



International Journal for Peace and Justice

Minding A Social Distance: A Dialogue About Researching Strategically Undervalued Communities In An Ethnopolitical Conflict During A Global Pandemic

Sean Byrne, Robert C. Mizzi, Nancy E. Hansen, and T. Sheppard-Luangkhot

Introduction

In 1970, C. Wright Mills wrote, “Perhaps the most fruitful distinction with which the sociological imagination works is between the ‘personal troubles of milieu’ and ‘the public issues of social structure.’ This distinction is an essential tool of the sociological imagination and a feature of all classic work in social science” (p. 14). As critical qualitative researchers seeking the social emancipation of strategically undervalued communities through research, we found Wright Mills’ point relevant when reflecting on our research experience during the COVID-19 pandemic. Our research intended to explore marginalized perspectives of how peacebuilding impacts lives in Northern Ireland (NI), whether inclusion/exclusion tendencies prior to the conflict carried forth into the peace process, or if there was some form of social change resulting from the conflict. We had planned to conduct interviews with various disability and LGBTQI+ Civil Society Organizations (CSOs) in Belfast and Derry. This research is a continuation of the partnerships and connections with researchers and CSOs that the researchers have developed over considerable years, a 2017 grant funded research project on marginalized communities as well as Byrne’s 30-year research with NI peacebuilding CSOs. While marginality is a broad and interconnected concept, we focused on the experiences of lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, queer, and other minoritized sexualities and genders (LGBTQI+) and disabled people in NI after

the 1998 Belfast/Good Friday Agreement came into effect. We find these two groups often occupy the periphery both in social research and in social policy, and yet they interact with and support one another. Kimberlé Crenshaw's (2017) concept of intersectionality suggests that individuals can be a part of many communities and have overlapping identities and varying experiences of power, which is a useful concept for our research.

Intersectionality underpins this research, given that there are issues (ableism, ageism, classism, queerphobia, racism, sexism, xenophobia, etc.) that cut across identity differences and restrict access to rights and privileges in civil society. This research aimed to paint a different picture of what it means to reconcile with victims of the conflict and how people integrate and interact with members of their various communities. Our intention was to conduct a series of semi-structured interviews with individuals from both the disability and LGBTQI+ communities in NI, and with those in allyship who facilitate social services that support these communities, to help us reach our research goals. Previous research found that the NI peace process excludes both groups (Byrne et al., 2018).

Blinne (2016) acknowledged that controversial and complex research projects face adversity in academe, such as experiencing strenuous peer review. We extend on this view and suggest that significantly changing research contexts can also challenge critical research. Similar to other researchers across the globe, the height of the COVID-19 pandemic brought our project to a standstill. Lockdowns also meant shutting down research projects that involved people as study participants. In spring 2021, we attempted to resurrect the NI research in an adapted, virtual form. This decision was not taken lightly, as "Zoom fatigue" dominated much of online interaction during the pandemic, which meant that people have inhibited spontaneity, restricted mobility, and awkward conversations, among other tropes (Asgaard, 2022). As researchers based

in Canada, our adaptation meant attempting to conduct online interviews with strategically undervalued communities in an over-researched society, which we found challenging.

The purpose of this article is to discuss, as researchers, why the research was brought to a halt, the difficulty in recruiting participants from strategically undervalued communities that were exasperated by the pandemic to explore their perspectives of Brexit and the 30-year Troubles, the benefits of the interdisciplinary research team, and the challenges of the research process that can inform other researchers studying marginalized people in divided societies. As we demonstrate below, the COVID-19 pandemic has demonstrated the importance of intersectional minority and multicultural policies and continuous public dialogue as critical for the inclusion and participation of strategically undervalued communities (Zagar, 2022). We came to a realization that we needed to revisit our goals regarding what research means for the communities we seek information from, and to consider how we can better serve these communities.

Below is a dialogue that the researchers structured to help us organize and analyze the problems we encountered during the pandemic. Our critical, reflexive approach to the dialogue attends to problems within a complex, ever-changing research scenario, which is regulated by university policies, and seeks new ways of improving practice (Frølund et al., 2017), especially as global uncertainty and instability become more pervasive. By being reflexive, we suggest certain inclusion and exclusion tendencies in “doing” research that are seemingly in flux. We created each discussion question to operationalize the dialogue and used Google Groups to help organize the dialogue. After the dialogue, we offer several findings and conclude the paper.

Dialogue

Question 1: Based on our research experiences thus far, how has the COVID-19 pandemic, peace fatigue, Brexit and the political tension in NI affected our difficulty recruiting participants among the LGBTQI+ and disability community? Why is it difficult to research a society like Northern Ireland with an ongoing protracted conflict?

Sean: The transitional liminal peacebuilding process is complex, emancipatory, uncertain, untidy, and multidimensional (Mac Ginty, 2006). It includes a diversity of local actors and stories as people make meaning of micro and macro events as they unfold on the ground (Mac Ginty, 2006; Marijan, 2017; Senehi, 2022). Local resistance, stories, and experiences are entrenched in everyday networks, practices, relations, and spaces (Scott, 2020). Critical and emancipatory peacebuilding centres on agency, diversity, empowerment, inclusion, recognition, resiliency, and local grassroots approaches to peacebuilding and social justice (Byrne & Thiessen, 2019; Thiessen, 2011). Local people often do not own peacebuilding processes due to the power asymmetry with more powerful state and external actors. Bringing the local back in and including strategically undervalued groups is vital in building sustainable peace in post civil war and protracted ethnic conflict contexts like NI (Byrne et al., 2018). For example, positive social change movements like Cara Friend, TransgenderNI, Queer Space, Disability Action Northern NI, and Disability Sport NI worked toward social justice during Brexit and the COVID-19 pandemic while enduring peace fatigue as NI has become an over-researched laboratory. Enlarging and enriching the local in NI entails “broadened universalist” versus “insular particularist mindsets,” as well as prior “socialization experiences” and the development of “particular personal traits” that are essential elements in motivating people to engage in either intergroup or “within-group peacebuilding” and civil society activism in NI (Rafferty, 2016). A

“critical education” structure would generate a cosmopolitan and “common humanity mindset” in NI as local context shapes people (Rafferty, 2016). For example, young people attending NI’s integrated schools develop a “shared umbrella identity” that transcends the narrow, insular ethnonationalist identities associated with segregated schools (Byrne, 1997).

Consequently, inclusive and decolonial research must reflect the researcher’s empathy, insight, and genuine desire to improve the conditions of strategically undervalued communities by deconstructing unjust structures as well as listening to local stories discussing the complexity of conflict and the peacebuilding agency of ordinary people (Thiessen & Byrne, 2017; Tuhiwai Smith, 2021) in societies like NI transitioning out of direct violence and navigating that transition from war to a cold and often liminal frosty peace. One of the authors identifies as disabled, two authors identify as LGBTQI+, and the fourth comes from Ireland. Their experiences, identities, and stories also inform this research. The researchers are also aware of their privileged positions as external researchers and the power dynamic that exists in the interaction with the disabled and LGBTQI+ communities they are researching. Storytelling is, therefore, both an important qualitative research method and intercultural peacebuilding practice (Senehi, 2009, 2022) to use with marginalized groups. Marginalized movements’ compelling stories about the legacies of the past and the challenges of the future are a part of their traditional activism and highlight the significance of doing research with strategically undervalued groups whose experiences and ideas about their challenges, sense of community, and everyday living must inform peacebuilding strategies (Senehi, 2019). NI’s wisdom keepers are the key “transcultural storytellers” with knowledge about their community’s conflicts as well as peacebuilding and reconciliation practices (Senehi, 2009, 2015).

Robert: Sean makes valuable points. Researcher empathy, insight, and desire are practical concepts because they help question what we hope to achieve from conducting research. When I think about this question for our dialogue, the question, *what is research?* comes to mind. Is it about elevating those voices that have harsh life experiences with social and systemic marginalization? Could it also be about the process: designing a research project, strategizing participant recruitment, collaborating with others, meeting new stakeholders, writing grant proposals, among other tasks? This process is just as important as generating data, and there are often stories embedded within each. Facing challenges towards generating data are data too! A multivocal autoethnography (Mizzi, 2010), for example, can elucidate the challenges facing a research project and how we interact with the research project as parents, adult learners, researchers, and as activists. That is important data because we can now unpack what happens when we *do* research and what does research *do* to us.

Not engaging study participants due to a host of challenges is not a setback but perhaps an illumination into the urgent and deeply critical work that needs to happen. Challenges to research cause us to take the standpoint of the "Other": how to understand their settings, how people come to it and live in it, and what may be some of the more pressing difficulties facing the lives of strategically undervalued people (Delamont, 2020). Indeed, there can still be insight even in over researched societies.

Nancy: In Hansen (2020), I discuss the realities of doing field research as a disabled academic. I demonstrate how there is a pervasive and dominant structural ableism in academe in general, which limits how disabled researchers conduct their work. Further, and directly related to our work in NI, for the first time, I was able to work with non-disabled colleagues in the field. I did not have to figure out every element of access in advance. We worked on elements of

accessibility both physical and attitudinal as they arose. This collaboration enabled me/us to access spaces and places we would not have gone before noting invisibility and absence; thereby making the research that much richer and wiser.

T: Sean has made some important points. I also wonder about the impact of multiple traumata and how COVID-19 created further trauma, insularity, and mistrust of the "outsider" researcher, particularly for intersectional identities facing a world of extreme inequalities (Cho et al., 2013; Crenshaw, 2017). For disabled people and LGBTQI+ people who have intergenerationally suffered from the Troubles, who have been harmed by structural, cultural, and direct violence (Galtung, 1990), classism, ableism, queerphobia, transphobia, and xenophobia along with Brexit stress, it may be hard to be open and share stories. LGBTQI+ and disabled people in NI are facing barriers due to their intersectional identities and in a new war: facing COVID-19 economic, social, and health stressors, and in too many cases, death.

As crischolars, how can we honour that local people in NI may want to not share stories with foreign researchers as the "other"? Perhaps people, particularly people with marginalized identities, may want to focus on their localized, grassroots needs (Thiessen, 2011) to cope with their multiple layers of inequities and traumata. When trying to recruit participants, I noticed at least two responses from agencies who preferred to engage with local researchers who likely feel familiar and more trustworthy during this prolonged collective trauma that was the COVID-19 pandemic. Also, it is important to empathize with their standpoint, silence, and the need for the local, pressing issues as a decolonized, qualitative approach to our research and peacebuilding efforts (Fontan 2012).

Nancy Hansen's (2020) book chapter, "The continuing adventures of a four-legged female academic researcher," refers to changing the research landscape, and reconstructing

ableist, business-oriented research models. This invitation to flexibility and allowing time and space for research to be accessible, is perhaps not only for researchers, funders, and the academy, but also for participants themselves.

Nancy: Exactly! Disabled people paid a very high price amid COVID-19 on both sides of the ocean. Ableism and ageism is endemic and ugly these days (Burke, 2021). This is what is happening in NI (Disability Action, 2020). Certain groups of people are deemed disposable, particularly amid a pandemic (Meredith, 2021). Many people are literally having to justify their existence on a regular basis. Most deaths associated with COVID-19 in the United Kingdom (UK) had underlying conditions relating to disability (Burke, 2020).

Question 2: What would need to shift in NI for people to be able to participate again in international research that seeks to gather trans/queer and disabled peoples' perspectives on Brexit, the Troubles, and the post-peace accord milieu in NI?

Sean: Critical methodologies must link theory to practice that explores diversity, inclusion, knowledge, power, and “reflective praxis” (Lederach et al., 2007). Trans/interdisciplinary research challenges coloniality, the grand narrative, and the exclusionary power structure by creating new knowledge and practice spaces that open new possibilities for nonviolent action by including everyday peacemakers' alternative stories ensuring that researchers are not “reproducing othering and marginalizing practices in terms of the methods used” (Motzkau & Jefferson, 2009, p. 6). Researchers must include the marginalized and invisibilized in the research design that meet local people's basic human needs (Kulchyski, 2005; Robins & Wilson, 2015). Researchers must explore intersectionally the relationship between the marginalized and the researcher in terms of white privilege, cultural, gender, political, social, and class backgrounds (Holland, 2022; Redman-McLaren & Mills, 2015). Researchers and

strategically undervalued communities working together must coproduce valuable and relevant data combining insider's emic views and wisdom with the external researcher's etic and technical knowledge (Carlane, 1997). Thus, meaningful change in NI can emerge from critical research that encourages necessary new policies (Thiessen & Byrne, 2017).

The research should also inform policymakers and donors and raise local people's consciousness and mobilize them to pursue social justice (Byrne & Thiessen, 2019). "Post-qualitative research," therefore, decolonizes Western research methodologies refocusing knowledge while arrogating the interconnections between ethics, knowledge, and local wisdom within a rich local context (Le Grange, 2018). A bricolage mixed interdisciplinary method must include a culturally sensitive and gender-inclusive narrative storytelling method that empowers local people to articulate the axiologies, cosmologies, epistemologies, and ontologies embedded in their stories (Kincheloe, 2001; Mac Ginty, 2020; Senehi, 2019). Strategically undervalued peoples' informative and vibrant stories and social memory are included through a creative, inclusive, and innovative local or/and Indigenous research paradigm that focuses on their empowerment, recognition, and resilience and that is committed to social justice, a trauma informed inquiry, and research to help transform relationships and structures (Tuhiwai Smith, 2021; Wilson, 2009).

In post peace accord societies like NI, the re-traumatization of the local people and local security concerns often fuel the fear of outside researchers (Robins & Wilson, 2015). Researchers may also experience trauma when completing research on traumatic events in NI with traumatized survivors of the 30-year conflict. This raises a key concern for the well-being of researchers dealing with traumatic experiences encountered when researching people in protracted ethnopolitical conflicts and civil war zones (Millar, 2020). Researchers must be

encouraged to access counselling services to cope with the possible stress resulting from the trauma experienced while conducting field research in violently divided societies.

Robert: As a queer person, I appreciated this question and Sean's initial response. There is much to gain by including trans/queer and disabled people's perspectives in NI. We, as those with insider/outsider positionalities, can offer fresh perspectives around privilege and normative behaviours that stifle integration and participation suggesting ways forward. So often, I see tokenistic voices around the table: *the disabled voice, the queer voice, the racialized voice*, and so forth (Mizzi et al., 2016). This is dangerous because it assumes all voices are homogenized and funneled into one person. What needs to happen is the inclusion of a plethora of voices and engagements to achieve a more nuanced understanding.

What needs to shift are the traditions around doing research and to centralize principles of collaboration, reciprocity, and connectedness. For example, we now can explore social media and virtual sites as platforms to conduct research. We can also research spaces that have been unconventional or unpopular, such as museums, cafes, or streets. We need to meet participants where they are at so that they can participate in the research and work collaboratively to benefit their communities through research (Lambert, 2014). When we begin to “queer” research and the borders delineate what and where research is possible, we can connect with people and better understand their realities, and they can understand ours. For example, insider/outsider research status is a form of boundary-making, which emphasizes power relations between the researched and the researcher (Nash, 2010).

I agree with Sean that researchers may need counselling to work through their experiences of conducting research. So often, we are expected as researchers to identify counselling services for participants due to possibly re-living past harms out of conducting their

research. Ethics boards do not consider the emotional and psychological difficulties associated with conducting research. Perhaps if we approached research with greater sensitivity and openness, we would allow for various kinds of dialogue to surface and the necessary supports to be accessible.

Nancy: This all rings so true with disability issues. In many cases, the academy is afraid of difference; however, it is understood or framed. At present, there is toleration presented as inclusion. The academy's comfort level is sorely tested when dealing with anything beyond superficial, simplistic understandings of so-called difficult subject areas. The majority (whomever they are) established privilege and comfort zones are disturbed. Perhaps the most problematic barrier is endemic systemic ableism and homophobia cloaked in established practice. Failing to shift outdated practice dutifully maintains the status quo under the guise of progress. What is said about voices is right on the mark—again displaying a colonial simplification. Many community members refuse to participate in established practices. Not wanting to lend legitimacy to outdated understandings. Not to mention the great importance of intersectionality. Our research is so important because we are trying to shift research on so many levels simultaneously.

T: It is a great question, and full of hope to consider what would need to shift to engage disabled and trans/queer voices in international research. During COVID-19, there was a loss of hope in living a "normal" life. For people who are disabled and LGBTQI+, they are already living outside of the "majority" performance of normal (Foucault, 2010) that privileges ableist, ageist, heterocentric, classist, cisnormative, and white colonial performances.

As a trans person, I agree with Robert that we are not homogenous. I tend to engage with online and face-to-face research as a participant when I have time, psychological room, and

when researchers have found me, usually through social media and email, especially social media as it is more "fun" than my email and I am usually more open when engaged with it. With the onslaught of COVID-19, I had less psychological room and felt physically unsafe at the idea of in-person research, but if an accessible, trauma-informed questionnaire takes no more than ten minutes, I will engage with it. As Sean says, people need trauma-informed support to share stories, especially with the history of colonial trauma and war in NI and the fragile process of post peace accord reconciliation (Mac Ginty, 2006).

Nancy makes a good point about thinking flexibly beyond dominant research practice and working intersectionally (Crenshaw, 2017). Let's, as international researchers, be intersectional, and make it physically and psychologically safe and accessible, brief, and convenient through online engagement. We may be able to engage with disabled and queer participants in NI to gather their important perspectives on the Troubles, Brexit, and the post-peace accord milieu.

Snowball sampling is a critical recruitment tool to connect to participants when direct appeals are not working (Naderifar et al., 2017). Snowball sampling has been difficult when we have tried to employ it through email. I wonder whether we may reach people better through an online questionnaire like Survey Monkey and gather a "snow" of participants with the help of CSOs' social media accounts. In these social media savvy times, many research participants are often reached through colourful posters, quick read memes, and the ease of online questionnaires. Perhaps people needed to be invited through social media posters, memes, and a brief online questionnaire, especially during the increased online time of the pandemic. Ensuring our questionnaire and social media posts can reach disabled people is critical otherwise, we are performing ableism. Technology matters a lot in qualitative research (Seymour, 2008) and a

great deal during the pandemic as people relied heavily on their online time to get through the isolation of the pandemic. Participants may be more ready to share stories if we snowball recruit with platforms and invitations that stand out to them online.

Question 3: One noticeable element is that we are a small contingent of researchers working towards LGBTQI+ and disabled peoples' inclusion in NI. What may be a benefit and a challenge of our size for research collaboration?

Sean: In recent years, Peace and Conflict Studies (PACS) scholarship on LGBTQI+ individuals and disabled people in civil wars and protracted ethnopolitical conflicts has broadened our vistas and understanding of the complexity of roles adopted by strategically undervalued people as activists, peacebuilders, and survivors often interchangeably throughout a conflict's life span (Byrne et al., 2018; Hanes et al., 2020). In the past, LGBTQI+ people, disabled people, ex-combatants, newcomers, youth, and women affected by political violence were invisibilized in research in intrastate conflicts like NI (Byrne et al., 2022; Shea-Irvine & Hansen, 2019). War and political violence seriously impact strategically undervalued people as their communities are destroyed or as they actively participate as peacebuilders in protracted conflict milieus (Leatherman, 2011). Research is now examining the intersection of age, class, and genderqueer identity in the peace narrative in contrast with the war narrative when researching strategically undervalued people's resiliency and resistance (Yavuz & Byrne, 2021). This research has implications for using peacebuilding practices to fully include strategically undervalued people in sustainable peace processes like in NI. External researchers must also be sensitive and aware of cultural nuances in how they reach out and interact with potential participants (Mizzi et al., 2023).

Often the human rights and media frame a universal ableist and cissexist discourse and narrative around strategically undervalued people in NI as apolitical survivors needing therapy and to be “saved” (Shea-Irvine & Hansen, 2019). Ableism, ageism, heterosexism, transmisogyny, and heteronormative attitudes dehumanize strategically undervalued people while also not privileging pansexual and polyamory relationships (Mizzi & Byrne, 2015). Instead, this universal “bafflegab” (Dingwall, 2021) focuses on strategically undervalued people’s internalized oppression rather than their agency, choices, resilience, and peacebuilding practices. In NI, strategically undervalued people’s roles and choices are complex and are not connected to their supposed vulnerability (Hill & Hansen, 2011). Ableist, heterosexist, and transphobic stereotypes “thingify” (Cesaire, 2001) and objectify, ignoring the rich and heterogenous cultural, economic, historical, political, and social contexts of strategically undervalued people as civil wars and complex protracted ethnopolitical conflicts like NI are framed in an ethnonationalist and war discourse by policymakers and nationalists as multiple ethnic groups with separate ethnonationalist ideologies compete for power while ignoring heterogeneous differences (Agathangelou & Ling, 2004; Ashe, 2019). Universal neoliberal peacebuilding intervention is also gendered and ableist, failing to address the deep structural roots of conflicts to promote social justice by including strategically undervalued groups in the peacebuilding process (Byrne & Thiessen, 2019).

Robert: Excellent points, Sean! I also appreciate learning Dingwall’s (2021) word “bafflegab!” The more we learn about disabled people and LGBTQI+ people, the more we realize that we are just scratching the surface as to their lives, how they identify, and the nature of their relationships with each other and the broader social and educational systems. We may be a small group of peace researchers, but we are also open and collaborative, hopefully making for

a productive and positive experience. We seem to be continually learning from one another. I particularly appreciate Sean's deep knowledge of the Troubles in NI, Nancy's activism and scholarship for disabled peoples, and T's trans and social justice perspectives. Interdisciplinary research provides new terrain for PACS. As Makhanya (2020) explained, interdisciplinary research "forms a departure from the more traditional understandings of practices of research to pave the way for new knowledges, understanding, and practices that have particular relevance and application for the societies and countries in which they are found and from which they emanate" (p. 187). Interdisciplinary research is vital for integrating knowledge, techniques, perspectives, and theories and breaks down boundaries historically constructed by educational organizations to contain and categorize disciplines.

There are several challenges that nuance this research. First, since we are so small, we are easily identifiable despite anonymizing ourselves for peer review, we have a harder time developing a network of like-minded researchers. We find communicating the urgent nature of this research difficult for some people, such as policymakers. Having a larger research strategy in place will help articulate and justify our concerns. Further, we are researching a niche topic with a lengthy history of social and systemic marginalization. This history adds another barrier to the research.

Nancy: I always find it interesting that what seems natural to us is so different to most other researchers.

T: As cisgender and LGBTQI+ allies, Sean and Nancy are crucial to our small team because you can use your straight privilege and power for queer researchers like Robert and me and queer participants to allow them to become visible. You all are great cisgender allies to me and my trans, genderqueer identity.

Sean, Robert, and I can be allies to make space for Nancy's voice and gender and disabled research participants' identities and needs to be fully seen in the research process.

Neither Nancy, Robert, nor I know what it is like being raised in NI as Sean has. On this team, only Sean can offer the insider perspective as the Irish research voice and he understands participants with more nuance than the rest of our team.

I think the plurality of this team is that we can gently but firmly catch each other on the things we cannot see due to our standpoint (Strega & Brown, 2015). Our research process is all the richer for it. It also serves to help protect participants and the research process from researcher bias.

We may not see the intersectionality of race, as all of us have white racial privilege. Hopefully, we can catch each other on any “white fragility” (Di’Angelo, 2018) and avoid excluding racialized disabled and LGBTQI+ participants in NI who also deserve to be visibilized when discussing Brexit, the Troubles, and their post peace accord lived experiences.

Nancy: Great points here, T. There are some interesting reflexive parallels here. Just as I have the privilege of being straight and cisgendered. Similarly, as visibly non-disabled allies, your knowledge is more valued because in many instances (present company accepted of course!), I often get dismissed though it’s not articulated as such as a “crip with a chip on her shoulder.” Things cannot be that bad, etc. It is so great to be part of an interdisciplinary research team that sees value in disability rather than defective weakness. It is so natural to me that it all works together (Ebersold, 1998).

Question 4: Are there any other possible barriers to the research process that may assist others in conducting interdisciplinary, international research, especially during challenging times in protracted ethnic conflicts or/and societies transitioning out of a violent past?

Sean: The “hierarchization of knowledge and power” through scientific practices and the “grand narrative” or discourse is used by a plethora of societal institutions to exert power using “panopticon” surveillance systems to control, oversee, and manage people’s behaviour (Foucault, 1995). The “knowledge-power” malady (Foucault, 1995) is both contested and resisted in hierarchical bureaucracies in Weber’s “iron cage” of rational societal institutions. That said, democratic bureaucratic institutions today are under attack by the rejuvenation of alt-right, racist, ultra-nationalist ableist and homophobic ideologies creating the conditions for minority groups to be treated as adversaries because some strategically undervalued groups live and others die as social death is imposed on them by the state’s “necropolitics” (Mbembe, 2019). Strategically undervalued groups are exposed to deadly violence due to structural power asymmetries or “precarity vulnerability” (McClean, 2019). Consequently, a critical heterogeneous resistance micro politics must focus on otherness, queerness, and difference, and be comfortable with chaos, complexity, and heterogeneity (Butler, 2016).

At the same time, however, gendered politics depends on a militarized interlocking relationship between gender identity, public policy, security, and “toxic masculinity” (Enloe, 2007; Tickner, 1992). Patriarchy is enmeshed in unjust cultural, economic, political, religious, and social structures and institutions (Goldstein, 2003) that continue to protect white male privileges and exploit relationships with a divide and rule coercive and hierarchical strategy while strategically undervalued people continue to experience psychological traumas and direct and indirect structural and cultural violence. Women and youth are also oppressed within a capitalist, heterosexist, patriarchal, and racist structure with an amalgamation of oppressive systems of control and punishment locked in a “matrix of domination” (Hill-Collins, 2008). Women, youth, disabled people, LGBTQI+ citizens, Black, Indigenous and People of Color

(BIPOC) peoples, refugees, the elderly, newcomers, the very poor, and ex-combatant's efforts are often devalued, essentialized, and marginalized in peacebuilding processes. Structural violence, therefore, parallels everyday patterns of sexual and interpersonal violence that target women, youth, and trans people (Theidon et al., 2011, p. 22).

Consequently, the “personal is political” as private and public norms and values are interconnected so that a new “gender justice security architecture” is warranted that builds new critical peacebuilding skills and broad-based “alliances and networks” in places like NI to facilitate just “non-hierarchical equal relations” that are not grounded in hegemonic masculinity (Tickner, 1992, 2001). Creating peaceful relations and social justice means deconstructing patriarchal power and shedding unequal gender relations to forge a justpeace for all (Sylvester, 2016; Wilmer, 2022). For example, Peggy Chinn's (2012) peace empowerment methodology can be a useful peacebuilding practice to use in NI as well as Indigenous communities circles and medicine wheels that are a symbol of equity where everyone within the circle is equal in terms of power with its many ties to the animal, spirit, and natural world (for e.g., the earth, moon, stars, sun) (Wilson et al., 2019).

Robert: The personal is political, as Sean explains above, through patriarchy, injustice, and systemic violence. Those are barriers to doing interdisciplinary and international research. We are struggling amidst difficult regimes, locally, nationally, and globally. As I mentioned earlier, interdisciplinary research is about dismantling traditional barriers that contain research, and so this systemization of research makes it painful research and difficult to navigate through. For example, our research design originates in Canada, and our fieldwork is in NI. We are occupying a space on the margins, both in society and in academe, trying to articulate to whoever will listen that this is important work. Some people are not ready to listen and reflect. We run up

against competing needs. People needed to survive COVID-19, realize the impact of Brexit, plan for an economic downturn and still mitigate the harmful effects of the Troubles. For example, one agency told us they were unwilling to support our research since we are internationally based. On the one hand, researching human subjects during intense periods can reveal resilience, insights, and strengths hard to identify during calm periods. On the other hand, we are working with humans who are experiencing stress and hardship. Sometimes research is just too low on the hierarchy of needs, despite its richness in understanding and unravelling complexity.

Where do we go from there? I think of Spivak's (1993) claim that "one must begin somewhere" and that:

If the "somewhere" that one begins from is the most privileged site of the neocolonial education system, in an Institute for the training of teachers, funded by the state, does that gesture of convenience become the normative point of departure? Does not participation in such a privileged and authoritative apparatus require the greatest vigilance? (p. 58).

Researchers working across borders and boundaries must include their engagement within a more extensive apparatus of oppression and regulation that might have been unimaginable. That means expect delays, high communication, varied forms of outreach and communication, and ongoing commitment to the research. It also means speaking to everyone, not just those identified in a research protocol. Researchers may not be able to change the apparatus (yet), but its consideration during the research design may provoke innovation and vigilance. Mizzi et al. (2016) suggested, based on Spivak's work, "where we begin, indeed who that 'we' is, and where 'they' begin, is always accompanied by a certain form of personal vigilance" (p. 4). One practical example of personal vigilance would be to include a list of contingencies and dependencies necessary for the research to take shape.

T: Research participants give their valuable time when sharing their stories with researchers. It can be vulnerable to share stories with anyone, especially an outsider researcher based in another country. I agree with Robert. There were multiple and competing needs during the protracted social and health conflicts of the COVID-19 pandemic, and the protracted ethnic conflicts that afflict societies throughout the Global North and Global South. Sharing stories can feel like surveillance, as Sean suggests, with his reference to Foucault's "panopticon."

To address this, researchers need to be accessible to strategically undervalued participants facing multiple barriers and ensure that people with disabilities are empowered to provide fully informed consent, receive, and share information through communication aids like ASL interpreters, and audiovisual devices. Researchers also should be aware of multiple barriers facing LGBTQI+ participants who due to job loss, queerphobia and/or transphobia and/or ableism, may not have time or resources to engage in the research process, over and above the ongoing vulnerability and stressors of the post COVID-19 pandemic (Taggart et al., 2021).

Researchers could also be both intersectional and trauma-informed in their questions during semi-structured interviews and focus groups, given the power differential between researchers and participants, and the multiple traumas participants experience due to the intersections of their marginalized identities (Cho et al., 2013) with the stressors of protracted ethnic conflict or post-conflict processes (Mac Ginty, 2006). Sumi Cho, Kimberle Williams Crenshaw, and Leslie McCall (2013) suggest an application of an intersectional framework in academia, and to be cognizant of intersectional dynamics in research design and engagement of research participants. This is so that research participant experiences are understood from their overlapping and diverse locations of power, oppression, and equity such as like a racialized

transgender person with disabilities, facing systemic racism, ableism, and cissexism within a society affected by protracted armed conflict or post-peace accord processes.

Nancy: It is quite common for ethics departments to assume that disabled people are inherently passive and vulnerable simply because of their disability, and this is not the case (endemic ableism). Unfortunately, often, it has worked as a barrier to prevent participation. It is slowly changing; however, ethics departments require further education regarding strategically undervalued populations for all sorts of reasons, disability being only one sort of marginalization. T, you have captured the key elements succinctly.

Question 5: What is one recommendation that you would tell future investigators when they are researching participants impacted by conflict, trauma, peace, or fatigue?

Sean: Culture is politicized and embedded in people's daily lives as the Protestant Unionist Loyalist (PUL) and Catholic Nationalist Republican (CNR) communities in NI appear to be trapped in a permanent "political limbo" (Marijan, 2017). Geographical space is contested, and people live largely segregated and apart so that stereotypes cannot be challenged empirically on a day-to-day basis (Marijan, 2017). Some people especially in some urban areas live under siege, surrounded by perceived enemies, as they defend their territory, and are more predisposed to give "not an inch" to their neighbours in case "they" take it all (Creary & Byrne, 2014). Yet day-to-day interactions continue in NI's marketplaces and at the local fairs or at Pride festivals or music concerts in give-and-take and live-and-let live situations as people retrieve impugned spaces (Marijan, 2017).

Collective memories of ingroup victim narratives can sustain and reinvigorate protracted ethnopolitical conflicts and civil wars like NI (Rafferty, 2016; Rief, 2016). Yet the NI conflict is framed within an ethnonationalist war narrative that marginalizes all other issues (Byrne et al.,

2018). This means that grassroots activists from strategically undervalued groups working to change negative attitudes like anger and distrust are frustrated with recalcitrant sectarian politicians from both communities' efforts to manipulate collective ethnonationalist victim narratives to freeze rather than transform the intergroup conflict (Hyde & Byrne, 2015; Rafferty, 2016). However, the May 5, 2022, Assembly elections witnessed both largest ethnonationalist political parties in NI (Democratic Unionist Party and Sinn Fein) challenged by a new burgeoning middle ground of nonpartisan political parties like the Alliance Party of Northern Ireland (Byrne, 2023). This means that NI's strategically undervalued communities must heal from the traumatic experiences of the 30-years Troubles and be invited in by the Alliance Party as equal partners to fully engage in the peacebuilding and reconciliation transformative process.

That said, the international community often "romanticizes the locals" wisdom and knowledge without considering that there are many different local actors seeking change and who resist external and internal actors (Mc Ginty, 2015). Everyday local actors use different peace tools to create a "home grown" or "popular peace" resisting external intervention because it disempowers the population and encourages victimhood by reinforcing internal divisions and local hierarchies (Mac Ginty, 2015, p. 833). People's everyday actions "make and remake" territory as they have their own visions and networks and understanding of what the local really means (Mac Ginty, 2015, p. 851). "The local is divided along power, hierarchy, ethnic and gender lines, and [is] capable of displaying radical images and behavior as is the international" (Paffenholtz, 2015, p. 862). Local actors can have pockets of resistance against international power and dominance, and most of the resistance may also be directed against poor or recalcitrant local leaders (Paffenholtz, 2015, p. 865).

Robert: Good question! I recommend not to believe everything reported in the media or official government documentation. Often what is shared in those spaces is based on hetero/cisnormative and ableist foundations, which means that while some people are benefitting from a negative or positive peace environment, some people, such as LGBTQI+ and disabled people, are still struggling for safety, acceptance, and support. These struggles are often unreported unless there are targeted enquiries that hardly anyone reads or considers. In Kosovo, I have researched how international actors have been homophobic in their practice, reifying a (hetero)norm that excludes sexual and gender difference (Mizzi, 2009). People expect their governments to behave inclusively and appropriately through international development or collaboration initiatives. However, if countries still “do inclusion” through hetero/cisnormative, sexist, racist, and ableist ways in their own countries, then how can conceptualizations of a broader inclusion take shape in other countries? Examining the dreadful violence perpetuated by Canadian “peacekeepers” toward Somalians is an example of how safety discourses go awry (Razack, 2004).

Future investigators need to check their biases, practices of marginalization, and positionalities of privilege as they research communities affected by conflict, trauma, peace, or fatigue. These biases, practices, and positionalities cannot be so easily removed from understanding relationships and life experiences. Even highly respected scholar Frantz Fanon wrote a footnote in his infamous text *Black Skin, White Masks* equating homosexuality to prostitution and assuming Martinicans as being “passive” homosexuals (Walcott, 2006). In this regard, I agree with Sean that the international community romanticizes local populations. However, perhaps the Fanon example suggests there is also risk of a *fetishization of locals*, whereby people become objects of desire based on their identities and backgrounds (Said, 1979).

Researchers may wish to keep such biases and assumptions in check, recognize how “research” is rooted in Western traditions, dismantle power dynamics, honour local and Indigenous knowledges and ways of knowing, and work collaboratively to improve human lives (Tuhiwai Smith, 2021).

T: Johan Galtung and Daiseku Ikeda (2005) write how colonialism is the ultimate slavery or ownership by the mother country. NI and many societies were ravaged by colonial and post-colonial structural, cultural, and direct violence (Maiangwa et al., 2022; Rahman et al., 2017). There is chronic trauma and fatigue from the unbalanced power relationship, and as Sean writes, produces a siege mentality that takes a toll on people who may be potential research participants.

Researchers should consider how colonial and post-colonial societies create a siege mentality among marginalized research participants like LGBTQI+ people and people with disabilities whose lives are less valued by white supremacist, ableist, classist, cissexist, and queerphobic power elites. As Judith Butler (2016) writes in her book, *Frames of War: When is Life Grievable*, all members of society should have equal value and be equally grievable. War creates differential distributions of grievability as some populations are targeted and mourned, while some are not (Butler, 2016).

As Robert writes, international actors can also be homophobic in practice. A tragic example is when liberators devalued homosexual prisoners as ungrievable, relegating them to remain in concentration camps after heterosexual prisoners were liberated at the end of World War II. LGBTQI+ prisoners were mutilated, experimented upon, and sexually assaulted in camps: the pink triangles they were forced to wear symbolized cultural violence that enabled direct and structural violence by not only the Nazis researchers in the camps (who did medical

experiments on them) but the allied "liberators" after the camps were "liberated" (Grau & Shopmann, 1995).

Therefore, researchers need to consider that strategically undervalued participants need to feel grievable, valued, and equal in the research process by ensuring inclusion during recruitment, in the design of methods that help their stories authentically come forward, and in the way data is analyzed and discussed. Researchers need to remember the lived experience of the siege mentality, the fear of unequal grievability (Butler, 2016), and the longing for peace, equality and true liberation from colonial and post-colonial marginalization and war.

Nancy: Like what has been carefully outlined above, entrenched non-disabled privilege has naturalized the research process (Hansen, 2009). Disabled people have been marked as other, socially excluded, infantilized and problematized through various mechanisms and varying degrees of severity for well over a century (Hansen et al., 2008). Their bodies have been subject to social surveillance, colonization, and eugenic experimentation to the point of elimination (Hansen, 2009). However, this long history of disabled people's oppression is mainly unrecognized, misunderstood, and not characterized as discriminatory (Hansen, 2009).

Religious rights discourse dominates the process of peace. Strategically undervalued groups have begun to make some headway. However, despite comprising the largest number of disabled people in the UK, disabled people in NI have remained for the most part, invisible and overlooked. Disabled people are characterized as vulnerable and in need of "protection" (Hill & Hansen, 2011). Consequently, the need for protection is seen as being paramount. As a result, disabled people's experience has been absent from NI's "Troubles" history (Hill & Hansen, 2011). Further, myths and misconceptions coupled with hyper-medicalized understandings of disability continue to dominate, and disability issues are not seen as social justice or human

rights issues (Kerr, 2013). Gradual progress is being made, drawing parallels between disabled people and other strategically undervalued groups (Shea-Irvine & Hansen, 2019). However, although strategically undervalued groups may be recognized in legislation, deeply entrenched beliefs overshadow rights and service provision amid residual conflict realities. A great deal of unlearning remains to be done (Hansen, 2021; Ravenscroft et al., 2021). Researchers have only begun this process.

Findings

The article presented our perspectives about the challenges we faced doing research with strategically undervalued communities in NI during a global pandemic. Grounded in our understandings and experiences, we suggest five findings that emerged from our discourse on grappling with trying to research both strategically undervalued communities during the pandemic: realizing the liminal role of external researchers; research as social action; participant-centred research; responsive research administration; and the role of psychosocial triggers.

First, strategically undervalued communities might be more comfortable with internal and external researchers working as a hybrid team as they do not want to place themselves in vulnerable situations, thus increasing their stress. From our online interactions with friends and colleagues in NI, it was apparent that strategically undervalued people were suspicious of outsiders in the context of the pandemic, peace fatigue, retraumatization, Brexit, and security issues around ableism, and trans and queerphobia. NI's people's siege mentality has been heightened at this time, and therefore the response may be to strengthen and access current networks and not expand them.

Second, the NI conflict and peacebuilding there are framed as an ethnonationalist struggle as both communities currently engage in culture wars over cultural symbols like the

Gaelic Irish and Scots-Irish languages, flags, and emblems that were accentuated by Brexit and COVID-19. However, the liminal peace contains a plethora of heterogeneous stories. Strategically undervalued people's lived experiences include a myriad of stories that can be shared with researchers who use intersectional research methods (e.g., asking questions that cut across identity differences) (Byrne et al., 2018; Mizzi et al., 2023). Similar to Frølund et al. (2017), we see difference as a "prerequisite," as it "gives life meaning—to perceive, think, feel, and categorize our relations with our surroundings," which is particularly important for transnational research. These methods promote social action (dialogue, activism, change) and generate data for us to learn and share (Phillips et al., 2013). During the turbulent days of the pandemic, research needed to have multiple goals, including what could alleviate immediate challenges.

Third, empathetic interdisciplinary researchers must be pragmatic partners with strategically undervalued people with intersectional identities as they interact with the research project. Trans/interdisciplinary researchers' efforts must respect people's wishes and meet them where they are at. They must respect their wishes if they are not willing to engage in the research project during this time. We responded accordingly in our efforts to engage participants, respecting their time and requests. We chose not to be intrusive or meddlesome, and as Adler and Hansen in Blinne (2016) prompted, proceeded with a "compassionate lens" (p. 98).

Fourth, research administrators must be open to intersectional and trans/interdisciplinary research with strategically undervalued and invisibilized people, particularly how this can take longer than other forms of research. Social justice and human rights-oriented research mean deconstructing patriarchy and hegemonic and toxic masculinity and ableist, ageist, gendered, homophobic, misogynist, racist, and xenophobic politics so that mainstream researchers and administrators must be comfortable in the uncomfortable and not essentialize and devalue people

living on the margins. We were fortunate to receive extensions from the University of Manitoba to our research grant due to the fact that we could not travel to NI during the pandemic, which we deeply appreciated and are very grateful for the kindness.

Fifth, the personal vigilance of strategically undervalued people becomes paramount. NI people experience overlapping stressors due to their marginalized identities along with the health and economic stressors of COVID-19, intergenerational war trauma, Brexit, and everyday aggressions that shape their lives. All these pressures may trigger psychosocial coping mechanisms among potential participants to withdraw from engaging “outsider” researchers and instead, isolate with the familiar networks and local research milieu instead of the international research milieu. The pandemic affected us as well as researchers, causing us to reflect on our experiences working in the NI conflict milieu and realize that it is essential to pause, reflect, question, deconstruct, and discuss what it means to do research within strategically undervalued communities during times of great strife. We are forever learning from our participants, even when research falls apart.

Conclusion

This dialogic and reflexive paper provides an account of what happens to qualitative research when a global pandemic and responsive public health orders become a dominant force. Our dialogue adopted multiple layers, including a wide-angle lens zooming out on the social and political situation and how that complicates research and a more nuanced discussion on specific challenges facing strategically undervalued communities with multiple intersections of identities. Through our dialogue, we offered five findings for consideration whenever researching projects with highly vulnerable populations: realizing the liminal role of external researchers; research as social action; participant-centred research; responsive research administration; and the role of

psychosocial triggers. We realized that research biases could take many forms, including that strategically undervalued communities are readily available to participate in research projects. We suggest that conducting research with strategically undervalued communities needs to consider the timeliness and the changing context of the research and the methods of engagement. This approach means examining external pressures and regulations that may influence social lives when designing and implementing research projects and adjusting accordingly as the participants see fit. Positioning flexibility and respect as foundational to research designs seeking social emancipation is crucial, especially during perilous times.

Acknowledgements

We would like to thank the University of Manitoba UCRP grant that made this research possible.

References

- Aagaard, J. (2022). On the dynamics of Zoom fatigue. *Convergence*, 28(6), 223–231.
- Agathangelou, A. M., & Ling, L. H. M. (2004). The house of IR. *International Studies Review*, 6(4), 21–49.
- Ashe, F. (2019). *Gender, nationalism and conflict transformation*. Routledge.
- Blinne, K. (2016). Applying (com)passion in the academy. *Departures in Critical Qualitative Research*, 5(1), 92–101.
- Burke, S. (2021). *Making change a movement, not a moment* | BoF Voices. YouTube. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=qVkkN8ywDuU>
- Butler, J. (2016). *Frames of war*. Verso.
- Byrne, S. (1997). *Growing up in a divided society*. Associated University Presses.
- Byrne, S. (2023). *Local experts' practical knowledge, wisdom, and practices*. Routledge.
- Byrne, S., & Thiessen, C. (2019). Foreign peacebuilding intervention and emancipatory local agency for social justice. In S. Byrne, T. Matyok, I. M. Scott, & J. Senehi (Eds.), *Routledge companion to peace and conflict studies*. (pp. 131-142). Routledge.
- Byrne, S., Hansen, N., Mizzi, R., & Shepherd-Luangkhot, T. (2022). Economic aid, marginalization, and peacebuilding in Northern Ireland. *Asian Journal of Peacebuilding*, 10(1), 1–18.
- Byrne, S., Mizzi, R., & Hansen, N. (2018). Living in a liminal peace. *Journal for Peace and Justice Studies*, 27(1), 24–52.
- Carlane, J. (1997). Collaborative action research and peacebuilding. *International Peacekeeping*, 4(4), 79–85.
- Cesaire, A. (2001). *Discourse on colonialism*. Monthly Review Press.
- Chinn, P. (2012). *Peace and power*. Jones and Bartlett Learning.
- Cho, S., Crenshaw, K., & McCall, L. (2013). Toward a field of intersectionality studies. *Intersectionality*, 38(4), 785–810.
- Creary, P., & Byrne, S. (2014). Peace with strings attached. *Peacebuilding*, 2(1), 64–82.
- Crenshaw, K. (2017). *On intersectionality*. The New Press.
- Delamont, S. (2012). Introduction. In S. Delamont (Ed.), *Handbook of qualitative research in education* (pp. 1–20). Edward Elgar Publishing.

- Di'Angelo, R. (2018). *White fragility*. Beacon Press.
- Dingwall, O. (2021). President's message. *UMFA Communications*. Retrieved from <https://www.umfa.ca>
- Disability Action. (2020). *The impact of COVID-19 on disabled people in Northern Ireland*. <https://www.communityni.org/sites/default/files/2020-09/DANI%20COVID-19%20REPORT%20-%20FINAL.pdf>
- Ebersold, S. (1998). Exclusion and disability. *OECD*. <https://www.oecd.org/education/innovation-education/1856907.pdf>
- Enloe, C. (2007). *Globalization and militarism*. Rowman and Littlefield.
- Fontan, V. (2012). *Decolonizing peace*. Dignity Press.
- Foucault, M. (1995). *Discipline and punish*. Vintage Books.
- Foucault, M. (2010). The means of correct training. In P. Rabinow (Ed.), *The Foucault reader*. (pp. 188-205). Vintage Books.
- Frølunde, L., Pederson, C. H., & Novak, M. (2017). Unravelling the workings of difference in collaborative inquiry. *Departures in Critical Qualitative Research*, 6(1), 30–51.
- Galtung, J. (1990). Cultural violence. *Journal of Peace Research*, 27(3), 291–305.
- Galtung, J., & Ikeda, D. (2005). *Pax pacifica*. Routledge.
- Goldstein, J. (2003). *War and gender*. Cambridge University Press.
- Grau, G., & Shopmann, C. (1995). *The hidden holocaust?* Routledge.
- Hanes, R., Brown, I., & Hansen, N. (Eds.). (2020). *The Routledge history of disability*. Routledge.
- Hansen, N. (2009). Remapping the medical terrain on our terms. *Aporia*, 1(3), 28–34.
- Hansen, N. (2020). The continuing adventures of a four-legged female academic researcher. In C. Burke & B. Byrne (Eds.), *Social research and disability* (pp. 81–89). Routledge.
- Hansen, N. (2021). Bodies in migration marked for exclusion. In M. D. Ravenscroft, B. Hughes, C. Dann, & P. G. Nixon (Eds.), *Talking bodies III*. (pp. 33-50). Chester University Press.
- Hansen, N., Janz, H., & Sobsey, D. (2008). 21st century eugenics? *The Lancet*, 372, 28–34.
- Hill, M., & Hansen, N. (2011). Disability and conflict. In T. Matyok, J. Senehi, & S. Byrne (Eds.), *Critical issues in peace and conflict studies* (pp. 97–114). Lexington Books.
- Hill-Collins, P. (2008). *Black feminist thought*. Routledge.

- Holland, C. (2022). *Inequality, identity, and the politics of Northern Ireland*. Lexington.
- Hyde, J., & Byrne, S. (2015). The International Fund for Ireland and the European Union Peace III Fund. *International Journal of Conflict Engagement and Resolution*, 3(2), 93–115.
- Kerr, S. (2013). Disability and conflict. *Disability and Society*, 28(6), 826–838.
- Kincheloe, J. (2001). Describing bricolage. *Qualitative Inquiry*, 7(6), 679–692.
- Kulchyski, P. (2005). *Like the sound of a drum*. University of Manitoba Press.
- Lambert, L. (2014). *Research for Indigenous survival*. Salish Kootenai College Press.
- Le Grange, L. (2018). What is post qualitative research? *South African Journal of Education*, 32(5), 1–14.
- Leatherman, J. (2011). *Sexual violence and armed conflict*. Polity.
- Lederach, J. P., Neufeldt, R., & Cuthbertson, H. (2007). *Reflective peacebuilding*. University of Notre Dame.
- Mac Ginty, R. (2006). *No war, no peace*. Palgrave Macmillan.
- Mac Ginty, R. (2015). Where is the local? *Third World Quarterly*, 36(5), 840–856.
- Mac Ginty, R. (Ed.). (2020). *The companion to peace and conflict fieldwork*. Palgrave Macmillan.
- Maiangwa, B., Ndedi Essombe, C., & Byrne, S. (2022). The banality of infrastructural racism through the lens of peace and conflict studies. *Peacebuilding*, 1–23.
- Makhanya, M. S. (2020). Research in transforming contexts. In N. H. Hensel & P. Blessinger (Eds.), *International perspectives on undergraduate research* (pp. 177–203). Palgrave Macmillan.
- Marijan, B. (2017). The politics of everyday peace in Bosnia and Herzegovina and Northern Ireland. *Peacebuilding*, 5(1), 67–81.
- Mbembe, A. (2019). *Necropolitics*. Duke University Press.
- McLean, L. (2019). Protesting vulnerability and vulnerability as protest. In S. Byrne, T. Matyók, I. M. Scott, & J. Senehi (Eds.), *Routledge companion to peace and conflict studies* (pp. 181–192). Routledge.
- Meredith, R. (2021, December 3). People with learning disabilities ‘living a nightmare.’ *BBC News*. <https://www.bbc.com/news/uk-northern-ireland-59518578>
- Millar, G. (2020). *Ethnographic peace research*. Palgrave Macmillan.

- Mills, C. W. (1970). *The sociological imagination*. Penguin Books.
- Mizzi, R. C. (2009). When the down-low becomes the new high. In R. Hill & A. Grace (Eds.), *Adult education in queer contexts* (pp. 241–253). Discovery Association Publishing House.
- Mizzi, R. C. (2010). Unravelling researcher subjectivity through multivocality in autoethnography. *Journal of Research Practice*, 6(1).
<http://jrp.icaap.org/index.php/jrp/article/view/201/185>
- Mizzi, R. C., & Byrne, S. (2015). Queer theory and peace and conflict studies. In M. Flaherty, S. Byrne, T. Matyók, & H. Tusó (Eds.), *Gender and peacebuilding* (pp. 373–388). Lexington Books.
- Mizzi, R. C., Byrne, S., Sheppard-Luangkhot, T., & Hansen, N. (2023). Marginalized voices and the Belfast Agreement. *Journal of Ethnic Studies*, 90(1), 127–143.
- Mizzi, R. C., Shore, S., & Rocco, T. S. (2016). Starting somewhere. In R. C. Mizzi, T. S. Rocco, & S. Shore (Eds.), *Disrupting adult and community education* (pp. 1–16). SUNY Press.
- Motzkau, J. F., & Jefferson, A. M. (2009). Research as practice. *Qualitative Research in Psychology*, 6(2), 1–11.
- Naderifar, M., Goli, H., & Ghaljaie, F. (2017). Snowball sampling. *Strides in Development of Medical Education*, 14(3), 1–17.
- Nash, C. J. (2010). Queer conversations. In K. Browne & C. J. Nash (Eds.), *Queer methods and methodologies* (pp. 129–142). Ashgate.
- Paffenholtz, T. (2015). Unpacking the local turn in peacebuilding. *Third World Quarterly*, 36(5), 857–874.
- Phillips, L. J., Kristiansen, M., Vehviläinen, M., & Gunnarsson, E. (2013). Tackling the tensions of dialogue and participation. In L. J. Phillips, M. Kristiansen, M. Vehviläinen, & E. Gunnarsson (Eds.), *Knowledge and power in collaborative research* (pp. 3–18). Routledge.
- Rafferty, R. (2016). *Civil society activists in a protracted conflict* [Doctoral dissertation]. Centre for Peace and Conflict Studies, University of Otago.
- Rahman, A., Clarke, M., & Byrne, S. (2017). The art of breaking people down. *Peace Research*, 49(2), 15–38.
- Ravenscroft, M. D., Hughes, B., Dann, C., & Nixon, P. G. (Eds.). (2021). *Talking bodies III*. University of Chester Press.
- Razack, S. (2004). *Dark threats and white knights*. University of Toronto Press.

- Redman-McLaren, M., & Mills, J. (2015). Transformational grounded theory. *International Journal of Qualitative Methods*, 14(3), 1–12.
- Rief, D. (2016). *In praise of forgetting*. Yale University Press.
- Robins, S., & Wilson, E. (2015). Participatory methodologies with victims. *Canadian Journal of Law and Society*, 30(2), 219–236.
- Said, E. (1979). *Orientalism*. Vintage.
- Scott, J. C. (2020). *Seeing like the state*. Yale University Press.
- Senehi, J. (2009). The role of constructive, transcultural storytelling in ethno-political conflict transformation in Northern Ireland. In J. Carter, G. Irani, & V. Volkan (Eds.), *Regional and ethnic conflicts* (pp. 227–235). Pearson Prentice Hall.
- Senehi, J. (2015). Our tree of life in the field. *Peace Research*, 47(1–2), 10–28.
- Senehi, J. (2019). Theory-building in peace and conflict studies. In S. Byrne, T. Matyók, I. M. Scott, & J. Senehi (Eds.), *Routledge companion to peace and conflict studies* (pp. 45–56). Routledge.
- Senehi, J. (2022). Focal points in ethnic conflicts. In J. Senehi, I. M. Scott, S. Byrne, & T. Matyók (Eds.), *Routledge handbook of peacebuilding and ethnic conflict* (pp. 345–358). Routledge.
- Seymour, W. S. (2001). In the flesh or online? *Qualitative Research*, 1(2), 147–168.
- Shea-Irvine, R., & Hansen, N. (2019). Missing discourses. In S. Byrne, T. Matyok, I. M. Scott, & J. Senehi (Eds.), *Routledge companion to peace and conflict studies*. (pp. 189-200). Routledge.
- Smith, L. T. (2021). *Decolonizing methodologies*. (3rd ed.). Bloomsbury.
- Spivak, G. C. (1993). *Outside in the teaching machine*. Routledge.
- Strega, S., & Brown, L. (Eds.). (2015). *Research as resistance*. Canadian Scholars Press.
- Sylvester, C. (2016). *Masquerades of war*. Routledge.
- Taggart, L., McConkey, R., & Mulhall, P. (2021). *Coronavirus and people with learning disabilities*. Ulster University. <https://www.ulster.ac.uk/research/topic/nursing-and-health/caring-for-people-with-complex-needs/research-themes/neurodevelopmental/reports>
- Theidon, K., Phenicie, K., & Murray, E. (2011). *Gender, conflict, and peacebuilding*. United States Institute of Peace.

- Thiessen, C. (2011). Emancipatory peacebuilding. In T. Maytok, J. Senehi, & S. Byrne (Eds.), *Critical issues in peace and conflict studies* (pp. 115–142). Lexington Books.
- Thiessen, C., & Byrne, S. (2017). Proceed with caution. *Journal of Peacebuilding and Development*, 13(1), 1–15.
- Tickner, J. A. (1992). *Gender in international relations*. Columbia University Press.
- Tickner, J. A. (2001). *Gendering world politics*. Columbia University Press.
- Walcott, R. (2006). Black men in frocks. In C. Teelucksingh (Ed.), *Claiming space* (pp. 33–46). Wilfrid Laurier University Press.
- Wilmer, F. (2022). How gender is implicated in ethnopolitical conflict. In J. Senehi, I. M. Scott, S. Byrne, & T. Matyok (Eds.), *Routledge handbook of peacebuilding and ethnic conflicts*. (pp. 28–38). Routledge.
- Wilson, S. (2009). *Research is ceremony*. Fernwood.
- Wilson, S., Breen, A., & Dupre, L. (Eds.). (2019). *Research and reconciliation*. Canadian Scholars Press.
- Yavuz, M., & Byrne, S. (2021). Violence against the queer community in Turkey. *Journal for Peace and Justice Studies*, 30(1), 1–24.
- Zagar, M. (2022). How does the COVID-19 pandemic influence peacebuilding, diversity management, and the handling of ethnic conflict, and ethnic minorities? In J. Senehi, I. M. Scott, S. Byrne, & T. Matyok (Eds.), *Routledge handbook of peacebuilding and ethnic conflicts*. (pp. 94–104). Routledge