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SOCIAL ALTERNATIVES

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PEACE

For this issue of Social Alternatives, I have used a contemporary approach to the title design. This typographic design seemed appropriate for slowing down the reader, to better allow them to contemplate the title's meaning in relation to the cover artwork and the content of the themed section. Guest editor Marty Branagan's artwork *Delta* presented at the 'A Sustainable Peace' conference is a fitting cover image to represent the diversity of articles presented here. His artist statement explains the meaning and importance of the work:

Delta is an original artwork by Marty Branagan, the primary organiser of the conference from which the papers in this themed edition originated. An image of the artwork was used in the conference programme, website and film festival flier. Its semi-abstract, colourful nature seemed appropriate for the broad range of themes covered by the conference as UNE's Peace Studies celebrated all the diverse topics of its discipline. These themes include artistic activism, cultural peacebuilding and environmental peace. The painting featured in one of the conference's four exhibitions, and is currently on display in the UNE library. It also features in Marty's illustrated novel *Locked On! The Seventh and Most Illegal* in the *Hitchhiker's Guide Trilogy*, which is about nonviolent action within Australian climate activism.

Delta is a mixed media painting in oil and acrylic on canvas. It's loosely based on a coastal river system on which Marty kayaked in an epic journey with his partner and son from one of Australia's highest mountains, Berarngutta (Point Lookout), to Urunga on the NSW mid-north coast. It's a celebration of Gumbaynggirr country, native vegetation and a beautiful river that sustains us (Branagan 2023).

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Social Alternatives

Social Alternatives is an independent, quarterly refereed journal which aims to promote public debate, commentary and dialogue about contemporary social, political, economic and environmental issues.

Social Alternatives analyses, critiques and reviews contemporary social issues and problems. The journal seeks to generate insight, knowledge and understanding of our contemporary circumstances in order to determine local, national and global implications. We are committed to the principles of social justice and to creating spaces of dialogue intended to stimulate social alternatives to current conditions. *Social Alternatives* values the capacity of intellectual and artistic endeavour to prompt imaginative solutions and alternatives and publishes refereed articles, review essays, commentaries and book reviews as well as short stories, poems, images and cartoons.

The journal has grappled with matters of contemporary concern for four decades, publishing articles and themed issues on topics such as peace and conflict, racism, Indigenous rights, social justice, human rights, inequality and the environment. Please show your support by subscribing to the journal. For other enquiries please contact a member of the Editorial Collective.

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Editorial decisions are made democratically by the *Social Alternatives* editorial collective. Each edition involves the work and cooperation of a guest editor, liaison editor (to assist guest editors), general editor, poetry editor, short story editor, book review editor, cover designer and desktop publisher. A liaison editor is responsible for managing the editing and publication process. After contributions are blind refereed, the editorial collective has final control over publication. Where necessary the editorial collective calls on the advisory board to assist with refereeing articles.

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Submissions of articles, commentaries, reviews and fictional works are subject to double blind peer review and should be emailed to the general article editor. Authors are encouraged to consider and reference papers previously published in *Social Alternatives* to promote ongoing discussion. Submissions should be double-spaced with page numbers on the bottom right. Academic articles should be approximately 3,000-5,000 words, commentaries and review essays between 800 to 1,500 words, book reviews 800 words, short stories 1,000 words and poetry up to 25 lines. Submissions must include:

- copyright release form
- title page listing contributing authors, contact details, affiliation and short bio of approximately 80 words
- abstract should be a maximum of 150 words
- three - five keywords.

Please use Australian/English spelling and follow Harvard referencing. Submit tables, graphs, pictures and diagrams on separate pages. Remove in-text references identifying authors and replace with [name removed for the review process].

For further information please consult our website:
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CONTENTS

THEME FOR THIS ISSUE: *A Sustainable Peace*

Editors' Introduction

- 3 A Sustainable Peace.....Marty Branagan and Helen Ware

Refereed Articles

- 7 The Colonial Creation of Tribalism in Africa(?).....Issah Tikumah
15 Youth, Empowerment and Long-term Peace Consolidation: The Case of Sierra Leone.....Christina Mammone
22 'I Wanted to Contribute to the Peace Process': Women's motivations for peace in Myanmar.....Godwin Yidana
31 Strengthening Peace with Justice in Sri Lanka: The struggle for agency to research.....Scott Robert Hearnden
40 The Dynamics of Conflict in the Chittagong Hill Tracts of Bangladesh in the Post Peace Accord Period.....
.....Obayedul Hoque Patwary
46 'Just like a man': A project continuing L.M. Montgomery's subtle gender activism through the arts.....Merri Bell
55 Lessons in Truth and Reconciliation for Australia from Overseas.....Helen Ware

Commentaries

- 63 Resisting Weapons Industry Influence in Our Schools and Elsewhere.....Sue Wareham
66 Killer Robots and Deepfakes: Activists and artificial intelligence.....Brian Martin

Short Story

- 71 Striker.....Jane Downing

Commended Poetry from the 2022 Seeking Asylum Poetry Prize

- 06 Provinces.....Paul Hetherington
39 Nostos.....Tina Huang
45 The Writing on the Wall.....Margaret Johnston
73 Asylum Seeker.....Tammy Lee Coad

Poetry

- 30 Poetry.....Sharon Kernot
39 In the Waiting Room.....Sharon Kernot
65 from "October Sequence".....Sheila A Murphy
65 from "October Sequence".....Sheila A Murphy
73 from "October Sequence".....Sheila A Murphy
74 Influencer.....Juliet A. Paine
74 All the Stories We Do Not Know.....Reneé Pettitt-Schipp

EDITORS' INTRODUCTION

A Sustainable Peace

MARTY BRANAGAN AND HELEN WARE

In December 2022, the University of New England in Australia convened the conference, 'Environmental and Sustainable Peace, Social Justice and Creative Activism: Celebrating 40 Years of Peace Studies at UNE', held on country and curated by the Anaiwan and neighbouring groups. We wanted to hold it on country where Peace Studies began at this university, and also chose to use a hybrid format of face-to-face as well as Zoom in our sessions to allow some excellent international speakers to participate with a minimal carbon footprint. We began with a Welcome to Country by Anaiwan Elder Uncle Steve Widders, complemented by a yarning circle involving another Elder, Aunty Rose Lovelock and her sister Fiona.

Thanks to the late Bernard Swan and his creative thinking, passion and perseverance, 40 years ago Peace Studies had entered through the back door of UNE. This was at a time when, amazingly, no university courses were discussing solutions to the threat of nuclear war, then humanity's greatest challenge, and now joined by the anthropogenic global warming and species extinction crises which developed countries' Peace Studies have increasingly focussed on.

In recent decades, Peace Studies has faced many challenges under the neo-liberalising of Australian universities, including a doubling of the cost of arts degrees, understaffing, and cuts to majors and units. Everyone benefits from peace, but it is often taken for granted and few have any economic motivation to want to pay for it. Peace Studies rarely have 'industry partnerships' or corporate sponsorship. We aim to change the future for the better. We at UNE have a good reputation internationally among peace academics but, being non-violent, we rarely feature in the news, which is why we continue to hold international events such as our 2022 conference.

Peace Studies is often thought to be a bit 'simplistic' or airy-fairy. But if achieving peace were simple, we could expect to see far more of it. In reality, Peace Studies is complex, multi-layered, dynamic and multi-faceted. As one student noted:

Working in science, the notion of peace studies is the source of much hilarity among my co-workers, but people are always shocked to learn what it is

we talk and think about in the discipline. Unicorns and rainbows? Not so much. These are among the hardest questions in life and if only it was just abstract academic questions – the practical application of the study is so frustratingly difficult!

Peace Studies addresses not just the symptoms but the root causes of the planet's major challenges, seeking solutions from the grass roots to the elite and the international. We attempt to understand how to minimise the inter-linked forms of violence, whether direct, ecological, structural or cultural. None of this is straightforward; nonviolent action, conflict transformation, peacemaking and peacebuilding are hard work. Peace is assertive action, not passivity – so Peace Studies is sometimes in trouble, and we are rarely adequately staffed or funded. As Martha Nussbaum's 2010 *Not for Profit: Why democracy needs the humanities* argues, democracies need people capable of critical, global thinking. Rather than just supporting individual success, we aim to create collegial, cooperative, empowered graduates capable of being active, informed, questioning global citizens, motivated to speak truth to power. We aim for graduates who are not compliant but provocative, capable of challenging embedded paradigms of militarism, consumerism and infinite growth, and resisting powerful interests such as the colossal arms industry with its tentacles in so many facets of our lives.

We hope the tide is turning for Peace Studies both at UNE and nationally. As Aboriginal band *No Fixed Address* sang: We have survived. We are the last official Peace Studies discipline in Australia, although other universities certainly have peace-related units, often linked to security or conflict work which attracts more industrial support. There are some promising developments and we hope to continue to thrive for another 40 years.

Over 40 years, we have impacted on thousands of students over several generations, and given them a sound theoretical understanding of how to achieve peace. We have contributed to intellectual debates that impact on the real world, and sent graduates out into the world, including the extreme danger zones of frontline peacebuilding, such as working to protect

vulnerable groups in the Darfur region of Sudan with the Nonviolent Peaceforce organisation. We have scores of PhD graduates scattered across the globe, making a difference in all manner of positions – a university chancellor in the Solomon Islands, a minister in Nigeria, founders of peacebuilding NGOs and permaculture institutes, UN workers, nonviolent activists and artists, land rights and environmental advocates, social justice practitioners, and many others.

All of these are working towards what Johan Galtung (1969, 1990) termed 'positive peace'. Much more than the mere absence of armed conflict, positive peace requires socio-economic justice and equity which are statistically linked to better environmental outcomes, superior developmental outcomes, greater resilience and stronger income growth (Institute for Economics and Peace 2022).

The 2022 'Environmental and Sustainable Peace, Social Justice and Creative Activism' conference began on 1 December. This is Abolition Day in Costa Rica, the date when in 1948 that country abolished its military forces – a momentous and beneficial decision described by Ambassador Vargas in his stirring address at the conference. Our outstanding speakers included Gem Romuld, Director of the Nobel Peace prize-winning International Campaign to Abolish Nuclear Weapons, who discussed ICAN's astounding success in getting nuclear weapons declared illegal by the majority international community. Dr Sue Wareham is President of the Medical Association for Prevention of War, and Bernie Shakeshaft is the founder of the renowned BackTracks organisation. Federal senator David Shoebridge provided other highlights for an engaged audience who actively joined in with this historic occasion.

The conference produced numerous resolutions, which can be found at the link at the end of this editorial. Recordings from the conference sessions can be heard on the conference website (see below). The conference was organised by a small and overworked group from Peace Studies and the UNE Creative and Cultural Arts Network. This was at a university that has been through a tornado both literally – recent severe flooding in this part of Australia from unprecedented adverse weather events – and metaphorically.

Complementing the in-depth academic program was a substantial cultural program, including multiple art exhibitions featuring artists such as Yuin Elder Uncle Lloyd Hornsby who recently exhibited at the Louvre. There was a performance of Dr Lorina Barker's immersive play 'Trucked Off'. A Human Rights and Nonviolence Film Festival featured films such as 'Atomic Confessions', 'Pray the Devil Back to Hell' and 'The Bentley Effect'.

There were musicians, an Indian dance performance and yoga sessions aiming for a holistic, non-dualistic and inspiring conference. We wanted cultural aspects embedded and integrated into intellectual inquiry and academia, as occurs in most Indigenous societies.

We also acknowledged our forebears in Peace Studies, such as the late Max Lawson and Raja Jayaraman, Toh Swee-hin, Bert Jenkins, Geoff Harris (who joined us via Zoom from South Africa), Rebecca Spence (running a peacebuilding workshop in Asia), Vanessa Bible (Zoom from Darwin), and current staff: former diplomat Helen Ware, Marty Branagan, Johanna Garnett and DB Subedi, whose history of Peace Studies at UNE can be found on our website (see below).

As deep ecologist John Seed puts it, we are privileged to be called into this time of such major challenges. In this summit on Anaiwan high country, we welcomed people from other nations within Australia and overseas. With our cultural cringe here in Australia, we often imagine that the main game is elsewhere, maybe in the cities of the northern hemisphere. But attendees were asked to visualise, for a moment, a world centred on New England. What we do, even in a small rural university town, can have an unpredictable impact.

Attendees were asked to imagine also, not all the doom and gloom of the world, exacerbated by saturation news, fear-mongering arms dealers and fossil fuel corporations dragging us down, but instead the eternal streams of good in the world, the mass social movements and inventions and divestments striving for a sunnier future, sometimes just needing an intelligent tweak here or a nudge there to reach critical mass and sudden positive change, such as the unexpected fall of the Berlin Wall. Here in this special place, on land sacred to the Anaiwan, attendees had five days to make a difference to the world. We tried to seize it by being open to new ideas, by being brave enough to seek out new people and to have challenging, respectful conversations. Together we could agree that wars and militarism make the world less safe rather than providing protection, as civilians of all ages and capabilities are killed in greater numbers than the military, and are wounded and traumatised, the environment is damaged, civil liberties are eroded and resources which could save and improve lives are wasted in creating destruction.

Peace Studies is by its very nature and mission an interdisciplinary field. A small selection of articles from the Conference have been included in this issue of *Social Alternatives*. They range from Africa to Australia and from literature to youth unemployment.

In 'Resisting weapons industry influence in our schools and elsewhere' (2023), Sue Wareham warns of the impact of arms manufacturers on schools while Brian Martin explores the consequences of killer robots and deepfakes for peace activists in his article 'Killer Robots and Deepfakes: Activists and Artificial Intelligence' (2023).

It has become a cliché to say that peace processes fail because the root causes of the conflict have not been addressed. Both Obayedul Patwary's report on the Chittagong Hill Tribes of Bangladesh (2023) and Christina Mammone's study of the youth of Sierra Leone (2023) describe situations where root causes remain unresolved and the potential for conflict remains. In Bangladesh this is because of the majority's lack of willingness to recognise the rights of the Hill Tribes. Sadly, one common feature of violent conflicts is that each side finds reasons to declare the other side as sub-human and therefore ripe to be killed. In Sierra Leone there is some desire to find a path to education and an economic role for the many jobless youths, but there is also an adverse tendency to stereotype them as 'lumpen', lazy and useless.

Issah Tikumah's discussion of the extent to which there was a 'Colonial Creation of Tribalism in Africa' (2023) represents a good example of the results of the opportunities which the University of New England offers to scholars from developing countries to have the space and time to consider issues of concern in a multidisciplinary context, temporarily free of the politics of home. As a novelist and former refugee, Issah has a special perspective on the consequences of colonialism which are still moulding Africa. A recent global history of Africa included over 900 references, only 32 of which were written by Africans (Reader 1999). At UNE we aim to support graduate students to publish their insights into their own countries during their research to redress the balance of outsiders from developed countries being able to afford to do research when locals cannot.

Godwin Yidana's (2023) study of women peace activists in Myanmar represents the research of an outsider but one who is also from a developing country. Whilst asking what motivates women to stand up for their rights, however dire the situation, it shows some wonderful examples of courage and determination in the face of a government purveying terror to its own people.

Scott Hearnden's (2023) work on Sri Lanka discusses the experiences of someone who was at once an outsider and an insider: an outsider by birth and nationality but an insider as a member of a minority group discriminated against for their sexuality. His report raises many implicit questions about just how well a Sri Lankan researching

a similar topic in Australia would fare in seeking the cooperation of politicians and bureaucrats.

At first glance, Merri Bell's (2023) discussion of the Canadian author of *Anne of Green Gables* subtle gender activism through the arts might appear to be somewhat distant from the concerns of the Conference. Yet that book has sold more than fifty million copies in multiple languages around the world and demonstrates that he or she who shouts the loudest is not necessarily the one who has the most influence.

Helen Ware's article on 'Lessons in Truth and Reconciliation for Australia from Overseas' discusses a current issue of domestic peace which each Australian state and territory must address, considering both the needs of the First Nations and the probable responses of all those who personally or through their ancestors are migrants to this continent. Reconciliation has been a popular 'soft' concept overseas, where there may have been previously friendly relationships to restore. For many Indigenous Australians, their goal is to secure their basic human rights, rather than to reconcile, a viewpoint ignored by many in government.

Links

Conference website: www.une.edu.au/2022peaceconference.

Conference resolutions: <https://blog.une.edu.au/pulsenews/2022/12/15/resolutions-for-peace/>.

Peace Studies website: <https://www.une.edu.au/about-une/faculty-of-humanities-arts-social-sciences-and-education/hass/study/political-international-peace-studies/peace-studies>

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Authors

Helen Ware has had a number of research, academic and bureaucratic careers. She was the Director of the Twelve Nation Study of the African Family and Director of Projects at the Australian Human Rights Commission. She covered the Pacific as an Assistant Director General of AusAID and served as Australian High Commissioner to Zambia, Malawi and the African Liberation Movements. She is currently the Inaugural Professor of Peace Studies at the University of New England.

Marty Branagan is the Convenor of Peace Studies in the Faculty of Humanities, Arts, Social Sciences and Education at the University of New England. He has been a long-term participant-observer-researcher in nonviolent activism including the Franklin River, Roxby, Borneo, Jabiluka and NSW old-growth forests campaigns. He recently co-edited *Rethinking Wilderness and the Wild: Conservation, Conflict and Co-existence* with Routledge. An exhibited artist, his illustrated non-violent action novel *Locked On!* is based on the Leard and Bentley climate campaigns.

POETRY AUTHORS

Sharon Kernot is an Adelaide-based poet, short story writer and novelist. Her verse novel, *The Art of Taxidermy*, was shortlisted for a number of prizes including the 2019 Prime Minister's Literary Awards.

Sheila A. Murphy's most recent book is *Golden Milk* (Luna Bisonte Prods, 2020). In 2023, BlazeVOX will publish *Learning to Relax*.

Juliet A. Paine is an Adelaide-based poet and aspiring novelist. These poems were written as part of Varuna Residential Fellowship.

Reneé Pettitt-Schipp is the author of the award-winning collection of poetry, *The Sky Runs Right Through Us*, written about Reneé's time on Christmas Island and the Cocos (Keeling) Islands. Reneé's non-fiction novel about her return to the islands in 2016, will be released by Fremantle Press in 2023. Reneé currently lives in the Great Southern region of Western Australia.

Provinces*

1.

My mind gathers provinces
I travelled through,
resting in wooded declivities;
girls who danced the Bandari;
men who played Pasur.
I dream of bayonets like beaking birds,
and lost regions of mind—
a letter I wrote to my mother
still travels obscure routes;
my signature sprawls strangely.
Swimming and surfacing,
I see the pointed weapons.

2.

The future becomes the gargoyle I'd carved
in childhood. And flat, dusty land
with weeds scragging margins;
squeezed bungalows;
fencelines of bristling light;
disinfected air smelling of rope;
unwieldy, dragged postures.
They took my son for silent days
that itched on my arm.
My wife's blacked-out letters
fell into skerricks.
I remembered a doll with straw-filled face
that my son used to carry
and, in fields near our village,
the guns of soldiers carousing in dirt.

3.

If you have seen me through laurel;
if you have caught sight of a fugitive image
that reminds you; or wondered
when a voice hangs in dusk;
or sensed remnant longing
in a wayward shred on your elegant clothes,
please know that, for me,
you keep the oleander's warm and bitter scent;
that this poor landscape remembers you.

4.

Hoping, and refusing hope, shifting chairs
while daylight hangs on furniture
like a form of transgression.
It's been more than an hour
yet there's no news. My world's all memory—
of hauling water
and holding my mother like a damaged parcel
as her brown eyes bleed.
I'm accosted by swathes of dark feeling.
The prospect of departure
is as shapeless as longing

PAUL HETHERINGTON

*Commended entry from the 2022 Seeking Asylum Poetry prize

The Colonial Creation of Tribalism in Africa(?)

ISSAH TIKUMAH

The theory of the colonial creation of tribes in Africa deserves re-examination from a contemporary African viewpoint. The main claim under review is that of Walter Rodney (1972), one of the chief protagonists of this anti-colonial proposition. This paper concludes that although there may be some truth in it, the accusation of the colonial creation of tribes in Africa has been grossly exaggerated. Precolonial African conquering groups had created tribes long before the Europeans came (Jonker 2009; Evans-Pritchard 1940). Colonisation might have encouraged tribalism in Africa by energising group-consciousness in several ways such as creating new names for certain 'anonymous' groups; subjugating hitherto independent tribes under other tribes; and, through the provision of new educational and economic opportunities, facilitated the upward mobility of hitherto downtrodden tribes so that former slaves now became rulers over their previous masters with all the resentments and tensions that entails. However, colonisation neither manufactured actual peoples out of the earth, nor created their differences; colonial officials only twisted and exploited pre-existing differences in new directions for their own nefarious goals and objectives.

KEY WORDS: Tribalism, precolonial era, colonisation, Africa

Introduction

Tribalism has often been vilified as the greatest obstacle to peace and progress in Africa (Ki-Zerbo 2006; Reader 1999). As a proper diagnosis of a problem is essential to identifying a sound solution, a factual exposition of theories relating to tribalism is crucial in the efforts to stem tribalism and promote peace and stability on the African continent. Stereotypical colonial theories about the African past as a civilisation-vacuum are coming under attack (Nyoni 2015; Bello 2015; Green 2010; Bellucci 2010; Muiu 2008; Fyle 1999). Western scholars have increasingly endorsed assertions by Africans about a past which was well civilised, under chiefdoms and kingdoms with comprehensive state structures, even at a time when Europe was still groping in medieval darkness. Similarly, African and Africanist historians seem to be unanimous in reporting that precolonial African states were multi-ethnic in population (Rodney 1972; Chinweizu 1975). This multi-ethnicity was born largely out of warfare. Powerful tribes conquered and absorbed weaker tribes into their dominions. However, there has been much written about a Machiavellian-style colonial creation of tribes in Africa for colonialist gains (Southall 1997). This paper aims to examine the merits of the theory of the colonial creation of tribes in Africa.

Colonial Tribalism in Africa

Like many other concepts in the social sciences and humanities, the word tribe as a sociological or anthropological term does not have one specific, generally accepted definition. However, there is one logical thread

that runs through the defining traits of tribes as depicted in the various definitions and categorisation of groups as tribes: kinship, common ancestry, history, culture, and language (Ronfeldt 2006; Smelser and Baltes 2001; Southall 1997). A tribe is a group of related families, both close and distant in ancestral lineage. They are territory-bound, though individual members may travel far-and-wide, settle and even establish enclaves in other territories, for their survival.

Similarly, in scholarly deliberations, a precise definition of tribalism has yet to be born, because the word tribe itself is ambiguous by definition; what precisely constitutes a tribe lies in the eyes of the beholder. As Southall (1997) pointed out, a multiplicity of definitions only multiply confusion and add nothing to understanding. Here the definition by The Oxford Advanced Learner's Dictionary (2023) is sufficiently comprehensive: Tribalism is the 'Behaviour, attitudes, etc. that are based on supporting and being loyal to a tribe or other social group; the state of being organized in a tribe or tribes.' The tribe provides its members with economic security by giving them land for farming and other necessities. The need to safeguard the economic security of group members may lead the tribe to become boundary-sensitive and discriminatory, even aggressive, towards other tribes. These two goals: provision of economic needs and defense against outsiders, are referred to as 'moral ethnicity' and 'political tribalism' respectively (Lonsdale in Berman 1998: 324).

The malleability and amorphousness of precolonial tribal identities remain clear. Perhaps the most important question to answer should be this one: 'Did colonisation create tribes in Africa?' The answer to this question is both 'Yes' and 'No'.

We can conceptualise 'colonialism' as 'the imposition of foreign rule by an external power, which culminates in the control and exploitation of the conquered people' (Okon 2014: 2). Motivated by a desire for the economic exploitation of the human and material resources of the foreign lands, political deception and misinformation, as well as military violence and intimidation, were often the chief weapons of the colonialists (Schaller 2012). It is instructive to note that the word 'colony' emanates from the Latin 'colonia' which literally means a 'farm/landed estate'. Having lost their lucrative 'farms' in America in the 18th century, and having been addicted to 'farming', European imperialists had to turn to Africa for new 'farmlands'. Thus, for the colonisers Africa was a farmland and a mine; their purpose in being there was simply to cultivate the land – using the free labour force of the inhabitants of the land itself – and take the produce back to Europe. As such, behind the smokescreen of a paternalistic goodwill mission to enlighten, civilise and maybe eventually equip the colonised with the skills of self-governance and put them on the path of progress towards joining the community of the truly human, the colonial state was primarily and essentially a merciless apparatus of capitalist exploitation, with the singular aim of maximising profit by any means. Based on African cash-crops and wage labour, the colonial political economy rested on a structure of bureaucratic control which was classically authoritarian in character (Bayeh 2015).

Over the last few decades researchers have increasingly identified modern African tribalism as a delinquent child of the forced marriage between the unsettling storm of colonisation on the one hand, and indigenous socio-cultural, economic and political values on the other (Fearon in Weingast and Wittman 2006; Berman 1998; Vail 1989; Horowitz 1985). Europeans justified their invasion of Africa by the pretext of a paternalistic mission to organise and civilise disconnected clusters of acephalous, unruly pockets of primitive peoples, only to discover upon arrival there that 'they were unable to govern without the participation of African allies and intermediaries' (Parker and Rathbone 2007: 102). For instance, in some places, the British 'imported an Indian population to serve them as clerks and merchants' (Chinweizu 1975: 129). But that could only answer one aspect of the governance question for the colonisers.

Lacking in adequate administrative personnel, political legitimacy and cultural understanding, and yet determined

to exploit the human and material resources of Africa, the intruding colonial powers entered into 'alliances with local "Big Men", using ethnically-defined administrative units linked to the local population by incorporation of pre-colonial patron-client relations' (Berman 1998: 305). By the agency of 'bureaucratic authoritarianism', with the colonial administrators established at the top of a hierarchical pyramid of control while local chiefs and sub-chiefs – some of whom were directly appointed or even invented by the colonial administrators (Rodney 1972) – stretched down to the base of the pyramid as the conduits between the indigenous community and the colonial officials. This alliance between the colonialists and tribal chiefs was symbiotic, albeit asymmetrical. With the colonial governor at the peak of the client-patron pyramid, each weaker or less powerful client (the African chiefs and their sub-chiefs or headmen) facilitated access to labour and raw-material resources within his dominion, in return for protection and financial reward from the superior patron. This was at the tribal level. At the intertribal level, through the instrumentality of mapping and the population census, the colonial authority attempted to delineate and demarcate the African peoples into clear-cut tribal definitions with rigid geographical boundaries. In the process, homogeneity was crudely turned into heterogeneity, and heterogeneity tagged with homologous ascriptions. The sentiments of the colonial subjects mattered very little to the colonists who pursued their will with their fingers placed on the trigger of the decimating machinegun (Schaller 2012). The primary goal was colonial administrative convenience for maximum political control and economic exploitation.

With the partition of the indigenous peoples into tribal enclaves whereby one's movement outside of his/her officially demarcated tribal enclave was monitored and scrutinised, the colonial subjects were conditioned to nurture and develop ethnically-informed closed minds with heightened perceptions of otherness, that is, 'us versus them' sentiments and attitudes (Mason and Athow 2001; Christopher 1988; Morrok 1973). It was at this point that the seeds for intertribal hostility in postcolonial Africa were sown by the colonial administration.

The colonial style of the invention of tribes in Africa is aptly summarised by Berman in the following passage:

Thus, through reliance on collaboration with 'tribal authorities' ruling over demarcated, enumerated and supposedly homogeneous administrative units composed of a single tribe [*italics is my highlight*], the colonial state was actively engaged in the invention of ethnicities that often bore little correspondence to pre-colonial identities and communities, and were occasionally, as in the case of the 'Luba' in the Belgian Congo entirely novel creations. Moreover, colonial

states acted to define the culture and custom of the demarcated 'tribes' with a greater degree of clarity, consistency and rigidity than had ever existed before. 'The most far-reaching inventions of tradition in colonial Africa', Ranger notes, 'took place when Europeans believed themselves to be respecting age-old African custom'. Nowhere was this more evident than in the definition of customary law, governing such crucial issues as marriage and access to land and property, which was supposed to be administered by the chiefs and headmen. Relying on its local allies as sources of information on what was expected to be a fixed and consistent body of rules, the colonial state allowed chiefs, headmen and elders to define a customary law that asserted and legitimated their power and control over the allocation of resources against the interests of juniors, women and migrants (1998: 320).

Thus, the creation of administrative units was based on theory rather than reality, that is, the demarcation of administrative units hinged on the false assumption of group homology; and, through the patronising of local chiefs, custom and tradition were manufactured and turned into tools of colonial manipulation. With the motive to prevent the development of trans-ethnic anticolonial collaboration, divide and rule was the strategic logic behind the fragmentation of communities and the creation of tribal enclaves. The consequence of this process of segregation was the development of moral ethnicity and political tribalism in the African polity.

Some nationalist scholars and politicians have gone as far as portraying tribal differences in Africa as a purposeful invention of 'Machiavellian colonial policy' following a divide-and-conquer paradigm (Southall in Grinker and Steiner 1997: 41). A dispassionate inquiry will find such accusations against colonisation to be only somewhat valid. However, colonisation may have indeed created tribes in the sense that some of the entities that came to be designated as tribes only appeared in the literature 'for the first time during the colonial period and must in this sense necessarily be considered a product of it' (Southall in Grinker and Steiner 1997: 41). To buttress this point, Southall cited the case of the Luyia in Kenya to explain how some interest groups (i.e. associations) came into existence as tribes. The Luyia originated from a group formed by politically-intentioned individuals from loosely-related, somewhat acephalous cultural entities, in response to colonial administrative exigencies. On account of their cohabiting the same geographical zone and sharing similarities in culture and politico-economic aspirations, this interest group ended up being consecrated as a tribe by colonial officials. The Luyia people had never been known or heard of until about 1935-1945. 'The fact is that many tribes have come into existence in a similar way to the Luyia, through a

combination of reasonable cultural similarity with colonial administrative convenience', Southall argued (in Grinker and Steiner 1997: 42-3).

The situation in Rwanda and Burundi under the Belgians is another textbook example of how colonial administrators created tribes in Africa. How did 'Tutsi' and 'Hutu' which were, more or less, mere class terminology in precolonial time eventually turn into tribal identity? The colonial administration created a space for mandatory statements of tribal affiliations on birth certificates, travel documents, and so on. Those who identified as Tutsi then became the favoured workers for the colonial administration. This led to the strengthening of tribal identity and the sharpening of the sense of otherness between the Hutu and the Tutsi (Dowden 2009). As part of their divide and rule tactics, colonial administrators deliberately began to encourage and promote diverse African cultures (customs, languages and so on) as a way of intensifying sentiments of group identity and cultural distinctiveness between the various peoples in their colonies (Rodney 1972). Colonial administrators may also have created tribes through the fueling of intertribal tension and animosity by subjugating some (hitherto self-governed) tribes under other tribes, thus fertilising the seeds for inter-community discontent and resentment in postcolonial Africa. A notable case was the British extension of the dominion of the Buganda kingdom to cover the Banyoro lands in Uganda (Green 2010). Thus, as Parker and Rathbone rightly concluded, colonial officials did not actually create group and individual differences, but they pushed these differences 'in dangerous, and ultimately disastrous, new directions' (2007: 47).

Mamdani's (2002: 8) terminology of 'citizen' and 'subject' may be another way to explain the colonial creation of tribalism in Africa. Through Western education opportunities and colonial privileges, colonial policies, so divisively manipulative in intent and character, classified the African kith-and-kin into 'citizens and subjects' on their own land. Those who proved their human credentials by managing to turn themselves into pseudo-Europeans through adaptation to Western culture and subservience to colonial interests, were lifted up to the status of citizenship and lordship over their 'benighted' compatriots who remained in the class of subjects. This made it possible for former slaves, at both intra and intertribal levels, to rule over their former masters. By these internal and external divisions and reversions of power and fortunes, which united 'diverse ethnic groups in a common predicament' under some favoured or privileged tribes; lumped up multiplicities of variant identities under one monolithic whole; and consequently denied 'the existence of an oppressed majority', Mamdani argues the colonisers laid the foundations for the 'string of ethnic civil wars' in postcolonial Africa.

It is necessary to add that the colonial scheme of the invention of tribes, as analysed above, was augmented by two “unenlisted” allies – missionaries and anthropologists. Let it be noted, however, that the role of European/American missionaries in colonial Africa is a rather controversial one, a controversy Roland Ndille captured in this point in the following passage:

While a school of thought holds that the missionaries were motivated by a spiritual revival and response to the call to ‘go ye therefore, and teach all nations... unto the ends of the earth... what I have commanded you’, decolonial and subaltern studies hold the very strong opinion that missionaries played an ambiguous role in preparing the grounds for European occupation and the entrenchment of coloniality. Within this civilizer-colonizer debate, I argue ... that there is a significant amount of historical evidence to justify that missionaries served as forerunners of colonialism and have used missionary correspondences, data on their interaction with the indigenous communities as well as critical secondary literature to present the Cameroon experience (2018: 2).

After considering the pros and cons to the argument, Ndille concludes that the plea that colonisation was the unintended consequence of the humane purpose of missionaries is strongly refuted by the fact that ‘substantial evidence abounds in almost all parts of the world where missionaries made inroad to hold strong to the position that they were not the angels of mercy but conquerors or the foot soldiers of European/American subjugation of indigenous people’ (2018: 8).

Similarly, Okon’s input to the debate is that ‘although there is a glaring absence of scholarly consensus on the role of the missionaries in the colonisation of Africa, the argument seems to favor the view that some missionaries cooperated essentially with colonial authorities in the exploitation and cultural subjugation of Africa’ (2014: 7-8). Okon argues, knowing that they were European and therefore had more in common with the European traders and colonial administrators than their African counterparts, missionaries in Africa, who, moreover, ‘in critical times of need, depended on traders for funds, and relied completely on administrators for physical security and protection’, necessarily had to collaborate with colonial administrators as and when required. Aside from helping to facilitate colonial penetration of the African polities, by orientating their African converts to disparage and shun their African ancestral beliefs, cultures and traditions in favour of western ways of life, missionaries also helped to ingrain on the African psyche the ‘colonial mentality’ (that is the tendency to perceive anything Western as superior

to its African alternative). In this sense, missionaries not only aided colonisation to thrive in Africa, but also helped to hook postcolonial Africa onto European cultural imperialism (Okon 2014: 13).

Focusing on the case of precolonial Xhosa Chiefdoms in southern Africa, Paul Gifford (2012) argued that it was missionary activities that tilled and softened the land for the colonial seeds to eventually germinate on the African soil with minimal toil. Their mission being to convert the people to Christianity, missionaries had to first and foremost learn the languages as well as study the cultures, customs, traditions and understand the psychology of their would-be converts in order to accomplish their evangelical mission. In the process, the missionaries also familiarised Africans ‘with the language and tradition of their future rulers’ – European colonisers, thus eventually building the bridge between the African polity and European colonial rule. When colonial officials eventually arrived in Africa, the missionaries, who had already learnt the languages and cultures of the African peoples and earned their trust, played the role of interpreters and mediators between Africans and the Europeans. Missionaries might have had good intentions from the start, but knowingly or unknowingly, willingly or unwillingly, their intentions seemed to have shifted in the long course of their dealings in Africa. Christian missionaries, Gifford elucidated, had played a pioneering role in the formation of the anti-slavery movement of the eighteenth century that eventually forced European governments to act to halt slavery. Missionaries then set out to replace the slave trade with a battle to reform the African soul for Christ. In the end, however, Gifford concluded, ‘the war was not between God and Satan for the souls of Africans, it was between Europe and Africa for the hearts and minds of the people’ (2012: 9).

There is not much argument about the fact that colonial seizure and occupation of African territories was facilitated through dubious treaties (Parker and Rathbone, 2007). As Chinweizu put it, the African chiefs ‘discovered, too late, that their signatures had been traps’ (1975: 45). Only the most trusting would believe that the missionary interpreters and intermediaries did not condone and connive with their European fellows in the signing of all these land-grabbing treaties. Whatever their motives might have been, Christian missionaries, by accident or by design, prepared the ground for the colonial conquest in Africa. Rodney (1972) studied how the French colonial administration enlisted the support of the Catholic Church in France after realising that the British missionaries’ war to win souls for Christ in Africa was actually winning souls for British imperialism.

If missionaries did indeed pave the way for the colonial onslaught on Africa, then whatever good or evil

colonisation eventually delivered to Africa, including the creation of tribalism, missionaries must share the praise or blame for it. The volatile situation in northern Nigeria is a typical example of how missionaries created political tribalism. By providing western education to Christian converts from minority tribes in northern Nigeria – where Islam was the official religion of the precolonial state and where, for that matter, missionaries won virtually no converts from the Hausa-Fulani Muslim groups – missionaries not only sharpened the sense of otherness in the minority tribes but also, they eventually supplied these minority tribes with tools for political agitation and self-emancipation from their precolonial tribal overlords. To date, as each election demonstrates, religious and political divisions in northern Nigeria go along tribal lines – Islam for the majority tribe and Christianity for the minority tribes, with all the socio-political tensions and hostilities that entails.

The first task of missionaries upon arrival in Africa was to learn the languages of the people they were there to convert, and it was at this point that the missionaries' own role in the invention of tribes began. As Ndhlovu (2014) noted, not only is language one of the primary means by which the cultural coherence of a group is expressed and sustained, but also, group barriers are often coterminous with language barriers. Colonial administrators recognised and, with the 'complicity' of missionaries, utilised the segregative power of distinctive languages in the 'creation' of tribalism in Africa.

Berman explains the point in the following manner:

By compiling grammars and dictionaries from one among a diversity of variant local dialects, usually that spoken around the mission station, missionaries transformed it into the authoritative version of the language of a whole 'tribe' and propagated it through their schools. By creating and disseminating a standardized print vernacular, the missionaries promoted the development of an indigenous literate elite, encouraged the recording of standardized local history and custom, and thereby had an important impact on the conceptual reification of particular ethnic groups and their cultures (1998: 322).

Berman (1998) went on to cite John Peel's (1995) and Terence Ranger's (1983) analyses on the cases of the Yoruba in Nigeria and the Manyika in Zimbabwe respectively. Missionaries' linguistic innovations not only helped to promote and reify the ethnic consciousness of the Yoruba people, but also popularised the very name Yoruba itself; it was in similar ways that missionary activities developed and nurtured the ethnic identity of the Manyika in colonial Zimbabwe.

Anthropologists soon arrived with their own contributions to the invention of tribes in Africa. The role of the anthropologists in colonial Africa is as controversial as that of missionaries. Andrew Apter provides an insightful representation of this controversy:

In the important collection by Asad (1973), James (1973) could cast the anthropologist in Africa as a 'reluctant imperialist' capable ... of openly criticizing colonial authority and policy, whereas Faris (1973) could confirm that those like Nadel were willing co-conspirators in imposing theoretical-cum-colonial order and control (1999: 3).

Sule Bello is direct to the point:

Critical to imperial activities were the essential requirements of justifying its domination by depicting Africans as sub-humans, on the one hand, as well as providing the politico-administrative structures for the management of its colonial territories on the basis of a policy of divide-and-rule, on the other. Not only do these requirements have tremendous ideological implications, they also led to racial segregation and the introduction of "tribal" divisions, or the Bantustanization, of the 'Native' African population (2015: 21).

These exploitatively divisive needs, Bello argues, not only informed colonial anthropologists' research programs, but also determined their choice of research methodology and assumptions. Berman (1998) balances between the two extremes: while anthropologists and colonial officials did not always agree among themselves, British anthropologists certainly shared with the colonial officials the mistaken beliefs and assumptions of socio-cultural homogeneity and primitivity of African communities. British functional anthropologists, whose focus was on cultural integration, unscrupulously generalised application of research findings from one community to a whole tribe without pausing to consider internal variations and without any inclination to place tribal representations in their proper historical contexts. Furthermore, anthropological analysis ended up bequeathing a set of conceptual analytical tools and methodological approaches that a growing indigenous intelligentsia could harness for its own construction of tribal identities (Ericksen 2010). The result was a proliferation of literature of identity constructions and contestations as indigenous historians from every tribe scrambled to create versions of history most favourable to their own tribal constituencies and question the glorious identity claims of rival tribes. Indigenous intelligentsia became the mouthpiece of their tribes both at the level of intertribal relationships and in official dealings with the waning-and-fading colonial administration (Berman 1998).

The colonial masters left more than half a century ago, but the intelligentsia politics of tribalism created by the triumvirate forces of colonial officials, missionaries, and anthropologists remains and even flourishes. The situation that emerged in the footprints of the departed colonial masters was one of *new people, new style, old dance*. The composition of national governments in the postcolonial African state is but a conglomeration of tribal representatives and regional advocates. It is still necessary to caution against the tendency to exaggerate the story of the colonial invention of tribes in Africa. The credibility deficit of such nationalistic theories is often betrayed by their own internal contradictions. It is good, for example, to examine the arguments of Walter Rodney. Condemning the colonial/anthropological accusations of tribal atavism against Africans as 'one of the most important historical arrests and stagnation' Rodney (1972: 275-7) acknowledges, though, that Africans did indeed live in family-based social organisations, of which the largest unit was the tribe, which comprised a group of families with a common ancestry. However, beyond being of the same ethnic stock, sharing a language and culture, Rodney (1972: 276) maintains, 'members of a "tribe" were seldom all members of the same political unit' or commercial interests. Furthermore, the intertribal harmony and solidarity of the African past are evidenced by the fact that all of 'the large states of 19th century Africa were multi-ethnic, and their expansion was continually making anything like "tribal" loyalty a thing of the past, by substituting in its place national and class ties.' But total replacement of ethnic affiliation with civil ties, Rodney explains, may span generations. Besides, within every group, there are always some parochial, conservative tribal or regional elements who would resist change and would attempt to reverse any transition or transformation process. Rodney argues that, far from being a hotchpotch of genetically tribal folks, Africans' inability to depart from tribalism should be blamed on European imperialism. To begin with, European colonisation disrupted and halted Africa's march towards total detribalisation by destroying the well-developed, multi-ethnic precolonial states that had formed the engine of the detribalisation machinery. Besides, Rodney continues, because tribalism could neither be easily destroyed by colonial machinations nor settled comfortably in the unsettling disorientation of colonisation, it 'tended to fester and grow in unhealthy forms'. To exacerbate the matter, the colonial masters themselves soon found intertribal animosity as a powerful divide-and-rule instrument in their constant efforts to stop the natives from uniting against 'their principal contradiction with the European overlords' (1972: 276-7).

Referring specifically to Nigeria, Rodney asserted that there is no historical evidence anywhere of ethnically-based wars between Igbos and Hausas in the pre-colonial era. He then went on to contradict himself by concluding:

'Of course there were wars, but they had a rational basis in trade rivalry, religious contentions, and the clashes of political expansion'. This conclusion dilutes Rodney's assertions of the absence of pre-colonial intertribal animosity, for the question that begs for an answer is 'to what extent could tribe be separated from religion in the pre-colonial era?' A common religion (usually rooted in deified ancestry) is a salient feature of classical tribal identity and ethnocentrism (Ronfeldt 2006). Historically, as Ronfeldt explained, religion-rooted tribalism has been the most ethnocentric, exclusionary and antagonistic type of all tribalisms. James Fearon (in Weingast and Wittman 2006) cited a modern example of the unity of religion and tribalism in the contrast between Catholics and Protestants in Northern Ireland.

In a booklet entitled *Islam or Tribalism?* (Tikumah 2006), I argued that minority tribes in northern Nigeria (and elsewhere) accepted Christianity only as an escape route from the scorch of Hausa-Fulani tribal chauvinism. A Hausa-Fulani Islamic evangelist in Nigeria once explained to me that people often accused his ancestors of fighting wars to impose Islam on other peoples. But one fact those accusers did not know, he continued, was that in many cases the Hausa-Fulani were fighting economic wars under the banner of religion. Islam has strict rules for fighting wars: when you go out to fight non-Muslims, there is a three-tier procedure you must follow. First, explain the mission of Islam to them, then invite them to accept it voluntarily. If they choose not to accept the faith, then the second option is for you to ask them to sign a peace pact with you: they will never fight you or aid anyone else against you; they will allow you to freely practice, preach and invite people to Islam on their land in a peaceful way; in addition, they will pay annual levy (*jizyah*) to you in return for military protection and security guarantees from the Islamic state. If they refuse the offer of alliance, then the third option is war. Ironically, the Hausa-Fulani 'Islamic' warriors hardly ever gave any chance for the first two options. They always went straight to war. Not only did they rarely give the people they attacked any option to accept Islam, but also, they often took concrete measures to discourage those people from accepting Islam. The secret is, the evangelist concluded, that the payment of *jizyah* included in the second option can only be imposed on non-Muslims; once the people accepted Islam, then the obligation to pay *jizyah* is lifted automatically by Islamic decree; the Islamic state cannot extort any levy from a Muslim apart from the obligatory property-tax (*zakat*) that every other Muslim must pay annually. So, the *jizyah* was often the priority of the Hausa-Fulani warriors and not the religion. As such, they preferred the people they conquered to remain non-Muslims so that they could continue to extort levy from them.

Over the story of the Hausa-Fulani warriors fighting economic wars in the name of religion, much ink has

been spilt by northern Nigerian historians, the very grandchildren and great-grand children of those warriors themselves. See, for example, Sule Mohammed's *History of the Emirate of Bida to 1899 AD* (2011: 183-93). Not only did the Hausa-Fulani warriors prioritise economic interests over Islam, but also, they did so in the most flagrant disregard for Islamic injunctions. For instance, the Islamic law does not allow the *jizya* to be taken in human beings, but in money or material commodity only, yet those ostensible soldiers of Islam would often demand from the vanquished that they should pay the *jizya* in slaves (Mohammed 2011). In short, tribal bigotry of the Hausa-Fulani became as much an attractive motivation for other peoples in northern Nigeria to join the newly arrived Christianity, as it had become an impenetrable barrier to the spread of Islam outside the Hausa-Fulani ethnic group.

In light of the foregoing, as conversion to Christianity automatically turned them into the allies of the more powerful European invaders, precolonial intertribal underlings found Christianity as a way out of tribal humiliation by the powerful tribes. Rodney himself implicitly acknowledged this point: 'It is to be noted that in West Africa, long before the colonial scramble, many outcasts in society and persons who suffered from religious and social prejudices were the first converts of the Christian church' (Rodney 1972: 310).

Similarly, the idea Rodney raised that precolonial inter-tribal wars might have been motivated by economic interests, rather than tribal malevolence, may only be partially true and cannot score high in the test of critical probity; for there is not much evidence of individual tribes fighting intra-group civil wars for economic gains. Except for instances of skirmishes of inter-clan rivalry usually pertaining to succession disputes, tribes did/do not usually fight within themselves. Tribesmen would not rationally fight among themselves over economic interests since sharing of economic gain and possession is one of the central pillars of tribal solidarity (or 'moral tribalism'). Tribes only fought and looted outsiders to acquire cattle, slaves and other forms of wealth. Thus, the choice of battlefield for economic pursuits was informed by tribal affiliation. Moreover, as Rodney himself (1972) pointed out, precolonial rulers rarely seized or sold their own tribesmen as slaves; they only enslaved other tribes. Therefore, the economic factor cannot logically stand alone as Rodney would have us believe; it must be seen as an appendage of tribal bigotry. In other words, granted that economic gain was the end in inter-tribal wars, tribalism was the means to that end.

Precolonial wars in Africa can hardly be separated from tribalism. Even economics and religion were passengers in the tribal vehicle. Colonial administrators certainly did

not create the names Hausa and Yoruba in Nigeria, Xhosa and Zulu in South Africa, Ashanti and Ewe in Ghana and so forth and by the mid-19th century animosities between these peoples were as old in Africa as colonialism was new there. In short, as Isaack Albert aptly put it, 'The attempt to blame Africa's problems on outsiders alone and not Africans themselves, as Rodney did, amounts to a monocausal explanation, if not an over-simplification, of a complex problem' (2011: 5).

Conclusion

Colonisation has three different images in the perceptions of Africans: for some Africans colonisation was an evil, for some it was a blessing, and for others it was a mixture of both evil and blessing (Parker and Rathbone 2007). It is a crime of scholarship to seek to present colonisation as if, as some nationalist politicians and academics (such as Rodney 1972; Chinweizu 1975; Schaller 2012; and others) have attempted to do, it had just one-and-the-same face in the eyes of all Africans. The downtrodden tribes of the precolonial age would certainly have seen colonisation as a blessing, a liberating force. Colonisation created tribes by unearthing marginal social groups who had been buried alive under the deadweight of the ethnocentric chauvinism of the domineering tribes of the precolonial age, by nurturing the conducive atmosphere for 'ascriptive tribalism' to mutate into 'aspirational tribalism'. As Okon (2014: 169) rightly warned, scholarship driven by sentimental rigidity and prejudice and devoid of 'historical objectivity and neutrality' represents an existential threat to wisdom. As a Dagbana by tribe (the overlord tribe in northern Ghana since precolonial days), I was never a victim – and I mean my forefathers were never victims, but rather, they were perpetrators – of precolonial tribal colonisation. However, in the spirit of siding with the weak, I have to say, even at the cost of causing outrage, that to the extent that colonial tribalism gave voice to the voiceless, created the possibility for the downtrodden tribes of pre-colonisation to also rise from rags to riches, may God bless colonialism. This, however, is not to say that I subscribe to the nonsensical assertion – that in view of the benefits resulting from colonisation such as 'equal' access to education, improved transport facilities, health care and so on – that Africans had voluntarily invited and willingly embraced colonisation for their own good, an assertion Okon (2014) has already denied, citing the abundant evidence of Africans' massive military resistance to colonisation to demonstrate its absurdity. Such an assertion is tantamount to saying that if a woman loves a child she bore out of a violent rape, then the woman had somehow invited the rapist's acts. Colonisation did as much good as it did evil and, for the sake of intellectual credibility, neither its good nor its evil should be twisted and distorted based on sheer sentiment. By creating a somewhat level-playing field in politics and economics for all tribes, including pre-colonial underdogs, colonisation

has contributed to peace and progress in Africa as much as it has created new dimensions of violence and regress on the continent.

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Youth, Empowerment and Long-term Peace Consolidation: The Case of Sierra Leone.

CHRISTINA MAMMONE

When considering the findings of the Sierra Leone Truth and Reconciliation Commission Report, the Commissioners acknowledged how the economic disenfranchisement of youth undeniably contributed to the outbreak of violence and eventual civil war in Sierra Leone (1991-2002). Years of education and employment inopportunities compounded, plaguing a majority of the population and by the 1990s the acute level of social immobility led many youths to join the fighting. Despite efforts to redress these issues in the post-conflict setting and over the last two decades, the socio-economic marginalisation of youth remains. Moreover, there continues to be a level of apprehension and negative perceptions by the wider population around youth and the inherent threat that they represent. This paper raises questions of how ongoing educational and employment barriers alongside continued negative perceptions of youth affect long-term peace consolidation in contemporary Sierra Leone.

KEY WORDS: Sierra Leone, Post-conflict peacebuilding, Positive Peace, Youth Empowerment, Idle Youth, Economic disenfranchisement

The 1980s saw significant structural shifts across the global powers with the collapse of the Soviet Union. The abandonment of superpower influence in emerging democracies created significant instability throughout much of the developing world, particularly the African region (Teitel 2003: 71). The conflicts which ensued, the majority of which were internal, resulted from a myriad of social causes associated with greed and/or grievance, as suggested by Collier and Hoeffler (2002: 14). They acknowledge that poor governance and economic mismanagement were largely responsible for the emergence of both greed and grievance and also provided the motivation for many insurgent forces (Collier and Hoeffler 2002: 17). Certainly, these factors contributed to the discontent which led to the commencement of fighting in Sierra Leone, West Africa. As such, the eventual peace consolidation efforts which were required moved beyond the first parameters of peacebuilding, addressing both traditionally understood security threats, and the underlying socio-economic issues which led to violence.

Authors such as Lambourne argue that transformative justice is required in order to address both traditionally viewed security threats and the underlying socio-economic causes of violence. Building on conflict transformation, a transformative justice process addresses all aspects of peace during the post-conflict peacebuilding process, aligning with Galtung's analysis of peace (Lambourne 2014: 22). Since the publication of Galtung's seminal work in the 1960s, it is widely understood that peace operates on multiple levels. He argued that 'peace' can refer to

'negative peace' as the absence of violence, and also to 'positive peace' as a removal of structures and injustices that allow for violence to persist (Galtung 1969: 183; Galtung and Fischer 2013: 173). More recently, scholars such as Lee, Mac Ginty and Joshi (2016: 493-494) have re-categorised Galtung's peace typology to include 'social peace' and 'security peace', to better articulate how socio-economic issues are just as legitimate as traditionally viewed threats when seeking to understand what constitutes peace or its absence.

According to Lambourne (2014: 22), this re-categorisation directly informed how peacebuilders can address all aspects of reconstruction and reconciliation under the notion of 'transformative justice'. As such, transformative justice is much broader than legal justice or accountability, extending to cover truth or psychosocial justice, socio-economic justice and political justice. To promote a broader sustainable approach to long-term peace consolidation, the peacebuilding process should benefit from adopting a transformative justice perspective to address underdevelopment, economic stagnation and other socio-economic causes of state destabilisation. In other words, proponents of transformative justice are arguing for a total transformation of society. This is particularly important considering the high rate of relapse for post-conflict states as demonstrated by Caplan (2020: 312) and Call (2012: 52).

Sierra Leone has remained relatively peaceful since the conflict's conclusion in 2002, so it is well positioned for a

longitudinal examination of long-term peace consolidation. Through employing transformative justice as the measure of analysis and a combination of interview material and pre-existing literature, this article examines how socio-economic youth disenfranchisement continues to damage long-term peace consolidation. A level of 'social' peace has survived in Sierra Leone despite remarkably little change in institutions or movement towards socio-economic justice. This article primarily focuses on male youth and their access to education and income generation whilst acknowledging that a separate study of young women would be very valuable. This text also examines how negative perceptions of youth and the labelling of them as 'idle' and 'lumpen' not only impacts community relations, but also perceptions of social peace.

Background

From 1991 until 2002 Sierra Leone experienced a humanitarian crisis and mass violence as the Revolutionary United Front of Sierra Leone (RUF/SL) led by Foday Sankoh waged war against the government. The eleven-year-long conflict resulted in at least 50,000 casualties, thousands maimed (mostly resulting from the RUF/SL directed amputation campaigns), and half of the population internally displaced (Ferme and Hoffman 2004: 77). Forced child recruitment and systematic sexual violence were amongst the grave crimes perpetrated and normalised by all armed groups involved.

The multifaceted conflict resulted from the compounding of political, economic and social failings deeply entrenched within the framework of the state. Divisive political practices by the two major political parties, the Sierra Leone People's Party (SLPP) and the All People's Congress (APC) supported clear ethno/regional political lines. It was the norm that ethnic groups in the south-east would vote for the Mende-aligned SLPP, whilst the Temne and Limba, located in the north, supported the APC (Kandeh 1992: 92; Allie 1990: 230). The 1967 election of the APC made these divisions more pronounced as the newly elected President Siaka Stevens quickly filled his ministerial cabinet with Temne and Limba elite and enacted policies favouring the northern districts (Mboka 2010: 124). Stevens actively reduced the Sierra Leone Army's budget, largely replacing it with his personal guard, further disenfranchising those located in the south of the state (Kandeh 1999: 352). By the mid-1970s Stevens dismantled all opposing political parties, instead opting for a one-party system (Kandeh 1999: 352). In 1986 the presidency was passed to Brigadier Joseph Saidu Momoh, allowing the cancerous practices to continue (Davies 2010: 69). The 'kleptocratic' Momoh government is often blamed for the conflict, however, as Kandeh argues, 'by the time that Siaka Stevens hand-picked Brigadier Joseph Momoh to succeed him in 1986, the state was already on the verge of collapse' (1999: 352).

Corruption coupled with economic mismanagement and external pressures led to the collapse of the Sierra Leone economy, shrinking the already limited formal employment sector (Reno 1996: 8). This had a profound effect on the livelihoods of the youthful Sierra Leonean population as both education and employment opportunities were highly limited. Scholars agree that the high level of youth involvement in the conflict resulted from the socio-economic injustices pervasive in all aspects of life. The phrase 'crisis of youth' coined by Richards (1995: 135) has become synonymous with the mobilisation of disenfranchised youth in both Sierra Leone and neighbouring Liberia.

Since the 1950s access to education for the wider population had steadily diminished. This was further compounded during the 1980s alongside exorbitant tuition fees, and the official education budget was slashed, resulting in mass school closures, layoffs, and an exodus of teaching professionals (Zack-Williams 1990: 27). Frustration grew as President Momoh dismissed criticism, retorting that 'education is a privilege, not a right' (Richards 1996: 19).

With the collapse of the raw material market, formal unemployment figures climbed beyond 70% (Conteh-Morgan 2006: 99). Unemployment in the informal employment sector was high and increasing but not recorded in the statistics. Even in formal employment there was no guarantee of receiving a proper wage, as the Sierra Leone Army suffered poor pay and working conditions (Abraham 1997: 102). Consistently the literature acknowledges how the RUF/SL exploited the extreme sentiments of disenfranchisement experienced by the young population. Disenfranchisement can have many interpretations. Here it is primarily understood as economic disenfranchisement and the resulting social alienation. The inopportunity of both employment and access to education directly affected socio-economic development and social mobility. This undermined young people, leading towards social alienation within the wider community, impacting all aspects of their lives. For example, Richards (2005: 576) identifies that there is a direct correlation between community-based corruption, economic disenfranchisement and marriage opportunities at the time, leading many to join the RUF/SL in response to the marriage bottleneck in rural and remote areas. The RUF/SL directly preyed upon such discontents when recruiting youth, providing camp education and promising government jobs with good salaries after victory (Nuxoll 2015: 3; Kposowa 2006: 43). The focus on holding the APC government accountable for social injustices created considerable support from the wider community during the early years of the conflict, however, this support gradually diminished as fighting continued (Kaifala 2016: 224).

The violent nature of the conflict also created a shift in the societal perception of youth. Scholars such as McIntyre and Thusi (2003: 73) and Abdullah (2002: 23) argue that the lack of life prospects resulted in youths becoming complicit in violence and criminal activities, resulting in the emergence of what came to be referred to as 'idle' and 'lumpen' youths. Abdullah states that 'by lumpen, I refer to the largely unemployed and unemployable youth, mostly male who live by their wits [...] They are prone to criminal behaviour, petty theft, drugs, drunkenness and gross indiscipline' (1998: 207-208). Discussing 'idle youths' Reno (2003: 54) lists similar traits. However, not all youths experiencing this disenfranchisement became engaged in violence and other questionable acts. Rather the unfavourable climate of disadvantage perpetuated the habits of those who already demonstrated anti-social tendencies (Abdulla et al. 1997: 176). Whether the 'idle' and 'lumpen' youth were as pervasive as the literature suggests, the disenfranchisement and the ultra-violent atmosphere of the conflict had a lasting effect. The post-conflict reconstruction efforts needed to address the underlying social issues to prevent youths transforming into violence and securitised threats.

Youth and Disenfranchisement in the Immediate Post-Conflict Setting

The Sierra Leone civil war ended in 2002, thus commencing a long period of reconstruction (Penfold 2005: 549). Fighting had redefined communities, altered family dynamics and complicated everyday life making peacebuilding a complex and difficult task.

A high priority was given to addressing massive levels of youth disenfranchisement. Through the Truth and Reconciliation Commission (TRC) the transitional justice process attempted to promote social peace through socio-economic recommendations. The Commissioners acknowledged that:

The civil war has aggravated matters for the youth. After ten years of war, thousands of young men and women have been denied a normal education and indeed a normal life. Their childhood and youth have been squandered by years of brutal civil conflict. Many young Sierra Leoneans have lost the basic opportunities in life that young people around the world take for granted. These young people constitute Sierra Leone's lost generation. The Commission recommends that the youth question be viewed as a national emergency that demands national mobilisation. This is an imperative recommendation (TRC 2004: 166).

Following recommendations provided by the TRC, efforts to rectify access to education were made, for example

primary school was made both free and compulsory for all Sierra Leoneans (TRC 2004: 177). However, implementation was difficult due to the significant level of education infrastructure damage which had occurred during the fighting. Still there was a swell of interest in formal education, in what Paulson viewed as 'education resilience manifested':

Many schools built additional classrooms blocks and moved to double-shift operation. Some of the most prestigious secondary schools in the country took on pupils "from what would be considered very sub-standard schools" (Wright, 1997, p. 27) and did so fairly successfully. New schools were opened for displaced children by non-governmental organizations (NGOs), religious bodies and private organizations (Paulson 2006: 339).

There was an informal, parallel education system created with the establishment of community-operated schools, that were operated without government support by the community and at times with assistance from NGOs (Paulson 2006: 340). Aside from the lack of infrastructure, the professional teaching vacuum already present prior to the conflict had been exacerbated by the intentional targeting and killing of educators during the conflict (Smith Ellison 2014: 199). Similarly, there was a large number of adolescents who had been unable to receive even the most basic education. In response, several accelerated learning programs were implemented, such as the Complementary Rapid Education for Primary Schools. This program provided accelerated teacher training to new educators as well as an accelerated two-year-long course to those older than primary school age (Smith Ellison 2014: 199).

Beyond the education efforts and despite the SL TRC recommendations, the negative perceptions of youth remained palpable throughout the post-conflict period. Those involved in the peacebuilding efforts noted serious concerns around youth; 'heavily armed, angry and idle, they embodied crisis', and a tangible threat to the peacebuilding efforts (Hoffman 2003: 296). Despite the Disarmament, Demobilisation and Reintegration (DDR) efforts attempting to demilitarise the minds of adolescent ex-combatants, there was a fear that they would fall back into anti-social and the negatively perceived 'idle' tendencies (Wai 2021: 519). During fieldwork interviews I engaged with several interviewees who had experienced adolescence during the conflict and post-conflict period¹. For example, George (pseudonym) explained how even those who did not fight had the capacity for violence.

The way they reacted was violent, even those that were not directly involved. All of us knew violence,

we saw violence [...] so as a result the minds were violent (George 2019).

The tense atmosphere and general confusion during post-conflict meant that all youths appeared to represent threats to security. Significant and wide-spread rural-to-urban migration resulted in a concentration of war-affected youth in urban spaces (Fanthorpe and Maconachie 2010: 255). UN Peacebuilders were vocal in their concerns that congregation of disenfranchised youths would result in ghettos and enclaves of lawlessness, allowing for a continued atmosphere of idleness and lumpen-ness to permeate.

Many people involved with the mission have repeatedly voiced concern about the thousands of 'idle youth' prone to violence and without any prospects in life. They worry that these youth present a security threat if their future and needs are not taken care of. They fear that youth might easily destabilize the country. These concerns are genuine if one considers that historically youth have been a target for mobilization in Sierra Leone's conflicts (Mcltyre and Thusi 2003: 78).

Despite such fears that areas located in Freetown such as Magazine, Sawa Grounds, Lumley Road and Regent Street were becoming pockets occupied by loitering war-affected youths, these concerns were largely baseless (Bjørås et al. 2008: 47). Rather, Sierra Leone has remained relatively peaceful, representing an outlier to other post-conflict states (Caplan 2020: 312).

The 'Crisis of Youth' in Contemporary Sierra Leone

Despite Sierra Leone's continued peace, remnants of the 'crisis of youth' persist. Youth disenfranchisement remains pervasive, as socio-economic causes of the conflict such as lack of education and employment continue to be areas of concern.

Education was severely disrupted in 2014 as the government enacted state-wide school closures lasting nearly an entire scholastic year, in response to the outbreak of Ebola. During this time, efforts were made to continue providing learning opportunities via the free-to-air broadcast system through the Emergency Radio Education Program (Powers and Azzi-Huck 2020). The joint program between the Ministry of Education, Science and Technology, UNICEF and the Global Partnership for Education broadcast taught maths, English and civil education. However, it remains unclear how many participated and how successful the program was (GPE Secretariat 2020). Despite the reopening of schools in 2015, there was a noted decrease in re-enrolments as

many secondary school students did not return to the classroom (Bandiera et al. 2020: 2).

Education retention and overall costs remain obstacles for many Sierra Leone students, so to rectify this the government implemented the Free Quality School Education (FQSE). Announced by the Maada Bio government in 2018, the FQSE scheme implemented several unrealised SL TRC recommendations by making all stages of education free and reducing the cost of certain schooling necessities (Kamara 2020: 175). However, the initial months of the program noted a serious hurdle, in that the scheme did not include community-operated schools (Kamara 2020: 175). Despite this important caveat, initial press around the FQSE resulted in assumptions in many communities that the removal of tuition fees included community-operated schools. The misinformation around the scheme led families to refuse to pay fees associated with community-operated schools in rural and remote areas, resulting in their abrupt closure. As the FQSE scheme was being implemented while I was in Sierra Leone for research fieldwork in Sierra Leone, the scheme quickly became a talking point when interviewing those working in the education sector. Georgieta (pseudonym) worked alongside a number of education specific NGOs and witnessed these school closures first-hand.

We've had loads of issues like [...] none of the community teachers turning up anymore because the local community heard on the radio that it's free education and so they stopped paying their community teachers [...] so the community teachers can't teach because they need to earn an income so they went back to work on their farms or went to work in government approved schools or whatever [...] Schools closing or like only two teachers instead of four teachers turning up so classes 1 to 6 in all the same classroom are being taught by one teacher and I mean I'm not saying that the conditions were good before, but that's even worse. And lots of people are a bit scared because a few teachers got arrested for taking money and so lots of communities and teachers said that they're really worried that they may get caught (Georgieta 2019).

Whilst efforts to rectify this failing have occurred, considerable damage has been done in rural and remote areas where accessibility was already severely limited. Moreover, with the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic schools were once again forced to close, which inevitably resulted in a lack of data rendering the success of the FQSE unclear.

Regarding income generation and employment, as Bangura (2016: 40) explains, the limited employment

opportunities in the post-conflict setting raised concerns about the success of long-term peace consolidation efforts. This was further exacerbated by the failure of the DDR process to provide adolescent ex-combatants with adequate and long-term employment opportunities, so that many turned to informal employment (Knight 2008: 42). The *okada* (*motorbike taxi*) industry quickly became popular with many as it provided an avenue of income generation, whilst filling the transportation vacuum resulting from the conflict. Despite the *okada* industry providing a vital service it remains a part of the informal economy, susceptible to its unpredictability and lack of safety nets, as well as the influence of elites within the industry.

Additionally, many were skeptical of the capacity of *okada* to undermine the purpose of the demobilisation process and reinstate an ex-combatants' militarised identity. For instance, Menzel (2011: 100) raises the concern that the *okada* industry could present an avenue to 'combatinise' civilian youths and remilitarise ex-combatants. Conversely, some in the industry noted the opposite, with the service having a significantly positive effect on fostering post-conflict community relations. For instance, surveys found that working in the industry removed negative perceptions around ex-combatants and instead provided them with a sense of personhood and community (Buccitelli and Denov 2017: 139; Büürge 2011: 60). Others noted that the industry continues to be a vital crutch, fostering community relations and personhood for disenfranchised youths (Jenkins et al. 2020: 138). This suggests that perspectives reported by Menzel could be perceived as reflecting ongoing negative perceptions of 'idle' and 'lumpen' youths and the capacity of male aggression rather than the industry itself.

During numerous interviews in which themes of youth disenfranchisement were examined I asked interviewees what they identified to be the main areas of concern for both male and female youth. Interviewees expressed and explained the wider community's concerns regarding the ongoing disenfranchisement and weak investment in the youth population and the use of negative terms such as 'idle' and 'lumpen'. The National Youth Policy had attempted to address ongoing issues of widespread unemployment and under-employment (Alemu 2016: 16). Overall, the vocational skills training efforts provided were severely underwhelming and poorly thought-out, making career opportunities untenable for many (Alemu 2016: 22).

Another concern is an increase in the uptake and openness around recreational drug use. The end of the conflict in 2002 noted an increase in the presence and distribution of drugs, and over the last twenty years drugs such as a *djamba*, a similar drug to marijuana,

have become increasingly accessible and openly used (Bøås and Hatløy 2005: 51). There is growing concern around the increased availability of opioid-based drugs such as Tramadol. In 2017 Sierra Leone was identified as one of eight countries being major transit-hubs and also distribution locations for various opioid-based drugs (WHO 2018: 44). The increased use and openness around drug-taking by youths frustrated by a worsening economic outlook has resulted in the return of community fears of the 'idle' and 'lumpen' youth. During an interview, Tennah (pseudonym) directly attributed the re-emergence of anti-social and volatile tendencies to a lack of government and international investment in male youth.

So you see the idle ones [...] they'll be sitting there no work, nothing, many times because of their mind and complacency [...] other times because there is nobody to pay for them [...] it leads them to cause other types of trouble around (Tennah 2019).

With the continued stagnation of the formal economy and educational provisions youths still suffer, however their level of resilience has persisted. Not only was this observed during my time in Sierra Leone, it was also noted by Lucy (pseudonym) who has lived there since 2000.

It didn't enter their heads to be angry with the government for not investing in them, for not providing for them. It was just the most sort of extraordinary thing really (Lucy 2019).

Still there is the question of what happens when the youths reach breaking point. Since 2020 there have been an increasing number of violent outburst and riots. In 2020, Makeni-based youths clashed with the police over the relocation of a generator to Lunsar in Port Loko district (Consortium for Good Governance, 2020). This interaction denotes a level of distrust between the youth and the government. Then in early 2021 footage emerged of rioting in Freetown. Later it was explained that the rioting resulted from growing distrust in the security sector and from economic tensions (Thomas 2021). There is room for speculative analysis of the dynamic relationship between youth and the government, which is only compounded by the reality that a full report has yet to be published. Most recently, in August 2022 violent protests broke out between mostly youth protesters and the security forces. The rioting, which lasted several days, leaving several protesters and security personnel dead, was in direct response to the increased cost of living and the worsening socio-economic situation for youth (Fofana and Inveen 2022). This was in addition to growing anger regarding increases in police and security sector violence against the population (Thomas 2022). Of note was that protesters directly called for the removal of President Maada Bio,

indicating a disconnect between the government and the needs and expectations of youth.

Conclusion

Youth involvement in the conflict is a clear example of how the perpetuation of social injustices directly threatens security and stability within a state. In this case, disenfranchisement through exclusion from education and employment opportunities demonstrates how opposition to social injustices can materialise into a security risk threatening peace and state destabilisation. Moreover, youth participation in the conflict will have significant and long-lasting ramifications on community relations and social cohesion.

Despite some efforts to address the causes of the crisis of youth during the post-conflict peacebuilding period, education and income generation continue to be contentious issues. Whilst the government continues to promote policies to remove educational barriers, it remains unclear as to how effective such efforts have been considering the COVID-19 pandemic which resulted in widespread school closures during much of the 2019/2020 and 2020/2021 scholastic years. In relation to avenues of income generation, the youth population continues to be plagued by high rates of unemployment and underemployment, resulting in many turning to the informal economy in favour of small-scale commodity trade and the *okada* industry. The *okada* industry provides considerable informal income generation opportunities and a wider community service. Nevertheless, the industry, as with all industries situated within the informal economy, remains unpredictable and without the financial safety nets provided in the formal economy. Moreover, with an increase in fuel prices, many *okada* riders report increased financial pressures and strain.

When considering the perception of youth within society, this too remains complex and contentious. The negative perceptions of the 'idle' youth still resonate within contemporary Sierra Leonean society, particularly among those who experienced the conflict first-hand. While there are those who question whether the 'idle' and 'lumpen' youth ever existed, those within the community acknowledge how the persistent lack of opportunities allows for anti-social tendencies to resurface. Peace within the country remains fragile and the ongoing experience of youth-related social injustice still has the capacity to disrupt country-wide stability. Moreover, socio-economic pressures will continue to grow as the full impact of COVID-19 becomes more apparent. Given the links between socio-economic injustices and security threats, it is vital to continue to monitor the situation for the youth in Sierra Leone and, to the extent feasible within the weak Sierra Leonean economy with a Gross National Income of

just US\$490 per head, to provide sustainable avenues to education and gainful employment for those who currently have so little hope for the future.

Interviews

Names of the participants have been changed to protect their identity.

George 2019 interviewed in Freetown, on 30/01/2019.

Georgieta 2019 interviewed in Makeni, on 17/01/2019.

Lucy 2019 interviewed in Freetown, on 11/01/2019.

Tannah 2019 interviewed in Makeni, on 18/01/2019.

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End Note

1. Fieldwork in Sierra Leone was conducted from late 2018 until early 2019 as a part of my PhD research. The purpose of the fieldwork was to examine the long-term impact of transitional justice and societal perceptions of how effective the process was in consolidating peace. Interviews were conducted with members of NGOs, CSOs located in the north and west of the country and covered a variety of topics associated with lived-experiences during the conflict, transitional justice, post-conflict reconstruction and socio-economic development. All interviews present in this article were conducted in English while in Sierra Leone.

Author

Having recently been awarded her doctorate, Christina Mammone's research examines the limitations of international humanitarian efforts in promoting sustainable long-term peacebuilding. Her research is primarily focused on transitional justice and how its relationship with development can provide a more durable form of peace. To address this relationship, Christina's approach to transitional justice research incorporates retrospective analysis and contemporary development perspectives.

'I wanted to contribute to the peace process': Women's motivations for peace in Myanmar

GODWIN YIDANA

Women's civil society organisations in Myanmar were critical actors in the struggle for women's political empowerment and transformative participation in the peace process. They filled the gap between marginalised women and decision-makers. They also significantly contributed to peace in Myanmar through their informal peacebuilding activities. This paper describes some of the peacebuilding practices of women's CSOs (WCSOs) and women-led CSOs to illuminate women's agency for peace in Myanmar. It particularly focuses on state-level women's organisations to help to bring marginal voices to the fore, and to highlight women's significant but often ignored contributions to everyday peace in local communities. It also draws on such WCSOs to envoice the muted voices in the women's movement in Myanmar, contribute to diversity, and enable an intersectional understanding of women's agency for peace in Myanmar.

KEY WORDS: Women, civil society, gender, motivations, networks, peacebuilding

Introduction

In responding to armed conflict, women have multiple approaches at their disposal, including becoming peace activists and contributing to transform the conflict through peacebuilding; becoming actively involved in nonviolent resistance in support of peace; becoming active fighters or engaging in other forms of violence in support of conflict or becoming refugees or internally displaced persons (IDPs). As Joyce Kaufman and Kristen Williams note, crucially, 'these are not mutually exclusive categories' (2013:2). Women's responses to violent conflict can be seen as a form of political activism that occurs 'along a *continuum of political activism/action*' (Kaufman and Williams, 2013:2). Peace and conflict are not a dichotomous dualism but rather a range of actions available to women.

In Myanmar, while some women chose to join ethnic armed organisations or the Myanmar military in support of violent conflict (Kolas and Meitei 2019; Hedstrom 2015, 2016, 2022), a majority of them have formed or joined various civil society organisations (CSOs) in support of peace (Buzzi 2019; Cardenas and Olivius: 2021; Di Padova 2019; Nilsen 2019; Kolas 2019). The women's decisions to form or join peacebuilding CSOs or work for peace are deliberate choices and an illustration of their agency, 'sometimes driven by feminist goals' (Kaufman and Williams 2013:3) and sometimes by more conventional values. In most situations, 'the primary male patriarchal structure of political decision making excluded women from the initial decisions to engage in some form of political violence. Women respond to that situation as political actors—working for peace is one of those strategies' (Kaufman and Williams 2007, 2010).

A key question that then arises is what motivates these women to form or join peacebuilding CSOs in support of peace? To answer this question, this paper describes the motivations of women in Myanmar to form or join various peacebuilding organisations to illuminate women's agency for peace in Myanmar. It particularly focuses on women at the state-level to help bring marginal voices to the fore, and to highlight women's significant but often ignored contributions to everyday peace in local communities. It also draws on the experiences of such women to *envoice* the muted voices in the women's peace movement in Myanmar, contribute to diversity, and enable an intersectional understanding of women's agency for peace in Myanmar.

The paper is divided into four sections. Section one provides a definition of civil society as pertains in the Myanmar context and a classification of women's civil society organisations (WCSOs). Section two covers the methodology of the research, while section three discusses women's motivations for establishing or joining various peacebuilding CSOs. The final section is the conclusion.

Definitions and categorisation of WCSOs

There are competing definitions of civil society. However, this author adopts South's descriptive definition which refers to civil society as 'voluntary, autonomous associations and networks that are intermediate between the state and the family and are concerned with public ends' (South 2008: 13). These include a wide variety of community-based organisations (CBOs), non-

governmental organisations (NGOs), 'media and social welfare organisations', traditional and modern religious and cultural groups, and explicitly political groups (South 2008: 13).

As Petrie and South (2013) note, although the terms community-based organisations (CBOs) and non-governmental organisations are often used interchangeably, there are significant conceptual and practical distinctions between the two. In this paper CBOs refers to community-based grassroots membership organisations that are managed locally for the benefit of members and local communities, and they 'normally exist in just one community or a group of adjoining communities' (South, 2008: 13). Women's community-based organisations (WCBOs) as used here refers to local community-based organisations that are managed locally by women for the benefit of their members and local communities.

Methods and Materials

This paper reports on part of a broader fieldwork study conducted by the author in Myanmar between September and December 2019 as part of his PhD research project. He conducted 49 in-depth interviews with key informants and six focus group discussions with selected women from civil society groups across six locations in Myanmar. The in-depth interviews were conducted in Hpa-An in Karen State, Loikaw in Karenni State, Mawlamyine in Mon State, Myitkyina in Kachin State, Nyang Shwe and Taunggyi in Shan State, Sittwe in Rakhine State, and Yangon in Yangon Region. The focus group discussions were carried in all the six states. All participants of both the in-depth interviews and focus group discussions were women as the focus of the research is women's lived experiences in relation to the peace process. Female translators were used in both the interviews and focus group discussions, except in Shan and Rakhine states, where the women demanded specific male translators that they trusted and felt comfortable with due to prior working relationships with them.

A total of 33 women's organisations were involved in this study. Of these, five were national-level, 18 were state-level, and 10 were grassroots-level organisations. Three of the five national-level organisations, including Alliance for Gender Inclusion in the Peace Process (AGIPP) and Gender Equality Network (GEN) were umbrella organisations such as an alliance, coalition or network, while two were single organisations.

Nine of the 18 state-level WCSOs were also umbrella organisations, while nine were individual WCSOs. Seven of the grassroots-level organisations could be described as WCBOs, while the rest could be viewed as local NGOs

with professional paid staff and defined budgets and programs. The majority of the state-based organisations were intra-ethnic in nature as they directed their activities towards women of specific ethnic nationalities. Others were inter-or-multi-ethnic because they worked with women from all ethnic backgrounds within a given state or region. All the national-level organisations were multi-ethnic because their activities were directed towards all women in Myanmar irrespective of their ethnic identities.

None of the 33 organisations in this study were religious or had a religious colouration.

Twenty-four of the 33 organisations were specifically women and gender focused, while the rest were generic CSOs with women's programs or led by women. For example, Nyein (Shalom) Foundation is a generic national-level CSO in the peacebuilding space. However, it was led by two women who played critical roles in the peace process as technical advisors.

The majority of the WCSOs were located in various states because that is where most of the women's peacebuilding practices occurred. The multiple armed conflicts in Myanmar prior to the February 2021 coup (Kipgen 2021; Maizland 2022; Maung Thawngmung and Noah, 2021; Noel 2022) were predominantly concentrated in ethnic nationality areas—in the various states—so the need for everyday peacebuilding activities was greater in such areas than in areas such as Yangon and Mandalay. This partly explains the concentration of the WCSOs and women-led CSOs in states such as Kachin, Karen, Mon, Shan and Rakhine States. While the 1 February 2021 coup may have slightly changed this dynamic (the February 2021 coup produced militant resistance in urban areas predominantly occupied by ethnic Bamar—a situation that did not happen during previous coups), it is generally still the case that there are acute humanitarian and emergency needs in ethnic nationality areas, where the military junta continues to focus its military might rather than in urban areas.

Some of the inter-and-intra-ethnic organisations were transborder in nature because they had offices across Myanmar's borders with Thailand and Bangladesh. This is because some of these organisations were formed on the Thai-Myanmar border or Bangladeshi-Myanmar border. For example, KWAT maintains an office in Chiang Mai because it was established by Kachin women refugees there.

Motivations for establishing or joining WCSOs

The women in this study had diverse motivations or reasons for forming or joining various WCSOs and women-led CSOs. Their motivations were as varied and unique as the women themselves.

To Promote Women's Rights, Empowerment, Gender Equality and Agency

Some of the women in this study indicated that they joined specific WCSOs to promote women's rights, their empowerment and agency, and facilitate gender equality in Myanmar. Several interview participants in multiple locations confirmed this view to me during discussions about their motivations for forming or joining specific WCSOs.

The National Advisor at AGIPP told me that:

The motivation for starting AGIPP is that mostly people portray women as the victims: victims of war; victims of violence. But actually, women are more than just victims: women have capacity; women have empowerment. If one woman is standing alone, it's not significant but a group of women gathering together, they can make something change. That's why the women's network and women's mobilisation and organisation are very important. This is why I have devoted most of my life to women's mobilisation, organisation and networking. Women are not always just victims. We are more than just victims of war and violence (Mary 2019).

Several of the focus group participants reiterated this view. For instance, the Assistant Program Coordinator of Jeepyah Civil Society Development Organisation (JCSDO) told me that she decided to join JCSDO because she wanted to promote women's rights:

For me, I used to work with MYPO, Mon Youth Progressive Organisation. When I was a youth, I wanted to participate in youth activities. So, that is why I joined MYPO. And now I joined Jeepyah Civil Society Development Organisation. I knew this organisation since we were living in the border area fighting for women and child rights. As a woman, I want to work for women's rights and children's rights; that's why I joined this organisation (Joana 2019).

The Founder of the Karen Women's Democracy Action Network (KWDAN) explained:

I have a background in healthcare and in our country, there are so many issues and so many gaps in healthcare delivery. There are also serious gaps in women's rights that need to be addressed in order to move the country forward. There are serious issues affecting women that no one is talking about ... That is why I formed the organisation to give voice to these issues that are affecting women and also to carry out the needed social work in the communities (Abigail 2019).

Lived Experiences of Armed Conflict and Desire for Peace and Development.

Other interview participants across various locations noted that their motivations for establishing or joining particular WCSOs were based on their lived experiences of armed conflict and/or their desire and commitment to peace and development.

A program staff member with the then Myanmar Peace Center (MPC) shared how her experience of armed conflict in her home village in rural Shan State motivated her to join MPC.

Because MPC was like a semi-government organisation which was taking the focal role for the negotiation process and, well, I'm from the conflict area myself, Shan State, and you know, from the rural area, so, to access education is very limited. I know the consequences of the conflict so I would like to be part of the process of finding lasting peace and I want to work as much as I can, no matter what, to participate in the peace process. Before I joined MPC as an intern, I was already a program officer in another institution but I wanted to contribute to the peace process so I quit my former job and started working at MPC as an intern (Joyce 2019).

The Director of the Capacity Development and Community Mobilisation Program of the JCSDO in Mon State shared a similar view:

... in 2005, according to the political situation, I thought that fighting was not the best option of addressing the issues because for about 70 years, we have been fighting but we have not had any success yet. But without guns, we can get the self-determination. Because, you know, now, you know more than us, I think. The Burmese military and the ruler and most Bamar people think that and they act as they are the leaders and other ethnics are ruled by them, so we don't have any equal or equity in opportunities. This is why there are ethnic armed groups. But according to the international observers, the fighting is not yielding any positive results. So, I believe that we have to find another way to peace and self-determination. We have to figure out how to get that without the use of guns (Eva 2019).

The Director of the Women's Empowerment Development Organisation in Rakhine State had a similar motivation:

I got really interested in social work and so decided to work with the Rakhine Women's Network after

2012 to help mitigate the conflict and build peace in local communities in our state. I wanted to especially promote women's role in peace when I joined the network.... My goal was and still is to help promote the involvement of women in the peace and political dialogue processes. So, that is why I decided to join the network and not to work as a teacher anymore (Grace 2019).

The majority of the participants in the first focus group discussion in Loikaw, Karenni State, said that they joined their respective CSOs to advance women's participation in the peace process particularly, and politics generally.

The General Secretary 2 of Karenni National Women's Organisation (KNWO) observed:

I joined KNWO because myself I'm a woman and KNWO is a women's organisation. I grew up in a conflict area and in order to help my community, it is much more effective to join an organisation instead of doing it individually. Also, I joined KNWO to help address women's issues relating to the conflict and violence and to promote women's participation in the peace process, decision-making and leadership of the state. We have a lot of experience working on gender-based violence issues in the communities. Women help other women. Men don't really help and support women. Women know the feelings of women. If women are participating in the peace process and in politics, there will be more effective policies and peace. Women get pregnant but men don't. So, women know about each other but men don't. So, women need to participate in the peace process. This is why I joined KNWO to fight for women's inclusion in the peace process (Emma 2019).

This view confirms the findings of a study conducted by the Karen Women's Organisation (KWO) in 2020 which found that Karen women chiefs used their agency to protect local 'communities against threats and attacks' by the Myanmar military despite the risks to their own lives (KWO 2020: 7-11).

Experiences of Discrimination, Oppression, Human Rights Violations and Violence

Women's experiences of discrimination, oppression and violence can drive them to band together to find solutions. As Porter notes, women's commitment to peace is not because they are naturally peaceful but rather because such commitments often 'emerge out of the experience of oppression, knowing what it is like to be excluded and seeking a society that is truly inclusive' (2007: 3). She

further observes that 'The common ground that draws women together usually lies in women's commitment to family and community ties and the shared urgency to pool resources and meet everyday basic needs, despite being surrounded by chaos and destruction' (2007: 5). Similarly, Cynthia Cockburn maintains that 'if women have a distinctive angle in peace, it is not due to women being nurturing. It seems more to do with knowing oppression when we see it' (cited in Manchanda 2001: 17). 'Knowing what it is to be excluded and inferiorised as women, gives them special insights into the structure of unequal relations at the root of conflict' adds Rita Manchanda (2001:17).

Some of the participants explained that their motivations for joining or forming specific WCSOs were based on their lived experiences of discrimination, oppression, human rights violations and violence. The Chairperson of Rahkine Women's Union (RWU) explained how her lived experiences of Burma military oppression drove her to join the Arakan Liberation Party and later on to start the RWU in Bangladesh:

There has been a lot of oppression of ethnic people by the Burma ruling parties and governments. For instance, my own father was used as forced labour by the Tatmadaw many times. His labour was forcefully exploited without any payment because the Tatmadaw came to the village and called for labour work. They didn't even spare old people and blind men. My father faced a lot of problems with the Tatmadaw. That is one reason why I joined the revolution. Another reason is that I had a big and beautiful garden at the time of the 1988 uprising and the Tatmadaw destroyed my garden and used the land for a barracks without any compensation payment. So, my father lost lots of things. Others in my village also lost their lands and wood plantations. There was a lot of oppression against our people, so I decided to revolt against the military government during my youthful days. This was during the days of the Ne Win's Burma Socialist Programme Party government in the 1960s. I was angry and frustrated with the way the party and military treated my people when I was young. I wanted to destroy the Burmese parties and the Burmese military (Julie 2019).

The Deputy Director of Nyein Foundation recounted how:

... My husband was an army officer. Myanmar Army officer and he is from my father's side ethnic group. I am a mix. So, even among Kachins we have different languages. So, my mum is Jinghpaw and my dad is Longpaw. They don't share a word,

although they're the same ethnic group. And my husband is also a Christian and at that time, there was an unwritten law for the Christians in the army and government; the Christians cannot reach up to a certain government position or army position. So, within the civilian sector, once you become a director, it is the highest post for a Christian. It's not about ethnicity. It's about Christianity; religion; and especially when you have an armed group in your ethnic group. So, it's an issue of trust. They don't trust an ethnic Kachin who has an armed group in his or her area. So, there is a generalised view that every Kachin is a rebel. ... My mum, also, couldn't go for further studies. She was a very smart woman. A medical doctor and she could not go for specialisation because her brother was one of the founders of KIO. And actually, her brother had died long time ago... There was no promotion at all because we are Kachin and we are Christians Now, it's a little bit relaxed but it is still there; the discrimination against ethnic nationalities and religious minorities still exists today.... It was changed like four, five years ago. So, at that time, it was so fierce. Both of us were told: "Okay we feel pity for you." the commander told us: "We feel pity for you and you're very smart. You know, you should be promoted but because of the situation; your identity. If you change your religion and if you change your name, then the promotion will be possible." And after we decided to quit, I was thinking okay, I know how to sew. I am a very good dressmaker, so then, I was thinking okay I would start my small business. I know that there are things wrong in the system. It is because of the system and the attitude. And there is discrimination going on at every level up to date.... it is because you're not Buddhist. So, these are things that I have experienced personally; they are not a story; they are my own personal experiences. These are the things that are motivating me to participate in the peace process (Emily 2019).

Ethnic and religious discrimination is common in Myanmar. Most people of non-Bamar ethnic extraction and non-Buddhist religious backgrounds are denied employment or promotions in the public service and government-controlled organisations, as well as in business and industry based on their ethnicity, religion, sexual orientation, ability/disability living with HIV or a combination of some or all of these identity markers (Myanmar Centre for Responsible Business, 2017). Women, particularly ethnic nationality and religious minority women, experience compounding discriminations as their gender intersect with ethnicity and/or religion (Myanmar Centre for Responsible Business 2017: 3).

Inherited Responsibility/Role

For some women, such as the founder and Executive Director of the Myanmar Institute of Gender Studies (MIGS) in Yangon, the motivation was a commitment to fulfilling an inherited role from her grandfather. She explained that she established the MIGS and two other organisations to help contribute to peace, security and pave the way for the formation of a federal union due to an inherited responsibility:

Right, actually, I was born in Shan State and my grandfather was Shan State advisor for federal issues. So, yes, well, since I was three years old, he taught me about the federal issues in this country and he died when I was eight years old. But, well, the last message that he left me with was that I have to inherit this responsibility from him because he cannot finish his duty to establish a federal, democratic country. So, actually it is inherited. So, since I was young, I found myself with this enormous responsibility to help establish a formal democratic country. And actually, insecurity is a dominant issue in our Shan State, and without peace, we won't have security. If we won't have security, how can we establish a federal state? So, it drives me to study all these issues and to participate in the peace process. And then I established these organisations, so, the vision is based on my personal vision and then later on I worked together with others who can share my vision to strengthen the organisations in order to build the capacity of women but also men and young people to help shape the future of this country (Melissa 2019).

A steering committee member of Kachin State Women Network (KSWN) supported this view when she discussed her motivation to participate in political activism:

My family background, my grandparents are from the governance clan in Kachin culture called the *Duwa*¹. Most of the *Duwas* must govern their own clan or tribe. Because no one was interested in talking about politics in my family when I lived in Myitkyina, I never knew that I had this background, from my grandparents' side. My grandparents were also members of parliament during the Ne Win Era. When Ne Win seized the power in 1962, my grandfather was an MP, and he had a good relationship with Ne Win, and he gave my grandparents some gifts. So, when we grew up and saw some of these things, we wondered why no one in the family talked about politics. So, I think because politics runs in my blood, I have always wanted to learn about politics and take part in politics (Zenith 2019).

The Director of Kyun Ta Htaung Myae (KTHM) Foundation also supported this view when she was discussing her motivation for working for human rights, women's rights, and for ethnic and political rights of ethnic nationalities:

I come from a political family. My grandfather was also a politician, so nothing is new for us as a family. The intimidations and harassments are part of our lives. Traditionally, I am also from the ruling or royal clan called Sao Phan. We have always worked for the interest of our people and we have always paid the price for standing up for our people. My family background motivated me and continue to motivate me to work for human rights, to join politics and to start this organisation to fight for the rights of our people, especially women in conflict-affected areas (Memunatu 2019).

The phenomenon of women inheriting the public roles of deceased male relatives is not new in Myanmar (Harriden 2012; Loring 2018). When Aung San and other leaders were assassinated in 1947, their widows assumed temporary roles as members of parliament, including General Aung San's wife Daw Khin Kyi, who served as Myanmar's high commissioner to India from 1960 to 1967 (Mi Mi Khaing 1984:159). Aung Sang Suu Kyi's popularity, some have argued, is largely because she is seen by many in Myanmar as the daughter of General Aung San, father of modern Myanmar and founder of the Myanmar Army (Tan, 2014, p. 6). She is generally seen as continuing the unfinished work of her father in Myanmar's politics (Ellis-Petersen 2018; Silverstein 1990; Tan 2014: 6).

Inspired by Role Models

Some of the women were inspired by close family members or other women activists to join WCSOs and to work for women's rights and peace. For example, the Programmes Officer of the Myanmar Institute of Gender Studies (MIGS) in Yangon explained that her boss was the source of her motivation to work for women's organisations:

I joined MIGS because of Daw Khin Ma Myo. She is one of my role models. She is on the forefront of the policymaking but also involves the community in the policymaking process. So, I really admire the work she does. Also, most of my work experience is in the area of gender; that is why I got the job after I completed a diploma course in peace and conflict studies (Zaria 2019).

A number of focus group participants corroborated this view of the importance of role models. For instance, the

Project Manager of the Mon Development Organisation (MDO) explained:

During my high school days, I got to go to learn at Nyisa and seeing the differences between my hometown community and other areas. I saw Mi Kun Chan Non as the leader and she was talking to foreigners and leading and joining the discussions, which is different from what women do in my hometown. Women are only seen as mothers, wives and taking care of the family. These are the roles women play in my community. So, I saw Mi Kun Chan Non leading and saw her as my role model. I told myself, one day I want to be like her, leading other women to fight for our rights. This made me stay after my training (Jenny 2019).

Commitment to Promote Women's Rights, Empowerment and Participation

Other women joined specific women's organisations because such organisations worked on women's rights, empowerment and participation in the peace process. For example, a young woman who worked for Kachin Women Peace Network (KWPN) explained that:

In the past, I worked for the Kachin Women Association Thailand in Myitkyina. I worked for many years in Myitkyina. Then I went for further studies to develop my skills and knowledge. Also, I wanted to experience a different setting so I moved to Yangon and decided to join a Kachin-related women's organisation. So, Kachin Women Peace Network is based in Yangon ... I joined them in 2018 because their work is also on women's issues and also about peace (Jazz 2019).

The Director of Rakahi Community Development Foundation explained:

In Paletwa there are more women than men but the women do not have any opportunities. There are a limited number of educated women in Paletwa. I can see that I'm the only one being involved in issues so I thought to myself I need to do something to help women understand their rights and the opportunities that are available so they can stand up for themselves. They can claim their rights and participate in the political decision-making process. So, I decided to form Tainga Yin Thu. Most of the women in Paletwa are really struggling. Their social and economic status are still very low (Deborah 2019).

The General Secretary of the Kayan Women's Organisation (KyWo) in Loikaw asserted:

When we look at Kayah, people are just surviving in the very remote areas. So, it is not easy for local Kayan women to assume leading roles in the communities or within organisations. So, ten years ago, we founded KyWo to empower local Kayan women to share their knowledge and experiences, especially those who have not got formal education. Due to lack of education, transport network and communication network, many Kayan communities are poor and have low educational standards. KyWo is more than ten years now. We founded the organisation in Mae Sot on the Thai-Burma border but now we have moved back inside Myanmar to work closely and struggle with our local communities for their security and development (Elisabeth 2019).

The Program Coordinator of Cetana Development Foundation reiterated this view:

This organisation has contacts with the local communities and is working in the area of local livelihoods development, which is where my interest is.... My main reason for joining is the lack of job opportunities in the local communities. In my family, we are 11 siblings and only a few of them have jobs At that time, when I was young, we couldn't migrate to other countries and we didn't have rubber plantation.... Now, we have created the job opportunities for women and young people and also teaching these people how to manage their finances. There are a lot of people who earn a lot of money from the rubber plantation but they don't know how to manage the money. So, we created a micro financial management programme, where we train the local people on how to manage their finances (Wendy 2019).

Some of the focus group participants reiterated this view. For example, the Accounts Officer of Kachin State Women's Network (KSWN) recounted:

I joined the KSWN because I am really interested in women's issues relating to peace and conflict and women's participation in the peace process and in politics. Since I joined this organisation, I have learnt about the four pillars of the Women, Peace and Security agenda. The four pillars include participation, protection, prevention and relief and recovery.... Even though I am the accounts officer, sometimes I'm able to join some of the training activities on women and peace (Akua 2019).

Access to Justice

Other women were motivated by the need to provide legal aid and access to justice for vulnerable individuals and

groups in ethnic nationality areas, who were frequently persecuted through legal suits by government and military operatives. For example, the Director of the Peace and Justice Legal Centre said to me that her motivation for establishing the centre in 2017 was to give free legal services to poor individuals and groups.

She explained:

Initially, I worked with other people and we were just providing pro-bono legal services to poor people and groups. As time went on, more and more people joined us and the demand for our services kept increasing so we decided to form an NGO and I am the director of the NGO. We established the Peace and Justice Legal Aid Centre in May 2017. Then we linked up with the International Bridges to Justice, which has its headquarters in Geneva and we became their regional office in Shan State. Generally, my motivation is providing legal assistance and support to people who are being targeted and persecuted by the government. Most of the people we help include Shans, Pa-Oo people who are often accused of violating article 17 (1), which relates to unlawful assembly of people. These cases are often politically motivated and designed to silence people. So, I have to help these people with their cases by representing them in court and arguing their cases (Ann 2019).

While some women joined organisations focused on human rights, others worked for organisations with a focus on women's participation in political process such as the peace process. Others also joined organisations that focused on broader women's empowerment issues, including economic empowerment, political empowerment and prevention of gender-based violence.

Another key theme is that women's decisions to join specific organisations are informed partly by their lived experiences and partly by the goals and programs of particular organisations. Women are not a homogeneous group and so, while they may have shared goals or values, their individual motivations differ based on their unique lived experiences.

Concluding discussion

This paper has discussed women's commitment to peace in Myanmar by exploring their motivations for forming or joining particular WCSOs. It has revealed that the motivations of the women were as diverse and unique as the women themselves. The findings demonstrate that while peace may be the common goal for women, their motivations, which are largely informed by their lived experiences, are different and peculiar to each

woman. While some were motivated by their commitment to promote women's rights, enable access to justice, facilitate gender equality and empower other women, others were motivated by their experiences of violent conflict, discrimination, human rights violations, and oppression. Some were also inspired by their role models or had inherited the responsibility to work for peace from family members.

The paper argues that while women may have the same goal (peace), they often have different motivations for becoming peace activists, which are largely shaped by their lived experiences. While the paper is generally descriptive, it contributes to our understandings of women and peacebuilding by shedding light on women's variegated motivations for peace. Focusing on the women's motivations for peace has shed light on women's agency for peace in Myanmar and enhanced our understanding of women and peacebuilding, thus contributing to the literature on women, peace and security.

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Interviews

Names of the participants have been changed to protect their identity.

Abigail 2019 Interviewed in Hpa-An, Karen State, on 23/11/2019.

Akua 2019 Interviewed in Myitkyina, Kachin State, on 20/11/2019.

Ann 2019 Interviewed in Taunggyi, Shan State, on 03/12/2019.

Deborah 2019 Interviewed in Yangon, Yangon Region, on 16/11/2019.

Elisabeth 2019 Interviewed in Loikaw, Karenni State, on 14/11/2019.

Emily 2019 Interviewed in Yangon, Yangon Region, on 05/11/2019.

Emma 2019 Interviewed in Loikaw, Karenni State, on 15/11/2019.

Eva 2019, Interviewed in Mawlamyine, Mon State, on 19/11/2019.

Grace 2019 Interviewed in Sittwe, Rakhine State, on 10/12/2019.

Jazz 2019 Interviewed in Yangon, Yangon Region, on 11/11/2019.

Jenny 2019 Interviewed in Mawlamyine, Mon State, on 18/11/2019.

Joana 2019 Interviewed in Mawlamyine, Mon State, on 18/11/2019.

Joyce 2019 Interviewed in Yangon, Yangon Region, on 02/11/2019.

Julie 2019 Interviewed in Yangon, Yangon Region, on 29/10/2019.

Mary 2019 Interviewed in Yangon, Yangon Region, on 02/11/2019.

Memunatu 2019 Interviewed in Taunggyi, Shan State, on 04/12/2019.

Melissa 2019 Interviewed in Yangon, Yangon Region, on 08/11/2019.

Wendy 2019 Interviewed in Mawlamyine, Mon State, on 19/11/2019.

Zaria 2019 Interviewed in Yangon, Yangon Region, on 10/11/2019.

Zenith 2019 Interviewed in Myitkyina, Kachin State, on 29/11/2019.

End Note

1. A Duwa refers to a Kachin chief (Shayi 2015).

Author

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He managed the Centre for Peace and Conflict Studies' Civil Servants Programme in Myanmar in 2014-2015, where he led the training of over 500 civil servants in conflict transformation and peacebuilding across the country. He is currently completing his PhD at the University of New England (UNE), exploring women's participation in the Myanmar Peace Process through a feminist lens.

Poetry

We go through multiple doors
and a barbed gate into the compound
where dozens of youth workers
wearing duress alarms and radios
stand with legs apart, arms crossed.

They escort us to small groups of children:
the little ones are eight to twelve,
the middle, thirteen to fifteen,
the older are testosterone-filled,
and then there are the girls.

The groups are small pustules
of hatred and grief and despair:

Who the fuck is this?

What do we have to do now?

I fucking hate poetry.

Poetry sucks, man.

We step into an awkward, uncomfortable rhythm.
I read poems about kids in lock-up,
about unhappy, acting-out kids.
I give them cut-ups from Eminem lyrics
to grow into poems.

They tell tough stories about sex and dope
about being caught by the cops
about how they stole cars and cut people
and how much they hate others
especially their mothers and fathers.

Even though they hate poetry
I notice how carefully they write their words
between ruled lines,
how they colour and decorate their poems
and how they sign their names neatly
at the bottom of the page.

SHARON KERNOT

Strengthening Peace with Justice in Sri Lanka: The struggle for agency to research

SCOTT ROBERT HEARN DEN

During six years in Sri Lanka, I sought to understand the struggle for peace with justice through the voices and experiences of marginalised communities. I researched democracy, human rights and the civil society space available for such voices to be heard as constitutive elements of peace.

Yet I also faced many structural barriers in my attempts to undertake the research. These barriers arose through my early attempts to engage people from within state and quasi-judicial authorities and my misplaced hope in their ability or willingness to participate. The institutional structural barriers I faced became instructive in creating the research journey. They served both as benchmarks and inflection points against and around which I learnt to navigate my way forward, to adequately prepare myself to listen to the participants' experiences, and to recount and interpret their own journeys. This article discusses those barriers and the construction of a set of methods enabling the research outcome.

KEY WORDS: Research agency, civil society, Sri Lanka, peace studies, LGBTIQ

Background

I first went to Sri Lanka in 2005 to begin the process of organising the 8th International Congress on AIDS in Asia and the Pacific (ICAAP). The Congress was a biennial HIV and AIDS conference facilitating international cooperation on prevention, care and treatment through engagement of cross-sectoral stakeholders across the region. The impact of the deadly tsunami of 2004 remained a powerful psychological presence. The word 'hope' was often articulated by people. With their gaze fixed firmly upon a future of renewal, the local organisers of the Colombo ICAAP named the conference 'Waves of Change – Waves of Hope'.

The conference brought together a large cross-section of Sri Lankans, many of whom made sense of their own lives through a diverse set of identities. Such diversity, I realised, went beyond the social, political, cultural and economic structures that ordinarily dictated their experiences. As I was to learn, the conference afforded the attendees extraordinary opportunities for openness and engagement. Many attendees, especially those whose identities were not widely recognised as falling within the normative boundaries of Sri Lankan structures, were eager to be seen, heard and engaged. New dialogues opened. I witnessed senior government leaders talking to people with diverse sexual and gender identities and politicians sitting on floors in corridors with civil society representatives listening to the concerns of women and youth. Whether at lecterns in the formality of conference halls, over luncheon tables or somewhere in the labyrinth of corridors between session rooms,

the democratising of space legitimised the kinds of expressive rights-based freedoms for which people yearned. The momentary breakdown of traditional hierarchical structures that dominated the world beyond the walls of the conference seemed to foster a purposive agency amongst the attendees consistent with the incipient stages of solution-based dialogue. They found the kinds of agency that permitted a spirit of not only hope, that change remained possible, but of advocacy, dialogue and negotiation, and performative resistance.

Outside the relative safety of the conference space, conflict raged and with it there were the well documented and researched public narratives, such as the civil war in the northern third of the island between the armed forces of the Sinhala-Buddhist majority government and the Tigers of Tamil Ealam. Of course, that *public conflict* was also ever-present in Colombo, through the multitude of military checkpoints, roadblocks, the ominous presence of white vans with forced disappearances, murders of journalists, the occasional torching of media outlets, and torture by uniformed services personnel. But there were also *latent conflicts* and violence that targeted and impacted upon other communities of people, some of whom attended the conference, but which remained unaddressed and unresolved.

Beyond the conference, these *latent conflicts* also became known to me through my own associations with a cross-section of community-based people. The juxtaposition

between the freedoms found by those attendees within the conference space, on the one hand, and the deep marginalisation of their experiences outside, on the other hand, raised serious questions for me. Why, for example, under the wider Sri Lankan structures of power, were peoples' experiences so limited? What spaces existed for them to articulate their concerns, conduct policy and research, or report matters of public interest?

I was drawn to the work of peace scholars Johan V. Galtung and Paul D Scott. Their definitions of positive peace (absence of both direct and structural violence) and negative peace (in which structural violence persists), provided avenues for greater knowledge acquisition and analysis of structural conflict, violence and the marginalisation of people whose lives existed beyond the representations found in contemporary normative research (Galtung 2012). Importantly, Galtung and Scott's work linked peace with structural forms of participatory democracy, human rights and the kinds of civil agency that conference attendees had demonstrated (2008: 23, 25, 35-45, 66-74, 79). I was also drawn to scholars of law, social and political science, such as Dennis Altman, Aditya Bondyopadhyay, Partha Chatterjee, Mark Gevisser and Shawna Tang. Their work on civil agency and marginalised communities in the Asia-Pacific and African regions have demonstrated that the production of marginality and oppression arises through structural inequity and unjust power relationships from above. In particular, both Bondyopadhyay (South Asia and Sri Lanka) (2011: 80-81), and Tang (Singapore) (2016, 63-64), have examined post-colonial legal and political legacies in Asia, including state constructions of sexual minority rights as neo-colonial impositions.

These, and other studies, led to the creation of a purposive and emancipatory research agenda that was inclusive and participatory of marginalised peoples. I was influenced by the methods of scholar Norman Denzin (2009a, b). Like Gayathri Lokuge and Dorothea Hilhorst, whose research in north-east Sri Lanka applied intersectionality 'to capture people's agency and power' (Lokuge and Hilhorst: 2017, 473-497), I also sought a similar approach by giving voice to members of marginalised and oppressed communities. As Altman has asserted, 'For those who are oppressed always know more of what is above them than *vice versa*' (1973, 24-25). Indeed, this became an underlying principle in the methods I developed, as part of the larger research agenda.

At first, I was unaware of the extent of similar barriers that I too might experience in the conduct of my research. I was conscious of both my own privilege and vulnerabilities as a non-Sri Lankan. I was, for example: an educated, trans-nationally mobile, English speaking white gay male

with a Western background. However, over the course of six years, I became intimately aware of the ubiquitous social and political barriers that existed; not only barriers faced by Sri Lankans, but those frustrating my research.

This article examines my struggle to find agency in the early development of a peace and conflict studies research agenda. It is not, in and of itself, a complete academic study of that struggle. It does however provide a hypothesis for future research on 'agency' and the broadening of research agendas that might otherwise be constrained by social, political or even academic hegemony. What follows is a historical reflection of barriers which I encountered in formulating the larger research agenda (explained above) and which impeded my 'agency'. It explains a suite of experiences that corroborates, and allows empathy for the parallel struggle of Sri Lankan people generally, and participants, specifically, who ultimately contributed through interviews to the larger questions in the research, concerning *their* agency in an uncertain civil society and civic space.

Searching for Agency: Developing a Peace Research Agenda

Following the conference, I remained in Sri Lanka and continued to engage across civil society, with members of marginalised communities, including women, youth, Tamils, Christians, Hindus and people of diverse sexuality and gender identity, and with those people who I had initially met through the conference. Many people demonstrated levels of marginalisation, beyond the normative frameworks of race, ethnicity, religion and language (Lokuge and Hilhorst 2017: 473-474). Not surprisingly, I found that those people from communities of diverse genders or sexualities experienced even greater marginalisation, and my research paid particular attention to their vulnerabilities. Not only were they often denied access to ordinary areas of public life, such as employment, accommodation, or goods and services, but their oppression arose from unjust laws. Most poignantly, they were denied the fundamental right to choose who they wished to love.

Incipient Engagement with Civil Society Organisations

During the developmental stages of the research, I visited many civil society organisations, including those focussing on 'peace' whom I perceived would be interested in participating in the research. I initially cast a wide net, seeking a broad cohort of people. My ambit included organisations focussing on: a) peace and conflict resolution; b) policy and law development; and/or c) policy and advocacy development for marginalised groups; in particular, women and girls, the lesbian gay bisexual transgender intersex and/or queer (LGBTIQ)

community, the community of people with disabilities and those associated with ethnicity or religion. I also wrote to key ministries and quasi-judicial authorities. In doing so, I recognised the limitations that can be imposed upon the scope of research activities in conflict environments. I was influenced by several scholars and independent organisations (Gerharz 2017: 1-18; Kingsolver 2010: 1-9; ICAC 1994).

Notwithstanding these anticipated shortcomings, I was welcomed warmly by various chief executives within civil society; but was also met with questions about how such research might proceed in the restricted social and political climate of the country. All wished me well. They initially spoke about engagement, however always with tempered terms that left me with a sense of unease as to the limits of possibility. None sought any continuity of engagement, and I noted their hesitations.

From those early meetings, I assessed each discussion and identified organisations I believed might best fit the research agenda. I sent invitations but was disappointed, and remained curious, when so few replied. Follow-up actions proved limiting. However, a few organisations furnished me with confirmation of their agreement or, at least, interest in participating. This was also consistent with the University of Sydney (USyd) Human Research Ethics Committee's (HREC) requests. I sent follow-up letters, emails and made telephone calls to those NGOs who had intimated their interest. Unfortunately, most responses did not lead to concrete engagement. Ultimately, I concluded that the social and political climate dissuaded most from meaningful engagement with the research and with me. I then turned my mind to broader institutional engagement not realising initially that by redirecting my attention I was stepping closer to the political centre and the source of frustrations.

I also decided to talk to people with whom I had had an earlier acquaintance in Sri Lanka, such as through the ICAAP conference and other community contacts, to explore alternative research avenues. On the recommendation of a retired senior government bureaucrat, I approached several institutions, including the University of Colombo (UoC) which we agreed might both help facilitate and legitimise the research.

University of Colombo

I first approached the UoC because I perceived it to be an institutional structure through which the research could appropriately be grounded, both substantively and administratively, in conjunction with the University of Sydney. This seemed a plausible solution to legitimately undertaking research in-country and meet both the USyd's HREC requirements whilst further building

upon an already established relationship between the two universities: a project between the Department of Democracy and Human Rights at the USyd and the Faculty of Law at the UoC was underway. Finally, the UoC was advertising for students (international and domestic).

I approached several academics at the UoC by randomly visiting their faculties. Each showed varying degrees of interest, or disinterest. One told me he had commenced a similar project with northern European funding two years earlier but that it had been stopped by university authorities. He warned me that my research may meet the same fate. Whilst pessimistic, he remained encouraging of my efforts. I considered that advice in the design and future approach to the research.

I found a younger academic in the Department of Social and Political Science who was interested in forming an association with me. My application to the university with his support took approximately 18 months to complete. The application was approved through school, department, faculty and University Senate committees. Ultimately however, the Vice Chancellor (VC) refused to act on the recommendations of each of the four committees. I visited the VC's office to find an explanation but was refused an interview. Following several visits to the VC's waiting room, I was instead granted an interview with the UoC's registrar, who informed me that I would have to return to the school level and begin my application again.

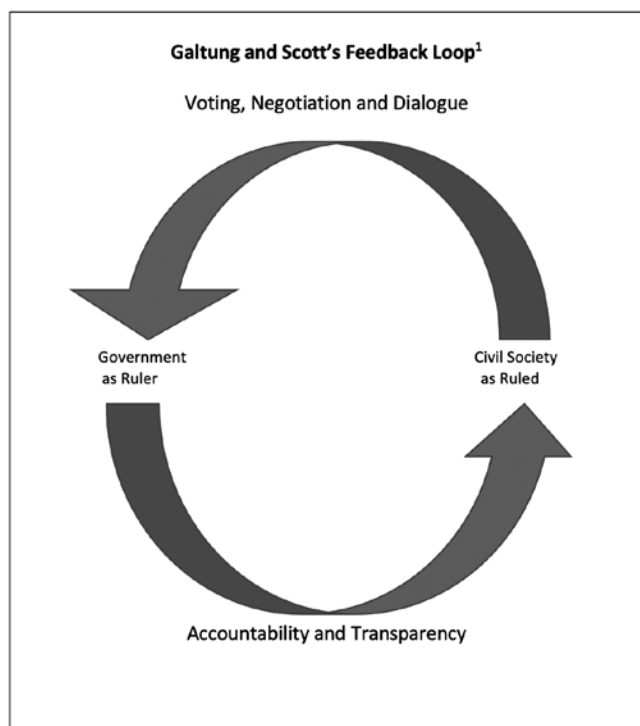
Frustrated, I returned to the USyd. I met with one of the Deputy VCs. She saw no reason why the UoC ought not support my application; although she recognised the possible political structural constraints that framed behaviours in alternative institutions. She wrote to the VC of the UoC on my behalf requesting steps be taken to enrol me. I returned to Sri Lanka and hand delivered the letter to the UoC's VC's office in June 2012. However, to my knowledge, no response was ever received at USyd. The exercise proved fruitful in so far as it offered an insight into the limitations of leadership and the structural barriers that existed, even within so-called democracies, when politically compromised.

Ministry of Higher Education

Much like so many of the experiences of Sri Lankans known to me, I too had begun a real Sri Lankan journey. Their experiences and frustrations with the social and political contract within the state seemed now to be confronting me. Unilateral decision-making in the upper echelons of power with little or no recourse to remedies, became more apparent. I decided to challenge the UoC's VC decision by lodging a complaint with the Ministry of Higher Education (MHE).

I continued to wrestle with the idea that there must be an avenue along which solutions existed. In a properly functioning democracy, recourse to discussion, debate and solutions is anticipated. Galtung and Scott's work provided a theoretical basis for moving forward, helping me to understand the structural barriers I faced (2008: 16). Moreover, their scholarship encouraged me to explore alternative solutions to overcoming barriers, such as through their dialogue-dependent democratic feedback loop.

Figure 1: Democracy Feedback Loop



Developed in consultation with Professor Paul D Scott by email correspondence dated 22 and 23 February 2020

I therefore pursued my complaint with the MHE throughout 2012 and 2013 only to learn that that organisation was directed by the VC's husband. Here I met with a ministry representative over several occasions, each visit providing the secretary with additional information about my application to the UoC. On 17 September 2012 I furnished the representative with a copy of the USyd VC's letter. That complaint was investigated over a period of a further 12-18 months and led to no result. What became apparent to me again and again, through my own experiences, was twofold: that enormous difficulties existed in accessing institutions that were in any way associated with the State; and, that there was no recourse to appeal nor pursue remedies in the wake of institutional decision-making. I was devoid of the democratic entitlements that one anticipated as a citizen of a Western liberal democracy. Moreover, from my readings I also realised that when benchmarked against the work of democracy scholars, the Sri Lankan experience not only fell short of the entitlements anticipated in rights-based

democracies, but it fell even shorter of the participatory mode of 'strong' democratic form to which the democracy scholar Benjamin Barber aspired (2003: 8).

Ministry of Official Languages and Social Integration

I continued to explore alternative participant options for the research. Although its mandate was limited to issues of race, ethnicity and religion, I visited the Ministry of National Languages and Social Integration (MNLSI) during 2013-14. It was divided into two divisions: languages, and social integration. The Social Integration Division, 'is committed towards the creation of a "Society for All" in which every individual, each with rights and responsibilities, has an active role to play' (MNLSI 2011: 1, 8). It seemed to me that within this ministry's mandate existed a potential interest in the wider social and cultural worlds of people in Sri Lanka.

I met with the minister's personal secretary periodically. We discussed the work of the ministry, the minister's engagement with communities and his preparedness for interview. I explained how the research was developing. On each occasion, the secretary requested more information and always sought more time to allow him the opportunity to discuss the minister's participation in the research. Ultimately, following a lengthy pattern of meetings, I pushed the secretary to secure an appointment with the minister for interview. Predictably, once I moved our discussions to dates and commitments, our engagement began to unravel. Citing the minister's view that 'the research was not of value to Sri Lanka', I was referred on to another department to commence alternative discussions. Again, like the UoC, my participation was thwarted. I found an environment that superficially appeared to be engaged but that ultimately harboured, at best, disinterest, and at worst, a deep fear about the study.

Sri Lankan Human Rights Commission

In addition to the UoC and the MNLSI, I wrote to and visited the Sri Lankan Human Rights Commission (SLHRC) during 2012-13. The strength of local authorities, such as the SLHRC, plays an important role when seeking to impart local people with new knowledge and values that might sometimes be viewed as imposed cultural logic from outside (Guneratne 2008: 101). I met with two Commissioners and explained the research. They talked to me about their work. However, their commitments to participate did not materialise when I followed-up at later dates. Commissioners became unavailable and SLHRC staff, who were also unable to formally commit to interviews, anecdotally told me that at least one senior SLHRC staff member was reporting back to the president's office, the result being that a culture of fear

permeated the organisation into inaction on politically sensitive issues.

Much later, when I had established interviews with participants from marginalised communities, interviewees were particularly critical of the SLHRC believing it was not independent and unable to fulfill its administration of justice mandate. Participants believed that it was internally compromised, furnishing me with examples of violence directed at its staff by state authorities. Those people who identified with the LGBTIQ community were particularly critical. For example, some said they had approached the SLHRC to investigate complaints of injustice based upon sexuality, but their requests were denied. One participant, Gloria, challenged the Commission's effectiveness as an institution of justice because she said, '*I think their ability to carry out their mission was so constrained by the political environment that they were operating in...*'. Another participant, Hilol, questioned the legitimacy, and appropriateness, of Commissioner appointments as well as their commitment to human rights. Others drew parallels between the conflicted relationship the SLHRC had with the government and the antagonism that had developed towards the Supreme Court, and the then Chief Justice who was ultimately impeached (The Gazette of the Democratic Socialist Republic of Sri Lanka 2012: 1796).

United Nations Country Team

During six years in-country, through the conference and civil society, I was also engaged with staff and heads of United Nations (UN) agencies. I wrote to and visited various UN agencies at the Colombo compound. None of the heads of agencies replied to my letters. None were prepared to be interviewed as representatives of the UN. However, three research participants attached to the UN (one head of agency) were ultimately interviewed, their identities protected by pseudonyms.

Amongst the civil society participants, one articulated their concerns about the conflicted responses of UN agencies. Self-censorship was central to this discussion. One participant of Focus Group 2, Nigel, spoke of two UN agencies, UNFPA and ILO, with whom his non-governmental organisation had worked on LGBTIQ, HIV/AIDS and sex worker issues. He said that both agencies had subjugated themselves to government demands, modifying or withdrawing from civil society support. These observations were anecdotally confirmed elsewhere during data collection, poignantly illustrated by the intermittent refusal of the government to re-validate visas of UN employees seen as troublesome.

What became clear was that the space in which the UN itself worked was conflicted by government demands, and possibly corrupted. Whether the UN system was

adequately upholding its international mandate in accordance with the Charter and the rights-based order, framed within the Universal Declaration of Human Rights or associated Covenants, was not directly addressed within the research; however, these collective experiences point towards a pattern of institutional behaviours which may have diminished civic agency.

Ministry of Defence

Under the first Rajapaksa administration (2005-2015), the Ministry of Defence (MoD) was given additional oversight functions. A Criminal Investigation Division (CID) was established to monitor the activities of civil society. In 2011, the UN Report of the Secretary-General's Panel of Experts on Accountability in Sri Lanka warned against the role. It found 'disturbing...reports of human rights organisations being investigated' and, given their 'concern' over the 'pressures on human rights defenders' noted the importance that defenders have 'unrestricted freedom of movement...and be able to monitor and report on human rights issues' (Report of Secretary-General Panel of Experts 2011: 113) The sub-case study within the research of two lesbians, Ramaya and Margaret, highlighted the difficulties people faced under such scrutiny. They worked in women's, gay men's health and sexual rights-based NGOs and said they made '*conscious efforts to stay under the radar so that they wouldn't get adverse media publicity*'. Despite this they both found themselves under investigation and closed-down their work on several occasions. During interview for the research Ramaya reported that they were, '*called by the NGO Secretariat and Ministry of Defence... to the 4th Floor of the CID and taken in for questioning...this made us very fearful*'. Dilshan, another participant, who ran an LGBTIQ NGO reported similar concerns and registered his NGO as a business to avoid the perception that they were involved in community-based work.

Similar stories had been known to me anecdotally and, when cross-referenced against my own experiences, helped me to interpret the environment in which I found myself more carefully. Like others' experiences, my participation, and hence agency, was limited by top-down institutional structural barriers whose own shortcomings arose due to the conflicted spaces they occupied within the political sphere.

Barber's strong democracy model aspires to a self-governing community of citizens who enjoy a common purpose and engage in mutual action 'by virtue of their civic attitudes and participatory institutions' (2003: 117). Beyond the importance of a purposively civic 'attitude', Barber recognised the mutually necessary structural imperatives that institutions ought to promote, such as allowing and enabling civic action to which I include

academic freedom and research agency. Unlike the quashing of agency demonstrated by the UoC, the MHE, the SLHRC and even parts of the UN system, the MoD had not yet refused my engagement. But its top-down mandate, of control and constraint, and its authority to arbitrarily prosecute those without, or with little, power under the criminal code created an environment that suffocated civic participation and agency.

Like the other institutional structures discussed above, I initially formed the view that the MoD should be afforded the opportunity to participate in the research and respond to questions about why a military institution ought to have oversight over the activities of civil society. I visited the offices of the MoD and spoke with one of the uniformed staff. They were reluctant to allow me to interview anyone formally but were interested in knowing who I was, who I had spoken to for the research and requested I remain in contact. However, as my discussion with the officer appeared not to demonstrate any level of genuine reciprocity and given the necessity to ensure there was no harm done to any of my own contacts or potential participant interviewees, I too, although somewhat prescient of the experiences of Ramaya, Margaret and Dilshan, decided not to engage the MoD further.

Discovering Agency and Theoretical Framing

I interpreted the lack of state-related participation as a denial of my agency. Whilst in democratic theory an individual may enjoy greater latitude in declining to participate in their civic duties, a state agency, or quasi-judicial body, owes its citizenry a mandated suite of goods and services furnished accountably and transparently. I returned to my observations made at the ICAAP conference to guide me. Present was the willingness and meaningfulness of marginalised people's agency amplified by the enabling provision of a democratically constructed space. My readings, and these personal experiences, further grounded my research within a peace and conflict studies framework and deepened my desire to explore the nature of peace, agency and participatory potential of a rights-based democratic space and whether any such space existed within Sri Lanka.

Galtung and Scott define the imposition of majority will against a minority as a form of 'cultural violence'. The participants' experiences, in particular those from the LGBTIQ community, demonstrated that, beyond the ordinary narratives of race, religion and language, a powerful heteronormative hegemony exists in Sri Lanka. They demonstrated that the ambit of Galtung and Scott's arguments concerning majoritarianism's violence is broad and extends to myopic applications of democratic forms. 'The imposition of one form of democracy on societies rather than develop some mix', Galtung and Scott argue,

is inconsistent with a peace whose 'mandate from the people' is respectful of culture, steered by human rights and encouraging of participatory practices (2008: 22, 29).

I searched for the kind of democratic *mélange*, that seemed absent in the Sri Lankan experience, but which might enable peace in a manner that was consistent with Galtung and Scott's theories. I discovered part of that mix in the form of Barber's 'distinctly modern form of participatory democracy' or 'strong democracy'. It is 'sympathetic to the civic ideal that treats human beings as inherently political' promoting participatory practices, inclusive of actors and stakeholders from within civil society. In the face of deprived agency, strong participatory democracy seemed to hold at least part of an answer to the methodological framing of the study, and I resolved that the creation of such a space was necessary in order that I establish agency for participants.

Through my own experiences, I became more convinced that whilst the research needed to focus on the structures of power it did not need to rely upon approval from within those structures. Nor, I resolved, should I allow the unwillingness of those located within such structures of power to frustrate my search for answers to the research questions. Rather, I decided I needed to rely upon the voices of those most marginalised and silenced. Accordingly, I approached the development of the research methods with particular care, grounding myself in the emancipatory and social justice visions of the methods scholar Norman Denzin (2009a, 2009b).

I hoped that the macro-framing of the research around these scholars would better meet both the substantive and methodological challenges that lay ahead. On the one hand, I was interested in why peace had been so elusive for so long in Sri Lanka. But I was also interested in what peace meant for people in different communities and how peace might offer them agency. I discovered a link between the real emancipatory desires of marginalised people and the emancipatory visions of methodology scholars. This intersection of desires and thought helped the methods evolve. It also helped me to focus on the study's overall substantive research question about the space available for civil society to function in the country. Of course, my own broad and long history working in human rights, civil society and with communities caused me to pause and consider how my own experiences were a conduit towards empathising with the experiences of others, to examining the multi-dimensional conflicted spaces in Sri Lanka and to interpret how power was being used.

The research was informed by symbolic and interpretative interactionism. According to Denzin, 'interactionism best

fits the empirical nature of the social world' (2009b: 5). Denzin also calls for a 'repositioned critical qualitative studies project'; an 'activist project'; and, a renewed 'public intellectualism' from which an emergent ideological and dissident urgency in scientific approach to method might be gleaned (2009a: 26-37). This approach fits well with the emancipatory and dissident visions of the academy of peace.

I was also conscious of my shared identity characteristics with some participants, for example, the members of the minority LGBTIQ community, which helped to enhance interactionism. I recognised that this doorway allowed me to reposition myself ethically and with a proximity to the participants that fostered common insights. As Martha Nussbaum has argued in her research on empathy, pity and compassion, 'the pain of another will be an object of my concern only if I acknowledge some sort of community between myself and the other, understanding what it might be for me to face such pain' (1996: 35). In an environment in which I could be perceived as *not belonging*, symbolic and interpretative interactionism and Nussbaum's insistence on the importance of deeper relational inter-subjectivities helped to bridge our relationships.

As I was interested in examining the broader scope of injustice across communities, I turned towards an intersectional methodological approach. It became an analytic tool that allowed me to focus on social inequality (Romero 2018: 1). It not only helped me examine how power is distorted but also helped to highlight the particular experiences of people whose intersecting marginalities arose from such distortions. Intersectionality allowed participants to portray themselves through multiple identities and other social divisions such as through their race, religion, age, sexual minority, or diverse gender status (Collins and Bilge 2016: 7). At the same time, I recognised that some participants harboured identity markers which could be understood as privileged as well as disadvantaged. For example, not unlike my own levels of privilege and disadvantage, participants presented with multiple and mixed characteristics. Dilshan, for example, was both a young gay man as well as being from the majority Sinhala Buddhist community. Throughout the analysis, each participant presented in terms of their particular combination of marginalised and non-marginalised identities, and in so doing, I recognised how those intersecting identities produced a particular experience for each individual.

The experiences of people with diverse sexuality and gender who identified as members of the LGBTIQ community served as a threshold marker that encapsulated the experiences of many others who are also disadvantaged by the systems of hegemonic

power in Sri Lanka. The body of theoretical work on intersectionality helped to highlight the relationships between these systems of power, including patriarchy, heteronormativity, and other issues of social division, such as race, gender or sexuality (Collins and Bilge 2016: 2). As Patricia Hill Collins and Sirma Bilge suggest, there is a nexus of power within institutional hegemonies, such as patriarchy, capitalism, white supremacist movements, racism and religion, amongst other structures, whose interdependence forces the location and social divisions of marginalised people based upon, for example, race, gender and sexuality (2016: 2, 66-67, 73, 76-77, 130-131). My attempts to establish the research project through various institutional structures and the consistency of barriers frustrating my ability to proceed highlighted the antagonisms that the participants themselves faced when trying to manage upwards from grassroots positions.

In conjunction with my own knowledge gleaned from my own experiences in Sri Lanka as well as my proximity and positionality with respect to the participants, I employed Interpretative Phenomenological Analysis (IPA) to interpret each participant's particular set of experiences. Whilst a common interview structure was used to commence discussions around peace, democracy, human rights and civil society, the open-ended component of interviews, consistent with principles of IPA, meant that each participant was free to explore new ideas and related concepts. Upon thematically codifying the interviews, new themes of common concern began to emerge, such as leadership, heteronormativity, patriarchy, culture and caste, the re-emergence of civil society and questions concerning the future. The employment of interpretative methods to analyse interviews enabled phenomena to not only be treated idiographically but, as Karl Popper argues, as part of a complex labyrinth of place, of past and present practices (Popper 2002: 4).

Conclusions

My time in Sri Lanka enabled me to better understand the struggle for peace with justice that ordinary Sri Lankans face. Recognising that the attainment of positive peace requires a much broader suite of considerations than the popular public narrative addresses, I set myself upon a journey that I hoped would reveal that hidden canvas. I discovered, through my own struggle for research agency, that what was not easily seen was made invisible by those in power and through the institutional structures that support them.

In attempting to answer the central research question relating to the civic space available for marginalised people to express their voices in Sri Lanka, my own agency became an issue of concern. It helped frame the methods I selected, their construction, and execution.

But it also provided me with greater insight during the collection of data more generally and from which my final analyses developed. As an emancipatory exercise too, the successful application of the methods, the results achieved and conclusions reached, the research fosters new opportunities for further investigations about peace with justice for marginalised communities to be developed, and for new questions to be asked in the future. Why, for example, despite the Aragalaya (Struggle) movement of 2022 have the same group of politicians returned to power? Why are peaceful protests still being subjected to 'heavy-handed' governmental responses? What will be the impact of these events on democracy, human rights and the agency of marginalised communities?

In a rights-based participatory democracy it is anticipated that certain fundamental rights, freedoms and responsibilities co-exist within the social and political contract. I discovered these anticipated practices and entitlements are unavailable to the Sri Lankan participants in this research. Those most marginalised, such as the LGBTIQ community, who also remain criminalised, had the greatest difficulty in finding agency and oxygen for voice. State-related structures were closed to them and, as I discuss above, to me.

In the construction of this research, I discovered the same institutional structures frustrated *my* journey and that the acquisition of knowledge about Sri Lanka which I sought to understand through the experiences of ordinary Sri Lankans could only be heard and analysed if *their* voices could be heard. I also realised that those most marginalised were the most dependent upon change and that such change relied upon these structural barriers opening. It was therefore the marginalised people in Sri Lanka to whom I turned in order to best understand the barriers and the prerequisite circumstances necessary for peace in the country.

The research contributes to contemporary scholarship by applying a multi-disciplinary peace and conflict lens to the circumstances in Sri Lanka. It does so by an examination of the experiences of marginalised communities in relation to democracy, human rights and civil society. By listening to the voices of people from marginalised communities the research broadens the normative narrative concerning conflict within the country and provides insight into the hopes of Sri Lankans and their desire for change.

The barriers I faced at the commencement of the research became instructive in the creation of the research journey, and in particular the construction of the methods. They served as invaluable pre-requisite experiences enhancing my abilities to listen, empathise and interpret the participants' experiences, *their own* journeys, into

meaningful knowledge. This article discusses my struggle for agency, in the face of entrenched structural barriers, and in so doing constructs a set of methods that gave agency to the participants, enabling the research to move forward.

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Nostos*

My pa escaped a war. He escaped a war,
only to spend his life trying to return.

He could not have imagined how restless domestic life
would be,
And we could not have imagined how the violence
would change him.

He reminds my ma & I often of his sacrifices, of the
horrors endured
But the truth, much worse
He misses the violence,
Wishes the fates would keep turning
Him around & around.

On our island one night, the light goes out
In the violet, blue dark no one but the gods
See the blood shed
And they will not intervene

For the gods already know:
There is no home for any of us now,
A long sigh is all there will ever be.¹

TINA HUANG

1. I have borrowed and adapted this line from *A River in the Sky* by Clive James.

*Commended entry from the 2022 Seeking Asylum Poetry prize

In the Waiting Room

I don't recognise her at first.
She is round and flushed
with new life – has three children
and one on the way.

The oldest, a willowy girl
is asked to watch the toddler
who bolts this way and that
and has everyone's heart by the throat
when he dashes out to the car park.

The mother rescues him,
resumes her place at the counter
where the middle child – an elfin princess
in a long emerald gown swings on her legs as if
they are sturdy trunks in a forest.

The waiting room vibrates
with their energy, their drama,
their effervescence.

They hold my gaze and smile these girls
because I am drawn to them.
And then I am drawn away.
Back in time. Almost three years.

I was travelling from Pompoota
with two tiny girls.
The youngest flushed with fever and flu.
The oldest chattered indecipherably.
Her speech fractured.

They howled and howled when
I delivered them to the foster home.

Later, I supervised their access visit.
The mother, thin and toothless, gave them
her undivided, energetic attention.
She explained, apologised, promised.

And here they are now –
the mother, drug-free and smiling
with her new teeth,
the children laughing
with confidence and gusto
because the world belongs to them.

SHARON KERNOT

The Dynamics of Conflict in the Chittagong Hill Tracts of Bangladesh in the Post Peace Accord Period

OBAYEDUL HOQUE PATWARY

The Chittagong Hill Tracts, located in the south-eastern part of Bangladesh, are regarded as the home of the indigenous people, resided in by 11 different indigenous ethnic groups, who are ethnically and culturally different from the mainstream Bengali people. However, the area has been subject to violent ethnic conflict since the late 1970s between the security forces of Bangladesh Government and the indigenous ethnic groups. A peace treaty titled the Chittagong Hill Tracts Peace Accord was signed in 1997 between the government of Bangladesh and the Parbatya Chattagram Jana Samhati Samiti (PCJSS) to end the armed conflict. However, the search for peace remains elusive as the region is still engulfed by violence in different ways including direct, structural and cultural violence. This has happened because the Accord has failed to pay due attention to transforming the conflict through reconciliation, community integration, and ensuring environmental sustainability, which could pave the ground to create peace from the bottom up. It is against this backdrop that the study focuses on the dynamics of conflict in the post-accord scenario in the Chittagong Hill Tracts.

KEY WORDS: Chittagong Hill Tracts, Peace Accord, Dynamics of conflict

Introduction

The Chittagong Hill Tracts are located in the south-eastern part of Bangladesh, covering 13,295 square kilometres, that is 10 per cent of the total land area of the country. The area is regarded as the home of 11 different indigenous groups, who are ethnically and culturally different from the mainstream Bengali people (Panday and Jamil 2009: 1053). The area has been subject to violent ethnic conflict since the late 1970s, initially between the security forces of the Bangladesh Government and the indigenous groups. In 1997, the Chittagong Hill Tracts Peace Accord (CHT Peace Accord) was signed between the government of Bangladesh and the Parbatya Chattagram Jana Samhati Samiti (PCJSS). The PCJSS was the representative body of the indigenous community of the Chittagong Hill Tracts (CHT), formed in 1972 to realise the demands of the CHT indigenous people for regional autonomy. The aim of the 1997 Peace Accord was to end the armed conflict. Its signing and the resultant disarmament of the members of PCJSS has largely reduced the direct violent confrontation between these contending groups. However, the search for peace remains elusive as the region is still engulfed by conflict although in new ways (Alauddin 2017: 63).

Indeed, the signing of the treaty has contributed to the achievement of a kind of 'negative peace' (Choudhury 2017: 5, Sajib and Sohad 2018: 272); or what Chakma and Cosa refer to as 'violent peace' (2013: 141), due

to the emergence of the new dynamics of conflict and violence. This includes direct, structural, cultural, and ecological violence in the everyday lives of the CHT indigenous community. Furthermore, the post-Peace Accord violence had become multi-layered, moving from the initial government versus indigenous people conflict to a situation which now involves indigenous versus government security forces and the Bengali settlers; and now ethnic intra-group conflict within the indigenous community (Panday and Jamil 2009: 1067). This situation emerged due to a number of factors including the exclusive nature of the Peace Accord negotiations; the failure to address social and cultural differences between contending actors; a top-down approach in dealing with the conflict; the continuation of land grabbing and the presence of military camps.

Historical background of the CHT Conflict

The roots of the indigenous movement in the CHT region can be traced back to the repeal in 1963 of the CHT Regulation of 1900, enacted by the British. Under this regulation the CHT enjoyed a 'Special Status' and was an autonomously administered region. The sale and transfer of land to non-indigenous people was prohibited, as was the migration of non-indigenous people into the CHT region. In 1935, the region was declared a 'Totally Excluded Area' by the Government of India Act. Under this Act, the region enjoyed relative autonomy and was

administered by the traditional tribal chiefs. In 1947, after the partition of India the CHT became part of Pakistan. An amendment by the Pakistan Government to the Constitution culminated in the withdrawal of the CHT region's special status and autonomy. This development opened up the region for the non-indigenous people to immigrate and settle in the region (Pandey and Jamil 2009: 1054-1055).

Apart from problems arising from the influx of non-indigenous immigrants to the CHT region, the building of the Kaptai Hydro-Electric Dam in 1962 by the Government of Pakistan caused immense hardship for the indigenous people. The dam submerged 218 square kilometres of land, approximately 40 percent of the total arable land of the CHT region, and displaced some 100,000 indigenous people from their homes. The government did not provide any compensation to the people affected by the dam. The dam is considered a 'death trap' by the indigenous people, as the lives and livelihoods of an entire generation – thousands of people – were adversely impacted (Pandey and Jamil 2009: 1054-1055).

After the independence of Bangladesh in 1971, the indigenous people then faced a new crisis: their identity was not recognised by the newly formed Constitution of independent Bangladesh, resulting in a sense of 'otherness' among the indigenous people. Article 9 of the Bangladesh Constitution adopted in 1972 states that 'Bangali Nationalism' will be the basis of state nationalism, ignoring the unique ethnic identities of the indigenous people, declaring that:

The unity and solidarity of the Bangali nation, which deriving its identity from its language and culture, attained sovereign and independent Bangladesh through a united and determined struggle in the war of independence, shall be the basis of Bangali nationalism (Article 9, The Constitution of Bangladesh 1972).

However, this definition of Bengali nationalism was instantly rejected by the indigenous people under the leadership of Manobendra Narayan Larma, who argued against the provision in the Parliament saying that:

You cannot impose your national identity on others. I am a Chakma not a Bangali. I am a citizen of Bangladesh, Bangladeshi. You are also a Bangladeshi but your national identity is Bangali... They (Hill People) can never become Bangali (Government of Bangladesh 1972 cited in Pandey and Jamil 2009: 1056).

On March 7, 1972, the indigenous people formed the Parbatya Chattagram Jana Samhati Samiti (PCJSS)

under the leadership of Manobendra Narayan Larma to fight for a constitutional guarantee of their ethnic identity. This later turned into a violent movement for more than two decades.

The post-independence governments of Bangladesh not only overlooked the demands of the indigenous people for a constitutional guarantee of their ethnic identity and rights, but also adopted policies which substantially changed the demographic balance of the region. For instance, during 1979-83, the government of Bangladesh resettled approximately 500,000 Bengalis onto the land of the indigenous people. The majority of these settlers were environmentally displaced people from different coastal areas – victims of natural calamities such as floods, riverbank erosion and tropical cyclones. The government provided them with land ownership, rations, and monetary benefits as inducements to move to the CHT. In 1941, indigenous people had proportionately constituted 98 percent of the total population in the CHT region, with Bengalis constituting the remaining two percent. However, by 2003, the indigenous proportion was reduced to 51 percent and the Bengali proportion increased to 49 percent.

These developments inevitably posed enormous challenges to the identity, culture and economic security of the indigenous people (Pandey and Jamil 2009: 1057) – so much so that the indigenous people responded with an armed movement which only ended in 1997 through the CHT Peace Accord (Zahed 2013).

Post-1997 Peace Accord: new schisms of conflict

More than two decades after the signing of the Peace Accord, the road to peace in CHT remains rocky, as indigenous people continue to live with the fear of being evicted from their traditional land and even tortured. On the one hand, the government did not address the underlying causes of the conflict which pre-dated the Peace Accord, between the indigenous community and the government security forces and Bengali settlers. On the other hand, the promises in the Accord are yet to be realised. New schisms have emerged from this situation, resulting in new dynamics of conflict and violence.

The indigenous community became subject to new schisms. One was the emergence of two contending groups, the pro-Accordists (PCJSS) and anti-Accordists (UPDF) (Alauddin 2017: 67). This development started with dissent around the nature of the Peace Accord when it was signed in 1997. The Peace Accord had been negotiated between the government and the PCJSS, on the basis that the PCJSS was considered at least by those parties as a unified voice of the indigenous community. However, the student wing of PCJSS had opposed the

Peace Accord's terms and already formed a new platform with other like-minded groups opposing it. Thus, from the beginning tensions arose between those who favoured the treaty and wanted its implementation and those who were against the treaty.

By 1998, the disgruntled members of the PCJSS in collaboration with other groups who felt excluded from the negotiations formed a new group: the United People's Democratic Front (UPDF). The UPDF claimed that PCJSS did not represent the voices of the 'downtrodden masses', and accused the treaty of 'selling out' the autonomy movement of the indigenous people (Wilkinson 2015: 188). They opposed the Accord due to its failure to meet their long-standing demand for complete autonomy; the absence of provisions for constitutional safeguards in relation to their identity; obscurity in relation to the land rights of the indigenous people; lack of a clear time-frame regarding the withdrawal of the military; and absence of provisions to repatriate the Bengali settlers from the region. The mass of the indigenous community believes that if they had been given 'indigenous' status in the treaty, then the land conflict could have been resolved through indigenous customary law (Alauddin 2017: 69). The violent conflict between PCJSS and UPDF has resulted in the loss of more than 500 lives and injuries to some 1000 people in less than a decade (*The Daily Star*, December 01, 2004).

Furthermore, a sense of grievance persists among the non-Chakma minority indigenous communities. The leadership of PCJSS is from the dominant Chakma ethnic community, who are blamed by the non-Chakma minorities for claiming all the benefits provided to the indigenous communities by the Peace Accord (Alauddin 2017: 69). While the violence between Bengalis and the indigenous community is now less frequent, the violent conflict between PCJSS and UPDF has become more frequent. This is a significant shift from the pre-Peace Accord period where the indigenous community was frightened by the attacks of security forces and Bengali settlers. Now, after the signing of the treaty, one indigenous group was frightened by the attacks of another indigenous group upon them. The emergence of this intra-ethnic conflict within the CHT indigenous community has weakened their position in a number of ways: the indigenous community is becoming increasingly divided, its economy is being negatively affected, and its social and human development is facing setbacks. This has diminished the hope for sustainable peace in the region (Panday and Jamil 2009: 1067).

Over the years since it was signed, the Accord has not only created schisms within the indigenous community, it has also exacerbated poor relations between Bengalis and the

indigenous community. The Bengali settlers initiated the Somo Odhikar Adhikari or Equal Rights Movement (SAA) in protest against the Accord (Uddin 2017: 8), as they felt that it had disadvantaged them. They believed the Accord made them second class citizen in the region (Uddin 2017: 8) while the interests of the indigenous community had been served through gains in power, position and authority (Sajib and Sohad 2018: 270). The founding of the SAA has created consternation in some parts of the indigenous community, as it calls for the abolition of the treaty (Panday and Jamil 2009: 1067).

In addition, the continuation of land grabbing by the settlers post-Accord is one of the underlying reasons for violent conflict between settlers and the indigenous community (Chakma and Costa 2013: 143-144). It is also alleged by the indigenous community that the government security forces always side with the Bengalis when violence erupts between the two communities (Panday and Jamil 2009: 1067). Continued migration of Bengalis in the post-Accord era also fuels conflicts between the two communities. Speaking in the British House of Lords, Lord Avebury opined that '(t)he very demography of the CHT is being changed under military occupation' (Quoted in Chakma and Costa 2013: 143-144).

The exclusive nature of the negotiation

In the negotiation process leading to the signing of the Peace Accord the government did not include all the relevant stakeholders from the indigenous communities. This consequently created more polarisation in the region. The government perceived the conflict as a 'two-sides' conflict (that is the conflict between government and PCJSS), which reflected their ignorance of the multi-faceted patterns of conflict within and between indigenous communities in the CHT (Wilkinson 2015: 184).

The Awami-led government had negotiated with PCJSS, which was considered by them to be the representative of the collective indigenous communities of the Chittagong Hill Tracts. However, when considering PCJSS, the indigenous communities in the CHT not only differ from the majority Bengali population, they also differ from each other in terms of religion, language, history, and social and political structures (Wilkinson 2015: 189). Accordingly, there is an ethnic dimension regarding the leadership of PCJSS, as it is dominated by the Chakma ethnic group. For this reason, the 'Jumma Nationalism' propagated by PCJSS is also regarded by many as a 'Chakma movement' (Chowdhury 2008: 66).

During the time of insurgency, some smaller ethnic groups distanced themselves from PCJSS, and even fought against it. For instance, the Mro Bahini, which was formed to secure Mro tribal interests, waged an

extended violent conflict against Shanti Bahini (the armed wing of PCJSS) throughout the 1980s, and also opposed any peace agreement involving the PCJSS. In 1997, another indigenous group named the Jumma National Army also carried out violent attacks in Rangamati and Khagrachari, opposing the Accord and the PCJSS as its signatories. Even within PCJSS a number of divisions grew over ideological disagreements. The first division within PCJSS happened in 1983 when dissident PCJSS members formed a new Priti group under the leadership of Priti Kumar Chakma. Indeed, the complex nature of the political landscape of CHT with more JSS Reformist groups indicates that PCJSS did not reflect the voices of all indigenous communities of CHT (Wilkinson 2015: 183).

Various civil society groups advocating the interests of the CHT indigenous people such as Pahari Gono Parishad (PGP/Hill People's Council), the Pahari Chatra Parishad (PCP/Hill Student's Council), and Hill Women's Federation (HWF) were also excluded from the negotiation process. They attacked the legitimacy of the PCJSS arguing that it did not reflect the voices of all tribal groups of CHT (Chowdhury 2002: 28). The Accord only engaged with some political elites of three dominant ethnic groups namely Chakma, Marma, and Tripura. As a result, smaller ethnic groups perceived that the Accord did nothing to protect their interest, rather it brought power, position and wealth for these elites (Uddin 2012). Indeed, the exclusive nature of the Accord negotiations has polarised the political landscape in CHT, and was responsible for the emergence of new patterns of violence in the post-Accord milieu (Wilkinson 2015: 185).

The failure to address the social and cultural differences between the Bengalis and the Indigenous communities

Peace is not a matter of an accord imposed from the top but it is actually a nexus, a co-existence and mutual integration between diverse socio-cultural and ethnic groups located in the low rungs of society (Sajib and Sohad 2018: 272).

In a multi-ethnic society, addressing social and cultural differences between communities is fundamental to ensuring social stability, security and peace. It can be promoted through building trust, which is the most important social capital to promote social cohesion and resolve differences in a multi-ethnic society (Islam et al. 2022: 9). CHT was originally considered to be a land inhabited by 13 different ethnic groups. The down shift in the proportion of the indigenous population in the CHT between 1947 and the 1980s from 98% to 51%, the balance being Bengalis, was dramatic (Pandey and Jamil 2009: 1057). Indigenous people regard Bengalis living in

the area as intruders, forced settlers and occupiers of their land. On the other hand, the majority of the Bengali settlers consider the indigenous peoples as outsiders, having their ancestral roots in Myanmar or India. Furthermore, Bengali settlers formed Somo Adhikari Andolon (SAA) to demonstrate their position against the Accord, perceiving that it has provided undue privileges to the Pahari, with Pahari being a generic term for indigenous hill people, by depriving the Bengali settlers (Sajid and Sohad 2018: 271). These developments have consequently deepened the schism between the two communities, resulting in clashes over many aspects of everyday life.

The CHT Peace Accord did not address the social and cultural differences between Bengalis and the indigenous communities (Uddin 2017: 17-18). Furthermore, the post-Accord period has created more polarisation between and among indigenous communities in CHT, marked by mistrust, religious extremism, discrimination and marginalisation of the Pahari people. The low level of social interaction between these two communities is mainly responsible for the emergence of inter-community violence in the post-Accord milieu (Islam et al. 2022: 9).

Today there are three possibilities awaiting the region: first, resurgence of the conflict situation that prevailed prior to the peace treaty; second, the continuation of the current conflict situation; and third, creating an environment for peaceful coexistence. It is predicted that there is a real possibility of the resurgence of ethnic conflict that crippled the region in the 1980s and 1990s unless peaceful coexistence between communities is ensured and the new post-Accord violent divisions addressed (Alauddin 2017: 73).

The failure to connect to the ordinary people at grassroot levels

The Peace Accord was signed without the participation of eight indigenous communities who felt they should have been represented in the negotiations (Alauddin 2017: 68). The Accord has accordingly failed to engage the majority of the indigenous community, instead engaging only the political elites of the three dominant ethnic groups. For this reason, the Peace Accord is perceived by many as a bilateral contract between the government and the political elites of three major ethnic groups, excluding the voices of those eight other smaller indigenous ethnic communities (Uddin 2017: 18). Accordingly, the treaty reflects an elitist and top-down approach that ignored the voices of the relevant stakeholders. The search for peace and stability so far not yet achieved still continues in the region (Panday and Jamil 2009: 481) because the peace process remains detached from the people – their needs and voices ignored (Rahmat and Ali 2019).

The government also did not listen to the opinions of the Bengali settlers who now constitute almost half of the total population of the region. The Bengali settlers consider the Peace Accord to be discriminatory, as it did not address the concern of the Bengali community and made them feel like second class citizens (Alauddin 2017: 7; Pandey and Jamil 2009: 473). The Bengali settlers also perceive that the development activities carried out by the national, regional, and international NGOs in the post-Accord era only focus on the welfare of the indigenous communities. Bengali settlers also claim that the practices of NGOs are also discriminatory in the appointment of staff and their activities (Alauddin 2017:70).

Land grabbing

While the treaty promised to secure the land rights of the indigenous people, the problem of land grabbing by both the settlers and the army continues. That is, the lands of the indigenous people continue to be taken away without their informed consent, for the purposes of building 'reserve forests' 'protected areas', 'national parks', eco-parks, 'tourism', and even for establishing military bases and training centres (Talukder 2005). The inflow of the Bengali settlers into the CHT continues, which has led to an ongoing cycle of violence over access to and control of land (Amnesty International 2013: 19). For instance, in 2004 reportedly more than 100 new Bengali settlers were settled on the indigenous land in Lalchari in the subdivision of Ramgarh in Khagrachari (one of the three hill districts of CHT) (Jamil and Pandey 2008: 476). From March 2007 to November 2007, 399.22 acres of land belonging to 133 Pahari people, were allegedly grabbed by the settlers with the help of the security forces (ACHR 2008 cited in Jamil and Pandey 2008: 475).

The government has established a Land Commission to settle land disputes in the CHT region in line with the Accord, and enacted the Chittagong Hill Tracts Land Dispute Resolution Settlement Commission Act 2001. However, the Land Commission has not been able to settle a single dispute since 2001 because of the difficulty of achieving a win-win solution in disputes between indigenous people and settlers moving into the region (ACHR 2008 cited in Jamil and Pandey 2008: 475).

The presence of military camps

The Accord contained provisions that all temporary military camps, Ansars (paramilitary forces) and the Village Defence Parties, would be gradually withdrawn from the region. This provision remains a distant goal as there remains a heavy presence of the security forces (Amnesty International 2013: 23), which creates a securitised environment in the region (Chakma and Costa 2013: 141). In 1991, there was one member of the security

forces for every ten indigenous persons (Chittagong Hill Tracts Commission 1991: 35). This situation has remained unchanged in the post-Accord period. The CHT hosted one third of the Bangladeshi army in 2011, yet CHT covers one tenth of the land area of Bangladesh (IRIN Asia 2011). Until 2011, only 235 out of 556 makeshift camps of Bangladesh military, BDR (Bangladesh Défense Rifles), and the Armed Police Battalion had been withdrawn. Only 35 out of 550 military camps had been withdrawn (less than 7 percent) (Chakma and Costa 2013:142). The heavy presence of security forces in the region is responsible for human rights violations against the indigenous people, including arbitrary arrests, torture, extra-judicial killings, harassment of rights activists and sexual harassment (IRIN Asia 2011).

Conclusion

The signing of the peace treaty has failed to sustain peace in the region as the root causes of the conflict remain unresolved. The stated objectives of the Accord have failed to transform into reality due to the lack of political commitment by the successive governments of Bangladesh; the lack of participation of the indigenous people in the decision-making processes of local government; and the continuous presence of the military in the region (Pandey and Jamil 2009).

The euphoria surrounding the signing of CHT peace Accord in 1997 quickly faded away due to the emergence of new conflict dynamics. Peace remains a distant dream. Given the present situation, a number of initiatives need to be taken such as the implementation of the provisions of the Accord; securing the land rights of the indigenous people; stopping the immigration of Bengalis and meeting local needs and priorities. Most importantly, a process of non-violent conflict transformation needs to be begun to address the root causes of violent conflict. This will be hard as bringing in the Bengalis to the CHT opened a can of worms which now cannot be closed again.

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The Writing on the Wall*

Ground down,
blown before the wind;
the detritus of humanity
piles up in drifts at checkpoints.
Flotsam on the ocean,
weary cavalcades on land,
wanwood, nameless, mute,
alien, foreign, other,
But look, they are all like us.

Carrying infant bundles, fleeing
flood and famine and persecution
that kill as surely as a missile.
Yet we sweep them into distant camps
(or on our doorstep, out of sight).
'No room, no room':
No asylum. No refuge,
For the innocent, a one way ticket
from trauma to transit to detention.
Temporary, we say.
For years on end.

A tidal wave, sloshing round the globe:
tens of millions
overwhelming poorer nations.
Momentum gathers to them.
They cannot long be stayed
at our carefully cultivated borders.
So we double down,
patrol and guard, turn back the boats,
erect new fences and more red tape.
construct dam walls, lest the flood:
sweep us all away.

But look again:
the world's refugees
are writing on those walls
as fast as we can build them.
And their message tells us clearly:
our own ways and days
are numbered.
Unless we read it right,
and try to put to right
their plight.

MARGARET JOHNSTON

*Commended entry from the 2022 Seeking Asylum Poetry prize

'Just like a man!': A project pontinuing L.M. Montgomery's subtle gender activism through the arts

MERRI BELL

There is a long history of utilising various facets of the arts in peace activism. Writing in Canada at the fin de siècle, author L.M. Montgomery's work contains numerous examples of her gender activism with her creation of peaceful societies for her female protagonists. As this was a time when women were not free to openly express dissatisfaction with their role in society, the arts were a method by which they could subtly share their views. While several authors consider Montgomery's subversive views on gender, few authors involve arts practice as part of their research. This paper will investigate Montgomery's building of strong, supportive female communities in her Anne series of novels. I will continue the culture of utilising creative arts to explore these gender dynamics by using an arts-based methodology to identify themes in Montgomery's work, resulting in a new musical composition that articulates the gender struggle. This work exemplifies how responding to gender dynamics through art continues, well beyond Montgomery's era, to provide a peaceful form of gender-based activism.

KEY WORDS: Gender, L.M. Montgomery, music, female community, literature

Introduction

There is a long history of the arts being used for peace activism, with the accessibility and social role of the arts reflecting emotions and providing a voice for societal change. The activism need not be blatant and forceful, but can be equally effective when delivered quietly and subtly. This has been especially the case for issues such as gender and the patriarchy in socially policed contexts. Canadian author L.M. Montgomery wrote during the fin de siècle, when options for young girls were limited due to rules confining their biological sex. This was the life of Montgomery's famous heroine, Anne Shirley, of *Anne of Green Gables* (Montgomery, 1908). It was also the life of her creator, L.M. Montgomery, known as Maud. At this time, as McQuillan and Pfeiffer (2001: 4) claim, 'Gender is a hierarchical structure that legitimates inequality'. Anne and Maud lived with this inequality. Montgomery responds to this gender inequality and patriarchal dominance in her *Anne* series of novels by destabilising the patriarchy to bring more peace into her fictional communities. Peace activism can function as a social criticism and release societal tension (McCarthy 2007: 364). Wergin asserts when art consumers are disoriented by art, they are invited 'to engage in some fresh thinking about how to deal with oppression and the worst instincts of humanity' (2017: xlv). The arts can provoke, generate unrest and ultimately encourage action (Wergin 2017: xlv).

These gender politics also resonate in a musical space and this article will explore the relationship of

music and gender, as throughout history gender has impacted Western art music in a number of ways. From the seventeenth century, concepts of male and female musical characteristics were constructed that affected how music was created, performed and received. Just as male privilege was evident in the patriarchal societies of Montgomery's time, so was the idea of male dominance in music; features connected to the essence or stability of the music were deemed masculine, while those that disturbed this stability were considered inferior and feminine. Discourse also exists surrounding gender being connected to performance, musicology and composition with activities related to the mind viewed as more masculine than the feminine pursuits of the body. When Montgomery was writing, there were still acceptability criteria attached to what instruments each gender could play, with restrictions only existing for females.

Methodology

How Montgomery lived during the fin de siècle had an influence on her work as an author. This article outlines her experiences, accompanied by a discussion of her subversive writing strategies, her portrayal of cohesive female communities and her treatment of male characters in the *Anne* series of novels, the series that builds on Montgomery's first novel, *Anne of Green Gables*. To continue Montgomery's gender activism using the arts, an arts-based methodology was employed to compose

a piece of music that represents the gender limitations of the era and how Montgomery wrote about strong female communities to subtly address this. Both Montgomery's journals and the *Anne* series of novels were analysed, enhanced by hermeneutic interpretation, to ascertain the most prevalent themes relating to gender. Also crucial was a consideration of the intertextual links between the novels and journals and how a new piece of music could be included in this intertextuality. This analysis coupled with a review of current literature indicated that Montgomery addresses gender inequality by creating strong female characters who unite to form supportive communities and the composition was written to represent this.

Short samples of the composition are included at relevant points in the paper, along with an explanation of how the compositional choices address Montgomery's treatment of gender in her novels. The first sample is situated at the conclusion of the discussion of gender in music as the motif shown represents the patriarchy. Following an explanation of how Montgomery wrote subversively is the second sample that represents new musical gestures being introduced to destabilise the patriarchy motif, just as Montgomery's writing did. Finally, the third sample is located following the analysis of Montgomery's creation of cohesive female communities as the patriarchy motif is modified and supported differently to epitomise this support.

Music and Gender

If it is accepted that what Joan Scott calls 'gender metaphors' exist all through society, then it may also be assumed they exist in music, from a composer's choice of sounds through to how the listener hears and associates those sounds (Cusick 1994: 14). Concurring that music and gender are connected, Biddle argues music is pressured to perform a cultural role that traditional discourse is unable to accomplish (2003: 217) and that it is a great resource to assess the male privilege of the Western world:

The phallogocentrism of the Western rational epistemology marks music as a particularly volatile yet profoundly effective (and affective) cultural resource in the imagining, policing, and managing of discourses on gender (2003: 218).

The male privilege – or dominance – in Western music reveals itself in many ways. Investigating music through many eras to ascertain how it relates to gender, McClary discovered that different aspects of music have, since the seventeenth century and until recently, had a connection to one gender or another due to the cultural conventions connected to them (McClary 2002: 7-8). Some of these

cultural codes change over time, while those that remain stable do so because the connected attitude about gender remains. Many of these conventions were connected to the concept of the masculine self – the essence of the music, the tonic, the strength, the resolved – and the feminine other; that which disrupts the masculine, the tension that requires resolution. Even a cadence – the ending of a phrase – was considered masculine if on a strong beat, feminine if it occurred on a weak beat. The main theme of a sonata was deemed masculine, while the subsidiary theme that disrupts the main theme was feminine and the music would only be considered complete when it returns to the masculine (McClary 2002: 9-13).

Using Liszt's *Faust* as an example Kramer also notes significant historical cultural codes in the musical themes connected to male and female characters. The female protagonist, Gretchen, has themes that are conjunct, homophonic, repetitive and almost immobile. In complete contrast, the themes of Faust, the male protagonist, are disjunct, contrapuntal, sequentially developed and highly dynamic (Kramer 1990: 106-107). Kramer states 'symbolic immobilization' as the main method used in the nineteenth century to 'regulate femininity', giving the role of subject to the male and imbuing the female with little meaning (Kramer 1990: 107-108).

Several theorists also discuss the relationship of gender to the experience of music, either performing or receiving it. Similar to the male dominance theories discussed above, these experience relationships are also a construct created from cultural conventions of the time and are now recognised as such, rather than fact. There are claims theorists in the past have resisted considering how music is experienced because the personal engagement and expressiveness required is seen as vulnerable and feminine as opposed to objective theoretical discourse, which has a masculine authority (Maus 2009: 63-64). Cusick (1994: 9-10) adds that performers relate to music with their body while musicology and theory require the use of the mind – what Maus calls the 'gendered opposition of mind and body' (2009: 71). Additionally, composition is considered masculine due to its connection to the mind, with the composer making conscious choices to inform the minds of those who will receive the music (Cusick 1994: 16). However, Cusick argues that only considering music as this connection of minds disregards the fact that the body is required to perform it and therefore the feminine is ignored (Cusick 1994: 16).

This previously clear delineation of the masculine and feminine in music has been modified over time, figuring more noticeably now in areas such as performance and

persona rather than embedded in the essence of the music; however, the change has been relatively recent. McClary (2009: 50-51) explains as recently as the 1960s female musicians were not featured in music history textbooks and it was difficult to find good recordings of female performers except singers. Additionally, particular genres of music such as lullabies, wedding music and funeral ritual music have been and still are associated with women, as they are connected to emotional life stages (McClary 2009: 52). In the 1970s performance in some genres started to expand the considerations of music and gender. In particular, glam rock was theatrical and gender-bending, with the indeterminate gender performance in some ways more important than the music, allowing masculinity to be presented in new ways (Weedon 2009: 38-39). Similarly, punk rock and the resulting new wave music allowed women to enter a typically-masculine sphere and explore new ideas of feminine behaviour (Weedon 2009: 39). In this Postmodern time rather than speaking from a particular viewpoint, McClary – using performer k.d. lang as an example – claims that artists ‘can only inhabit, destabilize, and somehow try to make a new kind of sense by means of previously existing codes’ (McClary 2000: 157). However, the patriarchal system still has control in subtle ways, as evidenced in this quote from Sonja Eismann:

When a female musician is up on stage, the audience sees a woman, whereas when they see a man they see a musician. Women are never perceived independently of their gender, while men, free of sex-based limitations, set the norm that makes women the exception (Weedon 2009: 37).

After the preceding discussion about music and gender it may be expected that the composition I have written would have a clear masculine/feminine delineation to mirror the patriarchal time in which Montgomery was writing the *Anne* series; however, this is not the case. By today's standards music is no longer defined as feminine or masculine and I do not desire to perpetuate that stereotype. Pursuing an intertextual relationship between the literature and the music, the world that Montgomery created for Anne is most important. Montgomery did not make a point of mentioning male dominance in her novels in a negative way. Instead, she gave it less importance. Consequently, the composition

represents this destabilising of the patriarchy and concentrates on the presence of Montgomery's capable, resilient female characters and the way they come together to support each other. The composition begins with a short motif that represents the patriarchy (see Figure 1), which is modified as the piece progresses and discussed in a later section. In a major key with assertive leaps, the motif is assured and rhythmically secure, representing the confidence of the patriarchy.

Gender and Instruments

The instrumentation chosen for this composition is also related to gender. One of the first sources to connect instrumental performance with gender was a 1528 etiquette book by Renaissance author Baldassare Castiglione in which he condemned instruments that required harsh movements or sounds that would ‘destroy the mild gentleness which so much adorns every act a woman does’ (Castiglione in Meling 2019-2020: 2). In 1784, German composer Carl Ludwig Junker wrote a detailed account of which instruments were appropriate for young women to play and which were definitely not. The horn, cello and bass were particularly unacceptable. Junker's reasoning can be summarised as follows (Meling 2019-2020: 4):

1. The contradiction of body movement while playing and ladies' fashion: the fashion of the day was not sympathetic to the movements required.
2. The contradiction of instrumental sound and the character of female sex: females were not deemed physically strong enough to produce the sounds required, plus loud tones should not come from the dainty fairer sex.
3. The impropriety of certain playing postures: some instruments required immoral posture; woodwinds meant not only pursed lips, but an obvious movement of the abdominal muscles, violin required an unnatural stretching of the body and neck and the cello was abominable not only because the instrument is straddled but also because it is held up against the chest.

Acceptable instruments for a female performer were piano and guitar, as the woman could sit in a ladylike manner and neither her clothing or posture are disturbed or immoral (Meling 2019-2020: 4-5). One hundred years later when Montgomery was writing, things didn't seem

Figure 1: Patriarchy motif.



© Link to full-version: <https://on.soundcloud.com/kwGeg>

to have changed greatly. In her novels, men played the violin – usually called a fiddle – while young girls mainly took piano lessons or occasionally played the guitar. Only young girls are offered music lessons and the term is understood to mean piano or organ. To continue Montgomery's passive gender activism using the arts, my composition is written for instruments that at the time would have been deemed inappropriate: flute, violin, clarinet and cello, for the reasons listed above.

Montgomery and the Fin de Siècle

The turn of the century from the 1800s to the 1900s, known as the fin de siècle, coincided with a change of eras from Victorian times to Modernism. The unquestioned patriarchy of Victorian times was starting to be challenged. The fin de siècle was also the era of the New Woman, with the changes to the role of women outweighing other changes in the areas of science, politics and art (Buzwell 2014: 1). The New Woman was independent and educated. However, with this education, women began to realise men were perhaps not always the best choice for determining all of society's rules and morals:

Women were ... at every point in their lives, always under scrutiny in relation to a pre-determined, socially-engineered role. Conversely, men could, if they chose, behave or misbehave as they pleased with little uncomfortable interruption to their public or private roles (Ramday 2015: 29).

How was our author, Maud Montgomery, living at this time? Maud is raised by her grandparents after her mother died and her father left in search of better opportunities. She keeps copious journals from her early teens, which provide a lot of detail regarding how she lived and felt. She writes of her grandfather, 'I have always been afraid of him' (Montgomery 2017a: 389) and that he was 'a stern, domineering, irritable man' who took pleasure in wounding her pride (Montgomery 2017b: 118). After sporadic schooling Maud eventually convinces her elders to let her study for a teacher's licence, although her grandfather refuses to support her in any way to gain employment. When her grandfather unexpectedly dies, Maud is forced to resign from teaching and return home to look after her grandmother, writing 'It is my duty to stay here and I do it willingly, but she makes it very hard for me in a hundred petty ways' (Montgomery 2017b: 124). However, as was the tradition of the time, the house was left to Maud's uncle, not her grandmother. After some brief independence and burgeoning success as a short story author, Maud was once again back under the rule of a male relative and fulfilling all the household duties for her grandmother.

During this quiet and lonely time, Montgomery began writing what would become her best-known novel, *Anne*

of Green Gables. In this novel she started to find her voice and the ways she is able to subtly convey her views on the current patriarchal society and her gender-based limitations. However, she does this in gentle ways and continues to do so throughout the seven books of the series.

Montgomery and Gender

A number of authors have identified ways in which Montgomery is subversive in her passive gender activism, but the originator of this idea is Montgomery biographer Mary Henley Rubio. She identified nine ways in which Montgomery subverted the conventions of the time, using in particular examples from Montgomery's non-*Anne* books (Rubio 1992). This article will relate some of her points to the *Anne* series of novels.

First, Montgomery kept any relevant comments at a very low profile; they were usually throwaway comments (Rubio 1992: 121), such as Anne telling how, 'Jane says she will devote her whole life to teaching, and never, never marry, because you are paid a salary for teaching, but a husband won't pay you anything, and growls if you ask for a share in the egg and butter money' (Montgomery 1909: 205). The women on the farms were generally in charge of the dairy and the chickens, so the reference to 'egg and butter money' is particularly pointed because it is the income earned directly by the women. As a child Anne would also occasionally ask questions such as why a woman can't be a minister when they could surely pray as well as a man (Montgomery 1908: 210), while Anne's guardian, Marilla mentions she believes 'in a girl being fitted to earn her own living' (Montgomery 1908: 203). Montgomery was not openly what might be considered a feminist and had some quite traditional opinions but reading her journals and discovering what drove her success reveals she believed in education, employment and independence for females, which all converge in Marilla's comment above.

As an extension of keeping her comments low-key, a strategy Montgomery often used was 'situational humour, verbal wit, and ironic and comic juxtapositions' (Rubio 1992: 126). In one example, Anne tells of a student who has decided she wants to be a widow when she grows up because 'if you weren't married people called you an old maid, and if you were your husband bossed you; but if you were a widow there'd be no danger of either'. (Montgomery 1909: 80) This speaks to both society's view of unmarried women and the patriarchy of a marriage but does so with humour so as to be less confronting. Miss Cornelia, a great friend during Anne's married life, has the catch-phrase, 'Just like a man!' (Montgomery 1917: 54), and its variation question, 'Isn't that like a man?' (Montgomery 1917: 48) used any time she wants to condemn the actions or attitude of a man, which is often.

She is known as a man-hater but she is not really such; as an independent woman she simply doesn't have patience for much of their behaviour.

Many of the subversive comments are made by secondary characters, such as Miss Cornelia's 'Just like a man!'. As Anne matures, her character conforms to societal expectations, as what was acceptable coming from an innocent child is not as appropriate when spoken by a respected member of society and particularly a doctor's wife (Rubio 1992: 127). Consequently, the subversion comes from characters such as Anne's maid, Susan Baker, the new minister's children, or other less important characters.

Montgomery also uses a narrative method of character over plot (Rubio 1992: 127); women could rarely cause action but they could respond to it. Typical of the patriarchal society, once Anne is married, the couple's movements are dictated by her husband Gilbert and his career. However, the story is not so much about the husband's actions as how Anne and others respond to them (Rubio 1992: 127). There is also power in language rather than action. Women censured their community through gossip – they lived in fear of what others would say or think (Rubio 1992: 127). One chapter of *Anne of Ingleside* is devoted to women of the community having a quilting bee in Anne's home and under the guise of humour and gossip, delivered by unimportant characters, every topic raised has to do with the poor behaviour of the men in their community. Anne was not in the room because a main character could not be party to the gossip.

Through all of these devices, Montgomery creates strong, supportive female communities. Although gossip existed in the larger community, a woman's inner circle was more compassionate and understanding. In the worlds created by Montgomery marriage was utilitarian, giving women children and social status and often little else (Hitchcock and Ball 2021: 269-270). In Montgomery's experience 'love and marriage signified a loss of autonomy' (Klempa 1998: 73) with her own needs being placed well below those of her husband. Montgomery writes of men who assess a woman's suitability for marriage based on her housekeeping or child-rearing skills but she responds by creating mature, wise women who contribute strongly to the community regardless of their marital status.

Why may this have been so important to Maud? When her grandmother dies, after years of looking after her, Maud is left homeless. Most of the friends of her youth have moved away with their husbands. She is lonely. Also, she wants to be a mother and is by now in her late thirties. What options are available to her? Only one. Marriage. She marries Ewan Macdonald, a Presbyterian minister, and writes how immediately after the wedding she felt 'a

sudden horrible inrush of *rebellion* and *despair*' and like a prisoner because there was something in her 'that did not acknowledge him as master'; the feeling eventually passes (Montgomery 2017b: 418). Again, because of the patrilocal society, even though she is now a well-known author, she has to leave her beloved Prince Edward Island and follow Ewan to the Canadian mainland. No nearby friends, no family, no support. More restrictions as a minister's wife; a minister's wife cannot make close friends within the parish as she cannot be seen to be playing favourites (Montgomery 2016: 56). She also deals with a husband who ignores her success and intelligence; she writes:

Ewan's attitude to women – though I believe he is quite unconscious of this himself – is that of the mediaeval mind. A woman is a thing of no importance intellectually – the plaything and servant of man – and couldn't possibly do anything that would be worthy of a real tribute (Montgomery 2018: 20).

Similar to Montgomery's use of subversive devices, in my composition I aim to disrupt the patriarchy theme, destabilising it a little, but allowing it to keep its place while the new themes and gestures are building prominence underneath (see Figure 2). This is achieved with mainly small but repetitive gestures such as mordents and trills and the use of contrasting chromaticism and staccato. The mordents written in extended form first appear in bar seven and become a feature of the non-melody lines throughout. Bar nine sees the introduction of staccato notes on the offbeat, bringing the suggestion of a less conventional rhythm along with the main motif. In bar seventeen these features all come together in a section that also includes destabilising chromaticism and shortly after the main motif returns again it is interrupted by high trills at bar thirty. The overall feeling is one of disturbance with gestures fighting for attention.

Montgomery and Female Communities

Instead of attacking the patriarchal system that keeps her subdued, in her novels Montgomery concentrates on

Figure 2: Destabilisation of the patriarchy motif

The image shows a musical score for four instruments: Flute, Violin 1, Clarinet in B, and Violoncello. The tempo is marked 'Allegro'. The Flute part is mostly rests. The Violin 1 part starts with a rest, then has a note with a dynamic marking 'p'. The Clarinet in B part is mostly rests. The Violoncello part starts with a note and a dynamic marking 'mf', followed by a series of notes and rests.

5
Fl. -
Vln. 1 -
Cl. -
Vc. -

21
Fl. *mf* *f* *p*
Vln. 1 *f*
Cl. *mp* *f*
Vc. *p*

8
Fl. *p*
Vln. 1 *mf*
Cl. -
Vc. *p*

24
Fl. *f*
Vln. 1 *p* *f*
Cl. *p* *f*
Vc. *f*

12
Fl. -
Vln. 1 -
Cl. *p*
Vc. -

26
Fl. *f*
Vln. 1 *mp*
Cl. *mp* *mp*
Vc. *mp* *f* *p*

15
Fl. *mf*
Vln. 1 *mf*
Cl. *mf*
Vc. *mf*

28
Fl. *p*
Vln. 1 *mf*
Cl. *p*
Vc. *mp* *p*

18
Fl. *mp* *mf*
Vln. 1 *mp*
Cl. *mp* *mf*
Vc. *mp*

31
Fl. *mf*
Vln. 1 -

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building vibrant female communities of great value. As a child, Anne surrounds herself with female role models – Marilla her guardian, Mrs Lynde a neighbour, Mrs Allan the minister’s wife, and Miss Stacy her favourite teacher. She expresses her adoration with phrases such as, ‘I love Miss Stacy with my whole heart, Marilla’ (Montgomery 1908: 161) and ‘Mrs Allan is one of the naturally good people. I love her passionately’ (Montgomery 1908: 153). Each of these women teach Anne different skills and values that enhance her life. As an adult, Anne herself becomes a role model to Little Elizabeth, while Anne’s daughter Rilla also finds good models in two of her teachers.

Female friendships were a vital part of young Anne’s development and also her adult life. As was typical during the fin de siècle, young girls spoke of their friendships with what Robinson calls ‘adolescent hyperbole’ (Robinson 2012: 170). Simply thinking about her bosom friend Diana one day marrying has Anne sobbing and exclaiming, ‘I love Diana so, Marilla, I cannot ever live without her ... And oh, what shall I do? I hate her husband – I hate him furiously’ (Montgomery 1908: 103). There is no such language in Anne’s male romances; the ‘emotional

intensity’ of her language is reserved for her female friendships (Robinson 2012: 171).

In relation to romance, Montgomery delays marrying off Anne until the fifth book of the series, after years of feuding, then friendship, and finally a three-year engagement for Anne and Gilbert Blythe. During this waiting time Anne experiences deep friendships with other women at university, and as a high school principal. There are also several secondary characters and stories about people experiencing similar suspended romances. Marah Gubar argues this postponement of marriage serves to evade the eventual submission to the patriarchy, also suggesting ‘Montgomery does not deem marriage obligatory for a cheerful existence’ (Gubar 2001: 49). Once married and in a new location – the patrilocal society at play again – Anne develops a new intense friendship with Leslie Moore, telling her ‘I am your friend and you are mine, for always... Such a friend as I never had before ... there is something in you, Leslie, that I have never found in anyone else’ (Montgomery 1917: 129). This is the adult version of her childhood friendship with Diana, with Anne even sharing the raising of her baby with Leslie more than Gilbert, waiting until ‘Gilbert was out of the way’ (Montgomery 1917: 203) before indulging in baby worshipping (Hitchcock and Ball 2021: 275). Female friendships are more intense and more romantic than any heterosexual relationship.

Most of Anne’s life after coming to Green Gables is spent in female-based or female-centred houses. Although she is adopted by a brother–sister duo, Marilla runs the house. The gentle Matthew dies at the end of the first book, leaving Anne and Marilla alone until at the end of the second book, Marilla’s friend Rachel Lynde moves in, allowing Anne to go away to college. At college, she sets up house with three female friends and a female housekeeper; the house they rent is owned by two elderly sisters. Now engaged, but with her fiancé Gilbert still away studying, Anne spends three years as a high school principal, where she boards with two widows and their housekeeper. Her own house is regularly populated by her friends Leslie and Miss Cornelia, and later her housekeeper Susan Baker. Gilbert is so busy with work he doesn’t figure prominently.

These houses often contain women such as Marilla, Miss Cornelia and Susan Baker who are lifelong single ladies, and happily so. They are not seeking a husband and show that life can be lived successfully without one. Even when Miss Cornelia does eventually marry – after refusing the man for 20 years because he wouldn’t shave his beard – he moves into her house, instead of the usual patrilocal tradition of the woman moving in with the man. Additionally, her attitude to men does not soften and she loses none of her independence. ‘Just like a man!’ is still

her common catchphrase. As well as living independently and confidently as single women, Montgomery also uses both Marilla and Miss Cornelia to show that a conventional marriage is not required for child rearing, as Marilla raises Anne, then the twins Davy and Dora, and Miss Cornelia takes on Mary Vance (Hitchcock and Ball 2021: 270). The raising of Davy and Dora is evidence of the female community at work, as single women Marilla, Anne and widowed Mrs Lynde all have a significant role in their upbringing, with no direct male influence.

As my composition progresses, it ends with a representation of the female communities Montgomery created for Anne. Instead of the jostling for attention in the previous excerpt, the instruments are now working very cohesively, signifying the unity derived from the supportive groups of women. Using the same theme, the harmonies are more traditional so it is clear the instruments are working together and supporting each other.

Montgomery and Male Characters

Men, of course, exist in these communities, but their roles are secondary. They offer little in the way of companionship or conversation; that emotional

Figure 3: Cohesive female community

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attachment comes from other females (Hitchcock and Ball 2021: 269). Additionally, in opposition to the men who are gossiped about, the male characters invited into Anne's inner sanctum are given stereotypically feminine qualities. Anne's guardian, Matthew, is a quiet, gentle man, quite the opposite of the stern matriarchs. Although her love interest, Gilbert, is more often in the background due to his masculinity (Hitchcock and Ball 2021: 278), he is also gentle and kind, reads poetry and understands Anne's flights of fancy. A young student she takes under

her wing, Paul Irving, is described in feminine terms such as having 'features of exquisite delicacy and refinement' (Montgomery 1909: 36) and has an appreciation for romance. But the best example is Anne's son, Walter, who is given many of Anne's own qualities – beautiful features, a love of beauty, an imagination, a romantic nature and he is a poet (Hitchcock and Ball 2021: 278-279). Walter and his struggles related to gender are a large feature of the final novel in the series, *Rilla of Ingleside*, which also addresses the complexity of gender roles and expectations in a time of war and the resulting frustrations and sorrows experienced by both genders. While the trauma of Walter's experience is a rich area, it is not part of the composition that accompanies this paper so will not be discussed.

Conclusion

L.M. Montgomery wrote at a time when the patriarchy was being challenged and women were fighting for a new position in society. Although she was not overt in expressing her views on the situation, the preceding discussion demonstrates how she was able to use the creative art of writing to articulate her opinion in subtle ways. This was mainly achieved through the creation of supportive female communities with males only as minor characters. As these gender politics have also long been evident in the musical world it is fitting that Montgomery's gender activism through the arts is continued with the creation of a musical composition that represents the destabilisation of the patriarchy by a cohesive female community. Peace activism need not always be achieved by shouting and overt gestures; in particular circumstances, subtlety and whispering can be much more effective.

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Lessons in Truth and Reconciliation for Australia from Overseas

HELEN WARE

Discussions of a potential truth commission in Australia have largely taken place in the state and territory or national context. However, given that there have been more than forty truth or truth plus reconciliation commissions (TRCs) to date across the world, Australia would be wise to learn from experiences overseas, especially from similar countries, notably the settler states of Canada and New Zealand. The South African TRC, although the most famous, is not a good precedent although it does point to what this paper argues is the most important lesson to be learnt – notably to clearly understand in advance the precise purpose of the Commission. This will involve satisfying numerous stakeholders, and be much more complex than finding one particular truth. Even if reconciliation is currently off the agenda and only the needs of First Nations peoples, as the innocent parties, are taken into account, there still can be a need for truth telling as a form of therapy: as a means of correcting the historical record, and/or as a prelude to treaty making.

KEY WORDS: Truth commissions, reconciliation, first nations, settlerstates, Makarrata, treaties

Introduction

There is currently much discussion in Australia about the need for truth commissions, or truth and reconciliation commissions, in the context of indigenous¹ claims to be heard. This article provides a discussion of potential lessons to be learnt from overseas commissions, especially those few which have been held in British-origin settler societies. Here it is argued that the first essential question to be determined in planning any commission is to identify the purpose behind the commission beyond aiming to find one or more truths and promoting reconciliation.

Definition of Truth and Reconciliation Commissions

According to the International Center for Transitional Justice (ICTJ),

Truth commissions are official nonjudicial bodies of a limited duration established to determine the facts, causes, and consequences of past human rights violations. By giving special attention to testimonies, they provide victims with recognition, often after prolonged periods of social stigmatization and scepticism (ICTJ 2013: 9).

The ICTJ argues that:

Truth commissions are most effective when integrated in a comprehensive transitional justice strategy that includes reparations policies, criminal prosecutions, and institutional reforms. By delivering clear findings and compelling

recommendations, commissions can enrich policy and create political and moral momentum for these initiatives (ICTJ 2013: 9).

Adding 'reconciliation' to a commission's title makes the aim of reconciliation explicit. For instance, the agreement between the Government of Sierra Leone and the Revolutionary United Front which ended the civil war between them provided that a:

Truth and Reconciliation Commission shall be established to address impunity, break the cycle of violence, provide a forum for both the victims and perpetrators of human rights violations to tell their story, get a clear picture of the past in order to facilitate genuine healing and reconciliation (Peace Agreement 1999 Article VI (2)).

As will be discussed below, some Australian indigenous groups do not prioritise reconciliation, and the Victorian Yoorrook Justice Commission does not have either 'truth' or 'reconciliation' in its title because of their desire to focus on attaining justice for indigenous peoples rather assuaging the consciences of the non-indigenous population. The Commission's website lists examples of truths which First Nations people may wish to present evidence about as 'experiences of racism, forced removal from home and land, massacres, forced labour, cultural loss, intergenerational trauma, economic disadvantage and stolen wealth' or 'acts of resistance and resilience' (Yoorrook Justice Commission 2022). There is no provision for people who are not members of

the First Nations to make submissions. The meaning and efficacy of truth and reconciliation are heavily dependent on the cultural and political context.

The Theory of Truth and Reconciliation Commissions

There is undoubtedly more affirmation than theory behind the promotion of truth and reconciliation commissions. There is also much more theory associated with the broader concept of transitional justice. For instance, there is the *International Journal of Transitional Justice*, the Routledge Transitional Justice Series includes 37 books (Simic 2021). The Australian Museum's website twice quotes James Baldwin's affirmation that: 'Not everything that is faced can be changed, but nothing can be changed until it is faced' (Sentance 2022a, 2022b). The website also quotes the statement of reflection painted on the wall of Hinze Hall in 2020: 'This was and always will be Aboriginal land' without any explanation of what this might mean (Sentance 2022b). Further, Louis Farrakhan, a leader not noted for his adherence to the truth, argued that: 'There can be no peace without justice. There can be no justice without truth. And there can be no truth unless someone rises up to tell you the truth' (Southern Poverty Law Center 2022). People who make statements to the effect that 'there can be no peace without truth' or 'without justice' generally are relying on faith rather than any kind of evidence.

There are a number of possible criticisms of Truth and Reconciliation Commissions (TRCs) only some of which are applicable to the Australian settler society context of negative peace, here defined as being where justice for the indigenous population is lacking but there is no civil war (Leask and Philpot 2012). One criticism is that TRCs can provide good, if partial, solutions to the difficult problems associated with securing reconciliation after bitter conflicts, but that a particular TRC, such as that in Sierra Leone could have been better handled. In 2004, Mendeloff, who is one of the rare critics of the very concept of the truth commission, asked supporters to 'curb the enthusiasm' but he has attracted few followers to agree with his negative views. As will be argued below, only Canadian and New Zealand settler-context precedents provide really helpful lessons for Australia. For example, the criticism that TRCs are just a weak substitute for trials (Brody 2001 in Brahm 2007) does not generally apply to Australia where most criminal acts occurred more than a generation ago, although some such as those related to deaths in custody and on the streets are more recent and even ongoing. Another argument is that TRCs can be harmful and potentially dangerous because they may encourage the creation of divergent versions of history, thus generating resentment amongst victims and insecurity amongst alleged perpetrators (Snyder and Vinjamuri 2003). In

Australia, judging by the very limited publicity accorded to the Victorian Yoorrook Commission (see below) the chief risk appears to be that their report will be ignored and consigned to the dusty shelves of law libraries.

Eric Brahm (2007) worked initially in Nevada, and when he subsequently came to Griffith University in Australia he participated in the establishment of its data collection of truth commissions (Dancy et al. 2010). He tried to work out a method for examining the success and impact of TRCs by looking at trends in democratic governance and human rights practices. He found that while no TRC would be likely to broadly adversely affect democracy in Australia, adverse reporting on practices contrary to human rights law might result in some changes – although the precedents thus far are not encouraging. More than three decades have passed since the publication of the Report of the Royal Commission into Aboriginal Deaths in Custody (1987), which could be regarded as an early truth commission. However, very few of its 339 recommendations have been implemented, partly because they require action by each of the States and Territories (Creativespirits 2022a).

Working in Canada back in 2008, Corntassel and Holder (2008) compared government apologies and truth commissions for their impact on indigenous self-determination in Australia, Canada, Guatemala and Peru, and found both instruments to fail. They argued for an equivalence between the two instruments because: 'Both are intended to transform intergroup relations by marking an end to a history of wrongdoing and providing the means for political and social relations to move beyond that history' (2008: 465). Whatever may have been the case in Canada, few in Australia would have expected the apologies to mark any end point, but rather a stage on a 'Journey without End' (Sanders 2002). The authors found that in each of the four cases:

the reconciliation mechanism differentiated the goal of reconciliation from an indigenous self-determination agenda. The resulting state-centred strategies ultimately failed to hold states fully accountable for past wrongs and, because of this, failed to transform inter-group relations (Corntassel and Holder 2008: 487).

From their perspective, TRCs can only succeed in contexts where they are accompanied by decolonisation and restitution. Whilst restitution could always be applicable, decolonisation does not directly apply to many post-civil war TRCs in Africa. In a classic text, Priscilla Hayner (2001: 319-11) examined 21 Truth Commissions and found that only three (Chile, El Salvador and South Africa) had measures that were

intended to advance reconciliation. Especially in Latin America, many were intended to find the truth about a previous despotic regime which had 'disappeared' and killed its enemies and thus did not aim at reconciling with the state authorised murderers.

There are undoubtedly cultures where speaking out about past atrocities may be neither wise nor helpful. Bangladesh, the former Yugoslavia and Eastern Congo stand as cases in point. In these cases, rape was used as an instrument of war, precisely because rape serves to destroy families. In such cultures, speaking out may serve no good purpose and result in damage to both the women raped and the children who had resulted from rape. In Australia's stolen generations many of the stolen children were the consequence of white men raping Aboriginal women. These unfortunate children, especially the girls, were often raped in their turn after being taken away from their mothers (Creativespirits 2022b).

The earliest truth commissions were held in Latin America where new regimes were inquiring into the egregious human rights breaches of the previous regimes. Attention then shifted to Africa where truth commissions were often held as part of peace settlements following brutal civil wars. The most recent trend has involved truth commissions in colonial settler states, notably Canada and Australia. The South African TRC stands out as having been held in a settler state but one where the disadvantaged group were the majority population, not a minority, and where the end of apartheid marked one form of radical transition – although not, it transpired, as radical as many in the majority had hoped. It can well be argued that there is not a great deal of point in examining post-civil war TRCs alongside TRCs in settler states where transitional justice is much more a question of examining developments over centuries rather than a few years.

For Australia, Sarah Maddison and Laura Shepherd (2014) have inquired into 'Peacebuilding and the postcolonial politics of transitional justice', although many Australians might query the use of the term 'peacebuilding' where First Nations for a century have conspicuously eschewed violence. These authors suggest a taxonomy of transitional justice divided into four categories depending on the thick or thin nature of the justice and the transition provided. A thick/thick transition would require the coverage of a long time period and socioeconomic redistribution in settler states to redress 'a continuity of marginalisation and oppression that dates from the original invasion and colonisation of their [indigenous] lands' (2014: 264). 'Settler societies must also negotiate the existence of self-determining indigenous groups within their midst' (Woolford 2014: 138).

Maddison and Shepherd (2014: 265) argue that the National Inquiry into the Separation of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Children from Their Families 'can be understood as a form of truth commission with similar limitations to the South African' TRC. As will be discussed below, the Yoorrook Truth Commission in Victoria avoids the time period and topic restraints imposed on the National Inquiry, leaving it open for First Nations to claim 'that they are still suffering the effects of colonialism – a structure that is for them a current reality rather than a historical artifact' (Woolford 2014: 147).

Factors to be Taken into Account Before Designing a TRC

Drawing on overseas experience with over 40 TRCs or similar bodies (USIP 2022), factors which need to be taken into account before designing a TRC include:

1. What are the purposes and goals of the TRC?
2. Is the truth already widely known but not widely acknowledged or will many new facts probably emerge?
3. Are none, few or many of the perpetrators of the crimes and evil deeds to be covered still alive?
4. If some perpetrators are still alive, what is to happen to them? Are there to be provisions for amnesties? If so, under what conditions?
5. How many TRCs are there going to be? If each state and territory holds its own TRC is there still a need for a national TRC and how would that work with respect to state and territory TRCs?
6. Just how many survivors / victims can the TRC deal with?
7. How public will the proceedings be?
8. What will be the limits to the recommendations the TRC can make? Restitution? Return of lands? Sovereignty? (Moreton-Robinson 2021)

Before looking at possible answers to some of these questions below, it is worth providing a little background firstly to the South African Truth Commission which is the most widely known and often regarded as a model, and secondly to the Canadian Truth Commission which is the TRC held in the historical and political context most comparable to Australia, so that the examples which they provide can be better understood for the Australian context.

The South African TRC

Contrary to popular belief, the South African TRC of 1995-2002 was not the first TRC. The Comisión Nacional de Verdad y Reconciliación, often cited as the Rettig

Commission, had followed the Pinochet regime in Chile from 1990-1991. There had been even earlier truth commissions not aiming at reconciliation in other Latin American countries. The South African TRC was created to investigate gross human rights violations that were perpetuated during the period of the Apartheid regime from 1960 to 1994, including abductions, killings and torture. Its mandate covered violations both by the state and the liberation movements. There were nine male and eight female Commissioners with a staff of 300 to assist the three committees dealing with Human Rights Violations, Amnesty and Reparations and Rehabilitation. Although South Africa is a multi-faith country, its TRC was carried out in a largely Christian context and was chaired by Anglican Archbishop Desmond Tutu. Proceedings were televised. Opinions vary as to the success of the TRC depending upon the assumed goals set for it. The most basic goal for the TRC was to save the country from mass racist violence and to stop it sliding into the bloody turmoil of a civil war: in this it was a success. The most radical goal suggested for the TRC was to establish a basis for structural change to the South African economy and society so that Blacks would no longer be disadvantaged in nearly every aspect of their lives. This search for a utopian heaven clearly was not even a partial success.

The Canadian TRC

The Canadian TRC was established in June 2008 with the purpose of documenting the history and impact of the Canadian Indian residential schools system. It was not a general overview TRC as the South African TRC had been. It was established because it was required by the Indian Residential Schools Settlement Agreement (the largest class action settlement in Canadian history), not necessarily because the Canadian government thought that it was a good idea. About 70 per cent of the schools had been administered by the Catholic Church, using government funds. So, both successive governments and the Catholic Church could be seen to be on trial. The TRC had a \$60 million budget for five years of work, later extended to six years. It held hearings across Canada, listening to the testimony of 6,500 witnesses including many survivors and others impacted by the school system. Understandably few of the administrators, teachers and others who might be regarded as 'perpetrators' appeared and, given that there were no amnesty provisions, there were minimal incentives for them to participate. The Final Report was issued in two stages in 2015, including 94 recommendations or 'calls to action' plus the conclusion that the Indigenous School System amounted to 'cultural genocide'. One problem with the Canadian TRC was its emphasis upon survivors, as the following years when the finding of many unmarked graves of those children who had died at the schools all too painfully demonstrated. This first

TRC was followed by the National Inquiry into Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls (MMIWG), which was appointed in 2016 and reported in 2019 under the title of Reclaiming Power and Place. As with the Residential Schools Report, the MMIWG made a finding of 'genocide' although there was not enough data to determine how many of the killings were by indigenous men. One of the 'Calls for Justice' recommendations was that non-indigenous Canadians should read the Report.

New Zealand's Approach to Truth and Reconciliation

As Australia's near neighbour with a similar colonial history (indeed, until 1841 New Zealand was part of the Colony of New South Wales) and political culture, New Zealand may indeed offer useful precedents for Australia. However, in this context it is vital to recognise that New Zealand differs from Australia in two very significant ways. Firstly, it has the 1841 Treaty of Waitangi signed in conflicting English and Maori versions which say different things, whereas Australia is unique among comparable colonial settler countries in never having had a treaty with its indigenous population. Secondly, the Maori people represent 17.4 per cent of the population of Aotearoa/New Zealand, and speak one language and share a common culture. In contrast, Aborigines and Torres Strait Islanders make up 3.2 per cent of the Australian population and before colonisation spoke between 250 and 363 separate languages. Given the number of surviving cultural groups, treaties with the Australian indigenous population may still come to number over a hundred and, given Australia's federal system, will probably be made with states and territories with a possible national treaty to follow. Richard Wong Maning (2021) has proposed tripartite treaties based on the UN Declaration of the Rights of Indigenous Peoples (UNDRIP) between the Federal Government, the State or Territory and the First Nations. Maning provides a model for such treaties which follows UNDRIP in recognising First Nations peoples' inherent rights to self-determination and self-government.

In New Zealand, Maori calls for the better recognition of indigenous rights resulted in the establishment in 1975 of a permanent commission of inquiry known as the Waitangi Tribunal (Treaty of Waitangi Act 1975, s.4). The Tribunal is empowered to determine and interpret the principles of the Treaty and consider the legitimacy of contemporary Maori claims of transgressions by the Crown (s.6). In 1985 a legislative amendment empowered the Tribunal to examine historical claims, which was joyfully greeted by the Maori as most claims were rooted in pre-1975 historical issues (Orange 2004: 159-175). To date, for most claims the Waitangi Tribunal has found in favour of the Maori claimants. The Waitangi Tribunal is not a truth commission as such, but it is a

standing body which investigates the truth or historical validity of Maori land claims and also other matters including claims relating to political representation, the Maori language and even broadcasting frequencies. The Australian Native Title Act 1993 established the National Native Title Tribunal which, like the Waitangi Tribunal, can hear claims, including those involving privately owned property, but cannot make recommendations regarding such claims. Debates in Australia about possible truth commissions generally envisage time-limited bodies which will determine a single truth largely based on the oral testimonies of indigenous witnesses and have not considered how the findings of pre-existing commissions and inquiries will be incorporated into their final reports. As the Canadian experience demonstrates, a series of truth inquiries over time may be necessary.

Victoria's Yoorrook Justice Commission

According to the Victorian Government's website on 'Truth and Justice in Victoria', 'Victoria's truth and justice process will recognise and address historic and ongoing injustices and form a key part of the treaty process'. In June 2020, the First Peoples' Assembly of Victoria passed a resolution seeking commitment from the State to establish a truth and justice process, that cited 'a requirement for justice' rather than mentioning reconciliation. The response was that,

In working towards treaty, the Victorian Government is committed to acknowledging the truth of Victoria's history and laying the foundations for new, positive relationships between the State, Aboriginal Victorians and non-Aboriginal Victorians, which all Victorians can benefit from (Victorian Government 2022).

The Government went on to say that,

It is widely acknowledged among First Peoples in Australia that we cannot talk about our shared future until we acknowledge our shared past. Through decades of activism, First Peoples have fought for truth-telling, to recognise the impacts of colonisation and address historical and ongoing injustices. Truth commissions offer a formal and legitimate process for this to happen. Establishing a formal truth-telling process will assist reconciliation and healing for people harmed and their communities (Victorian Government 2022).

This last statement would appear to represent a wishful hope rather than a scientific prediction. In May 2021 the Yoorrook Justice Commission was established as a Royal Commission under Victorian law. Yoorrook is the Wemba

Wemba/ Wamba Wamba word for 'truth'. The Commission is intended to facilitate truth telling and healing; educate the wider Victorian community and develop recommendations for institutional and legal reform. It has seven objectives focusing on learning the causes of systematic injustice, developing a shared understanding and supporting a future treaty. Reparations or land rights are not specified topics. However, the Government agreed that the Commission 'may make recommendations about appropriate redress for systemic injustice that could be implemented through the treaty process.' Originally the Commission was to report by 2024 but this has been extended to 2025, which is before the next state election in November 2026. Victoria has learnt from the South Australian experience where in a political about turn 2018 Steven Marshall's Liberal government paused the treaty negotiations begun by the previous Labor Government. The Commission's Terms of Reference task it to inquire into and report on historical systematic injustices perpetrated by state and non-state entities against First Peoples since the start of colonisation, specifically those which impede First Nations achieving self-determination and equality.

In 2022 South Australia circulated a draft First Nations Voice Bill (South Australia Attorney General 2022) specifying that local First Nations people would be elected to a state wide Voice to Parliament as well as to regional Voices around the state. It is not clear whether the State government still intends to hold a TRC or whether that decision would be for the South Australian Voice to advise on.

What Does Reconciliation Mean?

Outside of specialist circles of religious followers and academics, 'reconciliation' is not a word in everyday usage. Patricia Hayner, a significant authority on TRCs, argues that reconciliation means: 'rebuilding relationships today that are not haunted by the conflicts and hatreds of yesterday' (2001: 161). She poses three questions to assess whether reconciliation is occurring: (1) How is the past dealt with in the public sphere? (2) What are the relationships between the former opponents? and (3) Is there one version of the past or many? (2001: 161-2). Disputably, Martha Minnow, who maintains an Instagram blog on reconciliation, argues that 'restoring dignity to victims would be part of the [reconciliation] process, but so would dealing respectfully with those who assisted or were in complicity with the violence' (Minnow 1998: 23). The Uluru Statement from the Heart calls for Voice, Truth, Treaty but it does not call for reconciliation (National Constitutional Convention 2017). Many indigenous people understandably see reconciliation as in the story of Lorinna and Joe. Joe takes Lorinna's bicycle for his paper round, after which they are not on speaking terms. After

a while Joe approaches Lorinna and says 'Let's make up'. Lorinna asks for her bicycle back. Joe says 'No, I still need it' and no reconciliation occurs (adapted from Rigby 2001: 142). Apart from continuing conflicts over the return of land, reconciliation is a problematic term because it implies that there was once a harmonious relationship which can be restored, which has not been the case in Canada, New Zealand or Australia. In the consultative meetings leading up to the Uluru Statement, participants 'were resolute in their rejection of "reconciliation" as an appropriate framework' (Davis 2022: 25).

Woolford takes a highly cynical view of reconciliation in the Canadian context, arguing that:

the investment the non-Aboriginal governments are making in treaty negotiations is not one directed at repairing past harms. Rather, it is an investment in a future of stable economic and political relations between Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal peoples – a future in which Aboriginal peoples can be expected to participate in a nondisruptive manner in the social totality. The goal of the non-Aboriginal governments is to dissuade First Nations from accenting historical injustices, and to instead have them accept the responsibilities attached to distribution of land, money and governance powers so that they manage their communities in a manner that makes their Aboriginality less uncertain for non-Aboriginal society (2004: 400).

He wrote this in the context of the contemporary negotiations concerning a treaty to deal with land claims in British Columbia, where the First Nations peoples had never ceded their territory to the colonial society. Woolford distinguishes between 'reparations as certainty-making' and 'reparations as justice-making'. The 'former refers to political negotiations designed to bring an expedient and practical harmony to a history of conflict and brutality, while the latter describes an ongoing reconciliatory process through which tolerance, trust and reconciliation are gradually developed' (2004: 430).

Woolford warns of the risk of 'affirmative repair' (adapted from Fraser 1997) that:

threatens to overdetermine the process of justice-making. In affirmative repair the reparative process is a subtle application of force so that a dominant group places assimilative pressures on a less powerful group. In the Canadian or Australian context this involves enrolling the First Nations group into the world of neo-liberal governance to such an extent that it is near impossible for the First Nation to assert its difference in any way contrary to the prevailing political and economic norms of global markets (Woolford 2014: 430).

First Nations are not allowed to maintain communal land holding, let alone the idea that the land owns the people rather than vice versa. Nor are they allowed to spend their time on ceremonials rather than job-seeking or form filling. Vetoing mining on their lands is simply not allowed. Woolford's 2004 paper should be carefully read by anyone who thinks that the problems of Australian First Nations can be solved by one or more treaties.

In Canada, the original three TRC commissioners resigned over disputes about the balance between 'truth' and 'reconciliation', with the Chair wishing to prioritise 'reconciliation' and the other two wishing to focus on 'truth' (Friesen et al. 2008). In Australia, as in Canada, there is the problem that First Nations who still live relatively traditional lives in defined geographical areas are in a very different position to those who live scattered across major cities with limited, if any, contact with their home communities. Even at the simple level of a reconciliation ceremony or the erection of a commemorative statue and plaque, this is much easier in the former case than in the latter. In Victoria, some members and descendants of the Stolen Generations fear that the Yoorrook Commission will exclude their interests when it comes to questions of reparations and any return of lands.

Do the Numbers Matter?

One area where questions are often avoided concerning TRCs is whether the cited numbers of deaths or those mistreated do indeed constitute the truth. As with the Holocaust, where many consider it unacceptable to query the six million figure commonly quoted for the number of Jews killed, except possibly to raise it above six million, in Australia it is considered poor form to query Aboriginal accounts of how many were killed at a particular massacre site even when reports vary widely. The Bringing Them Home Report (produced by the National Inquiry into the Separation of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Children from their Families in 1987) said that 'at least 100,000' children were removed from their parents. The Australian Museum's website cites Gamilaray author Michael O'Loughlin as repeating the National Inquiry's finding that 'between 1 in 10 and 1 in 3 indigenous children were removed from their families and communities'. The difference between 1 in 3 and 1 in 10 is clearly vast. It could be asked whether an Australian TRC should or could go over the numbers from previous inquiries. Why and to what extent should it matter whether 120 or 140 Aborigines were killed by five or six stockmen in a massacre in the 1890s?

What About the Perpetrators?

The amnesty provisions of the South African TRC remain highly controversial. Many TRCs, including the Victorian Yoorrook Commission have terms of reference which

remain silent about what will happen to those named as perpetrators. The Liberian TRC notoriously named Ellen Johnson-Sirleaf as someone who should be barred from political office for her support of Charles Taylor, the former president ultimately convicted of war crimes. Johnson-Sirleaf herself went on to win the Nobel Peace Prize and to become the President who brought peace to her country. Truth Commission reports tend to present the events investigated in black and white terms which avoid the grey complexities of real life, and to make findings of 'genocide' which appear to stretch the meaning of the term. The Commissions are seen as having been established to right long-standing wrongs and to allow structurally disadvantaged minorities to have a voice, and not necessarily to present a balanced picture of the bad and good things which happened in the past. Canadian TRC audiences booed witnesses who made favourable comments about their experiences of the residential school system. In Australia it would probably be expected that TRC reports would name categories of people not individuals. Lawyer and former Liberate Senator Amanda Stoker (2022: 100-101) opposes any Australian truth commission on the grounds that to hold one would imply that 'our history, to this point, is somehow dishonest' and that a body that would not test the veracity of evidence presented to it would be 'a recipe for the mangling of Indigenous and the settlers' history alike'.

How to Measure the Success of Australian TRCs

Eric Brahm (2007) has discussed methods of measuring the success of TRCs largely in the context of calm following violent national conflicts. In the Australian context it is possible to envisage a number of measures of success in a more peaceful context. As it appears that each state and territory is likely eventually to have its own TRC, there will be scope for a national league table. The first measure of success could simply be the proportions of the majority and the First Nations populations which (1) had heard of the TRC and (2) could name one or more of its recommendations. It is tempting to suggest that the more recommendations that a Commission feels it necessary to make, the less successful it is likely to be. The next measure could be related to the successful implementation of police reform and reductions in deaths in custody and domestic violence, since every TRC will need to recommend this. The same applies to a measure of trends in how many children have been taken from their parents. Less readily measurable will be the relationship between TRCs and ensuing treaties.

Concluding Comments

Lessons on the practical aspects of TRC design such as staffing, budgeting or the technicalities of translating and transcribing oral testimonies can be learnt from many TRCs across the world, from Argentina to Korea

and Timor Leste. However, any person or institution in Australia looking for lessons on how to design a TRC would be well advised to examine what has happened in the settler states of South Africa, Canada and New Zealand. These are all settler societies where current evils experienced by their First Nations populations have their roots back in the original colonisation and seizure of their lands. To date no TRC would appear to have dealt with the highly complex and controversial questions of indigenous self-determination and sovereignty.

In many cases, including in the Northern Territory, Queensland and Victoria, there is an expectation that truth commissions will lead on to treaties. The thinking would appear to be that it is logical that once a truth commission has established that indigenous lands were stolen and indigenous people were denied their rights, it will be possible to move on to a treaty in which lands and rights will be restored or recompense offered. Megan Davis, the Aboriginal Chair of the UN Expert Mechanism on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples, argues that truth telling is not a pre-requisite to achieving substantive rights (Davis 2022). The Uluru Statement calls for a Makarrata Commission to 'supervise a process of agreement and truth-telling'. Strong and bipartisan political support will be needed to secure the passage of sustainable treaties and thus the coming of treaties is far from being inevitable. Indeed, the current debate about the indigenous Voice and a referendum over Constitutional change shows just how difficult it is likely to be to secure agreement to rights-assuring treaties across the country. Australia is a democracy and the indigenous population makes up only three percent of the whole. According to the 2021 Census, there are some 882,000 First Nations people in Australia as against 1,371,000 people of Chinese descent and 721,000 people of Indian descent, most of whom would have very little understanding of indigenous issues. The original inhabitants of the country are going to need a great many allies across the general population if they are going to be able to attain meaningful self-determination within the lifetime of those now living. As to sovereignty, a TRC can report the self-evident fact that, pre-colonisation, the First Nations held sole authority over their individual territories across Australia. A TRC could also make recommendations or issue Canadian style 'calls to action' for treaty negotiations. What is not clear, because there is so little prior experience (because other settler states already have treaties), is whether the findings or recommendations of a TRC could serve to motivate the strong political support necessary to achieve successful treaty negotiations across Australia.

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End Note

1. The Australian Institute of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Studies (AIATSIS) recognises that Australia's First Peoples chose to name themselves in many different ways and that in speaking of specific groups or individualist is best to ask what name they would prefer. When speaking of the whole, AIATSIS recognises that First Nations is increasing preferred over Indigenous. This paper uses both terms recognising that the sources discussed differ in their choice of terminology. The Statement from the Heart refers to both Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander tribes and to First Nations. Over time the term Truth and Reconciliation Commission often abbreviated as TRC has come to be used to represent both Truth and Reconciliation Commissions and Truth Commissions. This article uses both terms in order to reflect the specified mandates of the individual Commissions. For example, the Victorian Yoorrook Commission was legislated into being as a Truth and Justice Commission with no reference to reconciliation.

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Resisting Weapons Industry Influence in Our Schools and Elsewhere

SUE WAREHAM

Reducing the power and influence of harmful industries is essential for the preservation of life. The industry that needs war and instability for its survival – the global weapons industry – exerts extraordinary and growing influence over society, reaching into and reshaping public life and attitudes. The Australian education system, our national war memorial, and our financial institutions are just some of the sites where the power and influence of this harmful industry can be seen – and be resisted.

There's a lot at stake for the global weapons industry. The Stockholm International Peace Research Institute states that in 2021 the combined arms sales of the world's largest arms-producing and military services companies were \$592 billion (Beraud-Sudreau et al. 2022).

In many countries, spending on weapons programs appears to suffer few constraints, unlike spending in areas of desperate social and environmental need. In Australia for example, eye-watering amounts are dedicated even for extremely controversial programs, such as the proposed nuclear-powered submarines which are predicted by the Australian Strategic Policy Institute (ASPI) to cost up to one hundred and seventy billion dollars (Nicholls et al. 2021: 71). Once the word 'security' is uttered, governments simply foot the bill for unconscionably expensive weapons programs. In addition, in early 2018 the Australian government announced funding of 3.8 billion dollars to set up a Defence Export Facility to actively assist the industry.

The Public Health Association of Australia (PHAA) has observed that 'Many corporate actors invest extensive resources in influencing public policy-makers to make decisions which advance their immediate commercial and financial interests at the expense of the health and wellbeing of many people in society' (PHAA 2021). Military goods are among the examples given by the PHAA of products that damage public health.

However it is not just political influence that the weapons industry seeks. It also targets young people through our education system – at primary, secondary and tertiary levels – with the explicit goal of attracting the 'best and brightest' students in STEM (science, technology, engineering and maths).

Government and industry alike promote jobs in weapons programs, hiding the industry's core business behind words such as 'exciting careers', 'cutting-edge technology' and 'jobs of the future'. At the tertiary level there are many programs on offer, such as the government's Defence Science Partnerships program which every public university in Australia has signed on to. A policy brief by ASPI and the International Cyber Policy Centre, *'Building genuine trust: A framework and strategy for Indigenous STEM and cyber pathways'* (2022: 50) states that Defence funding comes into play in approximately 50% of STEM initiatives at the national level.

However the industry has its eyes on younger students as well. For schools there is a long list of programs, grants, scholarships, events, tours of company premises, exhibitions at careers fairs and direct personal engagement between industry personnel and students and teachers. These are provided by the Australian subsidiaries of the global weapons giants. With a grossly underfunded public education system, the provision of such programs is attractive to schools and teachers. The National Youth Science Forum (NYSF), which promotes and assists the country's most promising young scientific minds, has as its principal funder Lockheed Martin, the world's biggest weapons maker.

The Medical Association for Prevention of War (MAPW) has produced a report, *Minors and Missiles*, about the influence of weapons companies in our schools (MAPW 2022). The report documents how the big global players in the industry seek to build positive brand recognition amongst Australian primary and secondary students, so that young people are not only skilled in STEM but also socialised to regard wars as inevitable, and the industry as a force for good.

As just one example of what's on offer, BAE Systems, the world's sixth largest weapons company with 97% of its sales in 2021 being weaponry (Beraud-Sudreay et al. 2022), appropriates characters such as Jack and the Beanstalk, the Gingerbread Man and Hansel and Gretel, in BAE-branded activities for young children. BAE Systems, supplier of much of the weaponry for the bombing of Yemen, also promoted their brand name via financial support for the children's charity The Smith Family which provides educational opportunities for disadvantaged children and youth. It was only the bad publicity around the arrangement that led the charity to terminate it in 2020 (Daley 2020).

In addition to education and charities, the industry focusses on war commemoration, where the nation remembers those who have died in our wars – the very wars that the industry needs. Corporate partners of the Australian War Memorial can receive benefits including corporate branding, program and activity naming rights, advertising recognition, venue hire waivers for functions, and invitations and attendance allocations to major ceremonies. The latter would of course create opportunities to engage with decision-makers in defence purchases. For BAE Systems, the benefits included the naming of the Memorial's theatre as BAE Theatre. In 2020, after campaigning by activists, the Memorial's contract with BAE Systems was not renewed. The current focus of MAPW's campaign Reclaim Remembrance is the Memorial's financial arrangement with Lockheed Martin.

A key requirement for outreach by any industry whose products cause grave harm, regardless of any legitimate uses for those products in some circumstances, is its social licence to engage in promotions such as those outlined above. Citizens have power over this by withholding the social licence. The protection of vulnerable young people from the corporate influence of harmful industries is particularly important in our education system. Teachers and schools can withhold the opportunity for harmful industries to engage with students. Education departments can explicitly name the industries – including the weapons industry – that are inappropriate partners for schools. Education departments throughout Australia vary in the extent to which they do this. Stronger action to protect young people from the influence of harmful industries is needed.

Undermining of companies whose products cause harm can be brought about also by another means – divestment. The stigmatising of investments in weapons companies, and especially those that manufacture nuclear weapons, is already playing an important role in the struggle to abolish these worst-of-all weapons of mass destruction. In January 2021, the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons came into force, becoming part of international law. The stigma of illegality now applies to these weapons, along with that of immorality that has applied since they were first used in 1945. The campaign Quit Nukes, a collaboration between MAPW and the International Campaign to Abolish Nuclear Weapons (ICAN) Australia, works to get superannuation funds out of financing nuclear weapons. In 2021, Quit Nukes and The Australia Institute reported that most major Australian super funds have holdings in nuclear weapons companies (Quit Nukes 2021). Some highlight their exclusion of 'controversial weapons', but do not include nuclear weapons in the definition. In that year, after advocacy by Quit Nukes, the Responsible Investment Association of Australia declared that if superannuation funds want to claim that they invest responsibly then they must divest from nuclear weapons.

Much can be done to remove the insidious influence and privileged access with which weapons companies expand their core business of profiting from human suffering. Much remains to be done.

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from "October Sequence"

109/

Her psyche winters in Antarctica in case
The melting speeds up she hides her face on Zoom
Makes rash declarations to make sure
People know she is in charge
By way of pale authority and dowdy look
With bark supposing bite no one is interested
In fearing hearing what she hides
The gaps in background gaps in teeth
Gaps in experience she presents as
Long in the tooth apart from accompanying
Wisdom music humor smile
She hovers above people she deems her minions
She can only quash never embrace
And seeks out ways to break
The flow the joy humanity
As others look around them locate
New pursuits ways to recover
Innocence and joy

SHEILA A MURPHY

from "October Sequence"

110/

In perpetuity your grace shines lace
Sweet shamrock green veined luminosity
Pale threads distend the reach
As voices hover near
And months traipse close to walkways
With shelving half complete with relics
Remnants spliced a tacit bloom white
Shimmering response to sunlight
While the moon completes our dream
And shadows shift the pool
Where species swim mind rinses
Quiet with more peace than
Silver any day now memory
Will cleanse the quotient tithed
As guilt free gilded maturation
Slides into the joy beams hammocking
The margins of familiar boundaries

SHEILA A MURPHY

Killer Robots and Deepfakes: Activists and artificial intelligence

BRIAN MARTIN

If you're holding a rally, what do you do when confronted by automated police agents demanding that you leave? Can you negotiate with them? What if they start firing their weapons?

Another challenge: an opponent has produced a realistic video showing your group's most prominent figure in a compromising position. It's being widely circulated on social media. What can you do?

These are just two of the challenges potentially posed by artificial intelligence (AI), one of the most important technological developments of our time. Computing systems can be developed to undertake complex tasks automatically and 'intelligently', such as scanning a photograph and comparing it to a database of photos, far faster and often more accurately than any human.

To give a sense of the potential challenges posed by AI, two areas are addressed here: killer robots and deepfakes. The more general challenge is for activists to be better informed and prepared for these and other AI-related developments.

Killer Robots

Militaries have been greatly interested in battlefield applications of AI. The result is what has been called the automated battlefield.

AI enables the development of aeroplanes, tanks and robots that can be controlled by soldiers at a distance and, if desired, make automated decisions about battlefield operations. Already the Israeli military has deployed the Harpy, a drone that hovers over areas and, when it recognises signals indicating a radar installation, automatically launches a weapon to destroy it. Technologists have produced swarms of small drones that communicate with each other to collectively evade missiles and try to destroy a target.

Paul Scharre's 2018 book *Army of None* is an informative tour of the technologies and issues involved with autonomous weapons. Scharre provides a history of weapons development, including WWII efforts by the Nazis. The basic story is that rapid strides in artificial intelligence are making possible weapons that are semi-autonomous or autonomous. Especially useful is Scharre's analysis of what constitutes an autonomous weapon, with illustrations about the roles that humans play in the OODA (observe, orient, decide, act) loop. The question is about where in the process human decision-making plays a role: in selecting targets, authorising strikes and/or designing algorithms.

A key consideration when developing and deploying autonomous weapons is avoiding too many civilian casualties. In controlled environments, where the target is well identified, weapons can be given more autonomy. In a cluttered and fast-changing environment, identifying a target is far more challenging. According to Scharre, US air and naval forces seem opposed to autonomous weapons, perhaps in part because they want to keep their personnel involved. An important lesson Scharre raises is that many people in the military are acutely aware that there is a potential for blowback from actions by autonomous weapons, especially if there are civilian casualties.

Deane Baker (2022) in his book *Should We Ban Killer Robots?* addresses ethical concerns raised about LAWS, which stands for lethal autonomous weapons systems. Critics, for example the

group Stop Killer Robots, want these weapons banned or regulated. One of their arguments is that humans need to be in control of decisions about using lethal force in wars. Baker, countering this, points out that soldiers often have inadequate information or time to make careful decisions. For example, jet pilots may launch a missile at a target with only limited information and less than a second to make a decision. Why, he asks, are LAWS fundamentally any different? Indeed, an AI-based weapons system may be able to do much better than a human in making split-second choices about targeting and deployment.

Then there are land mines, now banned but still widely used. Land mines are autonomous in that they explode without a human intervening. With autonomous weapons, key decisions are in constructing and programming, and not necessarily so much in battlefield operation.

Baker uses a just-war framework for his analysis. Many in the peace movement are opposed to all arms manufacturing and military deployment. They would prefer to get rid of all weapons. Baker's point is that if you're going to accept many of the weapons currently in use, then LAWS are not different in any substantive sense.

There is some research on people's feelings about autonomous weapons systems, showing that they sheet home responsibility to those who manufacture and deploy the systems (Rosendorf et al. 2022: 177). This means that if LAWS do anything that seems unfair, the public reaction may be quite negative.

Robots vs Protesters?

What are the implications of autonomous weapons for nonviolent campaigners? It's useful to consider different forms of action. There are no obvious applications of weapons to deal with strikes and boycotts. The most likely area of application is policing public protests. It's possible to imagine police robots assigned to monitoring crowds or defending buildings from incursions. The next step would be that these police robots are armed and able to make quick decisions based on AI capabilities. Should a police robot see a threat, for example someone aiming a rifle, it might be programmed to counter the threat. Based on a misperception, the robot might fire on protesters.

How would this change the dynamics of a public protest? It is already the case that police are armed, with the ability to shoot protesters, and sometimes they do. There are several famous instances in which police opened fire on unarmed protesters, for example the 1960 massacre in which South African police shot protesters in the town of Sharpeville, killing perhaps one hundred of them (Frankel 2001: 150). Would it make any difference if, instead of human police, the killings in some future Sharpeville were carried out by robots using AI?

At Sharpeville, the police tried to hide evidence of their actions, including that they had shot many of the protesters in the back while they were fleeing and that they had used so-called dum-dum bullets, banned at the time. However, journalists were present and their stories and photos became front-page newspaper stories internationally.

If the same scenario eventuated but with killings by police robots, the key to generating outrage would be publicity: credible stories showing what really happened. There would be a blame game, with government and police leaders being blamed and most likely trying to avoid responsibility for killings.

When activists confront robots in the streets, some protesters might think it is satisfying to attack the robots, given that they have no feelings. Yet this might be unwise because it could put protesters in a bad light, as being violent and aggressive, therefore justifying heavy-handed policing. It is useful to think of protester actions as messages to observers, whether the actions relate to humans or robots.

Robots could be operated remotely or programmed to operate autonomously. To the extent that they operate autonomously, they are likely to be programmed to respond according to protester actions, just like humans might. Accordingly, activists might be best advised to treat robots just as they would treat human police, and even to seek to win them over. At the very least, protesters can try out different responses and learn from the interactions. One thing will remain much the same: the likely reactions of observers watching the engagements.

In summary, although it might seem that 'killer robots' pose a new and special threat to nonviolent activists, in practice the dynamics of interacting with robot police and soldiers may not be all that different from interacting with human ones. The rise of automated weapons systems makes it even more obvious that having no weapons is a good way to discourage being attacked.

Deepfakes

Imagine that someone could make a video showing you doing something horrible, something that would make others think less of you. For a nonviolent activist, this might show them slapping someone in the face, kicking a puppy or aiming a rifle at police, thereby discrediting their commitment to nonviolence. It's now possible to make fake videos like these, so convincing that they are almost impossible for ordinary viewers to tell from the real thing.

Fake evidence has a long history and has often been used against activists. However, creating convincing fakes wasn't all that easy. Visual evidence is especially important because most people tend to believe what they see. Photos — the old analogue ones taken with film — can be staged, but it requires a lot of work to make them convincing. Once taken, old photos can be altered, but it's a tedious process. Stalin tried to reconstruct history by having some individuals, ones he had purged, painstakingly removed from photos.

Digital photos are much easier to manipulate. You just go to a site like FaceApp and alter your image, for example removing blemishes and making yourself older or younger. That's done with AI.

Next are videos, which can be considered a series of photos that give the impression of motion. One type of manipulated video is called a shallowfake. It involves splicing together video segments to give the impression of continuity or connection. A widely shared shallowfake shows the actor Dwayne Johnson, known as The Rock, singing a song, cutting back and forth to Hillary Clinton, who is apparently listening (Skitz4twenty 2016). This involved splicing together segments from two separate videos of The Rock and Clinton. A superficial inspection reveals that Clinton was not there at the time. Yet many viewers accepted the shallowfake as showing an actual interaction. They were so prepared to think badly of Clinton that they ignored the contrary evidence before their eyes. Later, when The Rock supported Clinton in the 2016 presidential election, these gullible viewers were confused (Grothaus 2021: 28-40, 52).

In contrast to shallowfakes, deepfakes involve reconstructing digital images. Transforming the large number of digital images in a video requires far more computing power than for a single photo. But it can be done, and is becoming easier.

One technique uses what are called Generative Adversarial Networks. One AI program takes a video of you talking and tries to produce a fake video of you saying something else. Another AI program, the adversary, tries to figure out which video — the actual one or the fake — is real. Then the first program tries to do better, and so on until the fake is totally convincing.

There are many possible uses and implications of deepfakes (Karnouskos 2020). So far, the most common use of deepfake technology is for pornography. The face of a famous female actor, such as Scarlett Johansson, is used to replace the face of a female porn star, the result being a fake porn video of Johansson. It is now possible to produce videos like this with readily available technology that requires little editing skill. Needless to say, such videos are made without seeking permission from either the celebrity or the porn star.

Political uses are also troubling. One video, used to show the capabilities of the technology, shows former US president Barack Obama swearing (Monkeypaw Productions 2018). His lips and his speech are digitally created based on AI trained on videos of Obama, of which there are many. In the Ukraine war, Russians circulated a deepfake video of the Ukrainian president calling for his troops to surrender.

The technology has advanced so much that as little as a minute of video of someone talking can be sufficient to enable the creation of a realistic deepfake. This means that anyone who has been interviewed online or who has posted a video of themselves is vulnerable.

As commentators have noted, high-profile targets of deepfakes, such as celebrities and politicians, usually have access to ways to discredit the fakery, through various media outlets. On the other hand, individuals who are less prominent have fewer means to resist. For example, when a former partner seeks revenge by creating a deepfake video and circulating it to friends and co-workers, the damage can be immense and the opportunities for replying may be limited.

What about activists? Opponents may try to use deepfakes to discredit an organisation or a movement, cause distress to individuals, or encourage internal disputes. Imagine a deepfake video designed to suggest hypocrisy, showing climate activists flying private aeroplanes, nonviolent activists throwing bricks at police, or animal activists shooting elephants. Deepfake porn could be used to humiliate individual activists. Deepfakes might show bribery, illegal drug use or other crimes.

Deepfakes as methods of attack are one thing. As these become more common, there is another implication: audiences potentially may become more sceptical of photos and videos, so a real image is dismissed as possibly fake. The murder of George Floyd by police officer Derek Chauvin was recorded on a phone; this visual documentation was an important part of what triggered massive outrage. Would it have done so if audiences were exhausted by having to decide which videos are real and which ones fake? The loss of trust in recorded evidence could be the biggest impact of deepfakes (Fallis 2021).

What to Do?

Activists, like everyone, will need to understand the uses of deepfakes, for good and bad. To prepare for the wide range of possibilities, it would be worthwhile for some members to inform themselves sufficiently so they can lead discussions of the implications of deepfakes for planning campaigns, gaining support and defending against attack. More deeply, the rise of deepfake technology provides motivation to investigate how trust is created, specifically how altruistic campaigners for a better world can harness trust for their efforts.

Possibilities include building networks through personal contact, personally connecting with a range of people from diverse sectors in society, developing trusted communication channels, learning how to avoid rushing to judgement, and identifying ways to verify information using multiple channels. It should be possible to probe prior campaigns to explore how trust is built and undermined, and apply insights to a world with deepfakes.

Given the rapid development of deepfake technology, lessons will need to be continually updated. This puts a premium on continual learning.

Preparing for AI

Killer robots and deepfakes are just two of the many impending impacts of AI. Others include facial recognition and social media analysis. Some of these, like killer robots, are unlikely to affect activists, whereas others, like deepfakes, potentially will require major adjustments. Is there some way to anticipate and get ahead of the impacts of new technology?

Technologies are not autonomous (Winner 1977): they are developed by humans, most commonly for specific purposes. Most are developed with good intentions, but people often disagree about these intentions, for example whether 'better' weapons are a good idea. In principle, activists should be engaging in the innovation process, putting forward their values in helping decide research and development priorities (Sclove 1995). However, despite the efforts of campaigners to democratise the processes of technological innovation, in practice the main players are powerful governments and corporations, with most of the population positioned as users, as consumers. Most activists have little input into development and promotion, so their main choices are about which technologies to use personally and which ones to campaign for or against. In many cases, it is mainly a question of adapting and responding to new technologies, and so far that is the main way of interacting with AI.

There is a role for activists, individually and in groups, to learn about AI and its applications, to campaign when appropriate, to foster greater understanding, and to prepare and adapt when necessary. Going beyond this, there is a greater challenge: becoming involved in helping set agendas for innovation. That is already the case with environmental and energy technologies, where campaigners have played a major role, for example in championing renewable energy. So why not do the same with AI?

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Striker

JANE DOWNING

He headed around the back to the laneway behind the shopping centre. Banks of car parks blocked one side – the understoreys of towering sightless apartment buildings. And on the other, a storm water drain dictated the route of the path – the original creek a trickle of water hanging on from the last rain at the bottom. The oval of the Catholic school stretched beyond the drain. Empty at this hour. A car in the closest car park winked itself locked. Silenced. Eyes closed against the night again.

Bats creaked open the starlight to the left. Were gone. The last witnesses.

Someone, years ago, had planted trees on either side of this back path. Neglected, left unchecked, they gave luxurious shade on summer days, dappled light shows at dusk, and a tunnel of darkness now.

The way was shorter than following the road home from the shops.

He stuck his AirPods in, cranked up the metal and set off, his bulging shopping bags swinging from each arm like Jack and Jill buckets, heavy weights getting heavier, dead weights by the time he'd get home. Best not to dwell.

The throb of the metal fuelled his stride. It took a while to realise 1/ there was a figure further along the track and 2/ he was gaining on them. Now he was back on planet earth he couldn't help notice the figure speeding up even as he gained on them. A slight frame, a glow of fair hair in the light falling from an apartment above. But no matter how she accelerated, her pace was nothing on his natural stride.

He stopped abruptly when the analogy formed in his mind – this was like a predator gaining on its prey. When he understood what she must be feeling.

I'm not going to hurt you!

No! He couldn't call that out. Because that is exactly what a predator would call out to pacify its prey. He stayed silent. Except for his breathing.

In less than a minute he could overtake her. He imagined that minute for her. Alone in a dark laneway with no escape to left or right – a brick wall and a cement chasm forbidding any attempt.

What were her options? Flight, fight, paralysis. Even if she had no trauma to re-imagine, she'd have the stories of friends accumulating and overwhelming.

His mind calculated. As hers must. Though his scenarios were of a different kind. The muscles in his upper arms ached – what were they called – biceps? triceps? Home was just short of two kilometres distant. There was beer in the fridge and a mate-from-work's Netflix password remembered. And a flatmate waiting for the shopping. There was no way he was turning back to take the long way round. The only way was forward.

Less than a minute until he could be beside her.

One minute, he could overtake her and be home all the quicker.

One minute for him. Against a lifetime flashing for her.

*

He started walking again. But not to overtake her. Not to loom. Accelerating, then slowing,

until he'd calibrated to her pace. No gaining on her. One foot in front of the other in lockstep.

And yet, still, he feared his footsteps in the night were sending out a notice not of his composing. He wanted his footpads to beat out a message in remorse code: *I am here. But I am not coming for you.* Would she be able to hear that in the static? Her back was as rigid as a figure in a woodcut. To shout anything now with his deep, metal-ready voice would be even more threatening than earlier.

Thank Christ on a bike, the crossroad glimmered ahead, the mica in the asphalt catching the stars. She'd reached it. The chance of freedom from this tunnel of fear. The door to safety.

He saw the moment she allowed herself a backward glance. The swiftness of her snapped neck to banish the sight of him – a huge, hulking man, bulked up in the shadows into a giant. How was she to know it was a supermarket shop widening his girth?

He swore out loud when she turned to the right out of the laneway into the quiet suburban road. The way he wanted to turn. His quickest way home.

*

A left turn, the wrong way, would take him up past the ambulance station, through the winding trail of the new wetlands to complement the old ugly stormwater drain, around another bulge in the path to accommodate a few swings and labelled a playground. Then a double-back up a steep incline to rejoin his normal path from supermarket to home.

His arms ached. The weight doubled as he walked, still at her pace though she'd now turned the corner.

"Fuckety, fuck, fuck," he muttered in time to a clash of guitars through his AirPods.

Just go home the normal way, just overtake, he told himself. What did it matter? It wasn't as if he was going to hurt her. It's only one minute in two lives, a flash and he'd be gone. His obligation was to the comfort of his flatmate waiting for his return, not to this figure who had slipped out of sight now at the ninety degree turn onto the road's raised footpath. Who might indeed, he tried to convince himself, be under headphones too and oblivious to all his concerns – lost in a *Bubl * bubble or an audio book of 'War and Peace' or a podcast on unsolved true crimes filling her mind with lurking, smirking, stalking...

*

The intersection arrived before his decision. Any such hope of her being oblivious to the stranger in the night was dashed as he arrived at the road and looked right. She was still in sight, her shoulders now bowed. Racing. The brave back she'd been putting on now a headlong scuttle. She looked two foot shorter, bent into the oncoming wind in her mind. Was she the same woman? Yes. The same pink, plush cat bawled off the zip of her backpack.

He'd forget the incident soon enough. Maybe there'd be a flash of recognition on a distant autumnal night, traversing the same path, the twitter of a bat inciting a return to a memory lost in the vast flow of the day-to-day. The quotidian mire. He'd get home and give Em her tampons so she could go on her date with Rachel and he'd remember to take his meds, the ones that had a name like a character from 'Lord of the Rings.'

What, he asked himself, would a hero do?

But he just wanted to be home eating some of the thick fruit and cream yogurt that had been on special.

*

He turned reluctantly onto the path less taken. Past an ambulance gleaming on the apron in front of the station, across the road, he trudged onward. He tripped on the uneven gravel path down through the wetlands. The large pond sparkled under the solar-powered light that rose

up in majesty near the bridge. He slowed at noises from the left, slowed right down, losing the momentum of his swinging, overburdened arms. If he believed in a cosmic force for good as some did, he would have seen this next brake to getting home as a reward: a pair of swamp hens emerged from a bush by the water and paraded their chicks across the path in front of him. Two slick, noble long-legged birds herding a couple of black pompoms with tiny red beaks thrusting out of the fluff.

They were the stuff of his conversation for Em as he pushed through their front door. The woman on the path only resurfacing as he tried to sleep, a mantra treading his head, I'm sorry, *I really am sorry, I am.*

Author

Jane Downing's stories and poems have been published around Australia and overseas, including in *Griffith Review, Big Issue, Antipodes, Southerly, Westerly, Island, Overland, Meanjin, Canberra Times, Cordite, Best Australian Poems* and previously in *Social Alternatives*. In 2016 she was shortlisted for the Commonwealth Short Story Prize. She has a Doctor of Creative Arts degree from the University of Technology, Sydney, the creative component of which, 'The Sultan's Daughter,' was released by Obiter Publishing in 2020, and she taught at Charles Sturt University, Albury until she retired. She can be found at janedowning.wordpress.com.

from "October Sequence"

111/

Obbligato pries its way into thought process
As the windows in a row spritz flecks of landscape
Seen from train in daylight then at dusk
Before night tamps down to a quiet pause
Feelings rash with threat and buildup
Of a posse of views potentially ideas
Fraught with depth perception narrowed
To blinders as protective curse the glass
Rubbed clean of asterisks subtitles and gray text
Living beyond the mind and streaming toward
Enclosures at a glance as if
Some military bayou pretexted something
To fear or to believe the troops with zilch
To do but listen obey and nod repeatedly
Awaiting plastic policies pure procedures vaunted
By routine assuming mensch like qualities
Where there are none but giving in to fantasy
Learned young like the soft blue book
Replete with dogma in arrears
Appearing daily to resemble corruption dressed up
In a silk suit with plastered smile
Purporting to be warm and fatherly

SHEILA A MURPHY

Asylum Seeker*

For I am human, Yet I dare to exist.....
How could a life could be easily dismissed?

Everything I built pulled from beneath my feet,
Facing the end, retreating to defeat
Ever feel like you speak but no one hears,
It feels as if the rest of the world has blocked their ears!

Mother Mary weeps her tears,
The wind carries the echoes of wailing innocence lost,
Escaping the war comes at a cost!
Asylum, a plight that many thousands seek!

Far away lands that promise peace from the rage,
Why are we welcomed by being locked up, like a bird to the cage.

TAMMY LEE COAD

**Commended entry from the 2022 Seeking Asylum Poetry prize.*

Influencer

E.C.T

(i) Before

Three mornings a week
at 7:25am
An attempted transubstantiation
of monochrome into colour

I stare up at the antiseptic sun
its clinical white fluorescence
listening to the gods
in stethoscopes
& surgical gloves

'Now count back from five'
God # 1 says

1..
Will I hear it?
the fizz of oil on a pan
the sizzle of a light globe shorting out

2...
Do I want to?
the lightning strikes a tree
the hoarse voice of thunder

3...
down
down
down
into the flash & blur
the static of in-between

(ii) After

My eyes re-adjust
thoughts a muddy echo
as the fog goggles of anaesthesia

slip off

The geometry of metal bed rails
& the tubular network of oxygen
blood pressure
& heart monitors

Reeling me in
pulling me ashore

Clay figures blown with fire
the gods come alive
as doctors and nurses

Their words divine
splitting the dome of the ceiling sky
'She's done'
'She can go to her room'

Bed rest & recovery
sunlight falling on the carpet
light tessellating

All the Stories We Do Not Know

*Koi Kyeunu-ruff**
(Stirling Ranges)

In stories still told
these folds in the earth
were formed by the upward
movement of birds —
words heard and re-heard
in camps by blue-grey shadow of range
under pull of galaxy turning
familiar and strange

our breathing bodies step
into clean and brilliant air
so many unknown stories everywhere
the sky thick with their holding
moulding peak and swale

climbing we become our bodies
you— a beating heart
from the start your steady drum
drawing together what was
pulling apart

on this vertical path
our silence only step and step
your breathing body below me
familiar and strange

at the summit
two spectres
wide wings and shimmering bronze
calling circling
our two hearts tuned a wild beating
receiving their dark blessing

returning I could not
come down
from that extraordinary height
shadow of the range
blue-grey behind us
and all the stories we
do not know
holding us everywhere

* With thanks to Noongar elder Averil Dean for her permission to refer to the dreaming story 'Kaawar' in the first stanza

JULIET A. PAINE

RENEÉ PETTITT-SCHIPP

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