

INCLUSIVE ECONOMIES, ENDURING PEACE IN MYANMAR AND SRI LANKA:

FIELD REPORT

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ACRONYMS

ACRONYM	DESCRIPTION
BBS	Bodu Bala Sena, Sinhala Buddhist ultra-nationalist group (Sri Lanka)
CID	Criminal Investigation Department (Sri Lanka)
CSD	Civil Security Department (Sri Lanka)
DASSK	Daw Aung San Suu Kyi
FEOT	Feminist Everyday Observatory Tool
GoSL	Government of Sri Lanka
IDP	Internally displaced persons
KIA	Kachin Independence Army
KIO	Kachin Independence Organisation
LTTE	Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam
MaBaTa	Burmese ultra nationalist militant group
MIL	Mother in law
NLD	National League of Democracy (Myanmar)
NTJ	National Thowheeth Jama'ath, a radical Islamist group (Sri Lanka)
SLORC	State Law and Order Restoration Council, took power in 1988 (Myanmar)
Tatmadaw	Myanmar's military
TID	Terrorist Investigation Department (Sri Lanka)
USDP	United Solidarity Development Party (Myanmar)
VAW	Violence against women

ABSTRACT

The project, Inclusive Economies, Enduring Peace: The Transformative Role of Social Reproduction, has researched how women's unpaid and paid labour is affected by conflict. This report outlines the findings from a comparative qualitative research study as part of that project, carried out in two case studies in Sri Lanka and Myanmar across six sites (two each of conflict-affected, proximate to conflict and relatively stable) using the Feminist Everyday Observatory Tool (FEOT) (Rai and True, 2020). FEOT is a three-stage method consisting of a pre-observation questionnaire, observation and post-observation interview. The data analysed in this report is based on intensive research undertaken with nineteen adult women in nineteen households following this method.

The most significant research finding is that women experience greater difficulty in carrying out social reproduction with higher levels of depletion in the sites most affected by conflict. Depletion through social reproduction, that is, where women became more anxious and exhausted by the volume and intensity of social reproductive labour, and the paucity of available support for this labour, was observable at a number of points in the study. Higher levels of depletion were observed even when women in areas most affected by conflict were doing the same or less social reproductive and productive work than those in the relatively stable sites. The research also found that types of violence against women was present across all six sites, but conflict made women more vulnerable to both interpersonal and state violence in particular, as they carried out their social reproductive work. Moreover, the combination of social reproduction under conditions of conflict and violence increased the depletion of women's labour and wellbeing. Finally, the findings show that social infrastructure (health, education and welfare provision), like the physical infrastructure (roads, railways, bridges, construction), was damaged, poor quality, which increased depletion of community social reproduction in conflict-affected sites, compared to relatively stable sites.

The project has tested new feminist methodologies to address data collection in complex and challenging conflict-affected contexts. The research evidence produced has the potential to shape new policies and interventions to contribute to lasting peace and inclusive economic development that considers the critical role of social reproduction.

INTRODUCTION

The purpose of the study is to explore the impact of the costs of social reproduction as depletion in the absence of a well-developed social infrastructure supporting women within households in the face of conflict and displacement in Myanmar² and Sri Lanka. This report describes the results of pilot fieldwork undertaken in the two countries between January and March 2020.

Our proposition is that the lack of recognition and under-valuing of gender-specific roles in household social reproduction and care labour contributes to the depletion of those doing this work under conditions of conflict (Rai et al, 2014; Rai, True, & Tanyag, 2020). This lack of recognition by society and by the state and international financial institutions also adversely affects, directly and indirectly, the policy and development strategies that could reverse this depletion and bring about just and enduring peace.

FIELD RESEARCH QUESTIONS

1. How is social reproduction carried out in conflict-affected areas and with what effects?
 - a. How do people procure food, water, care, health, and education, and maintain the well-being of their households and communities?
 - b. How do people engage with social reproduction as part of political life and peacebuilding?
2. What are the costs of social reproduction and to whom? How does depletion operate/manifest in conflict-affected environments? How does it manifest in individuals and households in the conflict-affected context and communities in Sri Lanka/Myanmar?
3. What is the impact of the destruction or disruption to social infrastructure on women's social reproductive labour and on their depletion?
4. What did social infrastructure look like before/after/during conflict?

RESEARCH CONCEPTS

Five major concepts form the framework for analysis in this report: social reproduction, household, conflict/violence, social infrastructure and depletion.

Social reproduction is defined as the reproduction of social life, which includes biological reproduction, the unpaid production of goods and services in the home, social provisioning such as voluntary work to maintain communities, and the reproduction of culture and ideology (Hoskyns & Rai, 2007). The labour of social reproduction consists in the variety of socially necessary work that provides the means to maintain and reproduce the population, including to 'produce' the worker (Bhattacharya, 2017; Laslett & Brenner, 1989). It is, by and large, undertaken by women, always in demand but typically unrecognised, under-valued and unsupported.

The household is commonly defined in economics as the patriarchal household; a baseline on which broader assumptions about the economy and society are built (Becker, 1974; Grossbard-Schechtman, 1999). While also using household as a unit of analysis, this research takes a critical and feminist approach to the household as structuring a gender division of labour in production and social reproduction (Folbre, 1986, 2001). We also note that household composition varies geographically and temporally, with extended patrilineal families the norm in some areas, nuclear families in others, with new theorisations of the global household very relevant to both the Myanmar and Sri Lanka cases (Safri & Graham, 2010, 2015). The variation of household forms across time and place points to its socially constructed nature (Wilk, 1989).

Conflict and violence both work across a spectrum and are both contextual factors and part of the analysis. We define both the case studies in this pilot research (present-day Sri Lanka and Myanmar) as overall 'conflict-affected'. There are a range of descriptors that could have been used instead: 'war-affected', 'post-war', 'post-conflict', 'post-war transition', 'peace'. However, defining political conflict through periodisation can contribute to the categorisation of these spheres of activity as functionally, as well as temporally distinct (Richards, 2005). We take as the starting point for our analysis the feminist research that identifies gendered continuities between war and 'post-war' and that calls out the contradictions of using 'peace' to describe a post-war process in which gendered violence persists (Enloe, 2004; 2007; True, 2012).

Social infrastructure comprises state and non-state facilities and infrastructure for child care, elder care, education, physical infrastructure, welfare payments, healthcare. We broaden this definition to include kin and social networks that can provide emotional and material support. As women are disproportionately engaged in the social reproductive sphere, they stand to benefit more from investment in social infrastructure. This investment therefore has the potential to be an important contributor to replenishing those who engage in social reproductive work and therefore to enhancing human development and achieving the Sustainable Development Goals (Women's Budget Group, 2017). Feminist economists argue that investment in education such as skilled and trained teachers, health and social care workers, and in schools, hospitals, clinics and day centres - delivers benefits to the economy in the short, medium and long term (Pearson, 2019). These can deliver positive spill over effects to economic productivity, including increased incomes and inflows into the economy and tax systems, reduced loss of women's labour from the labour market; decreased fertility and increased childhood education leading to a better-quality labour supply (Ibid, 509; Seguino, 2019).

Depletion is a concept developed by Rai, Hoskyns, and Thomas (2014) to better measure, examine and account for the costs of doing social reproduction inside the home, the community, the state and across the globe (95-7). That is, depletion occurs when human resource outflows (time spent caring, domestic labour, reproduction) exceed resource inflows (medical care, support networks, leisure) as a result of carrying out social reproductive work over a threshold of sustainability, making it harmful for those engaged in it (Rai et al, 2014: 4).



MWA researcher in a field on observation day

METHOD

We used the Feminist Everyday Observatory Tool (FEOT), a new methodological approach, to carry out our research. The methodological objective of the study is to test and refine FEOT. The FEOT is a three-step method that brings together shadowing, a research technique from organisational research and ethnographic time-use data gathering and analysis (Rai & True, 2020). The three steps are: 1) a pre-observation questionnaire; 2) an observation day; 3) a post-observation interview. The initial questionnaire gathers key demographic information about the participant and her household though a half hour meeting.

For the observation day, the researchers shadow the participant, to understand how she uses her time and what her everyday work involves. The researcher documents the participant's time-use activities every 15 minutes for (ideally) 12-16 hours and also notes observations about the context and modalities of time-use. Photos are also taken throughout the day by the researcher, with the informed consent of the participant. In the post-observation interview (1.5-2 hours), which is carried out as soon as possible after the observation, in our study with the help of an interpreter, the participant answers questions about significant aspects of the observation day, and about the wider conflict environment.

THE AIM OF THE FEOT IS TO:

- Build on feminist and interpretive-qualitative approaches to develop a qualitative mixed method analysis of time-use with sensitivity to contexts of the participants.
- Expand the study of time-use by using a three-step observation methodology in order to consider space and violence.
- It treats domestic and paid work along the same time/space continuum, challenging the distinctions between productive/unproductive work (Elias and Rai, 2019).
- It allows researchers to understand not only what participants do, but what they feel about what they do as well as whether they feel they and their work are valued by their families and communities. This supports a comprehensive understanding and value of work – inside and outside the home (Rai & True, 2020).

The three-step method allows researchers a process to triangulate across different forms of data. It also allows for reflexive moments for participants. In a number of the post-observation interviews, participants described a moment of quiet revelation, where the extent of their labour became more real to them:

MWA researcher: We've discussed all the different activities you/we did during the day. How do you feel talking and thinking about/reflecting on these activities?

MAW007: How to say? I realize now that "Wow! I have done a lot of work!". I understand what I am doing right now. I had never recognized the activities I did daily as work. But now, Oh yes! I have so many works!³

The method's recognition of the importance of the everyday and of dimensions of space, time and violence (Elias and Rai, 2019) also resonated with participants' lived experiences:

I have said things I never told anyone before. It is because when you explained about the study, I knew it was important to tell you that; to show what women go through and the everyday pressures they face – I know because I experience it and I know other women who experience it.

SLPC2, Post Observation Interview 01 Feb 2020, Batticaloa district, Sri Lanka

CASE AND SITE SELECTION

The data in this report comprises intensive research undertaken with 19 adult women in households in six sites across two countries. The fieldwork was carried out over five weeks in Sri Lanka (8 January – 17 February 2020) and Myanmar (26 January – 2 March 2020).

The two case studies, Sri Lanka and Myanmar, are both conflict-affected countries. These cases were selected because of their relative similarity on a number of variables. Both are Buddhist majority countries, with significant ethnic and religious minorities and histories of ethno-religious conflict. The sites, scale, and intensity of those conflicts has varied over time in both countries. Both states have been characterised by heavy and changing degrees of militarisation over the last decades, even though Myanmar is a recent representative democratic state and Sri Lanka is a longstanding formal democracy that officially ended its civil war 11 years ago.

The six sites were chosen in relation to their exposure to conflict on a scale from conflict-affected, to proximate to conflict, to relatively stable. In both Myanmar and Sri Lanka, people in the conflict-affected site consider themselves to be impacted by war, and those in relatively stable areas consider their place to be peaceful, despite heavy militarisation or violence against women.

COUNTRY	MYANMAR			SRI LANKA		
Proximity to conflict	SITE 1: Conflict-affected	SITE 2: Proximate to Conflict	SITE 3: Relatively Stable	SITE 1: Conflict-affected	SITE 2: Proximate to Conflict	SITE 3: Relatively Stable
Location	Kachin State, Myitkyina, IDP Camp	Kachin State, Town of Namti (Grey Zone)	Mon State, Mawlamyine, Paung Township	Kilinochchi district, Northern Province	Batticaloa district, Eastern Province	Anuradhapura district, North-Central Province

A second consideration of site selection was according to the strength/existence of local research networks. In Myanmar, research networks in the north who already held government research permits were crucial to be able to carry out the research. In Sri Lanka, research partners were chosen who already had established connections with conflict-affected communities. Because of these networks, we were able to operationalise the intensive FEOT method efficiently and ethically in conflict-affected environments where trust of outsiders is generally low.

HOUSEHOLD SELECTION

A mix of households was chosen according to the kinds of households predominant in each site, the households' relevance to understanding broader conflict trends, and practical and ethical considerations. For instance, in the highly conflict-affected site in Myanmar, more female-headed households were chosen to reflect high levels of widowhood, and women married to soldiers living away from home. In the relatively stable site in Sri Lanka, state military households were chosen, to be able to investigate how ongoing post-war militarisation affects women within the military system (as well as those outside it).

LIMITATIONS AND STRENGTHS

The day-long observations in Sri Lanka and Myanmar enabled the piloting of research methods of observational time use studies which we have called FEOT. These methods yield rich data such as the extent to which women carry out multiple forms of social reproductive work at any one time. However, they require great patience from participants being shadowed for long periods, and can be intrusive. The method also requires long working hours by researchers and research assistants. In conflict-affected areas, full day observations were often not possible due to crises or violence in and around the household.

'Observation' is, for some populations, associated with historical and ongoing militarised surveillance and so can have violent and invasive connotations. Surveillance created risk and security issues specific to doing research in politically unstable/violent conditions (Hedström, 2017a). Risks to participants included the possibility of violent backlash from males within the household or from the military if the women were assumed to be sharing too much information with researchers; and community backlash if they were assumed to be receiving preferential financial support from foreigners. These risks exist with any research method but are potentially higher with the FEOT in contexts of conflict, simply because the amount of time that researchers spent with participants and the shadowing method increase the likelihood that researcher presence and women's participation in the research will be noticed by others. Risks to researchers included passing through military checkpoints, being subject to surveillance, and exposure to violent men in the household and community. These risks are slight compared to those faced by the research participants. However, the hazards and dangers are real and the mental health burden on researchers in conflict-affected areas is not insignificant.

Limitations also arise in the site selection. While the three categorisations (conflict-affected, proximate to conflict, relatively stable) recognise that different geographic locations and communities are differentially conflict-affected, they also demonstrate some of the challenges of such categorisation and expose important nuances:

1

THE AFFECTIVE AND INDIVIDUAL DIMENSIONS OF CONFLICT PROXIMITY:

For example, a participant in site 2 in Sri Lanka, whose brother, cousin and grandmother were murdered in war and whose husband was abducted and tortured, was categorised as 'proximate to conflict' because of the field location rather than according to the individual's ontological reality, which is directly conflict-affected.

2

THE TIME AND CAPACITY LIMITATIONS OF THIS PILOT STUDY:

The research team had to make pragmatic choices about who to include and leave out of this relatively small study. A key omission in Sri Lanka was up-country plantation workers, who are the backbone of the 'productive' economy. Their experiences of conflict are different from those in the sites selected, because of their class and caste positions and social reproductive conditions, including (lack of) access to housing and land. Omissions in Myanmar were migrant worker households, Rakhine State and Muslim communities.

3

GENDER DIMENSIONS:

Because of the time and resources required to do this work well, the research only observes women. This leads to some difficulty in assessing and analysing the gender division of labour.

While observing female-headed households was important for the study given the high levels of widowhood in conflict-affected sites, there were challenges involved in doing so. Women living without husbands already suffer stigma and harassment; therefore, in some cases, it was decided that their participation in the study would increase this and was unethical. For others, the very situation of a widow in a conflict context is such that her days and plans are likely to change at the last minute, out of necessity; she may not have extended family support structures and may have to live her life from one economic/social reproductive crisis to another (e.g. if daily labour opportunities change; if childcare is suddenly not available). While such situations would undoubtedly be valuable to observe and analyse, at such crisis points, an individual might be reluctant for strangers to shadow her for a full day. For example, in the conflict-affected site in Sri Lanka, a widow with two children who initially agreed to participate and with whom we carried out the pre-observation meeting had to withdraw from the study at the last minute when her mother was unexpectedly taken into hospital (and she did not wish us to observe her at the hospital).

Despite these limitations, the FEOT, in addition to achieving the aims described above, had some unexpected additional methodological benefits in the conflict-affected environment. When a full day of observation was not possible because of the conflict context, data on participants' time-use during the portion of the day they could not be shadowed could be collected during the post-observation interview. Changes to social reproduction over time and across different periods of conflict could be discussed in some depth in the post-observation interview because researchers could refer to activities documented in the time-use diary and ask participants to recall specific variations. A seeming limitation of the method – the inability to complete full observation days in the directly conflict-affected areas – was also very informative of the critical points where the conflict environment impacts everyday social reproduction. For example, in Myanmar, an observation day ended early after the participant's baby was rushed to hospital. In the traumatic process, the researcher was able to see how the poor healthcare infrastructure is not just threatening to children's wellbeing but also causes extreme depletion of the adults caring for them. In Sri Lanka, the inability to openly shadow participants working outside their homes (e.g. as one took her cows out to graze; as another worked in a local restaurant) demonstrated how embedded and feared the military presence is in local communities and how fractured the communities themselves are, despite the war being over.

MYANMAR

HISTORICAL CONTEXT

Myanmar¹ has experienced conflict for much of its history. Early Buddhist empires of the Burman and the Mon were established through martial strength. British colonisation (1825-1948) included three major Anglo-Burmese wars (First: 1824-1826; Second: 1852-1853; Third: 1885-1905) which created and amplified violent conflicts, and “ethnicised” Myanmar by cataloguing/creating 139 separate ethnic groups in Myanmar (Myint-U, 2020: 16; Wade, 2017). British colonial indirect rule and profit maximisation set the scene for extractive economies in both the agricultural heartlands (“Burma Proper”) as well as the resource rich borderlands (“Frontier Areas”) (Wade, 2017: 43).

The Japanese occupation (1942-1945), as in much of Asia, was the crucible of the Burmese independence movement. While Burman groups were recruited into pro Japanese militia, lured by the promise of independence from Britain, the Allies recruited ethnic minority groups like the Rohingya and Kachin into militia to fight the Japanese (Sadan, 2016; Wade, 2017).

After Burmese Independence, ethnic cleavages, colonial and wartime rivalries hampered the efforts of the overbearing ethnic Burman (or Bamar) leadership to establish a unitary nation state. Despite rhetoric on unity in the late 1940s, “Burma” was associated with Burmese ethnic group, and with Buddhism. Ethnic minorities (for example, the Kachin, Shan, Mon, Karen) as well as communist groups were given little space. As ethnic separatist movements and insurgencies continued to resist the state, the army became vital to maintaining territorial integrity (Jones, 2016: 97). Following the military takeover led by General Ne Win (1962-1987, with elections held from 1974), Burman Buddhist nationalism was used by the army a tool of political statecraft; military rule was justified by the need to control border areas (Taylor, 2009: 295). This was amplified in the context of Cold War geopolitics, where China, Thailand and the United States supported these separatist and insurgent movements with money, weapons, and places of refuge. The 1987 stock market crash caused factory closures, unemployment, state bankruptcy and failure to pay civil servants. The downturn precipitated widespread protests in 1988 calling for democratic reform and opening up of Myanmar took place. The army quashed such reforms, but not before the collapse of the Burmese Socialist Programme Party and renewed direct rule by the army (1988-2008).

Periodic ceasefires have occurred between the Burmese military and various insurgent groups (Sadan, 2016). The latest round of ceasefires (the “Nationwide Ceasefire Agreement”) coincided with Burmese militaries’ concessions to procedural democracy in around 2008. Democracy and ceasefires are correlative but not causatively related, however, as the Kachin again took arms against the Burmese military state in 2011 (Brenner, 2019; Jones, 2016). Currently, the national peace process only incorporates one third of the armed groups in Myanmar/Burma (Zaw, 2019).

While many of Burma’s wars centred on separatism, increasingly muscular Burman ethno-nationalism and Buddhist violent extremism has focussed on Muslims in Myanmar (who can be ethnically Burman, Rohingya, Shan or another ethnic group). Supremacist groups work with sections of the state, including the army, to propagate the notion that the Buddhist nation is vulnerable to deracination by Muslims (Kyaw, 2016; Schonthal & Walton, 2016).

¹ Historical name used in this section in line with the name of the state at the time being discussed.

POLITICAL ECONOMY

The militarised state elite, who have shaped most political and economic institutions for their benefit, characterise Myanmar's political economy (Jones, 2016). Rich in natural resources, a high population but low levels of education and development, many areas of the political economy benefit state elites, with little trickle down to peasant and working-class Burmese (Jones, 2016; Sadan, 2016; Woods, 2016). Some sectors have been liberalised since 2011 (telecommunications for instance) and outright extraction by the military in some central areas of Myanmar have been wound down. However, border areas continue to be dominated by the Tatmadaw, who now have access to foreign direct investment from former Cold War adversaries, China and Thailand. In border areas (including areas in Shan State, Karen State, Chin State, Rakhine State, Wa State, Kayah state) the end of fighting under ceasefires in the early to mid-1990s was a form of military state-building that allowed the state/military to expand its authority and control over land and people in the borderlands through a combination of military, economic and state institutional encroachment and control (Brenner, 2019). The end of fighting is tied to the extraction and trade of licit and illicit resource wealth (timber, amber, jade, rubies, opium, heroin, methamphetamines, human trafficking, gambling). Kevin Woods has usefully termed this state of affairs holding in the Burmese borderlands, "ceasefire capitalism" (2016). This is not a monolithic structure, but a process constantly changing, dependent on geopolitics, trade economies and the make-up and legitimacy of ethnic armed groups (Brenner, 2019).

GENDER RELATIONS

Variegated and resilient patriarchal systems present in all areas, at all levels. Conservative gender roles focussing on different aspects of women's organisation, work, behaviour, sexuality, and status have been mobilised by both the Burman dominated state of Myanmar and by armed ethnic organisations (Hedström, 2016: 61). At the same time, women have been mobilised along more feminist lines in a dual struggle for women's rights and broader political struggles for the nation/ethnic autonomy or democracy (Olivius & Hedström, 2019). Even in the context of some mobilisation of women, most institutions of state power have been male dominated. In the 1980s, during the "Burmese way to socialism" backed by the military, "only eight of the Party's (Burmese Socialist Programme Party) 280 members of the Party Central Committee in 1985 were women" (Taylor, 2009: 385).

The Myanmar state currently intervenes to reinforce unequal gender relations. A male headed household with a male breadwinner and a female homemaker is the official ideal of the state sanctioned Burman dominated government (CEDAW, 2008; Hedström, 2016: 64).⁴ There are no reliable studies on the prevalence of violence against women in Myanmar, but the CEDAW Committee notes there is high levels of violence against women, domestic violence, sexual assault and rape, all accompanied by a culture of silence and impunity (CEDAW, 2008).

Women's bodies have become symbolic markers of identity for ethnic groups, and this affects their access to rights. Legal pluralism between state family law and Islamic traditional law places a double othering and double burden on women in those communities (Crouch, 2016). Traditional gender roles remain significant sources of inequality among all ethnic groups in Myanmar. There are strong taboos on female pollution through menses and fertility, Christian patriarchal structures of male power in the church, widespread practices of brideprice, bride-napping, and child marriage (Banerjee, 2019; CEDAW, 2008).

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY: CARRYING OUT THE FEOT IN MYANMAR

In Myanmar, Site 1, an IDP camp in Myitkyina, was chosen as representative of a very conflict-affected community. Site 2 was proximate to conflict, with large numbers of families directly involved as members of the Kachin Independence organisation. In Site 3, a site was chosen that was relatively stable, and broadly representative of a typical Bamar Burmese way of life.

The research in Kachin State was conducted in a team with Kachinland Research Centre.⁵ The research participants in Site 1 (Myitkyina) and Site 2 (Namti) were selected in discussion with the country experts at Kachinland. Care was taken to ensure that these were communities that had an ongoing and deep relationship with the partner organisation. In Site 3 (Mawlamyine), a gender expert and researcher local to the area was consulted, and a site chosen with which she had an ongoing connection.

In all three sites, the socio-economic profiles of the participants roughly mirrored the average across the district. In Kachin State, the six participants across two sites were Christian (majority Baptist, one Catholic), living under the poverty line, and with primary school educations.

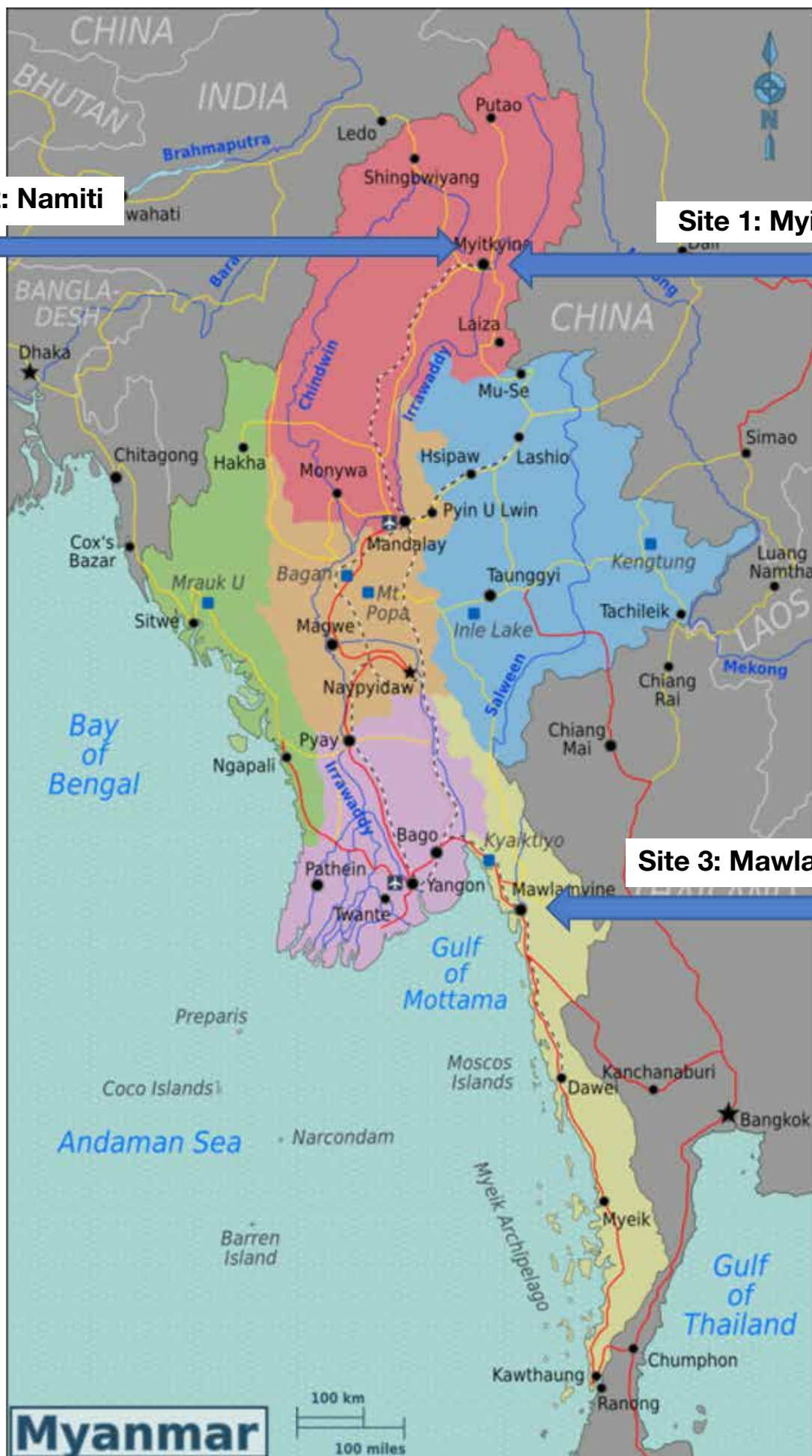
Three out of six participants in Kachin State were in female headed households, and three had male partners present. This reflects the high numbers of women in these conflict-affected areas living without their male spouse. In Mawlamyine, all three households were couples with husbands present. All nine women participants were mothers.

Table 1: Fieldwork Sites in Myanmar

FIELDWORK SITE	LOCATION	RESEARCH ASSISTANCE PARTNER
1: Conflict-affected (MYIT)	IDP Camp, Myitkyina, Kachin State	Organisation: Kachinland Research Centre
2: Proximate to conflict (NAM)	Namti, in the grey zone, Kachin State	Organisation: Kachinland Research Centre
3: Relatively Stable (MAW)	Paung Township, Mawlamyine, Mon State	Individual Feminist Researcher, based in Mon State and Chiang Mai, Thailand

SITE 1: CONFLICT-AFFECTED: IDP CAMP, MYITKYINA, KACHIN STATE

The first site⁶ chosen in conjunction with Kachinland Research Centre (Site 1 MYIT) was an internally displaced persons (IDP) camp in Myitkyina. We categorise this site as severely conflict-affected. After the Kachin ceasefire ended in 2011, fighting broke out to the north and east of Myitkyina, the regional capital of Kachin State. Myitkyina has been heavily militarised for decades, and it is the location of the Burmese Military or “Tatmadaw” Northern Command, which houses 33 infantry battalions and a Tatmadaw air force base (Globalsecurity.org, 2015; Myoe, 2009). Since the fighting restarted in 2011, hundreds of thousands of Kachin people have been displaced from areas around Myitkyina. There are more than 18 IDP camps in Myitkyina and around 100,000 Kachin people in IDP camps in Kachin State (OCHA, 2019).



Site 2: Namiti

Site 1: Myitkyina

Site 3: Mawlamyine

Source: Wikimedia Commons. 2009. Perry-Castañeda Library Map Collection

Myitkyina is the centre of the northern extractive economy, and a key area for army businesses in jade, gemstones and timber, which they have prised out of the control of the KIA during the ceasefire from 1994-2011. The army and the central Myanmar state has used a combination of economic control, buying off elites, landgrabs, and stronger economic and military links with China to extend political and economic control into these borderland regions, despite the KIA taking up arms again in 2011 (see, for example, Brenner, 2019; Jones, 2016; Woods, 2011, 2016)

The camp is situated around 5 kilometres from the city centre of Myitkyina on a highland plain near the Irrawaddy river. It comprises a whole village displaced from **** in the formerly KIA controlled highlands in 2017. With a resident population of 859 people, it is considered a small camp. The majority of residents are American Baptist Christian,⁷ and the local Baptist Church runs the camp, with donations from the powerful Kachin Baptist Convention and organisations like UNHCR.



Our participant selection in the IDP Camp followed consultation with the research team from Kachinland Research Centre and the male camp leader. Our three participants from the Myitkyina IDP camp (MYIT001, MYIT002 and MYIT003) were selected as representative of general demographic trends (female headed households, extra caring responsibilities, lower levels of education and wealth) in the camp. Camp residents comprise mostly female-headed households and their children; thus, two of our participants were chosen because they were female heads of households. Many of the women in the camp are married to, or widows of, Kachin Independence Army (KIA) soldiers, and one of our participants was a wife of a serving KIA soldier. The following three participants were proposed:

- MYIT001 A woman with an (absent) husband in the KIA
- MYIT002 A woman with a disabled family member
- MYIT003 A woman living with her husband (male-headed household)

On our first visit to the camp, the male camp leader said he would be happy to talk to interested participants, and let them know what the research involved and the compensation they would receive. On our second visit, the camp leader had already discussed the research with the proposed participants and introduced us. We then spent about one hour with each participant doing the pre-observation interview, with the research assistant taking around half an hour to explain the research, consent, withdrawal of consent, research ethics, and the three-step method comprising (1) pre-observation interview (2) time use survey (3) post observation interview.

Table 2: Participants in Site 1, Conflict-affected (Myitkyina, Kachin State)

	AGE	CIVIL STATUS	EDUCATION	FAMILY MEMBERS	PARTICIPANT'S WORK ⁸	FAMILY'S WORK	INCOME / MONTH
MYIT001	40	Married	Primary School	7, three of her children passed away, so there are four of them in the house. She is the de facto household head as her husband is away fighting in the KIA.	Caring, cooking, collecting wood.	Her husband is a soldier (currently living with his company).	Low
MYIT002	52	Widow	Primary School	7, one disabled son. She is the household head.	Cooking, collecting wood.	–	Low
MYIT003	36	Married	Primary School	7, three children and two younger sisters in the house. Her husband is the household head.	Running small shop in the camp; caring for her children.	Her husband is a day labourer.	Low



SITE 2: PROXIMATE TO CONFLICT: TOWN OF NAMTI, KACHIN STATE

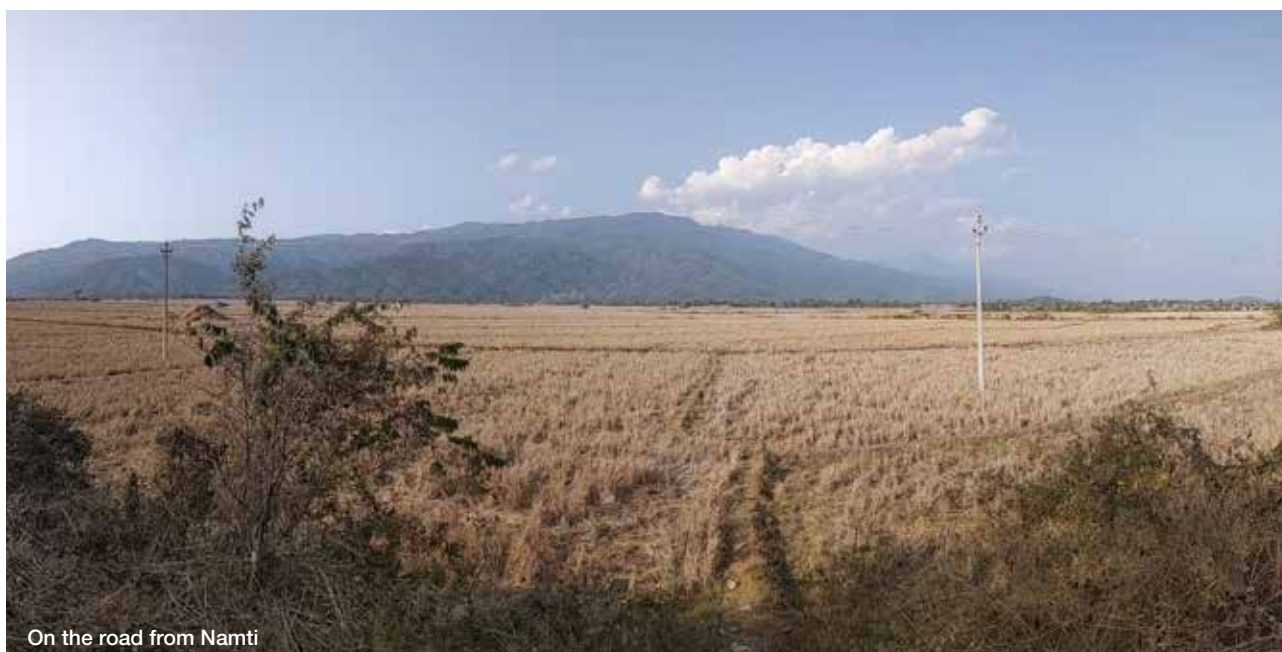
In conjunction with the research partner, we selected Namti as a site that was proximate to conflict. Site 2 Namti, is a town in the “grey zone” between KIA-controlled areas and central government controlled areas in northern Myanmar. We classify this site as “proximate to conflict”, with the Tatmadaw shelling in the area reported as recently as May 2018. Foreigners and Kachin people are allowed to travel to Namti but there is a military checkpoint on the road to Namti from Myitkyina, and travellers cross through the 15 kilometers of road adjacent to the Northern Command in Myitkyina. Namti is also home to large numbers of IDPs from recent fighting (Pwint, 2018).

The economy of Namti is a mix of subsistence farming, forestry, and waged labour. During the ceasefire, the KIO and their affiliates operated a number of businesses, in addition to forestry, jade mining (in nearby Hpakan), heroin, and gems. A sugar mill in Namti run by the KIO has remained out of operation since the resumption of fighting (BNOnline.net, 2008). The large volumes of licit and illicit trade running through the town, and the reliance of both the KIA and Tatmadaw on heroin trade means that there are large numbers of heroin addicts in the town. Kachin patrilineal kinship organisation is hierarchical, with the control of inheritance, marriage, and the exchange of women crucial to the political economy of the region (Hedström, 2016).

Namti is situated in the high plains underneath mountains, around 40km from Myitkyina, and is a village of a few thousand residents.⁹ The residents are ethnically diverse, but large numbers of people follow Christian religions. Many follow the American Baptist Church, but a number are also Catholic. Many KIO leaders, poets and notables come from Namti.¹⁰

Our participant selection in Namti followed consultation with the research team from Kachinland Research Centre and the leader of the quarter in Namti where we were based. Participants in Namti were relatively representative of typical women in the town (families with associations with the KIA, high levels of drug and alcohol abuse, low levels of education and wealth, families with a history of displacement). The three households comprised:

- NAM004 A woman whose husband was a KIA soldier (currently jailed)
- NAM005 A woman whose husband is present (male-headed household)
- NAM006 A woman with an alcoholic husband (also former KIA)



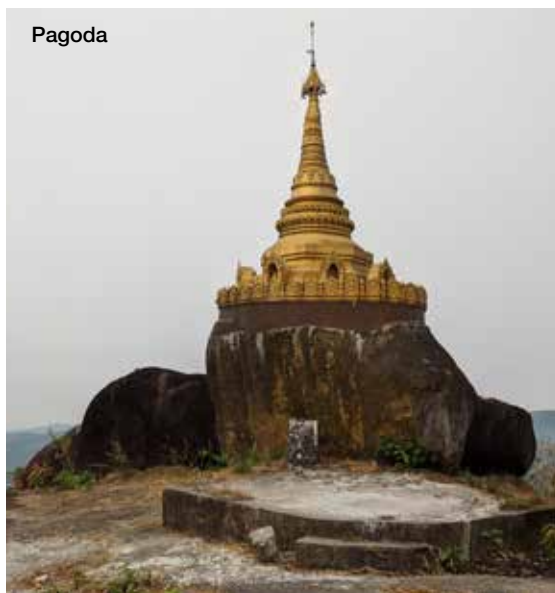
On the road from Namti



We spent about two hours with the village leader and his clerk (from the central government) discussing the research aims, then spent about one hour with each participant doing the pre-observation interview, with the research assistant taking around half an hour to explain the research, consent, withdrawal of consent, research ethics, and the three-step method comprising (1) pre-observation interview (2) time use survey (3) post observation interview. In Namti, as discussed in the section on the State below, we had to do these pre-observation interviews over two days, due to issues with the government administration.

Table 3: Participants in Site 2, Conflict-Proximate (Namti, Kachin State)

	AGE	CIVIL STATUS	EDUCATION	FAMILY MEMBERS	PARTICIPANT'S WORK	FAMILY'S WORK	INCOME / MONTH
NAM004	32	Married	Primary School	8, one of her own sons, two stepchildren, and the three children of her sister in law. She is the de facto household head as her husband is in jail.	Caring, cooking, cleaning, washing	Her husband is a soldier (currently in jail).	Low
NAM005	36	Married	Primary School	8, five of her own children, one nephew. Her elderly father eats with them, and is cared for by NAM005. Her husband is the household head.	Caring, cooking, washing, caring for her pigs	Her husband is a day labourer and a tuk-tuk driver, as well as being the leader of a local anti-narcotics policing group.	Middle
NAM006	37	Married	Primary School	10, seven children, one who is eighteen already, and her mother in law. She is the main breadwinner and carer as her husband is an alcoholic and former soldier.	Cooking, collecting wood, washing.	Her husband is a day labourer.	Low



Pagoda



A sketch of the Mawlamyine Monastery/Barracks

SITE 3: RELATIVELY STABLE: PAUNG TOWNSHIP, MAWLAMYINE, MON STATE

Site 3 is far to the south of the first two sites, south of Yangon in Mon State. Here we worked with a researcher who is a member of the Burmese women's movement, and who is local to the area. We consider Mawlamyine to be relatively stable, although it is also an area with significant mobilisation to ultra-nationalism (Buddhist extremism). Like much of Myanmar, it is also militarised with large numbers of Tatmadaw visible, on the streets, controlling traffic, and active in public life. Mon state also contains Karen areas (current armed ceasefire) on the other side of the mountains towards the Thai border. The site neighbours a number of conflict areas, but a ceasefire with the New Mon State Party was signed in 1995, and the site has been relatively stable. More recently, Mawlamyine was the origin site of the ultra-nationalist Buddhist 969 movement, which has been responsible for inciting hate speech and violence against Burmese Muslims (Kyaw, 2016). The presence of large numbers of nationalist monks, with strong links to the Tatmadaw means that although we consider the site stable, it is militarised.

The economy of Mawlamyine is dominated by larger scale agriculture, subsistence agriculture, mining, tourism, and various manufacturing. The former capital under the mercantile period of British colonialism, it is close to the Thai border and at the mouth of the Thanlin river, and serves as trading port for southern Myanmar. Many residents of Mon state work in Thailand as factory workers, domestic helpers and fishers. Religion, economy, and military seem tightly bound together, with one monastery near to an observation site in Paung township housing monks and Tatmadaw soldiers. The soldiers were providing security for a mining project. They had been there for ten years, according to informants.

Site 3, Paung Township is located around 20km outside of Mawlamyine. It has an ethnic Burmese and Buddhist majority, but significant Hindu and Muslim populations. There are thousands of temples in Mawlamyine, and monks in single file line the roads from 4.30am every morning to the food collect offerings due to them from the women villagers.

Our participant selection in Mawlamyine was largely carried out by the research assistant, a feminist activist, who has deep connections to the area. Participants in Mawlamyine were not the poorest sample, but still typical from the area of Paung. They were also all part of male-headed households, again, this is more representative of the south where husbands are not fighting for the KIA, for example.

- MAW007 A woman with three children, plus her sisters two children. A farmer.
- MAW008 A woman with one child, a farmer.
- MAW009 A woman with four older or grown up children, with a shop.



MAW008 mum's kitchen where communal lunch is prepared every day

In Mawlamyine we conducted the pre-observation survey over two days. We spent about two hours with the village leader and his clerk (from the central government) discussing the research aims. Then we spent about one hour with each participant doing the pre-observation interview, with the research assistant taking around half an hour to explain the research, consent, withdrawal of consent, research ethics, and the three-step method comprising (1) pre-observation interview (2) time use survey (3) post observation interview.

Table 4: Participants in Site 3, Relatively Stable (Paung Township, Mawlamyine, Mon State)

	AGE	CIVIL STATUS	EDUCATION	FAMILY MEMBERS	PARTICIPANT'S WORK	FAMILY'S WORK	INCOME / MONTH
MAW007	38	Married	Primary School	8, her three daughters, a niece and nephew, and her husband. Her husband is the household head.	Preparing children for school, washing, cooking, farming.	The husband goes out to volunteer his time to help others (as head of the NLD for this village) and sometimes helps with the housework.	Low
MAW008	34	Married	Primary School	Her daughter and her husband.	Cooking, farming, washing.	The husband is a motorcycle taxi for market products.	Middle
MAW009	50	Married	Primary School	Her, her husband and two daughters.	Cooking, cleaning, washing, selling food, preparing the children for school, farming.	The husband is a farmer, sells food and helps with the household chores.	Middle



MAW008 and her sister return to weeding with the hoe in the afternoon joined by their elderly mother

ANALYSIS

Early analysis of the fieldwork develops six major themes: social reproduction, the gender division of labour, home and household, conflict and violence, depletion and social infrastructure. Overall, there are differences in the volume, intensity of productive and social reproductive work across the three sites from more to less conflict-affected. The result of the research in all three sites was that women in more conflict-affected sites were more depleted, even doing the same or less domestic and productive work. This was largely because of male absence/non-contribution and the lack of social and state services that would replenish them, as well as higher care burdens because of war and less control over sexual reproductive health. In relatively stable areas, women were able to perform paid work, having access to land, and caring support from relatives.

SOCIAL REPRODUCTION

From the pre-observation survey we were able to glean some context with regards to the social reproduction. The information on the number of members in the family, household headship and caring responsibilities was triangulated with the FEOT (see table below) to show how social reproduction was carried out in conflict-affected areas.

Caring responsibilities were apparent during the first steps of the pre-observation survey. For instance, in the IDP camp in Myitkyina, MYIT001 told us how her caring responsibilities included her elderly and partially disabled mother in law, as well as her young children. She also told us that she had had more children, but they had died.

There are 7 family members, three of my children passed away, so there are four of them in the house. I am the de facto household head as my husband is away fighting in the KIA¹¹

From all three forms of data (pre-observation survey, FEOT and the post-survey interview), we knew that childcare and elder care were two forms of labour that took up the most of all nine participants' days across all the sites. Sometimes childcare was the primary activity (when dressing, talking to, washing children) or it could be a secondary activity while performing some other domestic work or productive work.

Take the example of FEOT observation below from Nanti, the proximate to conflict house in Kachin state. We knew from the pre-observation survey that NAM005 was largely engaged in childcare, but she had good financial and emotional support from her husband, who was living in the house, and who worked as a share cropper, a tuk-tuk driver, and had a role in the local government. NAM005's care responsibilities were substantial, and although she told us she had five children, most primary school age, we didn't realise until using the FEOT that her partially blind and deaf father visited her house for food, medicine and care every day. From the time use survey (shown in the table below), we know that NAM005 performed nearly all of her other social reproductive work while also engaging in childcare, often with her youngest child strapped to her back, or breastfeeding him.



MAW008 feeding her rambunctious daughter

7:30:00 AM	Took the children to Sunday School
7:45:00 AM	Bringing the children back from Sunday School
8:00:00 AM	Drawing water from the well to make tea. Clearing up the dishwashing area behind the outdoor kitchen. NAM005's father arrives and she chats with him.
8:15:00 AM	Wrapping the smallest child onto her back ; calling the kids to come and have breakfast. Washing plates and serving breakfast
8:30:00 AM	NAM005 is feeding her smallest son soft rice while she carries him on her back with a sling
8:45:00 AM	Washing dishes, yelling at dog. Giving water and medicine to her elderly father . Her oldest son, a young teenager, fetches water. Her husband is holding her smallest son.
9:00:00 AM	Travelling to church. Getting kids ready in their church clothes. Putting on makeup, a good longyi, and a suit jacket. She has a lace veil.
9:15:00 AM	At church, praying, singing, call response, the song "Hallelujah" and hymns in Jinghpaw
9:30:00 AM	Still at church, breastfeeding her small son , praying, helping keep him entertained.
9:45:00 AM	Praying, watching the service, listening.
10:00:00 AM	Listening to the service. Breastfeeding her son . Praying
10:15:00 AM	Church is finished. We travel back

On Sunday, parenting and other care took up the greatest number of hours for NAM004. At church she was still breastfeeding, for example.

Mid-morning, NAM004 returns home and starts cooking the midday meal, all the while holding her baby on her back.

11:00:00 AM	Preparing soup. Boiling water. All while carrying her youngest son on her back
11:15:00 AM	Preparing food, entertaining the kids who are running around all day because it is Sunday. All with the small son wrapped on her back
11:30:00 AM	Threading chillies onto a skewer to roast on the fire. Roasting tomatoes. Topping and tailing beans. Still holding her baby in a sling on her back.
11:45:00 AM	Pounding roast chillies and tomatoes (blackened skin removed) into a paste, still carrying her baby. Entertaining the baby by imitating the cat who is hanging out in the kitchen. Cleaning dishes as she goes in the outside wash space. Fetching more water for the kitchen from the well. Still holding her baby in a sling on her back.
12:00:00 PM	Slicing green beans very thinly. Boiling water. Still holding her baby in a sling on her back.
12:15:00 PM	Chopping herbs for stir-fry beans. Boiling water. Still holding her baby in a sling on her back. Laughing at her kids' games. Washing dishes in the outside annex.
12:30:00 PM	Stir frying vegetables, frying eggs. Serving vegetables into serving bowls. Still holding her baby in a sling on her back.



MAW008 washes clothes in the early evening

According to our time use observation data, after childcare, which occurred all day across all sites, cooking, washing dishes and washing laundry were the main domestic work activities and themes in the day. Washing laundry consumed a large part of every participant's day in all three sites. Consider MYIT001 spending 1 hour and 15 minutes washing laundry and NAM006's 1 hour 30 minutes washing laundry, as seen in the time use survey below. Even in the stable area of Mawlamyine, MAW007 had two extra children to take care of, her sister's kids, and she spent 1 hour 30 minutes washing.

MYIT001's morning washing schedule in the IDP Camp in Myitkyina. She starts so early because the water is only turned on in the camp between 4.30am and 5.30am:

Participant Code MYIT001						
Time	4:30 AM	4:45 AM	5:00 AM	5:15 AM	5:30 AM	5:45 AM
Activity	Wake up. Take large buckets to go and fill water at the IDP camp water supply.	Washing laundry.	Washing laundry.	Washing laundry.	Washing laundry.	Washing laundry.

In Namti, the site proximate to conflict, NAM006 had more children (nine) and therefore much more washing. The time use survey records her washing for hours:

Participant Code NAM006						
Time	10:00 AM	10:15 AM	10:30 AM	10:45 AM	11:00 AM	11:15 AM
Activity	Again walking across the road to the neighbour's property which has a decent well and a half built house. Drawing water from (the neighbours') well. Putting washing powder in the plastic basin. Using a nail brush to scrub the clothes.	Having scrubbed the inside and the outside of the clothes, NAM 006 pounds each piece of laundry with a wooden club.	Still washing and scrubbing the giant pile of laundry.	Still washing and scrubbing the giant pile of laundry.	Still washing; drawing more water from the well, talking with the younger boy as he plays nearby. Changing the baby. No nappies here. Rinsing the laundry in clean water. Washing the kid's bottom with clean water after he pooped.	NAM006 is nearly finished the washing. The town leader arrives to take her to a women's community meeting at the church. She rides pillion with the town leader to the meeting.

In Mawlamyine, the relatively stable area, MAW007 did laundry twice, once in the morning and once in the evening. She washed for 1 hour and 30 minutes.

Participant Code NAM007						
7:00 AM	7:15 AM	3:45 PM	4:00 PM	4:15 PM	4:30 PM	4:45 PM
Starting the laundry.	Washing laundry. Scrubbing the clothes. Shooing the chickens away from the laundry.	Finishing the cooking. Starting to do washing and folding longhi.	Soaping and scrubbing cloths.	Still washing laundry.	Rinsing the clothes and hanging them out.	Rinsing the clothes and hanging them out.

CONFLICT AND VIOLENCE

Violence against women (VAW) was present in all the sites, with participants or gatekeepers disclosing it to us in pre-observation interviews, or us hearing about it or witnessing men's violence against women during the time use observations, and most commonly, when participants disclosed it to us in the post-observation interviews.

The most egregious cases of VAW were visible and "mundane" intimate partner violence in the site proximate to conflict. In Namti, an informal chat with a local health worker revealed the extent of NAM006's husband's abuse and coercion control through sexual reproduction:

*"NAM006 is a tough case. Poor woman. Her husband beats her and rapes her, that's why she has so many kids. Before the birth of her last child, NAM006 hid the pregnancy from the nurse. The nurse had to press to examine her physically. She was ashamed, and afraid of her husband. The nurse had arranged (with NAM006's consent) for someone to adopt the baby (knowing that NAM006 was exhausted), but the husband refused."*¹²

It was common knowledge in the village that her husband beats NAM006. Note from the time use observation recount:

*We leave [NAM006's house]. Afterwards, we find out from the neighbour that NAM006's husband beat NAM006 heavily that night. Enough that the neighbours heard and intervened.*¹³

Again, in Namti, the proximate to conflict site, NAM004, who had been an IDP as a young girl, before being married off quite young for a brideprice, was beaten so hard she became partially deaf. She disclosed this to us while we were sitting in her kitchen during the time use survey. Kitchens were often a place to disclose VAW, because men were not allowed in them for cultural reasons.

11:45AM

Activities: Putting the rice in the pot. Soaking and washing green beans. Chatting with RA Nyem.

Notes: NAM004 has a fairly comfortable house and garden but a more precarious and difficult position in the family (her in-laws). NAM004 was married before, they lived together for three years but her ex-mother in law made them separate.

12:00PM

Activities: Boiling water for a soup. Telling us the story of her abusive first marriage. She's crying, and washing pots and pans, and washing broccoli.

*Notes: Her ex-husband was quite wealthy. He beat her all the time - so hard one time that she is partially deaf in one ear. He beat her because she was "barren" (she wasn't, having since had children, it was obviously his infertility) and because he paid a brideprice. He burnt all of her clothes. She's happier now, even if they [her and her new husband] are poor.*¹⁴

Participant Code NAM004		
10:30 AM	Hanging out laundry. Burning rubbish at the rubbish pit at the back of the yard	
10:45 AM	Sweeping the backyard. Cleaning the washing area. Washing the kitchen table.	Mother in Law (MIL) and the two older nieces are cutting the turmeric into 2mm slices. The blades they are using are sharp but impractical, as they are unhafted (without handles).
11:00 AM	Walking to the local small shop to buy a small bottle of vegetable oil.	We move into the kitchen.
11:15 AM	NAM004 lights the inside kitchen fire using a bit of plastic rubbish. She is getting pots ready. Washing rice.	Somehow NAM004 managed to wash the whole kitchen floor without my noticing.
11:30 AM	Peeling taro and chatting with RA Nyem. Cooking rice.	NAM004 tells RA Nyem that her brother in law has two wives. NAM004 doesn't approve - and she doesn't get along with him.
11:45 AM	Putting the rice in the pot. Soaking and washing green beans. Chatting with RA Nyem.	NAM004 has a fairly comfortable house and garden but a more precarious and difficult position in the family (her in-laws). NAM004 was married before, they lived together for three years but her ex-MIL made them separate.
12:00 PM	Boiling water for a soup. Telling us the story of her abusive first marriage. She's crying, and washing pots and pans, and washing broccoli	Her ex-husband was quite wealthy. He beat her all the time - so hard one time that she is partially deaf / deaf in one ear. He beat her because she was "barren" (she wasn't, having since had children, it was obviously his infertility) and because he paid a bride-price. He burnt all of her clothes. She's happier now, even if they are poor.
12:15 PM	Washing pork chops. Chopping pork. Boiling water for soup. Checking the steaming rice.	We bought the meat and the vegetables. As with the rest of the participants, most would never be able to eat meat regularly or have a few vegetable dishes at one time.

NAM005 is still working a lot, but the intensity of work slows mid-morning as she starts to cook. In the kitchen, she starts to open up to us about her life and her experiences as a victim of severe domestic violence from her ex-husband.

In the post-observation interviews in conflict zones, women often drew links between the violent conflict and violence against women. The same woman NAM004 in the Kachin grey zone, described intense fear: fear of violent reprisals from the Burmese military, and fear of her ex-husband. In response to the question: do you feel safe in your home, NAM004 said:

Um, while my husband goes back to his revolutionary force [the KIA], and the Burmese Army happens to know that he is a KIA soldier we will be in grave danger. It poses a permanent security risk for our family. Therefore, when my husband comes back home, the first thing I have to do is hide his KIA uniform. I am quite worried that they might come to interrogate us. I saw in an online video clip, the Burmese soldier came in civilian clothes to spy on the rebels in the village. I fear that they might come to interrogate in civilian clothes.

I feel safe somehow. But I fear that there will be a surprise check. The Burmese soldiers use to roam around in the village in civilian clothes.

I do not feel good. Just recently [my husband] followed me. I told him that we had already signed the divorce certificate. He threatened me to beat me to death. We got divorced in the last November. I threatened him as well he continued to harass me I will lodge a complaint to KIA leaders.¹⁵

Even outside of the conflict zones (Sites 1 and 2), however, there is generalized acceptance of violence against women as part of the everyday. In relatively-stable Mawlamyine in the south, our participant, MAW008, told us during the time use observation that hers was a forced marriage, that she is at peace with now, but at the time she did not consent to it. Instead, her husband kidnapped her, in accordance with a Burman Buddhist cultural custom, as she later explained in more detail in the post-observation interview.

When I was kidnapped, I really did not want to get married sine I was still enjoying my single life. He forced me to go with him at that time. I was really angry at him. Just as I saw the sandals, I even threw the sandals to him. I chose not to go back home since his friends also knew that I was with him and they might have told to the people in our village. If people from the village knew I was with him, there was no use or no one trusted me as a single. Therefore, I chose to stay with him. And, I knew that he was nice to me apart from kidnapping against my willingness. Even though we did not have any affair at that night, no one would trust me as a virgin. I felt so pity on myself but I had no choice. This is the only thing I really dislike in my whole life.¹⁶

Insecurity is an everyday experience in Kachin State. Many areas of Kachin State are forbidden to foreigners and require a permit. Travelling to and from fieldsites and in the everyday, military men are everywhere, and to reach Nanti, we went through a military checkpoint each day. This is normal for the citizens of Kachin State. The notes from the time use survey describe how this increased insecurity, especially when things didn't go according to plan, such as when we got a flat tyre from a bad section of road:

MWA researcher waiting for a flat tyre repair on the wrong side of the military checkpoint in the rain



The reason for my heightened anxiety was that we were on the wrong side of the military checkpoint to get back to Myitkyina, and the checkpoint closed at dark. Luckily, a man stopped his car on the side of the road to help us, and, with some back-and-forth to Namti, and a new tyre (the old one of course couldn't be patched) we were back on the road in under an hour. By the time we reached the outskirts of Namti, where the military airport on the Tatmadaw [Burmese military] base is, I could see that at night, the roads are all blockaded with barbed wire and plank barricades. The research assistant explained this as road blocks against smugglers (and rebel soldiers).

CHANGES IN SOCIAL REPRODUCTION

Conflict changed social reproduction and this could be seen across the differentially conflict-affected sites. Results from the time use survey showed that participants across the conflict-affected and conflict proximate sites spent the majority of their time on activities classed as social reproduction, especially domestic work. This is in contrast to the women in the sites that were relatively stable, who spent an equal amount of time on work outside the home. For example, while women in the conflict-affected areas did tasks such as collecting firewood or pounding turmeric that took place outside, or were part of paid work, they didn't work in agriculture or business, unlike all three women in the more stable part of Myanmar.

During the time-use observations, it was evident that women in the households in relatively stable areas had larger volumes of high intensity work, compared to women who had been displaced to government-controlled areas, or those in stable areas. While the participants in the IDP camp worked all day at social reproductive work, those in the relatively stable area (Mawlamyine) had extra hours because of their involvement in productive work (outside the home). For instance, MAW008 woke up around 5am to prepare food for her family before heading to her farm, and then started on washing laundry only after getting home from the farm. Likewise, MAW009 woke up at around 2am to start cooking for her small restaurant, so she could serve customers during the day.

Based on our post-observation interviews with those in conflict-affected and conflict proximate households in Myitkyina and Namti, the conflict has changed the volume and intensity of women's labour across the three sites. MYIT001, the wife of a KIA soldier away fighting, was displaced from her land in 2017 and describes it as:

Prior to living in the IDP camp, I worked very, very hard at her farm, clearing, planting vegetables cutting down trees. (...) Conflict has changed my life, before my life was physically demanding, but I wasn't as worried.¹⁷

In sum, women in the households affected by the conflict had less engagement in the productive sphere outside the home, but performed social reproductive work under far less supportive conditions, as the rest of this early analysis shows. The volume (how many hours of work) and its intensity (its physical or mental demands) of social reproductive labour changed over time, living arrangements, civil status and, crucially, because of the impact of conflict.

Conflict made women more vulnerable to state violence as they went about their social reproductive work. We witnessed that first hand during the time use study with MYIT001 at the IDP camp, when we changed plans for firewood collection to avoid going through a Tatmadaw checkpoint:

9:30 AM	9:45 AM	10:00 AM
Walking to get firewood	Walking to get firewood	Walking to get firewood
They don't need MYIT001's help today for the cooking so she decides to go and get firewood instead. They estimate it to be a 10km return journey.	MYIT001 initially wants to walk to their usual firewood collection spot that is on the other side of a Tatmadaw (military) checkpoint. The firewood spot is on someone else's land. There is quite a bit of back and forth. I say that my main concern is their safety, and any blowback they might get from the Tatmadaw. We decide to go through the checkpoint.	On the way to get firewood with our posse (MYIT001, her friend and her friend's daughter, plus RA Nyem and myself) we see two Tatmadaw on a motorcycle, who stare at us intently. I don't recognise them and start laughing at the intensity with which they have stared at me. But everyone else knows they are Tatmadaw because they are wearing dark green trousers. This makes everyone nervous. MYIT001 decides to take us to another spot, because she is worried for my safety.

In both the conflict-affected and proximate to conflict sites, firewood collection was considered women's work, and put women directly in contact with military, security, or other groups that could be violent.

During the post-observation interview, when we asked MYIT002 whether she felt safe in her home, she brought up how they had been attacked with a slingshot while collecting firewood. This would not have happened in her home village:



We hardly go on foot except for going to collect firewood and night market.

Yes, we have to fear the Burmese soldiers when we travel since we could not speak proper Burmese. We are afraid that they would stop us and frighten us.

When we were at our home village I felt safe if there is no fighting. Here we feel safe somehow. But here [in Myikyina] sometimes we got scolded.

We got scolded not by the landowners [when collecting firewood] but their guards. In our home village we can collect firewood anywhere we like. Last time a Burmese guard came after us with a catapult [slingshot], so we just collected fallen branches on the ground. Some guards were okay with that.¹⁸

Likewise, MYIT003 also said she feared the Tatmadaw:

I fear that we might meet Burmese soldiers in the jungle while collecting firewood. I feel insecure about going to the jungle.

I fear because I am a woman. We do not have the strength to respond back when things happen.¹⁹

Leaving aside the issue of conflict, in line with other studies of time use globally (Budlender, 2010), women experienced changes in social reproductive labour over time due to changes in marital status and living arrangements. In the relatively stable site of Mawlamyine, MAW007 described in the post observation interview how her burdens had lessened when she got her own household, separate from her mother in law:

I have less work right now since I live in my own house and I can manage to do as I wish. Before I lived with my mother in law, I had to do a lot. I had to get up very early and she would blame me if I didn't. I had to get up around 4 am to cook and to offer food to monks in the early morning. When the sun raised, I had to help with washing the clothes and helped my mother in law in selling some fried snack. During my stay with my mother in law, I had to do extra works such as frying snack and selling them, helping her in the farming.²⁰

Finally, during the post-observation interviews, we often heard that much of the work women did was not recognised as such. Non-recognition of social reproductive work, was rife, even in the relatively stable sites:

My main activities include washing clothes, cleaning and cooking. However, if someone asks me what I do, I just answer back "farming". How can I mention the rest of the activities such as washing and cooking as works since these are normal activities which every woman does? Nobody will consider to be work for women. Therefore, I say farming as a work.²¹



GENDER DIVISION OF LABOUR

The pre-observation survey showed that most women considered themselves to be engaged in care work and unpaid social reproduction. They would mention that their daily activities included getting firewood or laundry, or farm work. Our participants would describe their husband's productive work, and nothing indicated that their husbands (if present) did any social reproductive work in the home.

Strikingly, the traditional gender division of labour was most disrupted in the IDP camp, less disrupted in the grey zone of Namti, and most traditional in the relatively stable area. MYIT001 was a woman with an (absent) husband in the KIA, MYIT002 was a widow, and only MYIT003 lived with her husband. In the conflict proximate area one was in jail (the husband of NAM004), another was an alcoholic and former KIA soldier (NAM006's husband), and a third was conformed in a strict way to a pattern of male breadwinner, female homemaker. The closest example of this occurred in NAM005, whose husband was a sub-village chief, a tuk-tuk driver and a day labourer. Nonetheless, NAM005 still grew all the vegetables they needed for consumption all year, and her animal husbandry of pigs had paid for the impressive professional carpentry on their raised stilt house.

In the relatively stable site, two of the women had husbands who were present and also worked, but a third was simply too busy with his social life in the village, which involved volunteering his time to help other people.

In households where women participants lived with husbands, the time use observation showed men and women in most households engaging in productive work outside the home to varying degrees, but with a strict division of labour regarding domestic work and public work.

One of the most fruitful areas of inquiry in our post observation interviews was when we demonstrated how many hours our woman participants spent working. Then we asked the participants how they and their husbands' number of work hours (productive and social reproductive) compared. Our participant (MAW007) said of her husband, after a bit of thinking:

Comparing working hours between us, working at home and farm, I will have more hours than him. Even if you do something, he usually doesn't finish it and goes out in the middle of doing something. I will be the one who will finish doing it. For household chore, I am the one who works almost everything. For him, he only helps with picking the children from school. For the rest of the time in the whole day, he is usually outside and he comes to the farm for a few minutes. Just like that.²²

This led to some mental gymnastics from some women in male-headed households in explaining their gender division of labour. In the interview with MAW009, note how she verbalises the cognitive dissonance between the *fact* of her longer work hours, and the *ideal* that men ought to be the main workers in the household.

If I work 15 hours a day, then my husband also works the same hours too. He helps me when there are many customers and then goes to the farm. He doesn't have free time.

However, he may have fewer working hours, as you compare us. Because he starts drinking alcohol around 5pm. Then he also takes some rest in the afternoon and takes a nap. And he also has the time to watch TV. Then he goes to the farm and comes back around 5pm and starts drinking.²³

In terms of comparison of time use across the three sites, the gender division of labour was strongest in the relatively stable area, because of the number of female-headed households in the conflict-affected areas. In the IDP camp, for instance, women were shouldering the majority of labour burdens. Thus, in the post observation interview, MYIT001 said that for her, peace meant the return of her husband home from the frontline, to share those burdens.

HOME AND HOUSEHOLD

Displacement from homelands was one of the most constant themes in the conflict-affected and proximate to conflict sites. In the pre-observation survey in Kachin, four of our participants told us they had been displaced by the Tatmadaw, during the observation we found out that all six of the participants from Kachin State had family histories of displacement by the Tatmadaw.

Displacement of households from home and farmlands has had a significant impact on social reproduction and depletion. MYIT003 described how she had to move to Myitkyina from the Kachin highlands because of the conflict:

At that time the government informed us that they will have to do aerial bombing they asked the villagers to temporarily go away from the village and it was before the road blockade. We all came down here and lived in the camp. Soon after we came down here fighting started in our village. Our whole family is down in the IDP camp.

We could not carry all [our possessions]. When we revisited our home, they were all destroyed. We did not know who did it.

Some of our cattle are still there. It seems that all our pigs are killed. We do not know who did it. Not even a single pig left. Some families go back to the village and live here as well.²⁴

This quote from the post-observation interview describes how the theft of possessions, animals, and displacement depletes the ability of families to do social reproduction.



A rudimentary stool in the IDP camp

Even in the grey zone of Namti, where people had not been displaced, but farmlands impacted by conflict, our participants noted depletion of social reproduction, through reduced food, income and work opportunities and increased debt and a loss of social status because of the military presence. NAM004 described:

*Though we do not have paddy field of our own my husband used to work at other people's paddy field during the rainy season as a daily labourer. And then during the harvest season, he worked as a daily wagger there. He hardly missed this job opportunity even when he was sick. At least we had that income-earning opportunity. After the outbreak of the conflict, our family lost that opportunity. We could not work in the paddy field anymore. No paddy owners from **** do farming, and we could not work at the paddy fields as daily wagers. Since we lost this job opportunity it becomes increasingly difficult for our family to make ends meet. We could not afford to buy food since there is a lack of other job opportunities. Since we do not have enough money we had to borrow from others, setting aside our pride. So life was like that. Before the conflict broke out we could work in the paddy fields. Even though we do not have our paddy field since we could work at other people's paddy fields, we felt safe. Now we have degraded to the level where we had to borrow foods from others. We felt quite embarrassed.*

In the post-observation interviews, we could see how displacement led to negative health effects, because of the additional social reproduction work required in this context. In the IDP camp, MYIT002 told us during the post observation interview that conflict made a big difference to how she looked after her family, because she couldn't exercise any choice about what kind of work they do, or where they live, and they felt tired and unhappy.

Yes, there is [a difference in how we look after our family in the conflict]. In our home village, we can decide what we would do for a living. Here we have to stay where the camp committee locates us. We do not have a place to grow vegetables here. We cannot do what we like here.

We women are quite tired. We have to do household chores more. Men do a little bit, but we women have to do more. We have to wake up early, feed the pigs and chicken. It was quite tiresome living in our home village. Here, we do not have to do much. We do not need to go to the slash and burn cultivation field. We just need to cook and fetch water. That's it. Though we have to do less work here we are not happy. At the home village, we were quite happy living in our home.²⁵



The conflict impacted home and household in other ways that indicate depletion of those social ties. In our post-observation interview, one participant said there was more “tension” in the IDP camp, because there was no privacy, with former villagers living cheek-by-jowl in the camp.

Here there is more tension among the family members unlike before. Now there is separatism going on among the family members. Before we were quite united.²⁶

Consider the constant movement, and in the story of NAM006 in Namti, Kachin State, which she told us when we met the second time, on the day of the time use observation:

NAM006 is married to a former soldier who is now an alcoholic. Her, her husband and their nine children had been living at her mother's house for the past seven years. But last Monday, things reached crisis point. They moved into the shack in which we see them. They will build a new house on this land. The reason they were evicted from her mother's is that NAM006's older brother inherited their mother's land, and he evicted them. Before living with her parents, they had lived with NAM006's husband's parents in highland Kachin state. They fled seven years ago (2013) because of the conflict. The shack that they are currently in is actually located on other people's land. They are squatting with the approval of the village chief. The fact they are squatting on the land is the reason that neighbours are reluctant to help them build the house (usually house building is a community affair).²⁷

The initial displacement from his parent's lands disrupted the usual patrilineal residence pattern of the Kachin, and with it the couple's right to farmlands, impacting their ability to grow food. Through the conflict when her husband was fighting, they were able to live with their mother, but again patrilineal inheritance law meant NAM006's brother could evict them. Now, squatting on borrowed land, with no farmland, no real kitchen garden, no water supply, and a pit in the sand as a latrine, with no water the family can barely survive. NAM006 works all day to wash clothes, cook meagre food, and breastfeed her smallest child, but they are all unwell. The house is so unhygienic that both myself and my RA become ill from the food.

Some displacement from homelands in Kachin was easily apparent, as in the IDP camp, but other stories came out during observations. Aside from more recent fighting, or the direct conflicts between the KIA and the Tatmadaw, one participant in Namti had been a refugee from neighbouring Shan State, which is part of different conflict between an ethnic armed group and the Tatmadaw. She reflected on this when we were chatting in the kitchen during the time use observation, as recorded in the notes:

NAM005 is from Shan State. When she was four years old the government / military / pro-government militia had a policy of concentration, where they forcibly moved hamlets of 20 houses down into bigger villages. Her family and much of the village didn't want to be “concentrated”, so they all moved to Kachin State.²⁸

DEPLETION

Depletion through social reproductive labour, that is, where women became anxious and exhausted by the volume and intensity of social reproductive labour was observable at a number of points in the FEOT.

First, in the pre-observation interview, some depletion was obvious. For example, women with many care responsibilities with larger numbers of children or with disabled or elderly parents are physically aged, or mention that they are very tired in the opening parts of the pre-observation interview.

From the time use observations, we are also able to measure the depletion for those women with large numbers of people to care for. Consider these excerpts from the table of the time use survey of the heavily pregnant NAM004 in the site proximate to conflict (Namti).

NAM004 is married to a widower. She looks after his three children (the older girl [13]) and her mother in law, plus her two young boys, her stepsister's two children, and she is pregnant. The compound has two houses and the other, older house is that of her brother in law. He is the older brother of her husband.

NAM004 is, as she is the whole time, supervising the half a dozen children under 6 who are constantly playing in the yard.

15 people altogether live in the compound. The boys (I think there are around 5 under 5 years old) are playing with a toy pump gun and a toy uzi submachine gun.



NAM004s family keeping warm

8:30 AM	Still peeling the turmeric with the machete blade. NAM004 cuts her finger; not too badly but deep enough that it won't stop bleeding. I help treat it with my first aid kit and ask that she stops working. RA Nyem takes over the peeling with the MIL	
8:45 AM	After I disinfect, band aid and tape the cut, she still feels uncomfortable not working and goes inside to clean up from breakfast.	A point for the method: I have started explaining that we are not there to test or measure how much the participant is working; it's not a judgement of whether they are a good woman or not. However, there is a degree of performing work for the outside observer that must be taken into account in the method.
9:00 AM	NAM004 is sweeping the yard with a can broom. NAM004's niece (13) washes clothes, while the stepson (11) draws water from the well. NAM004 is, as she is the whole time, supervising the half a dozen children under 6 who are constantly playing in the yard. NAM004 then draws water from the well and cleans and sluices the kitchen.	The house is bamboo thatch, raised on stilts, with a kitchen inside the house. There is a concrete firepit inside the kitchen, which strikes me as both bad for smoke inhalation and a fire risk.
9:15 AM	She starts peeling turmeric again careful not to hurt her finger, or get it wet. Washing her tea cups. Making tea.	NAM004 is married to a widower. She looks after his three children (the older girl [13]) and her mother in law, plus her two young boys, her stepsister's two children, and she is pregnant. The compound has two houses and the other, older house is that of her brother in law. He is the older brother of her husband.
9:30 AM	NAM004 is making tea for me and cleaning the kitchen. She is checking to make sure the MIL and RA Nyem haven't missed any of the precious turmeric in the water filled basin. She tips the water and peels into the garden.	15 people altogether live in the compound. The boys (I think there are around 5 under 5) are playing with a toy pump gun and a toy uzi submachine gun.
9:45 AM	NAM004 puts water with leftover rice to feed the chickens. MIL checks the girls' hair for hair lice.	The yard is home to one chicken with around 6 chicks, and a duck pair with around 4 or 5 ducklings. Sometimes I get confused about the gender of the kids. Grown women must wear a longyi, while younger girls wear whatever. Often they are in fancy pink tutus or dresses, but with shorn heads (I assume from the headlice).
10:00:AM	NAM004 draws water repeatedly from the well; she fills a large plastic basin and two bucks. She puts a whole packet (50 grams) of washing powder on the laundry in the basin. Taking one piece of clothing at a time, she beats it first with a wooden club, then scrubs it with a nylon nail brush before putting it aside.	There are no nappies / diapers in these Kachin communities so every time a young child poos or wees, someone has to either prevent that from happening - by stripping the clothes off or down quickly - or they must be washed. This leads to a mountain of laundry by the end of the day.
10:15 AM	Pounding laundry.	The neighbourhood women drift away.
10:30:AM	Hanging out laundry. Burning rubbish at the rubbish pit at the back of the yard.	



Depletion of household financial resources (needed here to sustain life) occurred to a distressing level in the IDP camp. MYIT002 compared her current life in the camp with her life of subsistence cultivation and hunting and said that after displacement, life was more difficult, with food (from welfare or otherwise) “used up more quickly” and the “have to borrow from others”. The result of this constant depletion was worry, “about rice” and “about the next meal”.²⁹

A major marker of depletion as it occurred in the research was “tiredness”. The post observation interviews were best able to capture women’s responses to tiredness and work. Even in the “relatively stable” area women felt depleted by the activities they do. Take for example, MAW007, the vegetable farmer who said to us during the post-observation interview:

*Of course, it is so tiring. I sometimes moan while I am doing all these activities for all the children, saying: “Oh goodness! I don’t even want to do anything!” or something like that. I am not happy to do these but I have to do them, as a woman (...)*³⁰

MAW007 felt guilty about being so tired, because she no longer got up early to cook food for the monks, as pious women should, even though she knew getting up too early was bad for her already poor health,

*Of all of the activities, I feel the most tired when I have to get up early. I can’t cope up the whole day if I don’t have enough sleep after I get up very early. For me, I usually go to bed around 9 pm and wake up around 5 am in the morning. Even though I still have 8-hour sleep, I still feel so tired. Some women get up 4 am in the morning for cooking and offering food to monks in the morning. But, I can’t do that like them.*³¹

This was amplified in MAW007’s case because of her underlying health problems (high blood pressure and diabetes). As the notes from the observational time use survey refer to:

*The kids arrive back from school. MAW007 looks tired and RA Khin says that MAW007 is suffering from her high blood pressure.*³²

MAW007 connected her ill health, tiredness and headaches to her financial insecurity:

I can say that I am physically safe in my home but not financially. How can I be safe from financially since I have so many difficulties! Sometime, I think in deep how I can solve these difficulties. Since there are many difficulties, I don't feel safe. Currently, I have some debt. I sometime think too much about my debt, and the future of my children. Then, I get a heavy headache. I question myself; How can I pay back for the debt? How can I go forward for my children's future? My husband told me not to think about it too much. He said if I thought, I would suffer more diseases and if I didn't, I would not have stress. He said "let it be, it will be fine".³³

The most important research finding was that the conflict-related care burdens amplified not the volume or intensity of the social reproductive labour, but its depleting effects. Take for example, MYIT001 in the IDP camp, who described her tiredness during the pre and post-observation interviews.

Last year I was sick for a whole month with a fever, and I had to call for my husband to come back from the army to help.

Around two years ago, MYIT001's mother in law who suffers from a hunchback, became completely paralysed and had to be physically cared for in terms of washing, feeding, bathroom, while they were in the IDP camp. This was the physically most demanding time.

All that MYIT001 wants is an extra room to sleep in, or for guests. Every night, the kids wake her up, or the mother in law wakes up, and this keeps her awake. It makes her very tired. One room for all of them in the IDP camp is not ideal.³⁴

SOCIAL INFRASTRUCTURE

SOCIAL NORMS

Context and meaning of social reproduction were subject to strong social norms around gender, and this information could be gleaned from the post observation interviews with participants. Washing laundry in Myanmar is subject to strict social rules, as we were able to discuss with women in the post-observation interviews. Women and men's clothes, especially clothes covering the body from the waist down, need to be washed separately because women's bodies are considered polluting. We asked participants in the post-observation interview, whether the separation of laundry caused more work:

When we wash the clothes, we separate women's and men's clothes as our mom taught us since we were young. She said "don't touch with men longyi and women's tamain (the long skirt garments). It is not good and you may go to hell". Since we have to wash the clothes separately, I don't think it is taking more time since we have sorted the laundry already. For instance, we put different soaps for tops separately and put different soap for washing women tamain (longhi) as well as putting them in separate baskets. Therefore, I don't think there are more works to do because of this.³⁵



SECURITY SERVICES

The state in Myanmar was both conspicuous in its military presence, and conspicuous in its absence from social provisioning. The military government keeps a close watch on all citizens in the areas it controls in Kachin State. The reach of the state was apparent during the pre-observation interviews in Namti.

During the pre-observation meeting with NAM004 we encountered some surveillance. A few minutes after we arrived at NAM004s house the clerk (an appointment from the central linked government, not from the local Kachin leadership) turned up and took our photos and caused a big fuss wanting to see RA Nyem's ID and the research permit. Then, we got a call first, that the research was forbidden, followed by a second call to say it was okay so long as we went to the local district administrator in the neighbouring town. The RAs said that because the village clerk was from the central bureaucracy, he had reported us. After passing printed copies of the research permit, and a couple of meetings with various officials in the district administrator's building, we were allowed to proceed. The administrator of course said that the surveillance was for my safety, not about a concern for the research. The RAs thought that the surveillance was coming from the central, civil administration, not from the military. If it was military intelligence, then we would have to worry.

We had a sense of how the participants view the Myanmar state from the post-observation interviews. The responses to the role of government varied across the sites. In the sites in directly conflict-affected Kachin State, "government" brought to mind helicopter gunships and soldiers. In further discussions in these conflict-affected and conflict proximate sites, participants generally believed the government to be unresponsive and corrupt.

The view on the Myanmar state was captured best in the post-observation interviews. In the conflict-affected IDP camp, the state inspired fear; in the conflict proximate areas of Namti, the state was contested, being both the government and the KIA; in the stable areas, the state and the military could signify safety.

In the directly conflict-affected area of the IDP camp, the term government inspired fear, MYIT002 said:

Till now they [the Myanmar Government] are fighting us. And I am afraid of them.³⁶

And MYIT003 likewise in the camp explained:

Government is something we have to be afraid of. I do not mean the person or individuals but the bullets. We fear the noises of the battleground, bomb shelling etc.³⁷

In the grey zone of Namti, NAM004, married to a KIA soldier, said that government for her is “all of them”:

Government means all of them. The Burmese soldier is also a part of Government, KIA soldier is also a part of Government. The administration is also a part of the Government. They all are government.

I do not see education, health and social services, anyway I cannot get help from them.

My mother-in-law is now in 70s but she never received anything from the Government, except for the meagre support she gets from the Church.³⁸

In the relatively stable area, most participants felt unable to comment much on their government. One participant lived across the road from a monastery that housed Tatmadaw soldiers. When talking about household and security, she said,

It is great that our family live together. It is a great happiness that the family members are united and staying together nearby.

There are some military soldiers based in the monastery. But, I am not afraid of them. I even feel safe since they are around here.³⁹

STATE SUPPORT AND PHYSICAL INFRASTRUCTURE

Contrasted with the constant surveillance, the absence of the state in supporting social reproduction was apparent across all nine of the time use surveys. For example, in the directly conflict-affected site, the IDP camp in Myitkyina, the resources to run the camp (housing, roads, the school, the chapel, toilet blocks, water supply, blankets, transport to the dawn markets) were supplied by the Baptist Church with support from international donors. In the post-observation interviews with participants in the IDP camps, they recalled that initially there had been payments (of around 10 USD per month) made to households with elderly or disabled members, but that this had dried up now. In addition, school children received a meal “a nutritious meal” through a school feeding programme.

One participant in the conflict proximate site in Namti said she had received a bag of rice and around 20 USD from the KIO women’s wing when her KIA soldier husband was arrested. Other KIA support was not evident, although researchers have documented this in KIA controlled areas (Brenner, 2019; Hedström, 2017b).

During one of our time use observations, we directly witnessed the lack of quality health services available to conflict-affected communities. One of our participants, MYIT003, had a one-year old child who became very sick, requiring hospitalisation. The notes from the time use study below describe “chaos” “cats” “lack of facilities” and all the care work inside the hospital being done by women relatives of the patients, not paid staff.

10:30 AM	The baby keeps crying. She feeds it traditional medicine. The baby keeps vomiting; its body is rejecting all the liquid.	We decide to take MYIT003 and her baby to the hospital. This decision is greeted with excitement and sudden movement everywhere. I realise that I should have proposed this earlier and feel guilty. But everyone had seemed okay with using the traditional medicine etc. It's hard to know when to intervene. I'm glad we are going to the hospital.
10:45 AM	The baby is getting more and more hysterical. MYIT003 starts packing clothes and things for the baby.	Neighbour women gather round, putting things in the overnight bag, giving advice and making tea. It seems you have to bring all the supplies you need to take care of a sick person when you go to the hospital, as none of that is provided.
11:00 AM	We are all walking to the care. Our driver RA Aung will take us all to the hospital, that is, MYIT001, her baby, her aunty, myself and RA Nyem.	Now that we are definitely going to the hospital, I see how relieved MYIT003 is and I feel guilty for not suggesting it earlier. I look at the crying baby, so obviously in pain, and I start to cry.
11:15 AM	Driving to the hospital.	
11:30 AM	Arrive at the hospital. MYIT003 is carrying the baby, speaking with the nurses and the doctors. We go to the paediatric ward.	I stand on purpose near MYIT003 and they are seen very quickly. The hospital is dilapidated, run down, bare, but pretty clean to the eye. There are people everywhere and lots of cats.
11:45 AM	MYIT003 is helping the doctors hold down her baby so she can be examined.	On the duty board are photos of the doctors on duty. A majority of the paediatricians seem to be women.
12:00 PM	MYIT003 and her baby have been moved to a ward. The baby has been prepared (with a canula) for a drip, but is not yet hooked up. MYIT003 is continuing to hold and rock the baby.	We send RA Aung and the aunty back to the camp to get more clothes, once it is sure that mother and baby will stay a few nights at the hospital. MYIT003 had to pay 1500 kyat for new flip flops to wear in the ward. The emphasis still seems to be on clean feet (a very cultural thing) rather than other kinds of hygiene.
12:15 PM	In the paediatric treatment room, MYIT003 is comforting the baby while the doctors put the drip in. The baby is very distressed. She is washing the baby very thoroughly under the direction of the nurse, using disinfectant.	We have walked into the paediatric surgery room a couple of times. There is no separation between staff and patients. The system is very chaotic.
12:30 PM	In the paediatric treatment room, she is holding / comforting the baby while the doctors give her multiple injections.	The cleaning of the wards and beds is being done by female relatives, not orderlies. The hospital smells strongly of disinfectant, but overall conditions can't be that clean because of the decaying concrete, limited signage about hand washing and so on. There is only chicken wire between the halls and wards, and the outside courtyard, where the cats are hanging. The concrete all seems to have concrete cancer, and the walls and floors are not sealed, but whitewashed and covered with peeling paint. The sinks are concrete with plastic taps. Women are providing all the care for children, washing clothes with disinfectant, feeding small children.

The observational time use survey with MYIT003, describing how we went to the hospital. Ordinarily MYIT003 would not have been able to take her baby to the hospital, but we paid around 50 USD so her baby could be treated.

In the “relatively stable” site participants generally believed themselves to have no experience of the government or of the state, “I don’t understand about it very well.”⁴⁰ Where they did feel okay to comment was on the fact that they were corrupt, or mainly run by rich people.

Government means “the government only looks out for the rich people”. It never looks or provides for the poor people. We never receive the support from the government. I want the government which is more supportive for the poor people since there are many poor families who are even poorer than us. Therefore, I want the government to look back for them.”⁴¹

Consider MAW008 describing her experience getting loans to support her betel leaf vine farm:

But now, we heard the government support but just heard. Poor people always left behind any support programs. For instance, we heard there are micro finance program coming to our village. They took photos of house, compound and etc. In this case, they only approve to support who have better houses. If the houses are not in good quality or only a tent size, they do not give or they are very strict on those people.”⁴²

In Mawlamyine, the relatively stable site, people had a generally positive trajectory of government services since 2011.



Government agricultural land behind Paung township

SRI LANKA

HISTORICAL CONTEXT

Sri Lanka, known as Ceylon during colonial times and as Lanka or Eelam before that, is a small island situated to the south east of India, in the Indian Ocean. The question of 'who arrived first' to the island is the subject of continuing and unresolved debate, though human existence on it has been traced back to the Paleolithic age (Wikramanayake, 2004). By the time of the first European arrivals in 1505, Tamil-speaking settlements in the north and east had established a kingdom of Jaffna, while in the west and centre, the Sinhala-speaking kingdoms of Kotte and Kandy had emerged (Parameswaran, 2003: 220).

The whole island came under European colonisation for over 400 years, starting in the 16th century by the Portuguese, by the Dutch in the 17th and 18th centuries and finally by the British, whose rule ended in 1948. Although pre-colonial and colonial identities were not articulated along ethnic lines, colonisation facilitated the development of ethno-nationalist identities of the two dominant - Sinhala and Tamil - communities, with differences of language, caste and religion made into something new by the devices of the Westphalian state and accompanying missionary influences (Nissan & Sirrat, 1990; Wilson, 2000). The British established Ceylon as a unitary state, in a pattern of imperial rule that was the same as in their other Asian colonies, India, Myanmar and the Malay peninsula (Wijemanne, 1996). The unitary state satisfied colonial administrative demands but drove indigenous tensions.

Ceylon's independence from Britain in 1948 came about through an elite negotiation and transfer of power. The post-colonial state was controlled by the country's Sinhala Buddhist majority and Sinhala Buddhist nationalism became a central feature of the political landscape, to the detriment of Tamils on the island. This fuelled Tamil demands for self-government, which escalated into armed struggle against the state in the late 1970s and into all out civil war from 1983. The LTTE (Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam) was one of a number of groups fighting for a separate Tamil nation and became the most powerful, running a de facto state in the north and east of the island.

The civil war is frequently characterised as an ethnic conflict and the conflict certainly sharpened divisions along ethnic fault lines. However, it can also be understood as a part of an immensely violent process of Sri Lankan state formation, which was fundamentally incompatible with the simultaneous Tamil struggle for self-determination. The war claimed tens of thousands of lives up to the end of 2008 and tens of thousands more during the final few months in 2009 (UN, 2011). It officially ended⁴³ in May 2009, with a decisive and brutal victory for the Sri Lankan state and the comprehensive military defeat of the LTTE.

In the post-war environment up to 2015, while the incumbent President Rajapaksa and his Sri Lanka Freedom Party remained in power, the state entrenched its hold over the formerly contested Northern Province through a continuing, heavy military presence that now extended into the economic as well as political sphere (Jegatheeswaran, 2017; Law and Society Trust, 2017). Military spending as a percentage of general government expenditure was still over 10 per cent in 2018, versus 16.4 per cent at the height of the last phase of the war in 2008 (SIPRI, 2020).

In 2015, the Rajapaksa political dynasty was voted out of office. The following 5 years appeared to herald a time of relative safety in day-to-day living for those in the former conflict zones. Despite the failure of transitional justice processes and the stagnation of economic development in the directly conflict-affected areas, grassroots activists, who had long been documenting war atrocities and attempting to start down the long, slow road of rebuilding communities, were now able to do so with less fear of reprisal. The space for civil society expanded and protests for justice could be undertaken more openly⁴⁴. However, the Sirisena regime's brief interlude ended in November 2019, when Gotabhaya Rajapaksa secured a decisive win in the country's Presidential election.

Rajapaksa won on a chauvinist nationalist platform, promising, among other things, economic and social returns for state military families. For his supporters, he represented a form of securitised order and economic progress. This was particularly so after the 2019 Easter Sunday bombings (see Site 2 Overview below), and the perceived lack of leadership from the previous regime, as a result of which national security became pivotal to the election outcome.⁴⁵ The Tamil and Muslim dominated Northern and Eastern provinces overwhelmingly rejected Rajapaksa, however, fearing a return to the repression and human rights abuses of the 2005-2015 period. Gotabhaya Rajapaksa did not explicitly censure the entire international human rights agenda during his campaign and, in fact, referred to various UN conventions and rights in his manifesto. However, soon after his election, in February 2020, the Sri Lankan government announced its withdrawal from co-sponsorship of the 2015 UN Human Rights Council resolution on war crimes.⁴⁶ In July 2020, civil society and human organisations denounced the “campaign of fear” that has intensified since the November 2019 election.⁴⁷

POLITICAL ECONOMY

Sri Lanka has had an outward-facing economy since European colonial times; the most obvious manifestation of this is its export-oriented plantation sector. From 1977, the government implemented a series of market-oriented reforms to open the economy even further, now within an economic framework of neoliberal capitalism. However, the armed conflict and control of the north and east by the LTTE were major barriers for capitalist growth (Bastian, 2013). This changed with the defeat of the LTTE in 2009.

The end of the war was accompanied by the expectation of an upsurge in economic growth for the whole island (Central Bank of Sri Lanka, 2009: 534) that would particularly benefit the former conflict zones (IMF, 2009: 4). The GoSL articulated this within political discourses of the war on terror and the primacy of the unitary state: now that terrorism was defeated, the whole country and particularly the north and east could look forward to “huge benefits” (Cabral, 2011; Presidential Task Force, 2012: 293). While the north and east did initially experience more GDP growth, this was off a low base and soon stalled. The most conflict-affected regions continue to suffer high levels of poverty. The poverty headcount index, 4.1 per cent for the country, is the highest in the Northern and Eastern Provinces (7.7 per cent and 7.3 per cent respectively) and is 18.2 per cent for one northern district, Kilinochchi, and 11.3 per cent for one eastern district, Batticaloa (Sri Lanka Household Income and Expenditure Survey, 2016).

In the post-war period, the island was subjected to a further wave of open market reforms, now underpinned by financialisation (Kadirgamar, 2013). Significant flows of global capital came from international institutions and bilateral partners. Sri Lanka’s change to “middle income emerging market” status by the IMF in 2010 meant that it would now be increasingly reliant on international debt capital markets, rather than donor and aid grants, to finance post-war reconstruction. Global financial flows have, however, been directed towards geographically uneven development, exacerbating regional and sectoral inequalities. Development is mostly concentrated in the capital city of Colombo and the Western Province and has focused on large-scale infrastructure, such as ports and airports, and real estate development. The economy has transitioned from a predominantly rural to an urbanised one, oriented around manufacturing and services (World Bank, 2020). The shift is leaving rural populations economically precarious.

Meanwhile, the deepening process of neoliberal capitalist expansion manifested in the abrupt economic opening up of the north and east after the end of the war (Bastian, 2013). The state is heavily involved in post-war development of the former conflict territories, through security forces who have been extensively engaged in all aspects of the “Northern and Eastern Awakening” programmes.

GENDER RELATIONS

Pre-independence and post-colonial gender relations have been overdetermined by the influences of Sinhala and Tamil nationalisms in Sri Lanka. While these nationalisms were and are broadly conservative and patriarchal in nature (see, e.g. Maunaguru, 1995; de Alwis 2004; Coomaraswamy and Perera-Rajasingham, 2009), much feminist research documents women's agency and activism over the decades (see, e.g. Senanaayake-Rajasingham, 2001; De Mel, 2001, 2007; Ruwanpura and Humphries 2004; Satkunanathan, 2012; Thiranagama, 2014; Gowrinathan 2017). Women have, notably, been at the vanguard of anti-war struggles, collectively and publicly agitating for peace and justice (de Alwis 2009).

That being so, gendered violence is structured into Sri Lanka's island-wide post-war development strategy (Gunasekara and Nagaraj, 2019; Jayasekara and Najab, 2016). Women's safety and security were reported to have deteriorated sharply in the Northern and Eastern Provinces in the years following the end of the war (UN, 2012). The specific vulnerabilities shifted with the end of the fighting (International Crisis Group, 2011) but were multiple, intersecting and exacerbated by the collective societal disorientation and insecurity experienced in the wake of such a brutal culmination to the military conflict (Lingham, 2019). Meanwhile, a sustained, profoundly gendered, anti-Muslim campaign gathered pace (Haniffa, 2020). The shifts in gender-based violence have often manifested as a post-war gender backlash. The backlash is too often wrongly described as caused by "cultural prejudices" of the Tamil and Muslim communities (ICG, 2011: ii-4), or even ignored because of an international focus on investigating physical (sexual) violence against women. It has, however, involved (re)articulations of patriarchal Tamil nationalism and forms of Islam. In the Northern Province, there has been a simultaneous caste backlash.

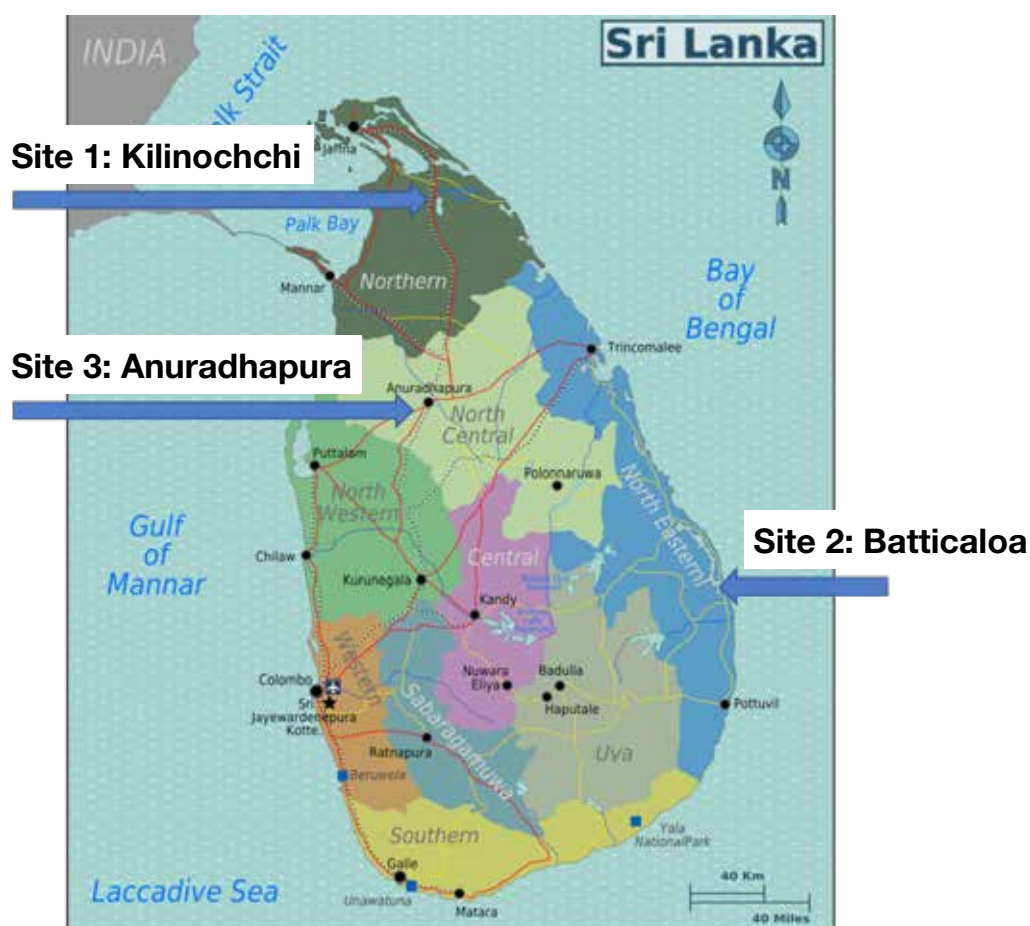
The embedding of the state military into everyday social, economic and political life in the former conflict territories seriously compromises the likelihood of any 'lived' post-war justice for human rights abuses, which include allegations of mass sexual violence by the army against Tamil women in the last stages of the war (Sooka and ITJP, 2014; Loken et al, 2018; Davies and True, 2017). Women's rights activists have described how unresolved military violence causes women fear of moving in army-dominated spaces; yet, they are compelled to engage with the army, out of socio-economic necessity (see, e.g. Minority Rights Group International, 2013 and Law and Society Trust, 2017).

Meanwhile, the rural south of the island remains dependent on the military as a source of employment, as the successive waves of market liberalisation implemented since the late 1970s have failed to provide these sectors of the population with alternative sources of employment (Venugopal, 2011:70). Rural Sinhalese women, including those in military households, are expected to uphold and reproduce the ideological and cultural values of the victorious Sri Lankan nation (Gunawardana, 2013).

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY: CARRYING OUT THE FEET IN SRI LANKA

As in Myanmar, the research sites were selected according to three classifications: directly conflict affected; proximate to conflict; and distant from conflict or relatively stable. Site 1, Kilinochchi district, was chosen as representative of a directly conflict-affected community. The largely Tamil population were displaced multiple times during and after the war, many are still searching for missing relatives and the state military maintains a heavy and intrusive presence. Site 2, Batticaloa district, was selected as proximate to conflict. The GoSL captured the Eastern territories and declared victory and the end of the war here in 2007 (see Site 2 Overview below, for more), although military clashes continued until 2009. Because of the ethnic composition of the district (Tamil and Muslim populations), communities were under attack from multiple agents (state army, paramilitaries, home guard and separatist militants). Site 3, Anuradhapura district, was selected as relatively stable: it is outside the formerly contested territories of the North and East and broadly representative of the majority Sinhala Buddhist population of the island.

We worked with locally embedded organisations and individuals in each of the three locations. The research in Kilinochchi was conducted with Adayaalam Centre for Policy Research⁴⁸, who work across the Northern and



Source: Wikimedia Commons. 2009. Perry-Castañeda Library Map Collection

Eastern Provinces and have in-depth knowledge and experience of conducting research in these complex, politically sensitive environments. The research in Batticaloa was conducted with an independent feminist researcher and activist from Batticaloa town. The research in Anuradhapura district was conducted with Law and Society Trust⁴⁹, who have strong local networks in the district and carry out research and advocacy across the island.

Table 5: Fieldwork Sites in Sri Lanka

FIELDWORK SITE	LOCATION	RESEARCH ASSISTANCE PARTNER (ORGANISATION/INDIVIDUAL)
1: Conflict-affected (SLCA)	Kilinochchi district, Northern Province	Organisation: Adayaalam Centre for Policy Research (based in Northern Province)
2: Proximate to conflict (SLPC)	Batticaloa district, Eastern Province	Individual: Independent feminist researcher and activist (from Batticaloa)
3: Distant from conflict/relatively stable (SLDC)	Anuradhapura district, North Central Province	Organisation: Law and Society Trust/LST (based in Colombo)

Participants in each of the three sites were selected with consideration to three criteria. First, their socio-economic profile should roughly reflect the average in the district. Second, the study sought to take account of specific dynamics of the Sri Lankan conflict: the ethno-religious tensions that shaped the war meant that it was decided to select Muslim participants for Site 2; ongoing post-war militarisation meant that it was decided to focus on state military households for Site 3. Third, in a politically sensitive environment, especially in the directly conflict-affected site, ethics and the feasibility of completing the research were key concerns. Therefore, although there are a high number of widows in the Northern Province, for example, doing the three-step method would either have drawn unwanted attention to them in an environment where they are already stigmatised, or was not possible because they could not be accompanied to their paid work.

SITE 1: CONFLICT-AFFECTED: KILINOCHCHI DISTRICT, NORTHERN PROVINCE

Table 6: Selected Statistics Kilinochchi

SOCIO-ECONOMIC INDICATOR	KILINOCHCHI	SRI LANKA
Mean monthly household income ⁵⁰	Rs 31,576	Rs 62,237
Poverty head count index ⁵¹	18.2%	4.1%
Ethnic composition ⁵²	98.5% Tamil 0.85% Sinhalese 0.6% Muslim 0.02% Other	74.9% Sinhalese 15.3% Tamil 9.3% Muslim 0.5% Other
Religious composition ⁵³	82.5% Hindu 16% Christian 0.8% Buddhist 0.6% Muslim	70.1% Buddhist 12.6% Hindu 9.7% Muslim 7.8% Christian

Kilinochchi is a predominantly agricultural district, situated in the middle of Sri Lanka's Northern Province. It is part of the mainland area of the Northern Province called Vanni, which was governed by the LTTE de facto state during the civil war and was the location of some of the final, appalling months of battle in 2008/9. At one point, the entire population was displaced. The UN withdrew from its base in Kilinochchi town in September 2008 and the district was captured in full by the Sri Lankan army in January 2009.



After prolonged displacement after the end of war, people returned to very damaged land and property or had to build anew if their original land was destroyed or still occupied by the army. The multiple displacements of Tamils throughout the conflict mean that the Vanni population comprises a mix of formerly geographically separate caste groups.⁵⁴ Caste discrimination, both challenged and hidden during LTTE rule, has re-emerged as a social fault line in the post-war period.

Ten years on from the end of the war, Kilinochchi district, like the rest of the Vanni, remains heavily militarised. During fieldwork, one visible indicator of this was the large number of sizeable army camps observed during travel. Since 2014, the military has become economically embedded in the Vanni through the establishment of Civil Security Department (CSD) farms (Jegatheeswaran, 2017; Satkunanathan, 2017). These are positioned as



livelihood providers and target former LTTE cadres and war-affected women for employment (Lingham 2019). However, there are allegations that CSD employees are expected to act as community informants to the military.⁵⁵ Criminal and Terrorist Investigation Department (CID and TID) agents continue to operate in Kilinochchi, as they do throughout the Northern Province. They focus on tracking and harassing anyone previously connected to the LTTE (including widows of cadres) and anyone engaged in political or human rights-based activities. Therefore, levels of trust within the community are extremely low, and suspicion, especially of strangers, predominates. Fear and mistrust have increased since the November 2019 election. Unsurprisingly, then, it was not possible to spend a full day of observation with any of the research participants. Therefore, in order to maximise the scope of the time-use diary method for this site, the FEOT was carried out with four (instead of three) participants.

Participant selection followed consultation with the research team from Adayaalam Centre for Policy Research, who work closely with community-level activists in Kilinochchi. As there are high poverty levels in Kilinochchi district, households living on or below the poverty line were selected, as representative of general demographic trends. All were Tamil and all were living in rural villages, that is, not in Kilinochchi town.

- SLCA1 A woman who has been protesting with mothers of the disappeared.
- SLCA2 A woman disabled from war and the economic head of household.
- SLCA3 A woman whose husband disappeared at the end of the war.
- SLCA4 A woman engaged in home farming, living with her husband and two children.

The research method was explained and discussed with the local partner in advance of the start of the fieldwork. This was an important aspect of the planning process. The observation day is central to the method but in Kilinochchi, 'observation' is associated with historical and ongoing militarised surveillance and therefore evokes suspicion. It was agreed that flexibility would be key to developing trust. The pre-observation interviews took around 30-60 minutes and were carried out on the same day. In addition to completing the short questionnaire, time was spent building rapport, explaining the study's objectives and the three-step method, obtaining informed consent, and agreeing dates for observation days and post-observation interviews. On observation days, the research assistant's knowledge of the micro-dynamics of the fieldwork location (e.g. when our presence might attract the attention of military informants; what risks women were likely to face if it became known that they were taking part in our research) helped gauge when it was appropriate to end the day and when it was possible to stay longer. Participants were generally more comfortable with the interview stages of the method and during interviews, would recount details of their social reproductive work that we were unable to observe.

Table 7: Participants in Site 1, Conflict-affected (Kilinochchi District, Northern Province)

INTERVIEWEE CODE	AGE	CIVIL STATUS	HOUSEHOLD MEMBERS	FAMILY MEMBERS	PARTICIPANT'S WORK	FAMILY'S WORK	INCOME / MONTH
SLCA1	59	Married	3	7, she has 5 children. 1 (daughter aged 21) lives with her and husband. 2 (son and daughter) married and live nearby. 1 (daughter) killed at end of war. 1 (son) disappeared since surrendering at end of war.	Household work. Subsistence farming (vegetables, cow, goats, chickens); some cash crops; juice-making. Searching for disappeared son with other mothers/relatives.	Subsistence farming; some cash crops; juice-making.	Low
SLCA2	36	Married	6	6, husband, three children and son-in-law. 2 sons are aged 12 and 15. 19 year old daughter just got married.	Caring for her two sons. Household work. Sells vadai (fried snacks) from roadside cart. Also works at roadside canteen next to the cart, selling vegetables and cooking and serving food.	Husband is a day labourer but is an alcoholic and uses his pay to drink.	Low
SLCA3	41	Married but husband disappeared at end of war	5	6, 4 children (daughters aged 14 and 22, sons aged 18 and 19). Her husband surrendered at the end of the war and has been missing since. She is the de facto head of household.	Paid work as housekeeper and childminder for a family in Jaffna town. Household work, including care work. Subsistence farming - 2 cows and chickens. Has a small shop selling basic goods at the front of the property.	Older children run the small shop at the front of the property during the day.	Low
SLCA4	32	Married	5	6, 2 children (girl aged 8, boy aged 12), husband, mother-in-law, mother. Her mother counts as family to her but she lives in the Eastern Province (Pottuvil).	Household and care work. Home farming, especially mushroom farming from INGO project.	Husband is a day labourer, a mason. He also equally participates in household and care work when he's at home.	Low

SITE 2: PROXIMATE TO CONFLICT: BATTICALOA DISTRICT, EASTERN PROVINCE

Table 8: Batticaloa: Selected Statistics

SOCIO-ECONOMIC INDICATOR	BATTICALOA	SRI LANKA
Mean monthly household income ⁵⁶	Rs 40,356	Rs 62,237
Poverty head count index ⁵⁷	11.3%	4.1%
Ethnic composition ⁵⁸	72.8% Tamil 25.5% Muslim 1.2% Sinhalese 0.6% Other	74.9% Sinhalese 15.3% Tamil 9.3% Muslim 0.5% Other
Religious composition ⁵⁹	64.6% Hindu 25.5% Muslim 8.9% Christian 1.1% Buddhist	70.1% Buddhist 12.6% Hindu 9.7% Muslim 7.8% Christian

Batticaloa district, in the Eastern Province, was part of the contested civil war territory although also the site of the LTTE 'split' in 2004. This split significantly weakened the Tamil Tigers (Goodhand et al 2011) and meant that the Sri Lankan army was able to capture the whole of the province in 2007 (vs 2009 in the north). Throughout the war, the district was divided, at multiple points, between LTTE-controlled territory and Sri Lankan government-controlled territory. In Muslim-majority areas, the GoSL recruited and armed a civilian army/home guard. Due to the ethnic and religious demographics, the district and especially the border villages between GoSL and LTTE territories was the location for immense violence by multiple agents: GoSL and paramilitaries (TMVP), the LTTE and the Muslim Home Guard (McGilvray, 1997; Goodhand et al 2009).

Since the end of the military conflict, Sri Lanka has been increasingly affected by violent Islamophobia, driven predominately by Buddhist ultra-nationalist groups, notably the Bodu Bala Sena ("Buddhist Power Force") (Haniffa 2020). People, mosques and Muslim-owned businesses have been attacked and businesses boycotted. The situation worsened after the Easter bombings last year⁶⁰ (21st April 2019), which were carried out by a Sri Lankan radical Islamist group, the National Thowheeth Jama'ath. Tensions ran especially high in Batticaloa. One of the attacks, which killed 30 people, including many children, took place at Zion Church in Batticaloa town and the bomber was originally from Kattankudy, a Muslim-majority town next to Batticaloa town. The founder of the NTJ, who was suspected to be one of the suicide bombers in Colombo, was also from this location⁶¹. In the aftermath of the attacks, the wearing of the burqa or niqab were - and remain - banned under emergency law. The legislation and accompanying Islamophobic violence have, in turn, driven a patriarchal



Border village lane in Batticaloa

backlash against women within Muslim communities. These outcomes demonstrate the gendered impacts of the bombings and of ethno-religious nationalist conflict (Cegu Isadeen 2019).

All three research participants from Batticaloa district were Muslim. This meant that the total fieldwork sample was representative of the three main ethnic groups in Sri Lanka. This was not a major intention of the research but was decided upon given the ethnic dimensions of the civil war and the ethnicised tensions that persist across the island today.

Participant selection was made in consultation with the research assistant, who already had contacts and networks within certain Muslim villages. Despite this, it was difficult to gain agreement to do the research in households where adult men (husbands, brothers, cousins) would be present during the observation day. This situation might have been navigated but more time would have been needed, to meet male household members and sensitively negotiate gendered household dynamics. Therefore, of the three participants selected, the husbands of two were working overseas. The husband of the third was present but did not come out to meet us during the observation day. The three households comprised:

- SLPC1 A low-income woman whose husband is working overseas (Middle East).
- SLPC2 A low-income woman, economic head of household; her husband has a disability.
- SLPC3 A high-income woman whose husband is working overseas (Middle East).

The pre-observation meetings were especially valuable for building rapport. Both the MWA researcher and the RA were Tamil, and the ethnic relations between Tamil and Muslim communities in Batticaloa have been especially fraught since the 2019 Easter bombings. That being so, coming into the Muslim community as ‘outsiders’ worked well: all three participants seemed more comfortable with sharing the intricacies of their daily lives with strangers than to people who might spread gossip within their villages. This meant that it was possible to spend full days carrying out the observation with two of the participants. The other (SLPC2) had a full-time job and so the observation took place before and after her day of paid work. Post-observation interviews for all three participants were planned to be 1.5 hours long but took around 2.5 hours each as participants in this site were especially keen to discuss the research and its relevance to their lives.



Table 9: Participants in Site 2, Proximate to Conflict (Batticaloa District, Eastern Province)

INTERVIEWEE CODE	AGE	CIVIL STATUS	HOUSEHOLD MEMBERS	FAMILY MEMBERS	PARTICIPANT'S WORK	FAMILY'S WORK	INCOME /MONTH
SLPC1	43	Married	5	6, 4 children aged 6 - 16 (3 daughters aged 16, 12 and 6, 1 son aged 14). Husband works abroad (Qatar).	Caring for children (hers and extended family), household work (cooking, cleaning, washing), looking after guests.	Husband migrated to work in a hotel in Qatar last month. He used to have a roadside food stand here.	Low
SLPC2	31	Married	3	4, husband, 4 year old son, mother. But her mum is now living with her sister, who just had a baby, in Kattankudy (20 minutes away by auto).	Paid work as field officer for Domestic Workers' Union; household and care work: caring for her son and husband completely; growing vegetables in garden.	She is the economic head of household. Husband has a disability from childhood polio, and so has difficulty walking and rarely works.	Low
SLPC3	38	Married	3	4, Husband (works abroad) and two children, 13 y/o girl and 16 y/old boy.	Caring work for 2 children and extended family (especially her sisters' younger children), household work.	Husband has worked as a driver in Qatar for the past 9 years.	High (Rs 60k+)

SITE 3: RELATIVELY STABLE: ANURADHAPURA DISTRICT, NORTH-CENTRAL PROVINCE

Table 10: Anuradhapura: Selected Statistics

SOCIO-ECONOMIC INDICATOR	ANURADHAPURA	SRI LANKA
Mean monthly household income ⁶²	Rs 58,326	Rs 62,237
Poverty head count index ⁶³	3.8%	4.1%
Ethnic composition ⁶⁴	91% Sinhalese 8.2% Muslim 0.6% Tamil 0.2% Other	74.9% Sinhalese 15.3% Tamil 9.3% Muslim 0.5% Other
Religious composition ⁶⁵	90.2% Buddhist 8.3% Muslim 1.2% Christian 0.4% Hindu	70.1% Buddhist 12.6% Hindu 9.7% Muslim 7.8% Christian



Rural lane in research participants' village, Anuradhapura district



SLDC1's front door: Presidential election poster supporting Gotabhaya Rajapaksa

Although geographically not in the south of the island, Anuradhapura is part of the 'political south', with a majority Sinhala Buddhist population and strong allegiance to the unitary Sri Lankan state. It was especially suitable as the third fieldwork site because the research partner already had strong connections with local community organisations.

Anuradhapura district is on the border with the formerly contested war territory and was therefore often a staging post for war. For the same reason, the population includes a high proportion of military households. While the villages directly on the border with the Vanni experienced attacks by the LTTE and some displacement, most of the district's population, including those in the village researched during this study, were not displaced during the war.

The district is predominantly agricultural. In rural villages, the military is one of the main and established sources of secure employment and income for men. Women typically undertake three shifts of labour: care work in the home; social and community work and farming/income-generating work.⁶⁶

The government forged strong connections with military households in the district after the end of the war, providing them with physical rehabilitation support and home equipment such as wheelchairs and accessible toilets for disabled veterans. Rehabilitation centres are still in operation. However, they offer minimal, if any, support for mental health issues. Veteran mental health issues are known to cause a 'transfer' of military violence to domestic violence and coercive control.⁶⁷

During and immediately after the war, veterans and their families were supported through salaries and pensions, but levels of compensation reportedly decreased during the Sirisena administration (2015-19), leading to protests by military family advocacy groups and fuelling support for Rajapaksa in the 2019 election⁶⁸.

Anuradhapura is the location of the Jaya Sri Maha Bodhi, the sacred tree of huge cultural and national significance to the Sinhala Buddhist nation. One of the high caste groups in the district are said to be the chosen tenders of and carers for the tree and consider themselves divinely ordained with rights to the land and nation for this reason (Gunawardana, 1990).

Given the overdetermining influence of the military in Site 1 (Kilinochchi), it was decided that it would be valuable to also explore social reproduction in a differentially militarised context, i.e. within state (Sinhalese) military households. Participant selection was undertaken in consultation with the research partner, Law and Society Trust, who worked closely with their contacts in community support organisations (CSOs) to identify and recruit

participants. Initially, two women from military households and one from a non-military family (as a comparison) were planned. However, the third withdrew from the study for personal reasons and so all three were military families. The participants comprised:

- SLDC1: A woman with a disabled ex-army husband; 3 children; high income.
- SLDC2: A woman with a husband still serving in the army; 2 children; low-middle income.
- SLDC3: A woman widowed from war – husband killed in 2008; 2 children; middle income.

Two of the pre-observation interviews were carried out at the same house, that of SLDC1, who was the informal village ‘gatekeeper’ and already worked with our CSO contact. The third was carried out on the same day, at the participant’s home. Pre-observation meetings took around 30 minutes each. The study and method were explained, informed consent was obtained, the introductory questionnaire was completed, and dates and times of the observation days and post-observation interviews were agreed. While it was important to build rapport, as we did in the other locations, the site’s relative distance from conflict meant that there were fewer barriers around trust to overcome. The relaxed atmosphere during observation days was also enabled by the fact that all three participants had spacious houses and land, so the study could be undertaken more unobtrusively than it could in smaller spaces. Two of the observations took place in a remote, rural village, so we had to leave before 6.30pm because of the very real risk of attacks from elephants after dark. Post-observation interviews took around 1.5 hours each and we encountered more guardedness during these recorded sessions than during the full days of observation.



Urban lane near research participant’s home, Anuradhapura district

Table 11: Participants in Site 3, Relatively Stable (Anuradhapura District, North-Central Province)

INTER VIEWEE CODE	AGE	CIVIL STATUS	HOUSEHOLD MEMBERS	FAMILY MEMBERS	PARTICIPANT'S WORK	FAMILY'S WORK	INCOME / MONTH
SLDC1	47	Married	3	5, husband and 3 children (2 married sons who live nearby, 1 20-year old daughter who lives with her and husband)	Household work: cooking, cleaning/ tending to large house and yard. Farming (that time, post-harvest work) and managing farm workers. Caring for 2-year old grandson who lives next door. (Buddhist) Sunday school teacher. Volunteers as social services worker in the village. President of the village mediation board, dealing with family violence and supporting people in need.	Army pension. Paddy and other farming - they own a paddy field and have a 'chena' (rural area where forest is cleared and crops are periodically planted). Brick-making.	High (Rs 90k+)
SLDC2	29	Married	4	4, husband who is serving in the army (sports division) but home 9 days every month on leave; 2 sons aged 2.5 and 9.	Caring for 2 children. Tutoring 9 year old in the afternoons. Household work. Vegetable garden. Paid daily labour (brick- making) with her husband when he is home on leave.	Husband's army income but it's not high because he's in sports division. Daily labour: husband does carpentry when home on leave and they both do brick-making.	Low-middle (Rs 25k in hand)
SLDC3	35	Widow	4	4, her mum and 2 sons aged 11 and 16. Her aunt's daughter sometimes stays with them but not every day.	Sells hoppers from small roadside stand on weekdays from 3 - 6pm. Home sewing (rugs, floormats).	Army pension and widow's compensation in addition to her own paid work.	Middle

ANALYSIS

SOCIAL REPRODUCTION

Enduring and unresolved conflict heavily impacts the lives of directly conflict-affected women, including their participation in social reproduction. Participants in Killinochchi undertook the following household social reproductive work (noted in pre-observation interviews and documented during observation days): caring for children – including taking them to and from tutoring classes – cooking, cleaning the house and yard, washing clothes, and subsistence farming (animals and home garden). Three of the four women also spoke, in post-observation interviews, about community-level social reproductive work: campaigning to find relatives who had disappeared in the war and participating in community ‘peacebuilding’ activities run by NGOs as part of the state’s post-war reconciliation agenda. Two of the participants, as well as a key informant, explained how the state military had obstructed them when they were carrying out basic household social reproductive work (see later sections).

In war-traumatised households, women compensate for men’s reduced capacities to participate in social reproductive work. Take SLCA1 and her husband: one of their daughters had been killed in the war in 2009 and they were still searching for their son, who had surrendered to the Sri Lankan army nearly 11 years ago at the end of the war and had been missing since. They were both suffering physical and mental ill-health; in the pre-observation interview, their mental trauma over their missing son was especially evident. In the post-observation interview, SLCA1 explained that she did most of the household social reproductive work because her husband was unwell. His health issues had started during wartime displacement:

He does help, but he is quite sick. I think [pause to think about the year] in 1986, when we got displaced, he got very, very sick. He lost a lot of weight and he had very bad fever. They said it was malaria, then they said it was brain fever, then it was pneumonia, but he just had bad fever. When he was really sick, the hospital said he needed further treatment in Anuradhapura [outside the Tamil area/Northern Province]. I had to sign a few papers for them to take him to further treatment. People thought I was going to be a widow, no one had any hope. [...] Before the sickness, he was better than this [at contributing to the household work]. [...] He has piles now. If he works hard and if he lifts heavy things, he gets very sick, but he refuses to have the operation. He was traumatised from the time when he was in Anuradhapura hospital on his own, without any support from us.⁶⁹

For SLCA1, however, doing most of the (time consuming and tiring) household social reproductive work was not experienced as burdensome. Being in her home and being able to carry out this everyday work seemed, rather, to have a grounding and calming effect on her. On the observation day, I noted at 10:45 in the time use diary: “Generally, SLCA1 seems quite alert and focused (versus yesterday at pre-obs interview, when she was v. disoriented when talking about her disappeared son).”

This suggests that, in the directly conflict-affected context, being able to safely, securely and consistently undertake everyday social reproductive labour in the home – however gender unequal the workload – might still be experienced as a ‘relief’, in comparison to unresolved, war-related trauma.





Participation in community-level social reproduction increases the burden of social reproductive labour for the most war-affected women. Community-level social reproduction involved different types of labour in the different locations. In the directly conflict-affected field site, SLCA1 participated in collective protests by Tamil families of the disappeared, who are still searching for missing relatives nearly 11 years after the end of the war and demanding answers and post-war justice from the central state (Human Rights Watch 2020). She faced threats and harassment from the military and CID as a result of her involvement in these activities. She would travel by bus to protests in Colombo; join long demonstrations/marches; and speak out in the media. SLCA1 carried out these tasks at the same time as working with her husband on a small, income-generating juice-making business and doing most of the social reproductive labour within her home. She describes here how she juggled things:

If I am gone for a day or two, when I come back my daughter will complain about how the food she cooked wasn't tasty and how she wants me to cook; the cattle won't have food; so I always get occupied with something.[...] If I am going for more than a day, I will collect the grass beforehand in 4 or more bags and keep them, so all they [other household members] have to do is just feed the cattle.⁷⁰

She would bring any food supplied to the protestors home for her daughter and husband, and she worried immensely about her youngest daughter while she was away from home. The travelling and marching were exhausting but she was compelled to participate, by her need to find out what had happened to her son.

The physical and mental burdens of this work (due to the reasons for its existence and the time and energy it demanded) contrasted with the benefits experienced by those participating in state-sponsored post-war 'reconciliation' activities, through attendance at local community meetings. SLPC1 had recently joined these. Here, state and NGO representatives advocated inter-religious and inter-ethnic harmony and good communication⁷¹ but did not address any of the fundamental matters of post-war justice, such as missing persons or occupied land.

Meanwhile, in the relatively stable location, participants carried out community-level social reproductive work but it was not burdensome. For example, SLDC3 was involved in a military families group who lobbied the government for more economic support for state military families. SLDC1 carried out everyday community work: she volunteered as a teacher in the village's Buddhist Sunday school and had done so for 22 years; she was also involved in a village welfare society.

Migration abroad can increase the financial resources of the household, but also increases the weight of social reproduction for those who remain at home. In Batticaloa district, proximate to conflict, the husbands of two of the three participants were working abroad (in the Middle East). Both had migrated for work because of conflict. SLPC1's husband had left recently: after the 2019 Easter bombings, the boycotting of Muslim businesses had caused his street food stand business to collapse. SLPC3's husband had been working abroad for nine years. He had been kidnapped by state agents during the war and tortured so severely that he had not been able to continue his work as a tailor in Batticaloa. He worked in Qatar as a driver and the household was financially well off as a result. In both cases, the women spent significant amounts of time on household care work: caring for children, cooking, cleaning the house and yard and washing clothes. They carried out multiple tasks simultaneously and cared for children within the extended family as well as their own. Both lived on lanes with several members of their families (sisters and their households). For the first 8 hours of the observation day with SLPC1 (we arrived at 06:45), she barely sat down to rest. A sample from the time-use diary shows the work she was doing:

TIME	ACTIVITY
08:00:00	Still sweeping the yard.
08:15:00	RA explains the details of the research to SLPC1 and eldest daughter.
08:30:00	SLPC1 now sweeping and cleaning inside the house. Makes ginger tea for her cousin, then sits with us and has tea herself, and a roti (which we brought for them).
08:45:00	She is now doing laundry and cleaning in the kitchen. There's a manual washing machine in the kitchen. She reuses soapy water by manually adding it back into the washing machine with a bucket.
09:00:00	She is playing with the baby/infant (one of her sister's children) while sitting down. Then goes back into kitchen to continue doing the laundry.
09:15:00	Washing clothes/laundry using the manual washing machine.
09:30:00	Comes out to the back yard to hang out the laundry. Manually washes a big cushion/mat.

TIME	ACTIVITY
09:45:00	Washes (bathes) at the water pump. Hangs up more laundry.
10:00:00	SLPC1 puts on a black abaya and we walk to the market. She buys fish because it is cheaper than chicken. It's a sea fish (not inland/river fish), costs Rs 570.
10:15:00	Back from the market. She takes off abaya and walks to the local shop nearby, buys oil.
10:30:00	Then she goes out again to the shop, back by 10:45.
10:45:00	She starts cooking rice. Daughter grates coconut.
11:00:00	In the back yard, scaling and gutting the fish. She sharpens knife on a stone. Chops the fish. Throws fish intestines to the crows. Stores and washes the fish in a pan of water. All this is done outside in the back yard, on the ground.
11:15:00	Gutting and washing the little fish.
11:30:00	She is cooking, doing laundry, looking after baby all at same time.



In the post-observation interview, she said that she wanted to build an extension to their house; not because she wanted a bigger house but because then the yard would be smaller and less work to clean.⁷²

SLPC3 experienced the social and psychological demands/pressures of compensating for her husband's absence, as recorded in the observation day diary excerpt below. She felt compelled to care for her teenagers as though they were still small children; she wanted to protect them from missing their father; and she had to simultaneously contend with male harassment and social judgement when she undertook social reproductive work outside the home alone, without her husband:

TIME	ACTIVITY	NOTES
06:45:00	She feeds her 13 y/o daughter breakfast, sitting on the floor together (roti, lettuce, some meat, prepared from last night's dinner).	She does this because she says her daughter won't eat properly otherwise. Her daughter <u>wants</u> to be fed by her - it makes her feel closer to/loved by her mum.
07:00:00	She makes milk tea for all of us.	Sometimes, she will make pittu, toast, roti and use curry from the previous night for breakfast. If she does this, she'll make it from 5.30 - 6. She says she usually wakes up at 5, washes and gets dressed, prays from 5.15 - 5.30. In the kitchen, she has taps (i.e. water coming from taps), a kettle, gas stove, rice cooker and fridge. There's a TV, ceiling fans and floor fans in the house too.
07:15:00	She gives her daughter food (breakfast and water in a flask) for school. Daughter leaves for school. She (SLPC3) now eats; says sometimes, she doesn't have time to eat in morning.	She says that she does a lot of work because she needs to do both "men's" and "women's" work - she needs to go to son's tuition class, go out and buy things - stuff that men/husband would usually do. This is tiring and makes her angry and stressed. Her mum says, even when we go to work, we have to come back home and work. We die earlier than them - and then they just remarry. If women and men are both doing paid work and they leave that work - the men leave to go and have tea, but the women leave to go and breastfeed or to otherwise care for the children. SLPC3 talks about how much she does for the children - but they appreciate it because they know/remember her struggles, especially since their dad has been away.
07:30:00	She finishes breakfast.	She explains to us: husband only sends money; she does the work. When she goes out alone, even though she's married, society/men judge. E.g. in the shop, a man asked her daughter for her (SLPC3's) phone number; at parents' evening, one asked her son for his mum's phone number - as a result, her son said to her, 'don't come to parents' evening again, just talk to the teacher on the phone'. When her son was in Grade 4 and daughter was 4.5 y/o, her husband went abroad. After he had been tortured by the SL army, he couldn't continue working as a tailor because of his back injury - it's very intense work, requires sitting for a v.long time - so that's why he went abroad. Her daughter didn't know/understand about her dad - but she would see other children going with their dads on motorbikes. SLPC3 would try to protect her children from missing their dad so would try to 'cover all bases' with her care for them.

In the relatively stable site, social reproduction is supported by material resources and by extended family networks. However, women experience pressure to present themselves as 'strong' rather than exhausted; as 'enduring' the challenges of unpaid social reproductive labour rather than suffering them.

In Anuradhapura district, the research participants carried out household labour of childcare, cooking, cleaning the house and yard, home farming and washing clothes. These were the same sorts of tasks that were carried out in the other two locations but the houses and community resources were noticeably better here. All three had good-sized homes and yards with space for home gardens, the surrounding areas were well-kept, and the roads leading to their homes were wide, well-maintained and accessible.

SLDC1, who carried out especially physically demanding tasks when farming and tending to the large yard/garden, expressed pride in how her unpaid labour contributed to the social reproduction of the household just as her husband's pay did. She was motivated not only by this but also by her contribution to the reproduction of the community and the Sri Lankan nation ("I do it for my country and my village").⁷³

Her partially estranged daughter-in-law, SLDC2, however, found social reproductive work, especially childcare (breastfeeding) and washing clothes, exhausting, which was apparent during the observation day:

TIME	ACTIVITY
09:15:00	She starts cleaning inside the house. Cleans the bedrooms. Sweeps the floors. Little son comes home, from his grandmother's, is very active.
09:30:00	She is sweeping the kitchen and main room. She wants to wash son but he doesn't want to have a bath.
09:45:00	She takes son outside for a bath. He's grizzling, refusing. She gets it done pretty quickly but he insists on putting the same clothes back on, including a pair of jeans that are too small for him - apparently his favourite.
10:00:00	She's washing the clothes (doing laundry) by hand in the washing area. Manually scrubbing them with soap against the stone, bending to soak them in water, then scrubbing again and rinsing. It takes 15 minutes. She hangs the clothes on the line. The clothes fill the line and they are only the clothes they used since yesterday afternoon. She says: now she's really tired.
10:15:00	We come inside and sit down. She seems very tired. She breastfeeds son while sitting down.
10:30:00	She's still breastfeeding. She tries to stop him - she seems too exhausted - but he wants more. He starts grizzling when she stops him. She says, the little one breastfeeds all night - she thinks that's another reason for her tiredness. He wakes up every hour to breastfeed. He won't let her sit and nap during the day. It's been like that since he was born - she had to do it all alone. Her husband only got 3 days' paternity leave (used to be 12 days but it changed).
10:45:00	She's still breastfeeding - she gives in, lets him continue. Then tries to distract him by showing him photos from one of the family albums.



SLDC2 does the morning laundry

The pressures upon women to carry out all the social reproductive household work extended, in this site, across gerontocratic hierarchies, as well as gendered ones. This was observed throughout the three stages of the FEOT: from the pre-observation interviews, which took place in SLDC1's house and in which she insisted on speaking for her daughter-in-law; to the observation days for both women, when SLDC1 actively encouraged us to record the difficult manual labour she carried out with ease, while SLDC2 confided in us from the very start of the day how exhausted she was; to the post-observation interviews, where SLDC2's descriptions of her tiredness were more measured and hushed, owing, perhaps, to the fact that the interview was recorded, while SLDC1 spoke with fierce pride about the even harder household work she had done in the past, alone, while her husband was away fighting in the war and her children were young.

CONFLICT AND VIOLENCE

Conflict shaped changes to social reproduction over time in all three sites, although in different ways. Proximity to conflict continued to determine participants' access to basic material resources, even though the war had ended over a decade ago; this is discussed in a later section (social infrastructure).

CHANGES IN SOCIAL REPRODUCTION

There were unique difficulties of social reproductive labour during the war compared to today, in all three locations. In the directly conflict-affected site, SLCA1 remembered how political violence and displacement affected her everyday care work:

[During wartime displacement] there wasn't much work to do. We cooked and we went out to fetch water, but we had to watch out for shells before we got out at all. Then I had to take my children one by one to the nearest well or somewhere for a bath, all the while hiding from shells and wondering when it would start. It was so hard to get even the basic supplies; we spent a lot of time gathering food. We could see a lot of food scattered in certain places after the bombing, but we couldn't get that food. [...] The basic work was cooking, fetching water and finding food. There was nothing else to do other than that.⁷⁴

In conflict-proximate Batticaloa, economic insecurities and political violence had made life almost intolerable during the war for SLPC3. She had had to care for her severely injured (tortured) husband and young son, while pregnant with her daughter:

There was a livelihood issue. I had to cover that and care work. I had a baby in hand and another one in the belly, my husband was also like a baby. I didn't have much experience; I couldn't express things like I do now. I was so depressed. I struggled a lot. [...] There was no sleep. He [husband] needed constant care and sometimes he would scream in pain. I didn't have a washing machine before. I would always wait for it to be morning soon, so I can get to washing. I have to wash and give him food, take him to

the washroom, look after the children, take him to the clinic on the correct dates, look after any visitors who are coming to see me, think about food, think about what can I sell to get some money, think about whom can I ask for some money. Whom can I ask for 1500 rupees to get medicine and get food... I felt so inferior going out and asking for help. I didn't even know mornings and night; life just went by. He needed to eat very healthy food, so I would buy him nutritious food and I would stay hungry. I couldn't even buy rice at times, because we didn't have anything. We lost all that we had. There were days I didn't even eat. I was supposed to take care of the baby I was carrying, I was supposed to be kind and loving towards the baby, but instead I was taking caring of the other two children I had.⁷⁵

The memories of this terrible time had strengthened her as an individual (making her realise what she was capable of) and given her great empathy for others who were struggling today. But at the same time, the experience had left her traumatised: 13 years later, she was still hypervigilant to the possibility that she might, at any time, be thrust into such suffering and isolation again.⁷⁶



SLPC3 prepares green leaves for lunch

In relatively stable Anuradhapura district, the challenges during the war had been socio-economic. SLDC1 had never been displaced or in the direct war zone but recalled having to raise three children and tend to the house alone for the 29 years that her husband served in the army:

My husband got married [to me] and joined the army. There were three children to be looked after. I had to send them to school, make food, face troubles that took place in the village, run here and there, watch over the children's education, send them to tuition classes – I did all these things on my own for 29 years. [...] My husband was away and I made bricks for this entire house on my own. Can you believe it? I did it on my own. At that time, my husband was paid a salary of 6,000 rupees. Can you imagine how one can live and educate three children with a salary of 6,000 rupees?⁷⁷

For directly conflict-affected women, however, social reproduction and other work were, in many respects, easier during the war than in today's 'peace'. This was partly to do with the persistent impacts of the violent conflict. SLCA2, for example, had lost her lower leg at the end of the war and had not received any support for her disability. She explained how she used to be able to carry out both paid and unpaid work before:

It's been 10 years. I lost my leg in 2009 in Iruttumadu. During the war. Now, it isn't the same as before. I was earning well before, I had money and I was able to handle things on my own. [...] The LTTE had farms, that is where I worked. I worked on the same farm for 10 years. Life was good back then. [...] Compared to the work at the farm, the work I do now is much less. I can't work like that now. Before, I cooked and then I went to work and came back and cooked. Now that I cannot work like that, I do most of the work at home and do a little bit of work outside at the shop. I cannot work like I did before at the farm. My income was also better at the farm.⁷⁸

It was also to do with chronic economic insecurity that directly conflict-affected communities now faced, due to the increased costs of living and the increased precarity of their paid work, as both SLCA2 and SLCA1 noted:

SLCA1: Now, no matter how much we work, we aren't fulfilling all our needs. [...]

Q: Why do you think that is?

SLCA1: I don't know. I ask this question and I haven't found the answer yet. It is not the like the time before. [...] Now, no matter how much you work, you can't even save from what you earn. There is not enough income no matter how hard you work. [...] In their [LTTE] time, our salary was only Rs 8000. Even then, we were able to save Rs 1000. Within that 8000, we were able to buy everything we needed; commodities weren't expensive like it is now. Today, the price of rice is Rs 120. [...] Rice was never more than Rs. 22-24 before. We had a hard time getting kerosene oil, but every other thing was affordable. [...] Honestly, our life before 2009 was better. We had enough money and whatever we needed.⁷⁹

There was an additional, psychological dimension that made social reproductive work and life harder today: households were now bereft or searching for missing family members, where before, they were at least together. SLCAKI, a key informant, had always had to carry out most of the household social reproductive labour herself, even when her husband was there. However, she recalled the happiness of being together as a family, even during war:

I was married to a [LTTE] cadre. He came home once in a while when he got leave, and I did all the work at home anyway. It's more or less the same as now. But when he was home, he'd help me a lot. He'd chop firewood, he'd wash the clothes of our children and help with whatever he could. [...] But he didn't get enough time to be at home. [Now] I have to do my work at home, and I have to do what my husband would have done if he was here, the work he would have done outside such as going to market. I am quite used to my husband not being at home, so it doesn't feel very different when it comes to doing work. But when he was here, the dynamics were different, we were happy. My children were happy to see [him], and I was stronger because he was there, even though he didn't come home very often. That is the part we miss now.⁸⁰

HOME AND HOUSEHOLD

The household is both a site and institution of social reproduction as well as of physical, sexual and psychological violence against women. Violence in the home was evidenced in all three research sites. This was not universally the case, of course.⁸¹ However, key informants in each of the three sites testified that research participants' experiences of gendered violence/IPV were not uncommon:

But the night before you came, there was a huge problem. He [husband] tried to smack me that day, he brought a hammer to hit me with. He tried to cut his son-in-law with a knife. My son-in-law was also drunk that day and he tried to cut him back, that is how my husband has a cut in his leg. When they are too drunk, that is how it is.⁸² (Kilinochchi)

I have to attend to my husband. He expects me to sleep with him. [...] If he is at home, then he wants me to sleep with him every day. If I say no, he says very harsh things, it hurts me. If I say I feel tired or I feel sick, he asks if I am a sick person or if I need other kinds of treatment. [...] I lose sleep over this. Even if I fall asleep accidentally sometimes, he wakes me up. So, I try to satisfy him, but he never stops even when I have my period/am sick. I cannot explain how I feel when he does that, I don't know if it is right or wrong. He doesn't consider how I feel, my feelings don't count. He forces me most of the time but even when I consent, he never gets satisfied. He always says I am not good.⁸³ (Batticaloa)

Father [in law] is aggressive. Like a devil. [...] Oh yes, she [mother-in-law] gets beaten. She has a big mouth. So she gets a beating. Sometimes he hits her with clay pots. [...] It's a normal thing here. Once a month, you hear beatings from every direction. My husband is also very aggressive. [...] He's in the army, that's why. People like that get angry often. When he [husband] beats, he beats well. [...] People here are evil. If you see the way they beat here, you'll think that it is a mob.⁸⁴ (Anuradhapura)

However, there are multiple meanings of 'household' and 'home'. At the same time as being a site of gendered violence, 'home' refers to one's own land and the security (or insecurity) that comes with that. Looking through this lens, there are significant differences between the security of the home for those in relatively stable Anuradhapura and the insecurities in conflict-affected Kilinochchi:

This place is mine. My house. We live here till we die and then leave these for our children. [...] I'm safe in my home. No one will come inside the house and try to harm me. No one will pressure me. My father gave this land. My husband's father gave our paddy fields and some other cultivating land. My father gave this land. I built the house. So, I feel very secure. A thousand percent safe.⁸⁵ (Anuradhapura district, relatively stable)

Before we came to this house permanently, we would come here to clean up during the day and go back to the other house at night. Once, we didn't go back to the other house for a few days, and on the fourth day, the CID was here. Imagine how closely they are watching. [...] But even before the protests,⁸⁶ they knew our houses and the details. Because we registered with ICRC about the surrendeers. So the CID knew the details of those who registered as families of the disappeared. They were watching all these families.⁸⁷ (Kilinochchi district, directly conflict-affected)

These differences in spatial security dovetail with the significant differences between the economic security experienced by a state military widow and her household (in Anuradhapura) and the chronic insecurity experienced by the wife and household of a disappeared LTTE cadre (in Kilinochchi):

There was a women's programme I attended in Mullaitivu. There, I learned that the wives of the departed [Sri Lankan] military men will receive pension for the rest of their lives. But here [north], there is not even one such scheme for women who have lost their husbands. Women here struggle so much without their husbands. We asked them why there isn't such support for them, like wives of military men. They said these are two different things, but there are so many women without their husbands all over the north and east struggling.⁸⁸

In conflict-proximate Site 2, in Muslim communities, the historical dimensions of conflict continued to shape meanings of 'home'. On the one hand, there was security from having one's own home and land today and from having had it for some time. Even those on low incomes and in debt had relatively well-resourced, large houses that were generally safely located, e.g. in a lane with many of their extended family members. On the other hand, even though participants had these positive experiences, there was a persistent sense of insecurity about whether they truly 'belonged', based on memories of wartime violence and displacement from ancestral land, and also because of the Islamophobia they were presently facing:

Even though we are here, away from the war, people sometimes refer to us as "people who came from somewhere else" like we are not from here. [...] And people here tell us it is because of us that this place is so crowded and dense and the land price increased. Yes [I feel like I belong here] because I have been here for a long time and want to be here, but when people say such things about you, you cannot help but think you would have been better off at your own place.⁸⁹



In SLDC1's home (Anuradhapura) - packing dried crops and caring for her grandson



In SLCA4's home (Kilinochchi) - packing home-farmed mushrooms on her verandah

DEPLETION

Depletion manifests in damaged physical and mental health and was observed in participants in all three locations. Social reproductive labour exacerbated depletion but was not the primary cause of it in the directly conflict-affected location. In the other two locations, it was a more significant driver of depletion.

The persistence of unresolved conditions of conflict perpetuates trauma and drives depletion. For example, notes from the (unrecorded) pre-observation meeting with SLCA1 document how badly her mental health was suffering as she continued to search for her disappeared son:

She got suddenly sick last year. She goes to a counselling clinic every week, she went first in 2005 or 2010, waited 1 year/1.5 years to be seen; her doctor wrote her a reference for it. The 'counselling support' was medication, not talking counselling. She's angry with her doctor for referring her to it – the doctor thinks she has a mental illness but she thinks she is fine. She has to go every week to the clinic; she feels more alert because of the medication but is also angry about it. She talked at length, very disoriented, about her disappeared son, starting almost immediately from the start of the meeting. Every point that came up, she made it about her disappeared son. She was disoriented, lacking details – e.g. confused about dates. She talked only about her disappeared son, not the children who were still alive. The RA said she sees this with many women protesting for disappeared.⁹⁰

The effects of such depletion seemed, in fact, to be slightly *mitigated* by the everyday normalcy of carrying out household social reproductive labour. SLCA3, whose physical depletion manifested as exhaustion as she juggled full-time paid work as a housekeeper and childminder with her household work, seemed to be replenished by being inside her own home and doing social reproductive work there: *"Going to work is the hardest. The work I do here is fine. Any work I do from home makes me happy. Any work I have to do outside – not so much."*⁹¹ This was despite the intensity of her household work, which included subsistence farming (without running water in her home), cooking, cleaning and childcare.

Physical disability and lack of support for disabled people exacerbates depletion through social reproduction. Take SLCA2, who was severely physically depleted; as early as 7am, the time use diary documents how tired she already was. Just one example of everyday social reproductive work (cooking) demonstrates the challenges she had to face, alone:

TIME	08:30:00
Activity	She brings in a big knife. Drops it on the floor. Drops the coconut on the floor; it falls partly on her foot. She sits down to husk the coconut, chop and grate it.
Notes	It's physically very hard from her seated position; she has to really whack the knife into the coconut, then wrench pieces of the husk off. Can see from her face that it is physically hard and she really has to focus to aim knife etc. Wrenches open husk using her hands and the knife. About 10 minutes in, she stops for breath, wipes her brow. When it's done, I ask if it was hard - she nods/indicates yes.

She was in constant physical pain, having to stand and work, with inadequate crutches:

All work is hard for me. Nothing is easy. If I had my leg, then it wouldn't be that hard. But now, I have to focus on holding on my crutches and focus on the work. It's hard when you have to work and simultaneously focus on balancing the crutches. She saw me the other day and how much I struggle to wash the dishes.⁹²

Depletion also had psychological impacts and was caused by the violent and conflict-affected context: SLCA2 had to not only cope with a disability but also endure domestic violence and alcoholism and face chronic economic precarity as a daily labourer. In contrast, she used to enjoy juggling paid and unpaid work before 2009:

I got married when I was 18 and I was working and earing since then. I have always worked. I worked on the farms and when I came home, I did my work at home. I used to wake up around 4 before when I had to go to the farms. I cooked early in the morning before I went to work, so my husband and children could eat. I came home after 5, took a shower, fetched water and finished work at home and it would be around 9 or 10 when I went to sleep. Then again, I wake up at 4 [...] But I was happy, we didn't struggle much. [...] I wasn't sick like this before; I was always active, and people could not even find me at home. I was always running around working. People would only see me before 6:30 in the morning or after 5 in the evening. I used to work hard. But now, after the disability, my body gets sick all the time and I also think a lot and all of that causes more pain.⁹³

There was no evidence of either mitigation⁹⁴ or replenishment for SLCA2 but in the post-observation interview, she stated that the provision of water pipelines for her home and support for the costs of children's education were needed.

Sexual violence and coercive control combine with the demands of childcare to cause extreme depletion. This was seen through the case of SLPC2. The everyday demands of caring, alone, for a 4-year old child were obvious throughout the FEOT, as just this half hour excerpt from the time-use diary shows:

TIME	07:15:00	07:30:00
Activity	Finishes giving son a bath, brings him into the front room, dries him. Puts baby cologne and talc on him, gets him half-dressed. Then returns to cooking.	She brings us breakfast (milk appam) and feeds him breakfast (the same) on a mat on the floor. Then she gets him fully dressed. He sits on the mat and does colouring but is still calling to her when she's not sitting with him (he isn't calling for his dad). She tidies up a little, cleans up from cooking. Packs his breakfast for school and explains to him what she is doing. She joins him in a bit of colouring. Then packs away the book and gets him to help her. She tucks a handkerchief into his pocket.
Notes	After the bath, he is cuddling her in a very affectionate/close (quite foetal) way. He always interrupts her - "Amma, Amma, Amma, Amma" (Mummy, mummy, mummy), whenever she is having a conversation with us. As she is cooking, he chats away to her and she chats back with him.	Usually, she would buy him appam for breakfast. He is wearing a school uniform. RA explains that Montessori schools can be very expensive but if he's supported/gets funding, it can cost as little as Rs 300/month.

In the post-observation interview, she described how violence and childcare demands manifested in bed:

My problem is my son is sleeping next to me. He [my husband] will pull me [demanding sex] and if my son wakes up, he will pull me too. If I tell my husband to wait until the son sleeps, he gets angry.⁹⁵

SLPC2 suffered from stress-induced high blood sugar and high cholesterol, as well as anxiety and depression. She had not continued her prescribed medication because it required her to return to the doctor regularly, which she could not do without her husband's help (time and financial support).

She had adopted one mitigating 'strategy': she was studying to understand more about the human condition and social conditions that caused her suffering. She had just completed a diploma in counselling and was about to start a degree in social sciences; she felt her education would help her and she gained energy from her belief in her son. However, while analysing and trying to make sense of her situation was important to her, it seemed to have a retraumatising impact, which was depleting her further:

I think I am sick now because I worry too much, and I get sad about things. [...] But it is supposed to be a bit better now, but maybe the worries I had before are affecting me now. Weirdly, I think I feel things more now.⁹⁶

Current depletion was not just caused by current, but also by past, social reproductive labour. SLPC1, for instance, suffered from severe headaches and other physical ailments such as piles and issues with her womb. These, she said, had been at least partly caused by the demands of reproductive labour (carrying and giving birth to children). Now, her everyday household work made these physical health issues harder: "I work from 4.30am till 11pm sometimes and it is tiring". She had been told by her doctor that she needed surgery to remove mucus from her head but she worried how she could spend time in hospital when there was so much social reproductive work that had to continue:

If I go to the doctor, then they will admit me for sure, I am afraid of that. Maybe my mother will take care of the children and my sister can cook, but the household work will remain. I'll have to be at the hospital for at least 3 days, then these people will have to bring me food everyday to the hospital and they have to travel to hospital very often, which they cannot do. I need someone to take care of me at the hospital and someone needs to be here to send the kids to school on time. There are so many things to think about.⁹⁷

Her depletion seemed to be partly mitigated by being able to connect to the outside world (outside the community): through contact with guests such as us, for example. This also seemed to mitigate some of the effects of depletion experienced by SLPC3 and SLPC2. All three women were depleted because they were had heavy loads of social reproductive (and productive, for SLPC2) labour and yet at the same time, felt immensely lonely and isolated (though to differing degrees and for different reasons). SLPC3 also mitigated some of the depleting effects of her persistent war trauma by volunteering in local social services work, to help others who were struggling.

Replenishment, for SLPC1 and SLPC3, came from the presence and support of extended family members (mothers; sisters; cousins). Conversely, the absence of such support (because she did not live near her extended family and was unable to talk to them about the psychological traumas of intimate partner violence) caused much suffering for SLPC2.

Replenishment through health infrastructure was also technically available in Site 2. For example, SLPC1 could have had surgery and SLPC2 could have obtained regular medication for her high blood sugar. In reality, however, it was hard to access when social reproductive support was not there and when violence and coercion existed within the household. Here, the gendered division of social reproductive labour emerged as a factor that perpetuated depletion; for example, SLPC1 said of her husband:

he buys the medicine and sometimes buys me milk to drink because it's healthy. But he doesn't do my [household] work! He'll do his own work. He does tell me I should rest if I cannot do the housework. He doesn't do a lot of work, but he tells me I can work when I feel better and I don't have to do any work when I feel ill.⁹⁸

Extended family can mitigate depletion through social reproduction by providing material support but also exacerbate it through abusive family ties. In Site 3, Anuradhapura, SLDC2 was physically and mentally extremely depleted by the combined effects of caring for young children and the house and garden alone (while her husband was away in the army), and anxiety from living within an extended 'mob-like' family.

Caring for the children was simultaneously depleting and replenishing. Her mother-in-law lived next door and looked after SLDC2's active and demanding younger son (her grandson), with great love and attention, every afternoon. She had done the same for the elder son before he started school. SLDC2 valued this care support and appreciated the relationship her children had with their grandparents. However, in the post-observation interview, she repeatedly expressed how the most stress (showing as physical manifestations of anxiety, such as panic attacks) was caused by conflict with her in-laws, which was not damaging her household or marital relations but was depleting her as an individual:

These things have had no effect on us [the household]. We don't fight. We are happy. But I'm decaying.⁹⁹

She experienced this sense of decaying so strongly that it was like a physical force and she believed it was due to black magic practised by her in-laws.

In the relatively stable site only, participants mitigated the effects of depletion through engagement in creative activities. For example, SLDC2's husband had bought her a stereo and speakers and regularly bought her memory sticks of downloaded music to help her cope with anxiety. SLDC3 had started (and continued) painting and sewing to cope with depletion that occurred after her husband was killed in the war in 2008:

I was entangled in debt and I faced a lot of stress. It was only through these things that I was able to fight the psychological stress. When I focus on something like this my mind does not wander into other things....¹⁰⁰

Participants are financially and emotionally replenished by the state in the relatively stable site only. As state military households, those in Anuradhapura benefited from their husbands' pensions and salaries. SLDC1, in the post-observation interview, also seemed to be psychologically replenished by her assured position in society: within the household, within the village and within the country. This affective replenishment was not available to participants in the directly conflict-affected site, and especially not to former LTTE cadres and their families, on the 'losing' side of the war. Neither was it experienced by Muslim participants in Batticaloa, who instead faced immense pressure, especially after the 2019 Easter bombings, to demonstrate that they were 'good Sri Lankan citizens'.



Sri Lanka Independence Day parade, 4 February 2020, Kattankudy township, Batticaloa district

SOCIAL INFRASTRUCTURE

SOCIAL NORMS

Oppressive gendered social norms persist, regardless of distance from conflict. Women carrying out social reproductive work alone in public (e.g. taking children to school) faced the constraints imposed by what might be described as informal infrastructures, i.e. social norms. These norms negatively impacted women's travel and social reproductive labour outside the home in all three sites. As women out alone, they had to deal with sexual harassment and judgement from society. This was not seen on observation days because the women were, of course, accompanied by us. However, the research participants described this, either during the observation day or in interviews. In Kilinochchi, SLCAKI, a female head of household, had to travel at night to collect her son from tuition classes, and carry heavy goods to and from the market on her bicycle alone. She experienced solidarity and support from others in similar situations but there was still social judgement:

If you have a husband at home, it is easier. It doesn't matter if he is disabled or not capable of working, but just having a man at home protects you from what people say about you. It doesn't matter how strong and true you are to God, people always see you as the one without the husband. [...] Others who know our situation and understand my struggles are supportive. They help when I need help. If someone sees me struggling to lift a weight, they help me. Because they see a woman trying to live on her own in this society without depending on anyone; these are people who understand the struggles. There are some who always talk about the fact that I don't have a husband. We face such issues in society. My son's tuition classes end at 10 at night, and I have to go and pick him up. I cannot worry about what society might say and not educate him.¹⁰¹

In Batticaloa district, SLPC2, whose husband barely participated or supported her in social reproductive work, said:

Every time I take a tuk, drivers and also other people always ask me questions, such as if I am married, if I have children, where I am going, if I am with my husband, where he works and how often he comes home. [...] I also realised that some men look at you very differently. I don't feel safe when they do that. I don't know what to tell them. [...] Recently, I went somewhere, and the cleaner of the bus I often take asked me if I don't have a husband and children and said that I am travelling often. [...] I didn't say anything back. I didn't understand at first, but later when I started to travel alone on my own, I understood why they are asking. It's the way they look at me. [...] Sometimes, I go out with my husband and people will see me. But when I go alone, they ask me why I married him and if he is really my husband. My husband also doesn't involve himself with me a lot. It is all of that.¹⁰²

In Anuradhapura district, SLDC3, whose army husband had been killed in war in 2008, said:

In the beginning, there were financial issues, but they were not significant because my mother was working abroad [sending home remittances]. But in terms of protection [physical safety], there were issues. I had just lost my husband. So, there were people who came with the intention of starting unnecessary relationships. I received unnecessary calls. [...] There is a sister [younger female neighbour] down the road who lost her husband due to a cause unrelated to the war 8 months ago. He was with the Civil Security Force [Civil Security Department, CSD]. This happens to her. Her own neighbour is harassing her. She is a lot younger than me – she's 27. He threatens her - Where are you going? Why are you going out? So this happens. It has not changed. Even I don't disclose to a stranger that I'm a widow. If I say that I've lost my husband, they telephone continuously. Or say various things....¹⁰³

SECURITY SERVICES

For directly conflict-affected Tamil women, state security infrastructure regularly creates and perpetuates *insecurity*. SLCAKI, for example, described how everyday harassment by the military obstructed her care work and children's education:

Recently, every time I pick my son up [from tuition classes] from the main road, there are about 25 military men with a temporary sentry point. They check the handbags, jackets and the vehicle; it's such a nuisance. They were there for 2 or 3 days continuously. They set up a table and register the vehicle and ID number and all that; it's a bit concerning when they do it every day. I am worried to take my children to tuition; I even worry if they are targeting me. Sometimes, they even check the bag of food I carry, and I am worried that they can put something in if they want and accuse me of carrying something. It's a very complicated life; sometimes my family tells me to not let him go to that class. Children with their fathers can drop them off and pick them up; I have to help my son. My son is worried too, he asked if he could just stay at home and study and not go to that class. [...] I don't think the quality of education at school is any good. It's because of tuition that the children are doing well in school, if we cut the tuition out, we will not get output from them. Children understand that, but they are worried about the military. Because they [military] register the ID number, bike number and other details at the camp, when there is a problem, they can come straight here looking for me; they wouldn't need a reason. I am just taking my children to classes and doing nothing else, but the military will see that we are travelling at night, it doesn't matter what we are doing.¹⁰⁴

In conflict proximate Batticaloa, the presence of military checkpoints at main road junctions was noticeable and was documented during the observation day with SLPC2 when we accompanied her on her journey home from work:

TIME	17:15:00
Activity	We get off the bus at 17:10. We cross over the wide, busy main road, walk directly past a military checkpoint/camp on that road and walk to SLPC2's home. Once off the main road, the roads are not busy. Once past the big checkpoint, we don't see any more military.
Notes	The stop is on a main road, busy and dangerous (no crossing, vehicles travelling fast). We get down at a military checkpoint. She calls it a camp and later tells us that it is because the army do stay there overnight - there are a few metal huts. We have to walk past the checkpoint. An army officer glares at me when I make very brief eye contact. The checkpoint/camp opened up after the Easter attacks. It was taken down for about 3 days before re-opening again during the Presidential election campaign. SLPC2 didn't go outside for 2 whole weeks after the attacks, because of fears of the army. They'd stop her and demand to see her IC (identity card) every time she passed. She didn't go to work for 4 weeks. If there are any new people or someone strange passing, they will still stop and search - that's why they stared at us, though they recognise SLPC2 now.

The state military presence had negatively affected everyday life for Muslims during the civil war and, recently, in the aftermath of the 2019 Easter bombings. Now, however, although unwanted and unpleasant, the military presence was nowhere near the levels observed in the north and the army seemed at least to exist 'outside' an otherwise quite socially coherent society. Militarisation did not overdetermine everyday life to the same extent that it did in Kilinochchi district.

The police also failed to provide security for women who were facing domestic violence and everyday community violence in war damaged Kilinochchi. This was evident in the case of SLCA4. On the observation day, from around 9:45 am until we left after 3pm, a group of men drank **kasippu**, illegally-brewed liquor, on the road in front of her house. The issue had been going on for a year:

TIME	09:45:00	12:15:00
Activity	She goes on motorbike to take the bag of betel leaves to the shop; she's back 5 minutes later and also picked up some milk. She says it's 10am and she has already made Rs800 (Rs 500 from the mushrooms and Rs 300 from 100 betel leaves). MIL is now inside, watching TV and making tea.	Sitting on the verandah, talking. MIL is sleeping inside.
Notes	We can hear banging music from the road in front of the house. SLCA4 says it's all young men who are regularly there, drinking and doing drugs. They're a nuisance. She complained and nothing happened - but the men then threatened to complain to the police about her so she stopped.	The men drinking out front are going to be here all day, she says. Sometimes, they go to a different area to drink. Sometimes they will stay and drink at night - they can do so because the police aren't very reliable. They drink here because there is a shop selling alcohol here. They (the drinking men) sell drugs.

The situation was threatening and impeded her everyday social reproductive work. The response of the police made things worse:

Usually, when I go past them with the cow, they will be fully drunk and passing comments. Yesterday, I couldn't take a bath in the evening, because the well is close to that fence. [...] I cannot afford to build a wall now, so with the fence I cannot bath when they are there. [...] If I complain to the police, when they release someone, they also tell them who made the complaint and give them the [complainant's] phone number. I informed women's groups, the human rights commission; I informed everyone and gave them petitions. It's not just my problem, but I made complaints. I am worried about my children growing up with this.¹⁰⁵

This lack of community-level support to deal with gendered violence and threats of violence contrasted with the police's approach to domestic violence and sexual harassment during the war, under the LTTE. Talking about the domestic violence she was suffering, SLCA2 commented:

Before, my husband could not get drunk like this and pick fights with me at home. If the LTTE knew, they would teach him a lesson. Now, there is no one to tell him, and he doesn't fear anyone. Even if the police arrest him now, he can bribe them and get out and go back to drinking again.¹⁰⁶

These combined experiences show how, in directly conflict-affected Kilinochchi, post-war security services were creating and perpetuating insecurity for women. This environment, together with the high levels of suspicion and the social issues like alcoholism that were exacerbated, if not caused, by unresolved war trauma, fostered a community whose formal social infrastructure and 'unseen' infrastructure – social ties; trust – were having

destructive impacts on women in their everyday social reproductive lives. The participants had to contend with this context, as well as the damaging effects of social norms discussed above. In many ways, this was experienced as worse than war. As SLCA2 put it:

There is no war, that is it, but everything else is upside down. There is a huge difference between life before and life now. Before, there was always war; now there are a lot more issues. No matter whether boys or girls, as parents you are always worried whether they will come home safe.¹⁰⁷

In contrast, participants in Anuradhapura had better support and much more trust in security services when dealing with issues of domestic violence and substance abuse:

At this moment I have the telephone number of the Special Task Force, and the drug prevention unit of the police. They have given me the numbers and advised me to call in any emergency. They come when you call. They [the police] will not say who tipped them off.¹⁰⁸

STATE SUPPORT AND PHYSICAL INFRASTRUCTURE

Access to basic material resources, such as running water in the home, is still determined by proximity to conflict, over 10 years after the end of the war. In Kilinochchi, the conflict-affected site, at least three of the four participants did not have running water inside their houses. SLCA1 only had a well hole in her yard; SLCA2 had to use the neighbour's well and SLCA3 accessed drinking water from a community well. SLCA4 had had to take out loans in order to dig her own home well (which she needed for her home farming work). The army, who occupied the area and had been constructing the road next to her land at the time, had initially obstructed her attempt to dig the well and had refused her permission.



SLCA1's kitchen. The yellow water bottle, which they still use, was given at a refugee camp during wartime displacement.

The combined impacts of war and poor access to water upon social reproduction were most starkly observable on the day spent with SLCA2. Because of her disability, she could not fetch water herself and had to rely on her young sons to do so in the mornings before they went to school. Then, she had to cook and wash up alone, balancing on her inadequate crutches:

TIME	07:00:00	07:15:00	07:30:00	07:45:00
Activity	She has got the kettle on, on a woodburning stove, and is washing up. She doesn't have running water inside. The boys are now helping - one is sweeping his room, the other has brought in water from outside/garden. SLCA2 stands and washes up by propping the handle of one of her crutches under the stump of her leg. After washing up, she sits down by the stove. The 15 y/o brings her her handbag and she gives him some cash (Rs 20?) from it. She looks tired now, already.	Preparing food, washing up. To wash up, she uses a bowl with water in - calls to her sons to bring in water from the tap outside. She uses a jug to pour water onto the dirty dishes, then scrubs the dishes, then pours water on again to clean - all the while balancing on one crutch.	Keeps calling to her sons to bring in more water. Boys bring in big black bucket of water together. She is now making tea, then washing up the implements - always moving between the sink and the stove. Has made each boy a big cup of plain tea. She sits down by the stove, has some plain tea, eats a few biscuits; shares the biscuits with the cat.	She washes and takes out bowls and cups. Sits on floor, starts preparing rice. Shakes it in bamboo tray; pulls over the big bucket of water by herself (the one both sons had to carry in together). Scoops out a number of cups of rice from the bag. Stands back up. Goes to wash rice at the sink, drains it. Cleans it - using water from bucket - takes out husks. Walks over to stove, leans back to sink to lift and carry over the bowl of rice and water to the stove. After doing all this, she sighs like she is in pain.

In contrast, the participants in Sites 2 and 3 were supplied with water from home wells and taps. All six had running (tap) water inside their houses. Of course, they still spent long hours undertaking social reproductive labour but this undoubtedly saved time and much effort in the household work.

In Anuradhapura – relatively stable and on the winning side of the war – there were, however, serious and ongoing health issues caused by water contamination. The three participants all explained this on the observation days and it was recorded in the time-use diary notes; for example:

She [SLDC3] said that Anuradhapura district has one of the highest numbers of cases of kidney disease in Sri Lanka - because of water contamination due to the chemicals used in agriculture. If one family member has the disease, it gets passed down. SLDC3 has tap water which has been treated (well water isn't). She pays Rs 250-275/month for it. There is also filtered water which they come round selling but it constipates her son - she thinks that maybe this is because the chemicals they use to treat that are harsher.¹⁰⁹

The issue seemed to be caused by the ongoing, destructive impacts of (neoliberal) agricultural development. That said, all three participants, even when on a lower income (SLDC2), were able to mitigate the threat, so that it neither affected their individual social reproductive labour nor the household's capacity to social reproduce. They had access to treated tap water and their economic resources enabled them to buy filtered water, which was brought round door-to-door. (Clearly, though, this was not the case for everyone in the district.)

Participants whose households benefited from state support still felt the government did not support their social reproductive needs. These were the women and households in Anuradhapura, who received military salaries and pensions. Because they received these, they were not usually eligible for any additional state relief, such as food aid or welfare payments (Samurdhi). When asked, they stated that the government did not provide any support for them. Despite this, participants expressed strong support – even love – for the President and his brother, for ending the war.

Participants in the former conflict territories were critical of state support for social reproduction but at the same time, needed it urgently. The criticism is unsurprising, given the state's role in inflicting immense violence and destruction on the North and East, and given how it politically excludes them (Tamils) and pressures them to demonstrate loyalty (Muslims). In Kilinochchi, there is fear that 'reproductive justice' (finding missing children) is less likely than ever, following the recent election of Gotabhaya Rajapaksa as president. State support is imperative to deliver post-war political justice and provide answers about missing relatives but is unlikely to manifest in this form. SLCA1, though, was unwilling to accept any other form (e.g. socio-economic) of support from the state as an alternative to political justice:

What can we expect from the government? We have given our children to them. They can help us after they give us an answer about our children. [...] I begged the GS [local government officer] to sign the papers to register with the police. I recorded in writing at the police station that I had witnessed him being taken by the military. I gave him to them alive. [...] If we let the government help us, then it will be on record they helped us. [...] What if they tell us later: "You wanted help, and we helped you, so you cannot have your son"?¹¹⁰

Other women in Kilinochchi searching for missing relatives said that provision of social reproductive support was part of the overall process of political accountability:

We believe that the military should take accountability and the government should help us. Not give us compensation for the person disappeared but support the children or their education until the disappeared member comes back.¹¹¹

Support for children's education was lacking in both Sites 1 and 2. In Kilinochchi, which has the highest poverty head count index in Sri Lanka (see country overview), education and nutrition support were both needed:

The government gives children textbooks at school, but they need workbooks to practise at home. [...] I cannot afford that. Only the rich can afford those. I cannot even buy them a good breakfast. [...] The government gives food for primary school children at school. But those in Grades 7 and 8 won't have that food. My son told me that he doesn't get food at school anymore. He got hungry at school, so he asked me for 50 rupees to buy food. I kept 150 rupees for the auto and I gave him 50, thinking that I could somehow manage to come home with someone.¹¹²

Support is needed for household infrastructure (water pipelines to homes), and community infrastructure (local transport). These are basic needs, and their absence has especially depleting effects upon those with physical disabilities, as SLCA2 explained. Those without pipelines are dependent on the goodwill of neighbours. Local wells dry up in summer; they then have to travel far to access water and private transport is unaffordable. Therefore, it can be seen that at the same time as there is fear that the government will only offer a trade-off – socio-economic support in place of justice – state support for social infrastructure is urgently needed in the former conflict territories.

CONCLUSIONS

In this study, we have documented and analysed social reproductive work under conditions of conflict. In so doing, we have revealed the economic, emotional, political, and financial costs of doing social reproduction and how these manifest in the depletion of individual women, households and communities.

RESEARCH FINDINGS

1

CONFLICT CHANGES HOW WOMEN DO SOCIAL REPRODUCTION.

Conflict complicates the ability to secure recourses for households. Meanwhile, other depleting factors, such as, the psycho-social effects of conflict also damage women's social reproductive capacities. Absent relatives who would otherwise share the load of caring for relatives or searching for missing family members, for instance, leads to further increased volumes of social reproductive labour.

2

A CONTINUUM OF VIOLENCE EXISTS BETWEEN CONFLICT AND VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN.

While the home could be a site of security, normality and happiness, the household, regardless of proximity to conflict, is a site and institution of multiple types of violence against women. In the most conflict-affected areas, women are more vulnerable to both interpersonal and state violence as they went about social reproductive work.

3

DEPLETION IS HIGHER IN CONFLICT-AFFECTED COMMUNITIES.

Depletion was a direct consequence of military displacement and intervention in the most conflict-affected areas, which is not a factor in the relatively stable sites. Depletion occurs across all sites, however, and is manifest in the damaged mental and physical health of participants. Significant causal factors are: violence against women; the ongoing trauma of losing loved ones and pursuing justice in the conflict-affected sites; and the double burden of productive and social reproductive labour, especially when facing chronic economic precarity. Women individually strategise about how to mitigate the effects of depletion but this is more feasible the further they are located from active conflict.

4

SOCIAL INFRASTRUCTURE, LIKE PHYSICAL INFRASTRUCTURE, WAS OF MUCH POORER QUALITY IN CONFLICT-AFFECTED SITES THAN IN RELATIVELY STABLE SITES, AND SO INCREASED DEPLETION.

State support has the potential to reverse depletion; however, state responses are often entirely hostile in conflict-affected areas, creating gendered insecurity through military presence and absent with regard to social provisioning. State support is urgently needed for provision of basic physical infrastructure, such as access to running water or wells within the home, and for social infrastructure, including local public transport, hospitals, children's education and maternal healthcare.

METHODOLOGICAL FINDINGS

The report documents and analyses field research undertaken in Sri Lanka and Myanmar in January and February 2020 using the innovative Feminist Everyday Observatory Tool (FEOT). The intensive, three-step core method, consisting of a pre-observation meeting, an observational time use diary and a post-observation interview, was completed with nineteen research participants in nineteen households across six sites (three differentially conflict-affected locations in each country).

As this was a pilot study, as researchers we were somewhat restricted in time and capacity. The intensity of the FEOT also presented some limitations, especially in the most conflict-affected contexts. However, the method's strengths and potential outside these limitations were evident:

1

The FEOT provides researchers with a well-defined research process in the form of the three-step method but it is also flexible. For example, if circumstances changed and a full day of observation was not possible, some missing time use data could still be collected in the post-observation interview. If a research participant wished to talk more during the pre-observation meeting, this could be extended to become more than basic data collection. Apparent moments of rupture in the method (when it could not be followed precisely because of unexpected events) proved to be particularly informative of the critical points at which the conflict environment impacts everyday social reproduction.

2

The method enables triangulation of findings across different forms of data. For example, changes to social reproduction over time and across different periods of conflict could be discussed in some depth in the post-observation interview because researchers could refer to activities documented in the time-use diary and ask participants to recall specific variations. Challenging and sensitive findings, such as those on intimate partner violence, are not necessarily be apparent during the observation day and might only be talked about in post-observation interviews. But researchers were able to retrospectively refer to observations and notes from the time use diary to comprehend more fully how such violence shaped participants' daily lives: for example, through physical ill-health and anxiety that had been noted but not entirely understood on the observation day.

3

The method enables investigation not only of different conflict-affected contexts and of what participants do, but also about how participants felt about what they do. The observational time use diary yielded rich data, such as the extent to which women carry out multiple forms of social reproductive work at any one time. The combination of steps two and three of the FEOT enabled reflexive moments for some participants, who, during the post-observation interview, took the opportunity to reflect on and appreciate the extent of their labour, as it had been recorded in the time use diary. The method's feminist recognition of the importance of the everyday, and the overlapping dimensions of space, time and violence, resonated with participants' lived experiences and so was also valued by them.

This study has demonstrated how feminist methodologies can address data collection in complex contexts. We have found that the FEOT can be employed productively in the study of social reproduction over time and across space, as well as in the study of depletion through social reproduction, violence and conflict. The research evidence analysed in this report has the potential to shape new policies and interventions to contribute to sustainable peace and inclusive economic development.

ENDNOTES

1. This study is funded by Monash-Warwick Alliance Acceleration Fund
2. In this report, Myanmar is used, but Burma is an equally valid name. Citizens of Myanmar are referred to as Burmese, and the ethnic majority is referred to as Burman.
3. MAW007, Post Observation Interview 23 Feb 2020, Paung Township, Mawlamyine, Mon State, Myanmar
4. Multiple marital systems apply in Myanmar (CEDAW 2008 p. 13). These include interpretation of the colonial-era Burma Laws Act which stipulates different personal laws for different religious groups (privileging male household headship) and the Buddhist Women's Special Marriage Law 2015 (Crouch, 2016, p. 92-94)
5. <https://kachinlandrc.org/about-krc/>
6. All site anonymised for reasons of confidentiality
7. American Baptist missionaries have been converting the Kachin since the US involvement in the area during the Second World War.
8. As nominated by the participant in the first interview preceding the time use survey.
9. Exact numbers not known at this time.
10. Discussion with local researcher, 29 February 2020.
11. MYIT001, Pre Observation Interview, 29 Jan 2020, IDP Camp, Myitkyina, Kachin State
12. NAM006, Observational Time Use Survey, 11 February 2020, Namti, Kachin State.
13. NAM006, Observational Time Use Survey, 11 February 2020, Namti, Kachin State.
14. NAM004, Time Use Survey, 7 February 2020, Namti, Kachin State
15. NAM004, Post Observation Interview, 8 February 2020, Namti, Kachin State.
16. MAW008, Post Observation Interview, 23 February 2020, Paung Township, Mawlamyine, Mon State
17. MYIT001, Post Observation Interview, 3 Feb 2020, IDP Camp, Myitkyina, Kachin State
18. MYIT002, Post-Observation Interview, 3 February 2020, Myitkyina, Kachin State.
19. MYIT003, Post-Observation Interview,
20. MAW007, Post Observation Interview 23 Feb 2020, Paung Township, Mawlamyine, Mon State
21. MAW007, Post Observation Interview 23 Feb 2020, Paung Township, Mawlamyine, Mon State
22. MAW007, Post Observation Interview, 23 Feb 2020, Paung Township, Mawlamyine, Mon State
23. MAW009, Post Observation Interview, 25 February 2020, Paung Township, Mawlamyine, Mon State
24. MYIT003 Post Observation Interview, 13 February 2020, Myitkyina, Kachin State.
25. MYIT002, Post Observation Interview, 3 February 2020, Myitkyina, Kachin State
26. MYIT003, Post-Observation Interview, 13 February 2020, Myitkyina, Kachin state
27. NAM006, Observational Time Use Survey, 11 February 2020, Namti, Kachin State.
28. NAM005, Observational Time Use Survey, 9 February 2020, Namti, Kachin State.
29. MYIT002, Post-Observation Interview, 3 February 2020, Myitkyina, Kachin State
30. MAW007, Post Observation Interview 23 Feb 2020, Paung Township, Mawlamyine, Mon State
31. MAW007, Post Observation Interview 23 Feb 2020, Paung Township, Mawlamyine, Mon State
32. MAW007, Post Observation Interview 23 Feb 2020, Paung Township, Mawlamyine, Mon State
33. MAW007, Post Observation Interview 23 Feb 2020, Paung Township, Mawlamyine, Mon State
34. MYIT001, Pre and Post Observation Interview, 2 and 3 Feb 2020, IDP Camp, Myitkyina, Kachin State.
35. MAW008, Post Observation Interview, 23 February 2020, Paung Township, Mawlamyine, Mon State
36. MYIT002, Post-Observation Interview, 3 February 2020, Myitkyina, Kachin State
37. MYIT003, Post-Observation Interview, 13 February 2020, Myitkyina, Kachin State
38. NAM004, Post-Observation Interview, 8 February 2020, Namti, Kachin State

39. MAW009, Post-Observation Interview, 25 February 2020, Namti, Kachin State
40. MAW008, Post Observation Interview, 23 February 2020, Paung Township, Mawlamyine, Mon State
41. MAW008, Post Observation Interview, 23 February 2020, Paung Township, Mawlamyine, Mon State
42. MAW008, Post Observation Interview, 23 February 2020, Paung Township, Mawlamyine, Mon State
43. On the issue of why the war did not actually 'end' in 2009, see Spencer 2016.
44. As stated in these two submissions to the 28th Session of the UN Universal Period Review, November 2017: 1) Joint Submission by organisations and individuals: <https://www.cpalanka.org/wp-content/uploads/2017/10/Final-Sri-Lanka-JCS-UPR-submission-March-2017.pdf>; 2) Individual submission by a human rights activist: <https://www.frontlinedefenders.org/en/statement-report/upr-submission-sri-lanka-2017>. Both submissions identify serious, ongoing issues with freedom of expression, whilst acknowledging how civil society space opened up after 2015.
45. See BBC News 17 November 2019. Accessed online at: https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/world-asia-50449677?intlink_from_url=https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/topics/cdmjkw6krwt/sri-lanka-easter-bombings&link_location=live-reportingstory
46. Sri Lanka withdrew from co-sponsorship of UNHRC Resolution 40/1 and previous Resolutions 30/1 and 34/1. The full speech made at the 43rd Session of the UNHRC on 26 February 2020 can be viewed here: <https://colombogazette.com/2020/02/26/sri-lanka-withdraws-from-un-resolution-and-offers-alternative/>.
47. "Sri Lanka: Human Rights Under Attack" (29 July 2020). Accessed online at: <https://www.amnesty.org/download/Documents/ASA3728022020ENGLISH.pdf>
48. <http://adayaalam.org/>
49. <https://lslanka.org/>
50. Sri Lanka Household Income and Expenditure Survey 2016.
51. Ibid
52. Sri Lanka Census of Population and Housing 2012.
53. Ibid
54. In addition to the pre-existing Vanniyar farmers/peoples, there are fishing/coastal (Karaiyar caste) people from the north and east coasts, Tamils from Kandy/the hill country (tea plantation workers), and Jaffna farmers (Vellalar/'upper' caste).
55. Key Informant (2) Interview, 24 January 2020, Kilinochchi district, Northern Province. These allegations have already been noted in earlier research (Satkunanathan 2016). Satkunanathan discusses how Tamil communities in the Northern Province, whilst distancing themselves from those they suspect to be informants, simultaneously understand the fluid and complex lived realities of CSD employees, whose marginalisation and disempowerment might compel them to collaborate with the military. These community dynamics were also observed by the MWA researcher during the fieldwork in Kilinochchi district in January 2020.
56. Sri Lanka Household, Income and Expenditure Survey 2016.
57. Ibid
58. Sri Lanka Census of Population and Housing 2012.
59. Ibid
60. See Al Jazeera 21 November 2019. Accessed online: <https://www.aljazeera.com/indepth/opinion/sri-lanka-muslimsreason-fear-rajapaksa-era-191121085426396.html>
61. See CNN 05 May 2019. Accessed online: <https://edition.cnn.com/2019/05/04/asia/zion-bombs-sri-lanka-intl/index.html>
62. Sri Lanka Household, Income and Expenditure Survey 2016.
63. Ibid
64. Sri Lanka Census of Population and Housing 2012.
65. Ibid
66. Key Informant Interview, 6 February 2020, Anuradhapura district, North Central Province.
67. Ibid.
68. See Daily News LK 22 February 2020, accessed online at: <https://www.dailynews.lk/2020/02/22/local/212225/defence-ministry-submit-new-cabinet-paper-solve-disabled-soldiers%E2%80%99-pension>. Also see Financial Times Lanka 07 March 2020, accessed online at: <http://www.ft.lk/opinion/-Disabled-but-not-handicapped-/14-697083>.

69. SLCA1, Post-Observation Interview, 18 January 2020, Kilinochchi district, Northern Province.
70. SLCA1, Post-Observation Interview, 18 January 2020, Kilinochchi district, Northern Province.
71. SLPC1, Post-Observation Interview, 29 January 2020, Batticaloa district, Eastern Province.
72. SLPC1, Post-Observation Interview, 29 January 2020, Batticaloa district, Eastern Province.
73. SLDC1, Post-Observation Interview, 14 January 2020, Anuradhapura district, North Central Province.
74. SLCA1, Post-Observation Interview, 18 January 2020, Kilinochchi district, Northern Province.
75. SLPC3, Post-Observation Interview, 4 February 2020, Batticaloa district, Eastern Province.
76. Ibid.
77. SLDC1, Post-Observation Interview, 14 January 2020, Anuradhapura district, North Central Province.
78. SLCA2, Post-Observation Interview, 22 January 2020, Kilinochchi district, Northern Province.
79. SLCA1, Post-Observation Interview, 18 January 2020, Kilinochchi district, Northern Province.
80. SLCAKI, Key Informant Interview, 18 January 2020, Kilinochchi district, Northern Province.
81. For example, in site 1, SLCA4 emphasised how egalitarian her marriage was. In sites 2 and 3, SLPC1, SLPC3 and SLDC3 gained a lot of strength and support from their mothers and extended family networks.
82. SLCA2, Post-Observation Interview, 22 January 2020, Kilinochchi district, Northern Province.
83. SLPC2, Post-Observation Interview, 1 February 2020, Batticaloa district, Eastern Province.
84. SLDC2 Post-Observation Interview, 14 February 2020, Anuradhapura district, North Central Province.
85. SLDC1, Post-Observation Interview, 14 January 2020, Anuradhapura district, North Central Province.
86. Protests by Tamil mothers of the disappeared, which started in 2017.
87. SLCA1, Post-Observation Interview, 18 January 2020, Kilinochchi district, Northern Province.
88. SLCAKI, Key Informant Interview, 18 January 2020, Kilinochchi district, Northern Province.
89. SLPC3, Post-Observation Interview, 4 February 2020, Batticaloa district, Eastern Province.
90. SLCA1, Pre-Observation Meeting, researcher notes, 16 January 2020, Kilinochchi district, Northern Province.
91. SLCA3, Post-Observation Interview, 22 January 2020, Kilinochchi district, Northern Province.
92. SLCA2, Post-Observation Interview, 22 January 2020, Kilinochchi district, Northern Province.
93. Ibid.
94. Mitigation as a strategy for reversing [depletion] occurs when individuals attempt to lessen the consequences of [depletion] by, for example, paying for help or sharing (Rai et al 2014, p. 13)
95. SLPC2, Post-Observation Interview, 1 February 2020, Batticaloa district, Eastern Province.
96. Ibid.
97. SLPC1, Post-Observation Interview, 29 January 2020, Batticaloa district, Eastern Province.
98. Ibid.
99. SLDC2 Post-Observation Interview, 14 February 2020, Anuradhapura district, North Central Province.
100. SLDC3 Post-Observation Interview, 10 February 2020, Anuradhapura district, North Central Province.
101. SLCAKI, Key Informant Interview, 18 January 2020, Kilinochchi district, Northern Province.
102. SLPC2, Post-Observation Interview, 1 February 2020, Batticaloa district, Eastern Province.
103. SLDC3, Post-Observation Interview, 10 February 2020, Anuradhapura district, North Central Province.
104. SLCAKI, Key Informant Interview, 18 January 2020, Kilinochchi district, Northern Province.
105. SLCA4, Post-Observation Interview, 24 January 2020, Kilinochchi district, Northern Province.
106. SLCA2, Post-Observation Interview, 22 January 2020, Kilinochchi district, Northern Province.
107. SLCA2, Post-Observation Interview, 22 January 2020, Kilinochchi district, Northern Province.
108. SLDC1, Post-Observation Interview, 14 January 2020, Anuradhapura district, North Central Province.
109. SLDC3 Observation Day - time-use diary notes, 9 February 2020, Anuradhapura district, North Central Province.
110. Ibid.
111. SLCAKI Key Informant Interview, 18 January 2020, Kilinochchi district, Northern Province.
112. SLCA2, Post-Observation Interview, 20 January 2020, Kilinochchi district, Northern Province.

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Monash Gender, Peace & Security Centre is a research centre focused on issues of gender, peace and security. Our vision is to build globally-recognised, gender-inclusive research evidence to deliver peace and security globally. We seek to use our research to inform scholarly debate, policy development and implementation, and public understanding about the gendered nature of insecurity and the search for peace. In addition to research with international, government and industry partners, community-engagement with civil society, and academic publications, Monash GPS academics engage in undergraduate and graduate teaching, executive education and PhD supervision.

The Warwick Interdisciplinary Research Centre for International Development (WICID) addresses urgent problems of poverty, inequality and social and economic change while challenging global hierarchies of knowledge and resources. Interdisciplinary, critical and robust analyses through co-production of knowledge and knowledge exchange characterise WICID's approach and ensure impact in the fields we work in. We aim not only to learn from each other but also to create together new methods of research, new analytical insights and propose new solutions, based on a robust evidence base.

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