

ANALYTICAL ESSAY

Microlevel Security after Armed Conflict: A New Framework for Analyzing Risks and Benefits of Peacebuilding Processes

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The maintenance and/or achievement of security is of paramount importance within settings recovering from armed conflict; however existing studies in the field of peacebuilding do not sufficiently explore how various processes undertaken within peacebuilding programming result in different types of security outcomes at the individual and community level. In this article, I develop a novel conceptual framework for analyzing “microlevel” security risks and benefits of peacebuilding processes, through an adapted version of Johan Galtung’s work on direct and structural violence. For the purposes of this article, the framework is applied in the context of “local” transitional justice (TJ) processes used in the aftermath of armed conflict, for which advocacy and implementation has increased in the recent past. Relying on a social psychological definition of security, I disaggregate components of direct and structural violence and use illustrative examples from existing empirical studies about the effects of local TJ processes in various settings to demonstrate ways in which these types of violence may be perpetuated, or initiated in new forms through these processes, thus posing security risks. The framework is further developed through the elucidation of factors that may help to repair the consequences of direct and structural violence and/or hinder the likelihood of their repetition, thematically conceptualized as physical and psychological welfare and social justice (respective to direct and structural violence) that I suggest link to security benefits. The framework is intended to provide new perspectives on understanding how peacebuilding processes may both promote and prevent security from being realized at the local level following armed conflict.

Keywords: local processes, peacebuilding, security

Introduction

Achieving, maintaining, or enhancing security commonly takes priority in the development and implementation of peacebuilding strategies pursued following periods of mass violence. This focus is of paramount importance at the macro, state-level, given that a high risk of renewed, widespread violence occurs in the period immediately after conflict ends (Collier 2003). At the same time, promoting security is also

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crucial at the micro, individual/community level, given that those who have survived conflict consequently experience a frustration of “their basic needs for security, for feelings of effectiveness and control over important events in one’s life, for positive identity, for positive connections to other people and communities” (Staub 2006, 871). Indeed, it has been argued that “the provision of basic security is a *pre-condition* for political, social and economic development (and well-being)” (Krause and Jutersonke 2005, 455). While security most obviously relates to the prevention or reduction of direct violence (and therein promoting “negative” peace), it also is conceptually related to the reduction of structural violence that inhibits individuals from reaching their full physical or mental potential (where achieving “positive” peace becomes possible) (see, e.g., Galtung 1969, 1990). For sustainable peace to develop, it is asserted that “at a minimum, the equitable satisfaction of human needs for security, identity, well-being and self-determination” are required (Christie 1997; Mullen 2015, 471), with each of these factors being inextricably linked to reducing both direct and structural violence. While the overall importance of understanding and promoting security in the context of building peace following armed conflict has been established, current peacebuilding scholarship has yet to sufficiently parse out specific components of individual-level security and how these components may be facilitated or conversely threatened through the implementation of peacebuilding programs. One area of peacebuilding that is particularly underdeveloped in this regard is an understanding of security risks and benefits at the individual or community level, resulting from postconflict justice and reconciliation processes. By shifting our focus to exploring “microlevel” security outcomes—that is, components of security achieved at the individual, interpersonal, and/or community level—we can gain a more nuanced understanding of risks and benefits of these processes, which is of the utmost importance for both scholarship and practice within this area.

Existing research identifies how international or state-led transitional justice (TJ) processes such as trials and truth commissions have overt links to macrolevel—that is, state/societal—security in the sense that they intend to prevent the repetition of widespread human rights violations (and the former aiming to uphold the rule of law) (Stanley 2009; Hayner 2011). This focus, however, does not account for other issues that directly affect individuals and communities, such as structural and social injustice (Nagy 2008; Evans 2016; Kochanski 2018). Conventional TJ strategies may indeed be inadequate for handling such issues that can inhibit lasting peace from being realized (Mani 2008; Evans 2016). While these areas may not immediately come to mind when considering commonly used definitions of security in the field of international relations, I argue that a clear link exists particularly when taking into account the psychosocial implications of conflict that perpetuate individual and community level vulnerability and hence, insecurity. This relationship logically follows Ullman’s (1983, 146) argument that “in every sphere of policy and action, security increases as vulnerability decreases.” While macrolevel security concerns are nevertheless relevant in postconflict settings, it has been argued that “individuals’ security should come first” as “states cannot be secure for long unless their citizens are secure” (Bilgin 2003, 208).

With this aim in mind, this article introduces a novel conceptual framework for analyzing the possible impacts of peacebuilding processes upon microlevel security after armed conflict. The point of departure for this framework comes from Johan Galtung’s foundational work on direct and structural violence.¹ I am particularly interested in what can *contribute* to both repairing the consequences of these types of violence as well as hindering their recurrence as features of microlevel security. Given the focal point of individual and community levels in this framework, I rely on a social-psychological definition of security—that is, that security means “feeling

¹ While Galtung’s work also includes the concept of “cultural violence,” this article focuses on direct and structural violence for the sake of analytic clarity.

safe and in control of [one's] life rather than feeling uncertain and threatened by [one's] circumstances" (Sheldon et al. 2001, 339). In contrast, risks to this security are conceptualized as vulnerability with regard to both physical and psychological harm (components of direct violence) and suffering from consequences of structural violence that inhibit the realization of one's physical and mental potential, which can in some cases result in loss of life—particularly via being denied access to care and benefits that support well-being and longevity—thus compromising safety, control, and certainty (see, e.g., Galtung 1969; Rhodes et al. 2012).

In developing this conceptual framework, the specific components that constitute both direct and structural violence and the components that are involved in repairing their consequences or limiting the possibility of their recurrence are teased out in an effort to systematize the process of discerning how peacebuilding strategies can produce both security risks and benefits. Thematically, I conceptualize the factors that contribute to repairing and hindering the continuation of vulnerability caused by direct and structural violence as "physical and psychological welfare" and "social justice" (respective to direct and structural violence). By mitigating the psychosocial risks that vulnerability—broadly understood as "exposure to contingencies and stress, and difficulty coping with them" (Delor and Hubert 2000, 1562)—entails, individuals and communities can be better equipped to control their environment and reduce uncertainty. The frustration of control and certainty—conceptually related also to threats to fulfilling human needs related to safety—can be particularly insidious as they have the potential to result in hostility and aggression that in turn provoke, escalate, and perpetuate cycles of violence (Kelman 1990; Staub 2003).

I demonstrate the utility of this framework for understanding microlevel security risks and benefits by exploring examples from existing empirical, peer-reviewed studies that have examined experiences of individual and community participation in what Adam Kochanski (2018) has referred to as "local transitional justice (TJ) processes" from various settings such as Bougainville, Northern Uganda, Rwanda, Sierra Leone, and Timor-Leste—whether from anthropological, sociological, or political science origins. Kochanski's (2018, 3) conception of local TJ concerns "locally based practices" that take place subnationally at the "district, commune, and village levels." While they may be "adapted, revived, and hybridized in their applications for TJ (Kochanski 2018, 3)," they emphasize rebuilding social relations among affected communities, as opposed to more macrolevel TJ goals such as democracy-building or national reconciliation.

By relying on data gathered from in-country field research, the intention is to reflect the views and experiences of these processes from within the contexts they have occurred. This approach aims to follow Bilgin's (2010, 620) recommendation to look more deeply into "insecurities as experienced by people and social groups in different parts of the world . . . treat[ing] them as subjects and not mere objects of security." While I use the framework to analyze contributions or hindrances to microlevel security related to local TJ processes in this article, it would likewise be useful for examining whether and how other TJ mechanisms such as trials, truth commissions, and/or reparations programs have contributed to individual- and community-level security outcomes (particularly for processes that have stated aims of impacting individuals and/or communities). The framework may similarly have value for analyzing microlevel impacts of other post-conflict peacebuilding processes such as disarmament, demobilization, and reintegration (DDR) programs and, perhaps most obviously, security sector reform (SSR).

The conceptual framework developed throughout this article—paired with illustrative examples of how we can discern different contributions to microlevel security—is intended as an analytical tool for researchers and policymakers to understand microlevel security impacts of peacebuilding processes. Such a tool can be

used to learn from past strategies but also as a guide prior to implementation to avoid possible unintended consequences as well as increase the potential to realize beneficial results from peacebuilding processes. Of particular value, this framework emphasizes how various commonly overlooked psychological dimensions of direct violence as well as structural injustices can result in microlevel security risks. In addition, I propose pathways through which these risks might be repaired and/or prevented at the individual/community level, conceptualized within thematic areas of physical and psychological welfare and social justice. The latter contribution adds another perspective to the recent literature that focuses largely on critiquing locally oriented peacebuilding processes by exploring more nuanced ways that they might positively impact individuals and communities in practice.

I begin by laying the foundation for the exploration of microlevel security as conceptualized in this article by providing brief depictions of purported shortcomings of various approaches to studying security in order to lend support to the value of my approach. The conceptual framework for analyzing microlevel security risks and benefits of peacebuilding processes is then developed in conjunction with empirical examples from existing research on local TJ processes to demonstrate its utility for this field of study. Where applicable, I highlight interactions between direct and structural dimensions of violence and different components of security in the context of these processes. Drawing the above illustrations together, I conclude with a synthesis of how the presented framework can contribute to scholarship and practice within the peacebuilding field along with suggestions of future directions for research.

Laying the Foundation for a Microlevel Security Approach

Galtung's well-known and well-studied typology of violence—with emphasis on the direct and structural forms—is a jumping off point for the development of the framework elucidated below (in which components of these types of violence will be disaggregated and exemplified through empirical illustrations). However, the concept of security requires further explanation to lay the foundation for the conceptualization of “microlevel” security used in this article. Following the end of the Second World War, international relations scholars largely approached security from a macrolevel standpoint, focusing on power relations between states, more or less synonymizing security with power (Buzan 1991; Buzan, Waever, and de Wilde 1998). Aiming to broaden this approach that emphasizes militarized security, scholars including those from the Copenhagen school, sought to further explore security among different sectors within states—that is, military, political, economic, environmental, and societal—and in doing so aimed to shift the “referent objects” of security to individuals and society instead of the state exclusively (Buzan et al. 1998). They introduce the concepts of securitization, wherein an “issue is presented as an existential threat, requiring emergency measures and justifying actions outside the normal bounds of political procedure” (Buzan et al. 1998, 23–24) and desecuritization, which refers to “the shifting of issues out of emergency mode and into the normal bargaining processes of the political sphere” (Buzan et al. 1998, 4). Although this broadening of security studies has been a substantial contribution to the field, some have criticized it because of “confusion over how to define ‘securitization,’ and contestation over whether it is a descriptive, theoretical or prescriptive framework” (Jackson 2006, 315). Another critique offered against this approach is that it tends to be Western-centric, which has consequently led to the knowledge coming out of the field to be “parochial” in the sense that it universalizes Western experiences and overlooks “different insecurities and responses in other locales” and “peripheral” in its avoidance of “low politics” such as gender insecurities (Bilgin 2010, 616–19).

At the same time, the concept of human security that began to take shape in the 1990s further contributed to the study of security by placing greater emphasis on

well-being and economic development, or as the [United Nations Development Programme's 1994 Human Development Report](#) states “freedom from fear” and “freedom from want” ([UNDP 1994](#), 24). Some have called attention to shortcomings to this approach related to, first, its failure to fundamentally challenge the current liberally oriented international system, as “human security practices are unlikely to support counter-hegemonic narratives, let alone provide the basis for meaningful systemic change” ([Christie 2010](#), 185). This results from the importance human security frameworks place on the role of states, international actors, NGOs, and IGOs that lack accountability, which may in turn serve to further disempower citizens in the Global South, thus having “the exact opposite effect to emancipatory aims” these practices seek to achieve ([McCormack 2008](#); [Christie 2010](#), 183). It may hence be insufficient for understanding and addressing nuanced local-level security needs.

In the context of considering how security may be promoted *after* periods of mass violence—where repair and (re)installation of feelings of security are crucial to avoid the reemergence of conflict—another critique against human security is that it is largely preemptive, as some have illustrated its focus on the maxim that “prevention is better than the cure” ([Boer and Koekkoek 1994](#), 519–20; [Roznai 2014](#)). An approach to thinking about security as repairing consequences of widespread human rights violations and also treatment for underlying causes of vulnerability that can perpetuate violence is then a valuable addition to peacebuilding strategies. Along this same line of thinking, when considering the growing popularity of locally oriented approaches within peacebuilding spheres, a fine-grained approach that looks at the origins of threats to security, and how they may be avoided or addressed within processes intended to reckon with consequences of armed conflict on the individual and community level, is necessary. As an umbrella concept for this type of approach, I use the term “microlevel” security, which aims to take into account the microlevel threats posed by direct and structural violence that contribute to vulnerability, while at the same time offering opportunities to explore factors that may help to repair the consequences of violence and prevent their repetition. I conceptualize these reparatory and preventive factors as “physical and psychological welfare” and “social justice.” These concepts and their basic descriptive components form the basis for the framework that I develop below for understanding both security risks and benefits that can result from peacebuilding processes (with an emphasis on local TJ in the context of this article).

The conceptual framework below will largely depict direct violence/physical and psychological welfare and structural violence/social justice as distinct categories in an effort to be analytically clear, but these categories are often interconnected, not least in the sense that structural processes can lay foundations for direct violence to be perpetrated as well as that social justice may likewise produce physical and psychological welfare. The elucidation of this conceptual framework is coupled with illustrative examples from several postconflict settings that have pursued local TJ processes, such as Bougainville, Northern Uganda, Rwanda, Sierra Leone, and Timor-Leste. Illustrations from these cases are chosen as each of the aforementioned countries experienced a period of mass violence and subsequent transition, which included the implementation of at least one process based on or derived from traditional or customary norms of conflict resolution, justice, and/or reconciliation that operated primarily at the subnational, or specifically community, level. At the same time, the way in which different facets of these processes impacted individuals or communities involved is widely varied, allowing for discussion about their contribution to different components of microlevel security.

Likewise, there is variation in how “local” each of these processes was in its operation, particularly related to the degree of state or international influence in their design and undertaking. For example, while foregrounded in customary conflict

resolution practices, Rwanda's gacaca courts were heavily dominated and influenced by the Rwandan state. Likewise, Timor-Leste's Community Reconciliation Processes (CPRs) were operated by the Commission for Reception, Truth, and Reconciliation that was overseen by the United Nations Transitional Administration in East Timor (UNTAET). For the purposes of this article, both of these processes are viewed as locally oriented, given their intentions to promote village-level outcomes, including justice, rebuilding social relationships, and reintegrating accused persons into their home communities (see, e.g., [Pigou 2004](#); [Ingeleare 2008](#)).

With these variations in mind, examples from the aforementioned cases were picked purposively to highlight different components of this framework, thus lending understanding to the range of possible microlevel security risks and benefits related to participation in these postconflict peacebuilding mechanisms. As the focus of this article is on presenting and illustrating the application of a conceptual framework and not an assessment of the overall efficacy (or lack of) of any one process or of locally oriented processes as a whole, it should be noted that the illustrations provided in the text are not intended to be an exhaustive review of these mechanisms.

A Note on the Relationship between Violence, Context, and Consequences

As some discussion of the framework describes how components of direct and structural violence may be perpetuated through postconflict peacebuilding processes, it is important to recognize that the illustrations used below come from settings that, because of their postconflict status, are inherently dealing with general consequences of past trauma as well as structural inequalities that in many cases precipitated the conflict. It is hence not necessarily realistic to expect that any one process alone can change these realities or dynamics. This is particularly germane to justice and reconciliation processes whose outcomes rarely challenge structural injustices from which many conflicts emerge but instead focus primarily on delivering retributive or restorative justice, especially when implemented through state- or internationally led interventions—an issue to which scholars have increasingly called attention (see, e.g., [Mani 2008](#); [Evans 2016](#)). While some suggest that local TJ processes can promote culturally sensitive approaches to victim healing and/or inclusivity that is lacking amid state- or internationally led TJ mechanisms, others likewise elucidate how these same processes can perpetuate preexisting local power dynamics and marginalize some groups ([Boege 2006](#); [Lundy and McGovern 2008](#); [Mac Ginty 2008](#); [Shaw and Waldorf 2010](#); [Allen and Macdonald 2013](#); [Kochanski 2018](#)). The following sections deepen and extend these discussions by depicting the ways in which these processes can further instill or possibly activate new forms of direct or structural violence—not necessarily that they *caused* them to occur—to illustrate how their disaggregated components can reinforce vulnerability, uncertainty, loss of control, and, hence, security risks. These unintended consequences can, as illustrated in some examples below, result from the interaction and tensions between aims and interests of international actors and those at the local level. These “patterns of local and international interactions in postconflict contexts” have been increasingly interrogated in literature on hybridity, which allows us to explore how “different actors and processes cooperate and compete on different issue agendas” ([Mac Ginty 2010](#), 397; [McLeod 2015](#), 51).

In cases where hybridity is prescribed—that is, that it is advocated for because of assumptions that it will produce desirable outcomes simply because it involves interaction between the (commonly homogenized) local and the international—outcomes may be unpredictable and possibly deleterious, especially when the process involved is ultimately “inconsistent with local concepts” and norms ([George and Kent 2017](#), 1333; [Millar 2014](#), 507, 510). Reinforcement of unequal power relations that subjugate local individuals is often the overarching factor driving negative

outcomes of processes invoking hybridity. Obtaining a fuller understanding of these issues requires that we “dig deeper and account for the importance of diverse and personal experiences” (McLeod 2015, 54). For this reason, I have integrated illustrations from empirical studies that depict experiences of individuals who participated in local TJ processes to highlight different components of the framework. In turn, explications of the pieces that form the framework along with these case-based illustrations will reflect on both positive and negative dimensions of hybridity in the context of local TJ processes where relevant.

Direct Violence: Physical Abuse, Fear of Abuse, Emotional Duress

Direct violence includes exposure to physical harm such as killings, maiming, repression, detention, and/or expulsion that may result in an acute loss of life or bodily wounds, as well as psychological harm or abuse, which can also comprise *threats* of physical harm (Galtung 1969). In addition to provoking fear and uncertainty, these physical and psychological dimensions of direct violence can also restrict or hinder human movement and action and result in a “long-term state of misery” (Galtung 1969, 1990). I thematically organize these factors into the categories of physical abuse, fear of abuse, and emotional duress, which are often interrelated. While actual abuse and fear of abuse can provoke emotional duress, the duress resulting from trauma can likewise be internalized as a type of “unfinished business,” resulting in “compulsion to take revenge,” and thus can “serve as a way of perpetuating violence” (Hamber and Wilson 2002, 37–38). Retribution may be beneficial at the individual level in the sense that it can create “symbolic closure” for those who have been subjected to violence (Hamber and Wilson 2002, 35) and, as some have suggested, can be equally effective at facilitating closure “as (often forgiveness-oriented) reconciliation” (Evans 2018, 685). However, harm inflicted as “payback” for harm done previously can cause conflicts to escalate, opening the potential for cycles of violence to continue indefinitely (Kim and Smith 1993, 38). When done extralegally, this kind of retribution is akin to vigilante justice. It may provide satisfaction or closure for the one that has been harmed, but I argue that the culture of fear that results from uncertainty of when one might be the target of a revenge attack (or likewise if the one who is retaliated against later seeks their own counter-retaliation) is congruent with Galtung’s conceptualization of direct violence. This congruence is aptly identified in the way that uncertainty of revenge attacks promotes emotional duress wherein “climates of unsafety” manifest and conditions for vulnerability are met (see, e.g., Delor and Hubert 2000, 1563).

In addition, emotional duress can further provoke vulnerability in situations where one experiences revictimization or retraumatization as a result of publicly disclosing or testifying about past harms sustained. This can negatively impact “victim’s self-esteem, faith in the future, trust in the legal system, belief in a just world, and ability to cope with the effects of the crime” (Laxminarayan 2012, 391).

The following diagram (figure 1) operationalizes the components of direct violence in order to depict how they may be perpetuated or provoked within peacebuilding processes. Visualizing these within the below triangle is intended to illustrate how any point can affect and interact with the other points.

As a first illustration of how direct violence can manifest within local TJ processes, Rwanda’s gacaca courts provide several examples of instances of physical harm perpetrated in retaliation for witness testimony presented in these hearings. Gacaca courts were developed to address the backlog of criminal cases to be tried in relation to the 1994 genocide and were adapted from an indigenous conflict resolution process that translates to “justice amongst the grass.” These processes utilized village-level hearings throughout the country, where complaints could be brought forth against those accused of participating in the genocide to be arbitrated

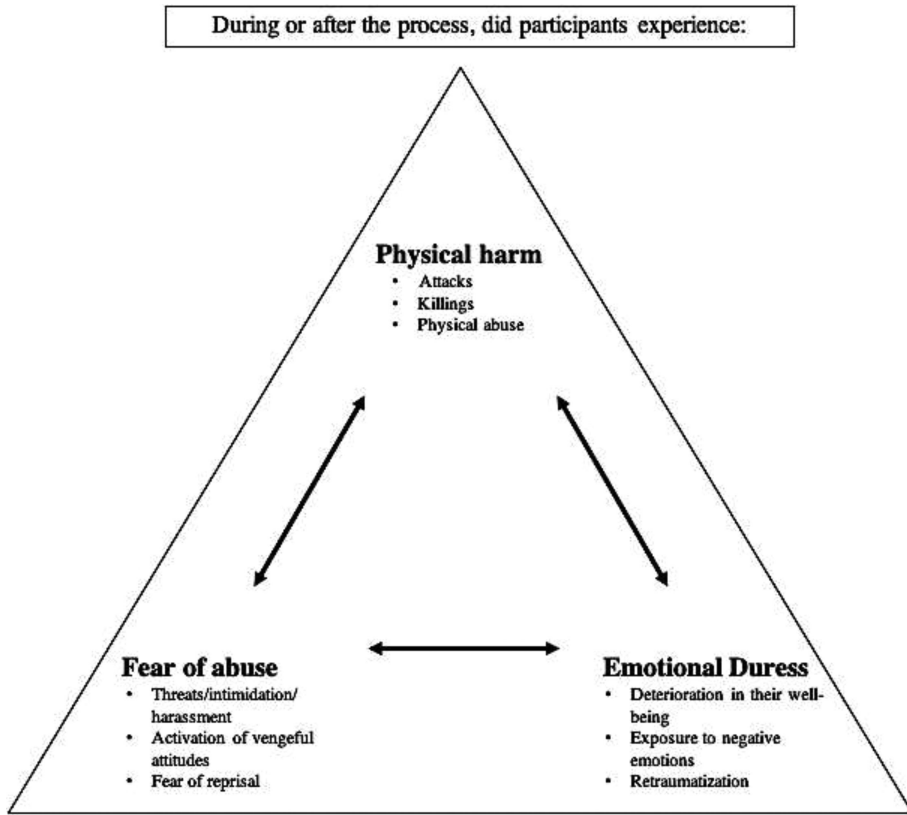


Figure 1. Components of direct violence

by locally elected judges, or *Inyangamugayo*. While intended to promote national unity and local-level justice/reintegration, evidence from numerous empirical studies shows that individuals who witnessed in the gacaca experienced a range of retaliatory physical abuse following their participation. Harassment and physical attacks were experienced by many of the sixteen women who witnessed in gacaca that were interviewed in [Karen Brouneus' \(2008\)](#) study. In addition, poisonings that are “akin to witchcraft in rural Rwanda and tantamount to murder” and “intimidation, disputes between families, theft, or even violence” were found to occur in relation to gacaca based on results from participant observation, two public opinion surveys, and semistructured interviews conducted by Max [Rettig \(2008, 39, 43\)](#). A research report on the reintegration of released prisoners from the [Penal Reform Institute \(2004\)](#) based on qualitative field research and interviews with survivors, detainee family members, former prisoners, and local authorities between 2003 and 2004 likewise describes how, during the preparatory phases of the gacaca, several survivors were assassinated to prevent them from testifying, suggesting severe forms of intimidation were not uncommon for participants. Jennie Burnet's ethnographic field research in rural and urban Rwanda, as well as focus groups and interviews, similarly reveal instances of retaliatory attacks against attendees because of beliefs that they were withholding information and/or for the purposes of settling old scores—sometimes escalating to mob violence ([Burnet 2008](#)). The cycles of accusations and denunciations that one focus group participant saw as being motivated by hatred depict, in her words, that “there are interminable conflicts,” illustrating

the above-referenced cyclical perpetuation of threats and fear that are characteristic of direct violence (Burnet 2008, 183).

The prevalence of retribution following gacaca appears to be linked to the findings from data gathered from approximately thirteen hundred Rwandans via a survey, focus groups, and formal and informal interviews that showed participation in the gacaca courts increased fear, “prejudice and resentment against families of convicted persons” (Ingeleare 2009, 511). Results from another survey of 755 Rwandans (395 survivors and 360 accused of being perpetrators) illustrate that the gacaca “enhanced their [victims’] level of distrust toward prisoners as well as their feeling of revenge and . . . reduced considerably their inclination to forgive” (Kanyangara et al. 2014, 409). The feelings of fear resulting from the institution of gacaca had a silencing effect on many survivors, as evidenced through ethnographic research and semistructured interviews undertaken by Kristin Doughty (2015, 426), introducing a form of “chosen amnesia” (Buckley-Zistel 2006, 131). As an interviewee from Rettig’s (2008, 44) study indicates: “When survivors give testimony, people look at them with hate, as if they could even kill them,” illustrating a pervasiveness of threatening attitudes related to participation.

While derived from indigenous conflict-resolution practices in Rwanda, gacaca was also heavily influenced by state and international norms and interests as mentioned above. This point will be expanded upon further within the sections below describing structural violence and its relationship to vulnerability, but it is useful to also flag here how this local-international orientation may have implications for promulgating dimensions of direct violence. Hybridization, in the case of gacaca courts appears to have contributed to the perpetuation of revenge attacks ostensibly because of their public truth-telling component. Advocacy for public testimony, which is increasingly prevalent within many state/international level truth and reconciliation processes since the South Africa Truth and Reconciliation Commission, inevitably involves accusing others of wrongdoings in front of their families and neighbors, as well as the disclosure of stories about sexual violence (Guthrey 2015). In many cultures, there are taboos against speaking publicly about experiencing sexual violence, as well as against publicly incriminating or speaking ill of others (McKay 2000; Reddy 2008; Guthrey 2016). In some state- or internationally led truth commission processes, the emphasis placed on public truth revelation has had decidedly negative impacts upon victims, as it conflicted with local sociocultural norms (Guthrey 2015, 2016). This reflection, however, has received less attention in the context of locally oriented processes. In the gacaca courts, these conflicts between the promotion of public truth-telling (influenced by international norms) and local norms and customs contributed to feelings of shame and fear, which in turn resulted in retaliatory attacks, as well as fear of attacks, in Rwanda. This unintended outcome greatly contrasts the intention of approaching peacebuilding from a local perspective in order to “foster predictable peace-promoting experiences among local people” (see, e.g., Millar 2014, 502). Working in the background, then, the influence of international norms on the implementation of local TJ processes can have consequences in the form of promoting new iterations of direct violence for those who participate.

Another illustration of how aspects of local TJ processes can produce direct violence is found within the traditional Acholi *mato oput* ceremonies pursued in Northern Uganda as a “restorative approach to murder” following the country’s twenty-year civil war waged between the Lord’s Resistance Army (LRA) and the government of Uganda (Anyeko et al. 2012, 108). Depicting how publicly testifying about past abuse in local TJ processes may provoke fear (and consequently a silencing effect), Erin Baines’ ethnographic research with affected communities and cultural leaders in this setting, found that some ex-combatants ultimately did not attend because “they fear[ed] that they . . . [would] be persecuted by the

victim's clan and further stigmatized by the community," leading to general fears of retaliation (Baines 2007, 109). Despite the emphasis these ceremonies placed on reconciliation, Baines (2009, 184) warned that they "could potentially increase violence rather than restore relationships," given the burden of guilt placed predominantly on ex-combatants—a conclusion drawn from community dialogues, in-depth interviews, and participant observation with fifty persons. Fears of retaliatory violence were also related to how perpetrators' families or clans were required to both take responsibility for their crimes and pay compensation following the ceremonies but in some cases did not have the means to provide recompense (Baines 2007, 109; see also Finnegan 2010, 432).

While the experience of physical abuse and fear of abuse related to participation in local TJ processes can result in emotional duress in their own right, instances of these processes sparking new forms of negative psychological symptoms and suffering have also been seen, particularly related to revictimization. In Rwanda, for example, findings from a multistage, stratified cluster random survey of twelve hundred Rwandans illustrate that those who witnessed in the *gacaca* hearings "reported higher levels of depression and PTSD than nonwitnesses, also when controlling for important predictors for psychological ill health such as gender or cumulative trauma exposure" (Brounéus 2010, 409). In addition, women witnesses who gave testimony experienced retraumatization, according to in-depth interviews (Brounéus 2008). Rimé and Kanyangara's survey of 755 persons similarly depicts that participation in the *gacaca* hearings reactivated negative emotions, including fear, sadness, and anxiety, as well as increased PTSD symptoms, for the victim group (although PTSD symptoms decreased for perpetrators) (Rimé and Kanyangara 2011). While this latter finding depicts characteristics of retraumatization, it also picks up on the aforementioned issues of fear and anxiety, likely a result of the uncertainty of what might transpire in the aftermath of giving testimony.

Further illustrations of how direct violence in the form of emotional duress can result from local TJ processes come from Sierra Leone following the end of the country's decade long civil war. While conventional TJ strategies were implemented to address the consequences of past violence—that is, the Special Court for Sierra Leone (SCSL) and the Sierra Leone Truth and Reconciliation Commission (TRC)—these processes were seen to be insufficient to address local level consequences as well as reintegration of perpetrators, including former child soldiers (Stark 2006; Hoffman 2008). Approaches based on traditional notions of healing and reconciliation were then seen as a viable solution. In addition to the use of traditional cleansing ceremonies shortly after the end of the civil war, a program developed later as a village-level continuation of the TRC called *Fambul Tok* (Krio for "family talk") was aimed at "building on traditional methods of reconciliation at the community level . . . drawing all members of Sierra Leone—whether victims, offenders, or witnesses—back into the Sierra Leonean family" (Hoffman 2008, 132). Similar to the above findings from Rwanda and Northern Uganda, in a longitudinal study investigating the impact of *Fambul Tok* on postwar reconciliation through a survey of 2,383 respondents, Cilliers, Dube, and Siddiqi (2016, 794) found that participation in this process compromised individual psychological well-being, including "the difficulty of coping with negative memories." Although this program reportedly had more positive impacts at the community level (which will be described further below), it appeared to contribute to emotional duress of individuals participating. These examples highlight ways in which local TJ processes may (re)activate components of direct violence through opening up possibilities for retaliatory violence, fear of violence, or at least, uncertainty of what will happen after participation in the processes, as well as negative impacts on psychosocial well-being—all of which instill vulnerability at the individual and community levels.

Physical and Psychological Welfare: Psychosocial Well-Being, Reparations, Restored Relationships

The vulnerability that results from both the physical and psychological harm of direct violence requires treatment in order to allow individuals or communities to feel an increased sense of safety, control, and certainty of their circumstances. Thematically, I refer to the factors that contribute to repairing the consequences of and/or preventing direct violence as physical and psychological welfare. Components included within this are: increasing psychosocial well-being, facilitating the provision of material and symbolic reparations, and restoring relationships. As described above, unresolved trauma and lingering grievances, which commonly relate to physical or material losses, as well as strained community or familial relationships, have the potential to cause violence to reemerge, hence, addressing these issues can contribute to microlevel security.

While the concept of psychological well-being is often considered to be highly Westernized, the use of the term psychosocial well-being is intended to be more holistic and reflective of the relational character of healing in many contexts where health is “traditionally defined in terms of relationships between individuals and their surroundings, their ancestors, and amongst themselves” (Stark 2006, 207). There is then an implicit connection in many settings between improving psychosocial well-being and restoring relationships. Material or symbolic reparation in the form of replacing lost property or income streams is also important for promoting both physical and psychological welfare. These forms of reparation can facilitate the (re)construction of lost housing necessary for physical safety and financial support for treating physical wounds sustained during conflict, which in turn can contribute to well-being. There is likewise a deep cultural significance of reparations or compensation in numerous contexts that serve to restore relationships between conflicting parties and to signify that a transgression has been resolved and the conflict has come to an end.

In addition to compensation, both apology and forgiveness are commonly described as components integral to restoring relationships. I use the concept of restoring relationships here instead of reconciliation in an effort to prioritize a more operationalizable term to contrast arguments that reconciliation is “an empty signifier” (Renner 2014; Evans 2018, 688). Restoring relationships is intended to signify, in line with suggestions from Evans (2018, 688), a process “which might facilitate individuals’ and groups’ acceptance of living alongside one another.” Individual forgiveness might contribute to this outcome but is not necessary to signify that relationships have been restored.

While apology is considered “an integrative device for maintaining ingroup cohesion” (Paéz 2010, 104), forgiveness involves releasing or overcoming resentment, anger, and fear that can continue after one is harmed through wrongdoing (Govier 2002). Often through promoting “a sense of goodwill” toward others, forgiveness can decrease desires to seek revenge or retaliation (Enright, Freedman, and Rique 1998, 47). As revenge may be a catalyst for renewed violence, removing desires and motivations for it through forgiveness can facilitate a shift toward restoring relationships, thus promoting dimensions of physical and psychological welfare and hence contributions to microlevel security.

In the context of discussing apology and forgiveness as components that have the potential to contribute to restoring relationships, this framework focuses on agentive use of these practices—that is, that they are considered components that contribute to physical and psychological welfare if they are voluntarily undertaken. Following suggestions from Evans (2018, 684), supposing that victims necessarily “ought to forgive” removes their agency in circumstances where they find themselves “unable or unwilling to forgive.” In addition, this type of compelled or coerced forgiveness places an undo responsibility on victims to

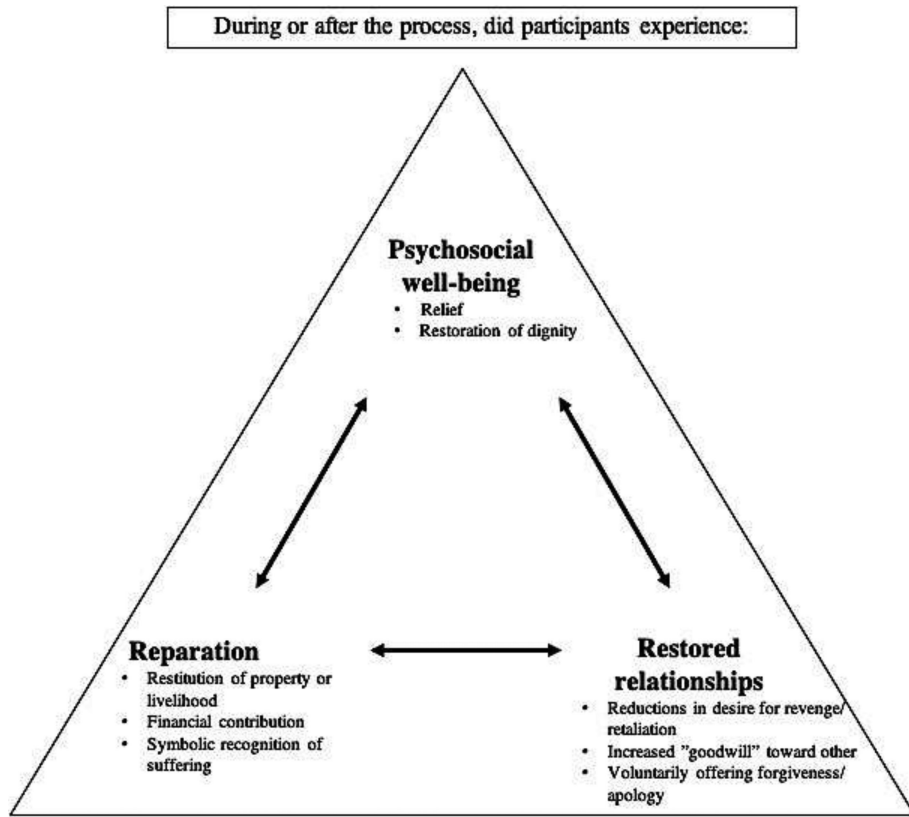


Figure 2. Components of physical and psychological welfare

address “the impact of conflict on those who are harmed by it” (Evans 2018, 684). While mentioned here to clarify how voluntarily offered forgiveness and apology relate to the conceptualization of restored relationships, I will return to the issue of forced forgiveness and apology below in the discussions of structural violence.

The following diagram (figure 2) operationalizes the aforementioned components of physical and psychological welfare.

An illustration of how these components may play out in local TJ processes can be seen in findings from Sierra Leone. Lindsay Stark’s (2006) study based on participant observation and semistructured interviews with 121 girls and seventeen traditional healers depicts a relationship between these ceremonies, improved psychosocial well-being, and the restoration of relationships.² Her study aimed to examine the experiences of girls who were victims of sexual violence during the conflict (and were hence stigmatized from their communities) that later underwent traditional cleansing ceremonies in the country facilitated by the Christian Children’s Fund (CCF). Supporting the cleansing process, members from the girls’ communities “organized, financed, and performed” the ceremonies, which reportedly helped the girls to regain their humanity after prolonged periods of sexual abuse, by being re-embraced by their home communities (Stark 2006, 213). Her interviewees commented on how, after the ceremonies, they felt relief, their communities stopped teasing and calling them names, and they were increasingly accepted by the

² Data in the cited study come from a sample of twenty-five interviews from four districts of Sierra Leone and observation of two cleansing ceremonies (Stark 2006, 208).

community, which improved social relations (Stark 2006, 213–14). One interviewee in her study relayed, for example, that “I hadn’t been mixing with my friends, but after the cleansing they started to embrace me. This provided me much relief” (Stark 2006, 213). These “acts of reconciliation that came out of the cleansing process,” as Stark (2006, 213) argues, “appear to be a major factor in improved psychosocial health.” In this case, a locally oriented process supported by an international organization (The Christian Children’s Fund) appeared to, at least in some capacity, address consequences of conflict-related gender violence, which has been suggested to increase physical and psychological security (Dokmanović 2007; McLeod 2015, 58). In this case, one can discern a positive outcome from the hybridization of a local reconciliation practice.

Further studies that explored the effects of Fambul Tok’s work in Sierra Leone also illustrate a contribution to restoring relationships but especially through forgiveness and apology. In some cases—as depicted in findings from Friedman’s interviews and archival research—these ceremonies allowed those who perpetrated harm in the past to express their remorse, such as when a district chief admitted his wrongdoings against his niece and her family during the war and then “publicly apologized and embraced her family” (Friedman 2015, 67). Other participants in Fambul Tok’s work described how, through their engagement, “tensions had lifted and the community was described as being ‘whole’ again,” according to results of informal and semistructured interviews with primarily victims and ex-combatants (Mitton 2015, 229). These findings from Sierra Leone illustrate two different directional linkages that correspond to the facilitation of physical and psychological welfare: specifically, that apology and forgiveness can lead to the restoration of relationships within communities but also that the restoration of relationships can increase psychosocial well-being.

Findings from studies about postconflict reconciliation processes in Bougainville provide further illustrations of contributions to physical and psychological welfare. From 1988–1998, a civil war was fought in the province of Bougainville, Papua New Guinea (PNG), between the secessionist Bougainville Revolutionary Army (and their associated armed factions) and the government of PNG. The war had an enduring impact on residents of the province, including continued fragility, difficulty obtaining and keeping employment, tense familial relationships, continued aggression, and problems with “trust and in normal social relations in the community due to conflict” (Jewkes, Jama-Shai, and Sikweyiya 2017, 9). Consequences also included a prevalence of “payback,” or revenge, violence that corresponded to crimes committed during the armed conflict (Boege 2006). Bougainville has long relied on traditional Melanesian conflict resolution and reconciliation practices to deal with community violence and transgressions, which was likewise incorporated into the post-civil war context. With reference to the use of traditional conflict resolution after the end of the conflict, Peter Reddy (2008) points to a relationship between apology, forgiveness, and restoring relationships through traditional ceremonies that he suggests reduced the possibility of revenge in Bougainville based on data gathered from fifty-six interviews with local Bougainville men and women ($n = 27$), peacekeepers ($n = 25$), and nongovernmental organization (NGO) and government employees ($n = 4$). One of his interviewees that underwent a traditional reconciliation ceremony commented that: “I met the man who tortured me, and he was afraid of me, I could have had him killed. I called him over and forgave him . . . He apologised to me . . . Today this man is my brother and I have reconciled with him” (Reddy 2008, 124). Related to ex-combatant disarmament associated with the postconflict reconciliation processes, another interviewee related that it was only after the reconciliation ceremonies had taken place that weapons were handed in as an illustration that they would no longer need them, which according to Reddy (2008, 126), shows how “reconciliation itself held the key to trust and feelings of safety” in Bougainville.

As a less “organic,” but still culturally rooted reconciliation program that engaged customary justice in post-civil war Bougainville, the PEACE Foundation Melanesia (PFM) program reportedly also made some contributions to restoring relationships. Interviewees from Naomi Johnstone’s (2017, 361) research—based on eighty-four interviews conducted in Bougainville—said that participation in the program helped to “provide the environment so we can go freely” because “we come together and there’s no murder and violence. We come together as one people and we have to work together. Forget about the past.” Hence, they no longer “fear[ed] violent retaliation by Bougainvillean groups who supported an opposing side.” This again illustrates a way in which local TJ processes can act as a conduit for restoring relationships, which then insulates individuals and communities from retaliatory violence.

The above examples depict ways in which local TJ processes can foment improvements in psychosocial well-being, the provision of symbolic recognition, and restoration of relationships (sometimes via opportunities for apology and forgiveness if undertaken voluntarily), which can interact with one another and ultimately contribute to physical and psychological welfare. As possible microlevel security risks (in terms of direct violence) and benefits (in terms of physical and psychological welfare) of local TJ processes have now been exemplified, the below sections will shift to the description and illustrations of components of structural violence that can be perpetuated or activated in new forms within local TJ processes. Following this, components of social justice that are argued to facilitate a repair of these consequences and/or prevent the occurrence of further structural violence will be described.

Structural Violence: Manipulation/Exploitation, Marginalization, Fragmentation

While direct violence has been described as “an event,” structural violence is conceptualized by Galtung as “a process” that inhibits people from realizing their full “physical and mental potential” (Galtung 1969, 1990; Evans 2016, 3). These processes, or structures, include offenses against human dignity and various forms of inequality such as extreme poverty, racism, gender inequality, and “increased risk of suffering serious disease or human rights violations” (Farmer 2003; McGill 2017, 97). The disparities upon which structural violence is built are “linked to social plans and programs” and/or “embedded in the political and economic organization of our social world” (Farmer 2004; Farmer et al. 2006, 1686; Evans 2016, 371) and are commonly at the “heart of armed conflict” (Farmer 2003; McGill 2017, 97). The divisions created by this type of violence into those who are superior and those who are inferior produce “relative status perceptions” that can lead to “anxiety and realistic and symbolic threats” (Tausch et al. 2007, 57) and have been linked to “shame, stress, discrimination, and denigration that result from having a lower status” (Lee 2016, 111). These characteristics of structural violence in turn produce vulnerability, which has been seen as “an indicator of inequity and social inequality” (Rhodes et al. 2012, 224). Based on components that Galtung characterizes as indicative of structural violence, I thematically organize these concepts as: manipulation/exploitation, marginalization, and fragmentation of individuals or groups (Galtung 1969, 1990). I argue that each of these contribute to uncertainty, loss of control, and/or vulnerability and hence compromise microlevel security. Like the above themes, these components may reinforce or facilitate the realization of each other.

Manipulation refers to how institutions and/or processes can be controlled or influenced by those in power for their own gain or to fulfill their own ambitions to the detriment of those in weaker positions. The related component of exploitation involves the instrumentalization of individuals or groups for the same end or merely to continue the subordination of the weaker party. This, in turn, reinforces

preexisting power dynamics (Boege 2006; Mac Ginty 2008), when those that are higher in the social or political hierarchy use their status to manipulate the outcomes or operation of the processes. Manipulation and exploitation can likewise lead to marginalization and/or fragmentation.

Marginalization relates to an individual or group being relegated to the “outside” in terms of decision-making or group belonging. This is often dictated by power dynamics, which allow the “underdog” to be subsumed by the “topdog,” with little opportunity to change their standing on their own (see, e.g., Galtung 1990). This type of exclusion can occur as part of discrimination—not least against women, youth, ethnic or sexual minorities, and/or those with disabilities—at the hands of those in the majority. Individuals with little to no access to financial means can likewise be marginalized, particularly when lower socioeconomic standing prevents them from being included in a process that most directly concerns them. From a physical and psychological health perspective, some have also suggested that institutionally excluding “certain social categories is likely to increase the incidence of various diseases, including mental illnesses” (Delor and Hubert 2000, 1565). This creates a situation where one is not able to fulfill their full mental or physical capabilities and, at the same time, becomes potentially more prone to a long-term state of misery, which reflects aspects of direct violence.

Lastly, fragmentation is a process whereby individuals or groups are kept apart—it may be used to split, and thus reduce, their influence, thereby re-instilling the power of the those at the top of the social or political hierarchy (see, e.g., Galtung 1990). Fragmentation may occur, or be enhanced, when tensions between (previously) rival groups are perpetuated, or at least not diffused, by those in power. Each of these components compromise agency and hence lack of control. Certainty is jeopardized in cases where processes are manipulated arbitrarily, depending on when those with superior power see opportunities to reap benefits for themselves. Given the role of inequality in conflict manifestation and perpetuation—not least as it concerns perceptions of relative deprivation related to status or access to resources (Gurr 1993)—structural violence and its constitutive components have a high likelihood to enable, justify, and legitimize further direct violence, thus leading to security risks.

Figure 3 visually represents how the aforementioned concepts within the theme of structural violence can be operationalized.

Evidence of manipulation and exploitation within local TJ processes has been seen in relation to elite actors manipulating processes as well as exploiting participants for their own interests. This can include the promotion of macrolevel “reconciliatory” goals (which do not necessarily reflect the needs and interests of those participating), as well as process manipulation for personal benefit, such as economic gain or insulation from accountability. Exploitative factors in some illustrations below appear to have imperiled agency, in turn (re)enforcing marginalization. It can also be seen that manipulation of processes by self-interested actors has fragmenting effects by reinforcing the separation between some groups and/or individuals, which can also perpetuate marginalization. Some outcomes below appear to be by-products of international and/or state-sponsored influence, depicting reproductions of structural violence through the hybridization of local processes.

Serving to illustrate how components of structural violence may manifest in the context of local TJ processes, this discussion begins with evidence from Timor-Leste. After the 1999 referendum for independence from Indonesia, the United Nations Transitional Administration for East Timor (UNTAET) championed a relatively comprehensive TJ strategy to deal with legacies of violence perpetrated during the Indonesian occupation of the country. This strategy included hybrid trials and a truth commission (Commission for Reception, Truth, and Reconciliation, known by the Portuguese acronym, CAVR), as well as village-level Community Reconciliation Processes (CRPs) based on the customary conflict resolution practices, *nahe*

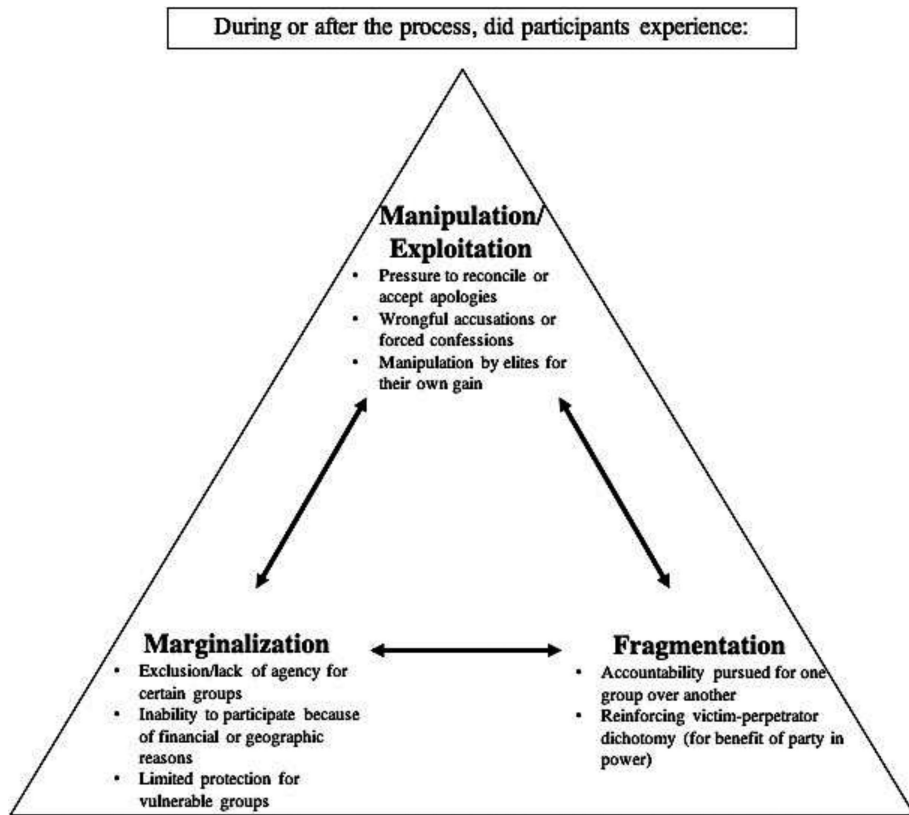


Figure 3. Components of structural violence

biti, which were operated by the CAVR. While some microlevel security benefits of these processes will be described below, various studies have pointed out shortcomings of the CRPs in the way that they were manipulated by elite actors in favor of achieving their own goals. For example, although “it [was] clear that some victims did not necessarily want to be reconciled with individual perpetrators even though they participated in a CRP hearing,” some victims were pressured into accepting apologies and hence “reconciling” with those that harmed them according to interviews (primarily with victims) conducted in separate studies by Elizabeth Stanley and Lia Kent (Stanley 2009; Kent 2012, 120). Forced acceptance of apologies and reconciliation in this example contrast with the discussion of voluntary provision of these practices in the above sections on restoring relationships. Reportedly a consequence of both “pre-existing power relations in local villages and the fiery reconciliatory rhetoric of CAVR commissioners” (Kent 2012, 157), this issue may likewise illustrate a degree of exploitation in the sense that victims were instrumentalized by those with more power to achieve their own goals without consideration of the victims’ desires. This mirrors critiques of other TRC processes that promoted their own version of “reconciliation at the expense of emphasis upon addressing wider societal conditions” (Huggins 2009; Evans 2018, 682). In this case, when exploring impacts of locally oriented processes orchestrated by international actors, one sees the “dark side of hybridity” (Wallis, Jeffery, and Kent 2016) manifested through the provocation of new and unintended forms of structural violence—specifically manipulation/exploitation as referenced here.

In a related way, the CRPs did not require that victims provide their consent for a Community Reconciliation Agreement to be completed, nor were they allowed to initiate the process by bringing forth complaints. Hence, their agency was compromised in a process that most directly affected them as a consequence of the process architecture, which also points to a marginalizing effect. It was further found that some “staff members have also been blamed for closing or manipulating hearings in which their family members were present as perpetrators” (Stanley 2009, 118). At the same time, it was perceived by some victims that perpetrators were not completely truthful in their testimonies, depicting process manipulation for personal/familial gain. This may, in turn, have had a fragmentary effect in the sense that it protected some perpetrators from accountability, reinforcing divisions between them and victims. The limited truthfulness on behalf of perpetrators—which I suggest to be a form of manipulation that can also promote fragmentation—according to Stanley (2009, 120) may be “a potential indicator of future conflict.” Overall, it appeared that some aspects of the CRPs did little to address status disparities and ultimately “reinforce[d] pre-existing power relationships within local communities,” (Kent 2012, 157) thus continuing dimensions of structural violence.

Similar to the way in which victims participating in the CRPs experienced pressure to reconcile by more powerful actors bending the process in an effort to achieve their own goals or gains, the gacaca courts were reportedly also heavily dominated by elite level rhetoric that intended to ensure the aims of gacaca would be fulfilled, no matter the individual-level cost. Susan Thomson’s (2011, 379) findings from ethnographic life history interviews with thirty-seven Rwandans call attention to how those who did not “perform according to the assigned script [of national unity and reconciliation] fall foul of the post-genocide state and its agents, and [we]re subject to a variety of sanctions.” Indeed, it appeared that individuals were exposed to various forms of process manipulation, including some being purportedly wrongly accused for political reasons during the hearings (Ingeleare 2009). In addition, some participants were compelled to perform certain actions based on pressure from authorities, such as being forced to confess to crimes they did not commit—ostensibly for the sake of achieving the elite level goals of the process (Ingeleare 2009). This links to other findings about how the gacaca courts were manipulated by some participants—including the fabrication of testimony and manipulation of evidence—for personal benefit, sometimes to either gain improvements in their own social or economic position or as payback for old scores (Rettig 2008; Doughty 2015). In some cases, as was found in the region of Ndora, witnesses on all sides were reportedly influenced by “threats, blackmail, and bribes” when providing testimony (Doughty 2015).

Further, while the community service as “punishment” component of the gacaca allowed indigent perpetrators to atone for their crimes in-kind instead of through monetary reparations, Doughty (2015, 431) highlights that this system of exchanging labor for debts recalled parallels to historical oppression of the Hutus by the Tutsis. She describes the link in some people’s minds to the practice of *uburetwa*, in which “peasants were required to supply [unpaid] labour for their chiefs and the king . . . as payment for occupation of the land from the late 1800s through the 1940s” and were “differentiated based on ethnicity and class,” which led to “an ethnicized political consciousness among Hutu” (Doughty 2015). Again, this depicts how the promotion of certain values intended to result in reconciliation and unity served to continue the subordination of a particular group in practice. Such an occurrence demonstrates a type of exploitation, and in turn marginalization, of the Hutu group that implies a further reinforcement of fragmentation between these groups. Hence, the architecture of parts of this process, influenced by ostensibly well-intended advocacy for reintegrative processes that consider economic limitations, resulted in an unforeseen reinstallation of historical structural injustices.

As another related consequence of the gacaca, the design of these processes also appeared to contribute to fragmentation in the form of selective blame and accountability of Hutus over Tutsis. According to Thomson (2011, 384), “the idea that Tutsi might be guilty of serious crimes against Hutu” is “publicly unimaginable” and rarely discussed in private, suggesting that such a consideration would be both inappropriate and unlikely to be brought up in a public setting such as gacaca.³ This relates also to how the term itself *genocidaire* (or “one who committed genocide”) is used exclusively to describe Hutus (Thomson 2011, 384). This is problematic as, while the Rwandan Patriotic Front (RPF) soldiers killed as many as forty-five thousand Hutus, these crimes are not classified as crimes of genocide and thus escape the jurisdiction of gacaca. While the remit of gacaca was indeed limited to crimes defined as genocide—a threshold that the mass killings committed by the RPF do not necessarily meet—brushing aside accountability for one group containing members guilty of murder (even if not classified as genocide) creates a skewed landscape of culpability, instilling a sense that some are exempt from being brought to justice because of their group belonging. This type of fragmentation comes as a result of process manipulation via “an authoritarian imposition of the [Rwandan] government’s narrative and the denunciation—or outright criminalisation—of opposing positions” (Evans 2018, 682). While promoting an agenda of reconciliation on the surface, the state exerted their own power to control the process by mobilizing reconciliation to “bolster political support, silence opposition and promote development that is primarily uneven” (Melvin 2012; Evans 2018, 3). In this sense, the reinforcement and/or obscuring of structural injustice and inequality appears planned and orchestrated, which has been argued to “contribute to the re-emergence of conflict or worsening of divisions in society” (Buckley-Zistel 2006; Evans 2018, 684).

Thomson’s research (2011, 378) found that, consequently, “full participation in community life is also limited because the perception that all Hutu are guilty of genocide shapes individual opportunities to reintegrate into one’s hill.” This finding illustrates a continued fragmentation of Hutus and Tutsis through assignments of blame left unchanged by the gacaca. It also denotes selective accountability of one group over the other, perpetuating a clear victim-perpetrator dichotomy that does not consider nuances of culpability for past violence. This is not to suggest that both sides should be held equally to blame—as this can allow one group to be de facto “absolved from their complicity in the maintenance” of structural injustices wherein they continue living comfortable lives built on the legacies of inequity, as seen in South Africa following the work of the TRC (Evans 2018, 681; Mamdani 2002). However, assigning culpability based on victor’s justice only serves to reinforce the fragmentation component of structural violence.

Selective accountability, in addition to what Doughty (2015, 431) refers to as “fractious dynamics of gacaca sessions,” appear to have resulted in social animosity and a lack of trust between people in communities where “they [people] should know who to mix with” (Rettig 2008; Ingeleare 2009, 43). This outcome was similarly depicted in Kanyangara et al.’s (2014) study that found that participation in the gacaca courts led victims to prefer an increase in *intragroup* contact and a reduction in *intergroup* contact, suggesting a relationship between these hearings and continued fragmentation. A comment from focus group participants in Burnet’s (2008, 186) study that gacaca was “‘profoundly dividing’ the population along ethnic lines” mirrors this finding.

In Northern Uganda, it was found that in some cases, community elders continually raised the price of undergoing a traditional cleansing ceremony because of being “more motivated by the income they could generate from such a ceremony

³ Max Rettig likewise comments that during his fieldwork in Rwanda, he also avoided asking questions about RPF crimes “because my research assistants feared government retaliation and to avoid any problems with local or national authorities,” depicting again the sensitive nature of investigating these violations publicly (Rettig 2008, 50).

than by a desire to help” participants (Baines 2007, 95). This type of manipulation for personal benefit also has a marginalizing effect for those who cannot afford the high costs and long duration of these processes. In practice, this limits the number of individuals able to participate in a ceremony that could be beneficial for their postwar reintegration and/or recovery. Studies also depict how Acholi traditional practices were sometimes promoted out of elite actors’ interest in maintaining their own status. As Acholi men suffered losses in their own power as their livelihoods dwindled during the conflict, Amy Finnegan suggests—based on semistructured interviews, questionnaire, and participant observation in the region—that leaders had an interest in promoting forgiveness through traditional ceremonies “for the ways it allows them to maintain power and placate women in Acholi society” (Finnegan 2010, 434; see also Baines 2007).

Traditional processes and, in tandem, the reinstitution of traditional authority were commonly framed by the older male generation “in terms of undoing the power gained by women and youth and imposing the power of men and elders over these formerly subjugated groups” (Branch 2014, 624). This is particularly relevant when considering that the customary *mato oput* practice is male dominated and does not include women in “decision-making, arbitration or negotiations” (Baines 2007, 107), which in turn serves to further marginalize women by excluding them from these processes. Given the high degree of state sponsorship of these traditionally based ceremonies, one can see aspects of this case reflecting what Adam Branch (2014) has referred to as “ethnojustice,” or a donor- and government-sponsored retraditionalization of local society through imposing a male-dominated version of customary justice. As a result, “forms of state-driven inequality and injustice that give rise to political grievances and violent conflict” become entrenched (Branch 2014, 625). In essence, this kind of sponsorship and influence allowed gender-based marginalization to continue unfettered, wherein “gendered frictions that can be generated as part of liberal–local peacebuilding” can “contribute to persistent gendered insecurity or vulnerability” (George and Kent 2017, 1331).

Furthermore, some have argued that traditional practices were promoted by the Ugandan government “precisely because traditional justice may guarantee state impunity” (Branch 2014, 625), further illustrating how elite actors can manipulate the use of local TJ processes to insulate themselves from accountability. This consequently instrumentalizes participants who may be unaware that their involvement in traditional ceremonies is being used for the ultimate purpose of protecting those who are most responsible for past abuse. This issue also points to characteristics of fragmentation in the sense that it was primarily Lord’s Resistance Army (LRA) crimes that were addressed within *mato oput* processes, thus also overlooking responsibility on the part of the government and Uganda People’s Defence Force (UPDF) who also committed crimes (Baines 2007). It likewise illustrates the prioritization of accountability of some groups over others, which can serve to generate further grievances and tensions between (previously) rival groups.

The above illustrations speak to existing critiques of how local TJ processes can be hijacked by political or community leaders for their own gain, often “to the detriment of the weak members of traditional communities,” and how power dynamics, along with social pressure, can also be used to make some community members comply or capitulate with a process or outcome that is not desirable to them (Boege 2006, 17; Finnström 2010; Shaw and Waldorf 2010; Harper 2011; Kochanski 2018). Such reification of power dynamics that benefit elite or privileged actors likewise informs much of the scholarship on hybrid forms of peacebuilding generally, not least through “compliance powers” and “incentivizing powers” exercised by international actors (Mac Ginty 2011, 78–84; Millar 2014, 502). Existing literature, however, has yet to frame discussions of these issues in terms of explicitly teasing out the different components of structural violence—that is, manipulation/exploitation, marginalization, and fragmentation—that may either be perpetuated or initiated

in new forms through postconflict peacebuilding processes via such power differentials and to conceptualize these outcomes as microlevel security risks.

These components create security risks as “unaddressed social and economic grievances are a powder keg of resentment and frustration that can threaten social order” (Muvungi 2009; Park 2015) through continuing or inciting uncertainty, vulnerability, and threats to safety, which may ultimately escalate to cause further violence (see, e.g., Caprioli 2005). In addition, current scholarship has not gone far enough in engaging with factors that may repair the consequences of structural violence and/or prevent its (re)occurrence in the context of postconflict peacebuilding processes. The following section conceptualizes these factors—empowerment, inclusion, and (re)integration—that can contribute to microlevel security as components comprising the thematic area of social justice.

Social Justice: Empowerment, Inclusion, (Re)Integration

In order to repair the consequences of structural violence that result or continue after conflict, as well as hinder its recurrence, it is necessary to create and/or institute structures that promote social fairness, equal opportunities, and evenly distributed social and political power. This involves facilitating the ability of marginalized or vulnerable populations to actively participate and/or be included in political and decision-making processes without discrimination. Thematically, I refer to this within the framework as “social justice,” which can be realized through empowerment, inclusion (e.g., in decision-making processes), and/or (re)integration of weaker, marginalized, or otherwise divided individuals or groups. Linking these components to the concept of security used in this article, first, empowerment has been considered to be “a process through which people gain control over the environment and their ability to satisfy basic material needs” (Christie 2007). Inclusive processes, in addition, have the “potential to alter the basis of social relationships and challenge the decision-making monopoly of dominant groups” (Gready 2008; Lundy and McGovern 2008; McGill 2017, 94). And lastly, (re)integration relates to receiving support for those who have been separated—either forcibly through socioeconomic or political structures or as a consequence of their ethnic belonging and/or role in past violence—to (re)join their communities or families. (Re)integration in this context differs from restoring relationships as outlined above, as it does not necessarily mean that the parties involved have “buried the hatchet” or restored fractured relationships. Instead it pertains to the facilitation and/or support for individuals or groups to reduce physical or psychological distance between themselves and those they were previously hindered from interacting with because of intentional or unintentional structures of division, thus facilitating repair from fragmentation.

As in the above themes composing the framework, these components also share relationships between one another, especially in that elements of inclusion and (re)integration can be empowering and that (re)integration may also be a signpost of an inclusive process—or at least moving toward inclusion. Each of these components of social justice, then, has the potential to contribute to increased control and certainty regarding one’s own circumstances. These outcomes can be realized via providing individuals with an opportunity to have agency; to participate; to (re)gain access to their homes, livelihoods, and/or supportive family or community connections; and to have insulation from discrimination, which can make individuals or groups vulnerable to more violence, not least to human rights violations.

Examples among existing research depict how some processes promote inclusion through being widely accessible even to those who may be socioeconomically disadvantaged, as well by providing opportunities in some cases for marginalized groups—particularly women and victims—to have some form of agency. Arguably this inclusion also appears to relate to individuals being able to experience some

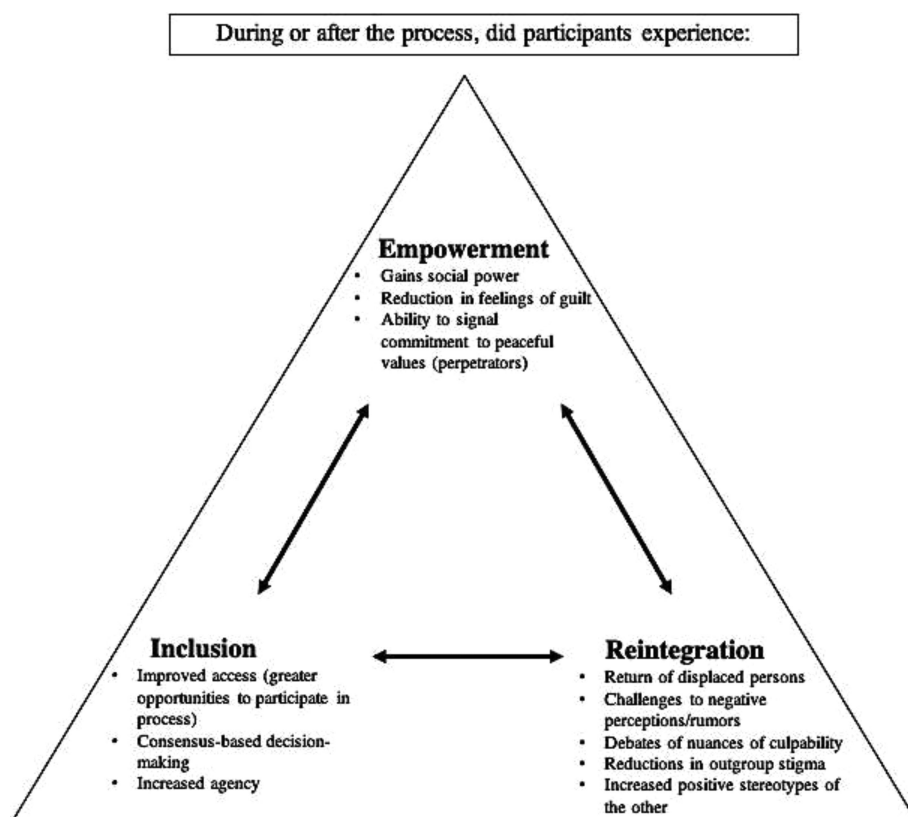


Figure 4. Components of social justice

forms of empowerment through having an opportunity to constructively engage with those that harmed them (if they choose to), to reduce their own guilt and/or shame about the past, and to be able to restore their status in their communities. As a related by-product of accessibility and wide participation, in some cases, processes also provided a setting where nuances of culpability for past crimes could be debated and rumors challenged, thereby moderating negative group stigma and contributing to repairing previous fragmentation.

Figure 4 operationalizes social justice related to the components of empowerment, inclusion, and reintegration.

Some aspects of local TJ processes in Sierra Leone appeared to promote a degree of enhanced agency and access to decision-making for women. Stark's (2006, 213) study, for example, reveals that roughly a third of the girls she interviewed were able to dictate the terms of their participation by deciding on their own that they wanted to be cleansed through a traditional ceremony. In a later study about the work of Fambul Tok, one interviewee in Friedmans's (2015, 70) study highlights how the process "has attempted to reconfigure traditional hierarchies by including women and youth in reconciliation ceremonies and, in some cases, encouraging women to testify against authority figures," which also depicts elements of inclusion and empowerment. As an outcome of this type of accessibility and inclusion in the process, following participation in traditional cleansing ceremonies in Sierra Leone, some survivors felt a release of guilt, which can be empowering, and, in the words of a girl survivor, "during the cleansing, I felt my guilt leave me" (Stark 2006, 214). Related to the further empowering and reintegrative effects of this reduction of shame and

guilt, Park (2010, 111) refers to how peace and reconciliation resulted from cleansing ceremonies, which in turn helped to provide a restoration of women victims' status in their communities. This finding comes her fieldwork in Sierra Leone consisting of participant observation and ninety-seven semistructured interviews with a range of participants including ex-combatants and victims (Park 2010).

Although often lesser emphasized, ex-combatant empowerment can also be important in postconflict settings, given this group's potential to experience marginalization, stigmatization, and threats within their communities, which can be a recipe for renewed violence (Themnér 2011). Findings about the work of Fambul Tok illustrate how former perpetrators had an opportunity to clarify events of the past. For example, one former RUF combatant commented that "It's good for me to say something about myself and my activities so other people's minds will be clear about my actions and it's also good for the next man, as maybe I'm taking him as something bad or good, but now his position can be clear" (Friedman 2015, 67–68), illustrating how local TJ processes can provide space where rumors and negative perceptions about the other could be challenged. Friedman (2015, 68) remarks that these kinds of narratives had an "equalizing function for ex-combatants' re-identification as civilians," which suggests a reparation of the effects of marginalization and hence a move toward some form of empowerment. In addition, such a finding implies a reduction of fragmentary effects caused by the sharp line drawn between ex-combatants and civilians. This may in turn insulate this at-risk group from the possibility of sustaining retaliatory attacks by signifying their evolution from perpetrator to community member.

Furthermore, the CRPs in Timor-Leste reportedly allowed opportunities for reasonably widespread participation given their proximate geographic location at the village and hamlet level to individuals who might benefit most directly from these processes (Kent 2012, 154). Relatively high levels of participation within the CRPs were seen as over fifteen hundred people asked to participate in the process, 216 CRP hearings were held (dealing with 1379 perpetrators), and as many as forty thousand individuals attended, leading to the conclusion that the "CRP offered a fast and cheap alternative to formal justice processes and it enjoyed relatively wide acceptance across Timorese communities" (Stanley 2009, 114). In conjunction with this inclusive characteristic of the CRPs, they also provided an opportunity to reduce negative stereotypes of others (and hence contribute to reintegration). A public forum was provided by these processes in which past rumors about roles during the Indonesian occupation could be challenged and debated, which in turn helped to reduce the "stigma that had become attached to individuals through the informal process of gossip" (see, e.g., Larke 2009, 663). In addition to facilitating reintegration of parties in this way, the reduction of stigma against individuals may have likewise promoted dimensions of empowerment in the sense that one could regain their social status by no longer being stigmatized because of unfounded rumors.

Further, the intentional use of the neutral term "deponent" instead of "perpetrator" within the CRPs may have provided an opportunity to counteract fragmentation of the past. The processes reportedly "attempted to reinforce the absence of the 'true' perpetrators and support the impression that all present, whether deponent, victim or those members of the community observing the hearing, shared the identity of survivors, those lucky enough to escape the machinations of the Indonesian regime" (Larke 2009, 660). Possibly a function of a wide breadth of accessibility to the process, as well as the opportunities to reduce stigma, CRPs reportedly "provoked a re-engagement between distant parties and made individuals reconsider others in their communities" (Stanley 2009, 113–14), illustrating a reintegrative component linked to inclusivity.

Despite how the architecture of the gacaca process contributed to fragmentation via selective accountability in some respects, the process also provided some

opportunities to debate nuances of culpability. For example, “participants challenged the omissions in the official version of the genocide, and argued for more nuanced versions of the position of Hutu, including broadening the definition of victim, or arguing for a category of innocent Hutu,” as these distinctions “did not capture the nuances of local dynamics” (Doughty 2015, 427). Although unclear whether this was a direct outcome of the opportunity to reflect more deeply on the contours of the past, studies about participation in the gacaca reveal that some survivors felt a release of guilt, which in Rwanda led to “a very significant gain in social power” (Kanyangara et al. 2014). It was also found that the gacaca hearings “improved social integration,” specifically through promoting “an increase in positive stereotypes, a more differentiated perception of outgroup, and a decrease in identification of participants with their ingroup” (Rimé and Kanyangara 2011, 703), suggesting a reparation of previous fragmentation.

Concluding Remarks and Future Research

The conceptual framework developed in this article is intended to help better identify the range of microlevel security risks and benefits associated with peacebuilding processes, as illustrated through examples from empirical studies about participation in local TJ processes. By disaggregating components of direct and structural violence—as well as areas that may repair their consequences and/or prevent their repetition, which I refer to as physical and psychological welfare and social justice—a more nuanced picture of factors that can both threaten and facilitate security at the individual and community level emerges. In particular, the more subtle psychological components of direct violence and various forms of structural injustice have rarely been framed as security risks in postconflict settings. I argue this is a useful exercise given how their components, when continued or reinforced, contribute to vulnerability, including lack of control of one’s circumstances and uncertainty on the ground. Such outcomes may in turn provoke what Maslow (1943) has referred to as “emergency reactions” that have the potential to perpetuate both large- and small-scale cycles of violence. This is not least because, as Höglund and Söderberg Kovacs (2010, 385) argue, “unresolved issues, residual violence, and hostile group attitudes pose threats to a sustainable peace precisely because each component has the potential to escalate the conflict again and restart a destructive cycle of dynamic conflict.” Likewise, existing literature sparsely focuses on a fine-grained understanding of potential positive operational aspects of peacebuilding processes that may contribute to security outcomes at the individual and/or community level. Through exploring how such processes can make contributions to physical and psychological welfare and social justice, a more complete picture of how dimensions of their work might be further emphasized emerges, which may be beneficial for policy and practice.

The framework and illustrative examples presented above are not intended to suggest that state- or societal-level security has been achieved in any of the contexts depicted above but instead they serve as a jumping off point for further analysis and classification of different types of security risks and benefits at the microlevel. By emphasizing a more nuanced approach for analyzing success (or failure) of various peacebuilding processes in terms of individual- and community-level security, we can obtain a better understanding of the impact of these processes on those who are most affected by them.

While this article has not intended to evaluate the efficacy of local TJ processes as a whole or within the specific cases explored, the framework elucidated above would be a useful tool for undertaking evaluations of these processes specifically but also a range of other peacebuilding programming. For example, researchers might conduct surveys or in-depth interviews with individuals who participated in the peacebuilding mechanism of interest by asking questions informed

by the framework components to assess how the process resulted in different microlevel security risks or benefits. Relevant to local TJ processes as depicted above, the framework could equally be used for analyzing the impact of truth commission or trial processes, as well as DDR and SSR. Again, data could be collected in line with the operationalized framework components outlined above to determine the extent to which these types of processes had security-related impacts at the microlevel. While their work may be targeted either at societal- or local-level outcomes, each of these processes inherently has implications for individuals affected by past violence, hence this framework can be used to investigate how their work has prevented or promoted microlevel security for individuals involved.

By understanding strengths and weaknesses of peacebuilding processes through this framework, policymakers and practitioners may be better equipped to develop more sustainable and effective solutions for addressing the consequences of mass violence. This analytical tool can also help us to ask why different outcomes may result, not least as it relates to the promises and pitfalls of pursuing “local” processes of conflict resolution that are inherently tied to local power dynamics but also to culturally relevant processes of recovery. Such a tool is valuable for identifying the security-related risks and benefits of postconflict peacebuilding approaches, thereby enhancing understanding of areas that should be emphasized as well as of those that should be addressed in the architecture of strategies used to deal with consequences of widespread violence.

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