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# Culture in Heritage

## On the Socio-Anthropological Notion of Culture in Current Heritage Discourses

Richard Pfeilstetter

### Outline of the Socio-Anthropological Approach(es) to Heritage

The accuracy of anthropological expertise for understanding (cultural) heritage might be seen as intrinsic and self-explanatory. Ultimately, heritage is about culture and culture is the scientific subject of social anthropology. But the field of heritage studies today encompasses a wide range of disciplines (from architecture to archaeology), institutions (from political to scientific), and professionals (from marketing managers to interpreters). In this multidisciplinary field (or in this transdisciplinary field as some might argue), the specific anthropological contribution is not always recognized as such. This is partially the result of a more general popularization of the concept of culture in various other fields of knowledge. Today there are management consultants who deal with corporate culture, lawyers who are specialized in indigenous culture, and prominent economists who hold that culture is the key-factor for sustainable development. That said, this expansion of the concept of culture has not been accompanied by a similar popularization and recognition of the discipline of anthropology. This article wants both to acknowledge and to classify different anthropological approaches to cultural heritage. These approaches entail the employment of an anthropological notion of culture, and, subsequently, the ideas of universalism, cultural relativism, and comparison of small and large-scale cultures.

Over more than a century, anthropologists have cultivated a sophisticated and heterogeneous discourse on their subject. Nevertheless, Edward Burnett Tylor's classic definition remains. Culture for him "in its wide ethnographic sense, is that complex whole which includes knowledge, belief, art, morals, law, custom, and any other capabilities and habits acquired by man as a member of society" (1871: 1). About a hundred years later, another famous anthropologist, Clifford Geertz, revitalized Tylor's all-encompassing and universalist view on culture as a "historically transmitted pattern of meanings embodied in symbols, a system of inherited conceptions expressed in symbolic forms by means of which men communicate, perpetuate, and develop their knowledge about and attitude toward life" (1973: 89).

This intellectual heritage of anthropology is today widely appropriated by institutions and scholars from other domains. In particular, this is the case for the field of cultural heritage in which professionals from all human and social sciences, including anthropologists, have found an arena for research and professional activity in recent decades. Tylor's and Geertz's notions of culture can be found in a wide range of discourses produced in this field of expertise during the last thirty years. The anthropological concept of culture is used in UNESCO's international legal frameworks, in the epistemological foundation of the new academic subject *heritage* as

well as in case studies on specific heritage items. While all of these discourses employ a marked anthropological notion of culture, the contribution of our article is to show the different roles that our subject, culture, plays in every one of them.

The first anthropological approach to heritage that can be distinguished uses the concept of culture to define a specific legal provision for heritage. Anthropological literature on culture is adapted in this case by lawmakers to formulate conventions for the safeguarding of heritage. The meaning of culture is matched here to the meaning of specific heritage categories. Cultural heritage is defined by the employment of vocabulary such as cosmovision, worldview, habit, tradition, social organization, belief, custom, etc. In particular, the categories Intangible Cultural Heritage, Living Heritage, or Ethnological Heritage are constituted by the anthropological concept of culture. In essence, these legal definitions are similar to the general anthropological significance of culture, as explored in detail in the next section.

The second anthropological heritage approach describes the very idea of heritage as a Western invention. In these discourses, heritage is a particular cultural *outcome* of human universals such as tradition, memory, history, and time. That is to say, cultural heritage is a particular type of collective memory performance, cultivated in particular societies. From this perspective, the process of assigning the label *heritage* to the Egyptian pyramids or the Hilali epic of the Bani Hilal Bedouin tribe is in itself a cultural phenomenon. Heritage is here a specifically Western way of dealing with transience and impermanence, and somehow quite similar to categories such as burial or religion. This approach is treated in detail in the third section.

A third anthropological heritage discourse establishes a universalist, transcultural notion of heritage. The "desire to protect and preserve" here a "essentially human characteristic" (Williams 1996b). As protection and preservation is always a selective process because it leads to distinctions and hierarchies between different symbols, the process of social differentiation due to heritage construction and deconstruction becomes the center of attention for this approach. Heritage-based conflict and contestation of the hegemonic notion of heritage is thus a focus of these types of anthropological inquiries. Heritage, in this third paradigm, is thus considered an essential variable for cultural identity and group belonging (see section four).

## Everything is Culture: Legal Frameworks for the Safeguarding of Heritage

Semantically, the word heritage evokes images of old objects located in museums and historical monuments within ancient cities. Historicity and tradition, understood as unaltered representations from the past in the present, are still at the heart of what is considered heritage. Nevertheless, in recent times, non-material and contemporary *culture* is also increasingly referred to in terms of heritage in its own right. Anthropology has played an important role in this process. For instance, the anthropologist Néstor García Canclini (1999), defends the view that heritage should be understood as a living cultural system, sustained by the contemporary expectations and interpretations of the related communities.

This anthropological focus on cultural heritage has found its way into the legal frameworks of national and international conservation charters. Moreover, the definitions of some heritage categories can even be read as a general outline of the anthropological subject, as explained further on. There are a lot of different legal provisions that use an anthropologically informed notion of culture in order to distinguish a specific kind of heritage. Examples are the different notions of ethnological, intangible, ethnographic, living heritage (just to name but a few) in diverse national safeguarding programs.

On the international stage, legal instruments such as Geographical Indications (see, for instance, EU rural development policies focused on heritage), institutions like the World Intellectual Property Organization (WIPO), and programs, such as the United Nations Environment Programs on Biological Diversity, carry out protection of cultural heritage. Nevertheless, the foremost impact on particular national cultural heritage agendas comes from UNESCO's heritage related policies. Since the 1990s, culture as understood by anthropology, has entered UNESCO's heritage discourses. Some of the first steps in this sense may be seen in the incorporation of new criteria for defining natural and cultural heritage. An evaluation of the nominated items during the first 20 years of UNESCO's World Heritage List showed the inherent Eurocentrism of this convention from the 1972. Therefore, in 1992, UNESCO aimed to broaden the scope of those elements which could be considered for inclusion on the World Heritage List. The notions of cultural landscapes, sacred places, and trade routes where incorporated. At the heart of these legal reconfigurations was the idea that natural and cultural heritage may sometimes not be separated. Therefore, one of the central epistemological foundations of

anthropology – culture is the result of the interaction between humans and their environment (see for instance Eriksen 2010: 203 ff.) – was used for a definition of a specific heritage concept. The Operational Guidelines for the Implementation of the World Heritage Convention define "the term 'cultural landscape' [as] a diversity of manifestations of the interaction between humankind and its natural environment" (UNESCO 1992: 88). The cultural landscape shows the "evolution of human society … over time, under the influence of the physical constraints and/or opportunities presented by their natural environment and of successive social, economic, and cultural forces, both external and internal" (UNESCO 1992: 88). This definition, trying to overcome the rigid distinction between natural and cultural heritage, predominant before the 1990s, reads like the anthropological literature of the cultural ecology school leading U.S. Anthropology during the postwar period. Human evolution explained in terms of the "interaction of physical, biological, and cultural features within a locale or unit of territory" was the main concern of Julian Steward (1972: 31) the same year that the UNESCO convention was implemented. UNESCO's notion of the cultural landscape as a specific heritage is, so to say, identical to anthropology's notion of nature in general.

Another example of a legal framework for the protection of cultural heritage similar to anthropological technical terminology is the UNESCO Convention for the protection of the Intangible Cultural Heritage (ICH) of Humanity of 2003. The incorporation of a legal framework for ICH and the consideration of the contexts of the material legacy in question is a definitive "anthropological turn" in heritage safeguarding policies. The ICH debate has led increasingly to a general questioning of the difference between material and immaterial culture (Kirshenblatt-Gimblett 2004). Since then, protected cultural elements have been progressively understood as hybrid. "All Heritage Is Intangible" is the title of a book recently published by Laurajane Smith (2011) which resumes this development best. The statement "everything is culture" from the former director of UNESCO's World Heritage Centre is also a significant indicator of this new trend in the 1990s (quoted in Williams 1996a). Since then, the distinction between different types of heritage (historic, artistic, cultural, natural, ethnological, material, immaterial, to name but a few) has been criticized because anthropological reasoning in heritage policies becomes involved.

The subsequent outcomes of this shift in the conception of heritage may be appreciated in the following examples from Spain. In the case of the UNESCO World Heritage List, the category of mixed heritage sites, both cultural and natural, addresses the connections between material and intangible heritage. The Balearic island of Ibiza in Spain is an example of this. Inscribed on the List in 1999 under the title "Ibiza, Biodiversity and Culture," the inscription file argues the simultaneous presence of natural (sea grass), archeological (settlements and necropolis), historical (Phoenician-Carthaginian period), and architectural (Renaissance military fortifications) heritage on the island. While in this example the difference between heritage categories is maintained, it is now appreciated that these may present an integrated whole, connected both through content and geographical proximity. A further development may be appreciated in more recently inscribed elements on the Representative List of the ICH of Humanity. Here the difference between the tangible and the intangible definitely disappears. For instance, the Mediterranean Diet, inscribed in 2013, and promoted among other state parties by Spain, is defined in the UNESCO nomination file as "a set of skills, knowledge, rituals, symbols, and traditions concerning crops, harvesting, fishing, animal husbandry, conservation, processing, cooking, and particularly the sharing and consumption of food. … It includes the craftsmanship and production of traditional receptacles for the transport, preservation and consumption of food, including ceramic plates and glasses."[1] Natural resources (food), their cultural processing (cuisine), the material outcomes (craftwork), and their value systems (food preferences), are considered here to be indivisible parts of a whole, as *culture*.

A look at the UNESCO Convention for the Safeguarding of ICH (2003) allows a more detailed appreciation of how this anthropological viewpoint on cultural heritage is legally implemented. Article 2 defines heritage firstly as a universalist concept consisting of "practices, representations, expressions, knowledge, skills – as well as the instruments, objects, artefacts and cultural spaces associated therewith." Secondly, it has a cultural relativist character in the sense that the definition argues that heritage is what people recognize as their heritage: "that communities, groups and, in some cases, individuals recognize as part of their cultural heritage." Finally, the definition is, thirdly, inspired by an ethnic identity discourse: specific cultural elements recognized as heritage create a subjective (changing and related to the feeling of belonging) and objective (inherit-

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1 Nomination file: <http://www.unesco.org/culture/ich/en/RL/mediterranean-diet-00884> [10.05.2017]

ed, related to history and nature) criterion for distinguishing humans:

This intangible cultural heritage, transmitted from generation to generation, is constantly recreated by communities and groups in response to their environment, their interaction with nature and their history, and provides them with a sense of identity and continuity, thus promoting respect for cultural diversity and human creativity (UNESCO 2003: Art. 2).

The emphasis on the processes (transmission, recreation, interaction), universalism, relativism, and an inclination for ethnic identity to account for the cultural variations in the world is the common ground both for anthropology as a scientific discipline and the definition of the ICH in the 2003 Convention. Nevertheless, as a final point, the UNESCO definition introduces an ethical-moral criterion that complements the constructivist notion of heritage (see above). The definition thus limits what can be considered heritage through an individual, social, and environmental rights approach:

For the purposes of this Convention, consideration will be given solely to such intangible cultural heritage as is compatible with existing international human rights instruments, as well as with the requirements of mutual respect among communities, groups and individuals, and of sustainable development (UNESCO 2003: Art. 2).

This ethical criterion is an important difference compared to the relativist notion of culture in anthropology. On the other hand, an analogous move in the anthropological discipline towards disciplinary ethical guidelines and limitations to relativism (see, for instance, the successive development of ethical guidelines by the American Anthropological Association) has to be recognized.

Considering the reasons for that "anthropological turn" in international heritage policies, best represented through the mentioned 2003 Convention, different lines of debate can be pointed out. From an anthropological, academic viewpoint, it can be said that the cultural relativist view (heritage is what people believe it to be) is simply closer to reality. Anthropology has proven that there is no such thing as an objective cultural value. But the cultural relativist point of view might also have other advantages, not just a scientific one. Some have pointed out that the need for consent and compromise leads to a naïve and imprecise notion of culture in UNESCO (Eriksen 2001: 136). Others state that the 2003 Convention, with its "anthropological bias," is an outcome of the "desire of certain states who wish to popularize a particular view of heritage" (Prott 2009: 268). The merging of the wide anthropological notion of

culture with legal provisions for the protection of heritage is then a reflection of the concern of developing countries over Eurocentrism in international heritage policies. The ethnologically inspired measuring of heritage is therefore an advantage or opportunity for non-European cultures to include their claims for representation on the international stage. Vice versa, anthropologies' specific understanding of culture is the outcome of its intensive engagement with these non-industrialized societies.

For others, there is no fundamental shift to a new heritage paradigm in UNESCO. On the one hand, because older legal frameworks, like World Natural and Cultural Heritage, which focus on objects and not on living cultures, remain. On the other hand, because international safeguarding conventions and legal provisions themselves are questioned as the appropriate procedure for the protection of cultural diversity. A cultural item once put on the Representative List of the ICH of Humanity is transformed into a "metacultural artefact" (Kirshenblatt-Gimblett 2004). The listing of a cultural phenomenon and its subsequent reification transmutes it into something different from local culture. In this sense, Kirshenblatt-Gimblett argues that if a cultural heritage "is truly vital, it does not need safeguarding; if it is almost dead, safeguarding will not help" (2004: 55 f.).

In conclusion, it can be said that anthropological reasoning in international legal provisions for the protection of cultural heritage is taking up space since the 1990s. The notions of Cultural Landscapes and ICH are two significant examples for this. The reasons for this shift seem to be both scientific and politic. In the next section the different roles to play for relativism, universalism, and cultural comparison in the heritage discourse, this time as a transcultural approach to time, are at the heart of the analysis.

**The Anthropological Paradigm of Time in Heritage Studies**

The field of knowledge constituted by (cultural) heritage studies today is an arena of applied, multidisciplinary, case-study-driven research on "contemporary" heritage processes (Harvey 2001: 319; Silverman 2011: 1). Nevertheless, most heritage studies account for a quite homogeneous group of theories that do not explicitly address the problem of heritage. This common body of literature is concerned with universalist interpretations in the fields of history, memory, custom, and tradition. What these studies all have in common is that they are wider meditations on the common human condi-

tion of time, both transculturally and historically. This section argues that these theories constitute an anthropologically-colored paradigm for current heritage studies. The paradigm is characterized by claiming universal explanations of social and cultural time. This framework also has an impact on the theoretical outlines preceding case studies in cultural heritage publications.

It is a delicate venture to address explicitly the academic hierarchy that the idea of a paradigm encompasses. Therefore, only the less discussed intellectual sources of the current academic debate on cultural heritage are quoted below. This approach becomes evident in David Harvey's account of history and heritage:

Every society has had a relationship with its past, even those which have chosen to ignore it, and it is through understanding the meaning and nature of what people tell each other about their past; about what they forget, remember, memorialise and/or fake, that heritage studies can engage with academic debates beyond the confines of present-centered cultural, leisure or tourism studies (2001: 320).

This is the wider historical viewpoint, in the sense of a universal human history, linked to a transcultural notion of time, which has been, since its origins, cultivated by anthropology. Such an approach needs to be accompanied by strategically "estranging" elements, or "othering" people, in order to disarticulate commonly held viewpoints. The revelation of hidden meanings in the natural and social world ordinarily experienced as self-evident is then the specific ethnological agenda (Bourdieu 1972). The deconstruction of the culturally bounded, every-day perception of *time* is a specific intellectual framework for anthropologically inspired heritage studies. *Denaturalizing* time by heritage scholars engaging with anthropology is an analogous intellectual procedure to the *othering* of the ordinary life of people cultivated by anthropologists. Semantically, this is done by "strangely" relating time to social domains. The *past* is then referred to as dead (Plumb 1969), as a scarce resource (Appadurai 1981), as invented (Hobsbawm and Ranger 1983), as a "foreign country" (Lowenthal 1985), or as hijacked (Herzfeld 2010).

The latter, Michael Herzfeld, is perhaps one of the best-known scholars establishing the foundations for linking the politics of history to the politics of heritage (1991). His fieldwork in the Greek town of Rethemnos during the 1980s shows how official history and local memory (monumental and social time in his words) find a stage of conflict and encounter in the conservation/non-conservation of historic buildings (read heritage). In particular, it is the question of how local and official time is negotiated, appropriated, and staged by means of architectural heritage that contributed to the anthropology of heritage and time. Herzfeld presents cases such as the owners of building in the Old Town highlighting or hiding the Turkish (bad) or Venetian (good) past of their property (thus merging official history with local time experience) according to the needs of their everyday life and their strategies of subsistence (Herzfeld 2010: 260, 265).

What is common to Herzfeld's work and the others quoted above is that they directly deal with, or indirectly lead to deal with, heritage as a particular pattern of culture. A notion of *heritage* as exclusively human and accountable to a universal history is highlighted. For some, as for David Harvey, this leads to a general approval of the term itself as a universalist and, therefore, anthropological concept, when he says that "heritage has always been with us and has always been produced by people according to their contemporary concerns and experiences" (Harvey 2001: 320). For others, as for Michael Herzfeld, heritage has not "always been there," as it is a historically bounded, Eurocentric and a patriarchal term (Herzfeld 2010: S262).

The concept of "heritage" is grounded in culturally specific ideologies of kinship, residence, and property, but the universalization of the nation-state as a collectivity of similar subunits has given those concepts globally hegemonic power (Herzfeld 2010: S259).

In the end, both views are part of a more general intellectual dichotomy used by anthropologist to process their subjects, that is, discussing them in terms of particularism and universalism. This dichotomy is then done and undone with the assistance of ethnographic enquiries on the past representations adopted in different societies. Whether the final argument is one or another, this means that heritage is in the end culture, and subsequently should have the same properties as culture itself. This anthropological interest is different from concerns inspired by other disciplines or demands for applicable knowledge. In these cases the question of comparison among cultures arises only in terms of standardization of the heritage concept in different national and international conservation guidelines, in terms of concerns over the tangible or intangible character of heritage, or the interpretations of the "heritage practitioners" in different countries. A good example for these types of questions concerning the global management of heritage is Yahaya's comparison of national definitions of heritage (2006).

In summing up it might be said that heritage, the same as culture, changes over time. While heritage is the outcome of a specific treatment of time specific to a certain epoch, time itself is the all-encompassing human universal that is addressed culturally by humans. In this sense, anthropology holds that heritage and the distinction between tangible and intangible heritage or between cultural and natural heritage are themselves culturally bounded distinctions. The main question that this paradigm raises for scholars is as follows: If, theoretically, all culture could be heritage, there is the empirical fact that only a few cultural elements are considered as such. The answer to the question of why only *some* and only *these* cultural elements are held as heritage is then the specific point of ethnographic departure for small-scale enquiries into local heritage construction processes (see the next section). This third field of anthropological influence on heritage studies is both a reaction and evolution of the body of literature mentioned above. These works, mainly from the 1980s and 1990s, treated the "past in the present" from a cultural relativist point of view. They constitute a voice of academic authority and theoretical groundwork for contemporary case studies into the political economy of heritage.

**Heritage as Competition**
**and the Universalization of the Heritage Concept**

There has been, more recently, a degree of consolidation of an explicitly heritage related paradigm complementary to anthropological thought. Based on the universalist and comparative approach to time, there is an emerging theory-building process that elevates the concept of heritage to a sphere of conceptual abstraction similar to the ideas of kinship, religion, tradition, rituals, or ethnicity. These theories are more concerned with explicitly operationalizing heritage as an academic field. They implicitly share the idea that all humans may actually have *heritage* so that the term itself is a suitable, culturally neutral concept. This means, the meaning of heritage cannot be limited to either its legal, economic, religious, political, artistic, or historic implications, or its commonly held meanings in Western society, or English-speaking global domains. This recent anthropologically-colored theorizing highlights, above all, the heritage construction process as a competition conducted by different elites, experts, and communities. The "othering of the past," as discussed in the previous section, remains in the background as the competition for heritage becomes the central concern in this evolved theoretical framework. While this distinction might seem to be a question of nuance, a further classification allows a recognition of a significant difference in the focus: Once the *invention of the past* is assumed to be the state-of-the-art among a important group of scholars (with no need to be invented anymore), the call for research on the specific processes, agencies, and places arises.

Helaine Silverman, in her outline of this new framework points out the universalist character of heritage and its conflictive nature:

… we live in an increasingly fraught world where religious, ethnic, national, political, and other groups manipulate (appropriate, use, misuse, exclude, erase) markers and manifestations of their own and others' cultural heritage as a means for asserting, defending, or denying critical claims to power, land, legitimacy (2011: 1).

The question of why something is heritage, which arises with this relativist viewpoint on history, is answered by this more recent work by linking heritage primordially to power and authority. Heritage is referred to from the 1990s onwards as dissonant (Tunbridge and Ashworth 1996), as a crusade (Lowenthal 1998), as an authorized discourse (Smith 2006), as ambivalent (Breglia 2006), as the legacy of conquest, colonization, and commerce (Nafziger and Nicgorski 2009), as contested (Silverman 2011).

For the sake of exemplification, the work of Lisa C. Breglia with the subtitle "The Politics of Heritage" (2006) may be illustrative of the paradigm in question. She focuses on the process of competition for the dominion over heritage in the context of a wave of global privatization of more and more types of public resources. The multiple conflicts she holds as constitutive for heritage consist, for instance, in the state trying to sell off heritage versus a civil society claiming their heritage not being for sale; the logical paradox between protection and promotion or between the formal-juridical mandate (heritage as national property) and the de facto practices, appropriations, and exploitations of heritage through different agencies on the ground (2006: 3–9). The author, and this is representative of all the quoted works, proposes a substitution of the narrow definitions of heritage, shifting it to the notion of *monumental ambivalence* or *assemblage* that encompasses the historically created social contradictions articulated in heritage (2006: 9–11). For Lisa C. Breglia, there exist various agencies exploiting this ambivalent character of heritage. These may be classified in terms of state, science, community, and industry, but they themselves are internally fragmented as ethnographic case studies show. For instance, the Mexican state is torn between unfinished mod-

ernization and incipient neoliberalism (2006: 10), the "community" living around the World Heritage site at Chichén Itza (Yucatán, México), is divided into workers economically benefiting through entrepreneurship and state-employment and other who see this with envy (2006: 15). It is this ethnographic focus that encourages the critical or conflictive view over heritage.

Consequently, this third group of anthropologically grounded theories of heritage is concerned with the political economy of monuments, sites, museums, thus underlining the political and economic implications when some elements start or stop being *considered* heritage. The heritage arena already exists here as a transcultural global social reality. It consists of players equipped with executive powers fighting for degrees of autonomy and dominion through the appropriation, exclusion, or definition of the powerful, global symbol *heritage*. On a methodological level the focus is laid on how heritage discourses are authorized by the players, for instance, by UNESCO, state-parties, or communities. An example of a concept that emerged from this paradigm is the Authorised Heritage Discourse (AHD), that states the exceptional nature of cultural items, and is the hegemonic articulation of a homogeneous heritage (Smith 2006). The AHD is encouraged by governments, nation-states, and administrations as an ideal-type category which "privileges the perspectives of a white, middle-class male" (Högberg 2012: 131). As a consequence, this imposition and appropriation of heritage representing the elite's point of view is contested by actors from the periphery. The complexity and social differentiation of every society, which is downplayed through the AHD, arises with groups challenging the official version of heritage promoted by museums, schools, sights, and monuments.

To summarize, the new ethnographically informed research agenda on heritage necessarily challenges the non-reflexive, one-dimensional view on heritage in favor of various layers of interpretation. Therefore, this paradigm challenges the monolithic opposition between the *creators* of heritage and the *represented* by heritage in favor of more plural, discursive, and gradual distinctions. It is in the analysis of the relation between making, creating, or constructing heritage, and being regarded by others as a transmitter, practitioner, or representative of heritage, that anthropology adds to the field of knowledge.

## Conclusions

This work draws attention to anthropology's influence on heritage discourses. Nevertheless, the growing amount of research on heritage in social sciences is also reflecting back on anthropology. Breglia's (2006) account on archaeological sites suggests the incorporation into the anthropological conceptual body, the notion of heritage as a specific economic practice of commodification of culture. The debate on the universalistic or particularistic character of the concept heritage itself (see David Harvey's and Michael Herzfeld's antagonistic but complementary positions) is raising new questions concerning humankind's modes of representation of the past in the present to the anthropology of time, religion, tourism, economy, law, or material culture.

The current contributions of the anthropological, all-encompassing perspective on culture to the cultural heritage discourse can be found throughout heritage literature. This article suggests that three different domains can be distinguished. The first is the field of legal definitions of heritage. Lending anthropological notions of culture for the definition of specific regulations for the safeguarding of heritage, allows the avoidance of ethnocentrism in institutional discourses. This is a particular concern of supra-governmental agencies, as the examples of UNESCO's notions of Intangible Cultural Heritage and Cultural Landscapes have shown. The second field is a wider theoretical contextualization for applied, case-study-driven heritage research. The conjunction of anthropology and history is used by scholars in heritage research to discuss the wider scope of their local analysis of museums, tourism, or protection policies. Thirdly, this article shows the development of a transcultural heritage concept that allows the comparison of cases and the generalization of patterns, both in space and time. This new paradigm focuses, above all, on the relationship between heritage, socio-cultural differences, and power. This critical approach to heritage regards universalism, cultural relativism, transcultural comparison, and empirical case studies as basic theoretical and methodological concerns. Both Tylor's and Geertz's notions of culture live on in such contemporary accounts of heritage. By focusing on the transmitted, acquired, and established character of patterns of meaning, shaped through symbols like cultural heritage, heritage scholars are inquiring into the shared social conditions of the human species.

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# Pluralism of Methods in Religious Studies

## A SWOT Analysis

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Religious studies can be called a field (Bronk 2009: 102) discipline (as, e.g., film studies, women studies, culture studies), that is different from domain