Peace as Betrayal: On the human cost of relational peacebuilding in transitional contexts

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Wilhelm Verwoerd, Alistair Little and Brandon Hamber[1]

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This article explores the microdynamics of intragroup betrayal and self-betrayal that can be evoked by relational peacebuilding between groups. The painful accusation of betrayal by close, family type group members and internally feeling like a betrayer as a result of working with the 'other side' is presented as an underestimated human cost of relational peacebuilding. This understanding emerged from an international 'Beyond Dehumanisation' research project, which included experienced peace practitioners from South Africa, the Israel-Palestine region and the conflict in and about Northern Ireland. The emerging diagnostic framework is supported by (and provide empirical support for) theories of betrayal that stress how deeply relational betrayal is. The resonance with Margalit's theory of betrayal as the 'undermining of thick relations' is especially strong. 'Peace as betrayal' suggests the need for more practical support for peacebuilders and can also be applied more widely to render *resistance* to transitional justice processes more visible.

Key words:

Betrayal; betrayers; intragroup peacebuilding; human cost; microdynamics; resistance to transitional justice

Peacebuilding as perceived betrayal

[1] Verwoerd is a Senior Research Associate and Facilitator, Studies in Historical Trauma and Transformation, Stellenbosch University, South Africa; Little is a Northern Ireland-based peace practitioner with more than 25 years of local and international experience; Hamber is the John Hume and Thomas P. O'Neill Chair in Peace at Ulster University, and a Clinical Psychologist and Facilitator.

> [A]t the beginning you feel like you are betraying yourself. You feel like you are betraying your community and your people by empathising with someone you see as an enemy. It's very difficult. People get angry with you. They will say 'you're turning soft now, you're soft', you know. And it's tough. I remember way back when I first brought some friends, some white friends, into my community. Some of my friends said, 'Ah Themba, you're bringing settlers now to the community.' And it was painful to hear that from people whom I saw as my friends and my people (July 2013).

This statement highlights how conflictual, how costly peacebuilding can be, especially for those who have been deeply involved in and affected by violent political conflict. Themba Lonzi was a passionate anti-apartheid youth activist in the 1980s, filled with hatred towards white South Africans, who were regarded as oppressors and 'settlers' who took over 'our land'. Since the late 1990s he became a dedicated reconciliation practitioner, using community theatre, music, storytelling and dialogue to bring members of civil society together across persistent racialized divisions.

He made the above statement as a participant in an international Beyond Dehumanisation research project, carried out by Verwoerd, Little and Hamber.[2] This project included 24 experienced peacebuilders from South Africa, the conflict in and about Northern Ireland, the Israel-Palestine region. Most of these peacebuilders were actively involved in their respective conflicts as former soldiers, fighters, paramilitaries and/or were directly affected as victims/survivors. Many of their views, as we will show, resonated strongly with Themba Lonzi's (initial) experience of feeling as if 'you are betraying yourself', 'your

[2] This project was funded by The Fetzer Institute, Projects 3186 and 3291. In this article, we have chosen to use the individuals' real names. This is done with express permission. Approved by Ethics Filter Committee at Ulster University (2010; 2013).

community', 'your people' by 'empathising with someone you see as an enemy'. He was also not alone in having to face anger from his friends and community for befriending their (former) enemies. Behind this anger, other participants confirmed, was the perception that this kind of peace work amounts to betrayal.

In this article we take this perception seriously, from the point of view of peacebuilders accused of betrayal by people close to them *and* by a part of themselves.[3] Guided by the lived experience and reflections of peacebuilders within the Beyond Dehumanisation project, as well as our own personal and extensive professional experience, we flesh out why the 'feeling' of self and ingroup betrayal can be so painful for someone like Themba Lonzi. Through this exploration of the multi-layered dynamics of betrayal we draw attention to an underestimated reason why peacebuilding, especially for former combatants, can be so 'very difficult', and so 'tough'. In the process we highlight how the pain of (real or perceived) betrayal can also help to explain resistance to transitional justice. We argue that overcoming this source of opposition to relational peacebuilding and transitional justice will require a greater focus on individual and intragroup support for bridgebuilders.

Our approach is supported by (and provide empirical support for) theories of betrayal that stress how deeply relational betrayal is. Typically, betrayal is defined in terms of the violation of trust.[4] For Åkerström the 'breach of trust involved is an overstepping of a We-

[3] Literature on betrayal tends to focus on the betrayed, not the betrayer. This is evident in literature on betrayal trauma, Jennifer J. Freyd, Anne P. Deprince, and David H. Gleaves, 'The state of betrayal trauma theory: Reply to McNally—Conceptual issues, and future directions,' *Memory* 15 (3) (2007): 295-311; on betrayal in moral injury literature, Edgar Jones, 'Moral injury in a context of trauma,' *The British Journal of Psychiatry* 216 (3) (2020):127-8, J. Shay, *Achilles in Vietnam: Combat Trauma and the Undoing of Character* (New York: Sribner, Simon & Schuster, 1995) and in Lawther's work on loyalist ex-combatants feeling betrayed by the Irish peace process, Cheryl Lawther, 'The Truth about Loyalty: Emotions, Ex-Combatants and Transitioning from the Past,' *International Journal of Transitional Justice* 11 (3) (2017):484-504. There are exceptions such as the comprehensive work of Malin Åkerström, *Betrayal and Betrayers—The Sociology of Treachery* (New Brunswick: Transaction, 1991).

[4] Åkerström, supra n 4 at 2; Nachman Ben-Yehuda, *Betrayal and treason: violations of trust and loyalty* (Cambridge, MA: Westview Press, Perseus Books Group, 2001); A. R. Elangovan and Debra L. Shapiro, 'Betrayal of Trust in Organizations,' *Academy of Management Review* 23 (3) (1998): 547-66; Julie Fitness,

boundary - the We consisting of relations ranging from a pair of friends to a nation'.[5] Margalit's multi-layered notion of 'thick' relations is particularly relevant. Such relations are characterised by exclusive mutual care, by a deep sense of belonging and existential meaning, interwoven with shared memories.[6] These thick relations, modelled by family and friends, are contrasted with 'thin' relations defined as the basic respect one owes to all persons in their capacity as human beings. Margalit's central claim is that the home of betrayal is thick relationships and that betrayal involves the undermining and breaking of thick relationships. As he states 'betrayal is ungluing the glue of thick human relations'.[7] As suggested by Themba Lonzi's reference to 'feeling' like a betrayer, the literature also stress the intense affective dimension of being betrayed, with feelings of indignation, contempt and revenge typically evoked.[8]

When it comes to peace and betrayal, our focus is not at the macro political level, i.e. political treason and betrayal at the state level[9] or what Shklar calls public treachery.[10] Nor are we interested in betrayal as a concern within formal negotiations or peacemaking, where often suing for peace is seen as a betrayal of previous principles.[11] That said, this wider collective, political connection between peace and betrayal provides the context for our interest in an area of betrayal seldom explored. This area is the central place (perceived)

'Betrayal, Rejection, Revenge, and Forgiveness: An Interpersonal Script Approach,' in *Interpersonal rejection* ed. M. Leary (New York: Oxford University Press, 2001), 73-103; Rodger L. Jackson, 'The Sense and Sensibility of Betrayal: Discovering the Meaning of Treachery Through Jane Austen,' *Humanitas* 13 (2) (2000):72-89; Gabriella Turnaturi, *Betrayals: The Unpredictability of Human Relations* (Chicago, USA: University of Chicago Press, 2007).

[5] Åkerström, supra n 4 at 2, 2. In a similar vein, others have called betrayal breaking the rules of communal relationships, Fitness, 'Betrayal, Rejection, Revenge, and Forgiveness', or the denial of the most elementary of social ties, Judith Shklar, *Ordinary Vices* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1984).

[6] Avishai Margalit, *On Betrayal*, (Cambridge, Massachusetts: Harvard University Press, 2017).

[7] Margalit, Ibid., 47.

[8] Åkerström, supra n 4 at 2; Lawther, supra n 4 at 2; Margalit, n 8 at 3.

[9] Ben-Yehuda, supra n 6 at 3; Rebecca West, *The New Meaning of Treason* (New York: The Viking Press, 1964).

[10] Shklar, supra n 6 at 3.

[11] Takudzwa Hillary Chiwanza, 'Did Nelson Mandela Sell Out the Black South Africans?,' *The African Exponent* 31 August 2017 https://www.africanexponent.com/post/8556-some-people-have-suggested-that-mandela-sold-out-south-africa; Lawther, supra n 4 at 2.

betrayal has in the minds, and potentially the actions, of someone like Themba who wish to take a step toward peace by engaging with former enemies in a more intimate and personal way. In other words, our focus is on the underestimated microdynamics of intragroup betrayal and selfbetrayal that can be evoked by civil society based relational peacebuilding.[12] Especially when this kind of peacebuilding includes intensely interpersonal processes such as storytelling and 'deep dialogue'.[13] Our focus complements Lawther's work on the neglected emotion of loyalty as an underappreciated root of antipathy amongst former armed actors towards truth recovery in transitional justice contexts, and in particular the notion of 'loyalty as betrayal' that emerged from her qualitative interviews with loyalist ex-combatants in Northern Ireland.[14]

Themba Lonzi's statement that he felt like a betrayer 'at the beginning' suggests there is more to his story of peace and betrayal. However, in this article we do not focus on how he and other peacebuilders within the Beyond Dehumanisation project have, more or less, come to terms with this perception, often contesting and even reversing accusations of betrayal from family and friends. We are fully aware of the need to engage with the evaluative moral challenge inherent in deciding whether a perception of betrayal is real.[15] But in this article our aim is more diagnostic: to deepen understanding of the potential human cost of relational peacebuilding for those who, as a result, are perceived as betrayers by people that really matter to them. For, as Jackson points out, no matter the reason for betrayal (or even if

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[12] Our focus on 'relational peacebuilding' has elements of what others have termed 'people-to-people peacebuilding', see M. Gawerc, 'Peacebuilding: Theoretical and Concrete Perspectives', *Peace & Change*, 31 (4) (2006): 435-478. We use the term 'relational peacebuilding' to refer to civil society driven, grassroots level work with groups within divided societies that specifically aims at building or rebuilding fractured relationships following conflict. For peacebuilding approaches that focus more on macro level structural and institutional rebuilding, see http://www.un.org/peace/peacebuilding.

[13] J. Senehi, 'Constructive Storytelling: A Peace Process,' *Peace and Conflict Studies* 9 (2) (2002):41-63; Alistair Little and Wilhelm Verwoerd, *Journey through Conflict Trail Guide* (Trafford, 2013).

[14] Lawther, supra n 4 at 2.

[15] Margalit, supra n 8 at 3, 29.

someone is not deemed a betrayer) engaging in such activities is risky and still present 'dangers' to the 'souls' of those involved.[16]

The main body of this article is therefore devoted to exploring the human cost of perceived betrayal. Next, we will give more detail on the background of the Beyond Dehumanisation project. Thereafter, we focus on the disruptive impact of betrayal on a range of intragroup 'We' relationships. Then we explore why peacebuilding poses such 'dangers' to the 'souls' of those involved given the often intense inner conflict evoked by reaching out to former enemies. In the concluding section we outline some of the implications of this betrayal diagnosis for transitional justice.

Learning from international peace practitioners

Between November 2012 and May 2014, Verwoerd, Little and Hamber used their professional networks to bring together a total of 24 experienced relational peacebuilders for a series of reflective workshops. There were three region-specific, two-day workshops, held in Ireland, South Africa and Palestine (West Bank).[17] Three to four follow-up interviews were also carried out in each case. This reflective process culminated in an international, three-day workshop, held in Northern Ireland.[18]

A unique feature of this group of relational peacebuilders is that most of them were *directly* involved (as combatants) in and/or affected by their respective conflicts and have

[16] Jackson, supra n 5 at 3, 87.
[17] The workshop on the conflict in and about Northern Ireland was held outside Dublin in November 2012 (7 participants); the South African workshop in July 2013 (8 participants); the Israeli-Palestinian workshop took place in the West Bank, in November 2013 (9 participants) and the international workshop in May 2014 (6 participants). Quotations from specific workshop transcripts will be referred to by date. For a visual introduction to a number of these participants and the facilitators of the process, see http://www.beyondwallsfilm.com/charactersindex.
[18] The Beyond Dehumanisation project also involved a separate strand with a specific focus on Vietnam veterans in the USA, including a two-day reflective workshop, held in March 2013, with 10 participants. This workshop and the follow-up interviews highlighted different aspects of the dynamics of betrayal, namely 'moral injury' and feeling betrayed *by* wider society and the government, which we plan to address elsewhere. See Jones supra n 4 at 2; Shay supra n 4 at 2.

subsequently deeply engaged with former enemies in attempts to build peace.[19] The workshops and interviews' primary purpose was to gather and share practical wisdom around the challenges of such work and specifically humanising your enemy in settings marred by political violence.[20]

This project's focus emerged from the work of Verwoerd, Little and Hamber who together and independently had each worked for nearly two decades as relational peacebuilders, mostly with those affected by and participating in violent political conflict.[21]

However, this work and the project that we report on here notably emerged not merely from professional experience but also real-life challenges. Before becoming a peace practitioner, Alistair Little was immersed in loyalist (Protestant) paramilitary violence as a teenager in Northern Ireland and over time became committed to an inner and outer

[19] The expression 'directly involved in and/or affected by' is an attempt to avoid the heavy baggage and contestation that comes with 'combatants', 'veterans', 'perpetrators', 'victims'. On the complexity of language for 'direct participants' see Tristan Anne Borer, 'A Taxonomy of Victims and Perpetrators: Human Rights and Reconciliation in South Africa,' *Human Rights Quarterly* 25, no. 4 (2003):1088-11; Trudy Govier and Wilhelm Verwoerd, 'How not to polarize "victims" and "perpetrators"', *Peace Review*, 16 (3)(2004):371-377; Trudy Govier and Wilhelm Verwoerd, 'Responsibility and Responsiveness', *Praxis*, 13 (20)(2011):9-23; Brandon Hamber, *Transforming Societies After Political Violence: Truth, Reconciliation and Mental Health* (New York: Springer, 2009).

[20] For more on ex-combatants as peacebuilders see John Brewer, David Mitchell, and Gerard Leavey, *Ex-Combatants, Religion and Peace in Northern Ireland: The Role of Religion in Transitional Justice* (Hampshire: Palgrave Macmillan, 2013); Peter Shirlow and Kieran McEvoy, *Beyond the Wire: Ex-prisoners and Conflict Transformation in Northern Ireland* (London: Pluto Press, 2008); Kieran McEvoy and Peter Shirlow, 'Re-imagining DDR: Ex-combatants, leadership and moral agency in conflict transformation,' *Theoretical Criminology* 13 (2009):31-59; Claire Mitchell, 'The Limits of Legitimacy: Former Loyalist Combatants and Peace-Building in Northern Ireland,' *Irish Political Studies* 23 (1) (2008):1-19. On the participation of victims in peacebuilding see D. Androff, '"To not hate": reconciliation among victims of violence and participants of the Greensboro Truth and Reconciliation Commission,' *Contemporary Justice Review* 13 (3) (2010):269-85; Vincent Druliolle and Roddy Brett, eds., *The Politics of Victimhood in Post-conflict Societies* (Cham, Switzerland: Palgrave MacMillan, 2018); Mijke de Waardt and Sanne Weber, 'Beyond Victims' Mere Presence: An Empirical Analysis of Victim Participation in Transitional Justice in Colombia,' *Journal of Human Rights Practice* 11 (1) (2019):209-28; Kieran McEvoy and Kirsten McConnachie, 'Victims and Transitional Justice:Voice, Agency and Blame,' *Social & Legal Studies* 22 (4) (2013):489-513; Albrecht Schnabel and Anara Tabyshalieva, eds., *Defying Victimhood: Women and Post-Conflict Peacebuilding* (Tokyo: UNU Press, 2012).

[21] Hamber, supra n 19 at 6; Brandon Hamber, Alistair Little and Wilhelm Verwoerd, '*Cultivating Peace: An exploration of the role of nature-based activities in conflict transformation',* paper presented at the 29th Annual Nobel Peace Prize Forum (Minneapolis, Minnesota, Augsburg University, 15-16 September 2017); Little and Verwoerd, supra n 13 at 4.

journeying of reconciliation with former enemies. [22] Personal and professional peacebuilding also overlapped for Hamber as an English-speaking white South African (and a clinical psychologist who works with a range of individuals affected by the conflict in different countries) and Verwoerd as a white Afrikaner (and reconciliation facilitator and researcher): both share the troublesome legacy of their 'whiteness' in the South African context alongside their professional work. Verwoerd, however, has faced additional personal challenges as he is the grandson of dr. HF Verwoerd, widely regarded as 'the architect of Apartheid', to whom most of his family have remained steadfastly loyal.[23]

Thus, a vital feature of the process was that it not only focused on the reflective dialogue between participants using methodologies previously developed by Verwoerd, Little and Hamber.[24] This approach also includes a self-reflexive element. As such, we have included, in line with our participatory facilitation method, reflections from the authors during the dialogues we explore in this article.

Several factors influenced our decision to mostly use the format of small group, multi-day reflective workshops to gather the real-life and practical knowledge we were looking for. Firstly, this methodology was familiar to the authors who had used this format in previous dialogue work, knowing that it evoked deep and reflective responses often facilitated by the sharing of participants and facilitators of their experiences. We have experienced many times that in the interaction and discussion between committed and diverse participants, questions, and insights come to the fore that transcend individuals' wisdom on their own or in structured focus groups. Secondly, we aimed to make the reflective process as authentic as possible; carefully selecting participants in each country/region to ensure a

[22] Alistair Little, with Ruth Scott, *Give a Boy a Gun: From Killing to Peace-making* (London: Darton, Longman and Todd, 2009).
[23] Wilhelm Verwoerd, *Verwoerd: My Journey through Family Betrayals* (Cape Town: Tafelberg, 2019).
[24] For example, see Little and Verwoerd, supra n 13 at 4; Hamber, Little and Verwoerd, supra n 21 at 7.

diversity of conflict-related backgrounds. By allowing space for storytelling and dialogue during the workshops, we were often experiencing in the moment what we were reflecting on, i.e. processes of humanisation, mutual understanding, compassion, not to mention the riskiness of engaging with one's truths about the past with (former) enemies in the room.

The inductive coding methodology that allowed us to focus on specific themes for the writing stage of the reflective process included the transcription of the multi-day country-specific and international reflective workshops as well as interviews. Transcription was combined with minor editing to improve readability (reduce repetitions and grammar mistakes, clarify where necessary, since English for many participants is their second/third language), while staying as close as possible to what was said.[25] We then systematically worked through the 689 pages of these transcripts and coded each page.[26] This coding allowed us to identify main themes and sub-themes, including (de)humanisation, forgiveness, apology, compassion, responsibility, promising relational peacebuilding processes, such as storytelling and dialogue, and practices of self-care. In the process the complex intrapersonal and intragroup dynamics of betrayal, including connections with apology and forgiveness, emerged as a prominent cross-cutting theme, to which we now turn.[27]

Disrupting thick relations

Themba Lonzi already highlighted his friends' anger at him for bringing 'white settlers' into their community. For other participants the biggest impact of engaging with historical enemies was on family relationships. Rachel McMonagle, a young Protestant from

[25] Additional permission was granted for use of specific quotations in this article.
[26] See Victoria Elliott, 'Thinking about the Coding Process in Qualitative Data Analysis', *The Qualitative Report* 23 (11) (2018): 2850-2861.
[27] For initial reflections on forgiveness see Alistair Little and Wilhelm Verwoerd, 'Public and Private: Practitioner Reflections on Forgiveness and Reconciliation', in Catherine Hundleby, ed., *Reasonable Responses: The Thought of Trudy Govier* (Windsor, Ontario: University of Windsor, 2016); on apology and betrayal see Wilhelm Verwoerd and Alistair Little, 'Beyond a Dilemma of Apology: Transforming (Veteran) Resistance to Reconciliation in Northern Ireland and South Africa' in Björn Krondorfer, ed., *Reconciliation in Global Context* (New York: SUNY Press, 2018).

Londonderry/Derry in Northern Ireland, articulated this in her relationship with her father. Her father was in the Ulster Defence Regiment (UDR) of the British Army and narrowly escaped several attacks from the Irish Republican Army (IRA) and related armed groups. As a five-year-old, she once rushed in between her father and a masked man with a gun, pleading, 'please don't shoot my daddy, please don't shoot my daddy!' Years later, she became a youth worker in her very divided hometown. She realised that she couldn't expect young people to reach across the divide between Protestants and Catholics if she was not willing to do the same.

> [For] me it was a real personal choice and a real personal journey that I needed to go and sit down with people to understand why things happened and why things were the way they were in Northern Ireland. So that's when I went on my first storytelling workshop. [I]t wasn't until I came home from that residential that I felt a real sense of betrayal. A real sense that I had been in a room with people who potentially were part of the organisations that were willing to kill my father. I had a feeling of betrayal of myself and I had a feeling of betrayal towards my father (May 2014).

Others too had experiences where family members actively disagreed with their peacebuilding actions, including being accused of betrayal. Verwoerd referred to his experience as follows:

> [I]n the mid-1980s…my brother was fighting in the South African Defence Force in Angola and I was meeting with people from ANC backgrounds. I felt like I was...I was betraying my own family, my own community. [M]y father would still say, 'that's what you did' (Jul 2013).

Ginn Fourie was another participant in the South African leg of the Beyond Dehumanisation project. Her daughter, Lyndi, was killed during an Azanian People's Liberation Army (APLA) attack on a tavern in Cape Town in 1993.[28] During the South African Truth and Reconciliation Commission Process (TRC) process she reached out to Letlapa Mpahlele, the APLA commander who ordered the attack. Eventually, she started working with him to promote reconciliation in South Africa and beyond.[29] Her husband, however, fundamentally disagrees with her actions, advocating punishment via the criminal justice system. Ginn responded to Themba Lonzi's difficulty with friends accusing him of 'turning soft' for working with white 'settlers' by saying: 'I know that struggle. My husband cannot understand how I can fraternise with his daughter's killer. And swan all over the world with him. Just doesn't make any sense' (Jul 2013).

Likewise for Ralph Burrows whose son was one of the last British soldiers to be killed by the IRA, outlined how his other sons reacted to him being involved in the Glencree victim support programme (LIVE) and then gradually moving toward meeting started former IRA prisoners: 'My two sons thought that I was betraying their brother for a long time. And they said things like, "********* IRA ex-prisoners...How could you? How could you do that?"'(Nov 2012). [30]

In other words, speaking with former enemies contained real familial risks. As Rachel McMonagle put it:

[28] APLA was the military wing of the Pan African Congress (PAC), a more Africanist liberation organisation than the better known internationally African National Congress (ANC).
[29] See www.forgivenessproject.com; and the autobiography of Ginn Fourie Ginn Fourie, *The Lyndi Tree: An autobiography of hope* (Melbourne, Australia: Tablo 2019).
[30] See case study by Ian White on victim-combatant dialogues in Northern Ireland, Ian White, 'Victim–Combatant Dialogue in Northern Ireland,' ed. D. Bloomfield, T. Barnes, and L. Huyse, *Reconciliation After Violent Conflict: A Handbook* (Stockholm: IDEA, 2003).

> For myself, personally, entering into a process like this took a lot of courage from me and came at a lot of personal risk. Potentially, I could have...my father could have turned his back on me and my mother could have turned her back on me and everybody within my family could have disowned [me for] the fact that I was going and sitting in a room with people that we saw as former enemies (May 2014).

For many of those with whom we worked, there was an added dynamic beyond the betrayal of immediate family and friends, namely, the close relationship with those with whom you share and ideological position and in some cases, you have engaged in active armed conflict together. Gerry Foster, a former member of the Irish National Liberation Army (INLA)[31] in Northern Ireland, articulated clearly the disruptive impact of reaching out to the other side on these strong bonds, especially with those who died while fighting for the same political cause and organisation. He opposed the cease-fire agreement of the early 1990s but eventually, reluctantly became involved in the non-violent political process to achieve his political goal of a united Ireland. During 2005 he had his first encounter with a group of elderly family members of British soldiers killed by the IRA and the INLA. This encounter for the first time really brought home the suffering of the enemy.

> It was after that weekend at Glencree[32] that I really felt the strong sense of betrayal. It was really frightening. I was up at my dad's grave and they're feet apart, the INLA plot is near enough next to it. I was looking down at the names on INLA graves, most of the names I knew. I was thinking by myself 'What would they think of me now; what would they be thinking of what I'm doing?' I felt 'I let you'se

[31] A more militant splinter group from the IRA (Irish Republican Army).
[32] Peace and reconciliation centre near Dublin, Ireland, see www.glencree.ie

> down, lads.' That was a part that was really strong within me, that I am not only letting them'uns down. I am letting myself down (Nov 2012).

The sense of betrayal increases the closer it appears the peacebuilder is to the enemy. As Ralph Burrows put it during the Northern Ireland reflective workshop: '[A]fter a while, I said, "The strange thing is that these people are now my friends." I think my kids found it difficult to understand this friendship, you know' (Nov 2012).

As the discussion at this Northern Ireland workshop made clear, Ralph Burrows' children were not the only ones with difficulties:

> Ralph, when you said there about some of those people becoming friends, so I've been on workshops with Republican prisoners where they haven't socialised with me, and they've said to me upfront, in terms of my family, coming to an event like this and having these discussions is one thing. But if I was to go back, you know, and say I was having a pint with you, that's just a different step, and they wouldn't be ready to understand that.' And loyalists, too, that I've worked with, said, 'Yeah, I have a working relationship with Republicans, but I wouldn't socialise with them' (Nov 2012).

The language of 'friendship' suggests a strength of emotional connection and intimacy that go deeper than 'working relations', a degree of vulnerability and trust that go beyond mere tolerance, a measure of mutual understanding and shared commitments.[33] This kind of friendship with former enemies stand in sharp contrast with the demonisation that Ralph Burrows, for example, started with in his relationship with Gerry Foster.

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[33] Trudy Govier and Wilhelm Verwoerd, 'Trust and the Problem of National Reconciliation', *Philosophy of the Social Sciences* 32 (2) (2002):178-205; Margalit, n 8 at 3.

The practitioner reflections within the Beyond Dehumanisation project draws attention to what might lie behind this fear of 'socialising', namely the risk of being seen as too supportive of the enemy, of being perceived as a betrayer of friends and family within one's own community. Furthermore, in beginning to make sense of these family and friendship related experiences of (perceived) betrayal, these practitioners highlighted the disruptive potential of peacebuilding for a strong, exclusive sense of *belonging*, of shared existential *meaning* and of 'sacred' *memories*. These clarifying practitioner reflections overlap strongly with the three interwoven strands of Margalit's understanding of 'thick' relations. By now taking a closer look at how some peacebuilders have articulated these three strands we, on the one hand, provide further empirical support for Margalit's (inductive) theory of betrayal as the 'undermining of thick relations'. On the other hand, we use his philosophical framework to tie together, retrospectively, different peace practitioner understandings of their lived experiences of (perceived) betrayal.

The first strand of 'belonging' featured explicitly in the post-workshop interview with Chen Alon, the inspirational co-founder of Combatants for Peace.[34] Despite a strong Zionist socialisation, he reached a point where he refused to serve as a soldier in the Occupied Territories. He became convinced that it would be in everyone's interests peacefully to change the injustice of the Occupation. Still, by working with the enemy, he broke powerful taboos in his community with the accusation of traitor and betrayal following:

> A few years earlier I couldn't even have imagined doing this. Initially I was terrified. You know I was the son. My parents were proud of their son, a major serving in a combatant unit. All the friends and the family were proud of me. When

[34] See www.cfpeace.org, former Israeli soldiers and Palestinian fighters working together for a just peace, and their sister organisation *The Parents' Circle-Family Forum*, comprising Israeli and Palestinian survivors committed to 'breaking the cycles of blood' that cost the lives of their loved ones, see www.theparentscircle.com.

> I told my parents that I am about to form Combatants for Peace the first thing that my mother asked me was, 'Isn't that dangerous for you?' This working with the enemy was something exceptionally dangerous for her: to be banned, not to belong to society, not to belong to the mainstream, to the narrative...not to belong to the 'Us'.
>
> A very close friend of my parents said to my father, 'I saw the name of your son in the newspaper, but let's not get into it because you know what I think. I think they should put them against the wall and shoot all of them, all these traitors' (2 Dec 2013).

Chen Alon's conceptualisation of not belonging to 'the "Us"' fits with much of the literature on betrayal that emphasises the importance of relations in the process, and particularly a closed familial or bonded group that continually seeks to remain uncontaminated and unchanged in the face of 'the corrupting Other'.[35] As a sociologist Åkerström notes, in conflict the boundaries between groups are drawn sharply and are often thought of as impermeable.[36] Adding to this, as Margalit highlights, animosity towards a common enemy can also serve to strengthen bonds of friendship and family.[37]

For many combatants, the bonds of loyalty to 'comrades' can be as strong or even stronger than bonds of love to the family.[38] It is no surprise that the language of family is often used to describe the intimate and profound nature of these connections such as 'band of

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[35] Andreas Wimmer, *Ethnic Boundary Making: Institutions, Power, Networks* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2013), cited in Eleonora Narvselius and Gelinada Grinchenko, 'Introduction: "Formulas of Betrayal"—Traitors, Collaborators and Deserters in Contemporary European Politics of Memory,' in Gelinada Grinchenko and Eleonora Narvselius, ed., *Traitors, Collaborators and Deserters in Contemporary European Politics of Memory: Formulas of Betrayal* (Cham: Springer International Publishing, 2018), 14.
[36] Åkerström, supra n 4 at 2.
[37] Margalit, supra n 8 at 3.
[38] Lawther, supra n 4 at 2.

brothers' or 'brothers in arms' or 'blood brothers' to describe the strength of bonds between soldiers or non-state combatants belonging to armed organisations.[39] The link with violence here can be significant because there is an intensity to this connection and the levels of trust needed to survive. Since trust is an inherently risky endeavour, trust is amplified when it literally can mean the difference between life and death.[40] This mingling of the idea of family and loyalty provides 'the thickest glue of friendship in arms'.[41] Moreover, particularly for groups that are created and 'live off' secrecy (for example, clandestine paramilitary groups) there is a further source for the intensification of social bonds.[42]

The second strand of 'meaning' (and its interconnection with the strand of belonging) came to the fore during the reflective project when Little drew on his youthful involvement with [paramilitaries] and his post-prison restorative justice work with youth-at-risk in Northern Ireland:

> I'm often struck by the notion of people, of young people especially, who are maybe on the edges of getting involved in violence, [being asked] to let go of that. But they're connected to organisations or groups that give them significance, that give them a sense of belonging, a sense of feeling special, of being valued as a human being. And even though we'll disagree with the choices they are making around the violence, we're actually asking them to let go of maybe the only thing that exists in their life that gives them significance, purpose, meaning, a sense of belonging, a sense of value (July 2013).

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[39] On 'messy' power dynamics and internal conflicts within family type organisations see Verwoerd and Little, supra n 26 at 8.
[40] Trudy Govier, *Social Trust and Human Communities* (Kingston, Ontario, Canada: McGill-Queen's University Press, 1997); Trudy Govier, *Dilemmas of Trust* (Kingston, Ontario, Canada: McGill- Queen's University Press, 1998).
[41] Margalit, supra n 8 at 3, 50.
[42] Åkerström, supra n 4 at 2.

The critical point raised by this input is that the experience of betrayal extends beyond the (intense) feeling that Themba Lonzi referred to, or Gerry Foster's 'strong felt sense' of 'I let you'se down lads'. At stake is also the purpose and meaning of previous actions as an activist or a combatant and the potential for 'epistemic rupture' as Margalit puts it.[43] During the international workshop Little, Gerry Foster and a female IRA ex-prisoner, Bríd Duffy, alluded to this root of (perceived) betrayal in the following exchange:

> Alistair: From my own perspective, in the early days, the fear comes not so much that someone else and what they're saying to you might be right but the fact that you've contributed so much of your life to something that's now questionable. [I]f you start to listen to the narrative of your enemy, there's a fear that that might take you to a different place. And you mightn't like that place because it's a truthful place. It's not that you don't like truth, it's that these things don't just exist in isolation - they're connected to emotions and memories and feelings and suffering and fear. And so it [listening to the narrative of your enemy] brings all of that into question.
>
> Bríd: Yeah, because then you can look and say 'what was the last thirty years about...?'
>
> Alistair: Absolutely, and that's a big fear.
>
> Bríd: 'What was it all for? Why?' But then you do sort of question that and then you just think of the waste. And then you get angry and that's the place I was in.

[43] Margalit, supra n 8 at 3, 130-133.

> Gerry: But the danger is once you question a wee bit ... then it can become bigger. And then, as you say, it [becomes] a whole [question], 'What was all that about?' (May 2014).

Little's important observation that 'these things don't just exist in isolation - they're connected to emotions *and memories*' draws attention to the third strand of 'thick' relations that are under threat as a result of truly listening to and engaging with former enemies.

The powerfully exclusive nature of conflict-related 'We' memories is highlighted by the highly negative in-group reactions to the annual Combatants for Peace joint remembrance ceremony.[44] Netta Hazan, the Israeli participant at the international workshop and a dedicated member of Combatants for Peace, spoke about this remarkable event and the criticisms both sides faced:

> In Israel, we have a memorial day every year that we remember the people, the Israeli Jewish people, mostly Israeli Jewish that died in the conflict, in the army, in establishing the country, in all the wars that we had ('48, '67, '73...) [I]t's a very, very important day for us that we remember the people who died, like almost martyrs for Israel. On that specific day, we, Combatants for Peace, we decided to remember the suffering of both sides - Israelis and Palestinians who died in this conflict.
>
> [W]e're touching on a very sensitive point on both sides. The Israelis cannot accept that we remember also the Palestinian people who died in the conflict, [saying things] like 'they're not human, they're killing us! How can it be that we

[44] For video footage of the 15th Israeli-Palestinian Memorial Day Celebration on 27 April 2020 see https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=QZlteYyA3C0.

> [Combatants for Peace] remember their suffering?'. And [on] the Palestinian side also, the Palestinians who came to the ceremony got a lot of critique about 'how are you going and you remember the soldiers who killed you?'(May 2014).
>
> [People say:] 'We sacrifice. We sacrifice our kids, our energies, our lives...everything for our land. They have nothing to do with it. We're not supposed to glorify their dead people' (May 2014).

Gerry Foster shared a similar experience regarding the sanctified nature of these memories:

> I mean, being a Republican, we can be critical of the men of 1916 [Easter Rising], but not of the fact that they did it. If you stood up and said 'they were a minority, they hadn't a vote between them and they had no right to do what they did'. Wow! Bang! You're breaking that sacred lineage. [A]nd it's the same even now. If we were to stand in our community and say 'let's examine the thing'[armed struggle], those that don't want change [will say]: 'Whoa! You're disrespecting the dead. Hang on, these people died for you!' [If we were to say:] 'Hold on, I didn't ask them to die for me', [they'll shout]: 'Sacrilege!' (May 2014).

To this end, engaging with the enemy can amount to disrespecting your community's narrative at one level, but at another is experienced even more profoundly, i.e. violating the sacred or dishonouring the 'Us'. This is akin to a form of blasphemy as Gerry Foster puts it. The use of the language of the 'sacred' resonated strongly with a number of participants during the international reflective workshop. Hamber initially used this term to explain how participants were referring to their relationships to others and their sense of betrayal:

> [S]ometimes the issue of betrayal is so difficult because of the sacred nature of our engagements in conflict issues. So if you lose a loved one, for example, normally what happens in that process is that we engage in a set of sacred bonds with that person: 'whatever happens, the truth will come out'; 'one day justice will be done'. Those bonds are really sacred. They're not just about loyalty. They're beyond loyalty. [A]and the problem is that one can't ever properly break those bonds yourself. Because if you're making the bond with some comrade who has died, they can never release you from that bond… (May 2014).

Hamber employed the word 'sacred' in a secular, metaphorical sense to capture these bonds' remarkable potency with 'our dead' that Netta Hazan and Gerry Foster were referring to. In Little's response to Hamber he returned to the 'sacred' quality of memories:

> How do you break the bonds of conditioning that you feel are not allowing you to be who you really are without damaging relationships or... destroying memories? You have memories of your loyalty. You have memories, your sacred memories of people that you knew that are dead or of the past, of your history (May 2014).

In support of these practitioner reflections Skhlar notes the strong feeling associated with betrayal can equally relate to 'divinely sanctioned bonds' being broken.[45] Ignatieff also refers to 'sacred bonds' and what he calls articles of faith following extreme violence.[46] And Margalit points out that thick relations can not only be applied to the living but also the dead.[47]

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[45] Shklar, supra n 6 at 3, 139.
[46] Michael Ignatieff, "Articles of Faith," *Index on Censorship* 25, no. 5 (1996):110-122.
[47] Avishai Margalit, *The Ethics of Memory* (Cambridge, Massachusetts: Harvard University Press, 2002).

Each of the three strands of thick relations, and how these apply to the dead, needs to be explored in much more depth to fully appreciate the disruptive potential of peacebuilding for practitioners' thick relations. In this section we merely highlighted the mutually supportive connection between practitioners' reflections and especially Margalit's theory of betrayal. In the process we use 'disrupting thick relations' as the concise summary for a promising diagnostic framework to help explain the dynamics of (perceived) intragroup betrayal that is likely to be evoked by intergroup relational peacebuilding.

However, to more fully understand this potential obstacle to peacebuilding and transitional justice we also need to take a closer look at the inner (intrapersonal) conflict testified to by a number of practitioners in the Beyond Dehumanisation project; we need to return to Themba Lonzi's statement that 'you feel like you are betraying yourself…by empathising with someone you see as an enemy.'

Endangering one's soul

During the international reflective workshop Themba Lonzi explained how he is confronted on a daily basis with racialised poverty and glaring socio-economic inequalities in so-called 'post-apartheid' South Africa. Continuing to reach out to privileged white South Africans in this context often re-ignites that initial sense of self-betrayal:

> So, I would say [that feeling of betrayal is] an ongoing internal struggle. [I]t's something that sometimes, you know, it comes back to you, especially if you sit in a country where there are still a lot of things that needs to change. And at some point you feel you're betraying yourself, you're betraying the things that you believed in for so many years (May 2014).

For Themba Lonzi there appears to be two selves that sometimes still come into conflict with each other. He spoke of his 'hardened' self as an anti-apartheid youth activist, 'filled with hatred and bitterness' because of the state violence visited upon him and his community (May 2014). And there is his older peacebuilding self, a 'tender' part of him that was reawakened when he started to 'connect' with 'people coming from different backgrounds'. In this process, he reflected, 'I started to question myself and my actions and my perceptions; that's where I believe I began to be tender again' (July 2013).

During the workshop in Palestine, Little made a similar distinction dramatically outlining how his 'young' self would probably kill the old 'traitor' self:

> Today I sit with the reality that the young [me] would kill the old [me] sitting here today; that the young [me] would see the old [me] as a traitor for being willing to enter into a room with the enemy or being willing to try and create a different future that respects those who are different from me (Nov 2013).

From the other side of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, Bassam Aramin (bereaved member of the Parents' Circle, Palestinian ex-prisoner and eventual co-founder of Combatants for Peace), also highlighted some of the inner strife accompanying his initial, intentional reaching out to someone like Chen Alon:

> I remember the first meeting…how you say... to try and understand your enemy: 'Oh my God, what am I doing here?!' And I saw Chen and others... 'Oh my God, I'm coming to see those criminals! By myself, with all my background, what am I doing here?' To test your reality to yourself even, to your past, to your suffering, not [even] to the Palestinian people (Nov 2013).

Gerry Foster, sitting opposite Ralph Burrows (bereaved father of a British soldier) during the Northern Ireland workshop, highlighted the fear accompanying the above-mentioned inner conflict between 'different selves':

> Gerry: But after that time at Glencree with them families, there was again that struggle: 'why was I upset because you'se were upset?' I shouldn't have been upset. I was thinking at the time, 'your family members were here with guns and in uniform; it was nearly to a certain extent some sort of deserved suffering, or, your suffering certainly isn't the same as mine'. Seeing you upset and starting that process, which I didn't want to do. I was fearful where I would end up - literally what type of person would I become: 'Will I be the total opposite of what I am and what I've been all my life?' And that's frightening...
>
> Ralph: Frightening, yeah... (Nov 2012).

Similarly, Little describes the fear and instinctual desire to run away rather than confront the past:

> When I have started to encounter people who were my enemy as fully human as I am, it allows me to see darkness in myself that's not comfortable to sit with. It allows me to see my prejudices…my wrongdoing as a human being... Everything about me wants to run away from that, because it's much more emotionally and psychologically painful to do that (May 2014).

One way to make sense of this inner conflict is suggested by Shklar, noting that moving away from a bonded group can stir a primeval fear that the distinction between kin and stranger or

the enemy will become blurred[48] not only in the real world so to speak, but also internally as the enemy is humanised.

Another angle is offered by some peacebuilders' experience that engaging with the enemy can result in a kind of familial shaming. As one Palestinian practitioner, Mohammed Awed Ah, described typical reactions in his community: '"You're sitting and you are going and you're coming with the people that killed your father - shame on you!" The shame, this is the difficult way in our situation' (Nov 2013).

Betrayal being experienced as a 'shameful act' is a common experience, since most cultures teach that betrayal is shameful and non-betrayal is seen as a virtue.[49] The experience of shame reflects a loss of global self-esteem and heightened self-consciousness over disappointing others in kinship networks and important personal relationships.[50] Åkerström is one of the few theorists that highlights the experience of the betrayer in this regard: 'It can be painful not only to be the victim of a betrayal; that is, the betrayed; but being the betrayer can also hurt. Associations of guilt or shame can linger on long after the act took place'.[51]

Much more can be said about the painful moral emotions of shame (and guilt).[52] The key point for our purpose in this section is that shame involves a deeper self-questioning of one's being, of the type of person you are, not only a particular action as is typically the case with guilt language.[53] Thus shame or being shamed offers a fruitful way to explain why being

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[48] Shklar, supra n 6 at 3, 139.
[49] Åkerström, supra 4 at 2, 66.
[50] A. Morrison, *Shame: The underside of narcissism* (Hillsdale, NJ: Analytic Press, 1989), cited in John P. Wilson, Boris Droždek, and Silvana Turkovic, 'Posttraumatic Shame and Guilt,' *Trauma, Violence, & Abuse* 7 (2) (2006):122-41.
[51] Åkerström, supra n 4 at 2, 18
[52] Lawther, supra n 4 at 2; Thomas Scheff and Suzanne Retzinger, *Emotions and Violence: Shame and Rage in Destructive Conflicts* (Lincoln, NE: iUniverse, 2001); Wilson, Droždek, and Turkovic, supra n 50 at 23.
[53] Johann A. Klaassen, 'The Taint of Shame: Failure, Self-Distress, and Moral Growth,' *Journal of Social Philosophy* 32, no. 2 (2001):174-96.

seen as a betrayer can lead to such painful self-questioning, and why a peacebuilder's 'soul' can be endangered.

A further explanatory route is provided by the following reflection by Little:

> And this notion of betraying all of that, betraying all of what you've been conditioned to believe is the right thing to do. And if you speak out against that, you're supporting the enemy or you're agreeing with the enemy. And therefore the blood of those [who died]... your friends, your community… are also on your hands, 'cause you're supporting them (May 2014).

Being accused of having 'the blood' of beloved friends and community members 'also on your hands' - because you are shaking hands with those who killed them, or even tacitly supported the killers – is indeed a heavy inner burden to carry. Without support this moral burden can lead to self-destructive behaviour and even become soul-destroying.[54]

In betrayal literature the potential for intense inner conflict is also recognised. The decisions facing bridgebuilders who want to reach out to the enemy creates a set of ambivalences with individuals facing choices about competing symbolic moral universes.[55] As Margalit puts it, in some circumstances, individuals are 'caught between two sets of recognisably incompatible deserving loyalties. In opting for one loyalty at the expense of the other, one may become a traitor to one and a hero to the other'.[56] In addition, Lawther found that 'where loss, trauma and belonging are discussed post conflict, the tension between

[54] See Lawther, supra n 4 at 2, on 'loyalty as protection', 501.
[55] Ben-Yehuda, supra n 6 at 3, 311.
[56] Margalit, supra n 8 at 3, 26.

loyalty to the past (to lost ideals, victims and comrades) and to the future (to the realization of a particular way of life and the development of one's community) will be acute'.[57]

The 'unsettling empathy[58] involved in deep relational peacebuilding can pose a difficult dilemma of competing loyalties: if you embark on a journey beyond the dehumanisation of those you used to hate, then it feels as if you are not only 'letting down' that anti-enemy part of you but also those you continue to love; if you refuse to 'betray' family, friends, community, and that part of you who still loves them, in pursuit of the humanisation of former enemies, then you are not true to your commitment to peace; then it feels like a betrayal of one of your deepest values. For those with inner conviction of the need to humanise (former) enemies, the tough choice seems to be: betray 'Us' or betray yourself.

Conclusion: 'thickening' transitional justice

Although the issue of group relations is fairly limited in the field of transitional justice, when the issue is addressed the focus tends to be on issues of identity at an intergroup level.[59] However, our findings in the Beyond Dehumanisation project draw attention to the less visible, though deeply disruptive impact this kind of cross-community peacebuilding may have on bridgebuilders' 'thick' relations with members of their own group and themselves. Transforming one's conflict role from a fighter (or a survivor) to a peacebuilder can pose a serious threat to strong family type intragroup relations. Appreciating the prior commitment to comrades, community and political cause that is at stake in intergroup peace

[57] Lawther, supra n 4 at 2, 485.
[58] For Krondorfer 'unsettling empathy' involves the willingness for fundamental self-questioning as well as the ability to translate this new self-critical awareness into ongoing intergroup relationships, Björn Krondorfer, *Unsettling Empathy: Working with Groups in Conflict* (London and New York: Rowan & Littlefield, 2020).
[59] Nevin Aiken, *Identity, Reconciliation and Transitional Justice: Overcoming Intractability in Divided Societies* (New York: Routledge, 2013); Paul Arthur, *Identities in Transition: Challenges for Transitional Justice in Divided Societies* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2011); Brandon Hamber, 'Transitional justice and intergroup conflict' in L. R. Tropp, ed., *The Oxford handbook of intergroup conflict* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2012).

work, allows for a deeper understanding of why this working with enemies can become such a fearful and painful inner journey. In other words, the (potential) dynamics of self-betrayal and *intra*group betrayal evoked by *inter*group bridgebuilding bring to the surface a typically underestimated root of resistance to relational peacebuilding.

This diagnostic emphasis on peace as (perceived) betrayal can be applied more widely to render *resistance* to transitional justice processes more visible. This wider applicability comes most clearly to the fore in transitional justice 'from below', with its focus on the participation of victims/survivors in localised truth, justice and memorialisation initiatives and the interaction of such participation with national truth-seeking and (criminal) justice processes 'from above'.[60] Although the importance of civil society and community agency in transition is recognised in transitional justice from below, this argument is usually framed as a juxtaposition between community and civil society grassroots participation compared to those of politicians and lawyers 'from above'. This juxtaposition tends to underemphasize the dynamics *within* civil society groups. Drawing attention to the dynamics of betrayal shifts the focus from *participation* by *victims* to *non-participation* by (perceived/legally defined) *perpetrators*. By exploring the lived experience of former combatants becoming involved in relational peacebuilding one gains valuable insights into the micro-dynamics of transitional justice from below and specifically why some processes are engaged with or not. The multi-dimensional dynamics of intragroup and self-betrayal highlighted in this article can also serve, we would argue, as a cross-cutting diagnosis to help explain resistance to participation in any pillar of transitional justice from below.[61]

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[60] See Kieran McEvoy and Lorna McGregor, ed., *Transitional Justice from Below: Grassroots Activism and the Struggle for Change* (Portland, Oregon: Hart Publishing, 2008).

[61] See Lawther, supra n 4 at 2. Our argument suggests that her valuable work on the micro-dynamics of the (non)participation of a particular ex-combatant grouping (loyalist paramilitaries) in one type of transitional justice process (truth-seeking in Northern Ireland) needs to be explored more widely. Our understanding of the dynamics of betrayal arising from the 'undermining of thick relations' (Margalit) goes beyond her (over)emphasis on the affective dimension of loyalty.

The diagnostic potential of 'peace as betrayal' extends beyond the grassroots level of transitional justice from below. The dynamics of loyalty and betrayal can also be used to help identify blockages in transitional justice 'from above'. Take for example the resistance faced by the South African Truth and Reconciliation Commission (TRC), from opposite sides of the racialised political spectrum.

In white Afrikaner circles the TRC was widely rejected as a 'one-sided, ANC witch-hunt'.[62] Elsewhere we have pointed out our strong disagreement with this biased, self-serving rejection of the TRC by highly 'implicated subjects'.[63] However, the TRC's 'special hearing' on 'compulsory military service' (for all white men in the pre-1994 era), highlighted the 'thickness' of relations between former white veterans and their families. The TRC's (justified) reframing of the 'anti-communist' 'Border War' as, in fact, a defence of Apartheid posed a serious threat to these thick intragroup, intergenerational relations.[64] Coming to terms with, especially, Afrikaner antipathy towards the TRC (and post-1994 South Africa) therefore requires that more attention be given to the dynamics of betrayal.

A similar conclusion can be applied to the 'subtle, but powerfully present, antipathy from [the ANC] government toward the TRC because of the well-publicised Mbeki/Tutu standoff over the content of the TRC Report'.[65] A key bone of contention was the TRC's findings that the 'ANC and its organs' were also responsible for committing gross human

[62] See Willie Esterhuyse, 'TRC cartoons and the Afrikaner community', in *Truths in Jest: Commentary on the TRC through cartoons*, ed. WilhelmVerwoerd and Mahlubi Mabizela (Cape Town: David Phillip, 2000).
[63] Verwoerd, supra n 24 at 7; Wilhelm Verwoerd, 'Social Justice, White Beneficiaries and the South African TRC', in *Trading Justice for Peace? Critical Perspectives on the Truth and Reconciliation Commissions in South Africa, Canada, and Norway*, ed. Sigríður Guðmarsdóttir, Paulette Regan and Demaine Solomon (Cape Town: AOSIS, 2021).
[64] Wilhelm Verwoerd and Theresa Edlmann, '"Why did I die?": South African Defence Force Conscripts Pre- and Post-1994', in *Ex-Combatants' Voices: Transitioning from War to Peace in Northern Ireland, South Africa and Sri Lanka*, ed. John Brewer and Azrini Wahadin (Springer, Switzerland: Palgrave Macmillan, 2021).
[65] Fanie Du Toit, *When Political Transitions Work: Reconciliation as Interdependence* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2018), 104; see also Hamber, *Transforming Societies*, 105-17, 194.

rights violations.[66] For Mbeki and his comrades, these findings amounted to a 'criminalisation' of the 'liberation struggle', even though the TRC explicitly rejected any moral equivalence between the Apartheid state and the anti-apartheid struggle.[67] Based on personal and professional experience and what we learnt from the Beyond Dehumanisation project, we would suggest that the dynamics of betrayal was also evoked by these TRC findings – the subtext was that the TRC betrayed those who fought against apartheid; accepting these findings would also amount to or be seen as betrayal of fellow comrades (amongst the living and the dead). The potential contribution of this diagnosis to explain the ANC's 'subtle, powerfully present, antipathy' towards the TRC, and the possibility that this powerful, loyalty-fuelled antipathy contributed to the deplorable lack of political will to implement TRC recommendations, including reparations, deserves further investigation.

The defensive reactions of Afrikaners and the ANC to TRC findings point to an even wider applicability of the dynamics of betrayal as a diagnosis of resistance to transitional processes, including 'reconciliation'. Elsewhere we have discussed in more detail how peacebuilders involved in the Beyond Dehumanisation project also struggled to question the ingrained sense of rightness that motivated their earlier active involvement in political violence and, therefore, resisted reconciliation processes that typically assume an apology-forgiveness paradigm.[68] The general challenge that comes to the fore seems to be that any transitional process – including relational peacebuilding, transitional justice, and reconciliation – that requires or includes the clear acknowledgement of wrongdoing is likely to evoke the dynamics of intragroup and self-betrayal.

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[66] *Truth and Reconciliation Commission of South Africa Report* (Cape Town: Juta, 1998 and 2003), vol. 5:238-249; vol. 6:642-672.
[67] Ibid., vol. 6:644-648.
[68] Verwoerd and Little, supra n 27 at 9.

Addressing this challenge certainly does not imply rejecting the need for either non-legalistic transitional justice or carefully defined reconciliation.[69] Our practitioner-inspired call for the dynamics of betrayal to be taken more seriously adds detail to McEvoy's argument against the theoretical 'thinning out' of the 'realities of confusion, "messiness" and tough choices' that characterize life in 'conflicted societies'.[70]

This 'messiness' was also present in our involvement as 'participatory facilitators' in the Beyond Dehumanisation project. We 'thickened' this reflective process by including our own life histories and experiences as facilitators, but at the same, we had to take careful steps to guard against our own experiences of betrayal exerting undue influence during the data gathering and writing phases of this project. These steps included extensive reflexive debrief sessions between facilitators, always working in pairs or in threes, and constantly drawing on extensive previous practical and professional experience in a range of different settings. Given our positionalities as two white South Africans and a former Loyalist paramilitary we also had to grapple with the tension between taking the disruption of thick intragroup relations seriously and continuing to prioritise the needs and rights of those on the receiving end of the political violence we are implicated in. Our diagnosis of the potential human cost of intergroup relational peacebuilding means that more attention needs to be given to flesh out the complementary intragroup and individual processes that will prepare, support, encourage peacebuilders to journey through the dynamics of betrayal identified in this article. However, especially when these peacebuilders are former perpetrators and/or beneficiaries of

[69] Govier and Verwoerd, supra n 33 at 13.
[70] Kieran McEvoy, 'Beyond Legalism: Towards a Thicker Understanding of Transitional Justice,' *Journal of law and society* 34 (4) (2007): 418-419. He uses the contrast between 'thick' and 'thin' more broadly than Margalit, as the 'intellectual shorthand' for 'juxtaposing complex, multi-layered' approaches from 'narrowly descriptive, unidimensional' analysis, with the latter tending to be disconnected from the 'real lives' and 'practical knowledge' of those affected (Ibid., 414).

political violence, this attention cannot come at the expense of those who continue to cry out for transitional justice.