



BRILL

JOURNAL OF PACIFISM AND NONVIOLENCE

3 (2025) 32–56



Journal of
Pacifism and
Nonviolence

brill.com/jpn

Protection through Vulnerability: A Gendered Analysis of Unarmed Civilian Protection

Louise Ridden | ORCID: 0009-0008-9345-738X

Postdoctoral Research Fellow, Tampere Peace Research Institute (TAPRI) and
Politics Unit, Tampere University, Tampere, Finland

Louise.ridden@tuni.fi

Received: 22 January 2024 | Accepted: 4 November 2024 |

Published online: 21 February 2025

Abstract

Unarmed civilian protection (UCP) is a nonviolent method of civilian-to-civilian protection and civilian self-protection. Without the use of weapons, UCP instrumentalises nonviolent bodies in the protection of themselves and each other, with methods including interpositioning, protective accompaniment, and proactive engagement with armed and unarmed actors. Where traditional security actors may seek to reduce their own bodily precariousness and vulnerability, UCP practitioners instead embrace and instrumentalise their material vulnerability to violence in their own protection and the protection of others. This paper explores the complexity of the role of precariousness and vulnerability in civilian-to-civilian protection and its intersection with gender, age, while making a feminist critique of associations between protection and strength. It does this through two case studies: Women's Protection Teams in South Sudan – groups of women who come together to address physical and gender-based violence in their communities – and UCP engagement with boys and young men affected by blood feuds. The article seeks to demonstrate the possibility of pursuing protection not through strength but through an embrace of the vulnerability of civilians at risk of physical harm and sexual violence.

Keyword

nonviolence – protection – vulnerability – unarmed civilian protection – gender

Published with license by Koninklijke Brill BV | DOI:10.1163/27727882-BJA00034

© RIDDEN, 2025 | ISSN: 2772-7882 (online)

This is an open access article distributed under the terms of the CC BY 4.0 license.

Introduction

The protection of civilians from violence in areas of armed conflict has traditionally been understood as a job for armed protectors, those who 'save strangers' (Wheeler 2002). The notion of direct physical protection is inherently gendered and racialised, built on an assumption of the strong protecting the weak, of 'white men saving brown women from brown men' (Spivak 2010, 43-44). Following this understanding, protection is provided through the strength of protecting actors, often through the physical and military strength of armed intervention.

The practice of unarmed civilian protection (UCP), however, challenges this association between strength and protection. UCP is a nonviolent method of civilian-to-civilian and civilian self-protection, in which civilians instrumentalise relationships and their nonviolent bodies in the protection of themselves and each other (Furnari 2016). UCP practitioners seek to build safer spaces for civilians in conflict-affected areas; to co-produce and build protection, rather than to give and receive it. While over 95% of uniformed UN peacekeeping personnel are male (UN, 2023), UCP is a far less male-dominated practice with many UCP organisations working toward or already achieving gender equality in protection teams. The nonviolent nature of UCP poses an even more fundamental challenge to masculine narratives of strength as protection, however. By instrumentalising the relational bonds between civilians, some UCP practices in fact seek to build protection through vulnerability and precariousness, rather than strength; this is what this article seeks to establish. Building upon UCP practices in South Sudan, this article challenges the binary distinction between 'protector' and 'protected' and argues that UCP offers the possibility of decoupling the deeply intertwined narratives of strength and protection. In its place, I argue that protection can be found within and built through vulnerability.

This argument about UCP necessarily hinges on discussions of civilian agency. The question of agency in peace and conflict studies is much disputed but has most recently been taken up by the so-called local turn. The 'local turn' in peacebuilding has increasingly focused on civilian agency in areas of armed conflict, and in particular on civilian protective agency (Mac Ginty and Richmond 2013). This literature takes seriously the role of civilians as peacebuilders and/or disrupters of violence (Wall and Hedlund 2016; Nilsson and González Marín 2019; Krause 2018), while also recognising the extreme risks civilians face in conflict settings (Jose and Peace 2016; Bonwick 2006). Macaspac (2019), for example, argues that the exercises of civilian agency and resistance such as peace zones need constant (re)production and repeated affirmation of their neutrality, which at once exercises civilian agency while also placing

an enormous labour burden on those already facing extraordinary violence. Such literature also highlights that civilians do not always turn to nonviolent or unarmed methods of protection, and indeed may resort to vigilantism or engaging directly with armed actors as a method of self-protection (Paddon Rhoads and Sutton 2020; Dorlin 2022).

Literature on unarmed civilian protection has sought to outline concrete methods of nonviolent civilian self-protection as a community of practice (inter alia Bliesemann de Guevara et al. 2021; Julian 2020; Julian and Schweitzer 2015; Gray 2022a; Gray 2022b), yet a focus on strength as protection remains pervasive. This focus on the 'strength' of civilians being the basis for the exercise of agency risks failing to realise the radical potential of seeking protection through vulnerability and rejecting the colonial logics of strong saviours and weak victims.

This article begins with a literature review of feminist work critical of the masculine narratives of heroism and strength, and their association with protection. Within this review, I explore Judith Butler's concepts of precariousness and vulnerability and identify a framework of understanding not the human but rather the body as a site of protection. Then, I introduce UCP practices which seek to build protection within and through the framework of vulnerability. This section begins by providing background information on forms of violence in South Sudan, which analysis then further unpacks. In doing so, it argues that the multiple intersecting identities classified as vulnerable, which produce the bodies of Womens' Protection Team (WPT) practitioners, are a source of both precariousness and of protection. The bodies of young men are politically produced as fighters in waiting and legitimate targets, and thus precarious, not deserving of public grief, while older women are able to instrumentalise their deep vulnerability as a source of protection through centring their identities as non-threatening (Butler 2004). Here, I explore the complexities of building nonviolent protection in and through structures of violence. Finally, this article challenges the dichotomies of protector/protected, strong/vulnerable, and masculine/feminine to argue that protection can be built within and through the complex and negotiated relations between these apparently binary categories.

Protection as strength in the gendered imaginary

The Protection of Civilians (PoC) in areas of armed conflict is an objective pursued through multiple 'protection architectures' (Gray 2022a). These architectures may be produced through international law, humanitarian norms, economic sanctions, diplomacy, armed intervention, and (military) peacekeeping.

These architectures are not mutually exclusive and often occur simultaneously; armed intervention can be sanctioned under international law, justified through humanitarian norms, and occur alongside economic sanctions, for example. Narratives supporting different protection architectures vary significantly; the ongoing commitment to humanitarian norms need not be justified in the same terms as the authorisation of armed peacekeeping missions. What they have in common, however, is their reliance on narratives of strength. The Protection of Civilians operates on an understanding of something which is given and received; given by strong protectors who save vulnerable or weak strangers (Wheeler 2002). Indeed, the grouping together of adult women with children as ‘womenandchildren’ is itself a reflection of the gendered dynamics of armed conflict in which men must fight to protect the monolithic category of ‘womenandchildren’, while women’s political agency as actors in their own right, not only as carers to children, is erased (Enloe 2014).

Feminist scholars have long argued that war is an inherently gendered phenomenon (Sjoberg 2010; Sylvester 2013; Enloe 2004; Millar 2021; Wilcox 2015; Eichler 2013); ‘war makes gender and gender makes war’ (Sjoberg 2014). The martial violence of war follows gendered logics which (re)produce the bodies of women as vulnerable and in need of saving, and men as either heroes and protectors or violent bodies from which women must be protected. In her work on the collective identities of soldiers, Katharine Millar demonstrates how the ‘groupness’ of narratives of ‘the troops’ produces the collective body of ‘the troops’ as being at once passively following commands and therefore not personally responsible for failures or atrocities, and simultaneous heroic, overcoming dependence and risk to save the vulnerable (2019). In areas of armed conflict, the Protection of Civilians is guided by a similar martial logic; strong states issue strong mandates for strong men to protect ‘womenandchildren’. The ‘use of force’ in the protection of civilians invokes language and imagery of ‘heroic’ violence – saviours protecting the weak (Millar 2021).

Contributing to this martialisation of PoC is the UN’s ‘whole-of-mission’ approach, meaning that the UN is committed to embedding a duty to protect in the mandates of all mission personnel, whether civilian or uniformed. The responsibility for the PoC however is most closely associated with armed peacekeepers and the ‘use of force’, which has two effects. Firstly, the ‘whole-of-mission’ approach has coincided with a move in the Security Council from authorising the ‘use of force’, in which civilians faced an *imminent* threat of physical violence, to authorising its use in response to more generalised threats of violence. As a result, peacekeepers are authorised to use deadly violence in many instances but *required* to use it in none (Gilder 2021). Such a broad authorisation of use of violence then normalises the ‘use of force’ and the asso-

ciation between weapons, martial violence, and protection (Millar 2021). This leads directly to the second effect: contributing to the narrative that unarmed or nonviolent methods of civilian protection equate to 'doing nothing' (Meyer 2008), which is in turn framed as a passive, feminine state.

There are, of course, examples of armed UN peacekeepers quite literally 'doing nothing' in the face of mass violence against civilians. In South Sudan, residents of an IDP site faced three days of mass violence from government forces while armed 'peacekeepers waited behind the gate' (Gray 2022b; Cammaert 2016). Gray cites residents of the site and UCP practitioners as witnessing 'how peacekeepers watched from behind locked gates as women were raped outside' (2022b: 314) – a case where peacekeepers quite literally did nothing. In this case, it was civilians who led the response in protecting themselves and each other, mobilising community-based protection practices. There is, however, a wider association between being unarmed and doing nothing, even if unarmed actors are in fact doing a lot. As Wallace (2018: 239) puts it, 'the association between weapons and protection is so strong and implicit that that the choice provided to the international community [...] is usually framed as one between 'intervening militarily' and 'doing nothing''. Such an association also serves to disguise the 'war like tactics' (Holt and Beckman 2006: 51) which are used in so-called humanitarian intervention and armed protection mechanisms, framing them as simply acting.

The promise of protection is thus inherently gendered. Cecilia Åse begins her chapter 'The Gendered Myth of Protection' by stating that 'The myth of protection is based on the belief that men can and should protect women and children' (2018) – thereby effectively summarising the 'myth of protection' in IR, and specifically the ideal of the protection of civilians from armed and violent conflict. She argues that at the heart of this 'myth' lies a set of binary distinctions between masculinity and femininity, protector and protected. These binary logics are not only simplistic, but as Åse demonstrates, they are also actively harmful. By reproducing the association between femininity and the need for protection and helplessness, the binary distinction between protector and protected, masculine and feminine, restricts women's agency (Sjoberg 2006). Through associating security, strength, and safety with masculinity, the myth of protection in turn justifies the ongoing power of men over women's bodies (Wilcox 2015). If strong men are needed to save weak women, then an uneven power dynamic becomes not only replicated, but necessitated (Marhia 2013). Here, armed conflict and masculinity are co-constitutive, with the logic of each enabling the other (Hutchings 2008; Enloe 2000). Building on the work of Kimberly Hutchings (2008), Åse argues that masculinity is neither fixed nor static, but is relationally produced, meaning that 'masculinity and femininity are opposing and mutually exclusive categories'

(2018: 276). This co-production of binary opposites reproduces gendered logics of war and victimisation; women are victimised by men, but also saved by them. In both cases women lack agency and protection is something given or done *to* them, but not built by them (Ayotte and Hussain 2005; Wilcox 2015, 39).

Vulnerability and precariousness

While strength and masculinity are traditionally associated with protection, UCP offers an alternative: demonstrating the possibility of pursuing protection through vulnerability and precariousness. Judith Butler identifies ‘precariousness’ and ‘vulnerability’ as bodily identities, insofar as they are politically and intersectionally produced through the body. Butler (2006) argues that whilst all bodies are inherently vulnerable to harm, not all are precarious. Vulnerability is inherent in the production of bodies and is due to the fact that we are all physically dependent on one another, and therefore vulnerable to touch, to violence, and to harm. It is this ‘radical relationality’ which makes communities, and is an ongoing, productive, and normative condition that continues to reproduce bodies (Butler 2006). Similarly, Felicity Gray argues that protection is something to be built through ‘protective relational webs’ and something collectively produced rather than given and received between two individuals (2022b). These relational webs emerge through strengthening and centring the relationships between communities affected by conflict which can be instrumentalised in protection (Brigg 2018). Gray makes the case for reimagining protection ‘not as a “thing” that is embodied in a particular actor or outcome, but rather as a dynamic formation of relationships’ (Gray 2022b). Protection then becomes a relational process, co-produced between and through bodies, and thus challenging the notion of *some* bodies as ‘protection actors’. While armed approaches to peacekeeping and the protection of civilians rely on ‘protection through strength’ and an understanding of protection in line with Arendt’s definition of strength as of ‘unequivocally designat[ing] something in the singular’ (1970: 44), UCP does something different. It recasts protection not as something singular or reminiscent of the individual heroism of the protector, but instead seeks to build protection through community and relations.

While all lives are vulnerable, levels of vulnerability differ as they are produced through socio-political power relations (Butler 2006). Gender identity, race, class, and sexuality can all make a body more or less vulnerable to material harm, something further compounded by the intersectionality of these factors. Rather than focusing solely on vulnerability, though, Butler introduces the framing of ‘precariousness’. They argue that some lives are framed as precarious and that precari-

ousness ‘implies [...] that one’s life is always in some sense in the hands of the other. It implies exposure both to those we know and to those we do not know; a dependency on people we know, or barely know, or know not at all’ (2009: 15). Life moves from being vulnerable to precarious, Butler argues, when bodies move outside of the frame of ‘human’. Rather than reproducing this exclusionary frame of ‘self’ or ‘other’, however, Butler argues that we must seek to ‘break out’ of it and refuse to (re)produce the binary distinction between the self and the other, the saviour and the saved (ibid.: 12). ‘What happens when a frame breaks with itself’, they argue, ‘is that a taken-for-granted reality is called into question’.

One of the most fundamental ‘taken-for-granted realities’ that exists in discourses of protection is that protection from violence necessarily requires further violence – something Duane Cady calls ‘warism’ (2020). Some UCP practitioners described to me their initial scepticism when they first read or heard about the possibility of nonviolent methods of civilian protection,¹ and attendees at a Nonviolent Peaceforce workshop designed to provide training to US citizens expressed doubt that methods that worked in South Sudan might also be effective for them in the US context (Nonviolent Peaceforce 2020). This scepticism exists in part because of socio-cultural hegemonic assumptions of the efficacy of violence.² When certain bodies and communities are framed as being intrinsically violent, then the only possible and ‘rational’ solution to such violence is further violence. Molly Wallace argues, however, that this fundamental assumption must be challenged, and that doing so involves a reframing of bodies as socially and culturally produced, and as an ongoing process rather than a static binary (2017, 195–207). Unarmed civilian protection, then, is breaking the frame of violence which underpins traditional understandings of conflict-affected areas and the civilians living within them. By responding to armed conflict with nonviolent methods – something a participant in my research, a UCP practitioner, recalls initially assuming was ‘completely crazy’³ – the framing of conflict-affected areas as homogenous spaces of violence, containing only inherently violent bodies or those of victims to be saved, is disrupted (Mac Ginty 2021).

Understanding the levels of vulnerability of some bodies which exist outside of the liberal frame of the ‘human’ creates space to make sense of nonviolent bodies instrumentalising their very vulnerability in their own protection. One UCP practitioner recalled this instrumentalization specifically: that they felt a closer relationship with other unarmed civilians they were building pro-

1 Interview 8 with UCP practitioner. Conducted online, 1 April 2021.

2 Interview 13 with Meta Peace Team Practitioner. Conducted online, 9 April 2021.

3 Interview 8.

tection with than would have been possible were they armed, as their bodies were equally as vulnerable to the material violence of a bullet.⁴ UCP then reimagines bodies as nonviolent processes – always under construction and necessarily relational and interdependent. It instrumentalises the very vulnerability of bodies that ‘warism’ views as a weakness to build relational bonds, which in turn underpin protection (Gray 2022a). The practice reframes *all* bodies as agential actors, and centres the object and process of protection. Ellen Furnari argued that ‘relationships are critical to peacekeeping’ (2015), and I argue that so too are (inevitably vulnerable) bodies to UCP.

Methods

This research is based on qualitative research with UCP practitioners. Empirically, this work primarily builds on conversations with UCP practitioners working with Nonviolent Peaceforce (NP), but is also informed by the work of Meta Peace Team, Operazione Colomba, and SweFOR. Each organisation approaches the practice of UCP differently, and NP’s work differs dramatically in principles, organisational structure, and approach from, for example, Peace Brigades International (PBI) who are largely considered to be pioneers of nonviolent civilian-to-civilian protection. Whereas PBI only draw on international volunteers – thereby instrumentalising whiteness and/or colonial power structures for greater protective capacity (Koopman 2013; Coy 2011; Ridden 2024) – NP seek to have at least 50% of their practitioners as ‘local’ or ‘national’ – that is, working in their own communities – and have a significant amount of salaried staff. Though the (de)colonisation of civilian protection practices is crucial to questions of civilian agency, I seek here – through my focus on NP – to unpack the gendered role of civilian agency in (self-) protection and collective protection, as well as the way that vulnerability, rather than privilege, might be instrumentalised in nonviolent forms of protection.

This research is methodologically interpretive. Rather than seeking to study an objective world that exists ‘out there’ for an independent researcher to observe and discover, interpretive research approaches knowledge production as an interactive, social, and relational process (Soss 2014; Schwartz-Shea and Yanow 2012). My fieldwork was scheduled to take place in Summer 2020, where I had anticipated international travel to meet with and interview UCP practitioners. Due to the Covid-19 pandemic and subsequent travel restrictions, how-

4 Interview 24 with SweFOR practitioner, 14 July 2021.

ever, I was forced to conduct my research online. From March 2021 until May 2022, I conducted one online workshop⁵ with UCP practitioners based in South Sudan, and 27 online interviews with UCP practitioners working in a range of countries, including South Sudan, Albania, Indonesia, and the US, and I also attended many online training and dialogue events for UCP practitioners in a range of organisations. The practitioners I interviewed were all either actively or within the last five years practicing UCP on the ground (i.e., not those with solely management or administrative roles). In these sessions, I asked practitioners to describe their work, how they understood protection to work, and how they felt when practicing UCP: Afraid? Excited? Safe? Vulnerable? I also attended over 30 online conferences, meetings, and other events hosted by UCP organisations from September 2019 – January 2023.

To reduce the distance created by the physical space between us, in the workshop I also asked practitioners to bring along photographs of things which represented to them the conflicts that they worked within and UCP itself. I wanted to create space for research participants to begin to reflect on larger research concepts and what they mean in their day-to-day lives, paving the way for future in-depth interviews. Xymena Kurowska and Berit Bliesemann de Guevara highlight the potential of arts-based methods to ‘unearth the polysemy of meaning’ (2020: 1219). The aide of photographs helped participants to reflect on their everyday experiences and meaning-making processes supporting reflective practices (Switzer: 2019). Using photography as method also helped to recreate a shared space which is lost through digital fieldwork. Asking participants to photograph representations of key concepts from their everyday life and world helped to create a space in which their lived experience is privileged over that of the researchers and whereby participants can directly share an image to represent the situatedness of their meaning-making processes as a foreground to verbal discussion (Mukumbang and van Wky 2020). In both interviews and workshops, we discussed the photographs (or sometimes objects) that participants had brought with them to show how they made sense of armed conflict. In one workshop, a practitioner brought along pencils to describe how UCP is something creative and also growing, and another added that the pencils also demonstrated the necessary adaptability of practitioners. Things can break or snap but then be resharpened and reused.⁶

5 The workshop was attended by 22 national and international UCP practitioners working with Nonviolent Peaceforce, all based in South Sudan at the time of the workshop. Conducted 7 March 2021.

6 Fieldwork Focus Group Discussion. Nonviolent Peaceforce South Sudan practitioners 4 and 7. Conducted online, 7 March 2022.

Intersectional identities: The entanglement of age and gender in vulnerability and protection

In this section I will consider two intersections of age and gender to consider the ways in which these identities come together to produce distinct yet interrelated bodily vulnerabilities that are responded to in different ways. First, I take the case of boys and young men who seek masculinity and adulthood through engagement in violent conflict, which in turn (re)produces their bodies as vulnerable *and* as precarious: fighters-in-waiting who are considered both legitimate targets of deadly violence and no longer grievable as children. Second, I consider Women's Protection Teams in South Sudan who foreground their heightened vulnerability to violence in order to contribute to collective self-protection for themselves and others. In particular, I focus on how the intersection between age and gender produces their bodies as both vulnerable and powerful, protector *and* protected.

Young men, violent masculinity, and the reproduction of vulnerability and precariousness

The gendered body plays an important role in UCP, and references to it came mainly from practitioners either categorising women as more vulnerable or precarious (which will be discussed below) or highlighting tensions between commitments to gender equality and expectations and norms of the areas they were working in. In both my fieldwork and the broader literature, it is often assumed that references to gender must indicate women; gender and women become synonymous. Though the role of women in UCP is important and will be discussed in depth in the following sections, I want to focus here on the connection between masculinity, male bodies, and (expectations of) violence. Just as femininity and the female body have been traditionally associated with passivity and even nonviolence, so too can masculinity imply the opposite. Violence, for young men, can become a rite of passage into adulthood – a transformation from being a boy to being a man.

This has been identified by Jana Krause in Jos, Nigeria, where 'everyday violence networks are built on the poverty and vulnerability of poor young men, who use violent masculinity [...] when alternative pathways to income, power and respect seem unavailable' (Krause 2019: 1478). It is reflected, too, in a report from a Nonviolent Peaceforce Good Practices workshop focusing on UCP in Sub-Saharan Africa held in 2018. Discussing the particular gendered vulnerabilities of young people in conflict affected areas, workshop participants observed that it was young men who were routinely targeted for recruitment by armed groups, while young women marry or have children when still minors

(Schweitzer 2018). In both cases, then, the gendered bodies are (re)produced through expected norms and their relations to militarised violence. The forced marriage of women and girls is itself a patriarchal, physical, and sexual violence in states where women's (and girls') bodies have been 'appropriated for the war effort', forced to bear children as fighters in waiting (Ibrek 2023: 64; Jok 2006). Here, boys become men through violence, and girls become women through childbirth and their marriage to men. These processes are diametrically opposed: the creation of new life (albeit through violence) which transforms girls to women is the antithesis of the killing and taking of life through which boys become men. The transformation from girl to woman is particularly clear as 'youth' in South Sudan is 'not a fixed biological category, but a fluid social construct' (Price and Ornert 2017: 2). 'Youth' here is a broad group that can generally refer to those aged between 18-45. Marrying or having children, however, removes one from this category, so a 19-year-old mother would not be considered a 'youth', whilst a 40-year-old single man might, again demonstrating the social nature of categories often assumed to be purely material (Schweitzer 2018: 53), troubling the logic of binary categories.

Young men in South Sudan are at higher risk of being recruited as armed actors, and workshop participants noted that there was social pressure on these men to prove their masculinity – they risked being branded as a 'coward' or as a 'woman' if they refused to fight (*ibid.*: 28). Violence is thus a way of performing their gender, which in turn (re)produces both the body as male and masculinity as violent. That young men who do not fight are branded 'women' is telling here, too. It juxtaposes female as the antithesis of male, and the abstention from violence as the binary opposite of violence, rather than seeing active non-violence in that role. There is a clear binary choice here, between male and female, fighter and coward – where the feminine end of the binary is routinely devalued. This binary is based on a particular concept of 'hegemonic masculinity', whereby masculinity is primarily linked to the ability to 'provide' for one's family and/or perform masculine violences (Enloe 1983; Tickner 2001).

Nonviolent Peaceforce attempted to re-engage these young men back into their communities without the need to use violence to perform their masculinity. They did this by providing training in conflict de-escalation and unarmed civilian protection, as well as by forming Youth Protection Teams – community groups for young people who are at risk of being recruited into violent conflict. These groups provided protective accompaniment to other young people, while also involving them in conflict mediation practices – work which remains ongoing. They encouraged young men to protect themselves and their communities through embracing their vulnerabilities as children and also sought to unravel associations between strength and protection, masculinity

and performances of violence, by reframing practices of violence de-escalation, unarmed accompaniment and protective presence as active engagement requiring courage and conviction. Thus, this work had two distinct strands. Firstly, creating space for children to embrace their identities and live *as* children, not simply aspiring adults. Secondly, efforts to cultivate nonviolent forms of (adult) masculinity to make clear that the distinction between childhood and adulthood, boyhood and manhood was not simply a matter of violence, but instead was a process where agency and strength could be pursued in a myriad of ways. These methods of building relationships between young people and teaching boys about patriarchal violence and the damage it inflicts on whole societies sought to trouble hegemonic masculinity to the extent to which masculinity can be redefined and renegotiated to be 'based on notions of equality and empathy toward women and men' (Krause 2019: 1417; see also Duncanson 2015). Here, it is the relationships built through UCP practices that are central in complicating associations between violence and masculinity, thus allowing boys and men to embody nonviolent forms of masculinity through exercising *civilian* agency and protection.

While armed conflict(s) in South Sudan is complex with many drivers including socio-economics and state-level politics, a key driver of severe violence and flare-ups of violence is related to seasonal agricultural practices. Cattle-raiding is a longstanding practice in many pastoralist societies in East Africa (Gray et al. 2003), including in South Sudan. The practice has both economic and social implications. The militarisation of society in South Sudan, however, and the prevalence of weapons stemming from armed conflict pre-dating the independence of South Sudan means that the practice is increasingly deadly (Wild et al. 2018). Hannah Wild et al. note that where cattle-raiding attacks were once launched 'with spears', those involved are now often 'armed with AK-47s [... and] heavy arms' (ibid.: 2). While this raiding is often politicised,⁷ Wild et al. identify the motivations for such raiding as being linked to socio-economic factors, rather the issues of political ideology. A Nonviolent Peaceforce South Sudan (NPSS) practitioner, described the need for UCP work addressing seasonal cycles of cattle-raiding and other pastoral violence, which most often involve young men being recruited or volunteering to be 'raiders', while young women may suffer conflict-related sexual violence and abduction as part of the cattle-raiding process. He described the risk of young men in particular being 'mobilised to go and attack a clan and bring back cows. There's not peo-

7 Interview 2, Nonviolent Peaceforce South Sudan practitioner. Conducted online, April 2021.

ple sitting at home thinking, “yeah I go, I might not go.” You have no choice.’⁸ Describing the social pressure on these boys, he said the choice they faced was ‘you can either be ostracised by your community or you can pick up an AK47 and join the rest of the boys.’⁹ This once again highlights how the association between violence and being a man / masculinity is constantly reiterated in everyday practices.

Age is also brought into focus here, particularly through its entanglement with gender. Beyond the materiality of the body, age and markers of ‘youth’ and ‘adulthood’ exist in relation to societal frames, expectations and norms. Drawing again on Judith Butler’s notion of frames, that life and death exist in relation to societal frames which constitute them as such, so too is age a frame which produces and binds the body. Highlighting the specific relationship between age and cattle-raiding practices, the practitioner above recalled: ‘Young people also are the ones that are suffering because of fighting. They’re the ones that because of the nature of the culture you know, it’s not individualistic, they’re part of a clan.’¹⁰ In another example of the nexus between gender, age, and expectations of violence, he also described the inheritance of expectations of violence; that some young men would be expected to ‘avenge’ the death of an older relative:

As you grow up as a young man you have to avenge the death of your uncle whose fate you have seen next to yours for the last 10 years. So in that way, like, you know I talked about a culture of violence, those kind of things where children are brought up almost purely as a tool of revenge you know, like, your mission in life is to avenge the death of your older brother or your uncles, your father etc. So one individual’s version of the conflict is their personal mission as a representative of their, their clan or whatever sort of sociological group they feel loyal to. It might be like your mission is to be violent and seek revenge.¹¹

Here, the bodies of young men are produced as inherently violent, constituted by the memory of those who came before them. The transition from child to adult, boy to man, comes in part from the performance of violence through performing both masculinity and manhood. While innocence is associated

8 Interview 3 with Nonviolent Peaceforce South Sudan practitioner. Conducted online, March 2021.

9 Ibid.

10 Ibid.

11 Ibid.

closely with childhood, boys who perform violence while seeking manhood in these inherited conflicts are forgoing their assumed innocence in pursuit of the agency that masculinity and adulthood bring. The expectation of violence on the part of these boys produces their bodies as not those of children but rather those of fighters-in-waiting (Breslow 2019). This adultification of the bodies of boys and young men demonstrates that their age or association with the framing of youth is not entirely dependent on the materiality of their bodies but rather intertwined with the socio-political and gendered framing of what it means to be a 'man', graduating from the permeable category of 'youth'. There is a clear intersection here between gendered and aged identities, with 'young men' – the nexus of the identity of youth and male – being produced by an expectation of a particular relationship to violence (Schweitzer 2018) and to protection (of reputation, families, communities), perused through an explicitly masculine performance of strength and violence.

Practices of armed protection, whether the protection of family, reputation, or communities, can further feed the vulnerability of these boys and young men. As highlighted by Wallace (2018), the most prominent justification of the use of violence remains self-defence; however, such armed self-defence may reproduce the bodies of those defending themselves as legitimate targets, in turn justifying and legitimising the further use of violence against them (see also: Butler 2020: 12; Krause 2017). When some bodies are produced as inherently violent or as fighters-in-waiting, traditional (armed) methods of self-defence and protection are reinterpreted as acts of aggression or violence. Put another way, armed 'self-defence is thus rendered irremediably impractical for the resisting body' (Dorlin 2019: 7). While the adoption of armed protection is based on the association between taking up arms and reduced vulnerabilities, this link is both racialised and gendered and, for many engaging in armed protection, in fact increases their vulnerability to being recast as a dangerous 'other' and therefore a socio-politically legitimised target. Here, it is the intersection of age and gender, youth and male, that together produces the conditions under which the bodies of these boys become politically constituted as dangerous fighters. This intersection at once increases their vulnerability to material harm from violence, while also increasing their precariousness as they start to be seen as less than human. The political grievability of a child who has been killed is significantly higher than that of an armed young man who was 'neutralised' or 'taken out' (among other violent euphemisms that may be used).

In response to the vulnerability of these boys to violence and the appeal of pursuing masculinity through violent engagements, Nonviolent Peaceforce South Sudan organised a 'boys club' 'based around ending gender based vio-

lent norms'.¹² This involved workshops and events for young men in a relaxed environment, where both national and international NP practitioners would discuss gender norms and expectations as well as gender-based violence with these young men. A UCP practitioner working with the boys club said that these clubs were an opportunity to 'positively influence them [young men] to give them a really good understanding of gender, sex, sexuality, [and] how gender norms can be played out in a negative way. What the impact is for them, not just for women'.¹³ By providing education and information to young men on the negative impacts of certain forms/ performances of masculinity, and particular gender-based sexual violence norms, for themselves as well as for women, this engagement challenged the notion that gender is something women have, but men do not. These clubs tried to engage young men in their communities, to show how they could have positive impacts and become important in their communities without engaging in violence and perpetuating cycles of seasonal violence, thus pursuing protection through community and relational bonds, challenging associations between violence, protection, and masculine strength.

Rather than empowering boys to become men through violence, these practices sought to demonstrate that some dominant gender-based norms were actively harmful to young men, who were expected to risk their lives from a young age in cattle-raiding. These clubs brought young men, often from different clans, together. Instead of associating only within their own clans and therefore acting in line with expectations of more senior members, then, these boys – through these clubs – built relationships and friendships with one another across clans and were empowered to make their own decisions. These practices also begin to unravel the imaginary of age and gender as categories which are based solely on materiality and are objectively given, rather than socio-political processes – thereby challenging the gendered 'myth of protection', which frames the masculine as the antithesis of the feminine, with strong protectors saving weak victims. In short, while armed protection approaches ironically reinforce the vulnerability of young men in their attempts to overcome it, this reconceptualization of masculinity as nonviolent agency can lessen the precariousness of young men and enable a different form of protection.

Vulnerability as protection in UCP in Women's Peace Teams

Armed peacekeepers seek to overcome the vulnerability of their own bodies and of those they seek to protect through militarised material infrastructures such as weapons, armed compounds, high walls, and barbed wire, which physi-

¹² Interview 3, 2021.

¹³ Ibid.

cally separate the safe and good ‘protectors’ from the dangerous, outside ‘other’ (Smirl, 2015). The logic of armed defence is based on the premise that the bodies of armed actors are less vulnerable to physical harm, as they have the ability to harm those threatening them – an imagination of protection as a zero-sum game. Whilst UCP practitioners do not have this option available to them, they are not simply soldiers or peacekeepers without weapons. Their very lack of such weaponry, Wallace (2017) argues, is what allows them to build protection with other civilians. Going further, I argue that rather than simply ignoring this perceived vulnerability, some UCP practitioners seek to emphasise and instrumentalise it as a tool of protection for themselves and others. Here, vulnerability creates the possibility of acting as sources of protection as they are not associated with threat or fear, nor do they feed into escalatory cycles of violence by promoting pre-emptive or retaliatory violence that can occur in response to militarised protection methods. This section will explore this instrumentalisation through and within the narratives of my research participants.

Women’s Peace Teams (WPT) in South Sudan are an example of the instrumentalisation of vulnerable bodies. WPTs are groups created with Nonviolent Peaceforce, where women come together as protection practitioners. These groups are comprised of national volunteers,¹⁴ and some for a time had male members join, though this was controversial and remains rare (Schweitzer 2018a). Women in South Sudan often face high levels of gender-based and conflict-related sexual violence (OHCHR, 2022), particularly when collecting firewood and water.¹⁵ The issue, however, is not always taken seriously as one of violence (Schweitzer, 2019), and WPTs often work closely on this issue through the frame of violence. Elder women in the community are also frequently associated with WPTs though they may not officially join. These women, the ‘mamas’, often have the ability and authority to engage perpetrators of gender-based violence and, due to their status in their community, are at lower risk of retaliation.¹⁶ Their position here is unique, as they are at once vulnerable to violence (as are all living things, though their vulnerability is heightened by their gender and age), yet they are not politically precarious. As they are respected within their community, they are grievable and therefore in a position to instrumentalise their vulnerability in a way others may not be.

14 The status of WPT members as unpaid volunteers remains a live question, and some practitioners believe they should be paid. Interview 2 with Nonviolent Peaceforce South Sudan International Practitioner, April 2021.

15 Interview 18, UCP practitioner based in South Sudan. Conducted online, 2021.

16 Interview 19, UCP practitioner based in South Sudan. Conducted online, 2021

Some WPTs also engage with tribal Chiefs who lead customary courts and decide on a significant number of cases in South Sudan. A UCP practitioner working with Nonviolence Peaceforce recalled that while NP was initially heavily involved in establishing WPTs, over time each team gained its own independence, drawing authority from the relationships the women in the team had with the wider community, and that cases which would ordinarily have been taken to the Chief to decide on would be brought to the women instead. WPTs seized this opportunity to challenge the injustices which often compounded the violence of sexual and gender-based violence cases by emphasising and instrumentalising the vulnerability, precariousness, and assumed lack of agency that their bodies had been assigned:

Normally when you take a case, especially a gender-based violence case to the Chief, some of the things that they would say were punishment to the perpetrator, was the perpetrator should take that girl and marry her. Remember this girl is very young, so women would realise that there is a gap, but because they can't challenge the Chief, the Chief has already given a ruling they can't challenge. So, what they would do, they would talk with the Chief in a very creative way to find a way [...]. They would go to the Chief 'you already have so many cases you're handling. Why don't you allow us to handle cases involving gender-based violence and women?' So, with those discussion we would find that the Chief would be 'Ok you handle those cases concerning women', so when the cases come to the women, the women would not tell the perpetrator that you should marry that girl.¹⁷

Survivors of sexual violence were often concerned that the perpetrator may continue to harass them or their family, and once they were able to 'handle cases concerning women', WPTs often spoke with the perpetrator:

What they would do was other than ask the perpetrator to marry the girl, they can ask the perpetrator 'Do you think what you did was right?' [...] try to get into the conscience of the perpetrator and the moment the perpetrator sits down [...] they will talk to you like a mother. They will tell the perpetrator, 'I'm talking to you like your mother'.¹⁸

The practitioner noted three outcomes of this form of justice. First, it was more effective in ensuring the safety of the survivor. Second, it created a chance to form a connection between the perpetrator and women, and to humanise

¹⁷ Interview 19.

¹⁸ Ibid.

women to him. Finally, that over time, some perpetrators of sexual violence would refer themselves to women in the community or WPTs. As a result, in one area a woman was invited as a representative into the Council of Chiefs, and in another a woman became a Chief who was in charge of handling cases.¹⁹

This account of the successes of WPTs, and in particular of how these women approached the Council of Chiefs initially, demonstrates the ways in which the unique vulnerabilities of bodies – intersecting age, gender, and socio-political status – create the conditions in which vulnerability is a force for protection. Here, the women's bodies are perceived as being vulnerable and non-threatening, meaning they can in turn instrumentalise those assumptions about their bodies and the lack of social, political, and physical 'threats' they pose. Women in South Sudan are at risk of sexual violence and, as the practitioner cited above recalled, such violence is often not taken seriously, and survivors are often forced to marry their attacker. As a result, their bodies are precarious: at high risk of violence and not socio-politically protected in the way that others are. Rather than directly challenging this construction, however, the women in these WPTs embraced the power structures which produced their bodies as vulnerable and precarious. Such structures allowed these women to approach Chiefs without Chiefs imagining or viewing them as threats to their power or authority, instead framing their protection of survivors of sexual and gender-based violence (SGBV) as a form of help to powerful Chiefs.²⁰ The material vulnerability of the bodies of these women, who were unarmed and in a category of high risk of sexual violence themselves, produced their bodies as non-threatening to powerful men. As such, the heightened vulnerability of their material bodies, produced through the intersection of age and gender, served to reduce the precariousness of at least some women. The socio-political status and leadership roles enjoyed by the women on these WPTs mean that they are able to instrumentalise bodily vulnerability to reduce direct threats of physical and sexual violence against themselves and younger women.

The response of WPTs to speak to perpetrators 'like your mother' is another embodiment of non-threatening femininity that has a protective effect. Rather than seeking to directly 'punish' perpetrators of sexual violence or to recreate the social power and status of the male Chiefs, they instead chose to embody and invoke the image of motherhood – one of the most enduring symbols of caring and non-threatening femininity. They were then able to instrumentalise this real and perceived vulnerability to create protection structures for other women and

19 Ibid.

20 Fieldwork Focus Group Discussion. Nonviolent Peaceforce South Sudan practitioner 2. Conducted online, 7 March 2022.

girls without the need to directly challenge the patriarchal violence and authority which produced them as such. Age features heavily in the production of these women's bodies as that of 'mamas', intersecting with imaginaries of vulnerability.

The bodies of these 'mamas', produced as such by the intersection of their age and gender, are at once imagined as equally vulnerable as, yet less precarious than, those of the young women they seek to protect from SGBV. Motherhood and pregnancy are closely interlinked with age categories, particularly in South Sudan, where a girl or woman, no matter her age, would not be considered a 'youth' once she became pregnant or had children, shifting the gendered and aged frames of the bodies of these women (Schweitzer 2019). Age categories here are not binary. Categories such as 'youth' and 'elder' are linked in part to the materiality of the body, but also to other relationships between people, and their relationships in turn with the socio-political frames which (re)produce their bodies. Motherhood here is a particular intersection of age and gender. Some of the women in WPTs were identified as 'mamas' not because they necessarily were mothers themselves, but rather due to the interconnectedness of their gender and aged identities, and others' imaginaries of that. Their bodies were reproduced as those in a caring, mothering capacity, and as such they had the agency and ability to deal with perpetrators of SGBV from the respected position of a 'mama', rather than the precarious position of a girl.

At the same time, older women – these 'mamas' – are arguably equally (though differently) as vulnerable to violence younger women and girls, yet less precarious. In the *Guidelines for Material Aid (South Sudan)*, Nonviolent Peaceforce outline eight categories of people who may be considered 'extremely vulnerable' (cited in Furnari 2016: 306-13). This list includes 'pregnant women', 'lactating Mothers (especially if she has her newborn baby with her)', 'women caring for an unusually large number of children in her household', and 'older persons' (ibid.). Motherhood, then, is a key factor in the increasing vulnerability of some bodies – those of pregnant women and mothers are deemed to be groups in some of the greatest need of protection. Being a 'mama', however, also implies that these women are older, categorised differently to the girls who were treated without agency when seeking justice for sexual violence. There was an implied respect, in the account cited above, that perpetrators of such violence held for these women, seeing these elder women in mothering roles, which imbues them with respect. While these women were older, and their bodies more vulnerable ('older persons', thus fitting into multiple 'extremely vulnerable categories'), their social position as elder *women*, 'mamas', produced their bodies at once as less precarious. They were treated, in this instance, with more respect than younger women, due in part to the imag-

ination of them and their bodies as being more vulnerable, less threatening, but also imbued with authority in their community.

This instrumentalisation of perceived vulnerability, however, brings with it many complexities. The instrumentalisation of structures producing these bodies as non-threatening and agential only through their association with maternal femininity risks reproducing them. Rather than challenging oppressive structures that produce women's bodies as agential only in relation to their status as mothers, this form of protection allows such structures to continue, and be reproduced. This is, again, an inherent tension which lies at the heart of UCP. Building protection through relationships and relationality often includes building protection through the structures and frames of oppression. The embrace of the perception of vulnerability allows WPTs to support the protection of other women, while reproducing the structures in which these identities come to be understood and materially conflated with vulnerability. Violent and oppressive structures here provide space for unarmed protection within them, but for the protection to proliferate, so too must the structures under which it has been built, as is further demonstrated by the instrumentalisation of whiteness in some UCP practices.²¹

At the heart of UCP practices is the embrace and instrumentalization of bodily vulnerability – a general understanding that all bodies are inherently vulnerable and that some bodies are more vulnerable, or vulnerable in particular ways. This acceptance of vulnerability as something which can be mitigated but never truly escaped places UCP in stark contrast to armed protection actors, who seek to make their own bodies invulnerable to violence (through body armour, weapons, the 'use of force') and thus reproduce the bodies of those around them as even more vulnerable and reliant on their presence for protection. In this way, the instrumentalisation of vulnerability as a protection method through UCP is thus not simply unarmed peacekeeping; it is rather a fundamental rejection of the premise of armed protection – the notion that some bodies can become invulnerable to violence.

Conclusion

This article has challenged the association between strength and protection in the context of the protection of civilians in areas of armed conflict, an approach that often increases the precariousness of civilians. Building on femi-

21 Many UCP practices explicitly rely on the instrumentalisation of whiteness, such as the leveraging of racial and passport privileges, or organisations having a preference for white volunteers (Koopman 2013).

nist critiques of both the gendered production of war and the binary categorisations such a production is based on, it has sought to unravel the apparently distinct categories of masculine/ feminine, protector/ protected. While the intersection of racialisation and gendering of bodies in conflict contexts is receiving increased attention, this article seeks to further introduce the category of age. By exploring the entanglement of age and gender in the production of vulnerability, I take seriously the call of Christine Sylvester to understand the ways in which '*war is experienced through the body*' (emphasis original. 2013: 5).

The case study of UCP practices in South Sudan which centre civilian agency does two things. First, understanding practices through which civilians protect themselves and each other troubles the notion that protection is given by a protection actor and received by a vulnerable civilian. UCP practitioners co-produce protection with other civilians and as such break the binary that those living in areas of armed conflict are either agential or vulnerable. UCP practitioners are both. Second, it demonstrates the possibility that vulnerability brings. Rather than seeking to instrumentalise institutional and physical strength to protect civilians, the practices presented here demonstrate the instrumentalisation and centring of vulnerability *as a method of protection*. While I do not claim that UCP presents a solution to the protection of civilians in all conflict-affected areas, this article introduces UCP as a possibility and a challenge to traditional and gendered associations of protection with (masculine) strength.

Acknowledgements

This research was funded by an ESRC Wales DTP PhD Scholarship. I am grateful to the anonymous reviewers and editors at the *Journal of Pacifism and Non-violence* for their helpful and thoughtful comments on this work. In addition, I would like to thank Berit Bliesemann de Guevara, Luise Bendfelt, Emily Clifford, and Hannah Richards for their support and feedback on this article.

References

- Arendt, Hannah. *On Violence*. London: Penguin Press, 1970.
- Åse, Cecilia, 'The Gendered Myth of Protection', in *The Routledge Handbook of Gender and Security*, ed. by Caron E. Gentry, Laura J. Shepherd, and Laura Sjoberg (London/ New York: Routledge, Taylor & Francis Group, 2019).

- Asher, Kiran. "Latin American Decolonial Thought, or Making the Subaltern Speak: Latin America Decolonial Thought." *Geography Compass* 7, no. 12 (December 2013): 832–42. <https://doi.org/10.1111/gec3.12102>.
- Ayotte, Kevin, J., and Mary Hussain E., 'Securing Afghan Women: Neocolonialism, Epistemic Violence, and the Rhetoric of the Veil', *NWSA Journal*, 17.3 (2005), 112–33.
- Bliesemann de Guevara, Berit, Ellen Furnari, and Rachel Julian, 'Unarmed Civilian Protection/Peacekeeping', in *The Palgrave Encyclopaedia of Peace and Conflict Studies* (Cham: Springer International Publishing, 2021), pp. 1–12. https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-030-11795-5_178-1.
- Bonwick, Andrew. "Who Really Protects Civilians?" *Development in Practice* 16, no. 3 (2006): 270–77.
- Breslow, Jacob, 'Adolescent Citizenship, or Temporality and the Negation of Black Childhood in Two Eras', *American Quarterly*, 71.2 (2019), 473–94. <https://doi.org/10.1353/aq.2019.0039>.
- Brigg, Morgan, 'Humanitarian Symbolic Exchange: Extending Responsibility to Protect through Individual and Local Engagement', *Third World Quarterly*, 39.5 (2018), 838–53. <https://doi.org/10.1080/01436597.2017.1396534>.
- Butler, Judith, "Bodily Vulnerability, Coalitions, and Street Politics." In *Differences in Common: Gender, Vulnerability and Community*, edited by Joana Sabadell-Nieto and Marta Segarra, 97–119. Brill, 2014. <https://doi.org/10.1163/9789401210805>.
- Butler, Judith, *Precarious Life: The Powers of Mourning and Violence* (London: Verso, 2006).
- Butler, Judith, *Frames of War: When Is Life Grievable?* (London: Verso, 2009).
- Cady, Duane, L., 'Eradicating Warism: Our Most Dangerous Disease', in *Revolutionary Nonviolence Concepts, Cases and Controversies*, ed. by Richard Jackson, Joseph Llewellyn, Leonard Griffin Manawaroa, Aidan Gonth, and Tonga Karena (London: Zed, 2020), pp. 102–12.
- Coy, Patrick, C. "The Privilege Problematic in International Nonviolent Accompaniment's Early Decades: Peace Brigades International Confronts the Use of Racism." *Journal of Religion, Conflict, and Peace* 4, no. 2 (2011).
- Dorlin, Elsa. "What a Body Can Do." Translated by Kieran Aarons. *Radical Philosophy* 2, no. 2.05 (2019): 3–9.
- Dorlin, Elsa. *Self Defense: A Philosophy of Violence*. London: Verso, 2022.
- Duncanson, Claire. "Hegemonic Masculinity and the Possibility of Change in Gender Relations." *Men and Masculinities* 18, no. 2 (2015): 231–48.
- Enloe, Cynthia, *Manoeuvres: The International Politics of Militarizing Women's Lives* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2000).
- Enloe, Cynthia, *Bananas, Beaches and Bases*, 2nd edn (University of California Press, 2014), JSTOR, <http://www.jstor.org/stable/10.1525/j.ctt6wqbn6> [accessed 24 March 2023].

- Furnari, Ellen, 'Relationships Are Critical for Peacekeeping', *Peace Review*, 27.1 (2015), 25–30.
- Furnari, Ellen, *Wielding Nonviolence in the Midst of Violence: Case Studies of Good Practices in Unarmed Civilian Protection* (Norderstedt: Institute for Peace Work and Non-violent Conflict Transformation, 2016).
- Gilder, Alexander, *Stabilization and Human Security in UN Peace Operations*, Routledge Research in the Law of Armed Conflict (Abingdon, Oxon ; New York, NY: Routledge, 2022).
- Gray, Felicity, 'Protection as Connection: Feminist Relational Theory and Protecting Civilians from Violence in South Sudan', *Journal of Global Ethics*, 18.1 (2022), 152–70. <https://doi.org/10.1080/17449626.2022.2052152>.
- Gray, Felicity, 'Relational R2P? Civilian-Led Prevention and Protection against Atrocity Crimes', *Global Responsibility to Protect*, 2022, 1–26. <https://doi.org/10.1163/1875-984X-20220007>.
- Gray, Sandra, Mary Sundal, Brandi Wiebusch, Michael A. Little, Paul W. Leslie, and Ivy L. Pike, 'Cattle Raiding, Cultural Survival, and Adaptability of East African Pastoralists', *Current Anthropology*, 44.S5 (2003), S3–30. <https://doi.org/10.1086/377669>.
- Holt, Victoria K., and Tobias C. Berkman. *The Impossible Mandate? Military Preparedness, the Responsibility to Protect and Modern Peace Operations*. Washington, D.C: Henry L. Stimson Center, 2006.
- Hutchings, Kimberly, 'Making Sense of Masculinity and War', *Men and Masculinities*, 10.4 (2008), 389–404. <https://doi.org/10.1177/1097184X07306740>.
- Ibreck, Rachel. "Protecting Women from Violence in the United Nations Protection of Civilians Sites, South Sudan?" *Journal of Intervention and Statebuilding* 18, no. 1 (January 2024): 61–80. <https://doi.org/10.1080/17502977.2023.2215604>.
- Jok Madut Jok. "Violence and Resilience: Women, War and the Realities of Everyday Life in Sudan." *Ahfad Journal* 23, no. 2 (December 2006): 58–80.
- Jose, Betsy, and Medie Peace, A. "Civilian Self-Protection and Civilian Targeting in Armed Conflicts: Who Protects Civilians?" *Oxford Research Encyclopedias*, n.d. <https://oxfordre.com/politics/view/10.1093/acrefore/9780190228637.001.0001/acrefore-9780190228637-e-216?print=pdf>.
- Julian, Rachel, 'The Transformative Impact of Unarmed Civilian Peacekeeping', *Global Society*, 34.1 (2020), 99–111.
- Julian, Rachel, and Christine Schweitzer, 'The Origins and Development of Unarmed Civilian Peacekeeping', *Peace Review*, 27.1 (2015), 1–8.
- Krause, Jana. "Non-Violence and Civilian Agency in Communal War: Evidence from Jos, Nigeria." *African Affairs* 116, no. 463 (2017): 261–83.
- Krause, Jana. *Resilient Communities: Non-Violence and Civilian Agency in Communal War*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2018.
- Kurowska, Xymena, and Berit Bliesemann de Guevara, 'Interpretive Approaches in Political Science and International Relations', in *The SAGE Handbook of Research*

- Methods in Political Science and International Relations*, ed. by Luigi Curini and Robert Franzese (California: Sage, 2020), pp. 121–30.
- Mac Ginty, Roger, *Everyday Peace: How so-Called Ordinary People Can Disrupt Violent Conflict* (New York, NY: Oxford University Press, 2021).
- Mac Ginty, Roger, and Oliver P Richmond. “The Local Turn in Peace Building: A Critical Agenda for Peace.” *Third World Quarterly* 34, no. 5 (June 1, 2013): 763–83. <https://doi.org/10.1080/01436597.2013.800750>.
- Macaspac, Nerve, V. “Insurgent Peace: Community-Led Peacebuilding of Indigenous Peoples in Sagada, Philippines.” *Geopolitics* 24, no. 4 (2019): 839–77.
- Marhia, Natasha, ‘Some Humans Are More Human than Others: Troubling the “Human” in Human Security from a Critical Feminist Perspective’, *Security Dialogue*, 44.1 (2013), 19–35.
- Meyer, Jörg, ‘The Concealed Violence of Modern Peace(-Making)’, *Millennium: Journal of International Studies*, 36.3 (2008), 555–74. <https://doi.org/10.1177/03058298080360030901>.
- Millar, Katharine M, ‘The Plural of Soldier Is Not Troops: The Politics of Groups in Legitimizing Militaristic Violence’, *Security Dialogue*, 50.3 (2019), 201–19. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0967010619836337>.
- Millar, Katharine M, ‘What Makes Violence Martial? Adopt A Sniper and Normative Imaginaries of Violence in the Contemporary United States’, *Security Dialogue*, 2021, 0967010621997226. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0967010621997226>.
- Mukumbang, Ferdinand, C., and Brian van Wyk, ‘Leveraging the Photovoice Methodology for Critical Realist Theorizing’, *International Journal of Qualitative Method*, 19.1 (2020), 1–16.
- Nilsson, Manuela. “Violent Peace: Local Perceptions of Threat and Insecurity in Post-Conflict Colombia.” *International Peacekeeping* 27, no. 2 (2020): 238–62.
- Paddon Rhoads, Emily, and Rebecca Sutton. “The (Self) Protection of Civilians in South Sudan: Popular and Community Justice Practices.” SSRN Scholarly Paper. Rochester, NY, April 24, 2020. <https://doi.org/10.2139/ssrn.3666945>.
- Price, Roz, and Anna Orner, *Youth in South Sudan: Livelihoods and Conflict*, Knowledge, Evidence, and Learning for Development (Institute of Development Studies and Future Seed C.I.C, 17 November 2017), https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/media/5c6eac3ed915d4a380dda98/203-205_Youth_in_South_Sudan_Livelihoods_and_Conflict.pdf [accessed 12 August 2022].
- Shehata, Samer, ‘Ethnography, Identity, and the Production of Knowledge’, in *Interpretation and Method: Empirical Research Methods and the Interpretive Turn*, ed. by Dvora Yanow and Peregrine Schwartz-Shea, 2nd edn (London: Routledge, 2014), pp. 209–27.
- Schweitzer, Christine, *Good Practices in Nonviolent, Unarmed, Civilian to Civilian Protection: Documentation of the Workshop in Nairobi, 12-14 November 2018* (Hamburg:

- Nonviolent Peaceforce, 2019), https://www.nonviolentpeaceforce.org/images/Nairobi_2018_Good_Practices.pdf [accessed 11 February 2021].
- Schweitzer, Christine, *Good Practices in Nonviolent, Unarmed, Civilian to Civilian Protection: Documentation of the Workshop in Paynesville (Minnesota), 21-23 October 2019* (Hamburg: Nonviolent Peaceforce, 2019), 'Good Practices in Nonviolent, Unarmed, Civilian to Civilian Protection: Documentation of the Workshop in Paynesville (Minnesota), 21-23 October 2019 [accessed 6 August 2020].
- Sjoberg, Laura 'Gendered Realities of the Immunity Principle: Why Gender Analysis Needs Feminism', *International Studies Quarterly*, 50.4 (2006), 889–910.
- Smirl, Lisa. *Spaces of Aid: How Cars, Compounds and Hotels Shape Humanitarianism*. London: Zed Books, 2015.
- Soss, Joe, 'Talking Our Way to Meaningful Explanations: A Practice-Centered View of Interviewing for Interpretive Research', in *Interpretation and Method: Empirical Research Methods and the Interpretive Turn*, ed. by Dvora Yanow and Peregrine Schwartz-Shea, 2nd edn (London: Routledge, 2014), pp. 161–82.
- Spivak, Gayatri Chakravorty, 'Can the Subaltern Speak?', in *Can the Subaltern Speak? Reflections of the History of Idea*, ed. by Rosalind Morris (New York: Columbia University Press, 2010).
- Switzer, Sarah, 'Working With Photo Installation and Metaphor: Re-Visioning Photovoice Research', *International Journal of Qualitative Methods*, 18 (2019), 1609406919872395. <https://doi.org/10.1177/1609406919872395>.
- United Nations Human Rights Office, A/HRC/49/CRP.4 (2022).
- United National Security Council, S/2016/924 (2016).
- Wall, Imogen, and Karen Hedlund. "Localisation and Locally-Led Crisis Response: A Literature Review." Local2Global, 2016. https://www.local2global.info/wp-content/uploads/L2GP_SDC_Lit_Review_LocallyLed_June_2016_revisedJan_2017_online.pdf.
- Wallace, Molly, S., *Security Without Weapons: Rethinking Violence, Nonviolent Action, and Civilian Protection* (London: Routledge, 2017).
- Wallace, Molly, S., 'Standing "Bare Hands" Against the Syrian Regime: The Turn to Armed Resistance and the Question of Civilian Protection', *Critical Studies on Security*, 6.2 (2018), 237–58.
- Wheeler, Nicholas J., *Saving Strangers: Humanitarian Intervention in International Society*, Reprint (Oxford: Oxford Univ. Press, 2010).
- Wilcox, Lauren B, *Bodies of Violence : Theorizing Embodied Subjects in International Relations* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2015).
- Wild, Hannah, Jok Madut Jok, and Ronak Patel, 'The Militarization of Cattle Raiding in South Sudan: How a Traditional Practice Became a Tool for Political Violence', *Journal of International Humanitarian Action*, 3.1 (2018), 2. <https://doi.org/10.1186/s41018-018-0030-y>.