

Introduction

It involves the illegal transportation of cultural heritage objects across international borders, often for profit or personal gain. This illicit trade can have several negative impacts on cultural heritage, including the destruction of archaeological sites, looting of museums and other cultural institutions, and the loss of significant cultural artefacts. The smuggling of relics and artistic property is allowed to be big business. All countries put restrictions on the import of colourful classes of artistic property and relics, ranging from archaeological objects to coins to aged art workshop. Hence their trade abroad frequently requires their illegal import from the country of origin. As with other conditioning of questionable legitimacy, still, it has been delicate to put a precise figure on the full extent of trafficking in artistic goods. For trade in agedness(exhumed ancient objects), which makes up only one element of the total illegal trade in artistic objects, estimates ranging from\$ 300 million up to\$ 6 billion per time (Atwood, 2004). Inclusive, these lawless conditioning represent the darker side of globalization – smuggling requires extra-legal conditioning that may abet corruption, put a strain on transnational relations, and potentially dampen the earnings from licit transnational trade. Therefore, lawless trade is an important element of political frugality and transnational trade.

Definition of Key Terms

Term 1

Smuggle: move (goods) illegally into or out of a country.

Term 2

Art: the expression or application of human creative skill and imagination, typically in a visual form such as painting or sculpture, producing works to be appreciated primarily for their beauty or emotional power.

Term 3

Antiquities: relics or monuments (such as coins, statues, or buildings) of ancient times

Term 4

Blood antiquities: archaeological artefacts that have been plundered during conflicts and have been used to fund these wars.

Issue Overview

The growing business of illegal art transportation takes up approximately 5% of the whole industry. During the pandemic, while the world was on lockdown art smugglers were more active than ever, generating over 10 billion dollars in illegal transportation in only 2 years. According to Roger Atwoods book written in 2020 the illicit art market raised between 300 million and 6.0 billion dollars a year. UNESCO reports that illegal cultural good trade (which art theft is part of) is worth 10 billion dollars.

Tracking down these crimes.

INTERPOL is in charge of the international network of law regulations that prohibit the smuggling of art. They have even created a smartphone application called 'ID-Art' in order to identify these so called 'blood antiques'. These apps grants access to civilians to the

INTERPOL'S data base of stolen art in order to identify and report cultural sites potentially at risk. Important people related to UNESCO and Interpol say that the punishment for the stealing of art need to be harsher than they are at present.

How are international agencies stopping this?

There are well established laws that stand against the destruction of cultural monuments and artefacts as well as their destruction of illegal transportation. Museum and the academic community plays an important role in this enforcement. The international Council of museums has a number of helpful tools and databases in order to assist ongoing investigations. However, it was on the 29 of November 2003 that the most important regulation to stop it was established by the UN, "The Convention is further supplemented by three Protocols, which target specific areas and manifestations of organized crime: the Protocol to Prevent, Suppress and Punish Trafficking in Persons, Especially Women and Children; the Protocol against the Smuggling of Migrants by Land, Sea and Air; and the Protocol against the Illicit Manufacturing of and Trafficking in Firearms, their Parts and Components and Ammunition. Countries must become parties to the Convention itself before they can become parties to any of the Protocols" was said in the convention.

Key role of OSCE

The OSCE has the political advantage and leverage that a lot of other organizations don't have. Other organizations, or even single countries, would have a harder time making an international project of this size, scale and impact happen. I believe we have found

success in this programme because we've been able to use this advantage to galvanize a large group of partners and bring together the collective, longstanding experience, and decades of expertise on a strategic, political and operational level," Cameron argues.

It is the broad knowledge and the close cooperation that are critical to the projects development. A new program has been set up to further strengthen the laws and regulations and reduce the trafficking of cultural artefacts. The programme the OSCE has set up, is a unique group that brings together officers, specific government agencies and law enforcement as well as museum experts and investigators.

Timeline of events with some pieces of art and artefacts that were stolen

1. Mona Lisa - On August 21, 1911, Leonardo da Vinci's famous painting, the Mona Lisa, was stolen from the Louvre Museum in Paris by an Italian employee named Vincenzo Peruggia. The painting was recovered two years later when Peruggia attempted to sell it to an art dealer in Florence
2. The Scream - On February 12, 1994, two thieves broke into the National Gallery in Oslo, Norway and stole Edvard Munch's famous painting, The Scream. The painting was recovered three months later, but it was damaged and required restoration.
3. Nefertiti Bust - The exact date of the theft of the Nefertiti Bust, an ancient Egyptian artefact dating back to the 14th century BC, is unknown. The bust was discovered in 1912 by German archaeologist Ludwig Borchardt and taken to Germany. The Egyptian government has been seeking its return since the 1920s

4. Rosetta Stone - The Rosetta Stone, an ancient Egyptian artefact dating back to 196 BC, was discovered by French soldiers in 1799 during the Napoleonic campaign in Egypt. It was taken to England in 1801 after the British defeated the French forces in Egypt
5. Elgin Marbles - The Elgin Marbles are a collection of ancient Greek marble sculptures that were removed from the Parthenon in Athens by the British diplomat Lord Elgin in the early 19th century. The exact date of their removal is unknown
6. The Ishtar Gate - The Ishtar Gate is an ancient Babylonian artefact dating back to 575 BC. It was excavated in the early 20th century and taken to Germany by a team of archaeologists led by Robert Koldewey between 1899 and 1914.
7. The Crown Jewels of England - On November 6, 1671, Colonel Thomas Blood attempted to steal the Crown Jewels of England from the Tower of London. He was caught and the jewels were recovered
8. The Amber Room - The Amber Room is an ornate chamber decorated with amber panels, gold leaf, and mirrors. It was created in the early 18th century in Prussia and later taken to Russia. During World War II, the Germans stole the Amber Room and its whereabouts are still unknown
9. The Codex Leicester - The Codex Leicester is a collection of scientific writings by Leonardo da Vinci. It was purchased by Bill Gates for \$30.8 million in 1994 and is now owned by the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation
10. The Adoration of the Mystic Lamb - On April 10, 1934, the central panel of the Adoration of the Mystic Lamb, a 15th-century altarpiece by Jan van Eyck, was

stolen from St. Bavo's Cathedral in Ghent, Belgium. The panel was recovered a few weeks later, but several other panels from the altarpiece are still missing

Possible Solutions

Raise public awareness

In order for a population to efficiently fight the illicit transportation of art, one needs the support of the general public. The first step toward awareness is to help the people understand and portray this kind of robberies as serious and important crimes. Public communication is critical in order to raise awareness, the information on the crimes can be further dispersed by the use of social media, as if a person of influence talks and portrays this crimes as serious, people would be much more aware of them. Adding to this, awareness raising should start in schools. In several countries, schools have started to inform and sharpen these feelings of the importance of preserving once culture into kids and teenagers.

Strengthen security for cultural objects

Despite the fact that security doesn't stop smuggling, it is the first weapon against this trafficking. These mechanisms include; mechanical (lockers, showcase), electric (cameras, alarms) and human (guards, police). In recent decades, technology has been believed to archive the maximum security in order to keep these artefacts safe, however there is no guarantee that technology can provide a 100% of efficiency when keeping objects safe, this is why the triangle of security is necessary to provide a 100% efficiency when keeping one of these objects safe. Adding to this, the location of these artefacts

also affect the security measures provided for it. In museums, the triangle of security is critical to ensuring the safety of this art, however in archaeological sites security is scarce, and only human force is not enough to keep this object safe. This is why in this case keeping a thorough and detailed inventory as to quickly identify any missing object and hope for its recovery.

The role of governmental administrations

At a national level, it is recommended that the government enhance the law especially in the following areas:

“Legal requirements for the import, export and transfer of ownership of cultural property (export certificates, registers for art and antique dealers, etc.)

Definition and implementation of strict due diligence procedures for the acquisition of cultural objects

Setting-up of sanctions in case of a breach of national legislation

Transposition of professional ethical rules into the national laws”

On a more practical level,

“Setting-up of one or more national services for the protection of cultural heritage

Establishment and update of national inventories

Development of conservation institutions

Supervision of archaeological excavations and promotion of related scientific research

Establishment of ethical rules for art and heritage professionals, including the art market

Public awareness-raising”

The problem with art robbery is that many times national pride and cultural identity is represented in such object, but if national and international regulations are followed, the artefacts should return to its rightful owner.

On the other hand, legislations don't regard the ownership of the artefact, and these particular cases, need to be based on a scientific, humanitarian and professional studies. An open dialog from the individual, the community and the parties involved is essential in order to find a quick and effective solution for all. Also many thefts end in diplomatic disputes, that is why governments should focus on stopping on these thefts as to prevent future disputes.

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