Circuits, the everyday and IR: Connecting the home to the international and transnational

Key words: home, everyday, ontological security, peace, circuits

Abstract

The primary aim of this article is methodological. It proposes circuitry as an analytical device – not a mere metaphor – as a way of connecting the everyday and the hyper-local to the national, international, transnational and all levels in between. Thus the article is concerned with IR's perennial levels of analysis problem. The study is prompted by empirical research from the Everyday Peace Indicators project in which research subjects narrated their own (in)security in terms of the home and the immediate vicinity of the home. The home can be regarded as a key part of everyday and ontological security for many people, but how do we connect this to the international and transnational. The article draws on literature on engineered and biological circuits in order to propose a novel analytical device with which to emphasise the connectivity between apparently unconnected levels. A life history is used to illustrate how the analytical device might be operationalized.

Introduction

A thread running through focus group transcripts from the Everyday Peace Indicators project was the importance of the home and the immediate vicinity of the home to perceptions of (in)security. This finding resonates with everyday, vernacular and ontological worldviews. What was very noticeable in the transcripts was how focus group participants did not make connections between their localised view of (in)security on the one hand, and international and transnational structures and dynamics on the other. Yet, patently localised situations in South Africa, Uganda and Zimbabwe were contained within, and connected to, much larger dynamics and political economies. This prompts the question around which this article is organised: how can the home, and by extension the everyday, be connected to the international and transnational? It is clear that the ontological and direct (in)securities captured by the focus group transcripts cannot be analysed in isolation. They occur in contexts and political economies that stretch far beyond the immediate locale of the (in)security. This article proposes a novel analytical approach to connecting the local and the non-local in IR: circuitry.

The article contends that circuitry – both biological and engineered – can be utilised as an analytical device. As will be elaborated later, circuits provide a way of comprehending the connections and tensions between the everyday and wider systemic dynamics. IR rarely takes seriously enough the hyper-local – such as the home – and so a major part of this article is concerned with explicating the significance of the vernacular, everyday and ontological dimensions in IR.

In many respects this article is concerned with issues of epistemology, and an awareness that interpretations of social phenomena are likely to be shaped by where we sit. This article argues for a situatedness (Neumann and Neumann 2015) that is cognisant of the importance and meanings of the home. This requires a further stretching of traditional IR perspectives that tend to prioritise levels of analysis far removed from the routine and intimate spheres of everyday life. As such, this article may be read as a critique of meta-level IR and its unconcern with the everyday. The key intellectual contribution of the article is the construction of an analytical device capable of capturing the multi-scalar and dynamic nature of the complex social systems. It can be read as encouragement to move beyond the binaries that are much beloved in International Relations (Tickner 2013; Srivastava and Sharma 2014).

In terms of structure, the article begins with a brief note on the Everyday Peace Indicators project. The project revealed the home, or immediate vicinity of the home, to be a common and primary referent in discussions of peace and security. In its second section, the article unpacks three neighbouring concepts that will help us better understand the concept of the home: everyday, vernacular and ontological and their relevance to IR. Importantly, and moving beyond some IR lenses, this article does not see these concepts solely in terms of (in)security. Instead, they are primarily epistemologies that assist us in gaining a more complete understanding of social phenomena. The third section discusses the concept of the home. The concept has been much discussed by feminist scholars of IR, and has gained greater prominence through literature on ontological security (Kinnvall 2004; see also Innes 2017). The case is made that IR needs to pay due attention to the home – something that will require methodological and epistemological innovation as it stretches IR beyond what it was originally designed for. The fourth section introduces the notion of circuitry as a way of connecting the hyper or very local (the home) and the international and the transnational. It proposes five ways in which the notion of circuitry can be useful in helping us understand the connections between the local and the extra-local. The concluding discussion seeks to operationalize circuitry as an analytical device. Using a life history, it connects the home(life) of an individual to wider circuits that operate at multiple levels.

The Everyday Peace Indicators project
The Everyday Peace Indicators project sought to construct and pilot a robust methodology that would allow the collection of bottom-up indicators of everyday peace and security. These bottom-up, vernacular indicators were then turned into community-wide surveys in South Africa, Uganda and Zimbabwe. The community–sourcing methodology drew heavily on ecology and participatory rural appraisal (PRA) techniques (Parkins et al 2001), and was facilitated through partnership with local NGOs. Participatory techniques are not without their pitfalls such as a tendency to overlook – and sometimes reinforce – power structures and exclusions (Parpart 2000: 7-8; Cottrell and Parpart 2006). The project team did its best to try to ameliorate these problems, although the extent to which research that is funded and directed from the global north can ever be truly 'participatory' is questionable (Firchow and Mac Ginty 2017: 22). While the researcher aims to have a light footprint, especially when examining something

as delicate as the everyday, there must be an acknowledgement that all research on human subjects has an impact. Within the broader issue of the epistemologies associated with Peace and Conflict Studies research, lies the issue of researcher positionality and the ability to skew research through assumptions and biases. Many of the assumptions underpinning research are so embedded as to constitute a form of conceit (Chabal 2012). Although reseach may take care to be authentic to bottom-up discourse, there is no satisfactory answer to Spivak's (1988) question of 'Can the subaltern speak"'. Any attempt to speak on behalf of the subaltern immediately raises questions of power.

Communities were chosen in conjunction with the partner NGOs and, as far as possible, we sought to have a mix of communities in each country: rural/urban, experiencing conflict in recent/not recent years, and experiencing peacebuilding or reconciliation intervention in recent/not recent years. Separate focus groups were held for youth, men and women in each of the communities, and focus group participants were asked to discuss their meanings of peace, security and how they recognised changes in relation to peace and security. The purpose of the focus groups was to develop community-level indicators of peace, security and change, and the separate focus groups for men, women and youth led to verification focus groups in each community whereby a selection from each cohort chose, by consensus, their agreed set of community indicators. These indicators where then converted into surveys that were shared with the wider community. The surveys were then repeated to track change over time. For the purposes of this article, only the focus group part of the research is relevant.

All of the research was conducted in accordance with the research ethics protocols set down by the author's then university. Participation in the focus groups was voluntary and restricted to adults. In Zimbabwe and South Africa in particular, consideration was given to the security of focus group participants. In relation to Zimbabwe there was concern that state security agents would monitor focus group discussions. In South Africa, criminality, and the outbreak of a gang feud in one of the research areas, meant that the timing and location of focus groups was constrained. Focus group participants were given much leeway in discussions in order to allow vernacular expressions to come through. This meant that the transcripts, at times, had a somewhat meandering quality but their was much richness in their discursive and vernacular nature. Further project details are available at everydaypeaceindicators.org.

The everyday, vernacular and ontological
The concepts of the everyday, vernacular and ontological are cognate with many overlaps, but bear scrutiny because of differing etymologies and the insights they offer. While each of these concepts have had sophisticated theoretical and conceptual treatments in relation to IR and other social sciences, their significance is quite straightforward: they help us move our purview away from overwhelmingly state-centric and institutionalist perspectives of the international. As Kay (2012: 260) notes in relation to ontological security, it 'shows the possibilities and limits for exporting formally rational, state-centred models of peacemaking, and reminds us that the urban geographer might be as important a security actor as the diplomat or the security representative'. By

utilising everyday and ontological perspectives, and multiple levels of analysis, we can develop more rounded and grounded frames of reference in relation to social phenomenon. The significance of these concepts from the point of view of this article is that they provide an over-arching framework in which we can further conceptualise the notion of the home and the practices associated with it. This will then provide a jumping off point for attempts to connect the home and the international.

In many ways, traditional approaches to IR have been a study of the exceptional and outliers. Whether through a focus on exceptional nations (Lepgold and McKeown 1995; Holsti 2011; see also Hodgson 2009), exceptional statesmen (and they usually have been men) (Kissinger 1994) or exceptional events like war or secession (Kissinger 2003), a key focus has been on order (Morgenthau 1948; Huntingdon 1996) and deviations from it (Carr 1946). A steady focus has also been maintained on elites, institutions, borders and thus IR has been justifiably accused of ethnocentrism. As Picq (2013: 446) observed, 'epistemologically speaking, IR remains a confined space'. Only relatively recently have mainstream IR authors sought to theorise a networked and transnational world (Keohane 2005; Slaughter 2017). But even then, it remains valid to question the extent to which approaches to IR have been gendered, taken full account of coloniality, and the biases towards an assumed Euro-Atlanticist centre (Sabaratnum 2013). It is in this context, that is, IR's sclerotic investigation of non-traditional epistemologies and methodologies, that the concepts of the vernacular, the everyday and the ontological are unpacked.

The vernacular dimension of security operates in at least two respects. At one level it is a way of seeing and narrating the world around us. Thus, for example, 'vernacular security' may be regarded as interpreting security or peace according to localised and culturally sensitive mores. This narration may be disruptive to hegemonic accounts of conflict: ' … vernacular constructions, experiences and stories of (in)security have the potential to disrupt "official" accounts and repoliticize the technocratic origin of national security policies' (Vaughan-Williams and Stevens 2016: 42). Vernacular accounts may involve the subaltern speaking in ways that change the principal referent of security, and may seek to recast the basis and impact of a conflict. After all, states, international organisations, media outlets and academics often invest significant energy into de-vernacularising local accounts of conflict (Scott 2013: 96-98). This reflects the second dimension upon which vernacular security operates: it can change the level of analysis and compel security and peace to be examined in ways that are contextualised and mindful of the local, hyperlocal and even individualised and embodied experiences (Vaughan-Williams and Stevens 2016: 44). This points to an important criticism of the vernacular frame, and one that goes to the heart of this article – the likelihood that vernacular accounts 'will always be measured against a universal and implicitly European kind of "real" modernity' (Brubant 2005: 277; see also Sabaratnum 2013 and Laffey and Nadarajah 2012). There is a sense of the local and the vernacular as perpetual antonyms to Eurocentric epistemologies and accounts. Thus networked, relational and localised accounts of IR have to work hard to be seen as valid in their own right.

Fundamentally, the notion of the vernacular can be seen as a translation device with the potential to rearticulate narrations and definitions of peace and security that may be more locally meaningful. As such, it has the potential to be subversive, but it is worth noting that vernacular accounts and turns are not without dangers. The local level is often the site of exclusion, patriarchy and discrimination and so it is important not to romanticise all things vernacular (Richmond 2011).

A last point on the vernacular as a translation device is that scholarly discourse risks de-vernacularising local narrations. The term 'ontological security', for example, has been enthusiastically embraced by many academics even though it is highly unlikely that any interviewee or focus group participant would actually use it. As Noble (2005: 108) observed, a vernacular expression for ontological security is simply 'comfort'. The point is an important one, albeit an uncomfortable one to admit: scholarly interpretations of conflict and peoples' experiences of conflict can be anti-vernacular processes that risk stripping agency from individuals and groups who actually experience a conflict. This applies to qualitative and quantitative treatments of conflict that not only have their own scholarly argot, but also are reinforced by favourable political economies of knowledge production and research dissemination (Picq 2013: 445).

By examining daily routines and common practices, the notion of the everyday allows us to see how lifeworlds and ecologies are constructed, reconstructed and shape one another. Foucault (1984), de Certeau (1980) and others showed how an interrogation of the often prosaic aspects of life, for example in relation to daily hygiene regimes (Pylypa 1998), opened a window on power relations and the structure of society. The invocation of the concept of biopolitics encouraged scrutiny of the relationships between the body, society, states and concepts like self-discipline (Kotsila and Saravanan 2017).

A focus on the everyday demands not only different methodologies than those traditionally utilised in IR, but also a rethinking of epistemology so that a granularity of detail and a focus on quotidian rather than exceptional aspects of life came to the fore. The concept of the everyday has been seized enthusiastically by critical scholars of Peace and Conflict Studies who have sought to critique the liberal peace as an insensitive and often ineffective top-down behemoth. Initial work by Richmond (2009) and Roberts (2011) has been followed by work that has scoped out the need for bottom-up and people-centric approaches to peace that are contextually sensitive and aware of the possibilities of local agency (Stanley and Jackson 2016; Berents and McEvoy-Levy 2015; Randazzo 2016; Williams 2013). Conceptual and empirical work has sought to understand notions and practices of everyday peace whereby individuals and groups navigate life in deeply-divided and conflict-affected societies. These studies, drawing on sociology, anthropology, feminism, and critical geography, have unpacked the micro-dynamics of life in conflict-affected areas and have sought to develop accounts and analyses of conflict that emphasise emotional

intelligence, adaptability and agency (Williams 2015; Mitchell 2011; Fregonese 2012)

Essentially, the term 'everyday peace' relates to the sub-state and non-elite dimensions of peace, and emphasises its experiential dimensions whereby it is consumed, produced, co-produced and narrated by individuals and groups. It encourages us to think of the 'everydayness' of peace; that is, its chronic and on-going aspects as opposed acute phenomena. As such it fits well with the notion of ontological security, or indeed ontological peace (Croft 2012: 221). Ontological security places the individual and group within a particular context and highlights how security (an affective as well as material phenomenon) results from a complex amalgam of identity, awareness and relatedness. At its most simple it is 'a security of being' (Dupuis and Thorns 1998: 27). It is, very much, a psycho-sociological concept that recognises 'a deep psychological need for a sense of security and constancy' (Hulse and Milligan 2014: 638). For Kay (2012: 236) ontological security can be an 'emotive, not always an overt cognitive experience' thus revealing how far removed it is from an International Relations of billiard balls and statecraft (Waltz 2001). Thus ontological security is concerned with the individual, the self and the networks they constitute and inhabit. It connects with the need to fulfil higher-order basic needs (Mitzen 2006: 343; Hulse and Milligan 2014: 638; see also Kinnvall and Mitzen 2017: 5) and is motivated by an underlying fear of precariousness and the need to understand it and protect against it (Croft 2012: 223; Mitzen 2006: 346).

Mitzen's seminal article on ontological security emphasises the importance of the everyday through routine, continuity and the sustaining of practices and identity (2006: 343, 346, 348). She observes that 'The need for ontological security is so deep, and our attachment to routines so profound, that we rarely see ontological security in daily life' (2006: 348). This embeddedness of ontological security is important from a methodological perspective as it places an onus on researchers to draw on sociologically and anthropologically inspired methods in order to see the banal (See Haddad 2014 on 'banal sectarianism'). Research methodologies that can identify and understand the micro-dynamics of relationships and sociality are not necessarily in the standard IR toolkit, and so somewhat unorthodox routes (like the lens offered by the home) become necessary.

From the perspective of this article, ontological security is very much connected with the home. Its concentration on a sense of belonging resonates with identification with the home, neighbourhood and community (Shani 2017: 277). This identification reminds of the significance of psychological value of security and how it stretches to imaginaries of the home and the homeland (Taylor 2013). Important here is the sense of continuity that individuals and groups might have with a particular home or district (Shani 2017: 282; Steele 2005: 526). We are encouraged to think of security not merely in terms of survival and preservation, but also in wider terms of the atmosphere or eco-sphere in which security is embodied and enacted (Browning and Joenniemi 2017). Ontological security entails a responsibility on individuals and communities to 'reflexively monitor' their own circumstances to assess if security is improving or not

(Cockain 2012: 341). The next section will further explore a key feature of the everyday – the home – before the article proceeds to investigate how the home can be connected analytically to other spheres.

The home

Quotation 1
'Peace is still not complete because I sleep with fear of what will happen at night since our doors are broken every night hence I don't feel safe at all.'
-   Woman, Gudele, South Sudan, 26 October 2013.

Quotation 2
We don't sleep at night instead we just stay up waiting for what may come up in the night … This has forced people to start having short calls (urinating) in small buckets within their houses in order to feel less exposed to danger out there.
-   Man, Gudelle, South Sudan, 26 October 2013.

Quotation 3
It's a risk just to cross the streets. Mothers stand on the balconies to see if it is safe for their kid to leave the court [low rise, poor quality public housing]. They wait for the kids in the other court [diagonally opposite) to see if it is safe to leave.
- Woman, Hanover Park, Cape Town, 12 December 2016

Quotation 4
The only peace you have is watching a video in your own house with the door locked.
-Man, Hanover Park, Cape Town, 12 December 2016

Quotation 5
[A sign of peace is] … people improving their house – renovating or extending it. But people would rather sell and move away altogether.
- Man, Atlantis, South Africa, 10 December 2016

The above quotations, from the Everyday Peace Indicators project, illustrate the importance of the home to everyday calculations of security and peacefulness. There is no pretence here that the quotations are representative of particular societies. They are provided to illustrate the frequency with which the home was invoked as a key referent in discussions of everyday peace and security.

By pointing towards the familiar, local and routine, the concepts of the vernacular, everyday and ontological encourage us to take seriously the notion of the home (Edjus 2017: 25). While the term has been extensively conceptualised in Sociology, it is less well developed in IR. Feminist scholars have unpacked the home as a site of patriarchy, production and the construction of identity, while those investigating ontological security have highlighted the importance of the home to identity and affective dimension of security. Traditional IR explorations of the home have been in relation to the homeland, the home front (Dobel 2010:

480; Sjoberg 2011: 120) and the interesting, but underdeveloped, concept of domopolitics (Walters 2004; Hynek 2012).

While the home usually involves a physical space most explorations emphasise the psychological dimension that separates a mere house or some other physical arrangement from a home. Dobel's (2010: 493) reference to 'a primordial sense of home' speaks to deep psychological resonances that capture a sense of belonging not only to the physicality of the house but also the neighbourhood and the identifiers connected with it (see also Browning 2018: 259). While for many the home is an actual space, this notion is not universal with, for example, diaspora populations having a-spatial or contested notions of what constitutes the home (Miller 2008: 73-82; Taylor 2013: 396).

It worth noting how the strategies of many conflict actors are to quite deliberately separate people from their homes (Davis 2002: 65-83; Quota, Punamäki and Sarraj 1998). Other strategies, such as the counterinsurgency concept of 'strategic villages' or apartheid South Africa's Group Areas Act, prescribe where people must live (Bwalya and Seethal 2016: 42; Newsinger 2013: 94). Such strategies deliberately target the psychological value, social capital and popular morale associated with the home (Hewitt 1983).

From the perspective of this article, and its interest in the home as an everyday practice that is connected not just locally but also to the international and the transnational, three points are worth making. The first point is that the home is often regarded as a place of sanctuary or retreat; it is part of the private realm - a material form of the private sphere providing a space to eat, sleep, consume, accumulate, and develop intimate and familial relations. In western societies, the establishment of the home as a private realm is usually associated with the movement of paid work from the home to factories and workshops (Trentmann 2016: 223). The point has been explored in depth by feminist scholars, with Mies noting how capitalist production and accumulation led to a process of 'housewifization' whereby the man left the home to work and the woman stayed at home (Mies 2014: 74; see also Narain 2014: 194). The home was also a place removed from the insecurities of the public realm (Browning 2018: 251). As feminist scholars have pointed out, the home has often been associated with women and cast as safe and removed from politics, while the public sphere was political and male (Kantola 2007: 276; Steans 2003: 443; Åhäll 2016: 164). Wibben (2018: 144) has noted how appeals to security and patriotism often rely on 'gendered myths of women at the home front and men at the front lines.' It should be noted that the dichotomised notion of the public versus private or home versus international does not hold true. Indeed, the next section on circuitry makes clear the intersectionality running through life.

The safety offered by the home may be ontological, deriving from a familiarity of surroundings, the 'comfort of things' (Miller 2008), and a sense of protection offered by family members and cohabitees. Important here is the separation, physical as well as psychological, from the rest of the world. It is worth noting how the concept of 'the street', often the immediate exterior to the home or house, is often regarded as dangerous and unknown. Terms such as 'street

walker', 'street gangs' or 'living on the streets' often conjure immediate and graphic images (Stephenson 2002). Of course, the home is not always associated with notions of safety and security. It may be the site of abuse, power imbalances such as patriarchy, and narrow horizons. Analyses of the home demand to be highly contextualised and somewhat fluid and while most understand the home as 'a secure base' (Hiscock et al 2001: 50), it is worth noting that these bases are often under threat. This might obviously be through conflict and displacement, but also through processes of development and de-development (Newton 2008: 221). The notion of fleeing home as part of personal growth is a common trope in fiction. Yet the idea of the home as freedom and breathing space predominates: 'space free from the pressures and conflicts of the public world, where the private life of emotions and familial relationships may be conducted in safety and free from interference' (Reid 2007: 935). The home might also be a site of resistance, free from surveillance by neighbours and the state, where the hidden transcript may be narrated (Scott 1990: 121).

The second point, and one particularly relevant to the home as a place of refuge, is that the home is a space for accumulation and consumption. In societies affected by acquisition crime the home is place to safely store goods, and may be a target. Commentary on consumption can often have a moralistic tone, concentrating on consumption as excess or a function of a throwaway society. Yet, histories of consumption provide fascinating evidence of surplus wealth, the development of class divides, fashions and fads, the development of trading routes, and the forging of different kinds of modernity (Trentmann 2016; Valentine 1999). Hurdley (2006) has observed how the home has become an important site of display. Seemingly inanimate objects offer the possibility of narrating the social world around them, and thus 'the social life of things' (Appadurai 2013: 3) can tell us about the cultural meanings of the object (see, for example Graves-Brown 2007 on the Kalashnikov or Walters 1997 on the Zippo lighter). A study of objects can also reveal how they might be used differently over time (MacGregor 2012: xxi), and the difference between systems use and normative use (Shankar 2006: 294).

The new materialism literature is useful in helping us move beyond a position of the object as inanimate, to an 'object-oriented ontology' (Humphries and Smith 2014: 479) whereby objects create lifeworlds for people and become intertwined with identity (Mac Ginty 2017). In Daniel Miller's (2006: 298) words, 'objects create subjects much more than the other way around'. This is most obvious in instances of 'technologies in intimate integration with humans' such as worn or medical nano and bio-technologies. But in many other respects, objects give humans personality, cultural power and social position. This is not always a matter of individual or group agency: positions may be ascribed by others who might identify one family as wealthy and therefore a potential target for robbery.

The third point to make is that the home, although usually associated with a localized space such as a neighbourhood or village, must also be located internationally and transnationally. This point is crucial to this article's concern with levels of analysis. The ambition of this article is to foreground the

intersectionality of multiple levels of analysis that are usually interrogated in isolation, and often with an implicit or explicit hierarchy that positions the international and centre as superior to the local, peripheral or the home. Identifying the home and the everyday as connected with the international and transnational requires us to adopt an extra-territorial lens that regards the local, international and all levels in between as verbs as well as nouns. In this sense, these levels of analysis are enacted (sometimes embodied) social processes that are constructed, reconstructed, negotiated and narrated according to myriad social, cultural and economic processes.

The home may be seen as an interaction between political geography and political economy. It is, in one respect, a physical dwelling with an identifiable site. Yet, in other respects, it is a function of the ability of the individual or family to pay rent, a mortgage or accumulate the resources to build or purchase a dwelling, the laws of inheritance and tenure, and systems of governance in relation to planning, regulation and taxation. At first glance, these issues may appear in the realm of the state or sub-state level and thus removed from international and transnational forces. Yet, further scrutiny reveals contemporary violent conflict, patterns of consumption, and the economies of housing to be linked to a series of complex financial and social interactions that cross international boundaries (Schwartz 2012; Aalbers 2008). The connections between the seemingly local and everyday (for example, the home) and the international and transnational are not always clear or visible. This conceptual separation of the domestic and the international has, to some extent, been eroded by work on isomorphism, globalization, global social movements, and transnational financial flows, but there is still room for concept scoping that allows us to articulate the complex connectivity that links different levels of society such as the home (apparently banal, everyday and localized) with the international (apparently exotic, exceptional and reserved for professional, tourist or diplomatic elites). How to articulate this connectedness is the focus of the remainder of this article.

The circuitry of people, commodities and practices
International Relations and related disciplines have produced a number of attempts to capture the multi-scalar nature of international, transnational and transversal phenomenon. Early IR inquiries into levels of analysis tended to reinforce the role of states and formal institutions, and disaggregated the individual, state, and international system (Singer 1961; Waltz 2001). Systems theory was useful in its comprehensive ambition, yet had little say about the sub-state level (Young 1968; Weltman 1972; and Kaplan 1975). While offering analytical clarity, such models seemed removed from the transversal complexity of transnational and international dynamics, and so have been overtaken by more sophisticated analyses that are aware of the relational and informal aspects of levels of analysis (Temby 2015; Speigel 2003: 84). The most convincing interrogations of the level of analysis issues has been sociologically inspired work, most notably by Latour (2007) on networks and Deleuze and Guattari (2004) on the rhizomatic nature of multi-scalar networks. Communications theory has also been useful, particularly Castells' work on urban spatiality in the networked era (Castells 2009 and 2010).

Influenced by this work, this article proposes notions of biological and engineered circuitry as an analytical device with which to connect the international, the local and all areas in between. Circuitry has an impeccable intellectual pedigree (Harvey 1975; Marx 1887). The notion of circuits, while popular in interrogations of urban and political geography, has had less purchase within IR. As a result, circuitry is explored here as a way of conceptually scoping the connectivities that constitute the assemblages of multi-scalar life. Circuitry, this article contends, is a useful way of connecting the seemingly isolated and local with other levels. This section will make the case for the conceptual and analytical utility of circuitry, while the last section will demonstrate this through a life history. It is worth remembering that empirical fieldwork, and specifically peoples' narration of their own (in)security in terms the home, has been the key driver behind this article.

In order to understand the analytical (not mere metaphorical) traction of circuitry it is worth interrogating literature from the natural and hard sciences that examines neurocircuitry, autonomic responses and the electronic circuits in the species and devices around us. From this literature, we can draw a number of lessons about the transmission of ideas, practices and goods that constitute the social world. Perhaps the most important lesson is one of humility. Neurophysiology tells us that we not have a complete understanding of the complexity of the brain and associated cognitive, sensory and motor components (Warr 2001: 12; Davis 2000: 313). Much of our understanding of neural circuitry relies on proxies, experimentation on animals, and modeling. As Warr (2001: 12) observes our insights into circuits rely on representations of phenomenon rather than phenomenon themselves: 'Our sensory systems provide us with dimensions of experience that model the energies surrounding our bodies. These experiences represent, rather than accurately report what is going on in the world.' Fear and panic neurocircuitry is suggestive of primordial impulses that are not always subject to control (de Carvalho 2010: 189). Humility is a useful starting point in any research journey that seeks to capture systems and contexts that are hard to access, often deliberately hidden and might rely on deep contextual information (Weiss 1986: 278). Indeed, the term 'circuitous' can also mean obfuscatory – or taking a deliberately complex route in order to conceal something (Gill et al 2016: 10). Moreover, it is worth noting that the two defining trends in electronic engineering have been on device minimization and complexity (enabling devices to do more) thus complicating the task of those wishing to understand circuits (Current 1979: 611; Weiss 2002: 83).

The remainder of this section makes five claims on the usefulness of circuits as an analytical device. Firstly, circuits denote movement (Gill et al 2016: 8). Marx (1887: 85) referred to the 'restless currency of money' that was 'perpetuum mobile'. This dynamism comes in multiple forms: transmission of electrical current or information along a circuit, but also the building or destruction of parts of the network. Circuits can mature, but they can also, in the case of biological circuits 'dissolve when they are done' (Pennisi 2003: 1649). Movements along the circuit can be in both ways, need not be direct, can be

reciprocal, and can trigger other movement, action or perception (de Carvalho 2010: 193).

Secondly, circuitry suggests an infrastructure of routes along which people, practices and ideas can travel. Circuits allow for recurrence and regularity, and are thus indicative of the everyday, the home and the ontological in the sense of routinized processes. Circuits that are institutionalized and normalized can establish and reinforce legitimation and power. They can be 'obligatory passage points … that stabilize and destabilize existing fields of power relations' (Logue and Clegg 2015: 399). As such, the infrastructure of circuitry can be a key part of the cultural, political and economic arbitrage that constitutes life in any ecosystem. Infrastructure is also suggestive of the material power required to build and maintain it. Infrastructure can be formal (for example, regulated commodity networks) but they can also be informal, hidden, episodic (Logue and Clegg 2015: 399) and a mix of the formal and informal (Cardoso 2016: 101).

Thirdly, infrastructures require agency in their construction and operation. They are constituted by a series of decisions and reactions, some of which can be innate and autonomic, and others that require deliberation. While electronic circuits give the impression of highly regulated transmissions (for example, restricted to a binary on/off switch), it is also worth thinking about circuits that involve choice, multiple responses and ambiguous responses. It is in this space that we can conceive of circuitry that may be non-standard, informal and even subversive. So rather than automatically reinforcing a system, some forms of circuitry can by-pass, subvert and render inert or irrelevant other circuits. Thus, rather than a flat or inanimate system, in some contexts circuitry can be seen as a site of agency, innovation and disruption. In this view, circuits are not simply a site of replication, order or path dependency. Instead, they may, in some circumstances, accommodate or facilitate change and non-standard expressions of power.

A fourth observation about the conceptual and analytical value of circuits relates to the different order of circuits. The intellectual puzzle at the heart of this article is how to connect the seemingly localized and insular sphere of the home with the international and transnational. Some circuits may appear to be localized and closed, with limited connectivity to wider networks. Most transmission and stimulus may be contained within a local circuit and the emphasis might be on the micro-processes of a community (Weiss 1986: 274). Yet as the life history in the concluding section demonstrates, an apparently localized existence is actually a site of connectivity, even if the connections are not particularly visible. Certainly many of the focus group discussions that were the point of origin for this article suggested an insularity and made little connection with the outside world. The literature on circuits is useful in showing how these apparently closed circuits may be connected to wider networks. Micro-circuits may be contained within macro circuits (Logue and Clegg 2015: 399). Grant and Oten-Ababio's (2012:11) work on the linkages between informal and formal economies outlines how circuits can be conceived of as horizontal and vertical, with connections throughout. Hence an apparently localized sphere of life may be connected to 'a circuitry that can stretch across the globe in embedded

hierarchies, divisions and various subdivisions' (Grant and Onteng-Ababio 2012: 3).

A fifth insight from work on circuits is that the multiplicity of types of circuits allows us to investigate the very different structures and processes that comprise complex social systems. Thus, for example, a highly localized political economy may seem to be of a very different order to a globalized one. The differences may be in scale, currency, commodities, traders and indicators of success. Yet the concept of circuitry allows us to conceive of how we might connect seemingly very different schemes and place them in a complex system. Such systems may involve and implicate a wide variety of actors of different levels and types – from individual criminal perpetrators and victims to complex trading networks. In order to capture such a complex system, it is worth drawing on systems biology or the emergent integration of biology, mathematics and engineering (Pennisi 2003). Here it is possible to think of the interactions between evolved (biological) and engineered circuits and how seemingly different types of circuits can complement one another, run side-by-side independently of one another, and still comprise the same meta-system.

Concluding discussion
The task facing this article has been to connect the everyday and the very local (the home) with the transnational and international. The focus groups that formed the starting point for this research discussed peace and security in terms of the everyday, the banal and routinized and often mentioned the home and the immediate vicinity of the home. Yet, it is clear that events that occur at the micro-local and everyday levels also relate to wider political economies and ecologies.

The challenge confronting any work that proposes an analytical device is to demonstrate its usefulness. How can circuitry help us understand the linkages between the everyday, vernacular and ontological on the one hand, and the national, international, and transnational on the other? The route chosen in this article is a life history (Taber 2013; Agar 1980). The restricted space of a journal article allows only for an abbreviated life history, but its purpose here is to illustrate the usefulness of the methodology in conjunction with the analytical device of circuitry rather than to give a full life history. Five claims were made on behalf of circuitry, that they: denote movement; suggest an infrastructure; require agency in their construction and operation; are multi-layered, and; come in many different formats. It is argued here that these dimensions of connectivity are illustrated in the life history given below.

Consider the example of Ignatius, a sixty-eight year old male interviewed by the author in December 2016 at a settlement about two hundred kilometres north of Cape Town, South Africa. The interview took place on the margins of an Everyday Peace Indicators project focus group meeting. Ignatius lived alone in small, and well-tended, home that had been built in the post-apartheid era. The home was cheaply built, and poorly insulated against the cold winters and nights. Flowers grew in the small front yard and a satellite dish kept him connected with the outside world. Ignatius lived in a bleak, wind-swept settlement on the side of a valley. The bottom of the valley was occupied by what seemed to be verdant

vineyards and punctuated by the large white (and heavily securitised) houses of the vineyard owners. On the much less fertile valley sides were the new townships that replaced older settlements. It was here that most people lived, in poorly built houses that had basic amenities (electricity and plumbing) but only limited community resources.

The main issues in Ignatius' life were poverty, fear of crime, and a sense of disillusionment with authority. Ignatius had worked in various capacities at the local vineyards, but no longer did so. He never had a permanent contract. Instead, his work was seasonal and *ad hoc*. He was a widower and his children had moved away. He seemed well-connected locally and had a sense of community. He had always lived in the area and had a strong understanding of the layering of life in his part of South Africa where tribe, family, party, nationality and locality seemed to become interspersed in a complex swirl. The major political event during Ignatius' lifetime – the end of apartheid – did have an impact on his everyday life in the sense that – eventually – he was able to move into a new home. A remarkable aspect of how Ignatius narrated his own sense of (in)security was how he did so almost exclusively in terms of the everyday, vernacular and local. He tended not to relate his life and situation to the world beyond his home and its immediate neighbourhood. He talked about crime, corruption and development in a highly localised sense. His satellite TV meant that he had the potential to be aware of the outside world, but in the narration of his own life he did not make the connections.

That Ignatius narrated his life and situation in very localised terms is significant, and confronts IR scholars with a problem. How can the vernacular and everyday be connected with other levels of analysis? Although Ignatius did not do so, it is difficult not to connect his condition with wider national, international and transnational flows. It is here that circuitry becomes useful as an analytical device. The five claims made on behalf of circuitry as an analytical device are justified when applied to the life history. The first of these, movement and dynamic was in evidence. Although he lived in a localised environment in which there were some apparent constants (for example, land tenure), there was also change. The source of political power, the willingness of the state to share public goods (housing), and the demographic of the area (Zimbabwean in-comers) had all changed in Ignatius' lifetime. His life history was shaped by the movement of people, ideas, goods and capital within a highly localised circuit in his valley. This, in turn, was connected to a series of wider circuits.

The second claim made on behalf of circuitry was that it helps us think about (infra)structure or permanent routes through which people, capital and power moved. In Ignatius' case, the infrastructure was present in the literal sense of the physical and human geography – the valley and vineyards, the routes connecting them to the outside world. An infrastructure was also there in a broader sense of the apparent permanency of power relations. Serious political and economic capital had been beyond Ignatius' grasp during his lifetime. Despite the fall of apartheid and the extension of the franchise, Ignatius did not feel particularly empowered. There was a resignation in his attitude to the structural factors that bounded his life, and he was scathing about what he saw as the corruption of

both municipal and national elites. The third claim made on behalf of circuitry, that it allows space for agency (and thus dissent, resistance, subversion and expression by minorities) was also apparent in Ignatius' story. He had not been politically active and his own life story does not bear out significant agency. Yet, his life was affected – in a negative way – by those who used agency beyond the power of the state. A big issue in the community was crime, with drugs and associated violence posing a significant threat to life and property. Criminal gangs operated with significant impunity and curtailed the routes one walked, the times one walked, and the extent to which anyone would display possessions. The chief point is that Ignatius lived in a context in which there was considerable agency, much of which operated to constrain the life chances of others, and much of which occurred outwith the surveillance of the state.

The fourth claim made on behalf of circuitry as an analytical device – that circuits are multi-layered – is particularly relevant to this article. Ignatius did not narrate his life-world in a way that suggested connectivity to layers beyond the local. His emphasis on narrating everyday security in terms of the home and its immediate locality suggests a circuit within a circuit. Ignatius sees the world in terms of a localised circuit – and for good reason. Central and even municipal government is far away and offers little by way of public goods and protection. The licit economy of the valley is more or less completely dependent on the vineyards. There is a literal and figurative sense of enclosure. Yet life in the valley, and in the immediate vicinity of Ignatius' home, is a product of national, international and transnational factors. Ignatius' circuit is contained within multiple circuits. A meta-circuit of geo-strategy has shaped Ignatius' life. The institutionalised racism of apartheid was legitimised and protected as a result of Cold War rivalry. Other large-scale circuits have shaped Ignatius' life – although in his narration he is only witness to a small part of them. Two transnational circuits are particularly important. The first is the wine industry that formerly employed him and shapes his local economy. Circuitry allows us to see how the highly localised (linked to a particular type of soil in a particular climate) is connected to a much wider set of globalised interests. Indeed, the author of this article – as a more than occasional imbiber of South African wine – is part of the same circuit. The route connecting the consumer to Ignatius might be circuitous but it does exist. The second transnational circuit that shapes Ignatius' life is the illicit drugs industry. The industry has shaped the orientation of the drugs gangs, their relationship with the police (allegedly involving bribery and co-option of the police), and the securitisation of homes against burglary and everyday practices such as walking.

The fifth value of circuitry as an analytical device that illustrates the connectivity between the local and other levels is that it allows for circuits of different formats. While some circuits might be static and predictable, others might be diffuse and changeable. Some might involve the production and exchange of goods in a private market (such as the wine industry) while other might involve the production and distribution of public goods like security, education or housing. In the case of Ignatius we can see how his life-world is comprised of multiple sectors that impact upon how and where he lives his life. These intersect around him although the linkages between them might be slight.

To conclude, circuitry is proposed as a way of comprehending the connections between the hyper-local (often revolving around the home and neighbourhood) and structural and exogenous factors. The concept of circuitry encourages us to foreground ideas of connectivity and the need – as feminist scholars remind us – to pay attention to the interstices between categories and levels of analysis (Ghabra and Calafell 2018: 11). Crucially, the notion of different orders and types of circuits allow us to conceive of circuits within circuits. Some circuits may be seemingly insular and closed, perhaps with non-obvious and very limited connections to wider circuits. There is also an emphasis on movement and transmission, whereby actors are agential, innovative (new circuits) and entrepreneurial. There is also room for the traditional (old circuits) and the hybrid (modified circuits). In this view circuits are verbs as well as nouns; they are enacted, constructed and reconstructed. Circuits can, depending on circumstances, allow for movement in all directions thus enabling subversion and the avoidance of hierarchies. It is worth noting, of course, that circuits often reflect power with the filtration, channeling and obstruction of some people, commodities and ideas and the encouragement and privileging of others. Circuits can take into account gender, race and multiple forms of power that result in inequality and the perpetuation of division. Some circuits are designed to be more powerful than others, to over-ride and to ignore others.

The chief advantage of circuitry is that it allows us to see the international and transnational as connected to individual, everyday and ontological concerns with security and identity. As Steele (2008: 8) argues, states have been adept at utilizing – for their own purposes - the needs of individuals for security, identity and continuity. The home – as both a physical and emotional site of security and identity (Kinnvall 2004: 747) – can play a key role in this. States and group leaders have often played on the imaginary of the home for mobilization purposes. For International Relations a continuing task must be to scope conceptual, analytical and methodological routes that facilitate situating the everyday in the international and transnational. Despite recent strides in emancipating International Relations, this still remains a somewhat subversive task. It is about stretching IR beyond what it was originally designed to do, and it involves inverting and interrogating concepts that usually do not keep company with one another – like the home and the international, and the everyday and the diplomatic or exceptional. It also involves investigating what literature from biology and engineering on circuitry might have to tell IR.

Acknowledgements

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