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Notes on Contributors

Alyssa Acierno is a graduate assistant in the Department of Romance Languages and Literatures at Hofstra University, United States of America.

Alex Botu is Lecturer and Strand Leader in Planning and Development Studies at the University of Goroka, Papua New Guinea.

Yogita Naruka is a research scholar and doctoral candidate at the School of Development Studies, Tata Institute of Social Sciences, Mumbai, India. Additionally, she holds an MA in Social Work from the Delhi School of Social Work, Delhi University and a BA in Elementary Education and Teaching from the Institute of Home Economics, Delhi University, India.

Gwendolyn Osterwald is a graduate assistant in the Department of Romance Languages and Literatures at Hofstra University, Hempstead, New York, United States of America. She researches in Spanish and Chinese literatures.

Er-Win Tan is a Senior Lecturer with the Department of International and Strategic Studies at the University of Malaya, Malaysia. His research interests include security dilemma theory, strategic culture, middle powers, security and diplomacy in the East Asian region, North Korean nuclear proliferation, and US-China relations.

Introduction

As I think about my work as the new editor of the *IAFOR Journal of Arts & Humanities*, the words “transition”, “transformation”, “metamorphosis” and “change” emerge to escort my speculation. This is not the result of some perceived need to redirect the aesthetic orientation or outlook of the journal: it is the current predicament of the sociocultural domain, beset by a political discourse that is being recast into new and troubling models, that bring these unbidden words to mind.

The arts and humanities have long endured in uneasy intimacy with the state in Western societies, and while very few humanists ever ambled authoritatively through the halls of power, the politicians who wielded that power took care to present themselves as sincere patrons and admirers of the arts and of humanistic pursuits. Such personal interest, I’ve always presumed, was the result of a political culture wherein the ascendancy and prerogatives inherent to power could be legitimised by association with the morality that is manifested through the arts and humanities, or conversely enfeebled by poor aesthetic and cultural judgment. In view of recent developments, particularly in the United States, we may be witnessing the demise of that political culture that discursively favored, encouraged and endorsed humanistic endeavors.

Conventional frames of reference for that relationship between the humanities and the state may shortly prove anachronous. There seem to be strong populist initiatives, particularly in Western countries, to overhaul the institutions of the state in such a fashion as to transform significantly the *meaning* of power. Populist discourse, loosely centering on the “demands” of the indigenous little guy, the “forgotten” blue-collar worker, will likely create a dynamic where support for the arts and humanities will cease to be a factor in the legitimisation of authority or, in a worst-case-scenario, will be at odds with it. Consequently, and given the present circumstances, humanism and art are in danger of being vastly outdistanced or even displaced by philistine entertainment in the state’s calculation of political worth and import.

The articles included in the present issue of the *IAFOR Journal of Arts & Humanities* reflect these anxieties. The mix of seasoned professors and young researchers that produced them delves into the likely repercussions of the Trump administration’s policies with regard to Asia, with municipal restructuring policies in India that have had adverse outcomes for urban populations, with the censure and misunderstanding of non-traditional sexual identities and with the societal changes brought about by rigorously mercantilist mindsets, among other topics. It is hoped that the far-reaching vistas offered herein will provide the reader with ample food for thought in a world that threatens to regress to the simple market-state binomial model.

Dr Alfonso J. García Osuna
Editor

In Between Angry Rivals: 2017 Prospects for Middle Powers Amidst US-China Relations

Er-Win Tan
University of Malaya, Malaysia

Abstract

Donald Trump's electoral victory was an unexpected outcome in the 2016 US Presidential Election, and one that now places many members of the international community in a state of uncertainty over the future of US foreign and security policy. Nowhere is this more apparent than in the context of the Asia Pacific region, which now faces the prospect of an increasingly assertive, nationalistic China. Given Trump's repeated statements indicating his willingness to confront China over issues such as unfair trading practices and the status of Taiwan, there are growing regional concerns that US-China relations under the Trump Administration will be characterized by tension and hostility. Such circumstances place middle powers in the Asia Pacific region in a particularly difficult quandary, given their preference for maintaining good relations with both superpowers whilst simultaneously avoiding conflict in the region and safeguarding their national security. The archetype middle powers in the Asia Pacific facing this conundrum are the Republic of Korea (ROK) and Singapore, and this study will examine the policy options that both countries, as middle powers in the Asia Pacific region, may attempt to exercise in seeking to balance their relations within the context of US-China superpower rivalry.

Keywords: Trump Administration, Sino-American relations, Republic of Korea, Singapore

Introduction

With the election of Donald J. Trump as the 45th President of the United States on the Republican Party ticket, the year 2017 is set to be characterized by uncertainty over the prospective direction of US foreign and security policy. Trump's upset electoral victory based on a populist platform has brought with it pressing questions as to the extent to which his campaign rhetoric accurately reflects his worldview. Whilst it is necessary to avoid superfluous extrapolation, some notion of Trump's prospective foreign policy may be gleaned from a review of the domestic constituents that brought Trump to power as well as his ongoing selection of likely cabinet officials. Based on these developments, it is probable that the new White House will be one characterized by a high level of unilateralism, particularly insofar as US security and diplomatic interests are concerned; a certain level of trade protectionism against China is also likely.

This analysis will be outlined in the following four sections. First, it will be necessary to consider the domestic factors that fueled Trump's electoral triumph, both during the Republican primaries as well as in the general election. By surveying the populist, anti-establishment forces that Trump had tapped into during his election campaign, it may be possible to envision the likely directions that we may expect from the White House from January 2017 onwards. At the same time, however, given the extent of the debates within the Republican Party concerning the policy priorities of the post-Obama White House, it will be necessary to consider the best as well as worst case scenarios for the East Asian region in the era of the Trump Administration. This will be followed by a second section that examines the prospective implications of a Trump administration for Sino-US relations. In so discussing the overall likely trajectory of US-China relations in the Trump White House, this author aims to set the stage for examining the challenges that will likely be faced by middle powers in the Asia Pacific region.¹ The third section of this article proceeds to examine the best and worst case scenarios that may characterize Sino-US relations under the Trump Administration. In light of this discussion of the likely direction of Trump's foreign and security policies, this paper will conclude by considering the geostrategic implications for South Korea and Singapore as middle powers in the East Asian region.

Understanding the Rise of Trump

By most accounts, Trump's electoral victory has been a shocking development. At no point in his life had Trump ever sought political office, military service, or even a career in academia or law – these occupational fields being the most common backgrounds of most previous US presidents. In addition, Trump's track record of sexist, bigoted and xenophobic statements would have been deeply disqualifying for a White House run in past presidential elections. Whilst much has been made of Hillary Clinton's supposed untrustworthiness, such a reputation for dishonesty pales in comparison to Trump's. Yet, although most national polls favoured Clinton's prospects for the White House, the election's disquieting outcome resulted

¹ Due to constraints of space, it will not be possible to examine the foreign and security policies of every middle power in the Asia Pacific region. Rather, this author will focus on the middle rank powers that face the difficulty of maintaining close security and economic relations with the United States, whilst simultaneously balancing between commercial relations with China without being entrapped by China's increasingly assertive foreign policy posture in the East and South China Seas. In this regard, the Republic of Korea and Singapore form the most fruitful studies. Both countries are located in the Pacific rim and thus have concerns over China's growing assertiveness; both maintain high levels of security cooperation with the US to hedge against the possibility of an aggressive China, and yet (unlike Japan) have expressed reservations about the possibility of alliance entanglement in the event of a Sino-US clash of arms.

from the Electoral College system's weighted structure. The latter gave increased influence to voters in rural states and the so-called 'Rust Belt' region (states with manufacturing sectors made redundant by the onset of economic globalization). Thus, although Clinton won the popular vote due to her being favoured by younger, educated urban elites in the east and west coasts of the nation, Trump won by 304 electoral votes to Clinton's 227. In the period following Trump's electoral win, analysts and commentators have identified two broadly overlapping, general factors that have led to this outcome. Both factors originate in rapid globalization and the extent to which it has impacted on world populations, and they are 1) the economic aspect of globalization, and 2) the socio-demographic impact on the cultural identity of working class White Americans in the Rust Belt.

Grassroots Opposition to Globalization

The twin trends of the ongoing Information Revolution and globalization have resulted in the fundamental, continuing transformation of the social and economic structure of the developed world. Whilst the emergence of a highly interconnected global economy has facilitated greater movement of commerce and people, the effects of globalization have also outpaced the ability of older, unskilled American workers to maintain job security. Trump's electoral victory was enabled by large sections of working class Americans from 'Rust Belt' states such as Pennsylvania and Michigan. Such communities were courted by Trump's claims that the North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA) had contributed to the closure of smokestack industries. The Trump campaign was able to exploit such sentiment by portraying Hillary Clinton as a symbol of an out-of-touch establishment dominated by Wall Street billionaires and politicians with little concern for the woes of working-class Americans. More recently, in line with his administration's 'Pivot to Asia', outgoing President Barack Obama had previously announced his intention for the US to enter into the Trans Pacific Partnership (TPP). Such a move would have facilitated a significantly increased volume of free trade within the Pacific Rim, whilst enabling the US to dominate and set the rules of regional commerce in the Asia Pacific region (Sen, 2016).

The expansion of free trade agreements in the globalized world is based on sound logic from the perspective of economists as well as diplomatic internationalists (both in the US and among US allies), people committed to ensuring Washington's continued global role in world affairs in view of China's growing assertiveness. Similarly, the Obama Administration's commitment to developing renewable energy had the potential to highlight the US role as a world leader in economic innovation. Yet, from the perspective of working class communities long dependent on smokestack industries, the onset of globalization presents an existential challenge to an existing way of life, a challenge that such communities are ill-prepared to handle. Fanciful language concerning environment-friendly policies and free trade are of little comfort when unskilled workers face the prospect of job redundancy. It is thus hardly surprising that communities that had previously been Democratic strongholds voted for Trump as a rejection of the job insecurity that Clinton's policies were believed to represent (Chen, 2016).

Ethnic Identity Politics

Globalization has also resulted in an increased flow of human beings across borders, and this, too, has given sections of American society – again, concentrated in less-educated, working class communities in the 'Rust Belt' and mid-West – the impression that an existing way of life is facing an existential threat. Such communities are largely dominated by Caucasian

populations with little past history of interaction with communities from different cultural, ethnic and religious backgrounds.

Whilst cultural, ethnic and religious homogeneity has insulated such communities in the past, they now face increasing challenges due to a culture shock resulting from the increased flow of peoples across borders. This has been further exacerbated by the vastly increased, uninterrupted availability of information on the internet, one which Trump was able to exploit by presenting a distorted image of the demographic future facing the United States. Particularly salient has been the extent to which the global news cycle of the past year and a half has been dominated by increasingly high-profile lone wolf terrorist actions instigated by the Islamic State in Iraq and Syria (ISIS). This has convinced more than a few segments of American society that the country faces an existential security threat posed by the increased movement of people that the process of globalization has fostered. The result is that many such communities fear that the existing socio-demographic order they have been used to is now threatened by a more multi-cultural, ethnically and religiously pluralistic society.

Here again, the extent to which the Trump campaign has been able to peddle falsehoods and conspiracy theories is epitomized by the electoral divide between the Democratic and Republican camps. The urban strongholds of the West and East coasts, dominated by well-educated liberals, saw through the falsehoods peddled by the Trump campaign, whereas such falsehoods were taken as gospel in the rural Midwest and Rust Belt states. Such a phenomenon is all the more apparent given that not one major newspaper endorsed the Trump campaign – a situation which would have doomed most Presidential candidates in past election cycles. Whilst the mainstream media's repeated condemnations of Trump doubtless fed the numerous polls that predicted a Clinton win, it is apparent that a significant segment of the working-class population that voted for Trump chose to do so based on their reading of dubious news sources and conspiracy theories espoused by such controversial entities as the far-right Breitbart News.

At present, it may be possible to break down Trump's prospective cabinet into four distinct groups based on their ideological underpinnings, which this author has labelled as:

- i) 'Heartlanders', based on their ability to connect (politically, as well as in jobs creation) with the domestic constituents behind Trump's victory. This group includes Trump himself, and is further reflected in the nomination of Breitbart CEO Stephen Bannon as Trump's White House Counselor and Myron Ebell as Administrator of the Environmental Protection Agency. Such a cabinet composition is largely concerned with connecting with a conservative domestic base, whilst having little long-term strategic vision for the increasingly urbanized, multi-cultural demographic makeup of the United States. Taken to an extreme, it is possible that such perspectives may advocate a return to the kind of isolationism adopted by the US during the 1920s and 1930s.
- ii) 'Security hawks', based on their militaristic perspective on national security. This group includes the nomination of General Michael Flynn as National Security Advisor (NSA), and General James Mattis as Secretary of Defense.
- iii) 'Trade Protectionists', based on a willingness to take a more assertive stance against unfair Chinese trade practices such as currency manipulation. This group includes the nomination of Peter Navarro to lead the newly created White House National Trade Council (BBC, 2016).

- iv) ‘Bridge-builders’, based on their position of political moderation and willingness to mend fences, both within Washington and with the international community. This group includes the nomination of Reince Priebus as White House Chief of Staff and Nikki Haley as Ambassador to the United Nations.

While it remains premature definitively to identify the policy directions that Trump’s White House will take, it may be possible to identify a number of cornerstone assumptions that would likely steer the Administration’s policies along definable trajectories:

Assumption 1: Trump’s Presumed Military Priorities

Based on a track record of aggressive statements targeted at ISIS and the appointment of the hawkish Flynn, it is likely that Trump will escalate US military involvement in the Middle East.

Assumption 2: Trump and US Alliance Relations

During the campaign trail, Trump made numerous statements accusing US allies in Asia and Europe of free-riding on the US security commitment. Particular ire was directed at Japan and South Korea over their supposed undercutting of US jobs through lower labor costs that, in Trump’s words, had come at the expense of US workers.

Assumption 3: Trump as a Foreign Policy Novice

During the election campaign itself, Trump’s statements pointed to a startling lack of understanding of world affairs, as reflected in his confusing September 2016 media statement supporting nuclear proliferation among US allies as a means of reducing the global US security burden (Windrem and Arkin, 2016). In the aftermath of the 2016 election, Trump has gone on to further demonstrate his foreign policy inexperience, speaking in gushing terms of congratulatory phone calls from the leaders of Pakistan and Taiwan. Such an action was particularly reckless, given both countries’ strained relations with emerging superpowers, India and China, respectively (Landler, 2016). It is apparent that Trump has no understanding of the fact that the direction of White House foreign policy has a significant impact on how US rivals as well as allies (along with middle ranking powers in the world) view their own relations with Washington.

Likely Developments in Sino-US Relations

The period following Trump’s electoral victory does not bode well for Sino-US relations. On 2 December 2016, Trump accepted a congratulatory phone call from President Tsai Ing-Wen of Taiwan, thus upending the longstanding ‘One China’ policy that has formed the bedrock of Sino-US relations since the normalization of Washington-Beijing ties in 1979. China has long regarded Taiwan as a breakaway province, and regards any challenge to its territorial integrity as anathema to Chinese interests; it should be remembered that China undertook large-scale military amphibious military exercises in the Taiwan Strait in 1995–96 as a signal of Beijing’s willingness to launch an invasion to prevent the island’s independence (Bader, 2016).

While the media initially cast Trump’s acceptance of Tsai’s call as the action of a political novice, further news suggests that Trump’s action was deliberate and had been thought out in advance; it has been reported that 1996 Republican Presidential candidate Bob Dole (a Trump supporter) had been involved in lobbying the Trump campaign to strengthen US ties with Taiwan (Davis and Lipton, 2016). In light of Trump’s concurrent bones of contention

with the People's Republic of China (PRC) over accusations of Chinese currency manipulation and unfair trade protectionism at the expense of American workers, it is possible that Trump intends to use Taiwan's status as a bargaining chip against Beijing. Such a backdrop of Sino-US tensions explains China's seizure of a US Navy surveillance drone in the South China Sea on 15 December; a clear signal of Beijing's displeasure with Trump's apparent willingness to intrude on China's core interests.

This is not to say that Sino-US relations are on an unavoidable trajectory for conflict. While the PRC leadership has made clear its willingness to adopt a more assertive foreign policy posture in the western Pacific commensurate with its self-identification as an emerging superpower, Beijing is doubtless cognizant of the real damage to Chinese interests that will result from a clash of arms with the US. Aware of the danger of a nuclear exchange, China is not likely to seek a direct confrontation with the US, but rather undertake coercive actions against the littoral states of the South China Sea. Such actions will presumably center on a continuing pattern of land reclamation in disputed maritime features so as to present regional states with the *fait accompli* of Chinese sovereignty.

Best and Worst Case Scenarios for International Relations in East Asia

Set against this backdrop of growing Sino-US geostrategic rivalry, what scenarios might middle powers in the Asia Pacific region expect? Without the benefit of hindsight, the extent of the rhetorical flip-flopping that has characterized Trump's policy statements on the campaign trail leads to an entire range of possible policy platforms that may reflect his administration's policies. Rather than offer a singular interpretation of the likely foreign policy that will characterize the Trump Administration, the author instead proposes to consider the best and worst case scenarios that may characterize Sino-US relations in the era of the Trump Administration.

Best Case Scenario

While much has been said of the Trump's unpredictability, based on his many inconsistencies during the 2016 election campaign, it is possible that, with input from skilled policy advisors and technocrats, the Trump White House may shift towards a more pragmatic foreign and security policy in the Asia Pacific region. Set against the rise of China as an emerging superpower, this would likely take the form of a continuation, however adapted, of the Obama-initiated 'Pivot to Asia', with a continued emphasis on ensuring US primacy in the Western Pacific. The Obama Administration had supported the TPP as a means of ensuring US diplomatic dominance and leadership in the Asia Pacific region, and as effective counterweight against China's rising power. While Trump has denounced the TPP as a threat to the job security of Americans, he is likely to endorse bilateral Free Trade Agreements that grant favourable terms to the US export market. Furthermore, recognizing the importance of regional alliances in the Asia Pacific, the best-case scenario envisages continued affirmation of US cooperative security arrangements with Australia, Japan, the Republic of Korea (ROK), as well as continued security cooperation with Singapore.² Given the likely strains on the US military arising from its concurrent operations in the Middle East and a tight defence

² Japan, the ROK and Australia are longstanding US allies. Although Thailand and the Philippines are also treaty allies with the US, the current state of uncertainty in both countries complicates attempts to provide a clear overview of their relations with the US for the foreseeable future. Although Singapore is not formally an ally of the United States, the city-state undertakes a high level of security cooperation with the US, and as such can upgrade its relations with Washington to an alliance if it so chooses.

budget, however, it is likely that Trump will, like the Nixon Doctrine of 1969, call on regional US allies to take on a higher share of the burden for their own defence.

Worst Case Scenario

At the same time, a ‘worst case scenario’ can also be foreseen for the Trump Administration. If Trump’s campaign speeches are to be taken at face value, it is possible that his administration’s escalation in military operations against ISIS may entail a shift in US attention from East Asia to the Middle East at a time of regional unease over China’s geostrategic ambitions. Such an outcome would also be consistent with Trump’s controversial statements calling for the downgrading of US security commitments to regional allies such as the ROK and Japan. More ominously, Trump had indicated that the aforementioned US client-states should develop independent nuclear arsenals, rather than continue to free-ride on the US security commitment (Gerzhoy and Miller, 2016). Such a situation may have the effect of dividing the Asian Pacific into regional spheres of influence, leaving a power vacuum in Southeast as well as in Northeast Asia; this could present Beijing with a geostrategic opportunity to position itself as the preeminent power in the Asia Pacific region.

Implications for Middle Powers in East Asia

Faced with such geostrategic challenges, it will be necessary for middle powers in the Asia Pacific region to maintain a nuanced balance between the application of hard power and soft power axioms. The notion that power has hard as well as soft forms was first explored by Joseph Nye, who defined hard power as the ability of states to utilize such material indices of power such as military strength and economic clout in order to achieve national objectives on the world stage. This stands in contrast with the notion of soft power, which Nye defined as the ability of states to achieve a disproportionate level of influence through skilled diplomacy and the capacity to shape the choices of other states; they effectively project themselves as regional leaders by establishing paradigms for norms of conduct in international relations. This distinction is important given that, whilst hard power remains the domain of the superpowers in international relations, soft power is an instrument of national strength that can also be utilized by middle ranking powers in international relations. Amidst the prospect of uncertainty over the directions of US-China relations under the incoming Trump White House, it may be argued that the present moment is an opportunity for middle powers in the Asia Pacific to utilize a combination of hard as well as soft power in promoting regional stability as a hedge against superpower rivalry.

The Republic of Korea

With the success of the ROK’s economy, its democratic transition from military rule in 1987 and high profile symbolic successes such as its hosting of the 1988 Summer Olympics, the ROK has come to recognize its status as a middle power in the Asia Pacific region. At the same time, however, the ROK’s efforts to promote itself as a middle power have been constrained by its dependence on the US security alliance in countering the North Korean threat, as well as Seoul’s recognition that Chinese goodwill is necessary if there is to be any unification with North Korea. Since taking office, ROK President Park Geun Hye has initiated and promoted the Northeast Asia Peace and Cooperation Initiative (NAPCI). Park’s inspiration was Finland’s promotion of the Helsinki Accords in seeking to prevent the US-Soviet Cold War from escalating. More recently, however, the ROK angered China by agreeing to the US deployment of the Terminal High Altitude Area Defense (THAAD)

system to the Korean Peninsula in response to North Korea's pattern of missile and nuclear tests. Although the ROK justified the THAAD deployment as a defensive measure against North Korea, Beijing is aware that THAAD assets based in the ROK can also be used to protect key military bases in Northeast Asia that the US would utilize in order to deploy air and naval reinforcements to the western Pacific in the event of a crisis in the Taiwan Strait.

Set against this context, Trump's electoral victory is a matter of concern for the ROK's ambitions as a middle power. At the time of writing, President Park Geun Hye has been impeached, following revelations that she had granted a shaman and confidante, Choi Soon-Sil, unprecedented access to state secrets, as well as influencing the prestigious Ewha Women's University into accepting Choi's daughter's enrollment, despite lacking the necessary academic qualifications. Such developments pose a worrying scenario for the ROK's middle power aspirations. Apart from the damage to the reputation and credibility of the ROK Government, Park's successor will likely face a post-Obama White House that calls on US allies to shoulder more of their own defence burden. Although the ROK fields a considerable military force, it is still dependent on the US for satellite-based intelligence gathering as well as for acquiring conventional armaments. Given Trump's repeated accusations of Japan and ROK as free-riding on the US security commitments whilst allegedly undercutting US manufacturers in the global export market, the ROK greatly fears the possibility of a Trump White House that downgrades the US security commitment. Moreover, whilst the ROK is, at present, reluctant to develop an independent nuclear arsenal to defend itself against North Korea for fear of sparking off a regional nuclear arms race, the prospect of US alliance abandonment is almost certain to shift public as well as official sentiment in favour of a South Korean nuclear weapons program – it should be noted that, during the 1970s, ROK President Park Chung Hee responded to the US downsizing of its military presence in Korea by seeking to pursue an independent nuclear weapons program.

Singapore

Singapore's vision of itself as a middle power has been marked by efforts to strike a balance between the scenario of being entangled in unnecessary confrontation with China on the one hand, and of a return to US isolationism on the other. Particularly during the Cold War and into the 1990s, Singapore had promoted itself as a facilitator of strategic dialogue between the US and China. In coping with these challenges, Singapore had focused on underscoring the mutual interests that both the US and China have in maintaining peace and security in the Asia Pacific region. This involved the city-state's promotion of itself as a neutral diplomatic hub of value to both the US and China. Moreover, Singapore has led the way in promoting diplomatic and security relations between ASEAN members and other key states in the Asia Pacific region through regional institutionalism, particularly through the Singaporean Government's promotion of the Shangri-La Dialogue.

At the same time, however, and over the last two years, the Singapore Government miscalculated in assuming that Hillary Clinton would win the 2016 Presidential Election. Between 2015-16, and in response to China's growing assertiveness in the South China Sea, Singapore moved forward in increasing the extent of its security cooperation with the US. This began with the signing of an Enhanced Defense Cooperation in 2015 that, while envisaging collaboration on issues such as cybersecurity, also granted the US Navy increased access to Singaporean air and naval bases for the purpose of undertaking Freedom of Navigation Operations (FONOPs) in the South China Sea. This same period saw Singapore Prime Minister Lee Hsien Loong visit Washington DC (in August 2016) to drum up support

for the US ratification of the TPP.³ Such a course of action clearly reflected Singapore's departure from its previous posture of non-alignment between Washington and Beijing towards alignment with the US. Predictably, the visit enraged Chinese public opinion.

In charting a course of policy that was based on the assumption that the post-Obama White House would remain committed to an internationalist foreign policy, Singapore presupposed that the foreign policy of the post-Obama White House would be characterized by a continuation of Washington's established track record, that is to say, managing the balance between deterrence of China's provocative behavior on the one hand, and provoking Beijing into unnecessary conflict on the other. Instead, by dismissing the possibility of Trump's electoral win, Singapore has found itself boxed in by a particularly unfavorable scenario. In November 2016, angered by Singapore's alignment with the US, Beijing seized a number of Singapore Army Terrex Infantry Fighting Vehicles in Hong Kong that were *en route* to Taiwan for a military exercise in a clear signal of the PRC's displeasure (Hunt, 2016). At the same time, given Trump's confrontational style and apparent willingness to align the US closer to Taiwan, Singapore now has to contend with the possibility of being dragged into a Sino-US conflict not of its own choosing.

The Way Forward for East Asian Middle Powers

In coping with the challenge of navigating international relations amidst the growing US-China rivalry, it will be necessary for middle powers such as the ROK and Singapore to learn from the mistakes of the past two years and to return to a deft balance between diplomatic soft power and military hard power. Middle powers in the Asia Pacific region are in a position to leverage their reputation for credible diplomatic even-handedness so as to enable them to function as mediators between the great powers and thus avert the prospect of a great power clash of interests. Such an exercise of influence would be most effectively exercised through international institutions and regional forums such as NAPCI, the ASEAN Regional Forum, APEC and the Shangri La Dialogue. Through a consistent record of good governance, middle power activism and diplomatic trustworthiness, it may be possible for middle powers to promote shared norms of conduct. In this sense, it will be necessary for the post-Park Geun Hye Seoul to press ahead with the NAPCI in underlining the interests that both the US and China have in avoiding a conflict in the Asia Pacific region. In a similar light, Singapore faces an uphill task in mending its relations with the PRC. Given that such forums as the Shangri La Dialogue and the ASEAN Defence Ministers' Meeting have a deck of cards stacked against Chinese interests, such forums are unlikely to prove workable for the city-state to seek a rapprochement with Beijing. Rather, it will be necessary for Singapore to focus its diplomatic efforts on Chinese economic interests, particularly on the fact that the maritime lines of communication on which the PRC depends for its continued prosperity run through Singapore's territorial waters; such an approach calls attention to the shared interests of all parties in avoiding conflict.

Nevertheless, it will be necessary for the ROK and Singapore to combine this exercise in diplomatic soft power with concurrent efforts to increase security cooperation, not only with the US, but also with other middle powers. Such a posture would enable middle powers to strengthen their own defence posture while reducing their dependence on the US, lowering as well the likelihood of alliance entanglement in the event of a US-China clash of arms. Increased security cooperation between middle powers in the Asia Pacific may take the form

³ Singapore, along with Brunei, New Zealand and Chile, was one of the founding members of the trade pact.

of increasing aggregate military strength as well as of geostrategic networking to counter China's military preponderance. Although none of the middle powers in the Asia Pacific has the strength to face off against China directly, regional pooling of military and diplomatic resources would enable the middle powers of the Asia Pacific region to make clear to Beijing that the prospective costs to Chinese interests would be considerable should its rise as a superpower be marked by aggressive nationalism at the expense of its neighbours. Further afield, increased security cooperation may involve collaboration in the research, design and production of high-end weapons platforms such as submarines, stealth warships and fighter aircraft.

Conclusion

The increasing research and design costs of such weaponry – key weapons in a geostrategic arena that is set to see increasing Chinese assertiveness – have made it difficult for most middle powers to develop these military capabilities indigenously. It is possible for middle powers in the Asia Pacific region to take a page from European collaboration that enabled the success of the Eurofighter project. Through the sharing of research and design costs and investments, it may be possible for middle powers in the Asia Pacific similarly to achieve economies of scale, or even profit, whilst devising and generating such expensive weapons platforms as are necessary for national security. Herein, the successful forays of Japan, the Republic of Korea, Australia and Singapore in undertaking various indigenous weapons platforms may function as a starting point for successful collaboration and cooperation between middle powers in the Asia Pacific region. These various middle powers have common concerns in fearing a future scenario characterised by US recklessness or neo-isolationism taking place concurrently with the growth of China's geostrategic footprint in the East Asian region. In view of the circumstances, increased levels of security cooperation among middle powers in East Asia will offer a certain level of mutual security assurance; such safeguards are especially important in an era of growing regional uncertainty regarding the future direction of US-China relations.

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Corresponding author: Er-Win Tan

Email: erwintan@um.edu.my

From Quest to Brothel: The Demise of the Courtly Love Tradition in *La Celestina*

Alyssa Acierno
Hofstra University, United States of America

Abstract

Enduring an arduous quest is an important component of the knightly code of honor. In the courtly love tradition of the Middle Ages, embarking on this quest and prevailing over its daunting obstacles epitomized the essential requirements for courtly love; that is, in overcoming those obstacles, a knight gained the spiritual value and honor that made him worthy of love. Accordingly, the attainment of spiritual value and honor opened a critical door: it allowed the knight to win over his lady and thus fulfill his carnal desires. Lancelot, for example, the main character in Chrétien de Troyes's *The Knight of the Cart*, meets all the quintessential requirements implicit in the courtly love tradition when he embarks on his quest for Guinevere. I will argue in this paper that, by the late fifteenth century, Spanish writer Fernando de Rojas, in his seminal work *La Celestina* (1499), reclaims this tradition's generic and distinguishing principles (a tradition called *amor cortés* in Spanish) in order to set up a specific path of inference for the reader. His reader, clearly recognizing the courtly love scantlings, will assign specific meanings to the work that correspond to a set of possible, courtly-love inspired conclusions, to which he/she is being led. This design is evident from the first lines of the work: when Calisto sees Melibea in her garden and love enters his soul just from the sight of her, the structure of the language and the emotive meaning it creates for the reader is, unmistakably, that of courtly love. But the reasoning texture soon becomes more complex, as the semantic information provided by other characters (who are not courtly lovers and, interestingly, often whisper to themselves or to each other in asides) begins to undermine the reader's path of inference, forging an alternate dimension of meaning where the work's language becomes contested ground, the instrument of credible agents holding pragmatic systems of belief and opposing values. In other words, for the reader, the initial prescriptive dimension of unequivocal meaning anticipated by generic courtly love language and content is challenged and overwhelmed by a subversive pattern of reasoning, one based upon real-life needs, interests and the profit motive.

Keywords: courtly love, medieval Spain, quest narratives, Spanish literature, tragicomedy, *Celestina*

Introduction: The Heroic Quest

Courtly love reasoning, once exposed to real-life concerns, serves to create the comic, grotesque effect that characterizes Rojas's "tragicomedy." Lofty language, the elementary substance of courtly literature, becomes transubstantiated in the real-life environment that Rojas wants to create. And the essential element that makes this treatment of courtly love viable is the elimination – or is it a transformation – of the heroic quest. In a total inversion of courtly love values, Calisto, protagonist and "courtly lover", does not embark on a quest for his lover Melibea: he sends his servant on a debased quest to strike a deal with the old whore, brothel-owner and witch Celestina, who, for the right price, will embark on her own quest to try to convince young Melibea to sleep with Calisto. By discarding/transforming the quest that makes the knight's desires honourable, Rojas skillfully eliminates spiritual love from the picture and disengages the means by which the protagonist might achieve his objective honorably. The artificial world of courtly love created by bored aristocrats, with its spirituality, quests and heroic deeds, serves no purpose – Rojas seems to imply – other than as comic frame: his character might attempt to resemble a courtly lover, but in reality he needs to behave like a man of his times, engaged in the pressing business of attaining carnal love in a late-medieval, pre-capitalistic society.

The courtly love tradition that was entrenched in medieval literature was efficiently codified in Andreas Capellanus's *De Amore* (c. 1188). In Book II of his work, Capellanus, a priest, lists the rules of courtly love to be followed in literature and social intercourse (4). It can be surmised that the rules that he set down do not necessarily reflect his personal beliefs on love, but rather the ideals of the people for whom he wrote, as he was probably commissioned to write this work (Lacey, 16). Yet, whatever his convictions on the subject, the rules of courtly love and the knightly code that appear in this work served as the foundation for many medieval courtly love stories, such as Chrétien de Troyes's abovementioned *The Knight of the Cart*. One such rule, specifically rule fourteen, is especially relevant to this paper because it speaks to the adventurous quest that the quintessential courtly lover or knight must endure for the sake of his beloved. It states: "An easy attainment makes love contemptible; a difficult one makes it more dear" (5). This rule clearly implies that the lover must embark on a difficult journey to win the love of his beloved; otherwise the love is worthless. The purpose of the quest in the courtly love tradition is seen as a vital component of making, not only the knight, but the love itself valuable and honourable. Adding this level of difficulty to the attainment of love presupposes that the courtly lover, through his sacrifice, becomes a more well-rounded person, worthy to love, worthy of love. It is also clear that the quest is seen as the means by which the love itself is infused with substance and value. Thus, during the Middle Ages it was crucial to include some sort of quest in this type literature, as it was an element that placed the requisite spiritual value on the knight and on the portrayed love affair. By putting this rule in full view one can best understand the conventional ubiquity of quests in courtly love literature, voyages for love that became a requisite for practicing ideal love. Moreover, the absence of the quest in late fifteenth century literature that deals with love, as exemplified in *La Celestina*, gives insight into the new pragmatism of a changing society, a mercantilist world of negotiators that emphasizes material benefits over spiritual value.

A prime example of the courtly quest is the one endured by Lancelot, a knight in the court of King Arthur, in Chrétien de Troyes's *The Knight of the Cart*. Likely commissioned by Marie de Champagne (Lacey, 137) and composed in the twelfth century, this story describes the various adventures that Lancelot must undergo in order to win the love of Queen Guinevere. The first trial that Lancelot must overcome regards the cart that is used to transport criminals.

By embarking on this cart, the knight gives up his honor, pride and even his identity; these were great sacrifices, personal hardships he had to bear in order to continue his journey to his lady. The obstacles continue when Méléagant abducts the queen and Lancelot must cross the Sword Bridge, a physically demanding and dangerous task that leaves him badly wounded, in order to save her (68–70). Finally Lancelot is captured and imprisoned by Méléagant and must fight in a tournament against him in order to win his freedom and that of his lover (121). All of his labors are immensely difficult, and when he overcomes one obstacle, he is faced with yet another.

Lancelot's quest clearly bespeaks the difficulties described by Capellanus in his fourteenth rule of courtly love. In his obstacles, this knight sacrificed his pride, freedom, wellbeing and identity all for the sake of his beloved. This quest forces him to learn and practice endurance, perseverance, physical strength and restraint. Furthermore, it stresses that carnal love cannot be attained without this spiritual journey; that is, a knight must prove his spiritual strength and honor before he can earn the physical pleasures that his lady can provide. In accordance with Capellanus's fourteenth rule of courtly love, Lancelot gives worth to his love by enduring this quest; the difficulties that he had to face made his love honourable.

The Debased Quest

The quest and the idea of this spiritual journey are thoroughly debased in *La Celestina*. Calisto, the supposed "Lancelot" of this tale, does not embark on any sort of quest at all but sends cronies in his stead. In the beginning of this story, Calisto seems to be a quintessential courtly lover when he appears in Melibea's garden, uses courtly love rhetoric to try and win over his chosen love, and subsequently locks himself in his room in utter despair over the initial rejection by his "lady" Melibea. In his overblown rhetoric we can easily spot the distinctive aspects of courtly love pronouncements: exalting the beloved as an individual who is vastly superior to the lover, bemoaning unfulfilled desire, presenting love as an illness and using neo-Platonic language to express it all. Such conventions were well-known and still very popular in Spain in Rojas's time and beyond, as Diego de San Pedro's *Cárcel de Amor* (1492) and *La Historia del Abencerraje y de la Hermosa Jarifa* (1561) clearly illustrate. In *La Celestina*, however, the reader soon realizes that Calisto is not a knight, but rather a parody, a counterfeit courtly lover that is incapable of undertaking the expected quest. He is essentially unable to perform that quest due to the environment in which he is placed by the author: it is a literary environment that necessitates credible characters, closer to the realities of the new, mercantile world. While Calisto expresses himself like a courtly lover, he does not *think* like one, but like an unscrupulous merchant that will stop at nothing to procure the goods he desires. His courtly love discourse, then, has been a misleading clue that has sent the reader on a fool's errand. Such discourse, then, is soon shown to be the consequence of an excessive cupidity that has led to the young man's derangement. Therefore, and unlike the knights of the courtly love tradition, Calisto does not win his lady through pure good deeds and an adventurous, honourable quest; rather, he goes to the lowliest brothel owner and self-proclaimed love doctor, Celestina, to win Melibea's love. In the mercantile, pre-capitalistic environment that pervades Rojas's text, this courtly love character is anachronous and must pay for his love in gold, as every character in the story knows. So payment comes in the form of a gold chain that Calisto gives Celestina for her service (the debased "quest"); she then performs the only quest possible in the realistic mercantile environment of the times. In the social climate that pervades the work, a knightly quest is disallowed and "courtly lover" Calisto is shown to be a sham, a blood and bones human being pretending to be a literary character.

So in striking this deal with Celestina, there is no journey for the protagonist, there are no carts, no bridges, and no jousts to endure. He essentially locks himself up in his room, professing unyielding faith in his new god, Melibea, a faith that will save him without the need for great deeds or good works. Such thinking seems like a depraved exercise in solifidianism.¹ Thus it is that the traditional quest of the courtly love tradition is transubstantiated into the jaunt of a hired old prostitute to the beloved's house. In the social climate in which the author has placed his story, love cannot provide the incentive for an arduous and spiritually rewarding journey; in such a setting as this, love is commercialized and becomes a commodity. The significance of the altered quest lies in Rojas's elimination of a moral dimension in the social geometry of this pre-capitalist, mercantilist society. In the self-regarding materialism of a protagonist who seeks immediate satisfaction, carnal love is much easier to attain and more immediately available if thought of as a commercial transaction; it is no longer something that must be earned through the protracted exertions that attend honor and spirituality.

Because by Rojas's time the courtly quest was still somewhat popular in its conventional form (as demonstrated by the two texts referenced above), his character Calisto is able to create a set of expectations that point precisely to that quest when, at the very beginning of the story, he laments to his servant Sempronio that Melibea is inaccessible and places her on a pedestal, comparing her to God. Such inaccessibility has been the motivation for courtly knights to undertake the arduous quest so as to gain access to the lady's favour. So, is this the beginning of Calisto's quest? It is not, for such quests would be considered nothing short of ridiculous given the spirit of mercantilism that underpins Rojas's conception of his story. Consequently, as Calisto broods in his rooms, spewing a synthetic collection of bombastic courtly love rhetoric, his servant makes a comment that would never be made in a traditional courtly love setting: Instead of relating to and encouraging his "spiritual" love for Melibea, Sempronio remarks that "He is mad and a heretic..." (Rojas, 4). It is clear that for the servant, Calisto's "spiritual" rantings are seen as pathetic, laughable and overly dramatic.

Parodying the Tradition

So the absence/deformation and parodying of the knightly quest allows Fernando de Rojas to accomplish his aesthetic objectives more effectively. At every point he is seen navigating the tradition of courtly love, which was extremely popular earlier in the Middle Ages and still well-known in his times, through new and unusual waters. First, Rojas makes Calisto a counterfeit courtly lover, and while he dies in the pursuit of his love, he in fact does so in the most banal manner possible by tripping and falling to his death. Moreover, by reviving the courtly love tradition in his golem Calisto, Rojas can more cogently portray his protagonist as unhinged, given that his thought process is in absolute conflict with the underpinning ethos of the work. Furthermore, with the debasement of the knightly quest the author can portray the final cause of the characters' actions as pure and simple desire, be it carnal or monetary, creating a stark contrast with the parodied spirituality of courtly love. In the end, materialistic Calisto fulfills his carnal desires without having to go through perilous obstacles that test his honor.

But as a consequence of the old prostitute Celestina's quest, all the main characters of the tragicomedy lay dead. In light of this, it might seem that Rojas wants to draw attention to the

¹ From the Latin *sōlus* (alone) and *fides* (faith), a theological doctrine, of Protestant origin, which affirms that faith alone insures salvation regardless of good works. It derives from Luther's translation of Rom. iii:28.

antithetic quality of the consequences: while in *La Celestina* death and mayhem ensue, in true courtly love narratives the knight usually “gets the girl” and love is triumphant. Should this be interpreted as Rojas’s endorsement of courtly love virtues? It is conceivable, but given that the author goes out of his way to point to the artificiality of courtly love, the courtly love world of Calisto’s psychological landscape is exposed as a dangerous daydream of escape from reality, that same reality where utilitarian concerns tend to quash such fantasies. A different mindset is emerging in Europe: within its neoteric structures, the lover must not try to earn the love and pleasure of his lady through flights of fancy when he can simply buy it. The mercantilism attached to love thoroughly removes the spiritual dimension from a text where it would have been superfluous; the spiritual love that made one honourable and made love valuable is fallacious and has no place in the new mindset. But when one weighs all of this, a caveat comes to mind: all the main characters lay dead in pools of blood and, as in Calisto’s case, with their brains strewn all over the paving stones. Such is the price to be paid for their cupidity. So is Rojas bemoaning the end of the type of society that endorsed courtly love as *model* of behaviour? Is he, consequently, denouncing the new mercantilist mindset?

Perhaps, but we must remember that he is using courtly love conventions for aesthetic purposes, so his attack on the materialistic mindset of his times does not necessarily mean that he yearns for the artificial world of knights errant. What may have been Rojas’s complaint is the loss of a generic model that had governed the psychological states through which people *assessed* their behaviour. As such, he was likely highlighting how society’s conventional *models* of behaviour have changed since the inception of the traditional courtly tales. When stories such as *The Knight of the Cart* were composed, people, particularly the entitled class, had more time to dream up ideal forms of behaviour. The courtly tradition and knightly code essentially stemmed from an elegant boredom that allowed time for more eccentric flights of fancy. Now, the incipient commercialism of Rojas’s society seems to have left little time and energy to maintain these courtly models of social intercourse. Additionally, social intercourse has become more commercialized, as lords have lost control of their vassals, the exchange of goods and services has become standard and monetary reward has replaced compelled loyalty; in the Middle Ages, honor may not have had a price tag, but in *La Celestina*’s social milieu everything had one, including honor and love. This seems to be the gist of Rojas’s message.

Conclusion

In the end, facts of life at the end of the fifteenth century demanded new ways of thinking about literature. While the old aristocracy was losing ground, a new mercantile class, at times with the king’s help, was steadily filling the economic, political and cultural vacuum left behind. And because the images, symbols and meanings present in courtly love narratives conveyed social models of behaviour they were increasingly seen as outdated; they became a tool to portray a lunatic’s extravagance in the new community imagined by Rojas. It is no coincidence that the author conceives Calisto as an aristocrat, one that has internalized the outdated fantastic musings of his class and, like Don Quixote, is acting according to their illusory prescriptions. As an implausible courtly lover injected into a text that conveys the essential prolepsis of that tradition, it could be said that Calisto follows courtly love codes, but in a practical manner more suited to the times in which the author has embedded him. To succeed, Calisto must adulterate courtly love at every step of the way. The debased quest, in the final analysis, is the most salient characteristic of Calisto’s efforts in this regard.

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Corresponding author: Alyssa Acierno

Email: aaaci13@gmail.com

Urban Aspirations: A Field View from the Margins of the City

Yogita Naruka

Tata Institute of Social Sciences, India

Abstract

Cities in India are transforming rapidly. While there is considerable variation in the level of transformation among the various cities, metropolises like Delhi, Mumbai and Chennai are witnessing the most significant changes as they navigate their way into the exacting networks of the global economy. These transformations are not apolitical in nature, but rather respond to societal imperatives that are compliant with the requirements of the middle class, the class that occupies dominant city spaces. Consequently, urban transformations embody the particular perspectives of the dominant class. The post-economic liberalisation period has seen significant shifts in the way Indian cities are planned and structured. There has been, for instance, a gradual increase in exclusionary city spaces and gated enclaves. Development plans justify these transformations by claiming that they comply broadly and comprehensively with people's aspirations and therefore reflect a homogenous and uncontested imagery of the city. But are these visions really homogenous? Do alternate city visions exist? Do urban transformations actually silence alternate visions and result in suppressed assumptions and a discordant urban culture? If so, what is the nature of this divisiveness? Is it restricted to physical segregation or is it expressed at subtler levels in the urban social fabric? This article is the synthesis of an ethnographic study, undertaken in the rapidly transforming metropolis of Delhi, India, that addresses these questions; it also aims to challenge development plans that project a homogeneous idea of the city that is questionable at best. Moreover, it explores alternate visions, that is to say, visions emanating from below, from the urban poor's desires regarding the spaces around them.

Keywords: urban renewal, urban culture, India

Introduction. Delhi: The Vicissitudes of Growth

With a population of more than 16 million (Chandramouli, 2011) Delhi, the capital of India, is the second most populous city in the country after Mumbai. The city holds a significant position not only from a demographic standpoint, but also because of its ever-increasing political and economic influence in the country. From the colonial period to the present day, Delhi has been a centre for political action, decision-making, and has played a paramount role on the social, political and cultural stages of national life. Beyond these characteristics, the city's identity is that of a multicultural and multilingual conglomerate. Evidently, the constant flow of population into the city is the reason for its diverse socio-cultural character. Delhi recorded a population increase of 23% due to migration between the years 2001 and 2011.¹ Kumar (2013) explains that Delhi's first Human Development Report indicated that Delhi, not Mumbai, is the most sought-after "city of dreams" for the common Indian. Nearly 40% of the population of Delhi is composed of migrants and, on average, 665 people migrate to the capital every day. To give an idea of the reasons why people migrate, the figures show that about 63% of incoming migrants from Bihar and 46% from Uttar Pradesh are characterised as "poor". Employment and livelihood opportunities, therefore, are the major reasons for the influx of people into Delhi.

A conundrum attends the integration of these new populations into the social fabric. On the one hand, they deliver most of the essential services in Delhi, while on the other their habitations are seen as a blot on the image of a "world-class" city. The urban restructuring and transformation practices that took place in Delhi, specifically post-1991,² charted the path towards the transformation of Delhi into a "world-class city". In line with regulatory prescriptions, urban renewal practices have endeavored to make city spaces impeccable, well-ordered and opulent. But a direct upshot of these practices has been the "invisibilisation" of the urban poor in the city spaces and their peripheralisation to marginal locations. To throw critical light on these practices, this article focuses on the ethnographic work done in one such settlement located on the peripheries of Delhi, the Bawana Resettlement Colony. This settlement came into existence in the year 2004, right after the demolition of one of Delhi's largest slum clusters, the Yamuna Pushta slums, situated on the banks of the river Yamuna.

Let us begin with inherently essential questions: What is the nature of the imaginative constructs and the aspirations of the people of the Bawana resettlement colony regarding the spaces around them? What do the urban poor envision for these spaces? What is the nature of this imagined space and what is its relation to the contemporary discourses of urban spatial transformations? To answer these questions, the following sections will delve briefly into the history of the emergence of the Bawana Resettlement Colony amidst the "world-class city" discourse. The aim here is to problematise the concept of communal "aspirations" and make the argument that, although aspirations are located in the everyday sphere of public imagination and may appear as a natural phenomenon, a specific research focus on communal aspirations as expressed by actual residents is requisite for understanding cities. Such a focus contests bureaucratic narratives and allows for elaboration on the expressed aspirations and imaginative longings of the people of Bawana regarding their private and public spaces.

¹ A city with room for migrants, if not a roof over their heads. (2015, February 3). Retrieved from <http://indianexpress.com/article/india/india-others/a-city-with-room-for-migrants-if-not-a-roof-over-their-heads/>

² In 1991, India adopted the New Economic Policy that resulted in the liberalisation of the economy and opened up avenues for more private and foreign investment. This was implemented by adopting structural adjustment programmes like decentralisation, devaluation and disinvestment.

Additionally, it supports analyses that relate and contrast their aspirations to the planning of the city of Delhi as exhibited in the master plans.

Bawana Resettlement Colony: An Aftermath of the World-Class Delhi Idea

Situated on the North-West corner of Delhi towards the Delhi-Haryana border, the Bawana resettlement colony is almost 30 kms. away from the Yamuna Pushta slums. Yamuna Pushta was a cluster of slums located in the eastern part of Delhi, near the banks of the river Yamuna, that housed almost 35,000 working class families and supported a population of 1,500,000. Almost 70% of these families were Muslim.³ The majority of the people residing in these slums was made up of construction workers, who had been brought to Delhi by labour contractors during the Asian Games in 1992 (Bhan & Menon-Sen, 2008). There was also a substantial population of wage labourers and informal workers like rag-pickers, rickshaw pullers, head-loaders and domestic workers, largely migrated from Bihar and Uttar Pradesh.

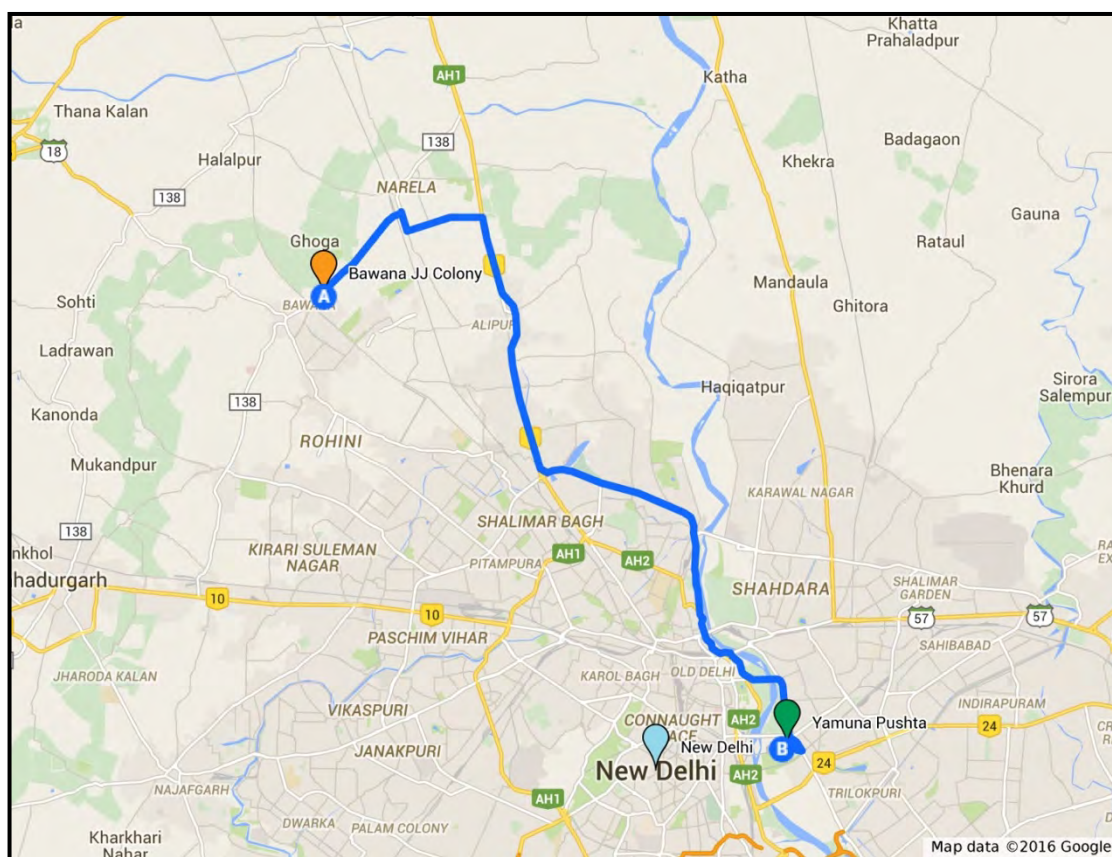


Figure 1: Bawana Resettlement Colony and Yamuna Pushta on the map of Delhi.
Source: Google Maps.

In the year 2004, these slums were demolished. Various reasons were cited for this demolition, such as the illegality of the settlements on the riverbed and the pollution of the river Yamuna. However, fact-finding report by Hazards Centre⁴ reported that only 0.08% of

³ A religious minority in India.

⁴ A non-profit organisation set up in 1997 for the purpose of providing professional services to community and labour organisations. The organisation aims to identify, understand and combat the hazards that beset communities and workers.

the waste going into the Yamuna originated in the slums of Pushta. The fact is that evictions were also motivated by petitions from middle-class groups and Resident Welfare Associations (RWAs) to clean up the Yamuna and its surroundings and make the squalid slums imperceptible from the city's neighbourhoods. In addition, the demolition of the Yamuna slum cluster was part of the grandiose plan to convert Delhi into a world-class city. Promoted aggressively by the then Union Minister of Culture and Tourism Jagmohan Malhotra, the demolitions paved the way for the construction of a riverside promenade along the river Yamuna; this promenade was intended to become a major attraction for the tourists that would flock to Delhi for the 2010 Commonwealth Games.

Delhi took its first major step towards becoming “world-class” in 2003. That year the city won the bid to host the Commonwealth Games, a spectacular international event that justified the remodeling and facelift of the city. Hosting the Games required that the city give an impression of elegant modernity, at the very least in appearance and in infrastructure. Dupont (2011) argues that, like the Olympics elsewhere, in Delhi the Commonwealth Games were used by the city's authorities as a “catalyst of urban change” and an “international showcase” to enhance the city's global recognition. The preparation for the games saw significant investments in the “world-class” idea, this in the way of expenditures to improve Delhi infrastructure, boost local jobs and income, develop a world class transportation framework for tourists, expand the Delhi airport through a joint venture with GMR-Fraport, a German firm, refurbish public facilities like bus stops, redesign dustbins, and re-style street lights and other street furniture. Beyond the efforts to upgrade infrastructure, there were numerous attempts to improve public order and enhance urban aesthetics for the games. However, the human cost of this aestheticisation was borne to a large extent by the poor. The Delhi government made all attempts to clear away the poor, as well as other “undesirables” (beggars, homeless, dogs, cows), from the streets of Delhi. As a function of the process of aestheticisation, slum demolitions caused dislocation and significantly altered Delhi's urban fabric.

Although the Commonwealth Games marked the beginning of concrete attempts to transform the city, the idea of the “world-class city” in India, specifically in Delhi, has its inception in the neo-liberal economic reforms and free-market policies that were introduced in 1991. Though the plans aiming to convert Delhi into a world-class city do not provide a concrete definition of what a world-class city actually is, general governance perspectives define such a city as one that attracts greater foreign investments by showing increased potential for economic development and improved standards of living. In the dominant public discourse, it implies a city that offers leisure living, high-end infrastructure, faster mobility, “clean” businesses, a spectacular consumptive landscape, and nodal positioning in the global flow of transnational capital and international tourism (Batra, 2010). Seen through the lens of that definition, slum demolitions and the subsequent resettlement of slum-dwellers at the city margins appropriately served the implicit, but very real goal of creating a spectacular city centre devoid of any traces of dirt or poverty.

Locating Aspirations in the Understanding of Cities

Cities are inherently aspirational in nature. I mean to say by this that cities are the product of the imagination, that of planners, politicians, architects and the dominant class. Using their basal platform, the media, these players perform a future image of the city on the public stage, an image already rendered in the planning documents that play a crucial role in transforming the city. But does this image reflect consensus? Is it uncontested and shared

equally by all of the city's inhabitants? Certainly not. Since the urban fabric is heterogeneous and composed of distinct social identities, it would be a fallacy to assume that city visions are homogenous. This leads us to posit the following three suggestive assumptions; they should provide a clear lens through which to locate dissimilar aspirations while at the same time understanding the dynamism of Indian city spaces.

Firstly, the literature on Indian urban studies has dealt with the question of the construction of the image by focusing largely on middle class perspectives. It has been noted that city planning and redevelopment practices are often aligned with the vision of the middle class. These middle-class-centered city visions have been vehemently censured for being exclusionary and for alienating the urban poor (Fernandes, 2006; Srivastava, 2015; Deshpande, 2003), and yet, in spite of the criticism, parallel visions for the city from the perspective of the urban poor have not been explored.

This might be explained by the fact that the urban poor have been viewed as passive elements, mere recipients of the transformation practices in the city. It is true that their struggles for survival, their difficulties in accessing basic services, their everyday negotiations, their contestations with the state and their claims for rights to the city have been at the centre stage of urban studies. Scholars and researchers (Baviskar, 2003; Bhan, 2009; Dupont, 2008; Ramanathan, 2005) have critically engaged with issues of slum demolitions and associated aspects of illegality, citizenship and the rights of the poor in the city. But, although this has significantly enriched our understanding of the urban issues in the context of the poor, the politics of urban development and the agency of the poor in asserting their rights, there has been limited focus on understanding how the urban poor in fact *envision* their city spaces. Hence, there is a significant need to bring the communal imagination and expectations of the urban poor for the future of their city and its neighbourhood spaces into the existing contours of urban studies.

Secondly, exploring how the poor imagine the future of the urban spaces they inhabit also means acknowledging their world views, their voice and hence their identity within the urban social fabric. Das (2007) argues that capturing their voice and their narratives is not about solving their problems but about acknowledging their voice and their needs. This is one of the ways to understand the most ordinary and everyday life practices of people. Bringing the voices of any particular group into the domains of research, academia, urban planning or policy is an acknowledgement of their identity. Taylor (1994) argues for the moral cognisance of persons who hold worldviews that are different from ours. In a multicultural society, hegemonic representations of the voices of people from different groups, ethnicities, class, caste and gender puts the subaltern at the lowest level and their perspectives are completely neglected. It is not just a matter of negligence and of silencing the voices from below, but is also an attempt to erase people's identities. Taylor argues that misrecognition is a form of oppression and, therefore, giving recognition is not just a courtesy that we owe to people, but also a human need.

Thirdly, the idea of acknowledging different groups' aspirations for the future of their city is closely related to the rights of people to their city. Lefebvre (1996) in his famous text "The Right to the City", argues in favour of diversity in the image of the city and considers these images utopianisms. He argues that there is no single imagination, not one utopia but several utopianisms:

Who is not a utopia today? Only narrowly specialised practitioners working to order without the slightest critical examination of stipulated norms and constraints, only these not very interesting people escape utopianism. All are utopians, including those futurists and planners who project Paris in the year 2,000 and those engineers who have made Brasilia! But there are several utopianisms. Would not the worst be that utopianism which does not utter its name, covers itself with positivism and on this basis imposes the harshest constraints and the most derisory absence of technicity?" (p. 151)

For Lefebvre, these utopias are prospective, they are alternatives to the present conditions. In other words, they are conceptual possibilities generative of models for future urban planning. The urban poor, on the surface, submit their utopias as alternatives to present-day city planning practices. But this is, as we shall see, a very complicated scenario.

Harvey's concept of the "right to the city", though primarily drawn from Lefebvre, is more contextualised to present conditions and is rooted in neo-liberal formulas. Harvey argues that excessive urbanisation and market-driven agendas have changed cities' physiognomy and have resulted in segregated spaces, gated communities and privatised public spaces that are now subjected to constant surveillance. These conditions have resulted in a threat to urban identity, citizenship and the sense of belonging in urban life. He argues that such processes have impacted the poor and underprivileged significantly as they have been removed for the sake of capitalist production and, moreover, have not been allowed to occupy their rightful place in the city. This can only be combated by democratic control over the process of urbanisation and use of surplus (Harvey, 2012). For Harvey, this "democratic control" lies at the heart of the Right to the City which, according to him, is both a working slogan as well as a political ideal devised to enable the dispossessed to take back control of the city. This ideal, therefore, calls for the purposeful participation of the inhabitants in the discourses of urban planning; the objective is to include them in the decisions that impact the future of the city. This kind of participation reflects the need to focus on the aspirations that people have for the spaces around them.

Aspirations for Housing Space

The aspirations of people from the Bawana resettlement colony are closely connected to the limitations and challenges that they face in accessing their present spaces. Voicing their aspirations also sheds light on the hegemony that the middle class has enjoyed in the visualising of neighbourhood and city spaces. This writer has noted that people's aspirations proceed with a crescent field of reference: progressing from the private spaces of their homes to the public spaces in the neighbourhood and then to larger city spaces.

A stroll through the narrow lanes of the Bawana resettlement colony provides an instructive glimpse into the limited housing space available to the residents. People use the same space for almost all household purposes, as there is no separation for cooking, washing, or living activities. Limited housing space has forced people to construct rooms by stacking them one over another, a situation that has resulted in a slew of weak housing structures.



Figure 2: Vertical rises in housing structures due to limited housing space. Source: Author.

At the time of the abovementioned resettlement, plots in two sizes, 12.5 square meters (sq. mts.) and 18 sq. mts. were allotted to families that could provide proof of residence. The families that were able to provide proof of residence in the slums of Yamuna Pushta before January 1990 (through documentary evidence) were allotted plots of 18 sq. mts. Those having proof of their residence after January 1990 but before 1998 were given plots of 12.5 sq. mts. Evidently, the allotted plots are too small for most of the families, as the average family size in Bawana exceeds five. The small size of the dwelling and the residents' discomfort with them emerged prominently when they were asked about their aspirations for housing space. In almost all interactions with the families, members asserted that the government should reconsider the size of plots allotted. The minimum size of the house to which people aspire in Bawana is between 35 sq. mts. to 45 sq. mts. An old couple living in Bawana with their family of four sons and one granddaughter expressed their concern over the small size of the plot and their expanding family, stating to this writer that:

It's just not enough. It is so small. What can you do with a 12 sq. mt. plot? This is the place to live, cook and do everything. You can't do any separation here. It's so small.... It is so difficult for all of us to stay here comfortably. I have four sons. To what extent will you keep building one floor over another?

To further aggravate matters, there has been a gradual decrease in the size of plots allotted to evictees during resettlement in Delhi, from 80 sq. mts. – as prescribed in the first Master Plan⁵ of Delhi in 1962 – to 12.5/18 sq. mts. at present. However, “a minimum size of resettlement of JJ plot is 25 sq. mts. which may be reduced to 18 sq. mts. *with 100% coverage* provided 7 sq. mts. per plot is clubbed with cluster open space” is prescribed in the

⁵ The Master Plan is a perspective document that envisions the development of a particular city for a period of the upcoming twenty years. Delhi is presently led by the third master plan, *Master Plan 2021*. It was prepared in the year 2007 aiming to achieve stated development goals by 2021. The First Master Plan of Delhi was prepared in 1962 with the target year of 1981; that is, it planned for the development of Delhi until the year 1981. This was followed by the Second Master Plan, which was prepared in 1987 and aimed for the development of Delhi until 2001.

Master Plan 2001 for Delhi. This was further revised with a Masterplan 2021 that recommends relocation on built structures (or flats/houses) of at least 25 sq. mts. in size (DDA, 2010). Nevertheless, in the Bawana resettlement colony, in spite of the fact that 100% coverage could not be achieved, the size of plots was 18 sq. mts. and 12.5 sq. mts. only.

Living on such a small piece of land has led to the substantial deterioration of the quality of life. A survey conducted by Bhan and Menon-Sen (2008) during the initial days of resettlement reported that 56% of households (1,451 families) lived in 12.5 sq. mt. plots while 44 % lived in 18 sq. mt. plots, i.e. 1,126 families. For an average household size of 5.35, this housing space implies that 5 people share a space of 10.12 feet, roughly the size of the kitchen in a middle class apartment and about one-third the size of an average-size plot in informal settlements like Yamuna Pushta (estimated to be about 33 sq. mts.). A constant desire for an increase in living space, therefore, appears significantly in the residents' narratives.

Aspirations for Neighbourhood Spaces

People's imaginaries are associated with the physical form, structure, and appearance of neighbourhood places as well as social values like safety and spaces free from discrimination and crime. People's dreams for public spaces and neighbourhood spaces include material as well as non-material elements. The material elements are related to the concrete appearance of spaces, the way they are maintained, the role of people as well as administrative bodies in maintaining these spaces, basic hygiene conditions, and the structures of these places. All of these elements influence people's access to public places.

The non-material elements of public spaces are more complex than their material counterparts. Non-materiality pertains to differential claims of people over the use of space. 'Who uses which space' is a pertinent question within the context of the use of public spaces. For instance, it is usually seen that women and girls desist using public spaces if there is the dominance of men or if women perceive a threat to their safety in these spaces. This results in a limited access by women to public spaces. Also, the instances of harassment, violence, and crime in public spaces determine people's accessibility to them. These non-material elements can be more significant to people than the physical availability and appearance of public spaces.

Regarding neighbourhood spaces, the first material element that appears in people's narratives is related to community infrastructure and basic services. Non-availability of cemented roads and streets make people question the administration for the work that has been done in the last ten years of resettlement. Apart from roads and streets, community toilet complexes (CTCs) are significant neighbourhood spaces. Due to limited housing space and the absence of toilets inside houses, these CTCs are an essential service resource for the community. They have not, however, been properly maintained, and this has resulted in issues related to sanitation and basic hygiene.

The lack of maintenance of these CTCs has a direct impact on the mobility of women and girls in the colony. The majority of dysfunctional CTCs have become waste dumping zones or dark corners used for drug abuse. This has serious repercussions on the safety of women and girls, and sexual harassment around the CTCs is a common occurrence. The exigency of open defecation further makes girls and women more vulnerable to sexual abuse. This restricts their mobility significantly in the public spaces.

The non-availability of services and the limitations related to basic community infrastructure give evidence of the consistent neglect and apathy shown for resettlement sites by municipal authorities. Unfortunately, this neglect is nothing new. There has been unvarying disregard for developing quality infrastructure in resettlement sites⁶. In a study conducted by Sheikh & Mandelkern (2014), government officials from the Delhi Development Authority (DDA),⁷ there is the expressed understanding that “in the planner’s vision, there has been neglect of economically weaker sections within planning”. The planning documents have been disparaged for providing a superficial analysis of the problems of the urban poor and resettlement site residents, as well as for being silent on the unavailability of basic services like water, sanitation, health and education facilities at resettlement sites. It has been noted, in studies like that of M.C. Saglio-Yatzmirsky (2014), that plan documents have failed to provide any comprehensive strategy for developing basic services at resettlement sites, and that “[t]he poorest families, who do not have the means necessary to adjust to these new constraints, often end up reselling – or, more precisely, giving up their right to a plot for immediate monetary gain” (p. 337).

The above discussion certainly indicates that physical community infrastructure is fundamental in the idiopathic image that people contrive for the places they wish to inhabit. Naturally, this image is intimately linked to the limitations that people face in everyday life.

In addition to basic community infrastructure, open spaces like parks, gardens and spaces for leisure and entertainment within the colony are some of the expressed desires that transcend the limits of fundamental necessities. While these spaces might not be essential for survival, they certainly have a role to play in improving the quality of life for colony residents. Interestingly, such spaces appear more strongly in the narratives of adolescent boys and girls. These spaces traditionally provide young adults with an avenue for exercising personal freedoms and a space for intimacy. Through such aspirations, they demand non-discriminatory spaces where they can interact freely with each other without being judged or labelled stereotypically. Both boys and girls face a restricted and conservative social environment where their intimate relations and communication are curbed. This influences their aspirations for spaces of leisure, recreation and entertainment. Such things might not appear to be basic or essential, but they have a real potential to enhance the quality of their lives by providing youngsters with a degree of freedom from preemptory environments.

Field narratives on people’s attitude regarding space reflect on the social character of space, relations that people have within the spaces around them and the way they relate to the spaces themselves. Lefebvre (1974) in *The Production of Space* argues that space is social, that is to say, it is socially produced and is rooted in the relations of production. According to him, social space is the outcome of a variegated set of circumstances and cannot be reduced to the category of an object. As such, space is consistently shaped by human activity. Massey (2009), drawing from Lefebvre, argued that space is a product of relations and is a complex of networks, links, exchanges and connections that springs from the intimate level of our daily lives. She considers spatial relations within the home as well as in the outdoors

⁶ Studies conducted in other resettlement sites in Delhi like *Bhalswa*, *Narela*, *Madanpur-Khadar* have shown similar findings.

⁷ The DDA is an institutionalised body formed under the Delhi Development Act, 1957. It is a powerful body which owns almost a quarter of Delhi’s land and is involved in almost all the activities related to land, housing and infrastructure in the city. The major functional areas of the DDA are planning, housing, land disposal, land management, horticulture, architecture, sports, landscape and urban heritage. Thus, it incorporates almost all of the aspects directly or indirectly related to the development and planning of urban areas.

environment as significant in the production of space. Space is produced by the establishment as well as by the refusal of relations. Social relations are central to space and determine the way individuals conceive space, so the dependency between social relations and the space they produce is reciprocal. While the nature of space decides the types of social relations that are developed, social relations, in turn, influence the production of space. Field narratives exemplify this relationship and demonstrate that the nature of neighbourhood and public spaces has a significant impact on the formation of people's social relationships.

People in the Bawana colony make an immediate comparison between the memories that they attach to their abodes before resettlement (the slums near the Yamuna) and their present resettlement site. The space of the Yamuna Pushta furthered the establishment of social relations through a safe, secure and familiar environment, a type of space that Bawana failed to provide. Everyday violence and criminality due to excessive alcoholism and drug abuse among men make the public spaces of the Bawana colony unsafe. The unsafe environment and the limited availability of collective spaces results in restricted social relations. The inhibition of social relations has alienated people from the public spaces and, consequently, has prevented any type of attachment to them. The narratives from Bawana, therefore, explain that space produces as well as is produced by social relations. And these social relations determine the way people associate with space.

Aspirations for City Spaces

For people, city spaces beyond their own habitation are impersonal and are viewed in light of the struggles that they have to face in the city. The aspirations for the city are not as precisely defined as they are for their spaces of habitation or for neighbourhood spaces. They assess the city spaces in connection with the spaces that they have inhabited.

The changes that have taken place around Yamuna Pushta after the demolition of their houses appear prominently in their narratives about the city. In interactions regarding the city, people constantly relate to the space where they used to live and reflect on the changes that have taken place there. The dominant discourses that describe the transformations of the city into aesthetically appealing spaces through structures like flyovers, malls and high-rise buildings appear clearly in the poor's assessment of the changes that have taken place at Yamuna Pushta. Although, and due to their peripheral location and limited means to connect back to the city, people find themselves disconnected to these beautiful places and to the city of Delhi as a whole, for them, these refurbished spaces are still evocative of the way city spaces should appear.

Therefore, for the people of the Bawana colony, the spaces of the middle class and upper-class societies are the benchmark for them in terms of the desired physical structure of city spaces. The dominant discourse on city spaces, then, still provides them with the particular idiom for categorizing spatial configurations. One of the female residents of the community stated to this writer that:

There are no such parks or places where we can go and sit. All the parks that you will see around are in bad shape. People cannot go anywhere to relax... When I go towards Rohini⁸ I see such nice parks where people just sit and chat. Children play there. There

⁸ Rohini is a residential area near Bawana colony comprising many gated enclaves whose residents are mainly middle and upper-middle class.

are chairs, trees, green grass and those places look so beautiful. We also want such spaces around our homes so that we can also sit and relax for some time and our children can also play. We can also hold some function or ceremony there if we want to. Right now there is no such place around. Whatever empty places are, they are dumped with garbage all over. They stink every time and are of no use. The government should do something to clean them.

However, in terms of the social environment, people express their aspirations in relation to their own experiences and struggles. For the poor, liveability in the city is crucial. Not only livability in terms of affordability but in terms of access to jobs: for them, employment is of crucial concern if their life in the city is to reach tolerable levels.

It should be stressed that these people's aspirations resonate with middle class values. Their aspirations mirror the middle class discourse of beautiful, ordered, segregated and pure city spaces and neighbourhood spaces. The conception of the "urban" is, therefore, constricted and is limited to the dominant idea of cities as aesthetically pleasing spaces with access to luxury infrastructure. This discourse demonstrates that a "fixed" idea of the "city" is formed in the dominant discourse and becomes entrenched amongst its inhabitants, shaping their desires. It further reveals that there is no radical re-imagination of the city spaces among poor residents, as their aspirations to re-order and re-structure the spaces are framed within the dominant discourse.

Conclusion

Understanding how a city is imagined and appreciating its transformations from the perspective of the poor inverts the vision that traditionally has been projected for the city. It provides an alternative vision for the city, a vision from below. These visions contest the homogenous conception of the city and show an alternative vision that emerges from the poor. Interestingly, the idiom used by the poor to express these visions do not radically re-imagine city spaces, but to a certain extent reproduce existing dominant narratives of ordered and aesthetically appealing spaces. But for the poor, intimate aspirations for spaces emerge from everyday interchanges and essential exigencies, as their ambitions are not of a strictly aesthetic character but rather are embedded deeply in their struggles for equal rights, access and entitlements in the city. For the poor, urban transformations go beyond creative or artistic considerations and are a part of the real world of struggle and distress. Beyond dreams of an aesthetically pleasing city, the poor's aspirations, as they are based on more pragmatic considerations, have a real potential to alter the quality of life for the better. They constitute utopias that are not seen as unreachable, utopias that are rooted in real life. Their everyday struggles are undertaken, in large measure, to make these utopias a reality. As Lefebvre states, utopias are alternatives that are imagined for the community, visions for tomorrow. As utopias, they might appear evanescent today, but for the poorer classes they are imagined as real possibilities for a more desirable future.

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Corresponding author: Yogita Naruka

Email: yogitanaruka.88@gmail.com; yogita.naruka2016@tiss.edu

Contradictions in the Representation of Asexuality: Fiction and Reality

Gwendolyn Osterwald
Hofstra University, United States of America

Abstract

This paper discusses an obscure chapter in the history of sexuality, one that has received precious little attention until quite recently: asexuality. Perhaps because of this dearth of investigative efforts, asexuality has never fully developed as a discursive object and has been notoriously absent from the theoretical discourse on sexuality. Asexuality, for example, is glaringly absent from Karen Horney's seminal *Feminine Psychology* (1922–1937) as well as from Michel Foucault's *The History of Sexuality* (1976–1984) and Pepper Schwartz and Virginia Rutter's more recent *The Gender of Sexuality* (2000). Modern nescience on the subject reflects an age-old unawareness: asexuals have received contradictory and obtuse representations in Western narratives from the earliest glimmers of Western culture. Thus, the discussion of asexuality in this paper will focus on modern-day representations of asexuality while looking back at earlier portrayals in order to provide context for the discussion. It will also touch upon common misconceptions about asexuality in biological and social contexts, such as the idea that it is a malady that can be cured or a phase in an individual's life that will eventually be overcome, much like pubescent acne. Beyond aesthetic portrayals, one must also touch upon the human cost of such invalidating conceptions: prevalent assumptions put asexuals at physical and emotional risk. Fortunately, the asexual community is now discussing and documenting the inner complexities of this misunderstood "sexuality" quite seriously. This is done particularly via the Asexuality Visibility Education Network (AVEN). One of the main ideas that this community wants to disseminate is that, very simply, a person identifying him or herself as asexual does not experience sexual attraction (e.g. lust) towards other people. And that this in no way makes such a person "abnormal".

Keywords: asexual, asexuality, alternate sexuality, sexual attraction

Introduction

Though the sexuality of fictional characters has been diversely portrayed for centuries, sexuality as a subject of scientific discussion has not received serious attention until recently. Prior to the XIX century, people were not strictly categorized as heterosexual or homosexual, that is to say, they were simply people who indulged in heterosexual or homosexual practices: such practices were heterosexual or homosexual, but not the individuals who engaged in them. King James of Scotland and England (VI and I), for example, was known to have “carnal entanglements” with other males such as Esmé Stewart, 1st Duke of Lennox. But no one ever labeled him as a “homosexual”. This changed in the XIX century when heterosexuality and homosexuality began to be defined as two distinguishing and circumscribing elements of a person’s identity. To a researcher into asexuality, such a restrictive definition fails to account for a group of people who do not fit into its closed binary structure, leading inescapably to misidentification of the asexual as a latent homosexual, as “[t]he concept ‘homosexual’ really functions as a category of negation, containing all who are not heterosexual. The label tells us virtually nothing about an individual other than the single fact that she or he is not heterosexual” (Paris, 2011, p. 70). This misidentification can be recognised in many centuries’ worth of fiction. Nowadays, while society is beginning to distinguish asexuality as distinct category, modern narratives attempt portrayals of “stereotypical” asexual characters that in no way reflect the complexity of asexuality. As we shall see, not only is the stereotyping of asexual characters detrimental to the understanding of asexuality, but also the treatment of these characters negatively affects society’s chances of accepting asexuals by unfairly pigeonholing them, and worse, by ultimately “fixing” or “curing” asexual characters as if they were suffering from an abnormality. This “fixing” demonstrates that the binary (heterosexual/homosexual) system of classification is still in play, conclusive and unambiguous: the asexual must therefore be incorporated, eventually, to one or the other of its constituent domains.

In this sense, modern society tends to believe that every human *must* be sexual in some way, so that it is entirely impossible to never be sexually attracted to anyone. There is a strong belief that “[h]uman beings are sexual creatures. The individual dimension of our fundamental sexuality is part of normal living, for we are continually made aware of the fact that humankind is divided into two sexually determined groups, male and female. [...] Humans are a sexual creation” (Grenz, 1997, p. 31). This generally accepted idea that everyone *must* be sexually attracted to someone and *must* have had sex sometime in their life gives rise to the idea that asexuality is an aberration because it is an affront to everything that makes up a human being. Furthermore, having sex is the only known way to replenish humanity and to convey one’s own lineage and genes to future generations. Royal families have always been preoccupied with succession, and Chinese society has actively emphasized having sons, as the family name can only be continued through a male heir; consequently, a wife’s failure to have a son has often resulted in the creative interpretation of Confucian values so as to allow men to have concubines that might produce a male heir. Until recently boys were more highly valued in Chinese society for the same reasons, causing the abandonment and adoption of many Chinese girls.

The “passing on” of one’s “blood” or genes to subsequent generations is, unarguably, an exceptive characteristic of the human person. At the end of the XII century, Geraldus Cambrensis reports that “the kings of Clan Conaill [Ireland] continue to be inaugurated in the high style of their ancestors – by public copulation with a white mare” (Cahill, 1995, p. 175). This ritual occurred because if the future “king” were not fertile, then the kingdom would not

thrive, as sexual drive and fertility were tied directly to the fertility and prosperity of the kingdom, its land and its people. So if the successor was not fertile and could not have heirs, the kingdom's future would be in peril, as well as the royal bloodline.

Medieval Portrayals

An interesting example of an asexual character comes from the Middle Ages. Marie de France's character Guigemar (in the *Lai of Guigemar*, late XII century) has but one troubling liability in the narrator's estimation. A perfect knight in every other conceivable way, he seems absolutely disinterested in women. He shows no interest in men either. His chivalry, his loyalty and his great successes on the battlefield make him a great catch, except that it seems that he couldn't care less about having physical relationships with anyone:

Nature had made one mistake concerning him, for he never showed any interest in love. There was not a lady or a maiden under heaven, no matter how noble or beautiful, who would not have taken him as a lover, if he had sought her love. Many women often sought his love, but he felt no such desire; no one who knew him could imagine that he wanted to experience love. For this reason, strangers as well as his friends considered him doomed. (p. 4)

Guigemar's lack of interest was indeed troubling to the narrator, for in order to become a complete human being Guigemar needed to fall in love, copulate and have heirs. It seems likely that Marie de France was telling or repeating the story of an asexual person, a person for whom she had no categorizing system, as the term "asexual" did not exist in the Middle Ages. But Marie's remarks regarding the knight, from an asexual's perspective, reflect everything that is wrong with assumptions about asexuals. Needless to say, in the Middle Ages no one categorized sexual orientations; however, the narrator's treatment of Guigemar's lack of interest in women ("strangers as well as his friends considered him doomed") may be compared with modern society's naiveté, as reflected in the aforementioned disregard for asexuals in modern research.

Obviously, the narrator thinks that her knight's lack of interest in women is extremely disconcerting. In stating that Nature made one mistake concerning her knight, Marie believes that Guigemar's disinterest is an aberration that must be fixed, that it is perplexing and contrary to the natural order. Yet, and in contrast to Marie's editorial, not once does Guigemar, carefree and happy, mention his disinterest as a troubling matter. Presumably, this is due to the fact that he would likely identify as asexual (if such categorizations had existed in the Middle Ages), and to most asexuals this disinterest is not distressing in any way since they cannot miss what they have never had the need to experience.

Marie de France's observations regarding her knight have an obvious parallel to modern interpretations, reflected in people that attempt to fix or decipher asexuals through condescension ("Oh sweetie, maybe you just haven't found the right person yet"). So it is that the author of *The Lay of Guigemar* forcibly annuls Guigemar's disinterest in women through the violence of a hunting accident: when Guigemar strikes a white doe with his arrow, the projectile bounces back to injure him. At that point the doe begins to speak, putting a curse on him by saying that his wound cannot be healed by anyone except by the woman with whom he falls in love:

He struck the doe in the forehoof. It fell instantly. The arrow rebounded: it struck Guigemar in the thigh in such a way that it went clear through and struck the horse, so that Guigemar soon had to dismount. He fell to the ground onto the thick grass next to the doe that he had felled. The wounded doe moaned in agony. Then it spoke these words: “Ah! Alas! I am dying! And, you, vassal who have wounded me, this is your destiny: may you never have a cure! Neither from herbs nor roots, nor by potions nor by a physician will you ever be cured of the wound you have in your thigh, until she cures you who, for love of you, will suffer great pain and great sadness such that no woman has ever suffered; and you will suffer the same for her, and all those who love, have loved, or will love in the future will marvel at this. Leave here! Leave me in peace! (p. 5)

While asexuals have been known to fall in love, get married and have children, the doe's actions practically *force* Guigemar to find a lover in order to save himself from dying, in other words, the author has forced a cure on the character, since his asexuality was clearly deemed an aberration. But Guigemar's first thoughts after being wounded have nothing to do with finding love; he scrambles to find another way to survive this, for curing his wound in the manner that the doe prescribed seems unfeasible:

Guigemar was grievously wounded and overwhelmed by what he heard. He began to think about what country he might go to in order to have his wound cured, for he didn't wish to allow himself to die. He knew quite well, and was correct in thinking, that he had never met any woman to whom he would give his love nor who would cure him of his pain. (p. 5)

The author's attempt to fix Guigemar by providing him with a beautiful young queen with whom to fall in love actually works, as the brilliant young knight is cured of his disinterest in women and gets to save the damsel in distress. However, this cure makes for a sea-change in Guigemar's personality, essentially ruining Guigemar's selfhood: he is no longer a knight dedicated to personal advancement and to promoting his polity, but a creature entirely dedicated to love. In other words, once he falls in love with the Queen, Guigemar ceases to exist as person with individual will. This seems to point to the fact that the only way of fulfilling the author's wish to cure Guigemar's disinterest is by destroying his selfhood and abrogating his free will. This kind of plotline in which an asexual becomes cured and falls madly in love with a beautiful woman, very happily having sex with her, comes across today as a very myopic representation of asexuality.

While many asexuals do have sex with their partners, they generally do not lust after them as lust implies experiencing sexual attraction (Bogaert, p. 13). Yet, and in a very unconvincing episode, Guigemar experiences sexual attraction the moment he sees the queen, as reflected in statements like “already there was strife in his heart, for the lady had so wounded him that he completely forgot his homeland” (p. 9). Since the author portrays Guigemar as cured of his disinterest in women, the unadvised reader might be led to believe that this is a tried and true remedy for asexuality. This type of misconception is still operative today: asexuals regularly post, on anonymous social media apps like Whisper, comments they have received that endorse corrective rape, doubt the existence of asexuals, and state that they suffer some sort of illness.

Renaissance Portrayals of Asexuality

One of European literature's most interesting portrayals of an asexual individual comes from Cervantes's masterpiece, *Don Quixote* (1605; 1615). In chapters twelve to fifteen, a girl named Marcela supposedly drives Grisóstomo mad with love for the sight of her, although she never once has expressed interest in him or in any other person. Because of her vehement defense of her freedom from the fetters of love, it is entirely possible that Marcela is Cervantes's portrayal of an asexual individual. Grisóstomo commits suicide because of her disdain and Pedro and Ambrosio, his chums, call her cruel, deceitful, a she-devil, and heartless because she has refused a wonderful young man's (Grisóstomo's) advances. Her stated desire for freedom and her avowed disinterest in men and sex are inconceivable to Grisóstomo's friends, who find her testimony preposterous. They believe that her beauty and bearing are tools that she employs to drive men mad for her; that she teases them and leaves them to pine for her. However, Marcela contradicts that narrative by saying that she never led Grisóstomo on and she never had any interest in men: she was born free and desires to stay that way. Her words can almost be taken as an asexual manifesto:

I told him [Grisóstomo] that [my purpose] was to live in perpetual solitude, and that the earth alone should enjoy the fruits of my retirement and the spoils of my beauty; and if, after this open avowal, he chose to persist against hope and steer against the wind, what wonder is it that he should sink in the depths of his infatuation? If I had encouraged him, I should be false; if I had gratified him, I should have acted against my own better resolution and purpose. [...] It has not been so far the will of Heaven that I should love by fate, and to expect me to love by choice is idle. (Cervantes, 1901, p. 99)

The other characters' attitudes towards Marcela manifest a general misunderstanding of asexuality, a belief that everyone is sexual by nature, so that Marcela *must* be using her sexuality for evil purposes. Such attitudes towards women, of course, have always existed, but they are especially pronounced when it comes to asexual women like Marcela. If the author may be allowed a personal aside, I must say that I can certainly relate to Marcela, as in the past, before I realized I was asexual, I had similar things said about me, and even when statements were not malicious, accusations were still hurtful. Since the majority of asexuals are women (or identify as women) according to the Ace Community Census of 2015 (around 62%), it can be supposed that many asexual women have experienced the same issues that Marcela and even I experienced when being kind to someone, then turning them down (for either dates, sex, hooking up, etc.), and then being accused of leading them on, teasing, and being heartless. These accusations are the products of ancient and still current misconceptions and a general ignorance regarding asexuality. Because of such misconceptions, it is understandable if few people want to "come out" because they fear the consequences.

Representation of asexuals in more recent productions like film and television shows continues the long tradition of idiosyncratic portrayals as exhibited in *The Lay of Guigemar* and *Don Quixote*. Modern asexual characters are either extremely brilliant or have some odd characteristic or personality trait that makes the viewer interested in them. Brilliance or quirky behaviour are necessary because characters without an interest in sex are obviously not considered interesting.

Modern Portrayals of Asexuality

Modernity follows a familiar and ancient pattern of misconceptions regarding asexuals. The first modern asexual that comes to mind is Sherlock, from Steven Moffat's reiteration of the Sherlock Holmes character. Asexuality is inscribed in the character, despite the fact that in interviews Moffat has said that

There's no indication in the original stories that he was asexual or gay...he declines the attention of women because he doesn't want the distraction... It's the choice of a monk, not the choice of an asexual. If he was asexual, there would be no tension in that, no fun in that – it's someone who abstains who's interesting. (Jeffries, 2012, n.p.)

In spite of Moffat's statement, I would still maintain that Sherlock is asexual due to his particular personality and unique personal characteristics. Sherlock never expresses interest in any woman except for Irene Adler, and even then it is more of an intellectual interest because, except for Irene, most people bore him mercilessly. Her antics make him introspectively curious about her and, for once in his life, it seems that Sherlock may have actually developed feelings for another human being. But it is obvious that there is nothing sexual in those feelings. Even in a later series, he only enters into a relationship with one of Mary and John's bridesmaids to gain access to her boss's office. The lack of sexual attraction that Sherlock seems to experience *all the time* makes his character remarkably focused on his work, so he is rigorous, concentrated and precise. And asexual.

While Sherlock's personality is quite recognizable to asexuals, the character still furthers misconceptions and inadequate stereotypes. For one, the viewer might get the impression that asexuals are mainly men, and this is a true misrepresentation. Out of the one percent of the population that is asexual (Bogaert, 2012, p. 42), 62% identify as women (Ace, 2016, n.p.). Secondly, Sherlock's cold and calculating genius in addition to his lack of sexual needs establishes the further stereotype that most asexuals are extremely brilliant and, as an upshot of brilliance, do not experience sexual attraction. This sort of reasoning can give rise to the idea that asexuals lack sexual needs only because they are too busy thinking and have not had the time to experience sexual fulfillment yet. This furthers the creation of dramatic tension in programs and films that depict asexuals, as their asexuality makes for a very interesting challenge for the other characters, as they endeavor to change their lack of interest in sex at critical points in the program; in reality, this "change" is not very feasible. Thirdly, the fact that Sherlock never has a serious relationship implies that asexuals cannot have relationships. In fact, many asexuals do have relationships that are solely romantic and involve no sex, while others carry on a romantic and a sexual relationship usually only because they want to please their partner or have struck a compromise with them, such as having children. The Ace census (2015) provides very informative percentages as to whether asexuals have never had sex (65%), are currently sexually active (12.4%), or have been sexually active in the past (22.5%), with separate percentages detailing the motivations behind sexual activity.

Another character that displays asexual characteristics is the Eleventh Doctor, an incarnation of Doctor Who played by British actor Matt Smith. Although the character has developed romantic relationships with his companions, i.e. the Tenth Doctor and Rose Tyler, he nevertheless displays asexual characteristics such as behaving awkwardly when others have kissed him (River Song), interrupting Amy and Rory's public displays of affection, and generally failing to understand human sexual (and possibly even romantic) relationships. This general awkwardness regarding his companions' relationship in the bedroom (Amy and Rory

request to have one bed rather than separate bunk beds, yet the Doctor does not understand their bizarre request) makes him very understandable to asexuals, who can be somewhat uncomfortable with sexual matters; for the Eleventh Doctor, any situation with even remotely sexual overtones becomes comically awkward.

However, in line with modern representations of asexuals, the Eleventh Doctor is still not very representative of typical asexuals, as he is still male and impossibly brilliant. These two factors combine to make the Eleventh Doctor just as fanciful as Sherlock, but compounded by the fact that the Doctor is an alien. In spite of it, his way of dealing with the awkward situations brought on by sexual tension is altogether endearing and captures, quite authentically, what many asexuals can experience in similar situations.

Another modern asexual character that represents asexuals fairly well is Voodoo, from the American comedy television series *Sirens*. She is an acceptable stereotype of an asexual: female, single, not interested in sex, etc. Beyond simply having never experienced sexual attraction, like the majority of asexuals she is utterly repulsed by sex (55% as per Ace, 2016, n.p.). Voodoo even goes so far as to tell her coworker Brian, in no uncertain terms, that she does not want to date him because he is sexual, and because of this the relationship would not end well. Of course, Brian tries to change himself for her, but this only creates more problems and forces Voodoo to prove to him that he has not “transcended” his sexuality.

To some viewers, Brian’s attempts to date Voodoo seem calculated to end in sex, all the while avoiding a romantic relationship. Yet this assumption would be, in my opinion, incorrect. Rather, Brian’s efforts to date Voodoo are clearly an attempt to develop a romantic link with her. But she refuses even that. Some asexuals also identify as aromantic, meaning that they do not experience romantic attraction either. It is possible that her character is meant to portray such an asexual. If so, Voodoo leans towards a false representation of asexuals, given that only a small minority of the community identify as aromantic (19%, as per Ace, 2016, n.p.). What further compounds the issues with Voodoo’s asexuality is that it seems her coworkers are spectacularly uninformed: Hank, for example, says of Voodoo that he “doesn’t have the imagination to make up a sexual pathology that strange and that boring” (*Sirens*, “The finger”, 2014, April 3). This by definition stigmatizes asexuality and makes it more difficult for Voodoo to explore her boundaries as an asexual, relegating her to a supporting role without much depth.

However, the most troubling aspect of Voodoo’s personality is perhaps the one that should most be expected: to make her character more interesting as an asexual, she was given an obsession for the grotesque, bloody, and macabre. It seems as if the screenwriters believed that she would not be a viable and interesting character in and of herself without such a hobby and that her salient character trait (being asexual) was not sufficiently appealing. Of course Voodoo is not entirely obsessed with gruesomeness, and her emotional relationship with Brian is an important feature of the show, but this odd characteristic stands out as an eccentricity and coalesces her with Sherlock and the Eleventh Doctor. Each one of them has something odd and extraordinary that sets them apart from the average person and makes them interesting. Without these extraordinary traits, screenwriters seem to say, the viewers cannot look at asexual characters as whole, interesting or compelling.

Conclusion

Asexuality is such a diverse spectrum of behaviours that it is very difficult to represent accurately. What is more, the misconceptions about asexuals created by diverse fictional characters throughout history have made it difficult for asexuals to be understood and accepted by society. At times these misconceptions can even create dangerous ideas about asexuality: that it does not exist, that it is an aberration that must be fixed, that there must be some mental or hormonal imbalance that causes it, etc. Until more diverse asexual characters can be represented without simplistic stereotyping in mainstream literature and film, asexuality will be regarded as a malaise “to be cured”. Scientific study will help in this effort, but it seems at present that it will be years before enough comprehensive data is gathered to show that asexuals exist outside the limits of the heterosexual/homosexual binary, and that we are normal human beings.

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Corresponding author: Gwendolyn Osterwald

Email: gwendolyn.osterwald@gmail.com

Implementing the Sorcery National Action Plan (SNAP): The Need for Coordinated Participatory Research and for the Development of Effective Communication Strategies

Alex Agai Botu
University of Goroka, Papua New Guinea

Abstract

The Sorcery National Action Plan (SNAP) is an analytical policy document developed as an intervention strategy in response to increased accounts of sorcery and witchcraft-related violence in Papua New Guinea (PNG). SNAP's mission is to make PNG society free from sorcery and witchcraft-related violence through strengthened partnerships among relevant stakeholders. It is a five-part strategy that focuses on care and counselling, advocacy and communication, law and protection, and health and research. Research, communication and advocacy have been identified in SNAP as the critical components needed to establish an evidence-based framework that will address violence related to sorcery and witchcraft. Methodical implementation of strategy has been recognized as the key to achieving the projected long-term outcomes envisioned in SNAP. This article emphasizes the importance of a coordinated participatory approach to research and reporting. With such an approach, SNAP will be continuously supported with evidence-based information for planning, incremental policy development and implementation. The paper also highlights the need for developing effective communication strategies as a vehicle to drive community advocacy to transform conflict and bring about social change.

Keywords: coordinated research, effective communication, sorcery and witchcraft, sorcery national action plan

Introduction

Papua New Guinea (PNG) continues to experience a high rate of torture and killings related to sorcery and witchcraft. Media coverage of sorcery and witchcraft-related violence in PNG, including such headlines as “Burnt alive” (*Papua New Guinea Post-Courier*) and “‘Sorcery’ leads to killing” (*The National*), has received much attention at local and international levels (Botu, 2014). Gibbs (2015) argues that the deaths of two women in PNG accused of witchcraft in 2013 shocked the world and prompted strong calls for action. He further argues that such violence continues to be reported in the media, prompting questions about what additional steps could or should be taken (Gibbs, 2015). Several studies have confirmed that violence related to sorcery and witchcraft is having a negative effect across a range of essential areas such as human life and social security, social support systems, governance, socio-economic development, community development, education, household food security, land resource conflicts and human rights (see Tanassa, 2012; Sohkin, Elliot & Chandler, 2013; Botu, 2014; Urame, 2015).

Despite the numerous intervention efforts by government agencies, police, civil society organizations, community-based human rights defenders, community leaders and churches that endeavour to contain violence related to sorcery and witchcraft, such violence is actually increasing (Botu, 2014; Gibbs, 2015; Urame, 2015). Traditionally, different types of punishments have been practiced, but the types that prevail at present are especially brutal and atypical (Botu, 2013). These include burning people alive, extreme torture, maiming, ostracism, public accusation and humiliation, home destruction, destruction of properties and of public infrastructures and food gardens, all having serious socio-economic consequences (see Botu 2014). The great majority of the people of PNG depends entirely on subsistence farming as a source for food and as a source of income, as surplus food is usually sold. People also engage in small informal economic activities such as livestock farming, broiler production and trade store entrepreneurship. The generalized destruction of food gardens and homes, as well as of informal markets and businesses, curtails of the ability to produce goods in significant sectors of the population. The severe physical and mental injuries and the ostracism levelled against so many people also impinges extensively on household food security, family unity, social support systems, child education and informal income-generating opportunities. Another obvious consequence is child orphanage, which is a growing problem¹. In addition, violence engenders fear in affected members of the community, restricting their freedom of movement and greatly curtailing their daily business activities. Furthermore, reports and observations of many cases of violence betray a trend in the type of violence related to sorcery and witchcraft: such violence is increasingly gender-biased (see Zocca 2010; Tanassa 2012; Urame 2013). Ume Wainetti, Executive Director for Family and Sexual Violence Committee in PNG, characterises the violence inflicted by men on women and girls suspected of sorcery and witchcraft-related crimes as essentially sexist in nature (*The National*, 28th March 2014, cited in Botu, 2014). However, Forsyth (2013) argues that the commonly perceived idea that sorcery and witchcraft-related violence is wholly directed at women is erroneous because there are numerous cases that show that men, women and children are common victims of violence related to sorcery and witchcraft. Such concerns demonstrate the need to conduct a detailed study that will isolate sorcery-related violence from gender-based violence. Such a study should establish empirical facts and supporting evidence that may be useful for policy development and planning.

¹ When parents are killed, orphans face the unstable prospects that attend the removal of proper parental care, economic support, and conventional expectations for food, shelter, social security and education.

Birth of Sorcery National Action Plan

The government of PNG introduced, legislated and implemented a number of intervention strategies as a panacea to alleviate social conditions and reduce the escalating rate of crime and violence related to accusations of sorcery and witchcraft. The thrust of these strategies has three basic focus points: (1) The endorsement of the Family Protection Bill 2013, (2) the introduction of death penalty and (3) the repealing of the Sorcery Act 1971 (Botu, 2014). Prime Minister Peter O'Neill called for more severe penalties following a spate of horrific tortures, killings (related and unrelated to sorcery and witchcraft) and rapes in PNG, a deterrent for which, he considered, was the introduction of the death penalty (*Global Post*, 2013, cited in Botu, 2014). This has met with considerable support from parliamentarians and important sectors of the population, but debates concerning the death penalty are still common. The controversial Sorcery Act 1971 was repealed in April 2013, as it was perceived as a mask that protected perpetrators of violence related to sorcery and witchcraft (Botu, 2014). This step was in direct response to public calls to end the pervasive—and ostensibly chronic—sorcery and witchcraft-related torture and killings. It was argued that, although the Act criminalized the practice of sorcery and witchcraft, it nevertheless served to facilitate and provoke false accusations and extrajudicial violence. Repealing of the Act meant that any cases where those accused of practising sorcery and witchcraft had been assaulted or murdered would be tried under existing criminal laws that punish assault and murder (see Forsyth, 2015).

However, these strategies had their critics, and this three-pronged scheme has been described as a headline-grabbing Western approach to dealing with conflict through the inexpedient use of legislative power and human rights prescriptions (see Botu, 2014). The disadvantages of these “Western” approaches to conflict resolution in non-Western settings are known and have been described (see Sanson & Bretherton, 2001). As anticipated by their detractors, they proved ineffective in PNG, resulting in impunity and an increase in violence. The second mission of SNAP is to deal effectively with the perpetrators of violence; given the figures, this has yet to be achieved. In light of it, Botu (2014) recommends that a more collaborative approach should be embraced in addressing sorcery and witchcraft-related violence.

A conference at the Australian National University, in June 2013, addressed the implications of sorcery, witchcraft and associated violence in Melanesia. It was there that an attending group of key stakeholders decided to form a working committee and consolidate efforts to develop a holistic, comprehensive strategy that would tackle the problem at all levels. Their efforts focused on distinct areas that needed urgent attention. As a result, The Draft National Action Plan (DNAP) was formulated and developed later in 2013. DNAP was further refined to produce a final blueprint, now called the Sorcery National Action Plan (SNAP), in November 2014. After more than two years of work led by the PNG Department of Justice and the Attorney General, the government, through a National Executive Council decision, finally approved SNAP on July 21, 2015 (Gibbs, 2015). This move was welcomed as an important step forward in addressing the problem of sorcery and witchcraft accusation-related violence at its roots.

The approved SNAP is an analytical policy framework developed as an intervention strategy to address sorcery and witchcraft accusation-related violence. The vision of SNAP is to make PNG society free from sorcery and witchcraft-related violence through strengthened partnerships among relevant stakeholders. It is a five-part strategy that is focused on care and counselling, advocacy and communication, law and protection, and health and research. Despite the challenges to its implementation and the aforementioned setbacks, it can be argued that SNAP is an important *long-term* strategic policy document that will help address sorcery and witchcraft-

related violence. The current trend of violence related to sorcery and witchcraft necessitates a policy document that incorporates a clear outline of the legal support framework. Creating a robust and pragmatic policy framework is an essential toolkit for planning and addressing social issues such as sorcery and witchcraft accusation-related violence, issues that adversely affect individuals, communities, institutions and the nation. SNAP as a policy document will help identify potential strategies, characterize the vulnerabilities of such strategies, and evaluate deadlocks to address sorcery and witchcraft-related violence more efficiently.

SNAP so what? And how can SNAP really address sorcery and witchcraft-related violence? Father Philip Gibbs posited a parallel question, asking how SNAP will be able to stop the tortures and killings of those accused of witchcraft (see Gibbs, 2015). In practical terms, implementation of SNAP remains a daunting challenge and its future uncertain because of the lack of seed finance that would help implement some of its critical content. SNAP is not legislation, but a policy document that strategizes how sorcery and witchcraft-related violence can be addressed in practical ways. As such, SNAP itself is *not* important, as it is another master strategy document. It is the intended outcomes envisioned in it that matter most because outcomes are the evidence of the successful results. The only way in which these outcomes will be realized is by effectively implementing the strategies. Otherwise, SNAP will gradually accumulate dust and become a banal remnant of unrealized objectives. Implementation herein refers to the transformation of policy ideas and strategies captured in SNAP into action that is aimed at remedying sorcery and witchcraft-related violence. In order to lessen and gradually eradicate sorcery and witchcraft accusation-related violence in PNG, there needs to be a united response and closer cooperation to implement SNAP effectively at all levels. It is hoped that herein I am able to emphasise and justify the need for participatory research and community advocacy. Participatory research and communication and advocacy are important strategies identified in SNAP.

Need for Coordinated Participatory Research

Research has been identified in SNAP as a critical component to establish an evidence-based framework to address violence related to sorcery and witchcraft. There must be adequate empirical evidence to develop appropriate working strategies so that policy makers can make informed decisions regularly and plan in spite of the great uncertainties. Violence related to sorcery and witchcraft has burgeoned astonishingly in PNG, creating great anxiety and uncertainty across the nation. It is to be expected that adequate research will contribute to the literature and knowledge of sorcery and witchcraft-related violence in PNG, revealing unreported cases, violence and its pervasiveness, and providing useful empirical evidence for decision-making authorities and stakeholders; this will allow for evidence-based planning and policy development and implementation. Surveillance through research and access to surveillance data are essential at all levels in order to understand patterns of emergence and to allow stakeholders to anticipate and respond to emergent and re-emergent sorcery related-violence.

The importance of collaboration and coordination in social research has been detailed (see Katsouyanni, 2008; Lambert, 2013). The need for a coordinated participatory approach to research is evident because violence related to sorcery and witchcraft, in spite of all other avenues of treatment, is seemingly perpetual and is increasing. So it is that, in line with the participatory approach, research institutions, civil society organizations and concerned individuals are conducting independent research on various aspects of sorcery and witchcraft-related violence across the country. This is beneficial because it contributes to the literature on the topic of sorcery and witchcraft; however, some of the studies are repetitive and often overlap.

So a need for coordination is identified. Coordinated participatory research will enable researchers to work effectively with each other and with the public at large. Through coordination, need areas for research can be identified and allocated and, consequently, research objectives will be spread over a wider range of specific areas, will address a broader spectrum of problems and will recommend more ways for addressing the problem of sorcery and witchcraft-related violence. In addition, resources allocated for SNAP [intended for research] can be budgeted and managed more effectively. Various aspects of sorcery and witchcraft in PNG have been studied, including its anthropological aspects (Gibbs, 2009; Franklin, 2010; Kuman, 2011), its legal aspects (Forsyth, 2015; Auka, Gore & Koralyo, 2015), and the destructive nature of sorcery-related violence and the collateral abuse of human rights (Sohkin, 2012; Sohkin et al., 2013; Botu, 2013; Urame, 2013). Botu's work (2013, 2014) explains the conflict dynamics attending research and further asserts the need for detailed study in this area. The research shows that researchers have fundamentally different backgrounds and outlook. This can lead to a result where differing outcomes compete for acceptance. Therefore, a coordinated approach will unify research menus and enable focused collaboration aimed at achieving specific projected research outcomes.

The focus of the research should begin by developing strategies on how the impact of sorcery and witchcraft-related violence can be communicated and addressed. For example, Oxfam International used a community-based participatory research (CBPR) approach in the Gumine district of Simbu province, and engaged members of the community to reflect on issues surrounding sorcery and witchcraft (see Oxfam International, 2010). This study showed that members of the community reflected on how problems surrounding sorcery and witchcraft are affecting them and discussed how they can address these problems themselves. Key areas of impact identified in the Oxfam study include conflict transformation and peace building, household food security, education, poverty, providing social support systems, community policing, health education and improving legal support to victims (Oxfam International, 2010).

In practice, scant research evidence is used in PNG with regards to developing policies. Many policies are drawn up by policy makers who base their findings on shallow observation, faulty research and personal assumptions. In some instances, and to some extent, policies are schematised in order to protect political interests. Needless to say, the development of SNAP has experienced the same problems. In the real world, policies are developed in fluid environments and, of necessity, tend to compete with vested political interests; they can also react to social pressure by striving to solve headline-grabbing problems quickly, albeit superficially. SNAP must be made impervious to this trend because, as stated above, the issue is real and very serious in PNG. There is a need for policy makers to be guided and informed by evidence at each stage of policy development, from when an issue is first identified, to the development of the most appropriate response and subsequent evaluation of its effectiveness. SNAP has to be standardized through transparent processes and be continuously supported with evidence-based participatory research. The research must also engage the challenges and limitations of implementing SNAP using a holistic bottom-up approach. Bureaucratic lenses and experiences do not often capture the views and experiences of ordinary people, and research shows this to be the case in sorcery and witchcraft accusation-related violence in PNG.

Let us now draw attention to the relevance of the type of policy design that is driven by empirical, research-acquired evidence, and not by theorizing ideologies. The relationship between research and policy development is at times tenuous and fraught with uncertainty because research is not always designed to be relevant to policy, or policy-makers do not understand research findings as central to decision making. Under such circumstances, there is a

danger of overlooking or misunderstanding the true nature of the situation on the ground. The aim of strengthening research capacity on sorcery and witchcraft accusation-related violence is to generate and convey knowledge into policy decisions, as is clearly called for in the SNAP blueprint. Moreover, policy-makers need to have access to the right information at the right time to inform decisions that draw on the evidence of what works. Research data must therefore be rapidly paraphrased into effective tools for policy-makers. Sorcery and witchcraft accusation-related violence has reached perplexing and complex levels, therefore, continuous participatory research is needed to improve and facilitate pragmatic policy development while implementing the existing SNAP policies.

SNAP shows promise in this regard, as a more rationalistic approach was engaged in its development. This approach is crucial because it holds great appeal and lays out a logical and deliberative framework for addressing sorcery and witchcraft accusation-related violence. The document is rooted in the collection and examination of evidence, evaluation of alternative courses of action and the creation of systems for implementation with projected long-term outcomes. However, it cannot predict abruptly changing environments or new expectations that may arise between the moment of decision-making and the moment of implementation. Only a short-term future can be predicted with confidence. This is the real dilemma with sorcery and witchcraft accusation-related violence in PNG. Perhaps, no matter how rational SNAP may be or hope to be, it is not possible to gather all the facts and take into account every consideration. This brings to the fore the issue of sustainability in implementing plans and strategies, and questions the attainability of projected long term outcomes. That is why an incremental approach through research is necessary for the plan's sustainability. Such an approach will support the long-term vision of SNAP while encouraging the feasible development of problem-solving strategies on a daily basis.

Need for Developing Effective Communication Strategies

Intervention strategies should not focus excessively on *resolution* or *management* of sorcery and witchcraft-related violence. These two approaches neutralize the technical and practical side of peacemaking, while ignoring cultural and relational issues (*see* Burgess, Burgess, Glaser & Yevsyukova, 1997). This often results in the continuation of injustice, as is clearly evident in the steadfast perpetuity of sorcery and witchcraft-related violence in PNG. The long-term solution to sorcery and witchcraft-related violence rests in conflict transformation: conflict transformation is a dialectic approach to conflict that is caused by and causes changes in relationships, with particular focus on the mindset. Ladarach (2003) defined conflict transformation as the process to envision and respond to the ebb and flow of social conflict, giving, in this fluid environment, the opportunities to create constructive change processes that reduce violence and increase justice. In short, it allows us to respond to real-life problems in human relationships. In order to build peace, negative or destructive interaction patterns need to be transformed into positive or constructive relationships and interactions.

Effective communication is an essential tool for conflict transformation (*see* Adejimola, 2009). Effective communication in conflict transformation activities contributes to re-establishing relationships and creating a shared understanding of the conflict, while also building the vision of an interconnected future among opposing groups (Baú, 2015). Advocacy and communication has also been identified in SNAP as an important strategy to address sorcery and witchcraft-related violence. This strategy must be accorded due priority because there is pressing need for community advocacy and awareness. Members of the community [rural and urban] have been identified as key stakeholders (Botu, 2014), yet they lack updated information on intervention

strategies² intended to address sorcery and witchcraft accusation-related violence. How do we connect to these people, particularly those in rural communities who are responsible for most of the violence related to sorcery and witchcraft, and communicate with them in such a way they can easily comprehend? A suitable communication approach will serve as a vital link.

Suitable research approaches such as Community-based Participatory Research (CBPR) methods integrated with visual design technologies (such as use of participatory videos) can be used to develop communication strategies to inform about issues of sorcery and witchcraft effectively. Interventions through the use of media can play a pivotal role in this (*see* Macionis, 1997). In this regard, the work of Vlad Sohkin has been overwhelmingly acknowledged. He documented images and stories of the victims of sorcery and witchcraft or gender-based violence in a project titled *Crying Meri* [meri is a *Tok Pisin*³ word for women] (*see* Sohkin, 2012). This study demonstrates the need for the use of visual literacy and digital technology as an effective alternate approach to addressing sorcery and witchcraft accusation-related violence as it is more intelligible and beneficial to the illiterate communities. On one side, the work of Sohkin (2012) lacked engagement with communities, effective communication and acknowledgement of social change processes. Many people in the rural communities of PNG are illiterate, thus, visual technology can be an effective medium of communication and advocacy. Furthermore, beliefs about sorcery and witchcraft are spiritually and culturally embodied and, as a result, more susceptible to visual stimuli; technology can help to adjust people's understanding of their non-secular world (*see* Thomas & Kauli, 2015) and of the violence associated with it. Advocacy and awareness programs can be done concurrently to educate people on the negative effects of accusing someone of sorcery or witchcraft, and of the violence such accusations can produce.

Community activities such as sports programs, youth initiatives and special skills training can be used as appropriate avenues to bring awareness and discuss issues relating to sorcery and witchcraft within the community (*see* Baú 2015, Witne 2015; Kuman 2016). The work of Baú (2015) highlighted how developing appropriate communication strategies was linked to conflict transformation: these help build peace through community activities such as sports and participatory media that promote social change, as happened in the Rift Valley of Kenya after the post-election conflict in 2007-2008. Social change refers to any significant alteration over time in behavioural patterns and cultural values and norms, yielding profound social consequences (Greenwood & Guner, 2008). As societies are characterized by the common attitudes and behaviour of their members (Greenwood & Guner, 2008), violent attitudes (such as sorcery and witchcraft-related violence) that are perceived as a norm in a society can actually be changed. In the modern world, societies and cultural patterns are never static; thus social, political, economic and cultural changes occur constantly. Such behaviour reflects purposive decision making by individuals acting vigorously in their environment. Such change in cultural values can shift and enable developmental pathways (Greenfield, 2009). The nature of sorcery and witchcraft-related conflict is deep-rooted because its emergence is founded on cultural values and belief systems. Such conflicts can only be de-escalated and transformed by transforming the people's mindset.

The work of Witne (2015) and Kuman (2016) are good examples of community-based participatory approaches that focus on social change. Their work demonstrates how community members of the Yuri tribe in the Simbu province of PNG initiated community peace-building. This was achieved through building awareness of underlying issues and in consultation with like-minded individuals who formed a community association⁴ to advocate for peace and to arbitrate,

² Such as new legislative changes.

³ Lingua franca commonly spoken in PNG and other Melanesian countries.

⁴ The group is named YAKA, abbreviation of *Yuri Alaiiku Kuikane Association*.

reunite, rebuild and reconcile the tribal community with other communities (Witne, 2015; Kuman, 2016). Importantly, the community partnered with key stakeholders such as community policing officers, non-government organizations and churches to drive the message of peace and safety and to say no to violence, including sorcery and witchcraft accusation-related torture and killings. Such community initiatives should be strengthened by providing support through skills training or by introducing other community development initiatives that can motivate and enhance the development of positive attitudes.

Conclusion

The aim of implementing SNAP should be to transform and de-escalate the conflicts and violence that are associated with the beliefs and practices of sorcery and witchcraft. Community advocacy strategies should harness sound programs and effective communication strategies that will promote and bring about social change. Apposite research must be actively engaged and strengthened to support SNAP and propel it into the future. This will enable policy makers and implementing agents to strategize approaches based on evidence. Importantly, community-based participatory research approaches must be used, and the planning aspects of advocacy should also focus on how local communities will be engaged and empowered to take ownership of the issue. SNAP will remain the cornerstone in addressing sorcery and witchcraft-related violence while it is successfully implemented. Otherwise, sorcery and witchcraft-related violence will become idiosyncratic in PNG culture.

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Corresponding author: Alex Agai Botu

Email: botua@uog.ac.pg, soliolabotu@hotmail.com

