

Institution: The University of Manchester
Unit of Assessment: 24b (Development Studies)
Title of case study: The Big Picture Show: Depictions of Truce at the Imperial War Museum
<p>1. Summary of the impact</p> <p>The <i>Build the Truce</i> (BTT) project, undertaken at the University of Manchester (UoM), considers the challenges involved in establishing and maintaining a truce during times of conflict. Findings from the research provided the basis for two innovative exhibitions, co-funded by the Department for Culture Media and Sport (DCMS). First, an interactive multimedia display at the Imperial War Museum London (IWML), included as an official part of the 2012 Cultural Olympiad. Second, a <i>Big Picture Show</i> (BPS); part of the rolling programme at the Imperial War Museum North (IWMN). Together these exhibitions, associated public engagement activities and workshops, have both challenged and altered public perceptions of truce, as well as offering a valuable example of how complex and controversial topics can be presented within a museum setting.</p>
<p>2. Underpinning research</p> <p>The BTT project was led by Dr Tim Jacoby (Senior Lecturer in Conflict Studies, Institute for Development Policy and Management, 2003-), who, between 2009 and 2012, undertook a series of interviews with doctors, academics, aid workers and former combatants from war-affected areas. These interviews revealed that truce was not necessarily a period of peace, recovery and progress. Instead, truce could constitute a period of unpredictable challenges, where deep-rooted sources of conflict may re-emerge, at the same time as issues around disarmament, demobilisation and peace-building come to the fore. This built on research undertaken over the last ten years in Turkey, where there have been intermittent truces between Kurdish insurgents and the state for much of the republic's history – including a broadly observed ceasefire between 1999 and 2005. This led to journal articles, alongside a major monograph that addressed human security and conflict transformation [A]. Similarly, research was undertaken with reference to similar periods of truce in Bosnia (funded by the International Labour Organisation) and in Palestine, as well as a consideration of the geo-political implications of organising an international intervention following a truce. Taken together, the theme of 'truce breakdown' also informed an influential monograph that considered the causes of violent conflict more broadly [D].</p> <p>These outputs informed the editorship of two special editions of highly prestigious journals, where the issue of rebuilding conflict-affected contexts during periods of truce was addressed, aiming at a wide-ranging engagement with both practitioners and the broader academic community [B][C]. These outputs were supported by an ESRC funded seminar series held at the Humanitarianism and Conflict Response Institute (HCRI). The HCRI was co-founded by Jacoby in 2009 with the specific purpose of researching conflict and post-conflict situations, and has now expanded to nine salaried academic members of staff, five administrators, five degree programmes, and over 20 PhD students. Taken together, Jacoby's research has led to the following conclusions:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Peace is not as simple as the absence of war. Ending violence or reducing its intensity tends not to provide a sustainable basis for long-term conflict transformation. It is unlikely to bring justice and human security unless the causes of the conflict are understood and addressed fully [D]. Without this process of reflection, conflict-affected countries tend to remain locked into a fluctuating cycle of violence [A]. 2. International efforts to build truces are often founded upon donor requirements and/or foreign policy imperatives, rather than local need. Opportunities to guide post-conflict societies in new directions are frequently determined not by the preferences of one or more of the protagonists, but by the victors, established elites or international actors [E]. 3. The process of demobilisation and disarmament is not as simple as merely turning swords in ploughshares. The presence of international agencies and former combatants re-entering society can bring new challenges to housing provisions and the labour market. Overlying these issues is the question of legitimacy. In many situations of truce, it is not clear why some (typically the state or a third party intervener) are permitted to maintain arms despite possessing little moral or administrative authority over that society [C]. As a consequence, rehabilitation is stalled, violent crime may increase and there may be a resumption of war itself [A][D].

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3. References to the research (all references available upon request - AUR)

The research is framed around two monographs, and a number of peer reviewed journal articles.

- [A] (2013) Jacoby, T. & Özerdem, A. *Peace in Turkey 2023: The Question of Human Security and Conflict Transformation* (Rowman & Littlefield, Lanham MD.) (REF 2014) (AUR)
- [B] (2011) Jacoby, T. (ed.) "The Forum: Dealing with the Aftermath of Political Violence" including "Conflict Response and the Study of Peace" *International Studies Review* 13(2) 354-385 doi:10.1111/j.1468-2486.2011.1042a.x
- [C] (2010) Jacoby, T. & James, E. "Emerging Patterns in the Reconstruction of Conflict-Affected Countries" *Disasters* 34(1) 1-14 (Jacoby & James eds.) doi:10.1111/j.0361-3666.2009.01096.x
- [D] (2008) Jacoby, T. *Understanding Conflict & Violence: Theoretical and Interdisciplinary Approaches* (Routledge: London) (AUR)
- [E] (2007) Jacoby, T. "Hegemony, Modernisation and Post-War Reconstruction" *Global Society* 21(4) 521-537 doi:10.1080/13600820701562751

4. Details of the impact

Background: In 2009, Jacoby was invited to IWMN to give a talk to large group of educators and museum professionals, all involved in developing curricula in the area of conflict studies. His presentation – 'The Problem with Peace' – problematised 'how to' questions of conflict resolution, which had traditionally presumed that lowering the intensity of violence would serve as an end in itself. The feedback was excellent, and Jacoby was asked to co-curate the two audio-visual displays that would make up the core of the BTT initiative [1]. By drawing on his research findings, and working collaboratively with both museum staff and professional film makers, he guided BTT – launched on the 'International Day of Peace' (21st September 2011) as part of the London Games' 'Olympic Truce' programme – towards a greater emphasis upon the ethical and political challenges of disarmament, demobilisation, re-integration and peace-building.

Pathways to Impact: Working with the HCRI, ten key individuals with experience of living and working in conflict-affected countries were interviewed at length. These included former prisoners such as Seanna Walsh (IRA) and Jackie McDonald (UDA), both now involved in Northern Irish peace initiatives; former UoM MA student Courtney Edwards, who had worked for a health NGO in a displaced persons' camps during the Sierra Leonean civil war; and Professor Tony Redmond (HCRI co-founder), who led aid teams in Kosovo following NATO attacks in 1999 [1]. Alongside IWMN, Jacoby selected and awarded a £55,000 contract to a specialist production company (The Soup Collective) to develop audio-visual display material to accompany the interviews; their director commenting that Jacoby's "*expertise and judgement were essential to the direction of the final films... Both our company and the Museum benefitted greatly from this collaboration and established a co-production model that was an improvement on the past and an example for the future*" [2]. Throughout, Jacoby maintained responsibility for academic content and developing learning objectives, and was lead press contact for media enquiries throughout the IWML run.

The Exhibitions: With more than 1.3 million visitors a year across its two main sites (London and Manchester), the IWM is well placed to extend academic research to a broader audience. The BTT project is one of the largest and most prestigious ever undertaken at the IWM, and was unusual as it ran in both London and Manchester venues, "*recognising the very different environments and identities of the two sites*", as well as initiating supplementary events at other IWM locations [1]. It was funded from the organisation as a whole, with matched funding secured from the DCMS. The overall budget (for the period 2009-13) was around £500,000 [1]. Accompanying the exhibition were a series of four continuing professional development (CPD) events (October 2010 – September 2012) reviewing and discussing the issues that BTT raises.

IWML: The BTT interactive multimedia display was exhibited at the IWML in the prestigious B11 gallery (May 24th until September 23rd 2012) and "*the touchscreen installation is now a permanent feature of the museum's research/resource area on the ground floor*" [1]. In including this project in the Olympic Truce Programme, and awarding it the Inspire kitemark, Lord Coe (Chair of LOGOC), noted that "*projects like Build the Truce use the power of the Games to inspire change.*" [4]. During the May launch of the IWML exhibition the Head of Conflict Department at the Foreign and

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Commonwealth Office, and author of the Government's 'Building Stability Overseas Strategy' stated that BTT *"gave the public exactly the right message regarding the complexities of post-conflict situations"* [1]; later noting that he: *"felt the project was successful in capturing the complexity of peace as not as simply the absence of war... It also underlined the need for international interventions to fully consider the needs of local people... It certainly succeeded in raising awareness of the difficulties encountered during periods of truce and gave the public exactly the right message regarding the complexities of post-conflict situations"* He also affirmed that BTT *"made a useful contribution to HMG's broader work on the Olympic Truce in 2012"*, with the project also featuring prominently on the FCO's 'Olympic Truce' web-feed [5]. Visitor numbers during the Olympic period were estimated to be around 250,000, with around 30% (75,000) visiting B11. The exhibition was covered by the national press, with an article in the Daily Mirror noting that: *"With images from Iraq, El Salvador, Sierra Leone, Kosovo Northern Ireland and others, [BTT] uses touch-screens to explain how a truce can have far-reaching effects. The soundtrack, made up of eyewitness interviews, offers a compelling insight from a huge variety of people from soldiers to medics and civilians"* [6].

Supporting events were held, including a discussion session facilitated by the London Boroughs Faith Network in June 2012, involving both Conrad Bailey and Lord Michael Bates, who undertook a 3000 mile 'Walk for Truce', from Olympia to London, and an array of British Council backed classroom activities for 11-16 year olds [7]. Lastly, as part of IWML's 2012 'International Day of Peace' programme (22nd September 2012), Jacoby chaired a BTT workshop entitled 'Starting in Neutral: What does Neutrality Mean or Matter in 21st Century Humanitarian Conflict Response?' This public event, reviewing BTT as a whole and considering 'lessons learnt', was held in IWML's largest auditorium, and included contributions from: the Executive Director of Conciliation Resources who commended BTT as *"an effective way of reaching out to members of the British public – particularly those outside the peacebuilders' specialist-loop... introduce[ing] some complexity into the discussion"* [8]; the Director of Programmes at International Alert; the Head of the Médecins Sans Frontières Programmes Unit; and the UK spokesperson from the International Committee of the Red Cross, who welcomed further collaboration with Jacoby and remarked that he was *"impressed by how 'Build the Truce' problematised conflict resolution, particularly via the innovative use of audio-visual displays... The project was clearly effective, particularly in the manner through which research findings were crafted to reach audiences who would not necessarily have fully considered these issues beforehand... [BTT & BPS] offer a useful model for the presentation and discussion of difficult themes, presenting... public engagement, through the formation of relationships between public institutions, NGOs and academic institutions"* [9].

IWMN: The BPS is a major selling point for IWMN, shown hourly in the main exhibition space designed by renowned architect Daniel Libeskind, presenting *"the personal stories of those caught up in conflict, narrating the experiences of ordinary people in extraordinary situations."* As the IWMN's Director continues *"...Build the Truce' is a significant and exciting addition to our repertoire. The partnership project has been a great success, fitting well with the purpose and strategies ambitions of IWMN to look at how war and conflict shapes lives"* [3]. BTT has provided 'unique pieces' enriching the IWM archives, and it is estimated that a majority of visitors will view at least one example of the BPS during their visit (69% of visitors saw a BPS in 2010). Footfall estimates predict that around 40,000 people visited IWMN during the initial exhibition period (July – October 2012), where the film was supplemented with two workstations in the 'Your History' area on the ground floor, with touchscreens showing interview clips, alongside arranged tours [3].

The numbers of visitors seeing the film remains considerable. Since 15th July 2012, it has been granted a prime slot (initially 2pm daily; now weekends and bank holidays) in the BPS permanent programme (*n.b.* annual visits to IWMN are in excess of 350,000)[3]. To supplement the BPS, Jacoby worked with Radiowaves, a market leader in educational social media; through the network generated, he and museum staff have distributed a range of resources drawn from the core research to schools and colleges throughout the country, including supplementary video materials – with requests for copies made by museums in Canada and schools in Italy – and bookable school sessions [1]. The Radiowaves collaboration has involved a number of focus groups, the recruiting of further delegates (mainly schoolteachers) to IWMN events and additional (broadcast)

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interviews with academics, peace activists and journalists. Selected weekends have also been used by IWMN staff to facilitate activities for young children based around the idea of “call[ing] a truce, whatever your differences”. Young visitors to the museum were invited to watch the BPS, and then hear ‘a slimy story of slugs, snails and truce time tales’ finding out ‘what united the slugs and snails in this funny and inspiring tale of truce’, and subsequently making a unique artwork based on their view of the stories presented. IWMN noted that event feedback was positive, confirming also that: “Project activities... were developed, piloted, delivered, evaluated and absorbed into permanent programmes” over the four years of the programme [1][3]. In 2014 BTT will also make up a key part the ‘Aftermaths of War’ programme at the John Rylands Library, Deansgate.

Evaluation & Legacy: Jacoby was able to secure UoM funding in order to thoroughly evaluate the impact of the displays, as well as gauge visitor perceptions more generally. Interviews were conducted with 263 individuals at both sites, and it was revealed that 73% of those interviewed had watched the whole film, with 64% per cent of viewers reporting that the film had changed their perception of truces, and 65% stating that the issue was more complicated than they had previously imagined. Selected comments included: “Truce isn’t always peace”; *I didn’t realise how hard things are after war*”; and “Before, I thought [truce] was always effective and well sorted out – but after watching the film, I’ve changed my mind”. Most importantly, the evaluation revealed that 56% of interviewees thought that the BTT had changed their view of the IWM itself, noting that for visitors “the BTT display added another dimension to their experience and feelings of the Imperial War Museum”. The most common reason cited was that the exhibition moved away from a focus on the execution of war, towards a more subtle consideration of the less obvious aspects associated with the aftermath of conflict. The report concluded that “there was the general feeling that the museum was moving forward and ‘continues to grow and evolve’”, and this observation was attributed not only to the BPS, but also the interactive and visual components of the IWMN exhibition, with 85% stating that the presence of eyewitness experience within the film was ‘important’ or ‘very important’ in shaping their overall perception of the display. Finally, the success of the exhibitions has been recognised by IWM staff, with the evaluation itself showing that half of respondents saw BTT as positively affecting their view of the IWM as a whole. It was also notable that the touch-screens were *not* seen as central to the exhibition; 78% of viewers did not use them, **yet 73% of those interviewed watched the whole of the film** [10, *passim*].

It has been recognised that “installing temporary exhibitions at both IWM’s main exhibition venues was a unique decision reflecting the project’s value and importance to IWM’s developing brand identity and mission statement.” As a result of these successful engagements, the IWMN director invited Jacoby to join the IWMN ‘Academic Network’ to advise the museum on forthcoming events and medium to long term overall strategy [1]. Jacoby also presented details of the project to the international conference: ‘Challenging Memories: Silence and Empathy in Heritage Interpretation’ (7th – 10th July 2013); the aim of which is to further solidify the bonds between academia and museum curation, with BTT seen as an exemplar of this mode of engagement [1][3].

5. Sources to corroborate the impact (all claims referenced in the text)

- [1] Testimonial from BTT Project Co-ordinator, IWMN (July 2013); (2012) IWMN ‘Press release: New Display – Build the Truce...’ (May); IWM North – Key Stage 4 Materials
- [2] Testimonial from Director, The Soup Collective (1st April 2013)
- [3] Testimonial from Director, IWMN (25th May 2013);
- [4] (2012) NW for 2012 ‘Build the Truce – inspired by the Olympic Games’ (19th July)
- [5] Testimonial from former Head of Conflict Department, Foreign and Commonwealth Office (15th July 2013); FCO Olympic Truce Feed (Storify)
- [6] (2012) Daily Mirror ‘How the Games Halted Conflict’ (17th July) (p.6)
- [7] (2012) London Boroughs Faith Network ‘Press Release: Olympic Truce’ (25th May); British Council ‘Connecting Classrooms: The Olympic Truce – Project Template’
- [8] Testimonial from Executive Director, Conciliation Resources (18th April 2013)
- [9] Testimonial from UK Spokesman, International Committee of the Red Cross (23rd May 2013)
- [10] (2012) Hawkins, J. ‘Build the Truce – Impact Report Data’ Internal Report (September)