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The Editors appreciate comments and feedback from readers. They also value any help in increasing circulation in order to fulfil the Journal's objective, which is to bring together a body of original scholarship on the theory and practice of dialogue that can be critically appraised and discussed.

Aim and Scope

The Journal of Dialogue Studies is a multidisciplinary, peer-reviewed academic journal published twice a year. Its aim is to study the theory and practice of dialogue, understood provisionally as: meaningful interaction and exchange between people (often of different social, cultural, political, religious or professional groups) who come together through various kinds of conversations or activities with a view to increased understanding. The Journal is published by the Institute for Dialogue Studies, the academic platform of the Dialogue Society.

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The Dialogue Society is a registered charity, established in London in 1999, with the aim of advancing social cohesion by connecting communities, empowering people to engage and contributing to the development of ideas on dialogue. It operates nation-wide with regional branches across the UK. Through discussion forums, courses, capacity building publications and outreach it enables people to venture across boundaries of religion, culture and social class. It provides a platform where people can meet to share narratives and perspectives, discover the values they have in common and be at ease with their differences.

Contents

Gadamer, Play, and Interreligious Dialogue as the Opening of Horizons

Paul Hedges

This paper explores the potential use of Gadamer's hermeneutical concept of play as a tool to understand and explore interreligious dialogue. In particular it brings this into a discussion about interreligious dialogue understood as theological or spiritual encounter and exchange, especially in the form of Comparative Theology. Thinkers like David Tracy and Ludwig Wittgenstein are engaged for their related discussions, while Gadamer's own concept of the Fusion of Horizons, which it is argued is best expressed as the Opening of Horizons in this context, is used to show how and why such dialogue is justified in hermeneutical theory. It is argued that play provides a useful model both for understanding the seriousness of interreligious dialogue but also how it stands apart from yet elides with many traditional perspectives within religious traditions.

Keywords: Hans-Georg Gadamer, interreligious dialogue, hermeneutics, Ludwig Wittgenstein, play, fusion of horizons, comparative theology

Introduction

In this paper I will explore a number of principles from Hans-Georg Gadamer's hermeneutical philosophy to assess their use and applicability within interreligious dialogue. One of these, the fusion of horizons, is well recognised within dialogue studies as a useful tool and so its employment and applicability within interreligious dialogue should not surprise us. However, I will suggest that in this context we need to rethink the Gadamerian concept, certainly at least the way it is expressed, so that we do not speak of a 'fusion' of horizons, but rather an 'opening' of horizons. I will explain this further as we proceed. The other principle I want to employ is one that may not at first sight seem so relevant, which is play. This he sees as a metaphor or model that may be suitable for certain areas within the human sciences, and I will argue that it is particularly applicable to interreligious dialogue. This will pick up a usage that has been used but not expanded upon by David Tracy (2010; for a fuller discussion on Gadamer, Wittgenstein and play in Tracy's thought more generally see also Andrejč 2016, 150–2, and Tracy 1981, 113–14).

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In using the term interreligious dialogue I am potentially invoking a huge swathe of different types of activity, often performed for different purposes. For instance, a common typology of dialogue is fourfold: the dialogue of theological exchange; the dialogue of religious experience; the dialogue of life; and the dialogue of activism (see Race 2008, 161–3). Jeannine Hill Fletcher meanwhile distinguishes between parliamentary-style dialogues, activist-type dialogue, and narrative-type dialogues (Fletcher 2013; for some other ways of dividing types of dialogue see also King 2011, 101–2, and Moyaert 2013, 201–04). The type of dialogue I will be discussing here is that which presupposes what can be called a learning encounter with the religious Other, and so may fit either into the dialogue of theological exchange or religious experience, and perhaps more readily into Fletcher's narrative type rather than the parliamentary style. Further, I will make particular reference to Comparative Theology, which can be seen as a type of interreligious dialogue (see Clooney 2013), although my discussion is not limited to this practice. I will explore this further in due course.

I will proceed by initially offering a brief background discussion on the employment of Gadamer in interreligious dialogue. This will help set the stage for the use I will make of his thought within this context. Next, I will engage in a close reading of what Gadamer has to say about play in *Theory and Method*, intertwining within this discussion some points and insights about the role and nature of play within religion. This will draw from across several religious traditions and so open up a dialogic aspect of the paper. The following stage will be to discuss the concept of the fusion of horizons, which as noted I will suggest that we interpret as the 'opening of horizons'. This will be related to the previous discussion, exploring how the concepts from the religious traditions discussed may potentially be employed in the dialogic encounter between them. The paper concludes with some discussion about further areas for exploration and the use of Gadamer's thought in interreligious dialogue.

Gadamer and Interreligious Dialogue

That Gadamer is seen as a useful theorist in dialogue studies seems well established (e.g. Gill 2015, while issue 2.2 of the *Journal of Dialogue Studies* explicitly mentions Gadamer as a theorist to be addressed in its call for papers on 'Dialogue Ethics'). Further, his concept of the 'fusion of horizons' is already employed within dialogue theory including interreligious dialogue (Demirezen 2011). However, we should note that there are some dissenting voices. At least one scholar has directly argued that his thought cannot be used within interreligious dialogue (Krieger 1991). Moreover, my arguing that he can be used in relation to spheres like Comparative Theology seems to go against Gadamer's own injunctions that Christian theology resists hermeneutics (Gadamer 1979, 295, 330–1, for a commentary see Eberhard

2007, 287). What may have seemed a straightforward and natural employment is therefore complicated. I will suggest why we may employ Gadamer in this context through two main avenues. First, I will contest Gadamer's understanding of theology and Christianity. Second, I will point to the considerable number of prominent theologians and theorists of interreligious encounter who have argued that hermeneutics is relevant and useful.

To begin, Gadamer seemed to have an essentialist understanding of Christianity as a *sui generis* field and argued for a Barthian understanding against liberal theology. That is to say: Christianity is Revelation, not a humanly mediated realm (Gadamer 1979, 463, and Eberhard 2004, 2007). Both from the perspective of historical analysis and from the principles of hermeneutics which Gadamer sets out, whereby all of our understanding and interaction with the world are within the hermeneutical field, such an understanding is untenable (see, for instance, on the historical construction of our theological identities, Hedges 2010, 30–44; on the way politics and the imbrications of power informed the development of Christian theology, Woodhead 2004, especially 9–60). Further, I would suggest it is also bad theology; however, this is something discussed very much in the second point, to which we now turn.

As regards our second point, a number of prominent theologians have suggested that hermeneutics, especially that of Gadamer, provides the required tools to understand the way that Christianity not only may, but does, engage with religious Others. Space will not permit us to argue thoroughly, so I shall simply indicate some main points; nevertheless, the range of references given should indicate the solid foundations of the argument. First, it is clear historically that Christianity is not a 'pure' tradition but has always learnt from, and engaged syncretically with, other religions; as such, Christian theology is, of its very nature, interreligious (an argument and survey of some key literature can be found in Hedges 2010, 33–4, 38–9, 186–7). Second, although in the contemporary context a number of theologians have taken up the argument that each religion must be understood in its own particularity, and so they cannot be compared and engaged, this has been substantially (even overwhelmingly) undermined by a range of theological, philosophical, and historical critiques (see, for two of the primary examples, Hedges 2008, Moyaert 2011). Third, the actual encounter of religions in contemporary theological exchange (see, for instance Clooney 2010, Knitter 2009, Schmidt-Leukel 2009) has been shown to be well theorised by hermeneutics, especially that of Gadamer. Theologians such as Elisabeth Schussler Fiorenza (2000), Marianne Moyaert (2014), and Tracy (2010) have taken up this issue. Indeed, the direct applicability of Gadamer's hermeneutics to Comparative Theology has also been argued (Hedges 2016b). As such, against what may have been Gadamer's own

insistence that hermeneutics cannot be applied to theology, we find a plethora of arguments suggesting not only that it is well founded, but also extremely applicable. Certainly Tracy has suggested that Gadamer's thought may be the most compelling contemporary philosophy to analyse these issues (Tracy 2010, 4). I would also note that in his later work Gadamer has also suggested that interreligious dialogue is necessary and helpful and in 'Dialogues in Capri' (Gadamer 1998) he argued that the West could learn from its encounter with what are seen as Asian religions. While he may not necessarily see this directly as an encounter with Christianity, the possibility does seem potentially opened up within his thought.

Gadamer and Play in Interreligious Perspective

We move here into an area that Gadamer discusses at some length, which is 'play'. However, this concept is not often featured in discussions of dialogue studies. (It is not entirely neglected, however, as Vessey discusses it as an aspect of dialogue but in relation to interpreting art, while Vilhauer also suggests we can see all human interaction/dialogue as a form of play, see Vessey 2000, Vilhauer 2010, 49ff.) For Gadamer, play is something which in its non-seriousness, but also state of intensity, is a suitable metaphor or model for at least some aspects of the human sciences. We will here, more or less, follow his discussion with commentary as needed, especially as we approach interreligious topics. Gadamer tells us that while 'we play "for the sake of recreation", as Aristotle says', yet '[i]t is more important that play itself contains its own, even sacred, seriousness' (Gadamer 1979, 91). One reason for this 'seriousness' of play is that it enwraps the player within it so it becomes its own self-contained world. Or, to use a common phrase, we find Gadamer telling us that play's purpose is fulfilled only if the player 'loses himself in his play' (Gadamer 1979, 92). That is to say, as when we watch children play, their delight is in part at least in being in a world of their own creating. Therein the rules follow the rules of the game not those of the regular world. Here I suggest we may usefully bring to mind Wittgenstein's discussion of games in the context of his own reflection on language games (Wittgenstein 2009, 7).[1] In the game, according to Wittgenstein, there is an internal and self-ordering logic in which certain moves make sense in one game, but do not necessarily make sense in other games with their own logic, or rules. Importantly, for Wittgenstein, we can locate games and know them when we see them. However, he notes that given their inherent diversity, we may still ask: how can we define them in a meaningful way (Fogelin 1995, 112–3)? This is relevant to us here on two grounds. Firstly, Wittgenstein's thought on language games has

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1   I am thankful to Gorazd Andrejč for helping me think through my usage of, and explain more clearly what I have to say about, Wittgenstein. In particular pointing out that I should discuss the fact that both are appealing to the same common term in German.

been applied to religion, especially as it relates to interreligious encounters. This raises the question as to whether the rules of one religion can be applied to another. Can the conversation take place? Pursuing this question would take us outside the remit of this paper, but it has been argued that Wittgensteinian principles justify interreligious dialogue (see Andrejč 2016, Hedges 2002, 2008, Moyaert 2011). Secondly, dialogue may itself be seen as a game in that it has particular rules and etiquette. Of course, different forms of dialogue will use different rules; hence with Wittgenstein we must recognise the particular game that is being played. We will refer to this further below. With relation to Gadamer, we need to be aware that within dialogue it is necessary to become immersed within the practice; hence we see the connection to his ideas of its seriousness in which we can become 'lost' as we engage. Interreligious dialogue may then be likened at this level to Gadamerian play, helpfully seen as well as a Wittgensteinian language game. It is worth mentioning here as well that play and game both refer to the same German term, *spiel*, with the different translations reflecting varying usages and meanings of that term in the original language. As such, we are still reflecting upon the same Gadamerian term, and so we could talk about the play of language instead of language games and the way that rules apply in one act of playing which do not apply in another. This, again, may be important for thinking about dialogue as play, for as we have noted there are many types of dialogue, and as discussed further below the aims and rules of one may not apply to another. Either way, to reflect with Gadamer or Wittgenstein on dialogue as play, or game, is to realise that we must enter into the logic and rules of the activity and become immersed (lost) within it to be truly dialogic practitioners.

Turning to some other aspects of what Gadamer says play involves, one of these is the 'primacy of play over the consciousness of the player' (Gadamer 1979, 94). This relates to what we have said about entering into the world of play, such that in a useful turn of phrase Gadamer also says 'all playing is a being-played' (Gadamer 1979, 95). That is to say, we may become lost in fascination as we are taken over by the game itself, and if played fully we live within the game world; in Wittgensteinian terms we inhabit the language game. In terms of dialogue, as noted above, we must become fully engaged in that activity as it presents itself to us. We are reminded here of Gadamer's words that we do not so much speak language, as it speaks us (Gadamer 1979, 421). This is because each refers to a whole world of meaning, a form of reasoning that shapes and informs the way we behave, act, and understand. Importantly, because play represents not just a small, trivial, sideline to life, but rather in the playing itself it can become the whole and needs no external justification. In addition to this, we should mention Gadamer's notion of the medial nature of play, something he repeats in several places (Gadamer 1979, 93, 94). While some scholars strongly stress mediality as

a defining quality not just of Gadamer's concept of play, but of his philosophical hermeneutics overall (most especially Eberhard 1999, 2004), this seems to overplay the occasional mentions found here. This is not to say that the emphasis given, on the grammatical concept of the middle voice, does not highlight an important element of Gadamer's thought. Nevertheless, it is not essential to take mediality beyond its occurrence in play and use it as a determining concept. With that said, the concept of the medial is connected by Gadamer to *spielen*. Commenting on this, Gadamer says play 'represents an order in which the to-and-fro motion of play follows of itself' (Gadamer 1979, 94). That is to say, between an active (sense of agent as doer) and passive (acted upon) play is an event in which both the player and the play (and other players) co-create the play. It is medial, neither (or not solely either) active nor passive, but part of a middle place. The player does not 'actively control' the play because she is within the rules; at the same time the very play is also constituted simply because there is a player willing to play and who is also involved in determining and potentially changing those rules. Therefore, the player is not simply passively receiving the game. In relation to hermeneutics as a whole, it can be suggested that this mediality is related to understanding because any interpreter is both receiving (taking in information) and creating (developing an understanding). Likewise, in relation to dialogue, it is noted that this has a grammatical medial nature because the activity 'to dialogue' is not determinative of the dialoguers; further, neither does either partner control the dialogue, rather it is a co-created activity. As such we can speak of all understanding and dialogue as medial (see McCormack 2014, 56–7). Nevertheless, it is not a defining Gadamerian concept developed at length; moreover, for Gadamer it is seen as removed in the move from play to art (Barthold n.d.). But it both usefully highlights an aspect of hermeneutics, and also for our purpose here shows a connection between play and dialogue: both are events which are neither directly active nor passive, but rather exist in a middle place. It concerns our 'being-played' or engaging in a dialogue.

Turning to another aspect, for Gadamer, play is something outside of the 'normal seriousness' of the world and its work-a-day habits and routines, almost a counter or reversal. Indeed, such routines of work are inhabited by a goal driven, even mechanistic rationale (here we may usefully bring to mind Foucault's analysis of the mechanisation of the body and modes of work in the modern age as part of his archaeological enquiry into the attitudes we have towards the body, see Foucault 1986, 173–89; we may also invoke Marx's critique of capitalist modes of production, see Marx 1985, 77–87; or less politically Ruskin's reflections on art and production, see Waithe 2015, 264). This routine can be said to be instrumental in its structure and ordering so that it has analogies to the natural science model which he is seeking an alternative to. For Gadamer, setting out into the world of play, like the sacred in its technical meaning, it is something set apart, and so denotes

'a closed world without transition and mediation over and against the world of aims' (Gadamer 1979, 96).[2] Countering, therefore, a market-driven, quantitative -assessment-based rationale of production and readily counted and graded outputs, we are offered play. However, not as a soft and purposeless alternative, but as a world with its own different ordering and meaning: 'The movement which is play has no goal which brings it to an end; rather it renews itself in its constant repetition' (Gadamer 1979, 93). In Christian theological terms it may be said to be analogous here to the liturgical calendrical system, where the year, although having goals and highpoints, does not reach a manufactured and gradable output, but rather finds value in the fact that it will be repeated, and the rounds and seasons will come and go, and come round again (for some reflections on time in liturgy and theological perspective, see Tillich 1968, III, 339–52, Williams 2000, 45–7, 51–2, 55–8). Like the *yuga* system of Hinduism (Kloetzli and Hilltebeitel 2007, 567–70), where the *yuga*s, ages or epochs, of the world repeat the processes of creation, preservation, and destruction of the world through countless aeons and cycles, the aim is not in the operationalised commodity but the play, the *lila*, of the deity, be that Vishnu, Krishna, Shiva, Kali, or another divine entity (on *lila* see, Lipner 2010, 170, 279–83; on the cosmic cycle as *lila*, see Flood 1996, 112–3). Even before we come to speak about interreligious dialogue then, we can see that play has clear analogies and linkages with certain religious conceptions of time and activity. It should be noted, though, that although speaking of this as a counter or reversal, we should not envisage it as an antithesis or opposite, rather it exists as a relational concept. It is capable of offering a reversal because it is in relationship to the 'normal seriousness' of the world, not utterly divorced from it. This point is developed further below.

The above raises questions as to what we mean by dialogue, especially as it occurs between religions. On the one hand, interreligious dialogue may be undertaken for clearly mundane or strategic purposes, that is to say for social cohesion, peace building, or greater mutual understanding (see Knitter 2013, Kadayifci-Orellana 2013). These are certainly important aims for society and for interreligious dialogue; nevertheless, when understood as play I contend that we are dealing with different

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2   It should be noted that there is much contestation around terms such as 'sacred' and even 'religion' within the academic study of religion, especially regarding whether they usefully engage any category that can be spoken of across cultural and linguistic boundaries. For instance, the sense of the sacred as 'set apart' seems to go against the very everydayness of much of what we typically classify as 'religious' in certain contexts. As this paper is written primarily from and into a Western context where a Christian employment and heritage gives meaning to these terms, and as they stand in Gadamer, I will employ them here, however, with due recognition of their problematic nature. (On such disputes, in relation to interreligious dialogue, see Hedges 2010, 64-87.)

areas of dialogue. In the well-known fourfold typology, playful dialogue would fit naturally into the dialogue of theological encounter as well as into the dialogue of religious experience. The famous Snowmass Dialogues would be one example of the kind of dialogue I am thinking of (see Bryant 2009, 87–99). That is to say, it is conducted for no other purpose than for further mutual understanding and development. It is an activity with its own logic and internal purpose and rationale. Indeed, we must consider that some of those who have engaged in such dialogue speak of themselves even leaving behind their old religious tradition or identity, crossing over into another religion, and then returning (Knitter 2009, 217). Such a logic and activity may certainly be at odds with the mainstream strictures of the religious tradition to which a person belongs, and so it becomes an act with its own internal rhythms. Of course, differing from child's play, areas like Comparative Theology (as noted this may be spoken of as a form of interreligious dialogue) aim to return to the home tradition and enrich it. Hence it will not stand alone and apart with no influence on the real world (see Clooney 2010, 111–4, 154–62), although it is well known in childhood studies that play is not simply 'downtime' but actually one of the most important tools and periods for learning. Therefore, I do not offer my contrast with child's play as an absolute rule; rather, at this level, play becomes a time of deep and intense learning, but outside of the usual structures such that it can return and enrich the other times (Whitebread 2012).

Returning to Gadamer, the connection of play to religion is indeed one that he makes himself, noting the relationship between children's play, and animal's play, and also 'the sacred plays of the religious cult' (Gadamer 1979, 93, citing J. Huizinga, *Homo Ludens, Vom Ursprung der Kultur in Spiel*, 43). In German he further links another usage of the term *spiel*, an original meaning as 'dance' (Gadamer 1979, 93). This again relates to another form of recreation, or play. Further, for dance or play, it works not to any utilitarian end by, in, and for itself. We may note today that play and recreation is often linked to utilitarian ends, so that one goes to the dance class or yoga as part of a keep-fit regime and so the purpose of dance is no longer the dance itself but to keep fit. Likewise, meditation or Tai Chi may be used by certain individuals or companies as stress-release mechanisms to boost worker satisfaction, and levels of productivity – even play becomes commoditised in what may be a hyper-mechanisation of Foucault's theory (see Carrette and King 2004). Dance, again, has distinctively liturgical connotations, whether this be in shamanic rituals or the stylised arrangements of the Catholic, Orthodox, or Anglican liturgies. Extending this to think about interreligious dialogue, a connection is known between Shiva and Jesus as Lords of the Dance. For instance, the well known Christian hymn 'The Lord of the Dance' was inspired by its author having a statue of Shiva Nataraja (literally the Lord of the Dance), on his desk (see Hedges forthcoming). Here, however, I would like to extend this reflection

to a figure like Kali. Certainly it can be hard to comprehend the devotion to this benevolent mother, especially in her 'awe-ful' aspect, as in any way linked to a purely utilitarian or commoditised assessment:

> Ever art thou dancing in battle, Mother. Never was beauty like thine, as, with thy hair flowing about thee, thou dost ever dance, a naked warrior on the breast of Siva.

> Heads of thy sons, daily freshly killed, hang as a garland around thy neck. How is thy waist adorned with human hands! Little children are thy ear-rings. Faultless are thy lovely lips; thy teeth are fair as jasmine in full bloom. Thy face is bright as the lotus-flower, and terrible is its constant smiling. Beautiful as the rain-clouds is thy form; all blood-stained are thy feet.

> Prasad says: My mind is as one that dances. No longer can my eyes behold such beauty, (Zaehner 1988, 146)

We may note here that the ferocious aspects of the Goddess represent her, in part at least, as creator, preserver, and destroyer of the universe. All life and death is in her hands and so she represents the natural cycles and flow of the universe. This of course happens within the dance and so it is both play, dance, and recreation, or we may say here that her *lila* is also re-creation (see, Flood 1996, 112–3, specifically on Kali's *lila*, see Brubkaer 1995, 208). What applies here to Kali may on another level be said to be true of other forms of play, or recreation: the activity is the means whereby we are re-creating as renewal. Here, it is the game that is important, for it renews. The subject of the game is not so significant. What matters, if I may extend Gadamer's thought here, is that the importance comes about because of the player who plays and reaches the end of play through the playing. Which, as we have said, is not a goal except in as far as it is recreation, or here re-creation. This, indeed, is where I think we see a link, beyond the religious and theological aspect of play. Certainly for some forms of interreligious dialogue, where learning from the other is intended, as with Comparative Theology but also Scriptural Reasoning, it may be spoken of as play in the sense discussed here because it is involved in the act of re-creation of tradition (see Clooney 2013, Moyaert 2013). Its end is itself as part of the 'serious play' wherein one does not work for utilitarian ends but for the becoming of things anew. In this sense we may say that all interpretation, or translation (here linking us to discussions of hermeneutics in relation to interreligious dialogue, see for instance Moyaert 2014, 121–2, 143–50), is play because it is the act of re-creation. Yet, in as far as it reaches no final end, it is not reducible to the commoditised measurable output, but is continually open to the cyclic renewal. (See the discussion on religious time above.) I say 'no final end' because it is increasingly recognised in interreligious relations, interreligious dialogue, Comparative Theology and similar areas that the aim is not (as some

nineteenth-century and early advocates seemed to assume) to reach a final end in the creation of a new religion, or the final synthesis of all religions, instead, we can only expect a journey of further development and mutual learning (on the contrast of the so-called 'Old' and 'New' Comparative Theologies, see Nicholson 2011, Hedges 2012; on issues on mutual learning, see Hedges 2010, 243–52).

A final aspect of Gadamer's reflection on play also needs to be developed here, which is when he says that 'play is representation'. By this he means that, like a theatre, the play is 'representing for someone' (Gadamer 1979, 97). Here, I am not entirely sure that I agree with Gadamer. Certainly in child's play the young child, as he says, can be 'lost in a game' such that even if aware of others around, the play is for the sake of the play itself. As such not all play has this form of representation, and Gadamer actually argues that in general games are not aimed at an audience (Gadamer 1979, 97–8). Indeed, he even says that games and play are threatened by the loss of their character by becoming a 'show', even if the theatre is a 'closed world' rather than widely open (Gadamer 1979, 98). However, I think that we need to consider different forms and the nature of play. While one can play for oneself, as a child does, at other times the child will also play for, or 'perform' in front of, their parents or others as an act of play. Although, in show, there is presumably a danger of play being done too 'self-consciously', its meaning becomes other than for the play of the game itself and so has no meaning of recreation or being within its own world. But this acting out in front of parents or others, surely, is no less play for the child? Indeed, play is also very often with another and so the act of representation is very often an integral part of the play because one is acting out before another who is also part of the play. Here both share a role in the medial (re-)creation or nature of the playing. Gadamer makes a distinction, however, saying that if play is done for another then it becomes something else, it moves from 'play' to 'art': 'Artistic presentation, by its nature, exists for someone, even if there is no one there who listens or watches only' (Gadamer 1979, 99). I am not sure that Gadamer's distinction is maintainable, and relies upon a rather idealised representation of art as set out here: 'I call this development, in which human play finds its true perfection in being art, "the transformation into structure"' (Gadamer 1979, 99). Nevertheless, despite my reservations about the sustainability of Gadamer's linguistic distinctions, I believe we see something valuable in this discussion, which is about play being for, at least potentially, another. Certainly, as I have indicated, interreligious dialogue – especially as Comparative Theology – is generally seen as having to relate to its home tradition, and so is done in some sense as something that is performed for another (see Clooney 2010, 111–4, 154–5). As such it is perhaps always done with the intention of an audience in mind, the playful re-creation of tradition is not part of that tradition unless it becomes received and reflected upon. Indeed, even if rejected by much of the mainstream tradition it still becomes part of that tradition and its development and self-interpretation.

I would like to address one potential criticism – that in understanding play, and theology, as something set apart from the mechanised work-a-day world it becomes simply an alternative, an escape: somewhere to indulge in idealistic speculative reflection. This may be one reading, but it is not the only way. Play, by showing that there is a different way of being, is also a challenge to the rationalised and commercialised order. It has a liberative potential. It is a space where one may challenge the world not by withdrawal but because it may be represented (or, re-presented) to the world. As with Bahktin's carnivalesque it is a place where the norms and ordering of the world may be turned upside down and shown to be other than they are. While this may be instrumentalised as a form of escape, like the traditional 'carnival' or times of 'misrule' when the boy-bishop rules for the day as simply a cathartic release so that the stresses and strains of the world may be released before the 'normal' run of things is resumed, it may also show that the 'normal' is not 'normal' and that there is another way of doing things. It can be a representation of the 'Kindom' to use Fiorenza's term (Fiorenza 2005).

As a final issue concerning play, I will discuss Gadamer's suggestion that there is a 'curious lack of decisiveness in the playing consciousness' that it cannot 'decide between belief and non-belief' (Gadamer 1979, 93). I understand, I believe, Gadamer's meaning here that it is sometimes very hard for the adult at least to fully suspend consciousness and lose oneself in another world that you may believe or perceive as lacking in 'reality'. A world that is, as it were, a fantasy creation. But adults' and children's play is different. For adults, play becomes time apart from the 'world of aims', whereas for the child there is no difference; indeed, play or imitation as it often is can be about learning or becoming into the 'world of aims' (make believe and fantasy). Moreover, some adults' play, for example, on the sports field, is about enforcing a sense of self which reaches over into the 'world of aims' or is never apart from it (e.g., we play chess to show intellectual superiority, or rugby, squash, etc. to show physical superiority). In some way is this not unlike animals' play for hunting or other skills. Even if one is not aware (as a child) of the role of play in becoming to the 'world of aims' this does not make it 'other' as the two intersect. Indeed, while I have drawn a distinction between 'play' and the 'world of aims', following Gadamer, I am not sure that this is maintainable. Play, or the game, as we have seen has its own rules, goals, and aims; not every game may have this, but many do. While play, or a dance, has its own rationale, also they often follow an internal rationale. This, as I have suggested, is not simply different, or other, from the 'world of aims', but elided. It exists alongside and in relation to it; hence the possibility that it can offer a challenge to it; if it were diametrically opposed it would be so other that the comparison would not make sense. I have noted above that we are not looking at dialectical opposites but areas that exist in relation, and will develop this theme further now. In theological terms it is, like the

sacred realm, a sphere that is not 'other' but interconnected and always in some way, if not part of, at least related to the 'world of aims'. Yet it exists in a (creative/ constructive) tension. The sacred to be 'set apart' must always be 'set apart' from the secular/mundane, but this very act implies or shows its relation to that secular/ mundane world. It is relational to it, not entirely other and distinct. If it were it could not be 'set apart' from it, but rather its otherness is a relational otherness. One's religious life and duties are not a separate corner of existence – though many treat it that way, it is what you do on a Sunday morning with other like-minded people before getting back to the hustle and bustle of work and life. Rather, the life of prayer is a part and an informer of the daily life, something deeply ingrained within the Islam practise of *salat*, or the five daily prayers, which become a rationale and a shaping compass to everyday life (Tayob 2003, 65–6). Indeed, in Mahayana Buddhist terminology, *nirvana* is *samsara* and *samsara* is *nirvana*, meaning that one is not looking to escape. In, for instance, the Zen Ox-herding pictures any escape is shown simply as a time of readjustment, a period for play/re-creation, before one re-enters the marketplace. In more technical language the *lokuttara* realm (spiritual realm) and the *lokiya* realm (the mundane realm or the everyday world) interlink (on the Ox-herding pictures, see Hart 2013; on Buddhist metaphysics of the connection between the spiritual and everyday, see Thich Nhat Hanh on *Interbeing*, 1996, 83–103). Therefore, I think we should not heed Gadamer's notion of a lack of decisiveness as showing that play is not an apt metaphor for the kind of serious interreligious dialogue I am discussing here. Rather, I think we need to suggest a different way to regard play and to take more account of certain parts of Gadamer's thought, concerning for instance play's 'seriousness'.

Summing up this discussion and its relationship to dialogue, we have shown various ways in which the concept of play relates to aspects of a number of different religious traditions. This has either been about aspects of Gadamer's thought, or the extensions of it offered here, and has shown ways in which religious ideas may be in dialogue. More broadly, we have developed various themes from Gadamer's notion of play as indicative of, or insightful for, understanding the activity of interreligious dialogue. We may note here that from the perspective of a Gadamerian inspired philosophical hermeneutics, to speak of dialogue as play is to see it as an act of sacred seriousness, but different from the work-a-day seriousness of the mundane world. Rather, it is a time or activity apart from the world, or tradition, to which it is related. To be in dialogue is to be engaged within a different world, a place where the dialoguers become consumed within the rules of the activity and the dialogue shapes their way of being in that dialogue. Nevertheless, it still informs our life or religious thought. Yet, as a medial event, it is a dialogue agreed to and arranged by the participants, so its logic is their logic. For a time they stand apart from but still engaged with, or related to, their tradition. The dialogue informs this worldview

and changes it on the return. They are re-created in the re-presentation of their tradition that the time of dialogue has offered up. To develop this discussion further we must now turn to Gadamer's conception of the fusion of horizons.

The Opening of Horizons

We turn now to the hermeneutical principle for which Gadamer is, perhaps, most famous: the fusion of horizons. It is necessary to place play in the context of this concept to see how they can be combined as part of a paradigm that grounds interreligious dialogue. Firstly, though, I will provide a context from Gadamer's own thought that it is useful to consider in relation to the fusion of horizons. As a starting point, Gadamer argues that we are shaped by our own tradition. He describes this as the set of prejudices (which may be both positive and negative, but are always necessary and so in that sense beneficial) that form our thinking, believing, and knowing. That is to say, we have a set of preunderstandings built into us by custom, tradition, and environment and these are the constituents of a worldview, and only with a worldview can we then interpret anything else. Moreover, all of this is encoded in language, which, as Gadamer says, is the shaper of our reasoning: 'Language is the language of reason itself' (Gadamer 1979, 363). In his terminology this tradition and set of prejudices form our 'horizon'. For Gadamer, the term represents the limits of our viewing: what we know and what can be known by us. Indeed, setting up this horizon is important to Gadamer, for in his thought: 'The key to a proper interpretation lies in acquiring the proper horizon' (Vessey 2009, 533). The horizon is what allows us to see to the limits of what we know, and is the basis for understanding and structures that which we understand.

For Gadamer, then, our current knowledge and worldview represents our present horizon. However, because of the hermeneutical tools of language, and belief in the possibility of translation, this horizon can be transcended, or opened up. Indeed, contrary to some who suggest that Gadamer's notion of horizon means that our ideas are enclosed within our prejudices, he claimed that we can never have a closed horizon, as we discuss further below (Gadamer 1979, 304). To put this in Gadamer's own words: 'In this the interpreters own horizon is decisive, yet not as a personal standpoint that one holds onto or enforces, but more as a meaning and a possibility that one brings into play and puts at risk, and that helps one to truly make one's own what is said on the text' (Gadamer 1979, 350). The notion of 'risk' here, we may note, accords with Moyaert's Ricoeurian notions of 'fragility' and 'vulnerability' – concepts she uses as the basis to develop another hermeneutics of interreligious encounter (Moyaert 2014). This fragility and vulnerability, she argues, carries its own dangers of needing to develop a 'post-critical faith' which is 'a difficult path to travel' (Moyaert 2014, 95). In the context of interreligious

dialogue and Comparative Theology, Moyaert explores and explains this, arguing that we need to be able to challenge the limits and prejudices of our own tradition (Moyaert 2014, 157–83).

For Gadamer, it is always the linguistic nature of our being and knowing that allows us to open up beyond the immediate nature of our horizons. As he says of language and speech: 'All human speaking is finite in such a way that there is within it an infinity of meaning to be elaborated and interpreted. This is why the hermeneutical phenomenon also can be illuminated only in the light of this fundamental finitude of being, which is wholly linguistic in character' (Gadamer 1979, 416). In his terms, we are opened up to an infinity of possibility through the finitude of our words. What this means is that our horizon and that of the Other may meet in what he terms the 'fusion of horizons' (Gadamer 1979, 350). We may note that for him the term 'horizon' is a technical term he adopts from Husserl's use (*Ideas*, 1913). This can be readily understood as being open because if we walk a short distance we have a new horizon (Vessey 2009, 527; see Gadamer 1979, 217, 269 on acknowledgements to Husserl). Gadamer's thought also has links to Husserl's *Meditations* (1931), for whom perception has horizons, but nevertheless we come to 'know' or 'imagine' the whole (Vessey 2009, 528–9). A well-known example of Husserl's is if we walk into a room and see the back of a chair, we do not think that only the back of the chair exists, but as part of our perception we 'imagine/know' the whole chair, the seat, legs, cover, and so on. Hence, again, our horizon is not simply a fixed limit but is always pushing beyond itself. So, in various ways, Gadamer argues that his use of the term 'horizon' should never denote an absolute or fixed limit. Notably, though, while Husserl used the term for things, Gadamer extends it to propositions too, and hence our whole linguistic world (see Vessey 2009, 530). This further shows that in speaking of this Gadamer does not stress the limits of horizons but rather how they provide a meaningful context for expanding our knowledge and awareness.

One important note, though, is that Gadamer does not suggest that all horizons are equally open. He suggests the way philosophers are more or less open to new propositions is related to the kind of horizons they have (see Vessey 2009, 531). We therefore have different intellectual horizons, and as part of this we can speak of a 'historical horizon', which is about understanding something of the context of our ideas. Importantly, as Vessey has noted, 'it requires a special effort to acquire a historical horizon' (Vessey 2009, 531). Here I would take us back to our earlier discussion about Gadamer's perceptions about Christianity and theology being immune or exempt from hermeneutics, and suggest that this was one historical horizon he had not yet acquired. To note, I would suggest that getting this hermeneutical background is key to approaching theology. The

theologian, especially as interreligious interlocutor, must unmask and derobe theology from fideism and show its being-in-the-world-ness through its historical and hermeneutical imbrications within life (various references on this were noted above in discussing the applicability of hermeneutics to interreligious dialogue and need not be repeated here). In this context the following is a very useful quote from Gadamer: 'A person who has no horizon does not see far enough and hence overvalues what is nearest to him' (Gadamer 1979, 269). In interreligious terms we may say that if someone only knows their own religious tradition, they tend to overvalue it and assume its uniqueness, whereas in Max Muller's well known adage 'to know one is to know none' (see King and Hedges 2014, 47).

For Gadamer, this is tied up with his discussion of communication as a form of conversation. As he notes, in conversation one is not always premeditated but follows the flow of it and so he says, 'All this shows that a conversation has a spirit of its own, and that the language used in it bears its own truth within it, that is, that it reveals something which henceforth exists' (Gadamer 1979, 345). In other words, a new realisation, a new interpretation, or re-creation comes about through it. For him, the fusion of horizons is the 'full realisation of conversation' (Gadamer 1979, 350). That is to say, when the two proponents of the conversation have come to know what is alien and other within their partner, and so have 'overcome' their prejudices, this opens up new borders for their own horizons as they meet and integrate the horizon of the other within their own. Indeed, we should add that within this they also add to their existing prejudices. Of course, by conversation we should not see this limited to the talking face to face of two or more people; all of culture and society can be our conversation partners. Our horizons can be opened by exposure to a book, a work of art, or an act of play. However, whatever the situation, for this fusion of horizons, or opening of horizons (I will address below why I prefer this terminology) to take place an openness is needed: 'Reaching an understanding in conversation presupposes that both partners are ready for it and are trying to recognise the full value of what is alien and opposed to them' (Gadamer 1979, 348).

I would prefer to term Gadamer's 'fusion of horizons' as an 'opening of horizons' for three reasons. Firstly, as a critique of Gadamer his notion of 'fusion' is problematic, even if I come to learn something from the other, it does not imply that I have grasped the fullness of her worldview, which the term 'fusion' seems to imply. Our worlds may have come together, but not 'fused' or 'merged' as one thing. Even if this is not Gadamer's meaning, and arguably he does not say this, the term 'fusion' seems problematic by implying this. Secondly, related to the last point, a fusion seems to suggest that two ideas come together, such that if we bring, for instance, Hindu and Christian ideas into discussion we make a new Hindu-Christian

creation. This is not really applicable to most interreligious dialogue, and not Comparative Theology as understood by Clooney. Rather, Christian ideas may be read in the light of concepts of another tradition in a way that opens new insight in the new tradition, not creating a novel third religion (see Clooney 2010, and in relation to hermeneutics, see Hedges 2016b). Therefore, it is simply the 'openness' that can be said to be our way to approach religious Others. My argument here has as much to do with the term as Gadamer's understanding, for he sees dialogue as being about a new perspective, not necessarily agreement or creating a universal point of view (Gadamer 1979, 535). Thirdly, the idea of being open, or what I have termed having a 'radical openness' to the religious Other is language already current in interreligious encounters, and so may readily be understood (see Hedges 2016a). As such, we find a parity of language if we speak of an opening of horizons. Such openness speaks of the readiness to learn from and encounter the Other in meaningful exchange. It is not the purpose of this paper to engage in interreligious dialogue or Comparative Theology *per se*; however, as noted when we discussed play, we explored a number of concepts from various religious traditions which, potentially at least, might provide areas where such interreligious learning may occur. This it may be said may concern the possibility of our opening our horizon to new perspectives.

Conclusion: Openness, Play, and the Religious Other

As I have indicated in the discussion above, it is Gadamer's concept of the fusion of horizons, understood in our context as the opening of horizons, which explains how and why interreligious dialogue is possible. Indeed, it explains how we can learn from other traditions, cultures, and worldviews in general. We have a worldview, which is the base that allows us to understand at all, and this gives us a horizon, the 'limits' of our vision. However, because of the linguistically constructed nature of all experience and understanding, we can always negotiate and extend that horizon when we encounter some Other beyond it, at least if we allow our horizon to be challenged (opened), for, as noted, Gadamer sees some people as limiting their horizons, or not having horizons as he puts it. This in and of itself will justify the activity of interreligious dialogue. Why then do we introduce the concept of play? Extending our discussion of this, I will advocate several reasons. Firstly, the notion of play and games, as we have seen, resonates well with aspects of particular religious understandings and worldviews. As such, in and of itself, as Gadamer noted, it is an area that can well be used to discuss matters of religious hermeneutics. Secondly, it opens up the possibility of a realm with its own rules and engagement which is outside our everyday discourse, but potentially elided with it. As we have discussed, this to some extent is what the practice of interreligious dialogue is doing. Especially in forms like Comparative Theology that are opening up a new space with rules within its own remit that is both outside the normal

understanding of most religious traditions, but which must also and importantly not be wholly divorced. This brings us, thirdly, onto the question of performance, and, as we noted, this can be part of play. Here, the interreligious dialogue while not necessarily done before or in front of others, must be something capable of being represented to them. Communicability must be an aspect of it. Gadamerian play, therefore, becomes a mode through which we explain not a justification for how the dialogue can happen in principle, that is the role of discussing the opening of horizons, but for mediating the discussion of how dialogue is enacted/performed.

Questions of course remain, though they are beyond the scope of this paper. For instance, if we can usefully employ the concept of Wittgensteinian language games alongside Gadamer's hermeneutics then it may be asked: what are the rules of dialogue? Here, of course, various propositions exist. These may range from guidelines of dialogue, to methods for the conduct of Comparative Theology. It is not the place of this paper to venture into the specifics of the various different types of dialogue which could make use of the principles set out here. Another question would be whether the home traditions of the dialogue practitioners of Comparative Theologians need to accept the outcome and results of the play of dialogue. That, again, is a question that exceeds the limits of this paper. It is very much an internal matter of theological dispute within each home tradition as to what is considered permissible, and in particular where it may wish to place limits upon horizons and the revision that may take place within them. As Clooney has noted of the Comparative Theologian, they may be a marginal person within the tradition in a somewhat liminal space (Clooney 2010, 157–60). This is not to say that the tradition does not value what is done. Certainly, in as far as the mainstream Christian traditions are concerned, interreligious dialogue has become part and parcel of their engagement with religious Others and has its own clear and well accepted rationale (see Hedges 2010, 58–62, King 2011, Moyaert 2013). Indeed, it has also been argued that engaging in interreligious dialogue actually strengthens people within their own tradition, including their commitment to it (Brecht 2014). Another question is what is intended or implied by speaking of openness and an opening of horizons. This may suggest good will in dialogue, the desire to engage in constructive ways, and an attitude that will learn and be changed. Again, the behaviour and ethics of dialogue is another area beyond the scope of this paper.

To conclude, I would argue that together Gadamer's notions of play and the fusion of horizons, understood as the opening of horizons, is a very useful model to understand those forms of interreligious dialogue which engage in dynamic learning with the religious Other. As a form of serious interaction that elides with but stands somewhat apart from the mainstream it opens a theoretical and practical space that can be understood in its own significance. As we have noted, this may

stand awkwardly to some traditionalist understandings of religious traditions, but such activity has an increasingly recognised role in mainstream Christianity at least. As such, it is important to use tools like Gadamer's hermeneutics to consider the nature and form of this activity.

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Faith, Peace Building, and Intra-Community Dialogue in South Yorkshire, UK

Richard Slade and Stephanie Steels

This paper discusses the outcomes of action research with an interfaith community dialogue project. The project was established to encourage resilience to the divisive narratives of extreme or radical right-wing groups in South Yorkshire, UK. In communities where there is antipathy towards 'outsiders', contact theory encourages intergroup interaction as a way of improving relationships. However, this research found that where people could or would not take part in inter-group contact, an alternative approach was therefore required. This research identified an innovative process of facilitated 'safe-space' intra-community dialogue that involved groups whose 'out-group' antipathy could feed extremism. Participants could talk amongst themselves about why they felt as they did without the expectation they would interact with other groups. This research identified the role of faith in challenging extremism and a dialogue process that has potential for wider application in settings where identity-related hostility is present.

Keywords: Cohesion, conflict resolution, faith, outsiders, dialogue

Introduction

This study explores findings that arose from action research with an interfaith community dialogue project established to challenge the divisive narratives of extreme and radical right-wing (ERW) support in South Yorkshire, UK. Given the 2015 general election, it may be timely to reflect on drivers behind ERW, and the extent to which support of such groups may change political focus over time.

The 2010 UK general election was thought by some to have marked the beginning of the end for ERW momentum. Nick Griffin, then chair of the British National Party (BNP), had stood in a high-profile campaign in the London Borough of Dagenham and Barking. His principal opponent was Margaret Hodge, a senior Labour politician. As in South Yorkshire, the borough had seen the BNP make significant progress in local elections (Slade 2012). Griffin came third, prompting Hodge to declare:

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> On behalf of all the people in Britain, we in Barking have not just beaten but
> we have smashed extremist outsiders. The message of Barking to the BNP
> is clear, get out and stay out. You are not wanted here and your vile politics
> have no place in British democracy. (Hodge 2010)

Hodge's (2010) response articulated a wider sense of triumph. The website of the
antiracist organisation Unite against Fascism announced: 'Multicultural Barking
defeats the BNP – a victory for the whole country' (Unite against Fascism 2010).
However, such responses diverted attention from why ERW support had grown
and where this momentum might lead in the future. The need for such analysis was
identified in a report published by the Institute of Community Cohesion (iCoCo
2011) which found that since 2001, the number of votes cast for the BNP in
general elections had grown from under 50,000 in 2001 to over 550,00 by 2010.
Although nationally the 2010 election saw the BNP receive 1.9% of votes cast,
in the principal towns of South Yorkshire their share ranged from 2.2% in the
multicultural constituency of Sheffield Central to between 8% and 9% in Barnsley,
and 10.4% in Rotherham. Whilst nationally BNP performance and governance
has collapsed since 2010 (2014 Ford and Goodwin), the right-wing radicalism of
the United Kingdom Independence Party (UKIP) has gained national momentum
in subsequent South Yorkshire by-elections. In 2011, whilst Labour held the
parliamentary seat of Barnsley, UKIP and the BNP were positioned second and
fourth respectively (BBC, 2010). In 2012, Labour retained its seat in Rotherham
with UKIP and the BNP positioned second and third (BBC Election Results 2010,
2011, 2012). South Yorkshire, with some localities bypassed by any New Labour
economic boom, struggled with post-2010 Coalition austerity. There is scant
evidence of change since the 2015 general election and South Yorkshire continues to
impress as fertile ground for the ERW. It is suggested that the continuing aftermath
of the 1984 miners' strike, resurfacing through the recent cessation of deep-mined
coal and continued controversy surrounding the behaviour of authorities during a
miners' demonstration at Orgreave (Conn 2015) coupled with industrial dereliction
has contributed to the rise in ERW.

Positioned in protracted social conflict (PSC) and community cohesion theory
and practice, this research explored drivers behind ERW momentum through the
inception and development of the interfaith community dialogue project (CDP)
established to challenge the divisive narratives of the ERW. The focus of the
research, the role of faith and the development of an innovative process of dialogue,
was addressed through three central research questions:

1. How was the dialogue process developed and what did it look like?

2. How does PSC theory and practice help to explain momentum that
   ERW groups appear to have gained in South Yorkshire?

3. What role did faith and faith values have in concerns about ERW momentum and the development of the CDP and the dialogue process?

The paper begins with a background of South Yorkshire and the CDP followed by a summary of action-research methodology. This is followed by an outline of the methods utilised for data collection. Then we present a discussion of the research findings in relation to the literature that addresses the paper's central questions. This is followed by our conclusions.

Background

South Yorkshire and the Community Dialogue Project

South Yorkshire has been profoundly affected by industrial decline that has had a corrosive impact on communities and their culture (Slade 2012). Associated with the loss and absence of focus arising from unsolicited change are strong feelings of hurt and resentment that centre on the strike by miners from 1984–1985 (Slade 2012). Strike action saw families and communities turned in upon themselves, with a legacy of acrimony arising from who remained on strike and who returned to work. The strike has left an aftermath of defeat and loss that ended traditional employment, eroded associated culture, and remains an embedded source of bitterness and grievance within these former mining communities.

With the exception of Sheffield, cultural and ethnic diversity in South Yorkshire is below the national average. White mono-cultural working-class communities are typical of the area (Slade 2012). Limited geographical mobility and little chance to encounter cultural or ethnic differences have resulted with generations of the same family living in the community. In many ways, this contrasts with urban conurbations in other parts of the UK, where ethnic diversity is a constant feature of everyday life.

Research has suggested that there is a general sense of wariness in relation to anyone perceived as an 'outsider', particularly towards those considered 'Muslim' (Slade 2012). In these scenarios the term 'Muslim' could serve as a proxy identity for all 'outsiders' who were not white and especially those with an Indian sub-continent heritage (Slade 2012). Indeed, despite overall limited diversity and with some communities 96% white British (ONS 2011), research has suggested that Muslims were seen as a threat (Slade 2012; Goodwin et al. 2010). CDP inception built on a public stand taken by local faith leaders that ERW were divisively feeding and exploiting such views (Carnelley 2009). The study found continual evidence in the narratives of research participants of a sense of grievance and belligerence arising from loss of individual and community resources, a grievance that began with the

miners strike, and had become generalised towards all outsiders, especially those of different race or ethnicity, who might pose a threat to limited resources, even if their geographic location was remote.

What appeared to be important was visible evidence, either through culture and ethnicity or racial biology, that a person or group could be quickly characterised as 'not from around here' and in some way represented a broader raft of threat and uncertainty (Slade 2012). Employing charitable funding and positioned in conflict resolution, the CDP developed an underpinning vision of South Yorkshire as 'a resilient, interconnected society which embraces diversity as normal, positive and enriching, and in which we share a real commitment to justice and equality for all' (CDP 2010). The aim of the project was to enable communities in South Yorkshire to become resilient to racist politics and divisive ideologies whilst empowering them to challenge racism and faith-based prejudice in themselves and others (CDP 2010).

The project was developed and managed by people from Christian, Muslim, Jewish and Buddhist faiths. A management committee and small team of staff oversaw the three core activities of the CDP:

1. The provision of 'safe space' dialogue sessions within which difficult conversations around the causes and implications of racism and faith-based prejudice could take place.

2. Supporting and encouraging interaction between groups and communities that do not ordinarily mix.

3. Developing a communications strategy to counter the effect of divisive reporting in the media.

Action Research Methodology

Engagement with the CDP presented an opportunity to understand more of the individual and collective role of faith values in contemporary society, the part they play in challenging radical or extreme views, and the experiences that lead to the dialogue process utilised with communities. These influences, alongside the researchers own methodological interest, pointed towards action research as a method whereby collaboration and trusted relationships could lead to productive research outcomes. Denscombe (2010) believes that action research is relevant in settings where research is used to 'alter things – to do so as part of the research process rather than tag it on as an afterthought which follows the conclusion of the researcher' (Denscombe 2010, 126). McNiff and Whitehead (2006) similarly conclude that the process is effective in settings where improved learning and social action is the focus. Stringer (1999) emphasises the method as a participatory

pathway leading to 'a collaborative approach to enquiry … that provides people with the means to take systematic action to resolve specific problems' (Stringer 1999, 17). This synergy of knowledge and change sat comfortably with the researcher's personal position and CDP's social change stance and a continual learning ethos that was embedded in the CDP processes.

Action research provides an appropriate methodology in responding to three critical factors: first, it provided resources to develop skills required of people who have to cooperate in a complex social action task. Second, whilst social action has a common contemporary faith role, doing so in the context of challenging ERW is less usual and draws on limited experience. The researcher's active engagement with the project enabled live insight and knowledge to be developed. Third, there was limited theoretical or research-based evidence on which the CDP could draw to guide the development and implementation of intra-community dialogue. Therefore the research process to support the development of learning and expertise was mutually beneficial. Fourthly, within the action research framework, the researcher made extensive use of PSC methodology (Azar 1990) that emphasises participative 'bottom-up' engagement by facilitators in dialogue between groups with strong group identities. Conflict resolution as delivered through PSC methodology is highly participative and democratic, offering a synergy with action research principles, Sectoral Social Dialogue (SSD) processes and a lens through which the ERW momentum and its consequences could be understood.

Data Collection

Ethical approval from the University of Coventry Ethics Committee was granted in January 2010. Fieldwork took place between 2011 and 2012. This period provided an opportunity to explore the impact of the 2010 general election and the effect of coalition policies, including those associated with austerity, on communities.

Participants were interviewed using a semi-structured interview schedule. The objective was to explore their experience of being invited to and taking part in dialogue sessions, their perspective on relationships within and between their community and other communities and their views on factors behind the growth of right-wing extremism. Interviews were audio-recorded and transcripts evaluated using a framework analysis method. Data collection was structured through three elements: interviews with CDP founders and Management Committee members; participation in a consortium of dialogue facilitators; and evaluative interviews with SSD participants.

Interviews with CDP founders and Management Committee members explored the role of faith in individual and group motivation behind CDP development and

the rationale for utilising the concept of SSD. Twelve persons were involved in these interviews. This enabled people to talk amongst themselves in safe spaces rather than the more usual approach of engaging in direct contact with those towards whom antipathy was felt. Data was obtained through a semi-structured schedule and modified Likert scoring scale and involved twelve audio-recorded individual interviews. Interviews were transcribed and subjected to framework analysis using categories that structured the interviews and which had been developed with a cooperative enquiry group established for the purposes of the research.

The second element saw the researcher co-opted into membership of meetings of dialogue facilitators that both led development of the SSD process and were the focus for critical analysis and peer supervision of each SSD session. Membership provided a key action-research opportunity to analyse and distil learning from live experience and introduce findings from other research. Two data-collection methods were utilised. First, meetings were recorded, transcribed, and subjected to thematic analysis by the researcher and facilitators. This resulted in a cycle of continuous revisions and improvements to processes and outcomes. These were then woven into the research framework. Second, this element of research concluded in a consolidation where facilitators were able to review and commit themselves to the processes as an accurate reflection of their experience and expertise.

The third element of action research was designed to understand individual experience of SSD so that a contemporaneous link could be developed between the dialogue process and the live experience of participants. This element of research was significantly limited in relation to a sample that was methodologically representative of the age, class, community, ethnicity, and faith of participants. The CDP guarantees of anonymity meant that no records of contact details had been kept and extensive networking was required to identify any participants who were prepared to be interviewed. This strategy eventually identified a sample of ten participants from a total of 84 adults giving a sample of just under 12% of the total number of SSD participants.

Participants were all white British and comprised six females and four males. Three participants self-identified as atheists, whilst all the other interviewees indicated regular attendance at Christian worship. The sample was drawn from nine SSD groups who had met during a period of twelve months. All the groups were affiliated with a Christian church either because they were faith-based or used church buildings for non-religious social-activity purposes. Assessed by voting patterns and in the account of participants, the communities in which the SSDs took place and the participants lived had an active ERW presence. The majority of communities scored above average in multiple deprivation indices and were over 98% White British (ONS 2011).

Results and Discussion

Extreme or Radical Right-Wing Supporters

The first step towards understanding the ERW momentum was to learn more about those who support such groups and the extent to which BNP and UKIP members might share common beliefs**.** Goodwin and Evans's (2012) research and analysis of BNP and UKIP members utilised a Yougov online survey of 1,460 UKIP supporters and 386 BNP supporters to establish an understanding of people who declared extreme or radical right-wing support. Their approach is relevant because UKIP have developed a strategy of openly encouraging BNP supporters to vote for UKIP candidates, thus suggesting some coterminosity of beliefs (Nuttall 2011, 93). Goodwin and Evans (2012) found that congruence between the groups was evident in their concerns and anxieties. After the financial crisis and subsequent austerity, their third joint principal concern was Muslims in Britain.

Both BNP and UKIP supporters have high levels of anxiety about Islam and its institutions and the extent to which the faith is a threat to the West. Both groups did not believe the UK benefited from diversity. Amongst BNP supporters there was a strong belief that immigrants are the main cause of crime and that certain racial groups are superior to others. Goodwin and Evans's (2012) research suggested that large numbers of BNP and UKIP supporters think that violence between racial and religious groups in the UK is inevitable. Thus, BNP supporters are most likely to consider a strategy of preparing for violence, with half the group willing to be prepared for armed conflict. Ford and Goodwin's (2014) later analysis of UKIP membership adds further insight. Whilst Conservative voters tend to be middle class and economically secure, they found UKIP draws most of its support from blue-collar workers and voters on low and insecure incomes (Goodwin 2014). European Union membership comes third behind immigration and the economy as the major cause of concern. The research also found that UKIP supporters are likely to identify with socially conservative policies that include an anti-immigration perspective, promoting traditional British values and national identity, a conservative stance on law and order, and are contemptuous of the contemporary political elite.

Three analytical issues emerged from this body of research that are relevant to the study's central questions. First, ERW supporters are struggling with pressures that have an impact on their economic security and thus their ability to meet basic needs. Second, ERW supporters feel estranged from contemporary political leaders and as a consequence their capacity for influence has weakened. Third, antipathy towards outsiders and those with a recognisably different identity is a clear feature of their attitudes towards coexistence with other citizens.

This research found evidence to support the relevance of these issues. Firstly, the South Yorkshire districts of Sheffield, Doncaster, Barnsley and Rotherham include communities scoring significantly above the UK national average in economic, social and health deprivation (ONS 2001).

Secondly, the decline of traditional heavy manufacturing and mining has been accompanied by the decay of institutions such as trade unions and working men's clubs that traditionally linked white working-class communities and the Labour Party and which might have been able to provide a counter narrative to the ERW. In our study, feelings of unwarranted change, powerlessness, loss and bitterness, and experience of class prejudice surfaced regularly during interviews. Articulating these feelings of resentment and of being ignored, allied with significant experience of deprivation, has been an effective strategy of the ERW. Both UKIP and the BNP have pointed to neglect by mainstream political parties as an explanation for why communities are deprived of resources that have flowed instead to the 'other'.

Thirdly, the antipathy towards outsiders can be understood through a coalescence of the first two issues expressed by one participant in the following terms:

> Where I come from, the communities have lost their employment, and a lot of the men particularly have lost their purpose. That sounds awful but they haven't got the work down the colliery. The [ERW] play on this kind of fear of them coming from abroad, nicking our jobs, and taking everything, and trying to take over. I think that rumour is propagated round an awful lot … and people just act on that fear.

Again, this provides the ERW with an explanation of what has gone wrong. They frame communities as ignored by the elite, defenceless in the face of competitive immigration, and threatened by the influence of multiculturalism and Islam. However, viewed through the lens of protracted social conflict theory (Azar 1990), it could be suggested that the ERW can be seen to draw hostile boundaries around communal identity groups, framing malevolent out-groups as challenging disadvantaged white indigenous in-groups.

Protracted Social Conflict Resolution and Contact Theory Literature in the Context of South Yorkshire

Protracted Social Conflict Resolution can be defined as a facilitated dialogue-based peace-building process developed to address actual or potential social conflict where tensions between groups become embedded. The protracted element can be observed where the aftermath of real or perceived incidents or concerns lingers, forming the basis of hostile stereotypes of 'out-groups' who are held responsible for individual or group misfortune. Contact theory can be defined as a similarly

dynamic process and aims to bring groups together through facilitated dialogue to explore and move on from such stereotypes.

Azar's (1990) methodology for working with protracted social conflict (PSC) was developed to address situations where identity groups are engaged in a struggle to meet basic needs such as security, recognition, acceptance, and fair access to governance (Azar 1991). Whilst the focus is religious, cultural or ethnic identity, tensions are driven by the need to satisfy 'basic needs such as those for security, communal recognition and distributive justice' (Azar 1990, 2). These underlying causes are exacerbated by external intervention and manipulation of local grievances.

Arguing from human need theory (Maslow 1959), Azar found that grievances arising from basic needs being unmet or unfairly disregarded combine with individual and group identity to create deep-seated resentments. He found that people strive to meet basic needs both individually and collectively through the formation of identity groups. This can give rise to a clear link between personal resentment, arising from unmet individual need, becoming generalised into group identity experience. These individual and group unmet needs become drivers of antipathy, leading to tensions between communal identity groups. This in turn creates a vicious circle of actual or anticipated fearful and hostile interactions between contestants, where conflictual positions lead to attitudes, cognitive processes, and perceptions of 'them' becoming ossified. Failure to address resentment provides a niche for lingering group grievances and anger. The process is rooted in feelings and perceptions rather than rationality. This can lead to a search for the 'guilty' based on fear and 'otherness' (Azar 1990, 17–19).

Using the above definitions, it could be argued that the roots of PSC developing in South Yorkshire are becoming embedded; this may be evidenced by momentum in voting support for the policies of ERW groups, underpinned by the sense of grievance and resentment identified in this research. This combination of factors could well have been of concern to Azar. However, our study did not find that South Yorkshire is ready to erupt in identity-based conflict. Despite levels of deprivation, cultural change arising from the decline of traditional industries, and a sense of exclusion from governance and influence, lower than average ethnic diversity could mean that PSC is less likely. However, our study found that what was significant was not what might be objectively identified but rather perceptions of outsiders. In particular, the research found that in the absence of day-to-day interaction people drew knowledge from media platforms that described distant and often un-contextualised events. This contributed to an atmosphere where Muslims and Islam were a frequent focus of anxiety and 'otherness'. One participant commented, 'Within the press, they are presented as a threat. You know, they take our jobs, they cost a fortune, they live in luxury, etcetera.' This notion of feeling threatened was

echoed by another participant: 'I read somewhere the other day there will soon be Muslims on the North Yorkshire moors … I was in [name of a local town] and was in a lift with someone who was dressed like a terrorist.'

One dialogue facilitator reported to the researcher about one participant recalling a journey on a tram:

> [He was] sitting opposite a 'foreigner' on the tram who, in their opinion, behaved very strangely, looking anxious and over his shoulder. He was convinced this person may be a terrorist trying to gather information about how best to commit an act of atrocity and later phoned up the police to report it. He spoke passionately about people not being safe in this country anymore and the need for everyone to be vigilant.

It is temptingly easy to dismiss the participant's experience as an example of Islamophobic views of Muslims and Islam. Whilst this may be true, a fair conclusion would take into account anxieties about security arising from terrorist incidents well beyond the small, safe and white mono-cultural community setting where the dialogue session took place.

The resolution of PSC situations lies in dialogue facilitated by independent mediators and facilitators who interact with groups by focusing on participant issues at a pace appropriate to their needs. Azar (1990) found that prejudicial behaviour is learnt, can be modified through such, and that listening to people through facilitated dialogue and addressing their issues and concerns is a fundamental tenet of resolving conflict. His emphasis on dialogue as a conflict resolution strategy argues synergy with the CDP process of SSD. However, the project's approach lay in groups talking amongst themselves about their antipathy rather than bringing different people together. The validity of this seemingly counter-intuitive method can be assessed through theory and practice exploring conflict resolution between belligerent groups.

Interventions in conflict arising from identity-based belligerence between individuals or groups usually focus on bringing people together in facilitated dialogue (Allport 1954; Pettigrew 1998; Scott-Appleby 2000; Cantle 2008). Allport (1954) found that 'in-group' attitudes of hostility towards 'out-groups' could be reduced through intergroup contact leading to a reduction in prejudice. Pettigrew (1998) developed Allport's approach by identifying outcomes of inter-group contact that included new learning about other people that could correct negative stereotypes, which underpin prejudice. However, he found that optimal inter-group contact was essential in modifying behaviour that would lead to changed attitudes, positive expectations of the 'out-group', reappraisal of in-group norms and positive attitudes towards out-groups generally.

Cantle (2008) sees inter-group contact as crucial in addressing the separateness and 'parallel lives' of communities in multicultural societies, divisions that he believes extremists can exploit. In general terms proponents of these approaches would endorse an inter-community approach to dialogue, rather than the intra-community process developed by the CDP.

Peace-building research in Northern Ireland provides a direct link with the CDP's work. Church et al. (2002) describe an approach to conflict resolution as intra-community dialogue and single-identity work. Their research explores a range of processes for engaging groups for whom a culture of sectarian division is a deeply entrenched reality. They debate whether inter-community contact is the only way forward, arguing that 'increased intergroup contact has not rendered viable, reconciliation in this [Northern Ireland] society' (Church et al. 2002, 8). They suggest that what is needed in some circumstances is a process that will engage those most steeped in their own traditions but which may still be supportive of eventual contact with other communities.

Other writers have explored similar processes that implicitly question the approach advocated by contact theory traditionalists. The work of Hewstone et al. (2008), also based on segregated communities in Northern Ireland, found that indirect contact between group members can have a positive impact on the group overall. Chris and Turner's (2009) development of 'imagined contact' also has resonance. Their methodology is likely to be applicable in localities where direct contact between groups is neither feasible nor sensible. In such circumstances they demonstrate that 'imagined contact', where participants work through various scenarios involving social contact with other people, can reduce prejudice and help in preparing for opportunities to meet people from other groups.

Set against this analysis, opinion is divergent in relation to the CDP intra-community approach. Research in Northern Ireland describes practice that echoes the CDP assessment of the need for such a process in South Yorkshire communities. Yet contact theory and community cohesion advocates would be likely to recommend interaction between groups as the way forward. However, the CDP faced a number of challenges in following such a route. In some communities with growing levels of support for the extreme or radical right wing, people would not or were not ready to meet with 'out-groups' towards whom fear and hostility was directed.

Allied with this was lower than average ethnic diversity and inward migration (ONS 2011) making the development of the optimal contact recommended by Pettigrew challenging and resource intensive to sustain. The position was further complicated by traditions of limited geographical mobility and deep-seated attitudes of wariness towards 'out-groups' summed up in a typical perspective by one SSD participant as

'fear of the outsider … people who aren't like us and don't come from round here … it's drummed into you at birth.'

Additional challenges in adopting an inter-group strategy were evident. First, direct contact is resource intensive and would have exceeded the CDP capacity. Second, CDP networks had identified an urgent need to provide some opportunity for people to talk about difficult issues such as race, and racism and other stereotypes of 'otherness' and difference: as noted by a CDP founder [to enable people to talk about] 'what everyone is thinking about but not talking about – they don't talk because they might be accused of being racist'. The sense of urgency arose from awareness that extreme and radical right-wing groups were actively engaged in such conversations and that these interactions were critical in their developing a power base. ERW groups were observed to be keen to listen to people's fears and anxieties and in doing so built an empathic portal to their group narrative of hostile stereotyping.

The issues appear more clear-cut in relation to a central element of the CDP intra-community process. The provision of SSD for this method is clearly evident in conflict resolution and peace-building theory and research-based learning. The UK-based St Ethelburga's Conflict Resolution Centre has drawn on experience of reconciliation work with groups that own strong communal identities to provide guidance in relation to safe-space work (St Ethelburga's Conflict Resolution Centre 2009). Their approach emphasises the crucial role of listening to perspectives in a non-judgemental way and facilitating new understandings of other groups. Similarly, Reychler (2001) finds clear connections between 'in-group' dialogue and non-judgemental listening that encourage people to address stereotypes and the importance of such strategies in conflict de-escalation. This analysis suggests a theoretical and practice-based endorsement of the concept of SSD.

How was the dialogue process developed and what did it look like?

Against this background the CDP began to develop and implement a method of intra-community dialogue SSD, in a process where personal values came together with learning and practical action. One interviewee remarked, 'We're dealing with something at a strategic level, at a practice level and it's also intensely personal. … That gives it energy.'

The focus of development was the consortium of dialogue facilitators where members with Christian, Muslim, Buddhist, and atheist perspectives met to reflect on and learn for live experience. The SSD groups that gave rise to this experience comprised nine groups involving 98 participants who met in specially convened or already

established groups. Four of the groups were Christian-faith focused and five were atheist, although they used church buildings. From the outset SSD took place in white communities. Whilst the CDP sought opportunities for activity with other faith groups in the words of one interviewee, 'We should be targeting people in danger of voting for the BNP – Muslim people are not in danger of voting for the BNP.'

Each group provided a different experience that was captured through reflective facilitator analysis and learning explored in consortium meetings. Key features of this learning placed emphasis on empathy, starting from where people are, and working within the unique identity and cultural context of each SSD group. Starting from a group's position, their view of the world and their narrative of their community proved essential in facilitators' developing a relationship with participants that enabled difficult conversations to progress towards an outcome. Exploring personal participant experiences of discrimination and prejudice was found to provide valuable insights for an SSD group discussion in relation to how others also experience hurtful discrimination. One facilitator encapsulated the approach as follows:

> The starting point is a presupposition that when there are fixed views, that is, a pattern that is relatively stable over time – for example, that a particular social group is the problem – then [dialogue facilitation can] unsettle the system and enable it to re-constellate into a new pattern. And that it is our hope that this new pattern, with appropriate facilitation, will embrace more of the complexity of the situation, rather than become more polarised.

In conjunction with the outcomes of the facilitators' dialogue consortium, eight interviews with SSD participants provided further formative data. One SSD participant felt sessions had built on their experience of working with other communities and that for other members of their dialogue group, who had not had such experience, the sessions had a similar positive impact. Another participant was already committed to addressing prejudice and described examples of doing this as they went about their daily life, since the SSD session. A further participant said sessions had reinforced their view that the subject matter was one of importance for their community and that people had been prepared to meet and discuss the matter reflected a similar priority of views in their group. However, this participant expressed disappointment that sessions had not gone further. One interviewee said the experience had made them more aware of prejudice, particularly in the media, and a further participant thought they understood prejudice better, how it could work 'in them' and that they had developed a practical strategy to respond to racism and prejudice as a result of the dialogue session. This participant believed that both for them, and their group, the experience had given a greater understanding of and commitment to challenge prejudice.

However, evaluations were not universally positive. Whilst participants were satisfied with the effectiveness of sessions in exploring the causes of racism and prejudice and the majority were positive about the role of facilitators, a number commented that sessions would have been improved if there had been more emphasis on practical strategies to address racism and prejudice. One participant believed CDP aims and objectives had not been achieved because in their view the sessions failed to explore issues in sufficient depth. Whilst most participants were not distressed or anxious, before, during, or after the dialogue session, two participants engaging with the CDP felt it had caused distress that reverberated for some time. Their dialogue group believed their community had been identified by some unspoken authority as needing a discussion about prejudice. Participants were hostile to the prospect and, based on the account of these participants, appeared steeped in denial that any element of this phenomenon was present in their group or community. This provided important learning in relation to ensuring that permission to work with a group was freely given and that communities were not labelled as racist – a process of stereotyping the CDP aimed to counter.

The Intra Community Dialogue Framework

The intra-community dialogue process may be transferable to different settings. It is not a prescriptive formula but has a strong resonance with elements of person-centred work described by Rogers (1986). In dialogue situations where qualities of respect, empathy, warmth, and immediacy are assessed as relevant, the approach may be useful. The framework can be understood as having two stages: stage 1 involved working with individuals and groups to seek out opportunities for dialogue; stage 2 could then be followed over several sessions. Stage 2 involved an introductory phase, a dialogue element, a reflective phase, and a concluding session focusing on outcomes including whether people might act differently towards outsiders in the future. Here, the stages are considered in relation to the study findings.

Introductory Phase

Research findings revealed that the introductory element of a session had a number of common purposes. Facilitators began with an introduction to the CD project and its aims and objectives followed by trust and confidence building with the group – developing a theme of 'we are learning from each other'. A further purpose was to find out, from the group's perspective, what it felt like to live in their community, listening especially to local narratives describing their concerns.

Dialogue Element

The dialogue element of a session began when people felt safe in being able to look at their feelings in relation to difference and antipathy towards others. A non-

judgmental approach, whilst challenging views when relevant, was found to be a key ingredient of effectiveness. The research found that in some groups, facilitators found it useful to start in a structured way, for example with a role play between facilitators presenting an aspect of prejudice, then moving towards a more equal relationship between facilitators and participants, where group members reflected on their own experiences of prejudice.

The Reflective Element

Facilitators reflecting back key themes that had arisen in the dialogue session were helpful in highlighting particular outcomes. Alongside this it was important to establish whether participants had been overly disconcerted by the dialogue session, taking appropriate action where necessary. If a further session was planned, then this element could give an indication of the themes or topics participants wanted to explore.

Dialogue Session Outcomes

Identifying the outcomes of a dialogue session flowed from the reflective element and was important for ensuring closure both for a specific session and the conclusion of a series of sessions. Research identified the importance of facilitators exploring a number of areas with participants. Some of these were unique to a group, but in general focused on how people felt as a result of the session(s) and whether attitudes in relation to prejudice had been influenced in any way. Facilitators asked if people wanted to take any action as a result of the dialogue session. This could include being more ready to challenge prejudice, and might extend to contact with other groups including groups of different faith or ethnicity.

Facilitator skills

Research identified a range of skills required by SSD facilitators. Some are common to all group-work situations; for example, skills in joint working, communication and co-facilitation were crucial. Other facilitation skills focused on the interpersonal and involved maintaining a respectful attitude, empathic listening – for the spoken and unspoken – non-assertive challenging, encouraging self-reflection and reframing. In some groups, facilitators were required to have skills and knowledge in applying aspects of theology relevant to issues of prejudice and stereotyping. In all groups, facilitators required a working knowledge of, and skills in, understanding and working with concepts of racism and prejudice. In addition, a subset of skills were identified that included role-play, holding conversations to a topic and pursuing issues in more depth, addressing the power of the single narrative, working with the group culture, and harnessing the impact of personal experience of prejudice, usually in relation to class, gender or disability.

How does Conflict Resolution Theory Explain ERW Momentum in South Yorkshire?

Azar (1990) emphasises the importance of cultural identity and access to resources to meet basic needs as critical factors in groups' developing of animosity towards outsiders. This research found that the traditional cultures and way of life of many people in villages and towns have been profoundly affected by industrial decline and change. Some communities are marooned in surroundings dominated by industrial dereliction and decay. Associated with loss of culture and consistency surrounding traditional employment are strong feelings of loss and bewilderment centred on change that was neither sought nor consulted upon. This decline has eaten into the cultural composition of communities and is particularly evident in the decay of institutions such as trade unions and working men's clubs. These institutions had enabled communities to interact with each other and linked them with the Labour Party and some political influence.

This sense of being ignored is allied with communities scoring significantly above the UK national average in economic, social and health deprivation that undermines the capacity of individuals and communities to meet their basic needs. High levels of unemployment and lower than average job ratios for people of working age are common for a majority of the population in each of the principal towns who live in the most deprived areas (NOMIS 2013). In some parts of the locality significant numbers of children are living in poverty and life expectancy for men is on average nine years less, and for women eight years less than in more prosperous areas (Public Health Observatory 2013).

Based on this analysis there appears to be evidence of unmet need and resource insecurity that would add to concerns arising from identity-based antipathy. Allied with this is a sense of exclusion from the levers of influence, a factor Azar (1990) believes is critical in precipitating PSC. However, interlaced with hostility towards outsiders and the challenges of meeting basic needs is a narrative discernible in many conversations that occur when people are invited to talk about their community.

Within a few moments, discussion will often focus on hurt, resentment, and deep feelings of unresolved grievance that arose from the 1984–1985 strike by miners. One SSD summed up the consequences of the win-lose conclusion of this industrial conflict with communities remaining bitterly divided: 'There are people who don't speak to each other because they went back to work. There are massive feuds between people because of that.' Another participant remarked: 'This village was wonderful until the miners' strike, and everything went downhill after that.'

For many communities this industrial conflict and the manner of its resolution remains a live and bitter experience in the culture, day-to-day lives, conversations, and expectations of communities. Peace-building theory and practice underline the danger for long-term cohesion of terminating conflict with an imposed win-lose situation leaving unresolved resentment and hostility in the triumphalist wake of the victor (Ramsbotham et al. 2005). Lederach (2005) argues the enduring consequences of such a solution: 'The past was alive and kept showing up on the doorstep of constructive change' (Lederach 2005, 138).

The sense of grievance arising from this bitter conflict remains a powerful force, adding to a collective sense of exclusion from the levers of influence and resentment that resources are distributed unfairly and to the disadvantage of local communities. Communities with a sense of exclusion, struggling to meet their needs, bypassed by the New Labour economic boom, and with a strong sense of 'the outsider' were looking for somebody to blame. The developing CDP approach reflected a belief amongst project founders that people were increasingly turning towards 'them' – Muslims, migrants, Gypsies – as the perpetrators of their discontent and that they found there was little opportunity to talk about their fears, felt inhibited in doing so, and feared opening themselves up to accusations of racism if they did. By contrast, ERW groups had no compunction in encouraging such discussion and exploiting subsequent divisiveness.

The Role of Faith in the Development of the CDP and the Dialogue Process

The CDP's inception built on a stand taken by South Yorkshire faith leaders during 2009 in publicly opposing the BNP (Carnelley 2009). This interfaith civic leadership was critical in CDP inception and interviews and was regularly referred to by CDP committee members and staff as a stimulus for persevering in addressing a complex challenge. Those engaged in many forms of partnership working will recognise the need for leadership of the sort presented by the faith leaders as an essential ingredient for success. In this context the high-profile position adopted by faith leaders modelled values of tolerance and coexistence in a climate where political ambition and hostility were prominent ingredients.

The CDP's vision of a resilient, interconnected society was evident and modelled through the CDP Management Committee and in the project ethos and culture. Made up of Anglican, Methodist, Muslim, Jewish, Catholic, and Buddhist perspectives, the group represented a spectrum of faiths that in other places face each other from positions of hostility and violence. On one level the extent of 'connectedness' was evident in the way the group addressed many of the challenges that are familiar elements of partnership working such as governance, priorities, roles, processes, and uncharted learning.

However, interviews found that individual faith values were critical in sustaining personal motivation that fed into the 'connectedness' underpinning progress. These individual values were evident in perspectives articulating a commitment to social justice, concerns about deprivation and the poor self-image of some communities. The comment of one interviewee encapsulated a commonly held position:

> If you're marginalised, poor, if your life isn't what you want it to be, you look for a scapegoat, and if you have a faith, that is going to be with you on your side of this injustice. The task is to help people engage differently with that picture of themselves and their community – for people who see themselves at the end of injustice.

Allied to such values was a clearer faith-based desire to find and build common faith ground evident in one participant's comment that 'in major faiths like Islam and Christianity there is common ground, values and principles … if we work from there – from the human aspects rather than say Christianity says this – because Christianity saying "Be kind to your neighbour" is exactly the same in Islam.' Another interviewee commented, 'There is common ground across Abrahamic faiths – God is a God of justice – we give God different names but as far as I'm concerned it's the same God.'

However, what appeared significant was that this search for common ground also had a clear objective. This involved challenging the strategies of extreme and radical right-wing groups that had been observed to be adopting religious identity as a way of forming relationships with communities and building difference and hostility towards 'outsiders'. A number of participants expressed fears that such groups, in a search for a more 'respectable' form of racism, were using Christian identity as a platform from which to develop their affinity with communities so as to build and exacerbate hostility towards easily identifiable outsiders, such as Muslims. One dialogue participant living in a community where extreme and radical right-wing groups were active may well have reflected the effectiveness of this strategy when they commented, 'In our community there is no outward prejudice at all … but when it comes down to the nitty-gritty like – Muslims – that's a sore point. People who don't believe the same that we do. It's more than race.'

This suggests that the role of faith in public life has the potential to introduce new categories of 'otherness' (Dinham et al. 2009). However, the research findings offer a counterpoint to this position where faith, belief, a commitment to social justice, and a concern to resist faith becoming used as a badge of hostility that jarred with personal values were harnessed to resist intolerance and aggressive doctrinaire narratives. Rather the CDP can be seen to reflect Scott-Appleby's (2000) description of faith in 'bottom-up' peace building that does not undermine confessional ties

but promotes 'forgiveness and reconciliation rather than … the nourishing of grievances' (Scott-Appleby 2000, 173).

Conclusion

The dialogue process identified through this research consists of a two-stage model with clear aims and principles. The dialogue stage comprises five distinct but overlapping elements and requires knowledge and experience of a skill set for its implementation. The dialogue process described has the potential for development and transferability in settings where people who are locked in tensions and animosity cannot, will not, or are not ready to meet with 'outsiders', and where hostility is exploited by others.

The study has argued that ERW groups draw on disaffection with mainstream political parties and exclusion of deprived communities from influence. A decline in traditional employment and associated culture has limited the capacity of people and communities to meet their needs, both in relation to basic resources and for individual and group esteem. It is suggested that the aftermath of industrial conflict remains an embedded and unresolved grievance.

The study also found that faith through leadership, interfaith cooperation, and interventions focused on social justice and community engagement brought faith-values into a secular, politically contentious realm and made an innovative and practical contribution in a complex field. The level of interfaith cooperation was of a high order and brought about good quality governance and a dialogue process developed through sophisticated and productive learning arrangements. However, given the small-scale nature of the CDP, its impact across the locality is likely to be limited. Whilst exploration of similar initiatives and resources was outside the remit of this research, and might arguably merit further study, the CDP impresses as a lonely figure on an increasingly hostile landscape. This should be of concern to social cohesion strategists and planners.

However, two aspects of learning stand out that are relevant to the intra-community dialogue process. First, telling individuals and groups that their views were pejorative did nothing to stimulate an alternative view of 'the other'. Rather it was more likely to enhance alienation and feelings of poor self-esteem. In the research context people could keep quiet if they felt unfairly challenged. Second, participants commonly experienced personal prejudice in relation to age, gender, disability, and especially class and community. Exploring their personal experience of hurtful stereotyping gave important insight into how others might experience prejudice and hostility on the basis of race or religion.

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Problematizing Whiteness: A Woman of Color and a White Woman Discuss Race and Research

Shametrice Davis and Chris Linder

In this paper, we engage in reflexivity to explore our experiences with race and research. Employing critical race theory as a framework, we engage in a dialogue about the risks and benefits of White scholars exploring race in higher education research. Through this conversation, we attempt to problematize the use of CRT by White scholars and provide a framework for scholars to consider when engaging in research related to race. Further, we intend to model the difficult dialogues in which White women and women of Color must engage to support each other as scholars in higher education.

Introduction

Problematizing Whiteness: Reconstruction or deconstruction? Unmasking or re-masking? Authentic tears or guilt? Genuine concern or professional opportunity? The preceding polarizing binaries often surface when considering the effectiveness of White scholars attempting to understand issues of privilege and oppression through the use of Critical Race Theory (CRT). The importance of such work is evidenced through its continual proliferation in literature (e.g., Bergerson 2003; Bondi 2012; Linder, Harris, Allen and Hubain 2015; Thompson 2003). But some scholars (e.g., Dace 2012; Patton and Bondi 2015) question the authenticity and expansive (Crenshaw 1988) outcomes of such work. Aligned with this critique, literature recently surfaced that heavily focuses on critical issues arising from research collaborations between women of Color and White women in the academy (Dace 2012).

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The propensity of collaborations between women of Color and White women to negative experience points to the importance of deconstructing critiques and concerns associated with this work. A negative experience with such cooperation can lead to a permanent severing of highly needed alliances. White women and women of Color share an obligation to dismantle perpetuations of oppression; further, we share a responsibility to countless women of Color to continue engaging in difficult collaborations that bring light to our hurt, our stories, and our hope. In this paper, we (one White woman and one woman of Color) discuss cross-racial collaborations in the context of using CRT from a research standpoint.

As the academy continuously strives to become more inclusive and representative of people with diverse identities, increased attention is paid to faculty issues from a variety of standpoints. Some of this literature focuses on the work-life balance for tenure-track faculty members who have families (O'Meara and Campbell 2011); mentoring dynamics between faculty members and graduate students of Color (McCoy, Winkle-Wagner, Luedke and Hannah 2013); and the continually evolving role of faculty members in the constantly changing contexts and demographics of higher education (Gehrke and Kezar 2013). Given the evolving demographics of the professoriate, we argue the importance of illuminating the increasing collaborations between White faculty members and those of Color in an effort to 1) bring light to some of the difficult issues stemming from Whiteness in such collaborations and 2) provide a framework that may serve as a guide for cross-racial research collaborations despite difficulties that can inevitably arise. In this paper, we highlight a dialogue about these complex issues as an example of a strategy to raise issues for consideration related to cross-racial collaborations. To be clear, we are not crusading for an increase in cross-racial collaborations in the academy, but rather attempting to provide a platform from which to elevate some of the issues that stem from these frequent collaborations that are already occurring. We provide detailed reasoning regarding our motivation for this work below.

As a woman of Color recently entering academia, I (Shametrice) wanted to explore the meaning of and my personal experiences with White women claiming to be anti-racist, committed to diversifying the academy, and loyal to understanding and using CRT as an analytical tool in research. I became especially motivated after reading *Unlikely Allies in the Academy*, an edited volume by Karen Dace (2012), because the book candidly addresses professional and personal predicaments stemming from alliances between White women and women of Color in the academy. During my last year as a graduate student, a new faculty member (Chris) gave a presentation regarding her research on students of Color. She openly identified as a White woman and readily acknowledged some of the complexities of engaging her research from the perspective of that identity. I experienced a visceral reaction to her presentation

because I questioned her motivation to research a group of students on an aspect of identity and experiences to which she herself could not identify. While I was sure of my discomfort with her presentation, I was less certain as to why I had such a strong reaction. It is likely due to having recently taken a Critical Race Theory course and coming to understand the dangers and repercussions of interest convergence, or the tendency for White people to suddenly become interested in issues for people of Color only if it will benefit them in some fashion. I went on to graduate and work in a postdoctoral fellowship before reconnecting with Chris a few months later at a conference and immediately remembered my feelings about her prior presentation. We began talking about it and ultimately decided to embark on the process of understanding cross-racial research collaborations in the context of academia.

As a White woman engaged in scholarship and pedagogy related to race, I (Chris) value opportunities to engage with colleagues of Color in meaningful dialogues about race. When I re-connected with Shametrice at a national conference in the fall of 2012, I felt excited about a potential collaboration with her to explore the dynamics of White women engaging in critical race scholarship. To that point in my career, my research had largely centered on the intersections of race and gender, including topics related to white undergraduate women's understanding of race and racism and the experiences of students of Color in undergraduate and graduate programs. I sometimes engage CRT as a framework for my work and recognize the challenges of my 'epistemic uncertainty' (Sholock 2012, 709), the fact that as a White woman there will be more times than not that my race inhibits me from fully understanding the dynamics of racism in higher education. However, I also recognize the immense responsibility I have as a White woman engaged in social justice scholarship and pedagogy to continue to unlearn and stop the ways in which I perpetuate racism and to intervene in my circles of influence, specifically with colleagues and students. This work with Shametrice represents my commitment to accountability to women of Color in higher education and my commitment to continually attempting to better understand my positionality and strategies for dismantling oppression.

While CRT is increasingly used by White scholars in pedagogy and research, few scholars have publicly critiqued this work. Bergerson (2010) attempts to critically analyze and question the use of CRT from a White perspective, but a dearth of cross-racial collaboration problematizing the use of CRT by White scholars exists. Specifically, we pose the following question: How can reflexivity and CRT be used to problematize Whiteness in cross-racial research collaborations?

After an overview of the theoretical framework, we discuss cross-racial collaborations and Whiteness in the academy. Next, we engage in critical reflexivity (Daley 2010)

of a dialogue we conducted regarding the use of CRT in cross-racial collaborations. We chose to engage in dialogue and critical reflexivity because both are highly effective methods for understanding difference, power, and discrimination between and among people with diverse identities (Freire 2000; Zuniga, Nagda, Chesler, and Cytron-Walker 2007). Dialogue, as opposed to discussion or debate, helps participants not only provide their perspective, but also engage in and respond to the other's worldview and perspectives. The critical reflexivity aspect allows not only for reflection on the dialogue process, but to act on it in our personal and professional lives. The paper concludes with a framework that delineates suggestions and implications for using CRT in research. Critical Race Theory undergirds the entire paper as a theoretical and conceptual framework. Additionally, this paper is based on academia in the United States and the language and spellings used are reflective of that context.

Critical Race Theory

CRT, although derived from the work of legal scholars (i.e., Bell 1980; Crenshaw 1988; Harris 1993), is often used as an analytical research tool for understanding inequality in educational and workplace contexts (Minor 2004; Vaught and Castagno 2008). Interdisciplinary in nature, CRT incorporates academic traditions from education, sociology, history, ethnic studies, and women studies, to name a few (Harper, Patton and Wooden 2009, 390). CRT is typically outlined by five to seven tenets, though the description of each tenet may be different based on the context in which the theory is being used. The tenets include: (a) racism as endemic to society, (b) counter-storytelling, (c) critique of liberalism, (d) interest convergence, and (e) Whiteness as property (Bell 1980; Crenshaw 1988; Delgado and Stefancic 2012; Harris 1993; Ladson-Billings 1998). We focus the discussion on the latter two tenets, as those are most relevant to this paper.

The interest-convergence tenet of CRT is twofold: it argues that in addition to Whites being the primary beneficiaries of civil rights legislation, progress is typically experienced by people of Color only when it reduces the perceived threat for Whites in society (Bell 1980). Said differently, interest-convergence is a 'process whereby the White power structure will tolerate or encourage racial advances for Blacks only when they also promote White self-interests' (Harper, Patton and Wooden 2009, 391). For example, data reveal that White women have reaped the most benefits of affirmative action legislation, despite a pervasive misnomer that these laws have provided an 'unfair' workforce advantage for people of color (Ladson-Billings 1998). Another concrete example of interest-convergence is seen in the context of Arizona becoming the last state to officially recognize the Martin Luther King, Jr. holiday. State legislatures did so once professional athletic teams threatened to disband, which would have resulted in significant loss of revenue for the state.

Whiteness as property stems from the notion that 'the origins of property rights in the United States are rooted in racial domination' (Harris 1993, 1716). While there is a literal aspect of this under-evaluated tenet of CRT, it does go beyond property as land ownership. Whites claimed an ownership to land through a dominant ideology allowing their Whiteness to serve as justification to rights and use of property previously inhabited by Native Americans. This serves as the starting point from which property expanded into a number of other rights associated with Whiteness, including: a) rights of disposition; b) right to use and enjoyment; and c) legal acceptance and legitimation of Whiteness. White scholars benefit both professionally and personally by exposing, deconstructing, and unmasking the privileges of their Whiteness through CRT. Examining Whiteness as property and interest convergence is essential to the discourse referencing cross-racial collaboration in critical engagement of this theory, underscoring its effectiveness in reviewing literature on this topic. Lastly, although CRT is often discussed in a black-white binary context, intersectionality (Crenshaw 1993) is another important concept related to this theory that reveals the complex nature of multiple oppressions, stemming from several social identities including but not limited to gender, race, class, and sexual orientation. Both authors identify as women, thus layering this discussion as it relates to what it means to navigate gender and race-related discrimination in the academy.

Whiteness in the Academy

We first examine the occurrence of women of Color and White women collaborations in academia by extrapolating some of the difficulties and advantages of such work. Next we elaborate upon the concept of Whiteness and how it manifests in the academy. Specifically, we attempt to problematize Whiteness regarding the use of CRT in research endeavors and the complexities of cross-racial collaborations.

Cross-Racial Collaborations in the Academy

Dace (2012) compiles an impressive collection of narratives from White women and women of Color elaborating upon their experiences with cross-racial collaborations in higher education. The volume deconstructs and critiques the nuances of cross-racial, same-gender collaborations in a mostly academic context with a few narratives illuminating the experience in the administration arena. Despite the complexities and feelings of pain and resentment that surface prior to, during, and long after these collaborations, there remains a call for continued engagement in such work. But within this call for sustained collaboration is a focus on shifting responsibility, as articulated by Torres (2012): 'I believe the burden of the alliance has always tended to fall on women of Color and that is tiring' (6). Consistent throughout this volume is a simultaneous commitment to preserving cross-racial alliances while

also problematizing the process from a critical perspective that forefronts women of Color, rather than White women.

CRT is implicitly woven through the narratives, while Whiteness is explicitly present. Dace (2012) warns women of Color of falling into the common misperception that predominantly White campuses desire their voices:

> Too many of our White colleagues want diversity if it means that they can attract people of Color who will be just like them in every way except the color of their skin. They forget that a diverse professoriate, staff, and student body should bring a diversity of opinion, outlook, ideas, and experiences. That means that when a person of Color says something that a White person has not thought of or would not say, problems arise. When White women are on the receiving end of a question about their behavior, they are often shocked, offended, and often feel attacked. Every time a woman of Color questions a White woman, she is acting like her equal, she is acting White. Unfortunately, in systems of privilege and power there just are not enough spaces for everyone to be White. (49)

The systems of power and privilege referenced by Dace highlight the pervasiveness of racism in society from individual and structural perspectives. Some Whites engage liberalism by thinking they have done 'enough' when it comes to dismantling systems of oppression by hiring, mentoring, and collaborating with a colleague of Color. As long as there are no threats to that person's Whiteness as property, that is, the right to not be questioned, challenged, or engaged in difficult conversations, then they have successfully aligned with and engaged in the fight to dismantle racism in the academy. The problem with that mind-set is the interwoven racism and complacency with small, comfortable progress in diversifying the professoriate (i.e., liberalism; Delgado and Stefancic 2012). If a White colleague is always comfortable with the work done to engage CRT from a professional standpoint, then that person is not doing enough work.

In further reference to Dace's (2012) quote, too often White champions of diversity expect one sentiment from newly hired professors of Color in a department: praise. As with any new hire, praise, excitement, and gratitude are the sentiments frequently expressed from someone who is excited to embark on the professional goal of tenure. But after the initial excitement mitigates into a reality of the politics and deep issues that can plague academic departments, a new hire's sense of agency is not always welcomed with as much enthusiasm as their initial excitement and praise. That is, when a new faculty member of Color begins to question dynamics and fight for their professional desires in a way that somehow threatens White faculty members, then difficulties begin to surface. It becomes clear that such questioning and fighting is reserved for those in power, those with Whiteness. For a faculty member of Color

to do so is to 'act out of line' while Dace brilliantly points out that for White faculty to engage in the same behavior is attributed to 'acting White' or within alignment or the 'rights' to do so. As such, she warns junior faculty members of Color to remain aware of this aspect that 'acting White' is synonymous with cultivating a sense of agency, and it is not always welcomed in academic departments that do not leave room for such agency to develop. Whiteness within cross-racial collaborations is thus complexly layered and deserving of further analysis.

Problematizing Whiteness and the Use of CRT

Extending beyond extant literature regarding cross-racial collaborations reveals the largeness of Whiteness in pedagogy, research, and professional situations. Issues surfacing from Whiteness and the use of CRT are discussed interchangeably, as the two concepts typically act in tandem with one another. For example, Hayes and Juarez (2009) further expose the interest-convergence aspect of White scholars using CRT in research and pedagogy by revealing the common desire of Whites to be seen as a 'good' White person. This concept is also underscored from a dominant perspective by Thompson (2003), who elaborates upon the concealed agenda of White antiracists' 'desire for unproblematic solidarity with people of color' (10). Whites are happy to 'join the fight against racism', or claim a 'commitment to social justice' as long as this engagement does not become too difficult, painful, or threatening to their internalized dominance. Hayes and Juarez (2009) provide the metaphor of winning this fight by critiquing the desire of Whites using CRT to be awarded with a 'good' White people's medal. They further expose the various ways in which such scholars continuously expose their Whiteness in trying to understand and adopt CRT into their pedagogy and research. The vast chasm between a White scholar enacting CRT in research and pedagogy and expansively incorporating it into their personal and professional actions is so great that lying within it are the multiple ways in which Whiteness as property is maintained through such endeavors. It is easy for some White scholars to academically understand, write about, and raise awareness on the tenets of CRT, but it is more difficult to concretely enact it into the fabric of their everyday life that is sewn with bridges providing a thruway for racism, dominance, and oppression to persist. To do so would mean that these White scholars may have to suspend one of these bridges of dominance, that is, their job, their credibility, their desire to be seen as 'nice' and not a 'troublemaker.'

After reflecting on their experiences with this phenomenon, the authors of this paper engaged in a dialogue first to illuminate their thoughts, reactions, and understandings of CRT: who uses this theory and in what ways does Whiteness complicate this use. The goal of the dialogue was twofold, the first being to expose the pervasive nature of racial scripts in society. Defined as 'a series of programmed messages (e.g., stereotypes and myths) about a particular ethnic group and significant

others' (Williams 2007, 48, as cited in Patton and Winkle-Wagner 2012), racial scripts are pervasive elements in everyday interactions between and among Whites and People of Color. While racial scripts typically present people of Color from a deficit or negative perspective, they generally preserve the privilege usurped by Whites to be presented as innocent and deserving of superior treatment. The second goal is to provide a framework for cross-racial collaborations with CRT in research. We expand on this process in the methodology section, before providing an excerpt from the dialogue. We then provide a critical, reflexive discussion of the dialogue that informs our recommendations for the practice and use of CRT in pedagogy, research, and personal/professional enactment.

Critical Reflexivity in Practice

Duo-ethnography, a methodology through which researchers engage in dialogue about a particular topic, provided a framework for engaging in this study. Building on autoethnography, through which a person shares their interpretation or experiences with a topic, duoethnography pushes researchers to engage with another person to make meaning of a particular topic through dialogue and reflection to further develop their understanding of a topic or issue (Sawyer and Norris 2009). Similarly, reflexivity, sometimes referred to as positionality, requires scholars to consider their relationship to power and privilege prior to and during the times they engage in identity-related work, including work related to race (Espino 2012; Freire 2000; Stewart 2010). Reflexivity and critical reflection are central components to critical research and critical pedagogy (Espino 2012; Freire 2000; Linder and Ivery 2012; Mertens 2010). Many scholars have written reflexive pieces about their work engaging with CRT (e.g., Bergeson 2003; Chávez 2009; Dace 2012) and several of those pieces influenced our approach to this paper. We build on those pieces with this duoethnography interrogating the use of CRT by White scholars.

Reflexivity may be described as 'reflection in action' and 'reflection on action' (Daley 2010, 2; Freire 200). The concept of reflection in action calls on scholars to consider their positionality in research and in the classroom during the process of engaging with research participants and students. Reflection in action requires on-going awareness of the subtle ways in which power influences relationships between people and attempts to mitigate some power differentials in the moment. For example, in the research process, an interviewer may attempt to mitigate some power differentials by meeting participants in a space of their choosing, rather than the researcher's office. In the classroom, faculty may attempt to reduce power differentials by sitting with their students in a circle and participating in class discussions, rather than standing and lecturing.

Reflection on action describes the process scholars engage in when they reflect on previous experiences related to research and teaching to consider ways to improve future scholarship (Daley 2010). Scholars may reflect on previous experiences through formal measures like annual evaluations or intentional and structured conversations with mentors. Additionally, some scholars may choose to engage in more informal experiences of reflection such as a researcher journal or an end of the semester review of a syllabus and learning activities. Patton and Winkle-Wagner (2012) engaged in a similar 'discussion analysis' and we draw our inspiration for this paper from their work.

In this paper, we use duoethnography as a methodology and reflexivity as a theoretical framework to interrogate the use of CRT by White scholars. The authors explicitly reflected on a set of questions co-developed in a preliminary conversation about the topic of White scholars employing CRT. We discussed a series of five questions over a Skype conversation, then transcribed the conversation and reviewed the transcripts for salient ideas. Both authors also independently journaled about our responses to our conversation and on-going thoughts related to the topic.

Dialogue and Discussion

Conversations between White women and women of Color in the academy occur in a number of contexts, spanning a wide range of topics, emotions, and outcomes. Such conversations are newly becoming documented as a means to confront difficult situations arising from cross-racial collaborations (Dace 2012). Below is an outline of a planned dialogue between the authors, a White woman scholar (Chris) and an African American woman scholar (Shametrice). The dialogue is interwoven with reflections from both of us that address the pervasive nature of racial scripts (Patton and Winkle-Wagner 2012; Williams 2007), the importance of challenging each other in discussions regarding critical research and pedagogy, the continued significance of CRT principles, and finally the vitality of creating and sustaining support in cross-racial alliances in academia.

> SHAMETRICE: What are your thoughts on the increasing use of CRT by white scholars, in research and pedagogy?

> CHRIS: …I'm curious how we as white scholars are using it. I think it can be both a blessing and a curse so I think it's really good because when white people start to understand the significance of racism, how racism impacts us as White folks, albeit differently than it impacts people of Color, it still impacts us, I think that that means that we could make some progress. The flipside of that is that I struggle constantly with the putting on a pedestal of White people who do race work. I had similar experiences with men doing feminist work. It's like this instant credibility, 'Oh you're a white person who

talks about race, you must be awesome', and that comes sort of without people exploring or with any sort of critical thought that goes behind that, there's this assumption that if you care that must mean you're doing it well and that's not always the case, so that's a big part of what comes up for me is it feels like it's a blessing and curse. What about you?

SHAMETRICE: I have a few. I have a visceral reaction to it to be quite honest. If the word or the phrase CRT was replaced with Whiteness, I would be fine, but I do have an issue of more white scholars claiming this white critical race theorist label because I question the motivation in doing so, I question the enactment of doing so, not just from a research/teaching standpoint that gets them kind of professional accolades, but what that actually looks like in their personal lives and if they're willing to intellectualize what is not an option for people of Color to feel personally almost every day in their lives, how there can be a failure to acknowledge that. I have a hard time with the venue in which it's used, so I totally get why White scholars are happy to do this hard work of CRT in a venue of the classroom where there's a clear power dynamic or in the venue of research where there's a dynamic of this is what I have to do in order to get promotion and tenure. I think it allows for a separation of academic versus personal lived experience. And it's disheartening to me, but I think the way to bridge that academic and personal experience is to go the Whiteness route and I think that is a little bit more credible for me. If somebody wanted to study other White students and Whiteness studies, to me I could understand that more than White scholars using CRT to understand experiences of people of Color in a research context.

A number of racial scripts surface within this excerpt of dialogue, most frequent being that of the 'good White person.' Chris references the pedestal metaphor, that if one is White and engaging in CRT research, then they are automatically assumed to be good at the work and deemed an expert in that subject matter. Although scholars of Color have long worked to dismantle systems of oppression from race, class, and gender standpoints, that work is somewhat expected from these scholars and accolades are more reticently given. Those accolades received by White scholars for engaging in this work demonstrate the simultaneous manifestation of interest convergence and retaining of Whiteness as property (Bell 1980; Harris 1993). White scholars can engage in this work just enough to receive praise for the research, without ever giving up their dominance by failing to connect the personal with the political. Property of dominance and accuracy is maintained if research is done from the CRT perspective, as opposed to critically engaging their own Whiteness, and how it pervades the academy.

The importance of White scholars who employ CRT interrogating Whiteness as part of their research agenda cannot be overstated. Engaging in scholarship about systems of oppression without examining one's own role in upholding and

maintaining those systems is irresponsible and unethical. Epistemic uncertainty (Sholock 2012) prevents Whites from fully understanding the ways in which they (we) are complicit in racism. This requires that White scholars consistently engage in self-reflection related to their roles. Because of the long history of complicated relationships between scholars of Color and White scholars described above, White scholars may be ignorant to the times they perpetuate racism and unwilling to hear when they are failing to challenge racism. Further, because of this continued failure to change, scholars of Color may not feel safe in providing feedback to White scholars when it needs to be provided. Additionally, fear of fulfilling pervasive racial scripts of being 'angry' or 'playing the race card' may further repress the willingness of scholars of Color to engage in feedback discussions.

We now move into discussing our concrete experiences with cross-racial collaboration on the use of CRT in research:

> SHAMETRICE: Maybe you could talk about your experiences in collaborating cross-racially with someone on the use of CRT.

> CHRIS: This project about students of Color (SOC) in Student Affairs/ Higher Education programs is most definitely a CRT framework and my experience in doing that is with people of Color in that there's a research team of students and that's been challenging for me, because I believe it's important to have people of Color, the difficult part is that all of the people involved are people who have less formal authority than me as well as they are people of Color and I'm a White person, so I've struggled with what does that mean. Clearly it's an opportunity for all of us involved. … My experience has been positive and I think that's because I'm white and people say, 'Oh my god, it's so cool you're doing this. Thanks for your work on this.' But then the other thing that's happening related to this research is people keep asking me, 'Are you going to continue this line?' This study started out as a ten- to fifteen-participant study and exploded because of the number of participants that we had respond to the call for participants. And so, the fact that that's how it happened, so I just tell people I don't see this being my primary line of work. Certainly, if I have students in the future that want to continue this line of work, I will support them and work the best I can with them, but I don't see this as being something that I will become the expert on this topic. I think it's an exploratory, it's important work, and I need to be exploring what are the white students doing in that space to create hostile environments for students of Color, so that's my experience.

> SHAMETRICE: So this is my first foray into it, in terms of the cross-racial collaboration, using CRT. Um, it's interesting so far, you know…I have some thoughts on some things you just said in terms of your experience with this current project and I was like, I'll just wait until we write about it because

even as I'm just listening to you talk, I'm like, 'It's mean.' If I say what's up, it's mean, so I don't know if you want me to go there or not.

CHRIS: I mean I would love to hear it and I don't want, I mean… .

SHAMETRICE: You say you want to hear it now… .

CHRIS: I learn and see that's another risk of this work, right, I can learn at the expense of you having to feel like a jerk or feel like you're being mean, so another dynamic where I'm benefiting and you're not. I mean, I think indirectly, hopefully it will be beneficial for you, but in the process, it's not a pleasant experience.

SHAMETRICE: …the other kind of metaphor that I thought of when [people ask you] 'Is this going to be your line of research?' and you say, 'Absolutely not,' I'm going to shift it to the White students, the metaphor I thought of is, I'm sure you've heard this, is like the eagle swooping in to get all of this wonderful rich information and then taking it and then swooping back out and I'm not imposing that metaphor or saying that that's what you're about, but that's just immediately what I thought of. Like, yeah, you'll do this and get in there and get good information, but then you won't commit to it, you'll take it and turn the tables, so yeah, get in and get all of the information and honestly, I think this is going to create a lot of buzz, you know what I mean, and so to do that and then not stay committed to it and either shift it to doing Critical Whiteness and looking at white students, then my question would be why not just do that from the beginning? Like that's my struggle with these short-term investments, but then this really isn't for me, I don't want my research agenda to be defined by this, I should go back to this standpoint, then why engage in it, you know? So yeah, those were two kind of thoughts that I had when you were speaking, but again, so much of it is just my own to need work through clear issues that I have, stemming from past difficult situations.

Reflection

The eagle metaphor referenced in this excerpt is essential to examine in cross-racial collaborations in research. If White scholars dabble in CRT for research and pedagogy, then should this theory undergird their future agendas in the academy? Is it OK to work on one research project and collect rich, informing information to then use in critical Whiteness research? If so, then why not just begin with a critical Whiteness agenda in the first place? These questions represent my (Shametrice) struggles within cross-racial collaborations that engage CRT. I also continue to struggle with actually having candid discussion with White women regarding these concerns. As displayed from the excerpt, the importance of challenging each other is underscored, particularly in efforts to avoid embodying the eagle metaphor. As

mentioned by Chris, it is at one another's expense, that such challenge and learning occurs. But the expense is mutual, as cross-racial alliances are incredibly complex and difficult for all parties involved, in some cases. It is important to note that not all collaborations are characterized with such contention. I would, however, argue that the complexities are always there, whether they remain below the surface or not.

For me (Chris), researching whiteness and racism work in tandem with each other, not necessarily in opposition. For example, exploring concepts of Whiteness and White privilege relies on understanding the nature of racism and White supremacy. Whiteness only exists to perpetuate oppression. Similarly, when exploring racism from the perspective of people or students of Color, the point is to expose the insidious ways racism and White supremacy influence their experiences in education; therefore, exploring the experiences of people of Color *is* exploring whiteness. Exploring whiteness for the sake of exploring the experiences of White people without centering White privilege and racism does nothing to dismantle oppression and results in self-indulgent scholarship. I believe there is a fine line between White scholars becoming experts on the experiences of people of Color and White scholars integrating their understanding of racism into their own research and pedagogy to do their part in dismantling racism. As a White scholar committed to eradicating racism and other forms of oppression, I believe it is important for me to find that balance. My role is to work in solidarity with critical race scholars of Color in addressing racism and White supremacy. I do not want to speak for, nor take the place of, scholars of Color in research or in the classroom.

Implications and/or Recommendations

Four implications surface from our discussion and subsequent reflections. The implications may also take the form of recommendations, as our goal of this work is to increase the mutual success of cross-racial collaborations and provide guidelines for engaging CRT in research and pedagogy. We place the implications/recommendations in a visual that represents an attempt to create a framework for increasing the effectiveness of these collaborations and use of CRT in the academy. The first two implications focus on the use of CRT in research while the last two center on cross-racial collaborations in the academy.

Avoidance of Embodying the Eagle Metaphor

Most important in choosing to engage in critical research as an outsider is careful consideration of why one is choosing to do so. This includes going beyond rationalizing the importance of the work. For example, pondering whether such work will define the researchers' subsequent research agenda is important in an effort to avoid diving in to a community with whom they do not identify, and

then flying back out having collected abundant goods and information only to abandon that community to take the resources as the researcher's own. We are not suggesting that all research must be undergirded by CRT, but rather that heavy consideration of how it will remain a significant aspect of work from personal and professional perspectives is essential. One way to remain connected to values of CRT is to engage in cross-racial research or teaching, to continue discussing and problematizing issues of racism in the academy.

As described earlier, an essential component of CRT is praxis – acting based on reflection and research. Avoiding the eagle metaphor also requires scholars to integrate findings from their research into their practice. It is not enough to simply illuminate the ways in which racism occurs in the academy. As a critical race scholar, one must act to address systemic racism in their work though challenging racist practices in tenure and promotion and addressing racism in the classroom.

Carefully Consider Co-researching Cross-racially

White scholars conducting research with communities of Color should carefully consider whether collaboration with someone who is connected to the community will strengthen the research. Cautiousness and intentionality is of utmost importance in these collaborations. Tokenizing a person of Color by assuming they are interested in or connected to a research issue is dangerous and offensive. Another pitfall to avoid (as much as possible) is constantly learning at a person of Color's expense. To some extent, this will always occur, as discussed in our dialogue, but maintaining an awareness of how much one asks for understanding, clarity, and follow-up from a research partner will limit the exhaustion and fatigue that comes with such educating. It is also an opportunity for a White scholar to directly and authentically engage with the community of Color they are researching by asking questions that help clarify possible cultural barriers once mutual trust has been established. It is difficult to know when trust has reached a level that asking such questions can occur, but again, being intentional in one's efforts may go a long way.

Having insider and outsider status (Collins 1986) in research is complicated and also worthy of consideration. For example, I (Shametrice) completed my dissertation research on the success of historically Black colleges and universities (HBCUs) in the twenty-first century, and while I share an African American identity with the majority of my research participants, I do not have the experience of attending an HBCU. During data analysis, taking time to bracket (Moustakas 1994) my schooling experiences was important in an effort to not conflate my experiences with that of the research participants, being that the contexts were entirely different. Milner (2007) offers insightful suggestions for how to consider one's own positionality as it relates to their work with different communities in research and scholarship.

Acknowledge and Discuss Whiteness and other Power Dynamics

With the expectation of demonstrating collegiality in the academy, it is not surprising that cross-racial collaborations have long occurred in academia, and are continually increasing (Dace 2012). We acknowledge that we are not suggesting anything new by asserting the importance of understanding power dynamics in research collaborations (Creswell 2007). Missing from extant literature, however, is the call to candidly discuss Whiteness, particularly in cross-racial collaborations. Uneven power dynamics in the name of tenured versus untenured or junior versus senior faculty status is only one place to begin this dialogue. As seen in our discussion, talking about issues of power and privilege from a Whiteness perspective can be emotionally difficult, but also effective in exposing unintentional actions that can have severe consequences for both the research being conducted and the vital partnerships needed to successfully navigate the academy.

Similarly to collaborating cross-racially in research, discussions regarding Whiteness cannot be placed solely on the shoulders of the woman of Color (Torres 2012). While it is her responsibility to educate, she should not have to do this alone. Integral to understanding Whiteness is self-work (Ortiz and Patton 2012), most effectively with others who are on a similar journey. Taking opportunities to work individually on personal issues regarding Whiteness, be it anger, guilt, or sadness, will assist in one's ability to effectively work on these issues in a group. Mutual work, educating, and discussing must occur as much as possible with regard to candid dialogue about Whiteness.

Engage in Cross-racial Dialogues and Subsequent Reflection

Lastly, the critical reflexivity is one of the most important suggestions we have for engaging in these collaborations. As essential as broaching the difficult topic of Whiteness in cross-racial collaborations may be, it is equally important to critically reflect after such dialogue, whether through journaling or venting to a trusted friend. When engaged in heated discussion on complicated topics, it is not always simple to see the tree in the forest. Some of the most essential realizations occur through reflection after having some time and space from the conversation (Patton and Winkle-Wagner 2012). The last step in this recommendation is to then discuss these realizations or new insights and ideas that may be useful in the future. Reuniting through reflective discussion after difficult dialogues about Whiteness and/or CRT in research can be very difficult, but is essential to dismantle contentious issues stemming from collaborations between White women and women of Color.

We acknowledge that engaging these suggested implications may be cumbersome and result in further exhaustion from an already demanding profession. But embracing this full spectrum, from carefully engaging in cross-racial collaborations,

to dialoguing about Whiteness, reflecting on that dialogue, and finally coming together to offer new understandings of what can enhance these partnerships is an in-depth (though not necessarily comprehensive) approach for those committed to this work. It is our hope that in doing so, increased levels of success and happiness in cross-racial collaborations will occur. The implications are represented in the evolving framework below:
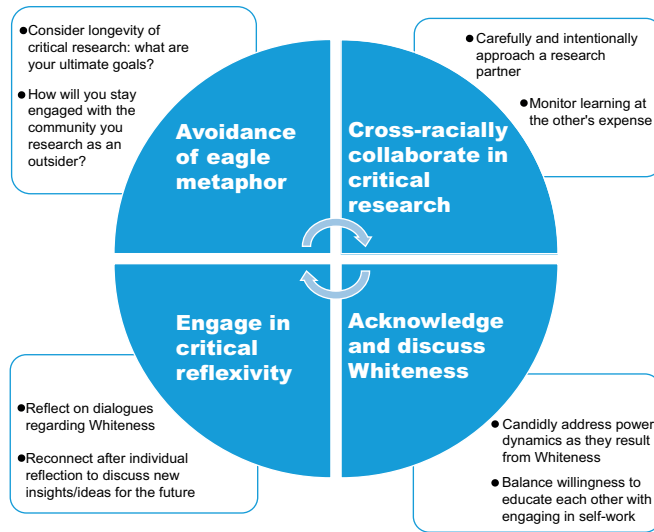
Figure 1: Factors Influencing Effective Cross-racial Collaborations

Boundaries and Areas for Future Research

The dialogue, reflections, and experiences upon which we elaborated in this paper are representative only of our respective experiences, and not that of all women engaged in cross-racial collaborations in the academy. We acknowledge the significance of context, resources, and willingness in the ability for our implications/recommendations to be used effectively. Lastly, our focus on women-only partnerships begs the question: What about males engaged in this work? It is a question worthy of exploration and an area for additional research. Are men engaged in conversations regarding cross-racial collaborations? What are the nuances of those experiences? Provided that we identify as White and African American, there may be a tendency to see this work as reinforcing the black/white binary that can dominate race-based literature (Delgado and Stefancic 2012). Future research on this topic should include a broader range of identities from a racial standpoint. Another area for future research entails the nature of cross-racial, cross-gender alliances in academia and how dynamics of race, gender, Whiteness, and power intersect. As previously stated, the expectation of faculty members to

engage in collaborative scholarship provides further justification for the importance of additional research regarding these topics.

Conclusion

We conclude with a final, brief excerpt from our dialogue that questions the ability of Whites to understand the experiences of people of Color. It is an aspect of the discussion with which we experienced significant struggle in understanding what the other was trying to articulate. Although we never reached a point of mutual understanding, we eventually acknowledged that we most likely would never fully comprehend what the other explained. It represents a significant issue that remains present, whether vividly or subliminally, in cross-racial collaborations today:

> CHRIS: I absolutely hear what you're saying and I think that, I think that we're saying the same, the same thing, I would never believe that I could have the same experience as someone whose identities I don't share. Ever. And I don't think that means that I can't empathize and understand what's going on even though it's [not] my experience.

> SHAMETRICE: Yeah. I think, I think I would agree with that. I think that you can empathize – you know empathy versus sympathy – whatever that means, but I think you could, you could understand it through a different lens, which is not really understanding. Does that help? Does that make sense?

> CHRIS: I mean, I think this might be one of those areas where we have to agree to disagree.

It is interesting to note that the dialogue ended on a common sentiment: 'we have to agree to disagree.' It is a seemingly peaceful idea, but left unpacked, leads to continual hardship and lack of trust in cross-racial alliances in the academy. This entire excerpt focused on semantics, differences in language and misunderstandings of experiences that run so pervasively deep between and among White women and Women of Color. The intricacies of these cracks within alliances are important to continually examine, unpack, and eventually understand, rather than simply 'agreeing to disagree.' By engaging the framework emerging from the use of critical 'reflection on action' methodology, we hope to have provided a context to begin the constant examination, reflection, and dialogue pertinent to successful research collaborations in academia. As qualitative researchers are expected to engage in continual reflexivity regardless of the nature of the specific investigation, this expansion of reflexivity is useful for a variety of research endeavors. Too often are the 'in action' and 'on action' components left out of the critical reflexivity commitment. This work represents an attempt to show how integrating all three can result in research that is more rigorous, nuanced, and inclusive.

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Deliberative Democracy: A Binding Methodology?

Peter Emerson

In a democracy, decisions may be taken in a number of non-violent ways. Some are taken by everybody in referendums or, after an election, by the members of parliament; almost all of these ballots and elections of the general population, as well as decisions by elected representatives, are binding. Other, usually non-binding decisions, may be made by independent commissions or public enquiries, albeit sometimes subject to a government veto; while yet further decisions of government may be influenced by consultations, public opinion surveys, deliberative polls and focus groups.

Given the ever-increasing sophistication with which some forms of deliberative democracy operate, it is time to ask whether they too should be legally binding if, that is, (a) the representative sample meets certain minimum criteria, and (b) the outcome, the social choice or ranking, has passed a pre-determined threshold of support.

Accordingly, this article first examines the way a social choice or ranking can be identified; next, with frequent reference to instances from across the globe, it takes an overview of the more common means of public participation; and then, in regard to item (b) above, it advocates criteria by which the outcomes of some of these democratic instruments may be deemed to be binding.

'Although many sectors of society have innovation as their motto – corporations, science, culture, sports – innovation is seen as superfluous for one sector only: democracy. That can't be correct!' (G1000 2012, 13)

Introduction

People have long since had the right to petition, to assemble, and to protest, subject only to the rule that such campaigning must be non-violent. In addition, most notably in Switzerland, some also have the right to a citizens' initiative.[1] Then,

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1   This right is shared by many electorates, and they include those of Finland, Malta, New Zealand, Philippines and, somewhat surprisingly perhaps, Russia. It is also used in 24 states in the US, while Italy has abrogative referendums.

especially in times of crisis and/or great change, many jurisdictions have held constitutional conventions, while on more routine matters, some have resorted to public enquiries and independent commissions.

In today's world, there are many other forms of identifying 'the will of the people', such as citizens' assemblies, public enquiries, consultations, *opinion surveys*, *deliberative polls*, and *citizen panels* or *focus groups*, and many of the latter (shown here in italics) are conducted under rigorous standards to ensure (a) that the sample chosen is representative; (b) that the questions asked are open and balanced; (c) that those concerned are well informed; and (d) that the analysis is accurate. Is it not reasonable to expect, therefore, that the outcome of such a process, if and when support for that outcome is sufficiently strong, should be binding?

After all, there are times when the governors become remote from the governed. In 1992, when Denmark prepared to vote on the Maastricht treaty, nearly all the political parties in parliament, those with 80 per cent of the seats in the Folketing (*Folketinget*) were in favour, and yet a majority, of admittedly just 50.7 per cent of the public, was opposed (Bogdanor 1994, 72). On a more serious matter, prior to the 2003 war in Iraq, protests in the UK (and elsewhere) against the use of force were huge. As history relates, however, the prime minister of the day, Tony Blair, ignored them all.

It has often been said, as for example in connection with the 2013 demonstrations in Gezi Park in Istanbul, that democracy should be more than just the exercise of the vote every four years or so. There is an overwhelming need, therefore, for various measures of democratic opinion, and not just regular elections and occasional referendums, to have some form of legal standing.

Accordingly, having first examined the nature of decision making, this article looks at the various forms of participatory democracy, if need be with reference to historical precedents, before then proposing some criteria by which the outcomes of certain forms of participatory democracy could indeed be deemed to be binding.

The Nature of Decision Making

Over 2,000 years ago, democratic decision making was devised as an alternative to war. The latter, of course, is binary: it is win-or-lose, and it always involves two supposed enemies, even when, as currently in Syria, alliances on one side and/or the other are frail and fickle. Some forms of democratic decision making are also dichotomous, most obviously the two-option majority vote. Furthermore, because of its no-compromise nature, binary voting can easily act as a provocation towards violence. Indeed, 'all the wars in the former Yugoslavia started with a referendum,' (*Oslobodjenje*, Sarajevo's now legendary newspaper, 7.2.1999).

Democracy, however, was never intended to be a means by which one faction could then dominate the rest; there were no political parties in ancient Greece; rather, it was intended to be inclusive – democracy is for everybody, not just a majority. Accordingly, the identification of 'the will of the people' or 'the will of parliament' – which, if the electoral system is a good one, should be roughly the same – needs a decision-making voting procedure which is more sophisticated than a binary ballot.

Alas, while electoral systems vary from the simplistic first-past-the-post (FPTP), to preferential forms of proportional representation (PR), such as the single transferable vote (PR-STV), decision making is invariably a (simple or weighted) majority vote. The latter is used in many international forums such as the UN Security Council; in most elected chambers, parliaments and councils; in most referendums, national and local; in many courts of law; in umpteen company AGMs; and in civic society and in countless community group meetings. This is partly because 'the public is deeply imbued with the mystique of the majority' (Dummett 1997, 81), and many of those involved in polling companies appear to be of the same bent (see below). 'There is [also] a surprisingly strong and persistent tendency in political science to equate democracy solely with majoritarian democracy' (Lijphart 2012, 6).

As a consequence, many a contentious and/or complex subject is reduced to a dichotomy or to a series of such binary choices; on many occasions, other options are not included on the ballot paper and are sometimes, therefore, not even debated. Binary voting can thus be very inaccurate. Hence, when the outcome is declared, the question of whether or not the given electorate has gained what a majority (or merely the largest minority) actually wanted is often still in doubt. Little wonder, then, 'that some forms of direct democracy may include protection against [the] tyranny of the majority' (Fishkin 1991, 51).

In fact, all too often, a majority vote identifies, not so much the will of the many who voted, but rather the will of the few who set the question. In Wales, for example, in 1997, a majority of just 50.3 per cent voted in favour of devolution rather than the status quo; this result was achieved not least because Mr. Blair had not allowed a third option, independence, to be on the ballot paper, as Plaid Cymru, the Welsh nationalist party, had suggested (Wigley 1996, 16). The outcome, then, identified not necessarily what the people of Wales wanted, but what Blair wanted them to want.

A much larger majority emerged in Kosovo in 1991, when 99.9 per cent of an 87.0 per cent turnout – that is, most of the Albanian-speaking population, with few if any of the Serbian speakers – voted in favour of independence. If, however, instead of independence, the question had proposed unity with Albania or a Greater Albania, it too would probably have received majority support. So even when the majority in favour is of Stalinist proportions, the precise 'will of the people' may still be uncertain.

Given, then, that the outcome of any majority vote is largely determined by the question, it is not surprising to note that this exclusive methodology has been used by such notable personages as Napoleon, Lenin – the original meaning of the word 'bolshevik' was 'member of the majority' – Mussolini, Hitler, Duvalier, Khomeini, Saddam Hussein and others (Emerson 2012, 143–50).

To identify 'the will of the people' or that of their elected representatives, a more inclusive procedure is required, one that is not of the 'win-or-lose' category, but a non-majoritarian 'win-win' methodology: of such is the Modified Borda Count (MBC). Those concerned first participate in choosing (a short list of) the options; next, they cast their preferences; then comes the analysis, the outcome of which is that option which gains the highest average preference… and an average, of course, involves everyone who submits a valid vote, not just a majority of them. Consideration shall now be given, therefore, to the nature of consensus voting, be it in a national referendum, a parliamentary vote, a public meeting, a focus group or other form of deliberative democracy, or on the web.[2]

The Modified Borda Count

The Modified Borda Count (Emerson 2007, 15–38), is a preferential points system of voting which is primarily designed for use in decision making. In an MBC of n options, a voter may cast m preferences where

$$n \geq m \geq 1$$

Points are awarded to (1st, 2nd … penultimate, last) preferences cast according to the rule

$$(m, m\text{-}1, \ldots 2, 1)^3$$

The MBC Vote

Consider, then, a ballot of five options. In such an MBC, the voters are asked to cast (a maximum of) all five preferences. If a voter does indeed cast all five, his first preference gets 5 points, his second preference gets 4, and so on. If another voter casts only two preferences, then her first preference gets just 2 points, and her second choice gets 1 point.

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2   The author facilitated a web-based discussion and decision in 2007 (Emerson 2010, 83–101).

3   Compared to the more usual Borda count (BC) rule of (*n-1, n-2, … 1, 0*), the (*m, m-1, … 2, 1*) rule *can,* but the former cannot, both cater for partial voting and encourage full voting. In an MBC of *N* options, where *N > 10*, it is suggested that voters should be asked to list a smaller number of just *n* options, where *n = 6*.

In effect, (in reverse order), he who abstains has no influence on the outcome; she who votes partially has a partial influence; and those who participate fully have a full influence. At all times, the difference between a voter's xth preference and her $(x+1)$th preference is 1 point, regardless of whether or not she has cast that $(x+1)$th preference. There is no especial weighting. The format is as shown in Table 1 below.

Number of preferences cast by voter	Points awarded to Preference 1	Points awarded to Preference 2	Points awarded to Preference 3	Points awarded to Preference 4	Points awarded to Preference 5
1	1	0	0	0	0
2	2	1	0	0	0
3	3	2	1	0	0
4	4	3	2	1	0
5	5	4	3	2	1

Table 1: The MBC count

The voter is thus encouraged to submit a full ballot; and experience over the years shows that, to a large extent, most do exactly that. In 2014, for example, the de Borda Institute commissioned a six-option survey in Scotland, just before the September independence referendum: of the 805 valid responses, 81.8 per cent filled in all six preferences. Furthermore, as compared to the two opinions offered in the referendum itself, in this multi-option survey, over 150 different points of view were expressed.[4] (See also below, under Elections and Referendums.)

In completing just such a full ballot, the voter in effect acknowledges the validity of the other options and the aspirations of their supporters. In consensus voting, no one votes *against* anything or anybody. Instead, albeit in their order of preference, people vote only *for* the various options. The MBC is inclusive.

The MBC Count

As noted above, the MBC is a points system; the outcome is a social choice and ranking based on the total number of points each option receives. Accordingly, the protagonist knows that, to win, she needs lots of high preferences, some middle ones perhaps, but very few low ones. It will be worth her while, therefore, to talk to her erstwhile (majoritarian) opponents, to try and persuade them to give her option, not a 5th but a 4th, a 3rd or even a 2nd preference. There is thus much to be gained from dialogue – or maybe 'polylogue' would be a better word.

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4   *Scotland - A multi-option survey identifies "the will of the people"* was published by the de Borda Institute, August 2014: http://www.deborda.org/home/2014/8/22/2014-12-scots-referendum-6-option-survey.html

So the protagonists are encouraged to engage fully with the voters, and the latter are also incentivised to engage fully with the debate. This, surely, is a sound basis for any democratic debate, no matter what the real or virtual forum.

The MBC Analysis

Invariably, one or more options will get an MBC score above the mean, and some will be below. If there is one leading option, way out in front, it may indeed be regarded as 'the will of the people' or even their collective wisdom. If its total is not so great, then perhaps the word 'consensus' would be a better description. If lower still, it may be just the best possible compromise. And if it is only a little above the mean, then some if not all of the other options are obviously also at that level, in which case there is no consensus, so no decision should be taken, and the debate should be resumed.

There are two other possible outcomes: (a) maybe a couple of options are both very popular, and way ahead of the rest. In this case, the consensors, whose main role is discussed below, may choose to composite the two, adding to the most popular option any aspects of the second most popular which are not mutually excluded by the former; or (b) maybe, while none of the options gets an outstanding result, the final figures show a cluster of more popular options somewhat separated from the rest, in which case the more popular cluster may be taken as the basis of a resumed debate.

A ballot, then, need never be a wasted exercise. Initially, it may be used to identify a prioritisation,[5] as when it is desired to form a short list from a large number of items up for consideration; or it may give either an actual result or, as just noted, the outcome may be the equivalent of a straw poll, guiding further discussions, the emergence of other more focused options, and then a more conclusive second ballot.

The Consensus Coefficient

To facilitate the analysis, options are given a consensus coefficient. This is defined as the option's MBC score divided by the theoretical maximum. It varies, therefore, from one to zero, from most popular to thoroughly unpopular. If in a highly hypothetical five-option ballot, 100 voters, in casting full ballots, all give option D a 1st preference, then D gets the maximum consensus coefficient of (100 x 5 / 100 x 5 =) 1.0;

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5   In determining a short list of, say, (approximately) six items from an initial list of over ten, those concerned may be asked to cast just their top six preferences. If, then, in the analysis, there appears a group of, say, seven items, all of which are rather more popular than the eighth and subsequent options, then the short list might best consist of seven items.

if, however, all the voters cast a partial ballot of just a 1st preference, again all for *D*, then *D* would get a score of just (100 x 1 / 100 x 5 =) 0.2.[6]

In a consensus debate, an outcome may be considered to be binding if it gains a minimum consensus coefficient of, say, 0.7.[7] It is a measure, not only of how much support that option has received, but also of the extent to which the participants have joined in the decision-making process. What is more, as implied above, if any one individual wants to win, she should best submit a full ballot. And if another, though his 1st preference is not a popular favourite, does not want to lose, then he too should participate, at least partially; if he abstains, he might lose by default, so it is better to participate; and, as already noted, it is always better to participate fully.[8] What is more, if his own favourite does fairly well, there is always the prospect of it forming at least part of a composite.

Altogether, then, the MBC encourages both dialogue and participation. Furthermore, 'the Borda count is significantly more consistent' (Saari 2008, 95) than other voting rules, and 'Borda's criterion is the soundest method of identifying the [option which] is most generally popular' (Dummett 1997, 71). In a nutshell, the MBC is more accurate and, therefore, more democratic. In addition – and this is utterly relevant to this text – this methodology can be used to identify both the social choice and the social ranking, in all scenarios: in referendums, commissions, consultations, deliberative polls, surveys, and in executive decision making.

In 2013, Dublin City Council used a BC twice. The Council first asked the public to propose a name for a new bridge over the Liffey; there was a huge response and well over 80 suggestions. A BC was first used in a naming committee to draw up a short list of five options; and then another BC was used in plenary, when the entire council cast their preferences on this short list, to choose the name of Rosie

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6   There will only be five options on the ballot paper if at least five individuals/parties have proposed these various options. In theory, therefore, there will never be an instance where 100 per cent of the participants cast their 1st preference for the same single option.

7   This figure must be pre-determined prior to the debate. In a cohesive group, a figure of 0.7 may indeed be realistic. In parliamentary circles, especially among those more used to an adversarial polity, a lower figure may be more appropriate, at least initially. It should also be noted that, in a post-conflict society, the figure could be set at a threshold which ensures decisions are accepted only if both/all communities are involved to a sufficiently high degree. Unlike other formulas used in Bosnia, Lebanon and Northern Ireland, the MBC methodology is ethno-colour blind.

8   Admittedly, in an MBC, if a large number of people do indeed boycott the ballot or submit only partial ballots, then the winning outcome may not gain a sufficiently high consensus coefficient to be implemented.

Hackett. It is understood to be the first time ever that a democratically elected chamber has used a BC in decision making.[9]

The Democratic, Multi-option Debate

Having decided that complex and/or controversial matters should be resolved by the above MBC form of multi-option, preferential voting, there then comes the question of who chooses the options and how. The guiding principle is stark: *in any participatory democracy, all concerned (or their representatives) must be enabled, not only to cast their preferences on the options listed, but also to participate in formulating that list.*

If and when a serious but non-urgent problem arises among any democratic group of people, the problem should be discussed and resolved by those concerned: either the electorate and/or their elected representatives in the local council or parliament; or the members and/or the executive committee of the relevant community/ business group. The first task, then, is to identify the format of the decision-making process. Is it to be subject to a debate and then, perhaps, a vote in a national referendum or in parliament; or is it to be based on the findings of a deliberative poll, an independent enquiry, or some such; or again, is the matter to be resolved at an Annual General meeting or Extraordinary General Meeting or a more general public meeting?

Next comes the double question of (a) who is eligible to participate in the debate, and (b) who may partake in the decision-making process with which the debate concludes. Either might involve all concerned, a representative sample of all concerned, or their elected representatives. No matter which answer is applicable, there will invariably be a need for an up-to-date list of relevant persons and a voters' register.

If it has not been done already, it will be necessary to appoint or, better still, elect the chair plus deputy/ies, one or more commissioner(s) or facilitator(s), as well as a team of at least three consensors. All of these persons shall be impartial and non-voting.

The forum for the debate may be a physical place, and/or it could be in part or in full on the web. In the former setting, use may be made of a computer and screen, and maybe of a dedicated website too, the *sine qua non* of the second setting. In both, resort may be made to plenary sessions, workshops and/or world-café discussions, and in all of these real or virtual meetings, agendas, prioritisations and themes can be determined by MBC preference voting.

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9   http://www.deborda.org/home/2013/9/6/2013-12-dublin-city-council-a-record. html. A BC is used in elections in Slovenia and, in a modified form, in Nauru.

In the debate itself, any individual or party (depending on the total number of participants involved) may have the right to make a proposal which, as long as the consensors judge it to be relevant and in accordance with a given set of norms like the UN Charter on Human Rights, may then be added to the list of options 'on the table.' Every proposal must be a complete package for the debate in question, (which implies the demise of the wrecking amendment) In compiling their list of options, in attempting to best represent the debate, the consensors may choose to edit or composite some of the proposals; and then they can display this list both (in summary) on the computer screen and perhaps too, in full, on the web.

The discussion then starts. While every contributor is limited in time (in the forum) and/or in number of words (on the web), all participants/parties shall be entitled to ask questions, seek clarifications, suggest amendments, propose composites, advocate new options, or whatever; and at all times, the consensors shall maintain an up-to-date list of what is currently 'on the table.' If at the end of the debate there is only one option, the latter may be deemed to be the outcome, the verbal consensus. If, as is more likely in any contentious dispute, there are still quite a few options on the list, the chair may call for a vote; at which point, the consensors shall draw up a final (short) list – when the subject is complex and/or controversial, the ideal number of options for any one ballot is between four and six. In this case the chair will ask all concerned if they are satisfied that the content of the (paper or electronic) ballot, at least in regard to the participants' own suggestions, is inclusive.[10] Finally, depending on the outcome and the level(s) of support expressed for the various options, the vote may be regarded either as a definite decision, or at least as a straw poll indicating the basis of further debate.

Various Forms of Participatory Democracy

The next question refers to the respondents themselves: who does and who does not participate in all the various forms of participatory democracy? The latter include constitutional conventions, independent commissions, citizens assemblies, public enquiries, consultations, public opinion surveys, deliberative polls, citizen panels or focus groups, participatory budgets, petitions, citizens' initiatives and referendums, and each will now be discussed in turn.

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10 This methodology was first tested at a 1986 public meeting in Belfast – the New Ireland Group's *People's Convention* – in which over 200 persons participated. Though still eight years *before* the cease-fire, those present included both Unionists (the late Sir Edward Archdale among others) and Sinn Féin (Alex Maskey, now Member of the Legislative Assembly, and colleagues). In a further experiment in 1991, with an even greater degree of cross-community involvement, use was made of a computer program – paper votes but an electronic count – and data screen projection of both the options and then the results.

Constitutional Conventions

A constitutional convention can cover a range of topics. The most famous is undoubtedly that which took place under the chair of George Washington in Philadelphia in 1787, when the nation's future governance was under discussion. Participation was limited to white males only, 'the well-bred and well-fed.' Interestingly enough, the future President was bitterly opposed to the party system of politics: as he said in his farewell address of 1796, 'the alternative domination of one faction over another… has perpetuated the most horrid enormities [and] is itself a frightful despotism.' Unfortunately, however, while the founding fathers and their contemporaries devised both a more consensual way of electing the President and various formulas for proportional representation, they did not question the root cause of two-party politics – the two-option majority vote (Emerson 2012, 54).

Of less historical import perhaps, there have been several other conventions. For example, in the wake of the financial crisis of 2008, Iceland held a national assembly of 950 randomly selected persons, and then elected a constituent assembly of 25 from a short list of 522 (Gylfason, 2013). Meanwhile in Ireland, a constitutional convention of 33 serving politicians and 66 randomly selected individuals was inaugurated in 2012 to review certain (fairly timid) aspects of Ireland's democratic structure; its recommendations were then considered by parliament.

Independent Commissions

In many countries, commissions have been used to try and establish the truth after years of often bitter turmoil. The first was the National Commission on the Disappearance of Persons, which was initiated in Argentina in 1983. In 1991, in the wake of Augusto Pinochet's dictatorship, a Truth and Reconciliation Commission was deployed in Chile, and a similar body to analyse the tragedy of apartheid was successfully initiated five years later in South Africa, under the chair of Bishop Desmond Tutu. Similarly, in the wake of the 1994 genocide in Rwanda, the Kigali government set up a system of *gacaca*,[11] little 'peace and reconciliation commissions' under the National Unity and Reconciliation Commission (NURC). Sadly, the British Government never saw fit to hold a similar investigation into the Troubles of Northern Ireland, maybe because, alongside some other dubious figures, it too would have been in the dock; hence its resort to piecemeal measures, like the Bloody Sunday inquiry.

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11   This Kinyarwanda word means 'grass' and it refers to the traditional decision-making processes in which the village elders would meet, as often as not under a big tree – where there is some grass – to resolve in verbal consensus any local disputes. Unlike many Western courts, where one of the plaintiffs is assumed to be guilty and the other innocent, sub-Saharan African disputes used to be investigated on an initial assumption that both were in the right (Kapuściński 2002, 315).

Going back a little and on a less violent theme, in 1985, New Zealand used a Royal Commission to study the question of electoral reform (Harris 1993, 53–57); despite considerable opposition and delay from the two main parties, this was eventually followed by a five-option referendum in 1992. The ballot was counted under a rather unusual form of the two-round system (TRS), such that the *status quo*, FPTP, got an automatic bye into the second round (Mackerras 1994, 36–40). As a result, New Zealand adopted a form of the German mixed system, multi-member proportional (MMP), a two-tier system which is part FPTP and part PR-list.

On the same topic, the late Lord Jenkins was asked by the British Government to head an 'Independent Commission on the [UK] Voting System' in 1997. The terms of reference specifically laid down that it should recommend an alternative (singular) rather than a (plural) number of options, as in New Zealand; this, it could be argued, infringed on the Commission's independence. The report referred to the antipodean experience – indeed, members of Jenkins' Commission actually went there to study everything in detail – but there was not one word about the multi-option nature of NZ's referendum in the final report (Jenkins 1998),[12] so confirming his lack of independence.

After the UK's 2010 elections resulted in a coalition government, electoral reform was once again on the agenda; hence, one year later, a referendum on the electoral system. The question was closed: FPTP or AV, the alternative vote. In other words, the British electorate was asked, 'Would you like David Cameron's first preference or would you like his second?' Even the Lib-Dem first preference of PR-STV was not allowed. It was another classic example of unparticipatory democracy! Furthermore, for the supporter of PR – whether the latter wanted a mixed system like the German MMP, a list system like the ones used in Belgium or Switzerland, the more preferential PR-STV of Ireland and Malta,[13] or whatever – the question was similar to that of the waiter who asks the vegetarian: beef or lamb?[14]

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12   In his own submissions to the Jenkins Commission, the present author argued, in vain, that the prospect of a multi-option referendum would allow for a more comprehensive debate.

13   Interestingly enough, both Ireland's PR-STV and Germany's MMP were imposed by the British, in 1920 (unilaterally) and in 1949 (with the Allies) respectively.

14   For reasons unstated, the UK's supposedly impartial Electoral Commission refused (and still refuses) to consider any form of multi-option voting; instead, in 2011, it ruled that the FPP or AV question was adequate. What is even more surprising is the fact that the press went along with this charade: BBC Radio 4 did a one-hour documentary on referendums and, despite this author's prompting beforehand, said not one word about multi-option ballots.

Citizens Assemblies

On the same theme of electoral reform, British Columbia held a Citizens' Assembly and then a binding referendum in 2005. The question posed – another closed question – was FPTP or PR-STV? It was yet another two-option question, even though the menu was multi-optional. The outcome, a 57.7 per cent vote for PR-STV failed to pass the pre-determined threshold of 60 per cent, so the outcome was bizarre: the 42.3 per cent minority won. If, however, as was suggested in a submission from this Institute, the final poll had been a multi-option ballot, then maybe the outcome would have been a more accurate reflection of 'the will of the people.'

At the height of a constitutional crisis in Belgium – the 2010 election produced a parliament which found it difficult to form a government and the process eventually took 541 days (a world record!) – a group of concerned citizens initiated the very successful G1000 Platform for Democratic Innovation, an exercise in deliberative democracy involving a random sample of over 700 direct participants. It was, and continues to be, a form of direct democracy which strongly supports (and hopes to improve) the indirect arm of representative democracy.[15]

Public Enquiries and Consultations

In a public enquiry, which nowadays could be held *in situ* and/or on the web, participation is based on self-selection. As in constitutional conventions and the like, a degree of confidence is placed in the commissioner(s) to be impartial and independent in their findings, which the government may or may not accept.

Likewise, in a consultation, participation is open and often largely confined to another self-selected group of lobbyists and activists. Here too, the government may reject any of the recommendations expressed and, in most instances, need not pass a judgement on them let alone express its own preferences.

Public Opinion Polls

A public opinion survey[16] is normally based on a scientifically balanced random sample of respondents. Questionnaires invariably seek information on gender, social status, neighbourhood, political affiliation if any (as and when appropriate) and so on, in order to ensure that those chosen do indeed represent society as a whole. Obviously, the larger the number, the more accurate the survey, and the normally accepted minimum is 1,000 respondents.

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15   http://www.g1000.org/en/

16   In contrast to most public opinion surveys, telephone polls can be hopelessly unscientific, again because the participants are self-selecting: the Eurovision Song Contest is a prime example.

As has already been noted, in a brave attempt to overcome the legacy of the appalling 1994 massacre, Rwanda set up its system of *gacaca*. Later, with aid from the British and Swedish governments, the NURC commissioned an independent (European) company to undertake a 'Gacaca and Reconciliation Opinion Survey'. The findings – an analysis of the 72 questions asked – were presented at a press conference held in the Hôtel des Milles Collines in Kigali in January 2003, and in the formal discussions which followed (and which this author attended), Dr. Ephraim Kanyarukiga of the Adventist University of Central Africa simply stated, 'Asking yes-or-no questions is very un-African.'

In complex scenarios, as noted earlier, the answers to any binary questions may be not only very un-African but also very inaccurate, not least because, by their very nature, these binary questions are closed. In an effort to overcome this deficiency, some surveys are done on the basis of multi-option graded answers,[17] usually on the following or similar pattern: support strongly, support mildly, indifferent, oppose mildly and oppose strongly. This methodology, however, may also be inaccurate, partly because the respondent, in order to boost his/her favourite option's chances, may be tempted to support strongly the option he/she favours and oppose strongly all the other options – (a similar criticism can be made of approval voting and, even more so, of range voting); and partly because some analysts tend to bunch the responses together as being positive or negative, thus somewhat undermining the original purpose of the gradings.

At best, then, both of these methodologies – a two-option question followed by either a yes-or-no answer or a graded response – identify those items which the respondents may or may not favour; in many instances, however, this methodology cannot declare one particular option to be the most popular overall, that is, they cannot identify the social choice let alone the social ranking. There would therefore be little or no point in giving the outcome of polls (or other forms of deliberation) taken in this way any binding status.

Deliberative Polls and Citizens' Panels/Focus Groups

Deliberative polling involves a smaller number but still representative sample of persons, with the advantage that rather more time can be devoted to the topic; indeed, as was the case in Belgium's G1000, such formats may be residential. The outcomes of most such polls are of an informative, non-binding nature.

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17   As part of the Northern Ireland Peace Process, the de Borda Institute commissioned a multi-option preference survey in 1998 (Emerson 1998, 1-41). Respondents were asked to put a shuffled pack of ten cards, on each of which was a political party's most preferred constitutional option, into their order of preference. The analysis identified both a social choice and a social ranking.

Efforts are made to ensure that, in an initial educational process – and again, full use may be made of a dedicated website – any 'experts' called to discuss the relevant pros and cons are balanced. Despite using many high-tech devices in their discussions, however, some deliberative polls involve majoritarian (i.e., low-tech) decision making; G1000 used preferences, but Australia's newDemocracy Foundation dislike all forms of voting and, though only *in extremis,* resort to an 80 per cent weighted majority vote.

Citizens' Panels and Focus groups involve smaller numbers than is the case in deliberative polls – tens rather than a hundred or so – partly because, to allow for a greater educational input, the format is almost certainly residential. The representative nature of these groups is, therefore, a little more suspect. Again, their conclusions do not have a binding status.

Participatory Budgets

Participatory budgeting has a specific function and a fixed location, and the process of discussions, decisions and implementations may extend over months if not years. While the direct deliberations may include a relatively small sample of individuals – the first one, in Porto Alegre in Brazil in 1989, was self-selected – the final decision-making process usually involves the entire local community. Hence the nature of such decisions may be binding.

Petitions

Unless the government of the day so decides, its own petitions, let alone any others, are only advisory. By their very nature, these involve self-selecting participants and may, therefore, be very inaccurate measures of the collective will.

Citizens' Initiatives

Unlike most of the above, citizens' initiatives are binding. Those who decide to initiate such a referendum are self-selecting but, firstly, as in Switzerland, there has to be a large number of them – 100,000; secondly, in the subsequent referendum, the entire electorate is entitled to participate. They tend to involve a binary question, but see below.

Elections and Referendums

General and local elections are of course binding, as are most referendums.[18] Depending on the particular electoral system in use, the former may be reasonably open, and this is certainly the case with any multi-candidate system such as the particular form of PR-list used in Switzerland and the two main preferential systems: PR-STV and the quota Borda system (QBS). In most referendums, however, the question is closed – either only two options are presented, or worse still, the voter has a choice of 'yes' or 'no' on just the one option.

As noted above, a recent case occurred in Scotland. In theory, the question was actually multi-optional, with three possible outcomes – the status quo, maximum devolution (referred to as devo-max) and independence. As so often happens, however, the politician does not like pluralism: so Mr. Cameron insisted on a two-option ballot – independence, yes or no? In theory, then, the outcome would be either independence or the status quo, and those whose first preference was devo-max were faced with a dilemma. Just before the vote took place, however, and after *postal voting had already started*, when many opinion polls suggested independence might actually be more popular than the status quo, Cameron and other London-based politicians made 'the vow', so to promise devo-max if the 'no' vote won. This left any status quo supporters with a problem.

In the event, on an 84.6 per cent turnout, the 'no' vote won 55.3 per cent to the 'yes' total of 44.7 per cent. So the winner was devo-max. But nobody voted for it. They could not. It was not on the ballot paper. This only serves to emphasise the point made earlier: participatory democracy, by definition, must allow either all concerned and/or their representatives to participate in forming the list of options, and not just in the vote.

The two-option referendum nevertheless has a purpose. In Switzerland, majority-vote 'instruments of direct democracy serve to supplement rather than to replace representative government' (Bogdanor 1994, 65); and interestingly enough, the Swiss Government has recently started to use multi-option voting (Bochsler 2010, 119–131).

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18   In Zimbabwe, Robert Mugabe suspected he was going to lose the 2000 referendum, so he declared, in advance, that it would be non-binding. He lost, the vote that is, by 54.7 per cent; but he won the day. It should also be noted that some state-sponsored referendums are held, not so much to identify the will of the people, rather so that the government concerned may avoid a topic over which its own party is seriously split: in the UK, for example, the 1975 referendum on Europe resolved an issue over which the Labour Party was very undecided.

The world's first multi-option referendum was held in New Zealand in 1894, and there have been quite a few since then, not only (as noted above) in New Zealand on electoral reform, but also in Australia, Finland, Sweden and Uruguay, for example, with most held under a system of TRS. One of the most interesting, again under TRS, was conducted in Guam in 1982, when the electorate was presented with a choice of six possible constitutional arrangements, along with another 'blank' option. So anyone(s) wishing to (campaign and) vote for a seventh option could do so, but only two per cent of the electorate took advantage of this (Guam Election Commission, 1982).

Like so many things in life, there are the good and the bad. At worst, the two-option plebiscite exacerbates divisions in society; it can be manipulated by those who write the question, as was the March 2014 ballot in Crimea, to take a glaring example;[19] it can alienate minorities, as happened in Northern Ireland in 1972;[20] and it can in effect disenfranchise those who might otherwise want to vote for compromise, as was often the case in the Balkans and the Caucasus.

There is also the problem of turnout. Some jurisdictions, like Denmark, lay down a minimum: not just 50 per cent of the turnout but 40 per cent of the entire electorate. Such a rule, however, can be problematic: in a 1939 referendum, when the threshold turnout was 45 per cent of the electorate, 91.9 per cent voted to reform the Danish upper house, but only 44.5 per cent voted, so there was yet another bizarre outcome: the minority of 8.1 per cent won (Bogdanor 1994, 44)! A similar instance occurred in Scotland's first referendum on devolution in 1979, when the prime minister of the day, James Callaghan, wanted the vote to be lost, so he imposed a similar threshold of 40 per cent of the total electorate. A majority of 51.6 per cent supported the measure, but the turnout was only 63.7 per cent, that is, just 32.9 per cent of the electorate, so yet again, the proposal failed, and democracy was bizarre.

The above, then, is an overview of the various instruments of participatory (or non-participatory) democracy in current use. The task of this paper now is to suggest that, if conducted in accordance with certain criteria, not just the outcomes of elections and referendums, but sufficiently accurate and convincing results of some of the other methodologies should also enjoy a binding status.

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19   Voters were asked if they (a) wanted to join the Russian Federation or (b) restore the 1992 constitution; 97.7 and 96.6 per cent of voters in Crimea and Sevastopol voted for (a). Like the Azeris in Nagorno-Karabakh in 1991, the Orthodox in Croatia and Bosnia in 1991/2, and the Georgians in Abhaxia in 2006, the Ukrainian and Tartar minority did not vote.

20   The Unionists voted; the Nationalists held a boycott. On a 58.7 per cent turnout, 98.9 per cent voted to stay in the UK.

To refer again to the referendums on the New Zealand, UK, or British Columbian electoral systems, a more participatory process could have involved an independent enquiry tasked to format a multi-option referendum. If such an instrument were to be deployed, the enquiry would be open to all so, admittedly, participants would be self-selecting; but it would be required to draw up a short but balanced list of options, which would then be presented to the entire electorate in an MBC referendum, the outcome of which would be binding on the executive if it gained a minimum consensus coefficient of, let us say, 0.4.[21]

Another format could be based on a deliberative poll, for example, a one-week gathering of, say, a minimum of 200 persons, again set to draw up a short list for a subsequent referendum. This process would require those involved in the poll to use an MBC to identify a prioritisation, that is, a list of those options which would then form the basis of the national referendum, and the exact number of options would be determined by the nature of any cluster in that social ranking (as suggested above: see MBC analysis). Such a national MBC referendum would identify the nation's social choice.

Criteria for a Deliberative Democracy

To a large extent, the nature of the decision-making process to be used at the end of the debate determines the nature of the debate itself. If the chosen methodology is to be a majority vote, participants may well divide into two opposing camps, and the debate itself may become polarised, if not vitriolic and abusive. If, instead, the vote is to be conducted under the above rules for the MBC, then experience suggests that the debate is likely to take place in a more civilised milieu. There are, of course, certain rules which must apply, some of which have already been alluded to:

1. Every option presented shall be a complete package, with perhaps certain sections common to those of other options (if need be, on editing, the consensors may choose to highlight those parts which are dissimilar).

2. On any one topic, any one participant or party, as appropriate, shall advocate a maximum of only one complete option; as the debate proceeds, if thus persuaded, the mover(s) may agree to a composite or even to his/her/their original proposal being withdrawn.

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21   This figure is much lower than that proposed for other settings (see fn. 7). In like manner, minimum turnout figures for majoritarian referendums are usually on the low side. Unlike the New Zealand or other forms of TRS, the MBC has the added advantage that it definitely requires only one ballot.

3. In plenary and/or on the web, participants shall be limited to a certain quantity of time or number of words respectively. And in both, at any one time or under any one theme, participants shall be limited to only one workshop. Furthermore, in both plenary and workshops, those concerned shall be limited in the quantity of their contributions.

4. In the final decision-making vote, every voter shall be entitled to exercise an equal influence on the outcome.

5. In opinion surveys, deliberative polls and focus groups, (as well as in the elected chamber), if a sufficiently large and representative sample of persons (or a minimum quorum of elected representatives) has participated in the decision, a social choice which gains a pre-determined minimum consensus coefficient shall be deemed to be binding. It must be emphasised that with an MBC, an option's consensus coefficient is a measure of both the level of its support and the degree to which those concerned participated in expressing that support.

Conclusions

The more sophisticated a people become, the more they will want to participate in the decision-making processes by which their lives are determined; so the more sophisticated should be the structures by which they *can* participate. Given the potential that cybernetics now offers, it is vital that democratically elected representatives devolve power from their parliamentary 'bubbles' and involve the electorate in a more meaningful way. This can best happen if, subject to certain criteria as outlined above, the outcomes of various forms of participatory democracy are deemed legally binding.

Abbreviations

AGM	annual general meeting	
AV (= IRV/PV/STV)	alternative vote	as it may be called in Britain/Ireland
BC	Borda count	
EGM	emergency general meeting	
FPTP	first-past-the-post	
IRV (= AV/PV/STV)	instant run-off voting	as it is called in North America
MBC	modified Borda count	
MLA	Member of the Legislative Assembly	Northern Ireland
MMP	multi-member proportional	
NURC	National Unity and Reconciliation Commission	Rwanda
PR	proportional representation	
PV (= AV/IRV/STV)	preferential voting	as known in Australasia
QBS	quota Borda system	
STV (= AV/IRV/PV)	single transferable vote	as in Britain/Ireland
TRS	two-round system	

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'Lived Faith' as an Approach to Inter-Religious Dialogue – Designing for Discussion

Sian Nicholas

Inter-Religious dialogue usually involves the exploration of various issues by people of similar hierarchical standing within different religious structures and is based upon spirituality and religious texts and scriptures to inform discussion. This paper explores the concept of 'lived faith' as a means to engage people of different faith backgrounds in conversations around contemporary contentious issues within the city of Birmingham, UK, which were termed the 'Birmingham Conversations'. The paper outlines the evaluative research methodology of 'conversation' development and the use of 'lived faith' as a concept around which to base the various discussions and conversations. The paper suggests that this method of engaging participants in discussions around conflict issues enabled participants of asymmetrical hierarchical positions within faith organisations to be present and contribute meaningfully and significantly. It also outlines the potential for 'lived faith' as an important tool for providing 'safe space' for contentious issues to be aired and greater understanding to be developed between people of different faith backgrounds in a globalised UK city.

Introduction

Inter-Religious Dialogue has evolved as a means of bringing individuals and communities from different religious backgrounds together to enable an increase in understanding and to enable conflict resolution and peacebuilding in varying conflict settings globally (Atkinson 2013, 63). Invariably for a dialogue to be described as inter-religious it must contain reference to written scriptures, or theological approaches to engaging with conflict (Abu-Nimer 2001, 686). In October 2014, the Bishop of Birmingham, the Right Reverend David Urquhart commissioned a steering committee to develop a methodology whereby a diverse group of Birmingham residents could come together and discuss their experiences of 'lived faith' in their communities, work places, and places of worship. 'Lived Faith' as a means for discussion in inter-religious dialogue is a departure from the

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normal approaches and consequently raises different potentials for understanding and communication which are normally not expressed in these discussions. Consequently, taking a lived-faith approach to discussing areas of tension and conflict could provide a new paradigm for inter-religious dialogue, and for how people of different faiths relate to each other in modern-day Birmingham.

Birmingham is a city that contains within it a 'super-diversity' of faith groups and backgrounds. Within the city alone 493 Christian, 105 Muslim, 24 Sikh, 10 Buddhist, 6 Hindu places of worship can be found, as well as others of different faith traditions.[1] The convening of what became known as 'the Birmingham Conversations' came as a response to the 'Trojan Horse' allegations made regarding the development of radicalisation and extremism in Birmingham Schools, following which six schools were placed under 'special measures' though only one demonstrated any sign of radicalisation (Guardian 2015). The Bishop of Birmingham felt that tensions between faith communities were not confined to formal education for children and that various communities in the 'super diverse' city of Birmingham needed the space to talk freely with others about their concerns about their own religion and their freedom to express this religion in Birmingham, and also the opportunity to share concerns regarding the expression of other religions within their community context. This provided the remit for the conversations, which was to enable difficult conversations around 'lived faith' for communities in the Post-Trojan Horse Birmingham context.

Furthermore, the rationale for these conversations was not as a peace-building tool in itself. For peace-building activity to take place within a conversation process it has been stated that the dialogues need to take place within a context of practical cooperation and in this way attitudinal change, emotional change and also practical change are considered to be likely outcomes from such dialogues (Abu-Nimer 2001, 689). The Birmingham Conversations were specifically meant to enable an increase in understanding, but were not aimed at producing consensus amongst a disparate group. Rather their purpose was to provide 'safe space' in which people of faith could share heartfelt concerns regarding the practice of religion of their own and other faith communities and be able to listen and understand the heartfelt concerns of those from other communities. This approach is also a departure from the usual format for inter-religious dialogue, which seeks to bring consensus around a cause of conflict and to lead to peace building (Smock 2004, 2).

The aim and purpose of the Birmingham Conversations was to provide a space for discussion amongst people of faith that was missing in the Birmingham context, about issues that directly impacted their lives, from the perspective of their daily

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1   2011 Public Census

practice of religion and culture. They were a means by which to understand the issues and challenges that impact people of faith in twenty-first-century Birmingham. In order to do this, six conversations were convened, which consisted of a three-hour meeting each month, and which were concluded with a symposium held in May 2015 to discuss findings and present reports to participants and other interested stakeholders such as secular authorities and organisations, or faith leaders.

Definition of Terms

As the approach to these dialogues is significantly different from other forms of inter-religious dialogue, it was important to establish definitions of terms at the earliest point and to return to these definitions during the actual discussions. For this purpose we prepared the following definitions:

> Enabling difficult conversations: facilitating the creation of safe space whereby participants feel able to freely express the deeply held convictions held within their faith traditions with each other. Within this safe space participants should feel heard and understood, and feel able to discuss issues and to disagree in a respectful manner. The space should allow participants to be challenged and to be challenging in a constructive way that informs the reality of the daily life of participants.

> Lived Faith: Religion is often expressed as a series of propositions, beliefs, practices or assertions that those who adhere to that religion are supposed to hold. Faith is a much more difficult term to define, but often speaks of the individual's own commitment to those beliefs or practices, or on occasion the way in which those beliefs and practices are expressed within a particular community. By 'Lived Faith' we are looking to move beyond a purely intellectual understanding of religion to see faith as something that not only affects the way each individual member of a religion lives out their faith, but also the way that living eventually interacts with those who live around them.

> Lived faith is probably best understood in relation to identity. It is that expression or practice of the faith that is most intimate and personal for each individual. It can be expressed in terms of a relationship, particular values, a series of practices, law or encapsulated in specific words or passages of scripture. To engage with lived faith at this level is to touch what is most personal for the faithful individual, that which has evolved from childhood, or that which drew a specific person to the faith in the first instance. It cannot always be expressed in words, and questions of memory, emotion and embodiment are essential to any expression of lived faith. It is also rarely something that is uniquely individual, a lived faith is shared, lived out within a community of faith, even if the different members of the community may not choose to express their faith in identical forms. The community of the faithful is clearly important, but in practice lived faith also engages with, and may even share values or practices with, those of other faith traditions who live close by creating particular synergies and tensions within the expression of the faith.

It was with these definitions that participants were invited to join the conversations, and with the aim that the conversations would seek to enable a heartfelt discussion around the individual and community practice of religious beliefs and traditions which would increase understanding and communication for all present.

Methodological Approach

The aim of the conversations was to develop a methodology that could be used in different contexts to enable difficult discussions around lived faith to take place. In order to do this the steering group approached the design as a form of evaluative research, using participant input and feedback to steer the design and approach. As the participants were not involved in designing the overall aims of the conversations, the methodology, although leaning towards action research due to the active participation of those involved in the design and research, would be best placed as evaluative (Hurtado 2001, 31).

The methodology of the design of these discussions was divided into group formation, and design of the conversations themselves. In order to do this a steering committee was formed initially comprising four Christians, three of whom were Anglican. It was agreed that the faith representation upon the committee needed to change and consequently participants from the conversations were invited to take part in the committee which was to meet between conversations to discuss findings and guide the direction of the next conversation.

A broad spectrum of participants was invited in an effort to ensure diversity both between and within faith groups. This was counter-balanced by the physical need to keep the group small enough for participants to be able to contribute in a meaningful manner during the conversations and to build relationship with those in the group. Consequently, 24 people were invited to join an initial group. These were people all known to Dr Andrew Smith, the inter-faith advisor to the Bishop of Birmingham, and emails and telephone calls were followed up by face-to-face meetings and discussions around the purpose of the conversations themselves. Thus, a spectrum of people from different faith backgrounds, split evenly across genders, was initially invited to attend and participate in the conversations.

The approach to the conversations was that of evaluative research leaning toward action research. Each conversation was evaluated by at least four evaluators, who kept a note of language and behaviour during the conversation and group activities. In addition feedback was sought directly from participants as to the process and the discussion itself. This information was given to the steering committee and used to direct and shape the next conversation. As all of the steering committee members took part in each activity and discussion and were all impacted and part of the

process, the methodology leant toward an action-research approach to the research and design of the conversations. As the facilitator of the conversations my actions were ultimately significantly impacted by the organic process of conversation formation within the larger group.

The outline of the conversations was based upon the work of Schirch and Campt in 'talking about difficult subjects', which includes inter-religious dialogue. This separates the dialogue into four phases. The structure of the conversations adhered to these four phases: establishing environment and common intent; activities to build relationship and small group discussion; activities to explore commonalities, positive attitudes – large group discussion; and review and evaluation with a pause for reflection (Schirch and Campt 2007). These phases were altered in length, style and content throughout the conversations in response to feedback and the overall aim of building relationship between individuals.

The initial conversation invited people to share the difficulties they experienced in the free expression of their 'lived faith' in daily lives. This initial discussion produced a number of topics for discussion, many of which were rooted in living out their faith in a society that is both secular and pluralist, as well as concerns around identity, and children and young people. It was these topics that informed the discussion content of the remainder of the conversations.

Furthermore, on one occasion the Archbishop of Canterbury, the Right Reverend Justin Welby, attended a session, and as part of the conversation shared the six points of reconciliation that are part of the model that he has used in the different inter-faith reconciliation activities. These six features include research, relationship, relief, risk, reconciliation, and resourcing. These features informed the last two conversations in particular as the steering committee aimed to continue developing relationship to enable greater risk taking of participants and to consider in more detail the risks taken by participants in attending the conversations.

Consequently, the flow of conversation, the activities, and the different sessions followed an organic approach which followed the structure as outlined in Development of Key Concepts in the Birmingham Conversations Methodology. These concepts show that the conversations allowed for greater relationship-building activities in the initial conversations but as relationship developed these activities were reduced. Concurrently, discussions around risk and risk taking increased during the activities proportionally to the development of relationship. Alongside these components of the conversation on-going research into the process itself, but also into the issues and concerns of the participants endeavouring to express their faith in their daily lives, was key to the conversations.

Challenges

Although efforts had been made to invite a broad spectrum of participants to the conversations, the work and personal commitments of participants impacted their ability to attend the six sessions which resulted in a particular under-representation of women, Muslims, and people not of a white or Asian heritage. This under-representation was particularly noted in the discussions around identity at which no Muslim women were present and only one male of mixed British and Afro-Caribbean heritage. Efforts were made during the conversations to rectify this under-representation but it remained an issue throughout the conversations.

One of the key components of inter-religious dialogue is the need for symmetry of status between participants (Abu-Nimer 2001, 696). Although many of the participants had a formal role within their faith structures, a number did not. Equally, the presence of the Bishop of Birmingham and the Archbishop of Canterbury at one meeting significantly skewed the symmetry of the participants present on that date. However, because the theme of the conversations was discussion around lived faith and there were consequently anecdotes and stories of the differing experiences of those present, and not rulings on doctrine or theological matters, this difference in symmetry presented a significantly reduced challenge than might otherwise have been experienced. Everyone's viewpoint in this case was legitimate and on occasion the greatest challenges were between people of a similar faith tradition who disagreed with the lived faith experiences of someone in their own tradition, rather than from a different faith tradition.

Throughout the process the conversations were to be a 'safe space' for participants to share. This, however, caused a tension between those who are comfortable sharing in a large group and are unlikely to take offence at the viewpoint of another, and those who were less comfortable in sharing in an open group. There was often a frustration that there were not more 'open' discussions where everyone could hear everyone's opinion, yet in these sessions only a few contributed initially. One session focusing on identity included gender-specific groups for part of the conversation in which the women stated they felt safe and comfortable and wished they had more opportunity to discuss issues in this safe environment. This tension of 'small and intimate' versus 'open and public' remained throughout the duration of the conversations.

The final challenge was that of time, although the conversations were three hours in duration because of the nature of the activities, which sometimes involved changing subjects, groups, or questions, participants often felt that conversations were curtailed and that just as they were beginning to discuss issues the meeting had to move on. This was a major source of frustration throughout the conversations,

and it is difficult to know how this could have been better managed initially whilst we were learning about the group, and how it was functioning. One solution was to remove formal comfort breaks and to enable people to get drinks or respond to phone calls as appropriate to not curtail discussions, although at the end of a group session an informal break would naturally occur and so time was invariably lost in this way. In addition, we significantly reduced the number of groups and/or questions so that more time could be devoted to one conversation.

Conversation Content

The conversations were split into six sessions overall:

1. Sharing of concerns around lived faith;

2. Children and young people;

3. Identity;

4. Global issues and impact on Birmingham and lived faith;

5. Race, evangelisation and conversion;

6. Caste and class, children in formal education.

A number of issues arose from these sessions, which were informative in themselves but also contribute to the on-going understanding of inter-religious dialogue. The first was the development of the 'language of other', in which faith groups established themselves as one group and other religions as 'others'. During the course of the conversations the language would swing at times to include all the faith groups as one group and the secular authorities as 'other', particularly in the issue of car parking. This change of language took place variously throughout the conversations as the notion of 'other' altered in relation to lived faith and the difficulties that communities have in expressing their lived faith on a daily basis (Stringer 2015, 4).

A second theme of the conversation was the notion of a coherent and unified 'Muslim community', which was repeatedly challenged by the Muslim participants of the group as non-existent. As a non-Muslim I was repeatedly surprised at the level of Islamophobia present within the group, which appeared to have been stoked not only by the 'Trojan Horse' incidents but also by global events that involved Islamic violence. The two Muslim participants were often listening to an understanding of their community as a homogenous group which needed to decide between peaceful co-existence and violence, and these two were seeking to address this misunderstanding of what is a disparate, broad and highly pluralistic faith. Gross misrepresentations of one faith by another can only be challenged in these small and intimate environments, whereby participants can reflect upon the views

they have just expressed and recognise where generalisations have occurred and they have attributed a characteristic across an entire religious group (Stringer 2015).

A third theme was hearing the 'other' viewpoint on something that you are well acquainted with. For Christians present it was challenging to hear the viewpoints of those who had been at the receiving end of Christian mission to India, asking clearly, 'Why would I invite someone who thought I was a sinner home to my house for a meal?'[2] Or hearing how missionary activities were viewed as cynical attempts to purchase new believers from traditional Indian religions. Listening to the stories of those present, respecting their viewpoints, and increasing understanding of how the same issues were seen from different worldviews was an important lesson of the conversations (Stringer 2015, 10).

In discussing lived faith, it became clear that it was possible to alter the terms on which the groups related to each other, and to begin to see the different faith groups represented as diverse, expressing different worldviews and living their faith in the cultural manner to which they were accustomed. The conversations gave the opportunity to explore this in greater depth than a purely theological analysis of conflict may have done, or reliance upon scriptural texts.

Reflections on Process

As a means by which to engage participants in discussion around the issues and concerns that they have in expressing their faith in their daily lives in twenty-first-century Birmingham the concept of lived faith was crucial in bringing equality and depth of experience into the conversations. Everyone present had stories, concerns, relationships, issues, and conflicts within their own faith traditions, with other faith traditions, and with the secular authorities with regard to their freedom to express their faith as they would wish. These issues ranged from the apparently mundane such as car parking through to the far more emotive issues of evangelisation and conversion and to institutional issues such as expression of faith for children at school.

At times the discussions were volatile and participants would express anger at comments that had been made. However, everyone was generally very polite to each other and no insults were traded. There were times when the small group discussions in particular were very engaged and almost impossible to break up because the conversation had grown so intense. Participants were vulnerable, open and honest about their thoughts, opinions and feelings, and this did at times make for an uncomfortable atmosphere. Nevertheless, participants remained committed to the process despite some of the difficulties experienced.

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2   Participant of Birmingham Conversation, conversation 5.

During the symposium all those who fed back expressed some comments about the level of relationship that had developed, even with people who held very different views and that they hoped to continue in this process of relationship development. Some expressed a desire for more relationship-building activities in the group setting so that they felt safer at an earlier stage. This highlights the organic nature of all such dialogues, and that there have to be opportunities to vary the activities and format in accordance with the levels of trust and relationship built amongst the participants. It also suggests that there will always be tensions in a disparate group with the comfort that people feel in sharing, as some want to begin the process of discussion and others want to continue building trust in relationship before taking risks.

Group size was initially set at 24, with the addition of the facilitator, the bishop, and four evaluators. It was perhaps not surprising in the open discussions that some participants found it difficult to contribute initially. As the conversations continued the number of participants dropped and held steady at about 18 individuals. This drop in number along with the development of relationship is likely to have contributed to the increased participation in the open-group discussions by the end of the conversations, as well as increasing relationship amongst participants. It suggests that the overall starting size of 24 may have been too high; however, drop-off in the number of participants attending made the group a more tenable size.

The aim of the conversations was never to find consensus on any of the topics. It was only to find a format and space whereby difficult conversations could take place and people could hear the perspectives of those from a different viewpoint living in the same city. This meant, of course, that at times the conversation was difficult specifically because they were not seeking consensus and because they were about participants' personal experiences which could not be discounted. This lack of consensus contributed to the difficulty that participants had in envisaging reconciliation amongst the different faith backgrounds. In fact there was no agreement on the meaning of the term 'reconciliation', and the expression 'building bridges' was used instead – although there was also dispute regarding the meaning of this as a term. This session suggested that much more work needed to be undertaken in increasing understanding and levels of respect between people of different faith backgrounds before any serious attempts at building any 'bridges' could take place.

Future Developments

The aim of the Birmingham Conversations was to develop a methodology whereby participants from different faith backgrounds could meet together and discuss difficult and contentious issues in a safe environment. This methodology was

developed over the course of the sessions with the direct input of the participants and this engagement would be essential in all future conversations. However, future conversations should include more attention toward relationship building, explanation of the process, and greater empowerment in the use of challenging breaches of ground rules to avoid the generalisations and labelling that occurred on occasions.

This methodology was specifically identified to work with 'inter-religious' dialogue, but further research into its effectiveness with intra-faith conflict would be valuable to identify whether discussions on lived faith enabled greater understanding between disparate groups from a similar faith background where tension and conflict has arisen, or between groups where other cultural identity markers are shared but lived faith is expressed differently

The short-term impact of the conversations can be measured in the number of people attending the conversations and symposium, and in the continuing relationships and conversations that participants hold with others now the conversations have ended. Long-term impact of the conversations is more difficult to measure and further evaluation after a period of time would be appropriate to continue seeking to understand it.

Conclusions

The concept of discussing challenges and issues in lived faith was developed in 2014 by the Bishop of Birmingham, the Right Reverend David Urquhart, as a response to the damage inflicted upon the 'super-diverse' faith communities of Birmingham following the wake of the 'Trojan Horse' investigation into a number of Birmingham schools. The concept of using lived faith is new to inter-religious dialogue and enabled different people to meet and discuss on a personal level the issues that they faced in their daily lives as they sought to practice their faith in accordance with their culture, tradition and community.

The conversations included a number of topics that were raised during the initial session, and allowed a dialogue to take place which at that point was not being addressed in an inter-religious setting. The aim of the conversations was to increase understanding and awareness of those present to the 'lived faith' experience of others in the room, and also for these new understandings to be shared outside of the conversation setting to increase impact.

The conversations were not in and of themselves about resolving conflict, or about finding a way forward, but at the end of the sessions there was a sense of 'where do we go from here' although it was agreed that much more work was

necessary in developing understanding within the Birmingham context for 'bridge building' or any agreed understanding of 'reconciliation' to take place. The people of Birmingham need to find a method by which they can communicate their fears, hopes and frustrations for their futures and the future of the lived faith experience of their children with those of other faiths and of none, and the Birmingham conversations present an alternative method by which the process of developing mutual respect and understanding could begin to take place.

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Reflections on GCGI: Creating a Culture of Dialogue, Collaboration, and Cooperation for the Common Good

Kamran Mofid

The future is indeed fraught with environmental, socio-economic, political, and security risks that could derail the progress towards the building of 'The Future We Want'. However, although these serious challenges are confronting us, we can, if we are serious and sincere enough, overcome them by taking risks in the interest of the common good. One thing is clear: the main problem we face today is not the absence of technical or economic solutions, but rather the presence of moral and spiritual crises. This requires us to build broad global consensus on a vision that places values such as love, generosity, and caring for the common good into socio-political and economic practice, suggesting possibilities for healing and transforming our world.

Key words: Globalisation, global consensus, values, common good.

'He that seeks the good of the many seeks in consequence his own good.' Saint Thomas Aquinas

'What is the essence of life? To serve others and to do good.' Aristotle

'A generous heart, kind speech, and a life of service and compassion are the things which renew humanity.' Buddha

'We have to build a better man before we can build a better society.' Paul Tillich

'Try not to become a man of success, but a man of value.' Albert Einstein

'The world is my country, all mankind are my brethren, and to do good is my religion.' Thomas Paine

Kamran Mofid is founder of the Globalisation for the Common Good Initiative and co-editor of GCGI Journal. He is a patron of the Human Values Foundation, and a founding member of World Dignity University. His work is highly interdisciplinary, drawing on economics, business, politics, international relations, theology, culture, ecology, ethics, and spirituality. He is the co-founder and was the Associate Director (1996–1999) of the Centre for the Study of Forgiveness and Reconciliation at Coventry University.

Introduction: Why Globalisation for the Common Good Initiative matters

Complex problems require interdisciplinary teams to solve them, but the current dominant model of neo-liberalism promotes individualism, selfishness, competition, specialisation, and isolation. How can we then develop a cross-discipline culture of cooperation and dialogue for the common good?

'No man is an island.' 'Two heads are better than one.' 'A problem shared is a problem solved.' These are just some of the proverbs that tell of the virtues of teamwork, but it seems they cannot always be universally applied.

In the past few decades, there have been great endeavours to bring about a dialogue of civilisations, cultures, religions, and peoples. However, there is a very serious void here: there has not been a concurrent attempt to bring about a fruitful and rewarding dialogue between different academic disciplines, faculties, values, visions, and missions. For example, there was a time when economics was regarded as a branch of theology, philosophy, and ethics. Economic factors were intimately linked to what was regarded as just or right, and these, in their turn, were shaped by spiritual and moral understanding of the common good. Today economics has become an autonomous discipline, divorced and separated from its original roots. This engineered separation has brought us all a very bitter harvest. In the end economics is about human well being in society and this cannot be separated from moral, philosophical, theological, and spiritual considerations. The idea of an economics which is value-free is totally spurious. Nothing in this life is morally neutral. The same, of course, can be said about other disciplines, such as business, commerce, management, education, politics, international relations, medicine, law, theology, and many more.

This shortcoming is having a serious consequence on our ability to understand, evaluate, address, and solve the multiple crises that the world is facing.

> The world is changing at an incredible rate. Pressing problems like climate change and the related social unrest are connected to an ever-growing population and dwindling resources. It has become clear that these vast problems cannot be answered by single academic disciplines, working within archaic institutional settings and throttled by systemic boundaries.
>
> Working across disciplines is the key to answering the big questions, focusing on what is needed to solve problems, and transcending the boundaries of conventional approaches and disciplines. However, in academia we have put boundaries in place to stop this happening, and the pace of change to adopt new strategies is glacial at best. (Guardian, 30 May 2014, in Kamran 2014)

Since 2002, when Globalisation for the Common Good (GCGI) was founded (Mofid 2013), we have been at the forefront of activities to encourage a way of working and forming a place where such dialogical conversations can be encouraged, nurtured, developed, and supported by bringing together a group of noted scholars, researchers, students, and professionals from all contexts and backgrounds who share this vision and appreciate the exciting potential of having the chance to talk and engage in a dialogue of ideas, visions, and values with people from a broad array of backgrounds and disciplines.

There are major benefits to such an interdisciplinary dialogue and encounter: it nurtures critical thinking; it encourages the recognition of diverse perspectives; it increases tolerance for ambiguity; and it improves sensitivity to a wide spectrum of ethical and spiritual issues. We are committed to the view that inter-disciplinary and multi-disciplinary work is a very positive and credible way forward in a rapidly changing world. It is our firm belief that a dialogue of values, ideas, and visions, supported by a meaningful dialogue of interrelated academic disciplines, will be very positive for a successful and rewarding path to a better and more harmonious world.

We strongly encourage others to join us in this timely mission. I do know, from my personal conversation and engagement with many at different universities in different parts of the world, that a very large number of academics as well as students are extremely unhappy about what is happening at their universities and other places of higher education. The sense of disillusionment springs from the introduction of managerialism, the growing loss of collegiality, dwindling and competitively allocated resources for research, the inappropriate but nevertheless wholesale use of business models in the education system, and the consequent transformation of Higher Education (teaching, research, and learning) into a fundamentally consumerist activity.

Many working in the education sector see their job and work as more akin to a vocation – something one does because of the love of learning, teaching, and the excitement of being with students – guiding and helping them to think for themselves. They do not see themselves as service providers and their students as customers.

In short, for us at the GCGI, our sense of passionate commitment to inter-disciplinary work is a reaction to the sense of frustration many people feel when faced by the narrowness of subject disciplines and the inability of subject specialists to raise their eyes above or beyond the horizons of their own territory. Dialogue and engagement with people from varied areas of interest can throw fascinating, stimulating and poignant insights into one's own thinking and research. There

is nothing more refreshing than looking at one's own work through the eyes of another, or being able to share perspectives with people from other professions who are working in similar areas. The possibilities for creative and innovative research are enormous.

Dialogue of ideas, visions, values, struggles, and hopes for the common good

Good ideas will drive out the bad

Imagine a political system that puts the public first. Imagine the economy and markets serving people rather than the other way round. Imagine us placing values of respect, fairness, interdependence, and mutuality at the heart of our economy. Imagine an economy that gives everyone their fair share, at least an appropriate living wage, and no zero-hour contracts. Imagine where jobs are accessible and fulfilling, producing useful things rather than games of speculation and casino capitalism. Imagine where wages support lives rather than ever expanding divisions and separations between the top 1% and the rest. Imagine a society capable of supporting everyone's needs and which says 'no' to greed. Imagine unrestricted access to an excellent education, healthcare, housing, and social services. Imagine hunger being eliminated, no more food banks or soup kitchens. Imagine each person having a place he/she can call home. Imagine all senior citizens living a dignified and secure life. Imagine all the youth leading their lives with ever present hope for a better world. Imagine a planet protected from the threat of climate change now and for the generations to come. Imagine no more wars, but dialogue, conversation and non-violent resolution of conflicts.

This is the world I wish to see and I believe we have the means to build it if we take action in the interest of the common good. We must begin to seriously think, ponder and reflect together on life's big questions, questions of meaning, values, and purpose:

What does it mean to be human? What does it mean to live a life of meaning and purpose? What does it mean to understand and appreciate the natural world, to forge a more just society for the common good? In what ways are we living our highest values? How are we working to embody the change we wish to see in the world? What projects, models or initiatives give us the greatest hope? How can we do well in life by doing good? How can we become agents of change for the common good? How to spark a new public conversation framed around human dignity and the common good?

Human beings have explored these many questions of value through religion, philosophy, the creation of art and literature, and more. Indeed, questions of value have inaugurated many disciplines within the humanities and continue to drive them today. Questions about values and valuing are fundamental to being human, but rarely are the subject of explicit public reflection.

What do I mean by the Common Good?

By the 'common good' I am referring to a broad evolution beyond values and actions that serve narrow self-interest, and towards those guided by inclusiveness, supporting well being, happiness, inner peace, contentment, dignity, economic prosperity and success, security, human rights, and stewardship of resources for the benefit of all, rather than just for some, as it currently is.

The principle of the common good reminds us that we are all responsible for each other – we are our brothers' and sisters' keepers – and must work for social conditions which ensure that every person and every group in society is able to meet their needs and realise their potential. It follows that every group in society must take into account the rights and aspirations of other groups and the well being of the whole human family.

The future is full of risk and perils for our planet and all peoples. If we are to survive, we must surely build cultures of peace, justice, kindness, sympathy, empathy, and trust, and we must walk together to face the future. The journey, for sure, will be much more secure and fruitful if we begin to walk the walk together for the common good.

The Origins of the GCGI

Perhaps the best I can do is to quote a passage from a book I co-authored well before the financial, spiritual, and moral crash of September 2008:

> From 1980 onwards, for the next twenty years, I taught economics in universities, enthusiastically demonstrating how economic theories provided answers to problems of all sorts. I got quite carried away by the beauty, the sophisticated elegance, of complicated mathematical models and theories. But gradually I started to have an empty feeling.

> I began to ask fundamental questions of myself. Why did I never talk to my students about compassion, dignity, comradeship, solidarity, happiness, spirituality – about the meaning of life? We never debated the biggest questions. Who are we? Where have we come from? Where are we going to?

I told them to create wealth, but I did not tell them for what reason. I told them about scarcity and competition, but not about abundance and co-operation. I told them about free trade, but not about fair trade; about GNP – Gross National Product – but not about GNH – Gross National Happiness. I told them about profit maximisation and cost minimisation, about the highest returns to the shareholders, but not about social consciousness, accountability to the community, sustainability and respect for creation and the creator. I did not tell them that, without humanity, economics is a house of cards built on shifting sands.

These conflicts caused me much frustration and alienation, leading to heartache and despair. I needed to rediscover myself and real-life economics. After a proud twenty-year or so academic career, I became a student all over again. I would study theology, philosophy and ethics, disciplines nobody had taught me when I was a student of economics and I did not teach my own students when I became a teacher of economics.

It was at this difficult time that I came to understand that I needed to bring spirituality, compassion, ethics and morality back into economics itself, to make this dismal science once again relevant to and concerned with the common good. (Braybrooke and Mofid 2006)

Aiming to be a source of hope and inspiration, enabling us all to move from despair to hope, darkness to light, competition to cooperation, and monologue to dialogue, the GCGI, which I very much wish to introduce to you, was born at an international conference in Oxford in 2002.

To understand, appreciate, and face the challenges of the contemporary world requires us to focus on life's big picture. Whether it is war and peace, economics and the environment, justice and injustice, love and hatred, cooperation and competition, common good and selfishness, science and technology, progress and poverty, profit and loss, food and population, energy and water, disease and health, education and family, we need the big picture in order to understand and solve the many pressing problems, large and small, regional or global.

In order to focus on life's bigger picture and guided by the principles of hard work, commitment, volunteerism, and service; with a great passion for dialogue of cultures, civilisations, religions, ideas and visions, at an international conference in Oxford in 2002 the GCGI and the GCGI International Conference Series were founded.

We recognise that our socio-economic problems are closely linked to our spiritual problems and vice versa. Moreover, socio-economic justice, peace and harmony will come about only when the essential connection between the spiritual and practical

aspects of life are valued. Necessary for this journey is to discover, promote and live for the common good. The principle of the common good reminds us that we are all really responsible for each other – we are our brothers' and sisters' keepers – and must work for social conditions which ensure that every person and every group in society is able to meet their needs and realize their potential. It follows that every group in society must take into account the rights and aspirations of other groups, and the well being of the whole human family.

One of the greatest challenges of our time is to apply the ideas of the global common good to practical problems and forge common solutions. Translating the contentions of philosophers, spiritual and religious scholars, and leaders into agreement between policymakers and nations is the task of statesmen and citizens, a challenge to which GCGI adheres. The purpose is not simply talking about the common good, or simply to have a dialogue, but the purpose is to take action, to make the common good and dialogue work for all of us, benefiting us all.

What the GCGI seeks to offer – through its scholarly and research programme, as well as its outreach and dialogue projects – is a vision that positions the quest for economic and social justice, peace and ecological sustainability within the framework of a spiritual consciousness and a practice of open-heartedness, generosity and caring for others. All are thus encouraged by this vision and consciousness to serve the common good.

The GCGI has from the very beginning invited us to move beyond the struggle and confusion of a preoccupied economic and materialistic life to a meaningful and purposeful life of hope and joy, gratitude, compassion, and service for the good of all. Perhaps our greatest accomplishment has been our ability to bring globalisation for the common good into the common vocabulary and awareness of a greater population along with initiating the necessary discussion as to its meaning and potential in our personal and collective lives. In short, at GCGI we are grateful to be contributing to that vision of a better world, given the goals and objectives that we have been championing since 2002. For that we are most grateful to all our friends and supporters that have made this possible.

To focus our minds, assisting us to see the big picture, I very much wish to offer for consideration and reflection the values of the GCGI, which we hold very dearly. I firmly believe that if these or similar values are adopted by all the stakeholders, and then seriously adhered to afterwards, then the attainment of these goals becomes much more possible:

We value caring and kindness;

We value passion and positive energy;

We value service and volunteerism;

We value simplicity and humility;

We value trust, openness, and transparency;

We value values-led education;

We value harmony with nature;

We value non-violent conflict resolution;

We value interfaith, inter-civilisational, and inter-generational dialogue;

We value teamwork and collaboration;

We value challenge and excellence;

We value fun and play;

We value curiosity and innovation;

We value health and well-being;

We value a sense of adventure;

We value people, communities, and cultures;

We value friendship, cooperation, and responsibility.

Conclusion: Co-creating 'The Future We Want' in the Interest of the Common Good

The future is indeed fraught with environmental, socio-economic, political, and security risks that could derail progress towards the building of 'The Future We Want'. However, although these serious challenges are confronting us, we can, if we are serious and sincere enough, overcome them by taking risks in the interest of the common good.

One thing is clear: the main problem we face today is not the absence of technical or economic solutions, but rather the presence of moral and spiritual crises. This requires us to build broad, global consensus on a vision that places values such as love, generosity, and caring for the common good into socio-political and economic practice, suggesting possibilities for healing and transforming our world.

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BOOK REVIEW

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Ethics in Interfaith Dialogue
Johnston McMaster
London: CHS; 2015
Paperback,198 pages.

Dialogue, as has been defined and expressed countless times, is derived from the Greek word 'dia-logos', which is composed of the elements 'dia' ('through') and 'logos' ('word', related to the verb 'lego', 'to say, to tell'). The additional element 'dia' tells us that 'dialogue' is more than 'lego', that is, a mere act of telling something to another person, or expressing oneself. It is a participatory act of verbal sharing, an action 'through' which 'logos' ('word') is shared and multiplied.

In his book titled 'A Word Between Us: Ethics in Interfaith Dialogue', Johnston McMaster goes beyond the dictionary definition of 'dialogue' and explores what it can mean when applied to an 'Abrahamic ethics' and utilized by adherents of three Abrahamic faiths. McMaster starts his exploration of an Abrahamic ethics by referring to the Qur'anic concept 'People of the Book' ('Ahl al Kitab'), a term that is specifically used to mean peoples with a revealed scripture, who therefore share commonalities and a common heritage, such as the adherents of Christianity, Islam and Judaism.

McMaster then goes on to discuss the implications of an 'Abrahamic ethics' in interfaith dialogue: when 'People of the Book' read each other's texts, the first Abrahamic virtue they should cultivate is humility, because we cannot 'pretend that we are always taking God's point of view' (p. 25). Secondly, he argues that we should interact with the texts not individualistically, but should see it as a 'shared exercise'. Thirdly, McMaster holds that we can take Abraham and his story as the main source of Abrahamic ethics, who was renowned for his hospitality, caring and compassion for all who pass by his tent, whether they are total strangers or fellow travellers. Fourthly, McMaster argues that a second source of dialogic ethics can be found in our scriptures, which teach us about 'justice', 'peace', 'compassion', 'tolerance', 'respect', 'the dignity of the human person', 'the face of love', 'self-giving' and 'the common good' (p. 26).

In the second section of his book, McMaster holds that in our globalized and shrinking world, dialogue has become an 'imperative'. He further explains that

world religions now have become 'neighbour religions', with adherents of each religion living ever closer to each other, and that this reality can teach us about our 'shared humanity', which is our common denominator and goes beyond identifying with a particular faith or tradition. McMaster holds that Gülen's vision of dialogue goes beyond the term 'People of the Book'; this can be understood to mean that the term has a specific and a wider meaning, just as Nursi extrapolated that 'People of the Book' can also mean all people who read and interact with 'texts' ('ehl-i mekteb', all people who are 'lettered'), not just 'sacred texts', thus implying a much wider and more embracing definition for the term. Following this line of thought, McMaster holds that if we can grasp that our shared humanity is our most basic and essential commonality, we can become 'more human' and learn to cultivate 'shared human values'. In the subsequent chapters, McMaster provides analyses of how three scholars from the Abrahamic traditions understand this 'imperative' for interfaith dialogue, by looking at the dialogue thought of Paul Knitter, Jonathan Sacks, and Gülen. The pervading message of these perspectives is that dialogue, respecting difference and diversity, and compassion are key components that can be derived from Abrahamic, faiths which can in turn inform an 'Abrahamic ethics' in dialogue. While Gülen holds that 'the style adopted by those who treat others with hatred and hostility is not in keeping with Islam', McMaster also confirms that this is true for the other Abrahamic traditions of Christianity and Judaism as well, and concludes that 'we need to support each other in the struggle for a more ethical interpretation and ethical praxis within our Abrahamic faiths' (p. 49).

McMaster outlines the wisdom of Abrahamic ethics, holding that 'wisdom', understood as 'hikmah' in the Islamic tradition (listing 'hokhmah' and 'sophia' as parallels in the respective Abrahamic traditions), is the 'heart of adequate and good educational praxis' (p. 55). The subsections give us an idea on the content of each scholar's view on this wisdom ethics: Islamic ethics sees 'Useful Knowledge and Righteous Deeds as [a] Divine Gift', Jewish wisdom ethics is based on 'hokhmah', divine wisdom, and it is 'wisdom as reflection on lived experience and ordinariness', and has a 'pedagogical intent', which McMaster connects with Gülen's vision of wisdom ethics. Christian wisdom ethics for McMaster begins with the encounter of the first believers in the teachings of Jesus, whose wisdom ethics was 'inclusive', 'egalitarian', as opposed to the oppression and 'coerced peace' of the Roman Empire. Finally, the shared Abrahamic wisdom ethics has a 'shared commitment to growing knowledge and righteous deeds through the wisdom that is a gift from God' (p. 70). In his book, McMaster explores a common Abrahamic ethics of social action, arguing that the social and the spiritual cannot be separated, just as faith traditions are as much about what is beyond our physical world as the here and now, social justice and responsibilities.

The Journal of Dialogue Studies is a multidisciplinary, peer reviewed academic journal published twice a year. Its aim is to study the theory and practice of dialogue, understood provisionally as: meaningful interaction and exchange between people (often of different social, cultural, political, religious or professional groups) who come together through various kinds of conversations or activities with a view to increased understanding. The editors welcome vigorous discussion of this provisional description, of dialogue's effectiveness as a means of increasing understanding, and of other fundamental questions.

The journal brings together a body of original scholarship on the theory and practice of dialogue that can be critically appraised and discussed. It publishes conceptual, research, and/or case-based works on both theory and practice, and papers that discuss wider social, cultural or political issues as these relate to the evaluation of dialogue. In this way, the Journal aims to contribute towards establishing 'dialogue studies' as a distinct academic field (or perhaps even emerging discipline).

The particular focus of this sixth issue is **'Translating Dialogue: Language, Identity and Difference'**. Questions explored including following:

- How do concepts of dialogue, language and identity interpenetrate?

- What influence do language, identity and difference have on dialogue – and vice versa?

- How is self and other identity constructed and/or obscured through dialogue?

- How is dialogue theory affected by and through theories of translation?

- Literal practices of translating and/or interpreting dialogue

- Socio-linguistic, cognitive and general language theory readings of dialogue

- On Universal grammars and the ethics of dialogue (Chomsky, Wittgenstein, Derrida, etc.)

- Contextualised accounts of dialogue as encounter

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