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What Can Anthropologists Do?: Applied Anthropology in a Conflict-Ridden World

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Abstract

This work examines the role of anthropology in conflict, post-conflict studies, and conflict resolution. Present research has asserted that Anthropology as a discipline must move forward with greater involvement in domestic and international conflict resolution, but no scholar nor activist has taken that leap. All anthropological research in conflict has pertained to forensic anthropology, expert witness testimony, and post-conflict ethnographic research— all completed after conflict has already ended. Many anthropologists have recommended involvement in actual conflict resolution, and many have advocated for further Ethnographic Peace Research. However, the role of anthropology continues to be questioned by the discipline itself as well as governmental agencies and other academic disciplines. Despite these objections, the agreement by the majority of anthropologists in conflict studies is that Anthropologists have the skills necessary to participate and aid in conflict resolution.

What can anthropologists do?: Applied Anthropology in a Conflict-ridden World

Senior Capstone Paper, Spring 2019

Emma Dorshimer

<u>Introduction</u>

My research this semester centered on post conflict studies and the role that anthropologists play in reconciliation efforts, trials of those accused of crimes and redefining a culture post conflict. I wanted to first determine how anthropologists define conflict and the origin of conflict studies in anthropology. After defining the concept, I moved on to address the role that anthropologists play in preventing it, stopping it, and reconciling it. I put special focus on national conflicts, as those have been subject to the richest anthropological study, though I sought to include smaller scale conflict as well.

Through this research focus, I sought to examine how anthropology could play a distinctive role in conflict studies: what insight can anthropologists give on how a culture transforms as a result of conflict, and how can their nuanced understanding of culture enhance programs geared toward conflict resolution? I will examine these questions by taking into account the case studies of a few diverse conflict areas, specifically Argentina and other Latin American countries, Cyprus and Kosovo, Israel and Palestine and the Middle East, South Africa, as well as local conflicts in traditional groups of Africa. I will study these conflict areas closely, focusing on the role of forensic archaeology and post conflict cultural studies.

After studying these case studies and the roles that anthropologists play, I assess the ways in which anthropologists could play a larger role in reconciliation efforts and accountability efforts. I seek to understand the extent how anthropologists can play a role in holding perpetrators of violence and conflict accountable, whether that is by conducting more research, serving in a forensic anthropologist role, serving as cultural translators, or helping in some way to prevent future conflict---and then determining how they could do more. Ultimately I examine

how Anthropologists participate in applied anthropology in post conflict studies and what an increase in that role may look like.

My intentions with studying a subject such as post conflict studies and applied anthropology stems from an interest in the diverse and growing number of conflicts that exist across our global community and affect our every day lives. On a small scale, conflict exists over the smallest details and tiniest annoyances. On a grander scale, conflict can range from anything like violence and discrimination to civil and global wars, and even genocide. My belief is that anthropologists have marketable skills for both post-conflict studies and for assisting in the resolution of conflicts, both large scale and violent, as well as small scale and interpersonal. My aim with this research is to determine how anthropologists can apply themselves to large scale conflict with the skills that we learn throughout our studies at the small scale level: being able to navigate conflict at the local level is a skill that I think a lot of anthropologists develop without knowing: patience, good listening skills, appreciation for the unknown. As a result, an anthropologist could lend their skills and possibly contribute to a more peaceful world.

My research was not limited to the books and resources available at Musselman library, but expanded to multiple databases that enabled me to access virtually all significant texts that became relevant to my research. I utilized inter-library loan (ILL) in order to take advantage of a wide number of sources, finding scholarly articles to be the most useful and most rich in information. A select group of books written by anthropologists and others scholars also lent knowledge. I approached this research through a specific lens: I wanted to explore conflict studies in general but also look for case studies that exemplify the work that anthropologists do post conflict. Furthermore, I sought to find commentary on the ways in which anthropologists

can continue to expand their work in post-conflict areas, a topic that was raised in almost every publication I read.

My research topic fits into wider research interests in anthropology for many reasons. As I mentioned before, conflict is an everyday occurrence both on a local and interpersonal scale as well as on a more global, more violent scale. The kinds of skills that anthropologists learn in studying groups of people enable them to not only conduct research in post-conflict communities, but also access the cultural knowledge necessary for conflict resolution in specific locales around the world. Anthropologists are trained to learn everything about a community, to understand a group of people at a level that many do not bother to reach. In addition, anthropologists know how to communicate these findings, be it through written, published ethnography or using mediums such as film and other technology. Regardless of what group is studied and the medium in which the ethnography is published, anthropologists have the skill to communicate in-depth and valuable information in intelligible and interesting ways. Because of this, an anthropologist's skills would be valuable in the realm of conflict resolution. In a realm where understanding different perspectives and being patient is valued, anthropology builds in its practitioner's skills that can create further peace in the world. As a result, the research conducted this semester can clearly be seen to be valuable to an increasingly more conflict ridden, violent world. I argue that anthropologists recognize the innate value in their skills, and though they employ them in myriad ways across the globe, almost everyone is under the impression that there is more to be done: whether that is further study of Ethnographic Peace Research, a more applied strategy in cultural studies, or further involvement in forensic archeology, it is well understood that there is more work to be done, and anthropologists are specially skilled and poised to contribute.

<u>What is conflict? What is applied anthropology?</u>

As I mentioned previously, conflict can be defined and explained in a diverse number of ways. Conflict occurs at the interpersonal level, whether it be in the family, the workplace, or an unpleasant encounter with a stranger on the street. But it also extends to a global scale, affecting inter-country relations as well as between governments and the people they govern. Regardless of where conflict occurs, there is no doubt that it has serious consequences on the social relations of the human species: "social relationships are of critical importance. Such relationships, throughout evolutionary history, contributed significantly to our ancestors' ability to survive; thrive; and produce, nurture, and protect families. Despite the importance of social relationships, conflict seems to be difficult for humans to avoid (McCullough and Tabak 2010; Stedman 1991). As a result, enduring social relationships are often fragile and difficult to maintain" (Coe et al. 2013: 111). Conflict naturally happens between people, as when it does, it threatens the culture and life of the people involved. Further, we have yet to find a prevention or solution for conflict, for as "Nobel Laureate Amartya Sen (2008) put forward, neither cultural nor economic approaches seem sufficient to explain intrastate violent conflict" (Wegenast and Matthias 2014: 433). Many argue that post-conflict studies would benefit from intersectional study that considers the tricky dynamics of both gender and ethnicity, studies that have been limited by some international groups (Handrahan 2004: 442). These issues are all ones that anthropologists often seek to include in their studies and ethnographies. However, regardless of how studies of conflict are conducted, it remains true that "as conflict can damage the social relationships that have been important to human survival and well-being, it is important to identify methods that have been shown to be effective across cultures in protecting important social relationships and

mending them when broken." (Coe et al. 2013: 110). This is exactly where the importance of anthropological thinking can be seen in post-conflict studies.

Peace and Conflict studies have also always engaged multiple disciplines. The very nature of conflict is interdisciplinary: economic, governmental, militaristic, theoretical—the list goes on. The study of peace and conflict has, as a result, taken on an approach that is "future-centered:" "Not content with the what and why of conflict, the field orients on what the future can be, it designs a path forward. In designing a just future, a new disciplinary approach is required; one that transcends narrow, disciplinary boundaries one that deconstructs in-order-to construct. This approach moves beyond multi/trans/poly/post disciplinary thinking that results in fractured approaches to complex conflict problems" (Matyók 2011: 14). As a result, anthropology seems especially poised to be integrated into the fold, for engaging an intersectional and diverse lens in something as complex as conflict seems most logical: "terms such as multi/trans/poly/post can serve, simply, as expressions of tolerance, not acceptance. Design points the way forward in a collaborative way. A design approach to disciplinary thought invites partners to engage in an open epistemological space" (Matyók 2011: 14).

Veronica Strang sees anthropology's role as a discipline to be integrally linked to ethics and social movements. In *What Anthropologists Do*, she outlines the many diverse ways that anthropologists demonstrate their unique skills in a diverse range of careers. Ultimately, she says, the discipline's strengths come "in seeking a deeper understanding of other cultural realities…in translating this between groups, and in ensuring that research is underpinned by ethical considerations and a concern for social justice" (Strang 2009: 25). This opens the door for anthropology to be inherently *applied*, meaning that along with an interdisciplinary approach, anthropology can have real world implications and impact. Anthropologists can apply the skills

they learn—being good collaborators and cultural translators, offering a holistic approach in research, offering ethnographically grounded information in conflict resolution (Strang 2009: 159)—to a wide range of issues and engage the discipline as multidimensional in use. It is easy to see how an interdisciplinary anthropology could participate and lend it skills to the world of conflict resolution, post-conflict studies and reconciliation efforts, and though it has not been used to its greatest potential in these contexts, anthropology proves to be useful in myriad ways.

<p style="text-align:center">Forensic Anthropology</p>

Now that we have seen how conflict is defined and the significance it can have in every day life, we can explore the myriad ways in which anthropologists have involved themselves in the resolution of conflict. In the past, this involvement has commonly been through forensic archeology and the identification of remains in post-conflict countries.

In today's context, forensic archeologists participate in a multitude of arenas including "police forces, forensic institutes, private forensic providers, universities, museums, archeological units, intergovernmental organizations or nongovernmental organizations (NGOS)" (Groen et al. 2015: li). Most broadly, forensic archeology/anthropology is defined as "a forensic discipline that uses archeological theories, methods and techniques in a legal context" (Groen et al. 2015: lii) and the most innovative use of anthropologists' forensic skills comes in the identification of remains in mass graves in post-conflict societies.

Forensic anthropology is so vital in post-conflict research because it produces scientific evidence of atrocities and human rights violations that, when documented, can prevent future political leaders and other perpetrators from denying the repercussions of their actions. This

evidence can be used in International Criminal Court, local and traditional forms of criminal court and in any other venues of criminal proceedings and judicial hearings to prosecute perpetrators of crimes against humanity, as well as provide closure for the relatives of victims who have been killed. In light of these important uses of forensic anthropology, I will examine two case studies in which evidence exhumed by anthropologists led to the convictions of perpetrators of national and international violence and to brought closure to grieving families.

Cyprus and Kosovo

"The armed conflict in Kosovo and the two periods of inter-communal conflict in Cyprus saw the disappearance of approximately 4500 and 2000 persons respectively" (Mikellide 2017: 33). In the ten-year period following these conflicts, forensic anthropologists became involved in projects that aimed to identify the remains of those killed. These cases were primarily different than others as "ever since the 1970's, investigations into missing persons' issues have become a central feature in societies emerging from conflict. However, such programs tend to be guided by legal and retributive objectives, seeking acknowledgement of the truth and the attribution of responsibility" (Mikellide 2017: 33). Alternatively, the work done by forensic anthropologists in these post-conflict countries was based on "purely humanitarian objectives, where the sole purpose is the identification of human remains and their return to the family for proper burial." (Mikellide 2017: 33).

In Kosovo, forensic anthropologists focused on numbers—exhuming as many bodies as possible in hopes of demonstrating that the crimes committed were wide reaching across the country. Their involvement in post conflict activities began directly following the cessation of hostilities and violence. Known as the Gratis Teams, multiple teams of forensic anthropologists from across the world descended on Kosovo in order to launch criminal investigations, develop

evidence, and exhume and identify remains. The criminal investigations were on behalf of the International Criminal Tribunal for the former Yugoslavia (ICTY). Within months of the start of the investigation, "the Tribunal received reports of 11,334 bodies within 529 gravesites, from 195 of which 2108 bodies were exhumed" (Mikellide 2017: 34).

Through their work, "in the case of Cyprus, after more than 40–50 years from the two periods of conflict and 10 years of systematic operations by the CMP," forensic anthropologists managed to identify 31% of missing persons, "leaving approximately 1380 families without information on the fate and whereabouts of their loved ones. By contrast, in Kosovo 13 years after the conflict and after ten years of systematic operations, the fate of more than 60% of missing persons had been resolved" (Mikellide 2017: 39). The purpose of the exhumations still remained to be to "collect evidence for the ICTY's judicial proceedings with basic attention given to the identification of the victims" (Mikellide 2017: 34). Despite the small discrepancy between the two, the work anthropologists did was significant and allowed hundreds of families to have the closure and resolution they needed. Ultimately, the establishment of these teams of forensic anthropologists "helped not only define Forensic Humanitarian Action but has undoubtedly supported forensic programs worldwide through their advisory services and promotion of best standards of practise" (Mikellide 2017: 39). But these anthropologists took it a step further and promoted further anthropological involvement in post-conflict societies through forensic work: "it is the ICRC's advocacy for the development of local forensic capacity as seen in both Kosovo and Cyprus… which marks a turning point in the approach and which offers a unique response to the increasing challenges relating to the recovery of human remains and to stalled processes" (Mikellide 2017: 39). Not only did forensic anthropologists engage in post-conflict reconciliation efforts, but they also advocated for more extensive anthropological

involvement in post-conflict societies through this forensic work. This is relevant to the role that anthropologists play in post genocide or post-conflict societies that involve widespread killing, as forensic anthropology becomes important in identifying remains and aiding in international courts.

Despite the successes, it was clear that there was a higher success rate in Kosovo than in Cyprus. Several factors contributed to a lower excavation success rate. In particular, the time between the cessation of conflict and the start of excavation was much smaller in Kosovo than it was in Cyprus—around 45 years in Cyprus compared to 3-15 years in Kosovo—an unfortunate occurrence that could easily attribute to the lower success rate. Even further, "the disparity may be merely the result of definitional differences in reporting of data (i.e. merging several sites under one entry after human remains have been recovered)" (Mikellide 2017: 39). However, although these anthropologists did not see the complete success that was hoped for, the work they did greatly contributed to tribunal court trials and helped to hold people accountable for their actions.

Argentina, EAAF and the Latin American Experience

The involvement of forensic anthropology proved important yet again in post-conflict Argentina as well as multiple other Latin American countries. Authors and anthropologists Mercedes Doretti and Jennifer Burrell formed the Argentine Forensic Anthropology Team (Equipo Argentino de Antropología Forense, or EAAF), for multiple reasons. They believe that very recently, "human rights commissions, international tribunals, and local judiciaries investigating past human rights abuses have increasingly turned to forensic archaeologists, biological anthropologists, and, to a lesser extent, social anthropologists to provide crucial

evidence in their proceedings and to oversee the recovery of victims' remains," and as a result, the disciplines of forensic archeology and anthropology have grown significantly (Doretti and Burrell 2007: 45).

During the 1970s and 80s, "the countries of Latin America were shaken by periods of intense violence and repression. Severe and extensive human rights violations were committed, primarily by states under the control of military governments. (Peru and Colombia are exceptions to this generalization)" (Doretti and Burrell 2007: 47). Once democracy had been established in many of these countries, the task of reconciliation and serving justice came to the forefront and the need to investigate those human rights violations became a major issue. In the past, these kinds of atrocities had been tried at the national and international levels and thought they led to some convictions, "in others, amnesty proclamations allowed those responsible to avoid conviction, even when investigations were and still are being carried out" and ultimately showed that "improvements in the administration of justice were crucial to reinforcing the new democracies" (Doretti and Burrell 2007: 47). In order to make convictions stick, forensic anthropology teams were created in Argentina, Guatemala, Chile, Peru, and Colombia. Forensic Anthropologist Mercedes Doretti co-founded The Argentine Forensic Anthropology Team (EAAF) in 1984 "as a nongovernmental, nonprofit, scientific organization that applies forensic sciences—mainly forensic anthropology and archaeology— to the investigation of human rights violations in Argentina and worldwide." (Doretti and Burrell 2007: 47).

The EAAF's work took on many different roles but its principal goal was always to provide evidence for criminal cases. During the time of dictatorship in Argentina, more than 9000 people were 'disappeared' without investigation. Many were buried in "John Doe" cemeteries across the country and this is where the EAAF started its work. Unfortunately,

"untrained cemetery personnel tried their best to recover skeletal remains but

left behind small bones, including teeth, and other evidence such as bullets.

The bones were broken, lost, or mixed up. Skulls were piled in one place and

postcranial bones in another, destroying the relationship between the skull and

the rest of the skeleton. Television screens showed doctors holding skulls with

gunshot wounds. Though in all likelihood these were the remains of

disappeared people, no one knew to whom among the victims they might

belong, to what episodes they were linked, or who specifically was

responsible for their deaths. Furthermore, no one knew what to do with the

remains once they had been recovered. The evidence necessary for

identification and for legal cases against those responsible for the crimes was

being destroyed." (Doretti and Burrell 2007: 50).

Although it made their job harder, the EAAF continued to pursue these remains. Along with

forensic anthropologists from the Human Rights and Science program at the American

Association for the Advancement of Science (AAAS), they "participated in exhumations in

which data were properly collected, documented, and analyzed" which resulted in "collected

evidence [that] served to convict several high-ranking military officials and to identify

disappeared people and restore their remains to their families" (Doretti and Burrell 2007: 50).

Since then, the EAAF has expanded its forensic anthropology efforts to more than 30 countries

around the world and in the future "aims to contribute to the historical reconstruction of the

recent past, which is often distorted or hidden by parties or government institutions that are

themselves implicated in the crimes under investigation. EAAF members frequently act as expert witnesses and consultants for local and international human rights organizations, national judiciaries, international tribunals, and special commissions of inquiry such as truth commissions" (Doretti and Burrell 2007: 51).

Doretti states that these forensic efforts meant more than just post-conflict reconciliation efforts and identification of remains. She states that "for many people we become the face of larger projects of democratization and transition, even though our connection with these projects may be indirect or may be through organizations that represent different aspects of this relationship" (Doretti and Burrell 2007: 48). Consequentially, the engagement of forensic anthropologists in post-conflict Argentina as well as other post-conflict Latin American countries has showcased the skills that anthropologists can bring to the table not exclusively in a forensic, legal or physical sense. As demonstrated through the use of forensic anthropology in Argentina, Latin American countries, Cyprus and Kosovo, forensic anthropology plays a consequential role in the criminal and legal tribunals of perpetrators of violence. The engagement of anthropology in post-conflict contexts has resulted in perpetrators being brought to justice.

<u>Ethnographic Study of Post-conflict Societies: Sri Lanka and Cease-fire</u>

In addition to forensic work, Anthropologists take on another diverse role when they choose to study post-conflict societies. Rather than directly participating in reconciliation efforts, they engage with ethnographic research of post conflict societies studying the ways in which conflict affects every day life and the changes it has already made on the society under study.

Jane Derges is one such anthropologist. During the cease-fire between

2002 and 2006, negotiated between the Sri Lankan Army and Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam

(LTTE), she studied "the consequences of inter-communal violence and its impact on a small

community of Tamils living in the northern Jaffna peninsula of Sri Lanka" (Derges 2013: 19).

The conflict in Sri Lanka started with the advent of colonial occupation, but

> "much of the civil violence arose following the occupation by the government's
>
> military in 1996. This brought the onset of army checkpoints, the loss of freedom
>
> of searches, arrests and disappearances. Rage, as well as fear of these repeated
>
> attacks and humiliations, had to be suppressed and subsumed into deference and
>
> silence for their protection. During the relatively benign period of the early
>
> ceasefire, intense emotions were largely dormant but became more frequently
>
> evoked as the ceasefire started to unravel. Violent incidents increased among
>
> some who were becoming increasingly frustrated and aggravated at the lack of
>
> progress in their lives. These frustrations found an outlet among some of the
>
> younger generation through adherence to gangs. Others took a different path:
>
> through a ritualised challenge to the self that also re-established a sense of
>
> strength (valimai) and cohesion among fellow villagers and family members.
>
> Although differing in method, these performances were a response brought about
>
> by war and violence that did not require verbal explication." (Derges 2013: 26)

Derges' post-conflict study in Sri Lanka revealed useful information in the realm of

conflict resolution and ultimately shows us how anthropologists can play a role in reconciliation

efforts. First, she determined that the outline of social relations themselves had changed

drastically at the grassroots level. With the destruction of infrastructure and other everyday necessities, the villagers found themselves needing to change their social and cultural customs in order to go about their day.

"Before, villagers would come together around these wells, so central to village life, to wash, chat and exchange local information. Their destruction contributed to the loss of valued social space that enabled the community to function as a self-supporting unit 1 ; concerns at village (uur) level would be discussed and managed through internal modes of social responsibility. Villagers had limited access to communities other than their own and, although there were inter-village rivalries, these conflicts were managed on the whole through a locally defined social system, albeit one based on restrictive caste-based hierarchies. 2 There was an informal hierarchical structure that maintained social stability and safety for the inhabitants through an arrangement of civic leaders, elders and other respected members of the community. External scrutiny and intervention was not required because of this network, which included the Grama Sevaka (an administrative official responsible for managing community affairs), religious leaders, healers, teachers and Ayurvedic and Siddha doctors. The local parihari, with his extensive knowledge of plants, herbs, concoctions and decoctions from Ayurvedic medicine, was a valued member, visiting families monthly to check their health. Not only would he check pulses for signs of ill health or prescribe prophylactic treatments, he would also offer advice and information to families regarding, for example, who had reached the onset of puberty and was therefore eligible for

marriage. 3 Illnesses would be reported, that enabled him to provide guidance and advice on a wide variety of concerns. Now the few pariharis still working are visited in their own homes by people largely unknown to them; they no longer have an in-depth knowledge of the families and their various ailments." (Derges 2013: 73-74)

The ways in which villagers responded to ailments, gathering water, and other daily tasks and inconveniences changed with conflict. In addition, families were blown apart during the war, women headed households became more common because of the death or disappearance of husbands, fathers and brothers in fighting, and the role of women changed in everyday life. Alcoholism and sometimes suicide became common in many women who had suffered losses during conflict. Further, "alliances between families were consequently more difficult to sustain, reducing the financial and social benefits brought by marriage unions" (Derges 2013: 85). The fabric of everyday life looked permanently different for the Northern region Sri Lankans, and as a result, confliction resolution and reconciliation took on a different view. Old categorizations of social classes changed and new social hierarchies emerged, changing the way in which reconciliation could be accomplished.

The ritual of kaavadi is especially applicable to the cultural change experienced through conflict. What kaavadi traditionally looks like can change based on the people involved, but to paint a picture of what Derges experienced, I refer to her thick description of a kaavadi ritual that she experienced first hand:

"Loud music can be heard, directing one's attention towards a small group of men and women dressed in their finest clothes, has been erected. The upper section of

wood is positioned horizontally and a man – the thuukkukkaavadi bakktharan –

hangs from it, suspended by ropes attached large hooks piercing the flesh of his

back and legs. A silver vel (spear) has been passed through his cheeks to give

protection; it extrudes from either side of his mouth and has a cobra-shaped head

fitted in the centre. In one hand he clasps a sprig of margosa leaves and in the

other a silver vel ; he slowly waves both arms up and down through the humid air

like a giant bird flapping its wings. Sitting atop the scaffolding another man has

the strenuous task of bouncing the entire structure with his weight, adding to the

sense of flight. Devotional music plays from speakers, garlands of flowers are

draped over the scaffold, and a large wooden panel, brightly painted with

colourful images of various Hindu deities, forms a backdrop. Huge bunches of

plantains still on their stems are tied to each side of the vehicle." (Derges 2013:

147)

Prior to the war, kaavadi was practiced by a very narrow group of Tamil society, almost

exclusively by only the most devout practitioners. Therefore, it was seldom practiced before war

broke out; however, when conflict did begin "after the occupation of the north by the army in

1996… the numbers taking part swelled and the type of devotee changed as the ritual became a

familiar sight throughout the peninsula, especially during the festival period. Its growth

continued on into the ceasefire and now post-war era. The new devotees transcend the

boundaries of caste, class and social milieu and include students, labourers, office workers and

professionals" (Derges 2013: 147). Further, it was an act carried for the entire community's

benefit, not for any certain individual's. The purpose of kaavadi was spiritual, but took on

another meaning through conflict. Participants "bear the unspoken traumas endured not only by themselves but also by social collectives. The healing capacities of such rituals therefore permit both the individual and body politics to emerge tested and resilient, although not recovered" (Varley 2015). The transformation in purpose of kaavadi shows how ritual was used to restore some semblance of order and peace, fostering collaboration between warring individuals in a conflicted country.

The value of Derges' post-conflict ethnography can be seen in her ability to show how cultural change in a society can provide insight into effective reconciliation efforts and conflict resolution tactics. The change in cultural norms in the Jaffna region of Sri Lanka shows that conflict resolution and the reconciliation efforts at a grassroots level will not always match those of the national government, international institutions or Western NGOs. Ultimately, "Jaffna emerges as an area set deliberately apart from southern Sri Lanka, likened to an 'open prison' not only because of the sometimes ominous presence of the Army and LTTE, but also because of the road-blocks and checkpoints which, during Derges' fieldwork, restricted Tamils' mobility within and beyond the region" (Varley 2015). Through Derges' efforts to broadly analyze the local and native point of view in regards to making sense of and dealing with conflict, "the ethnography acts as a valuable counter-balance to medical anthropologies of South Asia which prioritize western-oriented conceptualizations of trauma ahead of local-level cultural configurations and idioms of distress" (Varley 2015). Here the value of anthropology in post-conflict societies stands out. The skills of the anthropologist are to recognize the need for culturally relative conflict resolution and reconciliation tactics and to be able to communicate that information to the global scene as Derges has attempted to with the publication of this ethnography. Her research "develops the arguments against the universal application of western categories of

recovery through therapeutic models of 'trauma', by examining the notion of 'recovery' in unstable settings such as northern Sri Lanka. Here, where entire communities have been silenced by political violence, a focus on religious rituals provides a more nuanced and empirical understanding of the nature of suffering" (Varley 2015). Derges ultimately urges international officials to respect the people themselves as well as local officials as they work to move on from the violence and use rituals such as kaavadi to create a collective, peaceful, group identity.

<center>Traditional African Societies and Relevant Reconciliation Practices</center>

Anthropologists Kathryn Coe, Craig T. Palmer, and Khadij ah elShabazz have also studied conflict at the grassroots level and have demonstrated how culturally relevant information is vital to the resolution of conflict in certain areas of the world. In their ethnography entitled "The Resolution of Conflict: Traditional African Ancestors, Kinship, and Rituals of Reconciliation," they "focus on reconciliation, or the continuation of social relationships after a conflict has occurred, and outline the traditions associated with it, as practiced in precolonial Africa" (Coe et al. 2013: 111). The article, which examines several different African societies, ultimately determines that a focus on traditional cultural traditions is more important to reconciliation efforts in conflict rather than state sponsored justice and punishment systems.

The groups under study were determined to function as traditional social groups with traditional practices: "we define traditional societies as those in which cultural behaviors tend to have been copied from ancestors for many generations. Traditional behaviors are 'the legacy of the past' (Osaghae 2000: 204)" (Coe et al. 2013: 112). Through their research, they determined that these traditional practices have endured and that precolonial social groups had their own culturally specific ways in which they responded to conflict in their society. For many offenses,

there is a concerted effort to engage the community of those who were hurt and the community of that which did the hurting:

> "If one person in a community is killed, his or her kin say that they have been killed (Mbiti cited in Meiring 2005). If a member of one lineage of the Akan injures a member of another lineage, Busia writes, members of both lineages get involved in trying to reach reconciliation (1951). The injured man's lineage ensures that action is taken and the offender's lineage ensures that the man's injury is addressed. In the Igbo society, when a husband and wife are quarreling, the lineage wives settle the manner (Amadiume 1987)." (Coe et al. 2013: 113)

Furthermore, they tried to base all reconciliation efforts off of the ideal of bringing the community closer together. Whether they were family or not, there was encouragement to treat all as such.

> "If we draw on past models associated with the transition from kinship based systems to a state social organization, for example the Code of Hammurabi, we find that states have tried to persuade individuals to treat nonkin as they treat actual kin (Diamond 2008). Strategies used in these efforts often included a combination of deemphasizing the axiom of kinship amity (i.e., be nice to your kin) that had formed the basis of human cooperation for tens of thousands of years, while emphasizing forms of political, and often also religious, fictive kinship among all "citizens" of the state (i.e., patriotism). Decision-making and punishment moved out of the hands of kinship groups to the state.

Legal systems associated with the state began to emphasize justice at the expense of the

maintenance of close and enduring social relationships (Coe 1995)." (Coe et al. 2013:

113)

Ultimately, the emphasis was placed on strengthening community and relationships rather than

punishment and justice. Religion played a large role in that it emphasized not just a structure for

kinship and familial relations, but also provided "symbols, including dress, ornamentation, and

particular objects used in rituals, of the shared identity of the co-descendants. Religion also has

provided a story of origins and rules and rituals that promotes cooperation and

interconnectedness" (Coe et al. 2013: 115). Ancestry was also vitally important because it

promoted peace and harmony and pleasing the ancestors was considered the responsibility of

those living. As a result, "rituals of reconciliation thus were performed not only to bring about

reconciliation, but to also prevent the escalation of interlineage conflict and remind people of the

importance of reconciliation and continued cooperation." (Coe et al. 2013: 118).

The ethnography focused on the ways in which cultural traditions are more important to

reconciliation efforts rather than state sponsored justice and punishment systems. This kind of

information is vital to modern conflict resolution tactics as many believe that it is the sole

responsibility of the state to enforce laws and punish perpetrators. In contrast, local practices had

other interests and goals, and as a result, the cultural information here is valuable to state entities

who are resolving to assist with conflict resolution. This presents an area in which

anthropologists can use their cultural expertise to act as cultural translators in representing the

needs of the local groups rather than government sponsored units. We can see at a local level that

anthropologists can advocate for the proper kinds of reconciliation efforts that are culturally appropriate as well.

<u>Summarizing the Contributions of Forensic Anthropology and Ethnography to Post-Conflict Studies</u>

Both forensic archeology and post-conflict ethnographies represent a key role that anthropologists play in post-conflict studies. Forensic anthropology contributes in that it accumulates and garners evidence for international trials that will ultimately hold world leaders and citizens accountable for their crimes against humanity and their own citizens. Forensic anthropology also helps create a tangible and indisputable record of these atrocities, a record that international criminal cannot deny. The ethnographic study of post-conflict societies results in culturally relative and relevant information that can be communicated to those in power at the meta level and can actually help officials to create and advocate for culturally specific and relevant reconciliation efforts in a post conflict context.

It is important to note however that they strictly involve anthropologists involving themselves after conflict has already occurred. For many anthropologists, this presents a problem in the discipline and its connections to post-conflict studies as well as conflict resolution. As a result, many have called for greater involvement during actual continuing conflict, an unprecedented feat for a group of academics that focus their studies mostly on why things happen. What the future of the relationship between both conflict resolution and post-conflict studies and anthropology looks like is up in the air; however, anthropologists agree that there needs to be greater involvement.

<u>The Future of Post-conflict Studies and Anthropology</u>

The future of anthropology and its involvement with conflict studies and resolution is a grey space. No one knows exactly what it will look like or what it should look like, but everyone agrees that there is an undeniable relationship between conflict resolution and the skills that anthropologists foster in their work.

Shlomo Deshen, an Israeli anthropologist, sees the value of anthropology in assisting with the Palestinian Israeli conflict, but more generally with future endeavors and the role of anthropologist in preventing violent conflict from escalating. He argues that "Protagonists in the Jewish-Arab conflict have maintained essentially unchanged stances" but that his "intention is to demonstrate the relevance of anthropology in the mediation of that deadlock" and show that "the practice of the discipline, in a rigorous, methodological sense of the term, in the area of international conflict, can lead to committed conclusions" (Deshen 1992: 184). He sees the two sides of the conflict as dealing with purely cultural differences: "the positions of the doves and of the hawks are associated with diffuse cultural differences. It is part of the great clash between those faithful to the heritage of Jewry on the one hand, and the rootless on the other hand, between "Guardians of the Torah and detractors of the Torah, between goodness and corruption" (Deshen 1992: 182). Moving beyond the deadlock in opinions would mean tailoring attempts to appeal to all cultural positions in terms that are reasonable to both sides. The conflict is obviously heavily argued and inherently complicated, but Deshen truly believes that the skills that anthropologists garner in field work and degree conferral would contribute to a diplomatic and restorative conversation that could result in greater understanding on both sides.

Greater involvement by anthropologists could also be seen in the processes I have already discussed—forensic anthropology and participation in legal processes post-conflict. In the case

of post-Apartheid South Africa, anthropologist Olaf Zenker presents the ways in which anthropologists can act as expert witnesses in "the state-driven land-restitution process in post-apartheid South Africa, in which the new state currently compensates victims of former land dispossessions that were based on racially discriminatory laws and practices." (2016: 293). In the example of these land restitution cases, Zenker sees anthropology as recursive and calls upon an applied discipline that "transposes itself, in terms of a social theory, into a subject-oriented yet decentred praxeology. Finally, highlighting the humanist ethos of such a recursive anthropology, I have illustrated the kind of expertise made possible by such an approach through the example of my ongoing expert engagement with a White restitution claim in South Africa." (Zenker 2016: 308). Eventually, "within the legal sphere, anthropologists can take up the roles of seemingly neutral expert witnesses, work as consultants or collaborators with particular parties, or act as more and more positioned advocates, or even activists, for certain groups" (Zenker 2016: 293).

There is no contest that anthropologists have marketable skills. Almost every source referenced in this paper, as well as many more not mentioned, have agreed that anthropology *must* do more for the world. John Magistro detailed the issues faced by anthropologists when ethnic conflict emerges mid-research and thus the research mission must be altered, as in his own ethnographic work done in Senegal. He questions "what roles anthropologists can play as educators, administrators, policymakers, and practitioners in translating the academic knowledge into practical activities and programs that address the rise and ethnic violence throughout the world" (1997: 5). He believes that anthropologists have the relevant skills based on participant observation and field studies "to integrate more affectively their analytic and pedagogic skills with the growing field of conflict management and dispute resolution" (Magistro 1997: 5-6). Given their knowledge of culture, social processes and human agencies, Magistro argues that the

field is more than ready for anthropologists to step in and involve themselves in conflict management.

Some people argue that the application of these skills still remains problematic and fraught with obstacles in certain parts of the world. Further, this kind of work was originally undertaken by human rights organizations rather than academic departments and the ivory tower. Because of this, "forensic anthropology applied in the service of human rights offers a unique perspective for examining what we call the "gray spaces," that is, the way this anthropological work often falls in between or outside of traditional anthropological subject matters and academic concerns" (Doretti and Burrell 2007: 46). Further, "it also takes place at the interstices of local political agendas, NGOs' wishes, national programs, and the work of international organizations. These gray spaces add another dimension to the role of forensic anthropologists: finding a middle ground on which to carry out investigations, a search that includes negotiations of roles, positions, politics, and funding requirements" (Doretti and Burrell 2007: 46).

The reality is that more research must be done to determine the best and most successful ways for anthropologists to get involved. Gearoid Millar looked at exactly that relationship with his consideration of the value of Ethnographic Peace Research (EPR). The outcomes from the relationship between anthropology and EPR raise many questions. Because "the goals of our work, and the methods, techniques, and engagements used to achieve them, are often quite different from the concerns of anthropologists based in academic institutions." (Doretti and Burrell 2007: 46), the relationship must look different. As Millar states, there is no doubt that post-conflict peace building requires engagement with the local and native people:

"others would argue that successful peace-building will require engaging with, consulting, incorporating, or even empowering local actors and institutions within that context, while still others may call for international actors to actually withdraw to a great degree from such processes, serving more as supporters and facilitators of a locally driven peace. This turn to the local has inspired substantial reflection in the field and how we should define, research, and engage with the local are still open questions. One suggestion, however, has been that a turn to ethnographic methods can provide some leverage on these questions" (Millar 2018: 598).

This turn to ethnographic methods is again reflected in the desire to move away from disciplines such as political science, international relations, economics and legal studies in conflict resolution and post-conflict studies because they "are largely unaware of the theoretical depth and conceptual nuance of either 'culture' or 'the local' as they have developed within the field of Anthropology" and because "'extended fieldwork has not traditionally been considered necessary in order to understand a problem even if that problem is located in societies and cultures wholly unlike those of the researcher'" (Millar 2018: 598). The idea behind the necessity of EPR is that extended, long-term study and engagement is needed for research, an outlook not entirely shared in the disciplines I just mentioned. The short-term research used by these types of research, Millar believes, does not lend itself to a deep enough understanding of the culture: "it is 'only with sufficient time in the setting that the researcher can come to understand the situated concepts which underpin experiences of conflict, transition, and peace in post-conflict societies'" (Millar 2018: 599). There have been issues raised about white normativity of peace relations and

the trouble that local ethnographers encounter in the face of international agencies, but the reality

is that there needs to be more research done in face of these issues.

> "Indeed, the inequality of power and diversity of motivations among national,
>
> sub-national and local actors and institutions should make it apparent that even
>
> collaborative work alongside local actors and within local institutions can be
>
> turned to the purpose of power and the marginalization of sub-groups. It is for this
>
> reason that conducting rigorous and nuanced ethnographic research must involve
>
> a constant awareness of the operation of power and attention not to either
>
> everyday peace or everyday conflict, but to the manner in which these interact
>
> among and between different actors and institutions" (Millar 2018: 606)

The main idea remains that there are still problems with heavy anthropological involvement and

incorporation but these problems "must be acknowledged and addressed if the ethnographic

approach is to fulfill its early promise to add empirical substance to the local turn" in conflict

resolution and study "(Millar 2018: 597).

      We also need to remind ourselves that post-conflict studies and conflict resolution are

interdisciplinary in nature. Forensic anthropology requires the work of more than just

anthropologists; contributions come from archaeologists, forensic pathologists, biological

anthropologists, radiologists, ballistics experts, crime scene investigators, and geneticists. In

addition to just their titles, "forensic workers in human rights cases are sensitive to the fact that

what they do is often part of the process of restoring dignity, trust, and respect for people who

have suffered severe abuses. In many cases this trust may initially be difficult to establish and

requires extensive work with families of victims and with community leaders who support local investigation initiatives" (Doretti and Burrell 2007: 51). To take it even a step farther, many have considered the addition of psychology and other social sciences in post-conflict studies:

> "A new accompaniment to forensic investigation that is emerging is psychosocial support for families experiencing the exhumation of the remains of their loved ones. Having remains returned provides closure for many families; it offers the irrefutable proof that their loved one is really dead. But mourning under such circumstances is a complicated and unusual process at the individual, family, community, and national levels. Community and individual counseling has been developed by local NGOs in Guatemala and Zimbabwe and serves as a model for other countries undergoing similar processes. Our experience has shown that local or regional NGOs already familiar with the culture, language, religion, and individual situations of victims offer extremely valuable benefits to families involved. They have a firsthand understanding of the political climate and may also be more effective in the reparations stage of the resolution of a conflict."
> (Doretti and Burrell 2007: 54)

What is to be understood from all of this discussion is that more research must be done, more disciplines must engage alongside us and we must continue to find better ways to study cultures. But if we are to learn one lesson, it is that in general, *anthropologists must get more involved.*

As I have demonstrated, the majority of anthropological involvement in post-conflict studies has consisted of forensic anthropology and judicial proceedings; conflict resolution tactics have not been explored and ethnographic research needs to be pursued. And yet, everyone is in agreement that anthropologists can do more. What would that look like? Why haven't we already done it? These questions can only be answered by a commitment to take the valuable skills anthropologists already have and applying them to a conflict-ridden world that would benefit from culturally relevant information and negotiation.

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