

## SPECIAL ISSUE 2022

# NONVIOLENT APPROACHES TO SECURITY

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Our vision is a world beyond war where humanity is united and a global system of peace with justice prevails for current and future generations.

Our mission is to transform the global peace and security paradigm to one that is built around viable alternatives to war and all forms of political violence.

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Research featured in the *Peace Science Digest* is selected based on its contribution to the field of Peace Science, and authenticated by the scientific integrity derived from the peer-review process. Peer-reviewed journals evaluate the quality and validity of a scientific study, giving us the freedom to focus on the articles' relevance and potential contribution to the field and beyond. The editors of the *Peace Science Digest* do not claim their analysis is, or should be, the only way to approach any given issue. Our aim is to provide a responsible and ethical analysis of the research conducted by Peace and Conflict Studies academics through the operational lens of the War Prevention Initiative.



## NEED FOR THE DIGEST

The *Peace Science Digest* is a project of the War Prevention Initiative of the Jubitz Family Foundation.

We believe that there is a gap between the insights of peace science and the working knowledge that policy makers and practitioners use in global peace and security. Additionally, there is a delay in the application of academic research to policy and practice. As a result, policy and practice both reflect and reinforce militarist narratives about the necessity and legitimacy of the use of force. We believe that these militarist narratives are, in part, informed by xenophobia, racism, and hegemonic masculinities. These same forces also stifle diversity in the field of global peace and security.

The *Peace Science Digest* is a tool to usher in change. By increasing the visibility and application of academic knowledge from peace science, we aim to strengthen the peace and security field by making evident how militarism undermines peace around the world. The *Digest* contributes to a broader narrative shift about the assumed effectiveness of violence by demonstrating that nonviolent responses are often more effective, less costly, and, most importantly, more humane than military action. Drawing on a diversity of scholars, it highlights scholarship that critically examines the racial and gendered power structures, amongst others, that underpin militarism.

The *Peace Science Digest* is designed to lower barriers of access to academic knowledge in peace science by selecting articles from peer-reviewed, academic journals and summarizing their main findings in more accessible language. The Editorial Team then pulls out broader implications and practical relevance in each analysis.

useful  
understandable  
accessible



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# PEACE SCIENCE DIGEST EDITORIAL LETTER

Dear Readers,

We are pleased to present our special issue on nonviolent approaches to security in collaboration with Nonviolent Peaceforce. This issue focuses on nonviolent, civilian-led strategies for protection and violence prevention in various violent contexts, ranging from civil war and intercommunal violent conflict to urban gun violence. As distinct as these are, they are all contexts that would traditionally serve as justification for militarized interventions—whether by military forces abroad or by militarized police forces at “home”—in the name of security and civilian protection. Instead, this special issue highlights unarmed, nonviolent approaches already being adopted and employed around the world by communities themselves—and/or by international UCP (unarmed civilian protection) or humanitarian organizations whose presence has been requested—to protect civilians, prevent further violence, and enhance community safety. Drawing attention to these nonviolent approaches to security provision, therefore, provides a crucial response to the question: If not military intervention (or militarized policing) when civilians are being threatened by violence, then what?

Despite the particularities of each context examined here, common themes emerge that help us understand how these nonviolent, civilian-led protection and violence prevention strategies work. In particular, research explored in this issue highlights the critical importance of the following to creating security: addressing unmet human needs (that otherwise can correlate with participation in violence); building and drawing on relationships with a range of stakeholders, including armed actors; analyzing power and dependence relations and leveraging these for protection; and cultivating and using particular norms (including gender norms) to influence behavior away from violence.

Another common theme relates to a major challenge faced by these efforts—namely, that some activities and actors are not even seen as security activities or actors, despite the fact that they significantly contribute to people’s safety. It is so deeply engrained that security is provided by armed police and soldiers, and that forceful, physical action is required to respond to a security threat, that the absence of these is interpreted as passivity in the face of violence. How could a bunch of people talking in a room prevent a massacre? How could women walking each other to a well provide protection from sexual violence? How could a group of farmers threatening to leave a village change the behavior of an armed group? Gender hierarchies that value—especially in the realm of politics—activities and attributes associated with masculinity (dominance, force, autonomy) while marginalizing those associated with femininity (empathy, relationship-building, nonviolence) may go a long way in explaining the invisibility of nonviolent, civilian-led security strategies. Another part of the explanation may lie in the undeniable kinetic (and destructive) visibility of militarized, violent responses. A “show of force” is hard to miss—and in this way is very much a *performance* of concern, of defense, of security; whether it *actually makes* people any safer is another matter altogether.

Indeed, one of the key moves to make nonviolent, civilian-led security strategies visible is to notice how militarized responses to security threats frequently exacerbate these threats, rather than mitigating them. For instance, the infliction of violence (even if meant to be protective or defensive) solidifies group identities and entrenches polarization; it makes it harder for the target group to back down for fear of looking weak; it



creates more trauma and reinforces the victimization narratives that may be motivating the other group's violence in the first place—all of which reinforces cycles of violence, increasing insecurity for everyone involved.

By contrast, the utterly banal and unflashy daily work of sustaining relationships between polarized groups, of supporting youth at risk of violence in their pursuit of meaningful work in the community, of calling up an armed group commander to remind him of his group's stated commitments to international humanitarian law, of calling out a boyfriend for joining in an armed attack of an opposing group's neighborhood rather than fawning over his heroism—these actions work at the level of the actual causes of violence: polarization and dehumanization of enemy groups, unmet human needs including the desire for recognition, deflection of responsibility and lack of accountability, norms of masculinity that celebrate violence.

And the movers behind these security practices are not decorated military generals or well-armed soldiers but, well, regular people—mostly local civilians but also sometimes civilians from other communities or countries who have come to lend their presence to these civilian protection and violence prevention efforts. Noticing their daily security-seeking practices means noticing civilian *agency* in war zones and other violent contexts where civilians are usually seen simply as victims to be saved.

This ability to see civilians as agents of their own security and to notice these nonviolent activities as sources of protection and violence prevention can, perhaps counterintuitively, have radical implications for broader practices of global security. As long as “common-sense” thinking holds that violence is necessary to confront violence, cycles of violence will persist, as all they need to do so are otherwise “peace-loving” people who feel their security is threatened and think a violent response is therefore necessary, even if regrettable (which of course generates the same response in the opponent). Demonstrating that other, nonviolent responses to violence can be effective at creating security—while also highlighting the ways militarized responses can exacerbate insecurity—interrupts this assumption that ultimately feeds cycles of violence, from the community level to the international level. In other words, we don't have to wait for everyone else to be on board—for all the aggressive, violent actors in the world to be transformed—to be “safe enough” to adopt nonviolence ourselves. We can respond nonviolently in the imperfect and violent world as it is. Doing so would not only take the fuel out of violent conflagrations but also free up resources otherwise blindly devoted to military institutions, enabling us to invest instead in renewable energy jobs, education, food security, global health, and so on—efforts that would actually make real people more secure, not to mention address global inequality and some of the root causes of violent conflict. Nonviolent responses to violence do not guarantee safety—just as violent responses do not—but at least with them we stand a better chance of enacting the “change we wish to see.”

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Photo Credit: Nonviolent Peaceforce



# NONVIOLENT PEACEFORCE EDITORIAL LETTER

Dear Readers,

We are honored to collaborate with the *Peace Science Digest* on this special issue on nonviolent responses to violence. We hope you see the following pages as a resource in shifting our global paradigm from violence to nonviolence as the dominant method of responding to conflict.

At Nonviolent Peaceforce (NP), we reimagine security and civilian protection in areas most impacted by armed conflict by working alongside communities to interrupt and prevent violence. Radically centering those most impacted by violence, NP champions unarmed civilian protection (UCP).

UCP is a methodology and set of practices for the direct physical protection of civilians by trained, unarmed civilians before, during, and after violent conflict. In the longer term, UCP uses civilian-led protection strategies to support and strengthen local peace infrastructures, such as establishing safe zones and referral pathways, or supporting the creation and growth of groups and networks of Indigenous peoples, youth, and women to better recognize, prevent, and respond to violence without arms. UCP is grounded in civilian agency and action that prioritizes leadership and decision making by communities themselves, working alongside other unarmed actors such as civil society groups. In this way, UCP creates security in the near term, while transforming conflict into the future.

There are now more than seventy known organizations who practice UCP around the world. However, this number does not account for the vast range of community-level UCP initiatives, of which there are countless examples stretching back for generations.

NP started 20 years ago with a vision. A vision of a worldwide culture of peace in which conflicts within and between communities and countries are managed through nonviolent means.

For two decades now, we have stepped toward that vision. I see it today in South Sudan when Women Protection Teams decrease gender-based violence in their communities. I see it today in Iraq when youth build safe spaces for their communities through dialogues in youth security fora and neighborhood patrols on community safety teams.

I see it today in the Philippines. When NP's field team in Mindanao, Philippines, received information about rising tensions in a nearby village, they took to the road. The team recalled how they "heard sporadic firing of guns and [saw] approximately 30 vehicles with families onboard, including children, caught in the middle of the road and unable to pass through." Because NP is well known, with deep connections to actors in the area, the team was able to immediately jump into action and accompany the parade of vehicles, and the families inside them, to safety. No more gunfire was heard during the trip back home.

Not only did NP protect civilians from the crossfire, but the team also continued to work after the fight by creating a safe space for negotiations to take place between the two armed groups. And, once a ceasefire was signed, NP joined the ceasefire committee to deter further fighting. This is the deep peacekeeping work NP can do as a result of establishing relationships and credibility on the ground in conflict zones through UCP.

There is growing recognition that many of the existential threats the world is facing are rooted in a mechanistic worldview or paradigm. As [Vandana Shiva argues](#), it is a story of separation of humans from nature; of humans from each other through divisions of class, religion, race, and gender; and “of the Self from our integral, interconnected being.” This worldview has led us to extract, exterminate, and push species, cultures, and communities to extinction, while dividing us as a global community and alienating us from our humanity. It also separates the powerful from the consequences of their actions. The world needs to begin telling a different story if it is to survive—a story of interdependence, purpose, and sufficiency in a person- and planet-oriented global community. Pioneers across the world are working to bring this new story to life. The shift from retributive justice to restorative justice, or from industrial agriculture to agroecology—these are examples of this broader shift from separation to interdependence.

We believe it is time for a similar shift in the field of security—a field that currently relies heavily on walls and weapons technology, designed to isolate or (temporarily) eliminate threats and thereby allow the privileged few to enjoy their safety in separation from a dehumanized “other.” Of course, enforced through the threat or use of violence in this way, actual security remains elusive. Recognizing that sustainable security requires a different approach, grounded in relationship instead of separation, we believe that UCP can contribute to such a shift. UCP embodies this different story of security, a story in which security can be experienced through a stronger sense of connection with the “enemy.”

The editors at the *Peace Science Digest* provide “peace science made accessible, understandable, and useful.” Through this special issue, through conversations with one another, we can weave together a roadmap that can guide the global community in meeting its existential threats with courageous compassion. We hope you join us on the path towards a nonviolent future.

In peace,

Tiffany Easthom

Executive Director, Nonviolent Peaceforce





# Thinking about “safety” and “security”

Many languages have only one word for safety and security: “*Sicherheit*” in German, “*seguridad*” in Spanish, “*sécurité*” in French. But in English, we have two distinct words—each springing from a different root and conjuring a different set of connotations. “Safe” comes from the Latin *salvus*, meaning “uninjured, healthy,” while “secure” comes from the Latin *securus*, “without care.”

Colloquially, many people—if not using them interchangeably—use these words to distinguish an external action from an internal feeling, defining “security” as relating to “a group’s efforts to protect its members from harm” and “safety” as relating to “a personal feeling of being free from harm or danger.”<sup>1</sup>

Due to a broader context of militarism, “security” has become closely associated with military and/or armed approaches to defense and protection. Abolitionist thinker Mariame Kaba defines “security” as “a function of the weaponized state.” For her and fellow abolitionists, “safety” “means something else, because you cannot have safety without strong, empathic relationships with others. You can have security without relationships but you cannot have safety—actual safety—without healthy relationships.”<sup>2</sup> As NP’s Director of Mutual Protection (U.S.) Kalaya’an Mendoza often puts it, “safety is cultivated, while security is enforced.”

Many academic definitions distinguish the two based on the level of intentionality behind a danger.<sup>3</sup> To work on “safety” is to protect from hazards like natural disasters, snakebites, or muddy roads—but to work on “security” is to protect from threats that humans have intended. Other scholars further distinguish between “national security” (the defense of a country from military threats) and “human security” (the protection of actual human beings from a range of intended or unintended threats to their well-being)<sup>4</sup>—the latter challenging us to think of “security” as much more closely aligned with common understandings of “safety.” Distinguishing between these two forms of *security* helps draw attention to the way in which human security and national security can actually often be at odds, as the former is often violated in the quest for the latter, with

1. Kassabian, A. (2021, February 26). Differences between “security” and “safety.” VOA Learning English. Retrieved July 28, 2022, from <https://learningenglish.voanews.com/a/differences-between-security-and-safety-/5791194.html#:~:text=While%20the%20words%20%E2%80%9Csecurity%E2%80%9D%20and,free%20from%20harm%20or%20danger>

2. Kaba, M. (2017, November 9). Towards the horizon of abolition: A conversation with Mariame Kaba. The Next System Project. Retrieved July 28, 2022, from <https://thenextsystem.org/learn/stories/towards-horizon-abolition-conversation-mariame-kaba>

3. For instance, see: Jore, S. H. (2019). The conceptual and scientific demarcation of security in contrast to safety. *European Journal for Security Research*, 4(1), 157–174.

4. Paris, R. (2001). Human security: Paradigm shift or hot air? *International Security*, 26(2), 87–102.

civilians and soldiers alike paying with their lives for the elusive national security gains of military confrontations.

Despite the various definitional disagreements that abound over these words, one question comes into focus: What would it look like to create a world where we and our local and global neighbors feel safe and secure in our daily lives? Whatever these words mean to you—and whether you say “community safety” or “human security”—this special issue asks us to reflect on what it might take for everyone to live free of fear and full of dignity. How might we retrieve security from militarism and ground it in strong relationships instead of fear?

## What do “safety” and “security” mean to you?



Caption: Nyajima Gatkouth started working with NP as a volunteer in 2018 and as a Community Outreach Worker in 2019. She is now a National Protection Officer working with NP in the Juba Protection of Civilians (POC) site, South Sudan.

Photo Credit: Nonviolent Peaceforce

From hiding her cell phone to keeping her window covered, Nyajima Gatkouth, a National Protection Officer working with Nonviolent Peaceforce (NP), shares how the routine parts of her life are impacted by violence and insecurity in the Protection of Civilians (POC) site in Juba, South Sudan.

When the temperature drops slightly in the evening, residents pull off the plastic sheets covering their windows, letting in air to cool off their shelters, which have been baking in the sun all day.

“In my shelter there is a window and I can fold up the plastic sheet for the air to enter. But for me to be sleeping next to an open window, it’s risky,” Nyajima says.



At night, some members of the POC site go to each home with flashlights, looking for items to take or even intending to harm people. One night, Nyajima remembers that “some people tore the plastic sheet on my shelter, and they were asking me to come because they wanted to take my phone... My phone was hidden, but then they saw the light.”

She was able to convince them to go away that night, but, after that incident, Nyajima now makes a compromise: If she sleeps with the window open, she stays on a mat far from her bed; if she sleeps on her bed, she keeps her window closed.

“[Safety and security] mean a lot to me because I have to make these decisions and tradeoffs about many things, from freedom of how I sleep at night to freedom of movement. After about 6:00 in the evening, I am not able to move outside—it isn’t safe,” she says, reflecting on some of the reasons why she values safety and security.

But Nyajima finds mutual safety through working at NP alongside Women Protection Teams (WPTs).

These independent, grassroots groups of women use unarmed civilian protection (UCP) methods to protect themselves and their wider communities from violence: protective accompaniment and presence, sometimes alongside NGOs like Nonviolent Peaceforce that specialize in UCP; Early Warning Early Response networks; and collective risk analysis.

“Even in the daytime, because everyone fears for their own safety, people are less likely to help,” Nyajima explains. But the NP staff and the WPT members are recognizable as individuals who can help in the community, even when they take their uniforms off at the end of the day, because “they are always out doing awareness-raising, supporting SGBV survivors, or patrolling at the water points and in the Weapons Free Zones.”

“For example, because the community sees the WPTs as leaders in the community, the women are called in when there is a need for mediation. Recently, there was an issue at a water point between two groups of people. Some of the women told everyone to stop fighting. It took a week to resolve, but then there was peace. The whole shift in energy was felt across the camp. Not just because the fighting at that water point ended, but because the community saw yet another example from WPTs of how we could find safety in each other, rather than fear.”

Nyajima says she has seen UCP creating deep change and stronger sustainability across the POC site. “This is what just a few women can do for an entire area of our community. But the change is multiplied every day: In our camp, there are nine teams and a total of 160 WPT members.”

The biggest lesson Nyajima has learned from her experience with NP and WPTs is how to build relationships within a community.

"I used to be very quiet but when I came here, I learned how to be confident, how to build relationships with people," Nyajima shares. "I think that's really important because if we spread knowledge on safety, we will be able to help ourselves and help our neighbors."

After reflecting, Nyajima said she believes the two concepts of safety and security are intertwined. She shared her vision for what a safe future would look like for her: **"If I could roll up the plastic sheet at night, if I could sleep next to the open window and feel the breeze instead of the corner of my hot shelter without fear, it would mean safety and security for me. It would mean that I could trust my neighbors.** I've been displaced for years, and now the POC is my home. But a safe future would also mean people—families—children—wouldn't have to be displaced in future generations."



Caption: After the civil war broke out in 2013, people fled to the UN base outside Juba, the capital and largest city of South Sudan, where a displacement camp called a Protection of Civilians (POC) site was later set up. Although the security situation has improved today, almost 31,000 people still call the IDP camp home (Juba IDP Camp 1 and Camp 3 combined).



Photo Credit: UNMISS/Nektarios Markogiannis



# Colombia in Focus

Colombia has a long tradition of communities engaging in nonviolent self-protection amidst the contending armed actors in the country's decades-long civil war, from the creation of autonomous peace territories to more ad hoc efforts at dialogue with armed actors and/or engagement in early warning networks.

For this issue we have included two complementary analyses examining nonviolent strategies for protection and violence prevention in Colombia—one focused on the central role of local civilian actors and one focused on the supportive role of international organizations. In a single Informing Practice section, we weave together the implications of both pieces of research and draw out their practical applications.

## Keywords

peace territories,  
peace zones,  
nonviolent/civil resistance,  
community self-protection,  
civilian agency,  
unarmed civilian  
protection,  
Colombia,  
armed groups,  
civil war

## Key Insight for Informing Practice

Contrary to mainstream thinking, armed actors are sensitive to more than just the threat or use of violence against them. When contemplating ways to protect civilians in the context of armed conflict, both local communities and external organizations can leverage multiple nonviolent forms of influence in their interactions with armed actors.

# Explaining Armed Actors' Compliance with Civilian Demands in Colombian Peace Territories

Source | Mouly, C., Hernández Delgado, E., & Belén Garrido, M. (2019). Armed actors' responses to civilian demands in three Colombian peace territories. In L. Leitz & E. Y. Alimi (Eds.), *Bringing Down Divides, Research in Social Movements, Conflicts and Change*, Vol. 43 (pp. 133-157). Emerald Publishing Limited. DOI: <https://doi.org/10.1108/S0163-786X20190000043012>



## Organizations/Initiatives:

Peace Community of San José de Apartadó (and international partner FOR Peace Presence): <https://peacepresence.org/what-we-do/peace-community/>

ICRC (International Committee of the Red Cross) Colombia: <https://www.icrc.org/en/where-we-work/americas/colombia>

## Talking Points

In the context of civilian-led peace territories amidst armed conflict in Colombia:

- Armed actors depend on the cooperation of civilians in order to reach their objectives and therefore cannot achieve everything they wish to through violence alone.
- Key factors influencing armed actors' compliance with civilian demands include civilian impartiality and non-collaboration with armed groups, mobilization of a large number of community members, civilian threats to leave the area, external attention to the peace territory, and civilian use of "rhetorical traps" or leveraging of local relationships with armed actors.
- Armed actors in these cases are most driven by normative, political, and security—and to a lesser extent economic—considerations in their responses to peace territories' actions and demands.
- Armed actors can be motivated by a desire to adhere to norms central to their ideology and/or identity, as well as by a desire not to harm people with whom they have personal relationships like family members, friends, or neighbors.
- Armed actors' sensitivity to public image (due to concern for political legitimacy and support) is especially acute where a guerrilla group claims to be fighting "for the people," yet large numbers of civilians are mobilizing to demand an end to that same group's violations of the civilian population.
- Armed actors' dependence on civilians for security explains their sensitivity to civilian threats to leave the area, as well as the incentive they have to accept civilian demands if it means that a peace territory will be impartial and therefore not provide support to rival armed actors.

## Summary

It is widely believed that if violence comes up against nonviolence, violence will prevail—and therefore that, in armed conflict, civilians are simply at the mercy of armed actors and subject to their violence without recourse. Yet, in some civil war contexts, unarmed civilians have effectively mobilized to exert their autonomy and protect themselves in the face of armed actors' violence. Cécile Mouly, Esperanza Hernández Delgado, and María Belén Garrido examine what accounts for armed actors' compliance with civilian demands for autonomy and protection during the Colombian civil war in three **peace territories**—Samaniego, Las Mercedes, and “the area of influence of the Peasant Worker Association of the Carare River (ATCC).” They argue that armed actors were most driven by normative, political, and security—and to a lesser extent economic—considerations in their responses to peace territories' actions and demands.

<b>Peace territories:</b>	“[L]ocalities in which civilians engage in civil resistance to achieve greater autonomy from armed actors and reduce armed violence. They are also termed ‘peace zones’ or ‘peace communities’...”
<b>Civil resistance:</b>	<p>“[T]he application of unarmed civilian power using nonviolent methods such as protests, strikes, boycotts and demonstrations, without using or threatening physical harm against the opponent.”</p> <p>Chenoweth, E., &amp; Cunningham, K. G. (2013). Understanding nonviolent resistance: An introduction. <i>Journal of Peace Research</i>, 50(3), p. 271.</p>
<b>Rhetorical trap:</b>	<p>An appeal used by civilians in their interactions with armed groups that points out inconsistencies between armed groups' stated ideals and identities and their actual behaviors in order to influence them away from civilian violations. It entails “a collection of statements in which acceptance of the initial premises exacerbates a tension between prior ideational commitments and current stances or behaviours.”</p> <p>Kaplan, O. (2017). The art of rhetorical traps in civilian self-protection. <i>Journal of Peacebuilding &amp; Development</i>, 12(3), p. 112.</p>







Photo Credit: Juan David | /Adobe Stock





The authors conducted interviews with a variety of conflict stakeholders (both civilian and combatant) in the three peace territories between 2002 and 2018. Their analysis is informed by a few key theories of nonviolent resistance: Sharp's (1973) theory of power, Galtung's (1989) "great chain of nonviolence," and Schock's (2013) categorization of different forms of dependence relations. While these theories are often based on or applied to struggles against authoritarian regimes, the authors argue that they are relevant to civilian struggles against armed groups during war. These theories reveal how armed actors depend on the cooperation of civilians in order to reach their objectives and therefore cannot achieve everything they wish to through violence alone. Furthermore, since most previous research on peace territories and **civil resistance** in war zones has focused on civilian perspectives, this research focuses instead on armed actors' perspectives to better understand how and why exactly they are influenced by various forms of civilian pressure and negotiation.

While the two main guerrilla groups (the FARC and the ELN) and state security forces made commitments to adhere to international humanitarian law (IHL), and the paramilitary groups did not, all armed actors were responsible at times for harming civilians. These three geographically diverse peace territories emerged at different times and in different phases of the Colombian civil war, confronted different armed actors, and enjoyed varying levels of success. Nonetheless, they all "took an impartial stance and used nonviolent actions to persuade all warring parties to not involve civilians in the conflict and to respect civilian immunity."

Several factors influenced armed actors' compliance with civilian demands in peace territories: civilian impartiality and non-collaboration with armed groups, mobilization of a large number of community members, civilian threats to leave the area, external attention to the peace territory, quiet or public responses to violations (depending on context), civilian use of "**rhetorical traps**" with armed actors, civilians' leveraging of local relationships with armed actors, and the simultaneous existence of peace talks.

The authors explain armed actors' compliance with civilian demands with respect to political, security, normative, and economic considerations. First, armed actors depend on civilians for political legitimacy and support to reach their political objectives. For these reasons, armed actors are often sensitive to their public image and wish to maintain "a good reputation for strategic purposes." This sensitivity is especially acute where, as in Colombia, a guerrilla group claims to be fighting "for the people," yet is



Photo Credit: Matthieu | /Adobe Stock

confronted by large numbers of civilians mobilizing to demand an end to that same group's violations of the civilian population. That armed group is not going to want to alienate, let alone kill, a huge group of civilians on whom its legitimacy depends. Second, perhaps counterintuitively, armed actors can also depend on civilians for their security. Armed actors may strategically mix with the civilian population to gain some measure of protection due to the principle of civilian immunity. This concern for security explains armed actors' sensitivity to civilian threats to leave the area if demands are not met, as well as the incentive they have to accept civilian demands if it means that a peace territory will be impartial and not provide support to rival armed actors. Third, armed actors can be intrinsically motivated by a desire to adhere to norms central to their ideology and/or identity, as well as by a desire not to harm people with whom they have personal relationships like family members, friends, or neighbors. Thus, civilian actions, like the use of "rhetorical traps," that confront armed actors with inconsistencies between their stated normative commitments and their actual behavior can influence armed actor behavior away from civilian harm. Additionally, the existence or cultivation (usually through dialogue) of similarities or relationships between civilians and armed actors—reduced "social distance"—can facilitate positive responses to civilian demands. Finally, armed actors can be economically dependent on civilian populations, though, in the cases examined here, economic considerations—like dependence on "civilians' taxes, coca cultivation and food"—were often trumped by other, more pressing political, normative, or security considerations.



# The ICRC's Support for Communities' Self-Protection Efforts in Colombia

Source | Kaplan, O. (2021). The International Committee of the Red Cross and support for civilian self-protection in Colombia. *International Interactions*, 47(5), 898-927. DOI: <https://doi.org/10.1080/03050629.2021.1945593>

## Talking Points

In the context of the ICRC's protection work in Colombia:

- Communities and the ICRC have complementary protection capacities, with each “open[ing] up opportunities for dialogue with armed groups” in different ways.
- Communities feel safer when the ICRC is present, and the ICRC's work on international humanitarian law (IHL) provides a foundation for community advocacy around protection.
- The ICRC's limitations include not being able to intervene in situations of targeted threats (focusing instead on broader engagement with armed actors to get them to comply with IHL), as well as sometimes being held back from certain protection activities and/or relationships due to the practice of neutrality.
- The ICRC looks for strong, well-organized communities with whom to work, as the success of its work depends on community cohesion.
- The ICRC “enhanced the protection capacity and confidence of local communities, but primarily for more organized ones, expanding the scope conditions under which they could engage armed actors.”

## Summary

In light of the widespread community self-protection practices employed in Colombia, what, if anything, can international/external actors do to enhance or support these activities? Oliver Kaplan examines this question by focusing on the work of the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) in Colombia, specifically the municipality of El Bagre. His hypothesis is that external support is going to be most effective at “boost[ing]... protection capacities” in cases where communities are already more organized.

### Continued reading:

ICRC. (2022, March 23). Colombia: Living in the shadow of armed conflict. Retrieved July 15, 2022, from <https://www.icrc.org/en/document/colombia-humanitarian-challenges-2022-ihl>

Nolan, R. (2013, January 24). Local zones of peace: Communities withdrawing from conflict. Interview with Landon E. Hancock. Peace Insight. Retrieved July 15, 2022, from <https://www.peaceinsight.org/en/articles/zones-of-peace-landon-e-hancock/?location=philippines&theme=>

Gaviuk, T., Gray, F., & Preikšaitytė, K. (2022). Opinion: ‘We were ready’—learning from Ukraine’s locally led response. Devex. Retrieved July 14, 2022, from <https://www.devex.com/news/opinion-we-were-ready-learning-from-ukraine-s-locally-led-response-103429>

After the departure of the FARC rebel group in 2016, El Bagre became contested territory among various other armed groups, with occasional Colombian military presence. Civilians in the area have therefore been subject to insecurity and uncertainty over the years. In El Bagre, village councils, or *juntas de acción comunal* (JAC), are present but not as robust as they are in other areas of the country. There is also an overarching human rights and peace organization in the area called AHERAMIGUA. The ICRC—well respected and with good access to armed actors, largely due to its practice of neutrality—has worked for over four decades in Colombia, focusing on protection and the implementation of international humanitarian law (IHL).

In March 2017, while traveling with an ICRC delegation in El Bagre, the author conducted interviews with community leaders and ICRC staff and observed a training, a focus group, and a transitional justice meeting. He found that the communities around El Bagre engage in four main protection strategies primarily through their JACs and/or AHERAMIGUA. First, early warning networks facilitate information-sharing between villages to help them avoid getting caught in the middle of violence. Second, communities “promot[e]... pacifist social norms and avoid[ ] contact with armed actors,” in addition to taking other measures to ensure that they are not perceived as collaborating with opposing armed groups. Third, by dialoguing with and/or protesting against armed actors, communities demand that they not harm or infringe on the rights of civilian populations. Lastly, communities have developed investigation procedures for “suspected armed group collaborators” (in order to vouch for those found “innocent”).

Meanwhile, the ICRC engages in two main protection strategies directly or in support of communities. First, through “direct protection,” it engages in dialogues with armed actors to remind them of the requirements of—and consequences of not abiding by—IHL. Second, its “community-based protection” activities involve the provision “safe spaces for community members to meet” for trainings or workshops, the facilitation of “reflection and analysis,” and the linking of communities to authorities or resources. In addition, community members report a deterrent effect of the ICRC’s

occasional presence, noting armed actors “stay away” when the ICRC is around.

The ICRC also has key limitations in its work. First, since the ICRC’s focus is on encouraging greater compliance with IHL among armed actors, it can only call on armed actors to “use greater restraint and abide by IHL”—in particular, civilian immunity—but not to end the fighting altogether. Furthermore, the ICRC will not directly intervene in situations of targeted threats (against a particular individual, for instance), in part due to inadequate resources, presence, or information for accurately discerning the nature of the threats. Instead, in such cases the ICRC can assist threatened individuals to move away from the area. Finally, its practice of neutrality can provide greater access to armed actors but also hinders some forms of protection work or engagement with particular community groups deemed too “politicized.”

Ultimately, communities and the ICRC have complementary protection capacities, although with some “protection gaps.” Each “opens up opportunities for dialogue with armed groups” in different ways: “For the ICRC, communities are important sources of legitimacy and communication channels. For the communities, the ICRC provides additional weight and...security and reassurance,” sometimes reaching commanders who can then influence fighters on the ground or facilitating communities’ ability to dialogue with harder-to-influence armed actors like paramilitaries. In addition, as noted above, communities feel safer when the ICRC is present, as its very presence can be protective, and the ICRC’s work on IHL provides a foundation for community advocacy around protection. At the same time, the ICRC looks for strong, well-organized communities to work with, as the success of its work depends on community cohesion—but of course the ICRC’s work is even more necessary in weaker communities (where its work does not have the support it needs). The ICRC itself does not directly promote social cohesion, though this can be a byproduct of bringing together community members for trainings and workshops. Another protection gap arises in the way ICRC presence could actually embolden community members too much, beyond the protection it can provide, or create dependencies. In sum, the ICRC “enhanced the protection capacity and confidence of local communities, but primarily for more organized ones, expanding the scope conditions under which they could engage armed actors.”







Photo Credit: danaan andrew-pacleb/EyeEm | Adobe Stock



## Informing Practice

These two articles taken together provide a potent reminder that, contrary to mainstream thinking, armed actors are sensitive to more than just the threat or use of violence against them. When contemplating ways to protect civilians in the context of armed conflict, both local communities and external organizations can leverage multiple nonviolent forms of influence in their interactions with armed actors—thereby avoiding the trap of falling back on armed forms of “protection,” which often only end up reproducing insecurity for those they are meant to protect. Even in the context of the Russian invasion of Ukraine, civilians have demonstrated the power of some of these nonviolent approaches to security in interactions with Russian troops, as examples below illustrate.

The first and most prominent recommendation from both pieces of research is for communities to build broad participation and social cohesion in their peace and community protection efforts in order to present a strong and unified voice in interactions with armed actors. Whereas armed actors may be able to easily disregard or even target a handful of individuals challenging their violent behaviors, it is much more difficult for them to write off an entire community expressing its disapproval of these—especially when those armed actors purport to be acting in the interests of that community. For example, in Ukraine during the earlier phase of the invasion, masses of unarmed community members joined together to [block the entry of Russian tanks](#) into their towns—a powerful move especially since Russian soldiers were led to believe that they would be welcomed by civilians as liberators. For external organizations, the task is to find ways to support social cohesion efforts in communities where they work, as requested—even if only by providing space or funding.

Second, local communities should do as much as they can to take advantage of—and further cultivate—their social ties with members of local armed groups, while not collaborating with them, in order to create effective forms of leverage for civilian protection. Although the context is somewhat different, as Russian soldiers are not local to the communities where they are fighting, Ukrainians have still been extremely skilled in [reaching out to individual Russian soldiers](#) and building on the shared sense of “brotherhood” between the two peoples to urge these soldiers to desert. External organizations who wish to support civilian protection should be mindful to recognize and enhance—rather than sideline or eclipse—similar community protection practices and the local relationships and expertise that make them possible. In some cases (where community links with armed actors are weaker), external organizations who have access to armed actors, like the ICRC, can help create and strengthen these links by facilitating dialogue between communities and surrounding armed actors.

Third, both local communities and external organizations should constantly engage in analysis of the armed actors in the surrounding area so as to better understand their motivations and sensitivities. On whom do they depend for support (both material and moral), and how can those groups—if distinct from local civilian populations—be influenced





to put pressure on armed actors to stop harming civilians (through what Galtung calls the “great chain of nonviolence”)? In what ways do armed actors depend on local civilian populations in particular—for security? for income? for political legitimacy?—and how can any of these be exploited to influence armed actors to respect civilian demands for autonomy and safety? What are the ideologies or values that animate their call to arms, and how can these be leveraged through the use of “rhetorical traps” or otherwise to get these armed actors to respect civilian immunity (or stop fighting altogether)? For instance, Ukrainian communities could find highly symbolic ways to demonstrate that they are not Nazis and/or that they condemn neo-Nazi groups operating in Ukraine, [as “fighting Nazis” has been a rallying cry for the Russian military](#).

Finally, local communities can assess whether bringing in external organizations would provide greater protection, especially in cases where armed actors are sensitive to outside attention and their national or international image, and then draw on those organizations’ strengths to complement their own. For their part, external organizations, beyond [following the lead of local civilians in protection efforts already underway](#), should take stock of their own values, principles, and organizational identities to see what advantages but also disadvantages these entail—and then find ways to coordinate with community members and/or other organizations to take on different roles depending on these capacities. For instance, the ICRC’s commitment to neutrality provides it with increased access to armed actors but also holds it back from certain activities, so it should find ways for other like-minded organizations to take on these roles it cannot fulfill, lest it damage its reputation for neutrality. [MW]

## Questions Raised

- How can communities cultivate social ties with armed actors (in order to create leverage for protection) where those ties do not already exist?
- How can communities best mobilize broad participation and unity in their efforts to resist armed actors and enhance civilian protection?



# A Trauma-Informed Healing Approach to Urban Gun Violence

Source | Corburn, J., Boggan, D., & Muttaqi, K. (2021). Urban safety, community healing & gun violence reduction: The Advance Peace model. *Urban Transform* 3(5). DOI: <https://doi.org/10.1186/s42854-021-00021-5>

## Keywords

gun violence,  
public safety,  
peace,  
healing,  
racism,  
violence prevention

## Talking Points

In the context of the United States:

- Urban gun violence is most often the result of unaddressed trauma, which can be exacerbated by increased interactions with the criminal legal system.
- A public health-informed approach acknowledging racial trauma and emphasizing individual healing is a promising way to address urban gun violence.
- Deploying formerly incarcerated community members as street outreach mentors to interrupt violence and target influential individuals most involved in gun violence is key to violence reduction.
- Cities should institutionalize peacemaking and gun violence prevention efforts throughout city government instead of having such efforts siloed within law enforcement.

## Key Insight for Informing Practice

- Just as we advocate for ceasefires and diplomacy in global conflicts, so too should our city governments, and specifically offices of violence prevention, apply peacebuilding strategies in our own communities to keep civilians safe.

## Summary

A common response to the epidemic of gun violence in U.S. cities is more law enforcement. However, urban gun violence is most often the result of unaddressed trauma, which can be exacerbated by increased interactions with the criminal legal system. Advance Peace's Peacemaker Fellowship (PF) offers an innovative approach designed to address the structural violence that contributes to urban gun violence. Drawing from public health interventions, the PF seeks to stop the transmission of violence through a trauma-informed, healing-centered approach. Unlike focused deterrence programs, the PF does not work with police. Intrigued by this innovative approach, Jason Corburn, Devone Boggan, and Khaalid Muttaqi explore the PF in three California cities—Stockton, Sacramento, and Richmond. In their examination, the authors draw out why the PF has proven effective at curbing gun violence.

### Continued reading:

Corburn, J., & Fukutome-Lopez, A. (2020). Outcome evaluation of Advance Peace Sacramento, 2018-19. UC Berkeley, IURD. Retrieved June 3, 2022, from <https://www.advancepeace.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/04/Corburn-and-F-Lopez-Advance-Peace-Sacramento-2-Year-Evaluation-03-2020.pdf>

Peace Science Digest. (2021). Lessons learned from the law enforcement response to far-right terrorism. <https://peacesciencedigest.org/lessons-learned-from-the-law-enforcement-response-to-far-right-terrorism-insights-for-a-more-effective-approach/>

### Organizations/Initiatives:

Advance Peace:  
<https://www.advancepeace.org/>

Pulling from previous research, the authors explain how racism, structural violence, and trauma can contribute to urban gun violence. Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACEs) and Adverse Community Environments compound to create “toxic stressors” that impact an individual's development and decision-making. ACEs can include physical and sexual abuse, witnessing and being the victim of violence, poverty, homelessness, and interpersonal or institutional racism. Typically occupied by segregated Black, Indigenous, and immigrant communities, Adverse Community Environments are characterized by concentrations of toxic pollution, dilapidated housing, limited green space, low-quality schools, economic divestment, and community violence. Toxic stressors can impact brain development and function, specifically related to decision-making and impulse control. These compounding traumas can lead one to interpret normal and benign circumstances as dangerous. The PF acknowledges these traumas and prioritizes healing. It follows that the PF does not coordinate with law enforcement or utilize dehumanizing policing strategies.

Advance Peace operationalized a framework to address these traumas in their PF. Neighbor Change Agents (NCAs), or formerly incarcerated individuals charged with gun crimes who have successfully reintegrated into society, recruit individuals involved with gun violence to participate in the PF. For 12 months, these recruited individuals, or fellows, are mentored by NCAs. As individuals with life experience that positions them as “credible messengers,” NCAs serve dual roles as violence interrupters and mentors. Fellows and NCAs co-create an individualized healing plan, or LifeMAP, to follow for the duration of the fellowship. Fellows have often never had an adult invest meaningfully in their success, thus the LifeMAP represents a social contract ensuring a responsible, caring adult is doing just that. Progress in their LifeMAP guarantees fellows up to a \$1000/month milestone allowance. Additionally, NCAs facilitate transformational travel experiences to visit colleges or conduct community service projects

in which fellows must amicably co-exist with rivals from the street who are also in the fellowship. NCAs also refer and accompany their fellows to substance abuse, cognitive behavior therapy, or anger management support services. The fellowship also includes group learning and healing sessions that address institutional and systemic racism, while also celebrating the culture and history of minority groups.

The PF promotes transformation at the individual and community level. In addition to mentoring, NCAs regularly resolve street conflicts and interrupt imminent gun violence incidents. A resolved conflict refers to a general dispute or fight where no guns are present, while imminent gun violence interruption refers to a situation where guns are present or drawn and shooting is imminent. As conflicts are reduced in the community, gun violence is de-normalized. This coupled with the anti-gun messages, nonviolent communication styles, and healthy conflict resolution strategies espoused and modeled by NCAs all contribute to community-level transformation.

The authors compiled the 2019 data from the PF in Richmond, Sacramento, and Stockton. NCAs interrupted 88 imminent gun violence incidents across all cities. Beyond the obvious benefits of preventing the suffering associated with possible injury or death, this prevention of gun violence also has financial implications. In Richmond, NCAs prevented 31 imminent gun violence incidents. Calculating the estimated cost of each firearm injury or homicide in 2019, the program saved the city the equivalent of up to 10% of its budget that year. Of the 197 fellows from the three cities, almost none were injured or were considered a suspect in a gun violence incident after 12 months in the PF program. Considering the fellows' previous involvement with gun violence, the outcome of this program in their lives is laudable.

The authors make several policy recommendations based on the success of the PF. Cities should adopt a public health-informed approach to gun violence prevention that acknowledges racial trauma and emphasizes individual healing. Moreover, deploying formerly incarcerated community members as street outreach mentors to interrupt violence and target influential individuals most involved in gun violence is key. Finally, cities should institutionalize peacemaking and gun violence prevention efforts throughout city government instead of having such efforts siloed within law enforcement.







Photo Credit: Soupstock | Adobe Stock



## Informing Practice

Just as there is a continuum between U.S. defense spending and militarized policing in U.S. towns and cities, so too is there a continuum between the persistent notion that violence can keep us safe in both international and domestic spaces. Yet, Advance Peace's approach challenges the norm that violence and aggression are best met with increased violence and aggression. Moving away from the principle that increased violence is the most effective solution to stop violence, this intervention focuses on love and healing to address urban gun violence. The success of this approach speaks for itself. Additional evaluations of the PF in Sacramento demonstrate that the intervention [reduced gun homicides and assaults city-wide by 10%](#). As communities across the country face increasing violence, more attention should be focused on nonviolent, non-carceral ways to reduce violence and keep these communities safe.

Applying a public health approach to violence considered endemic to our society opens the door to alternative nonviolent solutions. Prevention can be focused on addressing roots causes—racial and other forms of trauma—and not just the symptoms—gun homicides and assaults. BIPOC communities face the legacies of decades of overincarceration and segregation into neighborhoods that do not have access to basic needs, such as clean water and adequate housing. It is likely that many incarcerated individuals would not have been imprisoned had they not lived in Adverse Community Environments. Meanwhile, being incarcerated increases one's exposure to violence and then, upon release, makes it more difficult for an individual to find employment and therefore provide for one's family or contribute to one's community. Furthermore, the families of these incarcerated individuals are likely to face financial consequences of the criminal legal system in addition to the regular cost of living, not to mention the trauma of children growing up with missing parents and siblings. And the cycle of trauma, violence, and incarceration continues. The structural violence experienced by BIPOC communities contributes to the physical violence plaguing communities and societies across the U.S. It follows that reinforcing these cycles of trauma by further ensnaring BIPOC communities in the criminal legal system is counterproductive in curbing community violence.

People want to feel safe, and that is important. But there are more ways to achieve safety than by just over-policing and locking up BIPOC youth. These nonviolent approaches to violence prevention are not only more successful—they are less damaging in the process. Just as we advocate for ceasefires and diplomacy in global conflicts, so too should our city governments, and specifically offices of violence prevention, apply peacebuilding strategies in our own communities to keep civilians safe.  
[KP]





## Questions Raised

- How can city officials further integrate peacebuilding into city policy and programs, beyond programs focused specifically on violence prevention?



# Beyond Victims or Peacebuilders: Women's Participation in Security in Mathare, Kenya

Source | Jones, P., & Kimari, W. (2019). Security beyond men: Women and their everyday security apparatus in Mathare, Nairobi. *Urban Studies*, 56(9), 1835-1849. DOI: <https://doi.org/10.1177/0042098018789059>

## Keywords

security,  
insecurity,  
Kenya, women,  
informal settlements,  
patriarchy

**Patriarchy:** “[A] political-social system that insists that males are inherently dominating, superior to everything and everyone deemed weak, especially females, and endowed with the right to dominate and rule over the weak and to maintain that dominance through various forms of psychological terrorism and violence.”

hooks, b. (2004). Understanding patriarchy. In *The will to change: Men, masculinity, and love* (pp. 17-34). New York, NY: Atria Books. Retrieved May 18, 2022, from <https://imagineborders.org/pdf/zines/UnderstandingPatriarchy.pdf>

## Talking Points

Based on the conditions in informal settlements outside of Nairobi, Kenya:

- Security is typically believed to be provided by “masculinized force,” leading to an overwhelming focus on men’s behavior in insecure environments.
- Women’s participation in security is overlooked or framed narrowly as either “victims or peacebuilders” in insecure environments.
- In Mathare, the largest informal settlement outside of Nairobi, women identify key security concerns connected to socio-economic conditions and participate in a wide range of security activities, despite obstacles to their participation.
- When women’s contributions are overlooked due to an overwhelming focus on men’s security activities, “gendered political participation, social relations and socio-economic inequalities” are also overlooked as key components of security.

## Key Insight for Informing Practice

- Power and patriarchy condition how security is defined, exerting observable effects on security policy by sidelining peacebuilding as an effective response to violence and marginalizing women’s roles in security.



### Continued reading:

hooks, b. (2004). Understanding patriarchy. In *The will to change: Men, masculinity, and love* (pp. 17–34). New York, NY: Atria Books. Retrieved May 18, 2022, from <https://imagenoborders.org/pdf/zines/Understanding-Patriarchy.pdf>

SIPRI. (2022, April 25). World military expenditure passes \$2 trillion for the first time. Retrieved May 18, 2022, from <https://www.sipri.org/media/press-release/2022/world-military-expenditure-passes-2-trillion-first-time>

Krystalli, R. (2020, October 22). Women, peace, and victimhood. IPI Global Observatory. Retrieved May 18, 2022, from <https://theglobalobservatory.org/2020/10/women-peace-and-victimhood/>

Turner, C., & Swaine, A. (2021, October 5). The participation-protection nexus: Beyond securitization. IPI Global Observatory. Retrieved May 18, 2022, from <https://theglobalobservatory.org/2021/10/the-participation-protection-nexus-beyond-securitization/>

Open Society Foundations. (2018, November). An end to manels II: Closing the gender gap at Europe's top policy events. Retrieved May 19, 2022, from <https://www.opensocietyfoundations.org/publications/end-manels-ii-closing-gender-gap-europe-s-top-policy-events>

Schneiker, A. (2021, July 5). The UN and women's marginalization in peace negotiations. *International Affairs*, 97(4), 1165–1182. <https://academic.oup.com/ia/article/97/4/1165/6294895>



### Organizations/Initiatives:

MADRE: <https://www.madre.org/>

## Summary

Security is typically believed to be provided by “masculinized force”—namely, the threat or use of violence by vigilante groups, armed guards, police, or military forces. This belief crosses geographic and cultural boundaries, even in circumstances where distrust of security forces is compounded by poverty, inequality, and exploitation. Accordingly, there is an overwhelming focus on men's behavior in acutely insecure environments and how their behavior (violent or not) drives security, “overshadowing women's various contributions” to local security.

Peris Jones and Wangui Kimari explore how women living in insecure environments participate in creating security for themselves and their communities in Mathare, an informal settlement near Nairobi, Kenya.

The authors reject imposed binaries that view women as either victims or peacebuilders and instead draw out the complexities of women's roles in ensuring security, often rendered invisible by a focus on men's behavior and masculinized forms of security. Drawing on social and cultural analysis, interviews and focus groups with women, and a general survey of those living in Mathare, they seek to understand how women “live in a space that is often conjured as unlivable for them,” women's practices to ensure security, and “significant threats and challenges” to these security activities.

Women identified several critical security issues: high rates of rape and teenage pregnancy, fires, youth unemployment, lack of adequate infrastructure, and lack of immediately accessible sanitation facilities. They understood security as multi-faceted and “closely related to [the] broader structural dynamics” of living in informal settlements. Socio-economic insecurity, a lack of formal protection from the state, and a general culture of “fear, lack of unity and distrust” are cross-cutting elements that underpin the daily experience of living in spaces “with significant structural and symbolic violence.”

These security concerns are gendered, meaning that, while all genders are affected, women suffer in unique ways. Yet, the authors find that women are not “passive victims” and participate in a range of everyday security activities including information sharing, taking part in preventive action, engaging and mobilizing young men, identifying and appealing to sympathetic police officers or local leaders, and physically intervening against police violence. There were also reports of women participating in violent, vigilante justice against people suspected to have been involved in “anti-community criminal activity.” Notably, women are involved in security “for the protection of all” in both mundane and visible ways, building a patchwork of security practices that is present in everyday life in Mathare.



Yet, there are also challenges to women's participation in security activities. Women expressed fear as a major deterrent to addressing abuses, describing it as "internalisation of inferiority [and] a sense of helplessness in being able to do anything about prevailing insecurity." Familial bonds, namely the practice of family hiding relatives who are accused of wrongdoing, can inhibit women's ability to protect each other. Finally, the political economy of life in informal settlements is a serious obstacle. Wealth and property are concentrated in the hands of the few, and residents live under the constant fear of land-grabbing, evictions, and the threat of displacement. Residents reported that police are often bought off by the wealthy to help "settle scores, whether with business rivals or problematic youth." Moreover, extrajudicial killings by police are commonplace.

Women's wide-ranging participation in security challenges the simplistic binary that frames women as either "victims or peacebuilders" in insecure environments. Rather, women's security practices, which rely on "invoking and building social relations," provide for a more pervasive and "reliable safety net [which] contributes to everyday security," when compared to more violent protection strategies in Mathare. Yet, security is often understood as provided through "physical coercion and means of deterrence which these women do not possess" rather than through non-physical means of building trusting social relations. When security is narrowly understood as provided by physical coercion, "gendered political participation, social relations and socio-economic inequalities" are overlooked as key components of security. These components are important because, as many respondents identified, improvements in security would follow from improvements in the socio-economics of Mathare, thereby creating a less risky environment "for women to advocate for more comprehensive community security." The authors recommend that any effort to improve the safety and security of urban spaces be more attuned to different conceptions of security and "existing mechanisms that people take up on a daily basis to feel protected."

## Informing Practice

Security is often associated with militarized forms of defense and protection as evidenced by increasing military expenditures around the world in response to global threats. According to SIPRI, [world military expenditure](#) surpassed \$2 trillion for the first time in 2021. It is expected to grow more due to [increased military expenditures](#) in much of Western Europe over the past year. The overreliance on the use of violence, force, and domination serves the interests of maintaining a system of patriarchy, which shapes gendered assumptions about the roles of men and women in security and exerts observable effects on security policy worldwide. As a result of sustained patriarchy, well-intended gender security policies



Photo Credit: Katie | Adobe Stock

face substantial challenges in transforming gender relations and even risk reinforcing the marginalization of women in security. As such, policy-makers in gender and security should question their deeply held assumptions about gendered roles in security and how security is achieved.

This research seeks to complicate both the assumed role of women in security and the definition of security itself. The predominant and narrow view of women as either victims or peacebuilders in insecure environments is a byproduct of patriarchy. Emphasizing women's victimization means stressing their passivity and assuming their dependence on masculinized force for security—(violent) protection by some men in the face of violence from other men. At the same time, the peacebuilding role often taken on by women—for instance, building trust and positive social relationships, fulfilling social and emotional needs, and identifying and addressing underlying conditions driving violence—is framed as inadequate in the face of violence. If security is framed in terms of “masculinized force,” then peacebuilding strategies become marginalized—and even obscured—as effective forms of security provision in violent contexts. Yet, as the women in Mathare demonstrated, building strong social relationships is a more effective security strategy than the use of force or domination.

The pervasiveness of patriarchy constrains well-intended gender equity policies meant to transform the security landscape. While prominent international policies, most notably the Women, Peace and Security (WPS) agenda, advocate for women's inclusion and participation in high-profile peace and security arenas where they remain underrepresented (for instance, as participants in [peace negotiations](#) or [as speakers](#) in European policy events), these same policies may unwittingly disregard the day-to-day security work women are already doing, not recognizing it as such. On the one hand, narrow views of women as either victims or peacebuilders eclipse their participation also as nonviolent security actors, armed combatants, or even security policy experts. On the other, even their recognized role as peacebuilders is undervalued and not seen as addressing “hard” security concerns. This disregard is indicative of gender security policy's failure to transform gender relations or challenge patriarchy to the extent that these fundamentally shape our very understandings of security. Policy-makers, therefore, should seriously contend with the pernicious role patriarchy plays not only in limiting women's inclusion in security but also in constituting our understanding of security and how best to create it. [KC]

## Questions Raised

- Without the influence of patriarchy or “masculinized force,” how would the definition of security change?
- How would insecure environments transform if women's safety and security practices were widely acknowledged and supported?

# The Role of Community Gender Norms and Relations in Both Mobilizing and Preventing Violence in Jos, Nigeria

Source | Krause, J. (2019). Gender dimensions of (non)violence in communal conflict: The case of Jos, Nigeria. *Comparative Political Studies*, 52(10), 1466-1499. DOI: <https://doi.org/10.1177/0010414019830722>

## Keywords

violence prevention,  
civilian agency,  
community self-protection,  
armed groups,  
unarmed civilian  
protection,  
communal conflict,  
violence, nonviolence,  
gender, masculinity,  
women's peacebuilding

## Talking Points

In the context of violent communal conflict in Jos, Nigeria:

- Civilian agency, in the form of “local violence prevention and peace programs,” accounts for the spaces and times of peace amidst communal violence, and this “civilian agency is gendered.”
- Since fighters in communal conflicts remain embedded in their communities, everyday gender relations and norms in their communities can directly influence individuals’ decisions to fight or not.
- Different norms of masculinity, and the broader community’s cultivation of these, as well as women’s roles in encouraging or mitigating violence, significantly influence whether a community will mobilize for violence or resist participation in violence amidst communal conflict.
- Whereas norms of *violent masculinity* were associated with the mobilization to fight, norms of nonviolent masculinity and restrained violent masculinity were associated with resistance to fighting and violence prevention.

## Key Insight for Informing Practice

- Noticing the work gender norms and relations do in either mobilizing participation in or resisting violence provides us as community members with a new set of access points and nonviolent strategies for preventing violence and creating security in our communities.





### Continued reading:

Krause, J. (2020). Women, peace and security: Prevention and resolution of communal conflicts. *Joint brief series: New insights on Women, Peace and Security (WPS) for the next decade*, Folke Bernadotte Academy, Peace Research Institute Oslo, and UN Women. Retrieved July 15, 2022, from [https://fba.se/contentassets/81a302223bfd44b-faa89564b8734e0a7/research\\_brief\\_krause\\_webb.pdf](https://fba.se/contentassets/81a302223bfd44b-faa89564b8734e0a7/research_brief_krause_webb.pdf)

Heilman, B., & Barker, G. (2018). Masculine norms and violence: Making the connections. Promundo. Retrieved July 15, 2022, from <https://promundoglobal.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/04/Masculine-Norms-and-Violence-Making-the-Connection-20180424.pdf>

Rood, C. (2020, September 22). Addressing gun violence by reimagining masculinity and protection. The Gender Policy Report. Retrieved July 15, 2022, from <https://genderpolicyreport.umn.edu/addressing-gun-violence-by-reimagining-masculinity-and-protection/>



### Organizations/Initiatives:

Mothers/Men Against Senseless Killing: <https://www.ontheblock.org/about>

Consortium on Gender, Security & Human Rights: <https://genderandsecurity.org>

## Summary

Jos, a city in central Nigeria, faced surges in ethno-religious violence in 2001, 2008, and 2010, all animated by political grievances mapped onto ethnic and religious differences. Yet, one mixed neighborhood in Jos, Dadin Kowa, withstood the descent into violence during each of these crises. Furthermore, since the 2010 crisis, Jos as a whole has “remained calm.” Jana Krause seeks to examine what accounts for this absence of violence in certain areas and during certain times in the context of regularly occurring violent communal conflict. The author argues that civilian agency, in the form of “local violence prevention and peace programs,” accounts for these spaces and times of peace amidst violence. Further, she argues that “civilian agency is gendered” and explores how different norms of masculinity and gender relations operate to shape violence or nonviolence.

In many parts of the world, becoming a breadwinner in order to provide for one’s wife and family epitomizes real manhood. When young men are unable to fulfill this masculine ideal due to the lack of employment opportunities, as is the case for many young men in Jos, they may find other ways to prove their masculinity, often through **violent or militarized forms of masculinity**. It is possible, however, instead to formulate and adopt alternative **nonviolent masculinities**, but to be appealing they must be upheld and supported by those in the surrounding community—especially other male peers but also, critically, women.

Central to the author’s argument is the assertion that fighters in communal conflicts remain embedded in their communities, as opposed to fighters in civil wars who leave their homes and families to fight as part of rebel groups. In civil wars, “rebel group ideologies and command structures shape notions of masculinity and femininity,” as well as the types of violence encouraged or discouraged. In communal conflicts, by contrast, “everyday gender relations and notions of masculinity and femininity may shape mobilization for fighting more directly,” with “family and community members” having much more influence on decisions to fight or not. Therefore, the author expects “a strong link between everyday gender relations and mobilization for or against communal violence.”

**Violent/militarized masculinities:** “[T]he fusion of certain practices and images of maleness with the use of weapons, the exercise of violence, and the performance of an aggressive and frequently misogynist masculinity.”

Theidon, K. (2009). Reconstructing masculinities: The disarmament, demobilization, and reintegration of former combatants in Colombia. *Human Rights Quarterly*, 31, p. 5.

**Nonviolent masculinities:** Ideals about what it means to be a man that do not depend on the threat or use of violence. These require “alternative identities or some other sense of self (...) positively valued by the young man and by those in his social setting, particularly the male peer group but also before young women.”

Barker, G. (2005). *Dying to be men: Youth, masculinity and social exclusion*. London: Routledge, p. 146.

The author examines violence and nonviolence in three different contexts: the mobilization to violence in violence-prone neighborhoods of Jos (in 2001, 2008, and 2010), the absence of violence in the Dadin Kowa neighborhood during these moments of violent mobilization elsewhere, and the absence of violence in violence-prone neighborhoods for several years after 2010. Drawing on interviews conducted from 2010 to 2015 with various stakeholders in Jos, including former fighters, the author explains violence or nonviolence with reference to different norms of masculinity and gender relations. First, she finds that violence was made possible in violence-prone neighborhoods through the pre-existence of “everyday violence networks,” consisting of “thugs, gangs, and vigilantes” whose ranks are filled with men who have adopted *violent masculinity* “to access respect, resources, and status.” In these contexts, violent masculinity was not challenged and was largely reinforced by the broader community, including women who would often encourage their husbands to “do something” in response to rumors of attacks by the “other side.”

Observation	Violence	Nonviolence	Postviolence prevention
Location	Violence-prone neighborhoods in Jos	Dadin Kowa neighborhood in Jos	Violence-prone neighborhoods in Jos
	Clashes in 2001, 2008, and 2010	Prevention of clashes in 2001, 2008, and 2010	After last major clashes in 2010
Variation of violence	Spatial		Temporal
Gender relations	Dominance of violent masculinities  Largely unchallenged by women and elders	Dominance of nonviolent masculinities  Strong normative support for nonviolent masculinities from women groups and elders	Dominance of restrained violent masculinities  Normative support for non-violent masculinities from women groups and elders

### Gender Relations and (Non-)Violence in Communal Conflict

From Krause, J. (2019). Gender dimensions of (non)violence in communal conflict: The case of Jos, Nigeria. *Comparative Political Studies*, 52(10), 1466-1499.

By contrast, in Dadin Kowa, community leaders ensured that vigilante and other armed groups never formed in the first place and also refused collaboration with external armed groups wishing to enlist support in their attacks against the other ethno-religious community. Community leaders—and, importantly, women—cultivated and upheld ideals of *nonviolent masculinity* through respect-building and public praise for young men who “promoted nonviolence for community protection and kept at-risk youth under control,” characterizing them as “strong men who could resist provocation.” Nonviolent masculinity was also reinforced through the nonviolent resolution of everyday community conflicts. At the same time, women in Dadin Kowa—especially market women—maintained “close communication and rumor-control across the religious divide,” as well as a sense of common identity as “people of Dadin Kowa” rather than as exclusive ethno-religious identities. They also capitalized on perceptions of women as “non-threatening” to engage in shuttle diplomacy between different groups in crisis moments.

Finally, the post-violence peace that emerged after 2010 is widely credited to NGO-led peace initiatives. These initiatives brought individuals—often former fighters—from both sides together in dialogue to hear each other’s stories and build relationships—and, in the case of Muslim and Christian women, to remind themselves that it was partly their responsibility to influence their sons and husbands away from violence. The transformation of former fighters into peacemakers through a network called Flashpoint Youth—and the adoption of a *restrained violent masculinity*—led to a tenuous truce, “based on their previous reputation for extreme violence and their ability to control other men,” as well as the trust and personal



relationships built among themselves. Also key to this transformation was the development of a newfound skepticism of violence, understanding it as a vehicle for elites to manipulate young men rather than as a source of empowerment.

Different norms of masculinity, therefore, and the broader community's cultivation of these, as well as women's roles in encouraging or mitigating violence, significantly influence whether a community will mobilize for violence or resist participation in violence amidst communal conflict.

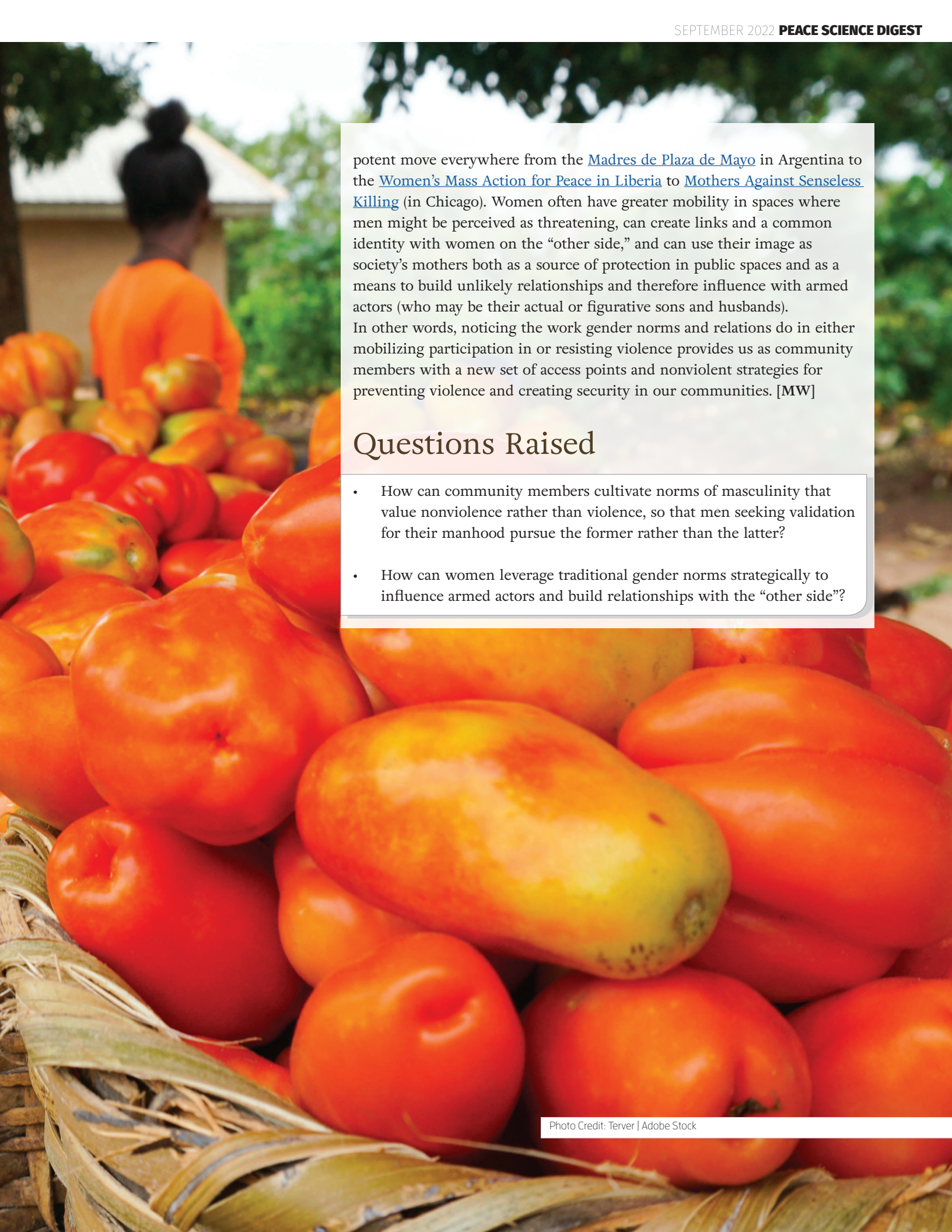
## Informing Practice

When surrounded by violence in one's community, it is difficult as a regular civilian not to feel completely disempowered and subject to the whims of the armed actors in one's midst. This research, however, reminds us of the power that regular people have to shape the norms—particularly gender norms and relations—in their communities and thereby profoundly influence the possibilities for violence prevention. Because gender norms operate at such a deep level, their ability to inform behavior usually escapes notice. However, precisely because gender so fundamentally constitutes a sense of self and because masculinity is so highly valued in most contexts, the desire of young men to express and receive validation for the expression of their masculinity can become a strong motivation for action. The question is how community members can cultivate norms of masculinity that value nonviolence rather than violence, so that men seeking validation for their manhood pursue the former rather than the latter. The significance of community norms focuses attention on seemingly little things like how young women respond to slights against their male friends or partners and how male strength is characterized—as violent retaliation or as the fortitude to withstand provocation and/or deescalate violence. (For an example of the latter, see Chicago's Watch Guard in the Bronzeville neighborhood and the [six-week program they developed last year for young men](#), teaching them to be “community stewards,” building their “self-discipline and self-care,” and developing their ability to deescalate violent situations.) In reshaping norms of masculinity, it is also important not just to take away the allure of violent masculinities but to replace them with meaningful, alternative forms of masculine identity. Here, the draw of a perpetrator-turned-peacemaker identity (such as [former neo-Nazis who commit to helping others leave violent extremism behind](#)) becomes apparent, as such individuals acquire a new purpose: to influence other young (mostly) men away from violence.

Furthermore, this research reminds women in particular of the power that comes, counterintuitively, from leveraging traditional gender norms—that may represent them as apolitical, peaceful, non-threatening mother figures—towards violence-prevention ends. This has been a politically







potent move everywhere from the [Madres de Plaza de Mayo](#) in Argentina to the [Women's Mass Action for Peace in Liberia](#) to [Mothers Against Senseless Killing](#) (in Chicago). Women often have greater mobility in spaces where men might be perceived as threatening, can create links and a common identity with women on the “other side,” and can use their image as society's mothers both as a source of protection in public spaces and as a means to build unlikely relationships and therefore influence with armed actors (who may be their actual or figurative sons and husbands). In other words, noticing the work gender norms and relations do in either mobilizing participation in or resisting violence provides us as community members with a new set of access points and nonviolent strategies for preventing violence and creating security in our communities. [MW]

## Questions Raised

- How can community members cultivate norms of masculinity that value nonviolence rather than violence, so that men seeking validation for their manhood pursue the former rather than the latter?
- How can women leverage traditional gender norms strategically to influence armed actors and build relationships with the “other side”?



# Familiarity as a Means of Protecting the Community from Mass Atrocities

Source | Gray, F. (2022). Relational R2P? Civilian-led prevention and protection against atrocity crimes. *Global Responsibility to Protect*, online. DOI: <https://doi.org/10.1163/1875-984X-20220007>

## Keywords

Responsibility to Protect,  
R2P, relational R2P,  
civilian protection,  
unarmed civilian  
peacekeeping,  
UCP,  
atrocity prevention,  
mass atrocities

## Talking Points

- In the context of violence in South Sudan, civilians leveraged relationships to overcome protection gaps left by external actors.
- In a relational understanding of R2P, dynamic social relations and environments are centered instead of the problematic notion of “saving strangers,” which reinforces militarized, colonial, racialized, and gendered dynamics between civilian and interveners.
- Recognizing the agency of civilians in their own context is an important step away from racist and colonial histories and “logics of intervention,” which cast the Global South as in need of help but also actually underpin many of the root causes of mass atrocities.

## Key Insight for Informing Practice

Practitioners of peacebuilding, INGOs, government entities, and donors have an opportunity to strengthen the already present turn to “the local” in peacebuilding by broadening R2P from a state-centered principle to a relational and actor-centered principle.

## Summary

### Continued reading:

Bakhita, S., Nyayiel, E., Bashir, F., & Gray, F. (2021, March 19). *Civilians protecting civilians: Women's Protection Teams (WPTs) in Bentiu Protection of Civilians Site [sic]*. Women Unbounded 2.0. Retrieved July 11, 2022, from <https://www.womenunbounded.com/post/civilians-protecting-civilians-women-s-protection-teams-wpts-in-bentiu-protection-of-civilian-s-s>

Peace and Security Funders Group. (2020). *Funding locally-led peacebuilding: Guiding principles and strategies for funders*. Retrieved August 31, 2020, from <https://static1.squarespace.com/static/521b8763e4b03dae28cd3e72/t/5eb02648838a9a2168d3cf43/1588602452826/Guiding+Principles+for+Funding+Locally+Led+PB.pdf>

Peace Direct and Alliance for Peacebuilding. (2019). *Local peacebuilding. What works and why*. Retrieved August 31, 2020, from <https://peaceinsight-whatworks.s3.eu-central-1.amazonaws.com/pd-local-peacebuilding-report-v2.pdf>

The Responsibility to Protect (R2P) was established in 2005 as a global commitment to prevent genocide, war crimes, ethnic cleansing, and crimes against humanity. It is a principle based upon the notion that the international community should step in to protect civilians from atrocities when their own governments cannot do so or are themselves perpetrating these. Common critiques of R2P see the practice as operating via a salvation paradigm of state-centered humanitarianism (the so-called “saving strangers” approach), which fails to engage those most affected by violence and overemphasizes military force as a means of saving lives. In this article, Felicity Gray builds on these critiques, arguing that R2P understood this way overlooks how close relational webs in communities can be used to prevent and protect people from atrocity crimes. The author introduces the practice of civilian-led **relational R2P**, describing real-world cases of unarmed civilian protection where relationships are integrated into the approach.

In **relational R2P** “the protection and prevention of atrocity crimes can occur through close relations and familiarity... ‘Protection’ [is not] a ‘thing’ that is embodied in a particular actor or outcome, but rather a dynamic formation of relationships.”

### Organizations/Initiatives:

Nonviolent Peaceforce:  
<https://nonviolentpeaceforce.org/>

The argument is based on the author’s ethnographic fieldwork on civilian protection in places such as South Sudan and Myanmar, both places at risk of atrocity crimes. She conducted 140 open-ended interviews with community members and practitioners engaged in civilian protection, which ensured that the insights on relational R2P were not romanticized but empirically grounded. The author’s engagement as a civilian protection practitioner in South Sudan adds to her understanding of the described methods.

In a relational understanding of R2P, dynamic social relations and environments are centered instead of the problematic notion of “saving strangers,” which reinforces militarized, colonial, racialized, and gendered dynamics between civilians and interveners. The focus on relationships centers the needs and agency of those most impacted in a conflict context. Questions such as “how can and are relations used to prevent atrocity crimes and protect civilians” and “what can be done to encourage these kinds of protective relational webs?” guide **relational R2P**.

In the context of violence in South Sudan, civilians leveraged relationships to overcome protection gaps left by external actors. Gray identifies three areas of operational relational R2P: “community-led protection and sexual



violence, mediation of intercommunal conflict, and direct protection from violence.” The first example is that of local Women Protection Teams (WPTs) who used unarmed civilian protection strategies and local knowledge to conduct specific and dynamic risk assessments that external protection actors overlooked. The WPTs connected with international nongovernmental organizations (INGOs), local authorities, and military actors using existing relationships to discourage assaults on women and other crimes.

The second example involves protection officers of an INGO who were born and raised in South Sudan’s Mundri area. By being embedded in the community, they were able to successfully prevent hostilities resulting from a cattle dispute from escalating into intercommunal violence. Upon the request of local youth, protection officers acted with speed and specificity to engage local leaders based on their knowledge on “who to contact, in what order, and in what way.” While met with skepticism from the conflicting parties, they were able to use the space created for dialogue to transcend the cattle dispute and have conversations about “economic security and access to markets, interstate border politics, and interclan marriage.” In other words, root causes of the conflict were addressed in a dialogue setting.

The third example of direct protection (compared to the prior examples of violence prevention) is most commonly associated with foreign presence and the leveraging of whiteness, which is often effective but nonetheless problematic. While acknowledging the risks of civilian protection to trained and untrained protectors, the author shares examples of local protection leaders who used pre-existing relationships to release abducted civilians or negotiate ceasefires to allow civilians to escape fighting. An interesting parallel drawn to the U.S. context is that of direct protection from urban gun violence by individuals who have the relationships and credibility in their own neighborhoods.

In conclusion, the author calls for a serious consideration of non-military tools for atrocity prevention and more specifically for a move beyond “narrow understandings of R2P as ‘saving strangers’ by force of arms...” The relational approaches presented in this article are not only viable alternatives for violence prevention and direct protection, but they also recognize the agency of civilians in their own context. This is ultimately an important step away from racist and colonial histories and “logics of intervention,” which cast the Global South as in need of help but also actually underpin many of the root causes of mass atrocities.







Photo Credit: Wollwerth Imagery | Adobe Stock



## Informing Practice

Relational R2P, in the author's own understanding, reshapes the toolkit of R2P. It reduces the reliance on militarized protective measures for civilians while at the same time potentially contributing to the restoration of the social fabric in conflict zones through the actions of those most affected by conflict.

As noted by the author, the “saving strangers” approach to R2P can be problematic due to the colonial and racist logics of intervention it reinforces. This is blatantly obvious in so-called humanitarian military interventions, where actions intended to defend lives actively take lives. Though less overtly harmful, unarmed civilian peacekeeping (UCP) interventions by external third parties may at times leverage their whiteness in a global racial hierarchy for protection purposes. Such UCP interventions can lead to successful civilian protection and should not be dismissed, but it is still important to note the possible harms that can come of exploiting racial privilege, especially if underlying causes of violence, such as global inequalities and structural violence, are not recognized and addressed. Adopting relational R2P, which instead emphasizes social relationships and environments in the context of protection, can decrease our reliance on destructive military interventions as well as the more problematic aspects of Western-driven UCP interventions.

The three strategic areas discussed in the study—community-led protection and sexual violence, mediation of intercommunal conflict, and direct protection from violence—are present in many humanitarian crises where the focus still lies on the narrower understanding of R2P as an outside intervention. Practitioners of peacebuilding, INGOs, government entities, and donors have an opportunity to strengthen the already present turn to “the local” in peacebuilding by broadening R2P from a state-centered principle to a relational and actor-centered principle that recognizes the protective capacity of relationships. “The local” must be critically examined as well, since it is, according to Gray, “also a space of contentious politics.” (See [Recognizing the Hidden Politics of Local Peacebuilding](#) in the *Peace Science Digest*.) Relational R2P strategies, however,





are well situated to address those politics and can potentially bring to the surface the real needs that communities in conflict face.

The author is very clear about the prospects but also the limitations of relational R2P. She states in the article that “these examples are not blanket solutions to the threat of atrocity crimes. They may not always be appropriate to every context of potential threat, and even when they are, they may not always work to prevent violence or protect civilians.” This realization points to a dilemma that peacebuilders and advocates for non-militarized, nonviolent approaches to countering violence face. Their methods indeed do not work perfectly to prevent violence and protect civilians all the time. Unfortunately, we have not seen the end of mass atrocities. Instead of looking at the peacebuilding toolkit as one with magic solutions, we need to look at these tools in terms of their effectiveness compared to militarized approaches. Relational R2P is one additional approach that strengthens the fabric of peacebuilding while also often preventing and protecting people from direct violence. [PH]

## Questions Raised

- Can relational R2P be woven together with so-called humanitarian military interventions?
- How can (and do) internationally driven unarmed civilian peacekeeping approaches center the creation and sustaining of relational webs in their programming and interventions?



Photo Credit: Nonviolent Peaceforce  
NP South Sudan Women's Protection Team



## Notes

[illegible]

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## OUR VISION

Our vision is a world beyond war where humanity is united and a global system of peace with justice prevails for current and future generations.

## OUR MISSION

Our mission is to transform the global peace and security paradigm to one that is built around viable alternatives to war and all forms of political violence. To achieve this we research, advocate for, and advance knowledge on practices that demonstrate the effectiveness of nonviolence and challenge militarism.

## OUR CORE VALUES

**Nonviolence** – We promote strategic and principled nonviolent solutions over any kind of armed conflict.

**Empathy** – We aspire to view social problems through the eyes of others and respectfully communicate with each other in the pursuit of mutual understanding.

**Planetary loyalty** – We consider ourselves global citizens, living in harmony with humanity and nature.

**Moral imagination\*** – We strive for a moral perception of the world in that we: (1) imagine people in a web of relationships including their adversaries; (2) foster the understanding of others as an opportunity rather than a threat; (3) pursue the creative process as the wellspring that feeds the building of peace; and (4) risk stepping into the unknown landscape beyond violence.

\*This concept was developed by peace and conflict studies scholar and practitioner John Paul Lederach in his book *The Moral Imagination. The Art and Soul of Building Peace*.

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Violence is often considered an undesirable yet inevitable characteristic of political conflict. By demonstrating the effectiveness of nonviolent responses to political conflict, we advocate for the rejection of political violence and instead promote the many viable alternatives. The end result is a global expectation/standard that political conflicts are managed without violence.