RADICAL REVIEW

Vol. 1
2021

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Danny Lord

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Proposing radical ideas for effective governance in a COVID-regulated world

COLLABORATIVE SOCIAL CHANGE

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About Collaborative Social Change

Collaborative Social Change (CSC) is a transnational network of proactive and receptive violence prevention specialists working in highly diverse political and social contexts. Our shared core mandate is to address and prevent diverse forms of direct, structural, and cultural violence using a series of grounded and participatory approaches to research and practice. In addition, CSC provides a range of services including research and problem mapping, documentation, policy development and analysis, facilitating dialogue, mediation, strategic advocacy, multi-level diplomacy, and program design and implementation, among others.

CSC is a registered not-for-profit incorporated company with headquarters in Vancouver, British Columbia, Canada. Our representatives and affiliates are based in more than twelve cities around the world including but not limited to Kampala, the Hague, London, New Delhi, New York, and Ottawa. Our dynamic community provides partners with experience applying multidisciplinary and interdisciplinary approaches to study and practice in international relations, international law, human rights, political science, sociology, psychology, transitional justice, peacebuilding, international diplomacy, area studies, gender studies and cultural studies. We tap into this multi-faceted network to mobilize cross-border collaboration to address conflict-related issues and violence in a particular locale or to address trends and patterns of violence across contexts by promoting peace-inducing change transnationally.

The views and opinions of the contributors are not representative of the views of Collaborative Social Change, but are presented and welcomed in the spirit of open discussion and collaboration.

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Editor's Note

Danny Lord

The title 'Editor-in-chief' belies the essentially collaborative nature of a project like this. From early discussions aimed at formulating a theme, to the peer-review, editing, and proof-reading processes, this has very much been a collective effort. With that in mind, I would like to thank Yasmin Jones, Erika Mukherjee, Aalok Vora, Marisa Tramontano, and Nousha Nematzadeh, for their help at various stages and throughout. Special mention is reserved for CSC founder Saghar Birjandian, for coming up with the idea for the Radical Review in the first place, and for playing a crucial role throughout its development, as made clear in her *Preface* (p3) and *Introduction* (p5). In the collaborative and necessarily adaptive and problem-driven approach taken to its compilation, this inaugural Radical Review solidly reflects CSC's driving ethos.

During those initial preparatory discussions, in the throes of 2020, it became obvious that the pandemic would be central to our theme. As a crisis felt across the world, it necessitated radical thinking in a number of ways. It is worth reproducing part of our initial concept note here to illustrate:

> A common refrain among scholars of space and infrastructure reminds us that the systems that sustain us only really become visible when they are put under strain and start to break down, or stop working altogether. The ongoing COVID crisis is having this effect on society (or societies) writ large. As a genuinely global crisis, all over the world it is functioning like an x-ray, throwing in sharp relief the systems, structures, and principles that order our societies. Inequalities of all stripes are exacerbated, networks of infrastructures placed under new stresses, and governance priorities are laid bare by how and when those in power choose to intervene to mitigate the effects of the crisis, if at all.

But as clear as it was that the pandemic would be an appropriate springboard from which to launch the Radical Review, we knew it would that it would also make it challenging to bring it together in a focused way. As much as the pandemic was an almost universally disruptive force, the intensity of that disruption was wildly unevenly distributed. It is perhaps because it was universally disruptive that the nature of those disruptions varied so much. Our focus on governance meant that submissions would reflect the diverse forms of governance in operation around the world, and the diverse ways in which they became or were revealed as acutely problematic during the pandemic (whether through their continued or truncated operation). This varied both within and across polities. This is how, for example, we have an essay proposing radical solutions for the reclamation and repurposing of common green space in North American cities (Sample, p15), alongside an essay offering innovative suggestions for the rehabilitation of police and army officers responsible for gratuitous violence against civilians in Uganda (Okoth, p38). Maintaining a coherent thread across such a broad range of topics presents editorial challenges, and an overview that places each in context, grouped according to two broad interpretations of the central theme can be found in Birjandian's *Introduction* (p5).

There was no way of knowing exactly what shape this volume would take at the start. It unfolded organically, and its substantive contours reflect the turbulent period during which it was produced. More is said on what there is to learn from the diversity of the contributions itself in the *Conclusion* (p60). But for now, I would like simply to thank all of the authors for working on these essays during what has been a difficult year for more or less everyone. I'm proud to be able to present this to the world and you all should be too.

Another core value of CSC's comes from the belief that every single one of us is relevant to processes of violence prevention and to peace more broadly.

Editor's Note

Gatekeeping is an enemy of genuine progress. Yet it rears its head in few places more than the academy, despite more idealistic characterizations seeing the latter as a site of potential liberation. All of our contributors have some kind of academic background, but they are not all writing as academics. This is not a document that is simply by scholars, for scholars.

One potentially insidious example of scholarly gatekeeping is the insistence on peculiar linguistic conventions. While these may admirably intend towards objectivity and clarity in theory, in practise they can arbitrarily exclude the uninitiated. Especially, that is, those for whom English[1] is not a first language, or whose English is not the precise vernacular spoken among particular social classes in the UK and North America. This is not meant to condescend by suggesting anyone find difficulty in writing in a defined style because of their background but rather to, at least for now, do away with the need to do so. Central to the enterprise of demystifying radicalism is allowing as many different normalities as possible to share an equal epistemic footing. Central to that is the preservation of every author's voice. Ensuring readability and effective flow while maintaining what is unique about a writer's style is a basic skill required for editing, but it is one that I feel is particularly important to emphasize here. We are not aiming for authorless objectivity but rather to radically foreground subjectivity. We are not aiming to translate ideas into academic English, but rather to make it clear that knowledge production and knowledge sharing are not confined to the academy, however valuable a role it may have to play.

It is our hope that this volume is read as widely as possible. This is not just about the number of people who read it (although a lot would be nice!), but about the range of spaces and circles in which it can be shared and considered relevant. We hope that it sparks conversation, thought, and action, and that it can do so for anyone.

1 Or whatever language the academic work in question is written in.

Preface

Dr Saghar Birjandian

Radical thinking as a child was very natural for me. According to some educators and psychologists, this is normal and one of the reasons children are so creative in comparison to older generations. Even if they are aware, children tend to be detached from the foundations and roots that cause a phenomenon and the realm of possibilities in the empirical world. Consequently, children can think of drastically different ways of being such as hoping they can fly when they get older or explaining childbirth to themselves as a result of mommy eating too much. And when confronted with the laws, norms, and environmental limitations of their society and their world, there seems to be a dominant trend across cultures for children to ask: why? Why does something have to work in a certain way? Why can't it work in this other way? Whereas many children are socialized out of such critical thinking, interrogating the reason(s) of a claim, position, action, reaction, process, or system is something I thoroughly enjoy and prioritize to this day. Additionally, I systematically ask why individuals and groups behave as they do when often we get distracted by focusing on their actions alone. I live and breathe asking why. In fact, I genuinely believe like many others do, that without answering why something is the case, the rest of our experiences of that thing remain superficial as we have yet to understand the reason(s) it exists in its current form.

Among adults, we see a dominant trend across cultures to accept or become increasingly ignorant about why their societies function as they do and instead, the focus turns toward figuring out *what* to do and *how* to be to survive and/or thrive in the status quo. But, in the twenty-first century and specifically during the recent pandemic, calls for a new world order and completely different ways of organizing social, economic, and political life require that we confront why relevant systems exist in their current form. And as the answers become visible including assumptions, beliefs, and histories upon which current systems rest, fundamentally different foundations can be intentionally designed. However, this radical way of thinking, which necessarily engages the root of something or someone, is not normalized in many spaces and I have experienced this firsthand.

I do not see the value of research and the academy if not helping to increase the quality of life for the masses, which often marginalizes me as an "idealist" or "too much of a practitioner" in the theoretical realm. When practicing in my field, I often call for a pause, to reflect and theorize how to improve approaches to violence prevention, which in the hustle of the everyday in the practical realm is a laughable luxury only academics and researchers enjoy. But I ask why this is not a mandatory part of practice in the interest of harm reduction? My masters thesis focused on understanding the utility of international criminal justice for conflict affected populations, which to the orthodoxy is beyond the scope of what international criminal justice should concern itself. But to me the purpose of international criminal justice should and arguably is in theory, to serve affected populations and protect them from predatory governance systems. When developing my doctoral thesis, I was looking to redefine what "transitional justice" means in accordance with conflict affected populations' views. But I had to justify why my resultant and fundamentally different definition should still be considered "transitional justice", whereas I would ask, why wouldn't it be if affected populations defined it as such?

When engaging the international atrocities prevention community, I asked why there would be irreconcilable differences between organizations given that diplomacy and conflict management is part and parcel to what these actors "teach" others to disallow

the conditions for atrocities to unfold. In the systems dynamics community, I asked why there could be silos, dividing "hard systems thinkers" from "soft systems thinkers", when most, if not all systems theorists work so hard to show the value of understanding all parts of a system and their relationships to each other. Why not apply this appreciation for all parts of a system to the systems dynamics community itself?

At every turn, I am constantly asking why something is the case. And consequently, I rarely feel as if I belong and often, I am not accepted as someone who "gets it" or I am easily dismissed as "radical", which means I am thinking and behaving in ways that do not fit within mainstream parameters. These reactions tell me that there is discomfort in understanding the purpose(s) of our actions and even resistance to changing said purpose(s) where necessary. But confrontation with why something is the case does not necessitate that we change the answers. We could also find a mismatch between the purpose(s) a person or something (e.g., machine) seeks to achieve and how they operate, making the latter a possible site for change. Yet asking such foundational questions at all can be problematized as a waste of time, idealistic, or "too philosophical" as to some the answers might be "too difficult" or even "impossible" to address.

These experiences caused in me a healthy frustration with the lack of will in the everyday to engage foundational questions that necessarily ask why something is the case. I believe we should be continuously asking why human beings and the world around us appear in their current forms. This is because to build societies that can manage conflict non-violently and in turn become more peaceful, at times, we must understand and change the fundamental causes of our systems' and our own behaviors, which radical thinking encourages and, in some situations, necessitates. In addition, if we understand and accept the purpose(s) our governance systems must fulfil, then we can change what they look like and how they operate to graph on to how our societies evolve without losing governance systems' essential functions. In light of these analytical benefits, the Radical Review is meant to normalize asking why as this is the starting point for the types of social and societal transformation that even beneficiaries of the status quo across contexts are calling for in a Covid-regulated world. Radical change requires radical thinking, where asking why is embedded in the process of understanding. The hope is that in this edition of Radical Review, the contributors demonstrate the utility of radical thought to advance non-violent approaches to governance in this transformative era.

Introduction

Dr Saghar Birjandian, Yasmin Jones & Nousha Nematzadeh

The Radical Review series aims to normalize asking *why* human beings and institutions function as they do to help strategize social and societal transformation more effectively. By asking why something is the case, we confront the core or root causes that produce said thing in its current form. In the context of "radical change" such an understanding can establish what informs and shapes existing states of being and affairs, which can then be challenged using alternative vantage points and by rejecting the limitations of the root causes of the status quo. Radical thinking in this form often reveals that what is deemed "radical" is context dependent rather than "universally" or "objectively" different from what is "normal" as normalcy is assumed here to be socially constructed.[1] By illustrating the context dependency of radicalism, this series also establishes the value in strategizing social change using cross-cultural knowledge exchanges as well as, multidisciplinary and interdisciplinary approaches to knowledge production; the latter of which, has been identified as a radical response to the disciplinary boundaries in academia.[2] To these ends, this introductory volume of Radical Review explores radical ideas that can improve governance in a COVID-regulated world.

The COVID-19 pandemic produced for many of us unprecedented time and space in which to carefully evaluate the worldviews, assumptions, values, and interests that drive how our respective governance systems operate.[3] More specifically, inhabitants[4] across the world analyzed actors and bodies that generate and enforce laws, market forces, security forces, and network trends such as subnational and national governments and regional and international bodies as they coordinated public response to the pandemic. We examined their levels of transparency and how they disseminate information; their ethical decision-making patterns; resource allocation strategies; and service delivery trends. For example, we observed service delivery gaps in some contexts and healthcare systems ill-equipped to support crisis response, demonstrating the inequality *between* nations. In other contexts, we witnessed elders be neglected by their healthcare systems and subsequently lose their lives, reinforcing the minimal value often placed on a human life that can no longer generate profit for the state. We also observed various governance bodies prioritize certain communities over others along ethnic, racial, and religious lines as well as the urban-rural divide. And as these realities were exposed in necessarily public decision-making processes, even people that typically benefit from the status quo could no longer deny the inequalities embedded in their social order. Thus, it comes as no surprise that there was a spike in social movements calling for fundamental societal change that is necessarily radical to eradicate inequality. The

1 Max Travers, "The Phenomenon of the `Radical Lawyer'," *Sociology* 28, no. 1 (February 1, 1994): 245–58, https://doi.org/10.1177/0038038594028001015; Tim Jacoby, "Understanding Conflict and Violence: Theoretical and Interdisciplinary Approaches," *Understanding Conflict and Violence: Theoretical and Interdisciplinary Approaches*, July 5, 2007, 1–242, https://doi.org/10.4324/9780203028827, 38; William Eckhardt, "The Radical Critique of Peace Research: A Brief Review," *Peace Research* 18, no. 3 (1986), 55.

2 S. Fish, "Being Interdisciplinary Is So Very Hard to Do," *Undefined*, 1991, https://www.semanticscholar.org/paper/Being-Interdisciplinary-Is-So-Very-Hard-to-Do-Fish/60762cf2f00410f88edcbb1a97d575c43ccf1938, 103.

3 Zygmunt Bauman, "Getting to the Roots of Radical Politics Today," in *What Is Radical Politics Today?*, ed. Jonathan Pugh (London: Palgrave Macmillan UK, 2009), 17–26, https://doi.org/10.1057/9780230251144_2.

4 The term "inhabitants" is used in place of "citizens" throughout this essay to account for the range of status agents can assume in a particular society including refugees, stateless persons, migrants, tourists, expats, international students, etc.

reflective essays in this volume explore diverse radical ideas in this context, which in the current political climate is a high-stakes endeavour.

UNDERSTANDING AND RECLAIMING THE CONCEPT OF "RADICAL"

The word radical comes from the Latin word "rudix" meaning root.[5] As a noun, "radical" often refers to the core of someone or something as being extremely different from the status quo. In the context of social and societal change, "radicals" are historically known for seeking to fundamentally transform their social, economic, and/or political systems, which is referred to here as "radical change".[6] Two basic features contribute to producing social and societal transformation that is "radical". The first includes asking "radical questions" that unravel the core or root of something or someone. Radical questions move past what something is and how something functions to asking why it exists as it does (i.e., examining root causes). And in unearthing the answers to why, "radical solutions" can be proposed that replace or significantly transform the identified root causes of the status quo, which is the second feature. Together, asking radical questions and proposing radical solutions produce strategies for radical social and societal change.

In the context of governance, "radical politics" proposing principally different social orders are traditionally celebrated, particularly in the theoretical realm. For example, Feminism, Modernism, Neo-conservatism, and Marxism have led to many radical social transformations by changing constitutive norms.[7] Today's most "legitimate" social order, namely, (Neo) liberalism was seen in the 1970s as a radical model meant to liberate corporate power. However, radical thinking and radical politics more specifically today remain quite weak for myriad reasons. One reason could be that there are too many radical factions, weakening the ability to collectively mobilize under a single movement for radical change.[8] However, radical "fragmentation" allows for diverse views to inform change and any one in particular serving as the "grand vision" of radical change, marginalizes other views and in effect can fuel inequality. Another cause could be that many radical thinkers are on the margins of society and therefore are disconnected from and less able to penetrate other parts of the system. Radical politics could also be weak because radical thinkers do not work hard enough to reach other parts of society, undermining collective action for societal change.[9] Though these and many other reasons are indeed valid, another reason worth emphasizing here is the entrenchment of (Neo)liberalism as the only legitimate social order at the turn of the twenty-first century,[10] which was amplified and reinforced by the Global War on Terror (GWOT).[11]

The attacks on the Twin Towers in New York City on September 11, 2001, affected every facet of the international order be it legal, political, social, or economic. This event continues to be depicted by the United States and other western liberal democracies as an attack on their way of life and something that should be combatted even if the use of force is required.[12] Whereas (Neo)liberalism was once celebrated for its "radical" nature, proponents of this ideology often problematize contemporary radical alternatives as existential threats. Consequently, "radical" is now coupled with "anti-liberal" and "anti-west", and most devastatingly, "violent extremism" in post 9/11 public, political and academic discourses.[13] Exploring radical

5 Jonathan Pugh, "What Is Radical Politics Today?," in *What Is Radical Politics Today?*, ed. Jonathan Pugh, 2009th edition (Basingstoke ; New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2009), 2.

6 Astrid Bötticher, "Towards Academic Consensus Definitions of Radicalism and Extremism," *Perspectives on Terrorism* 11, no. 4 (2017), 71.

7 Pugh, "What Is Radical Politics Today?", 2.

8 Ibid.

9 Ibid.

10 "The Radical Centre: A Politics without Adversary (1998)," in *Chantal Mouffe* (Routledge, 2013), 18.

11 Gordon Lafer, "Neoliberalism by Other Means: The 'War on Terror' at Home and Abroad," *New Political Science* 26, no. 3 (September 1, 2004): 323–46, https://doi.org/10.1080/0739314042000251306.

12 Guardian Staff, "Full Text: Tony Blair's Speech," the Guardian, January 7, 2003, http://www.theguardian.com/politics/2003/jan/07/foreignpolicy.speeches; Rashmi Singh, "'Defensive Liberal Wars': The Global War on Terror and the Return of Illiberalism in American Foreign Policy," *Revista de Sociologia e Política* 23 (March 2015): 99–120, https://doi.org/10.1590/1678-987315235306.

13 "Obsession: Radical Islam's War against the West: A Response," *Islam Ahmadiyya* (blog), February 22, 2010, https://www.alislam.org/articles/obsession-radical-islams-war-west-response/; Kabir Sethi, "The Allure of the Radical: Understanding Jihadist Violence in the West," *Macalester International* 22, no. 1 (January 1, 2009), https://digitalcommons.macalester.edu/macintl/vol22/iss1/14; Alastair Bonnett, "Western Dystopia: Radical Islamism and Anti-Westernism," in *The Idea of the West: Culture, Politics and History*, ed. Alastair Bonnett (London: Macmillan Education UK, 2004), 143–62, https://doi.org/10.1007/978-0-230-21233-6_8; Bonnett; "Putin and Naryshkin Resort to Radical Anti-Western Rhetoric," *Warsaw Institute* (blog), September 29, 2020, https://warsawinstitute.org/putin-naryshkin-resort-radical-anti-western-rhetoric/.

alternatives to the western (Neo)liberal mainstream is identified as a precursor to becoming a violent extremist.[14] This is a process referred to in counter-terrorism discourse as "radicalization", which is a notion often used by states to reference "a process through which an individual adopts an increasingly extremist set of beliefs and aspirations. This may include, but is not defined by, the willingness to condone, support, facilitate or use violence to further political, ideological, religious or other goals."[15] Such a definition significantly raises the stakes for anyone, particularly academics and practitioners in global affairs, to propose radical alternatives to the (Neo)liberal hegemony. Additionally, this high-stakes environment is partially why many so-called "radical" ideas become subsumed in the (Neo)liberal mainstream model as they challenge threads of the status quo but fall short of calling for an overhaul of its foundations.[16] Consequently, some of the contributors to this volume of Radical Review have experienced adverse reactions to their radical ideas in personal, public, and professional spaces.

To further exacerbate disengagement with radical social and societal change, many of the industries that fund and disseminate research are dominated by staunch proponents of the current (Neo)liberal international system.[17] Thus, radical theorists are often dismissed, and their research and programs are underfunded or restricted to (Neo)liberal parameters as a condition of securing resources.[18] For this and many other reasons, practice in related fields and public awareness informed by research and theory are not penetrated by radical ideas as effectively as those of the orthodoxy.

To counteract the counterproductive trends discussed thus far, this volume of Radical Review works to decouple "radical" from necessarily leading to "violence" and "violent extremism". To this end, contributors were asked to use "seemingly" radical solutions to the governance challenges they raised as opposed to contributors having free range to propose any fundamentally different solutions that occur to them.[19] More specifically, the contributors were asked to propose a radical idea that would help to address essential problems in existing governance structures that produce inequalities spotlighted by the recent pandemic. They then show how their idea is indeed acceptable or normalized in other academic disciplines, areas of practice, cultural contexts, and/or historical periods, as well as in the context of the pandemic itself. In so doing, the authors demonstrate their ideas are not necessarily violent, harmful, or implausible, but instead can be helpful, achievable without harm, and worth exploring. This approach further demonstrates that what is understood as "radical" is contextually dependent and therefore interdisciplinarity, multidisciplinarity, and cross-cultural engagement can provide myriad models and ideas to help us strengthen governance in our respective societies and at a global level.

EMBRACING THE RADICAL TO IMPROVE GOVERNANCE IN A COVID-REGULATED WORLD

It is timely to explore radical alternatives to current governance systems as calls for radically different approaches to social organization continue in the current post-liberal era.[20] Although radical models and solutions could indeed challenge the realm of possibilities known to humanity, contributors instead show how their radical ideas were used in another context. Accordingly, commentators with varied cultural, academic, and professional backgrounds draw on their experiences in one of two ways to propose radical thinking and radical solutions to governance challenges foregrounded by the recent pandemic.

14 "Tactical Reference Guide: Radicalization into Violent Extremism - A Guide for Military Leaders" (Asymmetric Warfare Group, August 2011), https://www.wired.com/images_blogs/dangerroom/2012/10/Radicalization-FINAL090911.pdf; Loretta E. Lynch, Karol V. Mason, and Nancy Rodriguez, "Radicalization and Violent Extremism: Lessons Learned From Canada, the U.K. and the U.S.," Conference report (National Institute of Justice, July 28, 2015), https://www.ojp.gov/pdffiles1/nij/249947.pdf.

15 Human Rights Council, "Annual Report of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights and Reports of the Office of the High Commissioner and the Secretary-General" (United Nations, July 21, 2016), https://documents-dds-ny.un.org/doc/UNDOC/GEN/G16/162/55/PDF/G1616255.pdf?OpenElement.

16 "Populism, Radicalism and Extremism: At the Margins and into the Mainstream," accessed May 29, 2021, https://ecpr.eu/Events/Event/SectionDetails/911.

17 Mary-Beth Raddon, "Neoliberal Legacies: Planned Giving and the New Philanthropy," *Studies in Political Economy* 81 (March 1, 2008): 27, https://doi.org/10.1080/19187033.2008.11675072.

18 Sandra Rubli, "Transitional Justice by Bureaucratic Means?" (Swiss Peace, April 2012), http://www.swisspeace.ch/fileadmin/user_upload/Media/Publications/WP4_2012.pdf.

19 For an example of this approach to proposing seemingly radical solutions, please see the comparison of radical centrism and triangulation in "The Radical Centre."

20 Stephen Hopgood, *The Endtimes of Human Rights* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 2013); Peter Finkenbusch, "'Post-Liberal' Peacebuilding and the Crisis of International Authority," *Peacebuilding* 4, no. 3 (September 1, 2016): 247–61, https://doi.org/10.1080/21647259.2016.1193937.

In one approach, authors show how the pandemic revealed something radically different to a specific audience or context that could help to improve governance in a COVID-regulated world. More concretely, Marisa Tramontano offers several examples of COVID-19 accelerating the movement to defund and abolish the police in the United States, which reinforced this seemingly radical movement as one worth pursuing. Using the same case study, Emily Sample discusses how the pandemic encouraged people to spend more time outdoors, particularly engaging "public" green spaces such as parks, which city dwellers have difficulty accessing. But a newfound appreciation for the environment due to COVID, provides opportunities to transition from a specifically American capitalist view that pits nature against city infrastructure, toward a merging of the two to build more inclusive and equitable ecosystems that are safe for human beings and the environment.

Drawing on examples from Canada, the United Kingdom, Uganda, and the United States, Saghar Birjandian argues that the pandemic revealed how individuals often function as "administrations of justice". She claims that understanding individuals in this way can serve as a useful analytical device to more effectively theorize the types of social and societal change required to establish just societies. Monica Macias offers a more structured comparative analysis of COVID-19 response strategies between western countries like the United Kingdom driven by individualism and countries like South Korea that are shaped by collectivism. She concludes that collectivism fosters more effective response to crisis and is worth promoting in a COVID-regulated world. Lastly, at the international level, Yatana Yamahata shows us how looking at the role of international institutions during the AIDS and COVID-19 pandemics reveals the power of these entities over state behaviour, which challenges conventional international relations theories that posit only the reverse as true.

In the alternative approach, contributors explain different ways the pandemic illuminated how we need to fundamentally change our thinking and behaviours and then propose some seemingly radical ideas to address said needs. For example, Calvete documents a conversation between university students and lecturers based in Brazil and the United Kingdom about missed opportunities to challenge the status quo during the pandemic. They identified that the hegemonic view of individualism and capitalism is so deeply entrenched that even during a global pandemic that naturally disrupted that status quo, the masses did not mobilize to demand a new international political economy. To counter this, the participants propose to replace the prevailing individualistic worldview with collective thinking and organizing.

Also centering his analysis around the masses, Henry Okoth examines why in Uganda, the military's atrocities against civilians during the pandemic and coinciding political elections, call for community led responses. He proposes a seemingly radical idea to use the family unit and the clan to hold state and military personnel accountable for their crimes, which has been successful in the past. Using the same case study, Tonny Kirabira points to an opportunity caused by the pandemic halting a long and drawn-out court process against a low-ranking Lord's Resistance Army rebel. He suggests that given the perpetrator is also understood as a victim by many survivors across northern Uganda where rebellion unfolded, it is worth exploring the use of victim participation in plea bargaining processes as a way for survivors to bring elements of their customary dispute resolution into post-atrocity justice processes. This could in turn, help courts of law to foster reconciliation in legally plural societies like Uganda.

Lastly, Shelly Clay-Robison problematizes information disseminated by governments during crises response as too superficial to help inhabitants participate in shaping governance. She proposes that governments, especially during public health crises, could more effectively communicate the research expertise of the social sciences to communities experiencing social and economic issues using the arts. In the conclusion of this volume Danny Lord and Marisa Tramontano reflect on these contributions and outline some implications for the masses as we move toward imagined futures.

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No Justice, No Peace:
Abolish the Police

Dr. Marisa Tramontano

"Law enforcement in the US was designed to subjugate Black people & enforce white supremacy. We must abolish policing as we currently understand it, divest from policing, and invest in a vision of community safety that works for everyone."
– Movement For Black Lives, 17 December 2020[1]

A young Black woman stands in front of an enormous crowd at Barclay's Center on Atlantic Avenue in Brooklyn, NY. "No justice!" she roars into a microphone hooked up to a large amplifier on wheels. "No Peace!" the crowd responds, fists in the air. "Abolish!" she calls next, "The Police!" the crowd answers. It is early summer 2020 and I'm at a Black Lives Matter protest after the murders of George Floyd, Breonna Taylor, and Tony McDade at the hands of police. I've been to many such protests. I've heard the demand to abolish the police before. I believe in this demand myself. But we've always been rebuffed, even by our closest allies, as idealistic and unrealistic, our ideas impossible. Abolishing police may seem like a truly radical call to action in that it demands us to reimagine everything. But when the ravages of COVID-19 laid bare the dysfunctions of our systems and left individuals with nowhere to go and nothing to do, this demand gained significant traction.[2] As Precious Fondren explains, "In 2020 'defund the police' and 'abolish the police' became mainstream political terms. Notable prison abolitionist Ruth Wilson Gilmore was profiled by The New York Times. To combat media coverage that was insisting the Black Lives Matter protesters were demanding police reform, Mariame Kaba wrote plainly for The Times that protesters are, indeed, calling for abolition of police."[3] This essay sets out to define "abolition" to demonstrate the ways it is practical and not idealistic and to argue for abolition now.

Activist and author Arundhati Roy argues that the pandemic is a portal. What's on the other side is new and different and we have to decide what from the old era we want to bring with us. She says, "What is this thing that has happened to us? It's a virus, yes. In and of itself it holds no moral brief. But it is definitely more than a virus...We can choose to walk through it, dragging the carcasses of our prejudice and hatred...or we can walk through lightly, with little luggage, ready to imagine another world. And ready to fight for it."[4] Abolition requires radical imagination, and COVID-19 and its associated lockdowns and closures, left many more people than any other time in history to do this reimagining work. More, the uprisings around the world over systemic racism and police violence indicate that no matter how decentralized, varied, and problematic those issues and their solutions may be, many people

1 "The Movement for Black Lives," M4BL, accessed December 18, 2020, https://m4bl.org/.

2 The city of Minneapolis, Minnesota, where George Floyd was killed, for example, voted to defund $8M from their police department, all but dismantling it. See Jenny Gross, "Minneapolis City Council Votes to Remove $8 Million From Police Budget," The New York Times (The New York Times, December 10, 2020), https://www.nytimes.com/2020/12/10/us/minneapolis-police-funding.html.

3 Precious Fondren, "Students Demand Abolition Coursework from Colleges and Universities," Progressive.org, February 4, 2021, https://progressive.org/dispatches/students-abolition-coursework-fondren-210204/. See full op-ed: Mariame Kaba, "Yes, We Mean Literally Abolish the Police," The New York Times (The New York Times, June 12, 2020), *https://www.nytimes.com/2020/06/12/opinion/sunday/floyd-abolish-defund-police.html*. Implied here is that up until this political moment, The Times is a liberal, mainstream periodical that is reformist, at best.

4 Arundhati Roy, "Arundhati Roy: 'The Pandemic Is a Portal'," Financial Times, April 3, 2020, https://www.ft.com/content/10d8f5e8-74eb-11ea-95fe-fcd274e920ca.

do not want to carry them into the post-COVID era.

The coronavirus pandemic, then, has had a significant impact on the discourses surrounding the defunding and abolishing of the police. As explained by abolitionist Angela Y. Davis, "the conjuncture created by the COVID-19 pandemic and the recognition of the systemic racism…has been rendered visible under these conditions because of the disproportionate deaths in Black and Latinx communities."[5] In other words, folks were radicalized not by the murder of George Floyd, but the murder of George Floyd and others in the midst of the deeply racialized pandemic already ravaging communities of colour in the US.[6] Ruth Wilson Gilmore adds, the pandemic "unsettle[d] all of the uneasy relations between and among people who experience abandonment and those whose job it is to control the effects of that abandonment," [7] highlighting the ways in which rupture and want enhanced calls to abolish the police.[8]

would allow for the dismantling of prisons, policing, and surveillance, and the creation of new institutions that actually work to keep us safe and are not fundamentally oppressive."[9]

Let's parse that a bit.

It's long term. No one is suggesting we close police stations until we have the institutions in place to create community health and safety in ways that do not include police. The emphasis on community care would, according to abolitionists, radically reduce "crime" because needs would be met and behaviors currently classified as crimes to police communities of colour would not be. They want to build a society where we don't investigate and restrain one another as a first or last resort.

Moreover, as Ruth Wilson Gilmore reminds us, there's been a shift in recent years where more and more social roles are performed by police, like attending to mental health crises, and more and more institutions model police functions, like children and family administrations. In other words, more and more institutions are deputized to bring in cops during conflict, meanwhile the cops are taking over more and more duties previously left to other agencies. On one hand, the Department of Education having a SWAT Team evidences the above. On the other hand, it is only 10 years old, so rolling back that turn is not as radical as one might think.[10]

All of this is to say that abolition is not merely the elimination of something, but rather, the founding of a new society.

WHAT IS ABOLITION?

Mariame Kaba defines abolition as "a long-term project and a practice around creating the conditions that

5 "Uprising & Abolition: Angela Davis on Movement Building, 'Defund the Police' & Where We Go from Here," Democracy Now!, accessed December 18, 2020, https://www.democracynow.org/2020/6/12/angela_davis_historic_moment.

6 At the time of writing, for example, there are 6,819 COVID cases in the Bronx – made up predominantly of communities of colour – and only 4150 cases in affluent and predominantly white Manhattan. "Rates of COVID-19 cases in New York City as of January 24, 2021, by borough," *https://www.statista.com/statistics/1109817/coronavirus-cases-rates-by-borough-new-york-city/(accessed* January 24, 2021).

7 Intercepted, "Intercepted Podcast: Ruth Wilson Gilmore on Abolition," The Intercept, June 10, 2020, *https://theintercept.com/2020/06/10/ruth-wilson-gilmore-makes-the-case-for-abolition/*.

8 Mariame Kaba, "Yes, We Mean Literally Abolish the Police," The New York Times (The New York Times, June 12, 2020), https://www.nytimes.com/2020/06/12/opinion/sunday/floyd-abolish-defund-police.html.

9 Intercepted, "Intercepted Podcast: There's Something About Jared with Mariame Kaba," The Intercept, May 31, 2017, *https://theintercept.com/2017/05/31/intercepted-podcast-theres-something-about-jared/*, emphasis mine.

10 Intercepted, "Intercepted Podcast: Ruth Wilson Gilmore on Abolition," The Intercept, June 10, 2020, https://theintercept.com/2020/06/10/ruth-wilson-gilmore-makes-the-case-for-abolition/.

It's a project and it's a practice, which requires continual action. Each time a small community leads a restorative justice circle,[11] each time a community-based organization nonviolently fills a role usually occupied by police, each time someone uses an alternative to calling 9-1-1, and each time communities come together to work on mutual aid and decentralized care, it is a step towards abolition. So, it's a project and a practice that creates the conditions that would allow for the dismantling of all settler colonial enforcers of surveillance and immigration law, policing, and prisons one action at a time.[12]

And finally, new institutions that actually keep us safe and are not fundamentally oppressive can be seen in two ways. Looking to the past, it is essential to recognize that early American police evolved from slave catchers and militias organized to commit acts of violence against Native Americans as a way to "keep peace" in North America.[13] This history leads abolitionists to conclude that policing is a fundamentally racist institution no matter how many "good" individuals may join this institution hoping to make change from the inside. "[P]olicing in America," as Malaika Jabali writes for The Guardian, "cannot be reformed because it is designed for violence. The oppression is a feature, not a bug."[14] Angela Davis elaborates that mass incarceration is a mutation of the same cultural ideas that enabled the institutions of chattel slavery, lynching, and legalized segregation, which have all since been formally abolished.[15] The abolition of prisons and police has the capacity to end this deeply entrenched historical pattern. Conversely, looking to the future, abolitionists imagine institutions that actually keep us safe, such as a city hotline to access unarmed, but highly trained mental health professionals for issues such as homelessness, mental health crises, and intimate partner conflict; a traffic service that watches out for and changes brake lights, taillights, and other mechanical infractions that have led to deadly traffic stops when an armed police officer is responsible for this social function; and/or institutions of community care such as mutual aid organizations so hungry people don't turn to "crime" to eat.

All of this is to say that abolition is not merely the elimination of something, but rather, the founding of a new society. Abolition is not the immediate tearing down of walls, it's a slow and meticulous process. It attends to direct, structural, and cultural violence.[16] It works towards positive peace.[17]

The key to understanding this argument is "invest-divest." What abolishing the police really means is reallocating resources away from reactionary, fundamentally oppressive, violent institutions and investing in preventative social institutions like education, healthcare, community support, and the like. For example, staggeringly, one set of police riot gear could provide 31 nurses with needed Personal Protective Equipment during COVID .[18] It's not that unimaginable to spend money on people instead of violence. But it is a tool of hegemony to label some things impossible.[19] As Mariame Kaba puts it, "As a society, we have been so indoctrinated with the idea that we solve problems by policing and caging people that many cannot imagine anything other than prisons and the police as solutions to violence and harm."[20] In

11 Centre for Justice and Reconciliation, "What Is Restorative Justice?" 2020, http://restorativejustice.org/restorative-justice/about-restorative-justice/tutorial-intro-to-restorative-justice/lesson-1-what-is-restorative-justice/

12 American abolitionists link "protection" of settler colonial borders through immigration law and domestic surveillance to prisons and policing as one fundamentally oppressive system that cannot be reformed.

13 Matthew Frye Jacobson, Whiteness of a Different Colour, (Cambrdge: Harvard, 1999).

14 Jabali, Malaika, "If you're surprised by how the police are acting, you don't understand US history," The Guardian, June 5, 2020, https://www.theguardian.com/commentisfree/2020/jun/05/police-us-history-reform-violence-oppression

15 Angela Y. Davis, Are Prisons Obsolete? (New York, NY: Seven Stories Press, 2010).

16 Direct violence can be traced to an individual perpetrator. Structural violence refers to violence built into structures and institutions. Cultural violence is the work to normalize and justify direct and structural violence. See Collaborative Social Change, "What We Do," link

17 Positive peace is more than an absence of violence, it's an absence of violence because of the presence of just structures, institutions, and cultures. More, positive peace moves past the absence of violence to also include collaboration for collective advancement or development. See Baljit Singh Grewal, Johan Galtung: Positive and negative peace, 2003, http://www.activeforpeace.org/no/fred/Positive_Negative_Peace.pdf

18 Marisa Casciano, "One Police Officer's Riot Gear Could've Bought PPE for 31 Nurses," InStyle, June 5, 2020, https://www.instyle.com/news/major-cities-spend-millions-more-on-riot-gear-for-police-than-on-ppe-for-frontline-workers.

19 Hegemony refers to the dominant culture that reinforces ideologies that justify the current hierarchies, norms, and inequalities in society. It refers to a ruling class' ideological and cultural control over the masses. It is a system that is largely consented to. But abolitionists are counterhegemonic agents in that they can imagine beyond the normalization of police that the hegemony puts forth across entertainment and news media.

20 Mariame Kaba, "Yes, We Mean Literally Abolish the Police," The New York Times (The New York Times, June 12, 2020), https://www.

other words, it keeps the status quo protected to say an idea is fundamentally flawed and unimplementable. It's the hegemony's silencing and discrediting that categorizes the abolition of police as impossible, not the work it would actually take to build communities rooted in transformative justice practices instead of punitive ones.

ABOLITION NOW!

Why is abolition considered such a radical notion? Angela Davis explains that at one time the abolition of chattel slavery was a completely radical idea, one that the global economy simply could not sustain nor imagine. While modern forms of slavery persist, after several generations of consistent effort, abolitionists then were able to eradicate enslavement as an institutionalized and legal widespread practice. Abolition was possible then and it is possible now, we just have to fight the powerful hegemonic framing that dictates that police are a permanent, necessary, universal feature of society.[21]

US Congresswoman Alexandria Ocasio-Cortez (AOC) was asked, "What does an America with defunded police look like to you?" She posted on Instagram in response:

> The good news is that it actually doesn't take a ton of imagination.
>
> It looks like a suburb. Affluent white communities already live in a world where they choose to fund youth, health, housing etc more than they fund police. These communities have lower crime rates not because they have more police, but bc they have more resources to support healthy society in a way that reduces crime.
>
> When a teenager or preteen does something harmful in a suburb (I say teen bc this is often where lifelong carceral cycles begin for Black and Brown communities), White communities bend over backwards to find alternatives to incarceration for their loved ones to "protect their future," like community service or rehab or restorative measures. Why don't we treat Black and Brown people the same way? Why doesn't the criminal system care about Black teens' futures the way they care for White teens' futures? Why doesn't the news use Black people's graduation or family photos in stories the way they do when they cover White people (eg Brock Turner) who commit harmful crimes? Affluent White suburbs also design their own lives so that they walk through the world without having much interruption or interaction with police at all aside from community events and speeding tickets (and many of these communities try to reduce those, too!)
>
> Just starting THERE would be a dramatically and radically different world than what we are experiencing now.

To be sure, critiques abound, such as "...the affluent, white suburb is no model for abolition. To imagine it as such is to construct the suburb as an idyllic space in which white people make good political choices rather than to identify it as part of the design of racial capitalism and carcerality abolitionists seek to confront."[22] That is true and AOC is making a different point. She's saying there is something that looks a lot more like positive peace in America's suburbs than urban centres. She's saying there is structural violence in urban centres committed by white people and institutions against people of colour that doesn't exist against affluent white people in the suburbs. She's saying that in terms of the invest-divest strategy popular among abolitionists, suburbs look more like an abolitionist future, where there are few cops, community serves most social roles, folks prevent kids from getting caught up in the criminal system, schools are funded, health care is accessible to most, etc. She's saying crimes are most often needs-based and in reaction to structural violence and overpolicing.

So what if the Movement for Black Lives' demands were met? What if these suburban conditions were available to all and all of these functioning social systems operated everywhere, particularly in marginalized, low-income communities? What if positive peace was so stable police officers were barely or no longer needed? Think outside the box drawn for you by the hegemony. Mariame Kaba reminds, "a big part of the abolitionist project...is unleashing people's imaginations while getting concrete—so that we have to imagine while we build, always both."[23] Let's get to work.

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nytimes.com/2020/06/12/opinion/sunday/floyd-abolish-defund-police.html.

21 Angela Y. Davis, Are Prisons Obsolete? (New York, NY: Seven Stories Press, 2010).

22 Tamara K. Nopper, "Abolition Is Not a Suburb," The New Inquiry, July 17, 2020, https://thenewinquiry.com/abolition-is-not-a-suburb/.

23 Mariame Kaba Organizer et al., "Towards the Horizon of Abolition: A Conversation with Mariame Kaba," TheNextSystem.org,

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It's Radical Being Green

Emily Sample

As the COVID-19 pandemic raged across the United States, scientists and health care workers made it clear that there was only one way to avoid the virus: stay home. But as weeks turned into months, the health and safety of isolating at home started to come into question. While it is still the best way to stay clear of COVID-19, there are other aspects of health that can suffer when isolated indoors, and those risks are not distributed equally across all populations. The places we used to find solace, distraction, or relaxation—coffee shops, libraries, museums, movie theaters, churches, synagogues, mosques, and temples—all shuttered. As a result, there has been an unprecedented appreciation and utilization of hyper-local green space.

During this time Americans' relationship with their outdoor space changed radically, especially for those residing in densely populated areas. For many, public parks became an extension of "home" —a place where they could run, walk, or even work remotely, while staying safe from shared spaces and potential infection.[1] The outdoors became the only safe setting outside of people's own homes. In many urban and low-income areas, however, outdoor space is a luxury few can afford. As such, when public parks and communal green space took centre stage last year, the unequal accessibility of these sites was brought into sharp focus. The concept of "public" versus "private" land has its roots in white settler colonialism, and this relationship with the land and land ownership is one that must be addressed in the broader conversation on environmental justice. Public parks are an essential part of this conversation to create not just public space, but areas of communal ownership. Our parks could be transformed from static, grassy open spaces to centres of community peacebuilding. This article will outline how several intertwined issues intersect to create unequal and unjust access to green spaces, and one potential avenue for radically changing our relationship with this public good.

PROBLEMS WITH PARKS

The first issue is that there are simply not enough public-access green spaces. A recent nation-wide survey found that approximately two-thirds of people surveyed agree that "local parks and green spaces are important in maintaining physical (68%) and mental health (65%) during COVID-19."[2] Despite this acknowledgment, the non-profit organization 10 Minute Walk has found that "over 100 million people across the country, including 28 million children, don't have a park within a 10-minute walk of home."[3]

Secondly, our current green space is highly directive in its use. Park visitors may walk, run, bike, picnic, and play, but you cannot, for example, sleep there overnight. Many green spaces also engage in what is known as "hostile architecture"—the specific inclusion or exclusion of design elements to guide or restrict public behavior. For example, many public benches have immovable armrests so as to limit users' ability to lay on the bench, or, more aggressively, the installation of metal spikes on landscaping walls to prohibit people from sitting.[4] Limiting outdoor use as to what is deemed 'acceptable' does not allow the park to fulfill the needs of the broadest spectrum of the community.

The third issue is that the green spaces we do have are not equally accessible to all people. In urban and suburban areas, research has proven that parks tend to be clustered in higher income areas, which in many places corresponds to traditionally white areas.[5] For example, Central Park was famously built over the

1 Campbell et al., "Quarantine Fatigue and the Power of Activating Public Lands as Social Infrastructure."

2 "Our Research."

3 "10 Minute Walk."

4 Winnie Hu, "'Hostile Architecture': How Public Spaces Keep the Public Out."

5 Grove et al., "The Legacy Effect"; Schwarz et al., "Trees Grow on Money"; Watkins and Gerrish, "The Relationship between Urban Forests and Race."

bulldozed Seneca Village, one of the first free Black communities in New York City.[6] Given the racist police practices prevalent throughout the United States, Black, Indigenous, and People of Colour are not able to utilize and enjoy public space to the same capacity as their white counterparts. During the COVID-19 pandemic, this has manifested in violent and racially asymmetrical arrests for violations of social distancing laws.[7] In May 2020, the mainly white New Yorkers gathered in Central Park were given free masks by NYPD officers; that same weekend a video posted on Twitter showed an NYPD officer in the East Village in Manhattan tasing and beating a Black man who allegedly did not follow social distancing procedures.[8] Other identity groups are also limited in their ability to use public green space.[9] For example, women are often afraid to utilize park space alone, especially after dark. Additionally, persons with disabilities often face barriers to accessibility or integration that would allow their equal participation in park facilities.[10] These spaces are not equitably open to the public if there are limitations on who can safely use the park.

The final issue is that some outdoor spaces, public or private, are not healthy to occupy. Air quality varies widely across the United States, even fifty years after the landmark Clean Air Act.[11] Fenceline communities (neighborhoods that border chemical and industrial sites) are subject to near constantly venting of poisonous gases, with Black, Indigenous, and People of Colour making up the majority of these communities.[12] For those in "Cancer Alley" in Louisiana or living between petrochemical plants in Houston, Texas, outdoor space is not a viable safe option for spending time.[13] Families residing in these and other similar areas are forced to make judgements daily on environmental safety, over which they have little to no control, before engaging in outdoor activities.[14]

A BREATH OF FRESH AIR

The way in which we plan, build, and utilize our current green spaces is not currently working for the greatest good. Even after we have a handle on the COVID-19 pandemic, our current public park system will continue to be inefficient and unjust. This proposal argues for the use of public parks as spaces of sustainable community agriculture, and has the potential to expand to include rooftops, sidewalks, medians, and even vertical space. In this proposal, the community itself would be responsible for the management and use of the land, with the support and subsidy of national, state, and local government. The concept of community gardens is not new; urban and suburban areas all over the world have utilized this idea of tending a plot of land off-site from your own home. Many of these, though, continue in the traditions of ownership and real estate scarcity, with long waiting lists for city-dwellers to occupy high priced land allotments.

Community gardens could subsidize community kitchens, where those who struggle with food security could work, volunteer, or simply eat. Communities under their own hyper-local leadership could choose what kind of food would be grown in their gardens with an acknowledgement of cultural identity, community needs, historical significance, and geographic feasibility. For example, my family might recommend to our community to develop elderberry bushes. In addition to being a native plant to our region, our family has harvested and canned elderberries for generations to make syrup and jelly. This syrup is delicious, important to our inter-generational bond, and, more recently, has been shown to support immune health and reduce inflammation. For other neighborhoods, staples such as sweet potatoes and fast-growing tomatoes might be favored over "non-essential" foods like elderberries. Still other neighborhoods may work to replace decorative trees on their streets with agricultural producers like apple or avocado trees. The idea is to engage each group to meet their needs and create unique gardens that can literally grow with the community.

For many communities, especially in urban centres, high rise buildings and businesses are part of the

6 Maddie Capron and Christina Zdanowicz, "A Black Community Was Displaced to Build Central Park. Now a Monument Will Honor Them."

7 "'Caravan for Justice' Protests Violent Social Distancing Arrests in NYC."

8 Marquise Francis, "A Tale of Two Parks."

9 Heynen, "The Scalar Production of Injustice within the Urban Forest."

10 Perry et al., "Accessibility and Usability of Parks and Playgrounds."

11 The Clean Air Act is the law that defines the Environmental Protection Agency's responsibilities for protecting and improving the nation's air quality and the stratospheric ozone layer. For more, see "U.S. Clean Air Act."

12 U.S. General Accounting Office, "Siting of Hazardous Waste Landfills and Their Correlation with Racial and Economic Status of Surrounding Communities."

13 Sample, "Environmental In/Justice: Peacebuilding in the Anthropocene."

14 Singer, "Down Cancer Alley."

neighborhood. This agricultural project does not exclude them—indeed roof gardens, vertical green spaces, and balcony gardens have all become important parts of modern, eco-friendly city architecture. Balconies and vertical spaces can be ideal settings for herbs, strawberries, or other annual plants with shallow root-bases. Rooftop gardens provide a space for plants that soak up high levels of sun and water, like ornamental grasses and low shrubs. Increasing the green coverage of a city through a combination of parks, tree coverage, and rooftop gardens reduces other major environmental issues, such as rainwater runoff, urban heat pockets, and air pollution. Chonggyecheon Stream in downtown Seoul, South Korea is one example of radical urban renewal that rejuvenated an existing stream while integrating the neighboring homes and businesses into a larger green city project.[15]

Additionally, parks that are communally owned, embraced, and maintained by grassroots leadership are less likely to need to be heavily policed. Since these gardens are centrally placed in the community, there is also a reduced risk of the opportunistic violence that can take place in infrequently visited corners of large parks. This reduction in overall violence is essential to the continued mental and physical health of the community members.

If integrated into the community and spread widely, these community gardens can provide an important supplement in growing food deserts, and a source of resilience against food shortages in the face of disasters. The COVID-19 pandemic illustrated that even the limited national lockdowns in March 2020 had the ability to disrupt the national food supply chain. As climate change makes weather disasters more intense and more frequent, the delicate food supply chain may see further disruption.

These gardens can also act as learning tools. At a time when fewer children know where their food comes from, locally based agriculture can help reconnect Americans to their sources of nutrition. This educational deficit is not only an issue in children; in a recent survey of American adults, almost seven percent answered that they believed chocolate milk came from brown cows.[16] Communities can use their gardens, and the gardens of their neighbors, to host lessons on cooking, dietary health, and nutrition. These lessons can also be an important space to pass on intergenerational recipes and cultural knowledge, as well as the almost lost art of jarring and canning. Neighbors sharing a meal, sharing recipes, and connecting over the joys of cooking and eating is one of the central tenets of Gastrodiplomacy, which has been utilized in conflict resolution and community-building settings worldwide, from President Obama's Beer Summit[17] to Arab-Jewish relations in the Middle East.[18] While coming together over a meal may not solve community-level tensions on its own, it creates a neutral space for mending ties and building relationships.

...the COVID-19 pandemic has brought into sharp relief the unequal and unjust relationship Americans have with their public green spaces.

Government encouraged—and subsidized—growing of your own supplementary produce is not a radical idea. During both World War I and World War II, the United States government encouraged its citizenry to grow their own produce so the food supply could be diverted

15 Misty Edgecomb et al., "Envisioning a Great Green City."

16 Dewey, "The Surprising Number of American Adults Who Think Chocolate Milk Comes from Brown Cows."

17 "Obama's 'Beer Summit' Effort to End Racial Dispute."

18 "Chefs for Peace."

to emergency use. Simultaneously, other countries involved in the wars' citizens utilized public land to grow food—the city of Leningrad famously filled their public gardens with cabbages during the siege of 1941. There is no reason these same tactics could not be utilized during peacetime.

Key to this proposal is the aspect of sustainability. While organic agriculture may not be feasible at first due to soil degradation and urban pests, as the gardens become more established, they will rejuvenate the soil and specific plants can be cultivated to deter pests without toxic chemicals. Fruits, vegetables, and other native plants can be specifically planted to emphasize their symbiotic relationship, and encourage visitation by bees, butterflies, and other natural pollinators. This will emphasize the feedback relationship in the community between clean air, clean water, and clean food, and create an additional avenue for lobbying to state and federal governments for increased environmental protections.

CONCLUSION

None of the aspects of this proposal are radical in and of themselves, but together they require a transformation of our fundamental relationship with our environment. By driving us to spend more time outside, the COVID-19 pandemic has brought into sharp relief the unequal and unjust relationship Americans have with their public green spaces. This moment has highlighted who has access to the outdoors and why. We can use this momentum to change how we envision the future of outdoor space. In creating spaces that are the responsibility, and for the benefit, of the community as a whole, new opportunities for peaceful governance and hyper local resilience emerge. By reframing public parks as community spaces that are for our communal use, we begin to transition from the zero-sum game of nature versus city, and see a path forward towards a healthier, more equitable ecosystem for insects, plants, animals, and ourselves.

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Understanding Agents as Administrations of Justice in the Everyday:

Improving Governance Strategies in a COVID-regulated World

Dr Saghar Birjandian

Many people claim that the world will never be the same again due to COVID-19. For some, this is cause for concern but for others, it is a serendipitous disruption to everyday life that presents opportunities for much needed social and societal transformation. Governance has been identified as one of the most vital sites for change as crisis response aiming to mitigate and prevent the effects of the pandemic exposed and exacerbated existing structural, economic, and social inequalities.[1] Consequently, the pandemic provoked calls for fundamental changes to make governance systems more efficient, equitable, inclusive, participatory, transparent, and representative of all people. But as I argue here, to improve governance in these ways, it is important to move past solely transforming the behaviours of traditional governance entities such as national and state governments and security agencies, intelligence agencies, corporations, regional and international organizations, religious and cultural institutions, and civil society. It is also important to understand the influence of the masses on governance trends, which the pandemic showed us explicitly in relation to the rule-making-and-enforcing component in social order.

More concretely, the pandemic revealed how agents (i.e., individuals) can and often do make independent assessments about the rightness and wrongness of actions, they can prioritize their own criteria in making such decisions, and they can pool their resources to promote and impose consequent determinations on other people. In other words, and as I explain in my analysis, COVID-19 showed us that human beings do indeed function as "administrations of justice" or institutionalized justice systems. This can be a seemingly radical conception of "administering justice" to some people, particularly, those in specific academic disciplines and sectors dedicated to operationalizing justice systems such as the courts of law. In part, this is because governance across many contexts is associated with institutionalized actors and processes not independent agents as such. However, if the masses seek to eradicate the injustices illuminated by the recent pandemic, then I argue it is crucial to facilitate a paradigm shift in

1 "5 Things COVID-19 Has Taught Us about Inequality," World Economic Forum, accessed June 26, 2021, https://www.weforum.org/agenda/2020/08/5-things-covid-19-has-taught-us-about-inequality/; Frances Z. Brown Carothers Saskia Brechenmacher, Thomas and Frances Z. Brown Carothers Saskia Brechenmacher, Thomas, "How Will the Coronavirus Reshape Democracy and Governance Globally?," Carnegie Endowment for International Peace, accessed June 26, 2021, https://carnegieendowment.org/2020/04/06/how-will-coronavirus-reshape-democracy-and-governance-globally-pub-81470; Zia Qureshi, "Tackling the Inequality Pandemic: Is There a Cure?," *Brookings* (blog), November 17, 2020, https://www.brookings.edu/research/tackling-the-inequality-pandemic-is-there-a-cure/.

governance strategies that specifically places agents at the centre of analysis and debate as administrations of justice. This shift confronts a reality about the masses, namely, their independent and cumulative power to determine whether the rule-making-and-enforcing component of governance is successful.

Drawing from examples in Canada, Uganda, the United States, and the United Kingdom,[2] I start my discussion by defining what I mean by an "administration of justice" and show how agents can function as such using examples from the recent pandemic and beyond. My analysis is structured in accordance with three fundamental features found across diverse justice systems: (1) they generate a set of criteria to determine just and unjust action and just response(s) to injustice, (2) they prioritize their own criteria as the appropriate framework to make such determinations, and (3) they often use their resources to enforce said criteria.

UNDERSTANDING INDIVIDUAL AGENTS *AS* ADMINISTRATIONS OF JUSTICE

It is common to immediately think of legal systems based on English common law when coming across the phrase "administration of justice" but the discussion here requires that we broaden the scope to also include myriad customary justice systems of Indigenous Peoples that continue to thrive or are being revived today. Accordingly, I broaden the definition of an "administration of justice" here to mean the rules and procedures that govern a set of agents and/or institutions as they work to address a clearly or loosely defined set of actions avowed as acceptable (i.e., just) and unacceptable (i.e., unjust) by said justice system.[3] It is in understanding how diverse administrations of justice generally operate that one can see how individual human beings can also be thought of as such, particularly in relation to the three features that most administrations of justice share.

The first feature is generating a set of rules that guide determinations about what are just and unjust actions. In moral terms, this means justice systems function to discourage and eradicate behaviour deemed "wrong" and promote a certain set of behaviours as "right" or "good" in society. We typically see in justice systems a written or orally communicated set of unjust actions (e.g., criminal codes) and just actions (e.g., marriage formalities) for which the system will hold individuals and/or groups accountable. In situations that include actions that are unaccounted for in their respective frameworks, decision-makers in justice systems (e.g., judges, juries, clan heads, chiefs, matriarchs, kings, etc.) often use moral beliefs, spiritual beliefs, cultural mores and/or historic decision-making in similar situations to determine whether a new set of actions are acceptable. Admittedly, politics and profit making can play a huge role in many justice processes, but this discussion is beyond the scope of the analysis here.

Some illustrative examples of agents applying their own criteria of just action can be seen in public reactions to state-led crisis response strategies. For example, in anticipation of a COVID-19 vaccine rolling out, inhabitants[4] across contexts started debating which populations should be prioritized using diverse criteria. Some argue in favour of prioritizing elders that live on their own[5] as others focus on elders living in long-term care facilities where more human beings interact.[6] Still others that are more skeptical of the vaccine altogether as it is indeed still in the experimental stages, do not like using elders as so-called "guinea pigs", particularly seniors from BIPOC communities.[7] Yet, some elders volunteered to go first to test the effects of the vaccine before giving it to younger generations as they "have nothing to lose and everything to gain."[8] In essence, we see diverse commentators considering age, general health, contributions to society, social norms, and other factors as the most appropriate criteria to make these kinds of decisions. Disagreement between commentators about the appropriate criteria shows that individual human beings can and often do use diverse factors of their choosing to determine the rightness or wrongness of a particular act. Agents in the masses also make these determinations in everyday life such as blatantly and pridefully jaywalking

2 Though this argument could be relevant across diverse empirical contexts, I limit its applicability to contexts that I have lived and worked in including Canada, Uganda, the United States, and the United Kingdom.

3 Tomas Aquino Guimaraes, Adalmir Oliveira Gomes, and Edson Ronaldo Guarido Filho, "Administration of Justice: An Emerging Research Field," *RAUSP Management Journal* 53, no. 3 (January 1, 2018): 476–82, https://doi.org/10.1108/RAUSP-04-2018-010, 476-478.

4 I use the term "inhabitants" in place of "citizens" throughout this essay to account for the range of statuses agents can assume in a particular society including refugees, stateless persons, migrants, tourists, expats, international students, etc.

5 "Seniors Living Independently Feel 'Forgotten' as Others Prioritized for COVID-19 Vaccines," Global News, accessed June 6, 2021, https://globalnews.ca/news/7588950/coronavirus-vaccine-seniors-timeline-schedule-priority-groups/.

6 John Paul Tasker · CBC News ·, "Seniors, Long-Term Care Workers Should Be First in Line for COVID-19 Vaccine, Committee Says | CBC News," CBC, December 4, 2020, https://www.cbc.ca/news/politics/seniors-long-term-care-workers-first-in-line-1.5828720.

7 Jan Hoffman and Chang W. Lee, "'I Won't Be Used as a Guinea Pig for White People,'" *The New York Times*, October 7, 2020, sec. Health, https://www.nytimes.com/2020/10/07/health/coronavirus-vaccine-trials-african-americans.html.

8 "Opinion | The Best Early Vaccine Candidates Are the Elderly," *Washington Post*, accessed June 6, 2021, https://www.washingtonpost.com/opinions/letters-to-the-editor/the-best-early-vaccine-candidates-are-the-elderly/2020/11/01/86c33620-19fe-11eb-8bda-814ca56e138b_story.html.

in New York City where the act is still outlawed but under review.[9] Another everyday example is high numbers of people using marijuana before it was decriminalized and legalized in various states and provinces across North America.[10] As well, many cannabis consumers continue to buy their supply from the black market even after marijuana was legalized and made available in authorized stores.[11] Through their discussions and/or actions, agents

These agents are using their resources... to enforce their own criteria of determining just and unjust action.

communicate their own criteria of judging just and unjust actions in the everyday quite regularly but the pandemic helped to spotlight this capacity.

The second feature of justice systems also exhibited by agents is prioritizing their own methods of making determinations about what is just and unjust and acting accordingly. In the context of COVID-19, we see this manifest in discussions about whether the public should listen to the protocols and policies that governance bodies supply to the public. For example, some commentators in Uganda problematized state and civil society led calls for social distancing, deeming these policies unjust and reserved for the economically privileged as many people rely on daily cash transactions to meet basic needs[12] or their living arrangements are unavoidably communal.[13] We can see similar trends in everyday life as many also challenge institutionalized justice systems responses to what is deemed unjust such as issuing the death penalty to someone who has committed murder. In some states across the United States and in Uganda, the death penalty is still an option.[14] Yet, there are inhabitants that problematize the hypocrisy in a justice system committing the same act of murder that the justice system itself deems unjust.[15] Another example in all four cases is non-adherence to laws and policies meant to eradicate racial discrimination, particularly in the public realm.[16] As the pandemic illuminated in various ways, marginalized racial and ethnic communities continue to experience discrimination in all

9 "Constantinides to Introduce Bill to Decriminalize Jaywalking in NYC," LIC Post, September 15, 2020, https://licpost.com/constantinides-to-introduce-bill-to-decriminalize-jaywalking-in-nyc; Clayton Guse, "Queens Councilman's Bill Would Decriminalize Jaywalking in NYC," nydailynews.com, accessed June 6, 2021, https://www.nydailynews.com/new-york/ny-jaywalking-councilman-costas-constantinides-bill-streets-20200915-vjsyd3vc7fhynk6skmwyz66cwy-story.html.

10 "The Illegalization of Marijuana: A Brief History | Origins: Current Events in Historical Perspective," accessed June 6, 2021, https://origins.osu.edu/article/illegalization-marijuana-brief-history/page/0/1.

11 "Canada Thought It Could Bankrupt Drug Dealers by Legalising Cannabis. It Hasn't Worked," October 25, 2019, https://www.abc.net.au/news/2019-10-26/canada-legalised-marijuana-why-are-people-buying-from-criminals/1162770.

12 "'I Must Work to Eat,'" Human Rights Watch, May 26, 2021, https://www.hrw.org/report/2021/05/26/i-must-work-eat/covid-19-poverty-and-child-labor-ghana-nepal-and-uganda; Karsten Noko, "In Africa, Social Distancing Is a Privilege Few Can Afford," accessed June 6, 2021, https://www.aljazeera.com/opinions/2020/3/22/in-africa-social-distancing-is-a-privilege-few-can-afford.

13 Sally Hayden in Namuwongo and Kampala, "Coronavirus: Social Distancing a Distant Dream in Africa's Slums," The Irish Times, accessed June 6, 2021, https://www.irishtimes.com/news/world/africa/coronavirus-social-distancing-a-distant-dream-in-africa-s-slums-1.4210862.

14 Nicole Daniels, "Should the Death Penalty Be Abolished?," *The New York Times*, January 20, 2021, sec. The Learning Network, https://www.nytimes.com/2021/01/20/learning/should-the-death-penalty-be-abolished.html; "Uganda Abolishes Mandatory Death Penalty," The East African, accessed June 6, 2021, https://www.theeastafrican.co.ke/tea/news/east-africa/uganda-abolishes-mandatory-death-penalty-1425450.

15 International Federation of Human Rights, "Uganda: Challenging the Death Penalty," International Fact-Finding Mission (International Federation for Human Rights, October 2005); "Uganda Abolishes Mandatory Death Penalty."

16 Colin Munro, "Race Laws and Policy in the United Kingdom," in *Challenging Racism in Britain and Germany*, ed. Zig Layton-Henry and Czarina Wilpert, Migration, Minorities and Citizenship (London: Palgrave Macmillan UK, 2003), 167–88, https://doi.org/10.1057/9780230506206_10; "Constitution of the Republic of Uganda 1995, as Amended to 2017," accessed July 10, 2021, https://constitutions.unwomen.org/en/countries/africa/uganda; "Civil Rights Act of 1991 (Original Text) | U.S. Equal Employment Opportunity Commission," accessed July 10, 2021, https://www.eeoc.gov/civil-rights-act-1991-original-text; Canadian Heritage, "Guide to the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms," October 23, 2017, https://www.canada.ca/en/canadian-heritage/services/how-rights-protected/guide-canadian-charter-rights-freedoms.html.

four countries.[17] This is in part because many people do not adhere to relevant laws in their interactions with "others". Admittedly, many people are just unaware of their biases and problematic assumptions about other groups, which can contribute to reinforcing internalized, interpersonal, and systemic racism.[18] But some agents refuse to accept that racism exists or that it is bad or unjust. They instead prioritize their own worldview, experiences, moral codes, cultural values, and myriad other factors over those of an institutionalized justice system.

The last feature agents share with administrations of justice is their willingness and capacity to use their resources (e.g., social and economic capital) to impose their own ideas about just and unjust action on other people and entities. In the context of COVID-19 response, many agents across contexts used diverse tactics to get other people to wear masks and socially distance in lieu of governance bodies enforcing these restrictions.[19] We also witnessed skeptics calling out those that do adhere to state-issued protocols and policies, calling them "sheep"[20] or generally encouraging critical thinking and critical analysis of governance during the pandemic.[21] Others that reject COVID-19 as a real local and global threat have gone as far as disallowing patrons wearing facemasks from entering their privately owned business establishments.[22] These agents are using their resources, be it their words or their respective power over privately owned spaces, to enforce their own criteria of determining just and unjust action. But we have seen agents tap into their individual and coordinated power for centuries, particularly when it comes to determining a just social order and realizing fundamental human rights. In Uganda, likeminded agents in the masses mobilized to decolonize their country from oppressive British rule. In the United Kingdom, university faculty, students, and staff mobilized to "decolonize" their institutions to combat epistemic violence. In America, mass mobilization of agents produced several civil rights movements and more recently, Black Lives Matter. In Canada, women's suffrage and Indigenous and human rights movements require(d) coordinating like minded agents in the masses to change the criteria of just and unjust action according to the state.

All the examples included in the discussion here reinforce that individual human beings can and often do function as administrations of justice in the everyday, which can have a significant impact on whether we experience our respective notions of governance. Thus, it is useful for us to understand popular criteria used by agents in the masses to determine which actions are just and unjust be it customary or codified laws from institutionalized justice systems, religion, culture, trauma, or other factors. This can help the masses, activists, and governance entities more effectively determine the types of social and societal change required to establish

17 Samantha Loppie, Charlotte Reading, and Sarah de Leeuw, "Indigenous Experiences with Racism and Its Impact," Social Determinations of Health (National Collaboration Centre for Indigenous Health, 2020 2014), https://www.nccih.ca/docs/determinants/FS-Racism2-Racism-Impacts-EN.pdf; "The Pervasive Reality of Anti-Black Racism in Canada," Canada - EN, December 11, 2020, https://www.bcg.com/en-ca/publications/2020/reality-of-anti-black-racism-in-canada; "Resources to Understand America's Long History of Injustice and Inequality," Washington Post, accessed July 11, 2021, https://www.washingtonpost.com/nation/2020/06/08/understanding-racism-inequality-america/; Rashawn Ray, "Is the United States a Racist Country?," *Brookings* (blog), May 4, 2021, https://www.brookings.edu/blog/how-we-rise/2021/05/04/is-the-united-states-a-racist-country/; Anthony Heath and Lindsay Richards, "How Racist Is Britain Today? What the Evidence Tells Us," The Conversation, accessed July 11, 2021, http://theconversation.com/how-racist-is-britain-today-what-the-evidence-tells-us-141657; "OHCHR | United Kingdom: UN Experts Condemn 'Reprehensible' Racism Report," accessed July 11, 2021, https://www.ohchr.org/EN/NewsEvents/Pages/DisplayNews.aspx?NewsID=27005&LangID=E; "The Divisive Nature of Ethnicity in Ugandan Politics, Before and After Independence," accessed July 6, 2019, https://www.e-ir.info/2012/05/25/the-divisive-nature-of-ethnicity-in-ugandan-politics-before-and-after-independence/; Refugee Law Project, "Compendium of Conflict in Uganda," 2014, http://refugeelawproject.org/files/others/Compendium_of_Conflicts_final.pdf.

18 For thicker descriptions of these diverse forms of racism please see, Paradies, Yin, Ricci Harris, Ian Anderson, (2008) "The Impact of Racism on Indigenous Health in Australia and Aotearoa: Towards a Research Agenda," Cooperative Research Center for Aboriginal Health. Available at: https://www.lowitja.org.au/content/Document/Lowitja-Publishing/Racism-Report.pdf.

19 "What Should I Do When I See Someone Ignoring Social-Distancing despite COVID-19?," thestar.com, April 5, 2020, https://www.thestar.com/news/canada/2020/04/05/what-should-i-do-when-i-see-someone-ignoring-social-distancing-despite-covid-19.html; Diana SpechlerUpdated June 13, 2020, and 5:00 a m Share on Facebook Share on TwitterView Comments28, "Social Distancing Calls for New Methods of Consent - The Boston Globe," BostonGlobe.com, accessed July 10, 2021, https://www.bostonglobe.com/2020/06/13/opinion/bodily-consent-age-covid-19/.

20 Jordan Kanygin, "'You Are a Sheep': Video Shows Anti-Masker Mocking Calgary Fabricland Staff, Customers," Calgary, September 15, 2020, https://calgary.ctvnews.ca/you-are-a-sheep-video-shows-anti-masker-mocking-calgary-fabricland-staff-customers-1.5106572.

21 Jillian Kestler-D'Amours · The Canadian Press ·, "COVID-19 Conspiracy Theories Creating a 'public Health Crisis' in Canada, Experts Say | CBC News," CBC, August 3, 2020, https://www.cbc.ca/news/politics/covid-19-conspiracy-theories-1.5672766; Alex, er SmithAlex, and er Smith is a senior reporter for NBC News Digital based in London, "Conspiracies Thrive in U.K. as Doctors Struggle with Covid Variant," NBC News, accessed July 10, 2021, https://www.nbcnews.com/news/world/covid-misinformation-takes-its-toll-british-doctors-teachers-n1254568.

22 "Owner Who Refused Mask Policy Says His Gaithersburg Restaurant Will Close Indefinitely," *DCist* (blog), accessed June 6, 2021, https://dcist.com/story/20/07/10/owner-who-refused-mask-policy-says-his-gaithersburg-restaurant-will-close-indefinitely/; "'Sorry, No Mask Allowed': Some Businesses Pledge to Keep out Customers Who Cover Their Faces," *Washington Post*, accessed June 6, 2021, https://www.washingtonpost.com/nation/2020/05/28/masks-not-allowed-coronavirus/.

better governance systems free from the various injustices spotlighted by the COVID-19 pandemic and beyond.

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Human Security in Crisis:

Analyzing the Role of International Institutions in a COVID-Regulated World

Yatana Yamahata

International institutions are integral forces in world politics as they have the political authority to set norms and provide governance. Although the World Health Organisation's (WHO) declaration of the novel coronavirus (COVID-19) outbreak as a global pandemic prompted a series of emergency responses worldwide, much of the power as well as the fate of the post-coronavirus world rests on the voluntary cooperation of states themselves. This paper discusses how traditional theoretical frameworks of IR—realism and constructivism—answers the following question: how important is power in explaining the role of international institutions in the post-coronavirus world? The paper argues that an understanding of power should not be limited to states as international institutions themselves wield symbolic power that influence state and non-state actors alike. This logic is explored by focusing on the concept of human security introduced in the 1994 Human Development Report by the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) and its application in managing the AIDS pandemic. The paper suggests realists and constructivists to consider the lessons learned from the AIDS pandemic and apply them in the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic by making two seemingly radical shifts: (1) to acknowledge the power of international institutions in the context of a global pandemic and (2) prioritize human security as a crucial power-generating source in the context of a global pandemic as they create exceptional circumstances where the behaviours of actors above the state (i.e. international institutions) and below the state (individuals in the masses) significantly influence states' decision-making and crucially, undermine the realist's and constructivist's understandings of statehood that give it power.

INTRODUCTION

On 11 March 2020, the World Health Organisation (WHO) declared the novel coronavirus outbreak a global pandemic, prompting a series of emergency responses worldwide, such as the issuing of travel-bans, national stay-at-home orders, and financial relief. The WHO and other international institutions are integral forces in world politics as they have the political authority to set norms as well as to provide governance. However, realists and constructivists argue that much of the power as well as the fate of the post-coronavirus world rests on the voluntary cooperation of states themselves.

This paper discusses how traditional theoretical frameworks of IR—realism and constructivism—answer

the following question: how important is power in explaining the role of international institutions in the post-coronavirus world? Both approaches understand that power is possessed by states; it is states that wield material and/or discursive power, determining the role that international institutions play in world politics. Alternatively, this paper argues that the understanding of power should not be limited to states as international institutions themselves wield symbolic power that influence state and non-state actors. Locating power in different actors, and not just its effects, thus becomes central to the analysis of international institutions, especially in the context of a global pandemic.

The paper expands on this argument by discussing how international institutions can shape the post-coronavirus world by focusing on the concept of human security introduced in the 1994 Human Development Report by the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP). In response to the COVID-19 pandemic, realists and constructivists need to make two seemingly radical shifts (1) to acknowledge the power of international institutions in the context of a global pandemic and (2) prioritize human security as a crucial power-generating source in the context of a global pandemic as global pandemics create exceptional circumstances where the behaviours of actors above the state (i.e. international institutions) and below the state (individuals in the masses) significantly influence states' decision-making and crucially, undermine the realist's and constructivist's understandings of statehood that give it power.

UNDERSTANDING THE ROLE OF INTERNATIONAL INSTITUTIONS IN A POST-CORONAVIRUS WORLD

At the most basic level, power is at work "when one actor compels another to do something they would not have done otherwise."[1] Traditional theoretical frameworks recognize that states possess and exercise power. For example, the Charter of the United Nations (UN) "gives the Security Council enormous formal powers, but it does not give it direct control of the tools with which to enact those powers." [2] Although the UN Security Council (UNSC) holds various authorities from enacting economic sanctions to authorizing military action to maintain international peace and security, its decisions are ultimately dependent on the political standing of the states that sit on the council. Similarly, the WHO provides leadership in providing information and laying out a framework to tackle the pandemic but does not dictate state policy. Efforts to contain the coronavirus have therefore varied by country and according to the extent to which individual governments perceive it to be a threat to national security. For example, Denmark, Finland, Norway, South Korea, Japan, Taiwan, Vietnam and New Zealand are some of the countries that "locked down early and/or used extensive test and tracing" while Brazil, Mexico, Netherlands, Peru, Spain, Sweden, the US and the UK "locked down late, came out of lock down too early, did not effectively test and quarantine, or only used a partial lockdown."[3] If the WHO and other international institutions are commonly perceived to not have political authority over states, where is power located in the post-coronavirus world?

Realism: Locating Material Power in States

The foundations of realist theory lie in the supposedly anarchic nature of the international system, where there is no overarching, centralized authority that oversees state actions.[4] Anarchy forces states to share a common goal of survival, in which they "compete among themselves either to gain power at the expense of others or at least to make sure they do not lose power."[5] Power is thus understood in terms of material capabilities, which include a powerful military and strong economy, among other things. In other words, realism locates power in state capacity, and hence, treats the role of international institutions as instruments that are constructed by states in order to serve state interests. Although realists maintain that international institutions "do not have significant independent effects on state behaviour," they recognize that "great powers sometimes find institutions–especially alliances–useful for maintaining or even increasing their share of world power."[6] For this reason, international institutions are also easily influenced by great power conflicts.

1 Matthew Eagleton-Pierce, Symbolic Power in the World Trade Organization (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2013), 2.

2 Ian Hurd, "Legitimacy, Power, and the Symbolic Life of the UN Security Council," Global Governance, 8, no. 1 (2002): 45.

3 Kelly Bjorklund and Andrew Ewing, "The Swedish COVID-19 Response Is a Disaster. It Shouldn't Be a Model for The Rest of The World," Time, October 14, 2020, *https://time.com/5899432/sweden-coronovirus-disaster/*.

4 Kenneth N. Waltz, Theory of International Politics (Mass: Addison-Wesley Pub. Co., 1979), 105.

5 John J. Mearsheimer, "Structural Realism," in International Relations Theories: Discipline and Diversity (Oxford: Oxford University Press), 77.

6 John J. Mearsheimer, "A Realist Reply," International Security, 20, no. 1 (1995): 82.

Since the outbreak of the pandemic, there have been some speculations regarding the extent of Beijing's influence on the WHO[7]. These suspicious had reached a peak in the US when the Trump Administration "framed the epidemic in China in geopolitical terms, used it to blame China's political leaders and system for the tragedy, and faulted WHO for complicity with China's perceived deception and propaganda."[8] Following these claims, the US under the Trump Administration announced its intention to "sever its relationship with WHO and redirect funds to US global health priorities," despite the decision being unlawful.[9] The pandemic has heightened pre-existing tensions between the US and China as well as further polarized the international system, placing the WHO in a difficult situation with respect to its ability to effectively carry out its responsibilities during the pandemic.

...when human security is weak within and beyond a state's borders during a global pandemic, state power is threatened.

Constructivism: Locating Discursive Power in States

Alternatively, constructivist theory focuses on "norms, beliefs, knowledge and understandings," contending that world politics is fundamentally made up of social constructions.[10] It asserts that "anarchy is what states make of it" as there is no 'logic' to anarchy "apart from the practices that create and instantiate one structure of identities and interests rather than another; structure has no existence or causal powers apart from process."[11] In other words, state interests can be "transformed through interaction, persuasion and socialisation."[12] Therefore, constructivists understand that international institutions are mutually constructed concepts, formed through discourse, between states. Constructivism attributes discursive power to states as they form intersubjective understandings that serve as a basis for international institutions.

For example, members of the UN and regional organizations (e.g., EU, ASEAN) have increasingly placed importance in discursive power over material power in order to enjoy the benefits of international cooperation. Following the US's unlawful withdrawal from the WHO, other members of the international community prioritised the importance of international institutions in managing the coronavirus:

> French President Emmanuel Macron has condemned Donald Trump's decision to suspend funding to the WHO indicating that slashing the budget in the middle of the global crisis was more than bad timing. Macron and Merkel launched a $8 billion drive to develop a vaccine and China has since donated $2 billion.[13]

7 Michael Collins, "The WHO and China: Dereliction of Duty," Council on Foreign Relations, February 27, 2020, *https://www.cfr.org/blog/who-and-china-dereliction-duty*.

8 David P. Fidler, "WHO Criticisms: The World Health Organization and Pandemic Politics," Council on Foreign Relations, April 10, 2020, *https://www.thinkglobalhealth.org/article/world-health-organization-and-pandemic-politics*.

9 Lawrence O. Gostin et al., "US Withdrawal from WHO is Unlawful and Threatens Global and US Health and Security," The Lancet 396, no. 10247 (2020): 293.

10 Kenneth W. Abbott and Duncan Snidal, "Why States Act through Formal International Organizations," Journal of Conflict Resolution 42, no. 1 (1998): 8.

11 Alexander Wendt, "Anarchy is What States Make of It: The Social Construction of Power Politics," International Organization 46, no.2 (1992): 394-5.

12 Shahar Hameiri and Lee Jones, "Rising Powers and State Transformation: The Case of China," European Journal of International Relations 22, no. 1 (2016): 76.

13 Michael A. Peters et al., "The WHO, the Global Governance of Health and Pandemic Politics," Educational Philosophy and Theory

Constructivists view international institutions as essential instruments that uphold values shared among different states, especially during a global pandemic.

LOOKING BEYOND STATES: SYMBOLIC POWER IN INTERNATIONAL INSTITUTIONS AND THE EMERGENCE OF HUMAN SECURITY

Both realist and constructivist approaches place states as the 'exerciser of power' in international institutions. In other words, material and/or discursive power of states determine the role international institutions play in the international arena; without states, there would be no international institutions. However, this paper proposes an alternative approach: international institutions have the power to influence states in a manner not reducible to the collective or individual agency of states themselves. This approach is discussed in relation to the concept of human security.

International institutions can place importance on symbolism as "an institution that is perceived as legitimate gives rise to symbols that possess a mobilising power because of their association with the institution."[14] Symbols are understood as a currency of power, because "once an object becomes a symbol and is invested with this power by association, it becomes a power in itself and the object of contestation in search of that power."[15] It places special focus on how language, "as a key symbolic system of political value, both reflects and constitutes power," continuously producing and reproducing reality.[16]

The concept of human security was introduced in the 1994 Human Development Report by the UNDP with an aim to ensure that people from all corners of the world are able to live with freedom from fear and freedom from want. Unlike traditional conceptions of security in IR scholarship that places states as a referent object—or in other words, an entity that is the target of protection —the concept of human security places the individual as a referent object. Therefore, the components of human security include economic security, food security, health security, environmental security, personal security, community security and political security.[17]

States and non-state actors have implemented UNDP's vision by incorporating human security into policy. For example, the Japanese government "stressed the importance of a human security perspective as one of its five basic policies when renewing its ODA Charter in 2003" and included human security in "the 2005 Medium-Term Policy on ODA as an effective approach to development assistance."[18] States legitimise the symbolic power of international institutions and hence the role they play in world politics to regulate and oversee aspects of political, economic and social interactions. The introduction of human security and its worldwide implementation show how the traditional conception of security was challenged and reconceptualized by international institutions.

Human Security in Crisis: Lessons from the AIDS Pandemic and Implications for the COVID-19 Pandemic

The previous section establishes that the symbolic power possessed by international institutions provide them significant political authority in world politics. Their legitimacy continues to be affirmed and reaffirmed through everyday practices of states. The following case study serves as an example of why states should be drawn to generating power through advancing human security in the post-coronavirus world by examining the role international institutions played in framing the AIDS pandemic as a global human security.

In January 2000, the UNSC met to consider the growing impact of AIDS on peace and security in Africa, temporarily abandoning "its traditional concern with regulating the deployment of armed force in international politics."[19] In this historic meeting, the President of the World Bank stated: "many of us used to think of AIDS as a health issue. We were wrong … We face a major development crisis, and more than that, a security crisis."[20] Securitisation is a process that identifies a threat and provokes an immediate response to it, such as through the implementation of certain public policies. By defining "who (or what) threatens whom and how" through the speech act, the language of securitisation had in this case effectively "endangered,

(2020): 4.

14 Hurd, "Legitimacy, Power and the Symbolic Life," 36.

15 Hurd, "Legitimacy, Power and the Symbolic Life," 37.

16 Eagleton-Pierce, Symbolic Power, 3.

17 UNDP, Human Development Report 1994 (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1994), 24-25.

18 JICA (2010): 2.

19 Stefan Elbe, "AIDS, Security, Biopolitics," International Relations 19, no. 4 (2005): 4.

20 Elbe, "AIDS, Security, Biopolitics," 4.

ordered and conditioned international relations."[21] The UNSC's designation of the AIDS pandemic as a 'security threat' resulted in policy responses, involving a wide variety of actors and relations. These actors include the following:

> (i) Predominantly Western governments including the United States; (ii) international organizations such as the World Health Organization, the United Nations, the European Union, ASEAN, and the African Union; (iii) a plethora of prominent multinational corporations working through the Global Business Coalition on HIV/AIDS; (iv) non-governmental organizations such as the Civil–Military Alliance to Combat HIV/AIDS and the International Crisis Group; (v) think tanks such as the Center for Strategic and International Studies, and the Chemical and Biological Arms Control Institute; (vi) media organizations; and (vii) scholars in the academy.[22]

The UNSC, as a legitimate political authority has been effectively able to mobilize such actors in combating the issue of HIV/AIDS. Moreover, the security threat of the AIDS pandemic is reproduced through everyday acknowledgement. In the few years following Resolution 1308, which argued that "the pandemic, if unchecked, 'may pose a risk to stability and security'", it was explicitly included in "the Millennium Development Goals; the UN General Assembly's Special Session on HIV/AIDS in June 2001; the establishment of the G8-backed Global Fund to Fight HIV/AIDS, Tuberculosis and Malaria in 2002; and the launching of the President's Emergency Plan for AIDS Relief (PEPFAR) by the Bush Administration in 2003."[23]

In the process of securitising the AIDS pandemic, the UNSC played an important role in recognizing it as a human security crisis by identifying individuals as a referent object, releasing recommendations, establishing funds and urging a variety of global actors to get involved in addressing the issue. The UNSC will continue to produce and reproduce its authority and influence as long as both state and non-state actors recognize its important role in world politics.

Similarly, the post-coronavirus world must learn from the human security-centric approach taken by international institutions and later, state and non-state actors in managing the coronavirus and its many related issues. Global pandemics create exceptional circumstances in which the extent to which the behaviour of actors above the state (i.e., international institutions) and below the state (individuals in the masses) significantly influence a state's decision-making becomes starkly clear. Crucially, this undermines the realist's and constructivist's understandings of statehood that give it power. Taking the resurgence of the coronavirus in India into account, when human security is weak within and beyond a state's borders during a global pandemic, state power is threatened not only because individual agents in the masses struggle to survive existential threats, but also because a state's lack of capacity to provide human security to its own population can become a threat to other states' populations. India hit a devastating second wave in April 2021 when the seven-day rolling average of new reported cases peaked at 392,000[24]. Furthermore, the delta COVID-19 variant first detected in India has "now spread to more than 80 countries and it continues to mutate as it spreads across the globe."[25]

Although the successful vaccine rollout in the US and UK has brought hope towards the end of the pandemic, states must not be quick to declare victory[26]. Global vaccine rollouts trail behind, which is especially a concern for least developed countries (LDCs) where the pandemic has exacerbated poverty and other threats to human security.[27] Instead of focusing on border closures and other state-centric measures to counter the pandemic, states should direct their efforts towards widespread testing and mass vaccination drives that would emancipate individuals from the coronavirus and other related threats to human security. Prioritizing

21 Jonas Hagmann, "Securitisation and the Production of International Order(s)," Journal of International Relations and Development 21, no.1 (2018): 195.

22 Elbe, "AIDS, Security, Biopolitics," 407-8.

23 Colin McInnes and Simon Rushton, "HIV/AIDS and Securitization Theory," European Journal of International Relations 19, no. 1 (2012): 122-3.

24 Soutik Biswas, "COVID-19: Has India's Deadly Second Wave Peaked?," BBC News, May 26, 2021, *https://www.bbc.com/news/world-asia-india-57225922*.

25 Rich Mendez, "WHO Says Delta Covid Variant Has Now Spread To 80 Countries And It Keeps Mutating," CNBC, June 16, 2021, *https://www.cnbc.com/2021/06/16/who-says-delta-covid-variant-has-now-spread-to-80-countries-and-it-keeps-mutating.html*.

26 Aria Bendix, "The US and UK Lead the World's Coronavirus Vaccinations – But They May Struggle to Reach Herd Immunity If They Reopen Too Soon," Business Insider, April 22, 2021, *https://www.businessinsider.com/us-uk-vaccinations-herd-immunity-reopening-too-soon-2021-4*.

27 Paul Akiwumi and Giovanni Valensisi, "When It Rains It Pours: COVID-19 Exacerbates Poverty Risks In The Poorest Countries," UNCTAD, May 4, 2020, *https://unctad.org/news/when-it-rains-it-pours-covid-19-exacerbates-poverty-risks-poorest-countries*.

human security would not only bring an end to COVID-19 but also prevent or mitigate future pandemics as the coronavirus exposed and exacerbated failures in providing people with the dignity to live free from fear and want.

CONCLUSION

Power is fundamental to understanding the role international institutions play in the post-coronavirus world. Mainstream IR theories–realism and constructivism–treats international institutions as a result of state power. Realists posit that international institutions are ineffective due to the supposedly anarchic nature of the international system. Therefore, states with significant material power use international institutions to serve their own interests. On the other hand, constructivists emphasize the importance of discursive power, which establishes intersubjective understandings between states. Constructivists thus view international institutions to be important tools in upholding shared values established by interactions between states. However, neither approach sufficiently explains the importance of power in understanding the role international institutions play in the post-coronavirus world.

This paper argues that an understanding of power should not be limited to states as international institutions themselves possess and use symbolic power. The introduction of human security by the UNDP and the securitisation of the AIDS pandemic by the UNSC are discussed to explain that the existence and authority international institutions are recognized through the mobilization of both state and non-state actors in its agenda to address the 'security threat'. Just as the material and discursive power of states determine the role international institutions play in world politics, the symbolic power of international institutions also influence the role states play in world politics, especially in the context of a global pandemic. Therefore, locating power in different actors as well as its effects become central to the analysis of international institutions.

Finally, the paper emphasizes the power of international institutions by highlighting the introduction of human security and its widespread implementation by different state and non-state actors. Although the coronavirus pandemic had uncovered that human security is in crisis perhaps unlike ever before, lessons from the management of the AIDS pandemic can be learned to prioritize individuals over states to face COVID-19 and other related human security threats in the post-coronavirus world. Global human security crises like the AIDS and COVID-19 pandemic show just how much power international institutions can have over states' decision-making processes. At the same time, the responsibility to provide people with the dignity to live free from fear and want lies with states.

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Reclaiming Utopia, Contesting Hegemony:
A Conversation

Dr. Luísa Calvete Portela Barbosa

Participants: Luana Isabelle Beal (MA candidate), Dr. Daniel Capistrano, Professor Henrique Carlos de Oliveira Castro, Jéssica Duarte (PhD candidate), Débora de Oliveira Santos (PhD candidate), Maria Julia Timmers (BA candidate), Dr. Tiago Vier, Dr. Sofia Vizcarra.

Living through a global pandemic, as well as the politics of a so-called populist (and powerful) right-wing government, this paper documents a conversation between university students and lecturers based in Brazil, one of the epicentres of this double-sword crisis reverberating around the world. The paper shows the development of the discussion as the group elects the issue of hegemony, and tries to work out ways to think, act, and lead a counter-hegemonic, collective future. The reflections in this paper are relevant to anyone interested in enacting change.

INTRODUCTION

Following the invitation from the call to discuss the effect of the Covid-19 pandemic in making seemingly radical ideas seem possible, I invited a group of Latin American scholars in different stages of their career to consider possible solutions. On the week we met online, Latin America was alight; Peruvians, Guatemalans, Chileans, and Bolivians were out protesting. Though each held different concerns, protesters shared an eagerness for change and upholding democracy amidst death, impoverishment, lack of governmental support, and rising repression. While protesters were hit with choking teargas and were violently dispersed by the police, the group sat outside these events. In the United Kingdom, where Daniel and I were, as well as in Brazil, where the rest of the group was, things were disturbingly quiet. It is in this context that the group considered the main issue behind all the maladies we seemed to be living – i.e., pandemic, authoritarianism, conservatism, and apathy. The paper follows the development of this discussion by first identifying hegemonic discourse that privileges individualism as the core issue, followed by considerations on how to create counter-hegemonic values that promote collective thinking and organizing.

As a reflection paper, some notes are necessary. First, for simplification first names are used throughout the text, and I use 'we'/'us' to refer to the group of scholars. Second, and importantly, given the nature of the interview, views were expressed colloquially and therefore are to be considered as simplifications of the participants' thoughts. The conversation took place in Portuguese and I am responsible for the translation.

27 November 2020

We started our conversation around Covid-19's effect

on our lives. Moreover, the group was frustrated with the unrealized potential for change that the pandemic exposed. It is from this frustration that the group arrived at the core issue traversing our conversation: the need to transpose hegemonic discourse that upholds capitalism – as described below.

PART I: THINKING COLLECTIVELY

> **Daniel**: I am a bit frustrated that this [pandemic] does not have the effect that it could have. If you think about it, it is a crisis like a war – people cannot leave their homes, they cannot interact, your relatives die, and you cannot get together. Yet, despite all of that, it is 'business as usual'. [...] Regardless of the impact Covid has had, people will continue to respect authority and will continue to be subservient to a government that is authoritarian. Covid has shown that people are quite flexible if that means sticking to the status quo. [...] hegemony is so strong that even if your grandparents die, you will still support Bolsonaro.

> **Sofia**: I want to add to what Daniel said. We discuss that liberalism is not an ideology, it is a rationality, and I believe the pandemic has really shown that. [...] What is keeping it [capitalism] is not something external, it is something that comes from us. [...] we are effectively responding with emotions (original, afectos[1]) that are shaped by right wing ideology.

The mention of 'hegemony' requires explanation. The group used the word as framed by the Marxist philosopher Antonio Gramsci. To put it simply, Gramsci[2] argued that hegemony was a way of thinking (a 'rationality') that is portrayed as common sense, thus maintains capitalism in an imperceptible way because people accept hegemonic discourses as the norm. Thus, for the group, the core problem in the world is capitalism. The general feeling of dissatisfaction arose from the perception that despite the pandemic's potential to generate a mass critique of capitalism, the group kept observing hegemonic thinking –an overall acceptance that people need to remain productive despite the pandemic, hyper-individualism, and the belief that the economy cannot work in a different way. It was from here that the group began to consider the need for new values that can guide new forms of thinking and acting.

> **Henrique**: Gramsci's answer is counter-hegemony - meaning, the construction of alternative values to the ones of the elites. Yet, this is hard. There is one very simple mechanism: organization - people organizing to do things. People have unlearned to work collectively. This pandemic reinforces the sense of hyper-individualism. To start off, we need to shatter this [individualist] paradigm and work together. It does not have to be revolutionary work. We need to gather people to talk about the world. [...] Any type of organizing creates a new relationship between the individual and the world. [...] all problems in society are collective. Even if I have a disease, which is apparently my individual issue, I need hospitals, transportation, I need society! This type of understanding that all solutions are necessarily collective is an effective way of enacting change and building alternative values.

Henrique's intervention enticed the group to think about the need for actions, and the need for framing solutions as "necessarily collective". It is worth expanding on the later. As mentioned, hegemony upholds capitalism by framing this economic system as common sense. As Henrique implies above, individualism is considered one of the constitutive values of capitalism; thus, it is pervasive and organic of hegemonic thinking. Because it is so pervasive, individualism can start to direct efforts that seem essentially collective.

One example raised by Luana was the historical co-option of 'the family' by conservative politicians and ideologues, who merge a discourse of market-oriented economy ('economic freedom') with ideas about who constitutes the family and how they behave. In this discourse, a man needs to be free to support his family (woman/wife and children) in whatever way he wants. In this necessarily heteronormative family, welfare provision is seen as an external intervention and an attack to the breadwinner's individual freedom. Moreover, state interventions are portrayed as 'Marxist' – therefore, a threat. In Brazil, supporters of left-leaning politics, such as Marxists, have been historically persecuted in defence of this ideal family. This discourse was prominent during the military dictatorship (1964-85) that targeted leftist and community organisations of all kinds – such as indigenous movements. This imagined threat has been updated by current President

1 Colloquially, 'afecto' (Spanish) is used as synonym to emotions, feelings, sentiments, or inclinations. In academia, it can also refer to a combination of ideas, values, objects, and bodily manifestations (Ahmed 2014). Sofia was loosely applying the later. I am choosing 'emotions' for simplification.

2 For more, see Gramsci (1999), and, for an explanation of the term, see Simon (2005).

Jair Bolsonaro (2019-). Today, leftists (they include feminists) have been targeted by the government that has repeatedly stated these groups promote child sex and animalism[3], thus further claiming the protection of the family as their realm. Within their narrative, heteronormative families are necessarily conservative, neoliberal entities; something that has mobilised votes and misrepresentations of community-led efforts and progressive politics.

Direct attacks and co-optation of ideas such as 'family' are only two ways of maintaining capitalism, and the group also discussed how individualism can be upheld in the essentially collective space of organised action. Organised movements have a powerful potential to provide collective spaces and entice much needed conversations. Yet, especially the ones mobilised around race and gender equality, and protection of the environment are often reframed as individual issues that need individual solutions by popular political discussions (i.e., media, political commentators, etc.). The simpler example of this is how small individual acts, such as using paper bags, are framed as the only possible solution for climate change – moving people away from collective organising against corporations and the economic system.

Race and gender equality organisations are too complex to discuss in this paper, so the discussion below will inevitably be unsatisfactory. Suffice to say that the group identified hegemonic thinking in these organisations as: the framing of problems and solutions from an individual perspective, which does not allow for or see solidarity as possible. Essentially, it is a problem of not seeing issues that manifest in the individual level as part of a broader oppressive structure that affects different people, in different forms. Hegemony shifts our attention to individual acts (of oppression and activism); as Débora frames it, "'I think this group needs more rights', or 'I am from this group and I understand that I need to claim my rights'; but I do not think or interact as a collective." Consequently, collective organising and solidarity are marginalised, and the individual becomes the centre of any possible action. As Jéssica summarises, "from the moment we were transformed into a product, it is not surprising that we start to fetishize this product; that we start to see ourselves within a 'productive process' instead of a collective." In other words, a type of self-fulfilment becomes the driver of action, not the will for change.

...seeing 'the normal' as something changeable is essential to break with hegemony, and to animate collective action.

For Henrique, the solution to prevent individualism in collective organising is quite simple: "place problem-solving at the core of the political, or social agenda. So, if people are hungry, well, hunger needs to be combatted and the people who are hungry will follow. If identity is gathering people, then let us politicize identity issues[4]." Or as Sofia summarizes, "people need simple interactions, and that is what 'collective' means.'"

Covid-19 has the potential to make us reassess the importance of state- and community-driven initiatives as we became aware of the essential (care) work that people around us do – i.e., family, friends, caretakers, cleaners, drivers, shelf-stackers, etc. Within this context, collective organising for collective needs must

3 For some examples, see Leal (2017).

4 Here it is worth bringing back the initial formulation of the term 'identity politics' by the Combahee River Collective (1977, 1) that stated, "we are actively committed to struggling against racial, sexual, heterosexual, and class oppression, and see as our particular task the development of integrated analysis and practice based upon the fact that the major systems of oppression are interlocking." This statement illustrates the argument of the group.

become the norm, and 'doing politics' must no longer be seen as 'radical', or negative. Tiago highlighted the later, as he described how politics is now seen as synonym of party politics (and corrupt politicians), that drove people away from politics as whole. However, the recent protests in Latin America offers proof that there is hope; the paper now looks at some lessons from current collective organising.

PART II: ORGANIZING COLLECTIVELY

From the start of the conversation, the group identified one worrying trend: right-leaning and conservative voices seem to be excelling at 'doing politics'. They organize physical and online forums to discuss issues, thus creating narratives and mobilizing votes, boycotts, and demonstrations. They are not afraid of collective action or being part of a group. Yet, there is hope for left-leaning and progressive voices, and it comes, unsurprisingly, from the younger generation.

> **Sofia**: In Peru, it was not only Lima, but the whole country; we had 10% of a country out in the street amidst a pandemic. It is huge, and it was organized via TikTok. The 'clans' out in the streets had the goal of defending democracy, even if disagreeing with what that means. And who they were? They were the Pokémon masters, the BTS army, the Dota clubs. So, they have a way of organizing, but we are out of it. Is anyone following Kpop?
>
> **Maria Julia:** [...] It is funny because I do listen to Kpop and I was in some of the groups that organized the boycott of Trump's first electoral event (when they bought all the seats). It happened almost as a joke, 'because we don't like him', and that is how it happened. It is the youngsters; they do not seem to be reflecting.
>
> **Sofia:** They know how to organize; they just do not know for what [reason]. They do not know they are doing politics. They do not see themselves as doing politics.

Our discussion exposed the potential for organising, and its messiness – various spontaneous collective acts exist around us. In this context, Sofia made an important remark: "politics is not consensus. It is a dispute. [...] We are now at a place where the politically correct is everyone being happy and not arguing". This quotation is essential as it demonstrates that the solidarity highlighted in the previous section does not entail complete cohesion but a common (collective, societal) goal. The value of dissent is in line with the group's use of hegemony. In Gramscian thought, hegemony entails the creation of a consensus around a certain issue/position, thus, a normalized status quo. Conversely, seeing 'the normal' as something changeable is essential to break with hegemony, and to animate collective action.

> **Sofia:** [...] I think we had lost the notion of fragility - that things can change. This is something that became evident in Peru now. One day you believe you live in a democracy, the next day you are being kicked by the police or being 'disappeared'. Additionally, for over 30 years we heard that the economic system cannot be changed. Today, people are asking, 'why not? Explain to me why not.' We are debating again.

Sofia leaves a positive outlook, one in which fragility and questioning come hand in hand. So far, the group identified hegemony, the traps of individualised thinking, the need for collective organising based on problem-solving, and the new platforms and groups active today. The inclusion of fragility has an immense potential because it opens the possibility of imagining a broader change; one that is truly counter-hegemonic as it questions the way we live. The paper now looks at how collective organising and thinking, as well as utopia need to be recovered from their status of impossibly 'radical' to become common practice.

PART III: BUILD UTOPIAS

The group discussed the need to 'do' politics in terms as simple as having a problem-solving approach, and of seeing solutions as necessarily collective. Indeed, as we grapple with the isolation imposed by COVID-19, the urge to gather seems renewed. Yet, an essential characteristic of this collective organising, one that has the capacity to keep people mobilized, to gather different generations, and create links between ongoing efforts, only came up at the end of the conversation: the ability to imagine that things can be different.

> **Daniel**: You have a very clear vision of the status quo: a vision of 'there is no alternative' from Margaret Thatcher [...] Here is where, I think, considering radical propositions, the anarchist concept of 'prefigurative politics'[5] is suitable –

5 Prefigurative politics was coined by Boggs (1977) as a directive for social action based on non-hierarchical, decentralised direct

> which is that from a small scale, you start to build something new, so you can form what you think can come next. [...] Today, there is no alternative, there is no new world being generated that used to exist in, for example, Latin America in the 1960s. [...] Something that Latin America brings as a lesson, or used to present as a 'hope', is the notion that the collective is broad. The 'collective' is your ancestors, are those people that fought for their causes, it is your surname, your relationship with the environment, with the people around you, with the trees and rivers. Now, being aware of the environment is to follow Greta Thunberg on twitter but you do not need to know or have ever swam in the river by your place. The idea of collective became being a member of an organization, instead of a collective in a prefigurative sense of what can exist in the future – this expansion of the collective. That is what is missing to change embedded values, the need of examples and the exercise of thinking new, possible worlds.
>
> **Henrique**: [...] translating it, if you allow me, Daniel: we are lacking utopia. [...] The right has a utopia: the world is unequal, but as long as everyone can compete, we are all happy. Some will be richer, others will be poor, but that is fine. This is utopia. A huge utopia that is being sold and bought is that solutions are individual; this is utopia. Utopia in the full sense of the world, of something that we strive for, that moves, that directs.

Hence, the group arrived at a more complete vision of how to organise in a way that incites counter-hegemonic values. Our organising must consider a collective that is much broader than the people we are surrounded by, and, at the same time, it must start with simple, problem-solving actions. It is about keeping an eye on the potential, and constructing solutions that can grow in scale. In sum, it is about transforming what is 'radical', or utopic into possible.

CONCLUSION

This reflective exercise had a life beyond the words on this page. This group of academics and students of different ages and experience enacted a bit of what was discussed. Though we had been meeting for a while for other purposes, this discussion seems to have created a new sense of direction (and collectivity) to our conversations. This piece is an invitation that others too start transgenerational conversations to imagine a new world, or to simply start proposing collective solutions to issues around them.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

The author would like to thank all the participants as well as the whole network of academics supported and nurtured by Professor Henrique Carlos de O. de Castro and by Professor Sonia Ranincheski (in memoriam).

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or participatory representation; one in which collective movements strive to embody "social relations, decision making, culture and human experience that are the ultimate goal" (Ibid. 1977, 100). For for history and main debates see Raekstad and Gradin (2020), and Breines (1989) for an emphasizes on the application of the term and its collective/community element.

Family and Clan as Pressure Systems of Accountability:

Responding to Brutality against Civilians During Uganda's COVID-19 Response

Henry Okidi Okoth

The central focus of this essay is the brutality orchestrated by state armed security personnel against the civilian population in Uganda that accompanied both the ongoing COVID-19 crisis and its attempted suppression, and recent political campaigns. Seemingly radical grassroots ideas are proposed to prevent further escalation of violence and strained relations between the military or security personnel and the communities. This essay explores two ideas. Firstly, holding community meetings with family members or clan of the brutal military personnel. This is intended to make them persuade their kin to be humane or more responsive to claims made in the public interest. Secondly, communities or districts rejecting transfers or appointments of brutal military personnel from a district which suffered brutality under their command to a new one. Importantly, the article suggests that while above two ideas may be "radical" according to Eurocentric governance theories or models, this labelling is less justified from other vantage points.

The presidential and parliamentary elections in Uganda follow a five-year cycle and the most recent one was held on 14th January 2021. Uganda has experienced sharp political tensions involving removal of presidential term limit and age limit of 75 in 2005 and 2017 respectively. This year's election period coincided with the COVID-19 outbreak. This election is particularly very important to Ugandans given the fact that 76-year-old President Museveni and his National Resistance Movement (NRM) party had ruled for 35 years amidst the growing concern over the rising inequality. According to the Electoral Commission, President Yoweri Kaguta Museveni won the poll by 58.64% and his closest opposition challenger Robert Kyagulanyi aka Bobi Wine received 34.83% of the vote[1]. However, Bobi Wine filed a petition in court against President Museveni's victory claiming that the poll was rigged. "Any election Museveni participates in can never be a peaceful election, can never be a free and fair election", claimed Medard Sseggona, Bobi Wine's

1 Ajuna, D. (2020) Museveni wins election with 58.6%. Daily Monitor

lawyer.[2] President Museveni has often been accused of using violence against political rivals and as a major tool to maintain rigid control over Uganda, an allegation he denies.

Human Rights Watch observes that the recent elections were characterized by widespread violence and human rights abuses such as killings by security forces, arrests and beatings of opposition supporters and journalists, disruption of opposition rallies, and a nationwide internet blackout.[3]

COVID'S ROLE IN ESCALATING ELECTION VIOLENCE

Much as COVID-19 is a public health matter, political decisions continue to play an important role in policies and guidelines aimed at preventing its spread.

widely regarded as historic opposition strongholds.[5] The security forces and government were accused of selectively enforcing the electoral guidelines on COVID-19 prevention in favour of the ruling NRM party. Opposition politicians claim that the state continues to use COVID-19 prevention as a pretense to gain political capital by violently cracking down on them and their supporters[6].

Early in the pandemic, the government introduced various preventative measures to slow the spread of the virus, including social distancing, use of sanitizers, travel restrictions, quarantine, curfews, and ultimately a full lockdown. These were often enforced in a draconian manner by armed forces who have a dark history of violence against civilians. The forces are composed of often ill-trained Local Defense Units, police, and the

...our communities tend to trust reputable elders and traditional leaders more than formal state governance structures.

Accordingly, the pandemic found its name being invoked in complex political situations, and not just in Uganda. One commentator in the Daily Monitor newspaper, Kaushik Basu argues that around the world, many autocratic regimes used the "pandemic as a pretext to arrest opponents and silence dissent"[4].

The Electoral Commission issued guidelines to be followed during the political campaigns to "prevent further spread of the virus." Political rallies were to be limited to a maximum of 200 people and prohibitions limited processions to and from the campaign venues. The electoral body also suspended political campaigns in major cities and towns they considered as hotspots for COVID-19, amidst claims that these urban areas were

army. It is upsetting if not surprising that by the time the country registered its 1st COVID-19 death, a dozen people had lost their lives at the hands of the brutal armed forces[7].

2 AFP (2020). Bobi Wine files election petition challenging Museveni's victory. Daily Monitor

3 Human Rights Watch (2020) Uganda: Elections Marred by Violence.

4 Basu, K. (2020) Covid and common sense. Daily Monitor

5 The Observer newspaper reports the suspension of campaigns in key urban areas by the Electoral Commission (EC),but a report in Daily monitor claims that the COVID-19 data contradicts Electoral Commission campaign freeze claims. Orena, A. (2020) EC now suspends campaigns in Kampala, Wakiso over COVID-19. Observer; Atukunda, N. (2020) Covid data contradicts EC campaign freeze claims. Daily Monitor.

6 Security forces target mainly opposition candidates who they regard as threats to president Museveni and in the name of enforcing SOPs, people are indiscriminatively killed, some opposition candidates have resorted to wearing bullet proof vests and helmets during campaigns. In other words, SOPs seems to apply to opposition leaders and their supporters but not members of the ruling NRM party. Even the minister of health Dr Ruth Aceng was among the first key public officials to disregard the SOPs. Nyanzi, F. (2020) Police and military should not enforce SOPs selectively. Daily Monitor; Draku, F. (2020) Police teargas Amuriat as NRM holds processions. Daily Monitor; Draku, F. (2020) Police teargas Amuriat as NRM holds processions. Daily Monitor.

7 BBC reports that In Uganda, at least 12 people have allegedly

In November 2020, Uganda witnessed some of its worst unrest in recent years. Presidential candidates Bobi Wine and Patrick Oboi Amuriat were violently arrested for allegedly flouting the controversial electoral guidelines. The security forces responded by indiscriminately shooting and killing nearly 60 civilians and injuring over 150 for holding a peaceful demonstration against the arrest of the two leading opposition presidential candidates[8]. Countrywide, the number of deaths caused by armed state security forces is high[9]. It is shocking that the government has fully justified the reckless and indiscriminate shooting of civilians by security agents, and at the time of writing , there is no sign that these perpetrators who murdered civilians on the streets in broad daylight will be brought to justice. The minister of Security, General Elly Tumwine, even defended the killings, saying: "police have a right to shoot you and kill you if you reach a certain level of violence… Can I repeat? Police have a right to shoot you and you die for nothing… Do it at your own risk."[10]. President Museveni bragged about how his government is a specialist in violence, saying: "They have entered the area we know very well, of fighting, and they will regret [it]."[11].

People in Uganda, and other countries in similar situations, are not just dealing with the pandemic but also facing daily challenges of living and surviving under their authoritarian governments. A significant number of people have more fear for the security forces than contracting COVID-19[12]. Civilian-military relations are at an all-time low[13].

COMMUNITY MEETINGS WITH FAMILIES OR CLOSE RELATIVES AND CLAN OF THE BRUTAL MILITARY PERSONNEL

Communities in Uganda cannot continue to watch the current unpleasant situation degenerate further. There is need to generate more sustainable and inclusive practical interventions that can reduce the widening gap between the members of armed forces and the people and harmonize relations beyond the aftermath of the pandemic. The silent majority of Ugandans know that the unfair treatment of fellow citizens is uncalled for and that it should be condemned in the strongest possible terms.

Whereas the community members in a district know all the notoriously brutal military leaders there, initiating a meeting with them directly can seem difficult because of the power dynamics involved. However, through their immediate families or close relatives, the harmonization or dialogue process can kick start. In a peaceful way, community members can approach the relatives of the brutal military personnel and explain the excesses caused or committed under their command.

In a typical African setting, community would members brainstorm with the relatives of the brutal military personnel to find a binding solution or way to improve the bad relations between the community and the military. In this case, such a meeting may be led by the elders in the community or by other traditional leaders. The relatives of the identified brutal officer would at least feel morally obligated to convey the message from the community to their kin. The military officer would in turn realize that his or her approach to the issues at hand is adversely impacting the lives of people and peaceful coexistence in the society where they live and may be motivated through these structures to change. Where the immediate relatives may not easily be reached, the community could involve the clan members of the problematic officers to listen to their plea for peace and empathy. Respected clan leaders can participate in dialogue with elders or local representatives of the aggrieved community. The dialogue signifies the love that community members

been killed by security officers enforcing measures to restrict the spread of coronavirus, while the country has only just confirmed its first death from COVID-19. Horrible stories in the Daily monitor revealed how people died in the hands of the security forces. BBC (2020) Uganda - where security forces may be more deadly than coronavirus; Daily Monitor (2020) Covid-19: How Ugandans died at the hands of security agents

8 The video shows state security agents shooting peaceful demonstrators with live ammunitions: https://twitter.com/observerug/status/1329335187126280193. See also: URN (2020). Bobi Wine protests: Over 1,000 bullet casings collected in Kampala. Observer

9 Daily Monitor (2020) Covid-19: How Ugandans died at the hands of security agents.

10 Observer (editorial) (2020). No single ambition should cost a life; BBC (2020) Bobi Wine protests: Shoot to kill defended by Uganda minister

11 Kahungu, M. (2020) Museveni warns public on riots.

12 Farida Nabourema (a Togolese human rights advocate) wrote an article in the African Arguments, a Pan-African platform entitled "Dictators love lockdowns" documenting how state security agents in dictatorial governments exercise excessive powers with impunity on citizens by shutting down their freedom of speech and association through biased laws and guidelines during the lockdown. Nabourema, F. (2020) Dictators love lockdowns. African Arguments

13 Civilian-military relation is at low currently in Uganda. Bagala, A. (2020) How LDUs have lost public confidence. Daily Monitor

have for the brutal military officer. Ultimately, the officer is likely to empathize with the people and in a steady manner peace and good relations will be established between specific military personnel and the community. If this happens in Northern Uganda, members of the Acholi communities might then apply mato oput, a traditional justice ceremony that includes forgiveness and reconciliation.

Women could play a pivotal role in such dialogue meetings because they have often been most harshly affected by brutality meted on the community members during pandemic prevention: Their livelihoods are affected; many are roadside or market vendors whose business has been impossible to conduct during periods of lockdown, yet they still have to provide for their families. These women have often been the direct victims of harsh enforcement of curfews[CITE]. Since women would tend to relate more to people than to hardware or military weapons, they would perhaps be significant in such mediation[14]. This is because women extraordinarily function as forerunners in rebuilding clan communication, conflict resolution and peace building activities[15].

This grassroots approach would create trust and confidence in the conflict resolution processes, since our communities tend to trust reputable elders and traditional leaders more than formal state governance structures. An anthropological case study conducted by Emma Eifversson indicates that customary conflict resolution systems are often better than the state led approach in addressing causes of conflict[16]. Such customary conflict resolution interventions lead to an increase in participation of the local communities in peace building and could indeed work better at grassroot level[17].

REJECTING TRANSFERS AND PROMOTIONS OF THE BRUTAL MILITARY PERSONNEL

The communities in a district may resolve to reject a transfer, appointment, or promotion of a known brutal military personnel. They can petition the appointing authority to rescind the transfer or appointment of a badly behaved military officer. The community, through their traditional leaders or other locally based representatives, can mount pressure on the local district government or central government authorities to amplify their voice regarding welcoming a brutal officer or seeking to have him or her transferred to another district or community. They can write to central government expressing their refusal to welcome the brutal military personnel in their society. The media can amplify the community's decision to reject the transfer or appointment of a brutal officer.

Certain actors, sectors, or disciplines, like Eurocentric governance theories and models, would find the proposals above radical as the public realm is meant to stay distinct from the private realm. However, from different vantage points, those that would deem the proposal radical are unjustified. In fact, the effectiveness of these proposals can make us question the boundaries of such a distinction altogether.

This proposal has been tested and proven to work. It promotes having law abiding military personnel who are empathetic to the people. On October 17th, 2020, a notorious District Police Commander of Mityana district in central Uganda, Mr Alex Mwine commanded a team of armed security forces who teargassed a gathering of traditional chiefs of Mbogo clan of Buganda Kingdom for allegedly not observing social distancing[18].

The gathering had some prominent religious leaders in attendance as well. The government attempted to transfer the above brutal officer to Hoima district but representatives of the traditional kingdom of Bunyoro and its subjects immediately protested the transfer. "We have rejected the transfer of Mr Mwine to Hoima which is the official seat of Bunyoro Kitara Kingdom. We have received reports about his disciplinary record and we have found it wanting," said Mr Andrew Byakutaga, the Bunyoro Kitara Kingdom Prime Minister. He read the letter before the media and sent a copy to the appointment authority who rescinded the transfer of Alex Mwine. The brutal officer was not wanted in the community because its members feared he would

14 Galtung, J. (1999) Conflict transformation by peaceful means: The Transcend method. UN

15 Lederach, J P. (1997) Sustainable reconciliation in divided societies. Washington, DC: USIP

16 Elfversson, E. (2013) Third parties, the state, and communal conflict resolution: A comparative study of evidence from Kenya. In Thomas Ohlson Memorial Conference, Uppsala, Sweden, pp. 18-20.

17 Mac Ginty, R. (2014) Everyday Peace: Bottom-up and Local Agency in Conflict-affected Societies. Security Dialogue 45, no. 6 (2014): 548-64.

18 Mr Mwine has been surrounded by many controversies. In 2014, the community of Bundibugyo attacked the Police station where he was the District Police Commander and during the lockdown in 2020, he was accused of assaulting Mr Francis Zaake, the Mityana Municipality MP. Nantume, G. (2020) Alex Mwine-Mukono, the officer creating controversy in Mityana. Daily Monitor.

antagonize their peaceful society.[19] Thus, the local communities or traditional leaders have played a crucial role in checking and monitoring the conduct of security forces.

CONCLUSION

The proposed ideas above are not actually radical if we think about how the community members through various locally based or non-state structures put pressure on leaders at the district level in practise. Particularly, the customary dispute resolution processes that facilitate engagement with relatives and clan members are vital to achieving sustainable and stable peace. The above engagement will create urgency because the brutal military personnel may not merely disregard the plea from the community which they interact with daily, host to their families, relatives, and clan members. Above all it is the same community where the brutal officers would live after retiring from public office. In the interest of peace, the community would not want to witness bloodshed resulting from revenge by the relatives of the deceased murdered by the brutal military personnel during enforcement of COVID-19 preventive measures.

As in the case of Mr Alex Mwine, Ugandan communities are encouraged to reject a transfer, appointment, or promotion of a known brutal military personnel. This approach should be embraced in all parts of the country currently experiencing significant brutality from the security forces during COVID-19 prevention.

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Alternative Justice for Victims in Uganda:

Learning from the Impact of COVID-19 on the Court System

Tonny Raymond Kirabira

The notion of a more "victim-centred" approach to peacebuilding and Transitional Justice (TJ), is increasingly emphasized in academic, legal and policy discourse. Unfortunately, this element is mostly lacking within the context of Uganda's post war recovery and transition. This article attempts to strike a balance between retributive justice and reconciliation. Considering the challenges of achieving justice through the courts, including the COVID-19 disruptions, the article argues that by directly engaging survivors in alternative dispute resolution as a process embedded in plea-bargaining, the Courts can make accountability for atrocity crimes more "victim-centred". This recommendation is radical, from an International Criminal Justice (ICJ) perspective, because redress through the courts is primarily about retribution or punishment of guilty parties, which a survivor-centred approach to plea bargaining might not always produce. The argument, however, is not to turn away from retributive justice. Rather, the claim is that it is ineffective for mass atrocities within specific contexts, on its own. Ultimately, a more radical approach is for criminal accountability mechanisms to preserve spaces that allow for reconciliation, through Alternative Dispute Resolution (ADR) and Plea Bargaining. This proposed approach is meant to specifically address atrocity violence during periods of transition, which would be interpreted as radical in the context of ICJ.

BACKGROUND

Thirty-five years ago, Northern Uganda plunged into a two decade-long civil war. The Lord's Resistance Army (LRA), a rebel group, were implicated in enormous acts of gross human rights violations. To some scholars, the war, which predominantly affected the Acholi people, was partially a result of the politicization of ethnic identities in post-colonial Uganda.[1] The LRA atrocities, together with the government military campaigns, led to massive displacement of people in Northern Uganda which lasted until 2006 when the rebels were driven out of the region.[2] In light of recent reports about the continued economic and psychological impacts of the conflict on the victims and communities,[3] it is important to

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Adam Branch, 'Exploring the Root of LRA Violence: Political Crisis and Ethnic Politics in Acholiland', in The Lord's Resistance Army: Myth and Reality, ed. Tim Allen and Koen Vlassenroot, 1st ed. (London: Zed Books, 2010)26.

2 Artur Bogner and Gabriele Rosenthal, "Rebels in Northern Uganda after Their Return to Civilian Life: Between a Strong We-Image and Experiences of Isolation and Discrimination," Canadian Journal of African Studies / Revue Canadienne Des Études Africaines 51, no. 2 (2017).

3 Sarah Kasande Kihika and Eva Kallweit, 'Building Blocks for Reparations: Providing Interim Relief to Victims Through Targeted Development Assistance', Research Report (Kampala: International

evaluate the existing framework of international criminal justice (ICJ).

While ICJ is primarily associated with international criminal prosecutions as a response to mass atrocities and impunity, it also envisions incidental outcomes like peace and reconciliation of communities.[4] Ugandan scholar Lubaale develops a legal pluralist account for ICJ, challenging dominant assumptions that undermine the role of local approaches in formal conflict resolution.[5] Crucially, there are calls for creative confrontation of the challenges facing ICJ within specific contexts[6]. It is here where this paper intervenes.

At the domestic level, the COVID-19 pandemic has had an enormous impact on the Ugandan criminal justice system and courts, namely through suspension of post-atrocity trials at the International Crimes Division (ICD).[7] In addition, the justice system faces enormous challenges like limited financial resources, leading to frustration among litigants, including victims.[8] These complexities beg the need for a seemingly radical solution: Reconciliation as a complementary goal of ICJ to be pursued through its constituent processes in a more than incidental manner. Based on my work as a legal practitioner and socio-legal researcher in Uganda, I argue that the radical solution of embedding reconciliation within formal court processes has the potential to make the trials more participatory and legitimate before the affected communities. Besides my work, the way that COVID-19 related disruptions in the trials threatened such an outsized impact the overall process of doing justice provided the impetus for thinking about solutions for the post-war affected communities and victims.

One can thus argue that reconciliation is a better option, since it allows the participation of multiple victims and affected communities.

RECONCILIATION AS A FORM OF TRANSITIONAL JUSTICE IN UGANDA

Transitional Justice (TJ) relates to the different process of addressing past systematic abuses during post-conflict or democratic transitions,[9] and its goals include truth-seeking, justice, peace, democracy and reconciliation.[10] The post-war accountability mechanisms of contemporary TJ in Uganda include reparations, reconciliation and criminal prosecutions at domestic and international levels through bodies like the International Criminal Court (ICC).[11]

Contemporary TJ scholarship suggests a need to create a balance between the competing interests of retribution

Center for Transitional Justice, September 2020)35, https://www.ictj.org/sites/default/files/ICTJ_Report_Uganda_InterimRelief_Web.pdf.

4 Payam Akhavan, "The Rise, and Fall, and Rise, of International Criminal Justice," Journal of International Criminal Justice 11, no. 3 (July 2013): 532; Frederic Megret, "International Criminal Justice as a Peace Project," European Journal of International Law 29, no. 3 (2018): 835–858.

5 Emma Charlene Lubaale, "Legal Pluralism as a Lens through Which to Appreciate the Role and Place of Traditional Justice in International Criminal Justice," Journal of Legal Pluralism and Unofficial Law 52, no. 2 (2020): 180–202.

6 Payam Akhavan, "The Rise, and Fall, and Rise, of International Criminal Justice"; Frederic Megret, "The Anxieties of International Criminal Justice," Leiden Journal of International Law 21, no. 1 (2016): 197–221.

7 Lino Owor Ogora, "Kwoyelo Trial Suspended Due to COVID-19," International Justice Monitor, March 26, 2020, https://www.ijmonitor.org/2020/03/kwoyelo-trial-suspended-due-to-covid-19/.

8 "Victims in the Thomas Kwoyelo Case Forced to Wait Longer for Justice," International Center for Transitional Justice, July 25, 2018, https://www.ictj.org/news/victims-thomas-kwoyelo-case-forced-wait-longer-justice; Andante Okanya, "World Bank Commits More Sh500m for Case Backlog Fight," New Vision, February 28, 2020, https://www.newvision.co.ug/news/1515708/world-bank-commits-sh500m-backlog-fight.

9 Joanna R. Quinn, "The Development of Transitional Justice," in Research Handbook on Transitional Justice, ed. Cheryl Lawther, Luke Moffett, and Dov Jacobs, Research Handbooks in International Law Series (Cheltenham: Edward Elgar Publishing, 2017), 11–33.

10 Paul Gready and Simon Robins, 'Transitional Justice and Theories of Change: Towards Evaluation as Understanding', International Journal of Transitional Justice 14, no. 2 (2020): 226.

11 Frédéric Mégret, "The Strange Case of the Victim Who Did Not Want Justice.," International Journal of Transitional Justice 12, no. 3 (November 2018): 444–63.

and reconciliation,[12] while making TJ more creative through sensitivity to the particular contexts in which the mechanisms are deployed.[13] Within the context of TJ, reconciliation refers to the process of rebuilding relationships at individual, societal and institutional levels.[14] Besides the truth-seeking mechanisms, acts of memory or remembrance, and acknowledgement of past violations by the perpetrators, including state agents, contribute to reconciliation.[15]

In Northern Uganda, reconciliation is synonymous with peacebuilding and community building through the use of customary practices of justice–mato opu or "bitter roots" among the Acholi people.[16] The ultimate goal of such rituals is to restore relations between the perpetrators, offended individuals and communities, through their clan representatives.[17]

On the other hand, retributive justice is objectively compelling in the case of atrocities as it offers a chance for nominal punishment. Yet, retribution is not necessarily beneficial to the practice of TJ. One can thus argue that reconciliation is a better option, since it allows the participation of multiple victims and affected communities. However, we should not think of them as mutually exclusive.

The next section will illustrate how customary rituals and practices could help facilitate a more effective form of ICJ, using the court procedures of Alternative Dispute Resolution (ADR) in the tangible case of Thomas Kwoyelo.

COURTS AS INTERMEDIARIES OF RECONCILIATION

The COVID-19 pandemic led to the halt of the trial of Thomas Kwoyelo, a former LRA commander, in the first domestic war crimes case, regarded as a test case for post-conflict justice in Uganda.[18] Kwoyelo was charged with 93 counts of war crimes and crimes against humanity, allegedly committed during the conflict. This case illustrates the complexity and limitations of criminal prosecution of LRA atrocities from a TJ perspective. The attitudes of affected communities towards the LRA crimes are diverse. Critics of the Kwoyelo trial view his prosecution as politicized justice, arguing that legal accountability is not appropriate within the cultural and political contexts.[19] In light of these arguments, it is important to also think of ways that criminal courts could act as intermediaries of reconciliation.

Alternative dispute resolution (ADR) refers to means of solving disputes outside of simple litigation in the court system, and often involves things like mediation or arbitration, but can take many forms. The range of outcomes of ADR processes might not be predetermined in the way that litigation is, and inputs from all parties involved can be taken into account. The adoption of a radical ADR within ICJ processes has the opportunity to bring community and traditional practice together with existing justice system and legal rigour. From legal pluralist point of view, Lubaale argues that traditional practices and criminal trials have the potential to complement each other.[20]

Whilst acknowledging their importance in TJ, interdisciplinary scholarship also suggests that criminal trials are not truly victim-centred due to their narrow focus on individual perpetrators,[21] and due to procedural limitations in victim participation and influence on the verdict [22] On the other hand, more victim-oriented scholars are sceptical about the value of traditional reconciliation ceremonies of mato oput, since they can also imply a lack of protection for victims

12 Dustin N. Sharp, Rethinking Transitional Justice for the Twenty-First Century Beyond the End of History (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2018); Anna Macdonald, ""In the Interests of Justice?" The International Criminal Court, Peace Talks and the Failed Quest for War Crimes Accountability in Northern Uganda," Journal of Eastern African Studies 11, no. 4 (2017).

13 Kirsten J. Fisher, 'Defining a Relationship between Transitional Justice and Jus Post Bellum: A Call and an Opportunity for Post-Conflict Justice', Journal of International Political Theory 16, no. 3 (2020),300; Hugo van der Merwe, 'Transitions in the Middle East and North Africa: New Trajectories and Challenges for Transitional Justice?', in Transitional Justice and the Arab Spring, ed. Kirsten J. Fisher and Robert Stewart (London: Routledge, 2014), 234.

14 Paul Seils, "The Place of Reconciliation in Transitional Justice: Conceptions and Misconceptions," ICTJ Briefing (New York, NY: International Center for Transitional Justice, June 2017), https://www.ictj.org/sites/default/files/ICTJ-Briefing-Paper-Reconciliation-TJ-2017.pdf.

15 Pablo de Greiff, "Unacknowledged Past Breeds Manipulation and Fear," International Center for Transitional Justice, May 4, 2016, https://www.ictj.org/debate/article/unacknowledged-past-manipulation-fear.

16 Marisa O. Ensor, "Drinking the Bitter Roots: Gendered Youth, Transitional Justice, and Reconciliation across the South Sudan-Uganda Border," African Conflict and Peacebuilding Review, Special Issue on Peace Education, Memory, and Reconciliation in Africa, 3, no. 2 (2013); Janet McKnight, "Accountability in Northern Uganda: Understanding the Conflict, the Parties and the False Dichotomies in International Criminal Law and Transitional Justice," Journal of African Law 59, no. 2 (2015): 193–219.

17 Ketty Anyeko et al., "'The Cooling of Hearts': Community Truth-Telling in Northern Uganda," Human Rights Review 13 (2012): 107–124.

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19 Anna Macdonald and Holly Porter, "The Trial of Thomas Kwoyelo: Opportunity of Spectre? Reflections from the Ground on the First LRA Prosecution," Africa 86, no. 4 (2016): 698–722.

20 Emma Charlene Lubaale, "Legal Pluralism as a Lens through Which to Appreciate the Role and Place of Traditional Justice in International Criminal Justice."

21 Makau Mutua, "What Is the Future of Transitional Justice?," International Journal of Transitional Justice 9, no. 1 (2015): 1–9.

22 Luke Moffett, 'Complementarity's Monopoly on Justice in Uganda: The International Criminal Court, Victims and Thomas Kwoyelo', International Criminal Law Review 16, no. 3 (2016)518.

and other vulnerable people.[23]

As observed by TJ scholars, the relationship between the elements of criminal trials, retribution and reconciliation is still unsettled.[24] This can make it useful to adopt a radical approach to criminal accountability processes, by including non-legal aspects like negotiation, apology, forgiveness and communal compensation in the process. One way of doing this would be through the use of ADR and its incorporation into court procedures. The end result could be a more participatory and culturally inclusive form of post-war justice.

The potentially successful collaboration between the criminal justice system and traditional reconciliation rituals and systems is illustrated through the use of plea bargaining. The context of Northern Uganda provides a practical case study to examine whether ADR could influence sentencing decisions by criminal courts, by bringing victims more directly into the criminal justice process.[25] Through a legal procedure termed "Plea Bargaining", the state prosecutors negotiate a compromise with the accused persons. Within the context of TJ, this would be more effective if the victims were allowed to be part of this process. In this way, the radical solution could be achieved by expanding the plea-bargaining process to include a wide range of actors, like village elders and affected communities, that are pivotal in the customary rituals.

CONCLUSION

The COVID-19 trial disruptions demonstrate to some extent the problem of relying on retributive justice done in the courts as a sine qua non for community reconciliation. More ongoing victim involvement in the form of ADR could have lessened the impact of such disruptions as delayed justice. This and other criticisms levelled against such trials reminds us of the need for legal pluralism and radical solutions.
In order for this to happen, the article has suggested the incorporation of ADR embedded in plea bargaining, into the post-atrocity criminal accountability procedures. The courts, in collaboration with government and development partners need to draw appropriate legal and policy strategies aimed at making this solution a reality.

This seemingly radical solution would be effective in countries like Uganda, where TJ processes remain contested[26]. As has been highlighted, there are critical concerns about punitive justice, and suggestions have been put forward for restorative approaches that centralize the affected communities and victims. The case of Thomas Kwoyelo has been used as a prism through which to demonstrate the practicality of the radical solution.

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Following South Korea:
Collectivism and Individualism Responding to COVID-19

Monica Macias

FOLLOWING SOUTH KOREA: COLLECTIVISM VERSUS INDIVIDUALISM AND THE COVID-19 RESPONSE

In the aftermath of the outbreak of Covid-19, countries around the world adopted a range of different measures. The catastrophic response of some Western countries such as the UK led to disastrous and often fatal consequence for their populations. South Korea, meanwhile, had relative success in clamping down on spiralling infections and fatalities.

This made me wonder: why is there such difference in response to such a great crisis? Why have there been more victims in the UK than in South Korea, when the UK had more time to prepare for the virus reaching its shores after the first case broke out in China? What failed?

While there is no single answer to my questions, in this paper I explore political culture – specifically whether it is collectivist or individualist – as one important factor. I strongly believe that good organisation, in conjunction with the Confucian-rooted collectivist mindset characteristic of East Asian culture, is one of the main factors that led to the relatively more effective and efficient response to COVID-19 in South Korea, compared to the UK. The South Korean example shows that when a society is confronting such a serious and important crisis, like a great pandemic, collectivism can trump individualism.

INDIVIDUALISM VERSUS COLLECTIVISM

Differences between individualism and collectivism profoundly influence and impact the way that societies are ruled, and the mentality and the ways of life of its members. But what are individualism and collectivism?

Generally speaking, individualism is a view that prioritises the needs and interests of an individual. That is, each person is distinguished from the masses and their interests considered more important than any socially imposed ones, with value placed on autonomy, uniqueness and self-sufficiency. According to De Tocqueville in Democracy in America (1835-40) individualism is an egoism that disposed humans to be concerned primarily with their own small circle of family and friends[1]. In 1980, Dutch social psychologist Geert Hofstede developed a theory of 'cultural dimensions'. Hofstede used Values Survey Module questionnaires to conduct research into differences between national cultures along six dimensions: power distance, collectivism vs. individualism, uncertainty avoidance, femininity vs. masculinity, short-term vs. long-term orientation, and restraint vs. indulgence[2]. The 'collectivism vs. individualism' dimension measures the degree to which societies are unified in groups and their "perceived obligations" and their dependency on groups (Corporate Finance Institute, n.d.). In Hofstede's testing, the UK scored 89 for individualism, contrasting dramatically with South Korea's score of 18[3].

1 Luke, S., n.d. Individualism | Definition, History, Philosophy, Examples, & Facts. [online] Encyclopedia Britannica. Available at: https://www.britannica.com/topic/individualism

2 Hofstede, G. (2011). Dimensionalizing Cultures: The Hofstede Model in Context. Online Readings in Psychology and Culture, 2(1). http://dx.doi.org/10.9707/2307-0919.1014.

3 Hofstede Insights (n.d). Country Comparison – UK & South Korea.

In terms of governance, individualism is often expressed through free-market or libertarian politics that emphasize personal (individual) freedoms and responsibility, and reduced involvement of the state in the private life of citizens. As former British prime minister Margaret Thatcher famously said: "there's no such thing as society. There are individual men and women and there are families...It is our duty to look after ourselves and then, also, to look after our neighbours."[4]

Collectivism allocates importance to obedience, social cooperation, and common goals, prioritising group interest over individual needs. A particular strand of collectivism can be seen in political formations that draw on Confucian traditions. Confucius advocated obedience and respect from citizens towards authority; that each person has an important responsibility to family and society and the needs of the group are more important than the individual[5]. Confucius believed in harmony between the universe and human beings. In order to achieve such harmony, he claimed that everyone should understand their status in society and behave accordingly.

Confucianism therefore centres around the notion of a societal interdependent relationship. It is a scheme in which people in lower ranks give obedience to people in higher ranks; within the family, from pupils to teachers, and especially when it comes to government and citizen relations. As a result, Korean and other East Asian societies encourage considerable respect and obedience to not only authorities, but also based on age. This is not simply about blindly following though, since the system places obligations on those in positions of authority to act in a way that is worthy of obedience. Alan Chong, associate professor at the S. Rajaratnam School of International Studies in Malaysia, explains in an interview: "People here – East Asia – are still collectivist in orientation of thought, meaning even if a certain government is despised, they will still listen to instructions, especially if they are reasonable"[6].

Individualism and Collectivism in Practise: My Journey

I am drawing on my personal experience of being brought up in North Korea, living and working in South Korea as a fashion designer, and my experience of living in the UK during the pandemic while studying for an MA in International Relations and Diplomacy. On my arrival to the West in the early 90s, there were three main things that caught my attention. Firstly, the expression of individualism through fashion in the West which revealed each person's character, personality and uniqueness. There was a clear contrast in each individual outfit, even while keeping within certain long or short-term trends. Women seem to dislike copying each other's styles, or wearing the same makeup. Secondly, the way citizens communicated with and about the government and authorities often displayed disrespect or disobedience. Thirdly, a comment from one of my co-workers that stood out to me: "I need to look after myself in order to look after others." This comment captures a self-reliant and individualist viewpoint that was far less common among my peers in Korea.

During my childhood in North Korea, in my boarding school, one of my tutor's favourite sermons was: "First, you think of and help your friends and neighbours, and then you think about yourself. Most importantly, you must respect and obey authority." This kind of mindset (and subordination to authority) could be observed when the Heabangsan hotel, the place I lived when I was undergraduate student in Pyongyang, went into quarantine for 40 days in the late 90s. My brother was infected with measles. The response from the health authority was a quick and effective quarantine of the hotel. The obedience of the hotel's employees was unanimous. This spirit of collectivism and obedience to authority was well captured in the Worker's Party's slogan: "If the party decides, we [citizens] do!"

While South Korea successfully adopted the Western liberal political ideology and economic system, I identified a strong trail of collectivism and Confucian ethics similar to North Korea during my time in Seoul. That trail manifested itself through fashion and social trends which emphasized conformity, and in the respect and obedience shown to relevant authorities within the company where I worked. For instance, in order to break such monotonous make up, style and outfit, I once suggested a new eyebrow style to one of my close friends. She refused to change the style, fearing being different from others and not obeying the widely followed (if unwritten) fashion rules. A strong sense of the collectivist mind-set embedded in Korean

4 Keay, D. (1987) Interview with Margaret Thatcher, Women's Own.

5 Park et al. The Influence of Confucian Ethics and Collectivism on Whistleblowing Intentions: A Study of South Korean Public Employees. Journal of Business Ethics, Jun., 2005, Vol. 58, No. 4 (Jun., 2005), pp. 387-403

6 Jennings, R., (2020). How Cultural Differences Help Asian Countries Beat COVID-19, While US Struggles. VOANEWS.

culture trumped the individualist viewpoint. Regardless of their differences in ideologies – communist in the North and liberal-capitalist in the South – both country's cultures share this trail of collectivism and obedience to authority, which can be traced back in the Confucian idea of governing society.

HOW HAVE THESE BINARY VIEWPOINTS INFLUENCED THE RESPONSE TO COVID-19 IN SOUTH KOREA AND THE UK?

When the first case of Coronavirus appeared in South Korea, the government acted quickly and efficiently. Their core strategy was to quickly identify those infected, prevent the spread, and ensure that they are recovered quickly through intensive treatment along with a high level of civic engagement in their Test, Trace, Treat program[7].

The South Korean government was conducting tracking and diagnostic tests using credit card usage information, CCTV footage, mobile phone location information, etc., to the extent permitted by the Act on the Prevention and Management of Infectious Diseases. Precautions were taken to avoid the exposure of citizens' personal information. The appropriate information revealed in the epidemiological survey results was disclosed anonymously to the public to ensure that the person who was in contact with the virus could receive an immediate diagnostic test if necessary.

The mobile phones of self-isolated people and dedicated officials were linked to the "Self-Isolation Safety Protection App", allowing officials to check the health status of self-isolated people twice daily, and to keep track of their location. The app also includes contact information for the Korea Center for Disease Control and Prevention and officials, as well as instructions to be followed by those self-isolating.

All the effective organisation, quick response and strategy of South Korean government could not have succeeded without the Confucian rooted collective mind-set of obedience and trust in the authority's decisions, I argue. British health journalist David Cox observed:

> [...] Part of this –achievement in tackling Covid 19- is down to the traditional obedience within South Korean culture, they also believe it is because the pandemic has not been politicised[8].

Compared to South Korea, the UK government had more time to develop and implement preventative strategies between the first cases coming to light in China, and the first cases arriving on its shores. Despite this, the effects of the pandemic in the UK have been devastating. The government's response has been described as "too little, too late, too flawed"[9][10].

The first cases of COVID in the UK were recorded in January 2020. By early March, scientists in the government's Scientific Advisory Group for Emergencies (SAGE), realized that the National Health System

...in a critical and serious situation like a pandemic, government policies that expect people to be individualistic are fundamentally ineffective.

7 Kennedy, J. (2020) WHAT CAN THE UK LEARN FROM SOUTH KOREA'S RESPONSE TO COVID-19? Centre for Health and the Public Interest; Ministry of Foreign Affairs Republic of Korea (2020). Korea's Fight against COVID-19.

8 Cox, D., (2020). The way South Korea crushed its second wave is a warning to us all. WIRED.

9 The BMJ, (2020). UK's response to covid-19 "too little, too late, too flawed"

10 This section incorporates and was adjusted according to substantive feedback from editor Danny Lord.

(NHS) would struggle to cope as the COVID-19 spread through the population[11]. Meanwhile, Prime Minister Boris Johnson missed five government emergency committee (COBRA) meetings[12].

Like in South Korea, the government in the UK made use a test and trace system, but it was introduced very late on in the pandemic, and was riddled with operational problems when it did come online. It was also less intense than the South Korean program, with self-isolation tracked using phone calls rather than location-tracking. The UK had two periods of nationwide lockdown, the first starting in late March 2020 and easing up later in the Summer, and the second coming into effect in October 2020, easing briefly before tightening up again in December, and easing up again from May 2021. Before the second nationwide lockdown, local lockdowns were implemented in different areas of the country. Social distancing measures were introduced from March 2020, and mask-wearing was made compulsory inside public spaces including on public transport from July[13].

In the cases of both the Spring and Winter lockdowns, the government was slow to implement measures, partly because of the Prime Minister's "deep ideological reservations about turning Britain into an effective police state, as some other countries have done" (Wickham). Another major reason for the delays and general reluctance to bring in harsh restrictions was an expectation that people would not follow the rules for long, that they would develop 'pandemic fatigue'[14]. In a "land of liberty[15]" such as Britain, it was thought that people would not put up with their freedoms being limited. This is individualism guiding policy and blocking effective pandemic response. The delay to the Winter lockdown alone was said to be responsible for an extra 27,000 deaths[16].

Despite the government's reservations – and despite anecdotal evidence and many news stories suggesting widespread non-compliance – adherence to the most restrictions was high (over 90% on average) among the population[17]. Pandemic fatigue turned out to be a myth. Adherence to self-isolation requirements among people who had either tested positive or come into contact with someone who had was relatively low, however. But Reicher and Drury explain:

"Unlike hand-hygiene and social distancing, self-isolation requires support from others to be possible. This includes support from others in the community, in the form of shopping most obviously. It also requires material support in the form of an income and sufficient space. The lower adherence rates for self-isolation therefore suggest that the issues may have less to do with psychological motivation than with the availability of resources.[18]"

This partly explains why low adherence was especially common among people with dependent children at home, people in a "lower socioeconomic grade", people otherwise experiencing "greater hardship in the pandemic", and workers in key sectors[19]. The government introduced a furlough scheme which saw the state pay 80% of the wages of staff at businesses that had to close or reduce their operations. But what was missing was an expanded sick pay regime for people who did continue working but may have tested positive and had to self-isolate. Statutory sick pay for UK workers is among the lowest in Europe, and was found to be in breach of the European Social Charter in 2018[20]. As a result, many people had no choice but to breach restrictions and go to work. Many of the newspaper reports highlighting non-compliance showed footage of packed commuter trains and buses. Furthermore, many companies were pressuring staff to return to offices, in breach of government guidelines[21]. Despite this, not one business has been issued any fine or prosecution for breaching COVID restrictions. Meanwhile official police figures from February 2021 showed that nearly 70,000 individuals had been fined.

11 Wickham, A., (2020). 10 Days That Changed Britain: "Heated" Debate Between Scientists Forced Boris Johnson To Act On Coronavirus. Buzzfeed

12 Walker, P., (2020). Boris Johnson Missed Five Coronavirus Cobra Meetings, Michael Gove Says. The Guardian

13 Institute for Government (2021). Timeline of UK coronavirus lockdowns, March 2020 to March 2021

14 Drury, J., and Reicher, S. (2021). Pandemic fatigue? How adherence to covid-19 regulations has been misrepresented and why it matters. Thebmjopinion.

15 Ibid

16 Booth, R. (2021) Delaying England's winter lockdown 'caused up to 27,000 extra Covid deaths'. The Guardian.

17 Drury and Reicher (2021)

18 ibid

19 Smith et al (2020) Adherence to the test, trace and isolate system: results from a time series of 21 nationally representative surveys in the UK (the COVID-19 Rapid Survey of Adherence to Interventions and Responses [CORSAIR] study). medRxiv

20 IER (2020) UK sick pay nearly worst in Europe and in breach of international law.

21 Savage et al (2021) Staff 'pressured to go back to work' in breach of UK Covid rules. The Guardian

The responsibility of the individual is prioritised, in a way that prevents effectively combatting the spread of the virus. Press reporting continued to put the blame on individuals misbehaving selfishly[22].

Various high-profile breaches of COVID restrictions by government personnel also steadily eroded trust in the government's own guidelines[23]. If collectivism requires a high degree of trust in authorities, this kind of behaviour undermines it. Collectivism is not just a matter of citizens looking out for one another, but also of people in control taking their responsibility seriously. Especially in a time of crisis, it is important for everyone, citizens and leaders, to be able to subordinate their individual whims before rational common interest.

The lack of effective strategy, organisation, and quick response to a crisis of such magnitude and importance as COVID-19, along with policies rooted in individualism resulted in the UK having one of the highest death rates in Europe. While South Korea accounted 169,146 Coronavirus cases with 2,044 deaths since the outbreak, the UK captured 5,155,243 cases with 128,431 deaths as per the time of writing this review[24].

It is clear to me that South Korea's well-organised strategy and its fast implementation, in addition to its collectivist culture enabled a more effective response to COVID-19 than what we saw in the UK. It is also clear that in a critical and serious situation like a pandemic, government policies that expect people to be individualistic are fundamentally ineffective. Even in the UK, mutual aid groups developed spontaneously within different neighbourhoods, with strangers coming together to look out for each other[25], and this is a collective spirit that should be encouraged and harnessed. Thus, it is maybe not as radical as we might think to follow policies that are rooted on collectivist morality, as South Korea did.

22 Roberts, L., (2020). Tube Drivers 'Furious' As Trains Remain Packed Despite Social Distancing Warnings. The Telegraph.; Maccarthy, C., (2020). Hundreds of young people try to enter Harrods in chaotic scenes as police make four arrests for affray and Covid rule breaches as huge crowds gather in Covent Garden. Mailonline

23 BBC (2020). Hancock Social Distancing Slip-Up Caught On Camera. BBC News; Sky News (2021) Dominic Cummings tells committee he didn't tell 'full story' about Durham trip - but Barnard Castle drive really was to test his eyesight.

24 Worldometers, Coronavirus data (n.d)

25 Power, A., Benton, E. Where next for Britain's 4,300 mutual aid groups?. LSE Blog

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Visualizing A More Perfect Union:

Social Science and the Visual Arts Building Just Futures Together

Shelly Clay-Robison

In New York City public housing, small paper notices reminding residents to prevent the spread of COVID-19 are posted next to elevators. The notices were hastily posted and were there to protect housing management from legal repercussions, but they share little written or visual information on how residents can protect themselves from COVID-19, leaving the poorest among them to wade through rumor, fact, and the information in-between.[1] Perhaps it comes down to decreasing attention spans and competition for attention, but capitalism, marketing, and advertising do visual communication very well. Why then, do governments often fail when it comes to inclusive and effective communication?

Public health communication is just one issue that requires attention, but society is also struggling with understanding and discussing issues like social unrest stemming from ethnic or racial oppression, economic inequality, and violence in our communities. Unfortunately, the 24-hour news cycle, social media, and increased amount of time online due to the pandemic, means that verbal communication is reduced and competition for our attention is increased. When it comes to designing public health communication and dispersing general information effectively to diverse audiences, governments should consider the radical idea of employing social scientists and artists to help them do it.

THE PROBLEM

Information about the state of the world is gathered and disseminated so rapidly that certain values needed for democratic governance and effective communication are stretched or are ignored. Transparency, equity and inclusive participation, and accountability, are compromised for the sake of quick delivery and short attention spans. There are urgent needs and systemic problems, like the ones experienced by the residents in New York City, that go unaddressed because they require time and consideration. Consequently, for democratic governance to be effective with respect to an issue like communication during a pandemic, government employees and citizens alike can contribute to the solution by doing the hard work of sitting and working with an issue or problem.

THE SOLUTION

The solution to this issue encourages new methods of communication that dig deeply into the problems: Combine the research expertise of the social sciences and the communicative power of the arts to create

1 The New Yorker, 2020

partnerships with communities experiencing social and economic issues and to produce new, artistic methods of communication. This means that a government would hire trained social scientists like anthropologists, sociologists, peacebuilders, historians, and psychologists to work in partnership with hired artists, painters, photographers, and sculptors. The goals are to create effective visual communication regarding public health, social problems, and helping communities imagine a future where they thrive. In its ability to accomplish better communication and information sharing, this seemingly radical proposal will be able to address social issues through meaningful and productive community engagement.

RADICAL COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

In order to understand the root of what a community experiencing misinformation, violence, or socio-economic inequalities needs, it is critical that we involve social scientists who know how to uncover the root causes and drivers of conflict and how to transform them. We then need to combine deep listening, which involves listening to understand and connect and not just to reply, with the arts, which have the power to create a discursive space for the oppressed public and provide areas for hope, such as the Black Lives Matter street mural did in Baltimore, MD[2].

As our lives are lived increasingly online or in isolation, we are less compassionate and alert to the experiences of others and experience issue fatigue[3]. Social scientists and artists can help uncover and address social problems while also helping governments communicate more effectively with the people they serve. This kind of community engagement is radical in that it is rare for federal governments to hire visual artists and social scientists who seek to engage a community for an extended time, uncover issues, and then create art that helps the local people and the global community continue to discuss those issues or find ways to solve them. Furthermore, rather than artists developing public art alone, their work should be created in collaboration with the social scientists and the community itself. In this way, the created content can help communities conceptualize and articulate their experiences of violence or inequality, and may help make sense of a conflict, reveal roads to navigate it, and transform living conditions[4].

Events are experienced through a diversity of viewpoints, but many, particularly those of marginalized groups, are either erased or deliberately forgotten.

RADICAL, BUT NOT NEW

While the idea of utilizing the collaborative efforts of social science and visual art to effectively address complex social issues may seem radical, it is not new. During the Great Depression in the United States, through arts-related programs incorporated under President Roosevelt's New Deal, artists documented and revealed issues around poverty and socio-

2 Campbell, "A Lifeline of Hope," 2020

3 Reiss, "The Empathy Effect," 2018

4 WochenKlausur, "From the Object to the Concrete Intervention," 2011

economic class. The Works Progress Administration (WPA) sponsored the Public Works of Art Project (PWAP), which employed artists who were struggling during the Great Depression as well as the Federal Art Project, which brought art production to under-served communities while also providing opportunities to previously disenfranchised and unemployed artists, particularly African American artists. Similarly, the Farm Security Administration, a new agency created under the New Deal to address rural poverty, hired photographers and writers to document and portray the lives and issues of people living in these areas. While these programs were not intended as cultural projects, they nonetheless had significant positive impact on local and national communities through engagement and visual communication. Owing to their efforts, the US now has socially and culturally influential works like Dorothea Lange's "Migrant Mother,"[5] which created awareness of the plights of impoverished farmers, as well as "Washington, D.C. Government Charwoman" also known as "American Gothic"[6] by Gordon Parks that made visible the hidden labor done by many African Americans at the time.

Visual arts used in this manner can diversify the stories a country tells about itself. New images that incorporate multiple stories can help people make sense of the conflicts or social issues they encounter by diversifying understanding and inspiring empathy. They can make people consider for the first time that multiple, contradicting stories exist at the same time. Using visual art to communicate a story not only creates new communication pathways, it also pushes people to reconsider how they imagine others, and that then informs new actions toward them.[7] Blues singer-songwriter and activist Nina Simone famously said, "An artist's duty, as far as I'm concerned, is to reflect the times."[8] Society needs more than just news media or government accounts to inform us. Events are experienced through a diversity of viewpoints, but many, particularly those of marginalized groups, are either erased or deliberately forgotten. We need visual art to help communities reflect, engage, and remember.

THE SKEPTICS

Those with libertarian views or an interest in "small government" politics may be skeptical and say that this programming could lead to government propaganda or the use of the arts for an authoritarian agenda. But the intention of this kind of project is to reinvigorate values of inclusive participation in civic life, information sharing, and accountability, not to induce nationalist sentiments. The community engagement and the art product should not be colonial in nature nor should it turn into state propaganda. A de-centralized power structure that is immune to political pressure is a way to protect against the art against being used as government propaganda. This is a chance for citizens to engage in collective imagining, to discuss issues beyond meme-sharing and tweets, and to visualize a future that needs and includes everyone, not just those in power.

THE PROCESS

In order to listen deeply to the concerns of a community and then produce visual art that tells a story, educates, or diversifies the dominant narrative, the people hired for this programing will need to be diverse. Multiple voices and a range of identities and backgrounds are necessary to create inclusive, democratic participation and give all people the opportunity to contribute to a social movement and civic life.

Step 1: Community Input

Understanding the issues within a community is a first step for the social science/artists teams, which would involve community interviews and listening sessions to determine how people make meaning in their lives and what their struggles are. The social scientists would use their skills in dialogue, qualitative research, and deep listening to work with community members or informal stakeholders. These community members should also be paid as consultants and working with them should be collaborative, not extractive. Using this information, the scientists and artists can work with the community to create art that informs, celebrates, educates, remembers, or inspires discussion.

An example of this comes from the city of Lancaster, Pennsylvania, where brightly rendered murals appeared during the COVID-19 quarantine that equated loving one another with social distancing, and advocated for the use of technology to foster connection, utilizing messages in both English and Spanish to express community unity. The Office of Public Art paid artists

5 Lange, 1936

6 Parks, 1942

7 Scarry, "The Difficulty of Imagining Other Persons, 1998

8 Stroud, "Nina Simone Great Performances." See also, Nina Simone Music.

to contribute to the "PSA Temporary Mural" program[9], but the effects of the program reached beyond the artists' experience and out into the community to share essential health information, while also uplifting spirits. The value these murals held was not only in the aesthetic work itself, but also in sharing information where it was lacking, and inspiring feelings of collectivity during isolation.

Step 2: Creating the Art and Considering the Space

The space a piece of work resides in is as important as the piece itself. A space cannot help but be transformed with the addition of art, and sociopolitical work can open metaphorical and physical space for a diversity of voices that may have been previously pushed to the margins or excluded completely. It can redefine space as politicized and claim it as an active part of a struggle, and in turn, their messages are enhanced by the space, but they also make visible a cultural pride that may have previously been inaccessible due to marginalization.[10] Furthermore, the space chosen and the message conveyed by the art must be purposeful and intrinsically linked to place. For example, in Northern Ireland, the public art created during The Troubles gave voice to both sides of the conflict, but were also meaningless when taken out of their contexts. It is imperative that these works reside in spaces where people can interact with them free of charge. For example, in Chicago the AMENDS project, created by artists Nick Cave[11] involves the surrounding community that experiences racism, asking participants to dig deep into themselves and take responsibility for their own roles in racism. Hand-written, deeply heart-felt reflections are posted on windows where people acknowledge and apologize for their complicity. It is intended as a call to action that involves participants and viewers alike to participate in addressing racism together.

Including the social scientist's and the artist's description of the project and a statement of intent is important as viewers will bring their own experience to viewing the art and that can leave open the possibility of misunderstanding or risk co-optation. Having community discussions, publicly accessed videos, or blogs with QR codes on or nearby the art that explain the project can be used to inspire conversation around misunderstanding. Descriptions of the project and its meaning will also help future community members to understand the struggles and celebrations in their neighborhoods and inspire them to continue imaging a better, more perfect future along with their elected leaders.

CONCLUSION

The Founders of the United States sought to form a "more perfect Union," by establishing justice, domestic tranquility, and promoting the general welfare of citizens. At the time, these privileges of an American citizenry were only extended to white, male, property owners. While progress has opened democratic participation to many more demographics since then, the US and countless other democracies remain far from perfect. Minorities voices and their needs are routinely ignored, and social issues or conflicts are not addressed from multiple angles. As the title of this piece suggests, it is possible to visualize and create a more perfect union when multiple voices are heard and complex issues are given the long-term consideration they need. Deeply listening to a community and helping them imagine a just future or visually communicating with them can open pathways for new relationships and alternative ways of understanding our world. This program will ask people to be vulnerable and to share their lives, but it is in this space that transparent communication can also move from the bottom up and democratic participation can flourish.

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Conclusion:
What now?

Danny Lord & Dr Marisa Tramontano

The breadth of analysis and recommendations that our authors have produced is testament to the wide-ranging effects of the COVID-19 pandemic. Crucially, though very few of the problems highlighted are themselves unique to the pandemic. By throwing the whole world into crisis, the pandemic has shone a light on pre-existing divisions, inequalities, and other social problems. It has revealed procedural issues in local and national governance, and in the dispensation of justice. The institutions we are supposed to rely on have been given a stress test and in many cases have not passed. But it has also revealed the range of other problem-solving mechanisms that we do already have at our disposal, and which we turned to at a moment of intense and widely-felt need.

In various ways, our authors have highlighted these alternative – and seemingly radical – problem-solving mechanisms in attempts to resolve governance-related issues and contribute to violence prevention in the broadest sense. In some cases, this has involved pointing towards ways in which certain groups have dealt successfully with the problems COVID brought up, ways that may not have occurred to others. In other cases, we have been reminded of historical interventions that may hold the keys for better understanding and addressing our present concerns. And in yet others, COVID has served as a spark that has drawn wider attention to long-fought battles for social justice. In all cases it has been shown that what may seem radical in one context is perfectly plausible and acceptable in another. Moreover, it has been shown that seeking out these radical solutions is absolutely necessary if we are to make our societies more equitable and peaceful.

In showing a diverse range of radical *solutions* to governance issues, our aim is to move beyond problem-identification and to positively inform critique, which otherwise can be liable to misfire. The partiality of the institutions charged with neutral and effective governance, and the structures they both support and rely on, can severely impede the effectiveness of interventions that genuinely are enacted for the good of the population. This is true not just in terms of misallocation of resources, but also to the extent that it undermines people's faith in those institutions. Over the last year and a half, we have seen large-scale rejection of public health measures and an intense proliferation of conspiracy theories regarding vaccination programs in several countries, often orbiting around a generalized suspicion of vaguely defined elites. This skepticism is not without justification, of course. Vaccine hesitancy among Black and minority ethnic populations in the UK and US must be understood in historical context. Health systems in both countries have historically been used to promulgate racist ideology, and under their auspices non-white populations were the subject of violent experimentation[1]. More generally, measures implemented by various governments have required tremendous sacrifice of our civil liberties and this raises the stakes of the relationship between the state and its citizens. Missteps and misuse of office stand out particularly starkly when the full power of the state is laid bare, and systemic inequalities are even harder to swallow than usual.

It is not just the case that established mechanisms for governance don't work, but that they often *do* work for an increasingly narrow subset of people. To clutch that critique from the jaws of conspiratorialism, which often

1 Esan Swan (2021), 'History is key to understanding vaccine hesitancy in people of colour'. Financial Times. Available at: https://www.ft.com/content/a25a2463-9367-4a79-9f7c-012ba728bd3a

ends up counterproductively serving the interests of those very same elites anyway, collaboration, cross-pollination between social movements, and collective education are crucial. The more we can share with one another the diverse mechanisms already available for challenging power and solving problems on macro and micro levels, the more a generalized sense of dissatisfaction with an unjust system can give way to constructive solutions to reorientate and rebuild it. And that is the process we hope to be making inroads on.

Given this, and given the urgency of the issues our authors have discussed, it is important for us to be able to present their thoughts and findings in a digestible and surveyable way. We have compiled bite-sized summaries of each contribution below accordingly:

- **Birjandian** argues that there is analytical value in understanding individual human beings in the masses *as* "administrations of justice" because such thinking can help to more accurately chart the types of social change required to establish just societies.
- **Calvete** documents a conversation between university students and lecturers based in Brazil, who identify the need to overcome a hegemonic individualism as fundamental barrier to significant progress.
- **Clay-Robinson** explores how governments, especially during a public health crisis like COVID, could combine the research expertise of the social sciences and the communicative power of the arts to create partnerships with communities experiencing social and economic issues.
- **Kirabira** proposes that the disruptions of COVID allow for the reimagining of justice and how court systems operate to ensure the focus is on healing and/or justice for the victim and not the punishment of the perpetrator.
- **Macias** dissects the individualist worldview prevalent in western countries like the United Kingdom in comparison to more collectivist countries like South Korea in the context of each country's response to the COVID pandemic, concluding that collectivism fosters more effective response to crisis.
- **Okoth** suggests that we cannot understand the response to COVID in Uganda without recognizing the legacy of authoritarian rule and military violence and considers the family and the clan as a possible pressure point to address brutality.
- **Sample** discusses the ways COVID made us rethink how we use public space, and who gets privileged access to it. She advocates for investment in community gardens as a way to strengthen intra-community relations and improve environmental education.
- **Tramontano** explains the ways that COVID accelerated the movement to defund and abolish the police.
- **Yamahata** shows us how looking at the role of international institutions during the AIDS and COVID pandemics reveals ways in which populations have the power to influence states, moving away from traditional theories of international relations.

WHAT NOW?

It has become a trope to suggest that the 'post-COVID' world will be a totally different one to before. And yet this is not really true. Historical (and colonial) distributions of power, money, and influence map – with some exceptions – closely onto what has been described as a system of global vaccine apartheid[2]. Wealth has been further concentrated in the hands of a few, while countless others face joblessness, increasingly precarious employment, depressed wages, and worse. Well-worn prejudices have demonstrated their immense staying power thanks to their deep roots in the structures of our societies; historically marginalized communities have largely experienced the worst health outcomes in many of our countries, and in the UK, police were twice as likely to fine Black people than non-Black people for breaching lockdown restrictions[3]. This is not to mention the months of protests against ongoing and systemic racial inequality following the murder of George Floyd in the US.

One major (and hardly surprising) thread that winds through almost all of the essays in this volume is a rejection of the dominant, top-down, liberal model for organizing societies and propelling change. This is a model according to which change comes from formal institutions and via policy. There is a clear division between the public and private sphere, and we assent to public institutions through which we may lobby for change in return for privacy and liberty in our lives as individuals. What is highlighted during a time of crisis, but shown through this to nevertheless be the case in general, is that this model is at best incomplete and at worst an obstacle.

2 Reuters (2021), 'World has entered stage of "vaccine apartheid" - WHO head' https://www.reuters.com/business/healthcare-pharmaceuticals/world-has-entered-stage-vaccine-apartheid-who-head-2021-05-17/

3 Vikram Dodd (2021), 'Met police twice as likely to fine black people over lockdown breaches – research'. The Guardian. Available at: https://www.theguardian.com/uk-news/2020/jun/03/met-police-twice-as-likely-to-fine-black-people-over-lockdown-breaches-research

We should take note of Okoth's observation that the line drawn between institutions that can and can't legitimately affect change in the public sphere is ultimately arbitrary. More than this in fact, it simply does not reflect where change *actually* comes from, and who we listen to and let ourselves be guided by. In doing so it precludes structures and people – families, clans, neighbours – from positively affecting change. Similarly, some of our responses to the pandemic – for example the growth in mutual aid groups in the UK – show us ways in which what we might euphemistically call 'the masses' can be more directly impactful when our status as a collective is not mediated by the state and its constituent institutions. Focusing on collective efforts at the local level is one way of doing this, drawing on the shared experience of a particular place, our relationship to which, and therefore to each other, might be reinforced by Sample's proposals. We should remain vigilant, however, about the potential for local solidarity to turn into hostility towards outsiders. To paraphrase Tramontano, we should not be aiming for the positive peace of the suburbs, built as it is on structurally violent and frequently racialized exclusion. Thinking seriously and critically about institutions like the police that help to reinforce that exclusion is therefore crucial.

The issues raised and solutions proposed within this volume vary in terms of who they target as *agents of change* (i.e. who it is that should be enacting the proposed change), and who they target as *beneficiaries of that change* (i.e. who the change is *for*; whose problems it solves). And this is a key point to take away. Social change is a complex thing. Faced with such grand problems it is easy to feel overwhelmed or deflated. But what we hope to have shown through the contributions presented here is that there are ways to make inroads and importantly that everyone has a role to play.

None of us has to try to tackle all of these governance issues at once, alone. Indeed tackling any one requires collaboration. Collaboration not just in the simple sense of working together to achieve a common goal, but in a deeper, richer sense, in which we learn from each other's experiences in order to show how tackling several seemingly discrete problems *produces* a global community and in doing so helps us work to address the bigger picture. Each of us is necessary; none of us is sufficient.

We hope that these contributions, individually and as a whole, can inspire the reflection and action necessary to move forward from this crisis, and allow us to better deal with whatever comes next.

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