Routledge
Taylor & Francis Group

Conflict, Security & Development

ISSN: (Print) (Online) Journal homepage: https://www.tandfonline.com/loi/ccsd20

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To cite this article: Benjamin Thorne (2022) The art of plurality: participation, voice, and plural memories of community peace, Conflict, Security & Development, 22:5, 567-588, DOI: 10.1080/14678802.2022.2138697

To link to this article: https://doi.org/10.1080/14678802.2022.2138697

Published online: 28 Oct 2022.

CONFLICT, SECURITY & DEVELOPMENT
2022, VOL. 22, NO. 5, 567–588
https://doi.org/10.1080/14678802.2022.2138697

The art of plurality: participation, voice, and plural memories of community peace

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ABSTRACT

This article's central focus is on exploring the interplays between plurality and methodological approaches in peace research, through engaging with insights from arts methods and participatory action research (PAR). Specifically, engaging with these insights suggests that they have significant potential to aid plural dialogue, intergenerational memory, and young people's active participation in post-conflict communities, and thus can further extend understandings of plurality in peace research. Furthermore, the article proposes that this creative and participatory methodology can contribute to three central parts of plurality in peace research, namely, facilitation, 'voice', and intergenerational participation. This article also draws connections between arts methods, PAR, and decolonising knowledge production, specifically in relation to peace research attempting to prioritise local forms of knowledge production. In doing so, the article also critically reflects on some of the challenges and limitations of this methodological approach and attempts at decolonising knowledge production in peace research. The article, engaging with illustrated examples of arts methods, argues that this methodological approach to peace research allows individuals and groups to understand multiple past experiences and events, can allow for a shared acknowledgement of frictional experiences of these events, and aid young people's participation in conversations about the present and future.

KEYWORDS

Plurality; participation; arts methods; intergenerational memory; decolonising knowledge production; ICTR archive; peace

Introduction

This article investigates how peace research can better understand and engage with plural voices within post-conflict communities. This article argues that the combination of participatory action research (PAR) as research design and arts methods as the methodological tools extends current understandings of the role of plurality in peace research. Specifically, the focus is on identifying the potential and challenges of this combination of tools and methodological approaches. I argue that the potential of this approach is to contribute to plural dialogue about intergenerational memories relating to past experiences, and to aid young people to be active participants in conversations about their communities present and future. As such, it contributes to understandings of the role of plurality in methodological approaches to peace research as discussed in the introduction of this special issue.[1]

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Arts methods, through their abstract nature, are directly orientated towards embracing lived experiences and communicating complex social relationships.[2] In this article, I argue for the potential of a combined approach of PAR and arts methods to further extend the role of plural intergenerational dialogue and memory in peace, and in doing so I will draw on my on-going research into the under-explored context of arts methods and archive material from the International Criminal Tribunal for Rwanda (ICTR). My research into legal archive material is at the design stage and has not yet been implemented. However, the design stage of research, particularly with regard to methodology and method(s), is a crucial part of the research process and directly impacts on claims that are made within research outputs relating to plurality and local knowledge production. Thus, engaging with research which is at the design stage provides relevant and important insights into the potential and challenges of innovative methodologies in peace research. To aid the arguments I advance in this article, the discussions also build on a conversation with scholarship on arts methods in post-conflict societies in order to help identify potential strengths as well as challenges and blind spots within my methodological design in the context of material from the ICTR archive.

Within peacebuilding scholarship there has been a steadily growing engagement with arts as a useful mechanism for community participation and healing.[3] However, despite arts initiatives connections with arts methodologies there has been limited direct consideration and critical understanding of this methodological approach to peace. Therefore, the central focus of this article is to explore how this method can contribute to further understandings of the role of plurality in peace research. This in turn will contribute to the overall aim of how to make peace more researchable as discussed in the introduction. Söderström and Olivius argue that the challenge of pluralism in peace research is both about 'paying attention to a plurality of voices' as well as 'studying peace in diverse ways'.[4] My article focuses on the former, how to ensure that research is open to a plurality of voices.

This article argues that arts methods and PAR has significant potential for extending understandings of plurality in peace research, and proposes that this methodological approach can advance three central parts of plurality: facilitation, 'voice', and intergenerational participation. Facilitation is the ways arts methods and PAR facilitates plural dialogue, negotiation around meaning of lived experiences, and local participation and ownership. Voice is understood here as both verbal and non-verbal and that arts methods allows plural complex experiences and relationships to be communicated. Intergenerational participation is the opportunities for those born during or after conflict to be active participants in plural dialogue about the past, and contribute to conversations about the present and future. Relatedly, arts methods and PAR directly connect to current debates on decolonising knowledge production, and, specifically within peace research, to the importance of prioritising local forms of knowledge production.[5] Therefore, this article will draw out connections between the proposed methodological approach, decolonising knowledge production, and plurality of voices.

The discussions in this article are structured as follows. The next section begins with outlining existing debates on plurality in peace research, and then proposes that further engagement with arts methods, PAR, and decolonising local knowledge production can extend understandings of the important role plurality can play in making peace more researchable. Section two provides an overview of the illustrative examples used, which

are employed to help advance the arguments in this article. Section three highlights some of the challenges of the proposed methodological design and tools in contributing to plurality in peace research; the positionality of the researcher in decolonising knowledge production, the importance of engaging with power relations in arts methods, and issues of navigating other people's traumas in peace research. It is argued that there is a need for peace researchers to be more aware of and engage with these challenges and that continued engagement is necessary to help navigate them. Building on from the discussion on challenges of arts methods and PAR, I discuss my ongoing research relating to arts methods and the ICTR archive material, focusing on the plurality of facilitation, 'voice', and intergenerational participation. I argue that this methodological approach to peace research has significant potential in contributing to individuals and groups to understand multiple past experiences and events, which can allow for a shared acknowledgement of frictional experiences of these events, and aid young persons' participation in conversations about the present and future.

Local participation and knowledge production

In this section, I argue that despite a growing awareness of the need for peace research to better understand and engage with plurality, this awareness is still limited in how it understands the interplay between the past, present, and future (experiences and events); the importance of intergenerational dialogue and memory production; and the importance of local communities having a central role in participating in and producing knowledge within peace research.

In recent years peace research has had a growing awareness of the need to engage with the plural nature of experiences of conflict or atrocity and the numerous ways in which individuals and communities attempt to make sense of a traumatic past and to attempt to re-build their lives. Terms such as local peace have emerged referring to peace initiatives that priorities local articulations of what peace means.[6] Within discussions on local peace, attention is often given to understanding how plural perspectives and experiences can be heard.[7] Prioritising local perspectives necessitates conversations regarding which different local stakeholders are included, which inevitably entails negotiation and compromise over which local perspectives are heard more than others.[8]

Existing debates on ways to give exposure to plural experiences and allow different perspectives on peace to be heard tend to focus on the plurality of individuals who directly experienced conflict or atrocity. While these perspectives are very important, however, what is often given less attention in debates on peace and plurality is the generation that comes after conflict or atrocity.[9] It is not only how the next generation understand past periods of violence, but also their perspectives on the present and the future which are important to understand.[10] It is suggested here that plurality in peace has two interconnected forms, plural understandings of the past, both experiences and events, and plural perspectives on the present and future. There is the need for peace research to give more attention to the intersection of generational perspectives on plurality, and I argue that arts methods and PAR can contribute towards this endeavour.

Furthermore, discussions on plural perspectives on peace also attempts to prioritise local forms of knowledge production, and to move away from international, and western ways of knowing and meaning making. However, even when there is the explicit

objective of decolonising knowledge in peace research, there still remains a common tendency to apply a western and normative lens to local contexts.[11] Relatedly, peace research often has an obsessional gaze on destination, how and when we know that 'peace' has been 'achieved', or at least when a given process has had 'impact'. However, as Jones and Luhe argue, the destinations, or end points, of 'peace are not an objective and static point we can see far off in the distance as we edge towards them. Rather, the journey itself changes the destination'.[12] This criticism around knowledge production in peace research is often entangled with debates about research methodologies and design.

As Mac Ginty has stated, researchers working within conflict affected societies encounter and have to navigate how their fieldwork design and implementation is entangled with cultural and political sensitivities and nuances, which look different in each context.[13] Relatedly, there has been questions raised regarding the strong emphasis on data sets, that in order to make credible arguments peace research should have large quantities of data.[14] The notion that knowledge of peace dynamics requires large datasets has been challenged by a range of scholars including those who engage with art methods and PAR.[15] As Breed has argued, arts methods and creative responses to mass violence offer a variety of modes for individuals and groups to explore the complexities of socially and politically orchestrated suffering and to begin a process to move beyond it.[16] Artistic forms of exploration and communication may well be more difficult to quantify than some other methods, though this is arguably one of its advantages.

Here, it is necessary to acknowledge that proposing the usefulness of plurality via arts methods and PAR is not unproblematic. For example, genocide denial and revisionism are a continuing issue in Rwanda, and other post-genocide societies.[17] It is possible that those denying the Rwandan Genocide against the Tutsi could use the fragments of memories in the archival material to advance their own distorted narrative. Denial and revisionism of the genocide against the Tutsi by those involved in the genocide or its supporters continues to be a significant challenge even more than 25 years after the events. No doubt, such a context may also make it harder for youth voices to speak up about their own lived experiences. However, proposing here the benefits of arts methods via legal archive material is not to suggest that all uses of memories, such as those denying genocide, should be accepted without a critical discussion of their political implications[18] Importantly, the mobilisation of memories and narratives of the past is always political. Research, such as my ongoing work, which investigates issues and themes of dealing with the past needs to be constantly aware of the potential for intentionally distorting the past in order to serve particular political agendas, and this is something that has to be navigated. However, this should not restrict the potential of plural discussion of the past and their connectives to the present and future. The plurality of memory can be very useful in aiding dialogue about multiple perspectives of the past, and in doing so it is vulnerable to abhorrent appropriations of the past. In short, the fragments of memories in the archival material have great potential to be a very useful way to explore the complexities and nuances of Rwanda's past, and aid conversations about its present and future.

Here, it is worth drawing out the connections between arts methods, PAR, and decolonising knowledge production and their relations to challenges and potential in peace research. Within academic research a growing chorus of criticisms has emerged from a variety of critical approaches challenging normative and conventional forms of

knowledge production.[19] Alongside these growing criticisms is the need to centre stage alternative approaches and voices, particularly from the Global South.[20] A current criticism of peace research is that too often researchers from the Global North are 'parachuted' into countries in the Global South, gather data and leave without sustained consideration and engagement with local communities.[21] The need for alternative approaches to knowledge production and de-marginalising voices is a central theme of the decolonising knowledge movement.[22] This movement has a number of different threads, though at its core is the argument for the need to eradicate and move beyond imposed forms of knowledge and to create alternative and more inclusive systems of knowing.[23] The essence of the decolonising movement mirrors concerns within arts methods and PAR, relating to challenging hegemonic structures of knowledge production and ways of knowing: how we know what we know.[24] The orientations towards participant centred research have occurred concurrently and it interplays with arts methods, and with a particular emphasis on community.[25] The growing discourse in academia for alternative and innovative approaches and to challenge traditional and dominant ways of knowing, is also a growing concern within peace research as was discussed above.

This article's focus on how arts methods and PAR can further extend understandings of plurality in peace research directly connects to understandings of memory as plural and a communal practice. Specifically, the construction of memory entails both individuals and groups communally sharing of plural past experiences.[26] Furthermore, fragments of memories, such as those in legal atrocity archives, have relations to each other, and post-conflict community's relational existence to the past can potentially be a helpful way to be able to move beyond the trauma of conflict/atrocity. An important part of fragments of memories via arts and PAR, is that it can contribute to conversations about plural meanings and experiences relating conflict/atrocity. However, crucially it can also facilitate intergenerational memory and dialogue about distinct but connected events, such as colonialism, race, and social and economic inequality issues, and their interplays within a community's past, present and future.[27] This is a really important point relating to the article's central argument on the connections between the proposed methods, and advancing understanding of the role of plurality in peace research. Specifically, these connections can facilitate multiple 'threads' of past experiences being discussed, and also intergenerational participation relating to these 'threads' in conversations about community's present and future. The role of facilitation and intergenerational participation relating to plurality will be further unpacked in the latter part of this article.

The article's framing of memory is in conversation with discussions relating to post-conflict truth-telling, however it is also positioned deliberately at a cautionary distance from these debates. Specifically, attempts at post-conflict truth-telling, particularly more formal processes, can produce an authoritative, although exclusionary, collective narrative of the past.[28] This, in part, is because of the strict temporal mandate of many truth-telling processes. Whilst the language of truth-telling is commonplace in peacebuilding discourses it can sometimes be distant from local communities experiences and is often resistant to accounting for the fluidity and contentious nature of lived realities of these communities.[29] To be sure, this is not to dismiss or minimise the scholarly debates and contribution within the literature on truth-telling. Rather, it is a choice of framing by me as a researcher on how to position discussions and arguments advanced in this article, as

we take on the challenge of a plurality of voices. The arguments made relating to arts methods, PAR and decolonising knowledge in peace research are framed as contributing towards discussions on dialogue and post-conflict memory ecology, with the specific intention of embracing the plurality and fluid nature of mass violence and lived realities within post-conflict communities. The use of the term memory ecology instead of collective memory is also deliberate.[30] Memory ecology, or post-conflict memory ecology, is understood here to mean the perpetual interactions between and across the numerous levels and layers of memory. Collective memory, both conceptually and in popular discourse, suggests a pinnacle of shared understanding of past events can be reached. In short, memory is understood here as ecology and multidirectional, which 'draws attention to the dynamic transfers that take place between diverse places and times during the act of remembrance'.[31]

Illustrative examples from ongoing research

This section gives a brief overview of the illustrative examples used in this article, which are employed to argue for the significant potential of arts methods and PAR to contribute to plural dialogue, and intergenerational memory, as well as make the arguments more tangible. For the present article I use examples from an ongoing research project, which is detailed below.

In my ongoing research I engage with two arts methods, namely a co-curated exhibition and participatory theatre in the context of archive material from the International criminal tribunal for Rwanda (ICTR) (1994–2015).[32] The ICTR was created through United Nations Resolution 955, in 1994, following a request led by the Rwandan government Rwandan Patriotic Front (RPF) and a United Nations investigation that concluded the violence between April and July 1994 was genocide.[33] The ICTR through its extensive and often long legal processes created a vast and diverse archive of material relating to the genocide. The publicly accessible ICTR archive facility in Arusha, Tanzania, and the online archive consists of a range of material, including transcripts of court proceedings, forensic reports, investigators' dossiers, audio material, videos of investigation sites, diaries, letters, drawings, and photographs from pre-genocide, genocide and post-genocide periods. These materials were gathered as part of the prosecutors' and defence counsels' investigations.

The research design in this ongoing research project is, in part, a response to the ways international criminal institutions deliberately distances themselves from the very communities they claim to be helping.[34] Despite the rhetoric from these international criminal institutions that the communities affected by the crimes they are judging are of central importance, it is common for these communities to feel detached and marginalised from these international legal processes.[35] This sense of community detachment and being marginalised is also evident within the archive material these courts produce, with neither the ad hoc tribunals or the International Criminal Court archives being located within the territories of the affected societies.[36] The research design of my ongoing work is also a response to peace research's distance, or lack of interest, in the connections between international justice and post-conflict communities. Whilst it is not uncommon for post-conflict societies to simultaneously have judicial justice mechanisms and peace initiatives taking place, peace research has had limited direct engagement in

exploring potential connections between international justice and the ways in which communities make sense of and attempt to move beyond conflict and atrocity.[37] This lack of interest by peace research is certainly evident in the context of legal atrocity archives and their material. The intention of the research design in my ongoing work using arts methods and PAR in the context of the ICTR archive material is, through co-curated exhibitions and participatory theatre, to explore how local communities bring meaning and make sense of legal archive material documenting their lived experiences, and the ways the arts can facilitate, via this material, plural dialogue and intergenerational memory. Thus, I try to design my research in response to what I see as forgotten voices, or as a way to mitigate silences created by the current state of both policy and research.

This illustrated example of co-exhibition and participatory theatre as method, discussed further below, particularly the central role participants can have in producing research knowledge, will be used to argue for how this methodological approach makes possible plural dialogue and memory production. To aid demonstrating the significant potential of a combined methodological approach of arts and PAR, the discussion below is also in conversation with other people's scholarship that engages with arts methods in post-conflict communities.

Arts methods, participation and decolonising knowledge production

This section begins with discussing some of the important challenges of the proposed methodological approach to peace research, including hurdles and limitations for peace research attempting to decolonising knowledge production, and the underacknowledged challenges of the role power plays within the use of arts methods. Building on these challenges and ways to navigate them, and engaging with the illustrated examples, three central components of arts and PAR contribution to plurality in peace research will be outlined: 1) facilitation; 2) 'voice'; and 3) intergenerational participation.

This article engages with the need for and importance of decolonising knowledge production in peace research, and the important role that arts methods and PAR can play. However, it is also crucial to acknowledge that decolonising knowledge production has become an institutional buzzword, which 'too often serves as metaphor instead of contributing to concrete practices'.[38] Therefore, engaging with attempts to decolonise knowledge and to prioritise plural local ways of knowing requires, at the very least, a concrete statement of how it is being used in any given research context. Arguably it is also necessary to critically reflect on how privileged scholars from the Global North, particularly those who are white and male, such as myself, are using the language of decolonisation and the challenges and limitations of this endeavour when engaging with local peace initiatives.

The following discussion will provide a summary statement of how I understand decolonising knowledge for peace research, and to present some of the hurdles and inherent shortcomings of attempts to create new forms of inclusive knowledge production in peace research. This critical reflection is not to stymie or lambast endeavours attempting to give voice to the marginalised, rather it is arguably a necessary prerequisite for any research engaging in these debates.

Decolonising knowledge production in peace research is understood here to mean that local communities and their embodied experiences and lived realities are seen as

central, and uses methodological approaches and tools offered by arts methods and PAR to support this process. This is a perpetual and fluid process, and crucially not a destination. Decolonising knowledge production is not something to be achieved, or arrived at.[39] Throughout the many 'twist and turns' of the research process there is the continuing attempt to reflect and, if necessary, realign the research with this understanding.

The decolonising movement in academia generally includes processes of critique, and thinking through ways to offer alternative epistemologies and theories which are less European centred.[40] The decolonising movement in research distinguishes itself from postcolonial theory. A decolonising perspective would argue that postcolonial theory, whilst attempting to critique European traditions and experiences and to bring awareness to the lack of non-European voices, it still struggles to more fully engage with the necessity of 'listening to perspectives and alternatives originating from these groups'.[41] In short, postcolonial theory in its attempt to challenge traditional assumptions of knowledge production and the alternatives they offer are nonetheless made within European academia and insights from Eurocentric thinkers.[42] The decolonising approach instead seeks to detach itself from the Eurocentric realm and instead embrace thinking and approaches from within former colonised societies.[43] In one sense, my choice of methodological design, tools, and framing of plural memory engaging with mainly European insights, is orientated more towards approaches of postcolonial theory rather than decolonising approaches. However, there are important connections and similarities between these two approaches and how to give voice to the marginalised in peace research. As Seppälä et al. have argued, 'both approaches [are] necessary for decolonising participatory research in practical terms, which in our understanding benefits from the important power/knowledge critiques of postcolonial theory and from the strong focus on transformative political practice of the decolonial approach'.[44] Acknowledging the strengths of both approaches (postcolonial theory and decolonising approach) and appropriate relevance to a given context can aid intentions of prioritising local perspectives and voices.

Notwithstanding this more disaggregated understanding of decolonising knowledge production, and even when there are the best of intentions to priorities local communities, there are a number of factors that may perpetually mean there are shortcomings to this endeavour.[45] Although, this does not mean that these endeavours should not be pursued. Instead, an awareness of these shortcomings can aid researchers in attempting to navigate them. For example, the use of arts in peace research often draws the question around how it is measured, though the measurement question is often circulating around much of the peace research. This speaks to the need for reflection on methods in peace research, and the difficulty of evaluating and measuring the success and impact of research, particularly research that is explicitly directed towards facilitating local participation and knowledge production.[46] This is, in part, because it is often not clear how to measure peace, and whose experience of peace is being measured, or questioning whether we should even attempt to measure it.[47] This also directly relates to institutional drivers and conditions of research, that research needs, or at least its 'impact' needs to be measured. Attempts to evaluate peace research needs to put the individuals and communities of the research centre stage, listening to their articulations of peace and how they define its impact, rather than applying pre-defined terminology and scales onto

these communities.[48] This can be difficult when we have funders, or other stakeholders, repeatedly wanting to know, was the research 'goals' achieved, or did you achieve the stated impact? In short, there are significant risks and limitations of attempting to quantify measurements of peace, particularly for the individuals and communities that peace research purportedly aims at helping. Put slightly more crudely, more numbers do not necessarily mean more peace.

Furthermore, arts methods and PAR, like many other approaches, engages with existing networks in order to identify and engage with research participants. Whilst this is a common approach, particularly for early career researchers such as myself, there are potential implications of this engagement, particularly with the ways in which established networks of other researchers reproduce, or rigidify, certain forms of knowledge and understanding. Here, I do not mean that research data is duplicated. Rather there is the need to consider and reflect upon how participants' experience of engaging with previous research projects, and researchers, shape how they understand and engage with each project. Crucially, what are the potential implications of this for peace research, and the connections to claims around 'new' and decolonised knowledge and understanding we make about individuals and communities in fractured societies.

Critical reflection on decolonising knowledge production in peace research should also include critique of arts methods and its interplays with processes of knowledge production. Considering arts methods holistic orientation and emancipatory potential there is often quite limited critical reflections by researchers who use them. Arts as method and approach can sometimes be seen as a 'cure all' antidote to more traditional methods which are limited, particularly in how they understand and explain complex and traumatic human experiences and relationships.[49] Specifically, the stated claims of the potential of arts methods, such as its abstract nature and embrace of complexity and plural forms of knowledge production, are rarely subjected, by researchers who use them, to the same critique they give to other research methods. More directly put, arts methods are often lauded as an innovative and more suitable response to other more problematic methods which are entrenched with normative assumptions and traditions, and art methods are outside or beyond such critique. For example, Phillips-Hutton has argued, in the context of archives for the South African Truth and Reconciliation Commission (TRC), the music performance of Philip Miller's *REwind: A Cantata for Voice, Tape, and Testimony* is an example of how arts can unsettle institutional narratives of past violence and contribute to a global collective memory.[50] Phillips-Hutton's argument does draw useful attention to the role arts can have within institutional archives relating to conflict and violence, however, in making this argument there is little direct engagement and critical reflection on the role power plays within performance art: such as the positionality of the artist, who is the installation for (and who is excluded), where is the participation of communities, what does the performance aim to achieve. The claimed achievements of *REwind: A Cantata forVoice, Tape, and Testimony* argued by Hutton seem to take arts as inherently good as taken for granted, without turning the reflective lens on the use of arts, and thus misses potential tensions between the claimed contributions that this musical performance can make and contradictions within those claims. In short, there is limited consideration given to how arts methods can also perpetuate normative assumptions and dominant frames of references.

For researchers engaging with arts methods and PAR there is also a need to consider encounters with trauma, particularly how the nature of arts can stimulate traumatic memories for participants, often in unexpected and sometimes profound ways. Nearly all, if not all, peace research entails encountering and navigating other people's trauma.[51] Navigating trauma is one of the reasons why significant consideration and planning, beyond the institutional 'ethical approval process', needs to be given to ethical and practical questions and implications of working in and with deeply traumatised communities. There is also the need to listen to local articulations of what trauma means and respond to these accordingly. For the current discussion on arts methods and archives, as a minimum, practical support for participants there will be pre-participation information given to potential participants explaining the nature and orientation of the project with specific reference to themes of trauma and traumatic memories. In my project, this translates to for instance, having a trauma therapist on site and accessible to all participants as well as at the exhibition for attendees. The impact of methods for participants does not end when the researcher concludes their fieldwork and returns home, and thus researchers need to consider access to trauma therapists, but also other ways to engage before and after data collection with participants.[52] Participants will also be given the continuing option, before, during, and after fieldwork, to withdraw from the research and being removed from its outputs. A participant's consent to agree to take part in research is not a static or fixed action, rather this can change during and after participation and thus they should be freely allowed to revisit their decision.

In summary, when researchers propose innovative and/or creative responses to research, such as arts methods, PAR, and decolonising knowledge production, there is normally impetus for the researcher to focus on narrating the benefits and strengths of these innovations. This impetus, at least in part, is often driven by institutionally produced conditions for research, such as funding bodies criteria for what counts as 'original' and 'impactful' research, and departmental staff recruitment and promotion criteria. It is fully understandable that researchers want to discuss the strengths of their research innovations. However, does the perpetual institutional conditions and drivers that act to include and exclude what kind of research is relevant, and the need to 'sell' our unique innovations and approaches to research, shrink the space in which researchers can individually, as well as with each other and publicly critically reflect upon the challenges and limitations of research innovations? My answer to this question is yes. Without exception, all innovations and creative response to research methodologies have limitations and weaknesses, which nonetheless can contribute to furthering our understanding and ways of knowing about a given issue. It is only by in-depth and sustained reflection on our processes and design of research that we can understand and best respond to these limitation and challenges in peace research. Sustained reflection on process will also likely have practical and positive implications for the communities and groups our research engages with. These issues will be exemplified and problematised further below.

Facilitation, 'voice' and participation

With the above critical reflections in mind, the following discussions will focus on three central contributions of arts method and PAR to extending understandings of the role of

plurality in peace research, namely facilitation, voice and intergenerational participation. Importantly, while for the sake of clarity and explanation the following discussions individually discuss facilitation, voice, and intergenerational participation, however, these three components of plurality are interconnected and as will be seen in the discussion below feed into and off one another.

In my ongoing research into material from the ICTR archive one of the proposed arts methods is a co-curated exhibition. Specifically, the exhibition will be co-curated with Rwandans, particularly young people including those who were born during or after the genocide and therefore have no personal memories or stories of the genocide against the Tutsi. The co-curation of archive material will be structured around workshops which will include a drawing and scoping exercise to understand intergeneration meaning and knowledge of the ICTR, mood boards, and interactive and collaborative exploration of the material and discussion sessions. As part of the arts and participant action research (PAR) methodologies, participants will use the archival material as a platform to create stories. Collaborating with local artists, participants will use a range of arts, such as poetry, painting, theatre, dance, photography, literature, and textiles, to create and tell stories about something meaningful to them. These art artefacts could be related to themes from Rwanda's past, though could also be about a present issue or aspiration that is meaningful to them. The art artefacts they create will form part of the exhibitions alongside the ICTR material they co-curate. Importantly here, it is proposed that through the co-curated exhibition participants, including the post-genocide generation, will have the opportunity to engage with dialogue between generations and through the stories told in their art artefacts participate in plural knowledge production about the present and future.

The archival material participants will engage with includes thousands of documents and visual material. These textual, visual and aural materials come from a diverse range of sources and depict a wide range of historical periods from Rwanda's past. Furthermore, the content of these diverse archive materials, such as photographs, represents a range of experiences, including images of family celebrations, such as a wedding taken before the genocide, photos of violence taken by journalists during the genocide against the Tutsi, and the everyday lived realities after the genocide, such as a football match, taken by ICTR investigators. Images can be used as a starting point to facilitate conversations. Particularly, as individuals co-curating these images will have stories of these places, it would allow for multiple meanings to be discussed. Images, such as photographs, are not a site where meaning is given, rather spaces where meanings are sought and negotiated.[53] In post-conflict/atrocity contexts, such as Rwanda, archived photographs offer an opportunity for meanings of a communities past to be sought and negotiated between individuals and generations. Photographs can stimulate dialogue about human experiences because imagery is explicitly orientated towards embracing complexity and the plurality of lived experiences.[54]

Archived photographs carry with them the potential for perspectives to be explored, reinforced, challenged and altered, and is the beginning of a conversation.[55] Photographs as a tool for dialogue are 'enmeshed in webs of power, resistance and agency through

which we assert and explore a sense of self and relation to others'.[56] Dialogue through photographs is a process of being with, and, being open to others, experiencing the world of and with other people.[57] For example, photographs taken after the genocide by ICTR investigators of places where genocidal violence occurred, such as high streets and football stadiums, could be a way of facilitating a dialogue between generations.[58] Particularly, some of these images will be part of the post-genocide generation's everyday lived reality, physical spaces that they know and interact with on a regular basis. Having familiarity with the places in these photographs means it is likely that individuals born after the genocide will have a collection of stories, or fragments of memories, associated with these places, which can be discussed, and their meanings negotiated. In other words, it is the process of being with and open to others, through the co-curation of archived material, such as photographs, that is an important part of plurality in peace research, as dialogue is about both telling multiple perspectives, and listening to other people perspectives and experiences of shared events.

Arts methods that entail imagery and participation, such as that proposed within my research, can facilitate agency of affected individuals and communities, both verbal and non-verbal. The potential for plural dialogue facilitated via images in my ongoing research, is also evident in the work of German photographer Armin Smailovic who documented the experiences of woman survivors of sexual violence and rape in numerous communities in post-conflict Bosnia.[59] This collaborative and creative process gave these women a public space to tell their experiences of horrific past suffering, 'through body language, giving testimony through their expression'.[60] The individuals who each have their own personal memories and experiences of suffering are through this collaborative and creative process brought together, their deeply personal stories intertwined into a collective visual testimony of pain, loss, and endurance. Simultaneously, these images can force the audience to 'hear' the previously silenced suffering of others and to engage with how these past experiences continue to shape the lives of survivors in the present.[61]

Smailovic use of collaborative photography in local communities, also brings direct attention to the importance of plurality in relation to understanding localised experiences of violence and trauma. The ways in which individuals and communities experience and remember conflict/atrocity are often orientated to the direct and immediate locale. That is to say, notwithstanding the importance of macro experiences of atrocity, often for the affected communities it is the very localised events during mass violence that have profound impact and implications.[62] Furthermore, participatory arts also highlight the interplay between micro-macro, private-public, and individual-collective experiences of past violence, and the role that arts methods can have in bringing awareness to these interplays. The importance of understanding and engaging with local experiences of violence was also evident in the context of the Rwandan genocide against the Tutsi. The material from the ICTR archive covers geographical areas relating to all of Rwanda's five provinces and thus offers an opportunity, via arts methods and PAR, to facilitate dialogue about local experiences and also explore how these experiences engage with other parts of the memory ecology, if the material is put to such use.

Notwithstanding the potential of participatory and creative methods, discussed above, one of the potential challenges this highlights for legal archive material, including photographs, and arts methods is the ethical implications of working with images

and representations. The co-curation process and exhibition, while offering significant potential for plural memories via arts methods, also presents a number of important ethical challenges, particularly in relation to engaging with and the representations of other people's experiences of harm and suffering. Other projects using similar material will face similar challenges. According to Subotic, one of these important ethical considerations is the positionality of the research within the archive and the material.[63] The researcher's engagement with the material is decontextualised from the social and political context that the material was once embedded within. This decontextualization of the researcher with the material results in the researcher's interpretation of this material.[64] Thus, a document from the archive on its own raises potential challenges around its detachment from context, and 'it can be highly deceptive and its interpretation ethically challenging'.[65] Importantly, there is also the ethical challenge for the archival researcher of engaging with and representing violence and other people's trauma, particularly trauma belonging to the dead. As Subotic argues, there is the ethical concern to protect the dignity of the dead.[66] These ethical concerns also arguably extend to the living, including the post-conflict generation, whereby representations of violence in the archive relating to personal lived experiences or that of a family member can act to (re)traumatise the very communities that the research is aiming to aid. In the context of the ICTR archive and its material, Subotic's insights and cautions, highlight some of the challenges within using this kind of material and arts methods. For example, my positionality and how my experiences of engaging with legal archive material could shape how and in what ways I use this material within the proposed arts methods. Furthermore, there is the need for awareness of the ethics of publicly displaying imagery, and audio, of individuals who may have never given their consent for the image or voice to be archived by the ICTR, such as photos taken by ICTR investigators in post-genocide period. An awareness of and engagement with these ethical challenges is vital in order to aid this research in attempting to navigate material that engages and represents the materiality of other peoples lived experiences and suffering.

The physicality of legal archive material, as well as the content within it, are sites of the interplays of sensory experiences and plural memory production. In this sense, the material can give 'voice' to individuals and groups who engage with them, and this is a two-way communication.[67] Through the co-curation process the material can 'speak' to participants via the memories it stimulates, and this speaking can in turn facilitate participants 'voice' through the art artefacts they produce. The way that people's embodied experiences of material of justice and law, such as the ICTR archive material, and what these experiences mean for those people is crucially important. As Carribine has stated, it is the 'sensory that has the most potential to challenge deep-seated epistemological assumptions about how knowledge is produced and to pursue the implications that arise from this self-consciousness over the meaning of what it is to know'.[68] A more attuned sensitivity to the sensory in memory production is particularly relevant to the context of legal archive material, arts methods and local communities, the plurality of lived experiences of the past and their connectivity's to the present and future are central

and the necessity to put front and central local communities in processes of knowledge production.

A recent focusing on the sensory in explorations of justice and aftermath of violence has had particular emphasis on the sense of sight. Indeed, the ocular through the process of co-curation has a lot to offer archival fragments of memory, as was discussed above. However, the ocular needs to be considered in terms of how it interplays with the other senses.[69] Each of the senses do not exist as autonomous entities. Instead, the senses are dynamic and continuously interconnected, understood here as multisensory.[70] For example, audio from the ICTR archive, such as the sounds of atrocity, justice and attempts to navigate everyday life in the aftermath of violence, are sources of stimulation. This could be a stimulation of plural experiences: both the internal memories of lived experiences, and external memories of narratives and trauma connected to lived realities but belonging to other people. The fragments of sound can also stimulate memories that are somewhat detached from the origins of the aural source though can equally stimulate reflection, exploration and dialogue. During the co-curation process there is also the opportunity for simultaneous stimulation of touch, taste and smell. This stimulation could be through physical interaction with the material, and also through the visuality which could potentially stimulate a past smell, an absent touch, a sweet taste.

The potential for plural sensory stimulation and memory production through the materiality of the content within the archive is also evident in research within the scholarship that has focused on textiles as a form testimony to tell difficult experiences of conflict.[71] These material testimonies are not only a form of plural storytelling but they can also induce dialogue and memory production through being exhibited and audiences' reactions and response to them. This creative method has been used in numerous post-conflict communities to aid individuals' stories to be heard, and as a process of local knowledge production through exhibitions and workshops. Textiles is not only a form of non-verbal testimony about past experiences but also a form of local knowledge production with the ability to transform perspectives.[72] Connected to this process of local knowledge production via arts methods is the role the senses play in allowing plural experiences to be heard.[73] Specifically, how sensorial experiences, both the process of the individuals creating the pieces and of the audiences who engage with them. The use of textiles as a participatory arts method highlights the connections between material, senses, 'voice' and local knowledge production.

Materials from the ICTR archive, such as photographic paper containing images, can stimulate the senses, the feel of the smooth paper between the fingers, the remnants of the industrial smell of chemicals used to produce the photograph, which in turn can speak to participants through the memories that are stimulated, both memories relating to the content of the material and, also importantly, apparent unrelated memories but still connected to an individual's lived experiences.[74] This 'speaking' by the material through memory production can also facilitate the 'voice' of participants through the process of producing their own art artefacts, such as a poem or painting. Moreover, because sensorial engagement and processes of memory are dynamic and context and person dependent, this creative and participatory method of co-curation can facilitate plural local ways of knowing and meaning making. In other words, the senses, like memory, are fluid and dynamic, changing from one direction to another, and sometimes with no warning.[75] The lived reality of shared past experiences are plural, and the untethered

nature of the senses is arguably an important part of the creative process of co-curation of the ICTR material, as well as post-conflict communities' engagement with the art artefacts produced through this process.

A central focus in my ongoing research engaging with arts methods and PAR is exploring how this methodological approach to peace research can contribute to both intergenerational memory production, and young people actively participating in conversations about the present and future. Specifically, engaging with participatory theatre methods within the context of the ICTR archive material and through local communities performing verbatim court transcript and afterwards through workshops, young people create their own performances, stories, on a topic meaningful to them. Considering the tradition of oral history in Rwanda, the play will aim to bring these legal texts out of the setting of the courtroom and make them relevant and meaningful to Rwandans. An ICTR case relevant to the participants, such as a case that directly connects to participants' lived realities, will be chosen. The transcripts from the trial will be given to participants, and where available they will be given the opportunity to engage with audio-visual material of the trial proceedings. Working with Rwandan performance artists, participants will choose parts of the transcripts they would like to perform. This choice is completely down to the group to decide, and the extracts chosen do not have to be coherent. Participants choosing the transcript is intended to contribute to them having a central role in the knowledge the research produces, and through the process of selecting transcripts to be performed may facilitated negation and understanding of other participants experiences. Participants will decide the roles for the performance, its aesthetics (staging, sound, music, visuals), its narrative direction and whether it is performed in English, French (the official languages of the ICTR), Kinyarwanda (Rwandan language) or in combination of these languages. The words in these transcripts cannot change; however, the people performing them can interpret and bring their own meaning to the way they perform these words.

Theatre and performance can be a very useful tool for individuals and groups across generations to explore the plurality of shared lived experiences of troubled pasts, particularly when past events entail complex and contested experiences. As Premaratna has argued, theatre can stimulate multiple perspectives being represented and can act as a space for beginning difficult and contentious conversations.[76] Theatre also puts centre stage the embodied experiences of those who have endured suffering.[77] In other words, participatory theatre offers two important components relating to decolonising knowledge in peace research, it engages with representations of individual and groups experiences of the past, and also their embodied lived experiences. Importantly, unlike more formal attempts at post-conflict truth-telling, such as trials and truth and reconciliation commissions, which collate individual experiences into a collective narrative, participatory theatre is a dispersed and dynamic process and can include the perspective from the generation that came after conflict/atrocity. Specifically, performance allows individuals to communicate, both verbally and non-verbally, lived realities and in doing so provides a space to engage with other people's experiences, particularly those experiences that 'rub-up' against each other.[78] Words can be very difficult to find, particularly when they

entail painful experiences. Participatory theatre can be both a non-verbal form of communication, and a pathway to dialogue. Here is an example of the interplays between intergenerational participation and 'voice', particularly the non-verbal communication through embodied performances. Crucially, engaging with other people's experiences through performance offers the potential for contested experiences of others to be acknowledged. Through directly engaging with the stories of those who may have frictional lived experiences, individuals do not need to approve of past actions, although importantly they can acknowledge these experiences. This acknowledgement of past lived realities of others is an important component for communities to understand and attempt to move beyond conflict. Intergenerational participation and 'voice' are orientated towards plurality of experiences of mass violence and can facilitate the communication of important dialogue within communities about past experiences and events, and discussions on inclusive and sustainable peaceful futures.

Therefore, the potential of participatory theatre as a method in the context of community engagement with legal archive material has significant potential to aid young people being given a 'voice' in dialogues about difficult past experiences and events, and crucially, to be active participants in policy and educational dialogue in articulating social issues that are important to them.

The discussions above on how arts methods and PAR can contribute to three central parts of plurality in peace research: facilitation, 'voice', intergenerational participation. The proposed methodological approach and methods can have significant potential to aid plural memory production, though crucially also aiding dialogue, storytelling and young person active participation.

Conclusion

This article has argued that understandings of plurality in peace research can be further extended by engaging with insights from arts methods and PAR. Specifically, the ways in which these insights have significant potential to aid plural dialogue, intergenerational memory and local knowledge production in local communities. Such methodological choices, thus, can help address the pluralism challenge as described in the introduction of this special issue. The article began by outlining existing understandings of plurality in peace research and then highlighted how arts methods and PAR can make significant contributions to extending how peace research understands plurality. The article discussed some of the challenges of the proposed methodological approach as it attempts to decolonise knowledge production, the underacknowledged role of power relations in arts methods, and issues of navigating other people's traumas in peace research, and these challenges in relation to pluralism. It was argued that these issues present significant challenges, and limitations and called for constant awareness, and openness to discuss these challenges by peace researchers, which will help them navigate these challenges. The latter part of the article focused on the plurality of facilitation, 'voice', and intergenerational participation, and how arts methods allow individuals including those born after conflict/atrocity to actively engaging in dialogue about these, and distinct but connected events. By discussing my ongoing research, I hope I have cast light upon how arts can aid individuals and groups to understand multiple past experiences and events, and can allow for a shared acknowledgement of frictional experiences of these

events. The use of my ongoing research as an illustrative example, hopefully has also made some of these choices and challenges more tangible.

Arts methods and PAR, through individual and community participation, draws attention to the interplays between how past experiences are understood: micro-macro, public-private, individual-collective. Furthermore, the act through which participants can engage with the materiality of archives, can be a non-verbal form of communication, as well as being a means to facilitate dialogue through public exhibitions of these art artefacts. Also, arts methods, such as performing legal transcripts to tell stories, place young people as active agents within their communities. The stories they tell are intended to be about something meaningful to them, which could be related to the events of conflict/atrocity. Although, crucially archive material, in all its varied forms, can also act as inspiration for telling stories about other issues, inequalities, or aspirations that are relevant and meaningful to them. As Rothberg argues, memories of a traumatic past event are not contained in an impenetrable bubble separate from other history and events, rather the process of remembering intertwine and weave their ways into each other.[79] Importantly, individuals engaging with arts methods also bring their own stories, fragments of memories, of everyday lived experiences, and this bringing of everyday memories can shape how individuals engage with past events and stimulate the memories of other people, as was highlighted in the discussion on archive photographs and intergeneration transmission of memories. Crucially, arts methods and PAR facilitating individual, and community intergenerational memory does not aim to construct plural lived experiences into a dominant collective narrative, like more formal attempts at truth-telling aim to do. Instead this approach of dealing with the past directly engages with the memory ecology of post-conflict communities, which is a dispersed, fluid and continuous process.[80] In summary, arts methods and PAR has potential to facilitate individuals and communities, particularly young people, being given a 'voice' to produce knowledge connected to their lived realities and in doing so aid their active participation in community dialogue.

Going forward, the contribution of this article on plurality within the context of the ICTR archive material goes beyond this one context, and I argue that that this methodological approach can be used within other atrocity legal archive contexts, such as the International Criminal Tribunal for the Former Yugoslavia, and the International Criminal Court. This is really important for peace research, given that a common criticism of these international criminal tribunals and courts, is that they are disengaged from local communities and fail to understand their articulation of justice and needs.[81] The methodological design, tools, and use of legal archive material proposed in this article could be used by other peace scholars in different context to engage with local participation and knowledge production. Moreover, this methodological process has additional relevance beyond judicial archives and could be applied to any archive that contains material relating directly, and indirectly, to conflicts and atrocities.

Notes

1. Söderström and Olivius, 2022.
2. Levy, *Research design*.
3. Fairey, 'Participatory Arts and Peacebuilding'; Garnsey, 'Rewinding and Unwinding'; Premaratna and Bleiker, Arts and Theatre for Peacebuilding; Shefik, 'Reimagining

Transitional Justice Through Participatory Art'; and Shrank and Schirch, 'Strategic Arts-based Peacebuilding'.
4. Söderström and Olivius, 2022 .
5. Luhe and Jones, *Knowledge for Peace*, 2–3.
6. Mac Ginty, 'Everyday Social Practices and Boundary-making in Deeply Divided Societies'; Kapplar, 'The Dynamic local'; and Shaw and Waldorf, 'Localizing Transitional Justice'.
7. Christie and Algar-Faria, 'Timely Interventions'; Björkdahl and Gusic, '"Global"norms and "Local"agency'; and Evans, A Future Without Forgiveness.
8. Björkdahl and Gusic, '"Global"norms and "Local"agency'.
9. Pells et al., 'No-One Can Tell a Story Better than the One Who Lived It'; Del Felice and Wisler, 'The Unexplored Power and Potential of Youth as Peace-builders'; and Lederach, Youth Provoking Peace.
10. Lederach, 'Youth Provoking Peace'; Magill and Hamber 'If They Don't Start Listening to Us, the Future is Going to Look the Same as the Past'; and Pruitt, *Youth Peacebuilding*.
11. Thorne and Viebach, 'Human Rights Reporting on Rwanda's Gacaca Courts'.
12. Jones and Luhe, 'Knowledge for Peace'.
13. Mac Ginty, 'Everyday Social Practices and Boundary-Making in Deeply Divided Societies'.
14. Fairey, 'Participatory Arts and Peacebuilding'.
15. Breed, 'Mobile Arts for Peace (MAP)'; and Fairey, 'Participatory Arts and Peacebuilding'.
16. Breed, *The Artist as Questioner*.
17. Bećirević, *The Issue of Genocidal Intent and Denial of Genocide*; and Ndahinda and Mugabe, *Streaming Hate*.
18. Kevers et al., 'Remembering Collective Violence', 620–640.
19. Seppälä, *Arts-Based Methods for Decolonising Participatory Research*, 1-4.
20. Barnes, 'Decolonising research methodologies', 382; and Bozalek, 'Acknowledging Privilege Through Encounters with Difference'.
21. Jones and Luhe, *Knowledge for Peace*; and Olivius and Åkebo, 'Exploring Varieties of Peace'.
22. Barnes, 'Decolonising Research Methodologies'.
23. Ibid.
24. Fairey, 'Participatory Arts and Peacebuilding'; and Palmer et al., 'Ways of Knowing Atrocity'.
25. Badham, 'The Turn to Community'; and Levy, 'Research design'.
26. Ricoeur, *Memory, History, Forgetting,*
27. Pells et al., 'No-One Can Tell a Story Better than the One Who Lived It'.
28. Hearty, 'Truth Beyond the "Trigger Puller"', 5; and Evans, 'A Future Without Forgiveness'.
29. Ibid.
30. Hoskins, 'Memory Ecologies'.
31. Rothberg, *Multidirectional Memory;* and Hoskins, 'Memory ecologies'.
32. Between April and July 1994 in Rwanda approximately 800,000 people were killed, mainly ethnic Tutsi and moderate Hutu.
33. The average length of a trial (from indictment issued to judgement) was just under 8.5 years, though the longest ICTR case was more than double the average at 19.5 years (Elie Ndayambaje). During the tribunal's 21-year existence it issued 93 indictments and delivered 62 sentences.
34. Clark, *Distant Justice*.
35. Ibid.
36. Thorne, *The Figure of the Witness in International Criminal Tribunals*.
37. Hayner, *The Peacemaker's Paradox*.
38. Seppälä, *Arts-Based Methods for Decolonising Participatory Research*, 4.
39. Ibid, 13.
40. Ibid, 6.
41. McEwan, *Postcolonialism, Decoloniality and Development*.
42. Mignolo, 'Delinking'.
43. Ibid.

44. Seppälä, *Arts-Based Methods for Decolonising Participatory Research, 5*..
45. Ibid, 6.
46. Ainley et el *Evaluating Transitional Justice: accountability and peacebuilding in post-conflict Sierra Leone*..
47. Ibid; and Mac Ginty, *Everyday social practices and boundary-making in deeply divided societies*..
48. Mac Ginty, *Everyday social practices and boundary-making in deeply divided societies*..
49. Fairey, *Participatory Arts and Peacebuilding: Embodying and Challenging Reconciliation*..
50. Phillips-Hutton, 'Performing the South African Archive in REwind'.
51. Markowitz 2019, *The better to break and bleed with: Research, violence, and trauma*.
52. Ibid.
53. Fairey and Orton, *Photography as dialogue*.
54. Azoulay, *Photography without borders. In Handbook of Human Rights*..
55. Fairey and Orton, *Photography as dialogue*, *298-299*.
56. Ibid, *299*.
57. Ibid, *301*.
58. For an example of the importance of photographs in how some Rwandans come to terms with and manage their past trauma see Cieplank's documentary 'The Faces We Lost' (2017).
59. Sounds of Silence Photography exhibition – UNFPA EECA | UNFPA BiH Photo Exhibition – Sound of Silence.
60. Ibid, 10.
61. Ibid, 11.
62. Fujii, *Killing neighbours*.
63. Subotić, Ethics of Archival Research on Political Violence.
64. Ibid, 347.
65. Ibid.
66. Ibid, 348.
67. McKay, 'The Aesthetic Archive'.
68. Carrabine, 'Afterword', 231–238.
69. Thorne, 'An atrocity archive'.
70. Pink, *Doing Sensory Ethnography*.
71. Andrä et al., Reflexivity in Research Teams Through Narrative Practice and Textile-Making.
72. Ibid.
73. Ibid, 342.
74. Thorne, 'An atrocity archive'.
75. Ibid.
76. Premaratn, 'Theatre for peacebuilding'.
77. Breed, *The Artist as Questioner*.
78. Premaratn, 'Theatre for peacebuilding'.
79. Rothberg, *Multidirectional Memory*.
80. Hoskins, 'Memory Ecologies'.
81. Clark, *Distant Justice*.

Disclosure Statement

No potential conflict of interest was reported by the author(s).

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