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Knowledge sharing in peacebuilding: A case study of the Nuba Mountains' war zone in Sudan

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Declaration

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Summary

Over the past decade, there has been an increase in decolonial/postcolonial approaches to peace, peacebuilding and peace education pedagogy, with scholars asking scholar-practitioners and practitioners to rethink 'the world from the perspective of the marginalized, that is, from Latin America, from Africa, from Indigenous places and from the global South' (Zembylas, 2020, p. 5; see also Ayindo, 2017; FitzGerald, 2021; Fontan, 2012; Hajir & Kester, 2020; Omer, 2020; Sabaratnam, 2013, 2017; Schirch, 2022; Shirazi, 2011; Weerawardhana, 2018; Zondi, 2016). However, decolonial/postcolonial-informed peacebuilding scholarship has yet to focus on the different conceptions and functions of knowledge sharing within peacebuilding practice from the perspective of peacebuilders working in a war zone, particularly in Africa. While scholars have called for more research on exactly how knowledge sharing could contribute to peacebuilding directly, empirical studies focusing on how knowledge sharing impacts peacebuilding practice within a war zone have yet to be conducted (Verkoren, 2006, 2008). This study contributes to filling this gap by using a postcolonial indigenous research paradigm (Chilisa, 2020) and a combined participatory action research case study methodology to better understand the role of knowledge sharing in peacebuilding practice in the Nuba Mountains war zone during the current war between the Sudan People's Liberation Movement–North (SPLM–N) and the Government of Sudan (GoS), which has been ongoing for 12 years.

The study found that the role of knowledge sharing in peacebuilding practice within the Nuba Mountains war zone was more than just information flowing between people. It was a far more profound communal experience that was based around a collective self-concept, using different kinds of knowledge within endogenous knowledge systems involving informal and formal community settings rather than organisational settings. These endogenous knowledge systems were an amalgamation of African, Arab-Islamic and Western knowledge systems due to the trans-Saharan slave trade, colonialism, globalisation and successive authoritarian regimes in Sudan that marginalised African knowledge systems within Nuba Mountains communities, over centuries. The study found that the Nuba Mountains communal knowledge sharing practice became a function of Nuba Mountains peacebuilding practice. It generated endogenous knowledge, unearthed buried knowledge, lessened inherited power imbalances, and played an epistemic violence prevention role within the peacebuilding practice. The study offers a contribution to peacebuilding scholarship and practice by highlighting a missing knowledge system dimension within peacebuilding scholarship and practice and offering a research design that borrows and integrates decolonial/postcolonial and relational mentoring constructs for its transdisciplinary analytical framework. Rather than offering a specific methodology for practitioners to use in practice, this study offers guiding questions that can aid any

peacebuilding scholar-practitioner who is thinking about engaging in knowledge sharing as part of peacebuilding practice or scholarship in war zones or with war-affected communities.

Keywords: Sudan, decolonial/postcolonial-informed peacebuilding, knowledge sharing, endogenous knowledge, relational mentoring, epistemic violence, postcolonial indigenous research paradigm

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Contents

Declaration **2**

Summary **3**

Acknowledgements **5**

List of Figures **10**

List of Tables **10**

List of Abbreviations **11**

Chapter 1: Introduction **13**

Statement of the problem *13*

Purpose of the study *14*

Research questions *16*

Conceptual framework *16*

Research methodology *19*

Significance of the study *21*

Background of case study *23*

Organisation of study *31*

Chapter 2: Literature Review **33**

Introduction *33*

Concept of peacebuilding practice *34*

Genealogy of knowledge, knowledge systems and types of knowledge within the peacebuilding field ... *40*

What constitutes knowledge? 40

Knowledge systems 44

Types of knowledge 52

Concept of knowledge sharing within the peacebuilding field *60*

Elicitive approach 64

Community of practice 68

Adaptive peacebuilding 73

Self-organisation approaches to community peacebuilding practice 76

Knowledge sharing within decolonial/postcolonial-informed peacebuilding *80*

Knowledge sharing using mentoring approaches in peacebuilding practice *87*
Knowledge sharing in peacebuilding conceptual framework *98*
Conclusion *99*

Chapter 3: Research Methodology and Design **100**
Introduction *100*
Research questions *101*
Postcolonial indigenous research paradigm *102*
Setting *106*
Peacebuilder demographics *109*
Participatory action research methodology within a case study *117*
PAR cycles overview 120
Initial planning phase for PAR 124
Cycle 1 127
Cycle 2 130
Cycle 3 133
Cycle 4 139
Post-cycles follow-up 141
Purposive and convenience sampling *142*
Data collection methods *144*
Data analysis methods *147*
Assessment of rigour *155*
Positionality and ethical framework *158*
Conclusion *163*

Chapter 4: Background of Nuba Mountains Historical Relations **165**
Introduction *165*
History of the term Nuba *166*
Historical pattern of ambiguous relations and multiple subjectivities of Nuba communities *168*
Conclusion *183*

Chapter 5: Characteristics of Peacebuilding Practice **185**
Introduction *185*
Leveraging relational networks *185*
Childhood and intercommunal family networks 186
National and international civil society networks 189

Challenges of spoilers within the networks....194

Creating mechanisms for building and sustaining peace....*197*

Peace committees and cross-line market committees 197

Community guidelines....206

Armed movement policies 211

Conclusion *213*

Chapter 6: Communal Knowledge Sharing Practice in the Nuba Mountains.... 214

Introduction....*214*

Nurturing knowledge sharing across social scales *215*

Family level....216

Peer/group level....220

Community level....225

Learning through relational networks across generations....*234*

Learning through relational networks during childhood....235

Role models during childhood....239

Role models during young adulthood 245

Conclusion *253*

Chapter 7: Impacts of Nuba Mountains Communal Knowledge Sharing Practice Within Peacebuilding Practice 255

Introduction....*255*

Generating endogenous knowledge....*255*

Unearthing of buried knowledge....*264*

Building confidence for mutual understanding *270*

Instances of epistemic violence when Nuba Mountains communal knowledge sharing practice stopped or failed to happen *279*

Conclusion *287*

Chapter 8: Discussion 289

Introduction....*289*

Overview of key findings *289*

Relational networks build mutuality across divides *290*

Collective self-organisation processes within the creation of mechanisms to build and sustain peace...*295*

Nuba Mountains communal knowledge sharing practice as a mental model for peacebuilders *303*

Value of situated knowledge involving place-based understandings of peace....*307*

Generating endogenous knowledge through Nuba Mountains communal knowledge sharing practice 311

Unearthing buried knowledge for re-learning through Nuba Mountains communal knowledge sharing practice *316*

Lessoning inherited power imbalances through Nuba Mountains communal knowledge sharing practice *318*

Epistemic violence prevention role of Nuba Mountains communal knowledge sharing practice *321*

Chapter 9: Conclusion 325

Introduction *325*

Overall conclusions of the study *325*

Implications for peacebuilding scholarship and practice in general *330*

Implications for Nuba Mountains communities and broader Sudanese communities *336*

Limitations *337*

Suggestions for future research *340*

References 342

Appendices 373

Appendix 1: Communal Conflict Analysis May 2021 – Nuba Mountains *373*

Appendix 2: Communal Analysis of the Peacebuilding Praxis Impact (2011-2020) *378*

Appendix 3: Knowledge Sharing Terms Existing in Nuba Mountains *381*

Appendix 4: Language Grouping of Nuba Communities *383*

Appendix 5: Oral History Interview Guide *384*

Appendix 6: Ethics Approval *385*

List of Figures

FIGURE 1: NUBA MOUNTAINS, SUDAN MAP 24
FIGURE 2: NUBA MOUNTAINS/SOUTH KORDOFAN - VIOLENT INCIDENTS AND PEOPLE KILLED 108
FIGURE 3: FOUR COMPONENTS OF THE CCBR MODEL 121
FIGURE 4: ADAPTION OF CCAR MODEL FOR PARTICIPATORY ACTION RESEARCH FOR DISSERTATION AND COMMUNITY RESEARCH 122
FIGURE 5: LEARNING/GROWTH CONCEPTUAL MODEL – NUBA MOUNTAINS 138
FIGURE 6: THEME SCHEMATIC 154
FIGURE 7: AMADO ALFADNI ARTWORK OF ENSLAVED SUDANESE MAN WHO SERVED IN THE BRITISH ARMY 172
FIGURE 8: STUDENT DRAWING FROM WAR ZONE 230
FIGURE 9: NUBA MOUNTAINS PEACEBUILDING ACTOR/MECHANISM CONCEPTUAL MODEL 260

List of Tables

TABLE 1: WESTERN AND NON-WESTERN/TRADITIONAL KNOWLEDGE SYSTEMS 45
TABLE 2: LATENT CONFLICTS IN THE NUBA MOUNTAINS (2021–2022) 109
TABLE 3: LIST OF PEACEBUILDERS INVOLVED IN THE STUDY 111
TABLE 4: LIST OF COMMUNITY ADVISORY COMMITTEE MEMBERS (INVOLVED IN ALL PAR CYCLES) 114
TABLE 5: LIST OF INFORMAL NETWORK OF PEACEBUILDERS (INVOLVED IN PAR CYCLES 2 AND 3) 115
TABLE 6: ROLE-SHIFTING APPROACH FOR PEACEBUILDER ADVISORS IN NUBA MOUNTAINS AND ACROSS SUDAN 129
TABLE 7: PEACE ACTORS/MECHANISM OPPORTUNITIES 136
TABLE 8: ABDUCTIVE THEMATIC ANALYSIS – INITIAL CODING 150
TABLE 9: ABDUCTIVE THEMATIC ANALYSIS – CODEBOOK 150
TABLE 10: NUBA AND BAGGARA REASONS TO SEEK PEACE WITHIN INTERCOMMUNAL PEACE AGREEMENTS (1993–1996) 182
TABLE 11: THE FIVE ROUNDS OF COMMUNAL ANALYSIS 261

List of Abbreviations

CAC – Community Advisory Committee

CCAR – Center for Collaborative Action Research

CCBR – Center for Community Based Research

CPA – Comprehensive Peace Accord

CT – Conflict Transformation

DUP – Democratic Unionist Party

GoS – Government of Sudan

INGO – International Non-Governmental Organisation

INPB – Informal Network of Peacebuilders

NCP – National Congress Party

NIF – National Islamic Front

PAR – Participatory Action Research

PB – Peacebuilder

PDF – Popular Defence Forces

PDIA – Problem-Driven Iterative Adaptation

RSF – Rapid Support Forces

SKBN – South Kordofan/Blue Nile

SPLM/A – Sudan People's Liberation Movement/Army

SPLA–N – Sudan People's Liberation Army–North

SPLM–N – Sudan People's Liberation Movement–North

SPLM–N/AA – Sudan People's Liberation Movement–North/Abdel Aziz Al-Hilu

SPLM–N/MA – Sudan People's Liberation Movement–North/Malik Agar

TCD – Trinity College Dublin

UN – United Nations

US – United States of America

Chapter 1: Introduction

Statement of the problem

Within the field of peacebuilding, the study of knowledge sharing has mainly focused on how knowledge has been shared between sectors (academic, policy and practitioners), between regions (Global North, Global South and conflict regions), between peace practitioners and within peacebuilding organisations (Verkoren, 2006, 2008). While scholars have called for more research on exactly how knowledge sharing could contribute to peacebuilding directly, no empirical studies have specifically focused on how it impacts peacebuilding practice within a war zone (Verkoren, 2008). There have been studies involving peacebuilders during times of war across the world, but they have not focused specifically on the conceptions, processes and types of knowledge sharing within these spaces and how they might impact on the peacebuilding practice within and around these war zones (Anderson & Olson, 2003; Anderson & Wallace, 2013; Hancock & Mitchell, 2007; Mitchell & Allen Nan, 1997). Moreover, over the past decade, there has been an increase in decolonial/postcolonial approaches to peace, peacebuilding and pedagogy, with scholars asking scholar-practitioners and practitioners to rethink 'the world from the perspective of the marginalized, that is, from Latin America, from Africa, from Indigenous places and from the global South' (Zembylas, 2020, p. 5; see also Ayindo, 2017; FitzGerald, 2021; Fontan, 2012; Hajir & Kester, 2020; Omer, 2020; Sabaratnam, 2013,

2017; Schirch, 2022; Shirazi, 2011; Weerawardhana, 2018; Zondi, 2016). However, the decolonial/postcolonial-informed peacebuilding literature has yet to include empirical studies about the conceptions and functions of knowledge sharing from the perspective of communities engaging in peacebuilding practice while simultaneously living through active war.

Purpose of the study

This dissertation seeks to contribute to decolonial/postcolonial-informed peacebuilding scholarship and practice by exploring how knowledge sharing has impacted peacebuilding practice in the Nuba Mountains war zone over the last 12 years during the ongoing war between the Sudan People's Liberation Movement–North (SPLM–N) and the Government of Sudan (GoS) with the peacebuilders who have been engaging in the peacebuilding practice. Instead of applying solely Western-conceived[1] conceptual approaches to analyse the peacebuilding practice or the knowledge sharing within the peacebuilding practice, this dissertation centres on the existing knowledge systems that emanate from communities in the Nuba Mountains. It also borrows from the peacebuilding, knowledge sharing, postcolonial/decolonial and mentoring literatures to create a transdisciplinary conceptual framework with decolonial intent.

[1] The terms 'Western', 'Eurocentric' and 'Global North' are used interchangeably in this study. They refer to what Sabaratnam (2013, p. 261) considered 'a conceptual and philosophical framework that informs the construction of knowledge about the social world – a foundational epistemology of Western distinctiveness. In this sensibility, 'Europe' is the cultural-geographic sphere (Bhambra, 2009, p. 5), which can be understood as the genealogical foundation of 'the West'.'

This participatory action research (PAR) case study is grounded in a postcolonial indigenous research paradigm, which centres on knowledge systems that exist in the Nuba Mountains while incorporating the least hegemonic Eurocentric research methodologies with decolonial intent (Chilisa, 2012, 2020). The study engages in four cycles of experiential learning and reflection with 38 peacebuilders during the overlapping 2019 Sudan revolution, the ongoing 2021 military coup and the Covid-19 global pandemic. The research findings have the potential to be a valuable contribution to the decolonial/postcolonial-informed peacebuilding scholarship, specifically with its conceptual framework that conceives Nuba Mountains peacebuilding practice within the existing endogenous knowledge systems present in Nuba Mountains.

This study's unit of analysis (developmental interactions, meaning exchanges between two or more people with the goal of personal and communal growth in relation to peacebuilding practice) and its loose analytical framework (precursors, processes and outcomes) will be the first time an empirical study in the field of peacebuilding has borrowed and contextualised relational mentoring concepts to design its analytical framework. The research process and findings also have the potential to be beneficial for the ongoing peacebuilding practice in the Nuba Mountains war zone and for peacebuilding scholar-practitioners working in war and other conflict-affected contexts.

Research questions

Using the case of the Nuba Mountains, this thesis will investigate the role of knowledge sharing in peacebuilding practice. The secondary research questions that help answer this main question include:

1. What are the characteristics of peacebuilding practice in the Nuba Mountains?
2. How does knowledge sharing about peacebuilding occur in the Nuba Mountains?
3. What is the significance of the impacts of knowledge sharing on peacebuilding practice in the Nuba Mountains?
4. What implications does the case hold for peacebuilding scholarship and practice in general?

Conceptual framework

Answering the above research questions requires exploration of the literature across four fields: (1) peacebuilding; (2) knowledge sharing; (3) postcolonial/decolonial studies; and (4) mentoring. None of these fields on their own offer sufficient guidance on how to explore the impacts of knowledge sharing on the peacebuilding practice ongoing in the Nuba Mountains war zone. Through a process of synthesised coherence (Locke & Golden-Biddle, 1997), or what can be described as moving beyond disciplinary silos and Western-dominated knowledge systems to integrate conceptual insights from different fields of

study, this study’s transdisciplinary conceptual and analytical frameworks are presented at the end of the literature review (Chapter 2).

This research design is conceptually grounded in a postcolonial indigenous research paradigm – ‘a framework of belief systems that emanate from the lived experiences, values, and history of those belittled and marginalised by Euro-Western research paradigms … informed by relational ontologies, relational epistemologies and relational axiology’ (Chilisa, 2012, pp. 19–20). It strives to equitably balance knowledge systems emanating from the communities in the Nuba Mountains war zone with less hegemonic European/Western methodologies with explicit decolonisation intent to ensure full reciprocity (Bhabha, 1994; Chilisa, 2012, 2020; Chilisa et al., 2017; Hountondji, 1997; Nabudere, 2009, 2011). It seeks to decrease epistemic violence, which is a consequence of using the Western liberal peacebuilding theory and practice that often marginalises and/or patronises knowledge systems and ways of knowing that are not from the dominant Western perspective (Mac Ginty, 2008; Mac Ginty & Richmond, 2013; Smith, 1999; Spivak, 1988; Walker, 2004).

Therefore, the study positions Nuba Mountains peacebuilding practice within a historical framing that stems from the trans-Saharan slave trade – a period in which disparate communities began to be categorised by outsiders as an essentialised enslaved people called Nuba. This deeper narration of history shows the compounding of subjugations, marginalisation and resistances, including colonial powers, successive

authoritarian regimes in Khartoum and the aid industry. It also exposes the impact of hegemonic ideologies from outside and inside Sudan, including Western ideologies and ethnonationalism, and how those impacts influence knowledge sharing in the present-day Nuba Mountains in Sudan.

This dissertation takes a pragmatic perspective (Dewey, 1924; Follett, 1924) that leans closer to social constructivism (Vygotsky, 1987), yet without letting these Western epistemologies dominate the thought process and methodologies. Instead, this dissertation puts at the centre knowledge systems emanating from communities in the Nuba Mountains and uses and values them equitably with non-hegemonic Western knowledge systems. It aligns with critical liberal and post-liberal peacebuilding scholars' calls to move away from formulating prescriptive models of hybrid peacebuilding and to seek 'more detailed, nuanced and sensitive descriptive accounts of bottom-up processes' (Wallis et al., 2016, p. 174). It also affirms Lederach's (1995, p. 10) statement that understanding culture and conflict is 'not merely a question of sensitivity or of awareness, but a far more profound adventure of discovering and digging in the archaeology of accumulated shared knowledge common to a set of people', while also suggesting that there is a missing knowledge systems dimension within this statement that dictates how knowledge is conceived, generated and shared within and between cultures.

Research methodology

This study uses an exploratory PAR case study methodology. It combines a qualitative exploratory case study (Merriam & Tisdell, 2016) with PAR methodology (Fals Borda & Rahman, 199; Fals Borda, 2006, 2008; Riel, 2019). PAR is a collaborative experiential learning approach that respects the endogenous creation of knowledge and emphasises dialogic observations, self and communal reflection, and participatory approaches to knowledge sharing and generation with a group of people involved in the PAR and the surrounding community (Fals Borda & Rahman, 1991). The PAR methodology focused on four cycles of experiential learning and reflection with 38 peacebuilders involved the Nuba Mountains peacebuilding practice since the war recommenced in 2011: 19 peacebuilders involved in the everyday facilitation of peacebuilding practice (two female/17 male); five community advisory committee members (one female/four male), who agreed to engage in dialogic observations and act as critical friends and guides for the study; and 14 informal peacebuilding network members, who have all been involved peripherally at different times in the region's peacebuilding practice over the last 12 years (three female/11 male). The PAR methodology used Arabic, English and local languages, as dictated by the peacebuilders, with the same peacebuilders also translating. This form of translation while conducting research and peacebuilding practice has been the custom for myself and many of the peacebuilders involved in this study, considering the established rapport that was built over the last eight years of working together in the Nuba

Mountains. However, due to the translations, there could have been a degree of bias, as any translation, no matter how short, would be shaped by the analysis of the peacebuilder or myself translating through the cultural interpretation of specific words.

The data collection methods included WhatsApp and email conversations, oral history interviews (WhatsApp and in person), in-person communal analysis gathering, dialogic observations with the peacebuilders and community advisory committee members, personal journals and desk research. This study also chose to use communal analysis and abductive thematic analysis as its data analysis methods (Boyatzis, 1998; Braun & Clarke, 2006; Thompson, 2022; Timmermans & Tavory, 2012). The study used purposive sampling to identify the peacebuilders who all engaged with the Nuba Mountains peacebuilding practice and so would have the lived experiences needed to help answer the research questions. However, due to the instability as a result of the 2019 revolution and travel restrictions due to the Covid-19 pandemic, the number of people who were physically or virtually available to participate with the lived experience as peacebuilders involved in Nuba Mountains peacebuilding practice over the last 12 years narrowed. So, the study shifted to convenience sampling (i.e., physically or virtually identifying peacebuilders who were available during the research period when I was physically in the Nuba Mountains or could virtually reach them).

In order to successfully ensure that the research remained both rigorous, community-owned and relevant to the issues that appear on the ground, I engaged in

dialogic observations (informal reflective conversations about aspects of the study or the changing environment) with peacebuilders, community advisory committee members, peers and TCD supervisors. I also kept a reflective journal. These reflective dialogic practices helped me continuously reflect on issues of power and privilege as I am a white American cis woman now living on the island of Ireland (in one of the six counties in the North) with assumptions and past experiences associated with growing up in a middle-class environment in New Jersey, studying peace and conflict at universities from a distinctly Western point of view and having worked in other war-affected countries[2] for the past 17 years. Although I have been working in the Nuba Mountains for the last eight years as a peacebuilding practitioner and adviser (and across Sudan over the last 12 years), I am also always a *khawajia* ('foreigner woman') within the Nuba Mountains.

Significance of the study

This is the first academic research to document how the extraordinary peacebuilding efforts in the Nuba Mountains war zone have been able to evolve in the midst of war.[3] The study contributes to the growing body of decolonial/postcolonial-informed peace theory,

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[2] Including South Sudan, Uganda, Kenya, the Philippines, Pakistan, Nepal and Palestine.

[3] For the last 12 years, publications about these specific peacebuilding efforts have been restricted to trusted humanitarian circles through confidential white papers due to the dire security situation, which has caused death, jail, intimidation and torture of people facilitating the peacebuilding practice if they were suspected of engaging or caught by the GoS authorities engaging in peacebuilding efforts from June 2011 onward. While there have been public publications covering a specific narrow outcome of the peacebuilding practice, these have included only a small sample of peripheral members of the peacebuilding practice and lack the depth of understanding and extent of the Nuba Mountains peacebuilding practice from 2011 onward (e.g. Omer et al., 2016).

peacebuilding and peace pedagogy within the wider field of peace and conflict studies (Ayindo, 2017; FitzGerald, 2021; Fontan, 2012; Hajir & Kester, 2020; Omer, 2020; Sabaratnam, 2013, 2017; Schirch, 2022; Shirazi, 2011; Weerawardhana, 2018; ; Zembylas, 2020; Zondi, 2016). It seeks to contribute toward helping the field move beyond its interdisciplinary roots (Miall et al., 2016) and into more transdisciplinary peacebuilding approaches to incorporate multiple knowledge systems that exist beyond only academic disciplines and to incorporate more worldviews and their corresponding knowledge systems into peacebuilding theory and practice (Mignolo, 2011; Quijano, 2000; Walker, 2022).

For peacebuilding practice, this study seeks to better inform scholar-practitioners on ways to explore 'how' peacebuilding practice happens as much as 'what' peacebuilding means, which is often neglected in both university courses and field-based trainings (Boulding, 2000, p. 55; Fisher & Zimina, 2009, p. 26). Scholar-practitioners and university instructors can use this study's design and findings to help train more scholar-practitioners on postcolonial/decolonial-informed approaches to peacebuilding theory and practice that can help them better contribute and learn from peacebuilding practice in a war zone. It can also help them learn the benefits of using a postcolonial indigenous research paradigm for conducting peacebuilding research and the merits of using a combined PAR case study methodology focused on cycles of experiential learning and

action-reflection that centre on knowledge systems emanating from communities that are living through active war.

Background of case study

The communities of Nuba Mountains within Sudan's South Kordofan state and parts of West Kordofan state have been living through 12 years of ongoing war between the GoS and SPLM–N.[4] From 2011–2016, the Nuba Mountains saw near-constant aerial bombardment by the Sudanese Armed Forces (SAF), intermittent SAF-backed militia attacks and SPLM–N/SAF clashes, and the refusal of the GoS, led by Omar al-Bashir's National Congress Party, to allow unfettered humanitarian aid or trade into an area of approximately 88,000 square kilometres (slightly bigger than the island of Ireland). From 2012–2016, 'at least 4,082 bombs and missiles have hit predominantly civilian targets including villages, schools and hospitals' (Nuba Reports, cited in Konda et al., 2016, p. 11). By 2014, approximately two million people living in the Nuba Mountains were affected by the war, with over 500,000 internally displaced and 250,000 living as refugees in South Sudan, Uganda, Kenya and Ethiopia (OCHA, 2014). The people living in the Nuba Mountains have largely been displaced from their homes – many of which were destroyed through the aerial bombing and ground shelling – while enduring food shortages, water insecurity, widespread disruption of livelihoods, psychosocial trauma and

[4] SPLM–N is the Northern Sudan chapter of the SPLM based in South Sudan, which formally began its own movement during the CPA period. The war in the Nuba Mountains recommenced just one month prior to South Sudan's 2011 secession from Sudan.

insufficient access to medical care and basic education. While no official map documents the boundaries of the SPLM–N-controlled area of the Nuba Mountains, Figure 1 below highlights the approximate area:

Figure 1: Nuba Mountains, Sudan map

Sudan, overall, has been in an almost constant state of civil war since it achieved independence in 1956 from the joint Egyptian and British colonial powers (1898–1955) (De Waal, 2016). As an ongoing protracted social conflict, the colonial legacy of divide and rule and the interconnected historical pattern of rivalry between northern tribal elites living along the Nile river and more populous southern and periphery tribes have their origins in the pre-colonial period (Kush, Nubian Christian and Funj Sunni Islamic

civilisations, etc.), which revolved around the wider slave trade that had been going on for millennia and that viewed 'Nuba people' as the most sought after of slaves in what is now called Sudan (Azar, 1990; De Waal, 2016). Sudan's geographic location has made it a historical and modern-day crossroads for trade (e.g., slaves, food/goods, music, terrorism) between West Africa, sub-Saharan Africa, the Mediterranean, the Middle East and South Asia (Ryle et al., 2012). Sudan's perpetual state of conflict, including two civil wars (1956–1972 and 1983–2005), has been driven by the centralisation of political, economic and security power by northern tribal elites who tried to force an Arab-Islamic identity on its multi-communal population following independence (Baldo, 2016; US Congressional Research Service, 2019). Following the 1989 coup that brought Omar al-Bashir to power, he and his Arab-Islamic ideologic guru Hassan Turabi systematically instituted the strategy of *tamkeen* (a Sudanese Arabic word meaning consolidation or empowerment) whereby their Arab-Islamic ideology-infused political party, the NCP,[5] consolidated power at federal and state levels and across the political, economic and security sectors, including management of all resources and services (Baldo, 2016). They eroded the ability of the opposition political parties and civil society movements to counter their kleptocratic strategy by systematically instituting continuous torture and intimidation, which caused divisions among opposition leaders and a mass exodus from Sudan of non-NCP intellectuals/technocrats and political and civil society leaders from the 1990s onward (De Waal, 2019). However, by the late 1990s, Bashir re-

[5] NCP rebranded itself from the National Islamic Front after a split between the leaders.

conceptualised *tamkeen* so that it only benefited himself and his ever-narrowing circle of cronies, while ideologically hollowing out the NCP until it became a shadow of its former self and only useful as a revolving door for civil, political, economic and security apparatus staffing needs (Baldo, 2016; The Sentry, 2020).

Over the last two decades, the international and regional dynamics related to global terrorism and EU refugee and migration crises further solidified political and economic power under the NCP's control (Cafiero & Wagner, 2017; Davis, 2016). In order to maintain this centralisation of power, the NCP started armed conflicts in Darfur (2003–present) and this war in the Nuba Mountains area of South Kordofan and the southern Blue Nile (2011–present). The NCP adhered to marginalising policies for these periphery areas of the country, which in turn served to undermine social cohesion, decrease human security and perpetuate local conflicts. Starting in June 2016, unilateral ceasefires by both the GoS and SPLM–N created a 'no war, no peace' situation for the Nuba Mountains, where the war remains in effect, but the almost daily aerial bombings and ground shelling have stopped (Nuba Reports, 2016). Also during this time, mounting internal political conflicts within the SPLM–N culminated with a political split in March 2017 – SPLM–N/MA led by Malik Agar and SPLM–N/AA led by Abdel Aziz al-Hilu – which added an additional layer of complexity to the conflict.

By August 2019, Sudan entered yet another uncertain phase of governmental and societal transition following the signing of the power-sharing deal between the civilian-led

opposition Forces of Freedom and Change and the Transitional Military Council, which ushered in a 3.5-year transitional government that was supposed to end in a legitimately elected civilian government (El Gizouli, 2020). This power-sharing deal was sparked by over six months of continuous protest by Sudanese people (led by non-politically aligned youth and women) who effectively organised and sustained non-violent nationwide demonstrations that forced al-Bashir to step down (Marks et al., 2019). Their non-violent movement was built on lessons learned from the Sudanese revolutions of 1964 and 1985 and the positive lessons and shortcomings of recent revolutions in neighbouring countries (i.e., Tunisia, Egypt, Syria and Yemen) (Marks et al., 2019). The SPLM–N/AA, SPLM–N/MA and civil society in the Nuba Mountains all held demonstrations to show their solidarity with other demonstrators across Sudan. This was a significant shift in social dynamics, as previously it was rare for citizens in conflict-affected areas and the rest of Sudan to publicly show solidarity with each other due to the NCP's marginalisation and wider historical prejudices inculcated in society against people from the Nuba Mountains and other periphery/conflict-affected areas (e.g., the Darfur region, Blue Nile state, the Eastern region of Sudan).

A military coup in October 2021 ended the 2019 power-sharing agreement and immediately sparked nationwide non-violent protests, with millions of Sudanese taking to the streets again to demand that the military hand over power to civilians. Meanwhile, the coup leaders have continued their attempts to engage in peace talks with armed groups

who refused to sign any power-sharing agreement with the now defunct military/civilian transitional government, including the SPLM–N/AA, the largest armed group, which controls the largest war region of the Nuba Mountains, the geographic focus of this study.

Although publicly unreported, when the war recommenced in 2011, a small group of local Nuba Mountains civil society actors who stayed in the SPLM–N-controlled area began to cultivate peacebuilding practices between divisive communities within and across the SPLM–N areas. They requested a handful of trusted international peacebuilders to help them build and scale up their peacebuilding practice with extremely small amounts of money that would cover stipends and petty costs for food, transportation, etc. to discreetly meet with:

- SPLM–N political, military, traditional and religious leadership
- SAF military officers
- Nomadic traditional leadership living on both sides of the conflict line
- Traders on both sides of the conflict line

Building on centuries of peaceful coexistence between communities despite the NCP's continued attempts to sow discord, this small group of local civil society actors initially designed an overall peacebuilding strategy that then led to specific peacebuilding and conflict mitigation trainings for re-creating local peace committees and establishing cross-line markets (or sometimes referred to as *souk n bouks*) that have grown in scale

over the last nine years – from one peace committee and one cross-line market in 2011 to over 32 peace committees and 12 cross-line markets in 2018 (Greeley, 2019). The cross-line markets, in particular, have been a lifeline for all communities living on both sides of the conflict and in neighbouring conflict-affected Unity State, South Sudan. The local peace committee members who work on both sides of the conflict line (SPLM–N-controlled area and GoS-controlled area) along with the eight peacebuilding facilitators can be conceived as a peacebuilding network for the purpose of building peace and managing conflict for communities inside and around the war zone.

Over the last 12 years, these local-level peacebuilding initiatives have slowly evolved into complex webs of dialogue, civil authority policies, civil and customary justice mechanisms and the creation and use of peace education resources. The outcomes of these evolving and complex peacebuilding practices include: greater economic interdependence, greater social cohesion and more calls for engaging in peaceful coexistence from nomadic communities from which the NCP historically recruited militias for intercommunal violence (Greeley, 2019). These local initiatives have also helped mitigate intercommunal conflicts before they spiralled into further violence, fostered trust between previously antagonistic communities and opened and sustained humanitarian access for the small-scale humanitarian relief without UN assistance or GoS authorisation. When some peace committee members died as a result of aerial bombardments or ended up being kidnapped, tortured or killed, these tragedies emboldened the network of

peacebuilders in the Nuba Mountains to continue their work as a way of honouring the lives lost. However, the need for secrecy also increased as a result of these tragedies, which made scaling up of the work more complicated since the web of peacebuilding relationships entailed finding the balance between the needs for inclusivity and information security (Greeley, 2019). With the Sudanese revolution and transitional government entering into peace negotiations with the SPLM–N factions as of 2020, there was hope that the peacebuilding practice could evolve more openly as the need and desire for citizens who want to return, or were already returning, to the war zone continued to increase (SKBN Coordination Unit, 2020).

Further study is needed to better understand how knowledge sharing between the informal network of peacebuilders recommenced and evolved the peacebuilding practice in the Nuba Mountains war zone. The informal network of peacebuilders included 32 peace committees (6–12 members depending on the committee) across Nuba Mountains, eight peacebuilding facilitators who train them and work as staff members within the two community-owned NGOs that did not evacuate when the war recommenced in 2011, and peripheral members such as the SPLM–N civil and military leadership and humanitarian aid workers (national and international). Further research with the informal network of peacebuilders would require more collective and individual reflective dialogue between and with peacebuilding facilitators, peace committee members and SPLM–N civil and military leadership, and humanitarian workers in the Nuba Mountains in order to

consolidate and synthesise the shared understanding while also applying experiential learning to current peacebuilding practice opportunities and needs during the ongoing uncertain political period in Sudan.

Organisation of study

The next chapter presents the relevant literature that informs this transdisciplinary study, which includes peacebuilding literature, the decolonial/postcolonial literature, knowledge sharing literature and mentoring literature. Chapter 3 discusses the research design of the postcolonial indigenous research paradigm and the integrated PAR case study methodology. Chapter 4 analyses the historical impact of the trans-Saharan slave trade, colonialism and ethnonationalism on the current relations among the communities of the Nuba Mountains. Chapter 5 describes the process characteristics of Nuba Mountains peacebuilding practice. Chapter 6 describes the emergence of knowledge sharing practice in the Nuba Mountains. Chapter 7 describes the outcomes of knowledge sharing on Nuba Mountains peacebuilding practice. Chapter 8 provides an interpretation and discussion of the findings from the study as they relate to the literature review chapter. Finally, Chapter 9 provides the conclusions of the study and describes its contribution to peacebuilding scholarship and practice, including implications for peacebuilding scholar-practitioners and Nuba Mountains communities, along with outlining the limitations of the study and future research areas.

Chapter 2: Literature Review

Introduction

Even though there has been an increase in decolonial/postcolonial approaches to peace, peacebuilding and peace education pedagogy over the last few decades, empirical studies have yet to focus on the different conceptions and functions of knowledge sharing within peacebuilding practice from the perspective of peacebuilders working in a war zone, particularly in Africa. This dissertation contributes toward filling this gap in the literature by focusing on the role of knowledge sharing on peacebuilding practice within the Nuba Mountain warzone with peacebuilders who have been engaging in peacebuilding practice since the war started in 2011. The literature reviewed in this chapter explores the concept of knowledge sharing within the peace and conflict studies field, development field, knowledge management and organisational learning fields, postcolonial/decolonial literature, and African/indigenous knowledge fields. It begins by providing an overview of the concept of peacebuilding practice. Next, it provides a genealogy of the term knowledge, knowledge systems and the types of knowledge that are shared within peacebuilding practices. Then, it explores how knowledge sharing has been conceived and used within peacebuilding practice. It also provides an overview of how the concept of mentoring has been used within the peacebuilding field for knowledge sharing purposes and suggests how the peacebuilding field could benefit from borrowing and contextualising the concept of relational mentoring. Finally, the chapter concludes with a

description of this study's conceptual framework based on the literature reviewed and a summary of the chapter.

Concept of peacebuilding practice

Peacebuilding scholar-practitioners recognise that 'organic peacebuilding existed prior to its 'discovery' by the global North' (Schirch, cited in Omer, 2020, p. 6). They also recognise that having a shared perspective of what constitutes peacebuilding practice has been a challenge considering 'the ideas and practices behind peacebuilding have deep roots in all cultures', so 'all cultures and communities have different ways of building peace' (Schirch, 2004, p. 16; see also Geneva Peacebuilding Platform, 2015). Prescribing a universal definition of peacebuilding practice is not possible since the concept remains highly contextualised based on the cultures and knowledge systems from which it is derived. Some scholars have defined the practice of peacebuilding as any international assistance effort that addresses any perceived or real grievance within 'four sectoral categories: security and military; social, economic, developmental, humanitarian; political and diplomatic; and justice and reconciliation' (Barnett et al., 2007, p. 45). Schirch and Sewak (2005, p. 4) describe it as the skills, knowledge, relationships and processes used to 'prevent, reduce, transform, and help people recover from violence in all forms, even structural violence that has not yet led to massive civil unrest', while it simultaneously 'empowers people to foster relationships at all levels that sustain people and their environment'. This definition describes peacebuilding practice as holistic, centres around

relationships and does not create a dichotomy between peace and violence. It affirms other research that highlights how peace and violence can coexist and coevolve in the same place, specifically in South Kordofan, Sudan and around the world (Campbell et al., 2017; Öjendal et al, 2021). Additionally, it supports Richmond's (2007, p. 248) assertion that scholars should problematise 'peace as simply the antonym of war'. And, it affirms Dietrich and Sützl's (1997) assertion that scholars should move away from any one definition of peace and instead embrace the notion that there are many peaces in the world. Therefore, for the purposes of this study, its definition of peacebuilding practice borrows from Schirch and Sewak's (2005) definition while also expanding it to include the underlying place-based knowledge systems that are culturally and historically influenced.

Within academia, the term peacebuilding dates back to the 1960s and 70s. The more popular origin of the term can be traced to Galtung (1976, p. 111), who used it to describe an approach to peace that relies on the structures that 'remove causes of wars and offers alternatives to war in situations where wars might occur'. He positioned peacebuilding as greater in importance than peacekeeping (providing distance between rival parties using a third party) and peacemaking (using conflict resolution that moves beyond a cessation of hostilities to resolve contradictions between specific parties), which were the basis for rebuilding Europe after World War II. Galtung's (1969, 1990) peacebuilding approach took a multifaceted view of violence and focused on the attainment of positive peace to end all forms of violence that he defined as direct (physical expressions of violence), structural (institutional practices and policies) and cultural

(social norms that legitimise direct and structural violence). He defined positive peace as the state of no direct, structural or cultural causes of violence in their broadest sense. This was in contrast to what he called negative peace, or merely the absence of war (Galtung, 1969, 1990).

While negative and positive peace theory is often attributed to Galtung, there was an earlier social justice conception of negative and positive peace offered by Rev. Martin Luther King, Jr. from his 1963 Birmingham Jail letter during the Civil Rights era in the United States (Azarmandi, 2018). King (1963, p. 18) described 'a negative peace which is the absence of tension to a positive peace which is the presence of justice'. Also, Galtung's conception of peacebuilding as the means for attaining positive peace is sometimes attributed as the inspiration for Boutros-Ghali's (1992) UN Agenda for Peace definition of peacebuilding (Cavalcante, 2019). However, in contrast to Galtung's definition of peacebuilding, Boutros-Ghali's definition of peacebuilding is 'much narrower, restricted to the 'post-conflict' and overemphasising the support to electoral processes and the promotion of democracies' (Cavalcante, 2019, p. 7). Boutros-Ghali (1992) defined peacebuilding 'an action to identify and support structures which will tend to strengthen and solidify peace in order to avoid a relapse into conflict' (p. 11). This definition addressed the challenges of 'protracted social conflicts' (Azar, 1990) around the world within a state-building and stabilisation approach that was grounded in democratic peace theory (Chandler, 2010; Richmond & Franks, 2009). The origin of democratic peace

theory can be traced to political scientists within the international relations field in the 1980s who invoked Kantian and other Enlightenment-era liberal values, namely the promotion of a multi-party democratic system and rule of law, individual rights and global economic trade as the ideals for reaching peace. These liberal tenets became known as liberal peacebuilding, which became the dominant peacebuilding approach among UN and international aid organisations starting in the 1990s through to the 2000s as the preferred way to rebuild war-torn countries (i.e., the Balkans, Afghanistan and Iraq) (Paris & Sisk, 2009).

While the UN and international aid organisations focused more on top-down, elite-oriented peacebuilding, other conceptions of peacebuilding started to emerge that focused on civil society (or non-government segments of society), involving multiple levels of society and drawing more from conflict resolution and peace theories (Diamond & McDonald, 1996; Fitzduff, 2002; Lederach, 1997). Lederach's conception of peacebuilding became the dominant approach within this group. It built on Galtung's positive peace theory by striving to transform the root causes of all forms of violence in society yet had a far more comprehensive approach that transcended perceived stages of conflicts – meaning that peacebuilding needed to happen before, during and after any peace agreement was signed. It was also 'oriented toward the building of relationships that in their totality form new patterns, processes, and structures' (Lederach, 1997, pp. 84–85). Specifically, Lederach's conception of peacebuilding was an expansive and holistic view

of peacebuilding as a paradoxical ‘process-structure’ that ‘encompasses, generates, and sustains the full array of processes, approaches, and stages need to transform conflict toward more sustainable, peaceful relationships’ (Lederach, 1997, p. 20). This conception drew from Lederach’s new conflict transformation theory. According to Lederach (2003, p. 14), conflict transformation meant:

> to envision and respond to the ebb and flow of social conflict as life-giving opportunities for creating constructive change processes that reduce violence, increase justice in direct interaction and social structures, and respond to real-life problems in human relationships.

Lederach’s conflict transformation-oriented peacebuilding contrasted with liberal peacebuilding because it did not ascribe to the democratic liberal peace theory with its strategy for societies to live in peace by attaining norms and institutions that reflect and maintain multi-party democracy, a free-market economy, individual human rights and the rule of law (Donais, 2013). Instead, it was the means to achieve what Lederach would later call ‘justpeace’ – a peace that ‘reduces violence and destructive cycles of social interaction and at the same time increases justice in any human relationship’ (Lederach, 2005, p. 182). Appleby and Lederach (2010, p. 40) argue that conflict transformation-oriented peacebuilding needed to be ‘architectonic’, or focused on providing ‘the social spaces, logistical mechanisms, and institutions necessary for supporting the processes of change

engendered to pursue a justpeace'. However, as critiques have highlighted, Lederach's conflict transformation framework has limitations due to its lack of power analysis and the limited attention it gives to the development of the political system of the conflict-affected society (Fetherston, 2000; Miall, 2004).

As Paffenholz (2014, p. 14) noted, Lederach's conflict transformation framework 'builds on Galtung's structural/cultural/direct violence, Curle's work on transforming relationships, Azar's work on protracted social conflicts, Kelman and Fisher's work on relationship building, also known as the 'conflict resolution' school, and Paulo Freire's work, notably Pedagogy of the Oppressed'. It also builds off Dugan's (1996) nested model of viewing conflicts (violent or non-violent) from their narrower issue level through the broader relational, subsystem and system levels. Lederach advocated for middle-range leaders (i.e., NGOs, academics, religious leaders, etc.) to act at the relational and subsystem levels in order to help connect short-term issues with long-term systemic needs. He conceived of these middle-range leaders as having the ability already to move horizontally (across domains and disciplines) and vertically (across elite, midrange and grassroots levels) in a conflict-affected society to improve communication and to share information more readily than other actors due to the access and relationships (Lederach, 1997, 2003). He asserted that a small, identifiable group of people could act as 'critical yeast' to build a wide peace constituency by moving around relational space to affect a process or change through quality interactions (Lederach, 2005, p. 91). However,

Lederach did not include specific ways in which effective quality interactions as linkages (whether they be individuals, institutions, groups, etc.) can be continuously supported and strengthened in order to foster and sustain peace at structural, cultural, relational and person levels. This study seeks to highlight the ways that knowledge sharing conceptions, formats and mediums can influence and strengthen linkages between people and institutions in a war zone.

Genealogy of knowledge, knowledge systems and types of knowledge within the peacebuilding field

What constitutes knowledge?

Understanding how the concept of knowledge sharing within the peacebuilding field has been conceived and used first requires a review of what constitutes knowledge since it can have multiple meanings and can be derived from multiple knowledge systems. Verkoren (2008) provides the most comprehensive studies on knowledge sharing within the peacebuilding field with a focus on knowledge sharing within Global South peacebuilding and development networks and organisations. Her studies define knowledge as information, experience or skill; objective or subjective; explicit or tacit; and academic or practical experiences. Verkoren (2008, p. 78) elaborates on these definitions:

> It includes 'information' but goes beyond that concept: it also includes the meaning that is allocated to information. Knowledge is subjective: 'I know what a

terrible person you are'. Unlike information, knowledge can also be an experience or skill: 'I know the best way to do this'. There are different types of knowledge. Knowledge can be available in written form (explicit) or locked inside someone's head (tacit). It can be theoretical (academic) or based on practical experience.

These definitions reflect the conventional understanding of knowledge that is found in the *Oxford English Dictionary* definition of knowledge, which includes the following:

1. Acknowledgment or recognition (the action of acknowledging or owning something).
2. Law (legal cognisance).
3. The fact or condition of knowing something (a thing, person, etc.; acquaintance; familiarity gained by experience).
4. The faculty of understanding or knowing (intelligence, intellect).
5. The fact or state of knowing that something is the case; the condition of being aware or cognisant of a fact, state of affairs, etc. (expressed or implied).
6. The fact or condition of having acquired a practical understanding or command of, or competence or skill in, a particular subject, language, etc. (through instruction, study or practice); skill or expertise acquired in a particular subject, etc., through learning.

7. Information about something.
8. A sign or mark by which something may be known, recognised or distinguished.
9. A thing which is or may be known; esp. a branch of learning; a science; an art.

The partial origin of these definitions date back to the Anglo-Saxon Chronicle (a collection of annals in Old English from the 9th century) and to the 14th and 16th centuries when the European Renaissance started to proliferate Eurocentric epistemology (ways of knowing about reality) and ontology (ways of seeing reality). These Old English and Renaissance definitions have their origins in the ancient Greek knowledge system, particularly Aristotle's classification of knowledge into three categories – episteme (scientific knowledge), techne (skill and crafts) and phronesis (wisdom) – and Plato's classification of knowledge as 'justified true belief' (Chappell, 2005). Therefore, the *Oxford English Dictionary* definitions of knowledge and Verkoren's (2008) definitions of knowledge seem to trace back to Aristotle and Plato's classifications of knowledge.

However, Verkoren's (2008) definitions of knowledge can also be traced back to non-Western knowledge systems' definitions of knowledge. Scholars have highlighted that Greek philosophical, religious and scientific development was influenced by the knowledge they gained from studying in ancient Kemet (now known as Egypt and Sudan) (Diop, 1974). As Zoogah (2021, p. 393) recently stated, 'Greek philosophers such as Plato, Eudoxus, Aristotle, Archimedes, Euclid, Pythagoras, Proclus, and Herodotus all studied in ancient Kemet, Egypt, and have made references in their works to their teachers

in Africa'. While providing an in-depth comparison of ancient Kemet and Greek knowledge systems is well beyond the scope of this study, it is worth highlighting knowledge concepts from ancient Kemet to understand the differences in what constitutes knowledge in the Egyptian mystery system as compared to the Greco-Roman knowledge system. The Egyptian mystery knowledge system included principles such as *Ma'at* (quest for justice, truth and harmony), *Nommo* (creation of knowledge through the spoken word to improve human relations) and *Sebait* ('way of learning or knowledge' or 'instructions or wisdom in relation to socioeconomic exchanges') (Zoogah, 2021, p. 388; see also Gussman, 1953; Lumby, 1995). These ancient principles are still intrinsic to all African cultures, knowledge systems and philosophies (*akan*, *ubuntu*, etc.) (Asante, 1988, 1990; Chilisa, 2012, 2020; Reviere, 2001).

These principles highlight how the knowledge system in ancient Kemet considered knowledge as continuously created and involving oral communication and socio-economic exchanges, or what can be conceived as intersubjective (knowledge as shared meaning created by people through interactions with each other) rather than objective (knowledge as an independent object that is considered verifiably true) or solely subjective (perceived knowledge one has about an object based on their own assumptions) (Held, 2019). They also highlight the interconnection between knowledge, wisdom and practical experience between people, unlike the Greek philosophers' definitions of knowledge, which objectively divides knowledge into categories of scientific or justified belief, skills/crafts

and wisdom. Therefore, while Greek philosophers' 'ideas and educational systems were modelled after the Egyptian Mystery system', their worldviews and epistemologies (ways of knowing) were not the same, causing the evolution of their knowledge systems to differ. Worldviews, or what Kuhn (1970) calls paradigms, are the ways people see reality based on the philosophical assumptions and beliefs about the world they have absorbed. These worldviews have corresponding knowledge systems, which are place-based and derived from cultures and histories that determine their specific ways of knowing, generating knowledge and sharing knowledge.

Knowledge systems

This study's definition of knowledge system chooses to see a knowledge system as a continuously evolving process of acquiring, sharing and generating knowledge over generations by communities as they interact with the environment and other cultures in a specific locale. This definition is different from the more popular knowledge management system definition that is derived from the business sector, and its subsequent sub-fields of knowledge management and organisational learning. The more popular definition of knowledge system can be described as 'a system of information collection, management, storage, and/or distribution (usually computer-based or computer-driven) or in reference to a collection of information or knowledge about a specific subject or area of study' (Shultz et al., 2009, p. 335). This definition is from the knowledge management field's earliest conceptions of knowledge systems, which were focused on seeing information as

objective knowledge and did not consider any cultural, historical and place-based understanding of what constitutes a knowledge system.

Depending on which knowledge system and corresponding worldview is privileged, knowledge can be understood as objective, subjective, intersubjective, experiential or based on practical use (Held, 2019). For example, Western knowledge systems have individualised worldviews with objective, subjective or based-on-practical-use conceptions of knowledge, whereas African knowledge systems have collectivist worldviews and consider knowledge intersubjective, experiential and based on practical use (Held, 2019; Mpofu, 2002). In her exploration of knowledge exchanges within the development and peacebuilding fields, Verkoren (2008) distilled a simplified and generalised overview of the differences between Western or modern knowledge systems and non-Western or traditional knowledge systems, as seen in Table 1 below:

Table 1: Western and non-Western/traditional knowledge systems

Western / modern knowledge system(s)	**Non-Western / traditional knowledge system(s)**
Scientifically generated	Experience-based
Documented, formalised	Undocumented, oral
Codified, abstracted, quantifiable	Qualitative, stories
Scientifically tested	Intuition, tradition
Systematic, verifiable	Myth, magic
Short-term emphasis, deadlines	Long-term emphasis, process-oriented
Reductionist	Holistic
‘Objective’, ‘value-free’	Subjective, moral, spiritual
Focus on learning in formalised settings, separated from applied context	Learning through observation and experience
Data generated by researchers	Data generated by practitioners

Verkoren (2008) did not use the term 'indigenous knowledge system' within Table 1. Instead, she uses 'non-Western/traditional knowledge system', yet she uses 'indigenous knowledge' interchangeably with the terms 'local knowledge' and 'traditional knowledge' throughout her study. Indigenous and local knowledge can refer to 'the understandings, skills and philosophies developed by societies with long histories of interaction with their natural surroundings' (Nakashima et al, 2017, p. 8). Within the indigenous knowledge literature, scholars have acknowledged the struggle to describe indigenous knowledge (Mazzocchi, 2006). The term 'indigenous' itself is often problematic because it can have colonial and racist connotations; it can convey a static or untouched historical time from the past, or it can be seen as a term in opposition to 'modern' due to hegemonic dominance of the Global North over the Global South (Sanders, 1999). Therefore, within the indigenous knowledge literature, the following terms are often used in place of the term indigenous: tacit knowledge, community knowledge, local knowledge, traditional knowledge, cultural understanding, traditional ecological knowledge, indigenous technical skill, and folklore (Chisenga, 2013; Nakata, 2002). Other scholars have argued that there should not be a clear distinction between Western and indigenous knowledge because 'it makes much more sense to talk about multiple domains and types of knowledge, with differing logics and epistemologies' (Agrawal, 1995, p. 433). Indigenous knowledge system scholars, in particular, argue that indigenous knowledge systems are unique to a certain culture and society, and they are ever evolving with differing aspects based on a person's age, gender, etc. (Sillitoe & Marzano, 2009). According to Hoppers (2002), it is

also important to fully understand the context in which any indigenous knowledge system is generated because it will reflect the internal cultural norms of that particular society.

Within Verkoren's (2008, p. 98) explanation of knowledge systems, she mentions the African concept of *ubuntu* and how it views 'the observer [as] an integral part of the reality [s]he is observing and an individual can only be understood as part of a wider group: 'I am therefore you are''. However, she does not explore how African knowledge system theorists and education practitioners conceive of knowledge and ways of sharing knowledge within African knowledge systems. Within African knowledge literature, theorists and practitioners assert that African knowledge systems have 'a practical, collective and social or interpersonal slant' within ways of learning for self-organisation within a collective African self-concept, which is passed down orally and intergenerationally in the location of community living and activities (Owusu-Ansah & Mji, 2013, p. 2; see also Mkabela, 2005; Mpofu, 1994). Specifically for adult education in Africa, Nafukho et al. (2005, p. 31) argue that African knowledge systems are grounded in the following principles:

- Learning through seeing, observing and doing.
- Joint and communal custody of knowledge and information.
- Passing on of information from one generation to another and across cultural borders.

- Equity, mutuality and respect among members of society in the use of knowledge.
- Development and improvement of intellectual skills based on need and want.
- Sparing and joint use of all types of resources.
- Importance of oral means of transmission, especially through metaphors and riddles.
- Understanding, appreciating and promoting the cultural heritage of communities.

African education theorists and practitioners also argue that African conceptions of intelligence '[emphasise] the practical, interpersonal, and social domains of functioning and are quite differentiated from the cognitive 'academic' intelligence that dominates Western concepts of the construct' (Owusu-Ansah & Mji, 2013, p. 2; see also Mpofu, 2002; Nsamenang, 2006). Moreover, Kaya and Seleti (2013, p. 37) argue that African knowledge systems emphasise 'experience, experimentation, trial and error, by independent observation of nature and human behavior, and through voluntary community sharing of information, story, song, and ritual'. They also assert that theoretical and practical knowledge are not separated within African knowledge systems and that the

locus of power for learning does not rest with a centralised controlling authority within African knowledge systems.

Ngũgĩ wa Thiong'o (1986), a literary critic, highlights knowledge generation and sharing within African knowledge systems rests heavily on language as part of cultural expression. He says that language is a powerful means for understanding, creating and sharing cultures because of its 'dual character: it is both a means of communication and a carrier of culture' (Ngũgĩ, 1986, p. 13) through time. Ngũgĩ (1986, p. 15) argues that 'language as culture is the collective memory bank of a people's experience in history. Culture is almost indistinguishable from the language that makes possible its genesis, growth, banking, articulation and indeed its transmission from one generation to the next.' Within the peace studies field, Amisi (2008) builds on Ngũgĩ's argument that scholars need to reflect or reconsider the languages and ideas generated from them that are relevant to the experience of African peoples. She argues that knowledge systems emanating from Africa 'have something to contribute to efforts at crafting new paradigms and approaches to peace in Africa' (Amisi, 2008, p. 17). She asks African scholars to explore their own knowledge systems and question if 'they cannot be reinterpreted in terms relevant to the twenty-first century African? Is it impossible to build on these ideas through innovation, enriching them and creatively finding ways of breaking them out of their particularity so that they benefit all ethnic groups in society?' (Amisi, 2008, p. 18).

Some African knowledge theorists also argue that modern Africans operate on multilayered knowledge systems due to the mix of different African knowledge systems and the knowledge systems instituted by the colonial/imperial powers, which affirms the unity in diversity maxim found across African societies (Goduka, 1999; Mpofu, 2002). Ngara (2007, cited in Nashon et al., 2007, pp. 1–2) specifically highlights four ways of knowing that reflect a modern African knowledge system that can harmonise Africa's broken past with its modern realities of globalisation, namely: '1) knowing through taboos, 2) knowing through collective wisdom and experience, 3) knowing through faith, and 4) knowing through communication (spiritual wisdom)'.

Nsamenang and Tchombe (2011) argue that the formal African education systems cannot be discussed without adequately considering African education systems that existed prior to being heavily influenced by the Arabic-Islamic or Western-Christian education systems across Africa. These African education systems were not written down, unlike the Arabic-Islamic and European educational systems, which were based on the primacy of the written word – specifically, Arabic and English words (Nsamenang & Tchombe, 2011). Due to the trans-Saharan slave trade, colonialism, Islamisation/Arabisation by successive economic and political authorities and governance regimes in Sudan since the 7th century (see Chapter 4), Sudanese communities were slowly and systematically integrating both Sunni Islamic principles with deep Sufi mystical beliefs into their social customs and belief systems as well as the English

language and Christian beliefs (Nasr, 1971). The spiritual, interpersonal, experiential and inclusive ways of knowing within the African knowledge systems allowed for knowledge sharing between Sufi sheikhs and the Sudanese communities and led to the Sudanese Islamic Sufi ways of knowing being subsumed within the existing African knowledge systems (Salomon, 2013). These Sufi ways of knowing (from a Sunni Islamic tradition) can be described as '*'ilm al-sharia* (knowledge of the book) and *'ilm al-haqlqa* (knowledge of the heart)', or what can be described simply as *'ilm* (religious knowledge from the Quran) and *ma'rifa* (experiential knowledge through reflection) integrated together (Salomon, 2013, p. 822). These Islamic ways of knowing strived to guide all aspects of society, as Nsamenang and Tchombe (2011, p. 46) assert:

> The divine revelation included the dogmas of faith and the religious and moral duties of the believer as well as guidance on the political, social and economic organisation of the community. It can therefore be said that Islamic education differed from Indigenous African education because it had a well laid out policy concerning all aspects of life in a society. The main principles guiding the content were of divine origin aimed at directing the conduct of the individual and the community to respect Allah's command. Since these commands were written, it became incumbent on Muslims to have literary education so as to gain fully from the religion.

Within the Nuba Mountains in Sudan, there still remain 'constant debates over what is proper Islam and what is not, what behavior is derived from proper Islamic principles and what derives from other sources' (Manger, 1994, p. 137). Therefore, the knowledge systems existing in the Nuba Mountains can be seen as a blurring of the lines between African, Arabic-Islamic and Western knowledge systems due to the historical and cultural transformations over the centuries.

Types of knowledge

There are many different types of knowledge that can be shared between people. Within Verkoren's (2008) study on knowledge sharing with peacebuilding organisations, she cites a few different types of knowledge, namely tacit, explicit, academic and practical experience. Tacit knowledge aligns more with non-Western/traditional knowledge systems in Table 1 because it is described as sensory knowing that may not be directly perceived through the five senses, but from an unconscious holistic bodily knowing and is not easily codified as knowledge yet can be enacted through social exchanges and in networks (Polanyi, 1967). It can be technical in terms of a body of knowledge or skill acquired through gradual and sustained practice over time. In contrast to tacit knowledge, explicit knowledge aligns more with Western/modern knowledge systems as it can be defined as easily codified and written for the purpose of sharing and learning from it. However, as Verkoren (2006, p. 30) points out, 'The challenges concerning explicit knowledge relate to codification and recording processes (how can I process this knowledge in such a way that

it is of the most use to others?) as well as dissemination (how can I ensure that this knowledge reaches the people who might need it?)'. These challenges align with explicit knowledge being conceived as an object that needs to be shared to wider groups of people in order to create more efficient, effective and innovative organisations and project designs, especially through the use of computer technology (Firestone & McElroy, 2003). Academic knowledge also aligns more with Western/modern knowledge systems in Table 1 since it is 'scientifically generated', 'formalised', 'quantifiable', 'scientifically tested', 'often separated from applied contexts' and 'often relies on data generated by researchers who come from formalized higher education contexts'. Conversely, practical experience aligns more with the non-Western/traditional knowledge systems in Table 1 because it is 'experience-based with community members', involves 'learning through observation and experiences' and is 'process-oriented'.

Nonaka and Takeuchi (1995) highlighted how knowledge (explicit and tacit) can be conceived in a dynamic and continuous process through a socialisation, externalisation, combination and internalisation (SECI) model. Remarkably, Snowden (2002, p. 101) stated that 'Nonaka and Takeuchi developed the SECI model as a way to contrast the acclaimed Japanese tradition of "Oneness" [*ichiyo*] with a rational, analytical and Cartesian western tradition'. Nonaka and Konno (1998, p. 42) later elaborated on the influential SECI model by distinguishing two dimensions of tacit knowledge: the technical

dimension, i.e., the ‘know-how’, and the cognitive dimension, i.e., beliefs, ideals, values, mental models, schemata.

Situated knowledge

While not mentioned as a type of knowledge in Verkoren’s study (2008), situated knowledge would align with non-Western/traditional knowledge systems in Table 1 because of its experienced-based nature, socially situated and opposing any sense of object–subject framing. The concept of situated knowledge comes from feminist epistemology, particularly Haraway’s (1988) description of situated knowledges as epistemic positions that are embodied, partial and localised. Haraway (1988) asserts that all knowledge and truth is shaped by the position from which a person is seeing and thinking about the world, which means that there are multiple situated knowledges and, therefore, multiple truths. The concept of situated knowledge sees the formation of knowledge as positional with no objective position. Haraway (1988, p. 581) criticised the positivist view of objectivity by calling it a ‘god trick of seeing everything from nowhere’ and offered a view of objectivity as situated in a specific context, environment, history, society, culture and embodied experiences that were both particular and embodied. Moreover, sociologist Collins (2000, p. 18) argues that taking an intersectional lens when analysing situated knowledges allows for all ‘particular forms of intersecting oppressions,

for example, intersections of race and gender, or of sexuality and nation' to be known. Using an intersectional lens when analysing situated knowledges within peacebuilding practice would allow power dynamics to be acknowledged with the aim of using that analysis to help dismantle power imbalances across social and political context levels.

Sabaratnam (2013) and Danielsson (2020) argue for incorporating situated knowledge in the analysis, methodologies and scholarly critiques of peacebuilding interventions. Sabaratnam (2013) argues that peacebuilding interventions need to centre the situated knowledges of those who are targeted by interventions within the analysis, design and evaluation of interventions. Danielsson (2020) argues that using the concept of situated knowledge can help 'make known and disentangle the politics and power relations of peacebuilding inclusivity projects' (p. 1096) by viewing these projects as 'necessarily situated, practical and achieved rather than given' (p. 1096) and by re-considering the categories of 'local and … international [as] emergent and mutually generative rather than distinct and pre-formed' (p. 1090). These arguments affirm Haraway's (2016, p. 31) assertion that 'Nobody lives everywhere; everybody lives somewhere; Nothing is connected to everything; everything is connected to something'. These assertions highlight the importance of knowledges being derived from particular places and shared through particular connections (including kinships or other relationships).

Endogenous knowledge

In addition to not including situated knowledge, Verkoren's (2006, 2008) studies also do not include endogenous knowledge within her categorisation of knowledges. The term endogenous originates from the field of biology to describe something that comes from the inside. Philosopher Hountondji (1997) reconceptualised the term to describe knowledge as endogenous, meaning the accumulation of cultural transactions that occurred over centuries between various cultures, while acknowledging the historical hegemony of this exchange of knowledge between Global North and Global South due to colonialism and globalisation. He moves away from viewing African knowledge systems as separate or untouched knowledge systems. His endogenous knowledge conception partly builds off arguments from anti-colonial scholars, such as Diop (1974), who advocate to look deeper into the past as a way to understand the present and how it has evolved. His conception of endogenous knowledge speaks to the historical and living processes of knowledge generation that happen in African societies that have evolved into intertwining knowledges and ways of seeing the world that derive partly from Western knowledge systems and Arab-Islamic knowledge systems due to historical events like the trans-Saharan slave trade and colonialism (Hountondji, 1995, 1997). Rather than only valuing African knowledge systems, Hountondji (1997, p. 13) calls for the 'reciprocal valorisation among knowledge systems', or people giving mutual value to all knowledge systems. His conception of endogenous knowledge is similar to indigenous scholar Little Bear's (2000, p. 84) description of indigenous ways of seeing the world as 'jagged'. Similar to

Hountondji, Little Bear also argues that indigenous ways of seeing and Western ways of seeing the world began to forcibly merge due to varying degrees of colonisation, imperialism and globalisation.

A few studies within the peacebuilding field have engaged with the concept of endogenous knowledge (Gilbert, 1997; López & Ingelaere, 2019). López and Ingelaere (2019) used the concept in their operationalising of their term 'peace trajectories' within the hybrid peacebuilding literature to better understand how hybrid peace formation takes shape in post-conflict societies. They describe endogenous knowledge as 'the accumulated learnings of the people in a locale…[i]t includes, but is not solely shaped by, the influence of 'outside' intervention' (López & Ingelaere, 2019, p. 6). It includes "situated knowledge and localized ways of social organisation but also sees these as further complemented by exogenous knowledge and resources' (López & Ingelaere, 2019, p. 10). The development field has engaged with the term more than the peacebuilding field. Examples include international organisations such as Practical Action and IDEA, which acknowledge the challenges to engaging in endogenous knowledge generation as endogenous development. Practical Action (2007, p. 153) found endogenous knowledge generation required first revitalising 'traditional learning and second to realize effective synergy and interaction between existing local knowledge systems and those from outside'. Within that endogenous knowledge generation process, at least two challenges exist: how to unearth

the traditional learning that may have been subjugated by outside knowledge systems and how to engage in knowledge sharing across multiple knowledge systems.

Attempts to codify and share knowledges (in explicit, tacit, endogenous, or situated forms) within the peacebuilding field have often been for the primary purpose of benefiting an external actor so they can understand the complexity of a context and further the pre-determined goals of liberal peacebuilding (i.e., values of a free-market democracy, rule of law and individual human rights) that stem from Western/modern knowledge systems. Examples in the peacebuilding literature include the *Gacaca* courts in Rwanda, the *Loya Jirga* councils in Afghanistan and the *uma lulic* 'sacred house' system in East Timor, which all lost their situated meanings when the formation and purposes were designed by peacebuilding technocrats from outside for liberal peacebuilding purposes (Nadarajah & Rampton, 2015). Another example is Paananen's (2021, p. 249) sensemaking processes to try and codify situated, explicit and tacit knowledges from a universalised 'local' context to better understand the local dynamics and capabilities from their perspective using informal networks in an instrumentalised community of practice that lacks full reciprocity in terms of knowledge learning and sharing.

Despite the best of intentions by peacebuilding donors and scholar-practitioners to recognise the importance of non-Western/traditional knowledge systems and concepts derived from them, 'peacebuilding interventions are often based on Western concepts of conflict resolution, mediation, and institution building' (Verkoren, 2008, p. 95).

Peacebuilding scholars are aware that most peacebuilding research and practice has been rooted in the Western/modern knowledge system with theories derived from realism/liberalism, constructivism, cosmopolitanism, pragmatism and critical theory/transformativity (Carey, 2020; McCandless & Donais, 2020), which then informs their methodologies (Mertens & Wilson, 2012). However, even when peacebuilding scholar-practitioners are aware of non-Western/traditional knowledge systems and worldviews within a community, the design of peacebuilding approaches can range from total irrelevance of endogenous and situated knowledges to these knowledges being totally consumed through appropriation or assimilation (Brigg & Walker, 2016). Also, when non-Western/traditional knowledge is used, there is often codification of the embedded non-Western/traditional processes into different replicable forms through particular Western worldviews and epistemologies. This process tends to displace the 'relational flux', which involves specific 'people, values, narratives, and places that are essential to the conceptions of peace within non-Western/traditional knowledge systems' (Brigg & Walker, 2016, pp. 266–267). They also run the risk of cultural exoticising or romanticising this knowledge within peacebuilding processes or practices to the point that they or the people themselves become commodities of the Western knowledge system-derived liberal peacebuilding enterprise, and infused with positivist, reductionist, linear and cognitive thought process of social change (Loode, 2011; Mac Ginty, 2015). Consequently, this study chose to use Hountondji's (1997) conception of endogenous knowledge by centring endogenous knowledge systems that exist in the Nuba Mountains within their conceptual

framework to acknowledge their ever-evolving cultural transactions between communities, including previous imperial/colonial or ethnonationalist powers and the aid industry that is embedded in Western/modern knowledge systems.

Concept of knowledge sharing within the peacebuilding field

In order to understand the conception of knowledge sharing within the peacebuilding field, it is useful to understand it from the development field first, considering the influences from the development field on the peacebuilding field. From the 1990s onward, the development field (primarily focused on poverty reduction and economic issues) became entangled with the peacebuilding field (primarily focused on the root causes of conflict) because of the increased awareness among both fields of the 'intertwined nature of poverty and conflict, their shared root causes, and the increasing complexity involved in addressing them' (Jantzi & Jantzi, 2009, p. 66). Also, over the last two decades, the centrality of knowledge and knowledge sharing has increased in importance for multinational institutions and NGOs, starting with the World Bank and the UN (Britton, 2005; Hovland, 2003; Ramalingam, 2005, 2006; Verkoren, 2006, 2008). As UN Secretary-General Kofi Annan said, 'we realise more and more that knowledge is what makes the difference: knowledge in the hands of those who need it, and of those who can make best use of it' (Clarke & Squire, 2005, p. 110).

Ramalingam (2005, p. 41) defined knowledge sharing as 'the flow of knowledge from one party to another. This includes the diverse tools used for translation, conversion, filtering and two-way communication.' Ramalingam (2005, pp. 28–29) also applied Nonaka and Takeuchi's SECI model for development and humanitarian organisations to engage in flow of knowledge from one party to another, emphasising the following: 1) socialisation resulting in 'shared knowledge' through 'mentoring (sharing internal knowledge, skills and insights)' or 'imitation, observation and practice'; 2) externalization as 'knowledge conversion' through 'dialogue between people who transform tacit knowledge into explicit knowledge'; 3) combination of 'different types of explicit knowledge' such as 'documents, telephone and meetings'; and 4) internalisation which entails 'learning by doing', or 'a process that occurs when the previous modes of knowledge conversion (socialisation, externalisation and combination), are internalised in people's minds as tacit knowledge, which is represented by mental images or models'. The methods offered by Ramalingam (2006) as two-way communication tools for the purpose of expressing tacit and explicit included:

- Stories: 'Storytelling, an approach which can both allow for expression of tacit knowledge and increase potential for meaningful knowledge sharing, particularly by permitting learning to take place through the presence of a narrative structure';

- Peer Assists: ‘This tool encourages participatory learning, by asking those with experience in certain activities to assist those wishing to benefit from their knowledge, through a systematic process, towards strengthened mutual learning’;

- Challenge Sessions: ‘a structure framework geared towards solving problems by allowing participants to supplement their habitual thinking with new methods, centred around working towards dealing with problems that are made up of conflicting requirements or challenges’; and

- After Action Reviews and Retrospects: ‘facilitates continuous assessment of organisational performance, looking at successes and failures, ensuring that learning takes place to support continuous improvement in organisational learning and change’ (Ramalingam, 2006, p. 7).

These two-way communication tools initially focused on organisational learning inside development organisations. Ramalingam (2006) also emphasized that workers within development organisations found one of the main barriers to inculcating these two-way communication tools across organisation was the limitations of an organisation’s culture. Knowledge management scholars argue that culture shapes knowledge sharing assumptions, particularly what is conceived as knowledge, what is worth sharing with others, who should share it and when is the appropriate format and time to share it (Brache, 2002; King, 2007).

Organisational learning scholar Senge (1998, p. 12) offered another definition of sharing knowledge that the peacebuilding field often used:

> Sharing knowledge is not about giving people something, or getting something from them. That is only valid for information sharing. Sharing knowledge occurs when people are genuinely interested in helping one another develop new capacities for action; it is about creating learning processes.

This definition explicitly focuses on mutual action and mutual learning processes. It builds on systemic thinking about collective learning and shared knowledge within learning organisations (Argyris & Schön, 1974; Senge, 1990). The peacebuilding field has increasingly used insights and models from Senge (1990) as well as from Argyris and Schön (1974, 1996) in the process of sharing knowledge for the purpose of organisational learning processes (Church & Rogers, 2006). Senge (1990) emphasised the power of mental models as one of the five disciplines of learning organisations (the other four disciplines being systems thinking, personal mastery, building shared vision, and team learning) that would need to be mastered for an organisation to continuously grow and innovate as an learning organisation. He described mental models as ‘deeply ingrained assumptions, generalisations or even pictures or images that influence how we understand the world and how we take action’ (Senge, 1990, p. 8). His method for engaging with mental models entailed ‘turning the mirror inward; learning to unearth our internal

pictures of the world, to bring them to the surface and hold them rigorously to scrutiny' through 'learning conversations' with others 'where people expose their own thinking effectively and make their thinking open to the influence of others' (Senge, 1990, pp. 8-9). This dialectic exercise of knowledge sharing between people could help shift peace imaginations toward 'different mental model[s]' that are beyond current dominant metaphors in the peace and conflict field (e.g. negotiating at a table), as advocated by Lederach (2019, p. 26).

While the peacebuilding field has been primarily focused on peacebuilding from an NGO organisational and institutional frame, there have been peacebuilding practices that began to focus on knowledge sharing within communities, including Lederach's elicitive approach, Lave and Wenger's community of practice, and De Coning's adaptive peacebuilding approach. These three approaches, more or less, all focus on knowledge sharing with community members within conflict-affected societies rather than within a single learning organisation. This next section reviews each approach in terms of knowledge sharing purpose, possible critiques and uses for this study.

Elicitive approach

Lederach (1995) began advocating the use of an elicitive approach to sharing knowledge about peace and conflict from the community. His elicitive approach can be seen in opposition to the prescriptive approach, which is a content-based knowledge sharing

approach that was the norm for conflict resolution trainings. Within a prescriptive approach, knowledge is transferred in a one-way direction from a trainer to the community using universal models for conflict resolution that are either applied or adapted to the cultural context (Lederach, 1995). The prescriptive approach could be viewed as part of the first generation of knowledge management, which was based on Western/modern knowledge systems that saw knowledge as objective. An elicitive approach conceives of knowledge as subjective where the knowledge needed rests within the communities' minds. In addition, the trainer's role is to perform a facilitating role to unearth these subjective knowledges by asking elicitive questions to the community. The approach seeks to address and transform cycles of violence within communities in order to build and sustain a justpeace. Lederach argued that understanding a society's culture was crucial to nurturing conflict transformation and peacebuilding. He asserted that understanding conflict and culture in a society was 'not merely a question of sensitivity or of awareness, but a far more profound adventure of discovering and digging in the archaeology of accumulated shared knowledge common to a set of people', which can enable understanding about the linkages between social conflict, culture and meaning making (Lederach, 1995, p. 10).

Lederach, with his elicitive approach, was also the first scholar-practitioner to advocate focusing on cultural understanding of peace and conflict issues from the communities' perspectives within the local turn in peacebuilding (Mac Ginty &

Richmond, 2013). Subsequent approaches within the peacebuilding field strived to engage in the local knowledge and relationships within societies through what can be described as local, hybrid, pragmatic, relational, or ethnographic-informed peacebuilding theory and practice. These approaches reimagined alternative approaches to the exhaustively critiqued liberal peace paradigm with its Global North-imposed, top-down, linear, technocratic, prescriptive blueprint for fragile or conflict-affected countries' transitions from war to peace, which all stem from Western/modern knowledge systems (Autesserre, 2014, 2016, 2017; Brigg, 2016; Mac Ginty, 2011; Mac Ginty & Richmond, 2016; Millar, 2014, 2018; Moe & Stepputat, 2018; Richmond, 2006). They critiqued how liberal peacebuilding – in theory and practice – was a system of governance with security as its imperative from the 1990s onward, and with an aim to perpetuate multi-party democratic systems under the tenets of 'the rule of law, human rights, free and globalised markets and neoliberal development' (Richmond, 2006, p. 292; see also Jabri, 2010).

All of these theorists argued for a normative movement away from prescriptive approaches to peacebuilding. They embraced emancipatory hybrid or post-liberal peace, which was rooted in everyday settings where everyday peace existed and the entire peacebuilding process – its means and its ends – were political by nature, and inclusive of diverse yet ultimately related perspectives, especially of the 'local' perspectives. Critics of these liberal peacebuilding critiques highlighted how they could be recast as Eurocentric critiques of Eurocentrism, as they still centred on Western distinctiveness, perpetuating the

very binaries they criticised (Global North–Global South, international–local, past–present etc.) (Sabaratnam, 2017). Scholars argue that these critiques remain silent about situated knowledges, race and other structural hierarchies that frame power relations across the world, including in the field of peacebuilding (Azarmandi, 2018; Paffenholz, 2015; Randazzo, 2016, 2021; Sabaratnam, 2013, 2017).

As some critics have highlighted, there may still be a 'transitive subject-object split' within Lederach's elicitive approach and other peacebuilding approaches, where '*We* are doing peacebuilding to *them*' (Avruch, 2013, p. 26, with phrasing from Rich Rubenstein). As Avruch (2013, p. 26) asserts, 'Any sort of 'peacebuilding', even the humanistic sort described by Lederach, involves a great intrusion into the 'target' cultures and societies, and a greater chance for mischief'. Coming from the cross-section of religious and peacebuilding studies, Omer (2020, p. 10) specifically critiques Lederach's elicitive approach for being 'instruments of violence and control, even if on the surface they lend authority to localized problem solving'. She argues that 'merely eliciting indigenous epistemologies does not go deep enough into people's capacity to imagine decolonial emancipatory alter-realities; these capacities involve border thinking, theological disobedience, indigenous interculturality, and a sociology of absences and emergences' (Omer, 2020, p. 19). Omer's critique suggests further decolonial and postcolonial analytical constructs that focus on material benefits for people living in the

margins of society are needed for elicitive approaches to peacebuilding to reach the epicentre of conflicts.

Consequently, while this study affirms Lederach's (1995, p. 10) statement that understanding conflict and culture in a society is 'not merely a question of sensitivity or of awareness, but a far more profound adventure of discovering and digging in the archaeology of accumulated shared knowledge common to a set of people', it also seeks to highlight the missing knowledge system dimension within societies. This missing knowledge system dimension within conflict analysis and peacebuilding practice could help illuminate the different knowledge systems and corresponding ways of knowing and sharing that have been marginalized or subjugated by dominant knowledge systems due to historical dynamics.

Community of practice

Lave and Wenger's (1991) concept of a community of practice would be more in line with the second generation of knowledge management because of its focus on dynamic interactions between tacit and explicit knowledge. A community of practice can be defined as 'a group of people who share a concern, a set of problems or a passion about a topic, and who deepen their knowledge and expertise by interacting on an ongoing basis' (Wenger et al., 2002, p. 4). A community of practice has three components: a joint enterprise (the common purpose that informally connects people), mutual engagement (the

amount and pattern of interaction among the members of the community) and shared repertoire (continual development and maintenance of tools, methods, art forms, information/knowledge, etc.) (Wenger et al., 2002). It is a type of self-organised group that is underpinned by situated learning theory. Situated learning theory conceives of learning outside of the classroom that is situated in particular activities, contexts or cultures and where an ongoing learning process within a community takes place. The members of this community are constantly engaging in tacit and collective learning through knowledge sharing, which is for the most part unintentional.

Critics of Lave and Wenger's situated learning theory argue that it privileges value-neutral approaches leading to an erasure of the trans-local context (Curnow, 2016) and does not pay attention to power dynamics (Contu & Willmott, 2003). The origin of Lave and Wenger's situated learning theory is based on older Western knowledge sharing theories, particularly Vygotsky's (1978, 1987) social/cultural learning theory and Bandura's (1977) social learning theory, both of which highlight the importance of social interaction within the learning process. Bandura's (1977) social learning theory focuses on learning as behavioural change through observing, role modelling (person or symbolic) and mimicking others' attitudes, emotions and behaviours based on their interaction in their environment. Bandura's theory says that both direct observation of role models and indirect observation of the media can lead to both positive and negative behavioural change. Many programme approaches and strategies within the wider field of conflict

resolution have implicitly used social learning theory to emphasise the importance of modelling and imitation for behaviour change (Shapiro, 2006).

Vygotsky's (1978, p. 86) social/cultural learning theory is based on cognitive learning through cultural interaction through languages and navigated through the zone of proximal development, which can described as 'the distance between the actual developmental level as determined by independent problem solving and the level of potential development as determined through problem solving under adult guidance or in collaboration with more capable peers'. Moreover, language was key to Vygotsky's theory, as it was the tool through which cultures and behaviours could be communicated and understood. Vygotsky's theory only became widely known in Western education systems when Wood et al. (1976) resurrected it and coined the term 'scaffolding' in place of the zone of proximal development.

Within the field of peacebuilding, international organisations often use both social/cultural learning theory to underpin their theories of change as part of their overall approach and strategies. For example, one of the mainstream international peacebuilding organisations, Search for Common Ground, credits Vygotsky's social/cultural learning theory within its Radio Peacebuilding Africa programme (Hargreaves & Rolt, 2005). Peacebuilding scholars, such as Wallis (2021, p. 163), also highlight Vygotsky's social/cultural learning theory for providing the theoretical understanding for acknowledging the relational ontologies that exist in conflict-affected societies

considering ‘social relations or relations among people genetically underlie all higher (mental) functions and their relationships’. However, they do not acknowledge the influence of worldviews and the corresponding knowledge systems as important dimensions within any theoretical lens used to engage in peacebuilding within conflict-affected societies.

Unlike Lave and Wenger’s concept of community of practice that does not address epistemic power within its knowledge sharing concept, Nabudere’s (2009) community site of knowledge concept theorises a community’s knowledge being rediscovered and sometimes fused with outside knowledge for the self-empowerment of the community (Velthuizen, 2014). Nabudere’s concept of a community site of knowledge is similar to Boulding’s (1971, p. 4) idea of a ‘learning site’ where cultures of peace develop. In Eastern Uganda, Wanda applied Nabudere’s concept of a community site of knowledge to find ‘a depository of indigenous knowledge systems and ‘nurseries’ for alternative socio-cultural and political leadership that leads to organic restorative practices to address persistent marginalisation, discrimination and socio-cultural exclusions’ (Wanda, 2013, as cited in Velthuizen, 2014, p. 66). Greeley (2020) applied a hybrid community of practice/community site of learning with peacebuilders from North and East Africa in a community of practice using WhatsApp over a seven-month period to engage in situated, explicit and tacit knowledge learning and sharing, which moved between the real world and virtual world. This hybrid learning site highlighted ‘the benefit from first creating a

physical community site of knowledge that builds and strengthens intensive social bonding and reciprocal learning using both Western and non-Western concepts and methods' and the importance of collectively determining 'the purpose and rules of engagement for a virtual community of practice (to) help transition a community site of knowledge into an informal virtual space so the reciprocal learning can continue' (Greeley, 2020, p. 386). The effectiveness of knowledge sharing in the virtual community site of knowledge was predicated on the in-person collective knowledge sharing and decision-making on the purpose and rules for continuing the group knowledge sharing.

In comparing Nabudere's community site of knowledge concept and Lave and Wenger's community of practice concepts, the former avoids hierarchical formations between actors/entities involved (in this case, peacebuilder) and intentionally engages in knowledge sharing that stays true to the principles of the existing endogenous knowledge systems present in the society. In contrast, Lave and Wenger's conception of a community of practice divides community members into core, active and periphery categories and privileges value-neutral approaches rather than approaches that are specifically trying to transform society across social scales to build peace and manage conflict. Consequently, this study chose to view the Nuba Mountains war zone as a community site of knowledge that centres endogenous knowledge systems and avoids hierarchal formations between peacebuilders while also looking to see what new knowledge can be applied from other knowledge systems that serves the needs of the communities from their perspectives.

Adaptive peacebuilding

Another peacebuilding approach that centres knowledge sharing with conflict-affected community members within its methodology is De Coning's (2018) adaptive peacebuilding approach. This approach is part of the growing complexity-informed approaches within the peacebuilding field. All of these approaches strive to move away from Newtonian and Cartesian maxims of cause-and-effect and rational logics, which underpins the liberal peacebuilding approach that views peace and conflict in binary and component parts in search of linear and causal solutions (Coleman et al., 2019; De Coning, 2018, 2020; Lederach, 2005; Loode, 2011; Mac Ginty & Richmond, 2013; Paffenholz, 2015, 2021). Instead of positivist understandings of knowledge as an object or thing, these complexity-informed approaches focus on managing the flow of tacit and explicit knowledge as part of sense-making and working with chaos and complexity (Snowden, 2002). They want to embrace the idea that space, time, things, people and mechanisms are all interconnected and react in different ways in endless relational processes that are responding, crossing, overlapping and interacting in non-linear and emergent ways across multiple complex adaptive systems.

The methodological core of the adaptive peacebuilding approach builds on the problem-driven iterative adaptation (PDIA) model originated by development scholars' evidence-based research on failures of building state capabilities (Pritchett et al., 2010). The PDIA model consists of iterative cycles of planning, action, reflection and revision with problems that are locally nominated and prioritized as well as interventions that are

designed to address the problems in an adaptive manner across activity, project and programme levels in order to inform project development and maximise impact (Andrews et al., 2013). While it centres continuous knowledge sharing through participatory experiential learning, it does so within a problem-oriented strategy for building state capability, with the ultimate goal of state functioning within the existing (unbalanced) globalised world. Chilisa and Tsheko (2014, p. 229) argue that one of the criticisms of participatory processes is that ‘most of the approaches are problem focused aiming at discovering communities’ unmet needs’. Tuck (2009, p. 413) also argues that the inclusion of a problem-oriented understanding of a situation plays into a ‘damage-centred’ inquiry that ‘operates, even benevolently, from a theory of change that establishes harm or injury in order to achieve reparation’. A damage-centred inquiry is similar to Freire’s (1970) deficit-oriented frame because it emphasises what a person or institution lacks. As Tuck (2009, p. 413) asserts, a damage-centred inquiry is a ‘pathologizing approach … in which the oppression singularly defines the community’.

Moreover, Akmeemana (2018) critiques the use of PDIA within development programmes because it ‘is looking at the process of national development. There’s an endogenous feedback loop from the experimentation to the adaptation. There’s a whole political and administrative system to respond, and we’re trying to mimic that somehow in a compressed project/programme cycle with something that is externally imposed. So some of these ideas are going to be very hard to implement, because we don’t have that

endogeneity in the feedback loop' (13:19–16:06). Therefore, by borrowing from the PDIA model within his adaptive peacebuilding approach, De Coning may inadvertently carry forward the imperative to create or reconstruct a functioning state within the current global system as the end goal. Therefore, it is not aimed at transformational change within global society. Instead, its aim is to 'maintain the outer parameters of acceptable state behaviour in the international system' (De Coning, 2016, p. 32). Consequently, De Coning's adaptive peacebuilding may fall in line with the wider hybrid peacebuilding approaches that do not question whether a state, particularly in the face of armed challenges to sovereignty, has legitimacy in the eyes of its citizens, or if non-state armed actors have more legitimacy, which happens in contexts where peacebuilding is ongoing in war zones (Jackson & Albrecht, 2018, p. 42).

In addition, critics of adaptive peacebuilding argue that the approach may still be geared toward 'bridging the local-international dichotomy in order to improve practice', rather than introducing a new paradigm (Randazzo & Torrent, 2021, p. 14). Other critics argue that this new complexity-informed approach 'by itself will thus do little to mitigate the power structures engrained in international interventions' practices … geared towards donor countries and interveners, and which deny the people targeted by peacebuilding to be considered subjects in their own right' (Bächtold, 2021, p. 506). So, while adaptive peacebuilding focuses on facilitating and enabling self-organisation within national and local social institutions as a process that can allow behaviours within a complex social

system to evolve with its environment (De Coning, 2018; Meadows, 1999), it may still be contained within international–local and object–subject dichotomies. Also, it may still perpetuate hierarchical power relations with the end goal of creating or reconstructing a functioning state within the current global system (Azarmandi, 2018; Paffenholz, 2015; Randazzo, 2016; Sabaratnam, 2017). Moreover, similar to Lederach's elicitive approach, De Coning's adaptive peacebuilding approach may also be missing a crucial knowledge system dimension that influences how self-organisation across social networks happens in war zones like the Nuba Mountains. Therefore, this study strives to explore the endogenous knowledge systems that exist in the Nuba Mountains to better understand how knowledge sharing within those systems influences the self-organisation within Nuba Mountains peacebuilding practice.

Self-organisation approaches to community peacebuilding practice

Within the local peacebuilding literature, scholars have highlighted the implicit rules that develop within self-organised peacebuilding practice during times of war across the world (Anderson & Wallace, 2013; Chigas & Woodrow, 2009). Implicit rules can be defined as accepted cultural standards for conduct in relationships and society overall, which includes knowledge sharing practices. Case studies of communities that opted out of war during violent conflicts highlighted that 'the systems, structures, institutions, attitudes, values and interests that support conflict prevention are already in place and in practice in areas where, nonetheless, conflict exists' (Anderson & Wallace, 2013, p. 98). In terms of self-

organisation rules that helped communities manage and evolve with their environments during conflict, Anderson and Wallace (2013, p. 35) found three functions of community governance: 'provision of services, establishment and enforcement of codes of conduct, and community security.' When international peacebuilders were involved in these processes, they followed the community governance tenets by distilling and sharing the knowledge from the local communities through advocating on their behalf at international policy levels to pressure the groups/countries that were inflicting the violence to stop.

Moreover, as Mitchell and Allen Nan (1997, p. 161) reminded, institutionalised communal conflict norms of permitted and prohibited behaviour have existed in societies across history, in what can be described as zones of peace:

> The historical record of other "conflicts within rules" suggests some common patterns of "rule content" that might well be observed within a zone of peace. Rules for conflict typically have been concerned with permitted behavior, prohibited behavior, targets of violence (both prohibited and permitted), time and locale for permitted behaviors, monitoring and supervision procedures, and third parties (e.g., umpires, adjudicators, sanctioners, and so forth)—their nature, behavior, powers and legitimate purposes.

This more anthropological view highlighted by Mitchell and Allen Nan (1997) found that societies across the world developed some level of rules for how society should

function during a conflict, which then became communal norms, including norms for how those inside the society and outside the society should behave, which could include how knowledge should be shared between individuals, groups, organisations and levels of society. The zones of peace highlighted around the world in Hancock and Mitchell (2007) describe communities who carved out locational sanctuaries where civilians felt safe and protected from armed groups engaging in violence involving them. They highlight the historic relationships of communal norms presented by sociologist Benet's (1957) studies 'of segmented and feuding societies among the Berbers of Morocco' with their 'temporary, outdoor markets (*suqs*)' which could 'develop aspects akin to locational sanctuaries in order to allow peaceful trading and the exchange of surplus goods' highlighted in the local peacebuilding processes documented by Hancock and Mitchell (2007). In addition, some societies have communal norms about not sharing certain knowledges for spiritual reasons or for epistemic and material protection of the society. Vizenor (2008) calls this an act of survivance – a combination of survival and resistance. These acts of survivance help prevent the appropriation and codification of situated and tacit knowledge found within endogenous knowledge systems.

Anderson and Wallace (2013, p. 48) also found that key to the self-organisation of communities that opted out of war was the form and quality of their leadership:

> [W]e found that leadership in nonwar communities was often multilayered and diffuse, with a variety of roles fulfilled by different leaders at varying levels. In

> addition, whether there was a single identifiable leader or a multilayered system of leadership, those playing these roles in nonwar communities demonstrated a remarkable openness to ideas, options, and inspiration generated from their constituencies. Leaders encouraged everyone to originate ideas and strategies. They claimed no monopoly on insight, wisdom, or strategic cleverness.

This 'multilayered' system of leadership could be a form of self-organisation that Ricigliano (2012, p. 67) calls a network of effective action, which can be defined as 'a set of practices for how peacebuilding actors can organize themselves for more effective and integrated collaboration and for greater impact on conflict situations at the programmatic and systemic levels'. It's a decentralised coalition of organisations that have self-organising goals that foster systemic change, promote learning and facilitate joint action (Ricigliano, 2012). Rather than focusing on people as the agents of change, an evaluation of the CDA Collaborative Learning Projects'[6] 'Reflecting on Peace Practice' project emphasised linkages on a multi-level basis that enabled more effective peace initiatives. These linkages included 'active linkages between efforts that stimulate change at the individual/personal level (attitudes, feelings, perceptions, skills, etc.), those promoting change at the socio-political level (societal, institutional, public), and between efforts targeting 'more people' (grassroots, broad engagement in the peace process) and 'key

[6] CDA Collaborative Learning Projects was formally known as CDA (Collaborative for Development Action) from 1985–2003.

people' in the conflict' in order to bring about peace writ large (Chigas & Woodrow, 2009, p. 59).

However, both Ricigliano and Chigas & Woodrow do not state how to identify and strengthen the linkages within networks of people and across multiple levels in society. This study seeks to explore the forms of knowledge sharing that were used during war, which could be seen as communal norms for behaving and sharing knowledge that also support linkages within networks of effective action or across levels of society, including spoilers to peace.

Knowledge sharing within decolonial/postcolonial-informed peacebuilding

Over the last decade, peace and peacebuilding scholar-practitioners have turned to postcolonial/decolonial literature to help re-frame approaches and to rethink the world 'from the perspective of the marginalized, that is, from Latin America, from Africa, from Indigenous places and from the global South', including how to specifically centre the knowledge systems that exist in these places rather than centring and/or privileging Western/modern knowledge systems within peacebuilding theory, practice and pedagogy (Zembylas, 2020, p. 5; see also Ayindo, 2017; FitzGerald, 2021; Fontan, 2012; Hajir & Kester, 2020; Omer, 2020; Sabaratnam, 2013, 2017; Schirch, 2022; Shirazi, 2011; Weerawardhana, 2018; Zondi, 2016). The decolonial turn in peacebuilding strives for a

comprehensive ontological (way of being), epistemological (way of knowing) and axiological (ethical frame/values) move beyond the critiques of the other local and hybrid peacebuilding approaches which, despite their good intentions, still privilege a Eurocentric worldview, including the penchant to frame the 'local' as an ontological 'Other' (Sabaratnam, 2013). Decolonial/postcolonial-informed peacebuilding strives to further engage with postcolonial and decolonial concepts to acknowledge and decrease epistemic violence within the field. One of the goals is to identify, unmask and dismantle all the intersecting hierarchies of power (including gender, religion, race, ethnicity, colour, class, age, language, able-ness and education), which have their roots in the racially hierarchised, capitalist, patriarchal, sexist, Eurocentric, Christian-centric and colonial histories (Grosfóguel, 2007; Quijano, 2000).

Decolonial/postcolonial-informed peacebuilding approaches build on the work of anti-colonial, postcolonial, and feminist scholars who, for over 60 years, have been highlighting the disruptive discourse of the biased global power relations that come from coloniality, the underbelly of modernity (Bhabha, 1994; Fanon, 1967/1986; Maldonado-Torres, 2007; Ngũgĩ, 1986; Said, 1978; Spivak, 1988). Coloniality is the existing and long-standing pattern of systemic distribution of power through the control of knowledge, morals, structures and practices that privileges the dominant group (Eurocentrism), as derived from the colonial governance era (Quijano, 2000). While postcolonial theorists focused on naming and disrupting this coloniality of power in all its dimensions, the

decolonial theorists used the postcolonial and anticolonial critiques to engage in practices of identifying, unmasking and dismantling forces that perpetuate power imbalances while also helping build inclusive and interdependent futures (Mignolo, 2011).

Even though colonialism in its temporal state ended when countries gained their independence from their colonial powers, colonialism's leftover coloniality matrix of power, still manifests according to the following interrelated dimensions: (1) control of economy (land appropriation, exploitation of labour, control of natural resources); (2) control of authority (institution, army); (3) control of gender and sexuality (family, education); and (4) control of subjectivity and knowledge(epistemology, education and formation of subjectivity) (Quijano, 2000, as cited in Mignolo, 2007, p. 156). This coloniality matrix of power is still alive in today's world because it is maintained through 'books, in the criteria for academic performance, in cultural patterns, in common sense, in the self-image of peoples, in aspirations of self, and so many other aspects of our modern experience' (Maldonado-Torres, 2007, p. 243). Striving to unmask and dismantle the control of subjectivity and knowledge that Western/modern knowledge systems continue to have on the conceptions, theories, methodologies and pedagogies of peace and peacebuilding theory and practice is at the heart of the decolonial/postcolonial-informed peacebuilding approaches.

Over the last decade, there has been a steady increase in studies (empirically and normatively) to name and disrupt the coloniality of power matrix within the wider peace

and conflict studies field. A normative example of decolonising peace was Zondi's (2016) focus on critiquing the African Union's attempts at transforming violent conflicts around the African continent. He proposed a paradigm shift that centred the importance of the continued decolonization of the African state and society to achieve a decolonial peace. Coming from the international relations field, Sabaratnam (2013, 2017) highlighted how peacebuilding (and its critiques) reinforce a Eurocentric worldview with an ontological frame of Otherness. Mesa-Vélez (2019), who comes from the cultural studies discipline, emphasised the dangers of using 'culture of dialogue' within peacebuilding if the coloniality of power, knowledge and being go unchecked. Accordingly, she asserts, it is 'important to be aware of the dangers of promoting it as a controlling discourse and to constantly question who is being included/excluded, how representation is taking place and if the content is being controlled as it could be used to reproduce coloniality logics' (Mesa-Vélez, 2019, p. 111). FitzGerald's (2021) normative conception of pluriversal peacebuilding centres on the 'pluriverse' – Escobar's (2018) concept from a Zapatista dictum: *un mundo donde quepan muchos mundos* (a world where many worlds fit). FitzGerald's pluriversal peacebuilding approach envisions ways of multiple worldviews, ways of knowing and practices by employing Mignolo's (2011, 2018) technique of 'de-linking' from Western worldviews and ways of knowing.

Mignolo (2000) built his de-linking concept on Moroccan sociologist Khatibi's (1983/2019) double critique and *pensée autre* (other thinking) concepts that conceptually

critiqued all forms of hegemonic ideologies (such as Eurocentrism or Islamisation) and those existing at the ideological margins of society (such as ethnonationalism) from across historical periods before and after colonialism. Both Khatibi's concepts and and Mignolo's de-linking concept provide analytical tools to achieve Fanon's (1967/1986) concept of disalienation and what Ngũgĩ (1986) would later call the decolonisation of the mind, or removing the colonial alienation from one's self, ideas of knowledge, identity and heritage. Fanon describes disalienation as the process of 'an immediate recognition of social and economic realities' in the internationalisation of racial oppression and '[i]f there is an inferiority complex it is the outcome of a double process: primarily, economic; subsequently, the internalization or, better, the epidermalization—of this inferiority' (Fanon, 1986, p. 4).

From the peace pedagogy side of the peacebuilding field, Kester and Cremin (2017, p. 295) engage with reducing epistemic violence by unmasking 'issues of structural and cultural violence in education and society' in order to 'de-nationalize and de-colonize peacebuilding education'. Epistemic violence occurs when there is only one dominant voice that silences any other knowledge holders' voices and forces other knowledge holders to adopt the dominant voice's worldviews, ways of thinking and methods of sharing knowledge (Spivak, 1988). This process silences, denies or destroys certain knowledges including the complete destruction of knowledges, which Santos (2007) refers to as epistemicide. Within the wider peace and conflict studies field, Azarmandi (2021, p.

4) contends that ‘epistemic violence is entrenched in our knowledge and ways of knowing’. Consequently, Azarmandi (2021, p. 8) urges scholar-practitioners to include ‘other forms of knowledge, such as indigenous peace traditions and epistemologies from the Global South, but also a questioning and suspicion towards the European canon of so-called expert knowledge’.

African decolonial theorist Ndlovu-Gatsheni (2018, p.87) argues for ending epistemic violence by engaging in what he calls epistemic freedom. He asserts the harm ‘imposed on African people cannot be reversed unless African people deliberately embark on the painstaking process of ‘learning to unlearn in order to re-learn’’. He conceptualises this process of ‘learning to unlearn in order to re-learn’ as an exercise of epistemic freedom and argues that it is necessary to transform the harm imposed on African people. Ndlovu-Gatsheni (2018, p. 3) defines epistemic freedom as the struggle for African people to have ‘the right to think, theorize, interpret the world, develop own methodologies, and write from where one is located and unencumbered by Eurocentrism’. It is about ‘democratizing ‘knowledge’ from its current rendition in the singular into its plural known as ‘knowledges’’ (Ndlovu-Gatsheni, 2018, p. 4). Ndlovu-Gatsheni’s (2018, pp. 24–25) argument for ‘learning to unlearn in order to re-learn’ calls for not believing ‘the Cartesian view of knowledge as an individual possession and restores the situatedness of knowledge in communities and civilizations (intersubjective character of knowledge)’. It is acknowledging how knowledge and ways of thinking and sharing that knowledge have

been imposed on African societies by Western/modern knowledge systems and expanding the concept of knowledge to include concepts of knowledge and ways of knowing that are derived from African knowledge systems within all locations across Africa. Santos (2007, p. 67) calls this pluralising of knowledges an 'ecology of knowledges', which is 'premised upon the idea of the epistemological diversity of the world, the recognition of the existence of a plurality of knowledges beyond the scientific knowledge'.

This study seeks to contribute to the decolonial/postcolonial-informed peacebuilding literature by engaging in an ecology of knowledges through recognising the endogenous knowledge systems existing in the Nuba Mountains, and identifying and engaging in ways of sharing knowledges from these knowledge systems as part of peacebuilding practice ongoing in that war zone with explicit decolonial intent. In addition, it strives to avoid engaging in epistemic violence by following Azarmandi's (2021) call to engage in ways of knowing from Nuba Mountains communities and question terms and dominant languages used as part of the PAR methodology. It specifically explores ways of sharing knowledge that are derived from Nuba Mountains endogenous knowledge systems rather than focusing on explicitly on replicating Western-derived ways of knowledge sharing, such as the Western-derived concept of mentoring.

Knowledge sharing using mentoring approaches in peacebuilding practice

The field of peacebuilding has yet to turn to mentoring literature to see how the theories, concepts and approaches in that field might be helpful for peacebuilding approaches, particularly how knowledge sharing can occur through different conceptions of mentoring. Despite scholar-practitioners not having an expressed theoretical understanding of what constitutes mentoring, international organisations/multilateral organisations are often perceived as the paternalistic mentor with the national/local/community being perceived as the unknowledgeable protégé (Autesserre, 2014; Sabaratnam, 2013). This paternalistic archetypal relationship can be seen in how the overarching Western-derived liberal peace paradigm continues to guide international peacebuilding efforts. It can be seen in the unfortunate conflating of peacebuilding and state-building literature when mentoring is suggested or used by an international organisation that assumes an effective mentoring relationship is one that pairs an international with a national/local to share/teach skills, knowledge and experience over a short period of time (Campbell et al., 2011). This kind of unilateral and hierarchical knowledge structure of exchange can be seen as a mental model that structures how peacebuilders coming from a Western liberal peace paradigm think knowledge sharing should be conducted, by whom, for whom and in what timeframe. The mentoring literature defines these mental models as mentoring schemas. Building on relational schema (Baldwin, 1992; Planalp, 1985, 1987) and social cognition

theory (Fiske, 1992; Markus, 1977; Markus & Zajonc, 1985), Ragins and Verbos (2007, p. 101) define mentoring schemas as 'fluid cognitive maps derived from past experiences and relationships that guide mentor's and protégé's perceptions, expectations, and behaviors in mentoring relationships'.

While searching two peer-reviewed databases (Taylor & Francis and JSTOR) for the terms 'mentoring' or 'mentorship' and 'peacebuilding', a total of 491 articles (368 in Taylor & Francis and 123 in JSTOR) in English appeared. Of these, 264 journal articles focused on peacebuilding efforts at the community, national or international levels and mentioned mentoring or mentorship as part of those efforts. However, none of the authors provided a theoretical or conceptual definition of the term 'mentoring' in their articles. Using thematic analysis, the following categories were derived to describe how the authors viewed mentoring: 1) type of knowledge ordering (top-down – vertical, peer-to-peer – horizontal); 2) type of social ordering of participants involved (identity of participants); 3) institutional location (place of focus for the efforts); 4) timeframe/duration (under six months, under one year, more than one year); and 5) type of operational design of engagement (remote, parachute-style, embedded). After analysing the 264 articles according to these categories, 252 articles used the term in the following manner:

- Hierarchical top-down (international to national participant, or Global South-based participant with more privilege working in international organisation to a Global

South-based participant with less privilege working in a national or community organisation);

- Perception of a ‘more knowledgeable’ person transferring knowledge to an ‘unknowledgeable’ or ‘less knowledgeable’ person within a state-run institution;

- Short-term time frame (under six months);

- ‘Soft-touch activity’ meaning the more knowledgeable person would meet remotely or dropped in on short-term basis (one day or once a week/month) for cost-effective purposes.

The remaining 12 articles used the term to describe peer-to-peer horizontal ordering referring to learning between two people of the same age group or institutional level. Eight out of these 12 articles referred to youth-based peer-to-peer knowledge learning. The results of this small meta-analysis indicate that the peacebuilding literature has not engaged with the mentoring literature on a theoretical or methodological basis. Consequently, this meta-analysis indicates the peacebuilding field is centring the Western/modern knowledge system’s concept of mentoring or mentorship with a short, time-bound, hierarchical and uniformed way of depositing knowledge in the forms of skills or competencies from a perceived knowledgeable to unknowledgeable person.

This neo-colonial and liberal agenda has included the historical paternalistic archetype of mentoring for the purposes of 'stabilising weakened or fragile states, but also augmenting and substituting Western military manpower' (Johnson, 2014, p. 648). This can be seen with EULEX (European Union Rule of Law Mission) in Kosovo in the way it is incorporating mentoring as a technical approach to local actors from international actors to be strategically less intrusive (Bargués, 2020; Greiçevci, 2011). In the Solomon Islands, like numerous other international post-conflict programmes, mentoring has been used as a short-term knowledge transactional relationship for income-generating programmes between knowledgeable internationals and unknowledgeable locals, yet not with combatants or victims of the conflict (Evans, 2016). According to AUSAID in Timor Leste, the reliance on foreign advisers for traditional mentoring of nationals did not work because there was quick turnover of staff (mentor and protégé), lack of coordination between foreign adviser mentors and questionable competency among the identified mentors and agencies involved (Goldfinch & DeRouen, 2014). This echoes Autessere's findings about international peacebuilders who may be well-intentioned yet receive vague instructions from their line-managers, misinterpret information, do not speak the language, or lack cultural knowledge (Autesserre, 2014, pp. 115–130). In addition, the Federal Government of Somalia is heavily dependent on international assistance for de-radicalisation interventions that incorporate a state-centric traditional mentoring approach of national actors by internationals that, in turn, reinforces paternalistic paradigms (Linnéa, 2020). In Afghanistan, the Afghan National Police training-and-mentoring

process was problematic because it was largely carried out by military personnel who ended up reinforcing military and liberal mindsets instead of civilian and Afghan-centred mindsets with community-level police trainees (Sedra, 2013).

There have been examples in international peacebuilding where communities acknowledge that the use of mentoring has been effective (even with ex-combatants); this has tended to be informal mentoring and not prompted by Western conceptions of mentoring. In Myanmar, for example, a religious-affiliated peacebuilding organisation found that women tended to gravitate toward efforts that entailed sustained interfaith relationship building, and particularly toward the support from national female mentors who were from their community (King & Owen, 2020). In Burundi, the internationally supported ruling political party (which was previously a rebel movement) overestimated its capacity to lead the peace effort as evident by its inability to sway ex-combatants who broke away from the previous rebel movement and who were not willing to engage with the government in mentoring schemes. Yet, these ex-combatants were able, on their own, to organise socialisation and mentoring frameworks in areas away from the ruling party where they felt more comfortable and secure (Rufyikiri, 2017). As Donais (2009, p. 16) states, effective capacity building needs to move away from 'the somewhat naïve assumption of outsiders that the socialization process required to embed external norms on issues such as community policing can be accomplished with a few weeks of basic training coupled with ongoing mentoring by outside professionals'. However, unless the

current mental model of the paternalistic mentor archetype embedded within international peacebuilding personnel shifts, their frameworks, approaches and instruments will still likely be underpinned by this same archetype.

This paternalistic mentor archetype became entrenched in the contemporary academic conception of mentoring through Levinson et al.'s (1978) study *The Seasons of a Man's Life*. These men explored the function of a mentor in an adult white male development. However, it began to shift when Kathy Kram (1985) established a theoretical foundation for the nascent field of mentoring that saw two equally important functions of mentoring, which enabled a holistic view of the relationship: 1) career-related support (degree of sponsorship, exposure and visibility, coaching, protection and challenging assignments); and 2) psychosocial support (friendship, acceptance, confirmation, counselling and role modelling). Similar to other relationships, mentoring relationships can be perceived as existing on a relationship quality continuum. This mentoring relationship continuum spans from high (relational) to middle (technical) and low (dysfunctional) (Eby et al., 2000; Ragins et al., 2000; Ragins & Verbos, 2007; Scandura, 1998).

Within the mentoring literature there have been disagreements among researchers from different disciplines – organisational development, sociology, psychology, education, management – about what constitutes mentoring and what is the difference between mentoring, coaching, sponsorship and apprenticeship (Chandler et al., 2011; Clutterbuck

& Lane ,2004; Clutterbuck, 2008). However, there is consensus that all of these relationships can be classified as developmental interactions or relationships (D'Abate et al., 2003). Similar to the term peacebuilding, Clutterbuck and Lane (2004) contend that prescribing one universal definition for mentoring is not constructive since the concept should remain highly contextualised based on the culture in which it is used. However, the main paradigm shift within the field of mentoring that helped avoid mentoring being conflated with coaching, sponsorship and apprenticeship occurred in 2007 when Ragins and Kram (2007) redefined mentoring in the context of developmental networks with the central element of reciprocity. They built their reconceptualisation on Kram's (1985) work to help the field of mentoring shift away from the historical conception of a mentoring dyadic hierarchical relationship (mentor–protégé) to a developmental network of relationships that are relational and non-hierarchical and diverse. A developmental network offers career support and psychological support to a protégé (Higgins & Kram, 2001). The developmental network also has a high degree of diversity in terms of identity and background (i.e., job function, age, race, etc.) since Kram theorised that a protégé's changing needs over time would need a constellation of developers. These changing needs were in reaction to globalisation and technological advancements that made organisations non-hierarchical and more agile, while contending with increased staff turnover, the reconceptualisation of boundaryless careers that expand across organisations, and the development of learning platforms within organisations (Chandler et al., 2011; Kram, 1996).

Around the same time, Ragins (2005) began to develop relational mentoring theory. Relational mentoring provided a new concept – a mentoring episode – which can be defined as a 'developmental relationship at the level of one interaction' – as the means of analysing different qualities of interaction (Fletcher & Ragins, 2007, p. 381). Relational mentoring grew out of an application of positive organisational scholarship toward mentoring as a relational state of high-quality connection (Dutton & Heaphy, 2003), and the development of interdependent and generative development relationships, which Higgins and Kram (2001) defined as a group of people who take an active interest in and action to advance a protégé's career.

Ragins and Verbos (2007) argued relational knowledge that fuelled relational processes, behaviors and outcomes derived from four sources: (1) direct lived experience in mentoring relationship, (2) witnessing mentoring relationships (both constructive and destructive ones), (3) a society's cultural norms that shape mentoring relationships (Clutterbuck & Ragins, 2002); and (4) an organisation's language, values, and practices that also shape mentoring relationships. These four sources helped make possible relational outcomes that moved beyond the traditional outcomes of a protégé's job attitudes, compensation and advancement (Ragins, 2012, p. 532). Instead of success being achieved by the independence and autonomy of the protégé with specific, pre-determined end goals, relational mentoring began to focus on success as achieving interdependence in collective interactions. Instead of 'a 'one-size-fits-all' approach to sharing knowledge',

mentors stepped down from their inherited hierarchical power role and moved toward a more ‘needs-based approach (‘What do you need and how can I help?’)’. (Ragins, 2016, p. 232). Similarly, this shift to a relational power role by the mentor also ends up shifting the role of protégé from being a ‘passive recipient (‘Tell me what to do’) of mentoring to engaging in a state of mutuality (‘Let’s figure this out together’) and empowerment (‘Wow, you went through this too? Maybe I can do this!’)’ (Ragins, 2016, p. 232).

New forms of mentoring began to develop following this new relational understanding of mentoring (Chen et al., 2007; Hamilton & Scandura, 2003; Kozlowski & Bell, 2008; Kozlowski et al., 2010). As a result, the type of group mentoring began to vary based on the need of the individuals, groups and organisations, including:

- Peer group: Fluid mentoring with people at similar ranks wherein all can be mentors at a particular time (Pololi et al., 2004)
- One-to-many: One mentor with several protégés simultaneously (Darwin & Palmer, 2009)
- Many-to-one: Multiple mentors with one protégé (Souto-Manning & Dice, 2007)
- Many-to-many: Polyaid mentoring relationship of more than two people in which the interactions were simultaneous and collaborative (Allen et al., 1999; Huizing, 2012)

- Near peer mentoring or step-ahead mentoring (Bulte et al., 2007; Ensher et al., 2001; Singh et al., 2002)

Although the term mentor is not easily translated into different languages considering it varies by culture, the concept of mentoring has always been present in African cultures, considering that it is something young people cannot survive and flourish without. It is common practice in many indigenous contexts for elders to be approached as the first point of contact as a long-term mentor for an indigenous or non-indigenous researcher (Smith, 1999, p. 137). In the context of Sudan, the term 'mentor' does not exist in the Sudanese Arabic language, but some of the mentoring-type roles exhibited by peacebuilders can be expressed in Sudanese Arabic: *moa'lim/moa'lima* (teacher), *daleel* (guide), *modarrib/modarriba* (trainer) and mosahil/mosahila (facilitator).

Although few non-Western models of mentoring in Africa have been reported in the literature within formal mentoring programmes, those that have been reported as being successful are found in South Africa and use *ubuntu* principles, which are common to African oral traditions across the continent (Van Zyl et al., 2011). Building on the work of Keane (2007), Malunga (2006) and Van Zyl et al. (2011), Geber (2015, p. 299) contends that *ubuntu* as a worldview and value system is found throughout the continent and can be considered an African mentoring approach with the following attributes:

- Collective ownership of responsibility, opportunities, and challenges

- Primacy of relationships: one becomes human only in the midst of others
- Harmony, humility and helpfulness as desirable qualities and aims
- Spiritual guidance as a natural part of problem solving
- Moral standards based on ancestral precedents, which may be difficult to change
- Consensus seeking, which may require time to develop.

Unfortunately, Western mentoring models, which are often used in early career development programmes in African countries, do not generally build on the cultural strengths and practices of non-Western nations (Geber & Nyanjom, 2009; Haretsebe & Manwa, 2007).

The field of peacebuilding could benefit from critiquing, borrowing and reconceptualising different concepts from the mentoring literature to engage in more relational and reciprocal understandings of human development that reflect the knowledge systems found in conflict-affected societies like those in the Nuba Mountains war zone. Instead of applying solely Western mentoring conceptions and models of mentoring directly onto the Nuba Mountains peacebuilding practice, this study seeks to borrow the analytical frame of the relational mentoring concept and the unit of analysis of developmental interactions and the analytical categories of precursors, processes and outcomes of developmental interactions to help frame how knowledge sharing about building peace and managing conflict happened from peacebuilders' perspectives in the Nuba Mountains.

Knowledge sharing in peacebuilding conceptual framework

Based on the literature reviewed above, this study views the Nuba Mountains war zone as a community site of knowledge where endogenous knowledge systems exist and have been influenced by both Western/modern and non-Western/traditional knowledge systems over history (Hountondji, 1997; Nabudere, 2009). This study borrows from the relational mentoring literature to help analyse how knowledge sharing impacts Nuba Mountains peacebuilding practice by using developmental interactions as the unit of analysis. Considering relational mentoring frames developmental interactions within a developmental network of relationships that is relational and non-hierarchical, it moves away from Western/modern knowledge system conceptions of centralised networks and hierarchical knowledge sharing and centres the relationships and knowledge systems between peacebuilders and other entities that impact the peacebuilding practice. It also borrows a loose analytical framework from relational mentoring, particularly the categories of precursors, processes and outcomes of developmental interactions within Nuba Mountains peacebuilding practice. This loose framework focuses on the developmental interactions with the peacebuilders who recommenced and evolved the ongoing peacebuilding practice in the war zone as the unit of observation.

Conclusion

This chapter highlighted how knowledge has been conceived, shared, and generated within peacebuilding field. It also explored the dominance of Western knowledge systems that have informed most peacebuilding theories and approaches and the organisational framing of knowledge sharing within peacebuilding practice. The section on the decolonial/postcolonial-informed peacebuilding literature highlighted the recent strides to unmask the coloniality of power, knowledge and being within peacebuilding theory, practice and pedagogy. It suggested that the field of peacebuilding could engage with more postcolonial and decolonial concepts to further acknowledge and decrease epistemic violence within the field of peacebuilding.

This chapter also suggested that scholar-practitioners within the field of peacebuilding could benefit from focusing on the ways of knowledge sharing centred on African knowledge systems and seating African education theorists' conceptions of ways of knowing and knowledge sharing alongside the Eurocentric conception of ways of knowing and knowledge sharing. It highlighted how the dominant conception of mentoring, as a form of knowledge sharing, in the peacebuilding literature has Western/modern knowledge system underpinnings and implicitly informs liberal peacebuilding approaches with international organisations/multilateral organisations perceived as paternalistic mentors and the national/local/community perceived as the unknowledgeable protégé. It also offers different conceptions of mentoring, including

relational mentoring and an African indigenous mentoring approach conceived from an ubuntu worldview and value system, which could be beneficial for scholar-practitioners in the field of peacebuilding to consider when analysing or engaging in peacebuilding practice in war-affected societies. The next chapter focuses on the research design and methodology chosen to undertake this study including the limitations associated with the study.

Chapter 3: Research Methodology and Design

Introduction

This chapter presents an overview of the research methodology and design used for this qualitative case study on how knowledge sharing impacts peacebuilding practice in the war zone of the Nuba Mountains in Sudan. First, the chapter discusses how Chilisa's (2012, 2020) postcolonial indigenous research paradigm influenced the development of the study's research questions. Second, it describes the evolving setting during the research study period and provides an overview of the peacebuilders involved in this study. Third, it discusses why and how this study used a combined PAR case study methodology. Fourth, it discusses the data collection methods of oral history interviews, dialogical observations, personal journals and desk research. Fifth, it discusses the data analytical methods of communal analysis, which included deep *wanasa* analysis (informal

oral analysis method used between two or more people) and abductive thematic analysis, which is a combination of deductive and inductive analysis. The data analysis generated five thematic findings, as presented in Chapters 5–7 and discussed in Chapter 8. Sixth, this chapter clarifies the criteria assessment of the study, namely its credibility, dependability, confirmability, transferability and catalytic validity. This chapter concludes with a discussion about my positionality and ethical framework as a researcher for this study.

Research questions

Using the case of the Nuba Mountains, this thesis will investigate the role of knowledge sharing in peacebuilding practice. The secondary research questions that help answer this main question include:

1. What are the characteristics of peacebuilding practice in the Nuba Mountains?
2. How does knowledge sharing about peacebuilding occur in the Nuba Mountains?
3. What is the significance of knowledge sharing on peacebuilding practice in the Nuba Mountains?
4. What implications does the case hold for peacebuilding scholarship and practice in general?

Postcolonial indigenous research paradigm

Within the field of peacebuilding, the vast majority of research and practice has been rooted in the Western-derived paradigms of realism/liberalism, constructivism, cosmopolitanism, pragmatism and critical theory/transformativity (Carey, 2020; McCandless & Donais, 2020), which then informs research methodologies (Mertens & Wilson, 2012). Conflict transformation-informed and complexity-informed peacebuilding often refrain from interrogating their chosen paradigm starting points. Explicitly or not, most of these approaches are still normatively drawing from a Western paradigm, whether it is transformative, pragmatic, constructivist or a combination of these. Therefore, their methodologies tend to universalise rational/cognitive/written-based methods of knowledge generation and have centralised-development and decision-making practices, which are often dominated by elite perspectives. Many indigenous and non-indigenous scholars have argued for the inclusion of an indigenous paradigm among the list of research paradigms since indigenous methodologies cannot be divorced from their corresponding indigenous ontologies, epistemologies and axiologies that are all relational (e.g., Buntu, 2013; Chilisa, 2012, 2020; Chilisa et al., 2017; Dillard, 2006; Romm, 2015; Russon, 2008; Wilson, 2008).

This study follows Botswanan scholar Chilisa's (2012, 2020) call to investigate the ethical and value beliefs that define a researcher's relationships and responsibilities to the researched before any ontological and epistemological questions are developed, as well as

her call for these relationships and responsibilities to drive the research process from formulation of research proposal to dissemination of findings. I chose to ground the study in Chilisa's (2012, p. 19) postcolonial indigenous research paradigm as a framework of 'belief systems that emanate from the lived experiences, values, and history of those belittled and marginalized by Euro-Western research paradigms'. This paradigm specifically chooses to centre historically marginalised communities, such as communities in the Nuba Mountains in Sudan that have suffered subjugation and marginalisation for centuries under colonial powers as well as Arabisation, Islamisation and ethnonationalism under successive government regimes since independence in 1956. This study centres the knowledge systems found in communities in the Nuba Mountains while incorporating the least hegemonic ways of knowing and methodologies from Western and other knowledge systems with decolonial intent (Chilisa, 2012, 2020).

The choice to ground this study in a postcolonial indigenous research paradigm grew out of my realisation that, as a researcher who is not from the Nuba Mountains, I could not adequately study and connect the intricacies of Nuba Mountains peacebuilding practice using a solely pragmatic, constructionist, transformative or indigenous research paradigm. In the initial conception of the study, I focused solely on a pragmatic perspective (Dewey, 1924; Follett, 1924) that leaned closer to social constructivism (Vygotsky, 1987). While I recognised the value in different aspects of these pragmatic, interpretive and transformative perspectives, I had a nagging feeling that two key

perspectives were being neglected and pushed to the periphery: 1) the various relational ways of being, knowing, doing and valuing that included non-living (ancestors etc.) and living beings within knowledge systems in the Nuba Mountains; and 2) the centring of desire-based framing to better understand why something has been so effective in the midst of overall historical power inequalities rather than a problem-based frame (Chilisa, 2012, 2020; Kovach, 2009; Tuck, 2009; Wilson, 2008).

Therefore, I reflected on my practitioner experience supporting the Nuba Mountains peacebuilding practice, which began in 2014 when I was first invited to the war zone by the community. I remembered the relational ways of inquiring, learning, sharing, planning and working through communal values of self-reliance, interdependence and tolerance of differences. Consequently, I decided to use the postcolonial indigenous research paradigm to ground the entire research process because it would honour and appreciate all spiritual beings with multiple relationships across time and generations, and because it would integrate only the least hegemonic Western perspectives into knowledge generation processes if the community determined they helped the situation. The postcolonial indigenous research paradigm uses the term 'postcolonial' in the research context to mean a 'continuous struggle of non-Western societies that suffered European civilization, indigenous peoples, and historically marginalized groups to resist suppression of their ways of knowing and the globalization of knowledge, reaffirming that Western knowledge is the only legitimate knowledge' (Chilisa, 2012, p. 12). Chilisa (2020, p. 62)

uses the term ‘indigenous’ to include multiple sources of traditional knowledge, empirical knowledge and revealed knowledge that can be collected and known through ‘community stories told during weddings, funerals, celebrations, and wars’ and conveyed in any language, practices, songs, rituals, dances, poems, proverbs or other forms of communication.

While the study honours the term ‘indigenous’ within Chilisa’s (2020) postcolonial indigenous research paradigm phrasing and within the indigenous scholarship field, it chooses to use Hountondji’s (1997) conception of ‘endogenous’ knowledge systems within the conceptual framework. This choice affirms the cultural transactions that have occurred over centuries between various cultures in the Nuba Mountains, while acknowledging the historical hegemony of this exchange of knowledge between Global North and Global South. Moreover, the term ‘indigenous’ in the Nuba Mountains is often politicised, as the former Bashir regime perpetuated power hierarchies by deploying this term in its ideologic strategies of Arabisation and Islamisation within the education system, the media and all the social, political and economic institutions over the last 30 years. Therefore, endogenous knowledge was a better term to use within this study’s conceptual framework.

Setting

The study focused on the geographic area of the Nuba Mountains in the South Kordofan and West Kordofan states in Sudan, which covers an area of approximately 88,000 square kilometres, or slightly larger than the island of Ireland. Research was conducted during the ongoing Sudanese revolution that began in April 2019, the Covid-19 global pandemic that began in 2020, and the ongoing military coup that began in October 2021. As a result, politically motivated communal violence increased in and around the Nuba Mountains, including lawlessness due to the kleptocratic management of state politics, judiciary and economy by the previous military-civilian power-sharing government (2019–2021) and current military coup leaders (2021–present). The heightened insecurity and deterioration of the economy led to an increase in violent confrontations over land within and between Nuba and Arab communities that centred around access and use and on the benefits from the gold mining, agricultural and livestock sectors. An increase in civilians crossing into the SPLM–N-controlled territory in the Nuba Mountains could be seen during the study period through the still-active crossline markets, as civilians needed safer and cheaper places to stay in light of the heightened instability and economic pressure prior to and following the military coup.

Figure 2 below shows the increases in violent incidents and people killed across two data sets during the study period (May 2020–November 2021) collected by: 1) Human Rights and Development Organisation (HUDO), an independent, non-government, non-

partisan and non-profit Sudanese organisation whose data set focused mainly on the GoS-controlled side; and 2) the peacebuilders involved in this study, who mainly focused on the SPLM–N-controlled side of the Nuba Mountains. These two data sets recorded a total of 127 incidents of violence (assaults, rapes and killings) that resulted in 169 people killed on both sides of the conflict line.[7] In terms of perpetrators, 50% were unknown criminals, 14% were SAF members, 14% were Rapid Support Forces[8] (RSF) members, 13% were Popular Defence Forces[9] (PDF) members, 4% was in-fighting between perpetrators (SAF/RSF/PDF members) and 5% were known members of specific ethnic communities. An increase in incidents can be seen leading up to the rainy season, which now begins in August,[10] and the beginning of the dry season, which starts around October/November. The Nuba Mountains peacebuilding practice involves communities on both sides of the conflict line, so any incident in either GoS-controlled or SPLM–N-controlled territory impacts the Nuba Mountains peacebuilding practice, especially the need for peacebuilders involved in this study to mobilise as mediators or to engage in conflict prevention activities that involve continuous meetings. The increasing number of conflicts throughout the study period thus did not allow for all participating peacebuilders to meet together in

[7] Both sides of the conflict line, meaning GoS-controlled or SPLM–N-controlled .
[8] RSF is a paramilitary force that was folded into the SAF officially, yet with a different command authority and funding under Mohammed ‘Hemedti’ Hamdan Daglo, deputy chairman of the Sovereign Council and the commander of the RSF.
[9] PDF is an Islamist paramilitary militia established by law under the former dictator Bashir’s regime shortly after the coup in 1989. It was the reserve wing of the SAF until 2019 when the military/civilian transitional government officially disbanded it, yet peacebuilders still attest PDF militia are active around Nuba Mountains.
[10] In the recent past, the rainy season used to begin around May, but due to climate change the rainy season now starts around August. Before the unilateral ceasefires starting in June 2016, the military movement usually coincided with the beginning and the end of the rainy season.

one place as envisaged for the PAR planning and reflective communal analysis. Therefore, we used the time we could via WhatsApp and when a quorum of peacebuilders was together in one place at one time in the Nuba Mountains to hold the reflective communal analysis discussions, communal oral history interviews and deep *wanasa* analysis in groups or in pairs.

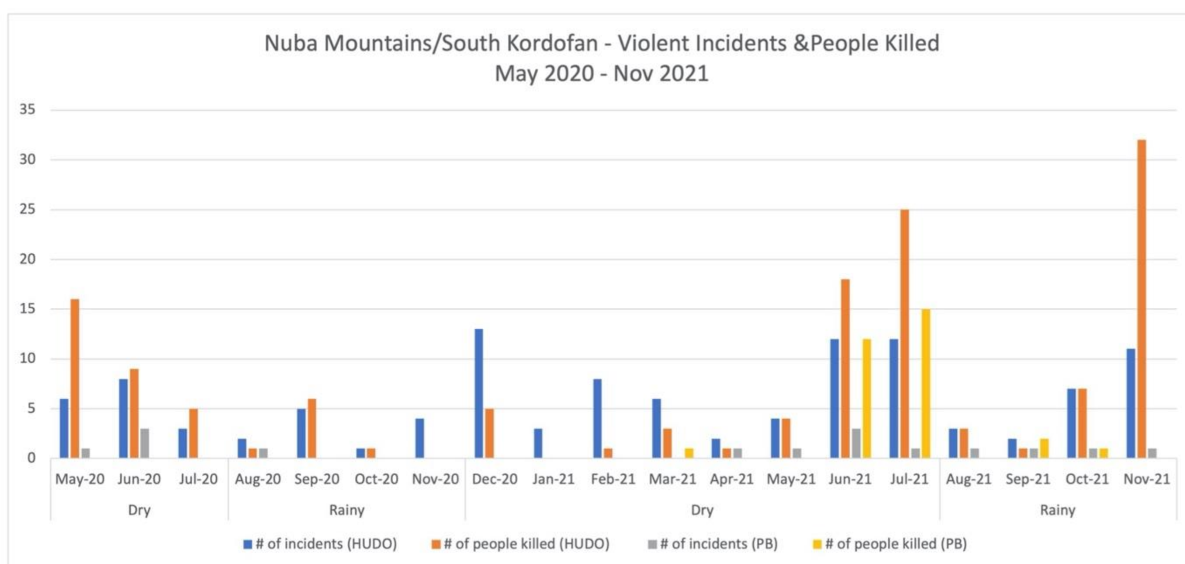


Figure 2: Nuba Mountains/South Kordofan - violent incidents and people killed

* Data from Human Rights and Development Organisation (HUDO), an independent, non-government, non-partisan and non-profit Sudanese organisation and peacebuilders involved in this study (PB).

In addition to the active conflicts happening during the study period, the peacebuilders were also helping to manage a number of latent conflicts through quiet and continuous discussion with the actors involved. Table 2 below gives a snapshot of the

locations, communities involved and degree to which peace committees are trained and available in those areas.[11]

Table 2: Latent conflicts in the Nuba Mountains (2021–2022)

No	Locality/Administrative Unit	Communities Involved	Peace Committee (Yes/No)	Date Trained (and refresher trainings)
1	Dallami/Heiban/Habila	Lira-Kwalib, Lira/Kwalib-Ayyitaga, Rawaga and other Hawazma clans	Yes	2013 (2020)
2	Heiban/Dallami/Habila	Lira-Kwalib	Yes	2013 (2020)
3	Dilling/Habila	Gulphan-Tieman	Yes	2016
4	Sonut	Karako/Shifir/Kujuriya	No	
5	Thobo/Ruweng Administration	Angolo-Dinka	No	
6	Lake Jau Area (Ruweng/Thobo)	Kharasana Misseriya, Dinka, and various Nuba tribes	No	
7	Ruweng Administrative Area (South Sudan)	Dinka-Various tribes in Yida/Adjung refugee camps	Yes	2017
8	Heiban	Tira-Toro	No	
9	Thobo	Shad-Angolo	No	
10	Arief Shargi/Umdurrein	Hawazma clans and Moro (and other nuba clans neighboring)	Yes	2017
11	Arief Shargi/Umdurrein	Moro and Hawazma clans	Yes	2017

Peacebuilder demographics

The participants involved in this study included peacebuilders who have been involved with the Nuba Mountains peacebuilding practice since the resumption of war in 2011.

[11] Members of the peace committees and the peacebuilders who have trained them participated in this study.

They were located on both sides of the conflict line (i.e., the SPLM–N side and GoS side). I was only able to meet some of them in person on the SPLM–N side of the line, as the ongoing conflict prior to and after the October 2021 coup made meeting them on the GoS side unsafe. There were 19 peacebuilders (two female and 17 male) involved in the oral history interviews with a median age of 50–55 years old.[12] In terms of community background, 84% were from Nuba communities, 16% were from Arab communities, and 1% were *khawajat* (foreigners). The study is limited by the low number of females and youth – a consequence of the insecurity and Covid-19 travel restrictions that prevented me from reaching more of the female peacebuilders, some of whom are traders in the cross-line markets, and more of the youth peacebuilders. Due to the need to keep peacebuilder names anonymous, I used a coding system as advised by the community advisory committee members and most of the peacebuilders. Due to my previous practitioner work in the Nuba Mountains war zone, I have known the 19 peacebuilders for the last two-to-eight years. For translation needs,[13] one of the 19 peacebuilders would translate. Table 3 below highlights each peacebuilder's code name, the sector in which they have been trained from their young adulthood, their gender, the dates of oral history interviews and the type of interview (in person/WhatsApp).

[12] Age was calculated in five-year increments due to some peacebuilders preferring to give an age range instead of an exact year.
[13] Translation needs included Arabic into English, English into Arabic, local language into English and English into local language.

Table 3: List of peacebuilders involved in the study

Peacebuilder (PB)	Sector	Gender	PAR Cycle 1 (Dates, type of activity)	PAR Cycle 2 (Dates, type of activity)	PAR Cycle 3 (Dates, type of activity)	PAR Cycle 4 (Dates, type of activity)
PB1	Education/Community Development	M	30/6/20, 6/7/20 (oral history interview - WhatsApp)	29/12/20 (Whatsapp Group Chat) 20/10/20–28/2/21 (*wanasa* sessions via Whatsapp)	20–21/5/21 (communal analysis gathering – in person)	22/5/21-26/5/21 (wanasa sessions in person)
PB2	Education/Community Development	M	19/7/20, 13/8/20, 23/8/20 (oral history interview - WhatsApp)	20/10/20–28/2/21 (*wanasa* sessions via Whatsapp) 05/01/21-02/04/21 (two in-person meetings in Juba with UN Mission staff)	20–21/5/21 (communal analysis gathering – in person)	22/5/21-26/5/21 (*wanasa* sessions in person)
PB3	Natural Resource Management/Community Development	M	24/7/20, 9/7/20 (oral history interview - WhatsApp)			
PB4	Community Development	M			22/4/21 (oral history interview – in person)	
PB5	Education/Community Development	M			20–21/5/21 (communal analysis	22/5/21-26/5/21 (*wanasa*

					gathering – in person) 16/5/21 (oral history interview - in person)	sessions in person)
PB6	Education/Community Development	M			20–21/5/21 (communal analysis gathering – in person) 16/5/21 (oral history interview - in person)	22/5/21-26/5/21 (*wanasa* sessions in person)
PB7	Education/Community Development	M			16/5/21 (oral history interview - in person)	
PB8	Military/Political Leader	M			14/5/21 (oral history interview - in person)	
PB9	Traditional Leader	M			14/5/21 (oral history interview - in person)	
PB10	Herder/Community Development	M			14/5/21 (oral history interview - in person)	
PB11	Traditional Leader	M			14/5/21 (oral history interview - in person)	
PB12	Herder/Community Development	M			14/5/21 (oral history interview - in person)	

PB13	Farmer/Women's Empowerment	F			13/5/21 (oral history interview - in person)	
PB14	Farmer/Women's Empowerment	F			22/5/21 (oral history interview - in person)	
PB15	Traditional Leader	M			22/5/21 (oral history interview - in person)	
PB16	Farmer/Community Development	M			22/5/21 (oral history interview - in person)	
PB17	Herder/Community Development	M			22/5/21 (oral history interview - in person)	
PB18	Military/Community Development	M			22/5/21 (oral history interview - in person)	
PB19	Political Leader	M			24/5/21 (oral history interview - in person)	

Following indigenous research scholars' advice for non-indigenous researchers to use a community advisory committee for conducting any research with indigenous peoples (Chilisa, 2012, 2020; Smith, 1999), I turned to five community leaders across civil society, civil authority and political realms to help guide me on the relational and cultural

understandings and nuances involved with all the different communities that inhabit the Nuba Mountains and with particular members of society. I benefited tremendously from their guidance prior to, during and after the fieldwork period. They were part of the dialogical observations segment of the data collection as well. They are located on both sides of the conflict line and all are from Nuba communities. I have known them for the last 2–11 years through my practitioner work in the Nuba Mountains and across Sudan. Their median age was 55–60 years old and included one female and four males. Table 4 below highlights each member's code name, the sector in which they have worked for most of their lives, their gender and the type of interview (in person/WhatsApp).

The five people identified were a mix of experience from previous civil war (1983–2005) and current war (2011–present), sector background, locations (in SPLM–N and GoS sides of the war) and were available to be in contact via WhatsApp and in person when physical meetings could happen in light of travel restrictions and social distancing with the Covid-19 pandemic and the heightened instability due to the ongoing 2019 Sudan revolution and the 2021 military coup.

Table 4: List of community advisory committee members (involved in all PAR cycles)

Community Advisory Committee Member	Sector	Gender	Type of Communication
CAC1	Civil Authority/Community Development	M	In person/WhatsApp
CAC2	Education/Community Development	M	In person/WhatsApp
CAC3	Civil Authority/Community	M	In person/WhatsApp

	Development		
CAC4	Community Development	F	In person/WhatsApp
CAC5	Education/Political Leader	M	In person/WhatsApp

The informal network of peacebuilders was involved in the PAR Cycles 2 and 3 (see Table 5). They were from different sectors including community development, humanitarian assistance, civil authority, political leadership and military leadership and represented perspectives from different levels of authority including community and regional. There were three females and 11 males among the 14 members of the informal network of peacebuilders who participated in this study. In terms of community background, 64% were from Nuba Mountains communities and 36% were *khawajat* (foreigners). Their median age was 45–50 years old.

Table 5: List of informal network of peacebuilders (involved in PAR cycles 2 and 3)

Informal network of peacebuilders	Sector	Gender	Dates	Type of communication (in person or WhatsApp)	PAR cycle
INPB1	Humanitarian Assistance & International Development	M	20/10/20–20/11/21	In person/WhatsApp /email	2
INPB2	Humanitarian Assistance & International Development	M	2/12/21–20/11/21 05/01/21-02/04/21	In person/WhatsApp /email Two in-person meetings in Juba with UN Mission staff	2

INPB3	Humanitarian Assistance & International Development	F	29/12/20 05/01/21-02/04/21	In person/WhatsApp /email Two in-person meetings in Juba with UN Mission staff	2
INPB4	Humanitarian Assistance & International Development	F	02/14/20–20/11/21 05/01/21-02/04/21	In person/WhatsApp /email Two in-person meetings in Juba with UN Mission staff	2
INPB5	Youth/Community Development	M	20–21/5/21	In person (communal analysis gathering)	3
INPB6	Military Leadership	M	20–21/5/21	In person (communal analysis gathering)	3
INPB7	Civil Authority	M	20–21/5/21	In person (communal analysis gathering)	3
INPB8	Women's Empowerment & Community Development	F	20–21/5/21	In person (communal analysis gathering)	3
INPB9	Community Development	M	20–21/5/21	In person (communal analysis gathering)	3
INPB10	Political Leadership	M	20–21/5/21	In person (communal analysis gathering)	3
INPB11	Humanitarian Assistance	M	20–21/5/21	In person (communal analysis gathering)	3

INPB12	Humanitarian Assistance	M	20–21/5/21	In person (communal analysis gathering)	3
INPB13	Political Leadership	M	20–21/5/21	In person (communal analysis gathering)	3
INPB14	Humanitarian Assistance & International Development	M	20–21/5/21	In person (communal analysis gathering)	3

Participatory action research methodology within a case study

The research questions needed detailed insight from the peacebuilders who helped re-start and evolve the Nuba Mountains peacebuilding practice when the war resumed between the SPLM–N and the GoS in 2011. Considering that the Nuba Mountains peacebuilding practice is actively happening in a war zone now, this study also needed to engage in the peacebuilding practice while incorporating reflective insights from the past (distant and recent) to generate knowledge and action for immediate transformative change. This study therefore used a combination of PAR and case study methodology. Instead of using Yin's conception of case study methodology that is grounded in positivism, it used Merriam's conception of a case study because this views a case study from a constructivist paradigm, which sees reality as an intersubjective construction and requires in-depth description and analysis of a bounded system. Merriam's conception was also open to other types of approaches that could be combined with case study methodology, such as PAR (Merriam,

1998; Merriam & Tisdell, 2016; Yin, 2002). She also advocated for a concurrent and interactive process for data collection and data analysis, which aligned well with the PAR processes that were needed for this study (Merriam, 1998).

The study used a Fals Borda-inspired PAR methodology combined with an adaptation to the Center for Collaborative Action Research's iterative model of learning to account for the dual roles I had in the study as both a dissertation researcher and a contributor to community research alongside the other peacebuilders to engage in real-time transformative change (Fals Borda, 2006, 2008; Fals Borda & Rahman, 1991; Riel, 2019). Fals Borda, along with other colleagues from Colombia, were dissatisfied with academia's perpetuation of a theory/practice gap in social science, the implicit subject/object divide in conducting research on people rather than with them, and the Cartesian split that conceived of science as devoid of values (Fals Borda, 2006, 2008; Kemmis et al., 2014). Fals Borda's version of PAR was influenced by: his admiration for Kurt Lewin's conception of action research in the post-World War II US context; his immersion in Latin American land reform movements (particularly rural areas of Columbia where he conducted his early research); and his application of Spanish philosopher Gasset's (1961) conception of *vivencia* (lived experience), in which Gasset expanded on Husserl's conception of *erlebnis* (life experience) by integrating human and surrounding nature as a context for ongoing action. Fals Borda took the basis of Lewin's conception of action research as a spiral of steps (planning, action, observation and the

evaluation of the result of the action) for generating knowledge about a social system and attempting to change it at the same time, and reoriented it to be centred on *vivencia*, which meant a lived experience could not be observed but only lived, felt and experienced (Fals Borda 2006, 2008; Glassman & Erdem, 2014; Lewin, 1948).

Fals Borda's version of PAR also differs from the more recent version of PAR that came out of US organisational development circles in the 1990s (Whyte, 1994). Similar to Lewin's model, this version of PAR relied on relatively linear and centralised lines of development that did not seek to interfere with the status quo (Glassman & Erdem, 2014). On the other hand, Fals Borda's version of PAR is more organic and strives to dismantle the status quo and rebuild unjust social orders (Glassman & Erdem, 2014). It is thus similar to the other families of PAR methodologies that began developing in the 1960s and 1970s within education and anticolonial movements in Latin America, South Asia and East Africa. In Brazil and Chile, the approach was named 'popular research' with Paulo Freire's adult education methodology being a central feature along with Francisco Vio Grossi's agricultural adult education system for farmers.[14] In India, the ideas around PAR became synonymous with Gandhi and Tagore's initiatives against British colonialism. In Tanzania, the ideas were described as participatory research, with Swantz (1982) encouraging university students to collaborate with Massai tribal villages to understand their responses to the new economic policies under President Nyerere. Fals Borda (2006)

[14] Grossi's agricultural adult education system developed in response to the land reforms under President Allende in Chile.

also credits Swantz's studies as being instrumental in the development of his PAR approach. His approach is a convergence of *vivencia* (participation as a lived experience), practice (reflective action) and research (collective new knowledge with reflective inquiry).

PAR cycles overview

The study was originally going to use the Center for Community Based Research (CCBR) conceptual model, which centred around a high degree of collaboration among stakeholders and co-researchers with constant feedback loops and incorporated different perspectives from the Global North, Global South and indigenous communities (Ochocka & Janzen, 2014). The Nuba Mountains peacebuilding actors were well versed in general PAR process methods as INGOs were increasingly using them. These processes, however, were increasingly projectised, which made communities and peacebuilding actors associate INGO-funded PAR processes with a micro-grant or seed funding. Therefore, this PAR process focused more on behaviour change aspects of the wider societal transformational process that the study strived to investigate and push forward without any micro-grant or seed funding attached. Figure 3 below highlights the four components of the adapted CCBR model that this study was originally going to use: 1) laying the foundation (discussing the overall plan/idea with co-researchers and stakeholders); 2) planning the research (deciding on what the focus will be, and the who, where and timeline); 3) gathering information and analysing it (the protocol used for documenting

and how many times and where the co-researchers will meet in person and/or over WhatsApp); and 4) acting on findings (what will be tried in practice, who it will involve and how they will be involved to encourage emergence).

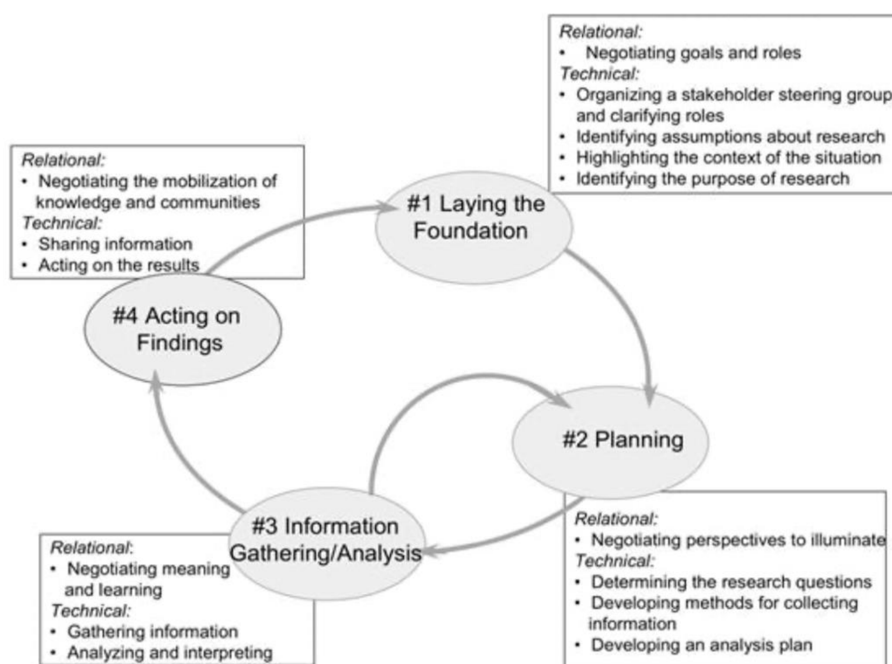


Figure 3: Four components of the CCBR model

Adapted from CCBR, 1998, 2004.

However, this adapted CCBR (1998, 2004) model for PAR ended up not being suitable for the increased unpredictable nature of the travel restrictions and social distancing with the Covid-19 pandemic and the heightened insecurity in the war zone as a result of the ongoing 2019 Sudan revolution and 2021 military coup. Therefore, the study

pivoted to using an adapted PAR model from the Center for Collaborative Action Research (Riel, 2019), which focused on the simultaneous dissertation research and the community learning. I needed to adapt it from its original intent as an organisational action learning model to a PAR for community and dissertation learning model (see Figure 4 below).

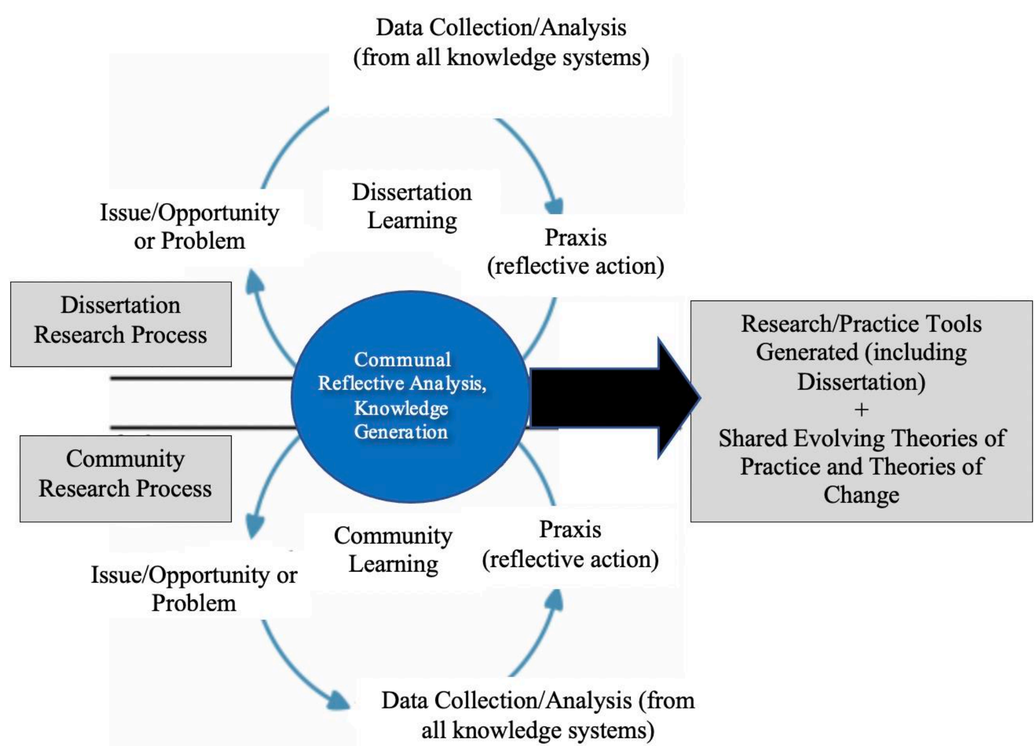


Figure 4: Adaption of CCAR model for participatory action research for dissertation and community research

The *vivencia* (lived experience) can be seen in my dual role within the dissertation learning process – dissertation learning and as a contributor to the communal learning within the group. The practice (reflective action) highlights the bridging of theory and action together through mindful actions that can affect change in practice. Both the dissertation and community research processes involved simultaneous data collection and analysis with the peacebuilders involved in this study. Both processes also combined communal reflective analysis and endogenous knowledge generation, which led to the generation of new endogenous knowledge and unearthing of buried knowledge (see Chapter 8 findings), including this dissertation, and shared evolving theories of practice (ways of working) for Nuba Mountains peacebuilding practice.

The PAR cycles focused on a specific issue, opportunity or problem that the peacebuilders were facing in real time as the dynamic war zone environment ebbed and flowed during the research period. Below is an overview of the PAR cycle process (per cycle) with the data collection and analysis methods used and the particular peacebuilders involved per cycle. All peacebuilders were not able to be a part of each cycle due to the dynamic nature of conducting the Nuba Mountains peacebuilding practice in a war zone, which was not conducive for a centralised meeting among all peacebuilders during the research period.

Initial planning phase for PAR

Three pilot oral history interviews were conducted as part of the initial planning phase for the PAR. Although I was speaking with peacebuilders whom I had known for between two and seven years by this time, I heard a wealth of new information about their childhoods and young adulthoods. I learned more about their early childhood social upbringing and the related social schemas that formed within their childhoods and young adulthoods, which then led to deeper and more emotional discussions about how they learned and shared knowledge conducting peacebuilding trainings, meetings and conflict management activities such as mediation or negotiation. The pilot interviews therefore confirmed it was a productive way to explore the back stories and processes of their developmental interactions. They also revealed that I needed to allocate more than 45 minutes to talk through all the other questions around how developmental interactions occurred.

I engaged in *wanasa* (informal meaningful conversation with reciprocal learning between two or more people) after the pilot interviews, where the peacebuilders explained that it was better if I would share the questions ahead of time so they could have time to recollect their memories and emotionally prepare to share them with me. Moreover, they advised against using the term 'mentoring' because it is not in the Sudanese Arabic language. My initial questions used the word 'mentoring' because my Eurocentric-born and trained mind could initially only think of the word mentoring to help practically

explain the self-organised growth of the peacebuilding efforts over the last 12 years, particularly the communal learning, sharing and interacting that was happening across divides (ethnic, religious, gender, generational, conflict line, etc.). We settled on the phrase ‘knowledge learning and sharing’ because it made more sense to everyone. This feedback was central to why I changed the phrase ‘mentoring episode’ to ‘developmental interaction’. However, I continued to use ‘mentoring’ in my written dissertation until July 2021, when it became even more clear through the PAR cycles that the way I presented and discussed the results and findings needed to match how I spoke with the peacebuilders for continuity rather than keeping the Western term in written form while using different words used in the Nuba Mountains.

Based on the feedback from the pilot interviews, I also split the semi-structured interviews into three phases – before the war, the current war, and the future – to fit the sessions around the peacebuilders’ ongoing work schedules and allow more reflective opportunity for them to unwind and think back. The oral history interview questions ranged from descriptive and structural questions to value, behaviour, feeling and background information questions (Patton, 2002; Spradley, 1979). They were asked in a less scripted fashion due to the method of approaching the conversations as life story, with emergent questions spontaneously arriving during the course of the conversation (Atkinson, 1998).

A community advisory committee was identified through conversations with traditional leaders, women's group leaders, humanitarian assistance workers from Nuba and international NGOs, and SPLM–N armed group leadership. The five people identified had a mix of experience from the previous civil war (1983–2005) and current war (2011–present), sector background and locations (in SPLM–N and GoS sides of the war), and were available to be in contact via WhatsApp and in person when physical meetings could happen in light of travel restrictions and social distancing related to the Covid-19 pandemic and the heightened instability due to the ongoing 2019 Sudan revolution and the 2021 military coup. I also had a working relationship with each of them for the last two to seven years.

Also during the planning phase, the informal network of peacebuilders started to be identified through conversations with the community advisory committee and the peacebuilders whom I had known for the last two to seven years at that point. They and I identified 14 people who ended up being in the study because of their mix of sector backgrounds, their experience contributing to the Nuba Mountains peacebuilding practice and their availability to participate in the study as the communal issues, opportunity and problems arose, which framed the PAR cycle formations. These 14 people were considered trusted individuals by the community advisory committee members, which was the most important criteria for inclusion in the research study because of the security concerns with engaging in peacebuilding practice in the SPLM–N war zone, given that in

previous years individuals involved in the Nuba Mountains peacebuilding practice who became known publicly were targeted by GoS security forces, with serious repercussions that caused them and their families harm.

Cycle 1

The first PAR cycle focused on answering the following question that generated from the planning phase: What insight can we gain from reflecting on the past that can be applied to support peacebuilding during the current situation in the Nuba Mountains?

Data collection/analysis

Because the Covid-19 pandemic and the subsequent travel bans and restrictions severely limited my ability to conduct in-person interviews, PAR cycle 1 started with oral history interviews via WhatsApp with three of the peacebuilders – two from Nuba communities and one *khawaja* (outsider). These three peacebuilders were: 1) convenient to access via WhatsApp because of their access to the internet; and 2) were on the ground in the Nuba Mountains when the war re-started in 2011 and were integral facilitators of the Nuba Mountains peacebuilding practice expanding through the subsequent years. Our eight years of knowing and working with each other allowed for more in-depth conversations to take place over three to four sessions per peacebuilder of 45–90 minutes per session for a total of 8.25 hours, recorded on a Dictaphone, which produced 79 pages of oral history interview transcriptions in English.

In a *wanasa* session after each oral history interview session, some of the peacebuilders commented that they found the questions useful because they allowed time for remembering and reflecting on how to use the practices they had forgotten about until I asked them to recall those times in their lives during the oral history interviews. the framing of PAR cycle 1 collectively emerged: What insights can we gain from reflecting on the past that can be applied to support peacebuilding during the current situation in the Nuba Mountains?

Reflective action

During the Cycle 1 dialogic observations with peacebuilders and community advisory committee members that were in the form of *wanasa* sessions via WhatsApp, there were communal reflections about the functional roles that peacebuilders played within the peacebuilding practice in the Nuba Mountains since the war re-started from 2011 onward. These roles included the following:

- Listener
- Storyteller
- Facilitator
- Trainer
- Buffer
- Diplomatic Connector

- Friend
- Manager (WhatsApp voice and text messages)

At the same time as these dialogic observations were taking place, there was an opportunity to influence the creation of one of the international development organisations' terms of reference for a peacebuilding advisor in Sudan. In order to seize this opportunity, the diversity of roles identified through the dialogic observations were then transposed into a theory of practice for the peacebuilding adviser role within an international development organisation to help facilitate continuous learning and experimentation within peacebuilders' practice in the Nuba Mountains and across all of Sudan. This role-shifting approach (see Table 6 below) moved at the speed of trust with colleagues, peacebuilders and other stakeholders as the evolving context shifted and new opportunities became available or within sight. The five roles within the role-shifting approach can be seen in Table 6, below.

Table 6: Role-shifting approach for peacebuilder advisors in Nuba Mountains and across Sudan

Roles	**Descriptions**
Sounding board	Peer sounding board (deep listening, advice if requested, well-being support)
Resource person	Provide peace and conflict resources, and context/pedagogical-specific insights (articles, e-books/books, facilitation, design and delivery of trainings, monitoring & evaluation, strategy development, analysis/synthesis, well-being exercises)
Bridger/Buffer/Translator	Policy/programme/community 'diplomatic' mediator – translate between and within policy/international actors and programme/community-based actors to help orient or better understand dynamics of wrongdoings and figure out options to remedy those wrongdoings.

Connector/Networker	Linking people in different spheres of influence/groups.
Risk manager	Determine the amount and depth of information sharing between actors to ensure confidentiality, security of individuals/groups, minimise problems, maximise opportunities for integration of ideas.

The modalities of this particular role-shifting approach involved individual and group WhatsApp introductory discussions (about what was weighing on peacebuilders involved in peacebuilding practice (through questions such as, ‘Do you want my support with any of this? What would help?’) or about sharing dynamics of heightened tensions happening across the Nuba Mountains and the wider state of South Kordofan on both sides of the conflict line. Based on the peacebuilders’ answers, the adviser would enact the following five roles, as dictated by the individuals/groups in the course of any given conversation. This role-shifting approach was successfully fed into international development organisations’ terms of reference for a new peacebuilding advisor position and became the basis for engaging with peacebuilders in the Nuba Mountains.

Cycle 2

The second PAR cycle question grew out of the political opportunities that developed on the ground in the Nuba Mountains as well as in Khartoum with the new UN political mission mandated by the UN Security Council. The dialogic observations with the peacebuilders and the community advisory council via WhatsApp led to the following

PAR cycle 2 question: How can we guide the new UN political mission to engage effectively in Nuba Mountains peacebuilding practice?

Data collection/analysis

By December 2020, the UN Security Council had mandated the first UN political mission in Sudan to engage with peacebuilding ongoing in SPLM–N war zones of the Nuba Mountains and southern Blue Nile state. A few of the peacebuilders involved in this study, a few of the community advisory committee members and a few of the informal network of peacebuilder members began to discuss on WhatsApp in individual and group chats about how to engage effectively with this new UN political mission staff members. The individual and group chats could be defined as *atwanesna* (the past tense of *wanasa*) sessions, where knowledge sharing took place and quick decisions about who to bring into the discussion for further ideas and who to engage with which UN political mission staff members.

Reflective action

Between December and February 2020, the UN political mission staff members met (in person) with two peacebuilders, two community advisory committee members and three informal network members in two consecutive group in-person meetings in Juba, South Sudan. At the same time, ongoing group and peer WhatsApp conversations were happening to share information about preparing for these meetings and discussing the

ways in which the new UN political mission could engage in the peacebuilding practice. Discussions identified a number of points, including:

- Building on what is already existing
- Observing the local resilience
- Issues of trust – no rush, as the process may take time to spontaneously heal
- Promoting the customary machineries/mechanisms that the partners have been using to resolve the local conflicts
- Making it clear to them that no Humanitarian Assistance Commission (HAC) certificate of registration is recognised in SPLM/A–N territory
- Making them aware that [the Nuba Mountains and southern Blue Nile] is diverse society and multi-lingual
- Making them observe the cultures and ethnic groups (WhatsApp Group Chat: 29/12/20)

The points derived from informal communal analysis in the form of WhatsApp group chat sessions. They were shared with the UN political mission in December 2020 to help guide their re-engagement in peacebuilding within the Nuba Mountains in preparation for the initial two group in-person meetings with the UN political mission staff. By February 2020, the UN political mission staff agreed to build on the community-led conflict mitigation and management initiatives and moved forward with formal grant-making through their UN partner agencies following the guidance relayed during the two

group in-person meetings and the ongoing group and individual WhatsApp chat with the UN political mission staff and three informal network of peacebuilder members.

Cycle 3

The deteriorating security, economic and political dynamics across Sudan, but particularly across the Kordofan region encompassing the SPLM/A–N war zone, led to the third PAR cycle question: What approaches could help support the management of the current increase in instability across the war zone due to the 2019 Sudan revolution?

Data collection/analysis

During cycle 3 (April 2021–June 2021), oral histories interviews were conducted with six peacebuilders (individually) and ten peacebuilders (communally, with five peacebuilders in each of two group sessions). For the individual oral histories, four out of the five interviews were conducted in English. They were roughly one hour each. One interview was conducted in Arabic with one of peacebuilders serving as the translator (Arabic to English and English to Arabic). These five interviews resulted in 18 pages of oral history transcription. These five peacebuilders preferred not to have the interviews recorded due to security concerns. They allowed me to take copious notes while we talked in settings they had selected and in which they felt comfortable and without anyone listening as an observer (i.e., covered shelter or under a tree).

The two communal oral history interviews were conducted in Arabic, with two of the peacebuilders involved in this study serving as the translators (Arabic to English and English to Arabic). One communal oral history interview lasted 90 minutes and the other lasted one hour. The peacebuilders also preferred not have the interviews recorded due to security concerns but they allowed me to take copious notes while we talked. Unlike the previous individual oral history interviews, however, the communal oral history interviews were conducted in more public settings (i.e., in covered shelters that were often accessed by community members). This allowed community members to stop and sit for some minutes to listen to the stories being told by the peacebuilders as they answered the interview questions, which was welcomed by those being interviewed. These two communal interviews resulted in 28 pages of transcribed notes.

Dialogic observations also took place in the form of *atwanesa* sessions with some of the peacebuilders involved in the 19 oral history interviews (three from this cycle and three from PAR cycle 1) as well as two community advisory committee members. The framing question for these dialogic observations was posed to the six individuals: What approaches could help support the management of the current increase in instability across the war zone due to the 2019 Sudan revolution?'

Reflective action

The oral history interviews and dialogic observations led to the decision to hold a 1.5-day communal analysis gathering with 16 individuals (12 informal network of peacebuilders members and four peacebuilders who had participated in the oral histories already). Preparation for the communal analysis gathering involved a collection of the information gathered during the oral history and dialogical observations during this PAR cycle. It resulted in the creation of *Appendix 1: Communal Conflict Analysis May 2021 – Nuba Mountains*. This was an overview of the type of conflicts, their triggers, their proximate causes at community, regional (Nuba Mountains) and national level, and their overall structural causes. The 1.5-day communal analysis gathering resulted in *Appendix 2: Communal Analysis of the Peacebuilding Practice Impact (2011–2020)*, which was the conclusions of the 16 individuals (12 informal network of peacebuilders members and four peacebuilders who had participated in the oral histories already) about the most effective and most destructive policy shifts, group dynamic shifts, institutional changes and attitude changes. It also resulted in the creation of a peace actors/mechanisms analytical model (see *Appendix 2: Communal Analysis of the Peacebuilding Practice Impact (2011–2020)*), which was a Venn diagram of peace actors/mechanisms within government, civil society and business spheres and across community, regional and national levels. This model helped identify the peace actors/mechanisms that offered the most opportunities for peacebuilding practice at the different levels, as seen in Table 7 below.

Table 7: Peace actors/mechanism opportunities

Community Level	Regional Level	National Level
Peace committees, as part of all domains	Alliances at regional level	Media (radio/websites)
Crossline markets, managed by the peace committees		
Women		The framework mechanism
Religious leaders		
Health care professionals		

The communal analysis also resulted in identifying the leverage points that could be most influential for peacebuilding practice if engaged with more due to their decision-making power and influence over communities, namely: the SPLM–N leadership, religious leaders and community-based organisations. The communal analysis revealed that they could be both peacebuilding opportunities as well as spoilers to the peace if there was not more intentional development of their understanding of the peace concept and methods for building and sustaining it.

Following this communal analysis there was another form of communal analysis in which three peacebuilders who participated in the oral histories conducted a training with three peace committees (totalling 26 individuals) who manage cross-line[15] markets that exist between the SPLM–N war zone and the GoS area of the Nuba Mountains. This training was funded by an outside donor and was not coordinated with the research study.

[15] Cross-line market refers to a market that exists in between the SPLM-N authorities and the GoS authorities and is managed by community-elected peace committees from both sides of the SPLM-N and GoS conflict line.

However, the three peacebuilders conducting the training decided to include the PAR cycle 3 question to the group: What approaches could help support the management of the current increase in instability across the war zone due to the 2019 Sudan revolution? During the training, one of the peacebuilders started drawing a learning/growth conceptual model (see Figure 5 below) to explain the role of the peace committee members. The model starts from the centre where a person's comfort zone exists and then moves into engagement with fear, then further into learning and growth domains in order to reach reconciliation (the outer domain).

Figure 5: Learning/growth conceptual model – Nuba Mountains

The peacebuilder had been continuously developing this model over the last few years based on their previous teacher training before the war and their lived experience through the current war. During the training, the communal analysis resulted in co-creating the model further by including ladders to symbolise the peace committee members within the communities who could view their roles as guides or people to whom

the community can turn as liaison support for finding a just resolution to any conflicts that are happening or could happen. The ladder could also be a safe place where community members need a helping hand in times where they slip back to their comfort zones or into the fear spiral. The co-created model was appreciated by all the peacebuilders in the training. It helped the group conceptualise their role and ways they can move forward in their liaison and guiding roles as peace committees that also manage cross-line markets.

Cycle 4

The fourth PAR cycle focused on answering a question that came out of the communal analysis gathering with the 16 individuals (12 informal network of peacebuilding members and four peacebuilders), which focused on orienting youth who are returning from East African countries due to the 2019 Sudan revolution in the Nuba Mountains towards their cultural history, namely: How can we connect youth back to their cultural history?

Data collection/analysis

Dialogical observations in the form of *wanasa* sessions were conducted with four peacebuilders and two community advisory council members that occurred directly after the communal analysis. These sessions were conducted during people's free time in between their need to de-escalate or address the fallout from inter-communal clashes and looting, which was occurring inside the SPLM–N war zone or just outside of it, in GoS areas, as a result of competition for land or the detrimental economic situation. These

sessions sparked the idea to start listing the ways in which people share knowledge for specific purposes. From the list of ways in which people share knowledge, the discussion shifted to listing the peacebuilding outcomes that people achieved from sharing knowledge together using these different formats. Then, it became apparent that there were so many different names in Arabic for different formats for meeting together in order to share knowledge – both informally and formally, within a small or large group, and for many different purposes. The peacebuilders started to highlight that the ways people in Nuba Mountains cultures shared knowledge was conceptually different from the generic English-language knowledge sharing formats, such as 'focus group discussion' and 'workshop'.

The discussions then moved to whether or not there were different knowledge sharing terms or peacebuilding outcomes words that derived from local languages found in the Nuba Mountains. This question sparked the idea to list the Nuba Mountains language communities. That idea led to further discussions about the Arabicised names of Nuba Mountains language communities.

Reflective action

The data collection/analysis led two actions: 1) Knowledge sharing terms existing in the Nuba Mountains (see *Appendix 3*); and 2) Language grouping of Nuba communities (see *Appendix 4*). The peacebuilders felt it would be useful to make these lists so that youth

and all community members could re-learn the Nuba Mountains language communities' names, and how they were linguistically categorised, from the point of view of the communities themselves. Although the time constraints related to this research study did not allow time for me to participate in the next steps the peacebuilders wanted to take, they moved ahead with sharing the lists with youth groups, teachers in primary and secondary schools, and community-elected peace committees in SPLM–N controlled areas.

Post-cycles follow-up

The post-cycles follow-up involved conducting the abductive thematic analysis using the data generated from all the PAR cycles. Desk research and my personal journals were also continuously used as data collection methods throughout the PAR cycles. I engaged in member checks with peacebuilders, community advisory council members and informal network of peacebuilding members via WhatsApp to verify data and my interpretation of the data. There were clarifications made about the spelling and definitions of terms during this process. The dissemination of the endogenous knowledge that was generated through the PAR had been continuously happening. However, there was further agreement on the need to draft an executive summary of the final dissertation that could be translated and shared with community members, particularly humanitarians and SPLM–N leadership, whom the peacebuilders felt needed to be further oriented about the Nuba Mountains peacebuilding practice.

Purposive and convenience sampling

This study used purposive sampling to identify the peacebuilders who had the lived experience of facilitating aspects of the Nuba Mountains peacebuilding practice since the war recommenced in 2011 through to the present. Below was the criteria for inclusion in the study:

- Over the age of 18
- Former or current member of peace committees and/or cross-line market committees[16]
- Former or current member of peacebuilding or humanitarian teams who worked for a Nuba Mountains organisation, national organisation or international organisation in the SPLM–N war zone and facilitated aspects of the Nuba Mountains peacebuilding practice as part of their jobs
- Former or current member of SPLM–N organs who facilitated aspects of the peacebuilding practice as part of their jobs
- Known by any member of the Community Advisory Committee
- Being available to meet virtually or physically during the research period.

[16] Community-elected committees that prevented conflicts from becoming violent or spiralling, resolved conflicts and managed cross-line markets that existed between SPLM–N and GoS sides of the warzone. They also facilitated movement of people and goods between the SPLM–N and GoS sides of the warzone.

Except for the last bullet point, the number of people who could fit the other criteria would total roughly 400. However, given the instability because of the 2019 Sudan revolution and travel restrictions due to the Covid-19 pandemic, the number of people who were physically or virtually available to participate was quite small. So, I had to shift to convenience sampling, which allowed me to choose the people who fit the sampling criteria while also being able to physically or virtually meet to participate in the study. The consequence of the shift was not having a greater number of peacebuilders from Arab nomadic communities (Hawazama, Misseryia and Fallata) living on GoS side of the conflict than originally planned and not having more peacebuilders who were women, since neither of these categories of peacebuilders were able to move as readily due to the heightened insecurity during the reporting period. Rather than only accessing peacebuilders who lived near the main city in the war zone (Kauda), I spent many hours in car rides moving to the frontlines of the war zone where I could check to see which peacebuilders were available to participate in the study through the contacts that I had accumulated over eight years of working in the Nuba Mountains. I spent a few days in different locations waiting for peacebuilders to be available. A total of 38 people met the above criteria, 19 of whom agreed to participate in the oral history interviews: five agreed to be the community advisory committee members, and 14 agreed to participate in the communal analysis.

Data collection methods

Because this study strived to balance less hegemonic Western methods with endogenous knowledge methods for decolonial intent (Chilisa et al., 2017; Hountondji, 1997; Nabudere, 2011), data collection methods within the PAR cycles included oral history interviews in WhatsApp, in person and individual/group forms (PAR cycles 1 and 3), in-person community analysis gathering (PAR cycle 3), dialogic observations in WhatsApp, email and in person, personal journaling form (all PAR cycles) and desk research (all PAR cycles). The oral history interviews helped transfer power to the interviewee to express their perspectives on the past and on how they make meaning of those past experiences. Although combining PAR and oral history methodologies is not commonly found in the social sciences, the two approaches are compatible in their use of storytelling and emancipatory outcomes: oral history primarily focuses on storytelling, while PAR primarily focuses on emancipatory outcomes through experiential learning and reflection on action, yet often uses storytelling as means of conveying knowledge. In war-affected conflict contexts like the Nuba Mountains, which are also historically oral societies, using oral history interviews as a method for research can offset structural power asymmetries and reclaim ownership of knowledge generation through their own ways of knowing (Chilisa, 2012; Ibrahim, 1985). This study also included pilot oral history interviews to test and refine the interview guide (see *Appendix 5: Oral History Interview Guide*) and overall oral history interview process.

Instead of using the Western research method of focus group discussions, the study used formal communal analysis gathering method, or *tabadul al arra* (formal exchange of ideas) to align with the communal norms in the Nuba Mountains and based on collectivist worldviews that focuses on co-construction of ideas and communal assessment of the issues and priorities for communities (Chilisa, 2020). Western-derived focus group discussion methods of qualitative research often have pre-determined questions within a semi-structured format that lasts usually less than 2 hours, and often do not pay attention to the communal norms and ways of knowing and sharing knowledge that are intrinsic to communities (Rothe et al., 2009). Communal analysis gathering was an iterative process that that lasted 1.5 days in a secluded area with 14 peacebuilders who were available in the central area of the warzone during the gathering period and who had been involved in the Nuba Mountains peacebuilding practice over the last 12 years. My eight years of working in the Nuba Mountains as a practitioner and adviser gave me the relational understanding to know how to use the appropriate customary ways for inviting and organising such a communal analysis gathering with a diverse group of people who represented different perspectives based on background, sectors (community development, humanitarian assistance, civil authority, political leadership and military leadership) and levels of authority (community and regional). Regardless of my years of relational understanding, however, I still verified with the peacebuilders involved in this study to ensure I was not breaking any protocols, that I had the right balance of diverse perspectives and was

creating an environment of trust that would allow the group to candidly share information and views without feeling uncomfortable.

The dialogic observations were in the form of *wanasa* sessions to make meaning of the discussions and reflections on what was happening within and around the discussions and the context overall. *Wanasa* is a term commonly used in Nuba Mountains and across Sudan to describe a casual, informal conversation between two or more people to exchange new knowledge or discuss current events happening in the community, area or wider country. It can happen virtually or in person. Jokes or gossip are also often exchanged. Other social science studies have used *wanasa* as part of their research methodologies (Abdel Halim, 2003; Medani, 2009). Dialogic observations also strived to move away from Western-derived false oppositional dichotomies of subject vs object framing of researcher and participants in the research. Instead, dialogic observations embrace relational ways of knowing that emanate from the endogenous knowledge systems emanating from the Nuba Mountains (Chilisa, 2020). Within the peacebuilding field, Schön's (1983) 'reflection-on-action' concept is similar to dialogic observations because it focuses on learning from the analysis of experiences after they have occurred to improve practice and decide on ways forward. Moreover, dialogic observations help bridge the gap between knowledge systems of two or more people involved by putting emphasis on both listening and sharing knowledge within endogenous knowledge generation. The act of mutual listening and knowledge sharing helps level power relations

between two or more people because each person is deemed to have valuable knowledge to share and hear (Fals Borda & Rahman, 1991).

In terms of desk research, this study used peer-reviewed journals and published books as well as white papers written by practitioners involved in Nuba Mountain peacebuilding practice, including myself, from 2011 to the present. Some of these white papers are available to the public, while others were made available to me with the authors' permission. This study also strived to avoid epistemic violence by centring secondary sources written by authors from communities in the Nuba Mountains, Sudan and across Africa and the Middle East, from both contextual and philosophical points of view. The desk research occurred throughout the PAR cycles with the communal analysis, dialogical observations and oral history interviews prompting new desk research searches, which fed into dialogical observations topics of discussions for clarifications.

Data analysis methods

Using a postcolonial indigenous research paradigm allows the study to engage in a conceptual space where there is interaction between ways of knowing found in the Nuba Mountains and Western-derived ways of knowing (Chilisa, 2020). This study used both communal analysis and abductive thematic analysis (Boyatzis, 1998; Braun & Clarke, 2006; Thompson, 2022; Timmermans & Tavory, 2012). The communal analysis involved both informal and formal methods. Informally, communal analysis happened as a by-

product of the dialogic observations data collection method in all four PAR cycles. Formally, communal analysis happened during PAR cycle 3 through *tabadul al arra* (formal exchange of ideas), in the form of the communal analysis gathering. The communal analysis allows for a greater approach to meaning-making than an individual analysis. It allows for more nuances, assumptions and meanings to be generated and explained, which leads to greater insights and possible common ground between diverse knowledge systems emanating from the communal group involved in the analysis (Rist et al., 2011; Walsh & Downe, 2005).

The study also used abductive thematic analysis that incorporated both deductive and inductive analysis (Boyatzis, 1998; Braun & Clarke, 2006). Abductive thematic analysis allows for the researcher to make sense of the data collected from their social and epistemic locations while being aided by data analysis steps (Thompson, 2022; Timmermans & Tavory, 2012). This study used a modified version of Thompson's (2022) step-by-step abductive data analysis process. For Step 1, I included transcription and familiarisation of the 143 pages of data collected from the oral histories, communal analysis gathering, dialogical observations and my personal reflective journal. For the oral histories, I listened to the recorded interviews again as I manually transcribed them into a document, which allowed me to hear the nuances in the interviews in terms of somatic responses and silences (Boyatzis, 1998; Braun & Clarke, 2006). I also cross-checked the timing of when each oral history interview was conducted with my personal reflective

journal to remember the somatic responses and silences at the time. For the communal analysis gathering, I re-read the flipcharts written in Arabic that were translated the day after the gathering into English by two of the peacebuilders who attended and my notes from the gathering. For the dialogical observations, I re-read the documented observations I recorded in my journal notes (in my physical journal and WhatsApp chats/voice notes) with the council of community

In Step 2, I included three rounds of coding, where I coded words, phrases and excerpts that I felt were significant to the study and fell along a loose deductive analytical framework borrowed from the relational mentoring literature, which divided up the data along three loose frames: precursors, processes and outcomes. During the first round, I cut and pasted words and phrases that resonated with the study's research questions into a spreadsheet with a separate tab for each analytical frame (precursors, processes and outcomes). Table 8 are excerpts from the precursors tab:

Table 8: Abductive thematic analysis – initial coding

Recipricol learning process	Yes, that is one which is very interesting. Before that, I did not go to the teaching evening session. Learning from the day to day. Everyone goes to different schools in the evening, and in the morning we come together and issues would come to schools with different people. So teachers are getting from learning and these all are coming together and tehn we develop another lesson plans.
Listening to Stories; communal discussion	So, everytime the group comes, they would listen to the stories and then discuss.
Feeling of usefulness	I just want to help
Storytelling as testimony	Also, the way they talk, the teachers who were involved by giving their testimonial and how they want to be teachers and what they want to do after being teachers.
Curiosity	so with the teaching that's what made me more interested about this peace

In Step 3, I merged the initial codes until I had 25 leading codes with definitions capturing the meaning of the codes, as seen in Table 9 below.

Table 9: Abductive thematic analysis – codebook

Building Confidence	Feeling the trust between people is growing and each person can rely on the other because they are true to their word and have shown themselves to be trustworthy
Seeing one's privilege	Being aware or conscious that one has benefits more than others for reasons related to chance, history or communal norms.
Non-violent childhood	Growing up at a time in which there is calm, peace, cooperation between neighbouring groups and nonviolent ways to deal with problems in the community and in the family.
Witnessing violence/injustice	Seeing or consciously realising through life experience, film, books and listening to others speak about violence.
Witnessing managing/resolving conflicts involving violence/injustice	During childhood and adulthood, seeing how role models managed conflicts between people in families and communities that involved violence.
Living around people from other groups	During childhood and adulthood, living and working around people from other groups and often being friends with them.
Seeing one's self in relation to others	Knowing and thinking from a vantage point where you are yourself as well as part of a larger group or system of life that is impacted by you and impacts you.

Ideas of peace	How ideas came to them about peace and the definition of those ideas of what peace means.
Inner self	The personality and thought process of a person.
Education (both informal and formal)	The schools, curriculum, lesson plans, books and life experiences used to teach and learn.
Family members as role models	Father, mother, siblings, grandparents and uncles who teach how to think, act, judge and live life by example.
Community members as role models	Community leaders including traditional leaders, elders and people in the community who give knowledge and advice on how to think, act, judge and live life by example.
God giving wisdom	Spiritual element to how knowledge and wisdom is given to people.
Voluntary/duty	The feeling or sense of voluntary duty for one to participate and act for the benefit of the whole community.
Peer Learning with Others (formal and informal)	Learning from peers in a reciprocal process in informal and formal settings.
Moral/ethical stance from world views	Explaining what is good and bad based on a philosophical grounding of how one sees the world and ways to think and act in it.
developmental interactions	The interactions (past interactions or dialogic observations in the present) that happened within peacebuilding activities over the last 12 years using the word 'I' and referencing something they learned.
Means of analysis/reflection and deliberation and decision-making within learning	How one describes the ways of analysing, synthesising and deciding on ways forward.
Formal and informal settings (including networks)	The social, political and economic organisational structures and practices, including networks, that are made up of socially shared rules and created/enforced by official sanctioned channels or non-official sanctioned channels.
Evolution of time	Time is constantly moving, not staying still, and life is continuously moving across time.
Everyone involved	All people across the community have roles to play within peacebuilding and without everyone involved dysfunction often happens.
Evolving Communal guidelines	The simple rules to organise society by identifying the priority communal needs to create peace and decrease violent conflict, ways to manage and resolve conflicts, and everyone's role with these simple rules.
Storytelling	Ways of communicating meaning between people and the environment, living in the present and from times past and for future generations

Instances of Epistemic violence	Instances where there is only one dominant voice that silences any other knowledge holders' voices and forces their worldviews, ways of thinking and methods of sharing knowledge onto the other knowledge holders
New and Buried Knowledge Generation	Knowledge in any form that is generated from two or more people who share ideas, thoughts, insights with each other. Sometimes this knowledge is new, meaning it's not been generated before, and sometimes the knowledge is old yet buried from existence due to dominant knowledge systems subjugating or marginalizing other knowledge systems

In Step 4, I started developing themes to portray the phenomena within the codes (Braun & Clarke, 2006; Saldaña, 2015). This step included multiple rounds of theme development, with the first round focusing on developing the 25 codes into four themes and 18 sub-themes. The second round further refined the themes into five overarching themes based on precursors, processes and outcomes of developmental interactions (unit of analysis) with the peacebuilders involved in the Nuba Mountains peacebuilding practice (unit of observation), specifically:

- Development of a common social schema toward building peace and managing conflict from the peacebuilders' childhoods and young adulthoods
- Awareness of characteristics of Nuba Mountains peacebuilding practice
- Nurturing pedagogical co-creative relationships
- Cross-level relationship building
- Dominating relationships that perpetuate divides

In Step 5, I included theorisation of the data by looking back at the literature review and conceptual framework to understand how they could help explain the relationships between the themes (Timmermans & Tavory, 2012). During this step, the themes of endogenous knowledge generation and instances of epistemic violence were theorised. For Step 6, I conducted a few rounds of comparing the oral histories data, the communal analysis gathering data, the dialogic observations data (including my physical journal notes and WhatsApp chat notes), the desk research data to understand which themes were more prevalent between these data sets. In Step 7, I started to draw schematics of the re-tooled themes and how they related to each other, first on paper and then using PowerPoint (see Figure 6: Theme Schematic below).

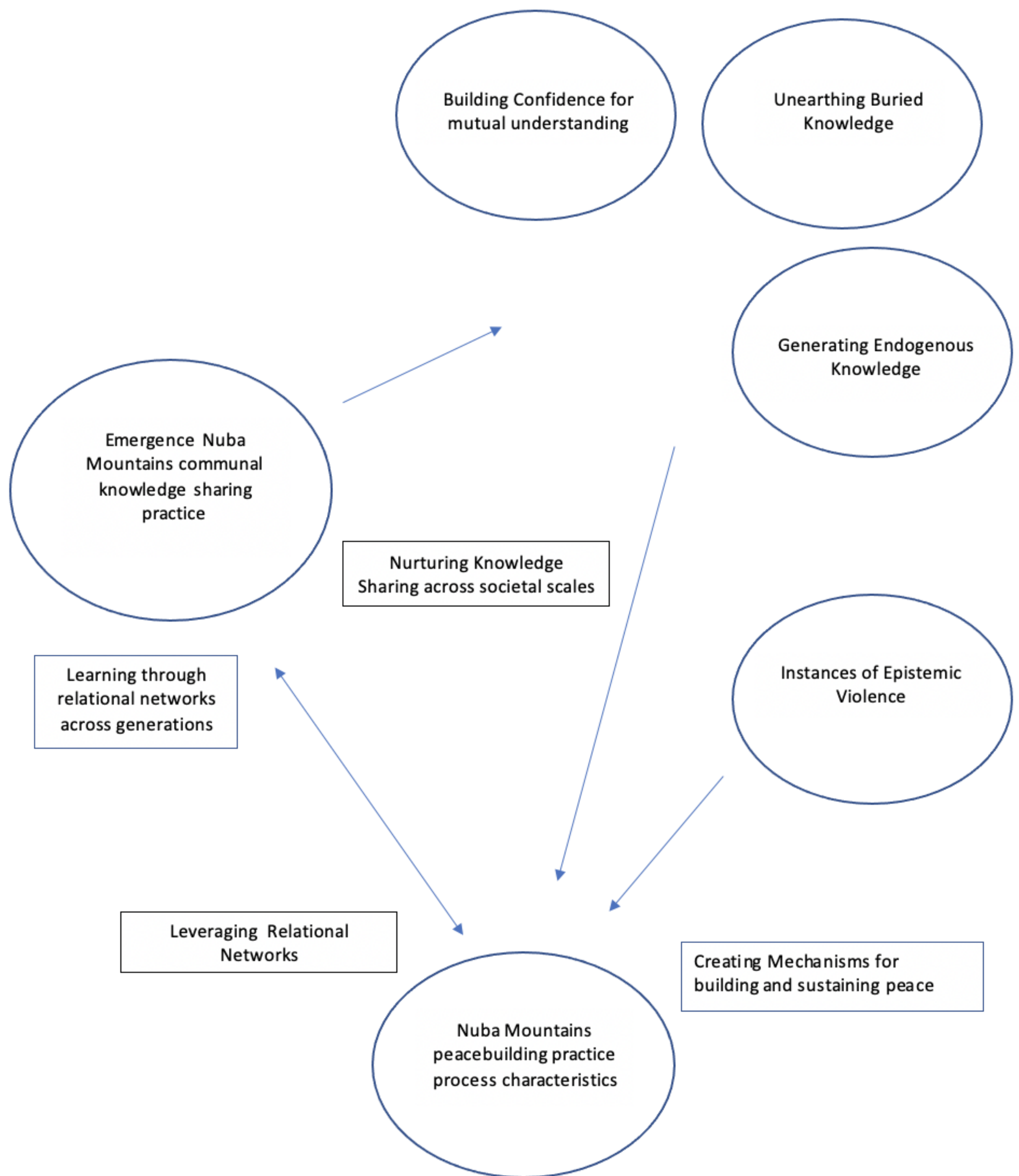


Figure 6: Theme schematic

Finally, with Step 8, I started to write up the themes presented in Chapters 5–7 and provide dense descriptions of social setting, the context and the peacebuilders involved in this study (while keeping their anonymity intact). The overarching themes presented in Chapter 5–7 include:

- Process characteristics for Nuba Mountains peacebuilding practice
- Emergence of Nuba Mountains communal knowledge sharing practice
- Generating endogenous knowledge
- Unearthing buried knowledge
- Building confidence for mutual understanding
- Instances of epistemic violence

Assessment of rigour

This study used multiple techniques to demonstrate rigour based on the evaluative criteria for qualitative research studies that combined constructs from Lincoln and Guba (2000) and Lather (1991), including credibility, transferability, dependability, confirmability and catalytic validity. In order to successfully ensure the research remained credible and, at the

same time, community-owned and relevant to the issues that appeared on the ground in the war zone, the researcher engaged in dialogic observation with peacebuilders, community advisory committee members, informal network of peacebuilding members, peers and TCD supervisors. I used a reflective personal journal, too. Member checks with the peacebuilders and community advisory committee members were continuously used for transcription validation and findings validation, both via WhatsApp and in person when it was possible to travel to the Nuba Mountains.

The goal of participatory action research methodologies are not to replicate the exact research methods in any war-affected context and achieve the same conclusions. Participatory action research methodologies are situated within specific places, cases, and time periods that require scholar-practitioners to understand the ways knowledge is conceived, generated, shared in the languages used by the people in these specific places. Therefore, the goal of participatory action research is to generate actionable knowledge among a specific group through critical reflection and actions that are based on values and knowledge systems intrinsic to the places where the research takes place in order to pursue social change as they see fit. In terms of this study's participatory action research methodology, the concern for replicability was not about creating a new model for peacebuilding scholar-practitioners to deploy in any war-affected place with any group. Instead, the study sought to ensure transferability of the process to co-construct and implement a combined participation action research case study methodology underpinned

by a postcolonial indigenous research paradigm within a war zone with peacebuilders active in that particular war zone. The methodology and paradigm would ideally reflect the ethics and unique knowledge systems existing in a particular place so it can evolve with the changing dynamics on the ground and not perpetuate epistemic violence.

To ensure transferability, I provided rationales for why I chose to use both purposive and convenience sampling due to the changing context of the war zone and included dense descriptions of the context setting and peacebuilders involved (while maintaining their anonymity). I also provided descriptions of adapted PAR methodology models for scholar-practitioners to use for their PhD dissertation or other research studies. For ensuring dependability, I included dense description of the PAR cycle process, the oral history interviews conducted via WhatsApp and in person (individually and communally), the communal analysis gathering in person, the dialogic observations and the data analysis methods for communal analysis and abductive thematic analysis. To ensure creditability, dependability and confirmability, I triangulated data across different data sets including oral history interviews, dialogical observations, personal journal and desk research. I also included communal analysis with a cross-section of peacebuilders from different sectors and levels of authority to engage a diverse set of perspectives.

As noted by Lincoln and Guba (2003, p. 238), 'many positivist and postpositivist inquirers still consider 'action' [as being] the domain of communities other than researchers and research participants: those of policy personnel, legislators and civic and

political officials'. In contrast, considering that I used a combined PAR case study methodology, an additional quality of catalytic validity was measured by 'the degree to which the research process reorients, focuses, and energises participants toward knowing reality in order to transform it' (Lather, 1986, p. 272). Following Mertens and McLaughlin (2004), who advised to assess catalytic validity by participants' self-reporting on outcomes of the research experience and the findings, peacebuilders involved in this study shared their desire to hold more communal analysis to help communally reflecting, carry forward insights to help mitigate evolving spoilers and use opportunities that present themselves for building peace and managing conflict with communities.

Positionality and ethical framework

On the question of how to carry out qualitative research, Keane et al. (2016) caution any researcher who has been formally taught within a Western/modern knowledge system that they still come with a scientific knowledge orientation where they separate themselves from the community they are researching and treat people as research subjects to be observed. They also highlight how each researcher's life experiences shapes their research purpose, design and reliability and suggest researchers tell their story before they try to understand anyone else's story (Keane et al., 2016). My reflective journal and the dialogical observations with the peacebuilders and community advisory committee members involved in this study (before, during and after the study took place) helped me continuously reflect on issues of power and privilege as I am a white American cis woman

now living on the island of Ireland (in one of the six counties in the North) with assumptions and past experiences associated with growing up in the middle class of New Jersey, studying peace and conflict at universities from a distinctly Western point of view and working in other war-affected countries[17] for the past 17 years.

My story begins with describing the knowledge system within which I was born and raised, which is a Western knowledge system, since I was born in New Jersey, USA. However, my family and my teachers tried to instil the values of social justice and racial equality as the guiding ethics for how I could see and know about the world. These social justice and racial equality ethics with their relational epistemologies were socialised into me by my teachers and friends beginning in my pre-school days, where my older brother and I were among the few white children in a majority black pre-school with black teachers who were part of the 1960s US Civil Rights movement. Learning how to practice social justice and racial equality was also part of the ethos at Martin Luther King, Jr. Elementary School, Conackamack[18] Middle School and Piscataway High School. My childhood friends who were first and second generation from different parts of the world (I was third generation since my grandparents came from Scotland, Ireland and Alsace–Lorraine) helped me normalise that there were different languages and cultures with different religions. I would visit the houses of my friends, who were black, Korean, Chinese, Taiwanese, Nigerian, Ghanian, Sri Lankan, Pakistani, Indian, etc. I would hear

[17] Including South Sudan, Uganda, Kenya, the Philippines, Pakistan, Nepal and Palestine.
[18] Chief Conackamack was the Chief of the Piscataway Native Americans who were forcibly moved when the European colonialists invaded their land.

the different languages being spoken, learn about the different foods we were eating at their houses and hear the different meanings of what terms in different languages meant. Growing up in my small hometown of Piscataway, NJ (population roughly 55,000), I thought it was normal for every town to have 50+ different languages being spoken. Consequently, by the time I moved to Chicago, IL to attend DePaul University, where I earned my undergraduate degrees in International and Japanese Studies, my social justice and racial equality ethical stance had already been firmly planted in me. Yet, the knowledge system in US societal institutions, in which I was born and raised, was still dominated by a Western knowledge system. Only through this PhD process did I reflect more deeply on my formative years to fully understand how those years were unconsciously socialising me into being around different knowledge systems and figuring out how to navigate and finding the common ground between them.

The ethical framework used for this study followed the 4Rs: relational accountable responsibility; respectful representation; reciprocal appropriation; rights and regulations (Chilisa, 2012, 2020; Ellis & Earley, 2006; Louis, 2007; Weber-Pillwax, 2001; Wilson, 2008). In addition, I followed the guidance from Chilisa (2012, 2020) to be flexible, creative, patient, curious and have a constant willingness to listen and be taught by the peacebuilders involved in this study. Although I have been working in the Nuba Mountains for the last eight years as a peacebuilding practitioner and adviser (and across Sudan over the 12 years), I am also always a *khawajia* (foreigner woman) within the Nuba

Mountains. In terms of relational accountable responsibility and right and regulations, when I started thinking about pursing a PhD in 2018, I also started asking permission from the peacebuilders who are now part of this study about the possibility of using Nuba peacebuilding practice as a case study. Until I started this PhD, I did not share any knowledge to the public about Nuba peacebuilding practice, whether in academic circles or programmatic international development circles. As Vizenor (2008) argued, not sharing information can be considered an act of survivance – the combination of survival and resistance. Moreover, it was not my knowledge to share. The ownership of the process of Nuba Mountains peacebuilding practice and what can and cannot be shared always rests with the Nuba Mountains communities overall. Also, I did not share any information publicly for security reasons. I wanted to safeguard the lives of those peacebuilders who have been working on the GoS side of the conflict line, as there have been peacebuilders in the last eight years on that side who have been jailed, tortured or killed for their involvement in Nuba peacebuilding practice. My role within Nuba Mountains peacebuilding practice started out as strategy development support to help the peacebuilders formalise and scale up their peacebuilding practice to reach across the whole region starting in 2014. I was one of a handful of *khawajat* (foreigners) who were invited into the war zone to specifically help with the peacebuilding practice. I was invited because of the small network of *khawajat* aid workers who thought my character and skill-set would be useful for the role needed. Over a year, my role shifted into a donor and grant manager role with the two NGOs that decided to stay in the war area when the fighting

recommenced in 2011. Over the years, my role shifted again to advising or helping implement multi-sector activities such as bottom-up civic education curriculum development, anti-recruitment (SAF/PDF/RSF) strategies, co-facilitating conflict analysis discussions and monitoring activities for donors. Throughout my various roles within Nuba Mountains peacebuilding practice, I was always a friend to the peacebuilders and the communities overall.

When the peacebuilders involved in this study gave me permission to use Nuba Mountains peacebuilding practice as a case study for my PhD, it was before the revolution in Khartoum and the rest of Sudan had started in April 2019 and long before the 2021 military coup, which further increased instability in the war zone. Therefore, following the ethics of respectful representation and reciprocal appropriation, we discussed how this dissertation could be used as a means for reflective practice through PAR methodology and oral history interviews as a familiar method to document and reflect on the communal, collaborative, eclectic and emergent nature of Nuba Mountains peacebuilding practice. Through this reflection, they could see what could be taken forward in real time. PAR and similar popular education methodologies developed by Freire (1970) (such as REFLECT) were already familiar to community members who had used these methodologies during the end of the previous war (1983–2005), during the Comprehensive Peace Accord (CPA) (2005–2011) and within this current war (2011–present) (Corbett, 2012; Kodi, 2019). Finally, we also discussed how the dissertation could be used to disseminate the findings

by having an executive summary of the dissertation translated into Arabic to disseminate it to the peacebuilders involved in the study and who are working in other parts of Sudan to share the methods and findings wider. In addition to following the 4R ethical framework, I also followed Trinity College Dublin's research guidance (TCD, 2014) and guidance from the Development Studies Association of Ireland (Van Bavel et al., 2016) to receive my university's ethics approval to conduct this PhD study (see *Appendix 6: Ethics Approval*).

Conclusion

This chapter described the rationale for choosing the postcolonial indigenous research paradigm, description of the setting and demographics, an overview of the PAR process and cycles that included data collection methods (oral history interviews, dialogical observation, personal journals and desk research as data collection methods) and a family of data analysis methods, namely deep *wanasa* analysis, which can be conceived as an oral analytical method used by people living in the Nuba Mountains (as well as the rest of Sudan), communal analysis with peacebuilders involved in this study and thematic analysis that used an abductive approach (a combination of deductive and inductive) to generate the five themes discussed in the next three chapters (Chapters 5–7). This chapter also clarified the study's assessment of rigour was not based on positivist-oriented criteria of validity, reliability, and generalizability. Instead, it was based on assessment criteria for qualitative research studies that combines constructs from Lincoln and Guba (2000) and

Lather (1991) that aligns with participatory action research and using a postcolonial indigenous research paradigm, namely: credibility, transferability, dependability, confirmability and catalytic validity. The chapter concluded with my positionality and ethical framework.

Chapter 4: Background of Nuba Mountains Historical Relations

Introduction

This chapter seeks to outline the historical patterns of social relations in the Nuba Mountains as they impacted the re-starting and evolution of Nuba Mountains peacebuilding practice over the last 12 years. There has been extensive social research on the geographic, cultural, linguistic, political, economic and humanitarian dimensions of communities living in the Nuba Mountains area of Sudan, which has been outlined in an annotated bibliography of social research of the Nuba Mountains covering 1910–2015 (Ille, 2015) and found in written and oral archives (in Arabic, English and other languages) storied at the Institute of African and Asian Studies, University of Khartoum, National Records Office of Sudan and the Sudan Archive in Durham University. This chapter does not seek to provide a comprehensive historical account of the people of the Nuba Mountains. Instead, it seeks to outline the patterns across history that pertain to why the Nuba Mountains peacebuilding practice started, how it evolved and how historical patterns of subjectivities still create dysfunction within the social, economic and political relations between communities in the Nuba Mountains and the power-holders in that region and the rest of Sudan.

The history of slavery still perpetuates Arab and Western subjectivities of the heterogeneous communities that are now known collectively as the Nuba. These

subjectivities begin with the origin and use of the name Nuba given by outsiders (Western and Arab), which is intertwined with the history of slavery in the Nuba Mountains. This history still drives social, economic and political relations both within and outside the Nuba Mountains. The pre-colonial states, colonial powers and ethnonationalist/theocratic regimes prior to and after Sudan's independence in 1956 have used these subjectivities, in one way or another, for exploitation, subjugation and marginalisation purposes. The chapter ends with a description of the re-starting of Nuba Mountains peacebuilding practice that sought to re-define subjectivities in the way people viewed each other living in and around the Nuba Mountains. This subjectivity privileges relationality and welcome ambiguities for social relations as situations evolve, which is how the Nuba Mountains communities have survived for centuries.

History of the term Nuba

The origin of the term Nuba is still debated by social science researchers. The Latin name 'Nubae' was first recorded in written history by ancient Greek geographers and philosophers, including Erastothenes, Strabon and Ptolemy, to describe the people who lived south of ancient Egypt (Ille, 2015). Moreover, scholars highlight the ancient Egyptian roots of the word ('nb'), which carried with it a connotation of Nuba being synonymous with an enslaved people or people who could be enslaved (infidels) because they had black skin colour, did not practice the Islamic faith and did not speak the Arabic language (Ibrahim H.B, n.d.; Stevenson, 1984). A millennium prior to Hegel dismissing

Africans as a people without history, Arab scholars were already considering blackness as an indicator of inferior political and social status for people living across the Arab world (El Hamel, 2013). Medieval Arab scholars referred to 'bilad al-Nuba' (land of the Nuba) as the Christian kingdoms (Nobatia, Makuria, Alodia) south of Aswan, and their populations as al-Nuba, with a more general description of the sub-Saharan region stretching from the Atlantic to the Red Sea they called 'bilad al-Sudan' (land of the blacks) (Mamdani, 2009, p. 75). The non-aggression treaty of Baqt (652 CE), which lasted for 600 years, had the Christian kingdoms in present-day Sudan paying 360 slaves from Fazughli and the Nuba Mountains to the Arab Muslim kingdom in present-day Egypt (Omaar & De Waal, 1995). As Sudanese scholar Francis Deng (2004, p. 4) asserted,

> slavery was the decisive factor that classified people into the master race, comprising Arabs and Muslims, and the enslaveable race, the Black Africans, who were deemed to have no culture, but could be redeemed by their adoption of Islam, the Arabic language, Arab culture, and, of course, fusing blood with the master race.

Most Sudanese scholars highlight the history of slavery as the basis for all future relations between communities of the Nuba Mountains and all other power groups throughout history, whether it be land rights, use/management, overall political or

economic marginalisation or cultural subjugation (Abbas, 1973; Kadouf, 2001; Komey, 2013, 2008; Manger, 2007, 2001; Mohamed Salih, 1995).

Historical pattern of ambiguous relations and multiple subjectivities of Nuba communities

The term Nuba was re-invented by Northern Sudanese Muslims as an ethnic group to categorise the 50+ tribes of indigenous peoples who migrated to the Nuba Mountains area 500 years prior to the first visitors to the area for slave raiding purposes – the *Baggara* (Arab cattle herders). As Sudanese scholar Idris (2001, as cited in Deng, 2004, p. 8) highlights:

> Northern Sudanese Muslims invented derogatory ethnic and racial categories to refer to non-Muslim groups in the South. These invented categories included terms such as *'Ibd'* (*sic*) or slave for Southerners or *Fallata* for Western Africans. Thus, with the creation of these categories the people of South Sudan, the Nuba Mountains, and the Upper Blue Nile became prey for Northern Muslims slave traders.

Some of these slave traders and holders were also Nuba, as was the case for the upper echelon of the Tegali Kingdom, which acted as an arm of the Funj Sultanate (1505–1821). It was the Funj Sultanate via Tegali that encouraged the first Islamisation and

Arabisation of Nuba cultural groups. Regardless of the historical debate around how much of the Nuba Mountains was actually ruled by the Tegali Kingdom (Ewald, 1990; Ille, 2011; Spaulding, 1987), they all affirm that there existed a functionary position of a *sīd al-darib* (master of the path) for each of the Nuba groups spread out across the over 80 hills in the Nuba Mountains. Historians have interpreted this role of *sīd al-darib* as both part of the Funj Sultanate's influence in the area via the Tegali Kingdom and as a sign of strength and independence of the communities, providing a representative for intercommunal agreements (Ewald, 1990; Spaulding, 1987). Kadouf (2001, p. 23) argues that these historic mediator roles were able to negotiate peace treaties because they 'possessed personal qualities such as bravery and wisdom, and the capability of negotiating the terms of peace'. He also highlights that it was 'not necessary that they should be of *kujur/kani* (shaman) origin, although a shaman might sometimes be needed to officiate the performance of a rite resulting in the peace treaty' (Kadouf, 2001, p. 23).

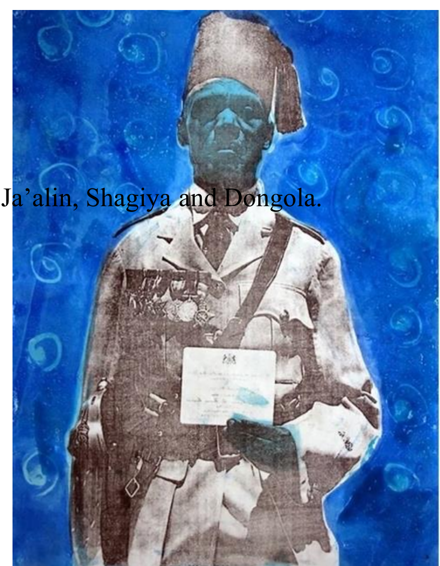
The communities of the Nuba Mountains can be defined as roughly 80% Nuba with the remaining 20% of communities being either Baggara (Arab cattle herder tribes of Hawazma, Misseria who migrated in search of grazing lands and water for their cattle), Fellata (other West African tribes who migrated west to Sudan) or Jallaba (merchant traders from Northern Sudan who were interested in slaves, gold, ivory etc.) (Komey, 2008, 2013). Most scholars agree that 'the Nuba are indeed the indigenous peoples of the Nuba Mountains; they have the strongest ties to their lands and have lived in this region

before colonization' (Komey, 2008, p. 105). Rather than reducing conflicts between these communities to a binary farmers vs nomadic divide, this study reiterates Ille's (2015, p. 18) statement that 'apart from national and global dynamics of resource exploitation … sedentary farmers practice husbandry and nomadic pastoralists agri- and horticulture, as stressed by thorough economic studies. These communities have a long and fluid relationship that was defined by slave raiding and trading as well as peace treaties for pragmatic reasons – to survive. As scholars have noted, if Sudan is the 'microcosm of Africa' and Kordofan is 'a microcosm of Sudan' then 'the Nuba Mountains may as well be regarded as an epitome of cultural transfusion of different ethnic groups in Sudan' (Kadouf, 2001, p. 46; Saavedra, 1998, p. 223).

Scholars also argue the late 18th and early 19th century is when the Baggara started to seasonally migrate their cattle into the plains surrounding the Nuba Mountains' hills and raiding Nuba villages for slaves to work their sedentary farms further away during the rainy season or to pay for more cattle and goods during the dry season. Nuba tribes eventually fled to the tops of the hills to escape the raids and started adapting sedentary farming to the terraces of the hills to survive. There were non-aggression peace treaties between Baggara and Nuba who developed interdependent relationships, which were location specific between adjoining areas (hills and plains) and mediated by *sīd al-darib* (the master of the path) from each group, resulting in numerous ad hoc peace treaties that did not always hold (Kadouf, 2001). Moreover, there were intermarriages between Nuba

and Baggara tribes that helped the Islamisation and Arabisation happening during the Funj Sultanate period due to enslaved women birthing children to their Arab masters (which made the children Arab according to the patrilineal line of descent in the Islamic faith) or as part of solidifying peace treaties. Meanwhile, the Jallaba[19] were the slave traders and masters who controlled and managed the commercial routes of trade (slaves, gold, ivory, etc.) between the Funj Sultanate and the Dar Sultanate (present-day Darfur), north to Egypt and west to Abyssinia (present-day Ethiopia) (Manger, 2007). They had an exploitive relationship with the Nuba tribes and would often use the Baggara as their slave raiders while also exploiting Baggara for more duty fees. While these exploitive and fluid relationships started around 1800, they have remained an embedded pattern of relations between the Nuba, the Baggara and the Jallaba (particularly the Ja'alin, Shagiya and Dongola who would go on to become the political and economic elites in independent Sudan through to the present day).

The slave raiding in the Nuba Mountains became worse at the advent of the Ottoman Empire's colonisation of Sudan. The Turco-Egyptian polity needed slaves to serve as both soldiers and workers for the agriculture fields and house servants across the entire Ottoman Empire (Ille, 2015). All those enslaved people who were conscripted into



[19] Jallaba originate mainly from the Arab or Arabised Nilotic tribes of Ja'alin, Shagiya and Dongola.

the armed forces ‘were manumitted [freed from enslavement] and received basic training in Islamic law’ (Mohamed Salih, 1995, p. 72). Similarly, roughly 100 years later, under the British-Egyptian colonial period (1899–1955), enslaved people from Nuba and across Sudan were being taken to Egypt and conscripted into the British Army to serve in the British Empire’s wars across the world (e.g., India, Indonesia, Mexico, etc.) (Suliman, 1999). When they returned to Egypt, they would receive *tazkarat horeya* (freedom passes) that indicated the end of their service as slaves (Scene Arabia, 2020). Figure 7 below highlights a Sudanese man who was enslaved and received his *tazkarat horeya* after serving in the British armed forces

Figure 7: Amado Alfadni artwork of enslaved Sudanese man who served in the British Army

The slave trade increased in the Nuba Mountains during the Mahdiyya period (1881–1898), a brief period between colonial regimes where an independent state in Sudan overthrew Turkish-Egyptian rule to start a theocratic state under Muḥammad Aḥmad ibn AbdAllāh al-Mahdī, who claimed descent from the Prophet Muhammad and continued under the Khalifa Abullahi (Ille, 2015; Kadouf, 2001). This period also began the pattern of Nuba relations becoming divided about their political attitudes toward

centralised governments in Sudan. The Mahdiyya was the first in a line of centralised theocratic governments in what is now Sudan that strived to divide and rule the Nuba Mountains and subjugate Nuba groups that resisted. As Suliman (1999, p. 210) states:

> The rise of the Mahdist movement in the 1880s brought fresh trouble to the peoples of the mountains. Some supported the Mahdi (a person believed to be the one who would lead Muslims to salvation); others resisted him. This difference in attitude toward the Mahdi was to be characteristic of Nuba relations with central governments in the future, dividing them into rebellious and government-friendly Nuba. After the death of the Mahdi, his successor, Khalifa Abullahi, sent a force under Hamdan abu Anja and al-Nur Muhammed Anqara to subdue the Nuba. More than 10,000 Nuba perished and even more were enslaved.

It was during the Mahdiyya period that a Nuba subjectivity started to be defined by communities of the Nuba Mountains rather that outsiders defining who they were. This Nuba subjectivity was in 'contrast to the Baggara Arabs of Kordofan and Darfur regions (what the Nuba are not) and objectively determined by shared space, comparable cultural values, and similar economic activities (what the Nuba are)' (Suliman, 1999). The collective values of self-reliance through interdependence and tolerance of difference became more salient within this collective new Nuba subjectivity. However, also during this period, a vast number of enslaved people from Nuba communities became soldiers

within Ḥamdān Abu Anja's *jihādiyya* (or military units of enslaved men) (Kadouf, 2001). Although this army made up of enslaved men is similar to the strategies deployed by both colonial powers, the Turco-Egyptian (1821–1885) and the Anglo-Egyptian (1899–1955), this particular period saw many Baggara tribes conducting these raids as followers of the Mahdi and also enslaved Nuba being part of the *jihādiyya*, which further Arabised them. Just over 100 years later, history would repeat itself during the civil war (1983–2005) involving the Nuba Mountains with most of the Baggara tribes (particularly Misseriya tribes) being armed by central government forces to raid Nuba villages as part of a jihad by religious extremists connected to the theocratic central government in Khartoum. Instead of enslavement, the central government in Khartoum in 1992 forcibly removed hundreds of thousands from their villages in Nuba Mountains to 91 'peace camps' as a 'centre of attraction' to govern the Nuba Mountains with Arabic/Islamic ideology propagated within them (Omaar & De Waal, 1995, p. 249). The central government under Bashir's dictatorship selected specific Nuba leaders who were trained using Arabic/Islamic ideology as soldiers and then as ideological bureaucrats to conduct the indoctrination within the 'peace camps' (CAC3, 20/02/21).

The Anglo-Egyptian Condominium (1899–1955) may not have started the marginalisation and exploitation of the Nuba Mountains. However, the British colonial rulers succeeded in embedding the already existing racist, ethnic stratifications, cultural antagonisms and patterns of regional underdevelopment. This, in turn, led to the extractive

economic relations, core–periphery patterns of political marginalisation and vastly unequal education and social development that still define the relationship between the Nuba Mountains and the central GoS through to the present period (Ille, 2015). Most Nuba rejected the integration strategies of the British to forcibly bring them down from the hill-tops where they were defensively living. The British wanted them to return to the plains so they could develop the vast arable land of the plains as part of the colonial extractive economic plan (Komey, 2013; Manger, 2001). This economic plan needed the Nuba Mountains to operate with an established military and administrative unit system where services and goods would be centralised into town centres with construction of roads to move trucks of goods and military personnel.

However, their economic strategy was counterproductive to their social strategy, which wanted to keep the Nuba apart from the Arab population to avoid further processes of Arabisation and Islamisation (Manger, 1994, p. 45). The 1922 Closed District Ordinance by the British closed the area so outsiders could not enter, and communities in the Nuba Mountains could not leave either. However, this Closed District Ordinance did not stop domestic slavery from happening, which was still taking place in these closed districts as late as the 1930s with Jallaba continuing to play the slave trader role, especially in the Nuba Mountains, as the British were unable to enforce their closed district policy to keep the Jallaba out. In addition, a caveat within the Closed District Ordinance was that English missionaries were allowed to open schools. However, they were not heavily

resourced, privileged the English language over the languages spoken by the 50+ Nuba tribes and were more focused on spreading the Christian faith than focusing on developing a generation of formally educated minds (Ibrahim, 1985).

Land use and management policies instituted by the British as part of their economic strategy to develop agricultural schemes in Nuba Mountains for exploitive purposes, particularly for cotton production, were reinforced by successive exploitive Sudanese regimes in the post-independent Sudan Khartoum (Komey, 2013). These policies helped solidify economic and political power in the hands of Jallaba groups and Baggara groups while severely disadvantaging the Nuba. As noted by Kadouf (2001, p. 50), 'In contrast the rest of the north continued to develop both educationally, politically and economically. Disparities in wealth distribution, education and economic development, eventually leading to the present conflict, were therefore inevitable.' The successive land ordinances and policies instituted by the British led to the current land tenure system in Sudan being characterised by duality of communal and civil systems, as Sudanese scholar Komey (2008, p. 993) outlines:

> 1) Communal traditional land tenure systems regulated by customary laws and institutions, which are not legally recognized in government courts when it comes to legal ownership, and

2) Modern state land tenure systems based on civil laws and institutions. Most of the Sudanese rural communities and their traditional customs in land tenure are beyond these modern land-tenure systems.

The British recognised and registered the cultivated lands in the northern and central region of Sudan along the White Nile river (where the Jallaba came from) as private properties while not registering similar lands in the Nuba Mountains. Instead, most of the Nuba Mountains was deemed government-owned land and subject to 'customary usufruct rights vested in community being tribe, section, and village', which meant that the British government could withdraw these rights since 'customary usufruct rights were not legally registered in the British government system' (Komey, 2008, p. 992). They also engaged in further divide-and-rule land policies by 'conferring land rights upon the religious leaders of the Khatmiyya and the Ansar as well as tribal leaders in order to consolidate and legalize these rights and to encourage these emerging landlords to grow cotton by pump irrigation along the banks of the white and Blue Niles' (Komey, 2008, p. 994).

The successive British land ordinances and policies and the Closed District Ordinance (that lasted until 1946) allowed Northern Sudan to economically, politically and infrastructurally control national developments, while stagnating any comparable development in the Nuba Mountains, especially by instituting a native administration policy to govern the region. This native administration policy did not follow customary

norms (Suliman, 1999). The British hand-picked ‘tribal leaders in positions of nazirs and omdas (mek is the equivalent term used for Nuba leaders in language communities within Nuba Mountains) … giving them the power to pass judgment on conflicts as well as to collect taxes’ (Manger, 1994, p. 48) while encouraging them to provide labour for the agricultural production schemes being developed on the plains below the hills. While the Power of Sheikhs Ordinance of 1922 (and its amendments in 1927 and 1954) granted these hand-picked tribal leaders positions of power, the system never became a consistent one of administrative governance since it was constantly politicised (Ibrahim, 1985). Yet, it remains the basic model for governance in rural areas across Sudan, and still within government-controlled areas of the Nuba Mountains through to the present day (Ille, 2015).

Prior to granting independence to Sudan by the British-Egyptian colonial rulers, a small minority of Northern Sudanese elite (the *effendia*), who consisted of Jallaba groups and the Islamic-informed political parties, namely the Ansar (in the form of the Ummah party) and the Khatmiyya (in the form of the Democratic Unionist Party (DUP)), were being groomed to take over power from the British by being given privileged civil servant positions and having elite secondary schools built for their exclusive education (Suliman, 1999). Due to the legacy of slavery and successive administrative and economic policies by the Turco-Egyptian, Mahydia and British-Egyptian polices, the *effendia* still viewed communities in the Nuba Mountains as slaves whose land could be exploited and used for

their own gain. As Kadouf (2001, p. 51) highlighted, 'Unwisely, northern politicians appeared to follow British policy that was based entirely on the general notion of "divide and rule"'. However, the *effendia's* strategy to exploit the Nuba Mountains community's land through further mechanised farming schemes to continue the cotton and gum Arabic production started under the British-Egyptian colonial era was not exclusively for their own economic interest. The *effendia* were dealing with their own inferiority complex as the rest of the Arab world looked down on them because their skin color were shades of black. As the former Sudanese Foreign Minister Mansour Khalid (cited in Deng, 2004) said:

> The reason [for northern identification with Arabism] stems from an inferiority complex really. The Northern Sudanese is torn internally in his Arab-African personality. As a result of his Arabic Islamic cultural development, he views himself in a higher status from other Sudanese not exposed to this process. Arabism gives him his sense of pride and distinction and that is why he exaggerates when he professes it. He becomes more royal than the King, so to speak.

Therefore, the minority Northern Sudanese elite became ultra-Arab and Muslim with further cultural subjugation of Nuba tribes and privileging the Baggara tribes around the Nuba Mountains in land and social policies, especially education curriculum being

taught in schools throughout the Nuba Mountains. This indoctrination and subjugation within the education curriculum was highlighted specifically by one of the leaders of Nuba Mountains resistance movements who was also a trained teacher, Yousif Kuwa (cited in Shurkian, 1994, p. 16):

> We were never taught anything good about the Nuba; we were taught the history of the Arabs and, when we were taught about ourselves, it was as slaves. Now, there is a [deliberate] policy to assimilate us into their Arab, Islamic culture to the extent that a lot of us do not know our mother tongue and despise our own culture.

The *effendia* began to arm specific groups of the Arab communities, namely the Missiriya, calling them the Murahaliin, to stop the SPLA forces who moved into the Nuba Mountains from southern Sudan. These SPLA forces consisted of Dinka/Nuer/Shilluk soldiers who were part of SAF, but mutinied around opposition to the exploitive land policies and discriminatory political and economic policies of the *effendia* in the central government of Khartoum. When the dictator Omar Bashir's regime came to power through the 1989 military coup, the Murahaliin were reorganised to include Misseriya Zurug and Humor and officially sanctioned as a military force known as the PDF (Kadouf, 2001). By 1993, Omar Bashir's regime was publicly acknowledging the vast killing and abuse of Nuba Mountains communities by its army and PDF. In February 1993, First

Lieutenant Khalid Abdel Karim Salih, head of security in South Kordofan state, announced:

> [D]uring a 7-month period, the army and the PDF had killed 60,000–70,000 Nuba. He stressed that these ethnic-cleansing operations made no distinction between Muslims and Christians. Churches and mosques, missionary centres and Quranic schools were all shelled indiscriminately (Suliman, 1999, p. 218).

This was one of the first public admissions of state-sponsored killing of tribes originating from Nuba Mountains. In 1993, a group of leaders in El Obeid, the capital of North Kordofan state, 'issued a *fatwa* (an authoritative ruling on a religious matter) supporting this *Jihad*' (Suliman, 1999). In the midst of the killing and abuses, relationships between some of the Baggara and Nuba tribes were not always antagonistic. In terms of peace agreements between the Nuba and the Baggara since 1993, there was the Buram agreement (1993), the Regifi agreement (1995) and the Kain agreement (1996). During these peace agreement negotiations, several reasons were cited by both Nuba and Baggara as to why establishing peace again is needed, as seen in Table 10 below.

Table 10: Nuba and Baggara reasons to seek peace within intercommunal peace agreements (1993–1996)

<table>
<tr><th>Nuba</th><th>Baggara</th></tr>
<tr><td rowspan="2">The Nuba emphasized the fact that they are fighting against the government, never against the Baggara; and</td><td>The Baggara lamented that they have lost many men and animals and some were forced to abandon their homes;</td></tr>
<tr><td>The Baggara admitted that the government deceived them (it told them that the war against the rebels would only take a month or two, whereas it is now more than 10 years old);</td></tr>
<tr><td rowspan="2">The Nuba said that they also need to trade with the Baggara (they especially need to exchange cereals and animals for clothes, salt, and other industrial goods that the Baggara bring from Khartoum).</td><td>The Baggara said that they need trade with the Nuba (they want to trade their consumer goods for cereals grown by Nuba peasants);</td></tr>
<tr><td>The Baggara told the Nuba that their politicians (for example, El-Mahdi, the leader of the Umma party) have already left the Sudan and are working with the SPLM against the NIF regime.</td></tr>
<tr><th colspan="2">Nuba & Baggara</th></tr>
<tr><td colspan="2">Both sides have lost many people and animals for no good reason</td></tr>
<tr><td colspan="2">They had been living together in peace for 200 years</td></tr>
<tr><td colspan="2">They intermingled through marriage and sharing of cultural and religious values</td></tr>
<tr><td colspan="2">Most of the Nuba and the Baggara fighters have been poor</td></tr>
<tr><td colspan="2">Outsiders, mainly rich Jallaba, seem to be the only beneficiaries of the war</td></tr>
<tr><td colspan="2">The outsiders come and go, but the people indigenous to the mountains will stay and have to find ways to live together in peace.</td></tr>
</table>

Source: Suliman (1999, pp. 210–211)

However, these peace agreements started to happen six years after the first peaceful overtures between the Nuba leaders and Baggara leaders to stop the fighting and

killing during the previous civil war (1985–2005) through hand-written letters and emissaries that were akin to the *sīd al-darib* (the master of the path) functions used 200–500 years earlier (Suliman, 1999). The reasons highlighted in Table 10 continue to be the basis of the current iteration of the peacebuilding practice in the Nuba Mountains.

Conclusion

This chapter strived to weave together the historical patterns of ambiguous relations and multiple subjectivities of Nuba communities that morphed over the centuries. Sudanese scholars argue that Sudanese historical accounts of the past prioritised written sources that were: 1) almost exclusively from male perspectives; and 2) strongly biased toward state officials' accounts and the forces that struggled to control the state (Ibrahim, 1985). The following chapters strive to prioritise the oral histories of peacebuilders along with the written accounts so they are treated on an equal knowledge base for researchers to use moving forward. Internal developments of Sudanese society (i.e., traditional institutions and attitudes of the people who are being administered), particularly in the Nuba Mountains, were far less important than administrative history centring around 'ruling institutions', such as armies, centralised government activities, etc. (Ibrahim, 1985, p. 122). This chapter provided the necessary historical background to the development of Arab and Western subjectivities about the heterogenous tribes collectively known as the Nuba and subsequent pattern of subjugation, marginalisation and divide and rule masked as integration that all regimes have, in one way or another, utilised in regard to their

relations with the Nuba communities. It also highlighted the development of a new Nuba subjectivity, as defined by the collective Nuba people themselves, which values interdependence and tolerance of difference.

Chapter 5: Characteristics of Peacebuilding Practice

Introduction

This chapter presents the findings from the thematic analysis within the PAR as they pertain to Research Question 1: What are the characteristics of peacebuilding practice? The thematic analysis led to the generation of two themes that could be framed together as process characteristics of peacebuilding practice. Process characteristics contrast with outcomes characteristics as the latter focuses on the end goals of peacebuilding practice (i.e., economic interdependence, lower severity of violence incidents, etc.) and the former focuses on how the practice could achieve the end goals. The two themes were leveraging relational networks and creating mechanisms for managing conflict and building peace. Within the leveraging relational networks theme were the following sub-themes: childhood and intercommunal relational networks, national and international networks, and challenges of spoilers within the networks. Viewing these two themes together, they can be seen as interdependent process characteristics of peacebuilding practice in the Nuba Mountains war zone.

Leveraging relational networks

Relational networks in the context of Nuba Mountains peacebuilding practice can be described as the networks of individuals who are connected to each other through family

and communal relationships from childhood or working relationships grounded in common purpose or principles. By leveraging these relational networks, the Nuba Mountains peacebuilding practice was able to connect across different levels – community, national and international – and maximise the effectiveness of building peace and managing conflict through these networks. Leveraging childhood networks enabled humanitarian assistance to secretly move into the war zone and intercommunal cross-line markets and peace committees to re-emerge and evolve. Leveraging national and international civil society networks connected the peacebuilding practice happening in the Nuba Mountains war zone to the wider conflict transformation efforts happening at the national level. However, non-peacebuilding relational networks could sometimes impede Nuba Mountains peacebuilding practice in the form of dysfunctional relational networks called criminal networks that worked on both sides of the conflict line and negative dynamics of shullahs (small friend groups within existing networks). Therefore, the leveraging of relational networks was both a process characteristic for enabling and destabilising peacebuilding practice.

Childhood and intercommunal family networks

Leveraging childhood networks was integral in carrying out the second order given by the SPLM/A–N commander-in-chief on the ground in the Nuba Mountains when the war restarted in June 2011. The first order was a military directive, whereas the second order was essentially a peacebuilding order: 'initiate contact with the nomadic groups and

explain to them that this war is not against them, it’s against the Government policies’ (CAC5 20/5/21). The order was given to a senior SPLM/A–N military officer who had friendships with officers in SAF, a few leaders of the PDF and leading members of neighbouring communities. These friendships developed out of working relationships while serving on both the Sudan Joint Military Command (2002–2005), which was initiated after the Nuba Mountains ceasefire agreement in 2001, and Sudan’s Joint Integrated Units (JIUs), mandated by the CPA (2005–2011). Some of these friendships were even longer, dating back to childhood while growing up in different states due to their father being in the SAF (CACP3 25/5/21).

This senior SPLM/A–N military officer handed the order down to a lower-ranked military officer to initiate contact with the neighbouring community leaders across the conflict line because this lower-ranked military officer had close family friendships with the neighbouring Arab communities due to growing up next to them (PB16 22/5/21). The multi-generations of family-level friendships between specific Arab and Nuba communities allowed the peacebuilders to communicate with the Nasir (head of an Arab community) to facilitate the movement of a lorry across the conflict line (PB16 22/5/21). These key childhood and previous working relationships enabled informal communication (that was formally sanctioned by the SPLM–N/A) to start between both sides of the conflict line. Over a few weeks, these informal communications led to a delivery of life-saving food and goods into the war zone. A single truck escorted by members of nomadic

communities who guaranteed safe passage of the food and goods through a hidden corridor to reach the SPLM–N-controlled side. This was the first humanitarian delivery of food and goods into the war zone, which was 'cut off from public services, trade or international assistance … attack[ed] from GoS land forces and almost daily aerial bombardment' (Corbett, 2012, p. 2).

Also during the first few months of the recommencement of war in 2011, on the other end of the war zone, a former senior SPLM/A–N officer and a former Arab senior militia leader who were friends since their primary school days discussed an idea to start a cross-line market between their communities, considering their communities were living on both sides of the new conflict line. They remembered the effectiveness of setting up the peace markets during the previous civil war (CAC1 17/11/20). The discussion between the childhood friends developed a new version of a cross-line market that brought together traders from both sides of the conflict line in the 'no-man's land' or 'grey areas' that was not securely under either warring side's control. It was the first one established during the current war and the only market to date with a joint chairmanship (one Nuba, one Arab) and a 12-person inter-communal committee (traditional leaders, traders, women, youth, etc.) elected by the wider communities living around that particular area. Two Community Advisor Council members also highlighted how the knowledge sharing process that led to the decision to start a new version of a cross-line market started with *wanasa* (informal conversations) and formal *ijtima* (meeting) between the two childhood friends. Then, the

discussion moved to group level between community leaders, including traditional authority on both sides of the conflict line and security authority from the SPLM–N/A. Then, discussion moved to wider community level to establish which people were the trusted traders on both sides who knew each other through their own relational networks (CAC2 20/5/21; CAC3 25/5/21).

National and international civil society networks

This study identified the contributors of the Framework Mechanism Coordination Group (FWM) as a national and international civil society network that was leveraged to engage in knowledge sharing across social scales. The FWM is the only nationwide Sudanese civil society collective analysis coordination mechanism that holds space (virtually and physically) for collective analysis, and dissemination of information and recommendations based on changes in the current Sudanese context. Contributors (totalling roughly 300) include community, regional, national and civil society members across all states and war zones in Sudan and a smaller number of international civil society members who are trusted among the contributors due to their long-standing work experience in Sudan. The FWM has been functioning for the last 11 years since the wars restarted in 2011 in the Nuba Mountains and Blue Nile when it became irrefutably clear that the Track 1 elite political processes were not sufficient for overall conflict transformation processes in Sudan. The FWM contributors, initially formed by work relationships and personal friendships, allowed the 300 contributors from different political, ethnic and geographic

regions to build confidence in each other and to build a common vision of what they wanted for their country. The effectiveness of the FWM network on contributing to the overall conflict transformation process in Sudan could be seen in the high number of FWM contributors who included membership in the FWM network on their CVs when they applied for high and medium level positions within the now defunct transitional government of Sudan (2019–2021) (CAC2 29/1/20).

This national and international trusted network of contributors had the ability to forge constructive relationships across ethnic, geographic, social class, political and institutional divides through continuous knowledge sharing interactions during and alongside in-person or virtual collective analysis meetings held over the last 11 years, including semi-annual meetings and ad hoc state and regional meetings in more recent years. The semi-annual meetings were held outside of Sudan for security reasons until the 2019 revolution. The framework is based on four essential features: 1) a shared analysis of the conflict causes and trends to support non-violent conflict transformation; 2) an agreed set of core principles and a coherent approach to inform and guide interventions; 3) an agreed set of essential component processes for long-term non-violent transformation; and 4) appropriate mechanisms to maximise dialogue, coordination, cross-learning and synergy. A few of the peacebuilders and Community Advisor Council members involved in this study (and me) have been contributors to the FWM over the last 11 years. During

the study, the FWM network was mentioned by one of the peacebuilders as part of the strategy for knowledge sharing across divides to ease heightened tensions:

> We are doing a lot of consultations with other groups in the northern area, like (*name of neighbourhood*) in Kadugli, and I contacted (*name of contributor to FWM*) and (*name of contributor to FWM*) in Khartoum, Dilling and Kadugli. And I contacted the peace committee members across the line and mobilised those within us here to make more coordination and continue consulting and trying to bring up the common strategy and common understanding on how we can deal with these things. We are thinking of just moving around and holding these meetings so we can gather the information, target the real actors, define and identify the spoilers, approach them and see how to talk with them and reduce the ongoing tension (PB2 23/8/20).

This excerpt highlights the knowledge sharing process as well as the related analytical and decision-making processes to 'reduce the ongoing tension' in the war zone and across the whole of the South Kordofan region. First, it was leveraging the developmental network of the FWM to engage in knowledge sharing about the tensions happening across the wider South Kordofan state. Then, it was mobilising the peace committee networks on the war zone side and then also the peace committees across the line to engage in knowledge sharing together as a group. Then, it was engaging in wider

knowledge sharing by 'moving around' and 'holding these meetings' to speak with community members and engaging in the analytical process to 'define and identify the spoilers, approach them, and see how to talk with them' in order to 'reduce the ongoing tension'. The act of moving around rather than having a centralised focal place to gather people also highlights the de-centralised process of engaging in knowledge sharing.

National and international civil society networks within the aid industry also connected the peacebuilding practice happening in the Nuba Mountains war zone to the wider conflict transformation efforts happening at the national level. Although the institutional systems themselves within the aid industry were not set up to facilitate the different knowledge sharing across levels of influence between community to elites or between community to national levels. As one peacebuilder highlighted through this study, the formal aid systems were often counterproductive to the process of the Nuba Mountains peacebuilding practice:

> [I]n terms of systems, I would say all those were actually all down to chance to individuals in the mix who allowed it to happen. The formal systems of the bigger aid system worked against all of this from the beginning – both from INGOs and donors. So, in most cases, I don't think systems were there, as institutional systems. It was more the mix of individuals, both *khawajas* [foreigners] and Sudanese, who luckily somehow came together at that time despite the institutional constraints … I suppose I would rank it [Nuba Mountains peacebuilding practice]

> at the top, in terms of the range of different approaches – at community level, getting the movement [SPLM–N] buy-in, getting the buy-in of senior leaders (not just grassroots community), and moving up to the framework stuff where it was possible to bring in much wider civil society awareness and inputs into wider level peacebuilding efforts (PB3 9/7/20).

This excerpt highlights how the relational network within the aid industry was not planned, yet 'luckily somehow came together at the time despite the institutional constraints'. By chance, there was a 'mix of individuals, both *khawajas* [foreigners] and Sudanese' who worked in different parts of the aid industry and who had different roles to play within the formal aid system – from high-level donors and intermediary INGOs to the national NGOs and community NGOs. They all had a common vision to allow space for Nuba Mountains peacebuilding practice to happen and enabled connection to the wider national level efforts. The 'institutional systems' were not there and 'the bigger aid system worked against all of this from the beginning – both from INGOs and donors'. The community-level Nuba Mountains peacebuilding practice needed to leverage the relational networks within the aid industry to allow the 'different approaches' of Nuba Mountains peacebuilding practice to flourish at the community level with the SPLM–N armed movement and the grassroots community, while also connecting to the 'wider civil society awareness and inputs' at the national level through the FWM. These different approaches focused on engaging the grassroots, the armed movement, elites in the armed movement

and wider civil society across the country. The relational networks within the aid industry system were able to use their respective institutions or influence to allow for 'flexibility, trust, nimble, quick, efficient user-friendly systems to get assistance to the local peacebuilders who [would] go through all the work' across the different approaches.

Challenges of spoilers within the networks

There were two main challenges identified within the study that frustrated the process of leveraging relational networks within Nuba Mountains peacebuilding practice. The first main challenge were shullahs within the relational networks. *Shullah* in Sudanese Arabic means a clique of small like-minded friend groups (three to four people) within a larger self-identified group. Relatedly, the second main challenge was the by-product of some of the shullahs, which turned into entirely new relational networks in the form of criminal syndicates.

Shullah, as a concept, is not inherently a bad thing. They are a natural part of human interaction in Sudanese society where people gravitate to like-minded people who share interests. They can be catalysts for peace as much as they can catalyse disrupting peace. They can bring frustration and allow personal divides to interfere with collective analysis, coordination and collaboration. Shullahs in Sudanese society have notoriously been used to sow seeds of discord through bullying, demeaning and ostracising others who dare to disagree or challenge the status and/or power of smaller groups within an

established group, especially in Sudanese politics and civil society. Some of the peacebuilders acknowledged that some of the shullahs developed ‘within the communities and within the peacebuilding’ (PB1 30/6/20) because the ‘direct material benefit’ gained by engaging in the peacebuilding incentivised them to engage in looting, killing, car-jacking and armed robbery (CAC4 6/2/21, CAC3 20/11/21).

The second main challenge that frustrated Nuba Mountains peacebuilding practice was criminal syndicates. These began to increase around 2016 as Nuba Mountains peacebuilding practice succeeded in opening six cross-line markets and the unilateral ceasefires went into effect from June 2016 onward (Greeley, 2019). The syndicates included individuals from both sides of the formal security structures (SPLM/A–N and SAF/RSF). According to the collective analysis conducted in the study with the peacebuilders, the absence of comprehensive policies to curtail criminal syndicates was destructive to the Nuba Mountains peacebuilding practice and allowed the criminal syndicates to at least ‘side-step’ accountability from the official systems set up by the SPLM–N to manage law and order in the SPLM–N-controlled area of the Nuba Mountains (see Appendix 2: Communal Analysis of the Peacebuilding Praxis (2011-2022). Despite the SPLM/A–N commander-in-chief giving orders to refrain from looting and other violence, the shullahs within the SPLM/A–N simultaneously continued to be spoilers of the peacebuilding practice by participating or being complicit in the looting and other violent offences that took place on both sides of the conflict line as members of these

criminal syndicates. The short-term economic gains in the ongoing war were often too much to pass up.

Communal knowledge sharing techniques helped deter members of the criminal syndicates. One example was with ‘a singer who wrote a clever and quite effective song … about a particular military officer (within the SPLA–N). He was known to be spoiling the peaceful coexistence in a particular community and how the community should shame him for his actions’ (CAC2 20/5/21). The singers were able to use their talents in the community to share situated knowledge through song that could engage with communal power as a deterring force against spoilers within their own community. Another example involved one of the SPLM/A–N sector commanders who tried an innovative technique in the type of punishment any SPLM/A–N solider would receive if they were caught looting livestock or any other violent crime. Anyone caught looting or committing a violent crime had to make 3,000 bricks by themselves, which the community would then use to build houses and school buildings. One peacebuilder remarked, ‘the amount of looting in this area has started to come down after that order was made. Three SPLM/N-A were caught looting a month or so ago. Their punishment was to make 3,000 bricks without any help. Each one. They are still there, making the bricks. I don’t think they will loot again’ (PB2 23/6/21).

Creating mechanisms for building and sustaining peace

Creating mechanisms for building and sustaining peace was another process characteristic of Nuba Mountains peacebuilding practice identified through this study. The term mechanism can be defined as a process or system for achieving a specified goal and can be in the form of policies, guidelines and structures or initiatives tasked with communally agreed functions. In this study, relational networks facilitated the creation of mechanisms for building and sustaining peace. These mechanisms included revitalising and/or starting peace committees, cross-line markets, community guidelines for building and sustaining peace, and armed group policies related to building and sustaining peace. These mechanisms were able to push forward law and order, economic interdependence and social development across society as the war was happening. However, these mechanisms were also susceptible to decline because as people who created or used the mechanisms shifted positions in society, the awareness and functioning of the mechanisms would decline. This caused a need for more mechanisms to be created that could share knowledge across a wider network of relationships at different scales.

Peace committees and cross-line market committees

Peace committees and cross-line markets were mechanisms for maintaining inter-communal peace agreements and economic interdependence at the community level across the war zone. Protection groups (made up of mostly women) organically started months

after the war recommenced in 2011. Their role was to help disseminate ‘key protection advice and ideas, facilitate cross-learning between villages, raising basic human rights awareness and documenting accounts of human rights abuses’ (Corbett, 2012, p. 3). The advice and ideas disseminated by the protection groups were initially based on people’s experiences living through the previous war, which were collected through a PAR project supported by a small international NGO with mainly youth from around the Nuba Mountains that had just finished collecting the research data from community members shortly before the war broke out in 2011. Women had the ability to cross conflict lines to disseminate messages (even during the height of the aerial bombing that was almost daily from 2011–2016) for different reasons: as a form of intra/inter-communal encouragement visits to families of people who were killed on either side of the conflict line, for holding informal coffee/tea discussions to talk through the issues that were affecting their lives through the war, or to make perfume together and do each other’s hair as ways to affirm each other’s dignity and provide communal and individual psycho-social support. Nuba Mountains women’s rights activist Nagwa Musa Konda highlighted the importance of all these reasons to come together:

> To me personally these small things are important too. Despite all the challenges, despite all the suffering, I do not want to look messy or walk around smelling bad. I want to be a normal Nuba woman and therefore I’ll protect my dignity for as long as I’m alive (Konda et al., 2016, p. 13).

By 2012/2013, these protection groups were asking the only two community NGOs in the war zone if it was possible to not just react to the bombs and land incursions by the SAF, but also to stop the people from wanting to drop the bombs and attack them in the first place. The idea of creating the peace committees started from that point (PB1 6/7/20). The discussions moved to the traditional leaders and elders who told the community NGO staff and other community members the stories of how previous violence in decades/centuries past were managed through joint dialogue between wise members of each community in the form of small committees (CAC3 25/5/21). These discussions led to the communal decision to revive the idea of using peace committees that were democratically elected by the community from different segments of society (traditional leaders, religious leaders, women's groups, youth groups and eventually traders and police as the war years increased) who would 'act like liaison and conflict resolution bodies that simultaneously prevent and manage local-level community-level conflicts' (Greeley, 2019, p. 2).

While the traditional leadership were vital for initiating and forging any peace agreement between divisive communities, it became the role of the peace committees who worked across their respective localities to disseminate peace agreements and play mediator or liaison roles to de-escalate situations or help manage the fall-out from spoilers who chose to break agreements. These peace committees could be seen as supplementary to the historical role of *sīd al-darib* (the master of the path) or emissaries who negotiated

peace (normally traditional leaders). They were unlike the state-sanctioned and appointed peace committees that still exist on the GoS side of the conflict line in the Nuba Mountains since this new iteration of peace committees were communally elected from both Nuba and Arab communities on both sides of the conflict line without political influence. They would play vital roles as liaisons, mediators and overall peacebuilders in their communities and coordinate with each other to manage violent incidents that community members brought to their attention. The oral histories highlighted the process of creating one of the first new iterations of the peace committees during this war:

> There are different clans there [across the line] who decided to help us but are few because from different ways of thinking. So, we selected from different clans to build confidence with them and then they came over to us. [*Gives names of five Arab nomadic communities*]. They wanted to come and help us. But, when we brought one from each clan, they didn't feel free. Those from Habila [*name of county/locality*] selected one from their clan themselves to come. The criteria they used was: 1) wise person; 2) see that they can create relationship of peaceful coexistence; 3) trusted person among the clan who can be a committee focal point. So, then we formed a committee from the other side, and then formed the committee from this side (PB17 22/5/21).

This self-organisation process to create the new iteration of peace committees started with building confidence between the community leaders through one-sided selection of people from another community to speak with about creating peace committees among their respective communities. It then evolved into communal selection through an agreed criteria for selection of people who could perform the peace committee member roles. At first, the Nuba communities selected who they thought should be in the committee from the Arab communities who lived ‘across the line’. However, the selected individuals ‘didn’t feel free’, meaning free to talk on behalf of their communities since they were not communally selected by their own communities. The turning point came from the group from Habila [*name of county/locality*] who communally ‘selected one from their clan themselves’ based on certain ‘criteria’. These criteria organically formed based on the characteristics of the person needed to perform a peace committee member role. The criteria involved the quality of character (‘wise person’), successful previous lived experience (‘see that they can create relationship of peaceful coexistence’) and trusted member of a relational network (‘trusted person among the clan who can be a committee focal point’). Then, the committees formed from each side (SPLM–N war zone and GoS side) and acted as mirror committees. Further criteria for peace committee member selection were highlighted throughout the study’s oral history interviews and dialectical observations with the peacebuilders, namely:

1. Wise person

2. Can create relationship of peaceful understanding
3. Trusted among the group they are coming from
4. Influential (i.e., family background or wealthy)
5. Has knowledge of community (i.e., cultural knowledge, background in heritage understanding)
6. Someone of integrity (straight forward person)
7. Courageous
8. Proactive

(PB8, PB9, PB10, PB11 14/5/21; PB 13 13/5/21; PB14, PB15, PB16, PB17, PB2 22/5/21).

The additional five criteria from the initial three listed by the group from Habila included more dynamic character qualities that touched on inclusion within existing relational networks, areas of knowledge and ethical stances. The 'influential (i.e., family background or wealthy)' criterion suggested the peace committees needed to have more sway by virtue of their family relations or their social/economic status in the community. The 'knowledge of community' meant that the people needed to have deeper cultural understanding of how the community developed over time, which included historical

stories that are passed down from generation to generation, concepts/meaning and behaviours. The ethical stances included ‘someone of integrity (straight forward person)’ and ‘courageous’, which highlighted the further need for good morals in the people who were functioning as peace committee members as the war years went on. The focus on being ‘proactive’ showed the communities wanted people who could have the foresight to know when a problem was going to happen before it happened rather than only reacting to problems. The added criteria highlight how the peace committees were able to adapt to the changing war environment to better perform their roles as peace committee members for the communities.

These overall criteria expanded on the historical criteria of a *sīd al-darib* (the master of the path), as first identified during the Funj Sultanate (see Chapter 4), who could represent their own community when negotiating a peace agreement as an emissary who had the wisdom to negotiate peace. Also, while not stated in the criteria explicitly, an implicit criterion was the ability to speak Arabic (PB5 16/5/21, CAC4 6/2/21). The ability to speak local languages and English was of secondary importance. By 2019, there were 32 peace committees with 6–13 members per committee depending on the needs (Greeley, 2019). One-third of the peacebuilders involved in this study are members of peace committees.

Some communities that had a sufficient amount of trust between them and had already formed peace committees through the process of communal self-organisation went

on to start more cross-line markets (*suk sumbuk*), or a revitalisation of discreet and intermittent market exchanges between community members on opposite sides of the conflict line (Corbett, 2011). The cross-line markets evolved into mirror committees with two separate Nuba and Arab committees that came together. As many as 13 cross-line markets at one point in time developed out of Nuba Mountains peacebuilding practice. The committees that managed these markets could be considered sub-committees of wider peace committees. These sub-committees included one *mek* (Nuba communities' equivalent of *nazir* and *omdas* in the Arabic language), one trader, one *payam* administrator, one communicator and two or three advisors from the communities. When there was instability in the area, the cross-line market sub-committees would only talk through the one communicator in each of the mirror committees (PB5, 22/5/21). These sub-committees were part of the larger mirror peace committees that would cover an entire county area or a few counties depending on the area of focus. By February 2019, there were eight cross-line markets functioning with previous cross-line markets needing to close due to heightened insecurity. Four operated one day per week and four operated two days per week across what can be called the grey area (between the SPLM–N-controlled area and the GoS-controlled area). An estimated 28,700 (2017) to 34,000 (2018) people came to these eight cross-line markets, which were located across six localities within the war zone (Greeley, 2019, p. 3).

Starting around 2017, community members started to say, 'this is our peace – between this side and that side' (Greeley, 2019, p. 3). Similar feelings were mentioned on the other side of the conflict line when the economic situation became much worse because of the Bashir regime's kleptocracy and the austerity measures instituted by the Transitional Government of Sudan (TGoS) in 2019. As the economic situation worsened through the 2019 revolution and into the 2020–2021 Covid-19 pandemic, one peacebuilder on the GoS side said, 'the cross-line markets are bringing this cash (USD) to this side so we can afford to eat and pay each other's salaries' (CAC4 11/2/21). Therefore, these cross-line markets helped provide a relative peace through economic interdependence on the ground for the communities living on both sides of GoS/SPLM–N conflict line. As a result of the Covid-19 pandemic in 2020, the cross-line markets almost completely shut down except for two of the longest running ones, which were still operational but on a smaller scale than before and with only the most trusted traders being able to move back and forth across the conflict line. By 2021, most of the eight cross-line markets had become operational again (CAC3 25/5/21).

These cross-line markets acted as economic resilience mechanisms where citizens 'could utilize livelihood inputs (seeds, farming tools, cash, etc.) and harvest outputs (particularly wild foods) and traders (both women and men) could access wider market networks' (Greeley, 2019, p. 3). However, they were not instantly accepted by most of the communities. As one peacebuilder highlighted in an oral history interview, 'most of the

people said, “the war is going on, the Antonov is bombing us, and the military is targeting us, so why are we talking about peace in this situation?”’ (PB1 6/7/20). Therefore, there needed to be community guidelines about what the cross-line markets were, the function of the peace committees, and how the communities themselves could function with peace agreements while living through active war.

Community guidelines

During April 2014, all sectors of the formal systems in society nominated representatives to come together over a two-week period to create community guidelines for: 1) implementing local peace agreements with traditional leaders, women, teachers, artists/media, youth and religious leaders; and 2) how to create access to justice guidelines with traditional leaders, police, judiciary and the military (author’s field note 14/3/14). From these initial guidelines, the peace committees that facilitated the local peace agreements between divisive communities (Nuba vs Nuba, or Nuba vs Arab) and the cross-line market sub-committee members could be trained.

In addition, the creation of the community guidelines and trainings transformed into a formalised peacebuilding programme that was jointly implemented by the only two NGOs (Nuba-owned and run) that decided to stay in the Nuba Mountains after the war recommenced in 2011. These two community NGOs ran the formalised peacebuilding programme between their organisations with a combined eight peacebuilding staff (six

people from Nuba communities, including two women; two people from Arab communities, both men) who conducted the trainings and helped the peace committees facilitate local peace agreements. Over the past eight years, different members of the eight peacebuilding staff provided the continuous trainings to help the peace committees develop and manage the crossline markets so problems could be resolved or managed on each market day. Issues were constantly arising due an estimated 28,700 (in 2017) to 34,000 (in 2018) people coming to eight cross-line markets per week across six counties in the war zone (Greeley, 2019, p. 3). The guidelines for training evolved based on the continuous integration of new knowledge gained by the peacebuilders involved in this study from trainings/discussions hosted by peacebuilding and humanitarian organisations (in the region or internationally that happened from time to time) as well as through direct peer learning with friends, former colleagues and peacebuilders whom they had met previously. The first training in 2014 focused on the following:

> how do we meet together, how to exchange the benefits that we have. For the peace committees who managed the crossline market, they needed different training. For the peace committees within [Nuba] given different peace committee training (PB1 6/7/20).

New conceptual models based on the endogenous knowledge (including stories known from both academia and the Nuba Mountains from the past as well as situated and

tacit knowledge) developed as the needs in the war zone evolved due to the changing context and needs of the communities. One peacebuilder explained the gradual evolution of the training guidelines for different structures such as peace committee members and other group members engaged in peacebuilding practice, including youth, women associations, adult education groups and protection groups:

> We added more tools for analysis. The tree and other tools that were introduced to analyse the conflict and get to the main causes or root causes. So, then we started to consolidate all these methodologies into a guide for training. And the issue of redress and the spoilers and instigators who may be behind the curtain and how to expose their tricks and stop them from spoiling. And then it started to develop. We developed it gradually. From time to time, we add more tools to it (PB2 23/8/20).

The training guidelines helped peace committees and the sub-committees who managed the cross-line markets to engage in conflict analysis and develop action strategies that would mitigate spoilers before they developed or as they developed. The training methodology for peace committees used group participatory methodologies including small-group work over a two- to three-day period and covered the following topics:

- The concept of peaceful coexistence;
- differences between conflict and clashes;
- internal and external reasons for conflict;

- ways to remedy situations;
- peace education;
- peacebuilding and peacekeeping;
- role of peace committees;
- required skills of peace committees; and
- recommendations to implement action plans moving forward.

These topics were a combination of sharing knowledge through practical experience and academic theoretical concepts. The theoretical concepts were sandwiched in between the practical experience sharing. For cross-line market trainings, the methodology focused more on conflict management and prevention since they were trying to keep the peace in a fluid security environment in and around the market each week. As a result, their role as mediators and peacekeepers was emphasised. These trainings also helped new peace committee members understand each other's process for analysis, which was case-specific based on the context and on those who were involved. One of the peacebuilders highlighted the analysis process for conflict cases:

> Contexts of every case builds in its own way because the contexts are different always. So, people have different motives, the way the conflicts escalate are different, so we need to understand the context of each group – the traditional attitudes or ethnic affiliation attitudes, their background or military mindset. All these things, we have to deal with each case according to its context. We have to

understand the analysis process, when we start ask questions and hear all these stories, at the end we conclude. We identified the main factors and the concepts from the other groups, then we get the entire picture so can start to deal with the case, each case in its unique context (PB2 23/8/20).

This excerpt highlights the importance of situated knowledges and hearing the stories from those who were involved in any conflict. Stories were the vehicles for transmitting situated and tacit knowledge to convey 'attitudes' and 'mindsets' and their own 'analysis process' with their own 'concepts' so that the peacebuilders could understand the 'entire picture' from their perspective. There was no universal way of analysing conflicts since the analytical process was situation-specific and depended on the parties' own analytical process.

The effectiveness of these guidelines and the inclusive ways of analysing conflicts could be assessed in how the peace committees and the teams within the two NGOs were viewed by communities living on both sides of the conflict line. They became known across the Nuba Mountains on both sides of the conflict lines as 'trustworthy, effective, and [could] provide neutral mediation when called upon' (Greeley, 2019, p. 3). When violent incidents happened in the 'grey areas' (the no man's land between SPLM–N and GoS areas of the Nuba Mountains), the civilians involved would refuse to engage with the SPLM–N military or civil authority. Instead, 'they would only speak with the

peacebuilding teams' (CAC2 29/1/20). Even the bordering Ruweng administrative area in South Sudan asked the peacebuilding teams in 2019 to replicate the peacebuilding practice across its region in South Sudan (CAC1 17/11/20). The creation of the community guidelines and formalised peacebuilding programme encouraged the SPLM–N authorities to provide facilitation support with the Nuba Mountains peacebuilding practice through an array of military and civil authority policies.

Armed movement policies

The SPLM/A–N armed movement policies that helped facilitate Nuba Mountains peacebuilding practice included military orders given to the SPLA–N soldiers by their commander-in-chief and the SPLM–N's policy across all their civil authority. One of the peacebuilders highlights the first order from the SPLA–N commander-in-chief that mentioned the peace committees by name:

> When this war first started, we thought of not allowing the politicians not to invest in differences among the ethnic groups. So we approached the leaders among the Arab groups, and said, "This is not an ethnic or religious war, this is a political war", so the communities could resist being mobilised against each other. So, because there was no DDR programme from the first war, so the groups they remained with their arms. So, we targeted those tribes with the arms first from refraining from being part of this war since it would worsen the situation. Then, we

asked the SPLA–N leadership to try to help us by giving strict and clear orders to the SPLA–N leaders to not make any attempt against any civilians either across [the] line or being within the line commander [SPLA–N commander-in-chief] was so responsive. He made an order to all units that they had to cooperate with the peace committees. That was one of the strategies of disseminating to everyone. I think that became the basis of starting our activities (PB2 19/7/20).

The order for all SPLA–N units to 'cooperate with the peace committee' was a seminal policy because it was the first time an armed group leader acknowledged the power of the peace committees as a mechanism to build peace and to 'not make any attempt against any civilians either across [the] line or being within the line' of conflict. It also acknowledged there was a difference between civilian and military affairs. As a result, it helped prevent this current military war or 'political war' from turning into an 'ethnic or religious war', as it did during the previous civil war (1983–2005).

The SPLM–N civil authority also adopted peacebuilding as a cross-cutting policy across all its secretariats in the Nuba Mountains area it controlled starting from 2014. According to the communal analysis, the peacebuilders regarded this policy shift as the most influential for Nuba Mountains peacebuilding practice because it was a shift in mindset from a militarised one to a civilian one around managing violence. Additional policies were adopted by the SPLM–N civil authority, including '[u]nifying the revenue

channels from the joint crossline markets considering all the documentation (e.g., receipts for taxes and insurance for security) in a good place' (see Appendix 2: Communal Analysis of the Peacebuilding Praxis (2011-2020)), which further supported the peacebuilding practice and, as a result, supported stability among communities in the war zone.

Conclusion

This chapter presented the process characteristics of Nuba Mountains peacebuilding practice in the form of leveraging relational networks and creating mechanisms for managing conflict and building peace. The peacebuilders' existing relational networks were made up of people from diverse backgrounds (ethnicities, sectors and levels in society). The mechanisms (structures, guidelines and policies) to build peace and manage conflict were created through a collective self-concept within communal self-organisation that was based on the needs on the ground, the communities' endogenous knowledge systems in which they are embedded and the implicit cultural norms that support building peace and managing conflict. The next chapter explores the knowledge sharing practice that fed into and nurtured these interdependent process characteristics of Nuba Mountains peacebuilding practice.

Chapter 6: Communal Knowledge Sharing Practice in the Nuba Mountains

Introduction

This chapter presents the theme of communal knowledge sharing practice in the Nuba Mountains with its sub-themes of knowledge sharing across scales and growing relational networks across generations. This theme relates to Research Question 2: How does knowledge sharing about peacebuilding occur in the Nuba Mountains? The chapter describes the process of knowledge sharing about building peace and managing conflict using multiple types of knowledge, in multidirectional ways, within relational networks across generations. This communal knowledge sharing practice became a mental model for people involved in this study, which helped fuel the peacebuilding practice. The relational networks grew out of location-specific ways of knowing, ways of understanding reality and ways to share knowledge about building peace and managing conflict across generations. They also included leveraging the cross-community relationships, developed from childhood through young adulthood, during the outbreak of war in 2011 and as the war evolved over the years. The modelling of behaviour involved family role models, community leaders as role models, peer role models and communities as role models. Also, the communication direction in which the sharing of explicit, tacit, situated and endogenous knowledge occurred was in multiple communication directions (top-down, horizontal and bottom-up).

Nurturing knowledge sharing across social scales

The first sub-theme was nurturing knowledge sharing across social scales (families, peers/groups and communities). The social scales covered the breadth of society, including: 1) the family level, which included the immediate household and extended families within ethnic groups; 2) the group level, which included peers/colleagues in communities and work sectors; and 3) the community level, which included Nuba Mountains war zone communities (Nuba and Arab), regional communities (i.e., Nuba Mountains communities living on both sides of conflict lines – Nuba and Arab), national communities (i.e., national Sudanese civil society across the country and diaspora, etc.) and international communities (i.e., international aid organisations, UN agencies, etc.). The knowledge that was shared included the wisdom of lived experiences, embodied practical skills and historical and current contextual information. The knowledge being shared was in multiple directions, from older to younger generations, from younger to older generations, from elites to grassroots, from grassroots to elites, between people across the Nuba Mountains war zone and between people in the Nuba Mountains war zone and the rest of Sudan. Both informal and formal settings were used to share the knowledge. The informal settings included unofficial or relaxed environments and formal settings were officially sanctioned by governing bodies, such as traditional authority, SPLM–N civil authority, or NGOs. Culturally-specific formats for knowledge sharing were the organising arrangements within informal and formal settings that corresponded to

the purpose and were identified with Arabic or local language names. The knowledge being shared between people involved in Nuba Mountains peacebuilding practice involved storytelling forms, namely oral history narration, current event narration and mediums of art (drawing, poetry, music, film, and theatre, etc.). These storytelling methods were within informal and formal settings at the family level, peer/group level and community level.

Family level

At the family level, knowledge was often shared through stories from the older generation to the younger generation. This knowledge shared wisdom about historical ways to live in peace with different communities from an early age. Some stories were in the form of *hajadima hajikum*, or what can be translated into English as informal quizzes within a *hakawi*, or narrative story, that grandmothers told. Grandmothers would share these stories either in the home or in a community area where more children would gather to listen. The stories they told were parables and often involved animals who talked and shared their wisdom about how to deal with people or situations. The stories helped the peacebuilders understand moral right from wrong and ways to be in peace from an early age.

Grandfathers and fathers were also mentioned as the storytellers who shared knowledge about communal relations and ways of living in peace with different communities. One peacebuilder highlighted a story they had heard from their grandfather

about how an Arab community arrived in the same location as Nuba communities: ‘I heard the stories that they [an Arab community] came as traders. They found the land was good for the cattle and grazing’ (PB16 22/5/21). Some storytelling at family level relayed how the peacebuilders first remembered seeing peacebuilding practice happen. ‘Meanwhile, I was watching as a child, watching my father visiting with the Arab. By then, I was not there; these are the stories I heard from my father’ (PB9 14/5/21). There was also intergenerational *ngash*, or discussions about a known thing, regarding how the previous generations lived in peace. For example, one peacebuilder relayed a story: ‘When they [elders] sit together, we used to go back and listen. Our fathers and grandfathers told us they lived in peace. We started asking when we are not living in peace. There are different clans there [across the conflict line] who decided to help us but [they] are few because [they are] from different ways of thinking’ (PB17 22/5/21). These stories shared by the elders (fathers and grandfathers) helped initiate ideas for devising mechanisms for managing and sustaining the peacebuilding practice during time of violence.

The younger generation was also engaging in and sharing practical skills with the older generation and their siblings at the household level to bring about peace and manage or resolve conflicts. In the Nuba Mountains, there are polygamous marriages where children would have fathers who have up to four wives living in the same household, so all the family (uncles, aunts, cousins) would often live together in a larger compound. Within these small and large households, there are often conflicts that happen at the family

level that can widen into community level if they are not able to be resolved within the family. As a result, students from the first community-run co-ed boarding secondary school in the war zone created a peace club starting in 2015 to help attendees learn ways of managing and resolving family and community level conflicts during this war so they could embody the practical skills of peacebuilding. They narrated their stories in *hakawi* form and wrote them as a short story compilation of their experiences returning to their home villages during their boarding school breaks, where they practised bringing about peace within their family. Below is an excerpt from the collection:

> [D]uring December holiday 2016, all my parents gathered together to hold family meeting. There was an issue with one of my cousin brothers. He had proposed a girl to marry but our uncle said that he would not take part in his marriage proposal yet his real father is away... My uncle spoke up about the mistakes my cousin brother did and the grudge he had with his brother long time ago...My cousin brother talked with fury and noise…For he was the only one who took care of our cattle as we were schooling. Had he not been there, we would have not been reached this level of education. He decided to abandon cattle from that day. When I realised his talk was not pleasing, I stood up and rebuked him in a soft tone...I advised him not to negotiate with his uncles as if they were his brothers or age mates. And that harsh talk always leads to violence, disagreement and chaos in the family...They should also use polite ways of talking to my cousin brother and they

> should involve us in any family meetings that required decision-making since we are now mature. They felt happy and appreciated of my comments. The boy, my cousin brother is now leading peaceful life with the family... (Skills for Nuba Mountains, 2017, pp. 5-6)

This short story highlighted a few different family level conflict dynamics, namely: 1) the uncle still holding a 'grudge' toward his brother from the past while having to take responsibility for his brother's son in terms of the unspoken dowery needed to pay for marrying a girl; 2) the broken social norm and lack of respect shown by the cousin brother trying to 'negotiate' with the older generation as if they were 'his brothers or age mates'; 3) the acknowledgement and respect shown to the cousin brother by saying if he was not tending to the cattle that makes a steady income for the family, all the other children 'would have not reached this level of education', meaning secondary school. The story also highlighted how embodying the peaceful way of engaging the family through 'polite ways' and not allowing 'harsh talk' to lead to 'violence, disagreement and chaos in the family' led to the resolution of the problem and more peaceful ways to engage in discussion and decision-making within the family. These family-level stories told by students, grandmothers, grandfathers and fathers using the different storytelling formats, such as *hakawi*, *hajadima hajik/kum* and *ngash*, conveyed the wisdom of lived experiences, modelling embodied practical skills and the transferring of historical information about the ways families and communities related to one another and tried to

bring about peace in their particular home areas in the war zone. The family level in the Nuba Mountains is a smaller version of the wider levels of society, with peer/group level being the next sequential social level.

Peer/group level

In informal settings, knowledge sharing through storytelling often happened at peer and group level using different formats, with the most common format being *wanasa*. *Wanasa* is an informal conversation that happens during relaxed times among two or more people, usually women, yet men are also welcome to join in *wanasa* too. The conversation is about current events (including gossip) and could happen spontaneously, during certain events like a special day (birth of a child, etc.), or generally during relaxed points during the day/week, such as coffee/tea drinking time, break from work or sunset time. *Wanasa* could happen over the telephone, in social media or in person. Anyone involved in the *wanasa* shares stories freely and equally without inhibitions. In the oral history interviews and dialogic observations, the term *atwanensa* was mentioned in conjunction with people sharing stories about engaging in knowledge sharing to convey new information about current events. Examples include a story from one of the peacebuilders about learning that his grandfather had recently passed away: 'I got the message from my father that my grandfather already died through *atwanensa*' (PB17 22/5/21). Another example highlighted a peacebuilder's observation of a *wanasa* that happened between myself and another peacebuilder where I was listening to a story about a recent conflict incident that

happened during the study period: 'I saw you and he were in *atwanensa* so I stayed away until you were done' (CAC2 16/01/20).

Aside from *wanasa*, there are other specific peer/group formats in informal settings where knowledge sharing through storytelling happened, depending on the purpose of the storytelling. Examples include *mutabaa*, an informal follow-up meeting with a group or individuals, and *tafakur*, an informal consultation where storytelling about a specific issue happens until a consensus is reached among the group about what to do next. One of the peacebuilders highlighted a *tafakur* that helped re-start the peacebuilding practice after the war recommenced in 2011:

> The involvement of [Nuba lawyer] came because in the beginning we were asking if we need another person or can we do it alone. So, we said yes, we can have someone who has a legal background as the starting point and after that, it can open the way for us to do. So, [Nuba lawyer] told us, "You need to bring the traditional leaders first together". So, it was learning for me to hear what was happening in the past through the stories (PB1 6/7/20).

The oral history delivered by the traditional leaders detailing how peace was built or sustained in generations past led to the peacebuilders to think of processes for engaging in peacebuilding practice on a wider scale across the Nuba Mountains war zone. They began to augment the traditional mechanisms, such as the judiciary mechanisms (i.e.,

tahkeen (arbitration), *judia* (judgement by a council of the elders), *mekuk* (people's court made up of Nuba religious leaders called *meks*), *souk n bouks* (cross-line markets) and creating and revitalising the peace committees that broadened the traditional *sīd al-darib* (the master of the path), as first identified during the Funj Sultanate (see Chapter 4), to include broader segments of society such as traders, women and youth (see *Creating mechanisms* section below). The role of the lawyer was to have a law-based orientation within the Nuba Mountains multicultural context in order to revitalise the Nuba Mountains peacebuilding practice while ensuring it would remain community-owned and run.

Stories at peer/group level were also central to group analysis within the peacebuilding practice to help manage or resolve conflict cases. One of the peacebuilders defined the analysis they used, which involved hearing stories of those involved in the conflict:

> Contexts of every case builds in its own way because the contexts are different always. So, people have different motives, the way the conflicts escalate are different so we need to understand the context of each group – the traditional attitudes or ethnic affiliation attitudes, their background or military mindset. All these things, we have to deal with each case according to its context. We have to understand the analysis process, when we start ask questions and hear all these stories, at the end we conclude. We identified the main factors and the concepts

from the other groups, then we get the entire picture so can start to deal with the case, each case in its unique context (PB2 23/8/20).

This excerpt highlights the importance of hearing the stories from those who were involved in any conflict. Stories were the vehicles for transmitting situated and tacit knowledge to convey 'attitudes' and 'mindsets' and their own 'analysis process' with their own 'concepts' so the peacebuilders could understand the 'entire picture' from their perspective. There was no one way of analysing conflicts as the process was situation specific depending on the parties' own analytical process.

Within formal settings, there were informal times or spaces that were crucial for storytelling as a form of knowledge sharing to play its part in building confidence among peers/groups so they could engage in formal knowledge sharing processes such as *motimer* (conference), *ijtima* (meeting) or *tabadul alarra* (formal exchange of ideas). Often, this storytelling was in artistic forms, such as singing and dancing, as the best way to simultaneously convey cultural understanding and allow for emotional processing, as seen in the excerpt below:

The first time I saw the Baggara [collective name for Arab communities who are cattle herders], they weren't opening, I want them to relax so we can make the workshop effective. So, I asked the singers [from Nuba community] who knew the

Baggara to sing and do the mardu [Baggara dance]. At the end they relaxed. We started the workshop then (CAC2 25/5/21).

This excerpt also highlights the importance of situated knowledge by one of the singers from the Nuba community who 'knew the Baggara', so could 'sing and do the mardu'. Only through an awareness and understanding of the Baggara's knowledge system, could the singer from the Nuba community know the type of song to sing and the type of dance ('the mardu'). The peacebuilder was aware of the differences in knowledge systems and used this awareness to their advantage by deploying the situated knowledge available in the room to ease the tension and grow group identity in order to start the workshop.

During the formal 1.5-day communal analysis gathering conducted through the study, there was an informalised storytelling introduction session between the group of 14 peacebuilders from different sectors of society who were either acquaintances or knew each other for years. This informalised storytelling introduction session focused on how they first became involved in peacebuilding. Through the stories, the group gained a new depth of understanding about their past decisions and what inspired them to engage in more peacebuilding as they continued through life. They also highlighted that the method of storytelling within a formalised workshop was unusual for most of them, as they were more accustomed to the aid industry or militarised type of workshops that were highly

structured and hierarchical in nature. As one peacebuilder said, ‘with the way we introduced ourselves, we already started reflecting – that was different’ (INPB5 21/5/21).

At peer/group level, knowledge sharing happened through storytelling using different formats in informal settings, with the most common format being *wanasa* (informal conversation that happens during relaxed times among two or more people) and other formats such as *mutabaa* (informal follow-up meeting with group or individuals) and *tafakur* (informal consultation about a specific issue happens until a consensus is reached among the group about next steps). Also, within formal settings, carving out informal times or spaces was crucial for storytelling to build confidence among peers/groups so they could engage in formal knowledge sharing processes such as *motimer* (conference), *ijtima* (meeting) or *tabadul alarra* (formal exchange of ideas). The stories transmitted situated and tacit knowledge that conveyed attitudes, and mindsets using analysis processes and concepts specific to different knowledge systems that exist in the Nuba Mountains, which required cross-knowledge system competence among the peacebuilders so people could share their knowledges.

Community level

In both informal and formal settings, knowledge sharing through storytelling at the community level often happened through the arts, including music, drawings, film and drama. The stories conveyed information about current life living through war, ways to deter spoilers and ways to live in peace. Sometimes, the audience was the grassroots

communities in the war zone with a singer or a group of singers using their talents to create a message of moral right and wrong, which would call out spoilers in the community and deter future spoilers from thinking about joining. Sometimes, the audiences were communities outside of the Nuba Mountains. Some knowledge sharing was in the form of narrating stories about women’s roles in anti-recruitment of SAF soldiers and militia. Below are a few examples:

”تاهملال

لاجم با بف وأ ةايحلا يحانم يف امدقتم املاع ،املعم ،ارايط ،اسدنهم ،ابيبط هارت نا ملحت لافط تبجنا ام لكل

بف مهاسى.......رخا ناب هل يضفراو هيحصناو كنبا بعنما ،ابارس حبصيو ددبتى ملحلا اذه بلعجت لا ةيناسنلاا مدقتو ةيهافرلا.

بمرجم رطاخ ناشع تومى هيكرتت لا ،هباهذب ةنوهرم ةفيرشلا ةميركلا ةايحلا ناو ،ملاظلا ماظنلا اذه ءاقب بف نمكى انءاقش

. ةيلودلا ةلادعلا يبولطمو ةيعامجلا ةدابلااو برحلا

To Mothers.

To every mum that delivered a child which she dreamed to be a doctor, engineer, pilot, teacher or scientist specialised in any field... Contribute to well-being of humanity and their prosperities, don’t leave this dream to overwhelm and become mirage, prevent your son and advise him, tell him that our suffering is because of long stay of this unjust regime and better and dignify life depends on it leaving,

don't allow to die for the sake of war criminals, ethnic cleansing and ICC inductees.

ةاتفلل سورعلاو ةبيطخلا

نا هب ىتملح لزنم ةبتع ىف ىتناو لمرتلا ىلبقت لا ،اهسرع ةنح لوزت مل ةجوز وا دعب اهتبوطخ ةليل لمتكى

مل ةبيطخ لك ىلا

ككرتى نا ىلبقت لا ،ةيلقعلا كاوقو كتدارا ضحمب هرايتخا رايخ ناك املاط كتايح قيفرو كيرش عم لايعو لام

تيب نوكى

لجا نم طقف ةعجر نودب لا ىنطولا رمتؤملا وا كتعمد ةنيزح ةديحو ةلمرأ ىتنا ىحبصتو ةطلسلا ىف هماظنو

ريشبلا ىقبى نا

كل هناديعى.

Betrothed and bride

To betrothed on her first night and bride her henna not yet washed out, don't agree to be widow while you have just on the footstep at a door of your dream house, you and partner forever believe to be rich of children and wealth, he is your free choice selection, don't let him go un return, only for Bashir and his regime to remain in power and you become alone sad widow, nor your tears neither NCP will bring him back to you (South Kordofan Media Center, 2015, pp. 2-3).

These small written stories were shared with communities via text, phone and handwritten notes during communal events (weddings, funerals, religious conferences and

holiday celebrations, etc.) where the messages could be easily spread. The people writing them, delivering them and then receiving and sharing them were connected through developmental networks of relatives, family friends and former classmates from childhood that expanded the reach of the Nuba Mountains peacebuilding practice to at least ten states across Sudan, namely Khartoum, Northern, Red Sea, Kassala, Gedarif, Al-Gezira, Blue Nile, North Kordofan, West Kordofan and White Nile. In these states and also in the Darfur region, relational friend networks were used to project documentary films, such as the award-winning *Beats of the Antonov*, on white walls at night in underground venues so Sudanese living in these states could see the never-before-seen realities of people living in the Nuba Mountains war zone. From 2011 through to the revolution in 2019, the GoS authorities had banned any media from entering the war zone and controlled the narrative about those living there. The documentary films were able to share the realities and conflict analysis from the perspective of those living through the war with communities living across Sudan for the first time since the war recommenced in 2011.

In formal community-run schools, knowledge sharing through drawings helped children process their feelings about living through the war and shared ideas for ways to bring about a more peaceful future. The peacebuilders involved in this study, who had an arts and teaching background that was developed living through the previous war (1983–2005) and the current war (2011–present) in the Nuba Mountains, were able to share their skills in arts-based conflict analysis and peacebuilding with teachers and students in the community-run schools. The excerpt and drawing in Figure 9, below, from a report by one

of the NGOs in the Nuba Mountains highlights the knowledge sharing about conflict and peace issues using student drawings:

> In the school, we introduced the anti-recruitment topic to the pupils and then asked them to draw anything that they thought of. Most of the drawings depicted scenes of war and violence that is dominating their minds. Others draw pictures of peace and reconciliation and need for development. Churches and mosques being bombed… This shows the new generation is destined to be more violent and chaotic and segmented if nothing is done about it. However, there were some who draw scenes expressing hope and peaceful coexistence. Others wanted development, schools and hospitals. Two children from two different schools draw Omar Al Bashir and Abdulaziz Adam Al Hilul sitting at the table talking peace. (Sefedin, 2017, p. 5)

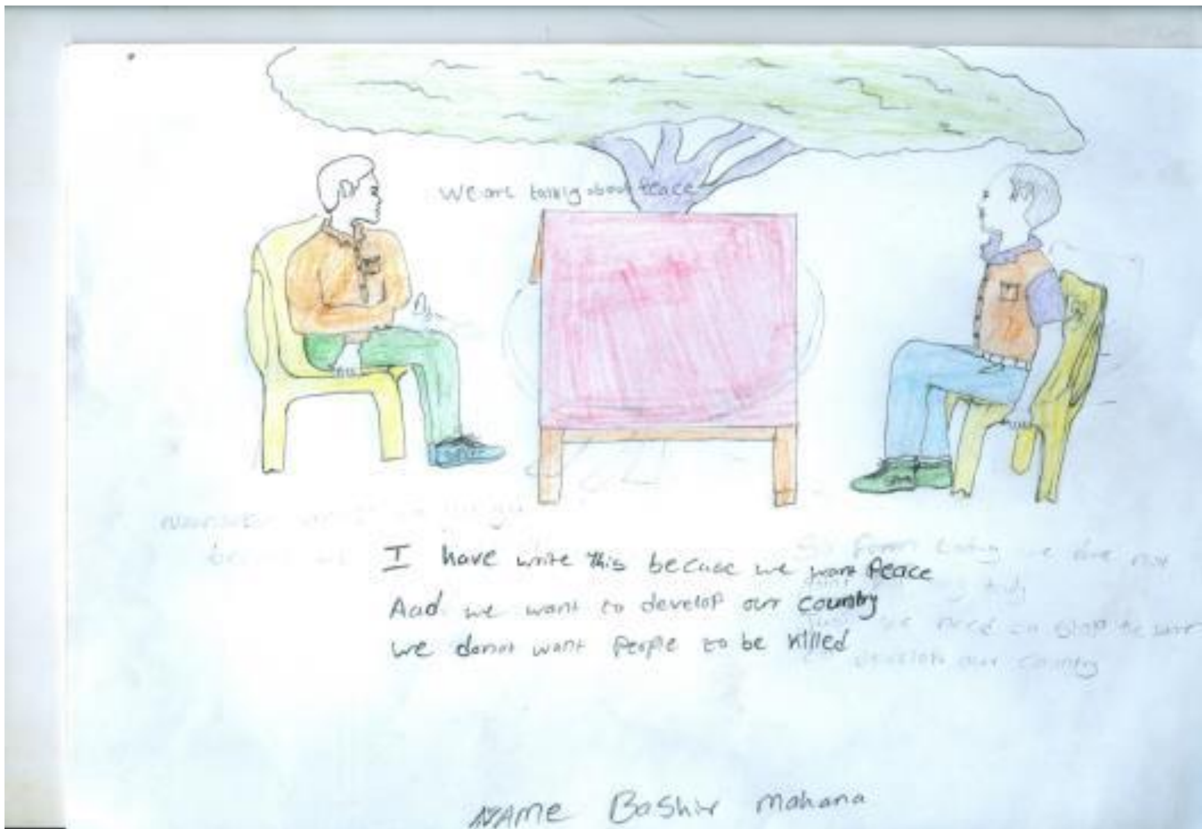


Figure 8: Student drawing from war zone

Figure 8 above highlights the awareness of ways in which peace is built from the perspective of the student, including: 1) seated under a tree; 2) top leaders from the GoS (President Omar Al Bashir) and the SPLM–N (Abdulaziz Adam Al Hilul) talking to each other as Sudanese-to-Sudanese with a table between them, where they are equal. The writing in English below the drawing indicates their desire not to have people killed and to develop their country as one people. The excerpt reveals the juxtaposition of violent

drawings from the students indicating a continuation of the cycle of violence with the drawings of 'scenes expressing hope and peaceful coexistence' and some who 'wanted development, schools and hospitals'. This suggests that the next generation witnessing violence do not have to be 'destined to be more violent and chaotic and segmented' and can break the cycle of violence by first imagining there are peaceful realities that can appear in the future.

Sometimes, knowledge through storytelling at the community level happened through in-person oral narration of stories about ways to overcome challenges to maintain peace between communities in the war zone. Knowledge sharing sessions between peace committees were in formalised spaces that could sometimes be described as *tawasul*, or interacting/exchange visits/sharing and asking for more listening, where members from different peace committees representing different communities could listen to and share stories about how cases were analysed, the mistakes that were discovered through the process and the ways in which people overcame those mistakes moving forward. These were rarely able to happen due to the time and cost of bringing two or more peace committees together (with six to ten peace committee members) in the middle of a war. Therefore, the knowledge sharing sessions were built into trainings or a *motimer* (conference) and often became the focus of the training or *motimer* because of the interest to listen and share stories between each other as their preferred way to relate information across communities, gain insights and analyse situations. An example of this was during

the Nuba Mountains traditional leaders *motimer* in 2015 with 71 traditional leaders representing 36 ethnicities from nine counties, which was supposed to be concentrating on SPLM–N civil authority/local government training (CAC2 23/6/21). However, it turned into a sharing of situated knowledge over 1.5 days between traditional leaders who normally did not have a chance to speak with each other, leave alone to share the dilemmas as members of peace committees and the ways they have tried to overcome them during this war (CAC2 23/6/21).

In-person oral narration of stories was also a way some elites in the war zone engaged in knowledge sharing with community members to better understand the challenges and dilemmas facing people from all walks of life and for community members to feel that their worries were being heard by people in elite power positions. Yousif Kuwa, the former leader of SPLM–N, set a precedent for travelling across the Nuba Mountains to sit with people having coffee/tea under a tree and listening to their stories during *wanasa* or an informal or formal *ijtima* (meeting), as described by one of the community advisory council members:

> Yousif Kuwa's legacy. He would meet people in their villages and listen to their needs, and issues could be re-awakened in the minds of the leadership (if they followed this legacy) (CAC1 20/5/21).

Also according to this community advisory council member, the current SPLM–N leader adopted this Yousif Kuwa way of engaging in knowledge sharing by listening to the community directly. The excerpt above highlights how the small group of elite leadership surrounding the current SPLM–N leader may not be engaging in this way of knowledge sharing process presently. As a previous study highlighted during the start of this current war, 'an unconnected, divided leadership that is not listening to the people will be unable to provide adequate physical protection, or help address issues of livelihood, social justice or long-term peace' (Corbett, 2011, p. 51). It also highlights how Yousif Kuwa was a role model for how elites in the Nuba Mountains should acknowledge the power of grassroots communities' situated knowledge. According to one peacebuilder, Yousif Kuwa understood that the future of the Nuba Mountains was not in positions of power that could be found in governance structures. He believed the real power rested with how the next generation of youth were taught about themselves and others. They narrated a story from the late 1990s when a journalist asked Yousif Kuwa what position he wanted if there was a peace agreement reached during the previous civil war (1983–2005). He replied: 'I don't want any position of power. I want to go back to my area [Nuba Mountains] and teach the youth they are not inferior to anyone' (PB19 24/5/21).

At the community level, knowledge sharing through storytelling in informal and formal settings occurred through the arts (music, drawings, film and drama), in written form or oral narration. These stories conveyed information about living through war,

deterring spoilers and how to live in peace. The stories, whether written, sung or drawn, conveyed situated and tacit knowledge. The act of engaging in storytelling toward the elites also acknowledged the power of the grassroots communities and their situated knowledges.

Learning through relational networks across generations

Relational networks could be described as each peacebuilder's map of individuals who influenced around their thinking and behaviour about building peace and managing conflict. The peacebuilders involved in this study would express themselves in the first person ('I') and shared an improvement or evolution in their ways of thinking or acting as a result of the developmental interaction from their childhood or young adulthood. They would then narrate who shared the knowledge with them, where they were when it was shared and often how they utilised that knowledge. During childhood, there was a place-based understanding of peace and violence where a village was mentioned in which cross-community and family relationships were formed that helped them learn about peace, violence, building peace and managing conflict. During their young adulthood, their working relationships and more cross-community relationships became instrumental in helping them learn more about building peace and managing conflict.

Learning through relational networks during childhood

Peacebuilders would often describe their childhood experiences with their relational networks in regard to how they learned about concepts of peace and violence. Almost all of the peacebuilders involved in this study said they lived in peace or in a peaceful community as a child. However, the concept of peace was considered 'such a big term' (PB2 13/8/20), so peacebuilders narrated what they meant by peace and how they learned about it. For example, one participant said:

> I learned the concept [peace] when I was staying in Umburtumos [village in the eastern part of the Nuba Mountains] as a child. The Ayattiga [Arab tribe] used to pass through there. I got the message from my father that my grandfather already died through *atwanensa*. There was strong relations and interaction with the Ayattiga and my grandfather and father. They came with their wives to the funeral, and to grind their sorghum. My uncle takes his cows and goes to the Ayattiga. My cows were with my son and my uncle when this war broke out. Because I am still in connection with the Ayattiga, the cows are still with them [the Ayattiga] (PB17 22/5/21).

Similar to most other peacebuilders in this study, the narrative above highlights the concept of peace being learned through the life experience in a particular place – 'Umburtumos' – and through a relationship with a different cultural group than their own

– in this case, 'the Ayattiga'. The above narrative shows the peace concept is rooted in location and built on 'strong relations' and 'interaction' with a particular cultural group from across the conflict divide. Some of the interactions between the groups included spiritual rituals like attending 'a funeral', and economic interdependence such as 'to grind their sorghum' or minding cows for a cultural group from across the conflict divide, even during the war.

Another peacebuilder highlighted how different conceptions of peace could be found in different cultural groups if the concept of peace was not passed down from one generation to the next:

> I learned about peace from my father. There is a difference in conception of peace because they [the Arab groups] didn't learn from their fathers. Because of the way they were treated in 1986, a shift happened. The time of Saddiq al Mahdi, which started the raiding of cattle. No formal relationship happened since then (PB15 22/5/21).

This peacebuilder referenced political- and religious-based incitement for cattle raiding by Arabs against Nuba groups and the lack of intergenerational knowledge sharing as the reasons why the conceptions between the Arab and Nuba cultural groups were different. Within the peacebuilders' explanation about the 'difference in conceptions of peace', there was an implicit assumption that a common concept of peace existed between

the groups, which negatively shifted due to the political and religious fatwa issued in 1993 by imams in El Obeid, which could have created disorder within the knowledge system between Arab fathers and their children about how to learn what peace meant. Also, one of the peacebuilders highlighted, 'The concept of peace given by organisations [is] not the same as the concept we have here' (PB12 14/5/21). This statement communicated two ideas: 1) the concept of peace already existed in the Nuba Mountains ('we have it here'); and 2) the concept of peace in the Nuba Mountains is different from the concept 'given by organisations'. This statement highlights how the aid industry and the communities in the Nuba Mountains have different knowledge systems from which their concepts of peace are derived. Peace from the knowledge systems found in Nuba Mountains came focus on peace already existing yet not in place and the need to find the harmony within relationships across families and communities. The peace concept 'given by organisations is something developed from outside the area rather than based on what exists on the ground in these communities.

Another peacebuilder defined the difference between living in 'real peace' and 'no real peace' (PB2 13/8/20). Similar to other peacebuilders in the study, they described a real peace occurring during the Addis Ababa Peace Agreement period (1972–1983) through remarks such as all society was working 'in order' and 'the rule of law was implemented equally' (PB2 13/8/20). The emphasis on equal justice and an agreed upon organisation of society was in contrast to the 'no real peace' that started 'from the second

eruption of war, from 1983 onward' (PB2 13/8/20) and even through the CPA peace period (2006–2011), this being described as 'a negative peace' (PB2 13/8/20).

A few peacebuilders did not believe that there was any real peace for them or their communities when they were growing up. One of the participants said, 'we are not living anytime in peace' (PB1 30/6/20). One of them described the period during the Addis Ababa peace agreement (1972–1983) as 'somehow calm', which allowed 'some people' to receive an education. For this peacebuilder, education was the mechanism for 'chances and options' that 'others did not get' (PB1 30/6/20). This awareness of privileged growing up appeared with another peacebuilder who said they were aware of the conflicts going on in their community, but felt they were 'completely sheltered' from them (PB3 9/7/20).

All peacebuilders witnessed direct violence at the family and community levels by the time they were young adults, with almost all witnessing violence as a child. One participant narrated the systemic violence happening in the Nuba Mountains:

> [F]rom the second eruption of the war, from 1983 onward, things changed. There was no safety. People were not treated equally. The movement and interaction of villagers were traumatised because of violences and lack of acceptance of other groups, which developed ethnic conflicts. I witnessed some of those violent incidents and some of the atrocities and unlawful killings on [an] ethnic basis and the retaliations events and incidents that were happening among our communities.

> A number of killing, because those ethnic groups of Hawazma were fighting beside the government as Popular Defence Forces. They started looting and burning houses and [we] know them very well because [we] have been living together for decades. When the war ended (in 2005), they started to retaliate because they were attempting to take back their property and address their grievances. Many people were killed and others were injured (PB2 23/8/20).

This narration highlights how those who committed violence were from all sides and were known to each other since they had 'been living together for decades'. The core grievances of people 'not treated equally', with a 'lack of acceptance of other groups' and 'attempting to take back their property' still pertain to today with the core demands of freedom, peace and justice by the majority of the Sudanese population against the powerful kleptocracy of the former Bashir regime, which still holds power through the current coup leaders.

Role models during childhood

All peacebuilders who described witnessing violence also described learning about and working for peace at the same time by watching and listening to different role models (as individuals or in group form). The role models mentioned were their family members and community leaders when they were children. For instance, one peacebuilder described the role models they saw in their childhood who managed conflict and brought about peace:

> [F]amily conflicts is where I saw peace as a child, when the elders of the community intervened, both men and women within their domains. Women, especially elderly women, intervene early and are already conscious of the conflict. Mother or someone will ask to contain, not let it explode, or manage/find accommodation (PB4 22/4/21).

The peacebuilder's story highlights the matrilineal line of power that historically and currently still exists in many Nuba cultural groups, whether they converted to Islam or not (Suliman, 1999). This power can be seen in the way the peacebuilder describes the innate knowledge 'women, especially elderly women' had as they were 'already conscious of the conflict' so could 'intervene early' in order to 'contain, not let it explode, or manage/find accommodation'. This story was reminiscent of another story a Nuba peacebuilder told about elderly women who were called upon by the leaders in the community to help adjudicate a land dispute as they were the knowledge holders for land ownership claims, even more than the elderly male traditional leaders. When the case was finalised, one of the elderly women who was called to share her expert knowledge told the traditional and civil leadership 'you should not wait until we are elderly to listen to us, you should listen to us when we are young too' (PB18 24/5/21). Another peacebuilder discussed how women were maintaining peace between communities through friendship between families living in neighbouring yet divisive communities:

> [T]he ladies came from the families with dried okra and sim-sim [sesame]. We were grinding the sorghum and we gave them milk. When we had celebrations like weddings, they were invited. The share of a slaughter of cow or meat went to them too (PB14 22/5/21).

These stories from peacebuilders' childhoods highlight that despite the matrilineal power that still exists in Nuba cultural groups, that power was often relegated to the home domain and rarely utilised in the public domain except when elderly expert knowledge was needed by the community to settle land disputes or to maintain peace between communities through rituals ('weddings') or cooking/feeding the community. During the current war (2011 onward), that matrilineal power has been instrumental in allowing women to cross the conflict line for rituals of funerals or a form of trauma healing that was called 'encouragement visits', where ladies from the other side of the conflict line would bring homemade perfumes to comfort the ladies who lost loved ones during the war to celebrate life and affirm that they still have dignity (Konda et al., 2016).

Other participants highlighted watching their 'fathers' (PB5, PB6, PB8 16/5/21; PB13 13/5/21; PB14, PB15, PB17 22/5/21), 'brothers and sisters' (PB4 22/4/21, PB19 24/5/21), 'grandfather' (PB7 16/5/21) and 'uncles' (PB16 22/5/21) manage and resolve conflicts at both the family level and the community level. One peacebuilder shared how

they learned from their father and neighbouring communities about handling conflict and staying in peace:

> When I was young, I learned it from my father – ways of how to stay in peace with community members and family. During that time, these Baggara [Arabs] were interacting with the Nuba. My name of Mohamed came from the friend of my father [from Rawaga]. The friendships is still, the Youif family. They have the same conceptions. They name their children after our family. We helped them in the path of peacebuilding. There is no shift (PB17 22/5/21).

This story highlights that there was already a state of peace between communities that needed to be maintained, so the peacebuilder learned 'ways of how to stay in peace with community members and family' from their father. Those ways foreground the importance of the relationship between the families from the different communities where they treat each other as part of the same family by 'interacting', 'having the same conceptions' of peace and friendship and passing down this knowledge to the next generation by 'naming their children after their family'. This story also conceives peacebuilding as a 'path' amidst unpeaceful influences or outcomes, where their families helped each other walk down with 'no shift' toward those unpeaceful influences or outcomes.

The peacebuilders shared that cross-community relationships withstood the stress involved with violent incidents or war. An example of conveying this self-in-relation concept can be seen in one peacebuilder's story below:

> When I grew up, I found himself staying with Ali [with] Dar Beti and Fallata (Arab communities), I learned the way of how to live in peace through the relationship with Shiekh from [name of community] and Nasir from [name of community]. In the past, when Nasir came he would stay with our family. Nasir family, his son [name of person] is common family ties. The relationship went continuously well, then there was peace in those areas. In the past, we would give each other cows to look after. When Abdalla from alHadra died, we sat together at the burial. We helped the family for the burial, Three weeks before today, [name of Nuba community] stole their cows, when they crossed the line into [GoS] held areas. The family from Dar Beti knows the marks of the cows, so they took them from the looters and returned them. Two or three days ago, some cows were stolen from their side [and brought to our side by the culprits]. Our family went to look for it (PB16 5/22/21).

This story highlights the deep trust, reciprocity and interdependence between the families that extended to their wider tribal communities where the Nasir of the Dar Beti would stay at their family's house when moving to their side. It also highlights the

criminal syndicates that are part of the challenges to the peacebuilding practice as they are allegedly working on both sides of the conflict line by stealing from one side and taking them across to give to their partners on the other side to sell or keep as short-term profit.

A few participants said they never saw family members handling conflicts when they were a child. Instead, they saw community members such as 'traditional leaders' (PB10, PB9 14/5/21) and 'administrative officers' (PB11, PB12 14/5/21) manage conflicts. For example, one peacebuilder said:

> I never saw my father doing this. I saw traditional leaders who knew how to handle conflict. In 1980, when I was ten years old, I saw that man solve problem. The Arab sat alone and then Nuba and Arab sat together and Arab/Dinka also sat together to handle their problems (PB8 14/5/21).

This peacebuilder highlights the dialogic engagement that often happened as an intra-group dialogue where 'the Arab sat alone' or an intergroup dialogue where the 'Nuba and Arab sat together' or the 'Arab/Dinka also sat together to handle problems'. This excerpt also indicates the wider view among the peacebuilders in this study indicating that traditional leaders had innate abilities to 'handle conflict' given their historical roles for managing and resolving conflicts between tribes as *sīd al-darib* (the master of the path). In addition, the spiritual guidance to solve problems does not exclusively flow through traditional leaders. One peacebuilder, who was also female, stated how they felt 'a kind of

wisdom given to them by God' considering they never saw anyone doing this (peacebuilding) when they were a child. She felt an innate ability to demand 'the elders to bring the peace' when their uncle was stabbed by an 'Arab that came from far' (PB13 13/5/21). They said: 'I felt I was a peacebuilder from then' (PB13 13/5/21). They felt their influence on the elders to manage conflicts and bring peace back started from that point in time. This story is another example of the matrilineal power to instigate peace that still seeps through despite the now dominant patriarchal societal norms.

Role models during young adulthood

As working-age adults, the peacebuilders highlighted the ways they learned about peace through observing their traditional role models (i.e., an older person in one's life with more years of experience and community leaders) and their own peer groups during voluntary and paid work involving communities in Sudan and refugees from neighbouring countries. All developmental interactions identified during the peacebuilders' early working careers with traditional role models included situated and tacit learning, which was formative in the way they evolved in their thinking about and working toward building peace and managing conflict. One peacebuilder narrated a story about watching one of their role models, who was an influential religious leader, in a group inter/intra-dialogue between Muslim and Christian communities in Sudan:

> The way [name of religious leader] addressed the situation, the way he would agree with the government officials and military officials inspired me more about how to open discussions with different levels of people in different positions, regardless of their attitudes or their positions. Focusing on only passing the right information and asking for the right thing to be done. His main focus was the communities living in peace and harmony and that was his message. Away from being influenced by the desires and attitudes of the politicians. Civilians must be left to live their civilian life and not be affected by any differences between the politicians based on their attitudes. So, at that early age, that's when I started to form this type of vision (PB2 19/7/20).

This story highlighted the importance of observing traditional role models in action as situated learning within a larger group that allowed those intentionally observing a role model to learn about how one has to remain open to share knowledge with 'all levels of people … regardless of their attitudes or their positions'. It also highlighted the separation from military and civilian ways of life within a vision for building peace and managing conflict.

Peacebuilders' role models during their adult working ages had major impacts on their conception of peace as well as the methods they chose to use in building peace and managing conflict. Through the developmental interactions with their role models, the

peacebuilders learned, for the first time, about how to engage in peace concepts as well as ways of being and thinking:

> I inherited the peace concept from [name of person]. He showed us how to be calm, be respectful, be generous, and be understanding. These top three were the first. The last one came when [name of person] trained us during this war (PB10 14/5/21).
>
> I never knew about the peaceful coexistence until [name of person] as a model (PB12 14/5/21).
>
> First when I joined [name of organisation], there was a director called [name of person]. We tried to write every day and take it to the community. The way he was trying to let us think and not to think negatively – even if we go to the community and we find something very negative, we should try to think in positive ways. That is the first one to help to me think every time that I should think positively and not think negative thoughts (PB1 30/6/20).

Both the first and the second excerpt highlight the importance of situated knowledge where the peacebuilders learned through their role model's actions and words in the war zone about what peace is, how to build it and how to sustain peaceful coexistence during times of war. The first excerpt also highlights how situated and explicit

knowledge can integrate by combining both the role modelling in the situations that happen in war and also including specific training on how to build peace and sustain peaceful coexistence. This integration of situated and explicit knowledge allowed the peacebuilders to engage in different ways of being and thinking about peace in the war zone. The third excerpt highlights how internal thinking impacted the peacebuilder's frame of mind as well as the actions they take. Therefore, the peacebuilder embodied the explicit knowledge given by the role model that 'we should try to think in positive ways … even if we go to the community and we find something very negative'.

In addition to community leader role models, developmental interactions with informal peer groups helped the peacebuilders learn integrated ways of being, knowing and acting through group discussions and reflections, observing each other and learning from the community with which they were working. One peacebuilder narrated a developmental interaction about an informal peer group's impact on them:

> I was voluntarily teaching at the evening centres … that's what made me more interested about this peace and how to pass it to other people, other communities and other teachers… While we were doing this teaching with displaced community, we were working with Ethiopian and Eritrean refugees who were in Khartoum and Gadarif. Also, the way they talked, the teachers who were involved by giving their testimonials and how they wanted to be teachers and what they

want to do after being teachers. This encouraged me to carry on with this teaching and civic education (PB1 6/7/20).

This peacebuilder highlights how both ‘voluntarily teaching at the evening centres … with displaced community’ and ‘working with Ethiopian and Eritrean refugees’ influenced his decision ‘to carry on with this teaching and civic education’, particularly the ‘testimonials’ by the refugees from Ethiopia and Eritrea who shared their experiences and aspirations as teachers where they lived before the war.

Moreover, the informal peer groups highlighted by the peacebuilders sometimes included specific peers who were a few years older and, as a result, had more experience in specific skills or areas of focus. One peacebuilder highlighted how another peacebuilder influenced their understanding about social justice efforts and how to design and conduct activities by working collaboratively on social justice efforts in groups with them during the previous war (1983–2005) and peace time (2006–2011):

> I worked with the IDPs and he also focused on working in the IDPs in the outskirts of Khartoum. That’s the time I worked closely with him in workshops, in other *motimer* (conferences) and he used to help us with the materials like leaflets and handbooks. That was the time when I started to learn from him. When he shifted during the CPA, he came to [location in Nuba Mountains/South Kordofan]. He did a lot with this democracy teaching with [name of community organisation]. This

> was the time when we came together to work with the communities in the region. I learned a lot from him (PB2 10/7/20).

The situated and tacit knowledge sharing between the peacebuilders in conditions of both war and peace within 'workshops, in other *motimer* (conferences)' and developing 'materials like leaflets and handbooks' allowed space and time for this peacebuilder to integrate different ways of being, thinking and teaching. The learning involved actively preparing and engaging in 'democracy teaching' together with peer role models who were slightly more experienced in both formal processes ('workshops … conferences') and informal facilitation processes ('work with communities in the region') in the Nuba Mountains.

The peacebuilders' role models (both traditional and peer) thought and acted through different knowledge systems from different parts of the world. However, while explicit knowledge in the form of academic theories from Western/modern knowledge systems was highlighted as useful, tacit and situated knowledge was seen as more important, particularly in the form of practical experience from the ground from knowledge systems found in the Nuba Mountains. This practical experience was with community members as peace and conflict dynamics continued to evolve. The excerpt below from the oral history interviews indicates this preference for situated and tacit knowledge from practical experience:

> Q: Did you see the differences of the kinds of peacebuilding ideas? Were they coming from the ground there in Sudan or they coming from outside?
>
> A: They are all from the ground. But [name of British teacher] spent a long time on the ground and in the South [Sudan]. Those Ethiopian and Eritrean [refugees] had left [their homes] a long time ago and spent some years on the ground in Sudan. So, we would meet with them differently, like meeting with displaced people and refugees differently. But, when you come to what do they think, what makes them come there and the issue that they need peace, it was all related together. Academic teaching sometimes gives more theory than the practical. The practical is showing how really peace happens and how the work on the ground really takes place. I find it easier if you start from a practical point of view and then see the academic point of view. You understand more if you start from the practical than having academic learning and then going to practical. … There are things done theoretically which are done differently when it comes to practice (PB1 30/6/20).

The excerpt highlights how peacebuilding ideas that resonated the most came from 'the ground', even for people who are not originally from Sudan. For example, the '[name of British teacher]', 'Ethiopian and Eritrean [refugees]' and 'displaced people' all spent different amounts of time 'on the ground' in the particular area in Sudan where the peacebuilder was located. However, all of their different ways of what 'they think, what

makes them come there, and the issue that they need peace' were 'related together'. This statement highlighted that there was a common thread between the different ways of thinking and reasons for leaving their homes and why they need peace, which showed a harmony within the dissimilar individuals. The excerpt also highlights how the peacebuilder values practice over theory, while still maintaining the usefulness of 'academic teaching'. It shows that 'if you start from the practical' or situated knowledge first and then 'see the academic point of view', you can 'understand more' about 'how really peace happens and how the work on the ground really takes place'. This statement puts the emphasis on situated knowledge that is rooted in place-based understanding of peace.

This place-based understanding of peace was evident in other peacebuilders' explanations for learning from the ground over any theoretical or universal abstract point of view. For example, another peacebuilder stated: 'I think it's why being on the ground, why I will continue, at this silly old age even me a dinosaur, to go back to being on the ground always because that's where I'll keep learning what things actually mean' (PB3 24/7/20). Another peacebuilder said: 'The concept of peace given by organisations not the same as the concept we have here' (PB12 14/5/21). These statements affirm the value of centring the community and its ground-level perspectives to help understand the meaning of what is happening in a conflict context, rather than trying to understand what is happening or how peace is understood from a distant universalised conception.

Conclusion

This chapter focused on the emergence of Nuba Mountains communal knowledge sharing practice within childhood and through working relationships of the peacebuilders, which became a mental model for how to nurture knowledge sharing across social scales, understanding of different kinds of knowledge (explicit, tacit, situated, academic and practical) and how to navigate across different knowledge systems. The knowledge sharing across societal scales involved family, peer/group and community levels, and storytelling using specific formats in both informal and formal settings, with the most common format being *wanasa* (informal conversation that happens during relaxed times among two or more people). The stories using different art forms and spoken forms transmitted situated and tacit knowledge, which conveyed attitudes and mindsets using analysis processes and concepts specific to different knowledge systems that exist in the Nuba Mountains. The Nuba Mountains communal knowledge sharing practice involved cross-knowledge system competence of individuals within relational networks who were accustomed to learning how different knowledge systems conceived of concepts, how they thought about issues and how they shared knowledge. These relational networks were a community map of individuals who share ways of knowing about building peace and managing conflict that have existed across generations; the peacebuilders were either born into them or they were brought into them through working relationships.

During childhood, there was a place-based understanding of peace and violence where peacebuilders from different villages engaged in cross-community and family relationships that helped them learn about peace, violence, building peace and managing conflict through explicit and situated knowledge sharing. This place-based understanding of peace and violence transferred through adulthood, with peacebuilders placing greater value on understanding the situated knowledge from the community's perspective on the ground rather than theoretical or universalised abstract descriptions of peace or meaning-making from afar. Also, during their young adulthoods, peacebuilders highlighted the ways they learned about peace through observing their role models in action during voluntary and paid work involving communities in Sudan, internally displaced peoples around Sudan and refugees from neighbouring countries. All of these developmental interactions privileged the situated and tacit knowledge over the explicit and academic knowledge that was formative in the way they evolved in their thinking about ways of building peace and managing conflict. The next chapter focuses on the impact of the Nuba Mountains communal knowledge sharing practice within the peacebuilding practice.

Chapter 7: Impacts of Nuba Mountains Communal Knowledge Sharing Practice Within Peacebuilding Practice

Introduction

This chapter presents the themes from the study as they pertain to Research Question 3: What is the apparent significance of knowledge sharing on peacebuilding practice in the Nuba Mountains? The study identified three themes related to when people engaged in the Nuba Mountains communal knowledge sharing practice as a function of peacebuilding practice. These themes were generating endogenous knowledge, unearthing buried knowledge and building relationships through mutual understanding. Conversely, the study also found that when endogenous knowledge holders were omitted or de-valued, the theme of instances of epistemic violence was apparent. This instances of epistemic violence caused harm to the Nuba Mountains peacebuilding practice.

Generating endogenous knowledge

The engagement in the Nuba Mountains communal knowledge sharing practice helped generate endogenous knowledge during this study. The endogenous knowledge generation encompassed an integration of concepts and analysis stemming from different ways of knowing in different knowledge systems. The endogenous knowledge included conceptual models for conflict and peace analysis purposes that were derived through communal analysis with the peacebuilders involved in this study. Over the course of the study, three

conceptual models developed: a learning/growth conceptual model, a peacebuilding/peace mechanism model and a role-shifting approach for peacebuilding advisors in Sudan model.

The learning/growth conceptual model was created during a Nuba-run NGO peace committee training in May 2021 between three distinct peace committees that manage cross-line markets that exist in the war zone's 'grey areas' (somewhere between the SPLM–N-controlled area of the Nuba Mountains and the GoS-controlled area). In this training, one of the peacebuilders explained a learning/growth conceptual model (see Figure 5: Learning/Growth Conceptual Model below), which they had continuously developed over the last few years based on their situated knowledge of being a peacebuilder in the war zone mixed with explicit knowledge gained from their previous teacher training before the war.

Figure 5: Learning/Growth Conceptual Model

Their explicit knowledge included Freirean adult literacy models and Lederach's conflict transformation model among others (i.e., Community Development Resource Association (CDRA) organisational and social justice models). The learning/growth conceptual model starts from the centre where a person's comfort zone exists and then moves into engagement with fear, then further into learning and growth domains in order to reach reconciliation (the outer domain). As one of the peacebuilders drew and narrated

the model (in Arabic), the group, including myself, watched and listened, with minimum translation (so as not to disrupt the knowledge sharing flow). I noticed the role of the peace committees was visually missing within the model. So, I asked the peacebuilder if I could draw a connecting point between the boxes to highlight a possible role for the peace committees within the model. I started to draw the ladders in black and described (in English with Arabic translation provided by the peacebuilders involved in this study) how the ladders symbolised the peace committee members with the communities as *daleel* (guides) to whom people could turn for advice or liaison support toward finding a just resolution to any conflicts that are happening or could happen. The peacebuilder who created the conceptual model said, 'the model was incomplete until the ladders. Then it was perfect' (CAC2 25/5/21). I asked the peacebuilder if they knew about the concepts of the zone of proximal development or relational mentoring as vehicles for learning since the learning/growth model seemed to be similar except much more practical for the needs of the peace committees and the communities living in the war zone of Nuba Mountains (Ragins & Verbos, 2007; Vygotsky, 1978). They had not heard of these concepts, but they were keen to learn about them. We started to talk more about the concepts, the co-constructed model and their usefulness for the peacebuilders, the communities and myself, so that we could keep developing the models to help the communities based on the needs on the ground. I learned much more about 'how to conceptualise moving through fear in order to discuss reconciliation than any of the academic models or concepts I've seen

before', such as Vygotsky's (1978, 1987) zone of proximal development and Ragins' (2005) relational mentoring concept (author's reflective journal entry 25/5/21).

Another endogenous knowledge generation example was in the form of a peacebuilding/peace mechanism model that developed during the 1.5 communal analysis gathering of peacebuilders in the Nuba Mountains. It started with a Venn diagram of civil society, business and government categories, which the South Africa-based NGO the CDRA had used during a previous governance training with a cross-section of civil authority and civil society, which had been held four years earlier (see Figure 9: Nuba Mountains peacebuilding actor/mechanism conceptual model below).

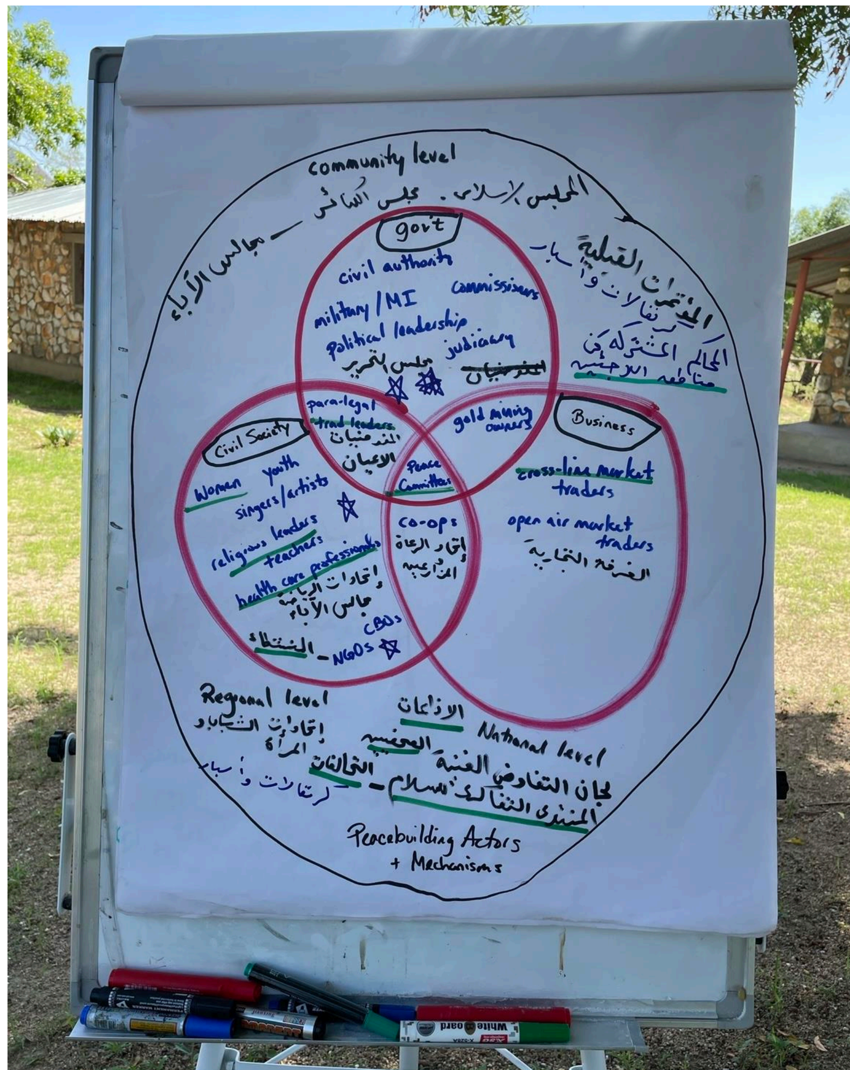


Figure 9: Nuba Mountains peacebuilding actor/mechanism conceptual model

Considering this Venn diagram model resonated with everyone who attended the previous CDRA training, the group decided we should use this model to start mapping the peacebuilding actors/mechanisms that exist or have an impact in the war zone. As most of the communal analysis was conducted in Arabic (with a minimum amount of English

translation for me so as not to disrupt the knowledge generation flow), the conceptual model was conceived in both English and Arabic. Table 11 highlights the peacebuilding actors and mechanisms that were named after three rounds of mapping and then narrowing to the ones with the most opportunities and power/influence.

There were five different rounds of the communal analysis (see Table 11 below). The first round included the main actors/mechanisms that were normally being used or engaged with to build peace and manage conflict in the war zone. The second round delved more into the actors/mechanisms that are not normally involved in the daily work of peacebuilding, but they have influence in the communities that have been known to help build peace and manage conflict. The third round of mapping moved outside of the Venn diagram and involved categorising the actors/mechanisms according to the different levels of society – community, regional and national. The fourth round of mapping narrowed down the actors/mechanisms with the most opportunities for peacebuilding within these different levels of society. Lastly, the fifth round of mapping looked over all the actors/mechanisms named in the different rounds and highlighted the ones with the most decision-making power and influence that should be engaged within the communities for building peace and managing conflict because they also have the potential to become spoilers to the peace.

Table 11: The five rounds of communal analysis

Level of	**First round of**	**Second round of**	**Third round of**	**Most opportunities**	**Most influential/potential**

society	mapping	mapping	mapping	for peacebuilding	spoilers if (not) engaged with more for peacebuilding
Community	Civil authority, military/military intelligence, political leadership, judiciary (G) Para-legal traditional leaders (CS/G)	Sports associations, PTA and activists (CS) Pastoralists Association and Farmers Association (CS/B)	Islamic Council, Christian Council, PTA, intertribal conferences, carnivals/traditional cultural practices, joint traditional courts in refugee camps	Peace committees, cross-line markets, women, religious leaders, health care professionals	SPLM–N leadership, religious leaders, CBOs
Regional	Women, youth, singers/artists, religious leaders, health care professionals, NGOs, CBOs (CS) Co-operatives (CS/B) Cross-line market traders, open-air market traders (B) Gold mining owners (B/G) Peace committees (G/CS/B)	Commissions & Elders (CS/G) SPLM–N Liberation Council (G) Chamber of Commerce (B)	Youth and women's association, carnivals and traditional cultural practices	Alliances	
National			Media (radio/ websites), journalists, alliances, negotiation technical committees, Framework Mechanism Coordination Group (FWM)	Media (radio/ websites), Framework Mechanism Coordination Group (FWM)	
G = Government domain; CS = Civil Society domain; B = Business Domain					

The peace structures that were identified in Chapter 5 as part of the peacebuilding practice appear in this list, namely: peace committees, cross-line markets and SPLM–N civil authority. The peace committees and cross-line markets were identified as

mechanisms that have the most opportunities for peacebuilding and can transcend domains, in the case of peace committees who move between the government, business, and civil society domains since their members align under these three domains. The FWM also appears in this list, which was one of the national/international civil society networks identified in Chapter 5 that shared information across level of society.

The third peace and conflict conceptual model generated from this study was the role-shifting approach for peacebuilding in Sudan. This model provides an international organisation in Sudan with a practical framework (how to apply and share skills and knowledge in situations) for peacebuilding advisors. It was based on the reciprocal oral analysis that happened during *wanasa* sessions on WhatsApp with peacebuilders and community advisory committee members following the three initial oral history interviews over WhatsApp in PAR cycle 1. The following functional roles were highlighted during these *wanasa* sessions as effective for the re-start and evolution of peacebuilding practice in the Nuba Mountains:

- Listener
- Storyteller
- Facilitator
- Trainer
- Buffer
- Diplomatic Connector

- Friend
- Manager (WhatsApp voice and text messages)

The diversity of roles identified were then transposed into a theory of practice for a peacebuilding adviser role within an international development organisation to help facilitate continuous learning and experimentation within peacebuilders' practice in the Nuba Mountains and across all of Sudan. As the context evolved, a peacebuilding advisor (Sudanese or *khawajat* (foreigners)) could shift into the five different roles detailed in Table 6 (see Chapter 6, p. 101) to respond to the situations as they arose, including new opportunities that were coming to light through the implementation of the role-shifting approach. The modalities of this particular role-shifting approach involved individual and group WhatsApp introductory discussions (through questions such as, 'Do you want my support with any of this? What would help?'). Based on the peacebuilders' answers, the adviser would enact the following five roles as needed. Eventually, when the Covid-19 pandemic travel restrictions eased, the conversations moved to being in person, while the WhatsApp and the iterative implementation of the role-shifting approach continued.

Unearthing of buried knowledge

Another outcome of engaging in the Nuba Mountains communal knowledge sharing practice within the unearthing of buried knowledge that occurred over time in the Nuba Mountains with Arab-Islamic knowledge systems and Western knowledge systems

subjugating the situated knowledge is linked to the language communities that emanate from the Nuba Mountains. These languages were often buried underneath the dominant Arabic language by successive Sudanese central government policies and practices of Arabisation and Islamisation. These polices and practice were built on the overall race-ethnic-class hierarchies set in place by the trans-Saharan slave trade, Funj Sultanate, Mahyddia and the imperial/colonial powers.

The study helped bring to the surface a vast conceptual difference between the generic English technocratic names for knowledge sharing formats such as 'focus group discussion' or 'workshop' and the conceptual understanding of different terms for knowledge sharing formats in Arabic language depending on the purpose for the knowledge sharing and the setting. The study allowed peacebuilders to collect the peacebuilding outcome terms based on the specific different knowledge systems found in the Nuba Mountains, which transcended across Nuba communities and Arab nomadic communities, including the Baggara (Hawazma and Misseriya) and Fallata (see *Appendix 3: Knowledge Sharing Terms Existing in Nuba Mountains*).

There were terms for peacebuilding practice outcomes that came from a mix of Arab-Islamic knowledge systems and Western knowledge systems. Also, the desired outcomes by the communities would evolve over time as the needs shifted within the war zone. For example, within a few years into the current war, communities in the Western part of the Nuba Mountains began to tell the peacebuilders involved in this study, 'we

don't want just peaceful coexistence. We need something better' (PB5 16/5/21, CAC4 6/2/21). The term for peaceful coexistence in the Arabic language is *taiish silmi*, which loosely translates into English as having no threat or fear, and trust, acceptance and tolerance. For some communities, *taiish silmi* was not enough. They needed a form of *malmus* (something sensible/tangible that was social or spiritual), *muktasabat* (economic divide/gain) and/or *islahat* (restoration/correcting) that could come in the form of *diya* (blood money), amended laws, practices of interaction or other forms of economic or social benefits. At the very least, there was a need for *tahdiaa* (cooling it down) when a situation was spiralling into violent conflict. Then a process of building *thiga/thigha* (confidence) through different knowledge sharing formats either separately at first or between the different parties to the violent conflict, which could take days, weeks, months or years depending on the conflict. The feeling of *intima* (belonging) and *thiga/thigha* (confidence) was also integral to ensuring a lasting peace could happen, according to the peacebuilders involved in this study. These different peacebuilding practice outcomes would shift based on the histories and dynamics on the ground that impacted communities differently.

The peacebuilders and community advisory committee members highlighted how different Arabic terms for the peacebuilding outcomes came from the different knowledge systems depending on the cultural background of the group. For example, one of the peacebuilders highlighted how 'the Misseriya Humor and Misseriya Zurug (nomadic

communities) have a specific outcome of *alangarab*', which loosely translates into English as coming together to commit themselves to not have conflict and to clean the spirits. Another community advisory committee member described a specific kind of *wanasa* session that was integral to some of the people from the Kawalib/Moro language community called *amra*, or a yard where people come to sit in the evening hours to discuss events happening. One of the other peacebuilders described another conception of *amra* that has been fused with Western knowledge systems, so *amra* has become known as classes that happen on Sundays after church that involve dancing.

Wanasa sessions following the communal analysis and dialogic observations via WhatsApp chats with peacebuilders and community advisory council members sparked the idea of collecting the knowledge sharing and peacebuilding outcomes terms that are in the local languages found in the Nuba Mountains. These terms could correspond to the Arabic language terms or could be completely different concepts in general that are intrinsic to specific language communities based on their cultural understanding. However, in order to collect these terms and outcomes, a list of language family categories would be needed as the basis on which to do so.

Therefore, part of the PAR cycle turned into devising an agreed framework for categorising the Nuba language communities and then naming the different language communities within each umbrella language family. The *wanasa* discussions on WhatsApp with the community advisory committee around naming the different language

communities brought up how names of tribes from the Nuba mountains were given new names by Arab leaders centuries ago. These names often had derogatory connotations within the Arabic culture. For instance, the word *Kwalib*, which means dog, was made into a tribal name by Arab leaders to describe the collection of nine different clans from in and around Dallami county. As one of the peacebuilders highlighted during a *wanasa* session over WhatsApp group chat:

> There are many derogatory names associated with tribal Nuba names. That's why Nuba groups are now engaging in going back to their original names, including Kwalib … Nymang = Ama, Ghulfan = Oncho … Ghulfan is certainly meant to be derogatory (at least in Arab culture) as it refers to 'uncircumcised' people (PB4, 10/22/22).

The language family categories that were initially agreed upon with a few of the peacebuilders at the beginning of the study were based on the language family categories used in the 2017 Nuba language *motimer* (conference) held in Europe, which a few of the peacebuilders involved in this study attended. These genetic language categories were based on a doctoral dissertation from the School of Oriental and African Studies, University of London by Stevenson (1951), a British missionary and linguistic researcher, and the seminal genetic classification of African languages by Greenberg (1963), an American linguist. The language family categories were:

- Niger-Congo (Heiban, Katloid, Rashad, Talodi)
- Ijo/Defako (Lafofa)
- Nilo-Sahara (Daju, Nubian, Nyimang & Afitti, Temeinian)
- Related to Nilo-Sahara but independent (Kadu)

After reviewing the categories with more of the peacebuilders on the ground in the Nuba Mountains during the study, one of the leading language experts who was a member of the Community Advisors Council (and could not attend the 2017 motimer (conference)) said these categories can be considered correct from a general academic point of view, but they were also 'from the outside looking inward rather than the other way around' (CAC5 13/11/21). Therefore, the peacebuilders and the Community Advisor Council members agreed on a new categorisation framework for Nuba language family categories using standpoint epistemology that corresponded to their situated knowledge gained from their lived experience on the ground (see *Appendix 4: Language Grouping of Nuba Communities*).

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Although the dissertation time period was not long enough to pursue the collection of the different knowledge sharing and peacebuilding outcome terms with the peacebuilders, the peacebuilders decided to carry on with the collection alongside their day-to-day work. As Sudan's ongoing revolution is youth-led, and particularly young women-led, there was a desire among the peacebuilders for youth, especially young women, in the Nuba Mountains to re-learn different knowledge sharing terms that were intrinsic to the different local languages their families used to speak or currently speak. However, some peacebuilders involved in this study were also wary of some elites within SPLM–N or GoS using this re-learned knowledge for their own interest so the knowledge terms would become co-opted or exploited by them. They highlighted how this relearning process needs to also include prevention strategies for exploitation of knowledge terms/approaches by any person in power (SPLM–N leadership or GoS leadership) (CAC3 20/11/21, PB1 21/11/21).

Building confidence for mutual understanding

Nuba Mountains communal knowledge sharing practice as a function of Nuba Mountains peacebuilding practice helped build confidence for mutual understanding through knowledge sharing between the UN and community-level peacebuilders in the Nuba Mountains war zone, and between the armed movement elites and grassroots civil society in the same area. Following the 2019 revolution, the UN Security Council mandated a new UN political mission in Khartoum on 3 June 2020 to help with the transition to a just and

peaceful Sudan. Part of the new political mission mandate was to support peacebuilding in the Two Areas (Nuba Mountains and southern Blue Nile). By December 2020, the new UN political mission heads started to reach out to the South Kordofan and Blue Nile Coordination Unit (SKBNCU), a locally-driven initiative made of (initially) Sudanese humanitarian staff who chose to stay in the war zone instead of evacuating and who pooled together the remaining humanitarian resources days after the war recommenced in the Nuba Mountains to assist the communities in the Two Areas. However, during the study period, the primarily internationally-staffed CU was not well-versed in Nuba Mountains peacebuilding practice as it was increasingly detached from the day-to-day workings of how peacebuilding practice enables humanitarian access, delivery of humanitarian services and managing the cross-line markets that were integral for 'livelihood inputs (seeds, farming tools, cash, etc.) and harvest outputs (particularly wildfoods), and traders (both women and men) who could then access wider market networks' (Greeley, 2019, p. 3). However, the informal network of peacebuilders, which included the current and former CU staff, was able to facilitate a channel of communication between the new UN political mission's peacebuilding section and some of the peacebuilders involved in this study. Below is a series of developmental interactions via WhatsApp about the preparation for meetings with the UN political mission staff.

> The agenda is to talk to these [the UN political mission]/Khartoum people and hear what they are proposing regarding peacebuilding – how, when, who, where.

Peacebuilders on our side want to hear more of that before they really share anything about who they are in Two Areas [Nuba Mountains and southern Blue Nile], what they are doing etc. … They were very clear that they wanted INPB3 to be their ambassador at first, to find out what [the UN political mission] is proposing. They are open to listening, but they have been burned before – that is their message. If they like what they hear, maybe they will be open to taking direct part in future conversations… I've shared the list of resources you [the author] recommended. They've [the UN political mission] met SPLM–N political reps (WhatsApp peer-to-peer conversation: INPB3, 29/12/20).

I have an intro call with [name of UN political mission staff]. As discussed with [name of informal network of peacebuilders member], I will see the notes from today's call. Besides listening to their aims, we want to encourage direct coordination and ideally direct support to locally led peacebuilding. Please send any suggestions I can put forward (WhatsApp group conversation: INPB1 29/12/20).

Principles might help to ground such discussions: connection before content, people before process, and past is prologue. There is broken trust that is trying to be rebuilt (the reasons why it broke needs to be understood without defensiveness too)… it needs to be understood deeply in order to keep finding paths forward

gradually and steadily as the last 4 years of UN–Two Areas engagement has shown (WhatsApp group conversation: author 29/12/20).

Adding my voice to [the author]… Build on what is already existing, observe the local resilience, issues of trust – no rush, as the process may take time to spontaneously heal, promote the customary machineries/mechanisms that the partners have been using to resolve the local conflicts, make it clear to them that no HAC certificate of registration is recognized in SPLM–N territory, and make them aware that [Nuba Mountains and southern Blue Nile] is diverse society. Multi-linguistic, culture and ethnic groups that need to be observed. Long list, but to mention a few (WhatsApp group conversation: PB1 29/12/20).

Adding my voice to [the author] and PB1, they should also know the community-led initiative which has already started, which needs to be built on if they really want to support and achieve real peace (WhatsApp group conversation: CAC3 29/12/20).

The call went well. [Name of UN political mission staff] got the message clearly and from many people (WhatsApp peer-to-peer conversation: INPB2 2/2/21).

These informal WhatsApp peer and group conversations and emails reflect the story of the Nuba Mountains peacebuilding practice, its genesis, the interconnectedness of the efforts within all sectors and life in the war zone. They also show the importance of peer-to-peer conversations and group conversations, happening in tandem, to provided informal guidelines for the UN, which hinge on observing and building on the culturally-derived mechanisms already being used successfully in the Nuba Mountains. Moreover, they reiterated the focus of the conversation on building confidence for mutual understanding between UN political mission staff and peacebuilders on the ground in the Nuba Mountains, rather than the UN political mission staff listening to elites (Sudanese and international) in Khartoum. Elites in Khartoum could never have the situated knowledge that comes from the lived experience of peacebuilders working for years on the ground in the Nuba Mountains war zone. This interaction led to further interactions between the UN political mission peacebuilding staff who began to shift their mindsets toward more relational ways of knowing. They started to then engage in more group knowledge sharing interactions at both the informal and formal levels with the informal network of peacebuilders who were working within the humanitarian sector of the Nuba Mountains (INPB4 10/2/21, 8/6/21, 20/11/21). As a result, the informal trust-building between the UN political mission's staff and the informal network did not translate into the formal system change, as the funding for the Nuba Mountains peacebuilding efforts became deadlocked in UN bureaucracy for over a year. However, the informal trust-

building between the UN political mission's staff as people (not as representatives of the UN political mission) and peacebuilders involved in this study continues.

Another example of building confidence for mutual understanding by using the Nuba Mountains communal knowledge sharing practice happened during the Lagawa peace conference just as the war re-started in the Nuba Mountains in 2011. There were multiple levels of knowledge sharing with a variety of facilitators within the same relational network (grass roots, armed group elites, civil society elites/intellectuals and trusted *khawajat* (outsiders)). These created informal spaces for group knowledge sharing between traditional authorities and grassroots peacebuilders, and between the SPLM–N authorities and elite civil society. Knowledge sharing between traditional authorities and peacebuilders was able to move ahead before and after the formal conference was eventually able to happen. One of the peacebuilders narrated the story of the Lagawa peace conference:

> When the war started in June, Lagawa became an island (of peace) up until now, I think up until recently. Because that good effort – the informal meetings before [the] starting of the conferences. We faced challenges with our authorities who did not allow us to start the conference formally. But we spent around two to three days just waiting for authorities to approve. So, that was very good because we had a good time (informally), so when the conference started everything was clear to everyone… Everyone was doing something. There was informal meetings. There

was singers. Everyone was playing different roles, although some were not putting it directly (PB1 30/6/20).

For almost ten years, Lagawa had been 'an island (of peace)' due to the multi-level knowledge sharing that happened using informal and formal spaces and across group and community levels. The power dynamics between the peacebuilders and SPLM–N authorities proved to be challenging but not insurmountable. The two to three days of waiting for the 'authorities to approve' the start of the conference turned into valuable time for the peacebuilders to engage in 'informal meetings' to share knowledge about what the conference needed to focus on. There was a collective effort across the grassroots communities, where 'everyone was playing different roles' both directly and indirectly, which shows the diversity of roles needed within Nuba Mountains communal knowledge sharing practice in order to engage in a variety of forms of knowledge sharing, and through different mediums such as the songs from the 'singers', to build and sustain peace.

At the elite civil society-level, reflections by peacebuilders on the Lagawa conference pointed toward the need to invest in time with SPLM–N authorities and the aid industry donors to help them fully understand the importance of grassroots mechanisms for peace and managing conflict facilitated by peacebuilders from the Nuba Mountains. The Nuba Mountains communal knowledge sharing practice through a combination of peacebuilders, local community leaders, elite civil society and trusted *khawajat* (outsiders)

allowed the SPLM–N authorities and the aid industry to open up space for grassroots peacebuilding mechanisms to perform their conflict management and peacebuilding roles. One of the peacebuilders reflected on the lessons learned from the Lagawa conference:

> There was a lot of work that needed to be done with the authorities, in this case the SPLM–N leadership … to get them to back the idea and create space for it [grassroots mechanisms for conflict management and peacebuilding], it took some work… So, that balance between working with authorities to create space and making sure all the support was there that allowed the communities to do their stuff, and have some external good facilitation that knew the context, language and had some understanding of peacebuilding to facilitate the process. But, they didn't have to be world expert on some technical aspect of peacebuilding… having people, good kind of slightly inspirational speakers [name of Nuba intellectual based in Khartoum] did a good job on that. But it was the local community leaders who did the nuts and bolts on that. What I learned was it was about creating that space to come together and acknowledging and respecting the skills and knowledge they had and were very valid. I think that was a very big lesson (PB3 24/7/20).

The SPLM–N authorities needed time to understand the value of the knowledge and skills that the 'local community leaders' carry within them. The Nuba Mountains

communal knowledge sharing practice with the SPLM–N involved ‘some external good facilitation that knew the context, language, and had some understanding of peacebuilding to facilitate the process’. In this case, the term ‘external’ was not code for ‘world expert on some technical aspect of peacebuilding’. Instead, external meant external from the parties involved in the conflict. The external facilitators provided ‘kind of slightly inspirational speakers’ from the elite level of civil society, in the form of a ‘Nuba intellectual based in Khartoum’. In contrast, the ‘local community leaders’ provided the essential roles as facilitators for all the communities (including the elites) to engage in knowledge sharing together, informally and formally, or what can be termed ‘the nuts and bolts’. The Nuba Mountains communal knowledge sharing practice allowed time for SPLM–N authorities to acknowledge and respect ‘the skills and knowledge’ that the ‘local community leaders’ possessed from their lived experiences and to see them as ‘very valid’, meaning they had authority as knowledge holders.

Similarly, the Nuba Mountains communal knowledge sharing practice allowed time for the donors interested in funding the Lagawa conference to see the value of knowledge and skills possessed by the local community leaders as facilitators of formal conflict management and peacebuilding mechanisms, such as *tahkeen* (arbitration), *judia* (judgement by a council of the elders) and *mekuk* (people’s court made up of Nuba religious leaders called *meks*) as well as informal dialogue processes (such as *wanasa*) to take place. One of the peacebuilders said, ‘maybe the role of a useful outsider is that they

are sometimes able to be a kind of bridge between different parts of the [aid] system that don't usually connect, talk [to] or understand each other' (PB3 24/7/20). In the case of the Lagawa conference in 2011, the outsider can help the interested donors to fully understand the value of grassroots and elite civil society from the Nuba Mountains being the ones who were 'facilitating the process between the parties … they really understood the context in a way that no international expert could' (PB3 24/7/20). The outsider can also act as a translator to enable donors to communicate effectively within their own institutions to reach mutual understanding and release funding streams quicker. One of the peacebuilders highlighted that it was 'important to try to dress up peacebuilding in different languages … whether we call it peacebuilding or market enabling' in order to 'access funds available and get where funds were needed' (PB3 24/7/20). The Nuba Mountains communal knowledge sharing practice was one of the keys to building enough confidence within the donors to re-envision, re-name and create modalities within their institutions so the funding could reach the ground quicker.

Instances of epistemic violence when Nuba Mountains communal knowledge sharing practice stopped or failed to happen

When Nuba Mountains communal knowledge sharing practice stopped or failed to happen, epistemic violence seemed to increase between grassroots civil society and the SPLM–N authorities as well as aid industry actors. The epistemic violence could be seen in mechanisms, such as policies and committees, that were created unilaterally by

authorities who devalued knowledge holders as unimportant, and omitted them from decision-making processes or proposal development processes. Instances in which epistemic violence occurred led to an increase in frustration and loss of confidence in the SPLM–N authorities and aid industry actors among communities and peacebuilders.

Peacebuilders highlighted the frustration they felt among the SPLM–N authority due to the imposition of appointing ad hoc committees for conflict management to address the insecurity in and around the Nuba Mountains following the 2019 revolution in Khartoum and the 2021 military coup in Khartoum as well as the impact of Covid-19 communal gathering restrictions. The existing peace committees, which had been established for years at this point, were the democratically elected conflict management and peacebuilding mechanisms, yet were not valued during the Covid-19 pandemic period by the SPLM–N authority as they had been in previous years. Instead, a small selection of peace committee members and members of the staff of Nuba NGOs were appointed by the SPLM–N authority to ad hoc committees to help manage or resolve disputes during the period in which there were Covid-related gathering restrictions. One of the peacebuilders narrated the conflict dynamics and the committees formed by the SPLM–N authorities:

> The [peace committee] meetings are continuing. But, they haven't been meeting regularly since gathering is also not allowed. So, they can do their work individually. What I can see clearly is that the area has more conflict, although with this corona they are still moving. There was conflict between Otoro and

> alHadra, and there was conflict in Heiban and part of Kawalib. There was other conflict between Tira and Otoro in Alduru, here in Kalkada. And another in Mendi. So all this, they [SPLM–N authorities] just formed a committee which is composed of some traditional leaders, one of [name of Nuba NGO] staff, one of [name of NGO] staff to just follow this. And these areas, they involved some members of peace committees, but not direct as peace committee. They've become members of this committee (PB1 30/6/20).

Instead of valuing the existing peace committees that were democratically elected by their communities to manage and help resolve violent conflicts, the SPLM–N authority chose to use its military authority to establish a new ad hoc committee, constituting of 'some traditional leaders', two members of Nuba NGOs and 'some members of peace committees'. Even though the SPLM–N established this new ad hoc committee to 'just follow' the increase in insecurity, the existing peace committees were continuing to perform their roles as informal liaisons, mediators and facilitators to diffuse violent situations and sustain peace where they could. Due to Covid-19 gathering restrictions, they 'haven't been meeting regularly', but they were still doing their 'work individually', since the communities still turn to them to help manage or resolve violent incidents between individuals or communities. Although the SPLM–N authorities (consciously or unconsciously) exercised epistemic violence by denying the value of the democratically-elected peace committees as the knowledge holders in managing and resolving conflicts,

the communities still valued them for their knowledge and skills, on the basis of which they had been elected by the community as peace committee members.

Another instance of epistemic violence happened between grassroots civil society and the aid industry actors when the Nuba Mountains communal knowledge sharing practice stopped. During the communal analysis session with the peacebuilders, they named a shift in car policy by the SKBNCU as the third most debilitating policy shift impacting peacebuilding practice over the last ten years. The SKBNCU created a peacebuilding car policy from 2017 onward that regimented the use of one Toyota Land Cruiser among four community NGOs engaging in peacebuilding practice from 2017 onward. According to the communal analysis discussion, this policy shift caused frustration among the peacebuilders for two reasons: 1) the decision was made unilaterally by the SKBNCU; and 2) there was a vast conceptual difference in the nature of peacebuilding. A seemingly small operational decision by SKBNCU caused immense strain between the NGOs and negatively impacted all their ability to self-organise separately and together since they did not normally function with a centralised car system. According to the conflict analysis document created through the communal analysis in the study, this policy shift was seen as a serious resource management issue that curtailed peacebuilding practice through the following ways:

- unrealistic way of responding to the unpredictable nature of inter- and intra-communal conflicts, and

- causes unnecessary friction between peacebuilding actors and between peacebuilding actors and the humanitarian-oriented agency who owns it (see *Appendix 1: Communal Conflict Analysis May 2021 – Nuba Mountains*).

According to the peacebuilders during the communal analysis, the managers of the SKNBCU conceptually and practically did not understand the 'unpredictable nature of inter- and intra-communal conflicts'. They also did not understand the communal analysis that went into discussions about the severity of conflicts, the links with previous or current conflicts or the response time needed depending on the situation. This possible lack of understanding and misconception also may have contributed to unbalanced power hierarchies within the decision-making processes between the SKBNCU and the community NGOs, considering the communal analysis highlighted 'unnecessary friction' between the community NGOs that engaged in peacebuilding practice.

This instance of epistemic violence might have been prevented if the Nuba Mountains communal knowledge sharing practice continued as it had for years before, which would have allowed for mutual understanding to grow regarding the nature of peacebuilding practice and violent conflicts and a more communal decision-making process about how to manage the use of the car. Ironically, the SKBNCU formed through engaging in Nuba Mountains knowledge sharing practice shortly after the war recommenced. Unlike all the UN agencies that evacuated when the war started in 2011, the grassroots community members across different humanitarian sectors and levels of

society along with a very small number of international aid organisations and international NGOs engaged in a low-profile, cross-border humanitarian response from South Sudan. They stayed in the war zone and quickly created the SKBNCU as a mechanism through which to share knowledge about remaining assets (cars, generators, equipment, etc.) and to facilitate the most equitable allocation of the humanitarian goods and support to the most vulnerable communities in the war zone. However, by 2017, the SKBNCU had become internationally-driven with a corresponding technocratic-style of management. The bi-weekly SMT (sector management team) meetings that occurred for nine years prior began to become less frequent, with a gap of six to eight months between them. The SKBNCU used to co-chair these bi-weekly SMT meetings for the purpose of communal knowledge sharing with community NGOs across humanitarian sectors, SPLM–N authorities and the very small number of international NGOs. As a result, the SKBNCU viewed peacebuilding practice from the perspective of Western knowledge systems, which treated the use of the car like a food security activity, meaning it had a linear, cause-and-effect intervention process with decision-making that was controlled by a centralised body (in this case, the SKBNCU).

Another example of an instance of epistemic violence was when Nuba Mountains communal knowledge sharing practice stopped during the drafting of a UNITAMS peacebuilding proposal between the peacebuilders and one of the informal peacebuilding network members. Despite having altruistic intentions to benefit the Nuba Mountains

peacebuilding practice, one of the informal network members who was tasked with incorporating the feedback from all the community NGOs and international NGOs inadvertently caused frustration among the peacebuilders when they ended the Nuba Mountains communal knowledge sharing halfway through the proposal drafting process. The below email correspondence between the author and one of the informal peacebuilding network members highlights the story of how the epistemic violence formed.

> The process for how the UNITAMS proposal went down didn't sit well with any of the partners or the intermediary partner on that side. I know you said it happened for pragmatic reasons. Yet, those reasons go against the community-led and designed way of doing work which is what everyone there is accustomed to, as you know. Maybe instead of talking with me, it's better you try to talk to the partners and the intermediary partner more about how that affected them and how to make it right now. UN architecture structural problem and the pragmatism of trusted individuals leading to anger, frustration, and definitely nowhere near community-led, designed or driven process where that emergent action to engage with UNITAMS started. It's an example of when you don't follow Nuba peacebuilding principles in going about the work, you get into dysfunction. That's the aid industry way of perpetuating the coloniality of knowledge and power – the deciders are the internationals and the people who are from the actual place are the

> manual labor. Not saying that was your intention, but that's what came out of it. The short cuts for pragmatic reasons end up being spoilers, too (Author's email correspondence to informal peacebuilding network member, 21/12/21).

This excerpt highlights the ramifications of stopping the Nuba Mountains communal knowledge sharing practice between the peacebuilders, international NGOs and one of the informal peacebuilding network members who was acting as the bridge to the UNITAMS funding stream. The Nuba Mountains communal knowledge sharing practice began as 'community-led, designed or driven' process using formats such as *wanasa* discussions at group level 'to engage with the UN political mission'. When this practice ended halfway through the proposal process, the relationship turned into an unbalanced power hierarchy for knowledge generation between with the informal peacebuilding network member seeming to not value the knowledge holders from the Nuba Mountains or the international NGO staff who were working in the war zone at the time. The informal peacebuilding network member omitted the access and involvement of all their situated knowledges. The mutual knowledge sharing, which involved communal analysis that was taking place during *wanasa* sessions over WhatsApp and in informal *ijtima* (meetings) between the peacebuilders, the international NGO staff and the informal peacebuilding network member had abruptly ended. Consequently, the informal peacebuilding network member caused the process to move into 'dysfunction' and led to 'anger, frustration' among the peacebuilders and international NGO staff.

Conclusion

This chapter highlighted the significance of Nuba Mountains communal knowledge sharing practice as a function of Nuba Mountains peacebuilding practice. The significance included the generation of endogenous knowledge, the unearthing of buried knowledge and the building of confidence for mutual understanding. The endogenous knowledge generation included co-designing and using new conflict and peace analysis conceptual models, namely three conceptual models developed through the study (the learning/growth conceptual model, a peacebuilding/peace mechanism model and a role-shifting approach for peacebuilding advisors in Sudan model). The unearthing of buried knowledge occurred in the form of relearning knowledge sharing and peacebuilding outcomes and re-categorising/re-naming language communities that originate from the African knowledge systems in the Nuba Mountains and that had been subjugated over time by authoritarian regimes in Sudan. The building of confidence for mutual understanding between peacebuilders and the SPLM–N authorities and the aid industry actors highlighted the effectiveness of the Nuba Mountains communal knowledge sharing practice, which was able to share knowledge across knowledge systems through a mix of people in the relational networks who could translate knowledge across those knowledge systems, using mostly informal spaces.

Finally, this chapter highlighted how when Nuba Mountains communal knowledge sharing practice stopped or failed to happen, instances of epistemic violence seemed to

increase between peacebuilders and the SPLM–N authorities as well as aid industry actors. This epistemic violence led to increased frustration, loss of confidence and the creation of mechanisms, such as policies and committees, in a unilaterally top-down manner where situated knowledges were not valued as equally important as explicit knowledge or were omitted entirely from proposals and decision-making processes.

Chapter 8: Discussion

Introduction

This study investigated the role of knowledge sharing in peacebuilding practice using the Nuba Mountains war zone in Sudan as the PAR case study. This chapter provides an overview of the key findings from the previous three chapters. It then provides analysis and interpretations of these findings as they relate to the literature reviewed in Chapter 2 to help answer the main research questions (What is the role of knowledge sharing in peacebuilding?) and three out of the four research questions (RQs): RQ1) What are the characteristics of Nuba Mountains peacebuilding practice? RQ2) How does knowledge sharing about peacebuilding occur in the Nuba Mountains? RQ3) What is the apparent significance of knowledge sharing on peacebuilding practice in the Nuba Mountains war zone?

Overview of key findings

Chapter 5 presented two process characteristics for Nuba Mountains peacebuilding practice that were generated from the thematic analysis: (1) leveraging relational networks; and (2) creating mechanisms (committees, guidelines and policies). A key finding from Chapter 5 was that the peacebuilders leveraged their existing relational networks developed from childhood friendships and adulthood working relationships to

build mutuality across divides (e.g. ethnic, sectors, levels of society). Another key finding from Chapter 5 was how creating mechanisms (e.g. structures, guidelines and policies) to build and sustain peace occured through collective self-organising processes. These collective self-organising processes involved respecting different endogenous knowledge systems while peace and conflicts co-evolved together in the dynamically shifting war zone over time. Also, Chapter 6 presented the way knowledge sharing occurred within the peacebuilding practice in the war zone, which was through the emergence of the Nuba Mountains communal knowledge sharing practice. The key finding from this chapter was how this particular knowledge sharing practice became a mental model for peacebuilders to nurture peacebuilding practice across social scales (family, peer/group, community) using an array of different specific formats and mediums. Another key finding was how the communal knowledge sharing practice entailed valuing situated knowledge involving place-based understandings even more than academic or explicit knowledge. Lastly, the key finding from Chapter 7 was how the Nuba Mountains communal knowledge sharing practice played a catalytic role for endogenous knowledge generation, unearthing buried knowledge, and lessening inherited power imbalances. And, it also played an epistemic violence prevention role within Nuba Mountains peacebuilding practice.

Relational networks build mutuality across divides

As presented in Chapter 5, a key process characteristic of peacebuilding practice was the leveraging of relational networks consisting of people from across divides (ethnic

communities, sectors and social scales in society). These relational networks facilitated the creation of the peacebuilding practice mechanisms (peace committees, cross-line markets, training guidelines and armed group policies) through knowledge sharing about building peace and managing conflict across different knowledge systems. These relational networks enabled the Nuba Mountains peacebuilding practice to connect different social levels – community, national and international – using childhood friendship networks and national/international civil society networks built through working relationships during the peacebuilder's adulthoods.

The composition of childhood friendship networks which involved cross-community friendships derived from either multi-generational family relationships or attending primary school together. These friendship networks were leveraged to create the first humanitarian assistance support from communities across the conflict line, the first cross-line market between disparate communities living on both sides of the conflict line and the creation of the first peace committees during this war in the Nuba Mountains. While this finding may be somewhat limited to the small number of peacebuilders involved in this study, it does highlight the importance of the people around a peacebuilder long before they are known as a peacebuilder. Within the mentoring literature, Kram (1985, 1996) calls this a person's developmental network, meaning those relationships that are relational, non-hierarchical and diverse in terms of identity and background that act as a constellation of support. While this finding supports the

mentoring literature's evolving definition of developmental networks that span across organisations and sectors and include friends and allies (Higgins & Kram, 2001), it also suggests the mentoring literature's conception of diversity within developmental network could be broadened to include the knowledge system in which a person is embedded.

Another key finding was how these relational networks transcended organisational frames. Previous knowledge sharing in peacebuilding studies only focused on knowledge sharing within organisations, within organisational networks or between organisations (Ramalingam, 2005, 2006; Verkoren, 2006, 2008). The findings from this study focus on the decentralised and expansive mutual knowledge sharing processes, which transcended across organisational structures and often involved a mix of Sudanese (including Nuba Mountains civil society, SPLM/A–N members and other Sudanese across the country) and *khawajat* (outsiders), some of whom are not coming from any formally recognised organisations. These relational networks were not described by the peacebuilders categorically through a local-international dichotomy, which confines most studies on peacebuilding practice and knowledge sharing within peacebuilding practice (Randazzo, 2016; Sabaratnam, 2017; Verkoren, 2006, 2008). Instead, a key finding from this study was how peacebuilders conceived of people within their relational networks based on the situational need, which included international aid industry actors sometimes, yet not all the time. More often than not, it included Sudanese located outside the war zone and in the diaspora.

One example involved the peacebuilders in this study who leveraged their connections to the FWM, the only nationwide Sudanese civil society coordination mechanism that holds space (virtually and physically) for collective analysis, and dissemination of information and recommendations. For the last 11 years, contributors have grown to 300 from community, regional and national civil society backgrounds across all states and war zones in Sudan, along with a few international civil society members. The study highlighted how peacebuilders engaged in knowledge sharing across divides through the FWM to help ease heightened tension (PB2 23/8/20). Their engagement in such a decentralised and expansive network of mutual knowledge sharing could be an example of a Ricigliano's (2003, 2012) Network of Effective Action that fosters systemic change, promotes mutual learning and facilitates joint action. Yet, Ricigliano's (2003, p. 446) Network of Effective Action has an organisational framing with a set practice for how 'peacebuilding actors can organize themselves for more effective and integrated collaboration and for greater impact on conflict situations at the programmatic and systemic levels'. However, the peacebuilders' engagement in this study are not coming from an organisational frame and the relational networks include other civil society actors from different national, regional and community levels who are contributors to the FWM as well as other community members who could act as spoilers to the peace. Therefore, this study's findings offer a non-organisational frame of viewing a network of effective action that functions through a knowledge sharing practice across different endogenous knowledge systems.

This decentralised and expansive network of mutual knowledge sharing could also be described as a small, identifiable group of people, or what Lederach (2005, p. 91) calls 'critical yeast' who can effectively build quality interactions of mutuality in order to foster and sustain peace at structural, cultural, relational and person levels. However, this study highlights a slightly deeper interpretation of the critical yeast metaphor that brings to light a missing knowledge systems dimension. If the metaphor conceives of yeast as multiple kinds of yeast which have existed and morphed over millions of years, then the metaphor can be reinterpreted to portray people existing within different knowledge systems which have morphed over time due to cultural, historical and place-based interactions between people from different knowledge systems. Therefore, while Lederach (2019) calls for discovering different metaphors to engage different mental models as a vehicle for engaging in peace imaginations that are outside of the dominant metaphors, this study highlights how reinterpretation of existing metaphors can also lead to different imaginings that account for the way knowledge systems, like yeast, can evolve over time and engage different ways of knowing and sharing knowledge. This slightly deeper interpretation of critical yeast highlights how the mix of individuals involved in the Nuba Mountains peacebuilding practice derive their ideas and practices from different knowledge systems, including African, Arab-Islamic, and Western knowledge systems, which is part of the effectiveness and strength of the peacebuilding practice in the Nuba Mountains warzone.

Collective self-organisation processes within the creation of mechanisms to build and sustain peace

A key process characteristic of Nuba Mountains peacebuilding practice presented in Chapter 5 was the creation of mechanisms (structures, guidelines and policies) to build and sustain peace that pushed forward law and order, economic interdependence and social development in the midst of active war in Nuba Mountains war zone. The creation of these mechanisms, particularly peace committees, cross-line markets, community guidelines for building and sustaining peace, and armed group policies, were part of the collective informal self-organising processes between communities and peacebuilders within Nuba Mountains. This finding is consistent with Anderson and Wallace's (2013, p. 35) conclusion that war-affected communities were able to self-organize by managing and evolving with their conflict environments, through three functions of community governance: 'provision of services, establishment and enforcement of codes of conduct, and community security.' The creation of mechanism for building and sustaining peace in this study could be seen as functions of community governance.

The provision of services could be seen in the creation of safe spaces through the informal cross-line markets (*souk n bouks*) where citizens living on both sides of the conflict could access and materially benefit for their everyday needs amidst the war. As one community advisory council member highlighted, 'the cross-line markets are bringing this cash (USD) to this side so we can afford to eat and pay each other's salaries' (CAC4

11/2/21). They acted as economic resilience mechanisms where citizens 'could utilize livelihood inputs (seeds, farming tools, cash, etc.) and harvest outputs (particularly wild foods) and traders (both women and men) could access wider market networks' (Greeley, 2019, p. 3). These cross-line markets could also be described as zones of peace (Hancock & Mitchell, 2007) where communities carve out locational sanctuaries where civilians feel safe and protected from armed groups engaging in violence. However, these locational sanctuaries do involve SPLM–N armed group and civil authority and individual SAF commanders who informally allow the traders and citizens to physically move to the 'grey areas' (the no man's land between SPLM–N war zone and GoS areas of the Nuba Mountains) where the mobile cross-line markets exist. Therefore, they are more similar to Benet's (1957) description of segmented and feuding societies among the Berbers of Morocco' with their 'temporary, outdoor markets (*suqs*)' which could 'develop aspects akin to locational sanctuaries in order to allow peaceful trading and the exchange of surplus goods' (as cited in Hancock & Mitchell, 2007, p. 4)

The establishment and enforcement of codes of conduct as a function of community governance could be seen in the communally designed and constantly evolving guidelines for training of peace committees and cross line market sub-committee. The Nuba Mountains community guidelines developed through collective discussions about how to formalize the training of the informal peace committees and the cross-line market sub-committees as well as the communities so they all understood the roles of the

committees and their own collective and individual roles to uphold and sustain the relative peace on the ground between communities. The training guidelines evolved based on the continuous integration of situated/practical/tacit knowledge gained from engaging in the peacebuilding practice and academic/explicit knowledge from trainings/discussions hosted by peacebuilding and humanitarian organisations and direct peer learning through the relational networks of the eight staff in the two community NGOs who designed and implemented the trainings. This collective self-organisation process could be seen as Nabudere's (2009) community site of knowledge where a community's knowledge is rediscovered (i.e. the peace committees and cross-line markets) and sometimes fused with outside knowledge for the self-empowerment of the community (as seen in the different kinds of knowledge within the community guidelines) (Velthuizen, 2014).

In addition, the establishment and enforcement of codes of conduct as a function of community governance could be seen in the SPLM-N civil authority and military policies supporting the peacebuilding practice and deterring people from looting goods and livestock among the communities in the war zone. The SPLM–N armed group shifting their mindsets from military to civilian when civilians were involved in violent incidents in the 'grey areas' (the no man's land between SPLM–N war zone and GoS areas of the Nuba Mountains). When these violent incidents happened, the SPLM–N military or civil authority would call upon the peace committees covering those areas because the civilians would say 'they would only speak with the peacebuilding teams' (CAC2 29/1/20). Even

South Sudan authorities with the bordering Ruweng administrative area in South Sudan asked the peacebuilding teams, meaning the peacebuilding staff of the two NGOs in the war zone and the peace committees, to replicate the peacebuilding practice across its region in South Sudan (CAC1 17/11/20).

The community security function of community governance could be seen in the creation of peace committees to act as liaisons to help manage and resolve violent disputes before they escalate as well as the criteria for peace committee members collectively decided by representatives from the communities living on both sides of the conflict line. The democratically elected peace committees and the collectively agreed criteria for peace committee members organically developed from the desires of spontaneously formed protection groups (mostly made up of women) who, after two years of active war, wanted to move beyond only reacting to the SAF bombing and land incursions and into more proactive strategies that stopped people from wanting to bomb and attack them in the first place (PB1 6/7/20; CAC3 25/5/21). Small informal group discussions (*wanasa*) between the protection groups and the two community NGOs in the warzone evolved into even wider small group discussions between the older generation to the younger generation (community NGO staff and other community members) about how joint dialogue in small committees between different community leaders in war times in the past decades/centuries led to building peace during war (CAC3 25/5/21). These discussions led to the collective decision to re-start these kinds of peace committees through

democratically elected members from wider segment of society (traditional leaders, religious leaders, women's groups, youth groups and eventually traders and police as the war years increased).

The peace committee members understood there was 'different ways of thinking' among different communities, so self-organisation processes need to account for the time for 'building confidence' between communities (PB17 22/5/21). Continuous small group discussion resulted in a collectively agreed criteria for peace committees that focused on the character, ethical stances, proven lived experience building relationships across divides, and influence within existing relational networks, namely being: (1) wise person, (2) can create relationship of peaceful understanding, (3) trusted among the group they are coming from, (4) Influential (i.e., family background or wealthy), (5) has knowledge of community (i.e., cultural knowledge, background in heritage understanding), (6) someone of integrity (straight forward person), (7) courageous, and (8) proactive (PB8, PB9, PB10, PB11 14/5/21; PB 13 13/5/21; PB14, PB15, PB16, PB17, PB2 22/5/21). These qualities aligned with the ancient role of *sīd al-darib* (master of the path) during the Funj Sultanate's influence in the Nuba Mountains area via the Tegali Kingdom (Spaulding, 1987). They were able to negotiate peace treaties because they 'possessed personal qualities such as bravery and wisdom, and the capability of negotiating the terms of peace' (Kadouf, 2001).

The communally decided criteria for peace committees could be seen as normative framework that aligns with Nafukho et al.'s (2005) description of the principles for African knowledge systems for adult education.

Collective Peace Committee Member Criteria	**African Knowledge System Principles**
Wise person	Development and improvement of intellectual skills based on need and want. Learning through seeing, observing and doing.
Can create relationship of peaceful understanding,	Passing on of information from one generation to another and across cultural borders.
Trusted among the group they are coming from.	
Influential (i.e., family background or wealthy)	Importance of oral means of transmission, especially through metaphors and riddles.
Has knowledge of community (i.e., cultural knowledge, background in heritage understanding)	Understanding, appreciating and promoting the cultural heritage of communities.
Someone of integrity (straightforward person)	Equity, mutuality and respect among members of society in the use of knowledge.
Courageous	
Proactive	
Collective peace committee (as a group)	Joint and communal custody of knowledge and information. Sparing and joint use of all types of resources.

(Nafukho et al., 2005, p. 31; PB8, PB9, PB10, PB11 14/5/21; PB 13 13/5/21; PB14, PB15, PB16, PB17, PB2 22/5/21).

Alongside the alignment of the criteria to the African knowledge system principles, there was an implicit criteria that was not written but was known among the community and the people who would become peace committee members, namely fluency in Arabic. The ability to speak local languages or English was of secondary importance for the role of peace committee members (PB5 16/5/21, CAC4 6/2/21). This implicit criterion can be seen as a direct influence from the Arab-Islamic knowledge system that slowly integrated into the endogenous knowledge systems across the Nuba Mountains for centuries, which ended up making Arabic the commonly spoken language across the region. These cultural and knowledge transactions influenced the dominance of the Arabic language and explicit/academic knowledge that were used in the self-organisation processes to create mechanisms for the Nuba Mountains peacebuilding practice. This finding supports African knowledge theorists' assertion that African knowledge systems have practical and collective ways of learning for self-organisation using a collective African self-concept (Mkabela, 2005; Mpofu, 1994; Owusu-Ansah & Mji, 2013). While the hybrid peacebuilding literature has used the concept of endogenous knowledge to operationalise the concept of peace trajectories (López & Ingelaere, 2019), this study contributes to further decolonial/postcolonial informed peacebuilding approaches by borrowing Hountondji's conception of the term to operationalise the ongoing peacebuilding practice in the Nuba Mountains war zone.

The peacebuilders acknowledged and respected ‘different ways of thinking’ among different communities which reflected their place-based endogenous knowledge systems with their corresponding ways of sharing and generating knowledge and allowed time for ‘building confidence’ between communities (PB17 22/5/21). This finding is significant because previous peacebuilding studies of war-affected societies have emphasised the importance of cultural norms, rules or standards that influenced community governance and self-organisation, yet previous studies do not mention the kinds of knowledge systems and their corresponding ways of conceiving, sharing and generating knowledge that also influence community governance and self-organisation (Anderson & Wallace, 2013; Hancock & Mitchell, 2007; Mitchell & Allen Nan, 1997). This finding expands on Schirch’s (2004, p. 16) assertion that ‘the ideas and practices behind peacebuilding have deep roots in all cultures’ by offering a missing knowledge system dimension which brings into more focus the ways knowledge is conceived and the ways knowledge is generated and shared as important factors when analysing and engaging in peacebuilding practice.

Nuba Mountains communal knowledge sharing practice as a mental model for peacebuilders

The study found there was a Nuba Mountains communal knowledge sharing practice that has been essential for nurturing Nuba Mountains peacebuilding practice because it involved sharing knowledge across different social scales (families, groups, communities) in top-down, bottom-up and horizontal ways, using different types of knowledge with specific formats and mediums in informal and formal settings. It was underpinned by a collective self-concept way of being (i.e., ways of seeing reality and existing in the world) and an intersubjective conception of knowledge, which is consistent with the African concept of *ubuntu* (I am therefore you are) as well as the ancient Kemet concepts of *Ma'at* (quest for justice, truth and harmony), *Nommo* (creation of knowledge through the spoken word to improve human relations) and *Sebait* ('way of learning or knowledge' or 'instructions or wisdom in relation to socioeconomic exchanges') (Asante, 1988, 1990; Chilisa, 2012, 2020; Reviere, 2001). This collective self-concept is consistent with feminist scholars' conception of relational–cultural theory, which sees human development as individuals growing in relationship with each other across life spans (Jordan et al., 1991; Miller, 1976). This common Nuba Mountains communal knowledge sharing practice became a mental model for peacebuilders as it had 'deeply ingrained assumptions, [and] generalisations' about how people engage with knowledge and learning about peace (Senge, 1990, p. 8). This finding also reflects Nonaka and Konno's

(1998) conception of a mental model as a cognitive dimension of tacit knowledge wherein people can be socialised so the mental model becomes internalised. For the peacebuilders, this mental model developed from socialisation and internalisation during childhood and during their working relationships, which indicated that Sudanese who were not from Nuba Mountains or were *khawajat* (outsiders) could be socialised into internalising this specific kind of knowledge sharing practice and use it as a function of the Nuba Mountains peacebuilding practice.

At the family level, knowledge sharing often happened through stories told by students, grandmothers, grandfathers and fathers using the different knowledge sharing formats, such as *hakawi* (or narrative story), *hajadima hajik/kum* (informal quizzes) and *ngash* (discussions about a known thing). The *hakawi* and *hajadima hajik/kum* are historically where generational wisdom and spiritual wisdom from any of the religions found in the Nuba Mountains – Islam, Christianity and Kujur (the animist religion most Nuba communities believe in, even if they also practice the Islamic or Christian faiths). These findings support Bandura's (1977, 1986) social learning theory with its focus on behavioural change happening through observation, role modelling (person or symbolic) and mimicking others' attitudes, emotions and behaviours based on their interaction in their environment. These findings also highlight African knowledge system conceptions of intelligence, which focus on 'interpersonal and social domains of functioning', which begin with family socialisation as part of the wider community (Owusu-Ansah & Mji,

2013, p. 2; see also Mpofu, 2002; Nsamenang, 2006). However, these findings also highlight the Arab-Islamic knowledge system influence within the ways of knowledge sharing at family level, considering the terms are in the Sudanese Arabic language and the spiritual/religious education that is central to the Arab-Islamic knowledge system (Nsamenang & Tchombe, 2011).

At the peer/group level, the Nuba Mountains communal knowledge sharing practice happened through storytelling using different knowledge sharing formats, often in informal settings. The most common format highlighted in the peacebuilding practice was *wanasa* (informal conversation that happens during relaxed times among two or more people) or *atwanensa* (the past tense of *wanasa*). The importance of informal ways of sharing knowledge in society was evident within the Lagawa peace agreement that happened around the time the war started, with informal times or spaces being carved out within formal settings to engage in storytelling for the purposes of building confidence among peers/groups so they could engage in formal knowledge sharing processes, such as *motimer* (conference), *ijtima* (meeting) or *tabadul alarra* (formal exchange of ideas) (PB1 30/6/20). The importance of informal ways of sharing knowledge was also evident with the frustration and miscommunication that was also evident when sharing knowledge at group level. The frustration and tension was the result of informal *ijitama* (meeting) not happening between different sectors of society. Socialising new people into practising Nuba Mountains communal knowledge sharing required informal peer/group knowledge

sharing and time – either on the ground in the war zone with peacebuilders or with peacebuilders' relational network members from the war zone. These findings support African knowledge scholars' assertion that informal ways of sharing knowledge are more commonplace than formal ways (Chikati & Mpofu, 2013; Mpofu, 2011).

At the community level, knowledge sharing through storytelling in informal and formal settings occurred through the arts (music, drawings, film and drama), in written form, through oral narration or practical experience. These stories conveyed information about living through war, deterring spoilers and how to live in peace. The stories, whether written, sung or drawn, conveyed situated and tacit knowledge to the wider groups and communities. Communal knowledge sharing methods using the arts and practical experience strived to deter members of the criminal syndicates. For instance, a peacebuilder highlighted 'a singer who wrote a clever and quite effective song … about a particular military officer (within the SPLA–N). He was known to be spoiling the peaceful coexistence in a particular community and how the community should shame him for his actions' (CAC2 20/5/21). This example can be seen as 'a practical, collective and social' way of learning within African knowledge systems that is shared orally in the location of community living and activities (Owusu-Ansah & Mji, 2013, p. 2; see also Mkabela, 2005; Mpofu, 1994).

Value of situated knowledge involving place-based understandings of peace

Peacebuilders valued situated knowledge over the explicit knowledge found in academic teaching that tends to be from Western knowledge systems. While explicit knowledge was valued, its use and value were secondary to the situated knowledges that came from practical experience on the ground in the Nuba Mountains. These findings support scholars assertions that modern Africans operate on multilayered knowledge systems due to the mix of the knowledge systems emanating from the communities on the ground and the knowledge systems instituted by the colonial powers (Goduka, 1999; Mpofu, 2002). Within the Nuba Mountains communal knowledge sharing practice, concepts of peace and conflict were based on their place-based experiences with other communities. They were not based on a universal or objective definitions. As scholars have noted, 'peacebuilding interventions are often based on Western concepts of conflict resolution, mediation, and institution building' (Verkoren, 2008, p. 95; see also Carey, 2020; McCandless & Donais, 2020). Instead, this study found that the peacebuilders and the communities in the Nuba Mountains had their own conceptualisations of peace and violence.

For example, one peacebuilder stated: 'The concept of peace given by organisations not the same as the concept we have here' (PB12 14/5/21). Peacebuilders involved in this study highlighted how the peace concept is rooted in location and built on 'strong relations' and 'interaction' with different cultural groups from across the conflict

divide (PB17 22/5/21). Whereas the peace concept offered by 'organisations' tends to be designed from outside as an abstract idea. When the concept of peace was not passed down from one generation to the next, the peacebuilders noticed different cultural groups would then have 'different conception of peace' (PB15 22/5/21), which affirms Dietrich and Sützl (1997) call for acknowledging many peaces that exist in society.

In terms of violence conceptions, peacebuilders saw violence existing alongside building peace, as they often occurred simultaneously. All peacebuilders described witnessing violence while also learning about or working for peace at the same time through watching or listening to different role models (as individuals or in group form). These findings affirm previous research on how peace and violence can coexist and coevolve in the same place, specifically in South Kordofan in Sudan (Campbell et al., 2017) and around the world (Öjendal et al., 2021). It also affirms Bandura's (1977) social learning theory where direct observation of role models effects the observer's attitudes, emotions and behaviours based on their interaction in the same environment, while highlighting the individualized limitation of his theory which does not account for the group role-modelling is central to collective worldview and collective self-concepts that promote 'a practical, collective and social' way of learning within African knowledge systems (Owusu-Ansah & Mji, 2013, p. 2).

Moreover, the peacebuilders all had an ability to understand and communicate across different knowledge systems existing in Nuba Mountains. This was as an attribute

they used within the peacebuilding practice. While the reasons for this common attribute may involve wider explanations, the study found that the ability to understand and communicate across different knowledge systems was influenced by the Nuba Mountains communal knowledge sharing practice into which they were socialised through their cross-community friendships and working relationships during their childhoods and adulthoods. These ways of knowing and sharing knowledge were consistent with the African knowledge systems' ways of knowing through collective wisdom and experience and through knowledge being passed down orally and intergenerationally in the location of community living and activities (Mkabela, 2005; Ngara, 2007). These findings also affirm peacebuilding scholars' assertion that the definition of peace is found through strong relationships and considered a product of interactions or 'relational flux' with specific people in a specific place within indigenous knowledge systems (Brigg & Walker, 2016, p. 267).

Another striking finding from the study was the importance of storytelling within the peacebuilding practice to understand situated and tacit knowledge as part of conflict analysis. Peacebuilders engaged in conflict analysis through listening to stories of the people in conflict so they could understand how the individual and the group thought based on their expressed situated knowledges that conveyed their context, their culture, history and their overall knowledge system. Stories were the vehicles for transmitting situated and tacit knowledge to convey 'attitudes' and 'mindsets' and their own 'analysis

process' with their own 'concepts' so the peacebuilders could understand the 'entire picture' from their perspective (PB2 23/8/20). These findings are consistent with the African knowledge system principles of the 'importance of oral means of transmission, especially through metaphors and riddles', 'passing on information from one generation to another and across cultural borders' and 'equity, mutuality, and respect among member of society in the use of knowledge' (Nafukho et al., 2005, p. 31). There was no single way or a universalised way of analysing conflicts within Nuba Mountains peacebuilding practice, since 'contexts of every case builds on its own way because the contexts are different always'. These findings also affirm Shultz et al.'s (2009) assertion that knowledge systems with their ways of knowing, generating and sharing knowledge cannot be removed from the cultural, historical and place-based understandings. The peacebuilders in this study showed respect for all different analysis processes and concepts that are derived from endogenous knowledge systems across the Nuba Mountains. Storytelling was the tool employed to help them learn these analytical processes and concepts to see the 'entire picture' from the perspective of the person conveyed the situated knowledge.

The study found that the Nuba Mountains communal knowledge sharing practice impacted the peacebuilding practice ongoing in the war zone through catalyst roles that generated endogenous knowledge, unearthed buried knowledge, and lessened inherited power imbalances. It also played an epistemic violence prevention role to avoid de-valuing or omitting knowledge holders within peacebuilding practice and moving toward

exercising epistemic freedom. These roles fuelled the creation of mechanisms (peace committees, cross-line markets, training guidelines and models, and armed group policies) and expanded the relational network connections across sectors and power levels of society. In addition, when individuals stopped or did not engage in the Nuba Mountains communal knowledge sharing practice, the instances of epistemic violence could be seen where knowledge holders were de-valued or omitted from the Nuba Mountains peacebuilding practice by SPLM–N armed group leaders and aid industry actors.

Generating endogenous knowledge through Nuba Mountains communal knowledge sharing practice

Nuba Mountains communal knowledge sharing practice led to endogenous knowledge generation that fuelled the creation of mechanisms for building peace and managing conflict, including the co-construction of conceptual models and frameworks. The learning/growth conceptual model (see Figure 5, Chapter 7) focused on the internal human and outward social development training for peace committee members as one of the key mechanisms of Nuba Mountains peacebuilding practice. The peacebuilding/peace mechanisms conceptual model (see Figure 9, Chapter 7) focused on the relational networks of peace actors and mechanisms that facilitate the building of peace across civil society, government and business sectors and across the social levels of community, regional and national. The role-shifting peacebuilding advisor framework (see Table 6, Chapter 7) focused on navigating internal human and outward relational development

aspects of peacebuilding for advisors within Nuba and also across Sudan, whether they were *khawajat* (outsiders) or Sudanese.

These three co-created conceptual models could be seen through an endogenous knowledge generation process that is similar to the process used in previous development studies (Practical Action, 2007). First, knowledge was conceived as intersubjective using practical experience, situated knowledge and oral communication as the ways of knowing between peacebuilders. Second, ways of sharing knowledge included drawings and stories through informal formats, such as *wanasa*, and communal analysis gatherings. Third, peacebuilders integrating explicit knowledge derived from outside knowledge systems that pertained to the communities needs at the time from their perspective. Rather than only valuing African knowledge systems, this process of co-construction seemed to reflect what Hountondji (1997, p. 13) calls 'reciprocal valorisation among knowledge systems', or people giving mutual value to all knowledge systems. It also affirmed that knowledge systems in African societies are multilayered knowledge systems due to the mix of the African knowledge systems with ways of knowing through collective wisdom and experience (Ngara, 2007) and through a collective self-concept (Mpofu, 1994, 2002).

Unlike Lederach's (1995) elicitive approach or other peacebuilding approaches which scholars have highlighted may still perpetuate 'transient object-subject divides' (Avruch, 2013, p. 26) where peacebuilders doing peacebuilding to societies, the creation of the conceptual models was grounded in collective self-concept (Mpofu, 1994, 2002)

where all the peacebuilders (including myself) were both simultaneously researchers and peacebuilders iteratively developing the models together as the situations arose in the war zone context. The trust between all involved allowed for intersubjective knowledge to emerge as ideas and memories of the past challenges and successes were shared and discussed openly. This collective self-concept sits in contrast to ‘transient object-subject divides,’ including the assumed role of outsiders as trainers and community members as the ones being trained, as is the subtext within Lederach’s (1995) elicitive approach. While his approach seeks to address and transform cycles of violence, it still has a trainer-trainee implicit framing.

The learning/growth conceptual model and the peacebuilding/peace mechanisms model highlighted how conceptual frameworks in the Nuba Mountains were derived using frameworks that were centred on a collective self-concept while borrowing from outside influences. The learning/growth conceptual model starts from the centre where a person’s comfort zone exists and then moves into engagement with fear, then further into learning and growth domains in order to reach reconciliation (the outer domain). The inclusion of the black ladder symbols in the learning/growth conceptual model could be considered metaphors for places or guides for the communities to turn to as liaison support for finding a just resolution to any conflicts that are happening or could happen. This finding contributes to Lederach’s (2019, p. 26) call for shifting to ‘different mental models’ as a vehicle for engaging in peace imaginations beyond dominant metaphors (i.e. negotiating

tables). The black ladder symbols resonated with the peace committee members in the training because it was a practical and often used tool in their everyday lives that served many purposes – it helped provide stability, it allowed access to new spaces, and it provided a safe space where people could rest when the work became too much. The co-constructed model also sparked knowledge sharing opportunities between peacebuilders to discuss similar models, specifically Vygotsky's (1978, 1987) zone of proximal development and Ragins' (2005) relational mentoring concept, that aligned with the learning/growth development model. Yet, this model offered more – being grounded in the situated knowledge that was able to conceptualise moving through fear in order to discuss reconciliation – than any of the academic models or concepts.

The peacebuilding/peace mechanism conceptual model was created during the communal analysis gathering of peacebuilders in the Nuba Mountains. It involved an initial framework (a Venn diagram of civil society, business and government) that all peacebuilders were comfortable with, as they had used it four years earlier with the South Africa-based group the CDRA during a governance training with a cross section of civil authority and civil society. It included five rounds of communal knowledge sharing about the peacebuilding actors and mechanisms that existed in the SPLM–N war zone and that were connected through relational networks. The last round was decided by the group after looking at peacebuilding actors and mechanisms as both opportunities and the challenges/spoilers to the peace. The peace structures that were identified in Chapter 5 as

part of the peacebuilding practice appear in this list, namely: peace committees, cross-line markets, and SPLM–N civil authority. Not only does this finding affirm Campbell et al.'s (2017) and Öjendal et al.'s (2021) assertions that peace and violence can coexist and coevolve in the same place, it also highlights how the same peace actors and mechanisms can be both peacebuilders or violent spoilers to the peacebuilding depending on their actions and mindsets.

The third peace and conflict conceptual model generated from this study was the role-shifting approach as a theory of practice (how to apply and share skills and knowledge in situations) for peacebuilding advisors in Nuba Mountains and in Sudan (see Table 6, Chapter 4, p. 101). The diversity of roles identified were then transposed into a practical framework for peacebuilding advisers to use as their terms of reference within an international development organisation to help facilitate continuous learning and experimentation within Nuba Mountains peacebuilding practice and peacebuilding across all of Sudan. The approach moved at the speed of trust with colleagues, peacebuilders and other stakeholders as the evolving context shifted and new opportunities became available or within sight. This role-shifting approach aligns with the relational mentoring literatures depiction of fostering relational mentoring relationships that move away from 'a 'one-size-fits-all' approach to sharing knowledge' (Ragins, 2016, p. 232). Instead of assuming the inherited hierarchical power role as a teacher to a student, relational mentoring shifts to a relational power stance where the mentor, or in this case the peacebuilding advisor,

uses a ‘needs-based approach (‘What do you need and how can I help?’)’ and the protégé, or in this case the community members, moves from being a ‘passive recipient (‘Tell me what to do’) to engaging in a state of mutuality (‘Let’s figure this out together’) and empowerment (‘Wow, you went through this too? Maybe I can do this!’)’ (Ragins, 2016, p. 232). The inherited hierarchical power role of a mentor is similar to how international organisations/multilateral organisations are often perceived as the paternalistic mentor with the national/local/community being perceived as the unknowledgeable protégé within peacebuilding (Autesserre, 2014; Sabaratnam, 2013). The role-shifting approach generated from this study is an attempt to reimagine a new mental model of sharing knowledge between international development organisation and the war-affected community.

Unearthing buried knowledge for re-learning through Nuba Mountains communal knowledge sharing practice

An unexpected finding that came from this study was the peacebuilders’ desire to unearth buried knowledge about knowledge sharing and goals of peacebuilding derived from the local languages found in the Nuba Mountains. This desire emerged from *wanasa* discussions regarding the collection of Arabic language knowledge sharing and peacebuilding outcome terms that transcended cultural and knowledge systems across Arab and Nuba communities (see *Appendix 3: Knowledge Sharing Terms Existing in Nuba Mountains*). The peacebuilders realised that they did not know what the terms were in their own local languages because these languages were buried underneath the dominant

Arabic language by successive Sudanese central government policies and practices of Arabisation and Islamisation. These policies and practices were built on the overall race-ethnic-class hierarchies set in place by the trans-Saharan slave trade, Funj Sultanate, Mahyddia and the colonial powers. They were exacerbated by the English language dominance within the missionary schools during the Anglo/Egyptian colonial period and within the subsequent aid industry.

In order to learn the knowledge sharing and peacebuilding outcome terms in the local languages, there was another realisation that the academic categorisation of the languages was correct, but they were also 'from the outside looking inward rather than the other way around' (CAC5 13/11/21). The peacebuilders and the community advisor council members agreed that they wanted to create a new categorisation framework for Nuba language family categories by using their own standpoint epistemology rather than using the genetic language categorisation derived from the field of linguistics, wherein the frameworks stem from Western knowledge systems. The findings highlight the importance of language within peacebuilding practice in terms of both analytical framing, synthesising and knowledge sharing. It also affirms Vygotsky's social/cultural learning theory (1978, 1987) that centres language as a tool through which cultures and behaviours could be communicated and understood. Moreover, it affirms Ngũgĩ's (1986, p. 13) argument that language is a powerful means for understanding, creating and sharing

cultures because of its ‘dual character: it is both a means of communication and a carrier of culture’ and its ability to share knowledge across generations.

The act of creating a new framework for categorising Nuba language community names through the peacebuilders’ own standpoint epistemology (Haraway, 1988) could be seen as them moving closer toward what Ndlovu-Gatsheni (2018, p. 3) conceptualises as exercising epistemic freedom, or the struggle for African people to have ‘the right to think, theorize, interpret the world, develop own methodologies, and write from where one is located and unencumbered by Eurocentrism’. They realised that the importance of re-learning the knowledge terms within Nuba Mountains language communities. This realization could be considered part of what Ndlovu-Gatsheni (2018, p. 87) calls ‘learning to unlearn in order to re-learn’ to begin to recover from the harm imposed by colonial periods that still manifests in people’s thinking, speaking and acting.

Lessoning inherited power imbalances through Nuba Mountains communal knowledge sharing practice

Another finding of this study was the lessening of inherited power imbalances between the elite power holders and the Nuba Mountains peacebuilders involved in this study, when they engaged in the Nuba Mountains communal knowledge sharing practice as part of the peacebuilding practice. One example of the Nuba Mountains communal knowledge practice lessening inherited power imbalances can be seen in the multi-level

knowledge sharing interaction that took place in parallel between the UN political mission peacebuilding staff, the peacebuilders and the informal network of peacebuilders who were *khawajat* (outsiders) who had worked or are still working within the humanitarian sector of the Nuba Mountains (INPB4 10/2/21, 8/6/21, 20/11/21). Knowledge sharing occurred between the peacebuilders and the UN political mission staff's over a few months through mostly informal (*wanasa*) conversations and a few in-person formal meetings (*ijitma*). These peer-to-peer and group knowledge sharing activities could be categorised as a form of peer group mentoring, or fluid mentoring with people at similar ranks wherein all can be mentors at a particular time (Pololi et al., 2004) and polyaid mentoring when two or more people in which the interactions were simultaneous and collaborative (Allen et al., 1999; Huizing, 2012), except these interactions were not formally organized for transactional purposes that revolved around organisational or individual advancement. They were part of a longer process of peacebuilding over years with relational network of people (peacebuilders and informal network of peacebuilders coming from the humanitarian sector of the aid industry) who organically came together in light of an opportunity to help re-direct how the UN wanted to re-engage in peacebuilding in the Nuba Mountain war zone after eight years. These successful knowledge sharing examples could also be categorised according to the way Ramalingam (2005, pp. 28–29) applied Nonaka and Takeuchi's (1995) SECI model for tacit knowledge sharing:

1) socialisation through the peer group and polyaid 'mentoring';

2) externalization through ‘dialogue between people who transform tacit knowledge into explicit knowledge’ in the form of the collectively agreed informal guidelines given to the UN political mission’s peacebuilding staff;

3) combination of ‘different types of explicit knowledge’ in the form of virtual messages (WhatsAPP and email) and in person informal conversations (*wanasa*) and formal meetings (*ijtimat*); and

4) internalisation which entails ‘learning by doing’, which, in this case included UN political mission staff engaging in more relational ways of knowing by engaging with peacebuilders through informal conversations (*wanasa*) during informal and formal meetings (ijitmat).

The end result of this multi-level knowledge sharing interaction was more trust was built between the peacebuilders and the UN political mission’s peacebuilding staff. A shift could be seen in the UN political mission staff’s way of engaging with the peacebuilders, which moved into further informal conversations (*wanasa*) and better understanding of how the UN could be a contributor from afar for the wider peacebuilding goal in Sudan. This finding could be seen as using Mignolo’s ‘de-linking’ technique that moves away from Western ways of thinking, with the UN technocratic way of engaging in knowledge sharing with elites based in Khartoum (both Sudanese and foreigners (*khawjat)*) through formal meetings (ijitma) and conferences (mortimor) as an example.

Instead, they engaged in more relational ways of knowing and sharing knowledge that was grounded in the endogenous knowledge systems found in Nuba Mountains. This shift in ways of knowing and sharing knowledge could be seen as lessening the control of authority and knowledge inherited by the UN political mission's peacebuilding staff as part of the coloniality matrix of power (Quijano, 2000), which perpetuates hierarchical power relations in order to creating or reconstruct a functioning state within the current global system (Azarmandi, 2018; Paffenholz, 2015; Randazzo, 2016; Sabaratnam, 2017).

Epistemic violence prevention role of Nuba Mountains communal knowledge sharing practice

The study found that when the Nuba Mountains communal knowledge sharing ended or failed to be engaged there were instances of epistemic violence where the dominant knowledge systems silenced or omitted the value of knowledge holders from Nuba Mountains communities. These dominant knowledge systems privileged specific militaristic supremacy ways of thinking and Western way of thinking that valued top-down decision-making, cost-savings and efficiency over valuing communal analysis, ways of engaging and decision-making, which come from knowledge systems emanating from Nuba Mountains communities. This epistemic violence could be seen in the creation of the policies and committees that (consciously or unconsciously) silenced or denied the expression of knowledges found in Nuba Mountains communities (Shiva, 1990; Spivak,

1988). These epistemic violence instances caused increased frustration and loss of confidence in SPLM–N authorities and aid industry actors among communities and peacebuilders.

One example of an incident of epistemic violence in the study was how the SPLM–N authority chose to use its military-minded authority and power to establish a new ad hoc peace committee with 'some traditional leaders', two members of Nuba NGOs and 'some members of peace committees' to address the heightened insecurity following the heightened insecurity during the study period (PB1 30/6/20). Even though the SPLM–N established this new ad hoc committee to 'just follow' the increase in insecurity, the existing peace committees were continuing to perform their roles as informal liaisons, mediators and facilitators to diffuse violent situations and sustain peace where they could. The communities continued to value all the communally-elected peace committee members for their knowledge and skills, even if the current iteration of the SPLM–N authorities seemed to only value a few that they deemed useful in the new ad hoc committees.

Another example of epistemic violence was highlighted during the communal analysis session through the narration of the third most debilitating policy shift over the last ten years, involved a peacebuilding car policy devised by the SKBNCU in 2017. This policy regimented the use of one Toyota land cruiser among four community NGOs engaging in peacebuilding practice from 2017 onward. This seemingly small unilateral

operational decision caused immense strain between the NGOs and negatively impacted all their ability to self-organise separately and together since they did not normally function within a centralised car system. According to the conflict analysis document created through the communal analysis in the study, this policy shift was seen as a serious resource management issue that curtailed peacebuilding practice through the following ways:

The individuals within the SKNBCU used their Western way of thinking, which valued top-down decision-making, cost-savings and efficiency over valuing communal analysis, ways of engaging and decision-making, which come from knowledge systems emanating from Nuba Mountains communities. According to the communal analysis, the SKBNCU's 'unrealistic way' of engaging in peacebuilding practice to address violent conflicts caused unbalanced power hierarchies in decision-making processes between the SKBNCU and the community NGOs and 'unnecessary friction' between the institutional relationships of the community NGOs that engaged in peacebuilding practice (see *Appendix 1: Communal Conflict Analysis May 2021 – Nuba Mountains*). This finding affirms Azarmandi (2021, p. 4), that within the peace and conflict studies field, 'epistemic violence is entrenched in our knowledge and ways of knowing'. The individuals leading the SKNBCU conceptually and practically did not understand the 'unpredictable nature of inter- and intra-communal conflicts' or the communal analysis and decision-making that went into differentiation between types and severity of conflicts or the response time

needed depending on the conflict situation (see *Appendix 1: Communal Conflict Analysis May 2021 – Nuba Mountains*).

In addition, some of the peacebuilders involved in this study were weary of SPLM–N elites or GoS potentially co-opting the collection of knowledge sharing and peacebuilding outcomes terms coming from the Nuba Mountains language communities, which sparked from the creation of Appendix 3 (*Knowledge Sharing Terms Existing in the Nuba Mountains*) and Appendix 4 (*Language grouping of Nuba communities*). These peacebuilders highlighted how the endogenous knowledge generation process needs to also include prevention strategies to prevent epistemic violence from happening by the SPLM–N leadership or GoS leadership co-opting and exploiting knowledge terms/approaches for the benefit of their elite power interests (CAC3 20/11/21, PB1 21/11/21). This finding support Fanon's (1967/1986) assertion that dominant regimes of power make the colonised person view and experience themselves as 'Other' to the point where they internalise inferiority. Following Fanon's (1967/1986) assertion, the consequences of centuries of subjugation and marginalisation of communities in the Nuba Mountains, through the trans-Saharan slave trade, imperial/colonial powers and the oppressive centralised regimes from Khartoum could have resulted in the psychological consequence of some SPLM–N (military, political and civil authority) having an inferiority complex, which could be making them seek domination over new 'Others' (civil society, especially youth) to re-assert their power.

Chapter 9: Conclusion

Introduction

This chapter presents the conclusions to this study's exploration of the role of knowledge sharing in peacebuilding practice in the war zone of the Nuba Mountains. The chapter also gives the overall implications of this study's findings for peacebuilding scholarship and practice, which helps answers the study's fourth secondary research question (RQ4: What implications does the case hold for peacebuilding scholarship and practice in general?). The chapter then presents implications for Nuba communities and broader Sudanese communities. Finally, the chapter addresses the study's limitations and provides suggestions for future research to overcome these limitations as well as to address the data points generated through the study that that did not pertain to its research questions.

Overall conclusions of the study

This study found that knowledge sharing within the peacebuilding practice in the Nuba Mountains war zone was more than just information sharing between people. It moved beyond the organisational domain, which was how knowledge sharing was framed in previous knowledge sharing in peacebuilding research (Verkoren, 2006, 2008). The study found that knowledge sharing in peacebuilding practice was a far more profound communal experience that engaged different kinds of knowledges, which were derived from interactions with people from different endogenous knowledge systems in informal

and formal community settings rather than organisational settings. These endogenous knowledge systems were a combination of African knowledge systems, Arab-Islamic knowledge systems and Western knowledge systems due to the trans-Saharan slave trade, colonialism, globalisation and successive authoritarian regimes in Sudan that marginalised Nuba Mountains communities over centuries.

The study also highlighted the importance of oral history and communal analysis using the culturally appropriate formats that correspond to the endogenous knowledge systems of communities. The different formats, often expressed in Arabic language terms, for meeting together to share knowledge can be described as informal, formal, within a small or large group, and purpose specific (see *Appendix 3: Knowledge Sharing Terms Existing in Nuba Mountains*). It reinforced the power of oral history and different forms of storytelling using informal formats that can convey knowledge from generations in the past (spanning thousands of years) into present-day dynamics so that new ways of building peace and managing conflicts can be imagined in the present, which will then benefit the generations to come. The findings also indicated that the peacebuilders found more value in situated knowledge and practical experience with other peacebuilders and communities than explicit or academic knowledge from outside the war zone. While the peacebuilders acknowledged the value of explicit and academic knowledge, they placed greater value on knowledges derived from knowledge systems emanated from the communities in Nuba Mountains and other war-affected communities.

The findings indicated that there is a specific way of sharing knowledges for building and sustaining peace in the Nuba Mountains war zone. This way of sharing can be described as a Nuba Mountains communal knowledge sharing practice, meaning communal knowledge sharing across social scales (families, groups and communities), involving different endogenous knowledge systems, formats and mediums, using different types of knowledge (tacit, situated and explicit) in informal and formal settings. This practice was grounded in a way of seeing reality and existing in the world (i.e., way of being) that can be described as a collective self-concept. This collective self-concept way of being conceives knowledge as intersubjective, which is consistent with the African concepts of *ubuntu* (I am therefore you are) as well as the ancient Kemet concepts, which also influenced the concept of *ubuntu* and all other philosophies, religions and cultures within Africa. These ancient Kemet concepts include *Ma'at* (quest for justice, truth and harmony), *Nommo* (creation of knowledge through the spoken word to improve human relations) and *Sebait* ('way of learning or knowledge' or 'instructions or wisdom in relation to socioeconomic exchanges') (Asante, 1988, 1990; Chilisa, 2012, 2020; Reviere, 2001).

The Nuba Mountains communal knowledge sharing practice became a mental model for how peacebuilders could engage with each other and communities in ways of building peace and managing conflict. This practice acted as the grease to the Nuba Mountains' peacebuilding practice wheels. When it was used, diverse relational networks

were able to cross divides to create mechanisms for building peace and managing conflict. The knowledge sharing practice also led to endogenous knowledge generation in the form of peace and conflict analysis conceptual models and frameworks while also unearthing of buried knowledge and building confidence for mutual understanding that lessened inherited power imbalances. These outcomes fuelled the creation and use of peacebuilding practice mechanisms and highlighted the value of situated knowledges. However, when the practice stopped or was not engaged, there were instances of epistemic violence between peacebuilders and the SPLM–N authorities and between the peacebuilders and aid industry actors where knowledge holders were de-valued or omitted from decision-making processes. This epistemic violence led to increased frustration, loss of confidence and the creation of unilaterally designed mechanisms, such as policies and committees, that did not value peacebuilders' situated knowledges or omitted them entirely from peacebuilding practice mechanisms and decision-making processes.

The study borrowed decolonial/postcolonial and relational mentoring concepts to illuminate different ways of viewing and engaging with the peacebuilding practice ongoing in the Nuba Mountains war zone. This study used Hountondji's (1995, 1997) conception of endogenous knowledge to view the endogenous knowledge systems that exist in the Nuba Mountains. The concept of endogenous knowledge systems moves away from viewing African knowledge systems as separate or untouched systems and embraces the historical and living processes of knowledge exchanges that happen in African

societies, including the historical hegemony in this case of Western and Arab-Islamic cultural and historical exchanges within the knowledge systems of Nuba Mountains communities (Hountondji, 1995, 1997, 2002). These knowledge systems are continuously evolving processes of acquiring, sharing and generating knowledge over generations by communities as they interact with the environment and other cultures in a specific locale, while acknowledging the historical hegemony between Western/Arab-Islamic knowledge systems and African knowledge systems.

The study also borrowed Nabudere's (2009, 2011) 'community site of knowledge' concept to view the Nuba Mountains as a site where numerous communities existed with an amalgamation of African, Arab-Islamic and Western-Christian knowledge systems. A community site of knowledge centres the African knowledge systems that have been eroded and buried within this amalgamation as a result of the trans-Saharan slave trade, colonialism and ethnonationalism, while also welcoming outside knowledges that the communities find useful for their needs as they evolved in the war zone. The study borrowed these decolonial/postcolonial constructs to help move away from perpetuating dichotomies of international-local or object-subject, which often still frame peacebuilding scholarship and practice (Avruch, 2013; Randazzo, 2016; Sabaratnam, 2017) and to embrace the intersubjective complexities of the continuous evolving endogenous knowledge systems in the Nuba Mountains with the peacebuilders involved in this study.

Implications for peacebuilding scholarship and practice in general

The overall findings from the study suggest that there is a missing knowledge systems dimension within peacebuilding scholarship and practice. By including a knowledge systems dimension within peacebuilding scholar-practitioner's analysis and engagement in peacebuilding practice, particularly in a war zone, instances of epistemic violence could be acknowledged and prevented, while ways of engaging in knowledge sharing that reflect the knowledge systems that exist and/or have been buried by historical consequences of slavery, colonialism, authoritarianism, or globalization could be promoted and/or revitalized. It suggests Lederach's (1995, p. 10) statement that understanding culture and conflict is 'not merely a question of sensitivity or of awareness, but a far more profound adventure of discovering and digging in the archaeology of accumulated shared knowledge common to a set of people' could benefit from an amendment to pluralize the 'accumulated shared knowledges' to account for the different kinds of knowledges (e.g. situated, tacit and practical experience, explicit and academic knowledges). And, his statement could expand to incorporate the missing knowledge system to account for how knowledge is conceived, generated and shared within and between cultures.

The findings from this study also highlight the benefits of using more postcolonial and decolonial analytical constructs, which provide peacebuilding scholar-practitioners with different conceptual tools that move away from pre-determined and static

dichotomous categories (e.g. international-local) and promote the inclusion of multiple knowledges generated from place-based endogenous knowledge systems (Hountondji, 1995, 1997) within war zones, or what can be viewed as community sites of knowledge (Nabudere, 2009, 2011). As a result, more spaces for generating new and buried knowledge for building and sustaining peace in war zones could be created beyond solely organisational frames, especially if ways of sharing knowledge derived from these endogenous knowledge systems are centred with their corresponding languages. When they are not centred by individuals involved in peacebuilding practice, this study highlighted how ways of knowing and sharing knowledge can continue to contribute to instances of epistemic violence that silence or de-value the importance of knowledge holders.

In terms of practice, this study's findings reiterated the importance and effectiveness of communal analysis in unstable and uncertain transition periods as increasingly more people are entering the war zone, with shifting positions of authority who may not have a full understanding of the extent and history of Nuba Mountains peacebuilding practice and what roles they can play to sustain it. Relatedly, the findings also point toward the usefulness of the relational mentoring literature's concepts to help peacebuilding scholar-practitioners and community members shift their roles away from 'a 'one-size-fits-all' approach to sharing knowledge' (Ragins, 2016, p. 232). The role shifting approach generated within the study (see *Table 6: Role-shifting approach for*

peacebuilder advisors in Nuba Mountains and across Sudan) aligns with the relational mentoring approach that promotes relational power and mutuality between mentors and proteges. The role-shifting approach generated from this study is an attempt to reimagine a new mental model of sharing knowledge between international development organisations and the war-affected community in Nuba Mountains that moves away the perception of the advisor within the international organisations/multilateral organisations as the paternalistic mentor and a member of the community as the unknowledgeable protégé within peacebuilding (Autesserre, 2014; Sabaratnam, 2013). The practical framework is not meant to provide the field of peacebuilding a standard for roles within a universalized role-shifting approach. Instead, the generated role-shifting approach is meant to be an illustrative example of the process of transposing the roles highlighted in virtual oral histories conducted on WhatsApp with peacebuilders as they were remembering different kinds of roles they played during the current war in Nuba Mountain into applicable roles that suit the situated knowledge and relational networks of each individual peacebuilding advisor in each particular international development organisation.

This study's research design shows the benefits of using a postcolonial indigenous research paradigm and centring on endogenous knowledge systems within a community site of knowledge. It empowers the peacebuilding scholar-practitioner to interrogate their reasons for engaging in research, the ethical frames they are using and the values/beliefs that underpin these ethical frames, which guide the research priorities, theoretical and

methodological choices, relationships and actions, and forms of dissemination (Chilisa, 2020; Mertens, 2009). The study's findings highlight the importance of endogenous knowledge generation and preventing instances epistemic violence in the course of conducting the research inquiry, while also contributing to the peacebuilding practice ongoing in a war zone. By using a postcolonial indigenous research paradigm, scholar-practitioners can focus more on 'how' peacebuilding practice happens, instead of only focusing on 'what' peacebuilding practice entails, which is often neglected in peacebuilding teaching and training in both university courses and field-based trainings (Boulding, 2000, p. 55; Fisher & Zimina, 2009, p. 26).

Rather than offering a specific methodology for scholar-practitioners to use, this study offers guiding questions that can aid any peacebuilding scholar-practitioners and researchers who are thinking about engaging in peacebuilding in war zones or with war-affected communities. They focus on self-communal reflections and community engagement with knowledge systems, including the knowledge systems that peacebuilding scholar-practitioners and researchers have been embedded in since their childhoods. Instead of promoting any single knowledge system as the 'right' one to follow, these recommendations point toward what Hountondji (1997, p. 13) calls 'reciprocal valorisation among knowledge systems', or people giving mutual value to all knowledge systems. They also help peacebuilding scholar-practitioners and researchers become more aware of and prevent epistemic violence from occurring through their research.

- Prior to beginning the research design, reflect on and deeply understand your own default knowledge system(s). Ask yourself the following questions:
  - Which knowledge systems did I grow up in, which influenced my default way of thinking about knowledge and knowledge sharing?
  - How do the knowledge systems I was socialized into during my childhood and adulthood inform my ethical stance when engaging in peacebuilding in war zones or war-affected communities?
  - How do people view me from this war zone or these war-affected communities?
  - How am I connected to these communities in this society (through my family, relational network from work or personal relationships)?
  - What is the initial level of trust that has been granted to me by these connections?
- As part of the initial research design, identify and figure out how to best engage in the endogenous knowledge systems existing in the war zone or war-affected society as part of your research design. While continuously observing and discussing with your relational network member(s) and others you have been introduced to in the community, the following questions may be useful to ask yourself and your relational network member(s):

    - Have specific knowledge systems been marginalised here?
    - Which knowledges are preferred over others – situated, tacit and practical experience, explicit and/or academic knowledge?
    - What are the culturally appropriate knowledge sharing formats (i.e. informal and formal ways of sharing knowledge), mediums and languages within these knowledge systems? What roles are people playing to facilitate knowledge sharing in these formats, medium, and languages?
    - How does informal knowledge sharing happen with people and institutions here – before, alongside and/or following formal knowledge sharing (i.e. conferences, formal meetings)?
    - What are the social scales within this society? How does the knowledge sharing happen within these scales? How is analysis conducted and decisions made in these social scales? Who tends to be marginalised during these processes? Why?

- While engaging in the research with your relational network member(s) and other community members, continue to ask the above questions, considering the knowledge systems shift due to the political, economic, social and environmental dynamics inside and outside the war zone.

    - How can I or members of my relational network share the knowledge generated from this study, as the study is progressing, particularly with others in this war zone and in my scholar community to capitalize on the current opportunities or challenges identified through the study?

- At the conclusion of your research, ask the following questions of yourself and with your relational network member(s):
    - How can I continue to share the knowledge generated from this study with others in this war zone or war-affected society and in my scholar community?
    - What data points generated from this study do I want to pursue with others in the present or future? Who can I share them with so they can pursue them in the present or future? What support do I need to give them as part of their relational network?

Implications for Nuba Mountains communities and broader Sudanese communities

This study's findings highlight the need for Nuba Mountains communities, particularly youth, to continue (re)learning the knowledge systems and corresponding knowledge sharing methods that exist within the near 100 language groups in the Nuba Mountains

(see *Annex 6: List of Nuba Mountains language communities*). These knowledge systems have been subjugated by imperial/colonial powers and successive ethnonationalist regimes that privileged the Arabic and, to a lesser extent, English language within specific Arab and Eurocentric knowledge systems. Some of the peacebuilders involved in this study highlighted how they suffered epistemic violence by their families and schools for not teaching them the languages that emanate from their communities' knowledge systems. This was due to the Arabisation under successive military dictatorships since independence in 1956 as well as the previous British colonial period, which focused on English language instruction in missionary schools in the Nuba Mountains. However, the peacebuilders involved in this study were committed to promoting the need for the next generations to learn to speak their local languages and the languages of their neighbours along with Arabic and English. Moreover, the findings also point to a need to devise strategies for communities to be aware of how to protect these endogenous knowledge systems with their corresponding knowledge sharing methods from being co-opted and exploited by those with political, military and civil authority or in the aid industry.

Limitations

There were limitations in the research strategy due to the Covid-19 pandemic travel restrictions and the simultaneous ongoing countrywide revolution and military coup, which did not allow enough time for me on the ground in the war zone as I originally envisioned when I began the study. Consequently, the study was not able to pursue PAR

cycles with a wider swathe of peacebuilders and community members to engage with and assess the effectiveness of different techniques of knowledge sharing that are used in different language communities in the Nuba Mountains.

There were also a few limitations that inevitably affected the collection and analysis of the data. There were physical limitations due to periodic Covid-19 pandemic travel restrictions and due to security concerns considering that the study's setting is an active war zone and there was simultaneously a revolution and coup ongoing across Sudan. The PAR process (including oral history interviews, dialogic observations and communal analysis) was with peacebuilders who speak English, Sudanese Arabic and local languages. Considering my limitation with understanding and speaking Sudanese Arabic or local languages beyond pleasantry expressions, possible cross-language qualitative issues might have occurred during the study. However, to ensure the data collected and analysed was trustworthy, peacebuilders involved in this study translated (when needed). Nonetheless, there could have been a degree of bias, as the translator, no matter how brief the translation was, could have shaped the analysis through their own cultural interpretation of specific words.

In terms of transferability, there is an obvious limitation for other scholar-practitioners who do not have established trust and relationships with communities in a war zone to conduct a similar study. However, I would argue that a peacebuilding study that uses a combined PAR case study methodology and a postcolonial indigenous research

paradigm should not be attempted by anyone without enough trust and working relationships already in place with community members in any war-affected setting. The trust I built with Nuba Mountains communities started with their invitation in 2014 to travel into the war zone to help support their peacebuilding practice. That invitation was only extended to me because the *khawajat* (foreigners) whom the Nuba Mountains peacebuilders and SPLM–N leadership trusted for over 10–20 years recommended me as someone who was trustworthy and useful. I worked with *khawajat* (foreigners) for three years prior to them recommending me to travel into the Nuba Mountains war zone. Having arrived in the war zone, I had to earn the trust and respect of the communities during that first trip that lasted two weeks (with daily aerial bombardments and shelling). They invited me to help the peacebuilders and the communities with strategy development to scale up the Nuba Mountains peacebuilding practice so it could cover the entire war zone. Therefore, I would argue that a trusted friendship and working relational network opens the door for trust and working relationships to grow. However, it is then also up to the scholar-practitioner and their worldviews and ways of relating to people from different knowledge systems that determine how strong that trust can be and how deep those relationships can be built in order to conduct such relational research and practice.

My eight years of experience working in the Nuba Mountains during this current war presented both a strength and a limitation. While I have demonstrated a high level of sociocultural competency within the area, there could have been self-selection bias as I

had pre-existing relationships with almost all the peacebuilders involved in this study. However, due to security concerns on the ground, I was unable to meet with a wider sample of peacebuilders who helped to re-start and evolve the Nuba Mountains peacebuilding practice. Specifically, I could not meet with more women who played roles in re-starting and evolving this practice due to the travel restrictions associated with the Covid-19 pandemic and the heightened insecurity in and around the war zone. Additionally, the travel restrictions related to the pandemic and the heightened insecurity did not provide enough time for me to meet with more youth who have engaged in aspects of the Nuba Mountains peacebuilding practice, especially the youth who have arrived following the 2019 revolution and the military coup in 2021. Finally, due to the ongoing political discussions and heightened insecurity in the Nuba Mountains over the course of the study, I was not able to spend more time, as I had originally planned, with: 1) political, civil, military leaders on the SPLM–N side; 2) more traditional and religious leaders on both the SPLM–N side and GoS side; and 3) more traders involved in the cross-line markets (including female traders).

Suggestions for future research

Future PAR studies could identify, engage and assess the effectiveness of different formats and terms for knowledge sharing and peacebuilding outcomes that are used in different language communities in the Nuba Mountains with a wider swathe of peacebuilders on both sides of the conflict line and community members in general. Future

research could also explore how knowledge sharing impacts peacebuilding practice in other heightened violent or war-affected areas of Sudan, including the war-affected region of Darfur. The unit of observation could shift in future studies to examine specific sectors or levels of society that engage in peacebuilding practice in their respective communities. Women traders at the community/regional levels and young nomadic community members are examples of these specific segments of society who have unique economic, social and political situated knowledges that could be studied in more depth, which would also address some of the limitations of this study. Studies could also be conducted in other heightened violent or war-affected areas across Africa, particularly in South Sudan, Chad, Central Africa Republic and Democratic Republic of the Congo, or in any societies that have been subjugated and marginalised through history by imperial/colonial and other authoritarian powers. Instead of exactly replicating the methods used in this study, scholar-practitioners who are from the countries or who have sufficient level of trust already through their relational networks connections within these war-affected areas could use the recommend research inquiry questions listed above to begin co-designing and implementing PAR methodology that reflects the endogenous knowledge systems found in these areas, particularly the ways of knowing and sharing knowledge, that are intrinsic to the locations and communities where the research takes place.

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Appendices

Appendix 1: Communal Conflict Analysis May 2021 – Nuba Mountains

Conflict Type: Inter/Intra-Institutional Conflicts

Triggers: new rules/policies instituted in non-participatory democratic ways, new staff/people in different positions, new programming, new/current organizations working at broader levels

Proximate Causes

Community/organization-level:

- *Resource Management Issue*: Sharing of limited resources (e.g cars, motorbikes, quad bikes) causes competition between teams within the same organization and delays in programming and responding to unpredictable peacebuilding emergencies (i.e violent incidents between and within communities) which inevitably negatively impacts communities access and availability of goods as well as increases humanitarian (i.e., closure of markets for some time following violent incidents).
- *Resource Management Issue*: Regimented use of "peacebuilding car" that is supposed to be split between four peacebuilding actors is 1) unrealistic way of responding to the unpredictable nature of inter and intra-communal conflicts and 2) causes unnecessary friction between peacebuilding actors and between peacebuilding actors and the humanitarian-oriented agency who owns it.
- *Resource Issue*: Lack of communication resources (e.g VSATs, phones, airtime) causes delays in receiving and sharing information, resulting in miscommunication and mistrust which leads to friction within and between organizations and authorities, especially with facilitating any movement across the conflict line.
- *Aid Missed Opportunity Issue*: Treating micro-grants as business ventures only rather than as joint economic interdependence action projects with peacebuilding and conflict management dimensions, which need mutual analysis space & delivery of different analysis tools/methods, so the time availed during micro-grant kick-off or check-in meetings and other inter/intra-communal meetings can provide an opportunity to share the tools/methods or engage in experience sharing with youth, women, traditional leaders, civil authority and other stakeholders.

Regional level:

- *Aid Insensitivity Issue*: Increase in perception of UN agencies working in opposition-held Two Areas causing influx of returnees who want to receive food and medical treatment etc., while the UN has not supplied medicine and the food is perceived to be only given to school around Heiban, which leads to 1) depletion of already limited resources, 2) heightens tension between existing community members and the recently returned, 3) heightened tension between national NGOs and community members that they are in agreement with how UN agencies are operating.
- *Awareness Issue*: Lack of understanding about the cross-cutting nature and concepts of conflict management and peacebuilding within donors, INGOs, new national/local NGOs, newly appointed traditional actors, newly appointed civil authority actors.
- *Controlling of Women and Youth Space Issue*: Women and youth associations not having sufficient space to have overall regional deliberative dialogue, not being exposed to various analytical tools/methods and not having their views taken seriously by political and civil authorities.

National level

- *Aid Insensitivity/Partnership Issue*: One-sided partnerships where INGOs are dominating the programming design and preventing adaptations by only engaging in extractive evaluation gathering and not engaging in co-designed programming that includes organizational (reporting etc.) and technical (analysis/strategic design etc.) training with national NGOs which build on the ground-level ways of organizing so the programming form fits the purpose.
- *Aid Insensitivity/Mindset Issue*: Overall mindset of programming in Two Areas as an extension of South Sudan rather than a transboundary area within Sudan that requires constant building of trust between civil society actors across Sudan and the opposition-held areas of the Two Areas through the FWG and other mechanisms to overcome decades of mistrust, discrimination, marginalization, and subjugation, while maintaining logistical support and access from South Sudan until a final peace agreement is signed.
- *Coordination/Engagement Issue*: Lack of common understanding around coordination and engagement modalities for gov'ts, UN agencies, INGOs, and national NGOs who have not operated or supported operations in the opposition-held areas and those INGOs/donors and national NGOs who have been operating over the last 10 years.
- *Aid Insensitivity Issue*: Shrinking of programming access through Yida due to operation decisions by UN agencies and INGO agencies in South Sudan.
- *Peace Agreement Talks Issue*: Peace talks, Juba Agreement, and Declaration of Principles increase perceptions about security/insecurity.

Conflict Type: Inter/Intra-Communal Conflicts

Triggers: Killing, looting, violent attacks, domestic violence, disagreement over land ownership/use, feelings of impunity/revenge/frustration, new crossline markets, new peace agreements/talks

Community Level

- *Land Management/Use/Ownership Issue*: Competition over limited resources during seasonal migrations (land-based conflicts such as grazing areas, farming areas, scarce water points).
- *Family/Rule of Law Issue*: Looting or killing due to seeking revenge, death payments, dowry, or lack of legitimacy in the appropriate civil authority to resolve grievances.
- *Trauma Issue*: Ongoing individual, communal and intergenerational trauma from unresolved grievances that occurred during previous war, CPA period and current war.
- *Generational Divide Issue*: Divide between elders and youth, as the youth are not consulted and/or their issues are not prioritized in decision-making meetings and communal agreements.
- *Gender-based Violence Issue*:
    - Gender-based violence as a result of young men feeling they need to emasculate the 'other' community, seek retaliation, feel superior, rid oneself of frustration living through the current conflicts through committing violence
    - Underdevelopment of women leading to higher rates of illiteracy, school drop-out, early marriage, early pregnancy, and prostitution
    - School drop-out, early marriage, prostitution due to young women and men needing to receive income for their family due to killing/death of family members, displacement, destruction of crops and homes by floods

Regional Level

- *Proliferation of Arms Issue*: arms given by military (SAF and RSF) across the region to nomadic communities to act as militia
- *Border issue*: unstable security policies between South Sudan and SPLM-N
- *Reconciliation issue*: all of Blue Nile communities
-

National Level

- *Criminal Network Issue*: National and state military/political/business leaders and traditional authorities who provide arms, fuel ethnically-driven violent narratives, and prevent the resolution to looting/killing/violent attacks at the regional and local levels.
- *Economic Crisis Issue*: National Economic crisis in both Sudan and South Sudan causing severe high inflation and devaluation of SSP and SDG, which causes higher costs for goods and movement of goods and more demand for crossline markets that need further training of committees to manage.
- *Conception of Secularism Issu*e: Different conceptions of secularism and the different ways it can be institutionalized and perpetuated across societal norms (including the silence around gender discrimination norm within conceptions of secularism).
- *Political Ordering of Society Issue*: actors and structures within current governance system that includes traditional customary non-state institutions of governance that determine everyday social reality in the present and non-state armed group and/or hybrid structures that aim to provide stability in the interim period are vying for internal power control resulting in reforms moving ahead without sufficient deliberative dialogue which would allow for new forms of political community to emerge that could lead to mutual governance and security in the interim and long-term.

<u>Conflict Type: Environmental Conflicts</u>

Triggers: Drought/Flooding, chemical run-off from excavating and processing gold and other minerals

Proximate Causes

Community Level

- *Land Management/Use/Ownership Issue*: Competition over limited resources (nomadic communities in search of viable grazing areas and areas to settle/farm in SPLM-N areas, Nuba communities in search of viable farming areas, all communities in search of safe water points)
- *Land Management/Use/Ownership Issue*: Disagreements between families/communities over land demarcation and historical grievances that are exacerbated by the proliferation of arms provides incentive to avenge the dignity ooting/killing/violent attacks at the regional and local levels
- *Gender-Based Violence issue*: Increased amounts of gender-based violence as a result of men's frustration with inability to generate income and feelings of being emasculated due to lack of income due to destruction of homes/farms during droughts/floods.

Regional Level

- *Land Management/Use/Ownership Issue*: Displacement due to flooding, droughts, and degradation of land by chemicals used in processing gold and other minerals
- *Education Issue*: Gold mining attracting youth with short-term income generation opportunities (gold mining and prostitution in the area around the gold mining) instead of the long-term education opportunities
- *Land Management/Use/Ownership Issue:* Returnees from government-held areas moving inward in search of viable grazing areas for their livestock, farm land so can grow harvest and then return to government-held area considering the desperate economic situation, and due to increase in security following revolution, Juba Agreement and DoP.

National Level

- *Climate change Issue*: Climate change causing more flooding and droughts leading to worsening of agricultural outputs and reliable harvests
- *Economic/Institutional Transformation Issue*: Lack of comprehensive reforms that can transform the corruption and cronyism in agricultural sector which prevents opportunities for engagement by households or small co-ops in SPLM-N with agricultural co-ops in government-held areas, including engagement with the WFP agricultural co-op scheme

Overall Structural Causes for all Conflicts

- Military mindset driving the system of governance, especially security
- Governance system that normalizes corruption and impunity and serves the elite who remain in charge post-revolution
- Unresolved historical grievances and traumas as a result of divide and rule policies during previous and current civil wars and peace times
- Gender and cultural norms that promote social exclusion, male-dominated views and decision-making and leave women uneducated and powerless
- Overall continuation of structural violence across Sudan that institutionalizes prejudice, discrimination and violence based on ethnicity, skin tone, religion, political affiliation, economic class and gender

Appendix 2: Communal Analysis of the Peacebuilding Praxis Impact (2011-2020)

Policy Shifts (in the last 10 years)	
Positive	**Negative**
*1) Adaptation of the peacebuilding programs as cross-cutting policy across civil authority in all the region (2014/2015) 2) Imposing regulations that prevent looting and hostilities among the others by military and police to hold the spoilers to account *3) Sending messages to neighboring community/tribes with the importance of peaceful coexistence and how the war is not between the people, it is between the government and the movement. *4) Unifying the revenue channels from the joint crossline markets considering all the documentation (e.g., receipts for taxes and insurance for security) in a good place 5) Adoption of the above in the manifesto (2017) 6) Imposing some guidelines with the importance of coordination between all the peacebuilding actors and ensure they are in a good operation and coordination (2014) 7) Ensuring all the laws are implemented and property are given out to the owners through the legal laws (e.g., codifying of the customary, civil, criminal…(and 4th law)) 8) Regenerate of stopping of hostilities and allowing the movement of civilians through protected corridors/roads. *9) Acknowledgment of the movement of SPLM-N of the land ownership to community. To impose laws to manage, monitor and support this system. 10) The movement has allowed the prime minister to visit the liberated area (Jan 2020) 11) The movement has allowed the UN to launch its operations in the liberates area (Jan 2020) 12) The signing of the declaration of principles in juba (March 2021)	*1) Denial of the NCP regime about the land ownership not being possessed by the communities and with no imposed laws concerning this issue 2) The interference of foreign policy in the Sudanese national policy 3) The CU created the car policy which negatively affected the performance of the NGO partners and by extension the communities (2017 onward) 4) The side step of profit gainers are not dealing with the official system (criminal network)
Group Dynamic Shifts	
Positive	**Negative**
*1) The involvement of all the groups (peacebuilding actors) in peaceful coexistence and building of alliances (AA and Khartoum people) *2) CBOs and Women One-way visit to the liberated areas. (Kandaka group from Abu Sin's side; Framework Group) 3) Encouragement of tribal conferences (at least 20 tribal conferences named – refer to notes) 4) Reactivation of sport activities religion and offering theological studies as cultural policy 5) Policy for conceptual forums (Lazim and Simon Kalo debate forums etc.) *6) Policy for the movement of refugees and displaced IDPs	*1) The formation and existence of criminal network 2) Lack of women are not fully participating in public services and women's association *3) The diversion of tribal conferences and forum from their main objectives and not keeping in touch with the sport spirit (when any tribe needs to conduct conference, they need to agree on the agenda)
Institutional Changes	
Positive	**Negative**

1) The signing of the declaration of principles *2) The separation of powers (military, civil judiciary, civil society) 3) The changing of SPLM-N leadership in 2017 and extraordinary convention *4) The formation and completion of SPLM-N structures (national, regional, county, payam, and buma) 5) Agent of Change to carry micro-grants activities with women, youth, and CBOs (DCA, SW) *6) The expansion of secondary education	1) The domination of SPLM-N (political) in decision-making *2) The frequent/recurring of institutional changes of personnel (civil authority (police, judiciary, commissioners), military, *3) Lack of completion of women institutions 4) The emergence of fake groups with women and youth to access micro-grants.
Attitude Changes	
Positive *1) Changing of negative perception through the community initiatives (more communal) (e.g., meetings, gatherings, visiting on social occasions, carnivals) *2) Instilling of discussion/dialogue and respecting of others opinion 3) Implanting of good human values through the designing of civic education curriculum *4) The intergenerational dialogues avail space for view points to reach common understanding	**Negative** *1) Absence of civil education (it is not been properly taught in all the schools or in neighboring East Africa–based schools) *2) Frustration and demoralization among the youth *3) High rate of pregnancy in different ways among girls/students

Appendix 3: Knowledge Sharing Terms Existing in Nuba Mountains

- wanasa – informal give and take of information about anything (from gossip to meaningful information)
- tafakur – informal consultation (specific issue and listening) until it reaches a consensus
- mutabaa – informal follow-up meeting (group or individual)
- mushawara (incl me) /tawashawara (they/them) – consultative meeting / Informing
- ngash – discussion about already known issue
- bahth/tahgig – research/investigation
- tanweer – briefing
- hakawi – the telling/narrating
- hajadima hajik/kum – quizzes within narrating a story
- judia – judgement by the Council of Elders
- tabadul al arra – formal exchange of ideas
- ofdal alarra – formal selection of best idea
- tahkeen – arbitration
- tahdiaa – cooling it down
- tawasul – interacting/exchange visits /sharing/asking for more listening
- motimer – conference
- ijtima – meeting

Intended Outcomes of Peacebuilding Praxis

- tawheed – uniting people together
- taiish - co-existence (no threat, no fear, trust, acceptance and tolerance)
- malmus – something sensible/tangible (social/spirital)
- muktasabat – divend/gain (economic)
- islahat – restoration/correcting
- thiga/thigha – confidence building
- alangarab – come together to commit themselves to not have conflict to clean the spirits (Humor and Zurug)
- intima – belonging

Appendix 4: Language Grouping of Nuba Communities

Kwalib/Moro	Kogolo	Ajang	Ama	Tieman	Masakin	Dajo Shat	Katla,	Tegali
Lira Abul (Leiban) Shawaya Tira Toro Lunangan/Lggal Moro Kau Nyaru Fungur Warni Lugarog Luganday Umbr Nuakyo Lamré Luliting Lugrang, Lugangdum Lunduna Lugubri Lugurrma LuNyukr Luluntíng Lemray Lukaml	Angolo (Angolo, Tabanya, Toroji, Fama,Ties, Frandala) Tullisi Kamda Kadala Katcha Korungu Tomtom Tata Tasomi Korindi Kiga (Juro,Lubun, Damik)	Ghulfan Wali Dilling Kasha Shifir Karko Kujuria Fanda Mandal Sobi Kaja Kadaru Abu- Junuk Tabag Alkudur	Nyaming Afitti Mandel Sobia (Kumati, Sarfus, Salara)	Tesa Kega- Juro	Achung Lumin Tocho Talodi Tesomi Tata Lira Lafofa Lamira Buram (masakin) Tagig Daloka	Dajo (Lagawa) Sabbori Trawing Shat Tilu Lagori Torouj (Lagawa)	Kattla Tima Julud	Tagoi Tumalae Turjok Tukum Kajajka Wadalka Rashad Tegali Moreib

Appendix 5: Oral History Interview Guide

Salutations, introduction to the interview process (informed consent form/information sheet)

A. Demographics

Name
Gender
Age
Where are you from
Where do you live now
Occupation (any)

B. Topic 1 - Background

Can you tell me about a time you recall when your community lived in peace?
How did you first get started in peacebuilding?
How did you learn about peacebuilding (then/now)?

C. Topic 2 – Peacebuilding During War

When the current war happened, how were you involved in peace efforts?
Who helped you learn?
Who did you teach?
How did you know what to teach?
How do you handle the different adversities that come with doing peacebuilding?

D. Topic 3 – Future Peacebuilding Opportunities

What is your vision of a just society for Sudan?
What individuals or groups would you trust to help bring about a just society for Sudan?
How can such a vision be realized?

Debriefing (verbal/written document)

Appendix 6: Ethics Approval

Legislation Relevant to the Project with the Method of Compliance (e.g., Data Protection Act, etc.)

All research will be conducted in line with Trinity College Dublin's research guidance (TCD 2014) and the Development Studies Association of Ireland (Van Bavel et al., 2016). Considering the area of focus in currently an ongoing war-affected region in Sudan, this research will follow the Social Science Research Council's situational best practices for conducting research with subjects from highly dangerous areas (Felbab-Brown 2014). In addition, throughout the fieldwork process, the researcher will seek advice from practitioner, academic, civil society, civil authority, and international diplomatic sources regarding the security and political dynamics in both Sudan and South Sudan, which can impact the research fieldwork.

In adherence to the Data Protection Acts 1988-2018 and General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR), this research will adhere to the following principles concerning personal data, including:

- Obtain and process personal data lawfully, fairly and in a transparent manner;
- Keep it only for one or more specified and explicit lawful purpose(s);
- Process it only in ways compatible with the purpose of which it was given initially;
- Keep data accurate, relevant and not excessive;
- Retain it no longer than is necessary for the specified purpose or purposes;
- Keep personal data safe and secure.

As previously stated above, the communication method for this research will involve WhatsApp, which means that Facebook (as the owner of WhatsApp) owns and stores this WhatsApp data, which implies that any data sent through WhatsApp is not fully protected according to the GDPR. Participants (peacebuilders and stakeholders) who engage in oral history interviews and PAR methods will be informed of this in the Informed Consent form.

As stipulated under GDPR, the storage of the data will be doubly encrypted on hard disks, both a separate external hard disk and internal laptop storage files. Audio files and transcriptions will use a numeric identifier/code name per participant that will be retained from the start of the project through the duration of the storage period. These numeric identifier/code names will be used to identify audio files and the transcripts of the audio files to ensure anonymity. A copy of each audio file will be given to the corresponding participant in written form (English) to ensure all information is correct and for their own

knowledge. The numeric identifier/code name list will be kept in a separate flash drive from the external drive and the researchers laptop that will have original audio files and transcripts of the audio files. All audio and written transcripts, researcher journals will be stored on researcher’s encrypted laptop hard disk and a copy of all files will be stored on an external encrypted hard disk that will be stored at the Irish School of Ecumenics Belfast Campus office for the next five years. After the five years, the data will be destroyed by the researcher with the permission of the participants which the researcher will gain prior. The audio recordings will not be played in public without specific permission (received in writing) from the participants who are involved in the specific recordings.

Trinity College Dublin
Coláiste na Tríonóide, Baile Átha Cliath
The University of Dublin

<table>
<tr><th colspan="2">Faculty of Arts, Humanities and Social Sciences
Research Ethics Committee
Decision</th></tr>
<tr><td>Project Title:</td><td>The ‘how’ is as important as the ‘what’: re-conceptualizing relational mentoring within adaptive peacebuilding praxis</td></tr>
<tr><td>Name of Lead Researcher:</td><td>Megan Greely</td></tr>
<tr><td>Name of Supervisor:</td><td>Prof. Iain Atack and Prof. David Mitchell</td></tr>
<tr><td>Estimated start date of survey/research:</td><td>April 2020</td></tr>
<tr><td>Date of Committee meeting:</td><td>08 June 2020</td></tr>
<tr><td>Committee:</td><td>Directors of Research:
Prof Ann Devitt (Chair)
Professor Orla Flanagan
Professor Ciaran Kenny
Professor David Mitchell
Professor David O’Shaughnessy
Professor Ahuvia Kahane
Professor Clemens Ruthner
Professor Kenneth Silver
Professor Peter Stone

Secretary:
Valerie Smith</td></tr>
<tr><td colspan="2"></td></tr>
<tr><td colspan="2">Decision:
Approved.</td></tr>
</table>