Greetings Delegates,

Welcome to SRMUN Atlanta 2021 and the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO). My name is Taheerah Smith, and I am ecstatic to serve as your Director for the UNESCO. This will be my third conference as a SRMUN staff member. Previously, I served as the Assistant Director to the General Assembly Plenary and the United Nations Security Council. In the spring, I received my Bachelors of Science in Health Systems Management and Bachelors of Arts in Communication Studies with a focus in Public Advocacy from the University of North Carolina at Charlotte (UNCC). During my time at UNCC, I was selected to serve as a United Nations (UN) Millennium Fellow of the 2020 cohort to advance Sustainable Development Goals 3 and 4 in the local Charlotte community. I am proud to announce that our committee's Assistant Director will be Emma Goldsby. This is Emma's inaugural year serving as an Assistant Director with SRMUN Atlanta. Emma is a Junior and is currently studying in Political Science, Islamic Studies, and Peace Studies.

The UNESCO plays a unique, yet integral role as a specialized agency tasked with promoting peace and prosperity through encouraging international collaboration in the fields of education, science, and culture. To effectively address these issues, UNESCO has the power to launch research studies, organize and hold international conferences, coordinate international conventions, make recommendations to Member States, and present expert research and consultation to the UN through the Economic and Social Council, which it acts under. With access to a broad network of partners from Member States, UN organs, intergovernmental organizations, non-governmental organizations, and the private sector, UNESCO remains a vital operating body in implementing the most ambitious goals of the international system.

To further emphasize the mission of UNESCO the SRMUN Atlanta 2021 theme of "Fostering Global Youth Empowerment and Leadership," we have developed the following topics for the delegates to discuss come conference:

      I. Navigating Iconoclasm During Periods of Conflict and Reconciliation
      II. Improving Access to Quality Education for Vulnerable and At-Risk Populations

The background guide provides a strong introduction to the committee and topics that will be debated at SRMUN Atlanta 2021. It should be utilized as a foundation for a delegate's independent research. However, while we have attempted to provide a holistic analysis of the issues, the background guide should not be used as the single mode of analysis for the topics. Delegates are expected to go beyond the background guide and engage in intellectual inquiry of their own. The position papers for the committee should reflect the complexity of these issues and their externalities. Delegations are expected to submit a position paper and be prepared for a vigorous discussion at the conference. Position papers should be no longer than two pages in length (single spaced) and demonstrate your Member State's position, policies, and recommendations on each of the two topics. For more detailed information about formatting and how to write position papers, delegates can visit srmun.org. ***All position papers MUST be submitted no later than Friday, October 29, 2021, by 11:59pm EST via the SRMUN website in order to be eligible for Outstanding Position Paper Awards.***

Emma and I are enthusiastic about serving as your dais for the UNESCO. We wish you all the best of luck in your conference preparation and look forward to working with you soon. Please feel free to contact Director-General Rachael Wnuk, Emma, or myself if you have any questions while preparing for the conference.

Taheerah Smith	Emma Goldsby	Rachael Wnuk
Director	Assistant Director	Director-General
unesco_atlanta@srmun.org	unesco_atlanta@srmun.org	dg_atlanta@srmun.org

The History of the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization

In 1942, with the goal of reconstructing European education systems ahead of the conclusion of World War II (WWII), multiple European governments gathered for the Conference of Allied Ministers of Education (CAME).[1] CAME gained global recognition, and a United Nations Conference for the establishment of an educational and culture organization was held.[2] As a result, the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) was established on November 16th, 1945.[3] UNESCO was founded as a specialized agency under the principal United Nations (UN) organ of the Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC);[4] and tasked in article 63 of the Charter of United Nations to harmonize the activities of ECOSOC and other UN specialized agencies through conference and agreements to such agencies and through recommendations made to the General Assembly and to the Members of the United Nations.[5]

The primary goal of UNESCO, as listed in their mandate, is "to contribute to peace and security by promoting collaboration among the nations through education, science and culture in order to further universal respect for justice, for the rule of law and for the human rights and fundamental freedoms which are affirmed for the peoples of the world, without distinction of race, sex, language or religion, by the Charter of the United Nations."[6] UNESCO was formed with the understanding that it would be an organization that would embody a genuine Culture of Peace which must "establish the intellectual and moral solidarity of mankind" in efforts to avert the outbreak of any future world wars.[7] The committee's duty remains to indorse the humanist undertakings in the realms of education, science and culture.[8] UNESCO's ambitious agenda from its inception has been to "to reinforce the United Nations' experimental expedition into international affairs by providing an open forum for the body of the organization as whole.[9]

Within the UNESCO System, there are 193 Member States who establish National Commissions and Permanent Delegations.[10] Member States participate in General Conference which is the supreme decision-making body that is held every two years and decides on any suggested policy that pertains to UNESCO activity, approves the programme and budget, and the appoints Director-General of the committee.[11] The General Conference then elects an Executive Board and the General Director who is recommended by the Executive board.[12] The Executive board contains delegations from 58 Member States which meet biannually to supervise the implementation of programs and budget.[13]

As a specialized agency of ECOSOC, a key task of UNESCO is international standard-setting through international agreements and recommendations.[14] One available option for norm-setting is through conventions which are "legally binding treaties that Member States adopt and ratify, often through domestic legislation and which compel them to particular courses of action."[15] Conventions require a 2/3 majority vote in the General Assembly which have been favored since the 1980's due to the increased resonance with States in the effort to move towards consensus

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[1] "UNESCO in Brief - Mission and Mandate." UNESCO, 2019.

[2] "UNESCO in Brief - Mission and Mandate." UNESCO, 2019.

[3] "UNESCO: United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization - Office of the Secretary-General's Envoy on Youth." Mattias Sundholm. 2013. Office of the Secretary-General's Envoy on Youth. August 23, 2013. https://www.un.org/youthenvoy/2013/08/unesco-united-nations-educational-scientific-and-cultural-organization/.

[4] "Making Sense of the UN Specialized Agencies, Funds, and Programmes." Winters, Eldon A. 2017. AMUN. May 16, 2017. https://www.amun.org/specialized-agencies/.

[5] "Transboundary European Heritage -a Topic for UNESCO Associated Schools." n.d.

[6] "UNESCO Constitution," UNESCO.

[7] "UNESCO in Brief - Mission and Mandate." UNESCO, 2019. https://en.unesco.org/about-us/introducing-unesco.

[8] "UNESCO in Brief - Mission and Mandate." UNESCO, 2019.

[9] "Humanity's New Heritage: UNESCO and the Rewriting of World History." Betts, Paul. 2015. Past & Present 228 (1): 249–85. https://doi.org/10.1093/pastj/gtv031.

[10] "Transboundary European Heritage -a Topic for UNESCO Associated Schools." n.d.

[11] "Organization and Structure of UNESCO." Ministry of Education, Culture, Sports, Science, and Technology. Accessed February 8, 2021. https://www.mext.go.jp/en/unesco/title03/detail03/1373236.htm.

[12] "Organization and Structure of UNESCO." Ministry of Education, Culture, Sports, Science, and Technology.

[13] "Strategic Planning Programme and Budget," UNESCO.

[14] "Strategic Planning Programme and Budget," UNESCO.

[15] Singh, J P. 2011. United Nations Educational Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO): Creating Norms.

decision making which has come to be the norm in the UN.[16] Another option for action on the part of UNESCO are recommendations which are requests for Member States to take specific paths of action and encourage them to change their domestic practices, decrees or establishments.[17] Recommendations are non-binding and only require a simple majority vote. A final instrument at the disposal of UNESCO is a declaration. Declarations function similarly as moral persuasions or requirements on pertinent matters.[18] Declarations function purely in an influential manner and serve as a formal acknowledgement of the Member States involved.[19]

The Bureau of the Budget manages UNESCO's funding and monetary allocations.[20] The Programme and Budget of the Organization, document C/5, aims to achieve the goals established under the Committee's eight-year medium-term strategy.[21] The C5 document, or program plan, receive approval every four years by UNESCO's General Conference.[22] The budget requires approval every two years by the UNESCO General Conference.[23] UNESCO's approved 2020/21 budget requests USD 1.3 Billion.[24] Funding for UNESCO stems from several places, roughly one-third draws from mandatory UNESCO assessed contributions by member states, one-third is provided voluntarily by Member States, and one-third is fundraised through private donations.[25]

The 40th UNESCO Session of the General Conference took place in November 2019, branded itself as a "historic turnaround" as UNESCO positions itself to address modern challenges.[26] This biennial session passed 58 resolutions directing work to carry out the Organization's missions.[27] Highlights of the session include directing the International Institute for Higher Education in Latin America and the Caribbean to promote greater inter-university cooperation, requesting the Mahatma Gandhi Institute of Education for Peace and Sustainable Development to "facilitating evidence-based and inclusive international education policy dialogues and online youth education programmes on peace, sustainable development and global citizenship," and establishing the Office for Climate Education.[28] When they last convened for their 40th session, their top priority was a recommitment to Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) 4, Quality Education. To this end, UNESCO education initiatives and discussions with young people on rising youth innovations took center stage.[29] In particular, the conference launched initiatives "Her Education, Our Future" and commended the results of "Global Convention on the Recognition of Higher Education Qualifications."[30]

The 210th meeting of the UNESCO Executive Board took place virtually from December 2, 2020, to January 27, 2021.[31] The Executive Board reaffirmed several UNESCO commitments to programs, issued calls to recognize cultural items such as Native American languages, and submitted various mandatory reports to the UN General Assembly.[32] Today the 2014-2021 Medium-Term Strategy defines UNESCO's global efforts and charges the Organization with focusing on its core mandate, better defining its primary functions, and strengthening partnerships worldwide.[33] Under this framework, UNESCO maintains five major programs: education, natural sciences, social

[16] Singh, J P. 2011. United Nations Educational Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO): Creating Norms.
[17] Singh, J P. 2011. United Nations Educational Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO): Creating Norms.
[18] Singh, J P. 2011. United Nations Educational Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO): Creating Norms.
[19] Singh, J P. 2011. United Nations Educational Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO): Creating Norms.
[20] "Strategic Planning Programme and Budget," UNESCO, https://en.unesco.org/strategic-planning/programme-and-budget?language=fr
[21] "Strategic Planning Programme and Budget," UNESCO.
[22] "Strategic Planning Programme and Budget," UNESCO.
[23] "Strategic Planning Programme and Budget," UNESCO.
[24] "Financial Accountability," UNESCO, 2020, https://en.unesco.org/about-us/financial-accountability
[25] "Financial Accountability," UNESCO.
[26] "UNESCO's 40th General Conference confirms the Organization's historic turnaround and its repositioning on contemporary issues," UNESCO, 2020, https://en.unesco.org/generalconference/40/results
[27] "Records of the General Conference, Resolutions," UNESCO, 2020, https://unesdoc.unesco.org/ark:/48223/pf0000372579/PDF/372579eng.pdf.multi
[28] "Records of the General Conference, Resolutions," UNESCO.
[29] "UNESCO's 40th General Conference…," UNESCO.
[30] "UNESCO's 40th General Conference…," UNESCO.
[31] "Decisions adopted by the Executive Board at its 210th session, Part I,:" UNESCO, 2020, https://unesdoc.unesco.org/ark:/48223/pf0000375183
[32] "Decisions adopted by the Executive Board at its 210th session, Part I," UNESCO, 2020.
[33] "2014-2021: Medium-Term Strategy (37 C/4)," UNESCO, 2014, https://unesdoc.unesco.org/ark:/48223/pf0000227860

and human sciences, culture, and communication.[34] Recent themes, such as the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and the Paris Agreement on Climate Change, provide focus to all UNESCO operations.[35]

Beyond these modern themes, UNESCO maintains its long standing Global Priorities of Africa and Gender Equality.[36] UNESCO breaks down these themes and priorities into achievable agenda initiatives.[37] Current initiatives include training judges in freedom of expression issues, fostering a media and information literate society, monitoring disinformation in electoral campaigns, and protecting world heritage sites.[38] To accomplish these initiatives, UNESCO has partnered with the African Union, Organisation Internationale de la Francophonie, and the Inter-American Court of Human Rights, among many others.[39]

UNESCO stands as an organization uniquely committed to the benefits of cultural diplomacy.[40] Their dedication to carry out the Sustainable Development Goals through education is unparalleled.[41] In an age of widespread misinformation, UNESCO's commitment to freedom of the press compliments their work in education as the Organization strives toward its Global Priorities of Africa and Gender Equality.[42] These focuses and priorities are regularly shaped by the Medium-Term strategy and guided by the SDG roadmap to action.[43, 44] In recent years UNESCO has increased its budget to tackle modern problems, continue providing quality services, protect cultural heritage in the face of growing conflict, and equip communities with the tools to address climate change.[45] Delegates should consider how to best use the host of existing UNESCO programs to address a novel set of challenges while following the Organization's commitment to refocusing on its core values and better defining its global role.[46]

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[34] "2014-2017: Approved Programme and Budget (37 C/5)," UNESCO, 2014,
    https://unesdoc.unesco.org/ark:/48223/pf0000226695
[35] "39 C/5 Approved programme and budget 2018-2019: first biennium of the 2018-2021 quadrennium," UNESCO, 2017,
    https://unesdoc.unesco.org/ark:/48223/pf0000261648
[36] "39 C/5 Approved programme and budget 2018-2019: first biennium of the 2018-2021," UNESCO.
[37] "39 C/5 Approved programme and budget 2018-2019: first biennium of the 2018-2021," UNESCO.
[38] "39 C/5 Approved programme and budget 2018-2019: first biennium of the 2018-2021," UNESCO.
[39] "Annual Report 2019," UNESCO
[40] "UNESCO's 40th General Conference," UNESCO.
[41] "Leading SDG 4 - Education 2030." UNESCO.
[42] "39 C/5 Approved programme and budget 2018-2019: first biennium of the 2018-2021." UNESCO.
[43] "2014-2021: Medium-Term Strategy (37 C/4)," UNESCO.
[44] "Timeline of the global education movement," UNESCO.
[45] "2014-2021: Medium-Term Strategy (37 C/4)," UNESCO.
[46] "UNESCO's 40th General Conference," UNESCO.

I. Navigating Iconoclasm Throughout Phases of Conflict in Modern Societies

Introduction

Iconoclasm, or the deliberate damage or destruction of images and objects of veneration, often due to religious, political, or ideological reasons, is widely viewed as a highly controversial practice.[47] Iconoclasm manifests as a social belief that involves the action of attacking or destroying the beliefs or institutional practices of others, and is pointless without an audience.[48] Many regard it as the purging of sacred religious images.[49] A most notable example, which occurred during the Byzantine Era serves as a defining moment in the history of the Eastern Roman Empire.[50] As a society with no concept of separation of church and state, the restriction of forbidden religious icons led to these items being lost or destroyed.[51] In fact, there were centuries of debate on whether icons should be considered idolatrous or to inhabit cult-like tendencies.[52] Thus, giving birth to the term *iconoclasm* given by the Eastern branch of Christianity from the Greek words for "icon smashing."[53]

While several examples can be found in the history of ancient empires, modern practices are still apparent today.[54] Iconoclasm is acutely prevalent in regions like the Middle East where conflicts are intractable in nature and fueled by religion, ideology, and identity.[55] For example, in Iraq, iconoclasm factors into the continuation of conflict in multiple ways.[56] Not only does the presence of historically significant monuments, such as those in Mosul, attract violence, these same artifacts present duplicitous challenges to the peacebuilding efforts by reinforcing division present in conflict.[57] Many post conflict societies, particularly those under authoritarian or theocratic regimes, in which monuments and statues of symbolic leaders are likely to be built, face a similar debate of whether to allow a monument to remain as a reminder of the associated conflict. While simultaneously running the risk of attracting supporters and further perpetuating victims.[58] Contrary, the removal of the monuments or statues can be very upsetting to supporters and pose the potential for future generations to overlook the conflict entirely.[59]

This issue holds much significance today because of its relevance to technology and its developing role in future conflict.[60] Not only has it been suggested that historical monuments of great prominence may attract violence and terrorism, the 24-hour news cycle and pervasiveness of the news media, especially in the digital age, make images and the symbolism found within them more important.[61] Modern areas of application include the enforcement of religious and cultural unity under theocratic insurgents, the confrontation of modern interpretations of historical figures found in western culture and shaping perceptions of government and power by authoritarian regimes.[62] While heeding the historical models of iconophobia, which warn of recurring conditions of violence being perpetrated against objects that hold symbolism, more recent occurrences specify that capital societies are not

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[47] "A Short Guide to Iconoclasm in Early History," JSTOR Daily, https://daily.jstor.org/short-guide-iconoclasm-early-history/ (Accessed March 12, 2021).

[48] "A Short Guide to Iconoclasm in Early History," JSTOR Daily.

[49] "Art Under Attack: Histories of British Iconoclasm – review," The Guardian, https://www.theguardian.com/artanddesign/2013/oct/06/art-under-attack-tate-review (Accessed March 12, 2021).

[50] "The Icons before Iconoclasm," The Harvard Theological Review, https://www.jstor.org/stable/1508902 (Accessed May 1, 2021).

[51] "Leo III and Iconoclasm: Theoria," A Journal of Social and Political Theory, https://daily.jstor.org/short-guide-iconoclasm-early-history/ (Accessed May 1, 2021).

[52] "A Short Guide to Iconoclasm in Early History," JSTOR Daily.

[53] "A Short Guide to Iconoclasm in Early History," JSTOR Daily.

[54] "The Icons before Iconoclasm," The Harvard Theological Review.

[55] "The Politics of Iconoclasm," Journal of Church and State, https://doi.org/10.1093/jcs/csv066 (Accessed March 12, 2021).

[56] "Destruction of Cultural Heritage in Iraq," Boydell Press, https://www.jstor.org/stable/25608579 (Accessed March 12, 2021).

[57] "Destruction of Cultural Heritage in Iraq," Boydell Press.

[58] "The Politics of Iconoclasm," Journal of Church and State.

[59] "The Politics of Iconoclasm," Journal of Church and State.

[60] "The Icons before Iconoclasm," The Harvard Theological Review.

[61] "Layers of religious and political iconoclasm under the Islamic State," International Journal of Heritage Studies, 10.1080/13527258.2017.1325769 (Accessed March 12, 2021).

[62] "Layers of religious and political iconoclasm under the Islamic State," International Journal of Heritage Studies.

immune to iconoclasm.[63] Even significant and grandeur works of art in these societies should be seen as world treasures that should not be remove from the circulation of iconoclastic exchange.[64]

History

The long line of dynamic reactions to institutional symbolism and ideas dates back to ancient times in world history, when art was more typically regarded as religious instead of political in nature.[65] Rulers asserted their power by rectifying statues of themselves or the gods in which they served.[66] Overtime, when their kingdoms were challenged and overthrown, so would their statues, in standard practice.[67] For example, sculptures and portraits of the Roman emperor, Augustus, were captured by the Kushite army upon seizing and invading Rome.[68] One sculpture of Augustus, in particular, was beheaded and buried under the temple of the Kushite capital, not to be seen again until 1910, when the site was excavated.[69] Other examples include images hung of biblical figures or scenes, in which eyes would be gouged out of in order to prevent eye contact with impressionable viewers.[70]

Many significant acts of iconoclasm occurred during the eighth century, following Leo III's ban on the production of religious images and the demolishment of preexisting idols, leaving the disadvantaged Christian followers inhabiting the eastern half of the Roman Empire, some of the earliest iconoclasts.[71] These Christians did not accept status quo and fought to keep their beloved icons.[72] Iconoclasm can be followed through the course of history often occurring during times of war and conflict. During the French Revolution, countless statues and effigies associated with royalty and Catholicism were wrecked and removed.[73] This destruction was not only mediated by the press but also by artists who created painting and drawings that depicted the defacement of monuments during and after revolution.[74] In ancient times those conflicts often revolved around religion and reformers, while in more modern times politics and social injustice manifest as a major driving factor for iconoclasts alike.[75]

During the 20th century, new technologies began being used to document the destruction of symbols for propaganda purposes.[76] One early example of this, in the midst of the First World War, photographs of the burnt Library of the University of Louvain in Belgium were spread around to portray Germans as barbarians, while also evoking the spirit of the loss of heritage.[77] Furthermore, in the wake of the Black Lives Matter protests that erupted all over the United States (US) of America, Southern America, and Europe, protesters in many cities were seeking revenge in the form of destruction.[78] Particularly, in Richmond, Virginia, where a statue of Robert E. Lee was defaced on June 8, 2020.[79] Shortly after, an image of George Floyd, whose death took police while in the custody of Minneapolis

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[63] "Iconoclasm and Iconophobia: Four Historical Case Studies," Diogenes, 10.1177/03921921030503008 (Accessed March 12, 2021).

[64] "Iconoclasm and Iconophobia: Four Historical Case Studies," Diogenes,

[65] "Art Under Attack: Histories of Bristish Iconoclasm – review," The Guardian, https://www.theguardian.com/artanddesign/2013/oct/06/art-under-attack-tate-review (Accessed May 15, 2021).

[66] "What the history of iconoclasm tells us about the confederate statue controversy," The Conversation. https://theconversation.com/what-the-history-of-iconoclasm-tells-us-about-the-confederate-statue-controversy-82878 (Accessed March 15, 2021).

[67] "What the history of iconoclasm tells us about the confederate statue controversy," The Conversation.

[68] "Appetite for Destruction: A Brief History of Iconoclasm," Art UK, https://artuk.org/discover/stories/appetite-for-destruction-a-brief-history-of-iconoclasm (Accessed March 15,2021).

[69] "Appetite for destruction: a brief history of iconoclasm," Art UK.

[70] "Appetite for destruction: a brief history of iconoclasm," Art UK.

[71] "Appetite for destruction: a brief history of iconoclasm," Art UK.

[72] "Appetite for destruction: a brief history of iconoclasm," Art UK.

[73] "Iconoclasm and Iconophobia: Four Historical Case Studies," Diogenes.

[74] "Iconoclasm and Iconophobia: Four Historical Case Studies," Diogenes.

[75] "Art Under Attack: Histories of British Iconoclasm – review," The Guardian.

[76] "Iconoclasm and Iconophobia: Four Historical Case Studies," Diogenes.

[77] "Iconoclasm and Iconophobia: Four Historical Case Studies," Diogenes,

[78] "As Monuments Fall, How Does the World Reckon with a Racist Past?" National Geographic, www.nationalgeographic.com/history/article/confederate-monuments-fall-question-how-rewrite-history (Accessed August 27, 2021).

[79] As Monuments Fall, How Does the World Reckon with a Racist Past?" National Geographic.

police was projected on the base of the statue.[80] Robert E. Lee served as a Confederate general during the American Civil War.[81] Over the next three days, statues of Christopher Columbus, Andrew Jackson, and other prominent historic figures were defaced, broken, or toppled into lakes.[82] These events embody a rejection of classic western historic interpretations.[83] Virginia Governor Ralph Northam promptly ordered the remainder of the statue be removed under a new state law that went into effect in July 2020.[84] This law allows for cities to have autonomy over the fates of socially controversial monuments.[85] Although a judge later went against the wishes of the governor and blocked the removal of the statute, Richmond City Council reported they are still working to gather the votes to have the statues removed.[86]

Actions Taken by the United Nations

In November 1972, during UNESCO's 17th session, the state parties adopted the "Convention Concerning the Protection of the World Cultural and Natural Heritage," and created the "World Heritage" designation, which served as a title assigned to extraordinary cultural achievements, such as the Great Wall of China, or natural landscapes, like Turkey's Göreme National Park.[87] It was stated in the Convention that "the deterioration or disappearance of any item of the cultural or natural heritage constitutes a harmful impoverishment of the heritage of all the nations of the world."[88] The Intergovernmental Committee for the Protection of the World Cultural and Natural Heritage adopted in the resolution reserves the right to exercise Rules of Procedure, as deemed necessary, with respect to State sovereignty.[89] Also emphasized, was shared global ownership of this heritage, along with shared responsibility of future generations to protect this heritage.[90]

Currently, nearly 800 cultural properties, along with 31 mixed sites (natural and cultural) are listed in 161 Member States around the world.[91] Over the course of the last 70 years, sets of conventions, recommendations, and declarations, such as the World Heritage Committee, have contributed to the expansion and implementation of new regulations, which tackle issues such as illegal trafficking of intellectual and cultural property, protection of cultural heritage during conflicts, and defining what should be considered "intangible cultural heritage."[92] UNESCO's Programme for the Preservation of Endangered Movable Cultural Properties and Museum Development launched a pilot program shortly after the destruction that occurred in Afghanistan involving the Buddhist structures of the Bamiyan in the early 2010s.[93] This program was managed by the UNESCO Satellite Office in Kabul in close

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[80] "Robert E. Lee Statue and Daughters of Confederacy Building Attacked by Richmond Protesters," The Washington Post, www.washingtonpost.com/history/2020/05/31/confederate-statues-vandalized-protesters-george-floyd/ (Accessed August 27, 2021).

[81] "As Monuments Fall, How Does the World Reckon with a Racist Past?" National Geographic, www.nationalgeographic.com/history/article/confederate-monuments-fall-question-how-rewrite-history (Accessed August 27, 2021).

[82] "Robert E. Lee Statue and Daughters of Confederacy Building Attacked by Richmond Protesters," The Washington Post, www.washingtonpost.com/history/2020/05/31/confederate-statues-vandalized-protesters-george-floyd/ (Accessed August 27, 2021).

[83] "Robert E. Lee Statue and Daughters of Confederacy Building Attacked by Richmond Protesters," The Washington Post.

[84] "Robert E. Lee Statue and Daughters of Confederacy Building Attacked by Richmond Protesters," The Washington Post.

[85] "As Monuments Fall, How Does the World Reckon with a Racist Past?" National Geographic.

[86] "Robert E. Lee Statue and Daughters of Confederacy Building Attacked by Richmond Protesters," The Washington Post.

[87] "Aspects of Management Planning for Cultural World Heritage Sites: Principles, Approaches and Practices," Springer, https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-319-69856-4 (Accessed March 21, 2021).

[88] "Managing Cultural World Heritage," United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization, https://www.iccrom.org/sites/default/files/2018-07/managing_cultural_world_heritage_en.pdf (Accessed March 21, 2021).

[89] UNESCO. Convention Concerning the Protection of the World Cultural and Natural Heritage.

[90] "Aspects of Management Planning for Cultural World Heritage Sites: Principles, Approaches and Practices," Springer.

[91] "Aspects of Management Planning for Cultural World Heritage Sites: Principles, Approaches and Practices," Springer.

[92] "Managing Cultural World Heritage," UNESCO, https://www.mekongtourism.org/managing-cultural-world-heritage/ (Accessed May 5 ,2021).

[93] "The United States Funds a UNESCO Project for the National Museum of Afghanistan: United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization," UNESCO, www.unesco.org/new/en/culture/themes/museums/museum-projects/archive/the-united-states-funds-a-unesco-project-for-the-national-museum-of-afghanistan/ (Accessed May 5, 2021).

partnership with the Afghan Ministry of Information and Culture and the Society for the Preservation of Afghan Cultural Heritage.[94] The project addressed two pressing concerns of not only the National Museum of Afghanistan but of the international community, as well.[95] The first concern being "the need to document and inventory the collections remaining after the looting and destruction of the Museum during the civil war and Taliban iconoclasm."[96] The second concern being "the need to improve the storage, conservation environment and the capacity of the Museum staff to safeguard the remnants of that national, movable cultural heritage into the future."[97] These goals were followed by the implementation of account tracking, preservation interventions and training exercises, which was managed by Museum staff.[98] A notable impact of this project was the establishment of an electronic database of the Museum's collections.[99] To strengthen the integrity of the database, a server and computer network were also installed. Furthermore, training was provided to ensure the sustainability of the database component of the project.[100] This was the first electronic database of movable cultural property, such as statues, artwork and written documentation, in Afghanistan, which has proved integral to the preservation and safety of these items.[101]

The refurbishment and categorization of the objects that had been scattered into thousands of pieces in the Conservation Department of the Museum was an aspiring part of the project that yielded outstanding results.[102] Staff of the Conservation Department took part in rigorous training to learn key elements within the techniques of conservation and restoration from recognition and arrangement of fragments to final consolidation of the destroyed sculptures.[103] This process allowed restorers and staff member to be able to put together several other sculptures smashed by the Taliban and to properly classify fragments for possible future restoration.[104] Although the Kabul Museum is still in need of improved security measures and continued training of its staff, this project has made a significant contribution to its recovery and provided an excellent example of restoration techniques to mitigate loss through iconoclasm.[105]

Current Situation

Today the toppling, beheading, and vandalizing of historical figures remains divisible. Some welcome their removal with open arms, while others are heavily concerned by these acts of "historical revisionism."[106] A prime example of what iconoclasm appears like today is the debate happening in the US on whether Confederate leaders' statues should be taken down or allowed to stand as symbolic remembrance.[107] Many refer to this as the new American civil war, which is being fought with symbols and statues, rather than with guns and weapons.[108] One characteristic of

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[94] "The United States Funds a UNESCO Project for the National Museum of Afghanistan," UNESCO.

[95] "Programme for the Preservation of Endangered Movable Cultural Properties and Museum Development," UNESCO, 10.1111/j.1468-0033.2006.00558.x (Accessed June 20, 2021).

[96] "The United States Funds a UNESCO Project for the National Museum of Afghanistan: United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization," UNESCO, www.unesco.org/new/en/culture/themes/museums/museum-projects/archive/the-united-states-funds-a-unesco-project-for-the-national-museum-of-afghanistan/ (Accessed May 5, 2021).

[97] "The United States Funds a UNESCO Project for the National Museum of Afghanistan," UNESCO.

[98] "Programme for the Preservation of Endangered Movable Cultural Properties and Museum Development," UNESCO.

[99] "Programme for the Preservation of Endangered Movable Cultural Properties and Museum Development," UNESCO.

[100] "Managing Cultural World Heritage," UNESCO, https://www.mekongtourism.org/managing-cultural-world-heritage/ (Accessed May 5 ,2021).

[101] "Managing Cultural World Heritage," UNESCO.

[102] "Programme for the Preservation of Endangered Movable Cultural Properties and Museum Development," UNESCO.

[103] "Programme for the Preservation of Endangered Movable Cultural Properties and Museum Development," UNESCO.

[104] "The Arghan artefacts that survived Taliban destruction," BBC, https://www.bbc.com/travel/article/20200203-the-afghan-artefacts-that-survived-taliban-destruction (Accessed May 15, 2021).

[105] "The Arghan artefacts that survived Taliban destruction," BBC.

[106] "What the history of iconoclasm tells us about the confederate statue controversy," The Conversation, https://theconversation.com/what-the-history-of-iconoclasm-tells-us-about-the-confederate-statue-controversy-82878 (Accessed March 15, 2021).

[107] "What the history of iconoclasm tells us about the confederate statue controversy," The Conversation.

[108] "What the history of iconoclasm tells us about the confederate statue controversy," The Conversation.

iconoclasm that has stayed the same overtime is the way in which the statues would be maimed.[109] Often, the destruction of statue held symbolism to historical figure's controversial acts.[110] For instance, in the US state of North Carolina, a statue of a Confederate soldier was taken down by roping a noose around its neck, symbolic to how slaves were often hung and killed in early American history.[111]

Furthermore, an underlying paradox has presented itself in the world of iconoclasm.[112] The rise of censorship has now constituted itself as an act of artistic destruction.[113] "The transformation of even mild efforts toward censorship into more destructive acts of mutilation, damage, and elimination illustrates clearly how the fear of images and of art drives our relations with culture, complicating them at every stage and occasionally resolving them."[114] The past has been subjected to censorship according to today's view of what is proper and what is seen as not proper.[115] Although the methods of censorship vary from iconoclasm, the intent remains the same.[116] The practice of iconoclasm remains arbitrary in nature, making it governance around the topic difficult and widely criticized.[117] Following UNESCO's World Heritage and UNDP's Programme of Preservation there has been little production in terms of mandates to manage modern forms of iconoclasm.[118] Additionally, Member States have failed to publish or address iconoclasm in their regions, on a national level, which is problematic in terms of how iconoclasm is evolving in the modern day.[119]

Digitally Mediated Iconoclasm

As technology advances, so do the means at which iconoclasm is exercised.[120] In February of 2015, the Islamic State's (IS) use of digital media to seize and broadcast their iconoclasm remains as a defining moment in the *jihadist* (holy Islamic warrior) propaganda.[121] In the days to come following the release of the video taken by the armed IS militants, the digital footage quickly 'went viral.'[122] The video of the militants chanting while raising sledgehammers and shooting off machine guns to smash ancient Assyrian artefacts and statues to the ground in total destruction was seen, discussed and shared countless times across the world, both via the Internet and broadcast media.[123] However, this was not the first and only video of destruction released by the IS.[124] This was one of many,

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[109] "Art Under Attack: Histories of Bristish Iconoclasm – review," The Guardian,
https://www.theguardian.com/artanddesign/2013/oct/06/art-under-attack-tate-review (Accessed May 15, 2021).
[110] "Art Under Attack: Histories of Bristish Iconoclasm – review," The Guardian.
[111] "What the history of iconoclasm tells us about the confederate statue controversy," The Conversation,
https://theconversation.com/what-the-history-of-iconoclasm-tells-us-about-the-confederate-statue-controversy-82878
(Accessed March 15, 2021).
[112] "The Fear of Art: How Censorship Becomes Iconoclasm," Social Research, https://www.semanticscholar.org/paper/The-Fear-
of-Art%3A-How-Censorship-Becomes-Iconoclasm-Freedberg/f6407b37d92b3175cd545ac48279ef8e903c838a
(Accessed May 15, 2021).
[113] "Transactions of the Royal Historical Society," Cambridge University, https://doi.org/10.1017/S0080440120000079
(Accessed May 15, 2021).
[114] "The Fear of Art: How Censorship Becomes Iconoclasm," Social Research.
[115] "Transactions of the Royal Historical Society," Cambridge University.
[116] "The Ethical Theory of Images Formulated by the Iconoclasts in 754 and 815." Dumbarton Oaks Papers,
https://www.jstor.org/stable/1291238 (Accessed May 15, 2021).
[117] "Appetite for destruction: a brief history of iconoclasm," ARTUK, https://artuk.org/discover/stories/appetite-for-destruction-a-
brief-history-oficonoclasm#:~:text=1500%E2%80%931520)%20is%20a%20rare,during%20the%20English%20
Civil%20War.&text=The%20mutilated%20sculpture%20was%20buried,damage%20%E2%80%93%20and%20r
ediscovered%20in%201954 (Accessed May 15, 2021).
[118] "The Ethical Theory of Images Formulated by the Iconoclasts in 754 and 815." Dumbarton Oaks Papers.
[119] "The Ethical Theory of Images Formulated by the Iconoclasts in 754 and 815." Dumbarton Oaks Papers.
[120] "Digital Technologies and Mediation in Armed Conflict," United Nations Department of Political and Peacebuilding Affairs
and Centre for Humanitarian Dialogue, https://peacemaker.un.org/sites/peacemaker.un.org/files/DigitalToolkitReport.pdf
(Accessed May 15, 2021).
[121] "Digitally Mediated Iconoclasm: The Islamic State and the War on Cultural Heritage," International Journal of Heritage,
https://www.academia.edu/35613574/Digitally_Mediated_Iconoclasm_the_Islamic_State_and_the_war_on_cultural_heri
tage (Accessed May 15, 2021).
[122] "Digitally Mediated Iconoclasm: The Islamic State and the War on Cultural Heritage," International Journal of Heritage.
[123] "Digitally Mediated Iconoclasm: The Islamic State and the War on Cultural Heritage," International Journal of Heritage.
[124] "Digitally Mediated Iconoclasm: The Islamic State and the War on Cultural Heritage," International Journal of Heritage.

released between 2014 and 2016.[125] The IS has deployed a strategic propaganda machine used to spread their radical ideology and persuade others to join them in their holy war.[126] The videos shared are designed to simultaneously send various messages to diverse groups of audiences in attempt to: attract and indoctrinate recruits; mobilize military support bases; strike fear in to the hearts of locals; and to infuriate opponents.[127] Furthermore, these mediums have been used to shock Western audiences with the amount of zeal and gore featured in the videos.[128]

Through mediating this heritage destruction digitally, the IS has transformed traditional iconoclasm in the modern technological world.[129] As images of destruction become more commonplace, the world will need analytical and conceptual frameworks to interpret the everchanging means of production and reception of these images.[130] With that, their everchanging meanings and scales of impacts must be measured adequately.[131] Digitally Mediated Iconoclasm (DMI), a term developed by Jas Elsner, involves the deliberate destruction of heritage sites experienced primarily through the propaganda that the actor perpetrating the destruction makes available for consumption.[132] This propaganda can be videos, social media messages, or digital media on online platforms such as TikTok, YouTube, Instagram and Facebook.[133] The common strategy found in displaying these acts entails recording of the site before, during, and after the moment of demolishment.[134]

In this new digital age, novice media technology has created new publics to which DMI may be directed.[135] For instance, social media platforms have become key to most political communication.[136] Social media also provides the opportunity for dominating parties to control the narrative during the any current phase of war or terror.[137] Social media are crucial for the IS in the expansion of its ideology in digital spaces.[138] Another key component of DMI strategy involves the ability to archive information on the internet making its storage decentralized.[139] The interplay between social and broadcast media may only strengthen the effects of DMI, as public discourse only multiples the terror violence rhetoric to a global audience.[140] Connectivity and information and communication technology use is set to continue and will only expand in the coming years, bringing radical changes to the way media is mediated, and mediation experts need to be prepared for these changes.[141]

[125] "Digitally Mediated Iconoclasm: The Islamic State and the War on Cultural Heritage," International Journal of Heritage.

[126] "The Assyrian Sculptures in the Mosul Cultural Museum: A Preliminary Assessment of What Was on Display before Islamic State's Attack." University of Chicago, https://www.journals.uchicago.edu/doi/abs/10.1086/687581?journalCode=jnes (Accessed May 15, 2021).

[127] "The Assyrian Sculptures in the Mosul Cultural Museum: A Preliminary Assessment of What Was on Display before Islamic State's Attack." University of Chicago, https://www.journals.uchicago.edu/doi/abs/10.1086/687581?journalCode=jnes (Accessed May 15, 2021).

[128] "The Assyrian Sculptures in the Mosul Cultural Museum: A Preliminary Assessment of What Was on Display before Islamic State's Attack." University of Chicago.

[129] "Digital Technologies and Mediation in Armed Conflict," United Nations Department of Political and Peacebuilding Affairs and Centre for Humanitarian Dialogue, https://peacemaker.un.org/sites/peacemaker.un.org/files/DigitalToolkitReport.pdf (Accessed May 15, 2021).

[130] "Contemporary Conflict, Nationalism, and the Destruction of Cultural Property during Armed Conflict: A Theoretical Framework," Journal of Conflict Archaeology, https://www.tandfonline.com/doi/abs/10.1179/157407812X13245464933821 (Accessed August 26, 2021).

[131] "Contemporary Conflict, Nationalism, and the Destruction of Cultural Property during Armed Conflict: A Theoretical Framework," Journal of Conflict Archaeology.

[132] "Digital Technologies and Mediation in Armed Conflict," United Nations Department of Political and Peacebuilding.

[133] "Digitally Mediated Iconoclasm: The Islamic State and the War on Cultural Heritage," International Journal of Heritage, https://www.academia.edu/35613574/Digitally_Mediated_Iconoclasm_the_Islamic_State_and_the_war_on_cultural_heritage (Accessed May 15, 2021).

[134] "Contemporary Conflict, Nationalism, and the Destruction of Cultural Property during Armed Conflict: A Theoretical Framework," Journal of Conflict Archaeology.

[135] "Digital Technologies and Mediation in Armed Conflict." United Nations Department of Political and Peacebuilding.

[136] "Digital Technologies and Mediation in Armed Conflict." United Nations Department of Political and Peacebuilding.

[137] "Digital Technologies and Mediation in Armed Conflict." United Nations Department of Political and Peacebuilding.

[138] "Contemporary Conflict, Nationalism, and the Destruction of Cultural Property during Armed Conflict: A Theoretical Framework," Journal of Conflict Archaeology.

[139] "Digital Technologies and Mediation in Armed Conflict." United Nations Department of Political and Peacebuilding.

[140] "Digital Technologies and Mediation in Armed Conflict." United Nations Department of Political and Peacebuilding.

[141] "Digital Technologies and Mediation in Armed Conflict." United Nations Department of Political and Peacebuilding.

Case Studies

Bamiyan Valley

The destruction of the two giant Buddha structures in the Bamiyan Valley of Afghanistan is a significant attack against historical and cultural heritage committed during a distinct period of turmoil for the Member State.[142] The structures were built before the religion of Islam had spread to the region in the sixth century.[143] Once Islam had traveled to the region, Buddhism became the secondary form of religious practice, and upon new leadership, the structures became an unwelcomed reminder.[144] The destruction occurred on February 26, 2001, following, Taliban leader, Mullah Muhammad Omar's order demanding the eradication of all non-Islamic statues and sanctuaries in Afghanistan.[145] This call to action resulted in the gathering of soldiers, rockets and tank shells to unleash destruction on the two large structures.[146] By March nothing remained of the Bamiyan Buddha Statues in the valley of Afghanistan.[147] Omar's decree and the actions that followed, received much scrutiny from Western Member States along with the Afghan minority.

The UNESCO emissaries plead to define the distinction between idolatry and exemplarity – between "secular admiration and idolatrous veneration."[148] The major argument of the Taliban in defending Omar's actions, was that the statues were not acknowledged by any Afghan minority, so there was no reason to preserve them.[149] UNESCO and other Member States such as, Thailand and Sri Lanka attempted to even purchase and remove the figures in order to preserve the symbols.[150] However, victory could not be won and the Taliban's efforts prevailed with no formal punishment from the UN or other international governing bodies .[151] Even so, such an extraordinary attack on religious and cultural emblems led many to speculate about the real intentions of the Mullah and the impact on cultural phases in history.[152]

Timbuktu

Timbuktu is considered an endangered site by the UNESCO, and has been referred to as a World Heritage site since 1988.[153] Recognized as a place of cultural significance for its diffusion of Islamic culture, Timbuktu is the home of countless mausoleums and holy places with historical significance.[154] Not only is Timbuktu seen as an area of endangerment due to environmental and developmental factors, such as flooding, terrorist attacks and civil unrest, but it is also now considered a region subject to civil unrest and deliberate destruction of heritage.[155] In the midst of

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[142] "The Death of the Buddhas of Bamiyan," Middle East Institute, https://www.mei.edu/publications/death-buddhas-bamiyan (Accessed March 10, 2021).

[143] "They were destroyed by the Taliban. But now the giant Buddha statues of Bamiyan have returned with 3-D light projection," The World, https://www.pri.org/stories/2015-06-11/they-were-destroyed-taliban-now-giant-buddha-statues-bamiyan-have-returned-3-d (Accessed March 10, 2021).

[144] "They were destroyed by the Taliban. But now the giant Buddha statues of Bamiyan have returned with 3-D light projection," The World.

[145] "The Death of the Buddhas of Bamiyan," Middle East Institute, https://www.mei.edu/publications/death-buddhas-bamiyan (Accessed March 10, 2021).

[146] . "UNESCO technical meeting and International Symposium on 'The Future of the Bamiyan Buddha Statues: Technical Considerations and Potential Effects on Authenticity and Outstanding Universal Value'," UNESCO World Heritage Centre, https://whc.unesco.org/en/news/1733/ (Accessed June 20, 2021).

[147] "The Death of the Buddhas of Bamiyan," Middle East Institute.

[148] "Cultural Landscape and Archaeological Remains of the Bamiyan Valley," UNESCO World Heritage Centre, https://whc.unesco.org/en/list/208/ (Accessed June 20, 2021).

[149] "The Death of the Buddhas of Bamiyan," Middle East Institute.

[150] "Cultural Landscape and Archaeological Remains of the Bamiyan Valley," UNESCO World Heritage Centre.

[151] "Cultural Landscape and Archaeological Remains of the Bamiyan Valley," UNESCO World Heritage Centre.

[152] "UNESCO technical meeting and International Symposium on 'The Future of the Bamiyan Buddha Statues: Technical Considerations and Potential Effects on Authenticity and Outstanding Universal Value'," UNESCO World Heritage Centre.

[153] "Timbuktu," UNESCO, http://whc.unesco.org/en/list/119 (Accessed March 18, 2021)

[154] "Radical Islamist Asks Forgiveness for Vandalising Ancient Monuments of Timbuktu," The Telegraph, http://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/2016/08/22/extremist-pleads- guilty-to-terror-attack-on-timbuktus-mausoleums/ (Accessed June 20, 2021).

[155] "2016 State of Conservation," UNESCO, http://whc.unesco.org/en/soc/928 (Accessed March 18, 2021).

the turmoil of the Mali civil war of 2012, rebel groups seized the town of Timbuktu.[156] Seeing the graves of the central mosque as idol shrines, rebels, led by Ahmad al-Faqi Al Mahdi utilized pickaxes and hammers to destroy many of the 15th and 16th century tombs and monuments.[157]

Al Mahdi, who was a teacher and a member of an Islamic militia in North Africa, admitted guilt for the war crime of attacking these religious and historical buildings.[158] This inner-Islamic fighting destroyed several monuments considered holy by other Muslim groups, such as the Hesbah, one of the four command structures of the Ansar Dine group.[159] In September 2016, action was taken by the International Crimes Court (ICC) in an unprecedented trial in which Al Mahdi was charged with 9 years in prison for his crimes against "things" rather than violence against people.[160] This was the first time that the ICC had been requested to pass judgement regarding the destruction of cultural monuments, and additionally, the first time that these crimes were recorded as war crimes.[161] Not only was Al-Mahdi required to serve his time in prison, he was also called forth, in 2017, to pay reparations in the amount of USD 3.2 Million to the victims affected by his crimes.[162]

Conclusion

The multidimensional composition of iconoclasm, particularly found within Western monotheistic traditions, paves way for a philosophical comparison to the complexity of its derivation, implementations, and functions.[163] The internal correlation between image and word varies greatly from religion to religion and cannot be adequately compared without great consideration.[164] Iconoclasm can be considered as an act of violence on the orthodoxy of a specific religion if the imagery plays a primary or even a secondary role within the traditions of that religion.[165] On the contrary, in religious traditions that doubt or negate the place, meaning or role of image, iconoclasm may not be translated as a safeguard of religious belief.[166] These acts of violence can compel and heighten conflicting sides during war and conflict, and in turn must be viewed as weapons of destruction.[167]

Regardless of the composition of the graphic imagery within the religious hierarchy, the existence of sacred images, particularly, icons as portraiture of persons, events, or concepts, exists on the same spectrum with the fear of idols.[168] It does not matter if the item is referred to as an image, icon, or idol, the visual object is presumed by the believer to contain or transmit sacred energy and power.[169] That power can be seen as a positive or negative expression depending on what is depicted and who is interpreting it.[170]

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[156] "Timbuktu," UNESCO.

[157] "Radical Islamist Asks Forgiveness for Vandalising Ancient Monuments of Timbuktu," The Telegraph.

[158] "Ahmad Al Faqi Al Mahdi: 'I Plead Guilty,'" UNESCO, https://en.unesco.org/courier/2017-october-december/ahmad-al-faqi-al-mahdi-i-plead-guilty (Accessed August 27, 2021).

[159] "Al Mahdi Case," ICC, https://www.icc-cpi.int/mali/al-mahdi (Accessed March 20, 2021)

[160] "Al Mahdi Case," ICC.

[161] "Ahmad Al Faqi Al Mahdi: 'I Plead Guilty,'" UNESCO, https://en.unesco.org/courier/2017-october-december/ahmad-al-faqi-al-mahdi-i-plead-guilty (Accessed August 27, 2021).

[162] "Ahmad Al Faqi Al Mahdi: 'I Plead Guilty,'" UNESCO.

[163] "The Ethical Theory of Images Formulated by the Iconoclasts in 754 and 815," Dumbarton Oaks Papers, https://www.jstor.org/stable/1291238 (Accessed May 15, 2021).

[164] "Religion and the Individual: Belief, Practice, and Identity," MDPI, https://www.mdpi.com/books/pdfview/book/337 (Accessed May 15, 2021).

[165] "Religion and the Individual: Belief, Practice, and Identity," MDPI.

[166] "Religion and the Individual: Belief, Practice, and Identity," MDPI.

[167] "The 'Martyrdom of Things': Iconoclasm and its Meanings in the Spanish Civil War," Cambridge Core, https://www.cambridge.org/core/journals/transactions-of-the-royal-historical-society/article/abs/martyrdom-of-things-iconoclasm-and-its-meanings-in-the-spanish-civil-war/4D44EA452AB45499F7F50E7088F3A24C (Accessed May 16, 2021).

[168] "Iconoclasts and Their Motives," Columbia University, https://academiccommons.columbia.edu/doi/10.7916/D8959S9H (Accessed May 16, 2021).

[169] "Voracious Idols and Violent Hands: Iconoclasm in Reformation Zurich, Strasbourg, and Basel," University of Wisconsin, https://history.wisc.edu/publications/voracious-idols-and-violent-hands-iconoclasm-in-reformation-zurich-strasbourg-and-basel/ (Accessed May 16, 2021).

[170] "Voracious Idols and Violent Hands: Iconoclasm in Reformation Zurich, Strasbourg, and Basel," University of Wisconsin.

Inherent to any image, power can be the foundation for fear in some cultures and/or religions ensuing in the dominance of the word and the banning of images.[171] If that power's moral character is in question or it is depicted as carnal in nature, the understanding can be centered on a shared cultural or religious distrust of what is seen—"the evidence of our eyes"—or of a fear of the sensory and the sensual.[172] The more complex nature of iconoclasm particularly as a religious or cultural act requires a thorough investigation into the patterns of iconoclasm in both Eastern and Western religions.[173] The basic nature of the iconoclastic impulse can be understood through detailed comparison of the individuality found in the Western model, both in and against the global evidence for iconoclasm on a larger scale.[174] Iconoclasm, destructive in nature, evokes major tensions when exercised during periods of conflict and civil unrest. Although some objects are seen to provoke complex interactions, the memory of violence holds emotional significance during times of war.

Committee Directive

The "power" of images is critical to *iconoclasm* as both an activity and a concept. The question of whether images have power, and the nature of that power, is elementary to the variations of cultural and religious definitions of iconoclasm. If a religion assumes that images have power, then iconoclasm is a necessary form of control of or deterrent to that power. Delegates should consider how power is defined and manifested or if it is characterized by its propagative cause. Delegates in their research, should focus on preservation techniques of artifacts in historical context and methods to incorporate controversial monuments in the peacebuilding process. As delegates conduct research, they should become fluent in their understanding of the prejudices associated with implementing international mandates surrounding iconoclasm, whether it be on the grounds of class, race and gender, or whether it be a monolithic response of that religion. Delegates should consider further questions that may arise either as to the appropriation or denial of the power of images, especially how that power is manifested, or used, in conjunction with cultural and religious interpretations of both images and iconoclasm. Furthermore, delegates should be advised that articulating a new conceptual framework to capture such mediated destruction is vital because, as 'images become more widely available, more easily reproducible, and more accessible than ever before, their power increases and iconoclasm becomes ever more frequent and widespread.

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[171] "Iconoclasm, In Christianity: A Complete Guide," Jstor, https://daily.jstor.org/short-guide-iconoclasm-early-history/ (Accessed May 16, 2021).
[172] "Voracious Idols and Violent Hands: Iconoclasm in Reformation Zurich, Strasbourg, and Basel," University of Wisconsin.
[173] "Iconoclasm, In Christianity: A Complete Guide," Jstor.
[174] "Iconoclasm, In Christianity: A Complete Guide," Jstor, https://daily.jstor.org/short-guide-iconoclasm-early-history/ (Accessed May 16, 2021).

II.   Improving Access to Quality Education for Vulnerable and At-Risk Populations

Introduction

According to the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), "vulnerable populations" are those "who live in situations of inequality and exclusion and struggle to realize their basic human rights," specifically encompassing "populations that live in poverty without access to safe housing, water, sanitation and nutrition and those who are stigmatized, discriminated against, marginalized by society and even criminalized in law, policy and practice."[175] The most commonly recognized vulnerable people groups are the homeless, immigrants, and refugees.[176] At-risk populations, while similar to vulnerable populations, are classified more broadly, and include those who are, "poor, frail, disabled, economically disadvantaged, homeless, racial and ethnic minorities, persons with low literacy, victims of abuse or persecution, and persons with social risk factors such as isolation."[177] While under these definitions, they are more commonly recognized as being at-risk for various health and social concerns, vulnerable populations also lack access to quality education.[178]

Vulnerable and at-risk populations often lack access to quality education, an issue that oftentimes exacerbates the drivers of the inequalities that most impact these individuals.[179] Reasons for this may include lack of funding, teacher ineffectiveness, no access to classrooms, lack of sufficient learning materials, exclusion of students with disabilities, gender inequalities, conflicts, distances between home and school buildings, hunger and poor nutrition, the cost of an education.[180] According to the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization's (UNESCO) Institute for Statistics (UIS) data, there were more than 258 million children who were out-of-school at the end of the 2018 school year.[181] Since then, that number has substantially risen.[182]

History

The UNESCO was established in London in 1945 during a United Nations (UN) conference for the establishment of an educational and cultural organization.[183] Representatives of 44 Member States attended the first conference, which took place shortly after the war, with the hope to foster peace and prevent another World War.[184] UNESCO's central mission, to drive sustainable development and end poverty, is centered on the belief that "education transforms lives," and has been the driving force behind both past, and on-going initiatives of UNESCO's education

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[175] "Vulnerable and key populations," United Nations Development Programme, https://www.undp-capacitydevelopment-health.org/en/legal-and-policy/key populations/#:~:text=Vulnerable%20and%20key%20populations%20include,in%20law%2C%20policy%20and%20practice (Accessed June 7, 2021).

[176] "Vulnerable populations in healthcare," National Library of Medicine, https://www.bing.com/search?q=what%20are%20vulnerable%20populations&qs=n&form=QBRE&sp=-1&pq=what%20are%20vulnerable%20populations&sc=5-31&sk=&cvid=EB3DFA7C4E9D482DA027B5993898F471 (Accessed June 7, 2021).

[177] "Populations at Risk," National Library of Medicine, https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC1490126/ (Accessed June 7, 2021).

[178] "Ensuring Access to Quality Health Care in Vulnerable Communities," Journal of Academic Medicine, https://journals.lww.com/academicmedicine/fulltext/2018/09000/ensuring_access_to_quality_health_care_in.13.aspx (Accessed June 7, 2021).

[179] "10 Barriers to Education That Children Living in Poverty Face," Global Citizen, https://www.globalcitizen.org/en/content/10-barriers-to-education-around-the-world-2/?template=next, (Accessed August 27, 2021).

[180] "10 Barriers to Education That Children Living in Poverty Face," Global Citizen.

[181] "Out-of-School Children and Youth," UNESCO UIS, http://uis.unesco.org/en/topic/out-school-children-and-youth (Accessed July 2, 2021).

[182] "Out-of-School Children and Youth," UNESCO UIS.

[183] "History of the Education Sector." UNESCO, https://en.unesco.org/themes/education/about-us/history (Accessed June 7, 2021).

[184] "UNESCO in brief-Mission and Mandates," UNESCO, https://en.unesco.org/about-us/introducing-unesco (Accessed June 7, 2021).

sector.[185] Its main objective is to build peace through cooperation towards the continuation of education, sciences, and cultures.[186]

Access to education has been a global issue since the inception of the United Nations (UN) and UNESCO, and the organization's early work through the UNESCO Institute for Lifelong Learning covered many education-related topics, ranging from pre-school education to adult education and formal education to non-formal education.[187] Through the Institute's commitment to bolstering adult and non-formal education, it has intrinsically addressed vital education access issues from the beginning.[188] UNESCO has achieved 43 milestones relative to the betterment of global education since its establishment.[189] Milestones of note include, but are not limited to, the creation of the UNESCO Institute for Education in 1952, the Declaration of the Rights of the Child in 1959, the Declaration on the Recognition of the Right to Lean in 1985, the World Conference on Education for All in 1990, the World Education Forum in 2000, and the Global Education Coalition in 2020.[190]

Overtime, the scale and diversity of UNESCO's education programme and related initiatives have evolved and grown.[191] The most recent milestone celebrated by UNESCO is the creation of the Global Education Coalition in response to COVID-19 in 2020.[192] The Global Education Coalition, furthered by the popular hashtag #LearningNeverStops, is a platform erected to foster collaboration to protect education during the crisis.[193] The COVID-19 pandemic is a large, pressing global issue which requires a global response, and UNESCO's Global Education Coalition is just that; the effort has garnered over 175 members from various sectors who rally together around three central flagships: connectivity, teachers and gender, and educational recovery.[194]

In the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, Article 26 calls attention to the value and importance of education by stating, "Everyone has the right to education," with international law also guaranteeing, an "education, without discrimination for all."[195, 196] The term all, or everyone, is inclusive of vulnerable and at-risk populations. From refugees to asylum seekers, education can be the key to them becoming recognized within their host country, gaining the language skills necessary for them to participate in local education, thus allowing them to assimilate to their new environment.[197] Yet, globally, only about 24 percent of refugee children attend secondary school.[198]

Actions Taken by the United Nations

From November 14 to December 15, 1960, the UNESCO held the Convention against Discrimination in Education in Paris with the goals of prohibiting discrimination in education and promoting equality with regards to educational opportunities and treatment.[199] During the Convention, involved Member States stressed the importance of non-discrimination and reiterated that "every person has to right to education," and established education a fundamental

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[185] "Education Transforms Lives," UNESCO, https://en.unesco.org/themes/education (Accessed June 7, 2021).

[186] "UNESCO in brief-Mission and Mandates," UNESCO.

[187] "History of the Institute," UNESCO's Institute for Lifelong Learning, https://uil.unesco.org/unesco-institute/history (Accessed August 27, 2021).

[188] History of the Institute," UNESCO's Institute for Lifelong Learning.

[189] "Education Transforms Lives," UNESCO.

[190] "Education Transforms Lives," UNESCO.

[191] "Education Transforms Lives," UNESCO.

[192] "Education Transforms Lives," UNESCO.

[193] "Global Education Coalition," UNESCO, https://en.unesco.org/covid19/educationresponse/globalcoalition (Accessed June 7, 2021).

[194] "Global Education Coalition," UNESCO.

[195] "Article 26 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights," United for Human Rights, https://www.humanrights.com/course/lesson/articles-26-30/read-article-26.html# (Accessed June 7, 2021).

[196] "Education for Migrants: An Inalienable Human Right," UNESCO, https://en.unesco.org/courier/2018-4/education-migrants-inalienable-human-right (Accessed June 7, 2021).

[197] "Education for Migrants: An Inalienable Human Right," UNESCO.

[198] "Refugee Children Have the Right to a Full Education," Human Rights Watch, https://www.hrw.org/news/2019/12/16/refugee-children-have-right-full-education# (Accessed June 7, 2021).

[199] "Ratification of the Convention against Discrimination in Education," United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization, https://en.unesco.org/themes/right-to-education/convention-against-discrimination/ratification (accessed April 2021.

right, not a luxury.[200] This Convention, inspired by principles in the UNESCO Constitution (1945) and the Declaration of Human Rights (1948), was the first international treaty by UNESCO to exclusively cover the right to education and have binding force in international law.[201] To date the treaty has been ratified by 106 Member States.[202] Having ratified the treaty, these Member States are required to implement the right to education as it is detailed in the treat and also remain obligated to provide free and compulsory primary education.[203] In addition to free primary education, Member States must also provide the following provisions: "Secondary education in its different forms, generally available and accessible to all; Higher education equally accessible to all on the basis of individual capacity; Equivalent standards of education in all public educational institutions of the same level and conditions in relation to quality; Opportunities for those who missed all or part of their primary education and their continuation of education, and; Training opportunities for the teaching profession without discrimination."[204]

In 2008, the 48th session of the International Conference on Education (ICE), was held in Geneva.[205] Over the course of the three-day session, 153 Member States, 20 Intergovernmental Organizations (IGOs), and 25 Non-Governmental Organizations (NGOs) convened to determine ways to expand access to education to the estimated millions of individuals deemed to have little or no access to educational opportunities.[206] For the sake of the session, participants focused on educational exclusion.[207] The specific victims of educational exclusion are those who do not have access to education, who must leave the educational system early, those who experience school failure.[208] Conversely, UNESCO views inclusion as, "a dynamic approach of responding positively to pupil diversity and of seeing individual differences not as problems, but as opportunities for enriching learning."[209] This session was met with a particular challenge to be addressed in relation to their topic at hand. That challenge being the 2008 global financial crisis, which had already placed unimaginable strain on existing global education systems and efforts to reduce poverty.[210] In an effort to devise a cohesive solution that would allow excluded groups access to education, while remaining cognizant of the global financial crisis, participants recommend the development of policies centered on inclusion in the following areas: "the promotion of linguistic and cultural diversity, and equipping teachers with skills and materials to teach diverse populations."[211]

In 2019, UNESCO published three thematic documents.[212] Each document addressed a specific population is regards to their right and access to education.[213] *The Right to Education for Persons with Disabilities* focuses on how individuals with disabilities are commonly excluded from education and goes on to discuss the extent and way in which they are excluded.[214] The document then goes into detail to assess the status of each Member State who has ratified the UN Convention of the Rights of Persons with disabilities.[215] Including what constitutional and legislative provisions have been made for individuals with disabilities seeking educational inclusion, and what measures have been taken to ensure the child's continued access and involvement within their Member States educational

[200] "Convention Against Discrimination in Education 1960," UNESCO, http://portal.unesco.org/en/ev.php-URL_ID=12949&URL_DO=DO_TOPIC&URL_SECTION=201.html (Accessed June 7, 2021).

[201] "Significance Of the Convention Against Discrimination in Education (1960)," UNESCO, https://unesdoc.unesco.org/ark:/48223/pf0000142908 (Accessed June 7, 2021).

[202] "UNESCO's Convention against Discrimination in Education," United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization, https://en.unesco.org/themes/right-to-education/convention-against-discrimination (accessed April 6, 2021).

[203] "UNESCO's Convention Against Discrimination in Education," UNESCO.

[204] "UNESCO's Convention Against Discrimination in Education," UNESCO.

[205] "The 48th session (2008)," International Bureau of Education, http://www.ibe.unesco.org/en/international-conference-education/48th-session-2008 (Accessed June 7, 2021).

[206] "The 48th session (2008)," International Bureau of Education.

[207] "The 48th session (2008)," International Bureau of Education.

[208] "Inclusive Education: The Way of the Future," UNESCO, http://www.ibe.unesco.org/fileadmin/user_upload/Policy_Dialogue/48th_ICE/General_Presentation-48CIE-English.pdf (Accessed June 7, 2021).

[209] "Inclusive Education: The Way of the Future," UNESCO.

[210] "The 48th session (2008)," International Bureau of Education.

[211] "The 48th session (2008)," International Bureau of Education.

[212] "Education transforms lives," UNESCO, https://en.unesco.org/themes/education (Accessed June 9, 2021).

[213] "Education transforms lives," UNESCO.

[214] "The Right to Education for Persons with Disabilities," UNESCO, https://unesdoc.unesco.org/ark:/48223/pf0000371249 (Accessed June 7, 2021).

[215] "The Right to Education for Persons with Disabilities," UNESCO, https://unesdoc.unesco.org/ark:/48223/pf0000371249 (Accessed June 7, 2021).

system.[216] While the document does not provide a general consensus on the actions of Member States, it does provide readers with an in depth evaluation of a Member States action or complacency.[217] *Indigenous Peoples' Right to Education* reemphasizes UNESCO's belief that *all* people have a right to education.[218] Over the course of the duration of the document, data from multiple Member States is shared to present practical examples of how Member States are upholding the 1960 Convention and Recommendation against Discrimination in Education.[219] While the document does actively recognize that not nearly enough has been done to support indigenous peoples rights to education, as they make up nearly 15 percent of the world's poor; the document does present promising reports of legislative provisions made within Member States such as Australia and Canada aimed at improving access to education for indigenous learners.[220] Finally, *Enforcing the Right to Education of Refugees: A Policy Perspective*, a follow-up to a 2017 UNESCO working paper, provides analysis and insight how national education systems could actively reinforce a refugee learners right to education.[221] After actively reviewing the current barriers to educations that refugee students face, contributing Member States go on to share policy recommendations centered around accessibility, availability, acceptability, and adaptability.[222] All four sections are designed to aid the refugee learner from their point of arrival, through language barriers, provide educator training and combat school segregation.[223] While all three documents present information from a high level, the transparency of Member States and information sharing within each theme allows us to understand the progress and hinderance to ensuring equitable access to education for all, including vulnerable and at-risk populations.[224]

UNESCO has also distributed Global Education Monitoring (GEM) Reports throughout the years, each of which covers a different education-related topic vital to the UNESCO mission regarding education; topics covered in these GEM reports range from accountability in education (2017) and education and migration (2019) to inclusion in education (2020).[225] These reports were created under the idea that realizing SDG 4 would "[require] sound evidence and analysis to support policy-making, facilitate the sharing of good practice, and hold those responsible to account for fulfilling their commitments."[226] Along with the full GEM reports, users can also gain access to honed gender reports, youth reports, and regional reports.[227]

Alongside UNESCO, the UN as a whole has continuously worked towards improving access to education through Sustainable Development Goal 4 (Quality Education).[228] UN Sustainable Development Goal 4 focuses on quality education, as "education enables upward socioeconomic mobility and is a key to escaping poverty."[229] While improving and expanding knowledge can uplift vulnerable and at-risk communities, a positive step towards achieving sustainable development, ensuring that all people have equal access to education proves a worldwide challenge.[230] Emphasizing inclusion and equity for vulnerable populations must be made a priority in order to address this pressing issue.[231]

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[216] "The Right to Education for Persons with Disabilities," UNESCO.

[217] "The Right to Education for Persons with Disabilities," UNESCO.

[218] "Indigenous Peoples' Right to Education," UNESCO, https://unesdoc.unesco.org/ark:/48223/pf0000369698 (Accessed June 7, 2021).

[219] "Indigenous Peoples' Right to Education," UNESCO.

[220] "Indigenous Peoples' Right to Education," UNESCO.

[221] "Enforcing the Right to Education of Refugees: A Policy Perspective," UNESCO, https://unesdoc.unesco.org/ark:/48223/pf0000366839 (Accessed June 7, 2021).

[222] "Enforcing the right to education of refugees: a policy perspective," UNESCO.

[223] "Enforcing the right to education of refugees: a policy perspective," UNESCO.

[224] "Enforcing the right to education of refugees: a policy perspective," UNESCO.

[225] "Reports," UNESCO, https://en.unesco.org/gem-report/allreports, (Accessed June 7, 2021).

[226] "Inclusion and Education," UNESCO, https://en.unesco.org/gem-report/report/2020/inclusion (Accessed June 7, 2021).

[227] "Reports," UNESCO.

[228] "United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO)," United Nations, https://sdgs.un.org/un-system-sdg-implementation/united-nations-educational-scientific-and-cultural-organization-unesco (Accessed April 5, 2021).

[229] "Sustainable Development Goals: Quality Education," United Nations, https://www.un.org/sustainabledevelopment/education/ (Accessed April 12, 2021).

[230] Inclusion in education," United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization, https://en.unesco.org/themes/inclusion-in-education (Accessed March 12, 2021).

[231] "Inclusion in education," United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization.

Current Situation

The Universal Declaration of Human Rights and, further, the Convention against Discrimination in Education holds that education is a fundamental human right for all.[232] In an effort to ensure this right to education, UNESCO has enacted efforts to develop, monitor, and promote education, including consultations, collaborations with other UN bodies, and an online observatory and atlas.[233] With a vision to transform the world, UNESCO launched Futures of Education in September 2019, which serves to be a "global initiative to reimagine how knowledge and learning can shape the future of humanity and the planet."[234] This initiative to date has included public global engagement in multiple facets. With the intention of facilitating a global conversation, an international commission in conjunction with educational stake holders, and every day citizens have engaged in consultations, open meetings, and webinars. UNESCO and the commission will continue outreach efforts in this medium until 2023.[235]

As the initiative focuses on the collaborative nature of future-making, it has been successful in sparking a worldwide debate on the importance of education in today's society.[236] UNESCO has additionally commissioned a series of global reports to address the various challenges faced by Member States.[237] In March 2021, the International Commission released a Progress update detailing what they have coined, a global human development crisis, and the unstable nature of our development contributing to significant inequities in global education.[238] Over the course of the update, the commission outlines the "regenerative potential" education holds for our society, and the need to rely on it as a global common good. [239] An additional report was release 15 months prior. This report, *Education in a Post-COVID World: Nine Ideas for Public Action,* was broaching uncharted waters at the time of its publication – it the middle of both a health and education crisis.[240] While we can look at this document with hindsight, it's important to recognize the theme of the document, "we cannot return to the world as it was before."[241]

Since COVID-19 was declared a pandemic, it has vastly impacted how people learn, work, and live. One of the most pressing challenges that has arisen is how to adapt the education system to accommodate vast school closures.[242] Since the pandemic began, over 1.6 billion learners in over 190 Member States have been impacted; making this one of the largest disruptions to global education in modern history.[243] With vulnerable populations more at-risk for various health and social concerns in addition to inadequate access to education, the pandemic has only further exacerbated already vulnerable groups of people.[244] COVID-19 will prove to be a great obstacle to UNESCO's

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[232] "Universal Declaration of Human Rights," United Nations, https://www.un.org/en/about-us/universal-declaration-of-human-rights (Accessed March 2021).

[233] "What you need to know about the right to education," United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization, https://en.unesco.org/news/what-you-need-know-about-right-education (Accessed April 18, 2021).

[234] "Futures of Education," United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization, https://en.unesco.org/futuresofeducation/initiative (Accessed April 18, 2021).

[235] "Futures of Education," United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization.

[236] "Futures of Education," United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization.

[237] "Futures of Education," United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization.

[238] "Progress Update of the International Commission on the Future of Education," UNESCO, https://unesdoc.unesco.org/ark:48223/pf0000375746/ (Accessed June 7, 2021).

[239] "Progress Update of the International Commission on the Future of Education," UNESCO.

[240] "Education in a post-COVID World: Nine Ideas for Public Action," UNESCO, https://unesdoc.unesco.org/ark:48223/pf0000373717/ (Accessed June 7,2021).

[241] "Education in a post-COVID World: Nine Ideas for Public Action," UNESCO.

[242] "The impact of COVID-19 on student equity and inclusion: Supporting vulnerable students during school closures and school re-openings," OECD, https://www.oecd.org/coronavirus/policy-responses/the-impact-of-covid-19-on-student-equity-and-inclusion-supporting-vulnerable-students-during-school-closures-and-school-re-openings-d593b5c8/ (Accessed April 15, 2021).

[243] "COVID-19: How the UNESCO Global Education Coalition is Tackling the Biggest Learning Disruption in History," UNESCO, https://en.unesco.org/news/covid-19-how-unesco-global-education-coalition-tackling-biggest-learning-disruption-history (Accessed June 7, 2021).

[244] "COVID-19: How the UNESCO Global Education Coalition is Tackling the Biggest Learning Disruption in History," UNESCO, https://en.unesco.org/news/covid-19-how-unesco-global-education-coalition-tackling-biggest-learning-disruption-history (Accessed June 7, 2021).

educational goals.[245] In an effort to respond to and overcome the desperate educational situations caused by COVID, in March of 2020 UNESCO launched the Global Education Coalition.[246] The coalition, which is composed of 150 Member States and individuals from academia, the private sector and civil society, operates in a flexible manner and has the primary objective of ensuring that learning doesn't stop just because of the pandemic. [247] The contributors and members of the coalition act as a partnership rather than a standard UN organization, which gives them greater access to resources than what would typically be available, as they strive to support 12.7 million teachers and 400 million learners globally.[248] Since its establishment, the coalition, and the partnerships its composed of, have experienced great success in their efforts to combat the effects of the pandemic.[249]

UNESCOs CapED programme, together with Education Cannot Wait (ECW), have worked to actively finance education response activities in the Democratic Republic of the Congo.[250] Through joint efforts, together the organizations have reached populations in the Member State with educational content by way of the radio, to fill the gap for 80 percent of residents without reliable internet connections.[251] In Samo, Vodafone is providing USD 7.5 Million to provide educationally data to 60,000 learners.[252] Learners can now access to free internet is Burkina Faso, Guinea, Mali and the Democratic Republic of the Condo through Orange and their subsidiaries.[253] The Global Education Coalition will continue to act with a sense of urgency in its response to the pandemic because UNESCO has reported that, "24 million learners are at risk of not returning to school, threatening a loss of learning that may stretch beyond one generation of students."[254]

Case Study

Education in Mexico: The Struggle of Women and Girls, Indigenous Peoples, and Rural Students

One group that has historically faced great barriers to education in Mexico are women and girls, and this is primarily due to gender inequality.[255] In Mexico, girls and women often have domestic chores and obligations to tend to—obligations, such as cooking, cleaning, tending to children, and taking care of the house, that do not allow older girls and women to regularly attend school.[256] Accordingly, girls are increasingly more likely to drop out of school by age 12 than their male counterparts are.[257] Furthermore, females are less likely to attend high school and college.[258] Additionally, child marriage is a pressing factor that can prematurely limit Mexican girls' access to education.[259]

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[245] "Policy Brief: Education during COVID-19 and beyond," United Nations, https://www.un.org/development/desa/dspd/wp-content/uploads/sites/22/2020/08/sg_policy_brief_covid-19_and_education_august_2020.pdf (Accessed April 15, 2021).

[246] "COVID-19: How the UNESCO Global Education Coalition is Tackling the Biggest Learning Disruption in History," UNESCO.

[247] "COVID-19: How the UNESCO Global Education Coalition is Tackling the Biggest Learning Disruption in History," UNESCO.

[248] "COVID-19: How the UNESCO Global Education Coalition is Tackling the Biggest Learning Disruption in History," UNESCO.

[249] "COVID-19: How the UNESCO Global Education Coalition is Tackling the Biggest Learning Disruption in History," UNESCO.

[250] "COVID-19: How the UNESCO Global Education Coalition is Tackling the Biggest Learning Disruption in History," UNESCO.

[251] "COVID-19: How the UNESCO Global Education Coalition is Tackling the Biggest Learning Disruption in History," UNESCO.

[252] "COVID-19: How the UNESCO Global Education Coalition is Tackling the Biggest Learning Disruption in History," UNESCO.

[253] "COVID-19: How the UNESCO Global Education Coalition is Tackling the Biggest Learning Disruption in History," UNESCO.

[254] "COVID-19: How the UNESCO Global Education Coalition is Tackling the Biggest Learning Disruption in History," UNESCO.

[255] "4 Barriers to Quality Education," ICF, https://icfdn.org/barriers-quality-education-mexico/ (Accessed June 20, 2021).

[256] "4 Barriers to Quality Education," ICF.

[257] "4 Barriers to Quality Education," ICF.

[258] "4 Barriers to Quality Education," ICF.

[259] "4 Barriers to Quality Education," ICF.

Data has shown that, in Latin America, child marriage is on the rise, and it is having a large impact on education.[260] A 2017 study conducted by a research group in Mexico City found that 83 percent of Mexican girls in relationships and/or married, often to older males, prematurely left school.[261] While there are a number of ways that child marriage can impact girls, abuse and deprivation are primary factors that can hinder girls' abilities to continue their schooling.[262] As girls with educated mothers are more likely to pursue education than girls with less educated female figures, the cycle of gender inequality in the sphere of education in Mexico will likely continue if these inequalities are not addressed.[263] Furthermore, gender-based violence in schools continues to pose a threat to female students.[264] Indigenous communities make up another group in Mexico that faces barriers to education.[265] Likewise to female students in Mexico, indigenous individuals face unique barriers to access to education, rooted in exclusion, which include the cultural gap in the education system, less relevant materials, and discrimination.[266]

With regards to the cultural gap in education, indigenous students are less likely than other students to receive an education that meets their needs.[267] The Mexican government recognizes 68 Mexican indigenous languages, and the 2002 Law of Linguistic Rights stipulates that native languages are to be protected and bilingual and intercultural education is to be encouraged.[268] However, few educators in Mexico speak indigenous languages or teach them in the classroom.[269] Just as language barriers impact the usefulness of a formal education to indigenous students, the skills often taught in schools can be less relevant to indigenous peoples, their economy, and their way of life; as the materials taught in schools and manners by which they are taught often do not take indigenous culture into account, indigenous students may feel less obligated to attend formal educational institutions.[270] Additionally, indigenous students in Mexico are likely to face discrimination.[271] In general, indigenous peoples in Mexico have historically faced discrimination because of their lower economic standings and lack of formal educations, which are often because of language gaps, dress, and various cultural manifestations.[272] In addition to indigenous peoples' socioeconomic status and education, indigenous students may also face discrimination on the basis of skin color.[273]

Students living in rural areas also face educational limitations due in part to poverty and proximity.[274] According to OECD Rural Policy Reviews on Mexico, more than 80 percent of Mexico's land, which houses about 36 percent of Mexico's total population, consists of rural regions.[275] This population accounts for about two-thirds of Mexico's extremely poor.[276] Overall, poverty in rural areas is driven by the lack of human/social assets, limited infrastructure, and scarce services.[277] Globally, there is a large disparity between in wealth and opportunity between urban and

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[260] Hannah Summers, "Mexico's lost generation of young girls robbed of innocence and education," The Guardian, https://www.theguardian.com/global-development/2017/may/02/mexico-lost-generation-young-girls-innocence-education (Accessed August 27, 2021).

[261] Hannah Summers, "Mexico's lost generation of young girls robbed of innocence and education," The Guardian, https://www.theguardian.com/global-development/2017/may/02/mexico-lost-generation-young-girls-innocence-education (Accessed August 27, 2021).

[262] Hannah Summers, "Mexico's lost generation of young girls robbed of innocence and education," The Guardian.

[263] "4 Barriers to Quality Education," ICF, https://icfdn.org/barriers-quality-education-mexico/ (Accessed June 20, 2021).

[264] "UNITED NATIONS GIRLS EDUCATION INITIATIVE," UNGEI, www.ungei.org/, (Accessed August 27, 2021).

[265] "4 Barriers to Quality Education," ICF.

[266] "4 Barriers to Quality Education," ICF.

[267] "4 Barriers to Quality Education," ICF.

[268] "Mexican Languages," DonQujote, https://www.donquijote.org/mexican-culture/history/languages-mexico/ (Accessed June 19, 2021).

[269] "4 Barriers to Quality Education," ICF.

[270] "4 Barriers to Quality Education," ICF.

[271] "4 Barriers to Quality Education," ICF.

[272] "Indigenous Peoples," Minority Rights Group International, https://minorityrights.org/minorities/indigenous-peoples-4/ (Accessed June 19, 2021).

[273] "Social Stratification in Mexico: Disentangling Color, Ethnicity, and Class," NCBI, https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC4222073/ (Accessed June 18, 2021).

[274] "4 Barriers to Quality Education," ICF.

[275] "OECD Rural Policy Reviews: Mexico," OECD, https://www.oecd.org/gov/oecdruralpolicyreviewsmexico.htm (Accessed June 20, 2021).

[276] "Investing in rural people in Mexico," IFAD, https://www.ifad.org/documents/38714170/39402825/mexico_e.pdf/458074c3-ed5a-4675-979c-a2535ec5477b (Accessed June 19, 2021).

[277] "Investing in rural people in Mexico," IFAD.

rural populations.[278] With regards to educational opportunity, Mexican students from impoverished and/or rural communities are more likely to be absent from school, repeat grade levels, and even drop out of school entirely.[279] In addition to poverty, proximity and infrastructure can also impact rural students' educational opportunities; there are far fewer schools in rural Mexico than there are in urban areas, and existing schools in rural areas lack appropriate tools, infrastructure, and funding.[280] Students from Mexico's rural and poverty-stricken areas often have to commute large distances on foot to attend school.[281] Given these challenges, many disadvantaged students do not have access to equal, quality education; for instance, fewer than half of 15-year olds in rural Mexico advance past elementary school.[282]

Mexico has taken steps to address these root issues and enhance access.[283] Internationally, Mexico is part of the United Nations Girls' Education Initiative (UNGEI), an initiative addressing gender gap in education by concentrating on marginalized and excluded groups and individuals, reducing and eliminating gender-related violence in schools, and improving girls' learning outcomes.[284] Nationally, Mexico boasts mandated free primary and secondary education, female-dominated post-secondary technical schools, and a 98.5 percent literacy rate for women aged 15 to 24 years of age.[285] Furthermore, UN Women Mexico has implemented the Second Chance Education and Vocational Learning Program, a program in indigenous communities in the State of Puebla and marginalized areas near Mexico City and Guadalajara with the goal of reaching more women and enhancing access.[286] As goals in Mexico include reaching more women and enhancing educational access, a variety of initiatives, projects, and models have been enacted. For instance, more school buildings have been constructed in rural villages to allow rural populations easier access to classes; furthermore, as indigenous girls' education is the most impeded by limitations like poverty and language barriers, Mexico's New Education Model, a Mexican educational reform, develops skills, lifelong learning, and inclusion for indigenous girls in the classroom.[287]

Conclusion

Work put forth by both the UN and the UNESCO Organization in attempt to improve vulnerable and at-risk populations' access to quality education, while positive steps for a brighter future, has shown that more work is needed to ensure that these individuals are not left behind.[288] Though the UN, UNESCO, and other organizations have continued to work to improve access to quality education for vulnerable and at-risk populations, more work, policies, and programs are needed to address the issues at hand.[289] In the wake of the COVID-19 pandemic and the disruptive role it has played in education, more focus on reform and learning programs is needed worldwide;

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[278] Empowering Parents to Improve Education Quality in Rural Mexico," J-Pal, https://www.povertyactionlab.org/evaluation/empowering-parents-improve-education-quality-rural-mexico (Accessed June 20, 2021).

[279] "'The help never lasts': why has Mexico's education revolution failed?," The Guardian, https://www.theguardian.com/inequality/2017/aug/15/the-help-never-lasts-why-has-mexicos-education-revolution-failed (Accessed June 18, 2021).

[280] "In pictures: Mexico's poor rural schools," BBC News, https://www.bbc.com/news/in-pictures-24615329 (Accessed June 20, 2021).

[281] "In pictures: Mexico's poor rural schools," BBC News.

[282] "In pictures: Mexico's poor rural schools," BBC News.

[283] "Understanding Girls' Education in Indigenous Maya Communities in the Yucatan Peninsula," Brookings, https://files.eric.ed.gov/fulltext/ED583024.pdf (Accessed August 28, 2021).

[284] "UNITED NATIONS GIRLS EDUCATION INITIATIVE." UNGEI, www.ungei.org (Accessed April 15, 2021).

[285] "Top 10 Facts About Girls'," The Borgen Project, https://borgenproject.org/top-10-facts-about-girls-education-in-mexico/ (Accessed April 15, 2021).

[286] "Women in Mexico sow seeds to hope through the 'Second Chance' programme," UN Women, https://www.unwomen.org/en/news/stories?country=475626ea4ca64b61bff804796e211077&story_type=d0438dc75ddf40749f0300d3b80cb4bc.

[287] Is Social Inclusion Happening for Indigenous Girls in Mexico?" Brookings, www.brookings.edu/blog/education-plus-development/2017/08/03/is-social-inclusion-happening-for-indigenous-girls-in-mexico/ (Accessed April 15, 2021).

[288] "Leaving No One Behind: How Far On The Way To Universal Primary and Secondary Education," UNESCO, https://en.unesco.org/gem-report/leaving-no-one-behind-how-far-way-universal-primary-and-secondary-education, (Accessed July 2, 2021).

[289] "What you need to know about the right to education," United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization Futures of Education, https://en.unesco.org/news/what-you-need-know-about-right-education (Accessed April 15, 2021).

inclusive public education systems are essential to short- and long-term recovery.[290] Groups that are at-risk of having access to quality education, populations including but not limited to women and girls, indigenous individuals, individuals with disabilities, people in conflict zones, and rural and/or poor students, are excluded in many ways (gender-driven inequalities, language barriers, lack of access to resources, location, funding, etc.); this happens virtually everywhere in the world. Improving access to education for excluded groups is a global goal that requires global efforts.

Committee Directive

Improving access to quality education for vulnerable and at-risk populations will require delegates to write policies and/or install programming that will allow all students' needs to be met. The drivers of common inequalities that impact these groups must be carefully considered, along with the theme of this conference: "Fostering Global Youth Empowerment and Leadership." What groups in Member States are facing vulnerabilities? What actions must be taken to ensure these vulnerable groups receive adequate education, a basic human right? What role does UNESCO play in assisting Member States when doing so? With new barriers to quality education for all arising recently, such as the COVID-19 pandemic and its various worldwide impacts, it is important for this issue to be addressed in full by all Member States.[291] While conducting their research, delegates should take note to specifically research the ways in which vulnerable and at-risk populations are impacted.

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[290] "Beyond reopening schools: How education can emerge stronger than before COVID-19," Brookings, https://www.brookings.edu/research/beyond-reopening-schools-how-education-can-emerge-stronger-than-before-covid-19/ (Accessed April 15,2021).

[291] "The Impact of COVID-19 on Education: Insights from Education at a Glance 2020," OECD, https://www.oecd.org/education/the-impact-of-covid-19-on-education-insights-education-at-a-glance-2020.pdf (Accessed April 15, 2021).

Annotated Bibliography:

Topic I: Improving Access to Quality Education for Vulnerable and At-Risk Populations

Alston, Margaret M. & Kent, Jenny. "Educational Access for Australia's Rural Young People: A Case of Social Exclusion." *Australian Journal of Education* 47, no. 1 (April 2003): 5–17. https://doi.org/10.1177/000494410304700102.

> Focusing on young people in rural areas of developed countries, this article discusses barriers to accessing quality higher education and the related effects on these areas as a result of globalization. Alston and Kent explain how globalization has negatively affected rural areas in manners such as a growing lack of access to higher education. The gap in access to higher education has resulted in those living in rural areas becoming socially marginalized and excluded, therefore experiencing effects such as poverty and diminishing human capital. Alton and Kent attribute the social exclusion of those living in rural areas to neoliberal governmental policies such as that of the Australian government that seek to minimize government intervention to keep the Australian economy competitive, which in their pursuit of specialization forget about higher education for their youth populations.

Downes, Paul. "*Access to Education in Europe; A Framework and Agenda for System Change.*" London: Springer, Dordrecht, 2014. https://doi.org/10.1007/978-94-017-8795-6_5

> The purpose of this book is to place scrutiny on access to education at higher levels and promote lifelong learning for those from socioeconomically excluded groups. Downes begins by enumerating the structural violence within the system that create barriers to access and utilization of current education programs. Focusing on the transformation of structural features of change for access to education, Downes discusses how the use of yes or no questions as malleable indicators will promote scrutiny and social inclusion. Chapter 3 evaluates the ability of Bronfenbrenner's Theory, "The ecology of human development" which focuses on the concentric levels at which systemic indicators exist and interact, to analyze a system's ability to adapt to feedback and include socially excluded, marginalized and vulnerable populations. The book draws the conclusion that the best way to affect system wide change is to implement a transparent framework for the assessment of structural indicators of education systems and policies that promote improvement, self-reflection and systemic change.

Lewin, Keith M. "Access to education in sub-Saharan Africa: patterns, problems and possibilities." *Comparative Education* 45, no. 2 (April 1, 2003):151-174. https://doi.org/10.1080/03050060902920518

> Through policies like the Millennium Development Goals, this article analyzes recent changes in access to education in Sub-Saharan Africa in response to recent multilateral focus on improving access to education through. After addressing access to education, Lewin goes on to focus on the highly uneven change in enrollment patterns and the problems associated with said patterns. This paper argues that based on the sporadic and vastly different patterns observed, the qualifications of access to education should be changed from simply enrollment to a combination of attendance, achievement, and progression through classes. Additionally, this article breaks down the regression of school attendance and enrollment for at risk students in Sub-Sarahan Africa to highlight student groups most at risk of social exclusion and detailing the way it happens, in hopes communities and classrooms can be as pragmatic as possible and serve every student to the best of their abilities.

Kett, Maria and Marcella Deluca. "Transport and Access to Inclusive Education in Mashonaland West Province, Zimbabwe." *Social Inclusion* 4, no. 3 (June 7, 2016): 61-71. https://librarylink.uncc.edu/login?url=https://www-proquest-com.librarylink.uncc.edu/scholarly-journals/transport-access-inclusive-education-mashonaland/docview/1801885422/se-2?accountid=14605.

> Acknowledging how transportation difficulties in rural areas function as a barrier to access to education and social inclusion for children, Kett and Deluca specifically focus on solutions for children with disabilities who are already vulnerable to social exclusion and seek to explore sustainable solutions, such as the use of a three wheeled motorbike and trailer intended to provide transportation for disabled children to

and from school and improve physical access without sacrificing any household income. This study outlines several different transportation related barriers to social inclusion for children with disabilities and based on the participants highlighting lack of access to affordable, dependable accessible transportation. The paper further evaluates the effects of implementing the motorbikes and finds net positive results which suggest that by removing barriers to transportation, at risk and marginalized children can experience much more accessible education.

Xhumari, Merita. & Dibra, Sidita. "Access to the Albanian VET System: social, individual and school-based barriers." *European Journal of Education* 51, no. 3 (July 26, 2016):320-322. https://doi.org/10.1111/ejed.12185

The Albanian Government has put forth the Vocational Education and Training System as a tool for skill development and social inclusion especially for those from low income and rural families and those with disabilities. Merita Xhumari and Dibra Sidita, in this article, address various factors that prevent children and students from underprivileged families and communities from enrolling in and completing programs within Albania's Vocational Education and Training System. This study uses a "participatory action research methodology" carried out during a social inclusion and cohesion project funded by the "European Training Foundation" to identify mechanisms of social exclusion. Upon completion, the study found that social, individual and school-based factors such as kinship, social networks, parents, friends, gender, academic results and location were found to be the largest barriers to entry for socially excluded and disabled children.

Topic II: Navigating Iconoclasm During Periods of Conflict and Reconciliation

Bartolini, Flaminia. "From Iconoclasm to Museum: Mussolini's Villa in Rome as a Dictatorial Heritage Site." *Martor Journal* 23, (November 1, 2018): 163-173. https://www.researchgate.net/publication/331014552_Title_From_Iconoclasm_to_Museum_Mussolini's_Villa_in_Rome_as_a_Dictatorial_Heritage_Site

> Examining the Villa Torlonia as a "state-owned museum of eighteenth-century property owned by the Torlonia family and the only one to possess a display of Mussolini", this article discusses the icon of dictatorial heritage's role in the "renegotiation of Italy's Fascist past". As an icon of a difficult heritage representative of a "past worth remembering but difficult to deal with in the present as it generates conflict in dealing with a contemporary identity", this museum represents an important hallmark of iconoclastic debate. This article explains the importance of creating a shared memory for healing and reconciliation to take place and allow affected areas to build a more peaceful future as a result.

Chong, Alan. & Balakrishnan, K. S. "Intellectual iconoclasm as modernizing foreign policy: the cases of Mahathir bin Mohamad and Lee Kuan Yew." *The Pacific Review* 29, no. 2 (March 18, 2015): 235-258. https://doi.org/10.1080/09512748.2015.1013496

> Proposing a different approach on the matter of Iconoclasm, this article views it as a policy option taken occasionally by semi-dictatorial leaders in the process of modernization. This paper addresses the sovereigns' governing style during the modernization periods of Southeast Asian countries which pushes the rally round the flag effect to the extent of intellectual iconoclasm which "refers to the need to literally 'shock' audiences into conforming to the critical foreign policy decision-maker's tactical moves." The article continues on to assess the roles leaders have played in the modernizing processes which the authors establish a trend towards the authoritative decision maker who can mobilize their population through strength in their decisions and charismatic hope based on respect for their power and leadership.

Clapperton, Matthew. Jones, David-M. Smith, M.L.R. "Iconoclasm and strategic thought: Islamic State and cultural heritage in Iraq and Syria." *International Affairs* 93, no. 5 (September 2017): 1205- 1231. https://doi.org/10.1093/ia/iix168

> Understanding that strategy is how "one uses their resources to achieve their objectives", this article presents Iconoclasm as a strategy, which "represents a logical and instrumental means of employing violence" to achieve political ends, for terrorist activities. Clapperton, Jones and Smith emphasize that in the context of conflict, the strategy of iconoclasm has both pragmatic and dogmatic motivations. They conclude that the strategy of iconoclasm taken by the Islamic State is Iraq and Syria, previously viewed as barbaric such as Palmyra and Mosul, can be understood as logical and consistent with other groups throughout history like the Balkans. Clapperton, Jones, Smith explain that understanding Iconoclasm as a strategy rather than a series of barbaric actions is necessary to mounting a full defense and winning the war.

O'Loughlin, Ben. "Deflating the iconoclash: shifting the focus from Islamic State's iconoclasm to its realpolitik*." *Critical Studies in Communication* 35, no. 1 (January 25, 2018): 89-102. https://doi.org/10.1080/15295036.2017.1393098

> O'Loughlin in this article discusses the relationship between the Islamic State's jarring iconoclastic actions and the rational motivations and strategy behind their actions. This article frames the attention-grabbing destruction of heritage icons as an assertion of the groups', in this case the Islamic State, presence within the global media forum, which functions as a zero-sum game and makes the group's presence known. Understanding why iconoclastic actions are taken is instrumental in crafting an appropriate response to the destruction of cultural heritage, O'Loughlin theorizes that the Islamic nature of destructive action provides new modalities for which destroying heritage icons can be contextualized and harnessed by.

Somerstein, Rachel. "News Photographers and Influence: Iconophobia, Iconoclasm, and Extramedia Influences on the Ground." *Visual Communication Quarterly* 24, no. 2 (July 27, 2017):115-127. https://doi.org/10.1080/15551393.2017.1309296

> This article more broadly focuses on how image censorship affects perception while more specifically focusing on how photojournalists and their imagery in war face censorship. Studying Iconoclasm, Iconophobia, and the Passerby Effect, this paper in an explorative manner assesses the numerous ways in which photojournalists face challenges in completing their work. The introduced Passerby Effect is described as "the criminality of the camera" or the prohibition of photographers because their work is viewed as suspicious, nefarious or harmful. The passerby effect is just one of the ways that the Internet's surveillance capacities may disrupt photojournalists' work that print journalists may not encounter," a modern form of iconoclasm.