VOLUME 5

PAX ET BELLUM Journal

Spring 2018

UPPSALA UNIVERSITET

Department of Peace and Conflict Research

PAX ET BELLUM

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Box 514, SE-75120 Uppsala, Sweden

All articles have been subject to an anonymous double-blind peer review process.
For an online copy, please visit http://www.paxetbellum.org/journal

Printed by Kph Trycksaksbolaget AB, Uppsala
ISSN 2001-9173

PAX et BELLUM Journal

Student Journal of Peace and Conflict Studies

Volume 5 | No. 1 | Spring 2018

Table of Contents

Welcoming Words

It is with great pleasure that we present the fifth edition of the *Pax et Bellum Journal*. This year, we reached an all-time high in the number of submissions, and the interest for our journal continues to flourish. We take this as a clear indication of the increasing attention for peace and conflict research amongst students and practitioners around the world, and the necessity for the knowledge this field yields.

In this edition, we present five articles. Apart from showing great scholarly talent, the authors have exhibited the dedication and patience needed to partake in the lengthy editing process. We believe that the articles published here greatly showcase the breadth and diversity of knowledge present in the field of Peace and Conflict Studies.

The first article 'Conflict Beyond Borders: Transnational Ethnic Kin and the Risk of Conflict Contagion,' written by Shawn Davies, examines the causal relationship between transnational ethnic kin (TEK) and conflict contagion by investigating the outbreak of conflict between the Government of Turkey and the Kurdistan Workers' Party (PKK) in 2015. The findings support the theory which suggests that threats to TEK groups motivate their kin to mobilize in neighbouring states. This creates tensions and influences the outbreak of conflict.

The second article 'Beyond Power versus Resistance: An Assemblage Approach to the Multi-Layered Conflict Dynamics in the Virunga,' written by Sara van der Hoeven, focuses on how land control shapes and influences conservation assemblages in times of armed conflict. Her paper, based on a case study of the Rutshuru Hunting Domain in Eastern DR Congo, reveals how limited statehood allows for the existence of pluralized authority through different mechanisms of land control.

Aileen van Leeuwen wrote the third article, 'Breaking with the Past: How Colombian Ex-Combatants Reintegrate into a City Dominated by Armed Groups.' The article investigates the reintegration of ex-paramilitaries and the mechanisms that facilitate this process. Her results highlight strong family ties and community involvement as important factors in successful reintegration attempts.

The fourth article, 'A Case for the Hybrid Mediator - Towards a New Strategy of Resolution in Intractable Conflicts: The Philippines Case' argues for hybrid mediators as a tool of conflict resolution in intractable conflicts. The author of this article, Charlotte Mulhearn found support for her case in a comparative analysis of two distinct stages of the mediation attempts between the GPH and the MILF in the Philippines.

Lastly, we present "'Endangering" Traditional Gender Roles: Gender Programming in the Humanitarian Response to the Refugee Crisis in Athens' by Sara Torrelles. Drawing from the case study of gender programs in Athens, her findings concur with the existing research which emphasizes that these programs generally fall short of promoting gender equality. To tackle this, the author suggests a more holistic, context and culture-specific approach to gender programing.

Our gratitude goes out to the Department of Peace and Conflict Research at Uppsala University for sharing their experience and expertise with us. We also extend our gratitude to the board of Pax et Bellum student association for all the encouragement and support. Further, and perhaps most importantly, we want to express our gratitude to the authors who submitted their papers for consideration – you are the backbone of this journal.

We hope this issue will be of great interest and enjoyment!

The *Pax et Bellum Journal* Editorial Board

Introduction

Students and researchers within the broad field of peace and conflict research are often faced with the grim reality of the world. We study the *whys,* the *whens,* and the *hows* of perhaps the darkest sides of human existence. Why do we do it? And how do we cope? We do it to promote peace. We do it to make a change. Ultimately, we are doing it to help prevent these things that we are studying from happening again.

The field of peace and conflict research has made substantial gains in the last several years, and we are gaining ever more knowledge about why conflicts break out, how they can be prevented, and, even, how they can be predicted. However, without novel and insightful scholarship, the field may easily stagnate and get stuck in "old truths" when the world is ever changing. To combat this, good research practices need to be promoted at all levels of the academic world.

As a student-led, peer-reviewed, academic journal, the Pax et Bellum Journal, featured at prestigious institutions such as the Stockholm International Peace Research Institute and the Peace Research Institute Oslo, contributes significantly to this promotion of scholarship. First, the Pax et Bellum Journal allows prospective scholars and researchers an opportunity to experience the full research process and to get their papers published in a proper peer-reviewed journal. Secondly, the Pax et Bellum Journal also allows students to be part of creating the research process by running a proper academic journal, editing papers, and making tough decisions based on reviews.

As a former editor and contributor to the journal, I am very aware of how valuable both of these experiences can be. The Pax et Bellum Journal also encourages students across the world to strive for a higher standard when they are writing papers and theses, as it gives examples of how students can produce sound and useful research. In the end, journals such as the Pax et Bellum Journal help foster the researchers of the future, and are therefore imperative for the survival of the field. With these words, I will leave the rest to you, the reader. Read the articles, think about them, act on them, and maybe, for the next issue, submit one of your own!

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Conflict Beyond Borders: Transnational Ethnic Kin and the Risk of Conflict Contagion

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Author Biography

Shawn Davies is a graduate student at Uppsala University's Department of Peace and Conflict Research, from where he also holds a Bachelor of Social Science degree. His research interests include non-state conflicts, internationalized conflicts and the strategic behavior of warring parties. He is currently writing his master's thesis on how external support affects interrebel relations in multiparty civil wars.

Abstract

This article presents two theories on how transnational ethnic kin (TEK) can cause conflict contagion. The theories are tested through process tracing on the 2015 conflict outbreak between Government of Turkey and the PKK. While neither theory was fully supported, the paper found some support for threats to TEK groups being able to motivate their kin to mobilize support in neighbouring states, which caused tension and violence. Further, the strengthening of a TEK group appears to be able to affect the threat perception of a government facing the same ethnic group at home, causing the government to escalate its rhetoric and behaviour towards the minority.

Introduction

Until recently, much previous research tended to view civil wars as domestic phenomena, isolated from their surroundings (Forsberg, 2016; Cederman et al., 2009; Gleditsch, 2007). Myron Weiner (1971) wrote that 'too many theories of development assume constancy or irrelevancy as far as the international environment is concerned, and assume also that internal political development or decay occurs without regard to external factors' (Weiner in Cederman et al., 2009: 405). This is changing, and a growing body of literature handles issues on how spill-over effects, such as economic recessions and refugees, can increase the risk of conflict (Cederman et al., 2009), and how external state sponsors affect conflict dynamics and the outbreak of conflict (Regan & Meachum, 2014; Salehyan, 2009). Forsberg (2016) identifies three transnational dimensions through which civil wars can be linked: clustering, contagion, and connectedness. Common contextual features making countries prone to conflict are often clustered spatially (Buhaug & Gleditsch, 2008). Conflicts can also increase the risk of conflict in neighbouring states through contagion effects, such as arms, refugee flows or inspiration. Finally, some conflicts are connected, in that issues and actors are interlinked in several countries (Forsberg, 2016).

This paper focuses on how shared ethnic ties to insurgent groups in neighbouring conflicts influence the domestic relationship between governments and minority groups. For instance, Buhaug and Gleditsch (2008) demonstrate that conflict is contagious, and ethnic ties are a central feature of conflict contagion. Transnational Ethnic Kin (TEK)[1] groups have primarily

[1] Other authors use related terms, such as transborder ethnic kin (Cederman et al., 2013), transnational ethnic ties (Buhaug & Gleditsch, 2008), ethnonationalist triads (Cederman et al., 2009), transnational ethnic kin (Gurses, 2014) etc. This study settled for uses the terms transnational ethnic kin and transnational ethnic ties interchangeably. They are defined as the presence of ethnopolitical mobilized kin in neighbouring states.

been researched as an issue affecting the probability and duration of conflict, and how it affects the capacity of the conflicting parties (Cederman et al., 2009; Gleditsch, 2007). TEK groups help sustain conflict, make it more difficult for governments to achieve a decisive victory and make rebel groups more likely to achieve favorable outcomes, by providing sanctuaries, resources, and recruits (Gurses, 2014). The relative size of the TEK groups matters, with groups of intermediate size being the most prone to increase the risk of conflict, as small groups won't rebel and large ones can enforce concessions (Cederman et al., 2013). This effect depends on the existing power balance between the conflicting parties, increasing the risk of conflict if the power relation between parties is relatively balanced (Cederman et al., 2009).

While considerable evidence exists for transnational ethnic ties affecting the probability of the outbreak of conflict and of TEKs facilitating conflict, little has been written on how TEK groups cause conflict contagion. This paper attempts to shed light on the process by which transnational ethnic ties could potentially cause conflict, not just facilitate it. Thus, it will attempt to answer: *how do non-state TEK groups affect conflict contagion?*

First, it will present two casual paths in which TEKs becoming engaged in conflict can cause conflict contagion. Second, the indicators derived from the theories will be operationalized. Third, the theories will be applied to the Turkey-PKK conflict. The political developments between Turkey and its Kurdish minority will be process traced, from July 2014 when the Islamic State (IS) launched attacks upon the Kurds in both Iraq and Syria, to July 2015 when the armed conflict between Turkey and the Kurdistan Workers' Party (PKK) broke out again. Finally, a conclusion of the findings will be presented.

Theory I: Emulative Mobilization

Lake and Rothchild (1998) argue that observing an ethnic group mobilize or achieve concessions in one state makes groups in other states more likely to challenge. This is part of what Forsberg (2016) calls an intangible form of contagion. Groups learn from each other, so the success of one group can cause other groups to update their beliefs on their own likelihood of success (Bakke, 2013). Inspirational effects have been noted to be stronger for ethnic groups with ties across borders where the mobilization of TEKs may change the perceived prospects of mobilization for ethnic kin elsewhere, making groups likely to emulate TEK groups that successfully mobilize in neighbouring states. An ethnic group might try to emulate another neighbouring group that mobilizes under similar conditions or mobilizes to support ethnic kin engaged in conflict (Buhaug & Gleditsch, 2008; Gleditsch, 2007). This leads to the possibility that when neighbouring TEKs engage in conflict, neighbouring states and ethnic groups will alter their own perceptions on the prospects for domestic minorities to mobilize.

Governments may then respond to conflict in neighbouring states by repressing groups they fear will challenge at home (Danneman & Ritter, 2014). Observing ethnic conflict elsewhere may cause a state to update their beliefs of the probability of another group to challenge within their state. This incentivizes the state to act preemptively, before the other group can complete their mobilization, making ethnic conflict 'literally materialize out of thin air' (Lake & Rothchild, 1998). The security situation for the ethnic group within the state changes through repression, possibly resulting in violence and ethnic conflict (Brathwaite, 2013).

Based on these theories, this paper proposes that an ethnic group may mobilize when observing transnational ethnic kin getting involved in conflict, and that this may, in turn, spark the state to preemptively repress the group, sparking the outbreak of conflict.

TEK Conflict → Mobilization by Ethnic Kin → Preemptive Repression → Conflict Contagion

It is thus expected that when TEKs get involved in conflict, neighbouring ethnic groups will be inspired to mobilize in response. The state may then respond by preemptively repressing the group, which may cause them to turn their arms on the state.

H1: The outbreak of conflict involving transnational ethnic kin increases the probability of conflict contagion.

Theory II: Uncertainty of Relative Strength

The second theory relates to the literature on bargaining failure, where parties fail to reach an agreement short of war. Parties with full information, of their own and their opponent's capacity and willingness to wage war, would never need to fight because the costs of war always make some form of agreement preferable to war (Fearon, 1995). Yet wars do occur because misinformation about one's capacity is important to get a better deal and for winning the war if it breaks out. The capacity of rebel groups is especially uncertain, as information about their size, popular support and financing often are unavailable (Walter, 2009).

The uncertainty of relative strength can be exacerbated by ethnic ties across borders, making such conflicts especially susceptible to conflict contagion (Forsberg, 2008; Cederman et al., 2013). TEK groups can constitute a 'third leg' in the conflict between an ethnic group and the government, capable of fundamentally shifting the balance of power between parties (Gurses, 2014). Notions of group strength are affected by regional events and kinship bonds, and this affects the risk of ethnic conflict (Forsberg, 2008). Erin Jenne (2004) has created a triadic bargaining model, between the state, an ethnic minority and the minority's lobbying actor. In the model, perceived shifts in power relations between the actors lead to shifts in the minority's demands, as differently radicalized voices gain predominance.

The second theory takes its inspiration from TEK groups as part of a triadic relationship in a bargaining process. It links shifts in power of a TEK group with a neighbouring ethnic minority's demands towards its government and the outbreak of conflict. It is theorised that conflicts involving transnational ethnic kin inflate the uncertainty of relative strength in neighbouring states where the government faces a domestic challenge, thus causing bargaining failure and conflict contagion. When TEK groups are involved in conflict, their power changes as the conflict progresses. This creates tension in neighbouring states between the government and the ethnic group, as both try to assess how their relative power is affected. The greater the shifts in the balance of power, the more likely it will lead to a disagreement of relative strength and thus increasingly divergent and incompatible bargaining positions. The risk of conflict should be especially pronounced if the shifts in power benefit the relatively weaker of the parties, as this gives the stronger party incentives to act preemptively. As previous notions of relative strength changes, uncertainty increases, which should lead parties to shift their bargaining positions. TEK power shifts and changes in the parties' demands is not a onetime event but will be repeated continuously as the TEK conflict progresses. The risk of conflict contagion will thus manifest each time one party perceives a shift in the balance of power and therefore shifts its demands, which may happen as long as the TEK group is involved in a conflict where its power can increase or decrease.

TEK Power Shift → Uncertainty of Relative Strength in Neighbouring States → Bargaining Failure → Conflict Contagion

It is expected that the more powerful a TEK group gets, the more likely its ethnic kin will feel emboldened. Expectations increase for ethnic kin in neighbouring states that perceive themselves to grow stronger relative to their government, leading to increased demands. In the same way, when the strength of the TEK group decreases, the government in a neighbouring state should feel emboldened to demand more and decrease its willingness to offer concessions to its domestic minority. Therefore, parties are expected to increase their demands as they are relatively benefitted from the development of the TEK group conflict. When demands are not reciprocated, whether, by the government or the ethnic group, the party has incentives to convince its opponent of its resolve through costly signals. If the opponent is not in agreement over how the balance of power has shifted, it is unlikely to back down. This will cause parties to engage in a series of increasingly costly actions which can spiral into war. Therefore, any shift in the power of the TEK, whether it increases or decreases, creates uncertainty of relative strength between parties in neighbouring states, and can thus cause conflict contagion.

H2: Shifts in the power of transnational ethnic kin increases the probability of conflict contagion.

Research Design

The dependent variable of both theories, Conflict Contagion, will be measured as a bivariate measurement of whether armed conflict is reported to have broken out between the PKK and the Turkish state.

In the theory on uncertainty of relative strength, the independent variable, TEK Power Shift, will be operationalized as territorial gains or losses by transnational ethnic kin, meaning the Kurdish entities of Rojava in Syria and the Kurdistan Regional Government (KRG) in Iraq. Rojava is controlled by the PKK's sister organization, the Democratic Union Party (PYD). The KRG is controlled by a rival Kurdish party, the Kurdistan Democratic Party (KDP), which has friendly relations with Turkey. While territory doesn't necessarily constitute power, it is a strong indicator of the group's capacity. If a TEK group is expanding, this indicates it has excessive strength compared to what it needs for its own defense, which could be appropriated by its ethnic kin. Similarly, losing territory indicates a deficit of power and thus a potential opportunity to be exploited by neighbours. It is also a more reliable indicator than most indicators, such as reports on recruitment, success in battle or finances.

Indications for power relations shifting the bargaining positions of the parties will be sought within the discourse of leading political figures. New demands expressed by leading political figures will be used as an indicator for the bargaining process expected in the causal mechanism. To indicate the demands of the Turkish government, this paper will use the discourse of President Recep Erdogan and Prime Minister Ahmet Davutoglu. For the PKK and its affiliates, the discourse of HDP chairman Selahattin Demirtas, PKK leader Abdullah Öcalan, and the PKK's top commander Cemil Bayik will be used. The HDP is the major legal Kurdish political party in Turkey, at times described by other Turkish politicians as the political wing of the PKK. The HDP participated in the peace process between the PKK and the Turkish government that collapsed in 2015. Öcalan is the official leader of the PKK and its primary

representative in the peace process but has been imprisoned in Turkey since 1999. Bayik is the top commander of the PKK in the field and has a significant influence on both the PKK and PYD as the chairman of the KCK, the umbrella organization for the PKK and PYD. While the public discourse of leading figures strongly indicates the bargaining position of parties, the validity of the measure is offended by the high probability of bargaining taking place behind closed doors.

For the theory of emulative mobilization, the independent variable, TEK Conflict, will be established through news reports of the KRG or Rojava being involved in armed conflict. To test whether the Kurds mobilized in response to their TEKs being involved in conflict, political and/or military mobilization must be confirmed, and reports of their reason. Political mobilization will be indicated by protests amongst the Kurds in Turkey. Military mobilization will be indicated by reports of recruitment by the PKK, or movement of its military capacity. While all these are rather direct measurements of the phenomena interested, and thus has high validity, the reliability of the measurements can be offset by reliance on the news report. This concern is minimized by process tracing the developments of the period, and a wide array of empirical sources.

This paper will conduct a process tracing to get a detailed insight in the 'sequential development over time' of how Kurdish TEK groups affected the development of armed conflict within Turkey (George & Bennet, 2005: 231). The paper starts at the domestic political situation within Turkey prior to July 2014, when IS attacked the Kurdish entities of the Kurdish Regional Government in Iraq and Rojava, the de facto autonomous Kurdish region in Syria. It will then trace how developments in the fight against IS affected the relations between the Turkish government and the PKK, the major armed Kurdish group in Turkey, until the outbreak of conflict in Turkey in July 2015. Process tracing is 'a key technique for capturing causal mechanisms in action' (Bennett & Checkel, 2015: 9). It will, therefore, be used to shed light on whether and how governments and ethnic group change their interaction, because of changes in the situation of TEK groups.

The paper has relied heavily on newspaper articles. The risk of biased reporting is offset by using multiple sources, the inclusion of previous academic work (though limited in scope), and reports from NGOs such as International Crisis Group.

Contagion Effects in Turkey from the Kurdish-IS Conflict

This paper studies the breakdown of negotiations and renewed intrastate war between the government of Turkey and the Kurdistan Workers' Party (PKK) in July 2015. It will trace the developments of this conflict from July 2014, when the Islamic state initiated its attacks upon the PKK's transnational ethnic kin in Iraq and Syria. A peace process had been ongoing since 2013.

The PKK is part of the umbrella organization Union of Kurdistan Communities (KCK), which also includes the Syrian Kurdish group the Democratic Union Party (PYD), and its military wing the People's Protection Units (YPG). The PYD is closely connected with the PKK, to the extent that the Turkish government often describe them as the same organization. Since the outbreak of the Syrian Civil War in 2011, the PYD has controlled three small geographically separated 'cantons': Jazira, Afrin, and Kobane, together known as Rojava. In Iraq, the Kurdistan Regional Government (KRG) is an autonomous Kurdish entity, controlled by the Kurdistan Democratic Party (KDP), a rival of the PKK, and with strong ties to Turkey (Gunes & Lowe, 2015).

In July 2014, IS launched an offensive on Rojava and the KRG. The PKK sent militias to help the KRG. With additional aid from US airstrikes and Iranian Kurdish militias, the attacks were halted rapidly, despite initial losses (Bengio, 2014). The IS attack on the Kobane canton was stalled in October 2014 after the US intervened, and Turkey, after several months hindering aid, relented to allow passage for KRG Peshmerga (Gunes & Lowe, 2015). On this front, PKK attempts to intervene was hindered by Turkey, sparking large protests and minor military skirmishes within Turkey (Champion, 2014).

From February 2015, the PYD was rapidly expanding in Syria, causing tensions within Turkey (Gunes & Lowe, 2015). On 7 June, Turkey held a highly contested parliamentary election, in which the AKP lost its one-party majority, largely due to the success of the HDP (Bardakçi, 2016). On 15 June, the strategically important town of Tell Abyad fell to the PYD (Salih, 2015). In July, the war between the PKK and Turkey broke out again after IS bombings killed 32 Kurds in Turkey, and the PKK retaliated by killing two police officers allegedly belonging to IS (Al Jazeera 2015a).

Analysis of Emulative Mobilization

The theory of emulative mobilization predicts that when transnational ethnic kin get involved in conflict, the ethnic group will mobilize in their support. Further, it suggests that the government will act with preemptive repression, to hinder the group mobilizing to threaten them. Preemptive repression is thought to increase the probability of conflict.

When the KCK, the umbrella organization of the PKK and PYD, called on all Kurds to mobilize in defense of Kobane, stating that an attack on Kobane was 'an attack on the whole people of Kurdistan,' the Kurdish organizations in Turkey answered (Perry & Cakan, 2014). The PKK sent militias to Syria from Iraq and Turkey (ibid.), while HDP chairman Demirtas called on 'all young people' to defend Kobane (Hurriyet Daily News 2014a). The PKK also sent troops to defend the KRG, despite longstanding rivalry with the movements controlling the autonomous region (Wilgenburg, 2014). This suggests that the Kurdish movement in Turkey mobilized when their TEK were attacked.

In line with the theory, the government responded to Kurdish mobilization with repression. When Turkish Kurds tried to cross the border to aid Kobane, they were stopped by the security forces, often violently (Aydintasbas, 2014). The tension throughout the southeast appears to have escalated with the renewed movement of PKK militias, leading to violent confrontations (Albayrak & Peker, 2014). When Turkey stopped aid from reaching Kobane, in a development not predicted by the theory, the Kurds attempted to pressure the Turkish government to relent through protests, first only at the border (Hurriyet Daily News, 2014b), but nationwide on October of 2014 (Al Jazeera 2014). While pressuring the government does not correspond to the theory, the aim was still to aid its TEK, not to change the domestic situation, and therefore does not contradict the theory.

The government responded with repression; it increased its military capacity in the southeast (Daily Sabah 2014a), cracked down on protesters violently resulting in 51 dead (Gunes & Lowe, 2015), and introduced curfews in several Kurdish cities (Orocoglu, 2014). The conflict escalated as skirmishes between PKK militias and security forces led Turkey to launch its first major military offensive against the PKK since the peace talks started in 2012 (Peker, 2014). This could easily have resulted in a breakdown of the ceasefire and renewed warfare but for the timely intervention by the US. The US began airstrikes of IS positions around Kobane and airdropped

aid, including weaponry, to its defenders decreasing the risk of Kobane's imminent fall (Associated Press 2014). Under pressure from the US, Turkey backed down partly on 20 October 2014, agreeing to allow Iraqi Peshmerga, aligned to PKK rivals in the KRG, to pass through Turkey to defend Kobane while still forcing the PKK to stay out (Gunes & Lowe, 2015; Pizzi, 2014).

The theory does appear to have considerable explanatory power for the early stages of the escalation, specifically the Kobane crisis, though it cannot explain latter developments. As the theory of emulative mobilization does not offer any predictions beyond the initial phase of a TEK conflict, it cannot explain the reignition of violence in 2015. Rather, it is suggested to have some explanatory power for creating many of the tensions that later caused the conflict and for making the Turkish government doubt the viability of the peace process. Other observers have also suggested that the Kobane crisis contributed to the harsh political rhetoric between the AKP and HDP that characterized the parliamentary election in June, and continuous distrust between the Kurds and the government (Bardakçi, 2016; Bacik, 2015; Krajeski, 2015).

While conflict did not break out during the Kobane crisis, it did cause considerable violence. Thus, it is suggested that hypothesis 2 finds limited support in this study: the outbreak of conflict involving transnational ethnic kin increases the probability of conflict contagion.

Analysis of Uncertainty of Relative Strength

The theory of uncertainty of relative strength would indicate that the two sides would be involved in a bargaining process during the lead-up to the conflict outbreak in July 2015 and that the sides would increase their demands as they are relatively benefitted from the development of the TEK group conflict. From July until mid-October 2014, the Kurds were losing territory in both Kobane and Jazira cantons, indicating that Turkey would be in a relatively better bargaining position. Yet, during this time Turkey did not increase its demands, instead implying that the developments abroad had nothing to do with the peace process in Turkey (see Davutoglu in Peker, 2014). On the other hand, the PKK increased its demands to include Rojava. They demanded to be allowed to pass through Turkey to save Kobane, threatening to go to war over the issue (Zaman, 2014).

The PKK also appears to have applied pressure on the government through minor clashes and the use of protests at the border, indicating attempts at costly signaling of resolve (Champion, 2014). Turkey responded by increasing its military capacity in the Kurdish southeast (Daily Sabah 2014a), while Erdogan called the people fighting in Kobane terrorists, the same as IS (Daily Sabah 2014b).

PKK attempts to increase pressure through massive protests, and military skirmishes were met with violence (Pope, 2014). Over fifty are believed to have died in the protests, and Ankara launched its first major military offensive against the PKK in two years (Peker, 2014). A compromise was reached on 20 October 2014, through which Peshmerga from the KRG were allowed through to help, while the PKK had to stay out. The USA, which had begun helping Kobane through airstrikes, pressured Turkey to reach the deal as the Kurds in Iraq and Syria were developing into the anti-IS coalitions main fighting force on the ground (Gunes & Lowe, 2015; Pizzi, 2014). While the parties were involved in a bargaining process, it didn't primarily encompass the situation in Turkey. The new demands found were contrary to expectations derived from the theory, as the PKK increased its demands to include Rojava while their TEK was weakening.

After the crisis over Kobane, the situation calmed with primarily positive developments being reported at the start of the year including a roadmap to peace in February 2015 (Dombey-Istanbul 2015). The PYD began making considerable gains in Syria after having launched an offensive in late February. From this time, the Turkish government took a contentious tone. Erdogan began questioning the peace process and a previous agreement to create a monitoring committee for the peace talks (Dalay, 2015). The statements came only a day before Öcalan was expected to issue a call for the PKK to disarm, which instead became a call for the PKK to hold a congress to discuss peace, conditioned upon a democratic transition (Öcalan in Agos, 2015; Candar, 2015).

In April of 2015, Erdogan accused the HDP of instigating violent clashes to win votes and sabotage the election (Al Jazeera, 2015b). While Kurdish leaders tried at first to calm tensions (Deutsche Welle, 2015), the HDP later released a statement in which they said that the peace process had arrived at the end of the road and that the government now had to act if the process was to survive (Hurriyet Daily News, 2015a). Contrary to the expectations of the theory, the government hardened its position when the Kurds were gaining in strength.

In June, the PYD's offensive neared its end goal, the border city of Tell Abyad. Capturing the city meant that the cantons of Kobane and Jazira would be linked and that PYD would control a continuous territory covering most of Syria's border with Turkey (Salih, 2015). According to Erdogan, this constituted a direct threat to Turkey (Şafak, 2015). Once the town had fallen, Turkey warned the PYD of further expansions (Kozak, 2015), and declared that Turkey would never allow an independent Kurdistan in Syria (Middle East Eye, 2015). Turkey also initiated a military build-up in the Syrian border area (Kozak, 2015).

On 17 July, Erdogan declared that 'there cannot be an agreement with a political party that is being supported by a terrorist organization,' thus distancing himself from the Kurdish peace process by saying that decisions should be made by parliament and not negotiated (Hurriyet Daily News, 2015b). On 20 July, an IS bomb kills Kurdish activists in Suruc, on their way to Kobani, fueling Kurdish belief that Turkey didn't want to protect them (Gunter, 2016). In retaliation, the PKK killed two Turkish police officers who they claimed were connected to IS (Al Jazeera, 2015a). From 24 July, Turkish planes initiated a bombing campaign against both the PKK and IS in Turkey, Iraq, and Syria. The attacks came after a deal was made with the anti-IS coalition that allegedly included provisions for the coalition to limit further PYD expansion in exchange for Turkish participation against IS (Kozak, 2015). On the 28th Erdogan declared that peace with the PKK now was impossible (Karadeniz, 2015).

The actors did to a large extent follow the predictions of the theory, in that they shifted their demands when the power of the TEK group changed. Surprisingly, both parties increased their demands when they were relatively weaker to their opponent, rather than when they were stronger. The Kurds threatened war just as Kobane was about to fall, and Turkey escalated their rhetoric the more the PYD expanded. While not contradicting the theory that uncertainties of relative strength causes altered bargaining positions, the expected direction would be that parties increase their demands as they become relatively stronger, rather than weaker, than the opponent.

Some interesting implications can be discerned from the case, that can be used to further refine the theory. The most violence and the highest risk of conflict appear when the TEK group were at its weakest, between September and October, when Kobane was close to falling, and at its strongest after capturing Tell Abyad and expanding from there. In both these situations the rhetoric of the actors also indicated the development in Syria as reasons for escalation: in

September 2014 KCK Chairman Bayik threatened war over Kobane (Zaman, 2014), while Turkey declared 'red lines' on further PYD expansion in June 2015 (TRT, 2015). While increasing their demands as they weaken could indicate that actors are more prone to bluff when they are at a relatively disadvantaged, it is also likely to signify that when a threat to a party's relative position of power increases, the probability of war increases. Feeling threatened by developments appears to make the parties escalate their bargaining positions. Still, shifts in the strength of transnational ethnic kin had a clear escalatory effect on the conflict. Consequently, the hypothesis that shifts in the power of transnational ethnic kin increases the probability of conflict contagion was supported.

Results

The theory on emulative mobilization failed to encompass the entire period, though it did well in explaining the outbreak of violence in October 2014. This episode of violence caused considerable strain on the peace process and increased distrust between the negotiating parties, which is likely to have contributed to the later breakdown (Bardakçi, 2016; Bacik, 2015; Krajeski, 2015). The actors did, on the other hand, to a large extent followed the predictions of theory II: they shifted their demands when the power of the TEK group changed. Surprisingly, both parties increased their demands when they were relatively weaker to their opponent, rather than when they were stronger. This indicates that the causal story needs to be refined.

The independent variables in both theories, TEK power shifts and TEK conflict outbreak, do appear to affect the probability of conflict contagion. In both the Kobane crisis and the 2015 outbreak, the relatively disadvantaged party reacted on the shifts in TEK group power. Both parties indicated a willingness to fight when they were weakening, rather than allow the power relations to decline further. During the Kobane crisis, a compromise was reached, whereas Kobane was saved, and the power balance stabilized. After the fall of Tell Abyad, the PYD ignored Turkey's warnings not to expand further, which correlates with the outbreak of the conflict. During the conflict, Turkey has conducted airstrikes, not only within its own borders but at PKK/PYD targets in Iraq and Syria as well (Al Jazeera, 2015c). This indicates that TEK groups do affect parties' notions of relative strength, but that they are more likely to react to threats to their relative power than to opportunistically take advantage of the other's weakness.

The outbreak of TEK conflict created tensions when the ethnic group mobilized and led the government to preemptively repress the minority. While it did spark violent incidents and numerous deaths, it did not cause a breakdown of negotiations, thus allowing the parties to come to an agreement that postponed the outbreak of conflict for several months. As such, while having some explanatory power for the initial escalation phase, it cannot explain the outbreak in 2015. This indicates that the rather static variable, TEK conflict outbreak, is not best suited to explain a complex escalatory sequence. It is therefore suggested that, as a possible hypothesis for further research, variation in the threat level, to or by TEK groups, increases the probability of conflict contagion.

Important to note, however, is that these findings are based on a single case and only hints at possible causal stories, and can neither confirm or refute any explanations for the phenomena of how transnational ethnic kin affect conflict contagion. Hopefully, this paper has offered some insight into how transnational ties function within the Kurdish conflict complex.

Even within the case of the Turkish outbreak of conflict in 2015, it cannot claim to explain the full complexity. Transnational ties are only one of the multiple factors affecting the

outbreak of conflict in this case. Amongst other popular theories suggested by analysts is the role of domestic electoral politics (see Bengio, 2015; Akyol, 2015; Scott, 2015). This theory suggests that the pro-Kurdish HDP, when passing the threshold for parliament on 7 June 2015, removed the AKP majority and thus inhibited Erdogan's intention of establishing an executive president role for himself. This would then have made him start a war with the PKK to make the HDP, which is often considered to have close ties to the PKK, fall beneath the electoral threshold in the reelection in November while winning the nationalist vote. The theory is limited though, in that it cannot explain the pre-election violence during the Kobane crisis and military clashes since then, which indicates that transnational ties played an active role. Some observers have suggested a more likely middle path; that the distrust, stemming from Kobane, hardened the political climate during the election, and that the loss of Kurdish votes due to this made Erdogan court the nationalist vote (Dalay, 2015; Gunes & Lowe, 2015).

Conclusion

This paper has aimed to shed light on the causal relation between transnational ethnic kin, and conflict contagion. It has suggested two theories for how TEK group conflict affect conflict contagion. These theories were then applied on the Turkey-PKK outbreak of conflict in 2015 by process tracing development since mid-2014. TEK groups did influence the outbreak of violence in Turkey during this period, even though TEK groups alone were not enough to explain the final collapse of the peace process. In particular, threats to TEK groups appear to be able to motivate their kin to mobilize in support, which can cause tensions and violence. Further, the strengthening of a TEK group appears to be able to affect the threat perception of a government facing the same ethnic group, though why, or how that affects government behavior, remains uncertain.

The first theory suggests that the outbreak of TEK group conflict will stimulate the mobilization of its ethnic kin to offer support. The government may view the mobilization of ethnic groups within their territory as a threat and act with preemptive repression, sparking retaliation from the ethnic group. The findings suggest that this theory found support during the lead-up to the outbreak between Turkey and PKK, though it failed to predict the final outbreak. It did well in explaining the violent skirmishes occurring in 2014 during the Kobane crisis, which did come close to causing a renewal of conflict. This case implies that the perception of a threat towards the ethnic kin appears to have been a driving factor of their mobilization and a potential field for further research.

The second theory stipulates that when shift occurs in the power of a TEK group involved in conflict, this shifts the notions of relative strength of their ethnic kin elsewhere and the governments they face, creating uncertainty. These shifts will cause the relatively benefited party to increase their demands, potentially causing bargaining failure if parties disagree on their relative strength. While the findings show that the strength of TEK groups worried the actors, the causal mechanism suggested was not supported. Contrary to theories on bargaining, shifts in the strength of TEK groups caused the relatively disadvantaged party to behave more aggressively, leading to violent incidents on two occasions. Shifts in TEK strength can thus not be dismissed as a factor affecting the probability of conflict. This paper suggests that further research should be conducted on how the balance of power between groups is threatened by shifts in TEK group power.

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Beyond Power versus Resistance: An Assemblage Approach to the Multi-Layered Conflict Dynamics in the Virunga

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Abstract

This paper problematises the binary narrative on nature conservation between a state-like actor and local dispossessed communities. This narrative dispenses too much power to the state-like actor, while in conflict-affected areas de jure authorities are not the only actors de facto governing. This paper goes beyond the binary using an assemblage approach by researching how mechanisms of land control shape, influence or interact with 'conservation assemblages' during times of (armed) conflict. Ultimately, the story this paper discloses is a case of how limited statehood allows for the existence of pluralised authority through different mechanisms of land control, such as (ethnic) territorialisation and violence and force. It is based on an exploratory case-study analysis of the Rutshuru Hunting Domain in Eastern DR Congo, including two months of qualitative fieldwork in Goma, during which, among other methods, 40 interviews were conducted.

Introduction

> 'We have collected information according to which armed men have killed citizens, some of whom carried cold weapons [knives]. It concerns Raphaël, age 65, President of the Syndicat d'Alliance Paysanne (SAP), a resident of Butunga, and father of seven children. He was shot to death. He has been found in a house near a field. Two other civilians were killed and one escaped. Noting that these killings took place in a difficult context that can be illustrated by, on the one hand, ethnic tensions, and on the other hand, the presence of armed groups and recurrent bands of kidnappers. Only credible inquiries would know to shed light on these killings, having been denounced by the local population and, particularly, by a farmers' syndicate involved in local development that just lost its President.'[1]

On 19 May 2016, a local Environmental, Democracy, and Human Rights organisation based in Goma, Eastern Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC), publishes this statement on their Facebook page. It concerns human rights abuses that were committed two days earlier in Rutshuru Territory, Bwisha Chiefdom in the Rutshuru Hunting Domain (RHD) adjacent to the Virunga National Park (VNP). An official inquiry regarding the deaths has never been

[1] Summarised and translated into English by the author, retrieved from CREDDHO's Facebook page in April 2017: https://www.facebook.com/Creddho/photos/a.300273296766542.1073741828.196397737154099/866780096782523

undertaken, and different people provide very diverse accounts of what exactly happened that day. Nonetheless, this event illustrates the complexity of land and nature conservation issues and the multi-layeredness of protracted conflict dynamics in the current Kivu conflict in Rutshuru Territory particularly, and in conflict areas signified by limited statehood in general.

The Virunga protected area in Eastern DRC, a conservation-conflict nexus marked by two decades of war and armed conflict, finds the presence of multiple armed groups (UN group of experts on the DRC, 2015), over 150 park rangers killed over the past fifteen years (Williams, 2016), and a high demographic pressure[2] (Tegera, 2013; Ngongo, 2015; Muheza, 2016). It is a region lacking unified statehood or heavy state presence. Rather, a discrepancy between *de jure* and *de facto* land control is encountered in the Virunga, as well as between public authority and territorialisation in and around its boundaries[3] (Marijnen, 2018; Tegera, 2013). It is this discrepancy that lays at the core of my analysis and argument in this paper.

Recently, conservation practices, seemingly non-political situations, are critically analysed in the view of it being a 'contested site of political negotiation and mediation' (Lund, 2006: 686). Initially, academic literature focused on the link between capitalism, neoliberalism, and nature conservation (Brockington, Duffy & Igoe, 2008), characterised by fortress conservation (Brockington, 2002; Verweijen & Marijnen, 2016; Adams, 2003; Cavanagh & Benjaminsen, 2015; Hochleithner, 2017). This conservation practice finds that nature conservation and human activity in the same area are mutually exclusive.

Furthermore, literature illuminated the increased securitisation of environmental problems and the subsequent rise in militarisation of conservation practices, a process coined as green militarisation: 'the use of military and paramilitary (military-like) actors, techniques, technologies, and partnerships in the pursuit of conservation' (Lunstrum, 2014: 817). All developments taken together led academics to describe a shift towards a 'war *for* biodiversity' (Duffy, 2014; Neumann, 2004).

Subsequently, when analysing this form of militarisation, much literature upholds a simplified power-resistance binary. This binary is developed in descriptions of two main actors to conservation conflicts: a dominating power, or a state-like actor implicated in different types of violence, and local communities that are being dispossessed by these processes and use 'everyday resistance' strategies (Lombard, 2016: 218; Li, 2007: 279; Cavanagh & Benjaminsen, 2015; Holmes, 2007; Massé & Lunstrum, 2016). Thereby they omit complexities within these actor-groups and local power relations.

Therefore, this paper argues that a power-resistance narrative is problematic when studying nature conservation in conflict areas. Among others because it dispenses too much power to the state-like actor, while in conflict-affected areas *de jure* authorities are not the only actors *de facto* conducting governance. In this paper, I, therefore, propose it is necessary to go beyond this binary and to disaggregate the notion of unified statehood by conceptualising the actors responsible for the governance of the (non)human life in the VNP and the RHD as a 'conservation assemblage,' or a biopolitical governance formation.

An assemblage is 'a governance formation in which a range of different global, national, local, public and private individuals, groups and normativities[4] interact, cooperate and compete

[2] Field interviews, Goma, April – May 2017.
[3] Field interviews, Goma, March – May 2017.
[4] – such as discourses, institutions, architectural forms, regulatory decisions, laws, administrative measures, scientific statements, philosophical, moral and philanthropic propositions – (Li, 2007: 264).

to produce new institutions, practices, normativities and forms of governance."[5] In 2005, a public-private partnership (PPP) was created with the support of the European Commission in which the Congolese Wildlife Authority (the ICCN) collaborates with the British NGO the Virunga Foundation. The entire authority to manage the park was delegated to this NGO in 2011, endorsing a radical change in this assemblage's governance structure (Marijnen, 2018; Virunga National Park, 2017).

In the case of the RHD, and conflict areas to a larger extent, it is inaccurate to dispense too much power to the PPP, being the state-like actor. Even though *de jure* it is the main actor that carries the mandate over the governance of the RHD and the VNP, *de facto* it is far from being the only actor performing statehood or public authority in the area. In practice, there are multiple (armed) groups claiming and performing authority and statehood (or the idea of 'stateness') in different areas around the park. A *mai-mai*[6] group's presence around Lake Edouard contesting state authority there during my fieldwork illustrates this point.[7]

The problematic nature of the power-resistance binary, then, is not only apparent from an empirical point of view, but from a theoretical one as well. Assemblages 'cannot be resolved into neat binaries that separate power from resistance [...] Fuzziness, adjustment and compromise are critical to holding assemblages together' (Li, 2007: 279). Hence, the adoption of an assemblage approach facilitates the problematisation of the previously presented binary. In addition, through its focus on continuously changing relations between different elements, and on identifying the set boundaries of the conservation assemblage that continue to in- and exclude specific elements, it facilitates surpassing the boundary.

Moreover, it is necessary to investigate mechanisms of land control to understand how access and control of land and labour are shaped by social structures and relations (Cramer & Richards, 2011), because places, territories, and scales are socially produced (Sjörgen, 2015). Mechanisms of land control are 'practices that fix or consolidate forms of land access, claiming, and exclusion for some time."[8] According to Kelly (2011), protected areas are land controlling mechanisms, regardless of their types of management (Kelly, 2011: 697). Those in control, the elements in the conservation assemblage, 'are able to define what is possible, what is desirable, and who will benefit by identifying or rendering 'stakeholders' invisible and determining the rules of use of a protected area' (2011: 692). Mechanisms of land control are, thus, closely-knit with questions regarding who can and is considered legitimate to perform authority in a certain territory.

Therefore, this paper aims to answer the research question of how mechanisms of land control shape, influence or interact with 'conservation assemblages' during times of (armed) conflict by adopting an assemblage approach, to go beyond the power-resistance binary narrative.

Overall, the objective of this paper, then, is to advance theory and thinking on conservation in conflict areas with limited statehood as 'active sites of political negotiation and mediation' (Lund, 2006: 686) and promoting the need for thick descriptions of conservation

[5] Based on Abrahamsen and Williams (2009: 3) and Li (2007: 264).
[6] Or *Mayi-Mayi*, they are a variety of (originally) community based militia groups in Eastern Congo.
[7] Field interview international NGO partner to the ICCN, Goma, 25 April 2017: At the time I was in the field, the park rangers did not patrol around Lake Edouard where mai-mai were active.
[8] Based on Peluso and Lund (2011: 668).

conflicts. It does this through adopting an analysis of assemblage that overcomes the problem of unintentionally reifying 'the state.'

On the other hand, from a policy perspective, this research is relevant and significant to the European Union (EU) because a large amount of money is channeled into this area of intervention. Together with other literature written on the Virunga case, it encourages European policymakers to critically evaluate their involvement in the protection and development of the Virunga area. Namely, it may be the case that the EU finances practices that are in fact counterproductive. For example, according to Verweijen and Marijnen (2016), the park management's 'hard' and 'soft'[9] counterinsurgency-style approaches to conservation are largely counterproductive to what it claims it aims to achieve: peace, development, and stability.

Theory and Analytic Frame

As stated, it is necessary to investigate mechanisms of land control (Peluso & Lund, 2011) to understand how access and control of land are shaped by social structures and relations (Cramer & Richards, 2011). Furthermore, the discrepancy between *de jure* and *de facto* authority in conflict areas and the RHD necessitated a focus on public authority and territorialisation. Building on this and my empirical data, I pose in this paper that a lack of statehood in conflict-affected areas leads to a condition of pluralised authority through several mechanisms of land control: violence and force (or the threat of it), territorialisation, and ethnic territorialisation. In protected natural areas, this shapes, influences, and interacts with the conservation assemblage, intertwining conflict dynamics and nature conservation.

Peluso and Lund (2011) discuss several mechanisms of land control: primitive accumulation, enclosure and privatisation, territorialisation, legalisation, and violence and force (or the threat of it). They see political violence and militarisation as important mechanisms in the frontiers of land control because violence (or the threat of it) is a major component in the making of territory, property, and 'the state.' Mechanisms of land control are, thus, closely-knit with questions regarding who can and is considered legitimate to perform authority in a certain territory.

Territorialisation is a concept often related to state authority, governance, and identity construction in analyses of the politics of nature conservation. It is 'a critical mechanism through which claims to authority are negotiated' (Corson, 2011: 708) and a 'particular attribute of governance' (Corson, 2011: 709). However, Corson challenges the notion of state territorialisation as a state-controlled process. According to her, under neoliberalism, territorialisation involves both non-state and state institutions in governance processes. Furthermore, territorialisation is closely linked to authority and can be both a claim to land and its resources, as well as a claim to 'the authority to determine who controls those resources' (Corson, 2011: 704). Thereby, it 'produces and maintains power relations among governed environmental subjects and between subjects and authorities' (Peluso & Lund, 2011: 673). Additionally, Sjörgen links territorialisation and authority by showing that 'struggles over territory are linked to competing notions of identity and authority' (Sjörgen, 2015: 167) and that the territorialisation of authority rests on or invokes social identities (Sjörgen, 2015: 165). In this paper, I define territorialisation as 'an attempt by an individual or group to affect, influence or control people, phenomena, and relationships by delimiting and asserting control over a

[9] 'Hard' approaches include violent law enforcement operations, e.g. conducted by mixed units of armed park guards and the Congolese armed forces, while 'soft' approaches 'take the form of "development" schemes driven by private investment' (Verweijen and Marijnen, 2016: 1).

geographic area, which can be both a claim to control land and resources, as well as a claim to the authority to determine who controls those resources' (based on Sack, 1986: 19; Corson, 2011: 704-5).

Governance, then, is a political and territorial project, as Dressler and Guieb III show 'emerging territories produce enclosures concurrently that yield discursive and structural violence to claim, control and discipline the behaviours and practices of farmers' (Dressler & Guieb III, 2015: 324). When enclosures are produced by setting social and physical boundaries, the territorialising actors 'imbue these territories with political meanings and claims that are discursively constructed and physically enforced' (Dressler & Guieb III, 2015: 327). Thus, land control and governance can 'change the repertoires of possible action' (Peluso & Lund, 2011: 677), because spaces and identities are bounded through enclosures and territorialisation and, thereby, create new kinds of environmental subjects 'who produce, accept, or contest new sorts of common sense' (ibid.).

As mentioned earlier, in the Virunga area, authority is rather negotiated with or contested amongst multiple state and non-state actors, contrary to existing arguments that claim that state authority is extended through the trans-nationalisation and militarisation of nature conservation (Marijnen, 2018). By studying this case from an assemblage approach, we, thus, see that the 'the state becomes a "node" in a broader network of power and authority that extends beyond the national territory' (Abrahamsen & Williams, 2009: 14): the de-territorialisation of governance through trans-nationalisation processes, such as the creation of the PPP. However, on a local level of analysis, many mechanisms of territorialisation are visible, as will come to the fore in the case-study section.

Literature Review

Conceptualising nature conservation as a neoliberal project, critics called into question the mainstream conservation discourse in which, through moral-boundary drawing, a good (conservationists) versus bad, or 'the Other' (poachers and frequently armed groups), narrative has been adopted (Brockington, Duffy & Igoe, 2008: IX). Resultant questions formed the basis for the body of critical literature that investigates the colonial and imperial roots underlying conservation and focuses on the marginalisation and disempowerment of local communities and their dispossession (Brockington, Duffy & Igoe, 2008: X; Massé & Lunstrum, 2016; Verweijen & Marijnen, 2016; Marijnen & Verweijen, 2016; Cavanagh & Benjaminsen, 2015; Neumann, 2004; Kelly, 2011). The latter is seen by Massé and Lunstrum (2016) as a process of 'accumulation by dispossession.' They argue that neoliberal conservation practices, through enclosing land and biodiversity and dissolving common access to it, dispossess rural populations of land, resources, and livelihood opportunities in order to cater new avenues for private capital accumulation (Massé & Lunstrum, 2016: 230). In this paper, I argue that accumulation by dispossession is equally evident in the Virunga case. The creation, expansion, and protection of the park's boundaries continuously followed hard law enforcement, including forced migration (Tegera, 2013; Verweijen & Marijnen, 2016).

What is more, Massé and Lunstrum (2016) coined the concept 'accumulation by securitisation' in order to link the present processes of environmental securitisation, the increasing securitisation of nature conservation, and the marginalisation of people living around conservation areas. In their own words, 'the concept captures the ways in which capital accumulation, often tied to land and resource enclosure, is enabled by practices and logics of

security. Security logics, moreover, increasingly provoke the dispossession of vulnerable communities, thereby enabling accumulation' (Massé & Lunstrum, 2016: 227).

Simultaneously with the securitisation of conservation and the war for biodiversity, a 'war on poachers' emerged, based on a similar framing process and moral-boundary drawing. Because the securitisation of nature conservation legitimised the adoption of extraordinary measures, shoot-on-sight orders against poachers could be adopted (Neumann, 2004: 813).

The securitisation of nature conservation concerning the VNP is, furthermore, legitimised through the adoption of a multiple-win rhetoric by the conservation assemblage, or a 'biopolitics of planetary survival' narrative (Li, 2009). This discourse echoes that the conservation of a confined, bounded natural area will solely lead to favourable outcomes: it will contribute to the development of surrounding local communities, save biodiversity sustainably, and deliver economic growth and stability in the case of areas embroiled in armed conflict (see Tumusiime & Svarstad, 2011; Marijnen & Verweijen, 2016; Kelly, 2011). In contrast, Tumusiime and Svarstad (2011) argue that the local narrative, the 'narrative of ambivalence,' differs from the conservation assemblage's multiple-win discourse that legitimises its own practices. The narrative of ambivalence includes a positive notion of the existence of a park as such, but at the same time it entails disappointments with the degree to which a park so far has brought economic benefits to the communities and, furthermore, dissatisfaction due to a lack of local influence in decision-making (Tumusiime & Svarstad, 2011: 250). It is this narrative that has sprung to the fore in most of the interviews conducted and throughout my fieldwork period.

Research Design

My structurationist, constructivist ontological and epistemological assumptions have had implications for my research design, which is inherently qualitative and investigates an in-depth exploratory case-study based on interviews, document analysis, news review, informal conversations, and non-participatory observation as methods in order to build a 'thick description.' The research question and objectives, having both an explorative and generative[10] nature, necessitated qualitative methods of data generation. Posing such a 'how' question required scrutinising peoples interpretations of actions and events, and their motivations, especially because mechanisms are 'constituted by events that alter relations among specified elements in similar ways over a variety of situations' (Tilly & Tarrow, 2007: 29), and land control is mainly about claim-making. The aim of building a thick description, then, is to draw conclusions from small, very densely textured facts to support broader assertions; in a sense the dialogue between contextualised evidence and social theory (Geertz, 1994: 321).

Part of the research design consisted of conducting two months of fieldwork in Goma, DRC between March and May 2017. Studying mechanisms over a period of time, the main units of analysis are the events that constitute the episode of contention. Therefore, I decided to work out a case study, which I regard as 'an empirical inquiry into an event or a set of related events that aims to describe and explain the phenomenon of interest within its real-life context' (based on Kohlbacher, 2006; Bromley, 1990: 302 in Zucker, 2009: 2). My understandings of both mechanisms and a case-study required me to divide the case-study up into several 'telling events' that I identified during the first part of the fieldwork.

[10] Generative research, in addition to being explorative, helps us to further define the actual problem or phenomenon under study (Ragin, 1994).

Sub-cases were selected based on their high prominence in preliminary interviews and conversations with general topic-experts and (news) reports, or for being emblematical of topicalities reported in those preliminary interviews. At the same time, topic sensitivities were evaluated. Interviewee sampling further developed after the cases were selected. This resulted in the following non-chronological, nor exhaustive list of events: 1) the 2016 killing of the president of the NGO Syndicat d'Alliance Paysanne (SAP), as has been introduced in the previous section; 2) the petition SAP delivered to the government in 2011 contesting the boundaries of the VNP; 3) the mediation of the intercultural Institute 'Pole' between SAP, the Institut Congolais de la Conservation de la Nature (ICCN), and the customary authorities, and its 'aftermath'; and 4) the attack by a *mai-mai* militia group on a team that was demarcating the borders between the VNP and non-VNP lands. All events have been researched and analysed with a focus on the Rutshuru Hunting Domain in Bwisha Chiefdom.

Both 'assemblage' and 'mechanisms of land control' advocate an operationalization that focuses on interactions, relations, and events through gathering empirical data on, e.g. alliances, contention, conflict, and cooperation from a historical, structural, and discursive perspective (Fumerton, 2017). I used my interviews to focus on everyday activity through the re- and deconstruction of the above telling events in order to analyse the different power relations at play surrounding the conservation assemblage. First, in order to understand and analyse the conservation assemblage before studying the various mechanisms of land control apparent in the protracted (land) conflict in the RHD through the telling events, and how these shape or influence the assemblage and the conflict.

The 40 topic list based semi-structured interviews compounded the primary data collection method for this article. Interviewees were identified through purposive sampling, mainly through multiple-snowball samplings. Although not all interviewees expressed their need to remain anonymous, I have chosen to refer to most of my interviews as 'field interview' due to the difficult, sensitive and sometimes insecure context in which this research has been conducted. Furthermore, secondary data collection consisted of document analysis,[11] news review,[12] informal conversations, and non-participatory observations, such as my attendance at a public *atelier* (workshop).[13]

Data analysis, 'the search for patterns in data, which are subsequently interpreted in terms of a social theory' (Kohlbacher, 2006) by 'breaking phenomena down into their constituent parts and viewing them in relation to the whole they form' (Ragin, 1994: 55-6), was, first, an attempt to find out what this is a case of empirically before continuing to its conceptualisation and theorisation. This was an attempt to move from empirical observation, through sensitising concepts, to saying something about the inherent qualities and dynamics of the phenomenon (Lund, 2014). To do this, I used a directed approach to content analysis as a method of analysis. This means using existing theory and research, on the basis of which I identified key 'themes' as initial coding categories (Hsieh & Shannon, 2005). This helped me to conceptualise and theorise what my study was a case of. Additionally, triangulation of different

[11] This has been an analysis of several NGO reports and other documents, such as governmental letters or ordinances, collected during my time in the field.

[12] I have done this to establish a better understanding of the context regarding my topic over the past years, through analysing Radio Okapi publications, in order to better contextualise and complete my interview topic list

[13] This workshop took place on 4 April 2017 and was organised by the NGO ACEDH, which is part of the GLA programme of IUCN: *initiative synchronisée, gouvernance foncière conforme à la sauvegarde du paysage Virunga*. Speakers came from the ICCN, the province, military court, UNHABITAT, and ICTJ (Ndoole, 2017).

sources and perspectives was a central element, both in the methodology and analysis of the case-study, in order to make the claims that I make. However, I want to stress that 'the "security" that triangulation provides is through giving a fuller picture of phenomena, not necessarily a more certain one' (Ritchie, 2003: 44).

Ethics

Ethical considerations and the principle of 'Do No Harm' have been paramount in the research design for this paper, and one of the reasons field interviews have been anonymised. In selecting interviewees, any direct victims were avoided, instead focusing on active spokespersons of particular (local) organisations and groups, who voluntarily participated in interviews. Guidance regarding this was sought and received at the local Human Rights Watch office, from other researchers, and from local journalists. Interviewees ranged from public SAP members, local NGOs, journalists, and university professors to provincial deputies, the ICCN, and international NGOs. Additionally, topic lists avoided direct questions regarding sensitive issues that were not publicly commented or reported on, unless interviewees themselves initiated such comments.

Finally, the research upon which this paper is based has been evaluated based on a set of requirements, including a detailed review of data-gathering ethics, as well as a security awareness paragraph on the political consequences of the research for informants and interviewees, by two senior academic staff members at the Conflict Studies/History of International Relations section of the History Department, Utrecht University.[14]

Case Study: The Rutshuru Hunting Domain - (Ethnic) Territorialisation and Pluralised Authority

The Rutshuru Hunting Domain is a protected area created in 1974 and is situated adjacent to the VNP, bordering Uganda. The domain has fallen under the same management as the VNP since 2004/2005 after it had some financial difficulties. However, it has a different legal status.[15] The RHD is situated in the Chiefdom of Bwisha, one of the two Chiefdoms that together with a section of the VNP constitute Rutshuru Territory. The *groupements* Bukoma and Binza, two of the seven *groupements* that constitute Bwisha Chiefdom, are situated in the RHD and have, thus, been the specific focus of this research. The VNP occupies forty-five percent of the territory of Rutshuru, excluding the RHD, which highlights the high demographic pressure on land on this side of the VNP and on the RHD in particular, especially in light of the fact that the primary sector provides people's main occupation in this area[16] (Muheza, 2016). The RHD[17] is made up of three different zones (see figure 1 and 2): A) the ecological zone,[18] where elephants reproduce, covers five percent of the total surface;[19] B) the zone for multiple usages;[20] and C) the green belt/buffer zone[21] that separates the multiple usage zone from the ecological zone and the VNP.[22]

[14] When desired, the centre's coordinator can be approached for any further clarifications regarding this.
[15] Field interview with the ICCN, Goma, 8 May 2017.
[16] Field interviews, Goma, March – May 2017.
[17] In French: *Domaine de Chasse de Rutshuru / DCR* (Figure 1/2).
[18] In French: *Zone Protection Integrale restante du DCR* (Figure 2).
[19] Field interviews with the ICCN and partners, Goma, March – May 2017.
[20] In French: *zone a usage multiple du DCR* in Figure 2.
[21] In French: *zone tampon* (Figure 2) / *ceinture vert* (Figure 1).
[22] In French: *Parc National des Virunga (PNVi)* (Figure 1/2).

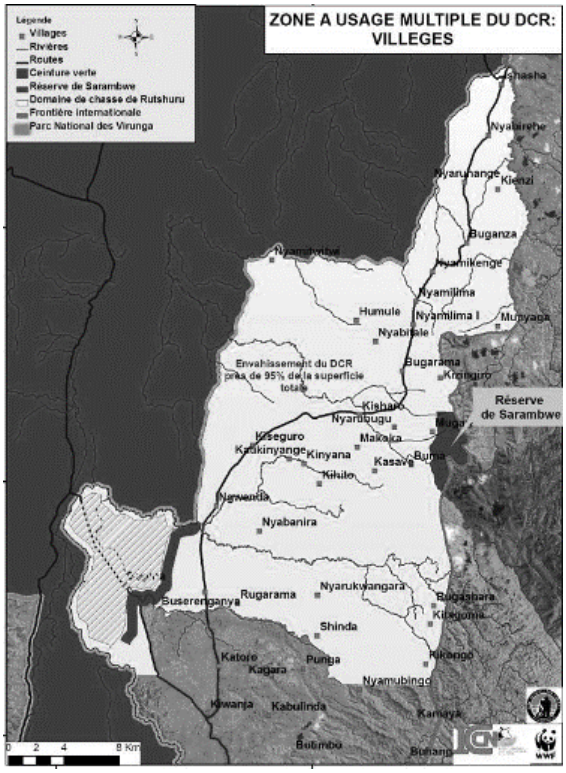

Figure 1: Map Rutshuru Hunting Domain (WWF, 2011)

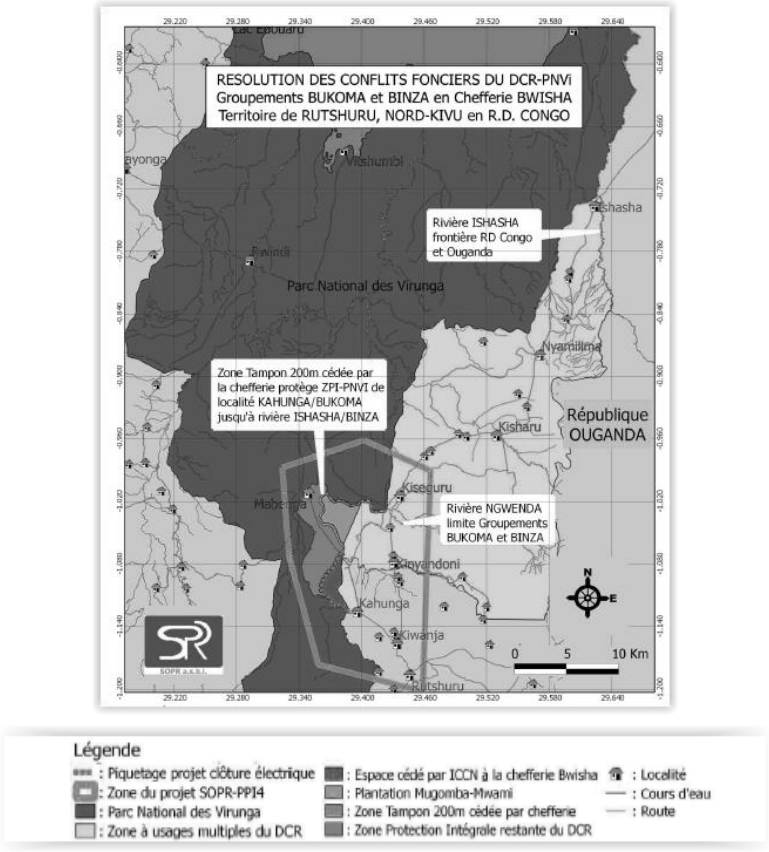

Figure 2: Different zones that constitute the RHD (SOPR, September 2016)

As explained, the main research question is answered through a mechanism of land control, mainly territorialisation, analysis of the four 'telling events' below. The concept of territorialisation is closely linked to authority and is used in this paper to show that authority in the RHD is pluralised, and how this pluralised authority in return influences territorialisation mechanisms. Pluralised authority draws on the notion of public authority, which already commences the disaggregation of the notion of 'the state': 'Public authority becomes the amalgamated result of the exercise of power by a variety of local institutions and the imposition of external institutions, conjugated with the image of a state' (Lund, 200: 686). Because it is extremely difficult in the case of the RHD to ascribe authority to a coherent state, it is necessary to adopt an analysis of assemblage that focuses on relations between different normative elements rather than a coherent network of actors.

Public authority in Bwisha Chiefdom is not just contested or continuously negotiated, I argue, it is pluralised. Pluralised authority, I claim, is 'a condition resulting from the simultaneous exercise or performance of power by a variety of formal and informal actors over different territories within a bounded geographic area.' This is demonstrated by, for instance, the legal duality that exists between the law and customs (Muheza, 2016; Kabila Kabange, 2015), and, in addition, by the presence of armed groups that *de facto* perform or make claims to authority over certain territories within the Virunga area and RHD. Hence, I conceptualise the discrepancy between *de jure* and the multiple *de facto* authority performers as a case of pluralised authority in the RHD in Bwisha Chiefdom.

The consecutive four events below, then, illustrate how several mechanisms of land control, under a state of pluralised authority, shape or influence the protracted land conflict that exists in the RHD, and how these mechanisms shape, influence or interact with the conservation assemblage of the VNP.

1. Death of SAP's President

This event, as described in the introduction, exemplifies the ethnicisation of territoriality. Through the different stories that surround the SAP President's death, it is possible to understand ethnicisation and authority in Bwisha Chiefdom. As a starting point, his death is highly politicised. Even interviewees who did not talk much regarding his death linked it to the land problematic in Bwisha Chiefdom.

Raphaël had been chased since 2010.[23] SAP accords his death to the land distribution problems that existed and for which he was fighting (Kyambula, 20 May 2016). Members of SAP stated that he had been killed by unknown people on his field near Kiseguru, around thirty kilometres south-east of Kiwanja. They explained that Raphaël was checking up on his crops in Kiseguru, where he owned a few fields. Accompanied by three other people, Raphaël decided to pass the night on his field, while suspicious movements of armed men were perceivable in the zone. Around five o'clock armed men shot Raphaël dead and mutilated his body. Everyone was afraid to go and collect the body. Only a human rights activist of *Centre de Recherche sur l'Environnement, la Démocratie et les Droits de l'Homme* (CREDDHO) was able to mobilise a few members of SAP and Raphaël's family to collect his body. Furthermore, according to these SAP members, several families in Kiwanja organised a feast on the day of his death, but they did not want to say what community they were from, illustrating the high ethnic tensions in the area.

[23] Field interview with a local human rights and environmental NGO, Goma, 21 April 2017.

After Raphaël's death, SAP members state, a manhunt for all members of the organization was started in Kiwanja. According to testimonials collected there, multiple members of SAP have already fled the zone to avoid the same fate as Raphaël. This is, for example, the case with the current and former presidents of SAP who sought refuge elsewhere. Currently, SAP members live clandestinely in Kiwanja and SAP has closed its office there.[24]

Additionally, there are other rumours and stories surrounding his death. To begin with, people argue that he was not supposed to be killed but rather taken hostage for money. However, when he tried to flee or fight his attackers, he got killed in the process. Furthermore, 'people close to him' (the Nande community), stated that he was killed by the *Forces démocratiques de libération du Rwanda* (FDLR) or Nyatura, armed groups that are mainly associated with the Hutu community, because of the land distribution conflict that existed between the *Mwami* (the main customary chief of the Chiefdom, who is part of the Hutu community) and the Nande farmers, who are seen by the Hutu community as people who are non-autochthone to Rutshuru territory.[25] Another rumour says that people organised his assassination when he was on his farmland because he was troublesome and tried to derange the Chiefdom and everyone who has concessions there.[26] Many people in Kiwanja suspect that the Chiefdom is implicated in this incident and/or that he was killed by the Nyatura.[27] Finally, there are people who accuse park guards of his death, 'Hutu extremists,' or a combination of the above.[28]

Ethnicisation

Ethnicisation has its roots in colonialism during which different tribal aspects were exaggerated by anthropological researchers, and people started more than before to affiliate with their ethnic background (Reybrouck, 2010). The colonial administrators believed that each chief belonged to an 'ethnic group' and should have their own territory. As a result, 'they embarked upon a vast programme of social engineering' that embodies the 'territorialisation of ethnicity' and the 'ethnicisation of local authority' (Marijnen & Verweijen, Forthcoming). This idea is further developed in following sections.

An incident that took place during my fieldwork in Goma illustrates these very high tensions between the two communities: A man in Rutshuru territory was found dead near a road after he had taken a *boda boda*[29]. This incident was immediately interpreted by the other community as having been carried out by the former community, which resulted in a revenge killing.[30] This shows how a single incident can spark tremendous tensions between the two communities, resulting in many deaths.[31]

To conclude, the various rumours surrounding the death of SAP's provincial president are located at the intersection of identity and natural resource politics. They demonstrate how ethnicisation influenced the contestations and negotiations over authority in Bwisha Chiefdom through connecting ethnic categories to the production of territorial spaces (see Vandergeest, 2003). Overall, this case illuminates the multi-layeredness of conflict dynamics in the RHD. It

[24] Field interviews with SAP members, April 2017.
[25] Field interview local human rights NGO, Goma, 10 May 2017.
[26] Field interview local human rights NGO, Goma, 10 May 2017.
[27] Field notes, stories collected by Esther Marijnen in Kiwanja in May, shared with me in June 2017.
[28] Field notes, April-June 2017; Field interview with Pole institute, Goma, 28 April 2017.
[29] A motorcycle taxi common in East Africa for transport.
[30] Field notes, April 2017.
[31] Field interview ICTJ, Goma, 20 April 2017.

shows how, among others, ethnic identity, the duality between laws and customs, the presence of armed groups, a history of violence in the region, and a demographic pressure on land are all entwined at numerous 'conflict layers.'

2. Petition Sap 2011 – 'Reclamation des Terres Spoliées'

The recent death of SAP's president is not a stand-alone event and is entangled in different mechanisms of land control regarding the park's land. Therefore, it is useful to take a further look at the park's history at this point. The VNP, formerly the Albert National Park, was created under Belgian colonial rule in 1925, mainly under the guise of protecting the mountain gorillas and their habitat. At this moment in time the park covered around 24,000 hectares in both Belgian Congo and Rwanda (Nzabandora, 2006: 16-17). This process of enclosure was continued and followed a fortress conservation rationale through multiple expansions, notably in 1935 and 1950 (Languy, 2005).[32] The park now encompasses around 780,000 hectares.[33] However, the green enclosure of this park did not make common land private property, but rather made private lands a public good in the name of nature and biodiversity conservation. This form of primitive accumulation allowed private actors to benefit from public 'goods' through its non-material exploitation (Kelly, 2011), for instance through tourist treks to the endangered mountain gorillas.[34]

The issues over land in Rutshuru already exist and have further evolved, since the park's creation in 1925 and expansion in 1935 and 1950. The park's boundaries have been contested ever since (Nzabandora, 2006). This contestation has taken a new dimension since the conservation assemblage has significantly changed composition through the creation of the PPP that was fully endorsed in 2011 and which will last until 2040 (Marijnen, 2018). At this time, Raphaël was already provincial president of SAP in Nord-Kivu. SAP as a peasants' organisation was established in 1992 at a conference in Kinshasa[35] (Tegera, 2003).

In order to put pressure on the government regarding the land problems in Nord-Kivu around the VNP, SAP delivered a petition to the government in January 2011, signed by over 100,000 people.[36] In this petition, they made claims to land that are, according to them, illegally occupied by the VNP, and in which they accused the park management of not having fulfilled their historic promises of compensation to the customary chiefs in exchange for their lands that currently constitute the VNP (see SOPR, 2011). Furthermore, the petition treats multiple cases of peasants' human rights violations by the park management and unequal law enforcement in the different territories around the park (Signatories, 2011). In addition, they view Belgian park director De Merode as conducting a neo-colonial project, as can be illustrated by the following claim made in the petition: 'Eighty-eight years after independence, a prince of Belgium, grandson of King Albert[37], Mister De Merode is appointed provincial Director of the ICCN of Nord-Kivu in order to manage the patrimony of his grandfather that is a World Heritage site. It looks like a

[32] This is before Congolese independence: Congo gained its independence on 30 June 1960 (Reybrouck, 2010).
[33] See https://virunga.org/the-park/.
[34] See https://visitvirunga.org/product/gorilla-treks/.
[35] Field interview, Goma, May 2017.
[36] On a population of 6,655,000.
[37] Actually, Prince Emmanuel De Merode is from nobility but not related to the royal Belgium family (Marijnen, Unpublished PhD Dissertation).

Belgian territory in the DRC'[38] (Translation based on Signatories, 2011: 21). In short, the petition claims that the laws establishing the park's altered limits after 1935 should not be adhered to because they have been set by a colonial administration without consultation of the local population, whose land the park occupies. They describe where the limits of the park are, according to the local population, and, finally, make several demands. One of these demands concerns the RHD specifically: the annulation of the *arrêté*[39] of February 1974 that created the RHD in favour of another one concerning the 500-meter buffer zone (Signatories, 2011). According to members of SAP, this petition served as a 'bomb' in order to put pressure on the government.[40]

The Congolese constitution, in article 27, stipulates that 'all Congolese have the right, individually or collectively, to submit a petition to the public authority which responds to it within three months.'[41] After the three months had passed without receiving a response, SAP considered their claims granted and continued to cultivate in many places in the RHD and VNP, which increased the already existing tensions. This was followed by an increase in encroachments and arrests.[42] According to SAP, one of the reasons why the government did not respond in time is that 'they just want to conserve their posts and do not have the time to read it, as they are only in that position for their own interest.'[43] Attitudes regarding the legality and usefulness of this petition were conflicting. Some interviewees regarded the petition as lawful, while others do not agree with the way the petition was initiated; they perceive the way SAP has executed it rather illegal and believe that it contributed to the bad reputation of the organisation.[44]

This case demonstrates the contested legalisation processes at work and exposes that violence and force, and in this case especially the threat of it, not only lies with the *de jure* authority but can be adopted by any actor related to the conservation assemblage or Virunga area, such as local individuals and organisations (e.g. SAP). Furthermore, it exemplifies territorialisation as a mechanism of land control: SAP attempted to affect, influence and control people, phenomena, and relationships around and within the borders of the VNP and RHD by delimiting and asserting control over a geographic area as laid out in their 2011 petition. Through this petition, they made both a claim to control land and resources, as well as a claim to the authority to determine who controls those resources, thereby contesting the authority that the VNP conservation assemblage performs through the PPP over the geographic area.

3. Third Party Mediation and its Aftermath

After the pressure that was put on the issue by the petition and through demographic land pressure in general, the Pole Institute in Goma organised a mediation workshop in Kisoro, Uganda, on 26-27 February 2013 between the main actors involved (Tegera, 2013).[45] Pole is an intercultural institute for peace in the Great Lakes Region. The participants were representatives of SAP, the Rutshuru Hutu community, the ICCN, and World Wildlife Fund (WWF), and the

[38] "Quarante huit ans après l'indépendance, un prince de la Belgique, petit fils du Roi Albert, Monsieur DE-MERODE est nommé Directeur provincial de l'I.C.C.N du Nord-Kivu en vue de gérer le patrimoine de son grand – père qualifié patrimoine mondial. On dirait un territoire belge en R.D.C.".
[39] Similar to an ordinance.
[40] Field interviews with SAP members, April 2017.
[41] See https://www.constituteproject.org/constitution/Democratic_Republic_of_the_Congo_2011.pdf?lang=en.
[42] Field interviews with various international and local NGOs, Goma, April – May 2017.
[43] Field interview with SAP members, Goma, May 2017.
[44] Field interviews with various international and local NGOs, Goma, April – May 2017.
[45] Field interview with Pole Institute, Goma, 28 April 2017.

organisation of women farmers (Tegera, 2013). This case demonstrates how territorialisation mechanisms are entwined with ethnicisation and, thereby, further develops the notion of 'ethnic territorialisation,' and how this interacts with the VNP conservation assemblage.

The workshop resulted in the accords of Kisoro, a document that was signed between the ICCN and the *Mwami* of Bwisha (Mwami de Bwisha & ICCN, 2014). The main conclusion reached was that all parties agreed to launch the legal process of the declassification of the Rutshuru Hunting Domain – apart from the five percent that constitutes the ecological zone, the zone of reproduction of elephants – as the only sustainable solution to the conflicts that existed between the local population and the ICCN at this point in time (Tegera, 2013; Mwami de Bwisha & ICCN, 2014).[46] Furthermore, the ICCN was supposed to erect an electric thread to separate the strict reserve from farmlands, and the local population said it would stop encroaching on the VNP[47] (Tegera, 2013; Mwami de Bwisha & ICCN, 2014), which at the time was estimated to be 22,602 hectares from Kahunga to Nyamilima, the border between the RHD and the VNP. This came together in the participative zoning project of the WWF (Uhoze, 2016).

However, the declassification is not a simple process, because the park is established by law and the ICCN does not have the legal authority to change that law, only the ministry does.[48] Thereupon, the mediation stopped because Pole was 'a bit blocked in continuing their work,' partly because they no longer received funds from the EU.[49] Hence, currently the RHD legally still falls under the mandate of the ICCN. According to SAP, park rangers are still harassing people who are cultivating there. However, multiple other interviewees argued that the ICCN is *de facto* not governing that area anymore and there are no patrols except for areas that border the VNP directly. The ICCN considered the mediation method of Pole limited from a legal perspective. Therefore, they currently continued a similar process[50] with UNHABITAT and ERAIFT.[51]

It is especially the aftermath of this mediation that is of interest for my analysis, as it incited and perpetuated an 'ethnic conflict' regarding the RHD; 'many people say that the *Mwami* did not distribute the, now *de facto* 'free,' land well.'[52] Besides, one of my informants mentioned that recently De Merode communicated to an audience in Rumangabo, where the park's headquarter is located, that he 'has not yet given the land to the local population.'[53] This statement implies that the involvement of the park management in the discussed area is, next to legally, neither *de facto* nor informally finished. In the same way, one interviewee stated that 'the ICCN was forced to accept the accords, because they had to find a compromise after SAP and the Chiefdom had encroached on the park during the M23 rebellion[54], and a conservator was 'arrested' because he took one of the local population's tractors that was considered illegal by the former. They thus had to find a compromise.'[55]

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[46] Field interviews, Goma, April – May 2017.
[47] Field interview Pole institute, Goma, 28 April 2017.
[48] Field interviews, Goma, March – May 2017.
[49] Field interview with Pole Institute, Goma, 28 April 2017; Field interview with an international NGO, Goma, 3 May 2017.
[50] Field interview with the ICCN, Goma, 8 May 2017.
[51] An UNESCO postgraduate training at the University of Kinshasa.
[52] Field interview local NGO partner to the ICCN, Goma, 11 May 2017.
[53] Field interview local NGO partner to the ICCN, Goma, 11 May 2017.
[54] The armed M23 movement was very active in Rutshuru during 2012-2013 and had taken over the city of Goma for several days in November 2012.
[55] Field interview with international NGO partner to the ICCN, Goma, 3 May 2017.

Ethnic Territorialisation

The mediation and subsequent ceding of land in the RHD stirred and perpetuated tensions between the Nande and Hutu communities. The report on the mediation published by Pole Institute even described the situation in 2013 as 'having the potential of being transformed into an ethnic conflict' (Tegera, 2013). Rutshuru territory has originally been a Hutu territory (Nzabandora, 2006).[56] Three waves of migration changed the ethnic composition of the Rutshuru population. 1) Recruitment of Nande from Lubero Territory to work for coffee plantations, 1947-1958; 2) their installations in so-called *paysannats*, that were boycotted by the autochthone Hutus, through the *Migrations Indigènes et Paysannats* programme, 1959-1965; and 3) emigration to west-Rutshuru from the first strains of Nande immigration from Eastern Rutshuru and Lubero and Beni Territories, 1966-1996 (Nzabandora, 2006: 21).

Thus, on the one hand, the Nande community is seen as non-autochthone to Rutshuru and labeled 'foreigners' because they originated from Lubero and Hutus are seen as the original inhabitants of the territory. The Nande have come to Rutshuru through the migration waves described above. On the other hand, Hutus in general, as part of the BanyaRwanda community, are also seen as 'foreigners' by a large part of the Nord-Kivu population because they speak Kinyarwanda, the main language in Rwanda, and a significant amount of Hutu people have arrived in Eastern Congo from Rwanda during the 1994 genocide there and the subsequent two Congo Wars.[57]

According to SAP, certain customary chiefs 'grabbed multiple hectares of land before granting certain plots along ethnic lines and to their preferences, thereby dividing the members of SAP.' They stress that SAP is composed of all ethnicities, but that Hutu chiefs incited Hutu members to leave the organisation in exchange for plots of land.[58] Furthermore, SAP views the Hutus as being opportunistic, profiting from the hard work they have carried out against the ICCN to gain the land (Tegera, 2013).

On the contrary, Hutu elders mobilised youth to occupy lands in the RHD in order to counter SAP, because they accused SAP of distributing the lands of the RHD to Nande people from neighbouring Lubero. SAP is generally perceived as an organisation mainly composed of Nande. They, furthermore, argued that the *Mwami* of Bwisha, who is part of the Hutu community, is the only legitimate and customary authority to distribute lands (Tegera, 2013).[59] The fact that the Kisoro accords were signed between the ICCN and the *Mwami* of Bwisha reinforces the acknowledgment of many actors that it is the *Mwami* who is the authority that should distribute the lands and not an NGO such as SAP. Hence, the conflict between the local population and the ICCN mixed with and further developed into a conflict between two communities.

I now turn to 'strongmen politics,' which is another dimension very apparent in this case, because a lot of land is owned by provincial and national deputies and other *hommes forts*. Those are individuals who have the financial means and power to acquire land titles 'all the way in Kinshasa.'[60] Because of this, the local poorer population is left without formally or customarily owning land, who continue to 'illegally' cultivate in the park. As a result, people consider that

[56] Field interviews, Goma, April – May 2017.
[57] Field interviews, Goma, April – May 2017.
[58] Field interview with SAP members, April 2017.
[59] Field interviews, Goma, March – May 2017.
[60] Field interviews, Goma, April – May 2017.

even if the RHD will eventually legally be given back to the local population, this will not solve the problem. They say that what is necessary is a total land law reform[61] (see Aide et Action pour la Paix June 2015). These *hommes forts* are, furthermore, associated with their ethnic groups and accused of contributing to dividing the local population in Rutshuru along ethnic lines. It is said that no Hutu will vote for a Nande as deputy during elections and vice versa.[62]

To conclude, in this case territorialisation mechanisms entwined with ethnicisation; mechanisms I refer to as 'ethnic territorialisation' (building on Marijnen & Verweijen Forthcoming). As demonstrated before, ethnicisation influenced the contestations and negotiations over authority in Bwisha Chiefdom through connecting ethnic categories and related identity constructions to the production of territorial spaces (see Vandergeest, 2003). Thus, as becomes clear from this case, multiple individuals and groups, often divided in ethnic categories such as SAP/Nande and the customary authorities/Hutu, attempted to affect, influence or control people (along ethnic lines), phenomena, and relationships by delimiting and asserting control over a, sometimes ethnicised, geographic area. These are both ethnicised claims to control land and resources, as well as claims to the authority to determine who controls those resources, based on ethnic identities. Thereby, these mechanisms of ethnic territorialisation produce, rearrange, and maintain power relations within the conservation assemblage, among governed environmental, ethnicised subjects, and between those subjects and the *de facto* authorities in and around the RHD (see Peluso & Lund, 2011: 673).

4. Interrupted Demarcation of Boundaries

Not long after the mediation of Pole Institute and the Kisoro accords, a mixed commission was installed to complete the demarcation between the VNP and the RHD. This commission, consisting of the ICCN, WWF, representatives of provincial civil society, and some local organisations, first carried out the task of participative demarcation of the Ishasa-Nyamilima-Kahunga axe (see figures). The commission had finished around forty kilometres of demarcation from Ishasa to Nyamilima in August 2016 when they were attacked by a *mai-mai* militia, supposedly *mai-mai* Charles, early in the morning near Nyamilima. This militia is perceived as being linked to the Nande community. The clash resulted in several deaths; multiple *mai-mai* were killed, and in addition, a few people of the demarcation team were wounded or killed, among which *Forces Armées de la République Démocratique du Congo* (FARDC) soldiers that had come along for security reasons. The demarcation process was immediately suspended and was supposed to be continued later in 2017.[63]

Although many interviewees agreed that 'it must have been *mai-mai* Charles' that was behind this attack, there exist multiple stories regarding their motives. One interviewee, for example, accused the Chief of Binza *groupement* of having secretly supported people to oppose and block the demarcation process because the chiefs are not implicated in the process. They are involved only in the execution phase but not in the earlier phases; they feel they 'just receive orders.' According to two other interviewees, it was SAP that organised the *mai-mai* Charles and has, thus, been involved in the attack. Again, according to others, the attack was linked to the specific location. They said that from Ishasa to Nyamilima they did not face much resistance from the population because encroachment was not so numerous in that area. Conversely, near

[61] Field interviews, Goma, April – May 2017.
[62] Field interviews, Goma, April – May 2017.
[63] Field interviews, Goma, April – May 2017.

Nyamilima, there are many local individuals and *hommes forts* that own large plots of farmlands within the VNP's boundaries. Hence, these 'big' farmers, through the attack, resisted the demarcation process to preserve their farmlands and, thereby, their income.[64]

In the same year, Julien Paluku Kahongya, the governor of Nord-Kivu, suspended all activities of SAP in Nord-Kivu in one of his speeches, considering it an illegitimate organisation at present. Nevertheless, they continue to work clandestinely.[65] SAP members, however, did not mention this during interviews. Many interviewees, including those with local civil society organisations, describe SAP as an 'extreme' organisation. Although they are not necessarily against SAP's goals, they generally do not agree with this NGO's approach to obtaining these goals.[66]

To conclude, this case demonstrates anew how different mechanisms of land control shape, influence or interact with the conservation assemblage of the VNP regarding land conflicts in the Rutshuru Hunting Domain in Bwisha Chiefdom. The discussed mixed demarcation commission as an element within the VNP conservation assemblage was created and halted due to (violent) mechanisms of (ethnic) territorialisation. Local individuals and groups, such as the Nande associated *mai-mai* Charles, local customary authorities, SAP, and the mixed commission attempted to influence and control a certain geographic area within and around the VNP and the RHD. Some do so through force and violence, such as the *mai-mai* militia that supposedly was behind the attack, others by making claims to land and its resources and the authority to determine who controls those resources. For example, the mixed commission did this through its demarcation project. Moreover, ethnicisation and territorialisation mechanisms are entwined as can be derived from the fact that both SAP and the associated Nande community, in general, have been accused of being behind the attack.

Finally, this telling event shows especially how violence and force, or the threat of it, as a land controlling mechanism is not solely linked to 'the state,' due to limited statehood in Nord-Kivu. This is demonstrated by the use of violence by the *mai-mai* militia to stop the demarcation commission. Local 'actor groups' also seem to deploy threats of violence, or indirect violence, through, for example, their supposed collaboration with local militias, e.g., SAP and the customary chiefs, to influence and shape the conservation assemblage. As a result, the commission stopped their work for the time being.

Conclusion

Through building a thick description, adopting the analytical framework of 'mechanisms of land control', and further developing notions of 'ethnic territorialisation' and 'pluralised authority', I have analysed how such mechanisms shape, influence or interact with the conservation assemblage of the VNP regarding the Rutshuru Hunting Domain, because the *de jure* authorities of the VNP are not the only actors *de facto* acting in Rutshuru Territory. Through such mechanisms of land control, different claims over land, identity, ethnicity, authority, and legitimacy are expressed in the land conflicts in the RHD and within the assemblage. Moreover, a lack of statehood in conflict-affected areas leads to a condition of pluralised authority through several mechanisms of land control: violence and force (or the threat of it), territorialisation, and

[64] Field interviews, Goma, April – May 2017.
[65] Field interviews ICCN and (international) NGOs, Goma, April – May 2017.
[66] Field interviews, Goma, April – May 2017.

ethnic territorialisation. In protected natural areas, this shapes, influences, and interacts with the conservation assemblage, intertwining conflict dynamics and nature conservation.

The discussed four events expose how ethnicity is used in claim-making regarding territorial spaces and can be viewed through the lens of ethnic territorialisation. Secondly, they demonstrate how *de facto* public authority is negotiated and contested, resulting in a state of pluralised authority through the simultaneous exercise or performance of power by a variety of formal and informal actors over different 'territories' within the bounded Virunga geographic area. Furthermore, they show how violence and force (or the threat of it) is deployed by a whole range of actors, and not solely by 'the State.' Above all, they disclose the multi-layeredness and complexity of conflict dynamics and land conflicts regarding the RHD, and in conflict areas in general. The local cases are entwined with wider conflict dynamics, as is illustrated, for example, by the ethnicisation of the land conflicts.

Thus, with this paper, I have proposed a starting point for surpassing the power-resistance binary that is apparent in much literature on resistance and armed conservation by adopting an assemblage approach. I have tried to advance theory and thinking on conservation and protected areas as 'active sites of political negotiation and mediation' (Lund, 2006: 686).

Furthermore, I had a more 'hands on' goal: to allow for an understanding of the local population in which 'they' are not solely seen as a homogeneous group, but their internal differences and conflict dynamics are understood as influenced by wider conflict dynamics; 'they' as well influence mechanisms of territorialisation through claims over land and authority and engage in practices of violence and force, especially the threat of them. I have argued that 'they' should not just be seen as 'dispossessed,' 'beneficiaries,' 'encroachers' or 'poachers' in the creation and justifications of conservation policies in order to avoid counterproductive policy practices. Hence, an analysis grounded in an analysis of assemblage will be helpful in circumventing those practices.

To Conclude and Suggestions for Further Research

Thus, ultimately, the story this research disclosed, through adopting an analysis of assemblage, is a case of how limited statehood allows for the existence of pluralised authority in a protracted land conflict through different mechanisms of land control, such as (ethnic) territorialisation and violence and force or the threat of it.

Currently, Duffy describes a shift from 'war for conservation' to 'war *by* conservation,' in which conservation, security, and counterinsurgency become more integrated (Duffy, 2016). Conservationists practice a 'proactive, interventionist militarized response' and are 'the intervening aggressor, not simply the defender of wildlife' (Duffy, 2016: 238). With this analysis, she opens up many opportunities for further conceptual enquiry and debate, to which this research aims to contribute. For example, we have to conceptually rethink the links between natural resources and conflict, and discourses on poaching to understand why and how the use of greater force has become more possible (Duffy, 2016). We need to scrutinise how these shifting dynamics translate into material effects and transform the role conservationists ascribe themselves in war zones and result in usage of counterinsurgency techniques by, e.g. describing themselves as major drivers of peace and prosperity in the region. Consequently, it is necessary to understand the mechanisms by which governance actors 'use environmental initiatives to gain greater levels of control over specific territories and populations' (Duffy, 2016: 240), and how this materialises in conflict zones where public authority over these territories is often explicitly contested.

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Breaking with the Past: How Colombian Ex-Combatants Reintegrated into a City Dominated by Armed Groups

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Abstract

Through interviews with Colombian ex-paramilitaries, this research aims to understand how ex-combatants reintegrated into civilian life while resisting continuous approaches to re-join an armed group. The interviewees employed three strategies to successfully reintegrate: (1) completely focus on their family, (2) avoiding people with a negative influence, and (3) involving themselves in a different community. This confirms that strong family ties and community involvement contribute to successful reintegration. Moreover, it reveals that persistent ex-combatant contact can both hamper and facilitate reintegration depending on the interaction. Finally, deliberate decisions surrounding their ex-combatant identity and the passing of time were instrumental in the interviewees' reintegration process.

Introduction

> 'It's like coming to terms with a person passing away. You come to terms with death when you bury someone. Otherwise you will keep watching the person and feel as if he's still alive and in the present. The same happened with our demobilisation. We demobilised and came to terms with being demobilised. Life is changing and you start looking at what you will become. Are we going to return to our old life or are we going to take advantage of the opportunities they are giving us? When you arrive at this point […] you have to take the decision to stay where you were or close your eyes and leave. That's what I did. I closed my eyes and proceeded at the hand of God. It's like when you are thrown into a river and you don't know how to swim or suddenly have to learn how to swim.' [1]

In 2003, Esteban[2] and his comrades were confronted with the sudden initiation of their paramilitary bloc's[3] demobilisation in Medellín, Colombia (Rozema, 2008: 428). They entered a highly

[1] Interview with Esteban, ex-paramilitary 6, 03/05/2017.
[2] The participants were allocated a different name to ensure their anonymity.
[3] Most paramilitary groups were established in the 1980s by local elites or poor people who seized the opportunity to become warlords. Their aim was to counter the upsurge of the guerrillas, control drug routes, rule society and eliminate individuals or movements that were an obstacle to their private property and business interests. During their operations they received (sometimes unofficially) military and logistical assistance from the government (Hris-

uncertain period in which they had to decide about the direction of their future lives. Although exact numbers are not available, it is generally known that a substantial amount of the paramilitary combatants, commonly referred to as paramilitaries, did not participate in the collective Disarmament,[4] Demobilisation,[5] and Reintegration[6] (DDR) programme of the umbrella organisation *Autodefensas Unidas de Colombia* (AUC). They either immediately continued in reconfigured paramilitary groups or started the DDR programme and later decided to return to an armed group (Hristov, 2010: 21-22). Consequently, for some paramilitaries, the DDR process marked a turning point in their life course whereas others disregarded the process and continued in war.

This research focuses specifically on the group of paramilitaries who managed to complete the DDR programme and transition to a civilian lifestyle. As such, this study aims to understand how reintegration can be achieved in an environment characterised by the dominance of armed groups. The city of Medellín is a particularly relevant location to conduct this research. First of all, because the collective demobilisation process of the paramilitaries started in this city as a pilot (Rozema, 2008: 440; Espinal & Agudelo, 2008: 15)[7]. The municipality of Medellín experimented with a new approach focused on the individual needs of ex-combatants. Based on the lessons learned here, the programme was eventually implemented in the rest of the country.[8]

In addition, while most paramilitaries were active in the countryside, Medellín formed an exception as it used to be a paramilitary stronghold.[9] Interestingly, the demobilisation process was initiated at the peak of the paramilitary domination in Medellín (Civico, 2015: 195). Their activities provided the *urbanos* - paramilitaries active in Medellín - with considerable power, privileges, money and the perfect embodiment of masculinity (Theidon, 2007: 76, 86). These aspects were hard to compensate for during the DDR process (Theidon, 2009: 30). Yet, approximately 3,000 paramilitaries participated in the DDR programme and many of them managed to successfully reintegrate into society (Civico, 2015: 95, 182; Theidon, 2007: 78; Rozema, 2008: 450-451).[10]

This is remarkable since roughly half of the paramilitary blocs – currently referred to as *bandas criminales* (BACRIM) - remilitarised within five years by reenlisting their former fighters and reviving their command-and-control structure (Daly, 2016: 2). In several of Medellín's neighbourhoods, these groups were able to maintain their parallel state, social control and economic activities (Rozema, 2008: 450; Theidon, 2007: 85; Hristov, 2010: 21-22; Espinal & Agudelo, 2008: 18-19; Daly, 2016: 2). Moreover, the collective demobilisation process was designed in such a way that the paramilitary blocs demobilised in their entirety. This meant that most ex-paramilitaries still lived in the same neighbourhoods as they did whilst active fighters, continued to meet up with their comrades and could thus rather easily continue their business as usual (Civico, 2016: 184; Rozema, 2008: 450; Daly, 2016: 88). Kaplan and Nussio (2016: 23) add that living

tov, 2010: 15; Interviews with former police colonel, expert 9, Medellín, 04/04/2017; Gustavo Duncan, expert 4, Medellín, 23/03/2017).

[4] 'The collection, documentation, control and disposal of small arms, ammunition, explosives and light and heavy weapons of combatants and often also of the civilian population' (United Nations, 2006: 6).

[5] 'The formal and controlled discharge of active combatants from armed forces or other armed groups' (United Nations, 2006: 19).

[6] 'The process by which ex-combatants acquire civilian status and gain sustainable employment and income. Reintegration is essentially a social and economic process with an open time-frame, primarily taking place in communities at the local level.' (United Nations, 2006: 19).

[7] Interview with Catalina Morales, expert 12, Bogotá,11/04/2017.

[8] Ibid.

[9] Ibid.

[10] Interview with Jorge Gaviria, expert 7, Medellín, 27/03/2017.

in the midst of criminal groups is one of the most important factors related to ex-combatant recidivism in Colombia. Consequently, the question arises as to how certain combatants managed to transition to a civilian lifestyle in these circumstances.

It is argued that social networks are among the main factors determining whether individual ex-combatants successfully reintegrate or continue in an armed group (Daly, Paler & Samii, 2014: 11, 49). According to Daly (2016: 251), ex-combatants' behaviour is highly dependent on the social context as they belong to a web of former fighters and armed institutions that may pull them back into their former power structures. This is especially true for cities like Medellín, where local paramilitary groups managed to retain their grip on society and monitored the whereabouts of former combatants in order to lure them back into their criminal enterprise (Daly, 2016: 94-95)[11]. This study therefore looks into how former paramilitaries - comprehended as social navigators who strategically move in their dynamic social environment to improve their life conditions (Vigh, 2006: 11-13) - managed to disentangle themselves from the persisting war structures. It is studied how they used and reconfigured relationships with family members, other ex-combatants and community members and, accordingly, which specific strategies they employed to transition to a civilian lifestyle. Hence, this research aims to understand the following question:

> *Which strategies did ex-combatants use to advance their reintegration process whilst living in an environment where they faced continuous approaches to re-join an armed group?*

This research question is socially relevant since DDR programmes often do not meet their stated objectives (Humphreys & Weinstein, 2007: 563) and subsequent unsuccessful reintegration is likely to cause new cycles of violence (Klem & Douma, 2008: 7; De Vries & Wiegink, 2011: 38). By adopting a qualitative research design, this case study contributes to existing literature in the sense that it provides in-depth knowledge on specific strategies former combatants deemed instrumental when they were reintegrating into society. These insights are also relevant for other DDR processes, such as those of the *Fuerzas Armadas Revolucionarias de Colombia* (FARC). Dissident groups of the FARC are currently developing in a similar fashion as those of the paramilitaries in 2003 (McDermott, 2017: par. 21). This study contributes to understanding how armed actors can desist from their combatant lifestyle and which strategies are useful for transitioning combatants to pursue their civilian trajectory.

This paper first provides an overview of the existing reintegration literature and factors that have been argued to be essential in successful reintegration processes. Accordingly, it is derived that strong family ties, and acceptance by and involvement in one's neighbourhood contribute to ex-combatant reintegration. Additionally, despite the contrasting findings on the persistence of ex-combatant networks, it is hypothesised that contact among ex-combatants does not automatically hamper reintegration efforts if they mutually reinforce other to stay on the civilian path. The next section will discuss the methodology, including its research design and limits. The analysis starts with a background of the conflict leading up to the paramilitary demobilisation process. Subsequently, the interviewees' strategies to advance a civilian lifestyle, their notion of reintegration as redemption and the importance of time for successful reintegration

[11] Interviews with Santiago, ex-paramilitary 1, 27/03/2017; Andrés, ex-paramilitary 4, 23/04/2017; Felipe, ex-paramilitary 5, 26/04/2017; Esteban, ex-paramilitary 6, 03/05/2017; Ricardo, ex-paramilitary 7, 04/05/2017; Luis, ex-paramilitary 8, 10/05/2017; Jairo, ex-paramilitary 9, 11/05/2017.

will be elaborated upon. Interestingly, these strategies confirm the three elements of the main hypothesis. Finally, the conclusion summarises the results, discusses the limitations of the analysis and provides recommendations for future research.

Theoretical Framework

Reintegration: Controversies and Effectiveness

Ex-combatants have been conceived as 'time bombs slowly ticking away' (Mashike, 2004: 101) and the legacy of armed ex-fighters has often been one of the factors accountable for renewed hostilities in post-conflict settings (Klem & Douma, 2008: 7; De Vries & Wiegink, 2011: 38). Consequently, the implementation of DDR programmes has gained importance within larger peacebuilding efforts since the late 1980s (Rozema, 2008: 427; Klem & Douma, 2008: 8). However, its effectiveness has been hard to establish and studies have come to different conclusions regarding DDR success. For example, whereas Humphreys and Weinstein found 'little evidence at the micro level that internationally funded programmes facilitate demobilisation and reintegration' (2007: 531), specific DDR programmes in Mali, Mozambique and Cambodia have been suggested as successful cases (Klem & Douma, 2008: 10). As such, disagreement and inconclusiveness characterize the academic debate of DDR effectiveness (Sprenkels, 2018: 134-135).

However, the reintegration literature does point at several variables related to the ex-combatants' social environment and networks that may facilitate or hinder reintegration. In the sections below, it will be explained under what conditions the independent variables family ties, persisting ex-combatant contact and community involvement could contribute to successful reintegration.

Family

To start with, family is a key network related to reintegration. As Theidon shows, family is an important reason to demobilise (2009: 21) and a key incentive to avoid remobilisation (2009: 31). The latter is confirmed by Kaplan and Nussio (2016: 24-25) who argue that those with familial restraints are less likely to become recidivists while ex-combatants with weak family ties might be more vulnerable for recidivism. Rozema takes this even further and states that reintegration will only happen if ex-combatants' families are willing to embrace them (2008: 428). Terry and Abrams (2017: 743-744) explain the importance of strong family ties by arguing that if family members are unwilling or unable to support them in the way they need, former delinquents are more likely to keep relying on their criminally associated networks. Subsequently, they find it harder to break with their criminal past.

Thus, it can be concluded that strong family ties are of critical importance for a successful reintegration process, whereas weak family ties might hinder the transition to a civilian lifestyle. Unfortunately, the abovementioned authors do not specify what 'family' exactly entails. Therefore, this research will look at the broadest interpretation of family. It investigates the role of the nuclear family ex-paramilitaries grew up in, their own family formation including their partner(s) and child(ren) and broader family ties such as uncles, cousins, in-laws and grandparents. Given the importance of family ties, it is relevant to investigate how strong the family ties of successfully reintegrated ex-paramilitaries are to see whether the theory holds for this specific sample and to understand what role their family exactly played in the reintegration process.

Persisting Ex-Combatant Contact

There is an interesting controversy within reintegration literature regarding the question whether persistent contact between ex-combatants is beneficial or not. Although most authors advocate a complete dismantlement of the ex-combatant network due to the risk of remobilisation[12]; others argue that persisting relationships between fellow ex-combatants do not necessarily increase the risk of recidivism (Kaplan & Nussio, 2016: 20; De Vries & Wiegink, 2011: 47). Wiegink (2015: 11) argues that maintaining ex-combatant networks can be worthwhile because it may provide former combatants with social protection, economic opportunities and a sense of belonging. This is supported by Zyck (2009: 111), who demonstrated that maintaining ex-combatant networks is important to prevent the 'social disorientation' that can lead to remobilisation.

Consequently, based on the literature, it is not possible to predict whether ex-combatant contact is contributing to a reintegration process or not. However, it seems that maintaining ex-combatant networks does not automatically lead to remobilisation and can even be beneficial for someone's reintegration process if the ex-combatants play a constructive role in each other's lives and mutually reinforce each other to stay on the civilian path. On the contrary, if ex-combatants try to remobilise each other this obviously negatively affects the reintegration process. Therefore, it seems that the consequences of persisting ex-combatant contact depend on their interaction and the specific role ex-combatants play in each other's lives.

Following the divergent findings in the literature, several authors have identified gaps for further research on the role of ex-combatant networks. For instance, Rozema argues that more attention needs to be paid to the role ex-combatant networks and criminal organisations play when analysing the risk of remobilisation (2008: 423). Accordingly, Wiegink (2015: 11) underlines that it is relevant to investigate the perspectives of ex-combatants who did not remobilise on the persistence of wartime networks and ex-combatant (non-)remobilisation. Daly (2016: 251) adds that the current literature on micro-dynamics of peace and trajectories of people emerging from conflict treats individuals as independent agents. However, her research shows that ex-combatants' post-war trajectories can only be understood by taking their environment and relationships with other ex-combatants into account. Hence, it is relevant to further explore which role this network played in the efforts of successfully reintegrated ex-combatants to remain on the civilian path after their demobilisation process.

Neighbourhood

Finally, the role of one's neighbourhood and its inhabitants, also referred to as community, has been widely discussed with regard to the reintergration of ex-combatant. It has been assumed that former fighters want to return to their homes. However, in some cases, ex-combatants are not welcomed in their former communities or have created 'home' at another place (De Vries & Wiegink, 2011: 46). Wherever ex-combatants choose to reside, acceptance by one's community has been identified as a factor that can restrain recidivism (Kaplan & Nussio, 2016: 7-8; Rozema, 2008: 428). However, the fact that community members are sometimes fearful and distrustful of the ex-combatants restrains their possibility of gaining acceptance (Espinal & Agudelo, 2008: 31; Wood, 2008: 555; Kaplan & Nussio, 2015: 3; Daly, 2016: 94).

[12] See for example: Daly, Paler & Samii, 'Retorno a la legalidad o reincidencia,' 49; Rozema, 'Urban DDR processes,' 449; Kaplan & Nussio, 'Explaining recidivism,' 5; United Nations, 'Operational guide,' 161; Utas, 'Bigmanity and network governance,' 19; Nussio & Howe, 'What if the FARC Demobilizes?' 60; Bøås & Bjørkhaug, 'DDRed in Liberia,' 2.

Moreover, constructive ex-combatant behaviour, such as participating in the neighbourhood, prevents the recurrence of conflict as well (Kaplan & Nussio, 2015: 16). When ex-combatants are embedded in their community a safe and supportive environment can be created (Kaplan & Nussio, 2015: 3). Adversely, in neighbourhoods with less social participation ex-combatants are more likely to organise among themselves (ibid.). This could, depending on the role of the ex-combatant network, either encourage or hamper remobilisation (Nilsson, 2005: 50).

Being accepted by neighbours and embedded in the community is thus shown to be facilitating a successful reintegration process. However, if the neighbours are not willing to accept the ex-combatants or do not have a very strong community bond, it is more likely that ex-combatants will organise among themselves. Whether this is beneficial for their reintegration process depends on the influence ex-combatants exert on each other's decisions. Communities and ex-combatants thus mutually influence each other's behaviour. Therefore, it is relevant to explore how relationships between ex-paramilitaries and their neighbours developed after the demobilisation process and how changing or remaining in their neighbourhoods influenced the ex-combatants' reintegration process. In sum, this section has shown that the debate on DDR effectiveness is still rather inconclusive and that the role of diverse social networks on the reintegration process needs further exploration. So far researchers have mainly focused on statistics and short-term outcomes (Klem & Douma, 2008: 10) and it has been pointed out that 'in-depth research on DDR and its consequences is still scarce' (Sprenkels, 2014: 3). Therefore, the present paper focuses on the long-term reintegration process, exploring how diverse social networks supported or discouraged ex-combatants to stay on the civilian path. The accompanying hypothesis is that strong family ties, acceptance by and involvement in one's neighbourhood positively contribute to ex-combatant reintegration process, whereas persistent contact with ex-combatants is only supportive if they mutually reinforce each other to stay on the civilian path.

Methodology

Research Design

According to Maruna (2010: 5), turning points in one's life course – such as demobilisation and subsequent reintegration - can best be understood by focusing on the stories of individuals. As such, this research adopts a qualitative research design using in-depth interviews with ex-paramilitaries to understand the complexity of successful, long-term reintegration processes. Since this research focuses only one subtype of participants in DDR processes – namely the ex-combatants who managed to transition to a civilian lifestyle and completed the DDR programme – this study adopts the 'building block' approach to theory development. This type of case studies entails that 'each block – a study of each subtype – fills a "space" in the overall theory' (George & Bennett, 2005: 67). Because, as concluded in the former section, the role of specific social networks with regard to reintegration efforts needs further exploration in diverse research settings, the apprehension of this study as an additional building block to existing theory seems appropriate.

It was chosen to focus on a single case because this approach is especially useful when researching whether and under what conditions variables are seen to be associated with the investigated outcome, in this case successful reintegration (George & Bennett, 2005: 69). As touched upon in the introduction, Medellín is a particularly suitable location to research how

reintegrating ex-paramilitaries dealt with challenges as it was the largest urban area plagued by a continuing presence of criminal groups in Colombia. Additionally, since it was the first location where the demobilisation process was initiated, the paramilitaries did not have any guarantee that the government would adhere to their promises. Moreover, as there was no precedent in another city, the paramilitaries had no idea how the reintegration process would take shape. Accordingly, this severely influenced the ex-combatants' willingness to start and invest time in the daunting reintegration process. Although every DDR process has its own specific characteristics, by focusing on a context characterised by such critical challenges, this research can inform other studies by providing an insight into the strategies ex-combatants used when facing significant obstacles to their long-term reintegration results.

Data Collection and Empirical Analysis

During the three-month fieldwork period in Medellín from March until May 2017, I held interviews with both local experts and ex-paramilitaries. In order to contextualise the research puzzle, I first interviewed local experts in Medellín and Bogotá. Commonly referred to as 'purposive sampling' (Boeije, 2010: 35), twelve experts had been selected on the basis of their expertise and availability. The interviews were semi-structured and lasted between fifty minutes and two hours. The experts' insights supplemented the previously conducted literature review and enhanced my understanding of the phenomenon I was researching. This was followed by the second phase, which entailed interviewing ex-paramilitaries in Medellín about their transition process that had started in 2003.

I gained access to ex-paramilitaries through the national reintegration organisation *Agencia Colombiana para la Reintegración* (ACR), the local reintegration organisation *Paz y Reconciliación* (PyR), PyR's education institute *Centro para la Paz y Reconciliación* (CEPAR), and the ex-paramilitary-run reconciliation organisation *Aulas de Paz*. Since I did not have a prior relationship to these organisations, it took a while to gain their trust and cooperation. However, with help from the experts I previously interviewed and after handing in several research proposals, they decided to put me in touch with former paramilitaries.

Although I did not have much influence on the organisations' selection of ex-paramilitaries I could interview, the employees took several criteria into account that were paramount to my research. The most important criterion was that the interviewees participated in the reintegration programme in Medellín and either had already lived in or moved to this city after their demobilisation. Another criterion was that the ex-paramilitaries demobilised between 2003 and 2006, preferably in the collective demobilisation programme. Out of safety and privacy reasons, the interviews took place in a private room at the organisation that had arranged the interviews. All interviewees were assured of their anonymity and the confidential use of the information provided. The interviews were semi-structured and lasted from one to two and a half hours. After the interviews with the ex-paramilitaries were conducted I had a final meeting with the expert Antonio García Fernández[13], who I had talked to before, in order to verify my information and discuss my preliminary findings.

The interviews were transcribed immediately after they had been conducted and recorded with the permission of the interviewee. When the data collection phase ended, I started summarising the interviews I had held with the ex-paramilitaries in order to create a quick overview of

[13] Interview with Antonio García Fernández, expert 5, 11/05/2017.

the information that was provided. These interview summaries were used to create topic summaries, in which the responses of the interviewees were organised per topic. The subsequent, comprehensive organisation of the data in NVivo was both guided by the inductive process mentioned above and the theoretical framework explained in the former chapter. After the data was organised, it was possible to answer the sub-questions I had previously developed to guide the analytic process. According to George and Bennett (2005: 76), asking questions to the data is useful in the sense that it allows the researcher to analyse the case in a way that provides 'answers' to the sub-questions. This step helped me to answer the main research question in the sense that it both showed the role of the three social networks mentioned in the reintegration literature and revealed additional elements instrumental for successful reintegration. Thus, through a combination of deductive and inductive analytical methods it was possible to understand how the interviewees could complete their reintegration process while facing significant challenges.

Limitations and Considerations

First of all, it is important to underline that the sample is not representative. The aim of this research is to focus solely on 'success cases' of reintegration; in other words, combatants who completed the DDR programme. Additionally, the amount of interviews is not sufficient to form a representation of the Colombian paramilitaries in general or, more specifically, the situation in Medellín. Instead this study focused on understanding the interviewees' behaviour and formation of a post-demobilisation life by documenting how a specific number of ex-paramilitaries talked about their social navigation practices during retrospective interviews.

Secondly, the sampling location had an influence on the information that was provided by the interviewees. The majority of the ex-paramilitaries I interviewed via the PyR were very positive about the organisation's work. This could be related to the fact that the PyR put me in touch with them. Especially since the three people who were most negative about PyR's programme were the ones I contacted through *Aulas de Paz* and CEPAR. However, because I also spoke with experts and ex-paramilitaries that were not contacted through the PyR, I believe that I still gained an accurate overview of the DDR process in Medellín.

Finally, it is noteworthy that the in-depth interviews with ex-paramilitaries were conducted in Spanish while the interviews with experts were held in both Spanish and English. Although I had a sufficient level of Spanish to conduct this research, I was not fluent in this language given the fact that I had only started taking intensive classes half a year before the fieldwork started. On the one hand, conducting the interviews by myself was an advantage in the sense that the interviewees were even more willing to help me out considering my efforts to learn their language. It served as a useful icebreaker to talk about the struggles I had whilst learning Spanish. Moreover, the fact that there was no third person present during the interviews rendered it less likely that the responses were biased. On the other hand, my intermediate Spanish level was a disadvantage since, especially in the beginning, I had difficulties understanding the ex-paramilitaries' use of slang. This inhibited my ability to ask some necessary follow-up questions. To overcome this problem, I held second interviews with the first interviewees to obtain the information I was missing. I also hired people to transcribe these interviews in order to ensure that there were no mistakes in the transcriptions.

The Formation of New Life

This section first provides a brief background on the origin of the paramilitary groups and their demobilisation, which marked the start of the interviewees' reintegration process. Subsequently, it will be explained how the interviewees integrated into the labour market and which strategies they used to advance a civilian lifestyle while simultaneously being sought out by criminals to join their lucrative business. Finally, it will be discussed how the passing of time and accompanying gradual change of mind are important for achieving successful, long-term reintegration.

From Origin to Demobilisation of the Colombian Paramilitaries

Paramilitary forces were already deployed in the period called *La Violencia* (1948-1958), during which the country was dominated by sectarian violence between elites of conservative and liberal parties who were pursuing economic and political control (Civico, 2015: 35-36). The agreement *Frente Nacional* put an end to the civil war and decided that conservative and liberal parties would take turns in governing the country (Civico, 2015: 37). However, the exclusion of other actors in the political arena fuelled resistance. Consequently, in the 1960s, the guerrilla groups FARC and ELN emerged in the countryside and a new civil war between the leftist *guerrilleros* and Colombian state spread over the country (Civico, 2015: 37-38).

In the 1980s, local elites and poor opportunists started to adopt a leading role and formed their own self-defence groups to fight the guerrillas (Civico, 2015: 38; Daly, 2016: 1)[14]. Due to their drug trafficking business and government support, they attained significant military and financial power (Hristov, 2010: 19). Additionally, the discourse framing paramilitaries as protectors of the state and its inhabitants legitimised their excessive use of violence and gross human rights violations.[15] In 1997, Carlos Castaño established the umbrella organisation AUC in an attempt to organise the multitude of paramilitary groups (Civico, 2015: 89).

Pushed by several internal and external developments, the Colombian government and AUC started peace talks in 2002. The resulting DDR process was launched in 2003 when Medellín's *Bloque Cacique Nutibara* (BCN) became the first paramilitary group to demobilise (Rozema, 2008: 442). Most paramilitaries received an amnesty[16] and Medellín's municipality created the organisation PyR to lead the local DDR programme. The reintegration process focused on various aspects such as education, work, psychosocial help, juridical support, reconciliation and reparation, improving community relations through social work and preventing recidivism.[17] Every ex-combatant's reintegration route was tailored to his or her specific needs and the benefits one received were linked to the person's fulfilment of diverse reintegration requirements.[18]

The ex-paramilitaries I interviewed entered a paramilitary group in their early or late adolescence and all participated in the reintegration programme in Medellín. Remarkably, although all interviewees emphasised how miserable their life was as a combatant, the majority maintained that they had preferred to continue in their paramilitary group when the demobilisation process

[14] Interview with Gustavo Duncan, expert 4, 23/03/2017.
[15] Interviews with former employee of the ACR, expert 2, 06/03/2017; Daniel Castaño, expert 3, 14/03/2017; Gustavo Duncan, expert 4, 23/03/2017; former police colonel, expert 9, 04/04/2017.
[16] Interview with former employee of the ACR, expert 2, 06/03/2017.
[17] Interviews with Jorge Gaviria, expert 7, 27/03/2017; Catalina Morales, expert 12, 11/04/2017.
[18] Interviews with former employee of the ACR, expert 2, 06/03/2017; Jorge Gaviria, expert 7, 27/03/2017; Paulo Serna, expert 10, 06/04/2017; Catalina Morales, expert 12, 11/04/2017.

started.[19] This was explained by their uncertainty about the future and distrust in the government.[20] Esteban explained that it was an extremely uncertain period in which they had no idea what would happen to them.[21] This uncertainty was further reinforced by the fact that the government had previously failed to comply with peace agreements, which left the paramilitaries distrustful of the government's intentions.[22] Interestingly, despite their initial concerns, all interviewees eventually demobilised.

The main reasons for the interviewees' decision to leave their old lives behind were the fact that their commanders ordered them to demobilise, their hope it would enable them to spend more time with their family, and the possibility to develop the kind of lifestyle they were wishing for. As Andrés explained: 'What I wanted while I was there [armed group] was to study. I wanted to get a good job, because that was my vision. I leave here and get a good job.'[23] Thus, the interviewees navigated their options in the sense that they were both pushed by their superiors to demobilise and personally imagined that demobilisation could guide them to their desired future position.

According to Terry and Abrams, making the decision to desist from a criminal lifestyle is a necessary step for behavioural change (2017: 5). Nonetheless, the road to a civilian lifestyle is long and Daniel Castaño - a Colombian academic specialised in paramilitarism - rightly pointed out that the factors explaining someone's decision to demobilise are different from the factors that clarify why ex-combatants stay on the civilian path.[24] The next section therefore focuses on the strategies ex-paramilitaries used to seize opportunities and navigate out of potentially harmful situations in order to transition to a civilian lifestyle.

'Salir adelante'

Navigating the Labour Market by Wisely Using their Identity

By now, all interviewees are working and half of them[25] managed to complete their studies while the other half[26] is still finishing their degree. The majority of the interviewees maintained that the PyR had an important role in providing them with opportunities to *salir adelante* (move forward).[27] However, some perceived the organisation as hindering their reintegration process as they had to fulfill PyR obligations during working hours, which made it hard to maintain their jobs. [28]

Although the PyR positively influenced the reintegration process of most interviewees, it is important to underscore their own creativity and social skills in entering and thriving on the

[19] Interviews with Santiago, ex-paramilitary 1, 05/04/2017; Diego, ex-paramilitary 3, 21/04/2017; Esteban, ex-paramilitary 6, 03/05/2017; Luis, ex-paramilitary 8, 10/05/2017; Jairo, ex-paramilitary 9, 11/05/2017.
[20] This finding is confirmed during my interview with Antonio García Fernández, expert 5, Medellín, 11/05/2017.
[21] Interview with Esteban, ex-paramilitary 6, 03/05/2017.
[22] Interview with Ricardo, ex-paramilitary 7, 04/05/2017.
[23] Interview with Andrés, ex-paramilitary 4, 23/04/2017.
[24] Interview with Daniel Castaño, expert 3, Medellín, 14/03/2017.
[25] Interviews with Santiago, ex-paramilitary 1, 05/04/2017; Felipe, ex-paramilitary 5, 26/04/2017; Esteban, ex-paramilitary 6, 03/05/2017; Luis, ex-paramilitary 8, 10/05/2017; Jairo, ex-paramilitary 9, 11/05/2017.
[26] Interviews with David, ex-paramilitary 2, 19/04/2017; Diego, ex-paramilitary 3, 21/04/2017; Andrés, ex-paramilitary 4, 23/04/2017; Ricardo, ex-paramilitary 7, 04/05/2017.
[27] Interviews with Santiago, ex-paramilitary 1, 27/03/2017; David, ex-paramilitary 2, 19/04/2017; Andrés, ex-paramilitary 4, 23/04/2017; Felipe, ex-paramilitary 5, 26/04/2017; Esteban, ex-paramilitary 6, 03/05/2017; Jairo, ex-paramilitary 9, 11/05/2017.
[28] Interviews with Diego, ex-paramilitary 3, 21/04/2017; Ricardo, ex-paramilitary 7, 04/05/2017; Luis, ex-paramilitary 8, 10/05/2017.

job market. The data revealed that the interviewees employed different strategies surrounding their identity to overcome the negative consequences of stigmatisation. Ex-combatants are still highly stigmatised in the Colombian society and it is argued that the population was not ready to receive them at the time of their demobilisation.[29] Interestingly, whereas the majority of the ex-paramilitaries were hiding their identity in order to prevent discrimination,[30] Esteban benefited from being direct and open about his past:

> 'When I arrive at a company the first thing I do is: "I'm demobilised since so many years and bla, bla." I tell them everything. [Then I ask them to] give me the opportunity to show them that I do have the skills to do whatever they need, to provide the service. You get to know the people and one company catapults you to the other.'[31]

Although some employers and colleagues of other interviewees were aware of their former involvement in an armed group, most ex-paramilitaries only revealed this part about themselves to the people closest to them. They preferred to maintain a low profile and deliberately chose with whom they shared this information. [32] Moreover, not only the people were deliberately chosen, what would exactly be disclosed about this past was carefully thought through as well. In Esteban's words: 'What happens is that there are things of the past that can be hidden and others that cannot. And this [the mere fact of participation in an armed group] is one of those things that cannot be hidden.'[33]

Thus, the ex-paramilitaries were able to integrate into the labour market by using their identity wisely and by detecting and acting upon opportunities that seemed beneficial on the long run. The interviewees used different routes to enter the job market: either through the PyR, their own social network, or a combination of the two. By moving smartly through their environment and by deliberately choosing which part of oneself should or should not be disclosed, they could seize opportunities that enabled them to move forward.

Dealing with Negative Influences

Importantly, while the ex-paramilitaries were shaping their new lives, they were simultaneously facing a constant flow of opportunities to return to their old lives.[34] Mainly because the reconfigured paramilitary groups retained strong information-gathering capabilities and could thus pro-

[29] Interviews with former employee of the ACR, expert 1, Bogotá, 06/03/2017; Antonio García Fernández, expert 5, Medellín, 11/05/2017.
[30] Interviews with Santiago, ex-paramilitary 1, 27/03/2017; David, ex-paramilitary 2, 19/04/2017; Andrés, ex-paramilitary 4, 23/04/2017; Ricardo, ex-paramilitary 7, 04/05/2017; Luis, ex-paramilitary 8, 10/05/2017.
[31] Interview with Esteban, ex-paramilitary 6, 03/05/2017.
[32] Interviews with Santiago, ex-paramilitary 1, 27/03/2017; David, ex-paramilitary 2, 19/04/2017; Andrés, ex-paramilitary 4, 23/04/2017; Esteban, ex-paramilitary 6, 03/05/2017; Ricardo, ex-paramilitary 7, 04/05/2017; Luis, ex-paramilitary 8, 10/05/2017.
[33] Interview with Esteban, ex-paramilitary 6, 03/05/2017.
[34] Interviews with Santiago, ex-paramilitary 1, 27/03/2017; David, ex-paramilitary 2, 19/04/2017; Andrés, ex-paramilitary 4, 23/04/2017; Felipe, ex-paramilitary 5, 26/04/2017; Esteban, ex-paramilitary 6, 03/05/2017; Ricardo, ex-paramilitary 7, 04/05/2017; Luis, ex-paramilitary 8, 10/05/2017; Jairo, ex-paramilitary 9, 11/05/2017; former employee of the ACR, expert 2, Bogotá, 06/03/2017; Daniel Castaño, expert 3, Medellín, 14/03/2017; Gustavo Duncan, expert 4, Medellín, 23/03/2017; Antonio García Fernández, expert 5, Medellín, 24/03/2017; Nico Tita, expert 6, Medellín, 26/03/2017; community leader of the neighbourhood *13 de Noviembre* in Medellín, expert 8, Medellín, 28/03/2017; former police colonel, expert 9, Medellín, 04/04/2017; Paulo Serna, expert 10, Medellín, 06/04/2017; Liduine Zumpolle, expert 11, Bogotá, 11/04/2017.

vide their commanders with accurate intelligence about the resolve and abilities of former fighters in the city (Daly, 2016: 4). According to Santiago, 'Armed groups are well-aware of people who know how to handle weapons, logistics, and all those kinds of things. […] So it is not at all strange that at some point they make me an offer for anything.'[35] These criminal opportunities had to be dealt with or avoided in order to advance their reintegration process. However, this was not always easy and especially in the first years after their demobilisation some important decisions had to be made so that they could remain in legality.[36] During the interviews, three strategies came to the fore that helped them to create a stable and motivating environment in which they could counter the negative influences and transition to a civilian lifestyle.

Role of the Family

The first strategy entailed the creation of closer ties with their family. Despite the reduced contact during their time in a paramilitary group, their family never lost importance. During the reintegration process the influence of their family further enlarged and significant family members functioned as main motivators to walk away from the bad influences. As David said: 'The family has always helped and influenced. With study and with work they have always […] given you an urge to *salir adelante*. To fight.'[37]

Additionally, the interviews revealed that fatherhood was an essential motivator to *salir adelante*. They wanted to be a good role model for their children, be present when they grow up, and work hard in order to provide them with a decent education.[38]

> Interviewer: 'You said that at the beginning of your demobilisation your daughter was born?'
> Esteban: 'Yes, that was something that came very close together. Before I didn't have that responsibility to have an obligation, do you understand? When you're in that life you only worry about drinking and consuming drugs. […] After you demobilise you change. I changed my life a lot and outside of that [armed group] came my first daughter, so that made me think in a very different way. […] That's why I started looking for work in something else.'[39]

This excerpt demonstrates that the birth of his daughter made Esteban more responsible and changed his mentality. Later in the interview, he guiltily smiled when he admitted that he impregnated an older woman when he was fifteen years old. Consequently, his first daughter was born when he was part of a paramilitary group. However, this event did not influence his life like the birth of his second daughter. This is in line with the timing principle of the life course theory, which holds that the same events or experiences affect people in different ways depending on when they occur (Elder et al., 2003: 12). Hence, this example shows that fatherhood had a decisive role in Esteban's transition to a civilian lifestyle, but only because the birth of his daughter occurred at the same time as his demobilisation.

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[35] Interview with Santiago, ex-paramilitary 1, 27/03/2017.
[36] Interviews with David, ex-paramilitary 2, 19/04/2017; Felipe, ex-paramilitary 5, 26/04/2017; Esteban, ex-paramilitary 6, 03/05/2017.
[37] Interview with David, ex-paramilitary 2, 19/04/2017.
[38] Interviews with David, ex-paramilitary 2, 19/04/2017; Diego, ex-paramilitary 3, 21/04/2017; Andrés, ex-paramilitary 4, 23/04/2017; Felipe, ex-paramilitary 5, 26/04/2017; Esteban, ex-paramilitary 6, 03/05/2017; Ricardo, ex-paramilitary 7, 04/05/2017; Luis, ex-paramilitary 8, 10/05/2017.
[39] Interview with Esteban, ex-paramilitary 6, 03/05/2017.

All interviewees mentioned that their families were the principal reason they did not return to an armed group. Remarkably, they portrayed family as 'the pillar'[40] everything is 'moving around.'[41] This indicates that they navigated the social world in a way that allowed their family to be the centre of their lives. Accordingly, during this process of forming a new lifestyle they constantly took into account which projects, environments and social contacts would benefit their family's future and well-being. Consequently, it can be concluded that strong family ties have been of significant importance for the interviewees to successfully reintegrate into society. Especially, their mothers, for whom they wanted peace of mind, and their own nuclear family were mentioned as main motivators to leave their past behind and look for new opportunities in life.

Persistent Ex-Combatant Contact

The second strategy entailed that they deliberately tried to stay away as far as possible from people who could have a negative influence on their achievements. For example, Andrés avoided phone calls from people who offered him criminal opportunities by changing his number as soon as someone got a hold of it.[42] Besides people, they also avoided places where there would be a chance of meeting new people who could have a bad influence. For example, Esteban avoided social events in his new neighbourhood since 'unfortunately, the first ones who seek friendships are the bandits.'[43] Consequently, all interviewees developed their own strategies to avoid people who want to convince them to return to an armed group.

Relatedly, the interviewees mentioned that they lost contact with most of their paramilitary comrades. The process of moving on and letting the others go was in general a slow and, sometimes, difficult.[44] Nevertheless, most interviewees maintained some sort of friendship with a select group of other ex-paramilitaries. Albeit some interviewees were closer with their former comrades than others, they all deliberately chose whom they allowed into their new lives.

> 'I have many friends who stayed after having lived through the whole process of jail and the armed group, true friends, who told me: 'I congratulate you, here we are, we can give you work, let's do this.' There are also others who looked for me and told me: 'Ricardo look, let's go again.' That's not a friend, I have real friends whom I met in the war and who came, visited and supported me and gave me a voice of encouragement. [...] I learned to select. What stayed with me from jail is that I regretted, that it served me and that I knew who the good and the bad were in my life. The bad ones I discarded, the good ones I strengthened and that's my environment.'[45]

Everyone who maintained close contact with other ex-paramilitaries emphasised that their friends were *saliendo adelante* as well. They mutually motivated each other and talked about the hardships they sometimes faced in their new lives.[46]

Thus, the interviews demonstrated that the ex-paramilitaries' contact with former combatants did not hinder their reintegration, which is in line with the work of Kaplan and Nussio

[40] Interview with Esteban, ex-paramilitary 6, 03/05/2017.
[41] Interviews with Santiago, ex-paramilitary 1, 27/03/2017; Felipe, ex-paramilitary 5, 26/04/2017.
[42] Interview with Andrés, ex-paramilitary 4, 23/04/2017.
[43] Interview with Esteban, ex-paramilitary 6, 03/05/2017.
[44] Interviews with David, ex-paramilitary 2, 19/04/2017; Esteban, ex-paramilitary 6, 03/05/2017.
[45] Interview with Ricardo, ex-paramilitary 7, 04/05/2017.
[46] Interviews with Santiago, ex-paramilitary 1, 27/03/2017; Diego, ex-paramilitary 3, 21/04/2017; Andrés, ex-paramilitary 4, 23/04/2017; Felipe, ex-paramilitary 5, 26/04/2017; Ricardo, ex-paramilitary 7, 04/05/2017; Luis, ex-paramilitary 8, 10/05/2017.

(2016), De Vries and Wiegink (2011), Wiegink (2015) and Zyck (2009). Contrary to other authors[47] who argued that the maintenance of ex-combatant networks leads to remobilisation, this research discovered that former comrades provided the interviewees with both positive and negative role models that helped them to move forward. On the one hand, several ex-paramilitaries stated that it was very inspirational for them to meet and maintain contact with people who successfully transitioned to a civilian lifestyle.[48] On the other hand, they heard stories about ex-paramilitaries who were returning to war and were immediately caught or shot. These negative role models showed them that the path of criminality would not be beneficial on the long run. [49] In the case of the interviewees, it can thus be concluded that persistent ex-combatant contact is not harming their reintegration efforts as long as they only keep in touch with the former comrades that decided to move forward as well. Maintaining contact with these other ex-paramilitaries even positively influenced their reintegration process in the sense that they felt inspired by them and learned from each other.

Role of the Neighbourhood

The last strategy most interviewees deemed crucial when advancing their new lifestyle was moving to a different neighbourhood. The collective demobilisation process took place in the same neighbourhood as where they were active as paramilitaries (Rozema, 2008: 450). However, the interviewees stressed that most paramilitaries looking for a fresh start moved to a different area after they had demobilised. They assessed which place was best to live and where they could enhance their chances to build a new life.[50] It was perceived as an essential step in breaking away from or 'knifing off'[51] their past.[52] According to David, it is almost impossible to move on if people stay in the same neighbourhood.[53] This realisation is described by Santiago: 'When I was thinking that I really wanted to demobilise the heart, the first thing I did was selling the weapons I had and moving from the area where I was.'[54]

This strategy is in line with Daly, Paler and Samii's (2014: 50) findings that reintegrating into the same area as where the combatants were active heightens the chance of recidivism. Nonetheless, two interviewees[55] managed to develop their new lifestyle in the neighbourhood where they were active as paramilitaries. This shows that although the last strategy was common among the interviewees, it was not a prerequisite if the interviewees could safely live in their old

[47] See for example: Daly, Paler & Samii, 'Retorno a la legalidad o reincidencia,' 49; Rozema, 'Urban DDR processes,' 449; Kaplan & Nussio, 'Explaining recidivism,' 5; United Nations, 'Operational guide,' 161; Utas, 'Bigmanity and network governance,' 19; Nussio & Howe 'What if the FARC Demobilizes?' 60; Bøås & Bjørkhaug, 'DDRed in Liberia,' 2.

[48] Interviews with David, ex-paramilitary 2, 19/04/2017; Felipe, ex-paramilitary 5, 26/04/2017; Ricardo, ex-paramilitary 7, 04/05/2017.

[49] Interviews with Diego, ex-paramilitary 3, 21/04/2017; Jairo, ex-paramilitary 9, 11/05/2017.

[50] Interviews with Santiago, ex-paramilitary 1, 27/03/2017; David, ex-paramilitary 2, 19/04/2017; Diego, ex-paramilitary 3, 21/04/2017; Andrés, ex-paramilitary 4, 23/04/2017; Esteban, ex-paramilitary 6, 03/05/2017; Ricardo, ex-paramilitary 7, 04/05/2017; Jairo, ex-paramilitary 9, 11/05/2017.

[51] This term is used in criminological theories and refers to the opportunities that help delinquents to break away from a wide range of contaminated past situations. Changing their neighbourhood is mentioned as a strategy of delinquents to knife off their past (Maruna and Roy 2007, 105, 107).

[52] Interviews with Santiago, ex-paramilitary 1, 27/03/2017; David, ex-paramilitary 2, 19/04/2017; Esteban, ex-paramilitary 6, 03/05/2017; Jairo, ex-paramilitary 9, 11/05/2017.

[53] Interview with David, ex-paramilitary 2, 19/04/2017.

[54] Interview with Santiago, ex-paramilitary 1, 27/03/2017.

[55] Interviews with Felipe, ex-paramilitary 5, 26/04/2017; Luis, ex-paramilitary 8, 10/05/2017.

neighbourhood, ended their involvement in former power structures and reconfigured their relationships with the neighbours.

Interestingly, most interviewees maintained a low profile in their neighbourhood and hid their identity from their neighbours in order be accepted.[56] Ricardo clarifies that only his close social network knows who he was while he maintains a different profile for others.

> 'No one knows who I was […] in order to take care of yourself in your environment. […] I will make my family, my children vulnerable as soon as they are going to point them out, no, I'm a normal citizen. My social circle is this [at his organisation] and everyone knows who we were or who I was.'[57]

For the people who remained in the same neighbourhood, the relation with the neighbours changed for the better. Felipe noticed that they no longer respected him because of his power position but because of his solidarity and social work in the neighbourhood.[58] Although the majority said they do not have a very close relationship with their neighbours,[59] they also mentioned that they have never felt so involved in their living environment before.[60] Due to their participation in social work and other activities in the neighbourhood, they became part of society.[61] This might have reinforced their feeling of not wanting to hurt the society anymore, which was mentioned by some as a reason to avoid returning to their old lives.[62] The interviews thus confirm the consensus in the literature that acceptation by one's neighbours and participation in the community supports reintegration.

In the three strategies discussed above, personal motivation and deliberate, daily decisions were crucial for the interviewees to successfully reintegrate. The importance of personal conviction was emphasised by Andrés.

> 'I think you have to handle it yourself […] There are many people, friends you had in that past, who say 'let's go and do this'. Then you have to make your own decisions. I'm not going to be doing this, I'm going to dedicate myself to the right life. […] You think about your future and the future of your family.'[63]

The interviewees' personal motivation and active demeanour were reinforced by their family, close friends, the PyR and, more importantly, God. All ex-paramilitaries were very religious and some mentioned God as an important influence to keep them on the civilian path. Remarkably, over the years the interviewees became more and more embedded in society and started to enjoy

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[56] Interviews with Santiago, ex-paramilitary 1, 27/03/2017; David, ex-paramilitary 2, 19/04/2017; Andrès, ex-paramilitary 4, 23/04/2017; Esteban, ex-paramilitary 6, 03/05/2017; Ricardo, ex-paramilitary 7, 04/05/2017; Luis, ex-paramilitary 8, 10/05/2017.
[57] Interview with Ricardo, ex-paramilitary 7, 04/05/2017.
[58] Interviews with Felipe, ex-paramilitary 5, 26/04/2017.
[59] Interviews with Santiago, ex-paramilitary 1, 27/03/2017; Diego, ex-paramilitary 3, 21/04/2017; Andrès, ex-paramilitary 4, 23/04/2017; Esteban, ex-paramilitary 6, 03/05/2017; Ricardo, ex-paramilitary 7, 04/05/2017; Jairo, ex-paramilitary 9, 11/05/2017.
[60] Interviews with Santiago, ex-paramilitary 1, 27/03/2017; David, ex-paramilitary 2, 19/04/2017; Andrès, ex-paramilitary 4, 23/04/2017; Felipe, ex-paramilitary 5, 26/04/2017.
[61] Interviews with Santiago, ex-paramilitary 1, 27/03/2017; David, ex-paramilitary 2, 19/04/2017; Felipe, ex-paramilitary 5, 26/04/2017; Ricardo, ex-paramilitary 7, 04/05/2017.
[62] Interviews with Santiago, ex-paramilitary 1, 27/03/2017; Diego, ex-paramilitary 3, 21/04/2017; Esteban, ex-paramilitary 6, 03/05/2017; Ricardo, ex-paramilitary 7, 04/05/2017; Jairo, ex-paramilitary 9, 11/05/2017.
[63] Interview with Andrés, ex-paramilitary 4, 23/04/2017.

their civilian lifestyle. This brings us to the final factor explaining how people could transition to a civilian lifestyle.

The Time Effect

A final, long-term factor that explains how ex-paramilitaries could stay in legality is that over time returning to an armed group lost its attractiveness. After they had completed the DDR programme, finished their study and found a job, returning to an armed group was seen as going backwards. It was perceived as an illogical move in which they would throw everything away they had gained over the years.[64]

> 'There are "tempting" offers, but no, […] they are not so good. I don't want to be outside of the law, only move in legality. […] What was, was and after everything that I have advanced to go back? That's going backwards. […] No, we liberated ourselves from many things.'[65]

Unconsciously, they all created a distance between their current life and their former one in the armed group. The interviews revealed that the ex-paramilitaries considered their demobilisation as a rupture between their old and new life.[66] Shadd Maruna (2001) discovered that people who successfully left their criminal past behind had to disassociate themselves from their delinquent, in this case paramilitary, identities and actively adopt new ones. In the interviewees' new lives they no longer saw themselves as paramilitaries, but as normal citizens, fathers and husbands. This indicates why over time it was seen as illogical to re-join an armed group: it no longer suited their idea about themselves and ideal life course.

The interviews showed that the ex-paramilitaries talked about their demobilisation and subsequent new life in terms of redemption. They were freed from their confining, stressful circumstances and were able to achieve *tranquilidad* (inner peace or calmness) for themselves and their families. In addition to their mental freedom, they also described an increased physical freedom. The ex-paramilitaries' freedom of movement was highly restricted while they were in an armed group. However, after their demobilisation they were 'able to move' and pass through different areas without being afraid.[67] This freedom of movement was highly valued and some stated that they would never want 'to lock' themselves in an armed group again.[68]

The interviewees were not only enabled to move in the literal sense of the word, their possibilities to move as social navigators were enhanced as well. In the armed group they had to follow orders from their commanders,[69] but the reintegration process allowed the ex-paramilitaries to increasingly shape their own life course. They learned how to be responsible and

[64] Interviews with Santiago, ex-paramilitary 1, 27/03/2017; Felipe, ex-paramilitary 5, 26/04/2017; Esteban, ex-paramilitary 6, 03/05/2017; Ricardo, ex-paramilitary 7, 04/05/2017; Jairo, ex-paramilitary 9, 11/05/2017.
[65] Interview with Felipe, ex-paramilitary 5, 26/04/2017.
[66] Interviews with Santiago, ex-paramilitary 1, 27/03/2017; David, ex-paramilitary 2, 19/04/2017; Diego, ex-paramilitary 3, 21/04/2017; Andrés, ex-paramilitary 4, 23/04/2017; Felipe, ex-paramilitary 5, 26/04/2017; Esteban, ex-paramilitary 6, 03/05/2017; Ricardo, ex-paramilitary 7, 04/05/2017; Luis, ex-paramilitary 8, 10/05/2017; Jairo, ex-paramilitary 9, 11/05/2017.
[67] Interviews with Andrés, ex-paramilitary 4, 23/04/2017; Esteban, ex-paramilitary 6, 03/05/2017; Luis, ex-paramilitary 8, 10/05/2017; Jairo, ex-paramilitary 9, 11/05/2017.
[68] Interviews with David, ex-paramilitary 2, 19/04/2017; Luis, ex-paramilitary 8, 10/05/2017.
[69] Interviews with Santiago, ex-paramilitary 1, 27/03/2017 & 05/04/2017; Felipe, ex-paramilitary 5, 26/04/2017.

create long-term plans.[70] Resembling the other interviewees, Santiago described that in the armed group their perspective was not focused on the future: 'When you're in the armed groups you become a person who only lives day-by-day and has no future. You're ending yourself in your thoughts, you are curtailing the idea of a future.'[71] Consequently, with help from mainly the reintegration programme and their family, the interviewees changed their mentality and visualised their life in the long run.

In sum, although the Colombian post-demobilisation period has to a certain extent been dominated by uncontrollable factors, persistent criminal opportunities, and stigma that influenced their opportunities, the interviewees managed to incorporate these obstacles into their long-term strategies and chose routes that had the potential for a better future.[72] Their newly developed strategies were tactfully employed on a day-to-day basis by constantly making deliberate micro-level decisions that facilitated their transition to a civilian lifestyle. Their perception of their own identities, abilities, and future opportunities gradually changed and over time they became too embedded in society to benefit from returning to an armed group.

Conclusion

This research aimed to understand how ex-combatants managed to reintegrate into an environment where they faced continuous approaches to re-join an armed group. Although the sample of ex-paramilitaries is too small to provide conclusive answers, it does contribute insights into the specific strategies used by ex-combatants when navigating their post-demobilisation environment. Based on the reintegration literature, it was hypothesised that strong family ties, and acceptance by and involvement in one's neighbourhood positively contribute to ex-combatant reintegration, whereas persistent contact with ex-combatants is only supportive if they mutually reinforce other to stay on the civilian path.

It was indeed found that all interviewees had a strong relationship with at least one family member while they were in the armed group and further strengthened their family ties during the reintegration process. Due to the ex-paramilitaries' more important role in their family life, they became increasingly attached to their family members and responsible in taking care of them. This responsibility guided their post-demobilisation life and was paramount in their decision to remain in legality. The second strategy focussed on avoiding people - and the places where they usually gather - who could have a negative influence on their achievements. Regarding other ex-combatants, this meant that people who tried to convince them to re-join an armed group were avoided, whereas ex-combatants who were also moving forward motivated them to work hard and overcome difficulties in the reintegration process. The last strategy was to move to a different neighbourhood in order to break away from their old habits and to redirect their lives. The majority felt accepted by their neighbours and embedded in society due to their community participation, which further enhanced their reintegration process. The three elements described in

[70] Interviews with Santiago, ex-paramilitary 1, 27/03/2017; David, ex-paramilitary 2, 19/04/2017; Diego, ex-paramilitary 3, 21/04/2017; Andrés, ex-paramilitary 4, 23/04/2017; Felipe, ex-paramilitary 5, 26/04/2017; Esteban, ex-paramilitary 6, 03/05/2017; Luis, ex-paramilitary 8, 10/05/2017; Jairo, ex-paramilitary 9, 11/05/2017.
[71] Interview with Santiago, ex-paramilitary 1, 27/03/2017.
[72] Interviews with Santiago, ex-paramilitary 1, 27/03/2017; David, ex-paramilitary 2, 19/04/2017; Diego, ex-paramilitary 3, 21/04/2017; Andrés, ex-paramilitary 4, 23/04/2017; Felipe, ex-paramilitary 5, 26/04/2017; Esteban, ex-paramilitary 6, 03/05/2017; Ricardo, ex-paramilitary 7, 04/05/2017; Luis, ex-paramilitary 8, 10/05/2017; Jairo, ex-paramilitary 9, 11/05/2017; former employee of the ACR, expert 2, 06/03/2017; Antonio García Fernández, expert 5, 24/03/2017 & 11/05/2017.

the literature as instrumental for reintegration processes thus resemble the different strategies used by the interviewees. The hypothesis is thereby accepted.

Interestingly, through the inductive research method, other strategies and factors that explain how the interviewees could reintegrate into Medellín were discovered as well. First of all, the interviewees adopted specific strategies regarding their identity as *desmovilizado*. In order to integrate into the labour market, the interviewees carefully chose which part of themselves and their past they disclosed to their employer in order to prevent negative consequences of stigmatisation. Additionally, most interviewees felt they would only be accepted by their community members, and thus safely live in their neighbourhood, if they would hide their past. It is important to bear in mind that community members' acceptance of the return of combatants does not automatically equal the offering of full, legitimate participation in society (Veale and Stavrou, 2007: 289). This tendency was also observable in Medellín, where people generally tolerated the reintegration of ex-paramilitaries but were, for example, reluctant to hire them for jobs. Accordingly, the interviewees smartly navigated this environment by deliberately choosing to whom and which specific parts of themselves could be revealed.

Furthermore, the passing of time was an important factor to complete the transition to a civilian lifestyle. After the interviewees had benefitted from the reintegration programme, changed their perception about themselves and created plans for the future, it was seen as illogical to give up what they had achieved and to return to their confined lives in an armed group. They all felt liberated and referred to their reintegration in terms of redemption. This points at the importance of time to complete the phase of secondary desistance, which is defined as the gradual shift from simply showing non-offending behaviour to the assumption of the role and identity of a 'changed person' (Maruna et al., 2004: 274).

Corresponding to Terry and Abrams's research (2017: 746), this study illustrated how the process of desistance from violence is a deliberate thought-exercise. Every day the interviewees made small choices concerning people, places and activities that would help them to pursue their civilian lifestyle. To further enhance our understanding of this process, future research could provide a unique contribution by tracking ex-combatant behaviour while it is unfolding. Due to the retrospective nature of this research, it was only possible to document ex-paramilitaries' representation of their reintegration process. However, following ex-combatants from the start of their transition to a civilian lifestyle could provide a greater insight into the development of reintegration strategies.

Besides the retrospective nature and small sample, this research was also limited by the fact that the agencies selected the ex-combatants I could interview. It is likely that they chose the most successful participants who could demonstrate how well the programme had worked out. Although this poses challenges for the generalisation of the results, the sample was useful for this specific research since its objective was to understand how particular individuals managed to reintegrate while facing critical challenges. For future research it would however be relevant to look into reintegration strategies used by a larger number of ex-combatants at different locations in order to gain a more systematic insight into this phenomenon.

Finally, conducting large comparative case studies answering why some ex-combatants relapse into their old lives while others remain in legality could provide useful insights for policymakers involved with developing reintegration programmes. It would be particularly relevant to investigate how ex-combatants' post-demobilisation strategies and engagement with their close social network differed. Additionally, further research can focus on the first years after the

demobilisation process, since the interviewees indicated that this time was specifically paramount to establishing a new lifestyle. In this period, guidance provided by the reintegration programme as well as their close social network appeared to be crucial. The results of this research are thus in line with Daly's (2016: 251) statement that ex-combatants are not acting independently of their social environment. Rather, the interviewees actively navigated their social network and environment in order to advance their civilian trajectory and gradually disentangle themselves from the armed groups they once belonged to.

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A Case for the Hybrid Mediator - Towards a New Strategy of Resolution in Intractable Conflicts: The Philippines Case

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Author Biography

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Abstract

This paper makes a case for the hybrid mediator as a tool of conflict resolution in intractable conflicts. A hybrid mediator is a multi-party mediation mechanism, comprising both state and non-state actors who work together as a group of individuals. I outline a causal mechanism, arguing that a hybrid mediator has certain characteristics, namely leverage, impartiality, and expertise, which make it more effective than a traditional single-party mediator at employing a facilitative strategy, needed for the resolution of intractable conflict. I will perform a comparative analysis of two distinct stages of attempted mediation in the GPH-MILF peace process in the Philippines, where there is a variation on the independent variable, mediator identity. I conclude with the idea that although there were many other factors contributing to the successful signing of the peace agreement in the Philippines, the hybrid mediator was particularly skilled at facilitative or 'pure' mediation, which helped to obtain success in the negotiations.

Introduction

In 2014 the raging conflicts in the Middle East provoked the largest spike in battle-related deaths since 1994 (Melander, Petterson & Themnér, 2016). The mainstream media evoked a pessimistic image of a world plagued with more violent conflict than ever before. However, in the same year, a landmark peace agreement was signed in the Philippines that signaled hope in a region beleaguered by intractable conflict. The agreement put an end to a 40-year civil war in Mindanao, a southern region of the Philippines, a territorial and national self-determination dispute between the Moros (Muslim Filipinos) and the government of the Philippines (GPH).

Since the 1960s, opposition to the Filipino government has been highly factionalised, ranging from communist insurgencies to Moro groups vying for an autonomous homeland. The Moro National Liberation Front (MNLF) was one of these groups, a separatist insurgent group formed in the 1970s in response to escalating tensions between Christians and Moros in the Philippines. These tensions culminated in the Jabidah massacre of Moro soldiers in Sabah, Malaysia, in March 1986, which sparked the mobilisation of the MNLF (Franco, 2013: 216). A decade later, the final peace agreement was reached between the GPH and the MNLF in 1996, but a splinter group, the Moro Islamic Liberation Front (MILF), deemed the agreement to be an unacceptable compromise on the key demands for Moro autonomy; thus, continued their insurgency.

A new set of negotiations between the MILF and the GPH began in 1997 and 17 years later these long peace talks culminated in the signing of the Comprehensive Agreement of the Bangsamoro (CAB) on 27th March 2014. Miriam Coronel-Ferrer, the chief negotiator for the GPH, lauded the CAB as signifying 'the justness and legitimacy of the Bangsamoro people, their aspiration for meaningful autonomy through a democratic process, […] [and] the aim to end the fighting between the government and the MILF' (Sabillo, 2014). The processes leading to the GPH-MILF agreement, which will be the focus of this paper, offer a model for negotiations for other ongoing disputes in the Philippines and other intractable conflict in the region. Most importantly, it proves that negotiations can be successful if there are enough political will and outsider support for the process (Vatikiotis, 2014).

Cases of intractable conflicts, such as the one presented in the Philippines, are tough to manage due to the lack of willingness of the disputing parties to consider any options other than violence (Crocker, Hampson & Aall, 2004). They are typically long-standing conflicts with numerous fatalities that can remain unresolved due to the lack of will or help from the international community (ibid.: 7). The puzzle is: why did the GPH-MILF reach a comprehensive peace agreement when the odds were stacked against its success? A multitude of factors allowed for the signing of the CAB in 2014, including the election of a sympathetic President and the renewed political will of the MILF. Furthermore, the prolongation of the peace process in Mindanao allowed for robust and evolutionary third-party involvement (Rood, 2016: 64), which responded quickly to challenges as they arose. Therefore, when the peace process broke down in 2008, the International Contact Group (ICG)[1] was formed to support the process. The ICG was the first ever hybrid mediator, consisting of both state and non-state actors, and supported the Malaysian facilitator in mediating the dispute (Conciliation Resources, 2013). Though clearly not the only factor contributing to the signing of the CAB, the creation of this unique mediation structure brought about a marked shift in negotiations and helped drive the process toward success. It is important to understand the factors contributing to the success of this mediation attempt to understand the best way to conduct effective negotiations in intractable conflicts going forward.

This paper makes a case for the hybrid mediator, a multi-party mediation mechanism, comprising both state and non-state actors who work together as a group of individuals. To make this case, I will identify the factors which contribute to the outcome of a mediation attempt and analyse whether these factors are dependent on the conflict context. I propose a theory that claims a hybrid mediator will be more successful at mediating intractable conflicts than traditional mediators. This theory addresses the gulf between the real-life occurrence of hybrid mediation (as seen in the Mindanao peace process) and the lack of theoretical literature on its effectiveness. The hypothesis is derived from earlier quantitative empirical research, which tests whether mediator identity and characteristics affect the outcome of a mediation attempt (see Bercovitch & Houston, 1993). I outline a causal mechanism linking mediator identity to mediation strategy and in turn to success in intractable conflicts. That is, a hybrid mediator has certain characteristics, namely leverage, impartiality, and expertise, which make it more effective at employing a facilitative strategy than traditional mediators. Moreover, previous experience and literature support the notion that less active strategies, such as facilitation are key to mediating intractable conflicts. To

[1] The ICG was the first ever hybrid mediator combining both state and non-state actors: the UK, Japan, Turkey, Saudi Arabia, Muhammadiyah, Conciliation Resources, the Asia Foundation and the Centre for Humanitarian Dialogue (Conciliation Resources, 2013). Each of the eight members worked together as a single entity alongside Malaysia to facilitate negotiations.

test the observable implications of this hypothesis I will use the 'method of difference' set out by Mill (1973) to compare two distinct stages of attempted mediation in the GPH-MILF peace process where there is a variation on the independent variable, mediator identity. The first phase was mediated by a single-party actor, and the second, by a hybrid mediator. To compare these cases, I will analyse interviews I have conducted with key players from the peace process to triangulate secondary academic and journalistic sources to see whether we can observe the hypothesised causal mechanism in the chosen case studies.

Defining Mediation

Peace negotiations must navigate sensitive issues, such as power-sharing arrangements, institutional reform, and transitional justice. This is difficult for disputing parties to decide and implement alone, due to the large number of compromises that must be made and the resources that must be mobilised, so that communities can live side-by-side in a post-conflict setting (Licklider, 1995). To create and shape the power-sharing institutions included in peace agreements, which is often seen as a necessary precondition to sustainable peace in deeply divided societies, parties often enlist the help of mediators. Mediation can be very costly for the disputing parties, as they must relinquish control of the process and make compromises on their demands that they would not have previously made.

This paper will focus on mediation in civil wars, particularly intractable civil conflicts since these are more difficult to solve through negotiations alone, and thus provide a more fertile ground for mediation attempts (Gartner, 2012: 72). Mediation is a way for disputing parties in civil wars to overcome information barriers and provide a credible security guarantee to ensure negotiations go ahead and agreements are enforced (see Beardsley et al., 2006; Walter, 1997). This is thought to end the misinterpretation of actions and miscommunication between adversaries, allowing them to come to an agreement and overcome the 'ethnic security dilemma' (Sisk, 2013). In summary, the functions of a mediator are to provide possible exit options, overcome information asymmetries and to make sure disputing parties do not lose face, whilst guiding them to make compromises (Gurses, Rost & McLeod, 2008). International conflict mediation can encompass a range of activities, and thus is defined in various ways, but for the purpose of this paper I will use a widely accepted definition of mediation provided by Bercovitch, Anagnoson, and Wille (1991: 8):

> 'A process of conflict management where disputants seek the assistance of, or accept an offer of help from, an individual, group, state, or organisation to settle their conflict or resolve their differences without resorting to physical force or invoking the authority of law.'

Since World War II, the frequency of third-party conflict management has increased rapidly (Gartner, 2012: 72) with mediation being the most common method, comprising 80% of all third-party activity (Bercovitch & Houston, 1996: 18). However, mediation does not have the best track record, as only 7.8% of mediation attempts have ended in full settlements, while 55% have been completely unsuccessful (ibid.: 19). Mediation as a form of conflict management has received considerable scholarly attention with the majority of research focusing on how to improve this poor success rate. The literature addresses the conditions under which mediation is most likely to be successful in reaching a peace settlement. More specifically, it considers *if* and

how contextual variables, such as the characteristics of disputes, the disputing parties and the mediators themselves, correlate with a successful mediation attempt.

Mediation Success

Kleiboer (1996: 361) commented that 'the issue of assessing outcomes of international conflict management is a tricky one'; even now, there is no definitive answer on how to measure mediation success. In the International Conflict Management dataset, success is defined as reaching a cease-fire, partial or full settlement (Bercovitch & Fretter, 2007). Other scholars have refuted this as a robust measure of success, arguing that *durability* of peace must be considered if we are to truly understand the utility of international mediation (Gurses, Rost & McLeod, 2008). It has been proven that mediated civil war settlements are less durable than negotiated settlements in civil wars (Gartner, 2012: 80). This, however, may be due to a selection bias rather than mediator ineffectiveness, since mediators are only invited to help in the most difficult cases of conflict resolution, hence the low rate of success (Bercovitch & Gartner, 2006; Gurses, Rost & McLeod, 2008; Svensson, 2009).

Many scholars believe listing the conditions needed for successful mediation to be futile, due to the contextual idiosyncrasies of each case (Meyer, 1960; Simkin, 1971). It is understood that mediation is 'universal but not a uniformly applicable process' (Bercovitch & Gartner, 2006: 332). Therefore, Bercovitch and his peers have developed a contingency model that assesses the impact of a range of variables on mediation success. These factors have been categorised into several context variables including nature of the dispute, nature of the disputing parties, mediator identity; and a process variable namely mediator strategy (Bercovitch, Anagnoson & Wille, 1991). I will discuss each of these variables, outlining the current wisdom and debates surrounding the factors more amenable for success in cases of mediating

Nature of the Dispute

Firstly, it is agreed that 'the success or failure of mediation is largely determined by the nature of the dispute' (Ott, 1972: 597). The nature of the dispute can be broken down into conflict duration and intensity (Kleiboer, 1996: 362). An empirical study found that mediation was most successful when initiated between 12 and 36 months into the conflict (Bercovitch, Anagnoson & Wille, 1991: 31). Other analysts, such as Zartman and DeSoto (2010), look at conflicts in terms of phases, identifying moments that are ripe for mediation. They argue that mediation is most likely to succeed when there is a 'mutually hurting stalemate' (MHS), often (but not always) marked by a past, impending or narrowly avoided catastrophe (Zartman, 2001: 8). The catastrophe can act as a deadline or warning sign that pain and loss could sharply increase if something is not done to stop it (ibid.). An MHS can also occur when the parties' bilateral negotiations have reached an impasse that the power balance begins to even out, or any time the parties see the cost of mediation as less than the cost of continued fighting (see also Zartman, 1983; 1985). The intensity of the dispute is closely related to this and scholars, such as Jackson (1952) and Young (1967), argue that the greater the intensity of the dispute the more likely the parties are to accept mediation. To refute this, a study carried out by Bercovitch and Houston (1996: 24) found that only 39% of mediation attempts had any success in high-intensity conflicts (10,000+ fatalities), compared to 64% in low-intensity conflicts (100-500 fatalities).

Nature of the Disputants

The second context variable is the nature of disputants, within which the identities of and the relationship between the disputing parties are examined. The regime-type of the disputing parties seems to have little bearing on the outcome of the mediation attempt (Bercovitch & Houston, 1996: 20). Young (1967) suggests, however, that the smaller the power discrepancy between the two disputing parties, the more effective a mediation attempt will be.

Mediator Identity

The last context variable is mediator identity, which has been particularly contentious in the academic research. Princen (1992: 3) describes mediators as 'third parties who intercede the purpose of influencing or facilitating the settlement of a dispute but who do not impose a solution.' This definition supports Zartman and Touval's (1985) theory that skilled mediators are those that can bridge the gap between a disinterested facilitator and an interested manipulator. That is to say, a mediator must be committed to the conflict management effort without attempting to manipulate the situation for their own gain (Melin, 2014). Bercovitch and Gartner (2006) describe mediation as a way of 'softening up' parties and promoting diplomacy, and as such it is instrumental in reaching peace agreements.

Mediators can range from individuals, states, non-governmental organisations (NGOs), international organisations, regional organisations to any combination of these actors (DeRouen, Bercovitch & Pospieszna, 2011: 6). The United Nations and strong-state actors are the most common mediators in civil conflicts, but more recently NGOs have begun to play an active role in mediation (ibid.). Certain qualities are commonly cited as being essential, such as 'skill, energy, effort, credibility, confidence, knowledge, authority, originality of ideas, rapport, intelligence and a sense of humour', skills that are generally seen as important in the world of business or politics (Bercovitch & Houston, 1993).

The two most disputed qualities are power and impartiality (Kydd, 2003; Svensson, 2009). It is often argued that a mediator must be impartial to gain the confidence of both parties and be accepted (Northedge & Donelan, 1971; Young, 1967). On the other hand, many recent studies have found that strong mediators are often seen as more desirable, as they possess qualities such as international weight and leverage that are viewed as more useful than neutrality if the aim is to negotiate a positive outcome and force compromise between conflicting parties (Zartman & Touval, 1985). Strong mediators are not always major states or international organisations; indeed, states within the same region or regional organisations can be more suited to strong mediation as they share common interests with the parties and hold regional leverage (Bercovitch & Houston, 1993: 302). Furthermore, studies show that strong mediators have more leverage if they are biased toward one of the disputants. Svensson (2007) contends that mediators who are biased towards the government side may be preferable, as they provide a chance for the rebel-side to prove their trustworthiness by accepting a mediator who may not necessarily have the same interests. However, elsewhere Svensson (2009) finds that mediators biased towards the weaker side, often the rebel side, are more successful at providing security guarantees and increase the likelihood of political power-sharing agreements. No matter which side the mediators prefer, biased mediators' efforts seem more credible because they have a larger stake in the negotiation, thus seem more committed to the process (Kydd, 2003; Melin, 2014). Kydd (2003) finds that biased mediators are necessary for the information sharing process of bargaining, as the disputing parties need to believe the mediator is telling the truth and is credible.

Mediator Strategy

Finally, we look to mediator strategy, which is often characterised on a scale from passive to active (Zartman & Touval, 1985). In most studies, analysts create three levels of strategic engagement: communication and facilitation, procedural, and directive strategies (Bercovitch, Anagnoson & Wille, 1991). The widely accepted theory is that active and directive strategies are more likely to result in a successful mediation attempt (ibid.). In a more nuanced study, Beardsley et al. (2006) found that a manipulative strategy was the most successful at reaching an agreement, as it could structure the costs of the conflict by imposing sanctions or using similar methods. However, they find that the most durable agreements are the ones that are mediator with a more 'hands-off' approach, such as facilitation (ibid.).

Theoretical Framework: Mediating Intractable Conflicts

The contingency model set out above posits that the outcome of mediation is a logical result of context and process variables (Bercovitch & Houston, 1993: 299). This model considers how the nature of the dispute and disputing parties affects the type of mediator that is attracted; how the type of mediator influences the strategy used; and how this strategy impacts the outcome of the mediation attempt (Bercovitch & Houston, 1996: 15). The empirical research undertaken by Bercovitch et al. shows that an active mediator behaviour employing a directive strategy will be most effective at producing a successful mediation attempt in the contexts tested (Bercovitch, Anagnoson & Wille, 1991: 16). Indeed, in the sample tested, manipulative mediators who influenced the content of the process by providing incentives and ultimatums were more successful than neutral mediators at reaching a settlement (Bercovitch & Gartner, 2006: 339). Furthermore, high-ranking officials from major states were also shown to have a better chance at success, as they could provide prestige, leverage (ibid.) and the resources necessary to carry out a directive strategy (Bercovitch, Anagnoson & Wille, 1991: 15).

These results, from the studies above, were derived from cases where international mediation had already been accepted by parties; as such, there may be a sample bias. Clayton and Gleditsch recognise that 'most research on mediation so far has exclusively evaluated hypotheses on mediation on observed (in-sample) data, and not considered to what extent existing research provides us with a basis for predicting the likelihood or outcome of mediation out-of-sample' (2014: 266). Therefore, these results from Bercovitch et al., showing a strong manipulative mediator as being the most successful, are only applicable to certain conflict contexts, those where mediation is most frequently accepted and most likely to be successful. The premise of the contingency model, however, is that the type of mediator and strategy depends entirely on the context in which the mediation is taking place, which is why other studies by scholars, such as Beardsley and Svensson, using a broader range of cases (including non-mediation cases for observation) have yielded different results. Therefore, in this study I wish to understand which type of mediator and mediation strategy will be most successful in some of hardest cases for conflict resolution, namely intractable conflicts.

Intractable conflicts, characterised by enduring and deep-rooted rivalries, are usually deemed too complex to solve; thus, the international community tends to avoid them and 'let them burn' (Crocker, Hampson & Aall, 2004). For example, Asia comprises a high proportion of the world's low-intensity warring dyads (usually part of a long-standing conflict) but sees very low levels of third-party engagement (Möller et al., 2007: 375). Even though it is not looked upon favourably by disputing parties in intractable conflicts, mediation is often the only viable solu-

tion because the parties' views are so entrenched that they are unwilling to compromise without the help of a third-party (ibid.). Thinking of some of the world's longest standing conflicts, such as Israel-Palestine, Kashmir, and Colombia, it is hard to imagine these conflicts coming to an end without the help of a third-party. This asymmetry in the literature on mediation, favouring short and intense conflicts over intractable ones, is something that must be addressed to better understand how to tame the intractable conflicts that pose a threat to regional stability and global security (Crocker, Hampson & Aall, 2005).

Intractable conflicts are often the most difficult cases for mediation, as they are characterised by durability and polarisation of warring parties. In these conflicts, the nature of the dispute and disputants do not provide the easiest cases to resolve. They are protracted by nature, lasting over several decades, and can be either active or abeyant with regular flare-ups of fighting (Crocker Hampson & Aall, 2004; 2005). Both types feature a tolerable stalemate or stasis, meaning they rarely have ripe moments amenable to mediation (ibid.). There is no MHS, and thus the political costs associated with continued fighting are not perceived to be any higher than the costs of mediation. Instead, there is a stable, soft, self-serving stalemate that is often deemed preferable to any solutions (Zartman, 2005). This is because the deep-rooted, 'enduring rivalries' that feature in intractable conflicts are often grounded in territorial or identity claims, these preferences are often asymmetric, polarised and intransigent (Greig & Diehl, 2012: 186). Moreover, trust between parties in these conflicts can be extremely low, especially in cases of active conflict or broken ceasefire. Therefore, credible security guarantees provided by third-party mediators are necessary to regain confidence in negotiations and coerce parties into compromise. In cases of intractability, in which the nature of dispute and disputants are not the most amenable to negotiation, what type of mediator strategy and identity will work best?

Mediator Strategy

Directive strategies are usually the most popular and successful mediation strategies for bringing about agreements, but are they appropriate for intractable conflicts? Mediation is deemed to be particularly costly in intractable conflicts, since they are typically fought over valuable commodities, such as identity or territory. Compromises in the form of autonomy, secession or power-sharing must be navigated sensitively; therefore, a mediator imposing a solution on the conflict may serve to antagonise the parties and polarise them further (Bercovitch, 2005: 116). Intractable conflicts will need a different approach at the lower end of the intervention scale to see a comprehensive peace agreement (ibid.). Consequently, it is necessary to have a mediator that can tailor the process to the parties' needs and employ a communicative and facilitative strategy. This type of strategy, in which the mediator shows no preference for the outcome and does not exercise power, has been labeled 'pure' mediation (Zartman & Touval, 1985). Tactics for employing a communicative and facilitative strategy of mediation include clarifying the situation, building a rapport with the parties, providing information and avoiding taking sides (Bercovitch, 2007: 177). To perform this role a mediator must be tactful, empathetic and able to gain the trust of the parties so that they can help when the process reaches crisis point. They must also be innovative to come up with solutions in times of deadlock. We must, therefore, investigate what type of mediators would be an appropriate mediator for intractable conflicts.

Mediator Identity

Mediators are often categorised as being either strong or weak, with states (or groups of states in international or regional organisations) often being classified as strong mediators and non-state actors as weak (Kiel, 2014). These classifications are dependent on ideas of power, resource, and leverage that the mediator can utilise in negotiations. Of course, this a rather simplistic generalisation of state and non-state actors, with some smaller state mediators being weak in terms of power and resources (such as Norway in conflict resolution processes in Israel-Palestine and Sri Lanka) and some larger NGOs having huge amounts of political capital and leverage on the international stage.

Mediators are usually accepted and successful when they have the leverage to produce the desired outcome; thus, global or regional powers who have resources and weight to provide incentives and punishments are usually the most desirable mediators (Zartman and Touval, 1985). Strong mediators are also associated with being biased toward one of the parties or toward a specific outcome, thus often have close relationships with one or both parties and a stake in the conflict resolution process. They can usually deliver the weaker side in negotiations (Melin, 2014; Svensson, 2009) or give the weaker side an opportunity to show their trustworthiness (Svensson, 2007) and provide credible security guarantees since their vested interests make them more committed to the process. Security guarantees are important in intractable conflicts where there are high levels of distrust between parties. Therefore, a strong mediator is desirable to help enforce and implement agreements (Walter, 1997). Bercovitch (2005) asserts that in the most resistant cases of conflict, such as intractable conflict, strong state mediators will be the most successful in bringing about an agreement as they will have more influence over the disputing parties. The archetypal strong, biased mediator would be a regional power, as they often have stakes in conflict resolution for trade or security reasons. Regional state mediators will usually have ties with one of the disputing parties and thus are preferred in negotiations. However, realist international relations scholars contend that major, biased powers will only intervene if they can impose a solution that serves their interests using a 'carrots and sticks' strategy (Gelpi, 1999: 117).

As previously mentioned, the sensitivity of intractable conflicts means that any directive mediation strategy, such as those employed by strong, biased mediators, may serve to further antagonise the parties. Furthermore, biased mediation when the interests of the parties a so polarised can contribute to the conflict's intractability. There are contradictory findings on whether bias is useful for facilitation. Kydd (2003) finds that biased mediators can have a positive influence on facilitation and information sharing as it makes the information more trustworthy. However, often perceived impartiality is needed to gain the trust of the disputing parties in intractable conflicts, and therefore, bias is not necessarily a helpful mediator characteristic when employing a facilitative or 'pure' mediation strategy (Siniver, 2006: 813; see also Carnevale & Arad, 1996).

NGOs are often considered non-threatening mediators with connections and knowledge in the area; could they be the key to ending intractable conflicts? Kiel (2014) recognises that NGOs have distinct advantages as mediators due to their in-depth knowledge of the region and culture, expertise in conflict resolution, and previous relationships with the disputing parties. They often have a more innovative approach to problem-solving and suggesting solutions, whereas states are constrained by diplomatic procedures and international norms. An indicative example is the Centre for Humanitarian Dialogue (CHD), which has become the largest third-party actor in Southeast Asia because it has a more convincing claim to neutrality than major

states (Möller et al., 2007: 381). These highlighted qualities make NGOs particularly skilled at facilitating intractable conflicts, as they can understand the sensitivities of the conflict, whilst remaining unthreatening to the disputing parties. Moreover, they can use their range of expertise to propose solutions rather than direct an outcome. It is important, however, to recognise the 'relative powerlessness' of NGOs, as they do not have the status, resources or leverage to provide a credible security guarantee or incentives for compromise (Kiel, 2014: 1).

All things considered, this leads to the conclusion that an ideal mediator in intractable conflicts would not only have the leverage to provide a security guarantee, but also retain a sense of impartiality and a wide range of expertise suited to facilitative mediation. A hybrid mediator would fit these criteria, as a mechanism combining the strengths and weaknesses of both strong, biased actors and weaker, impartial actors. Each state or NGO can use their own unique experience, leverage, and expertise to benefit negotiations. Moreover, whilst discussing mediator bias, Zartman and Touval (1985: 36) stated, a 'mediator may have two different "partialities" that balance each other out only in the aggregate and make it acceptable to both parties.' As a multiparty mechanism, this quality is reflected in the hybrid mediator, in the sense that the individual parties may have a bias toward either the government or the rebel side; however, when all these actors come together as a singular entity, these different partialities can be neutralised. This makes the hybrid mediator acceptable to both parties while retaining influence over both disputants. It seems unlikely that a single party mediator could possess all these qualities comparably to the hybrid mediator.

This combination of strengths should make a hybrid mediator particularly skilled at providing a facilitative strategy, whilst maintaining the security guarantees in negotiations. Due to its lack of obvious bias, the hybrid mediator would not be in a place to directly impose a solution; instead, it would be more skilled at facilitative, communicative and informative mediation strategies, as it can draw on a huge range of state and NGO expertise. This lends itself particularly to intractable conflicts where the mediator should not antagonise the parties or monopolise control of the process, but simply be there to bolster negotiations when necessary. This strategy will help to drive forward a process characterised by confidence, trust, and integrity, which will make both parties willing to stay at the table and negotiate a peace agreement that is acceptable to all.

Multiparty Mediation

Multiparty mediation, as seen in the hybrid mediator, can carry both risks and rewards as a conflict management strategy (Crocker, Hampson & Aall, 2015). On the one hand, the more actors in a mediation process, the more resources and expertise there are to draw from when devising a settlement (Greig & Diehl 2012, 189). The benefits of multiparty mediation with state and non-state actors are demonstrated when NGOs or weak state actors borrow leverage from more powerful actors, whilst simultaneously opening new channels of communications for diplomats to enter the process informally (Crocker, Hampson & Aall, 2001). This pooling of advantages means that actors can gain entry at all levels of the process and can restructure relationships between the parties and international actors in a way that would not be possible for a single state mediator (ibid.). Conversely, multiparty mediation runs the risk of what Crocker, Hampson, and Aall (2001) call the 'crowded stage,' where the profusion of actors can give rise to miscommunication, gridlock, forum shopping and dropping the ball. These issues are commonly found in peace-making efforts where the multitude of mediators do not communicate or cooperate with

one another, causing the mediation attempt to lack coherence. A hybrid mediator can overcome these problems, as its structure allows for an increased level of communication and coordination, in that each actor is obliged to assign an individual or small team to the hybrid mediation structure; these individuals then act as a single entity and cooperate fully without the constraints of their original organisation. This research has led me to formulate the following hypothesis:

> *H1: A hybrid mediator will be more successful at mediating a comprehensive peace agreement in intractable conflicts than a strong state mediator.*

I have chosen to compare hybrid mediation to single actor mediation in the form of a strong state because current literature asserts that major powers are most likely to mediate intractable conflicts since they have the desired qualities of bias and leverage (Bercovitch, 2005: 111). To prove this hypothesis, we must see two causal mechanisms at work. First, we would expect to see the strong state mediator use its leverage and bias to employ a directive strategy and impose a solution on the parties. This would lead to high levels of distrust towards the mediator and foster distrust between the parties, serving to antagonise them. This should result in a failed mediation attempt, as the solution would not reflect the will of both actors and sincere compromise. Second, we would expect the hybrid mediator to be trusted by the parties due to its impartiality and leverage that can be used to provide a security guarantee. The impartiality and range of expertise would allow the hybrid mediator to facilitate negotiations and communicate balanced and skilfully crafted solutions to any problems that arise. The parties would have more confidence in the process and will, therefore, remain at the negotiating table to reach a settlement based on sincere compromise from themselves rather than a mediator-imposed solution. This should result in success for the hybrid mediator and the disputing parties in the form of a full settlement, thus proving the hybrid mediator's superiority in mediating intractable conflicts.

Research Design

I have designed a comparative case study to test whether a hybrid mediator is more successful at mediating intractable conflicts than a strong state mediator. A hybrid mediator is a new phenomenon with a unique occurrence in the Philippine peace process, so a qualitative study will provide a clearer understanding of the causal mechanisms at work that link mediator identity and strategy to mediation outcome in intractable conflicts. There has also been a lot of qualitative research undertaken in this area, and a qualitative study will provide the opportunity to dig deeper to understand the complexities of mediation in intractable conflict.

I use the 'method of difference' to compare the outcome of two separate cases of mediation with a variation on the independent variable, namely mediator identity (Mill, 1973). The dependent variable for my hypothesis is mediation outcome, which will either be categorised as successful or unsuccessful. I define success as reaching a comprehensive peace agreement; any other outcomes will be classed as unsuccessful. The Civil War Mediation dataset comments that a full settlement is the best short-term indicator of success, as it represents a breakthrough that is 'more or less irreversible' (DeRouen, Bercovitch & Pospieszna, 2011). The independent variable is mediator identity, but more specifically, I will be comparing the hybrid mediator to a strong state actor. I define the hybrid mediator as a multi-party mediation structure comprising both state and non-state actors, where each member assigns a specific individual or small team as their representative. These actors work together and cooperate as a single entity to oversee the conflict

resolution process and employ a streamlined strategy. This study will help us attain some preliminary findings as to how mediator different mediator identities can affect mediator strategy and ultimately influence the outcome of the mediation attempt.

For this study, I will carry out a comparison of two phases of the GPH-MILF peace process. Phase one spans from 2001 to 2008 when Malaysia was the sole mediator; phase two is from 2009 to 2014 where Malaysia returned as a facilitator but was supported hugely by the International Contact Group, the hybrid mediator. It is important to note that the ICG was not created by the parties directly in response to the failings of the Malaysian facilitator. In fact, both parties were satisfied with Malaysia's mediation in the first phase and further international involvement in what was seen to be a primarily domestic issue was met with skepticism when the ICG was created (Rood, 2016: 78). Therefore, the two separate phases are viable cases for comparison, as they discuss two separate incidences of mediation that are not causally linked. Finally, I have chosen to compare two phases of the GPH-MILF peace process because the 'method of difference' highlights the need to control for contextual variables, which in this case are the nature of the dispute and disputants, in order to reduce other candidate causes and effects (Mill, 1973). This allows us to better isolate the effect mediator identity has on mediation outcome, though it must be noted that factors changed across negotiations, including changes in the leadership of the disputing parties that must also be taken into account.

I will present my cases and outline the differences between them, using process tracing to determine whether the hypothesised causal mechanisms are present in the mediation attempts. To do this, I will analyse interviews that I conducted with key players in the peace process, Emma Leslie, the member of the ICG representing the UK-based NGO Conciliation Resources (CR); and Miriam Coronel-Ferrer, the chair of the GPH negotiating panel from 2010 to the end of the process. I will also examine minutes from meetings that I recorded with other important members of the process whilst working with the Democratic Progress Institute (DPI) on a comparative study visit to the Philippines in 2015, most notably with Thomas Phipps, the ICG member representing the UK; Ali Saleem, the ICG member representing the Centre for Humanitarian Dialogue; and Chairman Murad, chair of the MILF negotiating panel. I will triangulate this testimony by analysing objective, secondary academic and journalistic sources.

I understand there are several limitations to this research. First, the confidentiality clause in the framework agreement on the creation of the International Contact Group prevents 'any data or opinion generated or exchanged in connection with the work of the ICG' from being released to the public (Mindanao Think Tank, 2010: 6). This meant that there was little available data or information on the negotiations. To overcome this barrier, I attained first-hand testimony from some of the most prominent actors in the peace process, as outlined above, to try to truly understand the intricacies of the process and the mediation attempt. Furthermore, due to the timing and lack of transparency in the process, there was even less data for phase one, and I had to rely mostly on secondary sources. However, as I am primarily analysing the hybrid mediator, I believed it to be more important to prioritise first-hand testimony for phase two.

Second, I have relied heavily on interviews to triangulate secondary sources and form the basis of my case in favour of the hybrid mediator. I realise these interviews are dominated by members of the hybrid mediation team itself, but I feel that the opinions of both chair of the GPH and MILF negotiating panel are able to provide balance to this testimony and all three major parties in the process were represented. The only missing actor is that of Malaysia, whose testimony I have had to make up for using secondary resources. The interviews were conducted

in two different settings, some at a formal roundtable conducted by the Democratic Progress Institute and a more informal one-on-one conversation between myself, Emma Leslie and Miriam Colonel-Ferrer in person and via Skype respectively. The data that both these kinds of interviews produced were extremely similar conferring more validity to the data.

Third, the method of difference is not an infallible research method in cases as complex as peace negotiations, and of course, we must recognise that this method will not prove causality between mediator identity and the signing of a peace agreement. However, as previously explained, I have tried to control as far as possible for contextual variables, hopefully allowing us an interesting insight into the methods and factors conducive to success. Finally, as this is the only case of hybrid mediation of this ilk, it is impossible to cross reference these findings with other peace negotiations to see if the results are replicable. In this way, I understand that this research may not be generalizable but could provide an interesting model for future cases. Furthermore, this case is still ongoing, and although a peace agreement has been signed, peace is still contested in the Philippines. However, the signing of a peace agreement is a landmark moment and should not be underestimated in the achievement of peace.

Empirical Analysis

Phase one: GPH-MILF negotiations with Malaysian facilitation (2001-08)

Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo assumed the Philippine presidency in 2001 against the backdrop of an 'all-out war' waged against the MILF by her predecessor, Joseph Estrada (DPI, 2012). President Arroyo unilaterally sought the assistance of the Malaysian Prime Minister to convince the MILF to return to the negotiating table and facilitate the negotiations. Malaysia succeeded due to their previous relationship with the MILF, and a framework was created for the resumption of talks (Mindanao Think Tank, 2010: 11).

Malaysia is a powerful regional actor, with a leadership role in the Organisation of Islamic Cooperation (OIC) and links with Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN), which legitimised its role as a facilitator (Franco, 2013: 218). Malaysia took leverage from its status within the international community and its expertise in dealing with multi-ethnic domestic conflicts (Odaira 2009). Malaysia has been cited as a biased mediator as it shares cultural, ethnic and religious ties with the people of Mindanao and Malaysia has a history of supporting the MNLF. The mediator's bias toward the MILF meant that their reception was positive since the MILF felt they had an ally and the GPH knew Malaysia could vouch for the MILF's commitment. However, Malaysia is often cited as a strange choice of mediator due to its territorial dispute with the Philippines over Sabah (Franco, 2013). During the Moro rebellion of the 1960s, 200,000 refugees from Mindanao sought refuge in Sabah and received weapons and ammunition from Malaysian troops (Penetrante, 2012: 18). The Vice Governor of North Cotabato[2] described Malaysian facilitation as 'allowing your enemy to count how many knives you have in the kitchen' (Tesiorna 2011). Chairman Murad made further comments that 'the GPH accused Malaysia of siding with the MILF' (DPI, 2015: 187). This made it clear that the unresolved territorial dispute precluded Malaysia's impartiality, which led to the process being surrounded by an air of distrust (Franco, 2013: 216).

Initially, Malaysia took on the role of facilitator, conducting shuttle diplomacy and playing a 'good offices' role, showing that their bias was not necessarily translated into biased media-

[2] Cotabato city is a region of Mindanao where the MILF headquarters are located

tion (Harris, 2010). However, there is evidence to suggest that Malaysian officials outside of, yet still close to the process promoted their own vision for a settlement (Santos, 2003: 6). There was also speculation about the impartiality of Malaysian representatives, with the GPH halting the process for several months with the GPH calling for a replacement (Svensson, 2014: 100).

Contemporary Malaysian foreign policy points toward their desire for stability in the region to establish stronger trade links and secure their status as a major regional power (Franco, 2013). Furthermore, it has been speculated that there was a 'quid pro quo' deal (DPI, 2015: 39), in which the GPH would drop their territorial claim over Sabah if Malaysia helped to propose a solution of unity in the Philippines, though this remains speculation. Statements made by high-profile Malaysian politicians often contained threats and urged the MILF to lift their claim for independence (Odaira, 2009). For example, in April 2003, the Malaysian Defence Secretary stated that the MILF 'challenging the legitimacy of this sacrosanct document (the Philippine constitution) is something [Malaysia does] not support or condone' (Santos, 2003: 8). This was a strong message that provoked a strong reaction from the MILF's highest ranking leader, who claimed: 'only God can divert the independence stand of the MILF. The Front will never succumb to the pressure from any country' (ibid.: 9). This is a clear example of Malaysia using a directive strategy rather than facilitating the wishes of the disputing parties.

One of the major achievements of the Malaysian facilitation was the establishment of the International Monitoring Team (IMT), which began its peacekeeping mission in Mindanao in 2002 (Svensson, 2014: 100). It is interesting to note that this gave Malaysia contributed the most troops to this team giving them increased leverage over the process, and this leverage grew as the process went on (ibid.). Despite several agreements being reached between the GPH and the MILF from 2001, in 2003 there was a resumption of hostilities that the Malaysian facilitator was not able to prevent. From 2005 the agreements were mostly focused on drafting the Memorandum of Ancestral Domain (MoaAd), which dealt with Moro autonomy, the most contentious issue of the process. In 2008 MoaAd was declared unconstitutional by the Supreme Court despite being signed by both parties: the process subsequently broke down and the flare-up of fighting that ensued displaced more than 500,000 people (Vatikiotis, 2014). Malaysia withdrew its facilitation, and the IMT broke down, prompting the mainstream media to condemn the state's participation and to claim that Malaysia was deliberately trying to prolong the process (Bondoc, 2010). Malaysia's facilitation continued after the resumption of talks in 2009, but they were supported by additional mediation mechanisms, as the MILF felt they would need a stronger and more credible security guarantee if they were to continue (Coronel-Ferrer, 2017; Leslie, 2016).

Phase two: GPH-MILF negotiations with Malaysian and ICG facilitation (2009-16)

The International Contact Group (ICG) was formed in 2009 to support the GPH-MILF peace process and the Malaysian facilitator, as the first hybrid mediator of its kind. The ICG consisted of four state actors: the UK, Japan, Saudi Arabia and Turkey, and four non-state actors: the Asia Foundation (TAF), the Centre for Humanitarian Dialogue (CHD), Conciliation Resources (CR) and Muhammadiyah. The framework agreement on the formation of the ICG outlined its role as attending negotiations, conducting one-to-one visits, giving discreet advice and seeking the assistance of outside experts to inform solutions (Mindanao Think Tank, 2010). Their mandate was derived from the Malaysian facilitator and the two parties, which allowed them to 'exert proper leverage and sustain the interest of the parties as well as maintain a level of comfort that restores mutual trust' (ibid.: 5).

The ICG was formed because the MILF felt it needed more security guarantees. Miriam Coronel-Ferrer (2017) stated that 'after that kind of break down [and] the resumption of fighting after the rejection of the MoaAd, there was not enough confidence that the government would be able to live up to the process and to the agreements.' Each ICG member put themselves forward for the position and had to be accepted after by the belligerent parties after showing what they could offer to the process. The UK provided resources as a strong Western state and shared lessons of conflict resolution from Northern Ireland, whilst Japan provided leverage as a regional power and helped with aid programmes in Mindanao (DPI, 2014). The states gave 'real government weight' to the process and their ambassadors helped by taking government officials to dinner to discuss issues and meeting with lawmakers in Manila (Leslie, 2016).

The NGOs played a complementary role to the states, acting as a bridge between the negotiators and civil society actors and providing relevant expertise (DPI, 2015). For example, CR shared cross-country lessons from Colombia, whilst TAF had specific knowledge of the intricacies of the Mindanao conflict due to their continuous presence in the region for over 60 years and partnerships with over 160 civil society organisations (Rood, 2016: 85-86). Emma Leslie (2016), the ICG representative from CR, commented that the NGOs were in a fortunate position because they could use the leverage of the states if they needed to exert power but overall retained informality due to their lack of diplomatic constraints. Miriam Coronel-Ferrer (2017), the chief negotiator for the GPH, agreed that most of the NGO representatives were her 'friends' before the process, which brought an air of informality, comfort, and confidence to proceedings.

The question of bias and impartiality of the ICG was important for the two negotiating panels. All the states within the ICG were chosen because they knew about the region but did not have special interests in the region, such as big business (Leslie, 2016). Thomas Phipps (UK), Ali Saleem (CHD) and Emma Leslie (CR) all agreed that the bias of each member of the ICG was 'neutralised internally' or 'levelled out' and that the individuals who made up the ICG shed their egos and interests to come together and suggest solutions to the two negotiating parties (DPI, 2015: 27; Leslie, 2016). Phipps and Leslie both noted that at times they wanted to take sides in the negotiations, but because they worked as a team, these interests were counterbalanced by the opinions of the other members of the ICG (DPI, 2015: 36; Leslie, 2016). Furthermore, Malaysia's continued role as a facilitator with a direct interest in the region and leverage over the parties meant that the facilitator could build direct relationships with the GPH and the MILF, especially Chairman Murad (Leslie, 2016). Over time the participants found that the Malaysia facilitator understood how best to use the knowledge and impartiality of the ICG to its benefit in negotiations (Coronel-Ferrer, 2017; Leslie, 2016). Therefore, this multi-party mediation had a combination of both biased (Malaysia) and non-biased (the ICG) actors to help contribute to a facilitative strategy.

The ICG began by simply observing negotiations, and Ali Saleem claims that 'the support mechanism by no means takes the process out of the hands of the two parties. [The negotiating parties] tell us when they want us to speak and we are at their service' (DPI, 2015: 31). All interviewees agreed that the ICG was most useful in the breaks between meetings when they could make suggestions and share experiences with the parties (Coronel-Ferrer, 2017; Leslie, 2016). Additionally, a breakdown of the process almost occurred in August 2010 when the MILF rejected the government's '3for1' development plan that outlined efforts to fight poverty, provide enhanced autonomy and recognise historical injustices (Rood, 2016: 80). The ICG wanted

to prevent a full breakdown, so drew up a matrix of the common points of both parties' proposals, allowing the disputants to see the views that they shared with their opponent rather than being blinded by the opinions that divide them (ibid.). Miriam Coronel-Ferrer (2017) confirmed that in these times of 'crisis' the ICG was crucial, as they could give an 'impartial view of what was going on' due to their lack of bias. They provided a competent facilitative strategy that allowed the parties to understand one another's perspective, thus making the parties more willing to compromise rather than walk out of negotiations. Furthermore, Malaysia's role as an adept emotionally intelligent facilitator meant it could instill confidence that the MILF would remain in the process.

The ICG's role was never as an influencer, but rather to reflect and share their experience in matters such as parliamentary systems, inter-governmental relations, and fiscal arrangements, in order to help in the drafting of key documents and inventing new solutions (Coronel-Ferrer, 2017). Additionally, they created an informal and trusting setting that was conducive to building confidence in the negotiations. Thomas Phipps and Emma Leslie reflected on occasions when they took certain members of the negotiating panels out of the room to allow them to 'cool down' when negotiations got heated, or when they played games in the negotiation room to lower tensions. It was noted by both that this was only possible due to the integration of NGOs in the process and the level of informality that this allowed (DPI, 2015; Leslie, 2016).

An increased level of trust between the parties meant that the ceasefire remained intact and casualties remained low throughout the period of ICG facilitation. The addition of the ICG to negotiations meant that Malaysia's influence was balanced by the new actors. Ultimately, after 43 meetings and a real commitment to the process by both of the parties, the Malaysian facilitator, and the ICG the final annex of the CAB was signed in 2014 (Hutchcroft, 2016: XXIV). Coronel-Ferrer emphasised the 'high degree of support the peace process received from critical sectors, as well as the international community' (ibid.).

It must be taken into consideration that hybrid mediation efforts cannot take all the credit for the signing of the CAB in 2014. There were also other contextual and structural factors that changed in phase two of the process, which helped the parties come to an agreement, such as the increased awareness of opportunities in the region for exploiting natural resources and the learning processes that have occurred over the 17 years since the start of the negotiations, making the two sides more skills and amenable for negotiation (Svensson, 2014: 105). Most notably, was the change in leadership on both sides, with the death of MILF leader Salamat in 2003 making way for Chairman Murad in the second phase of negotiations. On the government side, although President Arroyo was keen to see the establishment of the ICG and the resumption of talks 2009, she was nearing the end of her term as President and lacked political capital (Mindanao Think Tank, 2010). In 2010 President Benigno Aquino, son of former-President Corazon Aquino and activist Benigno Aquino, was elected. Aquino wanted to carry on the legacy of his parents and campaigned on a platform of peace in the Philippines (Leslie, 2016). He had the support of the military behind him and a true desire to see peace in the country. In an interview, Chairman Murad said that a meeting between himself and President Aquino in Tokyo in 2011 had been a turning point in negotiations, as they both had confidence in one another and the process (DPI, 2015: 179).

Discussion

Both case studies present evidence to support H1, demonstrating that the hybrid mediator was more successful than a lone strong state mediator at putting an end to the intractable conflict in Mindanao. The first case study shows that Malaysia possessed the typical characteristics of a powerful state mediator, in that it was biased toward the weaker side and could exert influence over the MILF to bring them into the negotiations. Malaysia's mandate and leverage were derived from its links with the international community and its status as a member of the OIC. The state's strategy was active because of their interests in the region, and thus the facilitator demanded that the Moros drop their claim for independence, which antagonised MILF leaders. Malaysia used its territorial dispute to bargain with the GPH, and its previous relationship with the MILF to coerce and threaten them. This provoked distrust in the mediated solutions, which led to a backlash from the MILF and a resumption of hostilities in 2003. As the hypothesis predicted, Malaysia alone did not manage to foster confidence in the process. Furthermore, the directive strategy prevented the two parties from engaging in effective negotiations and compromise because the solution was presented to them at the start of the negotiations. This meant that when MoaAd was rejected by the Supreme Court both parties walked out and the process was unsalvageable due to the fact that tensions were so high.

The second case study demonstrated that the Malaysian facilitator supported by the hybrid mediator had greater success in mediating the intractable conflict in the Philippines. There was a clear link between mediator identity, mediator strategy and the outcome of the mediation attempt, which supports the hypothesised causal mechanism. The ICG consisted of non-threatening actors and friends of the process; each actor bringing a different set of expertise that could be drawn upon in negotiations. The mixture of state and non-state actors allowed the process to have integrity and diplomatic weight, which gave the disputing parties a credible security guarantee, whilst also retaining an air of informality that was conducive to effective negotiations. The impartiality of the ICG was insisted upon by all actors in the process, and thus the neutralisation of each member's interests through enhanced cooperation was a crucial part of their structure and mandate. Their lack of outward bias or interest in a particular solution meant that the hybrid mediator was not suited to being an active influencer in the negotiations like Malaysia but rather a facilitator of negotiations. In addition, the ICG's understanding of the intricacies of the dispute meant they knew to take a backseat in negotiations, allowing the parties to take the lead. Instead, the ICG helped in drafting documents and proposing solutions in moments of impasse. The parties could use the ICG to gain a better understanding of the opposition's demands, making the process of compromise seem less costly to the disputing parties. It is evident that the ICG provided the negotiations with confidence and integrity due to their international weight and also brought the expertise to move the process forward toward the signing of a comprehensive peace agreement. This impartiality and expertise were also complemented by Malaysia's continued facilitation of the conflict, as their true commitment and vested interests in the negotiations are to be attributed to the durability of negotiations and the commitment of both the parties, as Malaysia could exert their leverage when necessary.

Overall, using the 'method of difference,' we can see that the identity of the mediator seemed to be one of the candidate causes of the mediation outcome. Furthermore, process tracing allowed us to see how each step of the causal mechanism outlined in the theoretical framework differed due to the difference in mediator identity between cases.

Conclusion

This study has made a case for the hybrid mediator, a multiparty mediation mechanism comprised of both state and non-state actors, by examining which actors are most suited to mediating intractable conflicts. Previous literature has failed to investigate the link between diverse types of mediator identity and strategy; and how this influences mediation outcome. This is especially true for intractable conflicts, which are often labeled 'doomed to fail' as mediation attempts are rarely successful as seen in conflicts such as Israel-Palestine and Sri Lanka. Due to the intense and protracted nature of intractable conflicts, they cannot be managed internally, and thus desperately need third-party assistance. Therefore, a better understanding of how to handle intractable conflicts through third-party mediation is key to global security (Crocker, Hampson & Aall, 2005). Theoretically, this research points to the need to find creative and innovative solutions to mediation in the toughest contexts and also shows the importance of the mediators understanding the intricacies of the peace process and being able to navigate these skilfully. Further research is needed to investigate the link between new and diverse types of mediators and their strategies in a variety of different contexts, rather than having a one size fits all model that often neglects the most difficult conflicts to solve.

I examined the puzzle of who should mediate intractable conflicts through the case of the Mindanao peace process, which saw the ground-breaking signing of a comprehensive peace agreement, notwithstanding deep-rooted party rivalries from an intense and protracted conflict and previous failed mediation attempts. A qualitative comparative study using the 'method of difference' led to the conclusion that the hybrid mediator is particularly skilled at facilitative or 'pure' mediation, which is crucial to the resolution of intractable conflicts. Conversely, strong state actors (preferred as the strongest mediator in previous literature) can use their leverage and bias to provide a security guarantee, but this leads to a directive strategy of conflict management process that antagonised the parties. We must recognise that the method of difference in cases as complex as this may not be infallible as there are many other variables, such as timing, leadership and changing preferences that certainly played an important role in the failure and success of the mediation attempts. Furthermore, the lack of alternative cases of hybrid mediation means that further research to support this paper may be limited. However, further research into this case could be carried out to try to identify a more robust causal mechanism between the two variables. This could include further data collection by way of thorough, structured interviews reaching out to more players in the process.

Finally, the results of this study could have serious practical implications for ongoing disputes in the region, where national integration has been problematic, and low-level warring dyads are the norm (Möller et al., 2007). This research on new and innovative types of mediation could provide an excellent springboard for viewing mediation in intractable conflicts in a different light. The case of Mindanao has proved mediation is not doomed to fail in tough contexts; rather if mediation is tailored to the context and understands the wants and needs of the negotiating parties it can be fruitful. The lack of empirical data regarding hybrid mediation techniques limits the reliability of this study, and it is difficult to prove any universal truths about the effectiveness of hybrid mediation in intractable conflicts, despite the robust link found in the case studies. The success of the ICG may have been attributable to a unique combination of factors specific to Mindanao: namely, the commitment of both parties to the process and the complementary expertise of the members of the hybrid mediator (Conciliation Resources, 2013). However, this study will hopefully inspire further research into whether the hybrid mediator could be translated

across new conflicts: for example, how it could be tailored to suit the needs of different contexts by understanding the local dynamics and cultural intricacies of a conflict and choosing appropriate members to mediate. This study highlights the importance of looking beyond traditional methods of conflict management if the global community is ever going to see an end to stubborn conflicts. As such, it offers a positive step toward understanding how to diversify mediation approaches to gain optimal results.

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'Endangering' Traditional Gender Roles: Gender Programming in the Humanitarian Response to the Refugee Crisis in Athens

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Abstract

Traditional gender roles change in the context of humanitarian emergencies. This paper builds on prior research that explores how these changes are considered in the design and implementation of gender programmes in humanitarian emergencies. Based on primary data on the 'refugee crisis' in Athens (Greece), it analyses the impact of Empowerment and Sexual and Gender Based Violence (SGBV) protection programmes and explores whether they challenge or reinforce traditional gender roles. It argues that gender programmes implemented in this context fail to challenge unequal power balances. Program design and implementation, as approached by NGOs, fails to promote gender equality and can reinforce inequality. This contributes to reinforcing traditional gender roles and consequently its inherent risks and vulnerabilities. The findings in this study highlight the need for more holistic, context and culture-specific gender transformative programmes, to challenge inequalities and contribute to greater social justice.

Introduction

Greece has witnessed the worst refugee crisis since the second world war; often referred to as the 'other' Greek crisis (McDonough & Tsourdi, 2012). For the first time, the arrival of great numbers of refugee men, women, and children through the Aegean route has brought the reality of war, violence, and human misery into the lives of those who live peacefully in the developed world. This 'crisis' brings back many issues into Europe and exposes (and questions) the very core values which represent it, one of which is gender equality. The refugee crisis is also a feminist issue (Pankrust, 2016), it has exposed women´s struggles and provided a platform to amplify their voices. There is a need for innovative approaches to handling it.

The refugee crisis in Greece has raised many questions about the responses implemented by humanitarian agencies in these contexts. In the past years, humanitarian action has been redefined: it has become politicised and institutionalised (Barnet, 2005). Actions that aspire to restructure underlying social relations are inherently political (ibid.). Consequently, humanitarianism in its new form can eliminate unequal power relations inherent in traditional gender roles. In other words, humanitarianism can contribute to bringing about social change through the implementation of gender-transformative programmes. But, to what extent are aid agencies taking advantage of this transformative potential?

Gender transformative programmes are about change. There is no change without empowerment, and there is no empowerment without agency. Agency can change restrictive aspects of traditional gender roles and challenge them (Kabeer, 2005). This form of agency can bring change in the existing patriarchal structures (ibid.). In the context of humanitarian emergencies, gender inequalities contain contradictions and imbalances, because of the environment in which they exist (Kabeer, 2005). Gender programmes in Athens are often designed to be implemented inside the camps; meant to be temporary (Turner, 2016). Consequently, their nature is not well defined. This is what makes camps a suitable arena to investigate changes in traditional gender roles or rather, reinforcements. While the camp can create new possibilities for women and other vulnerable groups, it may also reinforce old power structures (ibid.).

This article aims to explore the impact of gender programmes in traditional gender roles. Taking a descriptive rather than an explanatory approach, it argues that gender programmes implemented by Greek and International Non-Governmental Organisations (NGOs) in the context of the humanitarian 'refugee crisis' fail to challenge traditional gender roles and power imbalances. Often, these programs reinforce unequal power balances and ultimately, gender inequality. Therefore:

> 'Gender as an instrument for humanitarian analysis and planning has become so disconnected from its feminist origins that it can now be used in ways that are ignorant of, or even supportive of, the relations of power that the concept of gender was intended to expose and change.' (Olivius 2014b: 117)

While much of the literature on gender in humanitarian emergencies highlights the importance of considering gender throughout design and implementation of the response, it rarely mentions the importance of challenging traditional gender roles. A relatively small number of works consider these changes in the context of a displacement crisis (Freedman; Hyndman; Olivius; Szczepanikova; Turner). This article aims at 'encouraging a reflection on some of the less tangible and gendered effects of the humanitarian assistance to refugees' (Szczepanikova, 2009: 30). It will do so by analysing gender programmes implemented by Greek and international NGOs in the humanitarian response in Athens, to provide a critical and descriptive account of the reality of gender programming in this context.

The article is structured as follows: An introduction, literature review and methodology chapter precede the two central sections of this article. Section 4 provides an overview of gender programming in the 'refugee crisis' in Athens. It looks into what gender programmes do, and their two key objectives: empowerment and protection. It focuses on empowerment programmes to highlight gaps and challenges in their implementation. Section 5 focuses on Sexual and Gender Based Violence (SGBV) and protection programmes. It provides a critical analysis of SGBV in Athens. It touches upon issues of masculinities and the 'woman-only approach' and questions whether these interventions are still 'fit for purpose.' Finally, this article concludes with a summary of the main arguments and themes emerging from the discussions and some recommendations for the future.

Literature Review

Understanding gender dynamics is crucial to the implementation of gender sensitive humanitarian responses. Given the fact that the 'refugee crisis' in Greece was labeled as a humanitarian

crisis only in 2015, there is limited academic literature on gender in this context. However, the Greek context provides an environment in which changes (or lack thereof) in gender roles can be observed in a context which can be defined as 'stable.' This is precisely where this research fits. The following paragraphs review the existing literature on gender in humanitarian emergencies to describe and analyse the response to the 'refugee crisis' in Athens.

What does the promotion of gender equality mean in humanitarian assistance? There is a difference between mainstreaming gender and implementing gender transformative programmes. Theoretically, by mainstreaming gender, all activities are designed taking into account the different needs of women, men, girls and boys and gender roles are analysed and integrated into the programmes. However, in practice, it can provide an instrumental view of empowerment, focusing only on women to implement programmes efficiently (Olivius, 2016a). Furthermore, it hides the feminist values of building women's awareness and capacities to challenge patriarchal structures and relations (Hillenbrand et al., 2015). In contrast, gender transformative approaches conceptualize empowerment from its feminist roots. They are designed to challenge unequal gender roles and promote gender equality (ibid.).

Gender is a component of every humanitarian emergency; hence, it is a necessary part of its response. The approaches to 'mainstream gender' vary depending on the organisations' understanding of what it means to work with gender in humanitarian aid (Olivius, 2016a). Consequently, by critically analysing the current gender programming in humanitarian contexts, we can understand the rationales and objectives behind it. Olivius (2016a) identifies three different approaches to mainstreaming gender in humanitarian aid; the basic needs approach, which follows the classic humanitarian imperative of saving lives and relieving suffering; the instrumentalist approach, which understands gender mainly as differences between men and women; and the modernization approach, which goes beyond the mere delivery of life saving aid and looks into gender as the 'structural relations of power rooted in the cultural, social, economic and political systems' (Olivius, 2016a: 10). All aid programmes affect gender relations in some way, but not all programmes which take gender into account are necessarily promoting gender equality (ibid.). So, why should gender be a central rather than a peripheral issue? (Chant & Gutmann, 2002).

Gender programmes can further contribute to gender asymmetries (Grabska, 2011). Adopting gender mainstreaming as an approach allows it to be framed in different ways, which can contribute to blunting its critical and transformative power (Freedman, 2010). Sadly, whenever there is progress in recognition of women's needs and rights, it is often random and unplanned (ibid.). There is no conscious effort from NGOs to change unequal relations of power when designing and implementing gender programmes on the ground (Olivius, 2016a). Hence, the need to take gender issues into account in all areas of refugee protection. Freedman et al. (2017), in their detailed analysis of the gendered approach to the Syrian refugee crisis, ar-gue that gender mainstreaming by humanitarian organisations is often more associated with rhetoric than with practice. The current 'refugee crisis' has broken many structures and patterns in relation to gender dynamics. This justifies the need to undertake an in-depth analysis of the gender differences and relations of power which are created and transformed during the refugee's journey to Europe (Freedman et al. 2017).

The literature identifies several challenges which can contribute to gender being neglected and ultimately, to the reinforcement of traditional gender roles. Firstly, the 'pro-women bias' (Grabska 2011). Some organisations implement their programmes thinking of

women and men as separate entities, what Olivius (2016a) defines as 'an instrumentalist approach.' Working with women is seen as key to aid effectiveness. Consequently, women's participation in programmes becomes 'instrumentalized' and is seen mainly as 'best practice' for the design and implementation of gender programmes on the ground (Olivius, 2014b). As a result, women's interests are supported in a superficial way, which fails to challenge overall paradigms of gender inequality (El-Bushra, 2000). Dolan (2014b) argues that we should 'let go of the gender binary' and move into more inclusive approaches to gender equality which can replace the focus on women and girls. After all, women's participation does not provide a complete analytical picture (Indra, 1989). Consequently, a 'women-only approach' is not enough to challenge unequal power relations (Chant & Gutmann, 2002). The focus on women as a separate group can further marginalize women by highlighting their differences and disregarding relational aspects of gender (Freedman 2010).

The second challenge is related to cultural and context specificities. For example, Freedman et al. (2017) argue that the actors in the humanitarian response to protect refugees often assume that certain forms of violence against women are cultural practices which should not be questioned and cannot be changed. Programmes based on these assumptions will not address gender inequality or power imbalances, but rather the opposite. Occasionally, when humanitarian agencies aim at being culturally sensitive, they use traditional methods for solving issues inside the camps. This involves the elders, who are in most of the cases (if not all), men. Giving men the power to resolve such conflicts in the name of 'respect' for cultural specificities further reinforces unequal gender relations among refugee populations (Freedman, 2010). Hyndman's research on a UNHCR project in a refugee camp in Kenya shows the need to account for the historical context and the cultural and gender differences that are inherent in every society (Hyndman, 1998). The challenge is to respect cultural specificities while promoting gender equality.

Perceptions and assumptions from other cultures also play a role in programme implementation. For example, in cases where humanitarian assistance programmes are framed as human relief rather than as confronting inherent injustices, the notion of vulnerable women becomes central to the response (El-Bushra, 2000). This reverses any possible empowering effect and deprives woman of any kind of agency (Olivius, 2016a). Aolain (2011) makes a preliminary assessment of the main vulnerabilities that women face in humanitarian emergencies. In doing so, he argues that women are 'inevitably vulnerable' as a consequence of biological and socio-cultural pre-existing conditions (Aolain, 2011). But the concept of women as partners and as vulnerable can coexist (Hyndman, 1998). There are cases where woman 're-appropriate' such representations to their own benefit (Freedman, 2010). This is part of the strategies adopted by women as a response to specific constraints; the 'patriarchal bargain' (Kandiyoti, 1988). For example, Grabska's research shows that some women claimed they had survived Sexual and Gender Based Violence (SGBV) to gain or accelerate their resettlement to another country. This is an example of how women use the 'feminized image of vulnerability' to gain greater autonomy (Grabska, 2011). It also shows deficiencies in the approach taken in these programmes, and in the way they are implemented. Women, as a separate category which is vulnerable and further victimized, reinforces the traditional perceptions and puts women at risk. Not all women are vulnerable and helpless; some find coping strategies to navigate the system, which otherwise leaves them with few opportunities to decide and become empowered. Therefore, the phenome-

non of categorization in the response hinders its potential transformative effect and results in programmes not tackling the existing full range of needs.

The third challenge is: Where do men fit? (El-Bushra, 2000). It has been highlighted above that the 'women-only' approach in gender programmes can contribute to reinforcing traditional gender roles. Unfortunately, this is not the only negative consequence it might bring. Men and their needs in humanitarian contexts are normally disregarded (Krause, 2014). The concept of including men in humanitarian responses is rarely seen in practice. Chant & Gutmann (2002) argue that gender inequality is a result of power imbalances between women and men. The only way to tackle these imbalances is to incorporate the relationships between men and women in every stage of the response (ibid.). Not doing so can lead to men's 'social emasculation,' which can result in violence against women as a strategy to regain power (Krause, 2014). Indeed, prioritizing women in gender programmes can contribute to the erosion of men's traditional gender roles as protectors, providers and decision makers (El-Bushra, 2000). This influences their self-esteem which in turn can result in increased SGBV (Chant & Gutmann, 2002). One can easily agree that there is no point in conducting awareness raising activities with women, if they are not also conducted with men. Aolain (2011) talks about 'men's opportunistic sexual outrages' to describe the violence incidents that may result from men's frustration. By understanding the power imbalances existing between men and women, we can transform them and encourage 'positive masculinities' to emerge (ibid.). These are examples of the unexpected consequences that some gender programmes can have on men's frustration as a result of a concentration on women's empowerment activities (Turner, 2000).

The exclusion of men can also contribute to what is the fourth, and maybe most prevalent challenge: SGBV. 'Humanitarian crises are defined by a lack of security' (Aolain, 2011: 19). Consequently, SGBV is prevalent in displacement crises (El-Bushra, 2000). Why do these types of violence increase in these contexts and what are the factors that trigger it? Freedman (2016a) sees the prevalence of SGBV as a consequence of the changes in relations of power and gender relations within families and couples that occur during migration. This constitutes changes in traditional gender roles. The World Health Organization (WHO) estimates that one in five refugee women are expected to experience SGBV in their lifetime (WHO, 2013). Although there is sufficient knowledge on the topic and there are guidelines on the standards for prevention and treatment of SGBV in humanitarian contexts (UNHCR, 2016; IASC, 2015), in practice, protection programmes fall short of these standards in a way that leaves women exposed. Consequently, women experience various forms of SGBV. Stark & Ager (2011) identify three main categories: Intimate Partner Violence (IPV), physical violence and Sexual Violence, and Rape. Other forms of SGBV, beyond physical abuse (emotional and psychological), are humiliation, exclusion, and denial of resources (Krause, 2015). Despite the diversity of forms of SGBV, often, legal and policy documents suffer from 'tunnel vision' underestimating its complexity and ignoring that violence is affected by its context (Keygnaert & Guieu, 2015).

Despite the challenges, the situation of displacement can bring opportunities to redefine gender relations (El-Bushra, 2000). For example, the modernization approach (Olivius, 2016a) which is committed to social transformation, sees situations of emergency and displacement as opportunities for change. If displacement can both challenge and reinforce traditional gender roles (Krause, 2014), this highlights the need to finally make steps towards change. The knowledge and the theory should be effectively transformed into practice. By analysing the impact of gender programmes on the ground, this article will point to the main gaps and challenges

and will build on a path to implement gender transformative programmes that contribute to greater social justice.

Methodology

Research Design

This article investigates whether gender programmes in humanitarian emergencies contribute to reinforcing traditional gender roles, or not. The chosen case study is the current 'refugee crisis' in Athens, Greece. The fact that Greece is part of the European Union adds an innovative perspective to the field of gender in humanitarian aid and fills a gap in current research in the sector. It clearly exposes the aid community's failures in an environment which is not a 'typical humanitarian setting' (Secret Aid Worker, 2016). Observing whether there are changes in gender relations can 'challenge the practical knowledge that is taken for granted' (Bakewell, 2008: 450), and help build innovative approaches that are relevant in practice. After all, the migration crisis that is taking place in Greece is a result of the international failure to manage global relations of inequality (Rodgers, 2004).

Migration is a gendered phenomenon. Gender identities, relations, and ideologies are not fixed (Mahler & Pessar, 2001). Hence, the importance of seeing 'gender at work' (Donato et al., 2006). The complexity of changes in gender relations and the dynamics that shape them can only be studied in context. Consequently, the answers can only be found by studying humanitarian work in practice (Hilhorst & Jansen, 2010). I looked into how Greek NGOs (GNGOs) and International NGOs (INGOs) are designing and implementing their programmes and responding to particular vulnerabilities. Athens was the 'humanitarian arena' where I spent 43 days.

This research was conducted using qualitative research methods; suitable to investigate the dynamics and changes in gender relations, as they focus on the actor's understanding and perceptions of specific social dynamics within a specific context. The primary qualitative data were collected through in-depth, semi-structured interviews with development professionals employed in GNGOs and INGOs working in the humanitarian response in Athens. It is supported by secondary qualitative data from the relevant academic literature, grey literature, and reports from GNGOs and INGOs.

I have not rigidly applied a theoretical framework. However, qualitative rigour will be provided by an inductive method that will allow the data collected in the field to 'speak for itself' (Gioia & Hamilton, 2013; Tomas, 2006). My research is influenced by two theoretical frameworks; the 'actor-oriented' approach (Long, 2001) and the 'gendered geographies of power' approach (Mahler & Pessar, 2001). An 'actor-oriented' approach aims at investigating the social contexts that emerge from development programmes as well as the perceptions and responses of the affected social actors (Long, 2001). The 'gendered geographies of power' allow one to analyse an actor's agency and investigate their position within the multiple hierarchies of power that coexist in humanitarian contexts (Mahler & Pessar, 2001).

Data Collection

My research is primarily based on qualitative data collected during a field trip in Athens in the period from the 28th of June until the 15th of August 2017. Purposive and snowball sampling was used to identify those able to provide the most relevant information to my research question (Ritchie, 2013). I chose to interview aid workers who were active participants in the response in Athens and had a gender component in their work, the so-called 'gender experts.' This data col-

lection method was approved by an ethical review board prior to starting the fieldwork. All interviews were conducted in English, but the background of the interviewees was mixed (Greek and foreign). Anonymity was granted to every interviewee (name and organisation), and it was agreed that only their position and the nature of the organisation (Greek or International) would be revealed. I conducted 12 one-to-one, semi-structured, in-depth interviews with representatives from 4 different GNGOs, 6 INGOs and one representative from the Greek Ministry of Immigration.

Each interview focused on the humanitarian organizations' gender policies and programmes, the activities on Sexual and Gender Based Violence (SGBV) and evidence of any significant changes in gender relations. Interviews were recorded wherever permission was granted by the interviewee. Interestingly, when not recorded, interviewees felt more comfortable to raise specific concerns. For example, some proved to be very critical of the way in which gender was being integrated into the response in Greece and highlighted fundamental gaps in the way it was handled. Consequently, adopting an actor-oriented methodology allowed me to investigate how various actors faced problems that could arise (Long, 2001).

My curiosity led to most of the interviews turning into casual conversations. I adopted a feminist approach to interviewing, by which I became an active player in the development of data (Ritchie, 2013). This allowed 'us' to be more reflexive and interactive and occasionally step out of our roles as researcher and interviewee. Thus, it became clear that different social forms can develop under similar structural circumstances (Long, 2001).

Data Analysis

Several themes and key concepts were identified from the analysis of the data collected in the field. The data was organized using a non-cross-sectional approach, looking at parts of the data separately to outline the main themes from one particular case study (Ritchie, 2013). This was considered a suitable approach for a case study. It allowed the organisation of the data and made it easier to understand some complex narratives. The main themes emerging from the data analysis (identified as main challenges by interviewees) were women's empowerment and protection programmes and the prevalence of SGBV, which are those further explored in sections 4 and 5 of this article. Unfortunately, a number of themes emerged which have not been included in this research. For example, the gaps in the government's response or the gendered experiences of migration. However, this additional data can provide a basis for future research in the field of gender programming in unstable contexts. It appears that much of the research on humanitarian action with refugees has identified common gaps and comes up with similar policy recommendations. For example, poor coordination or limited participation of stakeholders (Bakewell, 2008). Perhaps unsurprisingly, there are common findings within my research and previous studies. This fact is rather frustrating. Why are these existing recommendations not yet put into practice? Perhaps, that is also a research area that deserves further investigation.

Challenges, Limitations and Ethical Considerations

Ideally, a strong case study combines many sources and techniques during the data collection process (Yin, 2013). This means that interviews with aid workers should be combined with site visits to observe how activities are being implemented on the ground. However, the available timeframe and the difficulties accessing refugee camps resulted in two short field visits to the camps in Malakasa and Schisto. Consequently, I cannot rely on the data gathered inside the

camps as a strong body of evidence. Nevertheless, I did have the opportunity to see how 'women safe spaces' were constructed and managed, which helped me understand the challenges and concerns that were often raised by the interviewees in this respect.

It is not easy to measure changes in gender relations. Actually, 'the assessment lies in the eye of the beholder' (Mahler & Pessar, 2001: 455). This means that the way in which changes are evaluated will, to a certain extent, correspond to my own perceptions and understandings of what gender equality and gender transformative programmes mean. 'Interview-fatigue' was also a challenge. Some people were tired of talking to researchers and journalists. After all, the refugee crisis in Greece started in 2015 and has 'benefited' from considerable media attention. However, this did not influence my results as it mostly affected people living in the camps, rather than the 'gender experts' who were the main subjects of this research. The process of change is an important aspect of the humanitarian response in Greece. From the 1st of August 2017, the situation in Greece is no longer considered an emergency, and the response is now managed by the Greek government. For this reason, more than one episode of data collection would have provided a better picture of the 'before and after' (Ritchie, 2013). Furthermore, I believe that in order to gain academic legitimacy people living in the camps should have also been part of my research but given the limits of my study and the ethical constraints, this was not possible.

The Gendered Response to the Refugee Crisis in Athens

This section provides an overview of the context in which gender programmes are implemented in Athens. First, it looks at the main activities that fall under the 'umbrella' of gender, highlighting 'who does what' in gender programming. This will unveil the gaps in the conceptualization and implementation of gender programmes. Understanding to what extent the response in Athens is 'gendered' will highlight the limitations and main challenges of these programmes in practice.

Gender relations, inequalities, and needs are not homogeneous across different humanitarian contexts (Olivius, 2016a). In March 2016, an EU-Turkey Agreement came into effect mandating that all irregular migrants crossing from Turkey to the Greek islands would be returned to Turkey. In exchange for every returned Syrian, one Syrian from Turkey would be resettled in the EU (Oxfam, 2016). As a result, Greece transitioned from a country of transit into a country of reception. The response is gradually adjusting to the changes, the landscape is chaotic, and the implementation is slow and 'ad hoc' (Hyndman 2010). The EU-Turkey deal was seen by many as a breaking point with a negative effect on gender programmes. For example, an aid worker who had been in Athens since the end of 2015 explained: 'it [the response] is not very well thought through and coordinated… nothing has been planned in advance; it is a complete mess' (I3). Another aid worker expressed frustration with the current situation, 'nobody cares, that's how things are' (I6). However, what might be perceived by some as a negative outcome, can also be seen as an opportunity to implement more sustainable programmes; 'when people are constantly moving they don't want to change, because they are not settled… However, after the EU-Turkey deal, this has changed' (I6).

'Doing gender' in Athens – Who does what?

The research has suggested that 'the integration of gender is done unconsciously, not targeted' (UNHCR, 2016) reflecting evidence from other studies (Olivius, 2014a; Turner, 2000; Freedman, 2010). When we talk about gender programming in humanitarian emergencies, we mainly refer to

two groups of activities: empowerment and protection. In general, empowerment activities are associated with advocacy and awareness raising whereas protection activities are related to the intervention on, and the prevention of Sexual and Gender Based Violence (SGBV). Although this section focuses on empowerment, both terms are often used interchangeably making unclear what their definition is or what exactly they refer to. This is exemplified by the following statement: 'We put this [empowerment] under the umbrella of protection […] The definition that we give means that ultimately, they would be able to get empowered as the term is and protect themselves, right?' (I5). This demonstrates a clear ambiguity in what the term actually means, and consequently, what its true potential is.

There were 22 actors 'doing gender' in Athens during the period this research was conducted. Most of these organisations have been working in the response since the end of 2015 and operate in the refugee camps of the Attica region[1]. The analysis of the collected data identified a number of categories of interventions carried out by the different organisations. These can be divided into five major categories: Management of Woman Safe Spaces (WSS), case management of SGBV, community outreach and advocacy (Empowerment), trainings (to other NGOs and Government) and psychosocial support. Not every organisation carried out activities under every category.[2] The following explains the nature of three of the categories outlined above:

> 'The structure of our programme has three pillars; the first is the development of a women's safe space within the camps, a space where women can go and spend some time, take part in activities, learn new skills, meet new women, discuss any concerns they have or get any information they need. They get a woman only space, accessible to women and girls over 12, and activities tailored around their requests and their needs. It can be a mix of recreational activities, educational activities, psychosocial activities […] Another core component of our programming is case management […] Supporting SGBV survivors through case management with case workers, supporting women and girls who have experienced violence, providing them with emotional support but also referring them to the right services safely, providing them with the information they need and being connected to services to support them in the best way, whether it is to respond to their medical needs, their legal needs or physiological needs […] Ensuring that we are very well connected within the camp but also outside of the camp […] The third [pillar] is community outreach […] Community acceptance at first was a big thing, ensuring we had certain community buy in to set up the space, informing people about it, what it was meant for […] Doing a lot of outreach within the community and specifically with the women and girls to get a sense of things coming up in the community through door to door outreach but also community discussions.' (I12)

According to interviewees, these activities are implemented through a 'survivor centred approach' by which 'caseworkers fulfill psychosocial and legal needs as required by survivors' (I1) Furthermore, since the beginning of 2016, UNHCR operates a National SGBV working group in Athens with bi-weekly meetings. All actors involved in the response are invited to participate. This working group is a forum to share information and 'identify the gaps and discuss what we

[1] See Appendix 1

[2] For example, trainings were mainly provided by UNFPA and Diotima. UNFPA provided trainings to both government officials and other NGOs on the ground; Diotima provided trainings mainly to government officials. In terms of the quality of community outreach and advocacy, Oxfam was the strongest actor in the field. Case management of SGBV was the responsibility of the IRC, which was occasionally supported by the DRC for 'monitoring and reporting on protection of human rights' (I7).

can do for them [the refugees]' (I8). However, some interviewees expressed concern regarding the difficulty of GNGOs (in the absence of human and financial resources) to comply with the optional, but rather significant participation in these meetings.

The data suggests that there were no activities targeting integration of refugees, which was considered key according to Greek aid workers: 'there is a huge integration problem which affects the work of all NGOs' (I4). The interviews also suggest that INGOs and GNGOs take different approaches. This might be a result of the different bureaucracy in INGOs and GNGOs, which influences the flexibility of their programs. Not only was there little collaboration between them, but there was also a degree of 'competition,' especially related to funding allocations. Often, INGOs were perceived as more 'capable' of managing funds, and consequently, are the ones who have easier access to them. In addition, a degree of secrecy was identified during the interviews, mainly from INGOs: 'People don't speak so openly because of this thing about not being able to talk about your mission freely […] It can become political in terms of funding and all that' (I7). In Athens, the assumed expertise of INGOs was not reflected in the design and implementation of programmes. Actually, it could be argued that the knowledge that GNGOs inevitably have of the context, puts them in a better place to implement a sustainable response. The following paragraphs will look at the empowerment activities implemented by NGOs in Athens, to highlight the main challenges. Protection and SGBV prevention activities will be further analysed in section 5.

The Nature of Empowerment Activities

Gender equality and women's empowerment have been reduced to buzzwords (Cornwall, 2015). The big gap in the language of women's empowerment demonstrates the need for more in-depth analysis of gender relations and their nature. Actually, the 'fuzziness' of the concept of empowerment can be attributed to a conscious political choice to avoid challenging the status quo (Eyben & Moore, 2009). As a result, 'the old feminist concept and practice of empowerment has been buried without ceremony' (Batliwala, 2007: 563). Gender power relations are dynamic, and the process of empowerment is necessarily one of change. Organisations should aim at supporting woman to hold on gains made during displacement (Clifton & Gell, 2001). Refugees renegotiate and redefine gender relations while they are in the camps, which can lead to women's empowerment (Krause, 2014).

Empowerment activities are often linked to refugee's participation. But, whose interests are served by these discourses of empowerment? (Fiddian-Qasmiyeh, 2010). The concept of agency is key to understand changes in gender relations resulting from the processes of empowerment (Essed et al., 2004). However, there are different interpretations of empowerment, and consequently, NGOs provide different kinds of assistance and advocacy. For example, an interviewee pointed out that 'our policies aim specifically at the reinforcement and autonomy of women' (I4). Nevertheless, admitted that 'gender issues and emancipation when working with populations whose cultural background is not always oriented towards these issues is complex' (I4). Szczepanikova (2010) argues that some forms of assistance can actually 'depoliticize refugees.' My research suggests that refugees' points of view are rarely incorporated into the operation of NGOs 'doing gender' in Athens. For example, even though interviewees claimed to gather feedback from refugees, I could not access any such document because they were confidential and integrated into the design of their response. Perhaps, women's participation in these activities is an instrument to optimize the efficiency of humanitarian interventions, rather than a tool

to promote gender equality (Olivius, 2014b). Changes in gender relations are hard to measure, and organisations tend to disregard their importance in the interest of effectiveness and perhaps, in the interest of those who fund such programmes. So, who are these programmes designed for? Are they targeted at improving refugees' living conditions? Or rather, are they responding to specific policy priorities?

Women's traditional roles further limit their capacity to participate; 'if they find jobs, the challenge is who will take care of their children while these women are at work…How can they emancipate?' (I4). Often women are absent from public spaces due to their care responsibilities (Oxfam, 2016). Furthermore, the context in which gender activities are implemented influences the engagement of participants. There are challenges in working inside the camps. Refugee camps are a 'poly-hierarchical space' characterised by limited livelihood perspectives and organisational rules (Krause, 2014). These rules define what refugees can and cannot do. Consequently, 'it is hard to talk to people about respecting women's rights when their rights are being violated every day by being in the camps.' (I6). Despite the challenges, the refugee crisis has broken many patterns and structures in relation to gender dynamics (Freedman et al., 2017). But, do these empowerment activities contribute to changing unequal power relations? Often, changing traditional gender roles and power imbalances is seen as a mountain too high to climb.

Empowerment is fundamentally about changing power relations (Cornwall, 2015). Perhaps, displacement can be seen as an opportunity to bring social change (Olivius, 2016a). The data from the field suggests that achieving social change in this context is not easy and rather unlikely. However, aid workers often saw some isolated events as examples of empowerment; 'gains' achieved by the implementation of their activities:

> 'There was one really great moment back in December, we had organised various activities, and in one of them we did some sort of field trip, we took women from Eleonas and Skaramagas camp to the Acropolis museum and to the centre of Athens for the day […] One of the women who came with us was living in a tent, in the camp […] When she came back to camp, she was told that she was finally being moved to a container and she turned to our team, bursting with joy and said, "this is the best day I have had in so many years, I have been out of the house for the whole day, without my husband, without my children, being able to take some time for myself, and with friends and now I have been told that I can move to a decent housing" […] It just showed how a day out was like such a major thing […] One of the bigger things that we are trying to work on is making women feel better equipped and have more dignity to deal with their situation and […] this example shows the impact that it can have on their general outlook on the situation.' (I12)

The above shows some transformative potential in simple things like day trips, however, these representations of empowered women are completely devoid of any images of the men in their lives (Cornwall, 2015). Relationships are generally of groups of women working together in imagined harmony; 'we do workshops were women participate, they make bracelets, or they sew' (I4). Men and boys disappear into a completely different field. Only once the presence of men was mentioned: 'we read poems about love, which gives them a chance to discuss about gender roles through an artistic project, which is not real life […] Some women said to their husbands, joking, "you cook today"' (I4). As a result, empowerment is mistakenly being understood as a 'women's issue' rather than a relational one. Consequently, the capacity of NGOs to influence gender relations in a positive and sustainable way is limited (Bushra 2000).

The lack of a holistic approach to empowerment activities was confirmed by my research. The empowerment approach, as understood by feminists, is not consistently adopted by humanitarian projects and programs and gender equality is often overlooked. Gender has become an instrument for humanitarian analysis and planning, disconnected from its feminist origins (Olivius, 2014a). It is being integrated into ways that ignore the relations of power that the concept of gender intended to challenge and change (ibid.) As an aid worker explained: 'I don't think that the goal in gender based activities is to bring back gender equality […] We are not going to change people's behaviours just by doing these activities' (I7)

Implementation Gaps and Challenges

Problems arise from the way gender programmes are implemented (Grabska, 2010). It is not enough to design 'good quality programmes,' they have to work on the ground. There are three major challenges identified in relation to the implementation of gender programmes in Athens. Firstly, the lack of coordination between different actors on the ground. Secondly, the lack of cultural and context specific programmes. Thirdly, the uncertainty and the lack of sustainability.

The lack of coordination between actors involved in the integration of gender in the humanitarian response in Athens was evident. While most interviewees acknowledged that 'it is all about building relationships and trust in order to collaborate effectively with all actors on the ground' (I3), it was observable that information was often not shared between organisations, especially between INGOs and Greek NGOs. There were several occasions where I had more information about what a specific INGO was doing than actors involved in similar activities. Inevitably, this has a negative effect on the response. Proper planning and implementation are not possible without communication and information flow. The second challenge is related to the way in which culture is being integrated into the response. Agencies aim to be culturally specific by using traditional methods of solving issues inside the camps (Freedman, 2010). This often involves the elders. However, elders are often men. Consequently, these methods rarely challenge traditional gender roles, and can rather reinforce them. Thirdly, aid workers have repeatedly highlighted the lack of engagement in their activities, not only because of language barriers and lack of appropriate translators but because of the volatility of the context. After all, 'for refugees, physical mobility is often short-term, one way and violence induced' (Nolin, 2006: 183). Obviously, this affects the sustainability of the programmes and has forced some organisations to change their strategies:

> 'When you are working in camps that are meant to be dismantled at some point, it is hard to create sustainability […] This is one of the reasons why we started working in the urban setting […] It could be a way to have more of a durable impact.' (I12)

This created frustration for aid workers working on the ground; 'it's a very special situation here, people came here with one goal, but they found themselves trapped […] It is very, very unstable' (I7). Sadly, this is just half of the story. The following section will look at the 'other half' of gender programming: SGBV and protection, and the challenges attached to them.

Protection Programmes and SGBV inside and outside the refugee camps in Athens

The previous section looked at the general aspects of gender programmes in the context of the 'refugee crisis' in Athens. It highlighted the two main activities implemented through gender programming: protection and empowerment. In particular, it analysed the implementation of empowerment activities and their challenges. This section will look at the protection programmes and will highlight the prevalence of Sexual and Gender-Based Violence (SGBV) in Athens. Protection activities are related to interventions on and prevention of SGBV. Analysing both categories in depth will provide a full picture of the overall gender programming in Athens.

SGBV is identified both as a reason why refugees and migrants leave countries of origin and a reality along the migration route (UNHCR, 2016). Interviewees indicated that most women who arrive in Greece have survived SGBV during their journey, and recognized that it was widely prevalent in Greece. This points to a 'continuum of violence' (Krause, 2015). It is estimated that those involved in case management and prevention of SGBV manage 45 cases of SGBV per month on average in Greece (Diotima 2016). This indicates that refugee women still face serious risks in their protection and are vulnerable to SGBV in refugee camps (Buscher, 2010; UNHCR, 2016; Moughalian, 2016). Aid workers mentioned that they kept a record of all the cases of SGBV inside the camp, but the data was not public and 'non-representative of the phenomenon' (I8). On a similar note, the study by Tappis et al. (2016), provides a comprehensive overview of scientific publications relating to the prevention of SGBV in refugee populations. One of the key findings in this study is the large gap in the investigation and effective documentation of SGBV prevention strategies in refugee communities. This absence of reliable data limits the ability to draw new knowledge from the experience of implementation of previous programs or interventions (ibid.).

This article aims at filling this gap by pointing out what contribution do gender programmes in Athens bring to the reinforcement of traditional gender roles. I argue that this should be a priority for the global humanitarian community. As part of protection programmes, most aid agencies working in Greece carry out activities related to the management of safe spaces, referrals, medical interventions and security related interventions. All actors involved in the response in Athens should be aware and convinced that SGBV occurs in all its forms and is a life-threatening issue, regardless of the existence or not of specific evidence.

Gender or Woman? The 'Woman-Only' Approach

Protection programming clearly focuses on women, pictures them as vulnerable and further reinforces their marginalization and lack of agency (Szczepanikova, 2010). Most of the protection programming is done 'by and for' women and girls (Michau & Zimmerman, 2015). Consequently, cases of SGBV against other groups are not addressed (Buscher, 2010) As an aid worker pointed out, 'when we talk about gender we talk about women […] The SGBV cases that come out are mostly women, even though there are also a lot of cases of SGBV against gay men… SGBV against women is the obvious one.' (I5). Furthermore, the data shows that there are unfounded assumptions regarding the inclusion of men in gender programming: 'Male engagement requires sort of a longer outlook and a more sustainable approach, you want to be somewhere for a long time to really see behavioural change' (I12)

Is talking about SGBV against men not as 'attractive' as talking about SGBV against women? This is a genderless phenomenon. Women are not the only victims of sexual violence, and sexual violence is not the only form of GBV (Dolan, 2014a). It is important to include a wider range of survivors: men, Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, Intersex, and Queer (LGBTIQ), to replace the current static model of gender vulnerability (ibid.). In other words, 'making sure that programs are designed to respond also to male and LGBTIQ survivors is a challenge and a must' (I9). In Athens, there is the absence of targeted support services for male and LGBTIQ survivors of SGBV. There is an exclusive focus on awareness rather than on supporting changes in attitudes which contributes to unequal gender relations (Michau & Zimmerman, 2015). For example, the only NGO conducting 'male engagement sessions' explained:

> 'No-one engages with men […] Men are considered non-vulnerable […] We think that everyone is vulnerable because everyone's rights are violated. We try to bring in the feminist agenda and talk about gender issues, to sensitize men and make them understand that they should lose their privileges for everyone to be equal.' (I6)

Where do men fit? – 'positive' and 'negative' masculinities

Traditional gender roles change during encampment. Krause (2015) points out that traditional patriarchal gender roles are 'familiar power imbalances.' Consequently, an 'unfamiliar power imbalance' appears when women take up more responsibilities and men lose their 'traditional masculine roles.' These 'forced' changes in traditional gender roles can create resistance which can result in SGBV (ibid.). Thus, men's inclusion is key to gender-transformative programmes, despite the challenges it might bring.

Olivius (2016b) argues that there are three representations of male refugees in NGOs' humanitarian responses. Firstly, refugee men are seen as perpetrators of violence. This violent nature is seen as 'rooted' in men's attitudes. As an interviewee mentioned: 'It is difficult to change behaviours… It is rooted' (I8). Consequently, gender interventions aim at 'educating' men to become more 'civilized.' Secondly, men can be seen as potential allies, due to their privileged position (Olivius, 2016b). However, to get their 'buy in,' gender justice must be contextualized in terms of gender complementarity. As a result, gender becomes 'depoliticized' (ibid.). Particularly concerning is the fact that these approaches do not allow male dominance to be explicitly challenged (Olivius, 2016b). By 'privileging' men and placing them at the centre, their already strong role is reinforced, and inevitably, the unequal power balance between men and women exacerbated. Thirdly, refugee men are seen as 'emasculated troublemakers' (Olivius, 2016b; Lukunka, 2012). This approach considers displacement to disempower men and prevent them from fulfilling their traditional gender role as protectors and providers. The displacement and the empowerment programmes implemented by NGOs are the cause of men's frustration (Olivius, 2016b). Therefore, challenging traditional gender roles is undesirable because it causes problems for men (ibid.). However, not challenging traditional gender roles because 'it makes men angry' reinforces men's privileged position.

Because of women 'transgressing gender expectations' (Hynes & Yount, 2016) changes in power and gender relations can increase incidence of IPV. Field evidence suggests that rather than changing gender relations to become more equal, inequalities are exacerbated by the context and the pressure on both men and women as a result of uncertainty and unsafety. In other words, these programmes can have the opposite effect than intended. For example, according to

an interviewee, there were tensions whenever a woman found a job. Men were often not happy with it, and sometimes they would not allow their wife to work, regardless of the need. Consequently, programs aiming at empowering women economically should take into consideration that men who perceive themselves to be economically vulnerable, could be more likely to commit SGBV (Tappis et al., 2016). For example, Falb & Gupta (2014)'s research looks at men's experiences with women's economic empowerment programmes. They argue that addressing men's concerns reduces violence against women (Falb & Gupta, 2014). Economic prosperity is one of the key definitions of manhood and masculinity, so 'we need to fight the stereotypes by bringing in different narratives, for example, male vulnerabilities' (I6).

There are many solutions put forward by the literature to successfully include men in SGBV activities. Olivius (2016b) suggests that men could be offered training in areas traditionally considered as female, and vice versa, to expand conceptions of male and female work and provide equal economic opportunities for men and women (Olivius, 2016b). Furthermore, SGBV prevention programmes should be culturally sensitive (Hough 2013). 'These programmes have to be put into context because if they are not culturally appropriate, they would be doing more harm than good' (I7). Research on gendered attitudes towards SGBV in Eastern DRC (Kelly & Vanrooyen, 2012) highlights the importance of the wider social consequences of SGBV, in particular, its impact on communities. Programming taking the communities' concerns into account can contribute to their protection and to the prevention of more cases of SGBV (ibid.).

Obstacles and Challenges to SGBV prevention and protection

SGBV survivors face many legal and practical obstacles while attempting to access services, rights, and protection (Freedman, 2010). As a result, services are available but inaccessible (Ho & Pavlish, 2011). The data gathered in the field suggests that there are several obstacles to the effective implementation of protection programmes in Athens. Firstly, it is often unclear 'who does what' as a result of a lack of coordination and common Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs). The ambiguity about the roles and responsibilities of all actors working on the ground was observable during my visits to the refugee camps. How can NGOs address refugee's concerns if they themselves do not know who they have to talk to? An aid worker explained that 'in many places, there is no SGBV actor […] There is ignorance of what the referral pathway is, and to whom they [refugees] can address concerns' (I8). Secondly, medical support services are inadequate. 'There are gaps with respect to medical and vulnerability assessment, recognizing victims of SGBV, and in the clinical management of rape' (I5) For example, most of the doctors are men and only speak Greek, disregarding that 'when you have a woman who has been abused it is easier for her to talk to another woman' (I7). Equally critical is the fact that 'most translators are men' (I2). Consequently, 'without a women interpreter, women are not open to speak about certain issues' (I4). In other words, the disclosure of an incident of SGBV becomes easier if the aid worker is a woman (in case of a female SGBV survivor). The problem is even more intense in shelters (Diotima, 2016). Without the presence of an interpreter, communication with the other residents (Greek or migrant) becomes impossible. Aid workers explained that many SGBV survivors are not willing to be transferred to shelters, an isolated and unfamiliar place in their eyes, and chose to remain subject to SGBV in the refugee camps. Thirdly, there is 'lack of competent humanitarian professionals with gender expertise who can understand standards and implementation' (I3). There are not enough SGBV 'experts' involved in the response in Athens (UNHCR, 2016). Most of the responses to protection risks are done in an 'ad hoc' manner: 'If

we cannot prevent some SGBV cases, at least we can do something after it happens […] You cannot foresee when someone is going to beat up his wife […] You cannot stop it from happening […] Being here is better than nothing' (I7).

Closely related to the above are the incomplete and inadequate referral pathways, and the challenges placing women in shelters. The lack of coordination between different organizations working in refugee camps results in delayed referrals and the lack of immediate intervention by the authorities (Diotima, 2016). As an aid worker explained: 'one of our biggest challenges has been placing women in shelters, shelters were very few for the number of people in need, and they were not adequately equipped to receive women who were not Greek' (I12). The interviewee illustrated the context in detail:

> 'There can be emergency placements but this is very difficult, places are limited […] If you go through the normal process, first, you have to conduct multiple tests in the hospital, have a psychological assessment to ensure that you can live in an environment with other people and then file a formal request which can take few months to get a place in a shelter […] Very often, when you make a request for a shelter it is because there is a high level of risk within your household or within the community.' (I12)

Often NGOs identify incidents in refugee camps and refer them to shelters without any appropriate documentation (history of the survivor or medical examinations) but only a 'single piece of paper with their address [container number] written on it' (I4). Consequently, many cases do not receive the necessary support. However, aid workers have learned to 'navigate the system' in order to mitigate the risks of SGBV: 'we learned our way through the system…now we are much better at ensuring all these things are done very quickly and in the most efficient way, as opposed to a year ago when we were just realising how complicated all this was' (I12)

These challenges are worsened by the location of refugee camps; far from urban areas and without easy access to them. This leads to social isolation and difficulty to access public services. Limited mobility is a disproportionate burden for refugee women, particularly those who are single mothers or pregnant (Diotima, 2016). Furthermore, there are serious safety and security issues derived from this environment. Refugee camps can be seen as conflict zones (Hyndman, 2004) 'sites of violence, which is clearly gendered in nature' (Freedman 2015, 37). The inadequate security presence in the sites and the clear lack of gender balance amongst the security staff (police and army) was evident, as confirmed by an aid worker: 'there is not much, if at all, women's representation within the camps, the representation is primarily male' (I5). Nevertheless, to some extent, gender related concerns have been considered in some sites. For example, an interviewee described their intervention to improve safety in Eleonas:

> 'An area in Eleonas is poorly lit and some women are deciding not to walk there after 8 pm, we will work with our wash team to see if we can set up a lamp there and then they might feel like they can really move across camp at any time, so these kinds of things, quite small scale obviously, but definitely making a difference.' (I12)

Directly linked to the lack of security inside the camps is the impunity of perpetrators, which discourages woman from reporting (Krause, 2015). In combination with the precarious living conditions in the camps, the fear of social stigmatization and social marginalization is fundamental to the refugees' inability to seek help (especially SGBV survivors) as reporting and prosecu-

tion procedures can 'seek to institutionalize women's bodies' (Hyndman, 1998: 253). Furthermore, refugees (especially women) are unaware of their rights and their entitlement to protection and assistance. Consequently, there can't be accountability when people lack the power to make their own choices and claim their rights (Ho & Pavlish, 2011). Interviewees explained that 'Police is a push away factor [for reporting].' (I9). They call the police often, but police refuse to intervene, claiming that SGBV is a difficult situation to manage and they lack the appropriate training. This creates lack of confidence, contributing to a sense of fear and insecurity experienced not only by refugees but also by aid workers themselves. This insecurity intensifies during the hours that NGOs leave the accommodation structures and creates the perfect environment for the reproduction of SGBV with impunity. So, are there any safe spaces in a refugee camp? (Krause, 2015)

The creation of women and girl's safe spaces (WGSS) has emerged as a key strategy for the protection and empowerment of women and girls in the context of humanitarian emergencies (UNFPA, 2015). An aid worker defined them as 'a space where women can go and spend some time, take part in activities, learn new skills, meet new women, discuss any concerns they have or get any information they need' (I12). In practice, things are very different; 'something that looks like a one stop shop' (I7). Krause (2015) argues that the so-called safe spaces are a temporary solution that can only provide protection for few people. Actually, SGBV can take place anywhere and anytime in the refugee settlement (ibid.). This is supported by the data gathered in the field and was evident when I visited the 'safe' space in Malakasa.

According to Michau & Zimmerman, 'transformation of the long standing political structures, deeply entrenched socially accepted practices, and normative behaviours, that maintain women's and girl's' inequality and tolerance of violence against women and girls, is complex, but achievable' (Michau & Zimmerman, 2015: 3) Why, then, is most of the research on SGBV coming to the same conclusions for the past 10 years, with little change in practice? Why are programmes being designed in the same way, despite the amount of information there is around how to improve their effectiveness? Perhaps the context in which these programmes are implemented hinders their potential to challenge the status quo. Nevertheless, there is a clear need for a radical change in the way SGBV protection and prevention is being approached.

Conclusion

This article has argued that GNGOs and INGOs, through the implementation of gender programmes, can contribute to reinforcing traditional gender roles instead of challenging them. The data suggest that humanitarian interventions shape gender relations and highlight the need to transform the way women's rights and gender equality are considered and addressed. Gender transformative programmes which consider unequal gender relations, and challenge them, are necessary. Several themes have emerged from the preceding chapters. These themes are presented here in combination with recommendations based on the findings of this article. However, further research would be necessary for a more representative account of the reality in Athens.

First, the Greek state's implementation capacity is a glaring shortcoming. This raises issues beyond Greece's capacity to fulfill its humanitarian obligations. For example, civil servants face great challenges when implementing new procedures while at the same time operating existing ones (McDonough & Tsourdi, 2012). The data suggests that even when sufficient resources are available, the Greek state is unable to deliver services efficiently. Therefore, a review of the

integration of gender in the humanitarian response in Athens should consider the broader economic crisis and the limitations and capacity gaps that it entails.

Second, this article highlighted the importance of context specificities. The change of situation in Greece from 'emergency' to 'stable,' meant not only the withdrawal of INGOs but also the reduction in resources available for 2017. Nevertheless, all planning and policy measures must aim at mainstreaming gender in every stage. The effort is twofold: Greece should incorporate a 'gender lens' in the response and the programmes designed to implement it, and Europe should allocate funding in a way that ensures that gender issues are being addressed and the needs of the refugees in Greece are adequately met.

Third, the lack of coordination between actors results in bottlenecks and gaps. It has unfolded rivalries, resulting in lack of common understanding and conflicting methodologies. The problems arising from the response should be addressed as common problems, rather than solely problems derived from the lack of capacity of the Greek state. A response based on a more holistic approach to gender would consider that external actors can improve the quality of the response and increase the capacity of the Greek state (McDonough & Tsourdi, 2012). For example, UNFPA trainings can help civil servants, and aid workers understand their humanitarian duties in terms of gender. Furthermore, the potential of the Greek civil society and the GNGOs should not be underestimated. They are well placed to lend their gender 'expertise' and support the Greek Government through this 'transition' period.

Fourth, safety and security need to be at the forefront. Improving SGBV prevention and response is a life-saving intervention. Fifth, including men in every stage of gender programming, while simultaneously expanding women's empowerment, is key to enable them to gain skills and capacity to challenge unequal power relations originating from traditional gender roles. Men should not be seen as the 'disposable sex' (Farell, 2012) but rather incorporated in every activity that aims at challenging traditional gender roles and inequalities.

Perhaps unsurprisingly, 'habitual practice prevented deliberation and debate, thus allowing the dominant instrumentalist discourse to be sustained by default' (Eyben, 2010: 276) Unfortunately, my research shows that well known challenges in the literature are still evident. What does this say about the effectiveness of these approaches? And more importantly, why have practices on the ground not changed? 'We need to ask why change is not happening, what works and what is next' (Rao & Kelleher, 2005: 57). To implement gender-transformative programmes, a holistic approach to empower and protect women, men, girls, and boys is necessary. There is a need to conduct further research on changes in gender roles in humanitarian emergencies, considering that these changes can be approached as opportunities to bring about gender equality. Supporting women's activism to challenge gender power relations and achieve institutional change is the key to social transformation (Rao & Kelleher, 2005). This should be the result of a joint effort between NGOs, CSOs, the Government and the refugees and migrants themselves. The few exceptions highlighted in this article should become the norm; challenging the status quo and breaking the rules of patriarchy embedded in our society. Gender is not about women or men; it is about a much wider spectrum of identities and struggles that form the nature of its power.

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Appendix 1 – GNGO´s and INGO working in the Attica Region (Athens)

International organizations: United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA) and United Nations International Children's Emergency Fund (UNICEF)
International NGOs (INGOs): ActionAid, Danish Refugee Council (DRC), International Medical Corps (IMC), International Organization Migration (IOM), International Rescue Committee (IRC), Médecins du Monde (MdM), Médecins Sans Frontières (MSF) and Oxfam.
Greek NGOs (GNGOs): Arsis, A21, Diotima, Faros, Greek Council for Refugees (GCR), Lighthouse Relief, Melissa Network and Praksis.
Governmental Agencies: Asylum Service, General Secretariat for Gender Equality, Reception and Identification Service (RIS) and the Research Centre for Gender Equality (KETHI).

Appendix 2 – Table of Interviews

Interviewee (I)	Position	Nature of Organisation	Date of Interview
I1	Women Protection and Empowerment Coordinator	INGO	5.07.2017
I2	Lawyer	Greek NGO	11.07.2017
I3	Head of Humanitarian Response	INGO	14.07.2017
I4	Protection Officer	Greek NGO	17.07.2017
I5	Gender Officer	INGO	18.07.2017
I6	Project Manager and Senior Researcher	Greek NGO	21.07.2017
I7	Protection Assistant	INGO	23.07.2017
I8	Protection Associate	INGO	25.07.2017
I9	SGBV Specialist	INGO	26.07.2017
I10	Woman Safe Space Field Coordinator	Greek NGO	27.07.2017
I11	Camp Manager	Greek Ministry of Immigration	28.07.2017
I12	Women Protection and Empowerment Manager	INGO	15.08.2017

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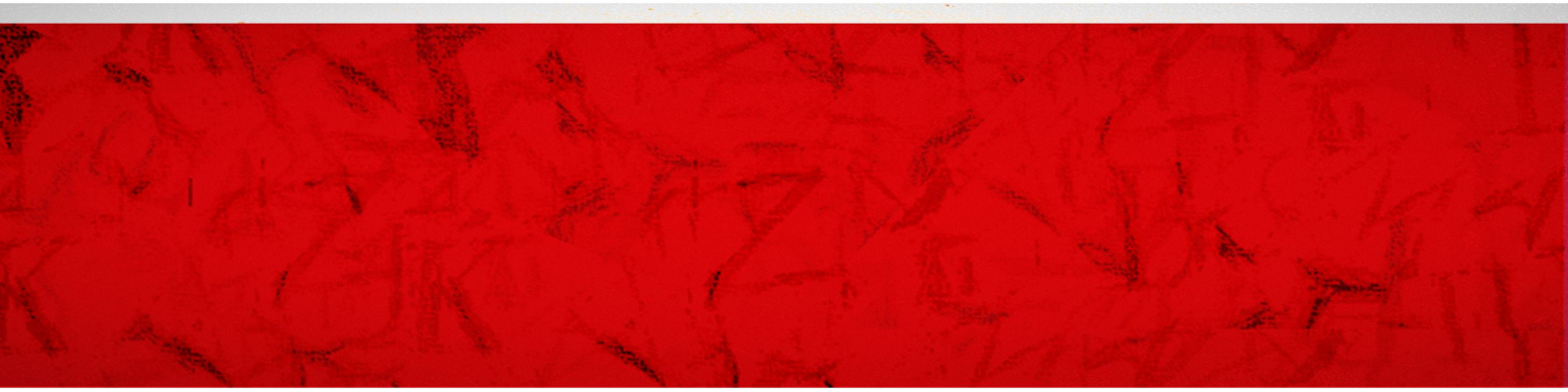

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