Peace and Conflict Review

Volume 4 – Issue 2 – Spring 2010

ISSN: 1659-3995

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The Peace and Conflict Review is a peer-reviewed, open-access journal dedicated to the publication of high quality academic articles in the field of peace and conflict studies.

Issues are published on a semi-annual basis, in Fall and Spring, and generally include a selection of scholarly articles, conference papers, and reviews of academic work published elsewhere.

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The Peace and Conflict Review is hosted at the headquarters of the United Nations mandated University for Peace (UPEACE) in San Jose, Costa Rica.

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Editorial Note

Few academics would deny the value of discipline in scholarly work – the practice of careful and thorough research, for example, provides a common standard for critically evaluating and engaging with new ideas. Of course, there is also the kind of self-discipline required to observe the world around us as accurately as possible, challenge our biases and preconceptions, and present our analyses coherently to colleagues and practitioners alike. This is particularly the case in the field of peace and conflict studies, in which everyone could be considered a practitioner on some level, being, as we all are, constantly confronted with the creative and destructive potential of conflict in our daily lives, and in our relationships with the socio-economic and political institutions which amplify that potential around the globe.

There are other meanings of discipline, however, some of the earliest of which carry with them a much different, and for our purposes, somewhat counterproductive significance. The quasi-religious orders of medieval Europe, for example, built disciplinary boundaries around their practices of learning and ritual, so as to guard the secrets of their particular craft and maintain a position of distinction from the general population. Unfortunately, part of this culture of disciplinary secrecy has survived into our own time, and academic societies continue to guard the lines between the initiates and outsiders of their specializations, for much the same reason as their medieval counterparts.

Another usage of discipline, and again one of the earliest, is in reference to “the order maintained and observed among pupils, or other persons under control or command, such as soldiers, sailors, the inmates of a religious house, a prison, etc.” (OED 2nd edition). Here is where we pick up the associations with physical or psychological punishment and submission to unquestionable authority that come up again and again in the study of how societies produce war and other forms of organized violence.

It is in scepticism of the social value of these latter concepts of discipline, therefore, that the Peace and Conflict Review is committed to the principles of openness and accessibility, and aligns itself squarely in support of research and scholarly dialogue that reaches across traditional boundaries and re-examines the legitimacy of power inequalities – all of which is characteristic of peace and conflict studies, and, we hope you will find, reflected in this Spring 1010 issue.

The following articles cover a broad territory, pulling together analyses of conflict before, during, and after violent outbreaks, within and between states, highlighting the diversity of actors and social organizations involved – from individual relationships to the United Nations. They also represent the work of scholars from quite diverse perspectives, professionally and geographically speaking, each bringing to this discussion of peace and conflict a wealth of knowledge unique to their individual experiences and vantage points.

I am grateful to all of the contributors to this issue – John Idriss Lahai, Uddipana Goswami, Susana Navarro-García, Pau Pérez-Sales, Alberto Fernández-Liria, Kevin Kester, and Tim Guldemann, as well as Sara Meger and Pandora Hopkins, for all of their thoughtful work.

As always, submissions and feedback from our readers are highly encouraged, and should be directed to editor@review.upeace.org.

Ross Ryan
Managing Editor
Gendered Battlefields:  
A Contextual and Comparative Analysis of Women’s Participation in Armed conflicts in Africa

John Idriss Lahai*

The level of women’s participation in armed violence in Africa is determined by the nature and typology of conflict. Using prior research as a data source, the article examines the nature of women’s participation in on-going and recently-concluded armed conflicts in 15 countries in Africa. Based upon data that show variations, and similarities in the contextual conditions under which women become war participants, this article presents three kinds of wars, and the conditions that distinguish them from one another, as a theoretical framework in analysing women’s involvement in Africa’s armed conflicts. The findings show that in ‘resources/opportunistic’ driven wars, women’s participation is higher and more complex when compared to ‘ethno-religious’ and ‘secessionist/autonomy’ driven wars. Moreover, this paper finds that women’s participation can be active and passive; coerced and voluntary.

It has been contended that women’s everyday life is a gendered battlefield. Cockburn (2004, p. 43) writes, “No wonder women often say, ‘War? Don’t speak to me of war. My daily life is battlefield enough.’” Women have usually been presented in the literature of wars as victims, and men as perpetrators. Dubravka Zarkov (2001, p. 96) discusses how such a conceptualisation has led to the continued dominations of notions of masculinity and the ultimate designation of who can or cannot be named a perpetrator or victim. Theoretically, analysis of gender and conflict has been dominated by the narratives of hegemonic masculinity. As a result there has been an emphasis on the patterns of practice that allowed men’s dominance over women through culture, institutions, and persuasion thereby denying women an agency devoid of victimhood in the discourse of violent gender relations (Connell and Messerschmidt 2005, p. 832). However, the persistency of masculine

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narratives has been reinforced by women who essentialise the roles of women in conflict. Against this backdrop, this article is a departure from this male-centric theoretical explanation to a gender-centric analysis because, as Beth Goldblatt and Sheila Meintjes (1998, p. 43) suggest, shifting the level of analysis on wars and the roles of women from feminist-essentialism—that sees women as naturally peaceful—to a more rational level would enable us to see that women are not always bearers of certain essential qualities of kindness and compassion, especially when seen from the fact that they sometimes collude in their own oppression.

However, researchers, as Kwesi Aning notes, have found it perplexing to reconcile women’s involvement in wars with the popular perception of exclusively male brutality (Aning 1998, p. 2). The questions therefore are how do we deconstruct conflicts without essentialising women’s roles, thus relegating them to the status of victims without agency? What are the factors responsible for the high presence of women combatants in some conflicts and less so in others? What are the conditions that explain women’s participation in these conflicts? These are the questions that this article will attempt to answer. Using prior research as the data source, this article examines the nature, trends and patterns of women’s participation in civil wars (ongoing and some recently concluded) in 15 countries in Africa.

Methodology

My sample of armed conflict countries is taken from the 2009 Armed Conflict report compiled by Project Ploughshares. The report lists, at the end of 2009, ten African countries: Algeria, Burundi, Chad, Democratic Republic of Congo, Ethiopia, Nigeria, Somalia, Sudan, Uganda, and Kenya (however, Kenya is excluded from this sample and replaced with Senegal’s Casamance Region’ conflict) that are in armed conflicts. To this sample, I have added five countries: Sierra Leone; Liberia; Rwanda; and Ivory Coast; and Angola whose conflicts have formally ended. The final sample is shown in table 1.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Countries with on-going Armed Conflicts, and Region (n=10)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>West Africa</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Central Africa</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>East Africa</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>North Africa</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nigeria; Senegal (Casamance Region)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Burundi; Chad; Democratic Republic of Congo (formerly Zaire)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sudan; Uganda; Ethiopia; Somalia</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Algeria</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Countries with recently-ended (with year) Armed Conflicts, and Region (n=5)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>West Africa</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Central Africa</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Southern Africa</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sierra Leone (2002); Liberia (2003); Ivory Coast (2007)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rwanda (2002)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Angola (2002)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>


2 I have excluded Kenya from the sample list replacing it with Senegal because according to some reports it has met the armed conflict definition threshold of 1000 battle related deaths. By adding it, this article also intends to move Senegal from its current status as the ‘forgotten conflict of Africa.’
This paper also relies on Glaser and Strauss’ (1967) grounded theory approach in investigating the shared gendered political conditions of war, and the patterns of women’s involvement in these conflicts. Adding to this, a total number of 31 African refugees, mostly Ethiopian, Southern Sudanese, Sierra Leoneans, and Liberians, living in Armidale and Brisbane, Australia, were randomly selected and interviewed. Gender and region were taken into consideration in the research design.

The paper is divided into three parts. The first section presents a contextual and comparative analysis of the shared gendered conditions of the countries under review. The second section contains an analysis of the typologies of conflicts, and a discussion on the distribution of conditions that differentiate them from one another, and the patterns of women’s participation. The final section presents an empirical/quantitative discussion on women in the fighting forces.

Definitions of terms

In this paper, gender denotes the specific and shared masculine and feminine roles and responsibilities defined in terms of their gender relations. The notions of patriarchy and masculinity also deserve clarifications. Adopting Goldstein’s (2002, p. 2) definitions, patriarchy is used in this article to denote the social organisation based on men’s control of power; and masculinity refers to the ideological and stereotypical construction that promotes male dominance. By armed conflict (which is used interchangeably with civil wars) this article adopts Project Ploughshares (2009) definition of an armed conflict, which it define as a conflict involving multiple actors (state and non-state) and in which there more than 1,000 battle-related deaths.  

Shared Gendered Conditions in civil wars (ongoing), and Civil-War-torn (recently-ended) African Countries

The data (see Table 2 below) reveals that these countries share eight generic (with some country-specific differences) engendered conditions—which are also determinants of women’s involvement in armed conflicts: (a) the masculinity of the parameters for armed conflicts; (b) the feminisation of war-related violence (such as sexual-gender-based-violence) and its influences on peace processes; (c) failed statehood reinforces the feminisation of poverty; (d) gendered representation (and the transvestite outlook of women combatants) in the fighting forces; (e) the gendered continuum of violence; (f) the existence of high pre-war domestic conflicts (mostly defined by heighten familial gender based violence); (g) the gendered differentials of the impact of war-related violence; and (h) the use of mass rape as a weapon of war and terror.

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3 Project Ploughshares adds, retains or removes countries annually based on the magnitude of war (above 1000 battle related deaths, defines as armed conflict; below 25 deaths, not an armed conflict) and peace activities (such as the signing of a peace accord and disarmament and demobilisation).
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Region</th>
<th>Parameters of War</th>
<th>Failed State Rank</th>
<th>Gender Specific Violations</th>
<th>Perpetrators</th>
<th>Domestic Violence</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>West Africa</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nigeria</td>
<td>Male-Instigated</td>
<td>99.8</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Male-Centric</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Senegal</td>
<td></td>
<td>Not Applicable (N/A)</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Male-Centric</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ivory Coast</td>
<td></td>
<td>102.5</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Male-Centric</td>
<td>Yes (Mid)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Liberia</td>
<td>Gender-Inclusive</td>
<td>91.8</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Gender-Inclusive</td>
<td>Yes (High)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sierra Leone</td>
<td>Gender-Inclusive</td>
<td>92.1</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Gender-Inclusive</td>
<td>Yes (High)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Central Africa</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Burundi</td>
<td>Male-Instigated</td>
<td>95.7</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Gender-Inclusive</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chad</td>
<td></td>
<td>112.2</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Male-Centric</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Democratic Republic of Congo</td>
<td></td>
<td>108.7</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Gender-Inclusive</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rwanda</td>
<td>Gender-Inclusive</td>
<td>89</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Gender-Inclusive</td>
<td>Yes (Mid)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>East Africa</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sudan</td>
<td>Male-Instigated</td>
<td>112.4</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Male-Centric</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Uganda</td>
<td></td>
<td>96.9</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Gender-Inclusive</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ethiopia</td>
<td></td>
<td>98.9</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Male-Centric</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Somalia</td>
<td></td>
<td>114.7</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Male-Centric</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>North Africa</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Algeria</td>
<td></td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Male-Centric</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>South Africa</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Angola</td>
<td></td>
<td>85</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Gender-Inclusive</td>
<td>Yes (High)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>


Example of Gender-specific violations against women are: rape, sexual slavery, forced marriage (“bush wives” phenomenon), sexual assault, and other violations that target the sexuality of women.

Perpetrators were determined by the following criteria: The indicator of either ‘male –centric or gender-inclusive’ is determined by the presence of at least 1000 combatants in the fighting forces and the presence of women in the command structure of the main rebel factions. Note: There are variations in the data for DR Congo. Women are perpetrators, but they are not represented in the rebel command structures.

Pre-war domestic conflict was depicted based on the Uppsala Conflict Data Program (UCDP) dataset definition of conflicts short of an armed conflict that results in less than 25-conflict related deaths. See [Uppsala Conflict Data Program (UCDP) Codebook for the UCDP Battle-Deaths Dataset: Definitions, sources and methods for the UCDP Battle-Death estimates](http://www.securityinst.org/codbook/ucdp_battle_deaths_dataset_definitions_sources_and_methods.html) (Uppsala University, 2009)
The masculinity of the parameters for armed conflicts

It is valid to argue that the more equal women are to men the higher their participation in politics; and the greater their participation the more equal a society will be and women politicians may also create a balance between welfarism and militarism (Reynolds 1999, p. 554). Conversely, the more women are excluded the more militaristic, ethnically marginalized and conflict-prone state politics becomes. According to Goldstein (2001, p. 3) in "understanding gendered war roles, the potential for war matters more than the outbreak of particular wars". For him, the constructions of masculinity (across cultures and belief systems) motivate soldiers to fight; because war becomes a ‘test of manhood, and that men’s war roles are determined by the supportive roles (of ‘bush wives’) provided by women. He further argued that:

Males occupy the ongoing role of potential fighters, even in relatively peaceful societies. Amazon myths aside, in only one documented case (Dahomey) did women make up a substantial fraction of combat forces in a regular standing army over many years. This regularity in gender roles in contrast with much greater diversity found both in war itself and in gender roles outside war (Goldstein, 2001, p. 10)

Traditionally in Africa state institutions are dominated by men, especially in pre-war years and in time of conflict. Consequently, they are responsible for making decisions to wage war, or set the conditions that encouraged popular rebellions and civil wars. Politics in Africa, writes Sederis (2001, p. 151), “constitute exclusive male clubs, which are defined by hierarchy, authoritarian control, aggression and violence.” Feminist scholars (Enloe 1998; Turshen & Twagirimariya 1998; Hatch 2000; Sideris 2001) have argued on the link between patriarchy and militarisation. Brommiller (1975, quoted in Sideris 2001, p. 151) contends that “ordinary men are made un-ordinary by entry into the most exclusive male-only club in the world”. Therefore this militarisation, she argues, is aggressively aggressive and masculine—which creates a sense of meaning and direction to remove women from war making decision. And in fact, the mere presence of women in positions of power is misleading according to Francine D’Amico;

Women’s increasing presence in the military does not change the fundamental gendered construction of the institution, which at its core is coercive, hierarchical, and patriarchal. In fact, the increasing presence of women serves to legitimize the institution by giving it a façade of egalitarianism (D’Amico, as quoted in, Peterson and Runyan 1993, p. 86).

In Africa the recruitment gap between women and men in the armed forces and politics, and attitudes related to women’s sexuality, provide an important vantage point from which to examine the interactions between militarism and masculinity. Though it is evident in many conflicts in Africa that women are increasingly being represented in militaries, and that they often enjoy special benefits and opportunities that men do not, gender and power relations are still not evenly distributed. McKay and Mazurana (2004) found that equal treatment and gender parity in the fighting forces were not evident in Sierra Leone, Uganda and Mozambique; instead women were the sustainers of in-group male perpetrated violence.

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4 However, not all countries without women’s political representations are in civil wars or will become failed states. For instance, in the Gulf States, which have parliaments, of Kuwait and the United Arab Emirates women do not have the right to vote or stand for election, yet there is no visible sign that they will ever enter into the type of civil wars experienced in Africa.
At the political level, the Inter-Parliamentary Union, IPU (1997) presents statistics that shows that women were fundamentally under-represented in politics between 1991 and 1997 (the period when the continent became volatile and conflict-infested). In Table 3, the pre-war and wartime percentages of women in parliaments, and the political systems of the countries under review are tabulated. A common feature of these countries is that they were either stratocracies or autocratic one-party dictatorships when the wars erupted. However, in the countries with recently concluded conflicts the trend is changing. Elson and Keklik (2002) contend that 13 developing countries in Sub-Saharan Africa have higher proportions of women parliamentarians than the United States (12%), France (12%) and Japan (10%). Rwanda has 26% and Uganda, 25%. 
Table 3 Women Political Representation in Conflict Countries in the Sample (n=15)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Number of Seats</th>
<th>1990-1993</th>
<th>1995-1997</th>
<th>Pre-War Political Systems</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>West Africa</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nigeria</td>
<td>---</td>
<td>---</td>
<td>---</td>
<td>Military Dictatorships</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Senegal</td>
<td>120</td>
<td>11.7</td>
<td>---</td>
<td>One Party State</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sierra Leone</td>
<td>80</td>
<td>---</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>Military/Democracy</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Liberia</td>
<td>64</td>
<td>5.7 (1994)</td>
<td>0 (1997-2003)</td>
<td>One Party State</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Central Africa</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Burundi</td>
<td>---</td>
<td>11.9</td>
<td>---</td>
<td>Ethnic (Tutsi) Dictatorships</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chad</td>
<td>52</td>
<td>17.3</td>
<td>---</td>
<td>Dictatorships</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Democratic Republic of Congo (Formally Zaire)</td>
<td>125</td>
<td>1.6 (lower house)</td>
<td>---</td>
<td>Dictatorship</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rwanda</td>
<td>70</td>
<td>---</td>
<td>17.1</td>
<td>Ethnic (Hutu) Dictatorship</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>East Africa</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sudan</td>
<td>400</td>
<td>---</td>
<td>5.3</td>
<td>Dictatorships</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Uganda</td>
<td>276</td>
<td>---</td>
<td>18.5</td>
<td>Military Dictatorships</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ethiopia</td>
<td>537</td>
<td>---</td>
<td>2.0</td>
<td>Dictatorships</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Somalia</td>
<td>---</td>
<td>---</td>
<td>---</td>
<td>Dictatorship/Warlordsim</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>North Africa</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Algeria</td>
<td>183</td>
<td>---</td>
<td>6.6 (in 1994)</td>
<td>Military Dictatorship</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Southern Africa</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Angola</td>
<td>220</td>
<td>9.5</td>
<td>---</td>
<td>Dictatorship</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Source:** Author’s Construction at basis of literature on Gender and Politics in Africa.

Data compiled by the Inter-Parliamentary Union on the basis of information provided by National Parliaments by 1 January 1997, [http://www.ipu.org/wmn-e/classif010197.htm](http://www.ipu.org/wmn-e/classif010197.htm) (Accessed 21 October 2009)

The *dash* represents either the lack of data, or there was no parliament, due to the political systems—mostly military regimes rule by decree and therefore there were no legislatures in government.
The feminisation of Peace processes

Though beyond the scope of this paper to delve into the nuanced theoretical feminist arguments surrounding the peaceful nature of women, it is important to note as Binta Mansaray argues that the:

Trite expressions like ‘women love peace and men make war’ are misleading... women represent the best bet for peace, not because they are ‘naturally’ or ‘inherently’ peace-loving human beings... but because women are usually excluded from the male-dominated political groups which take war-like decisions (Mansaray 2000, p. 144).

It is within this political exclusion that I suggest we start any analysis of women in peace activism (formal and informal). In Sierra Leone and Liberia, for example, after many years as inferior actors, women became very active (though under-represented in the formal peace talks) in influencing the outcomes of the 1999 Lome Peace Accord and the 2003 Comprehensive Peace Plan. In the ongoing war in Senegal (Casamance region) women are very active in calling for an end to hostilities through demonstrations and in lobbying the leaders of the warring factions (see De-Maio, 2004). However, there are mixed result from the data. In the conflicts in Darfur, Southern Sudan, and Ethiopia (Ogaden Region) women’s role in the peace processes are invisible or non-existent.

Several factors can be identified to validate the argument that peace processes are becoming increasingly feminine—though contentious—and that women are key actors in setting the parameters for sustainable peace. Firstly, the feminisation of war related violence, especially sexual-gender-based violence, against civilian populations has emerged as one of the motivating factors for the intervention of the international community to end protracted conflicts in Africa. Secondly, the feminisation of peace processes and the essentialisation of what women do in wartime has also influenced the emergence of women’s peace activism. Like war, peace is gendered. Whilst men dominate in the formal peace talks, in tandem with their over-concentration on the political questions that led to the conflict, women are more concerned with the socio-economic, humanitarian, and domestic/familial issues in the aftermath of war.

In his analysis on how gender shapes war systems and in the making of militarised masculinity, Goldstein (2001, pp. 323) contends that just as Hegel’s “beautiful Soul” protects ‘the appearance of purity by cultivating innocence’ about the cruel world, women’s dominance in household sphere creates a kind of metaphysical refuge for traumatised soldiers, a counterweight to hellish war. Although this gendering of psychological spheres, he argues, does not seem sufficient to account for gendered war roles, it reinforces peace processes.

Finally, despite the under-representation of women in disarmament, demobilisation and reintegration (DDR) programmes, women combatants are becoming increasingly involved in the DDR programmes in countries such as DR Congo, Burundi, and Uganda. Their involvement has two implications, first in deconstructing the traditional male-centric disarmament arrangements in Africa, and second, in emphasising the importance of women as key actors in peace, conflict and security, not just mere victims of war. The need for engendering peace has also gained international footing following the UN Security Council’s adoption of Resolution 1325 on “Women, Peace, and Security” which encourages:

All those involved in the planning for disarmament, demobilization and reintegration to consider the different needs of female and male ex-combatants and to take into account the needs of their dependent (United Nations Security Council 2000, para, 13.)
However, care must be taken when analysing the ‘feminised’ nature of peace processes. According to Goldstein (2001) although women are actively opposed to war more than men, their peace activism feeds into, and reinforces, masculine war roles. This, he further contends, has created a dilemma in women’s peace activism.

Failed Statehood and the feminisation of poverty

The poor management of the public sector, widespread gender-based violence and ethnic marginalization in pre-war years in these sampled countries disproportionally disadvantaged females. A closer look at the indicators of failed states, measured in terms of demographic pressures, worsening refugees/IPDs, group grievance; human flight, uneven development, economic decline, delegitimization of the State, public services, human rights, lack of human security, amid security sector over spending to the detriment of social welfare, the factionalisation of political and military elites, and the lack of effective and depoliticised external intervention (Foreign Policy Index, 2009) resulted in women’s increased domestic burdens. In such situations, as characteristic of my sampled countries, poverty becomes feminised, domestic violence increases, politics becomes more militaristic, and gender relations become more asymmetrical and violent. Put together, these problems fed into the political economy of wars.

The Gendered representation, and transvestite outlook of combatants, in the fighting forces

Although analysis on the gendered nature of war had, a priori, been male-centric, the patterns of civil wars however show that women are increasingly becoming perpetrators of violence (which is a distortion of the dominant-masculine-militaristic social order). For example, during the Rwandan genocide extremist Hutu women were actively involved in the perpetration of genocidal violations (see African Rights 1995). In Sierra Leone, Agnes Deen-Jalloh played a formidable role in the making of the Rebel group, the Revolutionary United Front (RUF) (see Abdullah 1998, p. 230; Gberie 2005, p. 29) and by the end of the war, thousands of women (whether coerced or voluntarily) were combatants (Mazurana and Carlson 2004, p. 6). In Liberia, President Madam Ellen Johnson-Sirleaf was very active in the making of war—and in the creation of both Charles Taylor, as Warlord, and his National Patriotic Front of Liberia (NPFL). In later years of the war, NPFL’s top female political operative, Grace Minor, shaped the (failed) outcomes of the peace processes in Liberia between 1994 and 1997 (see Aning 1998). In Uganda, the current ultra-religious (Christian) position of the Lord’s Resistance Army of Joseph Kony was shaped by Alice Lakwena’s Holy Spirit Movement (HSM).³

In Sierra Leone and Liberia’s wars (as in Uganda, Burundi, and DR Congo) the gendered outlook of combatants was sexualised and transvestite. According to Mary Moran, the localised context of the gendered identities of male fighters in the Liberian war was ritualised and formed part of “an altogether more complex and multilayered identity” (Moran 1995, p. 75). Adopting Moran’s line of argument, I will argue that the decision by many male combatants, especially those of the Revolutionary United Front (RUF), to feminise their appearance—wearing female clothing; dresses, brassieres and wigs—during the Sierra Leone war was either to distort (unconsciously though) societal opinion that sees women as mere victims, or as a demonstration of their ability to transcend

³ Lakwena had argued that the Holy Spirit commanded her to fight for the rights of the Acholis in Northern Uganda by overthrowing the Ugandan Government. When she was exiled to Kenya (where she died), her cousin Joseph Kony took over the HSM and transformed it into the LRA.
their masculine identities. This transvestite appearance of the male combatants played a role in the exaggeration among uprooted civilian populations that women were numerically more involved in some rebel attacks.

Similarly women were also transvestite both in appearance—wearing male fatigues—and in their masculine warrior names—such as Adama “cut hand”; lieutenant “Cause Trouble”; Kumba “Blood”; and Lady “Jungle Law”—that depict wickedness and violent behaviour. This transvestism of female fighters, according to Mary Moran, was the most unsettling of predictable gender norms, and although “rebel women are drawn into this mode of representation in a process that may ‘liberate’ them from feminine convention” their transvestism “ironically emphasizes and commandeers their sexuality” (ibid, p. 84).

The Gendered Continuum of Violence

It is evident in the literature that the end of conflicts, or the signing of peace accords, does not represent the end of violence against women. Countries in the data set of “recently-ended” civil wars share this feature of increasing levels of post-war gender-based violence. In Sierra Leone, for example, after the war the dashing down of the optimism of former male combatants to reclaim their lost status in society has resulted in more cases of domestic violence. In Southern Sudan, it has been pointed out that the violence that existed in pre-war years—such as arranged marriages, battering of women, and wife inheritance—is closely related to the prevailing culture of violence that escalated during the war, with multiple cases of rape of women (Lowilla, as cited in, Bop 2001, p. 36). Right across the African continent, Bop (2001) contends that the loss of identity, bodily integrity, the distortion of agency, economic losses, loss of Leadership, losses in education and health, amid the increase in domestic responsibilities defines the precarious condition of women’s post-war lives—hence the validation of Cockburn’s (2004) argument that violence against women is a gendered continuum.

Pre-War Domestic Conflicts and Violence

Following from Caprioli’s (2003) analysis on the relationship between gender structural inequality and armed conflicts; and Nordstrom’s argument that “what people tolerate in peace shapes what they will tolerate in war” (Nordstrom 1997, p. 1), I argue pre-war domestic violence was characterized by: (a) the political acceptance of violence as a means of sustaining patriarchy, and the subordination of women, and the ‘other’ men, and (b) the continuum of violence feeds into the war mentality, and often contributes to the systematisation of wartime Sexual Gender-Based Violence (SGBV). In Sierra Leone, for example, the Truth Commission (2004, Vol 3b, chp 3, para 102) found that the persistency of pre-war violence made women think that reporting domestic violence to ‘outsiders’ exposes ‘family secret.’ Consequently a culture of silence was created which spiralled out of control when war erupted in 1991. In Nigeria, prior to the Ogoni conflict women did not enjoy the same socio-economic and political rights as men. “This lopsidedness,” writes Ibeanu (2001, p. 207), “permeated both traditional and modern economic and political structures.” The same is true for the other on-going and recently-ended conflicts in Africa.

The prior research finding that informs this paper reveals that there was increased political violence before full blown armed conflict erupted in these war-torn countries. In Sierra Leone, for instance, the state sponsored the 1985 N’dogbohuso massacre, and by 1991 when the war erupted,

\[6\] For example in rural Sierra Leone and Liberia prior to the war it was a taboo for women to wear trousers, or to behave in ‘unwomanly’ (militaristic) manner.
political violence characterised relations between groups of youths, and there political benefactors. In Nigeria there was heightened state-sponsored domestic violence before the 1967-1970 and the present conflicts. In Rwanda the discrimination against the Tutsis was politically motivated.

The Gendered Differentials of the Impact of Armed Conflicts

Traditionally, I argue, as does Amani El-jack (2003, p. 11), men had largely accounted for direct combat-related deaths and other violations such as amputation and forced recruitment. However, the expansion of battle sites from the fields into the homes and ‘safe zones’ means that the casualties among non-combatants, especially women, have come to represent a larger percentage of those killed in Africa’s armed conflicts. According to Sivard after 1995 more than 75% of all casualties are non-combatant women and children (Sivard, as cited in, Skjelsbæk 2000, p. 2). However, as Skjelsbæk recognizes, these statistics are contentious, due in part to the lack of data on the sex distribution of those killed in protracted civil wars (ibid).

As we will see later, apart from killings, women are victims of systematic sexual-gender-based-violence (SGBV) in all conflicts in Africa. In the Ivorian Conflict, it was reported that many women were victims of sexualised violence (Human Rights Watch 2007). In Darfur, Human Rights Watch (2008) reported that since the war started thousands of women were raped, murdered, and uprooted from their communities. In Somalia, UNHCR (2006, p. 67) reported 256 incidents of rape and sexual violence in 2004 in the Dadaab refugee camp vicinity alone. In Sierra Leone, Physicians for Human Rights (2002, pp. 3-4) reported that between 215,000 and 250,000 women are victims of war related rape. Emphatically, these statistics are an underestimation of the victims of SGBV because women prefer not to report out of fear and stigma.

Despite their destructive nature, wars also offer women opportunities to change the pre-war gender stereotypes and subordinations. In Chad, as a consequence of the conflict, there has been a change in the patriarchal social outlook, because “the social disorder brought by the war transformed gender relations,” and “enabled women to leave the private sphere and participate extensively in the public domain” (Women’s Commission of the Human Rights League of Chad and the Editors 1998, pp. 126-207). In Nigeria, Okechukwu Ibeanu found that the Ogoni conflict raised the profile of Ogoni Women (Ibeanu 2001, p. 207). In Sierra Leone it was after the conflict that some of the patriarchal stereotypes (of barrenness, and ancestral curse on women who contest for paramount chieftaincy elections, especially in the Northern Province) in politics were removed, making it possible for women to contest alongside men. As already noted, it was after the genocide in Rwanda that women gained parity with men in politics.

Rape: A weapon of war and terror

It is argued that wartime time systematic rape is a weapon of war that often destroys the foundations that hold societies together. According to Sideris (2001: 148) the use of rape is to humiliate women and destroy communities constitute only part of the threat to social stability because the ways women are raped in war distorts social norms and in this way threatens social and cultural integrity. This is a shared gendered condition of war perpetrated by warring factions in the countries under review. In Liberia, for example, Aning (1998, 11) noted that sexual abuse formed part of the war strategy of Charles Taylor’s NPFL:

In the case of the NPFL, rape was specifically elevated to a central position in its intimidation tactics and exercised as a tool of coercion and terrorism.... In mid-1993, an excerpt of a radio conversation between Taylor and his field commander, John T. Richardson, was clear as to its
purpose. Taylor is heard giving orders to Richardson, who had surrounded a displaced persons centre in Harbel and Kakata, to shoot ‘at anything that moves’. Questioned for clarification as to what to do with the civilian populace, Taylor retorts, ‘...if you have men among them, chop them, and for the women, rape them. To hell with them!

Right across Africa it was (and still is, in Congo and Darfur’s case) evident that the rape of women served strategic militaristic purpose. According to Turschen (1998, p. 11) “rape is a weapon of war used to spread political terror... rape is used to terrorise and silence women and force them to flee homes, families and communities.” In Sierra Leone, systematic rape characterised the ‘joint criminal venture’ between all factions, irrespective of their political affiliations.

However, do arm marauding combatants only target women as part of their strategies? Are not war rapes more of an extension of the misogyny that is embedded in the patriarchal order that defines pre-war gender relations? Are mass rapes not a natural result of the breakdown of law and order which usually underpins war torn societies? These are the questions that have presented complex interpretational problems, especially when seen from the fact that some war rapes are spasmodic—perpetrated by men (in displacement camps and homes) who are interested in satisfying their sexual ego. Moreover, perpetrators often engage their victims, albeit forcibly, in a human sexual interaction that incriminates them in their own violations (Siders 2001, p. 148). Against this backdrop, mass war rape should also be seen as a weapon of terror.7

**Typologies of Armed Conflicts in Africa and the Patterns of Women’s Participation**

Project ploughshares define an ‘armed conflict’ as:

Political conflict in which armed combat involves the armed forces of at least one state (or one or more armed factions seeking to gain control of all or part of the state), and in which at least 1,000 people have been killed by the fighting during the course of the conflict (Project Ploughshares 2009, p. 1).

Whilst wars of this nature are not only confined to Africa, the continent is plagued with armed conflicts since 1978. According to the United Nations Peacemaker database between September 1978 (following the eruption of conflict in Namibia) and February 2009 (with the signing of the ‘Agreement on Good Will and Confidence Building for the Settlement of the Problem in Darfur’) Africa has witnessed more than 146 intra-state conflicts.8 However, the trends of war in Africa show three types of conflicts, which I label: (a) ‘Resource/Opportunistic’ driven; (b) ‘Ethno-religious/Nationalistic’ driven; and (c) ‘Secessionist/autonomy’ driven conflicts. I distribute the sampled countries between these typologies. However, it should be noted that the Nigerian case is unique (and complex) to all these typologies.9

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7 By adding this ‘terror’ component to the phraseology of “weapon of war”, I also intend to give voice to women victims of peacetime rape.


9 Since the 1990s the wars in Nigeria are characterized by separatists, state, and religious violence. In the Niger delta region the main rebel group, the Movement for the Emancipation of the Niger Delta (MEND), is fighting for the sovereignty of the regions’ 14 million Ijaw people, whilst at the same time doing an opportunistic war for resource (oil) control in the region. The country is also infested with other religious conflicts, especially between the Muslim-based armed groups (the Arewa People’s Congress (APC), Hisbah Groups, the Zamfara State Vigilante Service (ZSVS), and Al-Sunna Wal Jamma) and the ‘disorganized’ Christian Militia. However, these religious conflicts have been exploited by minority ethnic groups—for example there are religious undercurrents in the ethnic conflict between the Fulani and Wase, who adhere to Islam, and the Taroh and
The data shows that women participate in these wars either ‘voluntarily’ or ‘under coercion’ especially when survival is the overriding rule for women (and men) in times of conflict. Once involved, the character of their participation is little different from that of the male combatants. Brutality is hyped in armed conflicts, as every participating combatant feels some sense of privilege and empowerment when armed with an assault rifle.

Contextually, there are variations in the research finding on the levels and patterns of participation. The findings show that in resource/opportunistic driven wars women’s participation is higher when compared to ethno-religious and secessionist driven wars. In the opportunistic wars of Sierra Leone and Liberia, for example, apart from the behavioural similarities of female and male combatants, they were ideologically less motivated, whereas in secessionist wars there are clear ideological reasons for women’s involvement—and they are empowered and motivated by the sense of liberation. However, the result shows some exceptions. In the opportunistic wars in Somalia and Algeria, for example, women are absent in the war as active (fighting) participants due to the religious (Islamic) factors, yet, active (whether coerced or voluntarily) in the non-combative arena of being sex slaves or ‘Desert Wives’ for the male soldiers/rebels.

All these types of war share some features: first, they are intense and cannot end without external military and diplomatic intervention, culminating mostly in fragile power sharing governments; second, these wars result in the distortion of conventional and gender-specific roles and responsibilities—defined in terms of ‘what men and women are trained to do’ in their gender relations. Finally, some violence is targeted at women’s sexuality. However, they are difference in that belligerents in secessionist wars have de facto ante-bellum territories to which they can withdraw, whereas in resource driven (and ethno-religious) conflicts the rebel forces do not have a political claim to any territory (Aning 1998, p. 6). Moreover, in opportunistic wars the use of civilians as human shield is common, a tactic that does not feature in secessionist wars.

**Resource Driven/Opportunistic Conflicts**

These are conflicts that are fought over resources and political power with no aim of separating the state into two or more parts. Yusuf Bangura trenchantly describes the motive behind these wars:

Combatants deliberately target civilians rather than armed opposition in prosecuting goals; and atrocities are freely committed as part of strategies aimed at publicizing political statements. In countries rich in natural resources,...the political goal of wars often interact with the multiple logics of resource appropriation..., the looting of private property, and vandalism. Such complicated outcomes have led many commentators to portray contemporary (resource driven) wars as being basically anarchic (Bangura 1997, p. 117).

Moreover, economic opportunities vigorously provide an important variable for the prolongation of conflict which undermines any peace effort. In his analysis of the opportunistic wars in Sierra Leone and Liberia, Kwesi Aning posit that these “economic calculations (over time) came to exert a decisive leverage on the form taken by the civil conflict” (Aning 1998, p. 6). In other words, these wars are sustained by natural resources. For example, in Angola the warring factions, especially the Marxist Popular Movement for the Liberation of Angola (MPLA) and the anti-Marxist

Gamai, who are predominantly Christians (for more on the ethnic conflict see Florquin and Berman eds. 2005). Thus it has become very difficult to distinguish between the secessionist and ethno-religious wars in Nigeria.
National Union for the Total Independence of Angola, UNITA) funded their rebellions by trading natural resources, in particular diamonds and oil, for weapons and ammunition. In Sierra Leone and Liberia diamonds accounted for much of the rebel finances. According to Gberie (2005, pp. 183-184) between 1994 and 1999 Belgian figures alone registered more than $2 billion worth of diamonds imported from Liberia; and in Sierra Leone the diamonds mined and traded by Sierra Leone’s RUF and Liberia’s NPFL at different times accounted for between 4 and 15 percent of the world total.

Whilst this type of conflict is not unique to Africa, it is pertinent to add that the nature of lootable resources in these wars also includes the exploitation of women’s social capital both productive and reproductive. In these wars, I argue along with Meredith Turshen that, the use of rape is a systematic calculation:

To strip women of their economic and political assets (which) reside in the first instance in their productive and reproductive labour power and in the second instance in their possessions and their access to valuable asset such as land and livestock (Turshen 2001, p. 56).

Against this backdrop, since women in most cases control domestic labour, rape is elevated as part of a widespread tactic to enforce control of the population and destroy society’s agro-economic means of survival. Moreover, rape is militarised and politicised. Generally in opportunistic wars, the rational calculations of the rebel forces are reinforced by the belief that military defeat would result in physical extermination (Aning 1998, p. 6), as a result rape is used to produce mass displacement of civilians to create a human shield.

Patterns of Women’s Participation

McKay and Mazurana (2004, p. 22) found in their study of girls in fighting forces between 1990 and 2003 that girls enter fighting forces for a variety of reasons; ‘voluntary recruitment’, abduction, protection, taken as orphans, born into forces, tax payment, response to local violence, financial gain, response to state violence, improve educational options, abused or problems in homes, parent, sibling or spouse in force. However, they argued that the notion of ‘voluntary recruitment’ for girls is flawed because the lack of other alternatives creates latent coercive impulses that force them to become combatants. Based on their findings, we can observe two patterns of participation in opportunistic wars (as in other typologies): coerced and voluntary. In these resource and opportunistic driven wars women’s participation is highest, both in combative (fighters) and non-combative (sex slaves, and “bush wives”) roles. Table 5 shows the varying roles played by girls/women in such wars.

Table 4: Roles and Activities Assumed by Girls in Fighting Forces

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Combat Soldiers</th>
<th>Porters</th>
<th>Spies</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Training for combatants</td>
<td>Looting</td>
<td>Informants</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Slave labor</td>
<td>Suicide/bombing missions</td>
<td>Messengers</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sexual slave</td>
<td>Mine sweepers</td>
<td>Intelligence Officers</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gather, prepare and cook food</td>
<td>Child care and rearing</td>
<td>Communications</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Susan McKay and Dyan Mazurana (2004: 24)
Coerced: In resource/opportunistic driven wars participation frequently happens through abduction during attacks or patrols. One female combatant, in her testimony to the Sierra Leone Truth Commission, trenchantly describes the pattern:

My mother begged them [the RUF Rebels] in vain to release me but “Sergeant Small Soldier” – for that was the name of the rebel that abducted me – refused... he took me to...the camp where the girls and women were separated from the boys and men. We were left to the command of women rebels who maltreated us greatly... we were all trained to fight as rebels.... We were sent to raid neighbouring villages to loot food and bring it back. If anybody disobeyed, you were cruelly beaten (Sierra Leone Truth Commission 2004; Vol 3b; Cph 3, para. 216).

From this narrative, it becomes clear that once abducted women are coerced into handling small arms and light weapons and taught how to use them. In Northern Uganda, McKay and Mazurana (2004; see also Angulo 2000) found in their population-based survey on girls’ roles with the Lord’s Resistance Army that while girls are predominately porters (14%), and food producers (22 percent), they were also fighters (12 percent). Among these fighters, they reported that 72 percent reported weaponry training and 8 percent advanced military training. In Sierra Leone, McKay and Mazurana (2004, p. 92) estimated the number of girls combatants at 12,056.

As in Sierra Leone, in Liberia and DR Congo, forced recruitment took two forms: physical abduction and the use of mass rape (which forms part of the military strategy of the rebel forces) to send a message to women that they would only be safe if they join the rebellion, or were armed with an assault rifle—hence the militarisation of women’s femininity.

Voluntary: In these opportunistic wars, women also voluntarily join to benefit from lootable resources, escape their pre-war/war poverty status, revenge the killing of their loved ones, or to protect themselves. Furthermore, the aspiration of some women to transcend their ‘femininity’ or to exhibit signs of hegemonic masculinity (physical strength, and the temerity to do harm) led some to join, and in tandem, commit crimes of a more heinous nature than their male counterparts. As argued earlier, in Liberia, as in Sierra Leone, women who wanted to be recognized and included in the command structures of the rebel forces became transvestite and assumed a male ‘warrior image’ because the combination of their femininity with a masculine appearance gave them protection.

Beyond the economic lies the social motivation. The Sierra Leone Truth Commission, based on its research on the patterns of women’s participation in civil wars in Africa, posits that a substantial number of female combatants who voluntarily participated in the Sierra Leone war were also affected by crowd psychology:

By this theory, people lose their individuality to the group and act according to the dictates of the collective. Individuals experience a feeling of ‘almost limitless power’, promoting a kind of automatism that allows people to carry out acts without conscious thought, all the time supported by the formidable presence of the group. In this state a person can commit the most vile and gruesome violations. Often those in the group are vulnerable to this kind of pressure because of their own peculiar psychological make-up, whereas without a crowd they (women) might not have the guts to carry out such actions in normal circumstances (Sierra Leone Truth Commission (2004, vol. 3b, Chp. 3, para. 394).
It must be noted here that there is a major difference between women who were coerced into becoming combatants and those who volunteered. The former perform forced labour, besides actual fighting, and are also more susceptible to in-group sexual violence. Whereas the latter wield power; they are the commanders and trainers for those abducted. For example, the Women Auxiliary Corps (WACS) in the Sierra Leone’s RUF rebel group was made up of volunteer women commandos. They were the commanders-in-charge of the abducted girl-children, whom they trained and recruited into the ‘Small Girls Unit,’ an all-girls unit that was notorious during the civil war in Sierra Leone.

**Ethno-religious/Nationalist Driven Conflicts**

These are conflicts where one ethnic group fights to either uphold their freedom or supremacy, amid the resistance of other group(s). In these conflicts, the inter-ethnic tensions are a reactionary move designed by the oppressed to thwart the ‘other’ from threatening their survival and beliefs.

In Rwanda, like in Burundi, the war was about ethnic control of the state between the majority Tutsis and the minority Hutus. In Burundi, there was unparalleled ethnic discrimination against majority Hutus who constituted an estimated 85 percent of the population. The President and the Tutsi-dominated army retain their dominance in decision-making and have not initiated genuine power sharing with the Hutus (Global Security 2009).

As in opportunistic wars, ethno-religious wars are equally severe. However, the question is not much concerned with lootable resources; rather it is about politics of difference and identity which are shaped by questions of marginalization, honour and humiliation. Within this crucible of humiliation the cultural symbolism of the sexuality of women plays an important role in the making of ethnic identities. In these wars, women’s sexual purity symbolizes the inviolability of their community and the power of its men to defend its boundaries, making sexual violence by outside men a dishonour of individual women, a violation of communal integrity, and a shaming defeat of men in their protective role (Urban-Walker 2009, p. 35).

**Patterns of Women’s Participation**

Women’s participation in actual fighting—suggestive of their ethno-religious beliefs—is lower, at least when compared to opportunistic wars. In these conflicts the literature revealed that women play dual roles; in fighting, and in performing their traditional reproductive roles. This is especially true for protracted ethnic conflicts in Ethiopia (Ogaden Region), Burundi, and Senegal (Casamance Region). However, women are more visible and active in their reproductive roles than in active combat. Women are domesticated and webbed in patriarchal dictates that demand that they produce more children to swell the populations of their respective tribes.

It is the feminisation of this typology of wars that make it valid to conclude that violence against women in ethnicised conflicts targets their sexuality as a means of shaming their ethnic group(s). The sexual abuse of the enemy’s women is part of the trophy; it is used to de-purify the victim and her ethnic group, and promote coercive population imperialism. In Africa parenting is paternal; therefore if a male member of one tribe rapes, and succeeds in impregnating his victim, the child belongs to the father. This is the kind of scorched-earth war tactic that the Sudanese

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10 Conversely, in Rwanda the Tutsis were the majority at the time of the genocide in 1994.
Government and their Janjaweed militia have been doing to ‘Arabise’ and dislocate the Dafuri population since the war erupted in 2003.

However, the Rwandan case represents a distortion of this data fit as women were in actual fighting. The Ivory Coast is also another case that turned out complicated results. Although abduction for combat purposes was not known to have occurred, women were combatants fighting for either the Forces Nouvelles de Côte d’Ivoire (New Forces: FNCI) or the Forces de défense et de sécurité ivoiriennes (Ivorian Defence and Security Forces, FDS). In this war gender narratives did not feature prominently, due, in part, to the short length (2003-2007) of the conflict and the ability of the warring parties in divorcing from their ethnic grievances nuanced gender narratives.

Secessionist/Autonomy Driven conflicts

According to Toft (2001, p. 1) the reason for conflict between the belligerents (the de jure state and the disgruntled dissident region, and its people) in wars of this nature is the question of the (in) divisibility of the territory. While the secessionists are asking for autonomy/sovereignty over the territory they occupy, the state views that territory as indivisible. A characteristic feature of these kind of wars is that the belligerents are well organised in the traditional sense of conventional warfare. They are principled in political terms and are focused upon the attainment of their political goal. The combatants are under a central command system and are well organised, although their engagement with the enemy sometimes appears to be uncontrolled. The cases in point are the two-decade war of liberation in Southern Sudan; and conflict in Darfur. In Darfur, the secessionist war started in February 2003, when the Sudan Liberation Front, led by Muhammed Ahmed Al-Nurr attacked and seize Gulu, capital of Jabal Marra province in Western Darfur. In both Sudanese wars, the secessionists accuse the Khartoum government of oppression, exploitation and marginalization, racial discrimination and economic exclusion of their regions. However, the disagreement between warring factions over political representation and the fighting between the Pastoral Arab and the Agrarian Darfuri for resource (water) control makes Darfur a loose choice for this type of war.

The separatist conflict in Ethiopia’s Ogaden region between the Ogaden National Liberation Front (ONLF) (formed in 1984 for the independence of ethnic Somalis in Ogaden) and the Ethiopian government is another case in point. The ONLF started off as a protest organization protesting decades of political and economic marginalization of the Ogaden despite the natural resources in the region. As in other secessionist conflicts, the war tactics of the Ethiopian military involved pillage, raping of women, and the mass killing of civilians as part of a systematic campaign to force the people of Ogaden into submission. Nevertheless, for many the conflict in Ogaden is just a cover for the ethnicised conflict between the Oromo (majority ethnic, yet marginalized, group in the country) and minority Tigre ethnic group that controls political and military power in the country.11

In Senegal, the separatist Mouvement des Forces Démocratiques de la Casamance (MFDC) has been fighting for the independence of Casamance since 1982, first through popular protest, and then since 1990 through a guerrilla war. In spite of ceasefires and accords throughout the 1990s durable peace remains elusive. Reports from the region put the death toll above 1,000—the threshold of an armed conflict according to the definition of Project Ploughshares 2009—with displacement at over 63,000, out of a population of around 1.1 million (see Evans 2002). However, this conflict, though silent within the discourse of wars in Africa, also bears the semblance of an

11 Bereket Terekeng, interviewed (via email) by author, on 2 January 2010. This, he said, explains the emergence of two other rebel groups; the Oromo Liberation Front (OLF), and the United Western Somali Liberation Front (UWSLF).
ethic conflict between the Diola ethnic group, who are politically opposed to the separation of the region from Senegal and the other groups fighting for autonomy.

Patterns of Women’s Participations

In secessionist wars, since it is the state that is pro-active in putting down a territorially, politically and economically marginalized insurgent group’s effort to claim territorial sovereignty, or at least win fundamental rights for their people, women’s direct participation in these wars are minimal, and abduction for combat purposes does not future in these wars. However, women who are actively involved as combatants in these wars do not lose their sense of dignity and ‘womanhood’. For example, during the war for Algeria’s independence, Djamila, Zohra, and Samie tell us about their role:

We had visited the site and noted several possible targets. We had been told to place two bombs, but we were three, and at the last moment, since it was possible, we decided to plant threes bombs. Samia and I carried three bombs from the Casbah to Bab el Oued, where they were primed...Each of us placed a bomb, and at the appointed time there were two explosions; one of the bombs was defective and didn’t go off (Minne 1993, quoted in, Tursken 2002, p. 889).

Forty-two years after the liberation struggle ended in Algeria an opportunistic civil war erupted and women’s participation shifted from that of respected combatants, who took independent decisions during the first war, to sex objects (‘Desert wives’) for the male fighters. According to Chrea Meriem;

In the terrorist’ camp, I lived in hell. I woke at dawn to start cleaning, washing, cooking, fetching firewood and water. I nursed the sick and served the wives of the terrorists, the legal ones they called “free women.” Every night the terrorists visited me, taking their turns. They forced me to have sex several times a night. During my (six months) captivity I was raped by about 50 dirty, stinking, brutal, violent men.... The rest of the night, to keep me from running away, they bound my wrists and ankles with wire and took away my clothes (Belloula 2000, quoted in, Tursken 2002, p. 889).

These quotes show that women’s roles are determined by the type of armed conflict. In a war of a secessionist character, women are protected by their men, and their roles are respected. During the first Algerian conflict, Meredith Turshen (2002, p. 890) contends that 11,000 women joined the Maquis (mountain rebels) and were active in fighting and schooling illiterate peasant women about their collective social role and in explaining the reasons for the struggle. However, in the on-going opportunistic war, she contends that thousands of Algerian women and girls are the victims who have been denied not just their womanhood but their humanity.

The data however, reveals differing patterns of women’s participation in secessionist wars. In Southern Sudan, as a case in point, women are active in the fighting and in their supportive roles. For example, one female Southern Sudanese respondent (name withheld, interviewed for this article) believes that in southern Sudan it is nationalistic for women to give birth to, and in nurturing, committed (male) fighters to defend their right to statehood.12 In Darfur women are not actively

12 Interviewed (transcript tape recording) in Brisbane, Australia on 10 December 2009. When asked to confirm this, a Sudanese male in another town, Armidale, said “It is right for men and women to have more children in
involved in the war; rather they are the victims of sexualised violations. In Senegal (Casamance region), as already noted, though the conflict has affected women more than men, amid the lack of a negotiated settlement between the belligerents, the women are very active in calling for an immediate end to the violence.

Discussion: Countries grouped by type of conflict and the levels (and patterns) of women’s direct participation by contextual characteristics

In these conflicts, women’s participation is determined by the kind of conflict and the political, economic and social status of women, on one hand, and the public acceptance of the rebel leaders, and their agendas (popular or unpopular—defined in terms of their tendency to commit gender-based violence). As already seen, there are variations in the data for each typology of conflict, yet the findings reveal that women are more active as active combatants in resource/opportunistic driven wars. In Table 5 (below) the countries are grouped by typology, and the numbers of women combatants, including the patterns of participation is presented.
Table 5: Countries Grouped by Type of Conflict and Patterns of Women’s Participation by Contextual Characteristics

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Area of (higher) Participation</th>
<th>No. of Combatants</th>
<th>No. of Women Combatants</th>
<th>Resource Driven/ Opportunistic Conflict (n=7)</th>
<th>Ethno-Religious/Nationalist Driven Conflict (n=5)</th>
<th>Secessionist/Autonomy Driven Conflicts (n=4)</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>No.</td>
<td></td>
<td>Sierra Leone</td>
<td>Burundi</td>
<td>Sudan (Southern Sudan)</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Combatants</td>
<td></td>
<td>75,800</td>
<td>56,296</td>
<td>180,000</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Women Combatants</td>
<td></td>
<td>13,202</td>
<td>494</td>
<td>3000</td>
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<td>field combat/Non-combat</td>
<td>field combat/ Non-combat</td>
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<td>Liberia</td>
<td>Rwanda</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>101,495</td>
<td>350,000</td>
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<td>22,370</td>
<td>3,364</td>
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<td>field combat/Non-combat</td>
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<td>Angola</td>
<td>Ivory Coast</td>
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<td>167,583</td>
<td>48,064</td>
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<td>30,000</td>
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<td>field combat/Non-combat</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Algeria</td>
<td>Nigeria (total, including Niger Delta)</td>
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<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
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<td>Non-combat</td>
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<td>Democratic Republic of Congo</td>
<td>Somalia</td>
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<td></td>
<td>150,000</td>
<td>X</td>
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<td>3,000</td>
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<td>Chad</td>
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<td></td>
<td>X</td>
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<td>Non-combat</td>
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<td>Uganda</td>
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<td>21,000</td>
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<td>4,547</td>
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<td>field combat/Non-combat</td>
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Source: Author’s construction at basis of available data/literature on Gender, Conflict and Disarmament in Africa.

- The **Number of Combatants** is represents represent the combine total number of the rough (underestimated) estimates of those that have been disarmed by the UN. See the UN Disarmament Resource Centre (2009): [www.unddr.org/countryprogrammes.php?c=25](http://www.unddr.org/countryprogrammes.php?c=25) (accessed 10 January 2010). For country-specific cases: Sierra Leone (see Conibere et al 2004, p. 14); Nigeria (see also Project Ploughshares 2009); Sudan (Southern) (see also See UNMIS DDR Report 2009, p.
- The “X” represents lack of statistics/unknown number of combatants (male and female).
- **Area of (higher) Participation**: Those in ‘BOLD’ denote higher level of participation; those not in bold represent women’s presence but their presence is small when compared to the former. Those in blank represent either lack of data or non-involvement.
- **Angola No. of Combatants**: See Gomes & Parsons (2003). In Angola’s DDR women are more visible under the category of “families.” Whether this is part of gender stereotypes it is as a result of the gender-neutrality of the country’s DDR programmes.
- **Rwanda**: The situation in Rwanda is rather complicated, the data revealed that women were active only in the perpetration of genocide, and there is no data to support any claim that Tutsi women, who were victims of the Hutu-instigated genocide were victims of the abduction and subjugation to sexual slavery by their Tutsi armed opposition group.
- **Ethiopia No. of Combatants**: The combined estimate in all rebel forces-the ONLF, the Oromo Liberation Front (OLF), and the United Western Somali Liberation Front (UWSLF)
Although the estimated figures of those involved in wars are an underestimation, the findings reveal that there is higher number of combatants (both women and men) in resource driven wars. In Sierra Leone we see, for instance, that out of the estimated 75, 800 combatants, 13,202 are women (Conibere 2004, p. 14)—of whom 4, 751, including 506 girls, were demobilised (Mazurana and Carlson 2004, p. 6). In Liberia, the UN Disarmament centre (2009) put the total estimate at 101, 495 out of which 22, 370 are women. In Uganda, adding to the previous disarmament of 36, 358 soldiers of the estimated 90, 000-strong National Resistance Army fighters between 1992 and 1995, as of 2006 approximately 4, 547 out of the 21, 000 combatants that were disarmed are women. In Angola, the lack of an appreciable number of women and girls in is due to the fact that the community and national level DDR programmes continue to ignore their presence. CIDA (2004) argued that the 1994 Lusaka Protocol’s Demobilization Commissions which oversaw the demobilization of 9, 133 boy soldiers under the age of eighteen systematically excluded women and girls from the DDR programmes. In the on-going Somalia and Algerian wars women are absent in the war as active combatants.

Conversely in ethno-religious wars, though women are to a larger extent absent in the wars as active combatants, they are mostly active in other supportive areas—this is not to suggest that women in other wars do not perform supportive roles, besides fighting. In Rwanda, as of August 2004, the total number of combatants is 350, 000 (Waldorf 2008)—out of whom 50, 025 men and 334 women were demobilised (Farr 2004, p. 2). However, during the genocide women perpetrators were estimated at over one thousand. In Burundi, the UN disarmament centre (2009) put the total number of combatants at 56, 296, out of whom 494 are women.

The higher gendered representation in the Rwandan conflict presents a very interesting question: why women in Rwanda appear to have been so much more active as killers13 than those in Burundi? Part of the answer, I argue, rests on the pre-war gender relations of both states. Despite the discrimination against Tutsis, Hutu women in Rwanda were empowered; and empowerment that emerged from (a) the parity created by ‘Hutu Nationalism,’ which was instituted by the Belgian colonial government, and promoted by the pre-genocide media propaganda, (b) the de-sexualisation of Hutu women (epitomized by the folklore of Ndagabo14) in the nationalist discourse (Baines 2003, p. 479); and (c) the discriminatory militarisation of the state that followed the Juvenal Habyarimana-led 1973 coup. Whereas in Burundi, both Hutu and Tutsis women were domesticated and had little options open to them in the military and in politics.

However, in secessionist wars since it is the collective that is fighting for autonomy women are largely absent. In Darfur for instance, the leaders of both the Sudan Liberation Army (SLA), and the Justice and Equality Movement (JEM) had claimed that they had a combined force of 60, 000 combatants (de Waal 2006), but where are the women? In Southern Sudan, since there is central de facto state system, the statistics are somehow reliable. The number of combatants is put at 180, 000, out of which around 3, 000 are women. However, in Senegal (Casamance Region) and Ethiopia (Ogaden) there is no data on women combatants in active combat, yet they are involved in supportive roles—i.e. wives and spies—for their rebel forces.

Apart from the uneven levels of participation of women in each typology of war—for example, while 17. 41 percent of the total number of combatants in Sierra Leone are women, in

13 There is no data to support the claim that Tutsi women, who were victims of the Hutu-instigated genocide were victims of the abduction and subjugation to sexual slavery by the Tutsi armed opposition group.
14 According to folklore, Ndagabo was a warrior woman who hid her femininity and succeeded in becoming a commander of the Rwandan King’s military. Though her sexuality was later revealed, her prowess and strength led the King to marry her.
Burundi they constitute 1 (one) percent of combatants. In Southern Sudan women constitute 2 percent of those in the fighting forces—, there is also a large gap between male and female combatants in all typology of war. Several factors such as (a) male preference, (b) societal stereotypes attached to conflicts—as a male preoccupation, and (c) the reproductive roles (child bearing and rearing), amid increases in domestic chores, among others, can be advanced for this sex distribution gap in the fighting forces.

Conclusion

Despite the variations in the data for each typology of conflict, the findings reveal that women are not merely victims, but are important actors in deciding the outcome of wars. Against this backdrop, any analysis of gender and conflict should move away from the traditionally ‘male-centric’ level of analysis to a gender-centric one. Most tellingly, to depict women as the only victims of male barbarity robs women of their agency, and entrenches masculine expectations that politicises violence against women to wage wars of revenge—leading to any unending circle of violence—that are reinforced by states keen to manipulate those expectations for political gain (Cockburn 2001). This contextual analysis of gender and conflict has enabled us to see that the complex web surrounding gender relations during conflicts has resulted in a gendered representation in warring factions.

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Armed in Northeast India: Special Powers, Act or No Act

Uddipana Goswami*

The Armed Forces (Special Powers) Act 1958 (AFSPA) forms the core of the Indian Government’s relationship with the Northeast region. Fifty years after its inception violence in the region is increasing rather than decreasing. While the AFSPA is central to the ways the state relates to citizens in the region and has been a major catalyst for increasing violence, this paper will not treat the AFSPA as the sole instance of the Indian state’s skewed security regime in the Northeast region, but will instead argue that the act is only a symptom of a larger malaise characterised by alienation, militarisation, and a dangerous counter-insurgency strategy. The fallout has been not merely a brutalisation of the security forces, but a legitimisation of violence. A vicious cycle has been set in motion punctuated by three main dynamics: violence giving birth to more violence, brutalisation eroding ideologies, and state-sanctioned terror engendering a disregard for peaceful alternatives. It is argued that unless the Indian state bases its approach to the region on a proper understanding of the nationalistic aspirations and indigenous and ethnic identities of the people there, this cycle cannot be stopped.

Flying into the Northeast Indian state of Mizoram, as the aircraft navigates its route above the undulating hills of this highland state – the word ‘Mizo’ means ‘highlander’ or ‘hill-man’ – one is struck by the beauty and serenity of the landscape. However, if one knew the history of insurgency in Mizoram (earlier the Lushai Hills district of Assam) which led to its reorganisation as a state of the Indian Union, one would perhaps recall how in 1966, Indian security forces flew their aircrafts over these same hills and bombed the civilian population in Aizawl, now the capital city of Mizoram, as well as Tualbung and Hnahlan villages in northeast Mizoram (Sinha 2007, Ghosh 2001). Today, Mizoram is touted as the success story of the Indian state in handling insurgency in the northeastern region of the country (Northeast hereafter), comprising of seven other states – Arunachal Pradesh, Assam, Manipur, Meghalaya, Nagaland, Sikkim, and Tripura – almost all of which have experienced long periods of turmoil. However, the tactics employed to achieve peace in Mizoram have not always been peaceful or even lawful, and what is more, to employ such tactics, the Indian state did not need the sanction of special acts like the much-hated Armed Forces Special Powers Act 1958 (AFSPA). The bombings of the civilian population took place a year before the AFSPA became operational in the Mizo Hills (Ropianga 2005).

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This paper thus, will not treat the AFSPA as the sole instance of the Indian state’s skewed security regime in the Northeast region, but will argue that the act is only a symptom of a larger malaise – that of alienation, militarisation, and a flawed counter-insurgency strategy practiced in the region. The fallout has not merely been a brutalisation of the security forces, but a legitimisation of violence. This has resulted in the internalisation throughout the Northeast of what Capt. (Retd.) Ashok K. Tipnis, in his memorandum submitted to the Committee to Review the Armed Forces (Special Powers) Act, 1958 (2005) has termed the ‘Freedom [to] Assume Special Powers [with] Arms (FASPA)’. A vicious cycle has been set in motion: of violent response that gives birth to more violence, of brutalisation which erodes ideologies, and of state-sanctioned terror, which engenders a disregard for peaceful alternatives. In the midst of it all, civilian life and human rights have suffered as a result of which there has been further loss of confidence in the state machinery, heightened alienation, and an acceleration of the cycle of violence. This article is divided into five sections, the first of which discusses the creation of the Northeast as a troubled frontier with internal dissensions which is also alienated from/by ‘mainland’ India. The second discusses how the approach of the state has kept the sense of alienation alive both between the ‘mainland’ and the periphery, and within the ‘periphery’ itself. The third section discusses the ways insurgent movements have grown around this sense of alienation. The dangerous counter insurgency strategies adopted by the state which only exacerbate internal conflicts, heighten alienation, and legitimise violence are also discussed. The fourth section discusses how state sanctioned violence gives rise to more violence while brutalising not just the armed agencies of the state but also the insurgents and society at large. To end, the last section discusses how certain positive developments are taking place at the level of everyday interactions among people within the Northeast as well as in ‘mainland’ India. These have been contributing somewhat to fostering a better mutual understanding. It is observed, however, that the administrative and policy approaches need to change.

**India and the Northeast**

Although gradually changing, relations between Northeast India and the rest of the country have been described in terms of the ‘mainland’ and the ‘periphery’ (Misra 2000). Even in everyday parlance, both ‘mainlanders’ and those in the ‘periphery’ have been susceptible to expressing these relations in similar terms that seem to indicate that this particular region is not an integral part of the country, but one that shares a tenuous connection. A narrow strip of land called the ‘chicken’s neck corridor’ or the ‘Siliguri corridor’, which is 21 km at its widest, connects the landmass of the Northeast with the rest of the country. Often, this narrow corridor takes on a symbolic significance, one that stands for a sense of alienation from/by the rest of India among/towards the people of the northeastern frontier.

A ‘frontier’ has been defined as an area that lies in the ‘periphery’ of state territory which is also under comparatively weaker state control (Bodley 1975/1990, Ferguson and Whitehead 1992), where state and private actors ignore indigenous inhabitants’ ownership claims to land and natural resources (Geiger 2002). The Northeast, whether described in parts or in entirety, has often qualified for the ‘frontier’ tag in its geo-political history, perhaps more so in its ‘post’-colonial incarnation. As Scott (1999) argues, frontiers are as characteristic of many present-day developing countries as they were for yesterday’s colonial empires. When the British first spread their empire to this region, nearly a century after the rest of the Indian sub-continent, they referred to it as the ‘Eastern Frontier of Bengal’ (Pemberton 1835), or alternatively, the ‘Northeast Frontier of Bengal’ (Mackenzie 1871), where the geographical extent of the Northeast Frontier tract was described as embracing the hill ranges northeast and south of Assam valley and the western slopes of the mountain system between Bengal and Burma.
As the Assam valley grew in importance economically and administratively, it grew in size to incorporate many of the hill areas\textsuperscript{15}, and was constituted into a province independent of Bengal (for a detailed discussion see Guha 1977) from where these areas were administered, or purportedly un-administered, if we take into account the demarcations of ‘backward’ tracts (as per the Government of India Act 1919) known subsequently as ‘excluded’ and ‘partially excluded’ areas (as per the Government of India Act 1935). Indeed, the hill-valley divide had been marked out as early as 1873 when the ‘Inner Line’ system was introduced by the Bengal Frontier Regulation Act whereby ‘the people living in the settled districts of Bengal and Assam were prohibited from entering these hills’ (Jafa 1999a), marking the extent of the revenue administration beyond which the tribal people were left more or less to manage their own affairs. This divide was kept alive even up to the last years of the Empire – when long standing proposals for a Crown Colony encompassing the hill areas and populations of the northeast frontier of British India – including those which fall under present day Bangladesh – and upper Burma were revived (Simon Commission Report 1930, Coupland 1944).

Meanwhile in the plains of Assam, a different kind of divide had taken root, and it was the result of stiff competition between the nascent Axamiyā-speaking middle class and the old established Bengali middle class whom the British had brought to Assam to assist in the administration of the region. This competition over jobs and control of resources ended with the ouster of the Bengalis and the accumulation of available political and economic powers at the disposal of the ‘natives’ in the hands of the Axamiyā-speaking middle class. However, having wrested control for themselves, a majority of the Axamiyā-speaking community, which was overwhelmingly Hindu and keen to trace its origins to ‘mainland’ India, was loathe to share it with any of the other communities of the region which had migrated from parts of Southeast Asia and Tibet. This only exacerbated the hill/valley, indigenous/non-indigenous, tribal/non-tribal\textsuperscript{16} divides.

When the boundaries of the newly created Indian state were drawn up and Partition had taken its toll, the hilly and indigenous or tribal inhabited areas that now remained as the Northeast frontier of India found themselves landlocked and dependent on the Assam valley and were distant from the rest of the new nation-state of which they had been made a part. The internal instabilities were very much alive when the entire region, including the Assam valley, was left tenuously connected to the Indian ‘mainland’ through the mere 21-km corridor, on one end of which simmered intra regional tensions and on the other, a growing sense of mainland/periphery alienation.

On the ‘mainland’, there has never been much evidence of the Northeast being treated as part of the larger whole. The sense of distance and otherness has often found expression in myths about the region and its peoples and in stereotyped conceptions where categories like the ‘exotic’ and the ‘enigmatic’ on the one hand, and the ‘fearsome’ and the ‘loathsome’ on the other, take shape. In this imagination, the entire northeastern frontier of the Indian state is a homogenous entity, the land of untamed head hunting tribes who are only recently emerging from cannibalism; a place to be shunned or visited at the risk of exposure to savage peoples and animal-like

\textsuperscript{15} Tripura and Manipur were not at the time part of Assam as they were independent princely states till their annexation to independent India.

\textsuperscript{16} Administratively, to be ‘tribal’ is not a permanent label in the Indian State. Any community ‘scheduled’ as such is a tribe under the Indian constitution, which also means that any community voted as non-scheduled by a majority of the Parliament, can be de-notified from the tribal list. Thus political expediency rather than anthropological considerations determine tribal status in India. The popular perception of the tribal however, has proved to be less flexible.
behaviours\(^1\). We may call these folk beliefs, amusing but outdated. However, what is alarming is that vestiges of this ‘Northeast myth’ – residues of this popular fear of the violent, the untamed, and the unknown – remained in the Indian administrative and policy-making approaches towards the region after the Northeast was made part of the country. In the imagination of the Indian state, the people of the Northeast seem to have remained at either end of the spectrum stretching between the noble savage and the naked brute. The exoticised, enigmatic noble savage can be tamed (read co-opted), but the naked brute understands only the language of violence.

Thus, for instance, the Axamiya-speaking person from the land of tantra and the mother goddess Kamakhya who knows black magic and can turn you into a sheep or a goat and enslave you in her/his land forever, falls nonetheless within the fold of Hinduism and shows signs of Sanskritization owing to her/his cultural commerce and long association with the ‘mainland’. She/he can thus be allowed peripheral membership to the great Indian nation, and co-opted to act as the caretaker of the rest of the Northeast inhabited by intractable naked tribals. However, when she/he demands her/his legitimate rights as a citizen of the country – as during the Assam Movement (1979-85) – her/his needs to be disciplined.

Such a qualified relationship between the ‘mainland’ and the periphery, based on preconditions of membership, has kept the gap between the two regions alive. Because of this gap, an empathetic approach towards the problems of the ‘periphery’ is yet to be adopted. The result has been widespread militancy in the region, most of the time to demand what the members of the ‘periphery’ often feel are rights lost to just another colonial entity – the Indian State. In its turn, due to its lack of understanding and empathy, the Indian State has also hit back with dangerous counter insurgency measures that have only intensified the distance between ‘mainland’ and periphery.

What is more, the gaps between the constituents of the ‘periphery’ themselves have also been kept alive with the continuation of colonial legacies like the Inner Line Permit, among others. These leftovers of colonial administrative instruments accentuate the hill-valley, indigenous-non-indigenous divides, while only symbolically – and hardly ever in reality – safeguarding the rights of the hill people and indigenous communities which is their declared intent. The following section demonstrates how state policies and approaches have generated, rather than ameliorated, the alienation between communities and regions. It takes a closer look at the particular case of Assam.

**Alienation**

Three decades after Assam gained membership into the Indian union, a sense of Assam being a ‘Cinderella province’ (Das 1980, 97) began to set in among the people of Assam, who had begun to feel increasingly threatened about their livelihoods and identity owing to unabated population influx – legal and illegal, both from within India and without. The Assam Movement was thus launched as a civil disobedience movement aimed initially at ousting foreigners, mainly illegal Bangladeshi migrants from Assam, but it also subsequently turned on ‘outsiders’ from Assam, including people from the Indian ‘mainland’. The Indian State was perceived as doing little to address the threat posed by migrants and settlers.

At various points in ‘postcolonial’ history, the Indian state has indeed actively settled migrant and refugee populations in the Northeast (Goswami 2007). It has undertaken exercises in ‘nationalizing space’ (Baruah 2003a) by settling ‘mainstream’ populations and complemented them

\(^1\) A similar preconception had led Mahatma Gandhi to paint the Assamese as uncivilized savages in his Hind Swaraj. He made ample amendments to his outlook subsequently. For details see his ‘Lovely Assam’ cited in Kakati (1954).
by the settlement of refugee populations from neighbouring countries, populations considered ‘friendly’ to the Indian State. Thus, Chakma-Hajong and Tibetan refugees were officially settled in Arunachal Pradesh in the 1960s. The outcome was that otherwise untroubled by insurgency, Arunachal nonetheless has been periodically rising in ferment over the issue of ousting the refugee populations from the state.

In Assam, even before the British withdrew, Rajendra Prasad, former president of India, was contemplating settling the excess population from Bihar in the province:

I saw extensive waste lands in the Nowgong district as I was touring in the villages there. Assam’s soil being very fertile, good fodder grow [sic] on the lands. I also saw hutments here and there with sparse population. No crops were grown nor any trace of cultivation could be seen. These fallow lands were available... I recalled to my mind then that the population in Bihar, especially in the district of Chapra, was increasing to such an extent and put such a pressure on land that lakhs of people had to go every year to work as labourers. A few thousands of those people should have come to Assam... (Cited in Kakati 1954, 91-92)

Already the British had settled vast numbers of people in Assam— for instance, Adivasi populations like the Santhals and other ‘tea-tribes’ from east, central and western India, and Muslim Bengalis from East Bengal. Although the Adivasis were by and large tolerated — being as they were politically unrepresented and economically marginalised— the East Bengali Muslims with their vocal political leadership and early exposure to commercial agriculture and money economy were greeted with hostility in Assam since the early part of the 20th century (Goswami 2005). When the influx from the region — which became East Pakistan after Partition and Bangladesh after 1971 — did not cease, and instead, Muslims of East Bengali origin were found to constitute a majority in several electoral constituencies in Assam, the Assam Movement was launched to demand measures to stop population influx, safeguard Assamese identity, and ensure the economic rights of the ‘sons-of-the-soil’. Purportedly non-violent in nature, it however turned violent in places with mass genocides also taking place in pockets. The most infamous example of this is the pogrom at Nellie where a large number of Muslims of East Bengali origin were massacred. Varying estimates put the number of casualties between 1,200 (Hussain 2001) and 3300 (Rehman 2006).

Initially drawing participation from almost all communities of Assam, indigenous and non-indigenous alike, the Movement however was soon hijacked by the narrow agenda of self-aggrandizement of the Axamiyā-speaking middle class (Gohain 1982) which led to smaller ethnic and indigenous communities opting out of the hitherto cosmopolitan definition of the ‘Assamese’ nation, and carving out their independent identities and national selfhoods (Baruah 2003b). In this of course, there was not a little help extended by the Indian state which has been known to prop up one community or group against the other and by introducing factionalism, endeavour to weaken and discipline the disgruntled elements, and this practice has been quite apparent in its dealings with the members of its northeastern periphery. According to Bhaumik (2007), the Indian state has been using the four elements of Kautilyan statecraft: Sham (reconciliation through negotiations), Dam (monetary inducements), Danda (use of force through military operations), and Bhed (split) while dealing with the conflicts in the Northeast. The sudden rise and spread of the Bodo Movement (1987-2003) among the largest plains tribe of Assam, which started barely a couple of years after the Assam Movement officially ended, is indicative of this.

The Assam Movement ended in 1985 with the signing of a tri-partite accord between the leaders of the agitation and the Indian Government at the center as well as the Assam state government. The accord provided for safeguarding the rights of the ‘Assamese’ people while failing to specify whether ‘Assamese’ referred to all communities living in the geographical territory known
as Assam, or to the Axamiyā-speaking dominant community alone. This gave rise to more misgivings among the various communities of Assam who had been growing increasingly resentful of the big brother attitude assumed by the dominant community. This resentment and mistrust generated by the Assam Accord was now utilised by the Indian State whose agencies allegedly trained Bodo insurgents in guerilla warfare (Goswami 2006, Hazarika 1995). The insurgency that raged subsequently provided the perfect complement for the mass movement that simultaneously gained ground demanding a separate state for the Bodos within the Indian Union.

Although the Bodos did not get a separate state as demanded, they did get Sixth Schedule status whereby they were granted powers to self-govern. At the time of framing the Indian constitution, Sixth Schedule areas were created to cover most of the ‘excluded’ and ‘partially excluded’ tracts under colonial administration to provide a certain degree of autonomy to the indigenous communities living there and to preserve their ways of life. Another legacy of the colonial administration, the schedule was introduced in the constitution when based on the recommendations of a sub-committee for North East Frontier (Assam) Tribal and Excluded Areas headed by a non-indigenous Axamiyā-speaking leader and comprising of four indigenous leaders, and under the influence of various personalities like BR Ambedkar and Verrier Elwin, it was determined that the indigenous populations of Northeast India had not assimilated with the ‘mainstream’ and should be allowed the right to self-determination. While it kept the colonial construction of the hill-valley divide alive, the Sixth Schedule also came under a lot of criticism with regard to the degree and nature of autonomy it granted. However, many of these areas have demanded statehood and been granted the same to increase substantially their powers of self-rule. The schedule itself has been amended to incorporate other areas, and give them greater autonomy.

The most recent amendment of all was in 2003 when for the first time, a plains tribe – the Bodo – was granted Sixth Schedule status, the Bodoland Autonomous Territorial District (BTAD) was created in Assam, and the Bodoland Territorial Council (BTC) was granted powers almost equivalent to those of the state government. Demands from other plains tribes followed, and having seen that ethnic and indigenous aspirations can be addressed with a simple extension of the Sixth Schedule status, the Assam government conveniently took to doling them out to the various indigenous communities of Assam by signing nearly identical Memoranda of Understanding (MoUs) and granting huge cash benefits to the territorial councils (Prabhakara 2005, Goswami 2007). This had the desired effect of co-opting the community leaders who were happy with the power and pelf now made available to them. They saw not the state but the neighbouring community as the inimical force out to grab the political and pecuniary rewards they had been showered with. Thus, in trying to cosmetically bridge the gap alienating the members of the periphery, the state could at best win over a section of the ethnic elite; at worst, it exacerbated ethnic conflicts and rivalries within the periphery. This was the formula it devised to tame what was for it the ‘noble savage’; the ‘naked brutes’ could continue fighting among themselves. Such infighting and ethnic rivalries were after all inherent in most of the insurgency movements in the Northeast. The next section discusses the different dimensions of armed insurgency in the Northeast and the state’s proposed panacea of militarisation for ending these insurgencies.

Insurgency, Counter-Insurgency and Militarisation

While perfecting its ‘noble savage’ approach, the state was also honing the ‘naked brute’ method, mainly through its armed agencies and the imposition of a security regime which is also a measure of the distance between the ‘mainland’ and the ‘periphery’:

The very idea of turning the Northeast into an ‘alien space’ where martial laws like AFSPA operates suggests that people of the region is [sic.] closer to Hannah Arendt’s ‘objective
enemies’ whose definition is created by virtue of their existence in a particular position at a historical moment in time, and that they do not fall within the self-definition of a state. (Oinam and Thangjam 2005, 4)

They interpret the prolonged militarisation of the Northeast in these terms:

...The agents of the state, rather than approaching the affected people as citizens, treats them as ‘subjects’ adopts strategies applicable in International Relations [sic.]. Thus, military and paramilitary forces are ‘deployed’ for the maintenance of ‘peace and order’ in the region. This can be read as ‘interventionist policy’ in an alien space. (Oinam and Thangjam 2005, 17)

For others, like Bimol Akoijam (2005, 4), the preoccupation of the Indian state with the question of ‘security’ in the Northeast, as well as its ‘underlying vulnerability and the manifest militaristic posture’, is the legacy of a British empire obsessed with putting in place ‘an effective defensive system’ on its ‘vulnerable North East Frontier’. For the British Empire at the time, as for the Indian state now, the vulnerability of the Northeast frontier arose from its geo-political positioning bound as it is by China, Bangladesh, Burma, Bhutan, and Nepal. The Chinese aggression of 1962 and the near defeat India suffered have not quite been forgotten. Undoubtedly then, a heavy presence of security forces in the region would be encouraged also as deterrence against external aggression.

That the distinction between defending against external aggression and controlling internal conflicts often gets blurred should of course not deflect from the fact that ‘foreign hands’ have indeed often propped up insurgencies in the Northeast by providing training, arms and sanctuary to Northeast rebels. Pakistan or China training Naga rebels, or Bangladesh and Bhutan providing sanctuary to Assam insurgents, are open secrets. On the other hand, changing political equations or India’s diplomatic arm twisting have also often led to the collaboration of some of these countries in flush-out operations like the 2003 Bhutan ‘All Clear’ operation against Assam militants sheltering in the country.

The problem however, is not that the Indian armed forces have been fighting their asymmetrical wars with the Northeast insurgents, but that often these wars have not remained confined to the military domain. The major cause of discontent among the people of the Northeast is that these have transgressed into the civilian domain and erased the distinction between civil and military powers, providing an upper hand to the armed forces. Acts like the AFSPA only give these forces carte blanche to continue with such gross transgression and violation of civil rights, to the extent of eroding basic human rights and freedoms.

The history of violation of the people’s rights in the Northeast is almost as old as the history of the Indian state. It began with a disregard for the nationalistic aspirations of the Naga people. When the Nagas declared independence a day before India, their longstanding desire for the right to national self-determination was looked at with suspicion. When other efforts at subjugating their resistance against inclusion in the Indian union failed – including signing a treaty with a section of the leaders which the hardliners denounced, and holding parliamentary elections in 1952 where the turnout was dismal – extreme military repression was sanctioned. The whole of Nagaland was under siege with populations being relocated, villages ‘grouped’, civilians being fined, arrested and killed, and human rights completely disregarded (Bhaumik 2007). Insurgency began to gain ground, militarisation only increased, and Nagaland has been under military rule ever since. The special powers granted to the armed forces in the Northeast began to be thus exercised, and laws were subsequently formulated to give these ‘special powers’ legal sanction.
As insurgency spread to other states of the Northeast, militarisation spread. Mizoram, Manipur, and Tripura followed in the 1960s, Assam in the 1980s and thereafter, Meghalaya and Arunachal Pradesh. To this day newer and newer insurgent groups continue to raise their banners. Subir Bhaumik (2007,7) categorizes the insurgent groups of the Northeast as: those based on ‘a deep-rooted historical ethos of independence that developed into a struggle for secession from India – the Naga insurgency is the best and perhaps the only example in this category’. Others like the Bodo insurgents of Assam were ‘separatist in rhetoric but autonomist in aspiration, thus easy to co-opt into the so-called Indian “mainstream”’. Still others had sharp initial separatist overtones but ... were ultimately co-opted by the Indian system through sustained negotiations and concessions’ – the Mizo insurgency for instance. A few other groups have also existed in the northeast which sought to ‘change the Indian system’ and have fraternal allies in ‘mainland’ India – ‘the Manipur PLA before 1990 or communist insurgents of Tripura in 1948-50 would fall in this category’. And then there are the satellite insurgent groups like the Dragon Force or the United Peoples Volunteers of Arunachal (UPVA) that are ‘propped up by more powerful groups’ like the Assamese or Naga insurgent groups.

From a discussion of the nature of these groups, it is evident that not all of them are separatist and/or directed against the Indian state per se. Center-periphery conflicts are only one kind of conflict that the Northeast has seen. Inter-ethnic conflicts or conflicts between the various communities in the Northeast have also taken place – the preceding section has gone into a brief discussion of the creation of animosity between communities – and these also have given rise to insurgent movements that have demanded more autonomy, or more powers of self-rule to counter the hegemony of communities that have traditionally been higher up in the ethnic hierarchy. And in the genesis, development and dénouement (or what passes as ‘resolution’) of these conflicts, the Indian state has played a potent role.

As we have already discussed in the case of the Bodo insurgent movement, to defuse the tension arising out of one volatile situation, and as a measure to control one kind of conflict, the state instigates another, often between neighbouring communities. As in the case of the indigenous Bodo and non-indigenous Axamiyā-speaking community of Assam, in Manipur also a wedge was driven between the indigenous communities of the hills and the Hinduised Meitei of the plains. Thus in order to contain the Meitei insurgent groups of the valley areas, the armed forces initiated a Suspension of Operations (SoO) agreement in 2005 – the Manipur and central governments entered the agreement only in 2008 – with the hill militants who mainly belong to the Kuki and Zomi communities that have long been dominated by the dominant Meitei. Reports of how these militant groups under SoO are being used to raid hideouts of the valley insurgents keep surfacing every now and then (Bhaumik 2005b). Thus using traditional ethnic rivalries also, the Indian armed forces have been fighting the more powerful militant groups of the Northeast.

But conflicts between communities are not the only kind kindled by state agencies. To continue with the example of the Bodo community, when an insurgent movement – not patronised by the state and led by the National Democratic Front of Boroland (NDFB) – started gaining ascendancy, demanding aggressively the right of the Bodo nation to sovereignty, the largely co-opted Bodoland Liberation Tigers (BLT) were pitted against the NDFB which shared cordial relations with the United Liberation Front of Asom (ULFA), the oldest insurgent group of Assam. Thus internecine wars are also effectively fomented.

Where co-option is seen as a possibility either through ceasefire agreements and promise of peace talks as well as monetary payment, it has been done. The Dima Halom Daogah (DHD), an insurgent group of the Dimasa community of Assam, has been under ceasefire with the government since 2003. And although from time to time some noise is made about the necessity to hold ‘peace
talks’, for the most part the militants are comfortably ensconced in their government designated camps, being supplied with all necessities, called upon once in a while to launch attacks on a rival faction or another militant group, and not lacking monetary rewards. Thus, during the Karbi-Dimasa ethnic clashes in Assam in 2005, militant groups belonging to both communities used their designated camps to launch attacks on each other (BBC 2005a). Sahni and Routray (2001, 3) have shown – specifically in the case of Assam – how the government’s ‘surrender policies’ towards insurgents have ‘created a Frankenstein monster, a gigantic organized crime conglomerate that ... abandons its political intent, and that operates substantially under the protection of, and in collusion with, the state and its agents’. This is true also of most of the other militant groups of the Northeast where insurgent armies have turned mercenaries, ideologies have been eroded, and insurgency movements have become criminalised.

And it is not only the smaller insurgent groups that are susceptible to these tactics of the Indian state agencies. Even the two factions of the National Socialist Council of Nagaland (NSCN), the oldest and strongest insurgent group of the Northeast, signed a ceasefire agreement with the government of India in 1997 after 40 long years of fighting against it. Its cadres have been in government designated camps ever since. If the continuous rounds of ‘peace talks’ since then have made any headway, it is to ensure the government of India that the militant cadres will not be able to return to the harsh life of jungle warfare again and that the earlier intractable stand of the leaders has been softened so that they are willing to settle for much less than their original demand for sovereignty.

Meanwhile, as a ceasefire agreement does not entail a surrender of arms, armed cadres often defy ceasefire ground rules to freely roam in civilian areas, and often clash with the security forces or rival factions and militant groups. Thus, on the one hand, the civilians are subjected to atrocities by the armed forces in their search for militants, and on the other, they are also often caught in insurgent crossfire. The state for which these groups now become pseudo-agents to fight rival groups, turn a blind eye. The following section gives specific instances of brutalisation among the armed forces of the state as well as the insurgents. It shows how the cycle of violence unleashed by the state’s military repression of the Northeast has generated more violence.

**Brutalisation and Legitimisation of Violence**

The legitimisation of violence and utter disregard of civilian rights sanctioned for the armed forces seems to have filtered into the insurgent psyche as well, and this was demonstrated most vividly in 2006 when reports surfaced that a Meitei insurgents group went on a rampage and raped about 21 Hmar women (The Hindu 2006). The concerned group of course denied its involvement in the incident, but the high moral ground it hitherto held was nonetheless undermined. As for the Indian armed forces, they have frequently been accused of using sexual violence as a tactic for fighting their wars in the Northeast (MASS 1998), accusations they have often blatantly brushed aside, as in the case of Manorama Devi, whose rape by armed personnel saw Manipur in 2004 erupt in protest against the AFSPA, an act that provides immunity to armed personnel from prosecution (Talukdar 2004).

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18 Field visits since 2005 to designated camps and interviews with insurgent leaders have revealed much of these details.
19 As the UN Security Council Resolution 1820 (2008) to end sexual violence in conflict on June 19, 2008 notes: ‘women and girls are particularly targeted by the use of sexual violence, including as a tactic of war to humiliate, dominate, instill fear in, disperse and/or forcibly relocate civilian members of a community or ethnic group.’ (United Nations 2008)
There is little doubt that the sweeping powers under the AFSPA have led to a brutalisation of the armed forces in India, and ‘brutalised armies’ as former Indian Army Chief General Shankar Roychoudhuri has been quoted as saying, ‘are no good as fighting machines’ (Bhaumik 2007,35). Apart from such a degeneration of the armed forces, other agencies that do not enjoy the license to kill as granted by the AFSPA are also inspired to seek such powers. Thus the Central Industrial Security Force (CISF) Deputy Inspector General (DIG) met with the Committee to Review the Armed Forces (Special Powers) Act 1958 on 21.2.2005, to request that the force be granted the same special powers as provided to the Central Reserve Police Force (CRPF) and the Border Security Force (BSF) as Armed Forces of the Union. Among the powers the DIG sought were legal powers and protection against vexatious prosecution for acts done during the discharge of duty (DIG, CISF, Guwahati 2005). The poignancy of this request is underlined by the shooting of Nilakesh Gogoi, businessman and local community leader of a small town called Geleky on the Assam side of the Assam-Nagaland inter-state border, by CISF personnel on 23 January 2007 (The Telegraph 2007). The incident that created much controversy in Assam took place when Gogoi and a companion allegedly refused to stop at a CISF check post near an installation of the public sector Oil and Natural Gas Commission (ONGC) in the town. According to an eyewitness, the armed security personnel fired at them and killed them without provocation. A spokesperson of the CISF later called the incident ‘unfortunate’ and admitted that the force had been deployed in the area to guard the ONGC installment and was not ‘involved in counter-insurgency operations’ (The Telegraph 2007). Thus, AFSPA or no AFSPA, such incidences occur quite regularly in the Northeast and a top police official of Assam explains away the killing of Gogoi as a case of panicked reaction by the CISF personnel in a sensitive border zone, just a few days before Indian Republic Day on 26 January, one of the favourite days for insurgent attacks in the Northeast when calls for boycotting celebrations are given by all major insurgent groups (field interviews 2008).

The police forces have also indulged in excesses and gross violations of human rights, despite the fact that they are not provided the immunity granted by the AFSPA. The ‘secret killings’, or extra-judicial killings of arrested ULFA militants and their kith and kin in Assam between 1998-2001 allegedly by the police force with the help of surrendered militants, and widely acknowledged to have been done under direct state patronage, is perhaps one of the most well organised killing sprees in the Northeast (Barpujari et al 2009). The K. N. Saikia commission instituted to enquire into the killings took ‘two years to produce three voluminous reports on 35 cases involving 50 deaths’ (Hindustan Times 2009). No concrete results in the form of identification of the culprits involved and their convictions have however been achieved.

Indeed, instances of state-sanctioned violence are rife in the Northeast, with surrendered militants being used to counter those that have not yet ‘returned to the mainstream’. And with the lucrative rehabilitation packages announced for those who surrender, insurgency has become a career option beyond which lies state patronage and financial rewards. Sahni & Routray (2001) have shown how each surrendered ULFA (SULFA) militant of Assam under surrender schemes devised in 1992 and 1998 were given up to INR 250000 (USD 5000 approx.) in cash and INR 150000 (USD 3000 approx.) in soft loans which they did not have to return. At the time, the annual per capita income of Assam was INR 4281 (USD 87 approx.) (Sahni & Routray 2001,4). In this way also, violence is being made more and more attractive to the youth of a region where employment opportunities and livelihood options remain limited.

Meanwhile, states are also encouraged to enlist youths and raise forces for the Indian Reserve Battalion (IRB), which can then be summoned by the central government for deployment in any part of India. Despite frequent protests by civil society organisations, Mizoram and Nagaland IRB personnel have for a long time been deployed in another troubled state of the Indian ‘mainland’ –
Chattisgarh – which has been witnessing Naxalite insurgency (Singh 1999). As Mizoram Home Secretary C Ropiangla expressed it:

> When we agreed to create the battalions, we signed an agreement with the Centre, whereby it reserves the right to first call. According to it, the Centre can direct any of the battalions in the country to any state if required. Since the Centre has insisted that we send a battalion to Chattisgarh to fight the Naxalites, we have no choice but to obey. (The Telegraph 2006)

Naxalite insurgency is communist in nature unlike the insurgency movements in the Northeast that are mostly along ethnic lines. The plight of the people under the armed forces, however, is similar in both insurgency affected areas. Ironically, many of the cases of atrocity and molestation recorded by human rights activists in Chattisgarh are perpetrated by IRB personnel from the Northeastern states (AHRC 2007). Indeed, one of the greatest arguments against sending Naga youths to fight insurgents in Chattisgarh was – besides the heavy death toll – their brutalisation along the lines of the other armed forces. Field interviews (2008) have revealed how IRB personnel are as feared by the people of states like Nagaland and Manipur as any other armed force of the Indian Union given their propensity towards anti-social activities like robbing, killing, extortion, and so on.

The Indian state has not remained confined to brutalising the armed forces, and has gone so far as to arm civilians with the express purpose of defending themselves against insurgent violence. Despite an earlier experiment in the form of the Salwa Judum in the Naxalite areas proving disastrous (Sarma 2006), the state proposed raising Special Police Officers (SPOs) in Manipur (The Sangai Express 2007). Although the intervention of human rights activists has slowed down the process, the project is far from abandoned. It can only be imagined to what scale violence can escalate if the guns and a license to kill are made so easily available to everybody at large. Humanising the armed forces however, can only be the first step in bridging the gap between the mainland and the periphery, given the violent and brutal history of this relationship.

### Bridging the Gap

Talking of the village regrouping in Mizoram in the wake of insurgency in that state – a measure that has dislodged an entire way of life, not to mention the loss to life and liberty it entailed – VS Jafa (1999b), an Indian bureaucrat, has said it was ‘tantamount to annihilation of reason and sensibility’ to be treating ‘our ethnic minorities’ this way. ‘Annihilation of reason and sensibility’ has usually been the characteristic of India’s policy approach to the Northeast. One instance of this has been the continued imposition of the AFSPA despite an overwhelming regional, national and international agreement that it is inimical to the people of the region. However, as already discussed, there has been very little sense of kinship on the Indian ‘mainland’ towards the people of the Northeast. This was amply manifested by the fact that the North East Frontier Agency, later ‘nationalised’ by being given the Sanskritised nomenclature Arunachal Pradesh, was put in charge of the Ministry of External Affairs as far into ‘post’-colonial Indian history as 1965.

The state has of course tried to reach out to the region through other means and bridge the gap. It has for instance, made large financial allocations either through specific ministries (like the Ministry of Development of North Eastern Region), nodal agencies (North East Council), or directly to the states and autonomous bodies. It is not however, enough to simply dole out monetary packages. After all, there is more to insurgency in the Northeast than lack of economic development. Ethnic considerations often take precedence over economy and development here. After all, the very basis of oldest insurgency movement in the region was ethnic and not developmental in outlook. Besides, the prevalence in quite a few of the Northeast states of a parallel system of ‘taxation’ – read
extortion – by insurgent groups, while the government looks the other way, means these funds are only leading to a proliferation of arms and militant activities (Chaudhuri 2002). Without tackling these problems, often disproportionate amounts of funds are sanctioned by the various government agencies for the different states of the region, Nagaland being a case in point. Kuldip Nayar (1995) has shown how Nagaland was granted close to INR 300 billion (USD 6.66 billion approx.) as federal funding between 1956 and 1996: and its population is less than a million.

Rather than de-escalate violence, proposed developmental and resource management efforts by the Indian State have quite often contributed to exacerabation of conflicts. These efforts lack an understanding of the peculiar fragility of the inter-ethnic relations of the region. These relations can – and often are – disrupted by ‘development’ projects that are rarely based on any adequate understanding of the social milieu, customary laws, resource ownership (often community- and not individual-ownership), or ethnic hierarchies. The Tipaimukh dam is a case in point:

To be built in a Hmar dominated area, some sections of the Hmar have welcomed the project in the hope of being benefited by it, although others have posed questions about rehabilitation and loss of agricultural lands. But stronger protests are coming from non-Hmar communities. Leaders of the Zeliangrong Naga villages which are expected to be submerged have registered their protest against the government’s policy of developing one community at the cost of another (Goswami 2007,14).

The result is an escalation of ethnic conflicts and violence, to counter which the state sanctions counter-violence, and so the cycle has continued for more than half a century now.

The people in the Northeast are war-weary. The rhetoric of sovereignty and secessionism has long since disappeared from the popular discourse of the Northeast – only a few insurgent groups are keeping it alive and many of these groups have become too splintered or enervated and devoid of ideological moorings to command the kind of mass support they once enjoyed. Experience has shown that many of these groups have also accepted political settlements that are far below their original demands. Even the NSCN has agreed to a ‘special federal relation’ with India, climbing down from its earlier seemingly intractable position of secession. Meanwhile, the state has resorted to tokenism even in the purportedly empowering instruments of self-governance – like in the autonomous councils granted to various ethnic communities of the Northeast. As it continues to try and co-opt more and more of the ethnic elite, the insurgent groups also seem to be fighting a losing battle against co-option from all quarters.

Amidst such erosion of ideologies, there has been a silent exodus of young people from the region to parts of ‘mainland’ India. Whether it is due to the lack of opportunities in the region, or in order to escape the violence of everyday life, many young brains have left the region and settled in parts of ‘mainland’ India. According to an estimate of the Assam Association, Delhi, the number of permanent residents, employees of various government and private sector organizations and students in the national capital region from Assam alone has gone up to over 75,000 (Assam Association 2008). Often, because of their ‘oriental’ or Mongoloid features, they have to face questions like: ‘Do you need a passport to come to India?’ (Goswami 2008) But this shared fate of facing a common stereotype has contributed more towards annihilating the age old divides implanted by skewed policy decisions amongst the peoples of the region, and brought them together in a way neither institutional or organisational alliances nor impersonal education can. A common ‘Northeast psyche’ is thus being fostered.
On the other hand, the distance between the ‘mainland’ and the ‘periphery’ also seems to be shrinking somewhat. It is true that to some extent, ‘mainland’ Indians also have at times had to face some hostility from the people of the Northeast (Sinha 2007), and instances of mass killings of settlers from ‘mainland’ India by a few insurgent groups only serve to underline this hostility. And a sense of distance has undoubtedly remained, but what has changed is the degree and intensity of personal interactions between people from both ends of the ‘chicken neck’, what with more and more people from the northeast venturing out to the mainland as already discussed. This might well lead to a better understanding and mutual respect. However, whether this understanding and respect filters into the political and policy-making apparatuses remains to be seen.

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Exhumations in Latin America: Current Status and Pending Challenges
A Psychosocial View

Susana Navarro-García, Pau Pérez-Sales, Alberto Fernández-Liria*

In the present study, we reviewed exhumation processes in 14 Latin American countries where collective massacres have been perpetrated and people have been detained or disappeared as a result of state policies or social violence. In most of these countries, exhumations were instigated through the efforts of organized family groups rather than the state, and implemented by forensic anthropology teams, only rarely (as in Guatemala) with psychosocial support for victims. In general terms, there have been no significant reparation processes. We reviewed the different procedures carried out by the three parties who take coordinated action in an exhumation process—forensic anthropology, legal, and psychosocial—and the controversies that have arisen as a result of these processes. Lessons have been learned from this analysis, and we propose strategies for developing standards of good practice for exhumation of victims of political violence.

Many Latin American countries have suffered state violence or war that resulted in forced disappearances. Exhumations have been conducted in many of these countries to identify victims, clarify events, and serve as a basis for reparations and in some cases, legal proceedings. The circumstances and development of these exhumation processes as well as their effects on communities have varied, although they share elements that differentiate them from processes implemented in other continents. Recently, various exhumation processes have been systematically studied. As a result, the organizations involved have produced narrative collections, a process for sharing of experiences, and a debate that produced significant achievements such as the World Congress on Psychosocial Work in Exhumation Processes, Forced Disappearance, Justice and Truth held in Guatemala in 2007 and Bogota in 2010 (Ecap, Gac, & Geza, 2009; Pérez Sales & Navarro García, 2007b).

These collective works have also served as the basis for the Working Document for an International Consensus on Minimum Standards for Psychosocial Work in Exhumation Processes (Ecap et al., 2009). These standards are necessary because, as we will demonstrate, exhumation processes may be reparatory in nature but carry a risk of retraumatizing the victims’ families (Amnesty, 1994; McEvoy & H.Conway, 2004; Nesiah, 2002; Stover & Shigekane, 2002).

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During the last 15 years, exhumations have been carried out in 14 Latin American countries. Each country has seen different patterns of human rights violations:

1) Collective massacres in Guatemala (Navarro García et al., 2007), El Salvador (Hernández, 2007), Colombia (Gómez López & Martín Beristain, 2007), and Peru (Sornaiuolo, Chauca, & Baca Soto, 2007);
2) State terrorism with detention and forced disappearance in Chile (Baeza Fernández et al., 2007), Argentina (Tumini, Garay, Bancheri, &. 2007), Uruguay (Nadal, Pirotto, & Robaina, 2007), Brazil (Bouças & Vital, 2007), and Paraguay (Portillo, 2007);
3) Collective violence for different reasons in Venezuela (Carrillo, 2007), México (Limas Hernández, 2007), and Panama (Sanjur, 2007); and
4) Selective deaths under democratic regimes in Ecuador (Donoso, 2007) and Honduras until 2008 (Oliva, 2007) (Table 1).

This exercise has shown that: (a) in contrast with experiences in other continents, exhumations have generally been initiated and promoted by organizations of victims’ relatives (Eppel & Borer, 2006; Keough & Samuels, 2004); and (b) the forensic anthropology work has been conducted by inexperienced local teams or with advice from international teams; and (c) in the majority of countries, exhumations have been carried out without psychosocial support, or with support based solely on self-care and mutual support groups (Pérez Sales & Navarro García, 2007a).

Table 1. Exhumations analyzed in this study (Pérez-Sales and García2007b).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Institution</th>
<th>Forensic Anthropology Investigation/Vision of the Relatives</th>
<th>Legal Proceedings</th>
<th>Psychosocial Accompaniment</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>EG: Governmental teams</td>
<td></td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>EII: Independent local teams</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>EII: Independent international teams</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Pre-trial proceedings promoted by:</td>
<td></td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Subsequent access to justice (convictions of perpetrators)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Exhumations and collective massacres</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>El Salvador Relat</td>
<td>EG – Inadequate (Destruction of evidence; no identification of remains (double disappearance); retraumatizing actions for relatives)</td>
<td>Office of Public Prosecution (Official)</td>
<td>No</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Colombia Relatives</td>
<td>EG – Inadequate</td>
<td>Office of Public Prosecution (Official)</td>
<td>No</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Guatemala Relatives</td>
<td>EII – Adequate</td>
<td>Relatives NGOs</td>
<td>No</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Peru Relatives Organiz</td>
<td>EG – Inadequate (no identification of remains, destruction of evidence in some cases (Frontón)</td>
<td>NGOs</td>
<td>No</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>State</td>
<td></td>
<td>Office of Public Prosecution (Official)</td>
<td>No</td>
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</table>
Detainees-disappeared persons as state policy

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Country</th>
<th>Detainees-Disappeared Persons as State Policy</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Chile</td>
<td>EG – Irregular (Patio 29 Case and identification errors)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Argentina</td>
<td>EG – Inadequate (destruction of evidence; reburial too soon and without consulting; no identification of remains)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Uruguay</td>
<td>EG – Inadequate (use of heavy machinery; identification errors)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Exhumations and social violence

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Country</th>
<th>Exhumations and Social Violence</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Venezuela</td>
<td>EG – Inadequate (delay tactics)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mexico</td>
<td>EG – Inadequate (use of heavy machinery; identification errors)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Panama</td>
<td>EG – Inadequate (use of heavy machinery; identification errors)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
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Selective deaths under democratic regimes

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Country</th>
<th>Selective Deaths under Democratic Regimes</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Ecuador</td>
<td>EG – Inadequate (delay tactics)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Honduras</td>
<td>EG – Inadequate (delay tactics)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

EAAF, Argentine Forensic Anthropology Team; NGO, non-governmental organization.

Justice and exhumation processes in Latin America

When the existence of clandestine graves is suspected, all legal systems require investigation of the human remains, their origin, and the events that led to their death. Legal and judicial authorities are obliged to collect evidence and prosecute those responsible.

In 11 of the 14 countries studied, exhumations were initiated by relatives, either directly or through family organizations. Their prolonged efforts have often been exhausting and carried out without support. Only in four countries (Chile, Peru, Uruguay, and Colombia) have exhumations of clandestine graves been instigated by the state with various levels of legal guarantees. In Chile and Peru, these exhumations were linked to investigations by the corresponding Truth Commissions or as follow-up to their recommendations.

The technical work of investigating remains is performed by forensic anthropologists and, to a lesser extent, by legal medical specialists. The work is technically complex, requiring high levels of professional expertise (Keough, SimmonsT, & Samuels, 2004). In seven countries (Chile, Peru, Colombia, Mexico, Venezuela, Ecuador, and Panama), the state reserves sole authority to conduct the exhumations, although in a few cases, independent exhumation teams have been allowed at the request of local courts (Peru, Colombia, Mexico). Even when exhumations are not instigated by competent state bodies (e.g., Legal Medical Institute or forensic teams attached to the Prosecutor’s Office), the state is still considered responsible for the legal proceedings.

20 Relatives / NGOs (before 1990)
In four countries (Honduras, Brazil, El Salvador, and Paraguay) relatives have obtained judicial authorization for exhumation by international teams (usually the Argentine Forensic Anthropology Team), and in another four countries by local teams, with or without international advice (Guatemala, Brazil, Argentina, and Uruguay) (Pérez Sales & Navarro García, 2007a). The presence of independent teams may: 1) generate trust among relatives, 2) guarantee an independent investigation, especially when the state is involved, and 3) enable the accumulation of information regarding various exhumation processes.

In all countries where exhumations have been the sole responsibility of the state, there have been accusations of inexperience or negligence (Pérez Sales & Navarro García, 2007a) related to:

- destruction of evidence (especially in Colombia, Peru, Venezuela, and Mexico, but also mentioned in Brazil and Uruguay)
- lack of security and an adequate search process (Guatemala and Colombia)
- inadequate identification of the remains, leading to double disappearance (i.e., remains from the clandestine grave are stored anonymously with restricted access, and then reburied in legal graves marked NN [no name]) (Colombia, Peru, Brazil, Mexico, and Venezuela)
- technical inexperience or errors in judicial procedure (e.g., errors in identification or use of heavy machinery) (Chile and Panama)
- unnecessary delays or attempts to obstruct or deter the efforts of relatives (Venezuela, Ecuador, Panama, and Peru)
- actions that are retraumatizing for the relatives, particularly inappropriate handling of remains or disrespect or mutilation (Mexico, Brazil, Colombia, and Peru).

In contrast, these situations were not reported when exhumations were the responsibility of independent national or international teams.

The logical consequence of exhuming massacre victims is a criminal investigation to hold responsible parties accountable. However, in the majority of cases, the process concludes with reburial; exhumations generally fail to result in judicial proceedings. The few exceptions generally have been achieved through the Inter-American Human Rights System, such as the Caracazo case in Venezuela (Carrillo, 2007) and cases in Ecuador (Donoso, 2007), Colombia (Gómez López & Martín Beristain, 2007), and Guatemala (Navarro García et al., 2007). As of 2007, only seven of the more than 1,000 exhumations of massacres in Guatemala resulted in internal legal proceedings with convictions. Two cases were sent to the Inter-American System and the Inter-American Court; conviction of the state in the Plan de Sánchez case was particularly significant (Navarro García et al., 2007).

Intervention by the Inter-American Human Rights Court has been justified in these cases by the lack of access to justice within the countries’ legal systems. In all cases, binding sentences have condemned the state and established its obligation to investigate. The Inter-American Human Rights Court does not have a mandate to determine individual criminal responsibility, and given the absence of mechanisms for sanctions for non-compliance in the Inter-American Human Rights Court, impunity continues. Furthermore, acceptance of responsibility by the state has been accompanied by partial compliance with economic reparations, but very limited or no compliance with other aspects (sanctions against perpetrators, compensation, rehabilitation, moral and symbolic measures, and access to justice) (Martín Beristain, 2009). For example, sentences in the case of Efraín Bámaca in Guatemala or the Restrepo brothers in Ecuador explicitly establish the right to the truth for relatives seeking justice, as well as the state’s obligation to investigate (including appropriate exhumations), but this has not occurred. Public institutions have generally considered exhumations
as private concerns for the victim’s relatives. Therefore, relatives are denied access to justice (El Salvador, Brazil, Colombia, Guatemala, Peru, Chile, Argentina, Venezuela, Mexico, Panama, and Honduras)(Pérez Sales & Navarro García, 2007a).

**Psychosocial accompaniment**

Relatives have usually been alone in this process. Psychosocial accompaniment has been provided only in Guatemala, where systematic work has been formally conducted at the individual, family, or community level in nearly all exhumations performed during the last decade (Comisión para el Esclarecimiento, 1999; Navarro García et al., 2007). In Chile, governmental teams and non-governmental organizations (NGOs) have provided support at key times (Baeza Fernández et al., 2007). In Peru, specific support has been provided at key times in about 10% of all exhumations (Stornaiuolo et al., 2007), and very recently in Colombia, support teams have begun to be developed(Gómez López & Martín Beristain, 2007). In five cases (Venezuela, Honduras, El Salvador, Mexico, and Panama), the families themselves developed informal mutual support networks. In some cases families have been assisted by professionals (Mexico, Venezuela, and Honduras)(Pérez Sales & Navarro García, 2007a). These examples show that psychosocial accompaniment has not been provided consistently.

**The exhumation process and characteristics of accompaniment**

Three parties coordinate an exhumation process: forensic anthropology, legal, and psychosocial teams (Keough et al., 2004; Nesiah, 2002; Stover & Shigekane, 2002). Exhumation procedures are not homogenous, even among forensic, legal, and psychosocial parties working jointly.

*Participants in the process*

1. **Family members**

Extraordinary differences exist between contexts in which exhumations led to family organization or existing family organizations have served as a driving force for the process, compared with situations in which the state or human rights groups have taken the initiative.

Family organizations include the Committee of Victims’ Relatives (COFAVIC) in the Caracazo case of Venezuela (Carrillo, 2007) and the Héctor Gallego Committee of Relatives of Disappeared Persons of Panama (COFADEPA-HG). COFADEPA-HG was established with logistical and organizational support and accompaniment from the Popular Human Rights Coordination of Panama (COPODEHUPA) founded in 1986 (Sanjur, 2007), the foremost human rights organization in the country.

In Brazil, relatives and organizations not only had to fight a legal battle, but also had the task of removing the remains of over 2,000 people from an enormous common grave, raising funds, and setting up technical teams (Bouças & Vital, 2007). In Honduras, the process was similar at first; support from state institutions was not received until much later (Oliva, 2007). In Ecuador, the tenacity of relatives contributed to the search process (Donoso, 2007), and in Mexico and El Salvador, families struggled against the state and justice enforcement institutions (Limas Hernández, 2007). In Colombia, family organizations have lobbied for participation and control of governmental teams, a path that has been dangerous and exhausting (Gómez López & Martín Beristain, 2007).

In most of Peru, there are no strong relatives’ organizations active in demanding exhumations. Therefore, the process is advancing very slowly and exhumations carried out by the
state have occasionally faced serious technical problems due to a lack of control by the civil society. In places where relatives’ organizations have been effective (e.g., Totos), their insistence has been critical for completion of these processes (Stornaiuolo et al., 2007). The situation is similar in Guatemala, where victim organizations have long existed, are well organized, include legal accompaniment, and actively work to initiate legal proceedings, locate relatives, and provide logistical and media support. Where effective organizations exist, exhumations have been continuous and satisfactory (Navarro García et al., 2007).

Exhumations should be seen as a process rather than a specific activity. They start before and continue long after the excavation itself, which is simply the most visible and notorious part of the process (Navarro García et al., 2007). The exhumation can generate stable organizational structures, and it is this process that must be supported. Victim and family organizations not only improve efficiency (e.g., in locating and working with relatives), but promote cultural identification and adaptation to political circumstances, and address the demands and real needs of victims and relatives. Furthermore, these organizations help rebuild the social fabric and are therefore reparatory in nature.

On the other hand, Baeza et al. (Baeza Fernández et al., 2007) from the Centro de Salud Mental y Derechos Humanos (Center for Mental Health and Human Rights, CINTRAS) in Chile describe the exhaustion suffered by relatives’ groups as the years have passed, and their pain and frustration over unsolved cases. The relatives need protection and attention, and they should not have to bear the weight of the search. The Guatemalan experience supports this view of double victimization: relatives not only suffer pain due to loss of their family members, but they must investigate, initiate legal proceedings, and take on all personal, emotional, economic, and security-related costs in this search for justice. The Guatemalan Attorney General’s Office and the state take the position that legal proceedings are only possible if they are instigated by victims’ relatives. This position is unfair and inhumane. Besides their personal suffering, the relatives are charged with the responsibility of being the country’s moral conscience (Baeza Fernández et al., 2007; Navarro García et al., 2007).

2. The community

In some cases, such as Honduras, Brazil, Paraguay, Ecuador, and areas of Argentina and Uruguay, the disappeared were urban social or political militants who were murdered in remote rural areas. These exhumations have a social and political dimension, but do not involve the local communities. However, where genocide policies led to thousands of massacres in rural communities (particularly in Guatemala, Colombia, and Peru), the work of exhumations cannot be separated from the communities where the massacres took place.

To provide this type of support for cases of collective massacres, accompaniment teams in Guatemala report that teams need time to immerse themselves in the community to (a) explain the nature of the exhumation work, (b) determine the expectations of relatives, (c) discuss the origins and logic of violence and its impact on the community, (d) speak about exhumations as a form of reparation, and (e) inform the community about legal mechanisms to promote justice (Navarro García et al., 2007).

In Peru, this need was apparent from the start (Stornaiuolo et al., 2007), and is particularly serious in closed Andean communities, where distrust of outsiders is one effect of violence. Some communities have rejected the victims and their relatives, blaming them for their own misfortune. Furthermore, in places where the armed conflict produced confrontations within the community, it
is necessary to restore shared values and a common history. Reconciliation should be seen as a long-term process; it is not possible to force progress or limit reconciliation to the exhumation.

In Colombia, this preparation and community collaboration is impossible under the current conditions of open conflict, putting the value of collective exhumation in doubt at the present time. Despite this, many relatives feel that it is important to find the remains of their relatives, even in the midst of a conflict (Gómez López & Martín Beristain, 2007).

In Peru, the importance of working in community institutions has been particularly emphasized in schools and youth training centers. Children are always present at exhumation processes. Attracted by the novelty of the event, they play, observe, and ask questions about the excavation. It is important to prepare for this reality and coordinate human rights initiatives with teachers and local education authorities (Stornaiuolo et al., 2007).

3. Society as a whole

An exhumation is also an event that involves and questions the entire nation. The experiences described in the present study demonstrate how the exhumation of remains has become, in many cases, a key event in the collective minds of societies in transition.

Bouças and Vital (Bouças & Vital, 2007), referring to the Brazilian experience, state that “exhumations have only resulted in the identification of eight people, but the impact of these exhumations on the media and on the society has been huge, leading to a public debate on violence during the dictatorship”. In Chile, the Lonquén ovens case resulted in such a loss of credibility for the dictatorship that it unleashed an operation to remove the remains of all disappeared persons to avoid similar situations. Recent cases of erroneous identification at the Cemetery of Santiago kept the country on tenterhooks and led to a questioning of human rights policies during the coalition governments (Baeza Fernández et al., 2007). In El Salvador, the exhumation of victims of the El Mozote massacre altered the collective understanding of the country, which influenced the conclusions and recommendations in the Truth Commission’s report (Hernández, 2007).

In Honduras, the Committee of Relatives of Disappeared Persons (COFADEH) reported that exhumation processes implemented so far have not resulted in justice and the restitution of remains to relatives, but that they have revealed the truth and contributed to a collective awareness of the past (Oliva, 2007). COFADEH has been the most active human rights group in Honduras since the coup d’état in 2009, maintaining an up-to-date database of human rights violations and issuing periodic reports of these human rights violations under the post-coup government (Cofadeh, 2009). According to the Committee for Human Rights (COPODEHUPA), exhumations in Panama have put the issue of disappeared persons on the national agenda (Sanjur, 2007). Nadal et al. (Nadal et al., 2007) reported that despite the small numbers of exhumations in Uruguay, exhumations were an “authentic collective process of the Uruguayan people” because it was no longer possible to publicly deny political disappearances in the country (Nadal et al., 2007). In Ecuador, judicial investigations and the media have raised awareness of these issues and exposed violence by the authoritarian government (Donoso, 2007).

Furthermore, long years of work in Guatemala have shown that the passage of time reduces the social impact of exhumations and removes them from the media’s agenda, confining them to the private sphere. Navarro and collaborators (Navarro García et al., 2007) have warned about this risk and raised the importance of maintaining the presence of the media at exhumations and keeping the local and national debate alive to maximize the potential of exhumations for social transformation. If we understand “reconciliation” as a long-term goal that can take generations to
fully achieve, keeping the debate alive at local and national levels is an important part of a global strategy.

The social impact nearly always extends in both directions, and the perception of solidarity is very important for the victims’ families. In Mexico, the national and international mobilization of various academic, artistic, and popular organizations regarding the disappearances and murder of women from Ciudad Juárez have managed to open cracks in the hermetic political and judicial systems (Limas Hernández, 2007). In Venezuela, vigils, work efforts, sale of handicrafts and collections to fund the work of relatives, and even the cost of exhumations have produced tremendous solidarity among universities, popular sectors, and the church (Carrillo, 2007). This cohesion is now helping the relatives resist pressure and threats from the current government.

**Organization of the work**

**Accompaniment for relatives**

As previously stated, the need for psychosocial accompaniment is widely accepted; however, accompaniment has been the exception rather than the rule in forensic anthropology investigations (Pérez Sales & Navarro García, 2007a). In most countries, forensic anthropology and legal advice teams are gradually coming to understand exhumations as individual, family, community, and social processes with key human and reparatory elements. The enormous complexity of these tasks requires a professional team that is exclusively dedicated to this work. Furthermore, the experiences in Guatemala and other countries have shown that “the idea of the excavation as a painful period of psychological crisis requiring professional attention is not based on the experience of the teams. Emotional support during the excavation seems to be required by all ... with the exception of the relatives” (Navarro García et al., 2007).

Learning that accompaniment has little to do with providing a shoulder to cry on has taken years. Crying does happen in situations where crying is quite normal; however, providing a shoulder to cry on may be an invasion of the individual’s private reencounter with the past. Accompaniment should be considered distinct from crisis intervention, because it is a much more complex idea related to reparations. Accompaniment entails the need to work closely with relatives’ organizations, not just prior to excavation, but systematically, and includes opportunities for discussion and the winding down of the process, using popular methods for a participatory and systematic evaluation of the impact and efficacy of processes (Navarro García et al., 2007).

According to the Truth Commission, the dimensions of what needs to be done in Peru are similar to that in Guatemala. Stornaiuolo (Stornaiuolo et al., 2007) points out how psychosocial accompaniment in Peru, when it has been provided, has been linked specifically to the excavation phase with little prior work. In this context, it is important to look at Argentina. The Argentine Forensic Anthropology Team (EAAF) is one of the foremost organizations in this field and has given advice to the vast majority of forensic anthropology teams throughout the continent. In Argentina, coordination of exhumation processes does not usually include accompaniment of relatives (Tumini et al., 2007). This may be due to the psychoanalytical tradition of Argentina (as opposed to a more psychosocial and community perspective in other countries) or the difficulties sometimes encountered by coordinating organizations in a country in which victims’ organizations are strong and sometimes divided.

**Forensic anthropology investigation work**

Broadly speaking, we can consider two approaches to exhumation processes: the forensic approach and the psychosocial approach. The first substantial difference between the two
approaches is exemplified by the difference between countries where exhumations are conducted only by government teams or teams dependent on the judicial branch (see Table 1) compared with countries where appointment by competent jurisdictional courts enables independent national or international teams to legally perform this work.

Numerous reports and complaints about government teams by relatives’ organizations allege insensitivity, bureaucracy, connivance with military institutions or others potentially implicated in the violent events, delaying tactics, and interruption of action taken by relatives. Regardless of the veracity of the accusations, these claims demonstrate that exhumation processes should be carried out by teams trusted by the relatives. Unfortunately, in countries such as Peru and Chile, the teams appointed by relatives are limited to roles as experts for one of the parties to the action; in other words, they may oversee the process on behalf of the relatives to ensure that the work is technically correct. It is of fundamental importance that legislation is adopted in each country giving judges the authority to appoint forensic teams they deem adequate for each exhumation process, considering first of all appointing teams trusted by the victims and victims’ families themselves.

Furthermore, relationships between relatives and forensic anthropology teams during the excavation can differ considerably depending upon the context. In Argentina, the presence of relatives in the area of the exhumation during this phase depends on legal criteria. Also significant is the concern of the Argentine forensic anthropology team, which feels pressure from relatives’ expectations of the excavation results (Tumini et al., 2007). Relatives have not been present at exhumations in Uruguay, not having expressed any special interest or trust in the technical work of anthropologists (Nadal et al., 2007). In contrast, Guatemalan anthropologists promote and encourage the presence of the community around the grave, and relatives also carry out some of the related logistical tasks as a way of taking ownership of the process. The relatives participate by providing food and accompaniment, taking testimonies, and taking part in discussions (Navarro García et al., 2007).

In Venezuela, relatives take ownership of the process and collaborate on various aspects of the exhumation, including ante-mortem record forms, registration systems, communication with the media, excavation work, clearing undergrowth and disinterment, and moving bags that contain remains. The people involved agree that active participation in the process is not traumatizing, but rather gives relatives strength and generates trust (Carrillo, 2007).

These experiences should be compared with reports of the negative effects of incomplete findings shown to unprepared relatives in Colombia (Gómez López & Martín Beristain, 2007), Panama (Sanjur, 2007), and Ciudad Juárez (Limas Hernández, 2007). Relatives deserve access to factual and complete information. The excavation findings should be presented in private with sensitivity and empathy, and without traumatic details about the state of loved one’s remains so that relatives can decide how they want the recognition to proceed (e.g., using clothing or photographs to identify physical remains, and naming an appropriate member of the family to perform identification). In addition, relatives should be informed before the press has access to news and disseminates details, although each country is working in very different ways in this regard.

Determining which person in the interdisciplinary team should be the information channel for relatives is another ongoing debate. Responsibility for informing relatives lies with the Ministry of the Interior’s psychosocial teams in Chile (Baeza Fernández et al., 2007) and the Truth Commission’s teams in Paraguay (Portillo, 2007). In Guatemala (Navarro García et al., 2007) and Peru (Stornaiuolo et al., 2007), the psychosocial team is considered only a bridge to facilitate
communication or transmit concerns and are expected to avoid interfering in direct communication between relatives and the anthropologists or the legal team, except perhaps to help convey technical concepts. The Argentine experience contributes an additional element: the anthropological team in charge of the exhumation requests (nearly always successfully) that a judge be responsible for communicating the results of the process in private and based on official documents. This is considered an intrinsically reparatory act of state legitimation (Tumini et al., 2007).

Taken together, these findings underline the need for coordination and harmony between institutions. The Guatemalan teams go further; based on their more than 10 years of experience, they claim that “relatives should be an active part of the whole process and participate in all decisions taken during that process” (Navarro García et al., 2007).

The importance of culture

Native peoples of Latin America, including those in Guatemala (Mayans), Peru (Quechus and Aymaras), Chile (Mapuches), Colombia (Afro American and Amazon communities), and Ecuador (Shuar, Ashu, and Huaoan regions) have distinct worldviews and perspectives on community organization and violence as damage to the community. Their views may be difficult to understand and accept from urban and Latin viewpoints. It is therefore necessary to incorporate an anthropological viewpoint and cultural respect for themes related to life and death, relations with ancestors, and the social role of the dead, as well as to appropriately manage community conflicts generated by violence. It is also important to include professionals and workers from these ethnic groups in the teams and to promote dialogue and encounters so that psychosocial action can be culturally relevant and appropriate. An exhumation is largely a symbolic reconstruction, and symbols are based on and understood through the cultural matrix and specific ethnic interpretations of life, death, sickness, society, and conflict.

Political context

The political context in which the exhumation takes place is undoubtedly the main factor that affects this work. Exhumations carried out during active conflicts usually lack guarantees for relatives, witnesses, and teams. This leads to personal security risks, difficulty gaining access to regions where remains are located, or difficulties working in the presence of armed persons when perpetrators have not yet been punished. The security of relatives and human rights teams is the primary condition for exhumations, as stated by Colombian non-governmental organizations and relatives of victims in Panama.

It is not surprising, therefore, that despite the efforts of relatives during times of strong political control, exhumations have been initiated in the majority of countries only when the context has permitted. Guatemala, El Salvador, Brazil, Argentina, and Chile are examples of this. Experiences in Panama, Peru, and Guatemala have revealed the extraordinary importance of Truth Commissions in recognizing massacres and recommending exhumations as a state policy to form part of the national reparation plans. This transforms the concept of exhumation from that of a private space for relatives or legal action for use as evidence (and therefore as a discretionary action of the local court) and places it in a much broader framework as an instrument of reparation for society as a whole.

The importance of the political context, even when internal armed conflict no longer exists, can be seen clearly in Peru. Reparation policies are vulnerable because the decision to perform exhumations depends solely on the state, and therefore on the administration currently in power.
An administration accused by the Truth Commission as having direct responsibility for human rights violations may obstruct the attempts of relatives or human rights organizations to search for the disappeared.

**Controversies**

Even when the political context permits an exhumation, relatives have different positions with regard to the exhumation. In the experiences described here, voices have been raised in disagreement for different reasons:

1. **Political reasons.** The emblematic phrase of Mothers of the Plaza de Mayo is the best example. “They took them alive, we want them back alive” summarizes their view that an exhumation is an acceptance of death. To receive the remains is to end the struggle. Forced disappearance is a crime against humanity. Finding the remains transforms the disappearance into a death, and in the worst case scenario, a murder, and acknowledges that the perpetrators have succeeded. Exhumation is thus seen as a means to neutralize the family’s struggle for justice. Now, however, Hijos por la Identidad y la Justicia contra el Olvido y el Silencio (H.I.J.O.S.; Sons and Daughters for Identity and Justice Against Forgetting and Silence) regard exhumations as a space in the struggle for truth and justice for relatives and is now promoting and actively participating in the processes (Tumini et al., 2007).

2. **Social and economic reasons.** Some relatives have rejected exhumations in isolated communities in Peru, believing that spending money on the “dead” is offensive in the context of extreme poverty and that it would be better to invest in those who remain (Stornaiuolo et al., 2007). Relatives are often ambivalent about economic reparations—sometimes even rejecting them when they are not linked with justice against perpetrators.

3. **Humanitarian reasons.** The first exhumations in Chile were experienced by relatives as retraumatizing. When the possibility of new graves was announced, doubts, anxiety, and memories resurfaced. However, little or nothing was found in the majority of cases, which produced new frustration and a feeling of starting all over again. Consequently, most human rights organizations decided not to develop exhumation policies immediately after the end of the dictatorship (Baeza Fernández et al., 2007). Exhumations were resumed years later. In 2006, remains found in the Cemetery of Santiago in Chile were erroneously identified (the Patio 29 case). The team of forensic anthropologists relied on physical recognition techniques to determine probabilities that the remains corresponded to certain people. The courts accepted all the identifications as valid; however, the majority of identifications were found to be mistaken when DNA tests were performed 10 years later at the request of some of the relatives. The social and individual impact was extraordinarily negative and resulted in groups of relatives expressing their inability to trust any of the work performed by the Legal Medical Service. President Bachelet has since appointed a high-level commission to study this issue (Baeza Fernández et al., 2007).

4. **Symbolic reasons.** In the Araucanía region in southern Chile, interviews conducted over 20 years after disappearances occurred demonstrate that recovering the remains may not be important after so many years. Although some relatives still continue to assert that the disappeared person is not dead and may appear at any time, in fact very few people believe that this could happen. This does not mean that there are no groups of people for whom finding the remains is important, but it is not a priority for the majority (Baeza Fernández et al., 2007).
Reasons for exhumations

Despite these reasons, the majority of relatives do wish to carry out exhumations for reasons that vary a great deal depending on the context. For example, in Guatemala (Navarro García et al., 2007) and Peru (Stornaiuolo et al., 2007), relatives are in favor of recovering their loved ones, which allows them to pray and restore continuity with their ancestors. However, the search for truth and justice is the primary motivation for exhumation. This is the case in the long battles for justice in Honduras (Oliva, 2007), El Salvador (Hernández, 2007), and especially Venezuela (Carrillo, 2007), and in the demonstrations of relatives in Uruguay (Nadal et al., 2007), Argentina (Tumini et al., 2007), and Chile (Baeza Fernández et al., 2007).

There are also practical reasons for supporting exhumations. In Argentina, a law that acknowledges forced disappearances removes obstructions to legal processes such as inheritances, land sales, and remarriage; however, in Chile or Peru exhumations are required.

Identifications

Locating relatives

A related question is: Are exhumations even possible without the presence of relatives? If exhumation is considered a process that goes far beyond excavation and is significant for reparations, location is a key part of the work. Failing to inform a relative about the exhumation of a grave that may contain evidence of a loved one seriously violates a basic right to the truth and may cause irreparable moral harm. In this context, different experiences (Colombia, Venezuela, and Peru) have shown that denying families active participation in the process leads to anxiety about whether their relative might be among those reburied as NN in their absence. When permitted by the political context, psychosocial accompaniment includes historical and documentary investigation in the communities or family associations, as well public announcements in as many ways as possible (e.g., radio, press, and local newsletters) to reach the largest number of people possible as soon as the process has started.

Obstacles to identification

In general, relatives and organizations participating in the process have high expectations of identification. However, the actual rate of identification varies widely. The exceptions are cases in which witnesses were present, especially when they knew the victims (Hernández, 2007). These cases comprise only 3 to 5% of cases in large mass graves and 30% in best-case scenarios. Non-identification is more frequent than identification, and relatives are not always aware of this.

In our review we have included several cases in which identification has represented a significant problem for the relatives:

1. Delays. Cases in Honduras (Oliva, 2007), Brazil (Bouças & Vital, 2007), Peru (Stornaiuolo et al., 2007), and Guatemala (Navarro García et al., 2007) report that it can take a long time, sometimes years, from the time the remains are disinterred for laboratory analysis to the time when identification is made. It may also take a long time for the remains are returned to relatives, or the remains may never be returned.

2. No attempt to identify remains. As previously mentioned, cases such as those in Colombia (Gómez López & Martín Beristain, 2007) and other exhumations of mass clandestine graves have occurred without the opportunity for family participation or any real
effort to identify and return the remains. Mass graves have been “legalized” as deposits of unidentified bones, as in “operation television removal” by Pinochet after the exhumations at the Lonquén ovens in Chile (Baeza Fernández et al., 2007) or the so-called “operation carrot” in Uruguay (Nadal et al., 2007). Similarly, exhumations by the Legal Medical Institute in Peru have been reported in which appropriate efforts to locate relatives and identify remains were not made and the remains of victims were inadequately stored under unstable conditions (Stornaiuolo et al., 2007). In Venezuela, relatives spent years working on the exhumation of a common grave in Caracas cemetery and were ultimately blocked by the calculated action of the Legal Medical Institute, which issued death certificates stating cause of death by firearm and reburied the remains hours after obtaining them without informing the relatives or making an attempt at identification (Carrillo, 2007).

3. Mistaken identification. Even worse were the false identifications of women in Ciudad Juárez (Limas Hernández, 2007). In this case, the forensic authorities in the state of Chihuahua not only made no real attempt to identify the remains, but also handed over disfigured remains that did not correspond to the person being sought by the relatives to keep the family quiet. The relatives took responsibility for the funeral and burial as if the remains really belonged to their families, hoping that other families would do the same for their daughters. In Chile, identifications were considered valid even though evidence was insufficient, and in Panama, the state was negligent in its search for reliable experts to identify remains (Sanjur, 2007).

National Victims Registries and DNA Banks

Some of these problems can be solved by creating national registries of disappeared persons and DNA banks of relatives. DNA tests also permit identification when remains are minimal and identification cannot be based on physical features.

As a result of the Patio 29 case, the Chilean government decided to create a national DNA bank for relatives of disappeared persons, and has invested considerable economic and human resources in visiting relatives to explain the initiative and gain their participation (Baeza Fernández et al., 2007). Similar programs exist in Argentina, Paraguay, Peru, and more recently in Brazil and Uruguay. Relatives of victims in Honduras are also requesting this type of program. However, the information is sensitive and these registries are in the hands of the state. In Colombia, where a bill is in the final stage of approval in Parliament, plans exist to create a genetic database as part of the Office of Public Prosecution, although this has led to some apprehension among relatives.

Although the use of DNA has made identification more precise, the technique is still somewhat controversial. First, it involves the destruction of body fragments, which may be the only ones that remain from the disappeared person. From a human and procedural viewpoint, the use of DNA represents the individualization of the search, with the danger of losing the collective dimension of an exhumation as a space for community efforts, mourning, rebuilding the past, and dialogue (Baeza Fernández et al., 2007). Moreover, in some cases in Guatemala, DNA analysis has led to cultural conflicts with relatives who fail to understand the process and that DNA results may contradict results from site recognition or use of clothing at the site (Navarro García et al., 2007).
From the viewpoint of reparations

Political measures

When asked about future challenges for exhumations in their country, participants often mention political measures (Pérez Sales & Navarro García, 2007a). Exhumations are seen as part of the broader issue of global human rights.

Legislation is necessary where no laws exist, and compliance with Integral Reparation Plans (which may include exhumation of mass graves) should be required of the appropriate authorities. In Peru, for example, organizations demand application of the National Forensic Anthropological Plan, which has been legally approved but not yet applied. Furthermore, the legal framework of exhumations should be changed in most countries to allow intervention of non-government teams proposed by relatives after appointment by the competent court.

At least one comment should be made about the existence of huge graves in nearly all large cemeteries in Latin America where presumably destitute people have been buried, probably as a result of massive social cleansing. No one inquires about these people, nor has there been any effort to document their deaths or locate relatives. The huge graves found in cemeteries in Sao Paulo, Bogota, and Caracas and the suspicion that similar graves exist in most Latin American cities opens a subject that should be addressed by the appropriate authorities.

Justice

As previously mentioned, the personal involvement of some Argentine judges has resulted in symbolic recognition ceremonies through the reading of public documents (Tumini et al., 2007). This experience and that of special Chilean judges appointed to the search for the disappeared (Baeza Fernández et al., 2007) are some of the few situations in law enforcement institutions that demonstrate a positive attitude toward victims.

The search for justice is the driving force motivating victims in most countries. According to relative associations in Argentina and Venezuela, it may be more important than emotional elements or reencounters. However, the struggle for justice is difficult, especially in Brazil, Honduras, Peru, El Salvador, Ecuador, Colombia, and Guatemala, where the relatives bear the responsibility of finding evidence and initiating the proceedings (Pérez Sales & Navarro García, 2007b). In Venezuela, the family organization COFAVIC is still at the stage of “preliminary investigations” after 17 years of litigation, and no case has yet been judged by the country’s courts (Carrillo, 2007).

Table 1 shows that exhumations are carried out with impunity. In a few cases, the Inter-American Human Rights Court has intervened, resulting in sentences with considerable social and political impact in Colombia (a case of 19 businessmen and others), Ecuador (the Benavides case), Brazil (the Araguaia case), Peru (the Cantuta case), Guatemala (the Plan de Sánchez case and others), El Salvador (the Pro-Búsqueda case), and Venezuela. As María Julia Hernández (Hernández, 2007) said in El Salvador, “The judicial branch is not independent in this country and there are constant obstructions of processes to enforce justice when the military is involved (...). It is the relatives who carry the weight of the search for justice (...). Justice institutions only permit exhumations for humanitarian reasons.”

The situation in Guatemala is particularly significant in this context. According to Navarro (Navarro García et al., 2007), “The accompaniment teams have not been sufficiently aware of this reality nor have they included the work of information and discussion of the possibilities of legal
proceedings as a systematic part of their work". In contrast, the Centro de Desarrollo Integral de la Mujer, A.C. (Center for Women’s Integral Development, CEDIMAC) team in México makes this issue a priority, addressing it through education about human rights, training in legal proceedings, support for submitting testimonies, and recognition processes (Limas Hernández, 2007).

Where legal proceedings have been conducted in Chile, some family members have suffered through long interviews with prosecutors who are aggressive or question the victims’ experience (Baeza Fernández et al., 2007). In Ecuador, similar mistreatment of relatives has occurred. The most important conclusion from such experiences may be that relatives should participate in all actions taken to repair damage, including exhumations. Only in this way can exhumations be considered reparatory, as a process.

The state’s role

As mentioned above, the state’s role in exhumation processes has been widely questioned. Although the responsibility of the state to make reparations is assumed, actions taken by the state on a day-to-day basis could hardly be more negative. Therefore, the state’s role in exhumations has been questioned in Panama, for example (Sanjur, 2007). In many cases, the state is judge and jury, and the institutions responsible for proper process, chain of custody, and expert reports depend hierarchically on the state. Reports that forensic evidence has been destroyed by the corresponding medical-legal institutions are not unusual in Peru (Stornaiuolo et al., 2007), Colombia (Gómez López & Martín Beristain, 2007), Mexico (Limas Hernández, 2007), and Venezuela (Carrillo, 2007).

The Uruguayan model seems to be more appropriate: exhumations are carried out in the context of an agreement between the government and an independent public institution such as a university (Nadal et al., 2007). Alternatively, in the Guatemalan model, the judge appoints an expert responsible for the case after hearing the relatives (Navarro García et al., 2007). In Mexico, a similar system of agreements is being supported (Limas Hernández, 2007).

In Guatemala, exhumations have been funded for years through multilateral cooperation and international agencies. In 2006 and 2007, they were financed by the state under the National Reparations Programme (PNR). The nature of exhumation processes changed considerably, especially regarding access to justice (Navarro García et al., 2007). In Chile, official programs include workers with extensive backgrounds in human rights (Baeza Fernández et al., 2007), which generates trust and confidence among relatives.

Conclusions

Thousands of exhumations have been carried out over the last 15 years in Latin America. This experience has contributed many lessons, but tremendous challenges remain. This work aims to contribute to the general picture of what is being done from the viewpoint of psychosocial accompaniment. The following conclusions have been drawn:

- Scientific exhumation processes are needed to satisfy relatives’ expectations for recovering the remains of their loved ones, but also because they help provide the truth for relatives as well as for society in general.
- Exhumations may be one of the most significant events in political transitions. Despite this, professionals in the areas of mental health and psychosocial and community work have given exhumations very little attention.
- The context of an exhumation depends on the type of human rights violation, such as selective deaths of social or political militants, collective massacres of scorched-earth
policies, and social cleansing operations. Each situation requires a different strategy by the relatives and organizations.

- In most Latin American countries, no psychosocial accompaniment exists, or else consists of small contributions by volunteers who focus on mourning or crisis intervention. Most relatives of victims organize themselves or are alone in the process.

- Exhumations should not be seen simply as excavations, but as processes that begin long before the excavation and continue long afterwards in the framework of a global strategy focusing on reparations. This idea is not usually considered by teams in the different countries.

- Mutual recognition among teams providing forensic anthropology investigation, legal support, and psychosocial accompaniment is gradually developing, but unfortunately has not taken place in all countries.

- The role of the state in the processes of searching for disappeared persons is controversial. Although some people believe that the state should be responsible for this as part of reparations, many other voices describe the problems that this creates, sometimes with serious accusations. Some form of institutional regulation is needed in each country to gain the full trust of relatives.

- There is also some debate about the role of the relatives themselves, from that of assistance to the view that they should be consulted before any important decision. This does not imply that the responsibility for action should be placed on the relatives. However, important differences in the success and global and community effects of exhumations are apparent between places where strong organizations of relatives exist and places where they are lacking. All forms of self organization should be encouraged and exhumations should be promoted as opportunities for gaining strength (Ecap et al., 2009; Stover & Shigekane, 2002).

- Some exhumations are conducted for purely human and emotional reasons. On other occasions, the prevailing motivation is the pursuit of truth and justice. The experiences in different countries presented in this review have shown that the perpetrators almost always go unpunished. Psychosocial accompaniment teams have not traditionally prioritized these aspects of their work, which focuses on intrapsychic processes. It is necessary to provide opportunities for reflection so the relatives can freely decide whether they wish to pursue legal proceedings beyond excavation and reburial. This appears to be one of the most significant issues of this work.

- Culturally relevant psychosocial approaches are lacking in countries where most relatives are indigenous.

- It is important to promote a collective awareness of the past and help reveal the truth about past events of violence.

The reparatory potential of exhumations and impact on individuals, families, and communities is enormous. However, retraumatization and harm can result from bad practices or when exhumations are used for political intentions to break down the relatives of victims. For these reasons, it has been necessary to progress gradually towards achieving the goals in the International Consensus on Minimum Standards in Psychosocial Work and Exhumation Processes Related to Grave Violations of Human Rights (Ecap et al., 2009). Its implementation will be a huge challenge in the years to come. We seek to contribute substantially to this process from the viewpoint of Latin America with the large amount of data accumulated in this review (see Table 2).
**Table 2.** Compilation of minimum standards (ECAP, GAC and GEZA 2009).

<table>
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<tr>
<th>Accompanying relatives and victims</th>
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<tr>
<td>1. Psychosocial work shall contribute to developing elements necessary for the exhumation process and the search for the disappeared to be reparative as a whole for individuals, relatives, communities, and society.</td>
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<td>2. Psychosocial work shall aim to strengthen the capacity of victims to demand their rights to truth, justice, and reparation.</td>
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<th>Identification of expectations and needs</th>
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<td>3. From the standpoint of psychosocial work, the significance of undertaking search and exhumation processes lies in the expectations and needs of individuals involved in the search for the disappeared.</td>
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<td>4. All efforts shall be made to identify and locate relatives before starting the excavation process.</td>
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<th>Cultural context</th>
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<td>5. The sociopolitical and cultural context of the individuals affected shall be taken into account as well as the significance that families and communities attach to these processes to facilitate justice, truth, memory, and integral reparation.</td>
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<th>Community process</th>
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<td>6. Psychosocial work shall facilitate organizational possibilities for the individuals affected, so that exhumations and the search for the disappeared can be reparative.</td>
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<th>Working with children</th>
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<td>7. Psychosocial work shall consider accompanying children and adolescents, and their specific needs during the processes of exhumation and the search for disappeared persons.</td>
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<th>Coordination, communication, and security</th>
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<td>8. Work teams involved in the process of exhumation and the search for the disappeared shall guarantee coordination of all parties involved: individuals, families, communities, the State, international agencies, and non-government organizations, at all levels of the process.</td>
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<tr>
<td>9. All parties shall guarantee clear and precise information for affected individuals about the exhumation process or the search for disappeared persons, and about their actions, implications, consequences, and rights. This is particularly significant in aspects related to reparation and the right to justice.</td>
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<td>10. During an exhumation process and search for the disappeared, adequate security conditions shall be permanently guaranteed for families, witnesses, and participants.</td>
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<th>Forensic anthropology considerations</th>
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<td>11. During exhumation processes and the search for disappeared persons, compliance with legal and scientific, national, and international standards shall be guaranteed for forensic anthropology work.</td>
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<th>Self-support for teams</th>
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<td>12. Integral care shall be available for the interdisciplinary teams intervening in exhumation processes.</td>
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Role of the state

13. The state shall guarantee control and oversight mechanisms by victims, local organizations, and international agencies, thus ensuring transparency in the exhumation processes and the search for the disappeared.

14. The state shall take legislative, administrative, judicial, or any other necessary steps to fulfill the rights of individual and collective victims.

Judicial and legal aspects

15. Information shall be provided for relatives about the legal and social context of exhumations and their judicial consequences, contributing to decisions about future actions by relatives.

16. Judicial personnel participating in the search and exhumation shall have enough basic knowledge to respond to the psychosocial needs of relatives of the victims, adapting procedures to ethnic, gender, and generational characteristics in each case.

Integral reparation

17. Individuals, relatives, and communities shall be informed of their rights to integral reparation, as contemplated in national and international legislation.

18. Expectations of and rights to reparation for individuals, families, and communities shall be actively incorporated into psychosocial work, facilitating elements which will contribute to organization for this purpose.

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Education for Peace: Content, Form, and Structure:
Mobilizing Youth for Civic Engagement

Kevin Kester*

The inclusion of youth in peacebuilding initiatives brings vibrancy and creativity to peacebuilding efforts. Believing that youth offer creative energy and active potential for the transformation of violent conflict in the world -- and believing that education is a space for nurturing cultures of peace or cultures of war -- peace educators maintain that practitioners have a responsibility to dialogue with youth on knowledge, values, skills, and behaviors conducive to fostering global harmony and social justice. Peace is described as the absence of physical and structural violence, and the presence of justice; therefore, students should explore the root causes of conflict, know international humanitarian and human rights laws, envision alternative structures of security, and learn skills for managing micro/macro conflict without violence.

Accordingly, the goal of this paper is to discuss peace education as education for humane purposes and social justice, where youth are involved in the transformation of society and the construction of peaceful futures. The paper is divided into 5 sections: 1) what is peace education, 2) education for peace: values and inquiry-based teaching and learning, 3) peace education frameworks: the content of peace education, 4) pedagogy for peace: involving youth in community, and 5) models of peace education: learning in community. The paper focuses on the social purposes (why), content (what), pedagogy (how), and structure (where) of teaching peaceful values, behaviors, and skills, as well as generating a commitment among youth toward social agency and democratic participation.

What is Peace Education?


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resolve conflicts without violence. Jenkins (2007) illuminates the difference between education about peace and education for peace. Education about peace includes modules on war and peace and leaders of peace movements, such as Gandhi and King. Education for peace, on the other hand, intends to nurture knowledge, values, behaviors and capacities to confront violence.

Peace education as a practice in schools is attributed to Maria Montessori, John Dewey and Paulo Freire, though earlier thought on education for peace is traced back to Erasmus and Socrates, among other scholars. Montessori worked to foster peace on three inter-related levels: the individual, community, and globe. The individual level relates to person-centered awareness of the self (i.e. body, mind, emotions, and spirit), whereas the community level refers to interpersonal relations (i.e. trust, openness, and interdependence), and the global level concerns cultural and environmental consciousness (Montessori 1949). Dewey informed peace education through his work on the relationship between education and democracy, stating that one role of education is to foster active citizenship through the participation in processes of democracy (Dewey 1916). Freire (1970) centered education on revealing systems of oppression, particularly through the exploration of language and identity and by challenging the banking-model of teaching and learning. All three educators sought to create education that was learner-centered and autonomous. This concept of classroom education represents social outcomes relevant to democratic political systems. Hence, autonomous learning relates to individual and national autonomy and democratic classroom participation models active citizenship in a democracy. Peace education is also found philosophically in the work of authors (e.g. Tolstoy, Thoreau), social thinkers (e.g. Mead, Foucault, Adams), social learning scholars (e.g. Bandura and Walters) and activists (e.g. Ghandi, King, Ikeda, Syuu Kyi).

In practice, peace education is problem-posing education that attempts to build in every person the universal values and behaviors on which a culture of peace is predicated, including the development of non-violent conflict resolution skills and a commitment to working together to realize a shared and preferred future. Many scholars in the field address violence and the war system as the core problematic inhibiting peace and seek to propose viable solutions to violence in all its manifestations (e.g. social, economic, political, environmental, spiritual, and ethical). Violence might be defined as “avoidable, intentional harm, inflicted for a purpose or perceived advantage of the perpetrator or of those who, while not direct perpetrators, are, however, advantaged by the harm” (Reardon 2001, 35). Education for peace raises dialogue on critical issues at the heart of the community in order to transform oppressive systems from a violent orientation toward a culture of peace. Thus, through education for peace educators and students critically discuss manifestations of, and justifications for, violence, identify the actors involved and propose peaceful futures (Boulding 1988, Hicks 1994).

Peace education includes the cultivation of peacebuilding skills (e.g. dialogue, mediation, artistic endeavors). Peace educators, then, teach the values of respect, understanding, and nonviolence, present skills for analyzing international conflict, educate for alternative security systems, and use a pedagogy that is democratic and participatory. Thus, peace education as a practice and philosophy refers to matching complementary elements between education and society, where the social purposes (i.e. why teach), content (i.e. what to teach), and pedagogy (i.e. how to teach) of the educative process are conducive to fostering peace. Accordingly, peace education is a dialogical experience conducted through participatory learning, where learners communally and cooperatively grapple with contemporary issues (i.e. talking points) related to local and global contexts.

So, where do educators begin? What are the problems? What are the values and methods of education for peace? How do educators develop peace education programs? What are conceptual frameworks to help teachers and learners understand conflict, violence, and peace education? How
does education for peace address conflict differently than traditional education? Why should students have to study peace education and diversity issues? Isn’t this discourse merely distracting youth from the more important goal of learning core subjects and enhancing their primary skills toward a specific chosen vocation? And isn’t an extra class just an increased tuition burden during the current economic recession? I believe educators should focus more on maintaining creativity, which is often lost when growing older and burdened with more responsibility in a world dictated by economics that demand the sale of one’s time and labor over the nurturance of a meaningful vocation. Accordingly, there have been a number of frameworks designed to illustrate the content of peace education, as well as the instructional methods appropriate to the content. This paper will discuss those frameworks hereafter and present model peace education programs.

**Education for Peace: Values and Inquiry-based Learning and Teaching**

Education for peace begins with questions. Who am I? How do I identify myself? What, if anything, represents me? To what communities do I belong? What is community? How do members define community? What are the assets of a community? What are the strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats to a particular community? How do I solve conflicts? How do I involve myself with others in my community? What are examples of conflict and peacebuilding in my community, and how do I harness the potential encapsulated within conflict to transform it? How do I define violence? How do I justify violence? When do I use violent means? How is violence taught? What are alternatives? These questions are examples of the inquiry-based methodology and reflective practice that forms education for peace. Epistemologically, peace education focuses on the relationship between learning, violence, and cultures of peace. How do I learn? What do I learn? Who teaches the content? How is it taught? Who supports the content? In what spaces is peace learned? In what spaces is violence learned? What is done with the learning?

As an anecdote: Many of my students begin courses with the cynicism that peace is naive and impossible. They perceive peace as a utopian concept rooted in the ideas of harmony, quietude and passivity. Herein lies the problematic: that on one hand society perceives peace as silent and non-confrontational, yet for practitioners peacebuilding is dynamic, active and potentially agitating to the status quo. Peace education is not necessarily education for activism, though its intent is to create an informed, active and engaged citizenry, where civic participation and citizen decision-making forms a strong community and a healthy democracy. The process of peace education could be described as a process of revealing worldviews, biases and unmasking the intent behind education. Accordingly, many educators maintain that education is neutral, not political. However, by the very nature that education has objectives and social purposes it intends to foster among youth, education is political. The questions asked direct learning in a particular direction. The material teachers choose to teach directs the classroom discussion toward a specific sphere.

By claiming education as neutral many educators indoctrinate learners through education for capitalism and market-ideology, competition and violence, and neoliberalism and greed without allowing students to question the masked agenda (Apple 1969; Freire 1970; Giroux 1981, 2006; McLaren 1989). Peace education is overt with its intentions to confront, understand, and resist violence. Yet, because peace education is clear with its objectives, it is not a process of indoctrination (Mayor 2005). Peace education does not pour knowledge into the minds of students or tell students what to do. Nor does peace education utilize a system of experts who come into the classroom and tell students what to think. Peace education helps learners begin to raise questions and gives students the tools they need to direct their learning. It is an education about how to learn, not what to learn.

Inquiry-led education helps motivate learners to raise questions themselves, and become
reflective and active learners. Engagement with issues at the core of contemporary society is the message students receive as they begin to ask critical questions in the classroom and participate actively in their communities. Students come to understand that the medium—the structure of learning—is the message. Value a variety of points of view, be confident, speak up, share opinions in a respectful way, resolve conflict dialogically, and reflect—these are the lessons students learn. Through this inquiry-based method of learning, sharing of personal knowledge and experiences, asking critical questions, and listening actively to others, students experience a range of thoughts and perspectives for cultural understanding, non-violent communication and conflict management. Youth begin to see old events, peoples, experiences and structures in a new light. They begin to question their previous assumptions and values. This is transformative education. Reflection and dialogue transforms the way students see themselves, their communities, and the world. The dialogue and reflection is grounded in social and political theories of educators, political scientists, environmentalists, practitioners and philosophers, such as John Dewey (1916), Maria Montessori (1949), Paulo Freire (1970), Immanuel Kant (2005/1795), Kenneth and Elise Boulding (1988), David Bohm (1996), Betty Reardon (1988, 2001), and Vandana Shiva (2005).

Therefore, the classroom, its relationship between learning, socialization, culture and conflict, and the use of a specific value-laden pedagogy to achieve a desired result is central in cultivating an informed and engaged public. Education for peace, thus, includes participatory pedagogy and dialogue that more fully reflects the intended outcome of education for peace. In other words, education for peace seeks to foster peaceful personal attitudes, behaviors, skills and capacities. This education is not indoctrinating but is honest about its values of creating agency, respect and nonviolence. The most appropriate path toward this democratic objective is through learner-centered inquiry and democratic pedagogy (Dewey 1916, Freire 1970, Reardon and Cabezudo 2002). Classrooms must be spaces of multi-way, inter-generational, inter-cultural, pan-economic dialogue that introduces learners to new modes of thought, rather than sites of superficial discussions, memorization and information absorption that anesthetizes education (Kester 2007).

Peace Education Frameworks: The Content of Peace Education

While it is paramount that education for peace be specific to the teaching and learning context in which the learning is to take place and where the lessons are to be practiced, educators may nonetheless formulate their peace education lessons around common peace education themes. Burns and Aspeslgh (1996) describe these themes in five domains: 1) the international system, 2) peace, 3) development, 4) human rights, and 5) the environment. Additionally, there are several peace education frameworks to draw from as educators, as documented by the author (Kester 2008). Two of these frameworks highlight peace education content as the exploration of root causes of conflict, knowing international humanitarian and human rights law, envisioning alternative structures of security, and learning skills for managing micro / macro conflicts without resorting to violence. They are the Learning to Abolish War model (Reardon and Cabezudo 2002) and Flower-Petal Model of Peace Education (Toh 2004).

The Learning to Abolish War model emphasizes four strands of learning: root causes of conflict, international law, conflict management and global disarmament (Figure 1). The conceptual framework of this model places violence at the core of cultures of war, and non-violence and international understanding at the center of cultures of peace. This framework is particularly concerned with the role of international law in maintaining global justice, the construction of peacebuilding mechanisms, and the formation of personal lifestyles and behaviors conducive to fostering a culture of peace. In this framework education for peace is education for the abolition of war. This education relies on an exploration of what constitutes peace, dialogue at the intersection of identity and violence, and a process of re-defining human security in terms of needs and social
welfare in place of national security, the armaments industry and militarism. Peace education through this framework seeks to foster a commitment among educators to educate for non-violence and generate active citizenship among learners.

Figure-1. Learning to Abolish War Framework

The Flower-Petal Model of Peace Education (Figure 2) is another framework for forming education for peace programs. In this model, a culture of peace is placed at the center. A culture of peace may be defined as:

a set of values, attitudes, traditions and modes of behavior and ways of life based on respect for life, ending of violence and promotion and practice of non-violence through education, dialogue and cooperation...promotion of all human rights and fundamental freedoms...commitment to peaceful settlements of conflicts...efforts to meet the developmental and environmental needs of present and future generations... respect for and promotion of equal rights and opportunities for women and men (UN 1999, n.p.).

The Flower-Petal model has six categories comprising a culture of peace, including: 1) dismantling the culture of war, 2) environmental peace, 3) education for justice and compassion, 4) human rights education, 5) cultivating intercultural solidarity, and 6) harnessing inner peace. Dismantling a culture of war is concerned with mitigating all support for the war system, including competitive games, gender oppression, defense spending, oppressive security systems, and the sale of toys that mimic violence and teach children destructive behaviors (i.e. toy guns and knives, violent video games, excessive violence in film). It includes dissolving weapons access as well as disarming the mind from hate. Environmental education includes fostering global stewardship, simple living, and combating the environmental degradation that accompanies unsustainable development and war. Educating for justice and compassion deconstructs globalization processes, neoliberalism, and the notion of a commons. Education for human rights introduces students to their civil, economic, political, cultural and religious rights, among others, and assesses the nature of violations of these rights. Intercultural solidarity is concerned with interactions between differing groups and cultural norms, and national and international institutions that perpetuate violence or foster peace. Education for inner peace allows students to evaluate their own physical, emotional, and spiritual states as well as the interplay between micro and macro conflicts. The Flower-Petal framework focuses on intercultural solidarity, disarmament education, and the relationship between diverse
forms of life and ways of living that subvert ethno-centrism, de-humanization, and pseudo-speciation while fostering peace, global environmental stewardship and contemplative practices.

*Figure-2. Flower-petal Model of Peace Education*

In addition to the conceptual frameworks outlined above, there are a number of normative frameworks (i.e. international standards) that serve as the basis for developing peace education programs. One such normative framework is the *Declaration and Integrated Framework of Action on Education for Peace, Human Rights, and Democracy* (1995). The *Declaration and Integrated Framework* suggests “basic guidelines which could be translated into strategies, policies and plans of action at the institutional and national levels according to the conditions of the different communities” (n.p.). The guidelines include:

- Teaching with an international approach
- Teaching about forms of conflict, their causes and effects
- Teaching human rights and international standards (e.g. Constitutions, Universal Declaration of Human Rights, Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women)
- Teaching about democracy and civic participation
- Teaching about development, de-colonization and globalization
- Teaching the histories of nations and States
- Teaching about the United Nations and international institutions

These conceptual and normative frameworks inform contemporary peace education programs and form the developmental basis of education for peace. Through referencing these documents educators may create a peace education program specific to their schools and non-formal learning environments.

**Pedagogy for Peace: Involving Youth in Community**

Educators often find that the educational methods (e.g. lecturing and test-taking) do not match the intended social outcome, whether it relates to government, business, education, or technology, and that is largely what peace education concerns. Our schools and nations intend to
create democracy and community interdependence, yet to do so educators often use tactics of war-making (e.g. obedience-drilling, secrecy, and competitive games) that reflect more fully the very ideologies the school system intends to transcend. For example, many educators teach the benefits of capitalism through competitive games to illustrate individualism and hard work, yet to teach capitalism in this overly simplified manner exaggerates the negative characteristics of a capitalistic system (i.e. greed and exclusion). This education is fragmenting and divisive—it focuses on patriotism, militarism, and materialism—rather than holistic and interdependent. Such a lesson seems to value materialism above character. So we are presented with the ideological and existential contradiction that our means do not meet our intended ends, our content and pedagogy are in conflict, and democracy is compromised. Education must consider this contradiction. In contrast, to teach cooperation, respect, the value of diversity, creativity and empathy, educators could use cooperative games, participatory pedagogy, and creative problem-solving activities that emphasize learning to work and live together.

The classroom spaces also pose a democratic contradiction. Consider that classrooms are often sites of oppression. Several frequent learning situations occur in our classrooms that undermine fair and democratic education. Take, for instance, the overly didactic classroom where material is lectured to students in an authoritarian style, with learners listening passively but not engaging each other, the instructor, or the material. There are a number of characteristics that might define an oppressive classroom, including: 1) teachers lecturing for the entire period without responses from learners, or without giving learners the opportunity to question the agenda, 2) teachers allow one or a few students to dominate class time, which silences the majority, 3) students are encouraged to memorize ‘facts’ rather than engage in critical thinking and inquiry, 4) course material is not relevant to students’ lived experiences (e.g. US textbooks being used to teach Ethiopian youth), and 5) student-bullying is allowed to flourish as ‘boys just being boys’ (Kester 2007).

Accordingly, in light of this situation, educators have been working to cultivate a culture of peace for several decades. The United Nations, as facilitator, has promoted this dialogue. The UN General Assembly passed the Declaration and Integrated Framework of Education for Peace, Human Rights and Democracy (1995), Declaration on a Culture of Peace (1998), and declared the year 2000 as the ‘International Year for a Culture of Peace’ and 2001-2010 as the ‘UN International Decade on Education for Peace and Nonviolence for the Children of the World.’ The 1995 and 1998 resolutions articulate necessary components of education for peace and a culture of peace, respectively. Each includes education on knowledge, values, skills, and behaviors that support peaceful societies and unpacks thinking that supports the war system (Figure 3). Furthermore, the UN implemented peace education into its educational bodies (i.e. UNESCO, UNITAR, UNU, and UPEACE) to serve as a model for mainstreaming peace education into organizations and agencies.

**Figure 3. Toward a Culture of Peace**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>From: A CULTURE OF WAR</th>
<th>Toward: A CULTURE OF PEACE</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Power based on force</td>
<td>Power based on mutual agreements</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Having an enemy, dualism, dichotomy</td>
<td>Tolerance, solidarity, and international understanding</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Authoritarian governance</td>
<td>Democratic participation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Secrecy</td>
<td>Transparency, free flow of information</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Armament</td>
<td>Disarmament</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Exploitation of people</td>
<td>Human Rights</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Exploitation of nature</td>
<td>Sustainable Development</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Straight male domination</td>
<td>Gender equity and equality</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Reardon (2001, 111-112) describes education for a culture of peace:

*Learners must be guided towards a clear comprehension of the major obstacles to a culture of peace: the normative and behavioral obstacles that lie at the heart of our discussion of capacities and skills; and the institutional and existential obstacles, the global problems that are the worldwide manifestations of the culture of war. Together these problems comprise the problematic of creating a culture of peace.... One way of looking at the main tasks of creating a culture of peace is to think of the primary goals as reducing and eliminating violence, and enhancing and universalizing human dignity and equality by increasing gender justice.*

Hence, the pedagogy of education for peace focuses on illuminating causal relationships, developing empathy, and nurturing students who are committed to democratic participation and nonviolence in their local and global communities. Educators should be aware of direct and indirect forms violence and the war system so that education may overcome systems of violence. An education for peace program, thus, pedagogically emphasizes values (tolerance, respect, equality, empathy, compassion), capacities (cultural proficiency, sensitivity), skills (nonviolent communication, active listening, competence in a foreign language, gender-inclusive language), and knowledge (of history and cultures, peace movements) for peace. The pedagogy includes cooperative learning activities, gender perspectives, creative reflection and journaling, theatre games, role-plays, empathy-building activities, and alternative futures exercises.

Furthermore, the *Declaration and Integrated Framework of Education for Peace* (1995) suggests that education for peace must be trans-disciplinary and included in all learning spaces. Education for peace should not be limited to a single classroom or subject. Yet, the institution or space in which education for peace operates should be in harmony with the goals and lessons of peace education and peace education should be integrated into all learning spaces. That is the learning space should foster intercultural and international dialogue and respect, knowledge of national and global systems of governance, respect for all life, and a commitment to non-violence. Authoritarian and exclusive learning spaces work counter to the cooperative and inclusive goals of peace education.

**Models of Peace Education: Learning in Community**

Since 1982, the International Institute on Peace Education (IIPE), under the directorship of Betty Reardon, has been leading education for peace through a model of community learning. Every year IIPE brings together international educators to discourse on current themes related to peace, violence and the war system. IIPE has 3 goals: to develop peace education through identifying new and challenging themes, to form new institutional alliances among NGOs, universities, and agencies, and to generate regional cooperation toward transforming society (Jenkins 2007). Peace education communities foster peace through dialogical exploration of critical contemporary issues, sharing best teaching practices, and brainstorming methods for individuals and education to respond to the critical issues at hand. The program considers violence through the lens of education and the political systems in which conflict plays out. IIPE begins with the Freirean philosophy that all community members are at once teacher and student. This horizontal and dialogical process of community learning and shared responsibility among learners forms a learning community that both represents peace education and participation in a democracy. Through dialogal community learning, participants learn with and from each other toward political action possibilities to address the social issues under study in order to transform institutions of violence (Jenkins 2008). For more
information, see the IIPE website at http://www.tc.columbia.edu/PeaceEd/IIPE/index.htm.

In 2002, the United Nations University for Peace (UPEACE), through consultation with leading international peace educators, including Reardon, began formulating a framework and strategy for offering a master’s degree program in peace education. The culminating document from the consultation (Jenkins 2002) designed the master’s degree program around eight organizing principles: peace education as 1) comprehensive in scope, 2) holistic in organization, 3) values-laden, 4) inquiry-based, 5) conceptually designed, 6) practiced with learner-centered pedagogy, 7) intended to develop peacemaking skills, and 8) as intentionally-directed learning. The eight principles of peace education underscore a holistic and comprehensive model of peace education. Students at UPEACE interact with concepts of peace through exploration of the values, beliefs and worldviews present among cultures of the diverse student body. This approach to peace education embodies a symbiotic relationship between education for peace and multicultural education; for, both multicultural education and peace education aim to raise global awareness, respect for all life and a re-humanization of the “Other.” In multicultural learning communities learners deconstruct their previously held prejudices and beliefs about others and formulate models for greater cooperation in the future. For further information on UPEACE, see http://www.upeace.org/.

In 1997, the Civic Education Project (CEP) of Northwestern University began its youth programs by combining classroom teaching with community service to promote civic responsibility among youth. CEP offers young people an opportunity to learn and serve through service-learning projects in communities across the US, developing the knowledge, values and skills students need to make a positive impact on society. CEP engages students with social and economic challenges in cities (e.g. politics and urban poverty, hunger and homelessness, youth violence and conflict resolution, law and social justice, and public health) as a process of creating change and preparing youth for active citizenship. The structure of CEP includes a core course that grapples with the issue under study, field experiences working with local agencies addressing the topic, special topic seminars of the students’ choice, evening colloquia with guest speakers, nightly reflection sessions, and residential and recreational activities developing the participatory and cooperative ethos of the learning community. The Civic Education Project is found at http://www.ctd.northwestern.edu/cep/.

In conclusion, peace education as a practice aims to confront and resist violence to transform societies toward cultures of peace. Peace education focuses both on education about peace and education for peace while addressing the knowledge, values, skills and behaviors needed to nurture a peace culture. The content of peace education includes knowledge of peace movements, peacemakers, ‘negative and positive’ peace, direct and indirect violence, peace as an active process, human rights and responsibilities, worldviews and ideologies, non-violent communication, community and dialogue. The pedagogy used in peace education is cooperative, participatory and active, including case-studies, storytelling, role-plays, empathy activities, negotiation and mediation practice, journaling, reflection circles, and alternative futures exercises. The learning objective of peace education aims to transform conflict through dialogue and nonviolence, and particularly where peace education affects youth conflict is transformed across generations.

References

Peacekeeping Under Strain: Coping with Evolving Contradictions?

Tim Guldimann*

I. Introduction: the nature of peacekeeping

Peacekeeping is a lifesaving undertaking. It has contributed to reducing the number of ongoing wars in the last 15 years and is an essential instrument for fostering global peace and stability. However, peacekeeping is an activity full of contradictions. Many of these cannot be avoided, but can be acknowledged in order to improve understanding and learning.

Worldwide, almost 200,000 soldiers, police officers and civilians are serving as peacekeepers. They are sent by international organisations and governments into different conflict areas, with the aim of making the world safer. Since the end of the Cold War, such peace interventions have grown massively into a complex global undertaking. The drivers of this increase in peacekeeping have been both a new international consensus and high expectations addressed to the United Nations (UN), as the leading international body for securing global peace.

The engagement of the international community through peacekeeping activities, however, has often been decided quickly and with unclear mandates, especially in the early 1990s. This resulted in compromises on how and where to engage, which inevitably led to discrepancies between the objectives and the impact of certain operations. Because of this, the concept of peace interventions has undergone a difficult learning process over the last two decades. This process is analysed in this article in the following three phases.

- **The Expansion after the Cold War:** During its massive expansion after 1989, traditional peacekeeping was overstrained by new tasks, for which it had not been designed. Its failure provoked a re-assessment, leading to a change of approach.
- **The new approach of Peacebuilding:** The new, more ambitious approach combines traditional peacekeeping with instruments of political intervention intended to stabilise the political and social environment that had caused or allowed conflict. However, in this new political role,

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peace interventions have abandoned their former neutrality and created a series of new contradictions.

- **The impact of the global economic crisis:** As well as affecting the overall conditions for peace interventions, financial and political restrictions will curtail the future engagement of Western governments. At the same time, peace intervention generally may be increasingly questionable, as a largely ‘Western’ project. For peacekeeping to be more widely accepted and supported – and therefore more effective – wider international cooperation is necessary.

The UN and other international actors undertake a wide range of activities to foster peace and security in different conflict areas around the world. Among these activities, collective peace interventions account for by far the largest part of total personnel and costs.\(^1\) Apart from **conflict prevention**, intended to keep ‘tensions and disputes from escalating into violent conflicts’, the UN defines four other types of peace activities, as follows.

- **Peacemaking** includes ‘diplomatic action to bring hostile parties to a negotiated agreement’. It ‘may also be undertaken by unofficial and non-governmental groups or by a prominent personality working independently’.
- **Peace enforcement** aims to re-establish peace and security by legal force in a conflict, provoked by aggression. Offensive military force has been legalised only twice – in Korea (1953) and against Iraq (1991). In defending a ceasefire agreement, UN missions in various situations have applied military force, extending beyond self-defence.
- **Peacekeeping** is ‘designed to preserve the peace, however fragile, where fighting has been halted and to assist in implementing agreements’.
- **Peacebuilding** involves a range of measures targeted to reduce the risk of lapsing or relapsing into conflict by strengthening national capacities at all levels for conflict management and to lay the foundations for sustainable peace and development.

These definitions are not generally accepted, and they do not make clear distinctions between the different types of peace activities. Sometimes, as also in this article, ‘peacekeeping’ is used as the overall term for the latter three types of peace operation. In reality, field missions operate based on mandates, which combine elements of different activities. Missions are also generally not clearly focused,\(^2\) sometimes leaving a grey area between peace enforcement and peacekeeping.

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\(^2\) In 1996/97 the author was the Head of the OSCE Assistance Group to Chechnya. The short mandate of this small mission of about eight internationals had elements of peacekeeping and peacebuilding. Its peacemaking role, not explicitly foreseen by the mandate, consisted of mediating the ceasefire in May 1996 and arranging the meeting for the Khasav'oyt Agreement on 31 August 1996. Its main peacebuilding contribution consisted of essential support for the elections in January 1997.
Table 1: Foreign personnel deployed in peace operations, May 2009

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Military</th>
<th>Police</th>
<th>Civilian</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>UN missions</td>
<td>82,000</td>
<td>10,000</td>
<td>9,000</td>
<td>101,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NATO missions</td>
<td>73,000</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>73,025</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>EU missions</td>
<td>3,700</td>
<td>2,100</td>
<td>880</td>
<td>6,680</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>African regional organisations</td>
<td>4,250</td>
<td>140</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>4,390</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>OSCE missions</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>515</td>
<td>545</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Others</td>
<td>7,000</td>
<td>370</td>
<td>350</td>
<td>7,720</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>TOTAL</strong></td>
<td>169,980</td>
<td>12,635</td>
<td>10,745</td>
<td>193,360</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The figures in Table 1 reflect the structure of international peace missions. More than half of total peacekeeping personnel are under direct UN command; NATO accounts for more than one third; the EU, the African Union and the OSCE together contributed only 6% of the total peacekeeping personnel. Peace operations are mostly military: of the total personnel in Table 1, 88% are troops, only about 5% are civilian mission members, and the rest are police officers. The Multinational Force in Iraq, and local employees (which account for about 13,000 staff members of all UN missions alone) are not included in this overview.

Since the end of the Cold War, peace operations have greatly increased in size and number, as exemplified by UN activities.  

- During the Cold War, the UN’s traditional peacekeeping operations remained stable at a relatively constant level of around 10,000 UN peacekeepers. They were even fewer between the mid-1960s and mid-1970s.
- Between 1992 and 1995, there was an eight-fold increase in UN personnel to over 80,000. In the first decade after 1989, the UN started more than twice as many peace operations as it had in the previous four decades combined.
- Radical contraction followed, in the second part of the 1990s, with UN peacekeepers falling below 20,000, reflecting the serious setback in these operations.
- Since the turn of the century, a new expansion has been taking place, to today’s total of over 100,000 UN peacekeeping personnel.

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3 Zentrum für Internationale Friedenseinsätze (ZIF, Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Berlin): International and German Personnel in EU, UN, OSCE, NATO and Other Field Missions, updated in May 2009.
II. Overstrained traditional peacekeeping after the Cold War

Until 1989, UN peacekeeping operations were required to maintain a neutral role regarding the conflict parties. Mostly, the task of the missions was, and in some cases still is, to keep conflict parties apart, to monitor the respect of a ceasefire at a demarcation line, and to report on adherence to the ceasefire. Traditional peacekeeping was guided by four principles:

- the consensus of the conflict parties on the operation’s mandate,
- the operation’s strict neutrality between the conflict parties,
- restriction of the use of force to self-defence,
- the mission’s operation under direct UN command.

The concept was successful under Cold-War conditions in making the best of the UN’s limited space for manoeuvring. In 1988, the UN even received the Nobel Peace Prize for these operations.

However, this kind of peacekeeping also contributed to the freeze of conflicts, sometimes for decades, instead of resolving them – as in Cyprus, where the UN has been stationed for over four decades. Peacekeeping missions can also stabilise illegally created new borders by monitoring respect of these borders – as with the EU observation mission in Georgia. Whenever a conflict erupts anew, the mere presence of peacekeepers cannot prevent open violence. In late 2008, the biggest UN Mission was MONUC, in the Democratic Republic of Congo, with a staff of 20,000, that is a fifth of all UN peacekeepers worldwide. It could not hinder the rebels in Eastern Congo from advancing into the city of Goma, committing massacres among the civilian population and compelling a quarter of a million people to flee the area. In such situations, the UN faces a choice either of taking sides – in this case with the government – or of becoming an irrelevant and ignored observer.

Traditional peacekeeping was challenged fundamentally after the end of the Cold War. The end of communism did not bring peace to the world. On the contrary, the number of open conflicts immediately rose and reached a peak of 55 wars in 1992, and demand increased for peacekeeping operations. There was strong international consensus, not since equalled in this form, in favour of launching large-scale peacekeeping operations. For the first time, the Security Council entrusted the UN with its original role of guarantor of world peace, but increased demand and political support also raised expectations addressed to the UN. At the same time, modern conflicts have been growing increasingly difficult to manage through external interventions. Non-state actors, not accountable to any government, play an increasing role. Violence is used more readily and humanitarian rules are respected less and less. Moreover, failing states and escalating conflicts are mutually reinforcing.

The UN reacted with new ambitions for its leading role in international security. In the period between 1990 and 1994, UN peacekeeping operations expanded massively. The euphoria was reflected in UN Secretary-General Boutros-Ghali’s Agenda for Peace, adopted in June 1992, which went as far as proposing a permanent UN army available to the Security Council. The Agenda considers a UN response by such forces to outright aggression ‘not likely to be available for some time to come’. However, for restoring a ceasefire, it recommends ‘that the [Security] Council consider the utilisation of peace enforcement units […] which would have to be more heavily armed.

6 http://www.sozialwiss.uni-hamburg.de/publish/lpw/Akul/kriege_archiv.htm
7 Agenda for Peace, point 43.
than peacekeeping forces’ and ‘be under the command of the Secretary General’. However, this type of intervention would be a provisional measure (according to Article 40 of the UN Charter) and as such it ‘shall be without prejudice to the rights, claims, or position of the parties concerned’. In fact the Agenda tries to overcome the dilemma of traditional peacekeeping by proposing peace enforcement, assuming that this would be possible by consensus of the parties involved.

However, ‘peace enforcement by consensus’ is a contradiction in terms. The instrument of peacekeeping, traditionally designed for a consensus environment after a conflict, was overstrained in the early 1990s. Peacekeeping mandates could not be extended to include the new role necessary for coping with newly erupted or ongoing conflicts. Instead of fulfilling the new role as guarantor of global peace under the new conditions, the UN failed. This led to a crisis of UN peacekeeping, particularly caused by its failure in Somalia, Bosnia and Rwanda from 1993 to 1995. This failure also weakened the overall reputation of the UN.

In Somalia, after Spring 1992, the UN succeeded in assuring the humanitarian food supply, but could not bring the civil war under control. After the violation of the ceasefire, the Security Council empowered foreign forces under the UN mandate to proceed against General Adid, one of the conflict’s party leaders. By doing so, the UN departed from its impartiality in the conflict. UN Pakistani troops provoked an escalating conflict with Adid’s militia. Early in October 1993, the US intervened against General Adid’s position. The operation ended in a disaster, leaving over 800 dead (500 civilians, 300 Somali militants and 18 US soldiers). This resulted in strong reluctance in Washington towards further engagements in UN missions.

In Bosnia, UN peacekeeping lost its credibility when ‘UN Protection Zones’ could not be protected. On 16 April 1995, the UN Security Council had guaranteed the security of the people in Srebrenica and soon afterwards extended this guarantee to five other cities, without receiving the necessary military capacity from member states for fulfilling these obligations. Consequently, UN peacekeepers from the Netherlands became powerless observers of Serbian militias deporting 7000 to 8000 Bosniaks and killing them afterwards. This failure to act led to the downfall of the Dutch government.

In Rwanda, the UN mission had 2300 peacekeepers and military observers when the genocide against members of the Tutsi tribe began. The mission was informed about Hutu violent intentions, urged for more troops and wanted to seize arms caches. However, UN headquarters forbade the mission to use force except for self-defence. After ten Belgian UN soldiers were killed, the UN withdrew the largest part of its mission, leaving the Tutsis without protection. Within 100 days in 1994, Hutu militias killed between 500,000 and 1 million Tutsis.

The failure of these missions caused general disillusion with UN peacekeeping, including in the international public opinion. Member states became very reluctant to contribute troops and civilian personnel to such missions. This setback contributed to the abrupt end of Boutros-Ghali’s first mandate, and he was replaced by Kofi Annan in February 1996. Annan substantially reduced UN field missions in the following years: By 1998, the UN peacekeeping budget was reduced to almost a quarter of what it had been five years before.

A commission, mandated by Kofi Annan and led by the former Algerian Foreign Minister Lakhdar Brahimi, outlined the strategy for future UN peacekeeping. The Brahimi Report was critical of UN-

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8 Agenda for Peace, point 44.
9 Information provided by a high military officer of a UN member state involved in the Somalia operation.
10 At UN headquarters, DPKO was in charge, headed by the then Under Secretary-General, Kofi Annan.
operations that ‘did not deploy into post-conflict situations, but tried to create them’. The commission reaffirmed three of the traditional principles of UN peacekeeping: the consensus of the conflict parties, the mission’s impartiality and apparently the use of force for only self-defence. However, on the crucial point of impartiality, it went beyond the traditional approach:

   Impartiality for United Nations operations must therefore mean adherence to the principles of the Charter: Where one party to a peace agreement clearly and incontrovertibly is violating its terms, continued equal treatment of all parties by the United Nations can in the best case result in ineffectiveness and in the worst may amount to complicity with evil. No failure did more to damage the standing and credibility of United Nations peacekeeping in the 1990s than its reluctance to distinguish victim from aggressor.12

In this way, Brahimi’s commission recommended going beyond traditional peacekeeping and stressed the ‘need for robust doctrine and realistic mandates [...] It means that mandates should specify an operation’s authority to use force’. In other words, the commission implies the need to go beyond mere self-defence. Otherwise, it would not be necessary to specify:

   bigger forces, better equipped and more costly but able to be a credible deterrent. In particular, United Nations forces for complex operations should be afforded the field intelligence and other capabilities needed to mount an effective defence against violent challengers.13

Like Boutros-Ghali’s Agenda, the Brahimi report argues for a shift in peacekeeping in the spectrum from basic peacekeeping to the very challenging tasks of enforcement operations or humanitarian interventions. Between these two poles, an intermediate area can be defined as ‘stabilisation operations’.

- **Basic peacekeeping**, as in its traditional form, can count on the full consent of the conflict parties and consists mainly of monitoring a ceasefire, establishing a buffer zone between the belligerents, supervising troop withdrawals, conducting inspections and providing security for the monitors.

- **Stabilisation operations** have to deal with some resistance and extend the operation into the field of securing a stable environment by providing protection of borders, government buildings, politicians, election activities and humanitarian services. Such operations assist also in mine clearance and disarmament activities; they have to deter the outbreak of violence and to support local police in the event of riots.

- **Enforcement operations** need a robust mandate to deal with eventually widespread resistance. In addition to basic peacekeeping and stabilisation, enforcement also includes complex stability tasks such as to: guarantee security to populations at risk and provide them with humanitarian aid under difficult conditions, forcibly disarm belligerents and disruptive elements, conduct sanctions and embargo operations, arrest war criminals, control air space and waters, and maintain its own, robust quick-reaction forces.

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12 Ibid., p. ix.
13 Ibid., p. X.
Member states were very reluctant to concede to the UN robust mandates and refused to send their soldiers for operations under UN command. The alternative to enhanced UN peacekeeping for coping with the demand for robust action was a new division of labour, which actually took place. Instead of working to extended UN mandates, the UN kept the classical tasks of peacekeeping by lightly armed peacekeepers and concentrated on the civilian and police fields. For more complex or challenging military tasks, the Security Council mandated individual states or NATO. This shift in international peacekeeping doctrine – also called ‘peacekeeping by proxy’ – went in parallel with a shift in the military doctrine of major states, above all the US. In October 2008, a new regulation for the US army (‘Stability Operations FM 3-07’) put operations for stabilising a crisis area at the same level as traditional combat operations.

The advantage of the division of labour is the direct engagement of participating states or NATO in military peacekeeping, for which they assume the political responsibility. However, a successful division of labour, if political and military operations are deployed in parallel (as in Kosovo in the case of UNMIK and KFOR), depends on functioning cooperation between the two missions, each of them reporting to different headquarters. Moreover, outsourcing more robust tasks to individual states or NATO deprives the UN of its direct control over the operation. Instead, it allows individual states, such as the US, enhanced influence in the political development on the ground.

The second consequence of the peacekeeping crisis in the early 1990s, in addition to the new division of labour, was a strategic shift towards peacebuilding strategies to resolve conflict and foster political stability. This change was also reflected in the Brahimi Report, which recommends a ‘doctrinal shift in the use of civilian police, other rule of law elements and human rights experts in complex peace operations to reflect an increased focus on strengthening rule of law institutions and improving respect for human rights in post-conflict environments’.15

III. Contradictions of peacebuilding interventions

The step from traditional peacekeeping to a broader approach including peacebuilding was a substantial change of paradigm. Whereas peacekeeping during the Cold War was committed ‘to abstain from any political activity in the hosting country’,16 peace operations now lead to the opposite, and they interfere in the country’s political and social life. Modern peacekeeping therefore abandons its previous neutrality, which before could still be upheld for the supervision of a ceasefire. The new approach pursues a political project, with two important implications.

First, peacebuilding defines the political contents of the project. All peacebuilding interventions of the last decade share the twin goals of democracy and market economy. This is in itself a Western project. It can be shown that democracies are generally less involved in interstate and intrastate conflicts. However, in some countries democratisation, promoted above all by externally supported efforts to push for elections in a series of countries, has had destabilising effects. This was the case in Cambodia, Liberia, Angola, Rwanda and Bosnia.17

Second, the driving forces for peace operations are Western governments. They carry the biggest part of the financial burden, commit the biggest number of troops and implement the policy. They have a majority among the veto powers in the UN Security Council and a leading role in the peace operations themselves. NATO operations are by definition an exclusively Western domain.

15 Brahimi Report, point 47, p.8.
17 Ibid., p. 267 onwards.
The new form of peace operations, combining peacekeeping with active peacebuilding efforts, has been realised above all in Bosnia, Afghanistan and Kosovo, following Western military intervention. NATO assures security; the UN, the OSCE, the EU and other actors build up state institutions, strengthen democracy, promote the return of refugees, and support minorities as well as the respect of human rights.

Such peacebuilding, however, implies direct political intervention, from outside, into the political and social life of another state. Hence, peacebuilding is based on political influence, because it could not otherwise be realised through the consensus relationship of traditional peacekeeping. There are different expressions of power, directly or indirectly used by Western governments to influence local partners so that they deliver what the international side expects from them.

- **Power relationship:** In many cases the mere relationship of power between the two sides assures the expected behaviour on the local side. The peace agreement at the end of the war in Yugoslavia was signed at US air force base Dayton, Ohio, an impressive setting that had an impact on the signing partners.

- **Access to international cooperation and assistance:** Granting or refusing access to international organisations, such as the Council of Europe or the EU, or to their assistance programmes, or to assistance from the IMF and the World Bank, is used to influence local actors. In the Balkans, the EU has applied this ‘sticks and carrots’ approach extensively. Only after Croatia had handed over the indicted war criminal, Ante Gotovina in December 2005, were EU membership negotiations initiated. In Indonesia, pressure from the IMF obtained the necessary concessions from Jakarta in 1999 for resolving the East-Timor conflict.

- **Political positioning:** There are conflicts in which the West has had direct influence and has worked towards establishing a new government, ready to cooperate in the international peace project. In Afghanistan, president Karzai was put in power by the Bonn Conference in December 2001; only afterwards he was democratically endorsed.

- **Sovereign rights:** There are models for peace settlements in which the West keeps sovereign rights to intervene in local politics. The High Representative for Bosnia and Herzegovina has special rights for implementing the civilian part of the Dayton peace agreement. He can overrule political decisions and even dismiss local politicians. In Kosovo, following the declaration of independence in February 2008, the International Civilian Representative, according to Annex IX of the ‘Comprehensive Proposal for the Kosovo Status Settlement’, 18 shall ‘take corrective measures to remedy... any actions taken by Kosovo authorities that’ he ‘deems to be in breach of this Settlement... or spirit of this Settlement... this may include... annulment of laws or decisions adopted by Kosovo authorities‘; he also ‘shall have the authority to sanction or remove from office any public official’.

- **Protectorate:** A more explicit form of external domination is the establishment of a protectorate. This was the case in Kosovo where, based on Security Council Resolution 1244, the actual sovereignty was handed over to the Special Representative of the UN Secretary-General (SRSG), as the head of an interim administration. The stabilisation model consisted of the

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18 This so-called Ahtisaari Plan was submitted by the UN Secretary-General to the Security Council on 26 March 2007. Although it was not endorsed by the Council, it became the basis for the independence process promoted by the main Western powers. By May 2009, 60 states had recognised Kosovo’s independence; for the majority of states, Kosovo is part of Serbia.
gradual establishment of local provisional institutions, to which more and more administrative responsibilities were transferred until a political settlement could be achieved.

Peacebuilding efforts have been massively expanded during the last decade, and peace operations are increasingly confronted with new problems and contradictions, which did not exist in traditional peacekeeping. The new difficulties are mostly consequences of the political interference from outside. The following list summarises six key problems, but is not exhaustive.

1. Exit strategy

If a mission is deployed with a clearly defined goal and end-date, agreed upon by the conflict parties, the political commitment is foreseeable and the conditions for the cooperation with local partners are clear. In January 1996, the UN assumed the transitional administration of Eastern Slavonia until the region was integrated into independent Croatia on 15 January 1998, as had been previously decided. However, if an end-date for the international commitment depends on the success of its stabilising and rebuilding activities – such as in Bosnia, Kosovo and Afghanistan – the political risk is far greater. Here, the international actors themselves assume responsibility for the success of an open-ended project, and can hardly afford the high political costs of failure.

The project can succeed only if the fragile equilibrium of successful peacekeeping and successful peacebuilding can be maintained. This, however, requires a strong military and peacebuilding engagement from the outset, otherwise the process can fall victim to a vicious circle. In Afghanistan, the military engagement at the beginning was weak. Worsening security conditions have seriously jeopardised the development of civilian capacity. At the same time, setbacks in peacebuilding efforts, especially in the judiciary and police, hampered social development, affected internal stability and increased conflict potential. This vicious circle has now provoked fundamental doubts about the Western approach in Afghanistan. The problem cannot be resolved by a mere increase of foreign troops, now provided by the US but refused by most European states. In Bosnia, although security is stabilised, the international presence finds itself in a deadlock; the Dayton accord 14 years ago did not foresee the exit strategy.

2. Institution-building prejugs state-building

If the political solution to a conflict is not defined at the start of international involvement, it remains the task of peacebuilding. Peacebuilding implies the build-up – also through elections – of public power structures, which can hardly be defined without prejudging the political solution. Leaving the political solution unclear can provoke new conflicts, as with the riots in Kosovo in March 2004, five years after the international intervention. The riots forced the international side to accelerate institution-building in view of the envisaged political solution of a supervised independence, as defined by the Ahtisaari Plan. In March 2007, the plan failed to find international consensus. Institution-building by international actors (UN, OSCE) had contributed to local expectations for independence. Western governments had actively

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19 Ibid.
20 Elections held while the political solution is still debated can be used or abused by conflict parties to mobilise the electorate in favour of their position. The OSCE mission in charge of the elections in Kosovo in November 2007 was seriously criticised for defending its neutral position with respect to Kosovo’s status. In Chechnya, the author as head of the OSCE mission was declared persona non grata by the outgoing local president for stating after the elections in January 1997 that they did not affect Chechnya’s status as part of the Russian Federation.
promoted independence to the point that they in the end could pretend that there no other solution for securing stability than independence, declared in February 2008.

3. Stability versus rule of law

Peacekeeping enhancing internal security is confronted with the following dilemma: to stabilise the situation, it has to make deals with partners who, during the conflict or afterwards, have committed serious crimes or are suspected to have done so. In Afghanistan, the West felt obliged to work closely with brutal warlords in order to foster security. In Kosovo, Ramush Haradinaj became a strong partner of the international actors, although he was indicted by the International Criminal Tribunal for the former Yugoslavia and then acquitted due to lacking testimonies. Stability considerations can hinder subsequent approaches respecting the rule of law on drugs (as in Afghanistan) or organised crime (as in Kosovo), undermining the credibility of the international intervention.

4. Foreign standards versus empowerment

Political stability can become sustainable only if local ownership is assured, that is if local structures are developed to empower local partners to take responsibility for the process. However, international missions set standards and benchmarks and make empowerment dependent on their fulfilment. By doing so, they often delay the process: above all, big missions are inclined to keep control; and bureaucratic structures tend to perpetuate themselves.

The Council of Europe mission monitoring the Kosovo elections in 2007 acknowledged their quality but criticised the OSCE for having failed in the empowerment beforehand, and for having done too much in running the elections. If laws are written by foreign experts, as in Kosovo, they not surprisingly comply with international standards but their implementation is hampered by social reality and traditions. If peace operations promote rule of law and democracy in traditional societies – for instance with quotas for female candidates in elections – they accelerate modernisation, but provoke conflicts with traditional elites. In Afghanistan, the Taliban and others oppose efforts for granting equal rights for women, denouncing this interference as ‘Western cultural imperialism’.

5. Lack of democratic legitimacy of foreign interventions

Local people may welcome foreign presence initially, for assuring peace and security. However, the foreign presence is increasingly questioned, the longer it lasts. Foreigners who promote democracy also execute power, for which they have no democratic mandate from the population concerned. This situation becomes critical in elections, promoted or organised by foreigners, when the ‘wrong’ candidates are elected. If the internationals have the authority, they can simply dismiss such politicians, as in the case of the hardliner Poplasen, elected in 1998 in Bosnia.

6. Cultural gap and bureaucracy

Peace operations mostly take the form of larger missions, with hundreds or thousands of personnel. People from different countries are imported to work within a cultural environment

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21 The OSCE mission in Kosovo, in its Background Report ‘Human rights, ethnic relations and democracy in Kosovo, summer 2007 – summer 2008’ of 2 September 2008, states ‘While the laws meet international standards, their implementation is often hampered’, and the ‘judiciary remains the weakest of the public institutions. There are widespread violations of fair trial standards’.

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different from their own, and in many cases unknown to them. Institutions engaged in 
peacebuilding are large, and so have intrinsic bureaucratic problems. UN Secretary-General Ban 
Ki Moon addressed such problems at a meeting of UN managers in August 2008:

When you are trying to do something, which is tough, when you are trying to change the 
status quo, people will resist... They are thinking of their own position or benefit, not the 
larger interest of the UN... Here in the UN, unfortunately, I see people too often putting their 
own interest first... I see too many turf fights, too much intramural wrangling, too much 
protectiveness of the status quo... We waste incredible amounts of time on largely 
meaningless matters... People forget. We are here to act. We are here to deliver results... 
Department heads squabble among themselves over posts and budgets... as though as they 
somehow owned them... When you work for the UN... please leave your ego at the door.22

To present these problems is not an argument against peacebuilding operations, which are 
necessary and lifesaving and have achieved a lot. It is an argument for an open learning process for 
improving international peace interventions, which operate under difficult and contradictory 
conditions. It is an argument for supporting debate, which also has to acknowledge that peace 
interventions cannot be successful without external pressure and a good deal of paternalism in 
dealing with former conflict parties. Although institutional obstacles might hinder this learning 
process, the whole undertaking of international peace operations could continue relatively smoothly 
in the years to come – if we were not in a global economic crisis, changing the framework conditions 
of international politics.

IV. International peacekeeping after the global economic crisis

It seems reasonable to assume that the world economic crisis will enhance instability, tensions and 
conflicts. Demand for peace operations is likely to increase. The question is: will international 
peacekeeping satisfy this demand? This in turn depends on whether adequate financial and human 
resources can be mobilised, and whether there will be sufficient political will and consensus. 
Peacekeeping now and in the near future will have to cope with three serious obstacles: limitations 
in staffing, financial restrictions and declining Western influence.

• Limited availability of personnel: As outlined near the beginning of this article, peace operations 
depend mostly on military personnel. In recent years, it has been possible to increase the 
number of states contributing troops. ‘When one looks to the future... it seems likely that the 
demand for easy and moderately challenging operations will generally be met’; however, NATO, 
the EU and states, ‘that take on the most hazardous and potentially violent missions... are 
already overstretched, and they should remain so for many years to come’.23 While the US 
during 2009 have already doubled their troops to 68,000 and a further increase to 100,000 
troops has been announced, European countries are very reluctant to strengthen their 
engagement, especially in problematic areas of the country, making burden-sharing among 
NATO states very difficult. Military presence in Afghanistan has become a major political issue in 
Germany in particular, where total withdrawal is increasingly debated. Half of Germany’s 6600 
military personnel abroad are deployed in Afghanistan. Although this is less than 3% of its total 
staff, the German army is considered to be operating abroad at its limits of capacity, also due to 
shaky public support.

22 Ban Ki-Moon’s remarks at the Chief Officers of UN Funds and Programme Meeting, Turin, Italy, Friday 29 
August 2008. (The first two sentences quoted here, in the original text follow the rest of the quoted text). 
• **Eventual Financial restrictions**: The economic crisis has not yet hampered current peacekeeping operations. In May 2009 the yearly budgets for ongoing UN-Peacekeeping operations have been prolonged. In December 2009 the budget for the UN-Mission in Afghanistan has even been substantially increased. However, it can be assumed that participating states might become more reluctant to engage when new missions will come on the agenda. Therefore, in case of a new major crisis, international consensus on a larger new peace operation with strong military and financial commitments from different Western governments is rather unlikely.

• **Weakening Western power and influence**: Western predominance in the world is diminishing, and the economic crisis has accelerated this trend. This also undermines the acceptance of peacebuilding projects, which promote democracy and market economy and depend on direct Western influence on local actors. In the past eight years, US international credibility has suffered serious setbacks, affecting Western credibility generally in the rest of the world. Obama’s administration can hardly reverse this trend. The West is less and less successful in imposing its concepts on local actors by mobilising global support for its projects, as exemplified in Kosovo, in the Iranian nuclear issue or in the Near East. The world has become multi-polar, making international consensus on peace interventions more difficult. However, to date, there is no alternative to the Western concept of peace intervention, to Western peacekeeping capacities and to Western political will to engage.

Overall, two scenarios are discernible for the future of peacekeeping. First, it is possible that the weakening of the West as the traditional main power in world politics may not allow for coping properly with local conflicts, and will have wider destabilising effects. Second, it is possible instead that international peacekeeping efforts may be established on a broader basis. This would include the active involvement of Russia and of new powers such as China, India, Brazil and others. The West would have to accept these actors as equal partners, and the new actors would have to prove their readiness to assume global responsibility and to overcome narrow national interest as the sole driver of their foreign policy. This second scenario has clear implications for how the West understands its own role in the world. As Paddy Ashdown, former High Representative for Bosnia, has put it: ‘If we want a more ordered world at a time of great instability, we are going to have to provide a space at the top tables for nations that do not share our culture, our history, our world view or even our values’.  

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24 Paddy Ashdown in Guardian.co.uk, 25 May 2009.
One of the persistent frustrations for peace researchers is the often simplistic approach taken to understanding conflict in Africa. All too frequently, the dynamics of these conflicts are reduced to primordial arguments of ancient hatreds or over-reliance on ‘weak governance’ as an explanation for state failure and internal conflict. What makes David J. Francis’ edited volume, Peace & Conflict in Africa unique is that Francis assembles a collection of essays that aim to provide a more nuanced understanding of the causes of conflict in Africa. The book is presented as the first comprehensive overview of peace and conflict across the African continent and is promoted as an introductory text to key themes in conflict studies, including: conflict resolution, peacebuilding, security, and development. The book aims to introduce the reader to these key concepts and debates and to emphasize indigenous African approaches to addressing conflict and building peace in war affected African societies. Thus, the collection is set up in broadly two sections: the first is comprised of seven chapters focused primarily upon discourses and concepts for understanding conflict in Africa; the second section contains five chapters on specific issues, such as transitional justice, democratisation, globalization and human security.

Francis’ aim with this volume is an attempt to provide a more nuanced understanding of the causes of conflict in Africa. Francis argues in his introductory chapter, and quite correctly, in my opinion, that an approach to understanding the context and politics creating the conditions for wars on this continent requires the “dehomogenization of African politics” (p. 1) while still acknowledging the common features. This dehomogenization, in the opinions of the authors of this volume, which I share, is largely a conceptual project of the West. Thus, in many ways, this volume seems directed at Western scholars of African politics to make room in the discourse for a more accurate representation of African countries, without relying on tired explanations that essentialize the continent. This edited volume, though pragmatic, shows a general optimism for the capacity of African states to implement home-grown solutions to conflict.

What is interesting about Francis’ approach is also his criticism of patrimonialism as an explanatory model for understanding conflict in Africa. Works on neo-patrimonialism in Africa (c.f. Bayart 1993; Bayart et. al. 1999; Reno 1998; Berdal and Malone 2000) have contributed a focus on economic interests in the shaping of African politics, argued to be “the core feature of post-colonial politics in Africa” (Bratton and van de Walle 1997: 3), including the informalization and privatization of governance institutions and the supplantation of colonialism with similar structures of patron-client relationships from within the country. In his introduction to the volume, however, Francis is quick to defend the examples of African leaders who have transcended the appeal of neo-patrimonialism, which he uses to downplay the continued influence of patrimonialism in African politics. In doing so, Francis denies the extent of external influence that encourages the systematic and large-scale fraud and smuggling and economy of plunder the plagues many African states, mentioning only the Cold-War era dictatorships of Mobutu of Zaire and Bokassa of Central African Republic. Though he acknowledges that this external influence exists, his approach attempts to integrate internal and external social, economic, political, cultural, developmental, and security factors, which dilutes the importance of post-colonial economic influences by which the West

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continues to exploit African countries through unequal exchange, unfavourable trade terms, and support of patrimonial regimes.

As well, by taking such a grassroots approach, this volume at times ignores the practical questions of policy implementation. For example, Isaac O. Albert’s contribution to the volume, “Understanding peace in Africa,” takes a ‘bottom-up’ approach to understanding African approaches to peace, arguing for the need for more engaging peacebuilding models that incorporate indigenous African models of conflict management with dominant Western models. His argument is informed by cultural relativism, a theoretical framework that argues that the validity of any practice must be evaluated from within its cultural context and that there is no one right approach or solution to a given problem. Thus, Albert surveys meanings of peace in different cultures in Africa and draws upon various cultural traditions, which he argues are still vibrant and relevant for making, building and keeping peace on the continent. He believes it is the erosion of traditional approaches and traditional authority in many states that contributes to ongoing conflicts in Africa. While Albert contributes an interesting philosophical framework of conceptualizations of peace in Africa, the broader question of how to successfully implement policy based on these conceptualizations is not addressed.

In attempting to ‘Africanize’ the discourse through this bottom-up analysis of conflict in Africa, I feel this volume overlooked the important role that globalization and Western economic interests play in influencing the course of politics in the many resource-rich nations of Africa. This collection focuses too heavily on domestic factors that it neglects discussing the large degree to which African leaders are restricted from acting by larger international forces. In Kenneth C. Omeje’s chapter, for example, “Understanding conflict resolution in Africa,” he quickly surveys ‘conflict goods theories’ relating to the role of economic interests in perpetuating conflict in African states, but dismisses it as a pathological view of “African states as inherently predisposed to ‘irrational’ and predatory conflicts” (p. 73). However, it is not necessary to view African politics as ‘irrationally’ shaped by economic interests; rather, it would be more useful if the author had, rather than ‘Africanized’ his discussion, ‘globalized’ it to look for the common influences in what have been described as predatory economic wars. There is little use in discussing state-building and democratic reform in Africa without a thorough examination of the global processes that act to prevent this.

Similarly, in his chapter on “Africa and globalization,” Jim Whitman takes a rather conservative approach to his understanding of the influence of globalization on African states and their development. He recognizes the appeal of African states’ vast resource wealth to other states, and advises of the danger of selling off these resources too cheaply. According to Whitman, African states may be motivated by a desire for a quick solution to impoverishment and underdeveloped infrastructure and overlook their ‘competitive standing’ in the international system by which to advance their longer-term goals. He mentions the role of ‘globalized configurations of interests’ only in passing, admitting its influence on “initiating and sustaining patterns of violent conflict” (p. 193), but ultimately holds the individual states of Africa responsible for their own human and economic security within the globalized system of states. Like Francis’ introduction, Whitman ultimately concludes that the fault and responsibility for the exploitation of African resources and the underdevelopment of African states lies with individual African leaders. Whitman mistakenly assumes an even playing field in the international system, on which each African leader has the capacity to negotiate for their interests vis-à-vis Western states and vis-à-vis corporations, a view I argue is not entirely realistic. Whitman and the other authors of this volume too quickly overlook are the structures of international relations that construct and maintain power imbalances between the West and lesser developed nations.
Despite the above criticisms, the strengths of this volume should not be underemphasized. Peace and Conflict in Africa, while contributing to a growing field of discourse on these issues as they specifically relate to the continent, provides an important and largely overlooked dimension to the literature: traditional African responses to conflict and justice. However, as this review has outlined, this text falls short of contextualizing much of the volume’s contributions in terms of policy formation for the modern African state; the reader is left to wonder how a specific traditional cultural approach to conflict can be generalized and incorporated into a larger conflict resolution policy approach that transcends cultural groups.

Peace and Conflict in Africa is quite a dense, academic volume, written primarily by and for academics. The most receptive audience would likely be found in scholars of peace studies, development studies, and those interested in African studies more generally. However, this latter group is stated with reservation, as the historical content provided in each chapter is minimal and the surveys of conflicts may seem superficial to readers interested in a more politically analytical text. This book may also appeal to policymakers attempting to address post-conflict justice and reconstruction for the theoretical foundation provided in the early chapters and as an introduction to thinking about ways of incorporating indigenous and traditional mechanisms for peace in the formation of post-conflict policy and institutions.

References

Gender, Humiliation, and Global Security:
Dignifying Relationships from Love, Sex, and Parenthood to World Affairs
Review by Pandora Hopkins, Ph.D.*


I have reason to believe that in so far as the industrial applications of physics are concerned the forecast of the writers may prove to be more accurate than the forecast of the scientists. (Leó Szilárd 1933; quoted in Canaday 2000: 4)

These words, penned by the Hungarian nuclear physicist Leó Szilárd in 1933, accompanied The World Set Me Free, a book written by H. G. Wells 20 years earlier. The package was addressed to Sir Hugo Hirst, founder of the British General Electric Company. Only a few months before, Szilárd had picked up the novel that was to prove, not only pivotal to his own career, but tragically so to the world at large. In his novel Wells described artificial radioactivity and dated its future discovery: the year 1933. Despite the initial skepticism of fellow scientists, Szilárd was inspired by Wells’s imagination to begin working in the area of nuclear physics and, eventually, to become a leading player in the U.S. atomic weapons program (Canaday 2000: 3f).

The foregoing exchange of thoughts between a fiction writer and a physical scientist—members of “two cultures” usually considered to be impenetrable to one another (Snow 1956: 413f)—is particularly dramatic. However, the episode should also be understood as part of a growing desire to question the legitimacy of other boundaries between genres—e.g. anthropology/sociology, folklore/literature, mathematics/music, ethnography/writing. Ever-widening experiences with other cultures and their diverse modes of thought have led to critical reflection on accepted Western research practices, especially, the Procrustean bed of dualism and the contextlessness of non-holistic strategies. The newer perceptions are both enriching and humbling—enriching because of their potential for increased wisdom, humbling because of the implied willingness to cede a measure of professional authority. Sometimes they involve recognizing limits on what the human mind can in fact accomplish—as in the uncertainty principle (Ungenauigkeit) of the physicist Werner Heisenberg; the “fuzzy logic” of physicists (sometimes called “fuzzy thinking”) derived from the “fuzzy set theory” of mathematicians; or the on-going controversy by social scientists about how much of an outsider an ethnographer is able to be. In short, there has been a growing realization that accuracy in scholarly research must include the willingness to incorporate what might be inconvenient—including, the unpredictable, the contradictory, and the partially true.

Dr. Evelin Lindner, the Founding President of Human Dignity and Humiliation Studies, has recently written an important book: Gender, Humiliation, and Global Security. It is a sequel to her two earlier volumes (Lindner 2006 & 2009) on the grave consequences of humiliation and the urgent need to work toward both personal and interstate equality and respect—or dignity, as she prefers to

* Pandora Hopkins taught at Yale University, Rutgers University and CUNY (the City University of New York) before moving to Mexico where she is writing a book, tentatively called House of Cards and the Subliminal Truths That Are Holding It Together, from which this article derives. She also co-directs (with Victoria Fontan) an oral history project, “Voting With Their Feet.” A particular research focus on the political consequences of cross-cultural perception was also manifested by her book, Aural Thinking in Norway (Plenum, 1986); it is a study of the cognitive nature of aural transmission through an analysis of the Hardanger fiddle tradition of Norway.
call it. This is the subject Lindner calls her life’s project, and she has coined the term egalization “to complement the term globalization in ways that can help build a decent global community” (151).

Humiliation is a complicated emotion that comes in a number of forms; it can cause international cycles of violence; it can be addictive; and (one of the main themes of this book) it can even, in the sense of humility, be essential for survival. In line with the trend toward nuanced scholarship noted above, Lindner openly disavows dualism and uses qualitative methods to promote dignity through a respect for cultural diversity. In today’s world, it might seem difficult to shock through boundary-blurring. However, Lindner may have risen more than a few eyebrows by stretching the parameters of scientific inquiry into a realm usually associated with plastic lace, virtual Valentines and FTD.com. It is a subject area she calls by a variety of names, such as “big love” or “firm love,” as well as “tough universal love” and “ambitious love” (167).

Why does Lindner use the L-word? “Love has force. This is why I write about love, even though the word and the concept are so mangled that its force has almost been obliterated.” Clearly, it is partly for its very shock value that she decided to use the word. Just as clearly, the cumbersome term with its modifiers (“big,” “firm,” etc.) reflects the inadequacy of the English language to express this concept. In line with her cross-cultural ideals, Lindner lists a number of non-English terms, including satya, pilia, agape, and metta. Desmond Tutu, in his Foreword to her book, writes that she is advocating the African concept of ubuntu which he describes as the “traditional African philosophy for living together and solving conflicts in an atmosphere of shared humility.”

Lindner knows she is taking a courageous step onto uncharted—or should we say uncool?—territory. Fortunately, she is well-armed with impeccable academic qualifications: a doctorate in medicine and another in psychology. As to her lifelong concern for human dignity, she points to being born into a displaced family from Silesia in Central Europe, part of a group of people who were deeply traumatized by being punished for a war they had not caused: “the need to develop Geschichtsbewusstsein (awareness of history) and to stand up for ‘never again’ became central for my life” (xx). Lindner has chosen to match her interdisciplinary research with a similar freedom of movement in her personal life. Constantly on a global lecture circuit, she possesses affiliations, among others, with the Columbia University Network of Conflict Resolution, the University of Oslo’s department of psychology, and the Maison des Sciences de L’Homme in Paris.

This is not an easy book to understand because, while the focus is on domestic relationships, the points are being made both for their literal meaning and for their metaphoric value in relation to international dealings—a subtle but important relationship for which Lindner ingeniously chooses a spiral type of organization.

This book is, therefore, not merely about gender and humiliation or love and dignity. It is also about cultural and institutional change, locally and globally (xviii).

In order to show these correspondences, Dr. Lindner uses vignettes. For example, to bring out the importance of understanding the cultural frame before trying to solve a societal problem, she describes a situation in which both husband and wife play the roles assigned to them within the honor–society framework; the wife believes her husband’s beatings to be evidence of his love; the husband believes he would be humiliated if deprived of his dominant (and therefore, disciplinary) function—which he associates with honor. To permanently stop the husband from beating his wife, it is necessary to do more than enforce a law against domestic violence. The first step must be to change both husband’s and wife’s conception of marriage structure—and gender—to an egalitarian one. Another vignette concerns a ski trip in the mountains of Norway. The British leaders of the expedition tragically cause fatalities, including the death of one of their sons, through their
unwillingness to accept the humiliation of retreating from perilous weather conditions. In this case, acceptance of humiliation would have been constructive, in contrast to other types of humiliation situations that invite retaliation and often instigate cycles of vengeance.

It is easy to make the international inferences: Lindner is pointing out that something similar to the patriarchal code of honor is widely accepted internationally (and can therefore be used for propaganda purposes). Invasions of weak nations by the strong are commonly explained as a disciplinary action and withdrawal or defeat considered humiliating. Keying in humiliation and Iraq on my computer this morning, I received almost 40,000 hits this morning; for humiliation and Afghanistan, I got 155,000 responses. To some of us, it is reminiscent of Secretary of Defense John McNaughton’s explanation forty years ago: “The present objective in Vietnam is to avoid humiliation” (quoted in Schell 1976: 10). The second vignette (the skiing tragedy) refers to the main theme of the book: there are times (internationally, as well as domestically) that call for a beneficial, non-demeaning, type of humiliation; and that kind of willingness to give in, to humble oneself without feeling violated, is only possible outside the honor culture. Lindner sometimes refers to this as humility; I would suggest that exclusive usage of this term would be more suitable and less confusing.

Thus, Lindner finds that the honor society is not confined to the Middle East, but is a societal system “predicated upon the anticipation of war.” Lindner is disgusted and angry—about bailouts to crooked millionaires, about the environment, about a permanent war economy, about “endangering the future of our children.” She refers to the philosopher Otto Neurath who used a ship metaphor:

—the wealthy play with love and sex on their luxury top decks, trying to protect their riches from the poor who attempt to climb up to them from their miserable lower decks—and all overlook or deny the fact that the entire ship is at risk of sinking (xvii).

Dr. Lindner opens up—and invites—new avenues for collaboration: “I do not have all the solutions. Most probably, there is no one final remedy. Saving the ship will always be an ongoing process” (xvii).

This book is partially a blueprint, partially a call to action; however, it is as an authority on humiliation that the author is most powerful. She is able to contribute an important psychological component to a cutting edge issue: the linkage between a patriarchal family, an authoritarian state, and war (see Braudy 2003; Ducat 2004; Goldstein 2001; Hoffman 2001; Hopkins 2008; and Lakoff 2004). Lindner shines a spotlight on the honor culture and “the need to defend it against humiliation” (50), a structure that, she theorizes, may have originally come about through fear of others (the “security dilemma”). Anyone concerned about the path toward perpetual war recently taken by the United States should be roused to action by her strong language as she points out that, within this context, human potential is “curtailed, mutilated, and deformed.” It requires the polarization of gender roles since “men prepare to die young and women to produce new soldiers whom they have to prepare to die young.” Evolutionary biologists—and the rest of us—should take note, for “honor is inherently irrational (if interest in survival is defined as rational)” (50).

Psychology has only recently shifted its focus away from a search for universals. Dr. Lindner, as a psychologist who sees wisdom in boundary blurring, believes that: “metaemotions depend on our cultural scripts, which, in turn, are embedded into large-scale geopolitical framings” (5). Lindner categorizes the humiliation found in honor societies (honor humiliation) into four types and criticizes human rights organizations for conflating them under a single rubric (70). Some might imagine that anyone who attempts to work for a more equitable world while, at the same time, maintaining
respect for diverse cultural views, confronts a daunting task. Characteristically, Lindner openly airs the difficulties while pointing to the opportunities for enrichment offered by access to the knowledge and experiences of others.

As we learned from the H.G.Wells-Léo-Szilard anecdote at the beginning of this review, the fuzzing of boundaries opens minds to new ideas, but the results can be destructive: the invention of devastating weaponry. Nevertheless, *Gender, Humiliation* and *Global Security* delivers an optimistic message—a rarity in today’s world. As noted above, Lindner looks at that *bête noire* for progressives, globalization, and sees in it potential for creating a new and decent world community—the erasure of national sovereignty being a prerequisite for getting rid of the “security dilemma” and the honor culture it brings with it. While pulling no punches about the gravity of the contemporary situation, she makes positive suggestions for the systemic transformation of globalization she calls *egalization*.

Dr. Evelin Lindner even finds a hopeful sign in the economic meltdown: the pitiful performance of the powerful has aroused sleepers whose apathy used to be so thick, she writes, that people seemed to be victims to a “mind-set that races toward crisis by default.” The fallacy of reliance on corporate leadership is out there in plain sight, and she quotes Former Federal Reserve Chairman Alan Greenspan who said he was “in a state of shocked disbelief” to find that CEOs could not police themselves (xix). As Dr. Linda Hartling writes at the end of her *Afterword* to this book:

*If men and women are going to transform pernicious institutions, we must promote humility as an organizational necessity for bridging differences. Most of all, if men and women are going to create a sustainable future for the world’s children, we must cultivate humility as an urgent international necessity. This book calls us to forge a heroic, yet humble path forward, celebrating and enlarging men and women’s potential and capacity to work together for a better world.* (177)

Dr. Lindner has shown us that we must cross both physical and mental boundaries in order to learn how to live together on this planet. There is no language or culture that contains within it all the answers—even, as we have seen, words for all types of love. Like fuzzy logic, Lindner’s recommendations are both enriching and humbling. This is an important book and should be read by anyone concerned about the future of life beyond his or her lifetime.

**References**


Goldstein, Joshua. 2001. *How Gender Shapes the War System and Vice Versa*. Cambridge; Cambridge U.P


