Decolonising Peacebuilding

"Chamindra's work is a very important addition to the conversation and debates around the peace process, and politics more generally in the North of Ireland. Too often, we are given accounts of history that are stuck in the binary conversation of Unionism or Nationalism. It's therefore very important to have discussions that approach politics from a totally different angle here. Having a Global South perspective in relation to discussing politics in Northern Ireland is extremely important and I would urge people to read this important book."
—Gerry Carroll, MLA
Northern Ireland Assembly

"This book is an invitation to a reading of ethnic conflict and the politics of peacebuilding in Northern Ireland and Sri Lanka 'beyond' our usually assumed positions. Irrespective of where one stands on these violent conflicts and their continued ramifications, this book carries insights of interest. The decolonial focus is very helpful in questioning long-held assumptions and approaches. This book is a must-read for both Western and non-Western politicians, diplomats and peace activists. It is also a highly advisable addition to Peace and Conflict Studies coursework worldwide."
—Rathika Sitsabaiesan
MP for Scarborough-Rouge River, Canadian House of Commons (2011-2015)

Decolonising Peacebuilding:

Managing Conflict from Northern Ireland to Sri Lanka and Beyond

By

Chamindra Weerawardhana

Cambridge
Scholars
Publishing

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To
Mocsha & Oisín

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Belfast/Colombo, 12th April 2018

ABBREVIATIONS

ADB	Asian Development Bank
AIA	Anglo-Irish Agreement (1985)
AIIC	Anglo-Irish Intergovernmental Council
AMDP	Accelerated Mahaweli Development Programme (Sinhalese: *Kadinam*) Mahaweli Sanvardana Vyaprutiya)
ANC	African National Congress (South Africa)
APC	All Party Conference (also referred to as APRC: All Party Representative Conference)
APRC	All Party Representative Committee
APNI	Alliance Party of Northern Ireland
ASEAN	Association for Southeast Asian Nations
BIC	British-Irish Council
BIIP	British-Irish Interparliamentary Body
BJP	Bharatiya Janatha Party (Indian People's Party)
CA	Ceasefire Agreement (of Sri Lanka, signed on 22 February 2002, unless otherwise specified)
CCLA	Cross Community Labour Alternative
CFNI	Community Foundation for Northern Ireland
CIDA	Canadian International Development Agency
CLGF	Commonwealth Local Government Forum
CNC	~~Ceylon~~ National Congress
CP	Communist Party (of Sri Lanka, unless otherwise specified)
CRC	Community Relations Council
CWC	~~Ceylon~~ Workers' Congress
DCRC	Donoughmore Constitutional Reform Commission
DUP	Democratic Unionist Party
EPDP	Eelam People's Democratic Party
EPRLF	Eelam People's Revolutionary Liberation Front
ERDF	European Regional Development Fund
EROS	Eelam Revolutionary Organisation of Students
FARC	Fuerzas Armadas Revolucionarias de Colombia (Revolutionary Armed Forces of Columbia)

FCO	Foreign and Commonwealth Office (United Kingdom)
FF	Fianna Fáil
FG	Fine Gael
FPC	Federal Party of ~~Ceylon~~
GPNI	Green Party Northern Ireland
GTF	Global Tamil Forum
HCA	Hillsborough Castle Agreement
IA	International Alert
IFB	Intermediary Funding Body
IFI	International Fund for Ireland
ILA	Indo-Lanka Agreement (of 29 July 1987)
IMF	International Monetary Fund
INC	Indian National Congress
INCORE	International Conflict Research Institute Centre (University of Ulster, Magee Campus, Derry/Londonderry)
INI	Invest Northern Ireland
INPACT	Initiative for Political and Conflict Transformation (Colombo, Sri Lanka)
IPKF	Indian Peacekeeping Force
ISGA	Interim Self Governing Authority
JHU	Jatika Hela Urumaya (National Sinhalese Heritage Party)
JMC	Joint Ministerial Committee
JNP	Jatika Nidahas Peramuna (National Freedom Front)
JVP	Janata Vimukti Peramuna (People's Liberation Front)
LP	Labour Party (of Great Britain, unless otherwise specified)
LPNI	Labour Party in Northern Ireland
LSSP	Lanka Sama Samaja Party (Equal Society Party of Sri Lanka)
LTTE	Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam
MDMK	Marumalarchi Dravida Munnetra Kazhagam (Tamil)
MEA	Ministry of External Affairs (Sri Lanka)
MEP	Mahajana Eksath Peramuna (People's United Front)
MNI	Mediation Northern Ireland
MP	Member of Parliament

NCTC	National Counterterrorism Centre (India, unless otherwise specified)
NEPC	North Eastern Provincial Council
NERF	North East Reconstruction Fund
NFF	National Freedom Front (abbreviation used synonymously with JNP)
NICs	Newly Industrial Countries (League of)
NICRA	Northern Ireland Civil Rights Association
NICVA	Northern Ireland Council for Voluntary Action
NIE	National Institute of Education (Sri Lanka)
NILP	Northern Ireland Labour Party
NIWC	Northern Ireland Women's Coalition
NPC	National Peace Council (Sri Lanka)
NSMC	North-South Ministerial Council
NSSP	Nava Sama Samaja Party (New Equal Society Party)
NTT	Neelan Thiruchelvam Trust
NUU	New University of Ulster
P-IRA	Provisional Irish Republican Army
P-TOMs	Post-Tsunami Operational Mechanisms
PA	People's Alliance (Sinhalese: Podujana Eksath Peramuna)
PBP	People Before Profit
PC	Provincial Council (unless otherwise specified)
PRG	Peace and Reconciliation Group (Derry/Londonderry)
PSNI	Police Service of Northern Ireland
PTA	Prevention of Terrorism Act
PUP	Progressive Unionist Party
R2P	Responsibility to Protect
R-IRA	Real Irish Republican Army
RAAD	Republican Action Against Drugs
RPF	Rwandan Patriotic Front
RUC	Royal Ulster Constabulary
SA	Sunningdale Agreement
SAARC	South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation
SCOPP	Secretariat for Coordinating the Peace Process (also referred to as the Peace Secretariat)
SDLP	Social Democratic and Labour Party
SEUPB	Special European Union Programmes Body

SIRHN	Subcommittee on Immediate Humanitarian and Rehabilitation Needs
SLFP	Sri Lanka Freedom Party (Sinhalese: Sri Lanka Nidahas Pakshaya)
SLMC	Sri Lanka Muslim Congress
SLMM	Sri Lanka Monitoring Mission
TELO	Tamil Eelam Liberation Organisation
TMVP	Thamil Makkal Vidutalai Pulihal (Tamil People's Liberation Tigers)
TNA	Tamil National Alliance
TUH	Towards Understanding and Healing (PEACE-funded reconciliation project hosted by The Junction, Derry/Londonderry)
TULF	Tamil United Liberation Front
UDA	Ulster Defence Authority
UF	United Front
UNF	United National Front
UNHRC	United National Human Rights Council
UNP	United National Party (Sinhalese: Eksath Jathika Pakshaya)
UP	Unionist Party
UPFA	United People's Freedom Alliance
UUC	Ulster Unionist Council
UUP	Ulster Unionist Party
UVF	Ulster Volunteer Force
WB	World Bank

A NOTE ON TERMINOLOGY

In this book, when referring to gender disparities in conflict management and peacebuilding, I use the qualifier "cisgender", or its shortened form "cis", as an adjective. This serves to emphasise the tremendous monopoly of cis men on the politics of peacebuilding, conflict management, and related areas within politics/international diplomacy and also in terms of knowledge production in scholarly platforms. The words "Transgender", "Trans", "Indigenous", and "Decolonising/Decolonise" will be capitalised at all times, in order to highlight the routine discrimination suffered by non-cisgender people, Indigenous peoples, and the frequent omission of Women from power-wielding in the areas of peacebuilding, conflict management and peace negotiations. The capitalisation of these terms is also a symbolic means of challenging the epistemic marginalisation, if not violence, often inflicted upon scholars and epistemologies focusing on decolonising and challenging mainstream (and indeed "whitestream") processes of knowledge production and global governance.

Unless specified with the adjectives "cis" or "trans", the terms "Woman" and "Women" systematically refer to both cisgender and Transgender (and other gender-plural) Women.

The term "West" refers to the geographical zone of Western Europe, as well as the White Settler-dominated structures of power in Turtle Island and in parts of Oceania. More than geography, "West" denotes a linguistic family, a belief system, and an epistemology (Mignolo 2015, xxv).

The term "global South/s" refers to the non-Western (and largely non-Caucasian) parts of the world (including central and Latin America, parts of central Asia, parts of Oceania). This term also encompasses the socio-political, economic, and cultural landscapes of Indigenous peoples across the world, as well as those of peoples of colour living in the global North. This term also encompasses (unless otherwise specified) Indigenous peoples worldwide, including in northerly spaces such as Turtle Island. The use of "South/s" is intended to highlight the tremendous sociocultural, linguistic, historical, political, and economic diversity of this geographical and geopolitical expanse.

The term "global North" is used in this book to refer to the EU, the ~~USA~~ and NATO member states.

Following Jacques Derrida's deconstructive practice of placing certain terms deemed problematic and/or inadequate yet necessary '*sous rature*' [under erasure], colonially imposed names will be crossed, e.g. ~~Ceylon~~, ~~United States of America~~, ~~USA~~, ~~Australia~~.

“When they speak, it is scientific;
when we speak, it is unscientific.
When they speak, it is universal;
when we speak, it is specific.
When they speak, it is objective;
when we speak, it is subjective.
When they speak, it is neutral;
when we speak, it is personal.
When they speak, it is rational;
when we speak, it is emotional.
When they speak, it is impartial;
when we speak, it is partial.
They have facts, we have opinions.
They have knowledges, we have experiences.
We are not dealing here with a ‘peaceful coexistence of
words,’ but rather with a violent hierarchy, which
defines Who Can Speak and What We Can Speak About.”
—Grada Kilomba, in “Decolonizing Knowledge”, 2016

INTRODUCTION

ON PEACE PROCESSES AND CONTESTED TRAJECTORIES

> The flow of ideas has been a one-way street. But I see a two-way street coming.
> —Ambassador Professor Kishore Mahbubani (quoted in Hansen 2002)

This book is the product of some ten years of consecutive and painstaking efforts to explore issues of ethnic conflict, conflict management, ethno-nationalism/s, gender politics, and post-, if not neo-, colonial politics, focusing on two different deeply divided spaces: Northern Ireland and Sri Lanka. It involves a reflection acutely influenced by my efforts to actively engage in struggles for gender and social justice in Northern Ireland and beyond. A book of this nature, which reflects upon exploring new, if not different, forms of knowledge and understandings that run against the grain of cis-het-white-dominated scholarship on ethnic conflict research originating in the global North, is bound to be marked by many gaps, and all shortfalls are mine and mine alone. This book was developed with the objective of seeking—to borrow from Professor Chandra Mohanty—"emancipatory knowledges" on managing ethno-national contentions and politics of division in deeply divided societies (Mohanty 2004, 1).

What we know as "Conflict Research", "Peace Research", or "Peace and Conflict Studies" are research fields in which the terms of the debate and research priorities are largely set by cis-het-white academics in the global North, with scholars in the global South/s often forced to follow suit. This book is an effort to discuss ethno-national conflict in deeply divided societies, particularly the global South/s, using an approach based on a logic of decolonising. It is also important to note, that this work has been undertaken by a Woman of colour and a Sri Lankan citizen who researches facets of Irish political history and is actively engaged in political activity in Ulster. This book is therefore a product not only of research, but also of my lived experience as a politically active Woman of colour, who navigates highly cis-heteronormative neoliberal sociopolitical and academic spheres, while shuttling in-between two socially conservative

and deeply divided sociopolitical contexts (Sri Lanka and Northern Ireland). These are spaces that erase the existence of people who, like me, are non-cisnormative and non-heteronormative. This makes the study of ethnic conflict, research in conflict studies, and hands-on politics of deeply divided societies the exclusive confine of cisnormative and heteronormative people, who are often armed with the agency gained from socioeconomic, caste, class, and educational privilege. The extent of such hurdles in the academy has been invoked with regard to cis women of colour in the academy (see, for instance, Dua and Lawrence 2000; Johnson-Bailey and Lee 2005). In both academic and political spheres, claiming space and securing one's agency is even more challenging for a person of colour (especially in the global North), and especially to a Trans/non-cis-heteronormative person (in the North as well as in the South/s). When this manuscript underwent a blind peer review with a publisher in Turtle Island, a cis-het-woman-of-colour academic with a professorship in a Western European country, citizenship from another Western European country, and hailing from a highly-privileged expatriate Sri Lankan background, retorted, "It is not necessary to reveal the author's sexual identity since it is not directly pertinent to the analysis". Beyond the pathetic misunderstanding of gender identity and sexuality, this comment is exemplary of the ways in which the cis-het academy (including cis women of colour with positions of privilege within it) is often inclined to misconstrue, dismiss, and erase non-cisnormative and non-heteronormative individuals, approaches, voices, and analytical frameworks. This book, and the transnational lived experience that shaped its eventual coming together, is a story of sailing against this tide of exclusion. It is deliberately intended to be different in its approach, cutting across conflict studies, peacebuilding, Irish and Sri Lankan politics, and gender politics.

A war deemed unwinnable?

In the month of May 2009, the government of Sri Lanka completed the final battle of Eelam War IV, emerging victorious in the island's long-drawn-out secessionist civil war against the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam (LTTE).[1] This victory was all the more intriguing, given the long-

[1] The term "Eelam War" has been largely used to refer to the civil war between the Sri Lankan armed forces and the LTTE from 1983 to 2009. The usage of this term has been popularised by the media and has often been adapted in academic writing. In this book, I will use this term to refer to Sri Lanka's long war, as well as to its specific phases, such as Eelam War I, which took place between 23 July 1983 and

standing consensus among commentators that a full military victory over the Tamil Tigers was impossible. A combination of domestic and international circumstances favourable to a military offensive, such as the post 9–11 emphasis on counterterrorism and a growing public weariness of the peace process in Sri Lanka, facilitated this outcome. By the mid-2000s, this public discontent of the Norwegian-facilitated peacebuilding drive (which was endorsed by India, Japan, and Western governments) resulted in an unprecedented strengthening of Sinhala nationlist majoritarian politics.

In the immediate post-war years, governance took the unsurprising turn of being directed by a reinforced form of majoritarian politics. This resulted in the enfeebling of ethno-national minorities, especially the Tamils, with the Tamil political leadership in parliamentary politics drifting to a state of comparative inaction. The same could be observed with the parliamentary opposition, which now faced a much stronger and more popular Rajapaksa administration. A cautiously planned electoral manipulation enabled the replacement of the Rajapaksa administration by a new "joint government" in January 2015, much less ambiguous in its pro-Western positions and its commitment to the dictates of the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund (IMF) and, consequently, with a stronger emphasis on politics of austerity. In strategic terms, the Sirisena administration (January 2015 to present) is closer to the Delhi–Washington DC consensus than the Rajapaksa regime (December 2005 to January 2015), which maintained very close ties with Beijing. Although a semblance of increased accommodation of the political aspirations of minorities can be glimpsed in this new dispensation, a brand of Sinhala (if not Sinhala–Buddhist) majoritarian politics, which is also inherently patriarchal in character and is dismissive of minorities, continues to form the central pivot of governance in post-war Sri Lanka.[2] This makes it

29 July 1987. Eelam War II raged from 1990 to 1995, while Eelam War III took place from 1995 to 2002, after the collapse of the 1995 Kumaratunga–LTTE peace talks. Eelam War IV took place between 2006 and 2009, from the first outbreak of hostilities on 26 July 2006 to the military defeat of the LTTE and the assassination of its leadership on 19 May 2009.

[2] One could argue otherwise, citing the anti-Muslim agitation under the Rajapaksa dispensation, which has been watered down under the Sirisena administration. Yet, developments of this nature are all but momentary, with a strong Sinhala nationalist lobby gradually emerging at the time of writing, expressing stern opposition to the Sirisena–Wickremesinghe joint government. A revealing example is "*Sinha-lé*" (සිංහ-ලේ), a movement that calls Sinhalese people to paste a sticker that denotes their Sinhala ethnic identity. The hyphen between *Sinha* and *lé*

extremely challenging to engage in a dialogue about durable ways of addressing ethno-national politics, post-war gender justice challenges, in addition to working for social cohesion across caste, class, linguistic, and other socioeconomic/cultural dividing lines. At the time of writing, a clear cleavage along ethno-national lines continues in national politics. Tamil nationalism, for its part, plays a frontline role in parliamentary and provincial politics. The TNA holds power in the Northern Provincial Council, and since August 2015, the leadership of the parliamentary opposition. Despite this presence, its sphere of influence on national-level politics continues to be limited.

The month of May 2007 marked a watershed in the political transformation of post-Agreement Northern Ireland.[3] It was a moment that witnessed the political sphere managing the challenges of the Belfast Agreement.[4] What was hitherto deemed impossible—consensus between the Democratic Unionist Party (DUP) and Sinn Féin (SF) on power—became a reality in the highly-mediatised resumption of the power-sharing Executive. The Hillsborough Castle Agreement of 5 February 2010 served to further expand the remits of devolved governance, by addressing the thorny issue of devolving policing and justice powers to the Northern Ireland Executive, as well as contentious issues pertaining to the Parades Commission and matters of executive coordination. Despite these developments, the challenge of dissident republicanism[5] looms large, with

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implies that those pasting this sticker are bearers of "lion's blood", referring to a founding myth of the Sinhalese people. For a discussion of this trend, see Ahamed 2016.

[3] In this book, the Belfast Agreement of 1998, also known as the Good Friday Agreement, will be referred to by its official name: "The Agreement".

[4] On the challenges inherent in the Belfast Agreement's elite cooperation strategy, see Wilford 2001; Aughey 2005.

[5] Dissident republicanism has continued to demonstrate its presence in Northern Ireland by not infrequent apparitions and statements against the peace process and Irish republican politicians who support the peace process. The emergence of ultra "spoiler" groups opposed to perceived sell-outs is common across all peace processes, and Irish republican dissidents are not "groups apart" (Tonge 2011, 406). In the post-Agreement and post-St Andrew's era, their activism has been marred by two lacunae, namely the absence of a broad popular support base and the divisions between small groups. Concerning the first problem, they have been attempting to lure young men in working class neighbourhoods with a strong Republican support base, such as in the Republican areas of Derry. Concerning the second, a decision announced through *The Guardian* in late July 2012 noted that three of the main dissident republican groups, the Real IRA, the Republican Action Against Drugs (RAAD) and a coalition of independent armed republican groups

the Northern Ireland Executive increasingly unpopular due to its austerity politics. Sectarian tensions persist, and reconciliation on the island of Ireland is still at an early stage. This reality was clearly apparent in mid-2011, in the mass protests and the resulting unrest over new regulations on the hoisting of the Union Jack at Belfast's iconic City Hall. Cracks in the consociational settlement have been especially evident in the 2016–2017 quarter, with the 2016 Northern Ireland Assembly Election being succeeded by another Assembly election in March 2017, less than a year later. At the time of writing, the Assembly is in a deadlock over disagreements between Sinn Féin and the DUP, which especially include Sinn Féin's demand for an Irish Language Act, which the DUP vehemently opposes. Despite such setbacks and disagreements—themselves the result of the rise of "tribune parties" (Mitchell et al. 2009)––the Agreement's three strands have firmly put the province on a path of dialogue. Strong support from the US federal government and the European Union has strengthened the peace process, and serves as an international support network that continues to operate during the ongoing disagreements between Sinn Féin and the DUP in the 2016–2017 quarter. This support also helps to back further legislative developments reinforcing power sharing, such as the 2014 Stormont House Agreement.

Through a comparative exploration of the conflict management processes and broader political trajectories of Sri Lanka and Northern Ireland, this book purports to emphasise the crucial necessity of "decolonising" existing approaches to conflict management and peacebuilding in deeply divided

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have decided to merge to create a new IRA. The objective, according to *The Guardian* report, was to create a unified structure under a single leadership. Only the much older Continuity IRA is not part of this arrangement (*The Guardian* 2012). As far as the Continuity IRA is concerned, its resolve to continue its anti-Agreement and anti-peace process agenda was voiced anew in its July 2012 decision to appoint a new leader and to expel individuals it claimed were acting to the detriment of the organisation. (See notably, "Continuity IRA says it has new leadership in place." *RTÉ NEWS Ireland*, http://www.rte.ie/news/2012/0726/continuity-ira-says-it-has-new-leadership-in-place.html, accessed 30 January 2018). For a comprehensive account of British security strategy concerning dissident Irish republicanism, see Edwards 2012. See also Evans and Tonge 2012. In July 2012, a new outfit calling itself "New IRA" emerged, voicing a "mandate for an armed struggle derives from Britain's denial of the fundamental right of the Irish people to national self-determination and sovereignty" (*The Guardian* 2012b). The New IRA, admitted the murder of Kevin Kearney (46) in North Belfast on Tuesday 8 October 2013, and RAAD was suspected of the murder of Barry McCrory (35) in Derry on Wednesday 9 October 2013 (Moriarty 2013).

societies. The literature on decolonising, widely popular and gaining increasing currency in a number of different research fields in the social sciences, has not sufficiently impacted the overlapping areas of peace and conflict research, peacebuilding, conflict management, and comparative ethnic conflict studies. Decolonising peacebuilding and conflict management cannot be discussed in a vacuum, and is therefore intrinsically connected to ongoing campaigns and struggles that have a decolonising focus: especially the continuing and intense struggles for the fundamental rights of Indigenous peoples in colonised territories. From the French overseas departments in the Caribbean to Turtle Island and to Oceania, Indigenous discourses on key recurrent issues—such as land ownership and the right to an education, the protection and continuity of Indigenous knowledges and languages—are interrelated to peacebuilding. The first way in which advocates of decolonising peacebuilding can inspire is in the resilience of Indigenous peoples through their struggles for justice and for the preservation of their rich heritages.

Discussing Decolonising: Making Sense of a Concept

The term "decolonising" has been used and reused with varying connotations and in the recent spate of interest in "decolonising approaches" its usage in the academy has considerably increased. Although this has led to a certain level of distortion of the term's meaning and significance, the rise of decolonising approaches to research in the social sciences has enhanced the term's scope and significance. "Decolonising", for the purposes of this book, is understood particularly through the Indigenous understanding of the term: as a collective project that seeks to reimagine and rearticulate power, change and knowledge through a multiplicity of epistemologies, ontologies and, axiologies (Sium *et al*. 2012, iii). Especially when considering decolonising in terms of politics and IR, it is a discussion that necessarily unsettles, and cannot take place without contestation. Discussing the possibilities of decolonising peacebuilding and conflict management in deeply divided societies cannot take place in the absence of a core focus on knowledge production and dissemination. In terms of Indigenous decolonising struggles, Indigenous knowledges are indeed the starting point for resurgence and decolonisation, and without this knowledge power base, decolonising is reduced to a domesticated industry of ideas (ibid., iv). Concepts developed by researchers outside the strict confines of conflict research share vital relevance to a discussion of decolonising conflict management and peacebuilding. In addressing the tendency in the Western politics/IR/peace research academy to marginalise

and reject non-Western knowledge and thinking, useful insights can be drawn from initiatives that emphasise the legitimate value of Indigenous knowledges and their relevance for critically interrogating hegemonic knowledge systems within schools, colleges, and universities in Euro-American contexts (Dei 2004, 128). In his discussion of Indigenising the academy, Professor Taiaiake Alfred developed the concept of "Warrior scholarship"; thereby defining his mission as one of working to change universities so that they become "places where the values, principles, and modes of organization and behaviour of our [Indigenous] people [of Turtle Island] are respected in, and hopefully even integrated into the larger system of structures and processes that make up the university itself" (Alfred 2004, 88). This understanding of "decolonising" is also closely linked to a "pluriversal" perspective on knowledge production, going beyond Western "uni-versal", if not "university-based" structures of producing knowledge.[6]

This epistemic framework is of special relevance to the conflict research academy, where perspectives from the global South/s, especially those that do not stand in line with Western perspectives, epistemologies and ontologies, are seldom, if not ever welcome. To stretch this argument further, decolonising cannot simply be summed up to a tokenised inclusion of individuals and perspectives, but a lasting structural change in the ways in which knowledge production and dissemination are understood and executed. Alfred's trenchant critique of reconciliation—especially in relation to residential schools—is also of special relevance to a discussion of conflict management in deeply divided societies. He argues that reconciliation as articulated by the ~~Canadian~~ government is one of recolonisation, because it is all about consolidating the territorial gains of previous generations of settler crimes, claiming that it has nothing to do with transformation or even change (Alfred 2017). In many cases, reconciliation initiatives launched by governmental and supranational bodies are aimed at specific political objectives, and a semblance of reconciliation in the community remains the smallest priority of those who claim to be advocates of reconciliation.

When discussing decolonising at a different level, from a "white-passing" but nonetheless global South/s academic's perspective, Professor

[6] On the concept of the pluriversity, see the following interview with Professor Paulo Wangoola of the Mpambo Afrikan Multiversity: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ubWrNjEV2ck and a talk by Professor Wangoola at the University of Victoria, delivered on 25 October 2013: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=rfHhN4ncC14&t=788s (both links accessed 10 February 2018).

Walter Mignolo has developed the concept of de-linking, thereby marking a rupture from the web of imperial/modern knowledge and from the colonial matrix of power (Mignolo 2009, 20). This challenges the epistemic privileges of Eurocentric scholarship: a process that he also emphatically terms "epistemic disobedience" (see Mignolo 2009; 2011; 2013; 2015). The idea that scholars from the global South/s "can" and "should only" specialise on their country or region of origin, a rule that does not apply to Westerners (Mignolo 2009, 2–3), is one that has been challenged in some disciplines. However, it continues to occupy an influential position in politics and IR, and especially in peace and conflict research. It is often frowned upon if the non-Caucasian and non-white-passing scholar from the global South/s (with less access to white privilege, such as a Western passport) researches a place other than their native country and if the "area" of their study is a place in the global North, outright rejection and ridicule are not uncommon. Others have discussed the duplicities, racial hierarchies, and epistemic violence in knowledge production evoked throughout this book with regard to peacebuilding and conflict management and in relation to the social sciences in general. The concept of geopolitics of knowledge, for example, highlights the epistemic privilege of the First World, if not the West, over other parts of the world and their knowledge production systems (Mignolo 2009, 8). IR has witnessed over a decade-long discussion of geographies of knowledge of world politics in which some cis-white scholars have sought to deny the existence of one-way streets of knowledge production and circulation (see, for example, Agnew 2007). As Professor Kishore Mahbubani (2009, 11) clarifies, most Westerners cannot see that they have arrogated for themselves the moral high ground from which they lecture the world. The rest of the world can see this. This attitude does not come as a surprise, as the racially hierarchized Western politics/IR academy is often very quick to refute and disregard critiques that challenge the system in place, which facilitates and perpetuates the predominance of whiteness and prominence of white-led scholarship.

The vibrant literature around the theme of decolonising, I contend, can and should continue to further influence and positively impact peace and conflict related research. An emphasis on decolonising facilitates the task of articulating new counter-hegemonic narratives, and devising fresh liberationist and decolonising strategies in deeply divided sociopolitical contexts (Masalha 2012, 256). The focus on decolonising advanced in this book is especially inspired by Indigenous epistemologies, of developing a brand of warrior scholarship that unsettles. The term "decolonising", as used in this book, carries the weight of core concepts in Indigenous

epistemologies, such as unlearning, challenging Eurocentric knowledges, shifting the centre of the debate and the resurgence, if not prioritising, of marginalised voices (see, for example, Smith 2012; Wane 2013; Alfred 2005, 2015, 2017). Decolonising peacebuilding and conflict management involves, in the academic and worldwide practitioner realms, a great deal of work that is yet to be accomplished. It is a discourse that requires further framing and development along the tedious path towards decolonising ways of addressing ethno-national conflict in deeply divided societies. In this sense, the present decolonising conversation is very much an early step in a long process of seeking (intersectional-feminist) emancipatory knowledges, moving towards "a different and tangible place, somewhere out there, where no one has really ever been" (Reyes Cruz 2012, 153).

Postcolonial IR, Feminist IR and Decolonising Peacebuilding

In developing a decolonising perspective on peacebuilding, conflict management and knowledge generation in peace and conflict research, this book especially inspires from existing work not only in postcolonial and feminist IR, but also (and more importantly) in the broader sphere of critical postcolonial/intersectional feminist scholarship. Despite their tremendous relevance to problems in postcolonial societies affected by armed conflict, these readings are yet to have a concretely tangible effect on peace and conflict-related research. Over the years, a growing number of scholars have critically questioned the Eurocentrism inherent in security studies and IR theory (Darby 1997; Paolini 1999; Barkawi and Laffey 2006; Seth 2011, 2012, 2013; Sabaratnam 2011b; Vasilaki 2012). Sabaratnam (2011b) develops a rich theoretical discussion with regard to decolonising strategies for IR, which, however, does not adequately take into account the absolutely crucial and central importance of an intersectional-feminist perspective and this omission amounts to a Eurocentric critique of Eurocentrism in IR. This critique is also one that is both extremely theoretical and extra cautious in order to avoid any sharp, if not controversial, claims and is, therefore, intended for the consumption of a largely white western IR academy.

Gender Politics: The Clearest Indicator of the Need for Decolonising

In developing a case for decolonising peacebuilding and peace and conflict research-related knowledge production, some of the most pertinent reasons for pursuing such an approach can be found in recent research in gender politics. To begin with, peace processes, talks before talks, confidence-building strategies, and all aspects of market reform-based peacebuilding seldom involve women or non-cisheteronormative people in frontline roles. Apart from the usage of war-affected women and children for political agendas and, in the case of INGOs and peacebuilding practitioners, for funding purposes, the emphasis on making women part and parcel of peace efforts is minimal in practice. In cases where women have indeed played absolutely decisive roles in advancing peace processes (such as the important contributions of the late Dr Mo Mowlam MP in Northern Ireland and the Women's Coalition in its participation in the province's peace talks of the 1990s), analysts, researchers, chroniclers, and the press seldom recall them, and patriarchal machinations in conflict resolution are such that in comparison with their cis-male peers, women's legacies are obliterated with relative ease.

When it comes to research on gender and peacebuilding, the work is once again largely produced, spearheaded, and gate-kept by cis white women, who almost never question their own positions of tremendous privilege (see for example, Rioux and Gagné 2005; Porter 2007; Ni Aolain *et al*. 2011; Scannable and Tabishalieva 2012; Noma et al, 2012). This very much happens to be the case even with regard to the majority of critical perspectives on women and peacebuilding (Scully 2010; Pruitt 2013; Shepherd 2016). In the sphere of world politics, policy formulation on gender, peacebuilding and political reform in deeply divided places is carried out in a way that prioritises the interests of the global North. The UN's women, peace, and security (WPS) agenda is a case in point. Its near-white feminist conceptualisation of "gender", largely based on the concept of gender mainstreaming, has been the subject of much criticism even in restrictive academic circles (see, for example, Beveridge and Nott 2002; Hafner-Burton and Pollack 2002; Rees, 2005; Walby 2005; Perrons 2005; Youngs 2008; True 2010). Researchers have shown that even initiatives intended at reinforcing gender equality, such as gender mainstreaming, fall short of being inclusive of gender minorities and people in societies that do not subscribe to a Western reading of the gender binary persistently interpret "gender" around the "heteronormative binary", (see Zalewski 2010 21–22). This very basic understanding of

gender as limited to the cis-male and cis-female binary prevents supranational bodies from paying adequate attention to the multiple interfaces between race, sex, gender, nationality, ethnicity, sexuality, and power (ibid., 25; see also Jauhola 2010). Further delving into the UN's WPS/ Resolution 1325 agendas through a north-south comparative perspective, Jauhola (2016) outlines how WPS, when used as a branded peacebuilding tool, perpetuates exclusionary practices and carries coercive and colonial undertones.

These problems also invariably extend to the research area of "feminist security studies". The potential of feminist security studies to critically engage with and destabilize gendered power relations has been repeatedly highlighted (see Åhäll 2016). This body of work takes a highly cisgender feminist turn bordering on "white feminism", in its efforts to make distinctions and subjective and restrictive interpretations of what is implied by "feminist". This is also the case with the large majority of existing research in what we know as Feminist IR that calls upon us to see "security" as related, in many important ways, to gender issues (Hudson 2011, 586; see also Sjoberg 2009; Sjoberg and Martin 2010). Despite strongly challenging the dominant, repressive and invariably patriarchal ways in which national security, international security coalitions, foreign policy priorities and defence mechanisms are conceived, feminist security studies remain a considerably restrictive field.

A cursory glance at writings in a journal such as *Politics and Gender* suffices to observe that the large majority of contributors are cis-white and able-bodied women in lucrative positions of influence in Western academia. Their theorising invariably focuses on the gender binary, thereby limiting their brand of feminism to cis (and largely white) able-bodied women (see Wibben 2011; Wibben and Stern 2014). It is a field that seldom accommodates a diversity of perspectives, and sidelines voices of women of colour, Indigenous women, as well as the voices of Trans and Queer feminist scholars. The exception is indeed the important body of work carried out somewhat outside the strict confines of IR by cis female scholars with their roots in the global South/s, such as Professor Chandra Mohanty (Mohanty 1988, 2003, 2006, 2008). Indeed, the incentive for developing a decolonising perspective on ethno-national conflict in deeply divided societies can be found in postcolonial-feminist contributions to IR.

Back in 1996, Roxanne Doty contended that just as Filipino voices were systematically silenced by Western members of the Paris Peace Conference, the so-called "mainstream" international relations community ignores "third world" voices and the issue of representation itself (Doty 1996, 163–4). This tendency to adopt a patronising attitude and sideline, if

not obliterate, voices from the global South/s continues to happen in international relations, in both academic and practitioner realms. Despite the important contributions of postcolonial and feminist IR, it is still customary to refer to cis-white-male-dominated older approaches as "mainstream" IR.

This book is an effort to demonstrate the clear necessity of going beyond such practices, and moving towards more equitable approaches to discussions on world politics. Indeed, this book is not the first attempt at considering the importance of decolonising peacebuilding and conflict management/resolution. Fontan (2012), for example, focuses on this perspective, calling into question the discrepancies and duplicities inherent in peacebuilding projects, and exploring alternative and non-conventional initiatives that exist in different parts of the world.

Decolonising has also received academic attention in the field of Development Studies (see, for example, Langdon 2013). Departing from the premise that the linear evolutionary paradigm of development that comes out of Western knowledge production is a contemporary form of colonialism, Apffel-Marglin and Marglin (1996), for instance, bring together nine contributions that explore the vital relevance of a decolonising perspective to development studies research. This body of work is of special relevance to a discussion on decolonising peacebuilding, as foreign aid provisions and economic development initiatives, in the form of open markets and investments, are part and parcel of peacebuilding strategies. Indeed, the political economy of peacebuilding is one of the most coercive and hierarchical aspects of peace processes, in which governments in the global South/s have very little bargaining power. It is an area in which the hegemonic and uncompromising influence of powers in the global North, and their resolve to impose their agendas at any cost, are clearly apparent.

Peace and Conflict: A Research Area in Which "White Privilege" Plays an Especially Influential Role

A salient reality about what we know as peace research, peacebuilding, and conflict management is that they are very "white" fields of research. Eurocentrism, or the assumption of European centrality in the human past and present, has shaped, and continues to shape much of international relations and security studies (see Amin 1989; Grovogui 2002; Barkawi and Laffey 2006; Kayaoglu 2010; Bilgin 2010; Hobson 2012; Çapan 2016). "Peace and Conflict Studies" is also a sector of academic research in which knowledge produced in the global North is considered as the most authoritative, in both academic and practitioner circles. The