In armed conflict cultural property (generally including: historic buildings and monuments, museums and their collections, archives, and archaeological remains; it differs from cultural heritage in that the latter is wider, also including intangible heritage and uses of cultural property) may be intentionally destroyed or looted. This problem has not decreased over time despite that many preventive measures have been taken. The literature on cultural property destruction during armed conflict fails to interpret this trend within a broader framework of understanding the effects of nationalism, identity construction and warfare. Illicit war economies, the prevalence of wars in weak or failed states, and a multitude of actors contribute to intentional cultural property destruction and looting. There is a need to better understand why such incidents occur and, consequently, how an enhanced cultural property destruction prevention strategy could be formulated. Cultural property protection, abbreviated CPP, was developed by nations in Europe and North America in order to provide a means of lessening the damage done to cultural heritage during conflict, and to make it possible to create an international record of what should be protected. One purpose has been to guide post-conflict restoration and research. Current international framework is based on the 1954 Hague Convention for the Protection of Cultural Properties in the Event of Armed Conflict but the convention has both international precursors and domestic ones, going far back in time. This talk aims to contribute to our understanding of how cultural heritage, power and society are related to each other. The meaning of past and present are contested in everyday life, but tend to be so much more in the face of war. Periods of crisis tend to question the character and values of society. Controversies concerning planning for CPP could be around whose responsibility it is to care for and protect heritage. The distribution of responsibility has to do with ownership, funding, organisation and identification with heritage.

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