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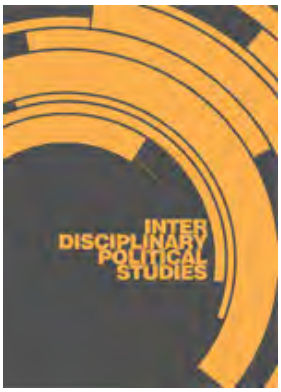

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EDITORIAL

Studying Insurgencies

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To come to terms with how insurgencies come about, how they seek different types of relationship with local populations and why people chose to join them we must acknowledge that many current insurgencies do not fit established analytical categories anymore. In his examination of the diversity of armed insurgencies in Africa at the end of the twentieth century, Christopher Clapham (1998: 6-7) distinguished between four broad groups of armed insurgencies. In his typology, the groups were divided into 1. liberation insurgencies (such as the anti-colonial nationalist movements (e.g. Mau Mau in Kenya); 2. separatist insurgencies (e.g. the Eritrean People's Liberation Front); 3. reform insurgencies (e.g. Museveni's National Resistance Army in Uganda; 4. warlord insurgencies (e.g. Charles Taylor's National Patriotic Front of Liberia and Foday Sankoh's Revolutionary United Front in Sierra Leone).

Clapham's typology was extremely useful, but the majority of recent insurgencies do not easily fit into the categories above – the only one that still is much

referred to is the 'warlord' insurgencies, and even that one has lost most of its acclaimed analytical value (see Bøås and Dunn 2017). Thus, while Clapham's 1998 collection is still one of the very best attempts to study insurgencies in a comparative manner, the external and internal environments of contemporary insurgencies have changed significantly, and the characteristics, dynamics and contexts of insurgencies are therefore clearly not the same across time and space.

However, it has been argued that for insurgent groups the objective of armed conflict is not the defeat of the enemy in battle, but the continuation of fighting for profit (Keen 2000). While it is important to acknowledge the complex ways in which insurgencies have been exploiting opportunities provided to them by transformations in the global economy, explanations primarily focusing on the economic agendas of armed actors are highly problematic. Such a myopic focus may help explain how some conflicts are sustained, but it rarely tells us much about why conflicts start in the first place. It would be a mistake, for example, to assume that the recent wars in Central and West Africa started as a competition over control of alluvial diamonds, coltan and other natural resources or that the current conflict in the Sahel is only a by-product of the collusion of the forces of transnational crime and regional/international Jihadists that has produced a regional crime-terror nexus (see Bøås 2015a).

In both Sierra Leone and the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC), the integration of the extraction and marketing of natural resources to the conflicts only occurred once the conflicts were well under way. Similarly, while there is no doubt that illicit goods are transported across the Sahel, there is also a wide spectrum of projects of political and social resistance at play in the same area – some peaceful, others armed. Some of these projects have a rather secular origin, while others are anchored to religious inspirations, some of these are also involved in the transport

and protection of illicit goods. Some of those involved in this business are mainly profit-seeking actors; others mainly aim to fund resistance projects. However, many are also involved in various minor roles in both smuggling operations and resistance projects as a coping strategy (Bøås 2015b). Nor does an exclusive focus on illicit goods or natural resource extraction explain why these incentives have come to play such an important part in recent wars: that is, the economic agenda research assumes the profit motive on the part of the belligerents without exploring why or to what extent political-military actors become profit-seeking, market-based actors. To understand this transformation, we need to take into account political, cultural and historical factors in addition to the economic dimension to conflict. This is precisely where the essays in this special issue has much to offer: its emphasis on the need to always contextualise conflict and conflict economies indeed helps us approaching insurgencies as a broad field of relational agents that dynamically attempt to navigate an evolving field - a field that is at the same time constantly changing and deeply entrenched in the politics of people and place that spans decades and centuries. This should be evident even if, obviously, economic agendas are an integral part of contemporary insurgent warfare.

1. Understanding insurgency violence

To understand insurgencies and the insurgents involved in them in the Global South, we need a more nuanced understanding of what war and violence are all about (see Shelby Ward in this volume that reminds us about the intimate relationship between violence and nation-building). The conflicts are most often deeply embedded in the history of people and place, and not only in colonial history and the transformation to independent states, but in the totality of history. Recent and distant pasts relate in direct, albeit also sometimes in rather unexpected ways, to on-

going processes of social change. For example, many of the events and relationships that characterise Africa's recent history – including politics and political violence – are intimately entangled in people's perceptions of their social and ethnic identities. These identity perceptions are social constructions; representations that change over time and are often distorted and manipulated, particularly as part of discourses of domination emanating from those in power in successive colonial and postcolonial regimes (see Atkinson 1994).

Armed struggle has always been in a constant state of flux. As new technologies, strategies, and pathways to resistance emerge, existing insurgencies attempt to adapt while new ones emerge (see Francesco Buscemi in this volume). Global and regional forces – be they political, economic, or social – impact on the context of the armed struggles in multiple, and often unpredictable, ways. In some cases, local causes of conflicts become interconnected, intertwined, and layered to produce a constantly shifting landscape. It is therefore important to acknowledge that armed insurgencies are not only forces of disorder, but equally parts of emerging systems of governance (see Sara Merabti in this volume). In fact, what we see today, in the cases where armed insurgencies exist over a prolonged period of time, is that a monopolised system of governance has either broken completely down or weakened to the extent that competing systems have emerged (Bøås and Dunn 2017).

These new systems are characterised by flexibility and adaptability, where actors compete for the role of the nodal point in between various networks of attempted informal governance. Such networks collaborate but also compete. At times they even are in violent conflict with each other over the issue of control. The fluidity of these networks can be reflected in the continuing existence – but changing function – of regional and local 'big men' within these armed insurgencies. In

many conflict-prone societies new forms and increasing degree with which these 'big men' (and their networks of governance) are connected to other regional and international networks and markets, further lead to the emergence of networks that are increasingly characterised by their adaptability and pragmatic shifting of alliances.

Regardless of the internal dynamics, new networks of power and rule are constructed that challenge – and replace – existing systems of governance. What we see are complex political configurations that have shifted away from monopolised systems of governance and patronage to one characterised by a multitude of shifting alliances due to the completion between actors and networks of patronage. The consequence of this for a research agenda that aim to understand violent conflict and the involvement of armed non-state actors therein, is that it is confronted with a field of constant flux and fragmentation. In such an intellectual endeavour, the important dimension to keep track is less the very agents of violence: but rather, the nodal points in these networks of governance and violence, and their ability to maintain networks across space and time should increasingly come under the spotlight (Bøås and Dunn 2017).

Thus, if we take recent conflict trends as a guide to the future, the field is and will continue to be characterised by complicated conflicts in politically difficult terrains. Conflicts where there is no clear endgame in sight, and where United Nations (UN)' missions or other international peace-building interventions will be left to grapple with weak states, increasingly unpopular national leaders with low levels of legitimacy. Such missions and interventions may therefore easily end up fighting or attempting to control insurgents that are not only hard to beat militarily, but also that have agendas which leaves little if any room for a negotiated settlement to the conflict. Such conflicts will also most likely take place in areas of the world where

local livelihoods are under pressure from a number of external shocks, including increased climatic variability, and the states in question are rarely seen as an actor able to offer local populations much support. Often it will be the opposite: the state(s) are seen as part of the problem and not the solution (see Alessio Iocchi in this volume).

This 'messiness' of things to come is easily observable in a number of areas in which the UN and the international community at large are engaged in by means of various peace operations such as in Afghanistan, the border areas between Iraq and Syria and the Sahel. Here international stabilisation efforts often come short as they fail to comprehend local contexts as well as perceptions of conflict and conflict resolution (see Laura Berlingozzi in this volume). Even if all of these conflict areas come with their own set of unique challenges, there are also certain commonalities that need to be thought through carefully. Thus, even if underlying cleavages and conflict lines may be relatively permanent, we are also currently faced with a new type of insurgencies that does not fit very well with the established conceptual categories. These new 'insurgents' that we can observe in parts of Africa and the Middle East are not uniquely fighting for national liberation, involved in a separatist struggle, have a revolutionary character in the traditional sense, nor are they just a warlord profit-maximising operation. However, even if they are none of these, they also contain traces of each and every one of them.

2. A new wave of insurgencies?

The conflict zone of the Mali-Sahel periphery offers an apt illustration of the arguments made above. It is crisscrossed by a number of old cleavages. Some date back to precolonial times as is the case of the relationship between the Tuareg of Mali and the black majority population. This cleavage, however, has frozen as

successive series of regimes in Bamako have been unable to unpack the contractions colonialism created when a previous elite trade-and-warrior group, e.g. the Tuareg was turned into a permanent political minority. after Mali gained independence from France. Others have a more contemporary origin, but still create considerable regional ramifications as is the case of groups that lost the Algerian civil war in the 1990s, but has transformed themselves into regional insurgencies, i.e., al-Qaeda in the Islamic Maghreb (AQIM).

The Sahel also undoubtedly consists of states lacking in state capacity as well as legitimacy. It is an area of the world where local livelihoods are under immense pressure due to a combination of increased climatic variability and the inability of both the states in the region and the international community to react forcefully and adequately to this. This part of the world is a much used passage for weapons and drugs as well as people trying to get out of Africa (see for example Shaw and Tinti 2014), and a number of insurgencies are active in the region, both Jihadist and secular organisations.

However, this does not mean that the Sahel has become the prototype of a 'new war' – a war that takes place in an 'ungoverned space' constituted by a nexus of transnational crime and global terrorism. This part of the world is not without certain levels of order and governance, yet these levels are also clearly of another type than the one that students read about in standard political science textbooks. Instead, what we need to draw attention to is the dense conglomeration of overlapping and competing 'big men' networks of informal/illicit trade, governance and resistance that exists in this area. These operates as networks based on personal power as the 'attainment of big man status is the outcome of a series of acts which elevate a person above the common herd and attract him a coterie of loyal, lesser men' (Sahlins 1963: 289). These networks vary in depth, geographical reach and

ability to penetrate the state, but all of them are unstable, changing and constantly adaptable, and while they rest on some sort of common interests, participants do not necessarily share the same goals or have similar reasons for being involved.

The elevation to 'big man' status does not follow one universal path. It varies in time and space and it can be based on different combinations of power. However, in an area such as this where authority is always contested, it must include the ability to use force, to generate resources and not the least to locate authority in and between the state and the informal. The example of the Sahel 'big man' Ibrahim Ag Bahanga illustrates this. Ag Bahanga embarked on his 'big man' career during the Tuareg rebellion in the 1990s as a lesser rebel leader, and gained control of a commune (division of local government) after the rebellion ended. He was involved in trade and smuggling; he led other rebellions, and at the same time, until his death in August 2011 maintained relationships with neighbouring governments, e.g. Algeria and Libya, as well as with certain segments of the Malian government and administration. Thus, his status as a 'big man' was not only based on one of these activities, but the totality of them and thereby his ability to, if not control, at least influence and maintain different and also partly overlapping networks that in their own right do not have much commonality with regard to long-term objectives and strategy (Bøås 2015b).

Some of these networks and the 'big men' involved are therefore mainly about criminality (and coping), whereas others make use of such activities to finance various projects of resistance (secular and religious). This may bring different networks and their 'big men' into conflict with each other, but conflict at certain times does not prevent collaboration and collusion during other times and circumstances, thus suggesting that a nexus of transnational crime and global terrorism does not exist in a form that makes it possible to depict it as a fixed entity with permanent

organisational features. Rather, the logic of these operations and networks involved is ambiguity and flexibility, and the actors involved are 'flexians' who adapt themselves and their resources to ever-changing circumstances in the terrain in which they operate (see also Wedel 2009 or Guichaoua 2011).

This does not mean that plasticity is total. Certain relationships and networks are not only more possible than others, but also more permanent. Ethnicity and kinship may matter, but so do the dangers of certain relationships, no matter how profitable they may be. One example is the networks of the Jihadist Mokhtar Belmokhtar. It is reasonable to claim that most of this more secular-oriented criminal networks vanished the moment he took responsibility for the In Aménas attack in Algeria in January 2013. This did not make doing business with him less profitable per se, but it certainly made it too dangerous.

What the examples above suggest is that the logic of the relationship between criminality, coping and resistance in the Sahel periphery to a certain degree can be described as 'ships passing in the night', but certain 'ships' pass each other more frequently than others. Nonetheless, what this leaves us with is a scenario where different competing 'big men' vie for the role of nodal points in different networks of informal governance: some mainly profit-driven, others combining income-generating strategies with social and political objectives (social and religious), yet other simply aiming to come (and hopefully thrive in the future). As the very constellation of these networks is changing, these acts and behaviours are therefore organised, but without much of formal or permanent organisation attached to it. This makes it possible to combine various strategies of criminality, cooping and resistance without necessarily losing sight of either immediate or long-term objectives. The outcome is a narrative-driven space of co-existence, collusion and conflict in

which the conflation of different actors' interests, ideas and actions only will lead to analytical confusion as well as misguided policy prescriptions (Bøås 2015b).

This is therefore the social landscape in which a new wave of insurgencies seems to thrive. One example of such an insurgency is AQIM. This insurgency is often viewed as one of the major lynchpins in the 'crime-terror nexus' that has taken advantage of the 'ungoverned space' of the Mali-Sahel periphery. Seen as an operational branch of the global al-Qaeda structure, it is viewed as an organisation that preys on the instability of the region to finance its criminal terrorist activities. However, if we look beyond AQIM's global rhetoric, a slightly different picture emerges. AQIM has clear strategies of integration in the Sahel that are based on a sophisticated reading of the local context that enables the organisation to appropriate local grievances and cleavages. The group's members also know how to combine the strength of its money, guns and prayers. The latter is of particular importance in an area where local state administration, to the extent that it exists, is generally perceived by the local population as corrupt, whereas AQIM operatives present themselves as honest and pious Muslims (see also Bleck and Michelitch 2015).

AQIM's point of origin is the Algerian civil war. Its predecessor, the Salafist Group for Preaching and Combat (GSPC), was formed by Hassan Hattab as a breakaway faction of the Armed Islamic Group (GIA), mainly as a reaction to the immense and senseless violence of the GIA in the latter years of the Algerian civil war. Officially, GSCP moved into northern Mali in 2003-2004, but they already had rear bases in the area since 1998 (Bøås and Torheim 2013). The relationship between GSCP and al-Qaeda is not straightforward, as this is a history of statements of mutual collaboration, but also of open conflict. When GSCP was established in 1998, the organisation expresses support for al-Qaeda, only to claim that it had broken away from al-.Qaeda in 2001(see ICG 2005). GSCP reaffirmed its loyalty in

2003, was blessed by al-Qaeda in 2006, and then finally embraced the al-Qaeda banner in 2007 when GSCP changed its name to AQIM (see Rollins 2010).

The GSCP may have done this for ideological reasons, but more pragmatic brand concerns also played a role. They had little to lose and possibly a lot to gain from taking up the al-Qaeda banner: it would make them look more global and powerful in the eyes of local communities than they actually were at the time.

However, when AQIM started to materialise in Northern Mali, it had more than a potent brand name. The AQIM fighters also had money; their main source of wealth originated from hostage taking, particularly the kidnapping of 32 German tourists in 2003. These tourists were captured when travelling through the Sahara and were held hostage for several months before they were released. AQIM used its new-found wealth wisely, trading with local communities, but also re-distributing money, medicine, as well as SIM cards and airtime. What this reveals is that AQIM's ability to embed itself locally is not based only on its ability to use force, but also on the establishment of an order based on financial strength applied through a religious-ideological framework. Already in 1998, AQIM members (then known as GSCP) started to arrive in the Timbuktu region (ICG 2005), and they approached the local population as honest and pious traders, paying a good price for the goods they brought locally. In this way, they bought themselves goodwill, friendship and networks. They also married locally – not into powerful families, but poor local lineages, deliberately taking the side of the impoverished (Bøås and Torheim 2013). Thus, in many ways, AQIM was acting as an Islamic charity, with the exception that they carried arms and did not hesitate to use them if needed. Thus, in addition to the ability to use force and generate resources, an insurgency repertoire can also usefully include a well-branded image of religious credentials and simply being honest and pious.

What this leaves us with is a new wave of insurgencies that are both deeply local and anchored in global discourses at the same time. Branding has become an integral part of their strategy. They are religious fundamentalists, but also pragmatic and extremely good at appropriating local grievances for their own purposes. As the case of AQIM indicates, most of them also operate in environments of little state control and state legitimacy where local livelihoods are under immense pressure due to a combination of increased climatic variability and the inability of the states to adequately react to this. As they are not seeking to capture the state or to break away from a state, but challenge the very notion of the modern state, there is no or only a very narrow margin for a negotiated settlement. Finally, as a majority of these insurgencies also seems to be very hard to beat militarily, the UN and the international community at large may be left to deal with conflict situations whose solution is very hard to find.

3. Some lines to conclude

The technologies of war, the modes of warfare and the language used to frame war is constantly evolving: however, this is not in itself a conclusive proof that a substantially new phenomenon under the heading of 'new wars' has emerged. Insurgents have always adapted to changing circumstances, including new opportunities for funding their projects of violent resistance, and the very nature of the conflict seems to be, if not completely permanent, at least much more lasting over time. This is also why it is so important to point out that all the conflicts and conflict zones currently active have deep historical roots: more often than not, the underlying cleavages that fuels the conflict are dating far back in history beyond the colonial period.

Each and every one of them are an offspring of unique social trajectories. Africa insurgencies, though, have something in common: that is, they have always been both the creation of and a response to political realities and their institutional manifestations. The 'new wars' literature, with is focus on economic agendas, transnational crime and terrorism can be very useful in explaining how armed movements sustains themselves, but this does not tell us very much about why these conflicts started in the first place nor about the wider motivations of those involved and the violence used. To understand this, we also need to take into account political, cultural and historical factors. The past and the present are connected in wars where insurgents are involved as elsewhere, and the only way we can hope to understand this is to consider how current conflicts are an integral part of the total history of the area in question. Due to the continued privileged position of the state – in theory as well as practice – examining who controls it and for what purpose is one obvious place to start our investigations. However, we need to keep in mind that almost all conflicts are local in character, and that not only material aspects matter, but also questions concerning identity and belonging. This means that what we need is a flexible and broad-based definition of what constitutes the 'political': politics in Mali for example is both formal and informal, yet the most significant political spaces are the ones that exist in-between the formal and the informal.

Insurgent wars are often brutal, and the consequences in terms of human suffering can be immense. However, such conflicts and the actors involved do not constitute anything substantially new, nor are they incomprehensible. It is only our approaches that all too often make us avoid seeing the obvious: people take up arms because they are angry, scared, poor, or short of other livelihood opportunities.

Thus, even if the new wave of insurgencies does not fit well with the established categories of insurgencies (see Clapham 1998), this does not mean that

they cannot be studied in a comparative manner. Far from behaving like classical insurgencies such as the Ethiopian and Eritrean ones of the 1980s and 1990s, the current ones seem more to be manifestations of rage against the patrimonial machinery of dysfunctional state structures: largely youth rebellions organised in social movements with a cultic element (see also Bøås and Dunn 2007). However, through empirical grounded studies of insurgent practices we can still establish conceptual categories as those suggested in this introduction that may enable a framework for analysis of single-case studies as well as mid-range theorising based on focused and structured comparisons.

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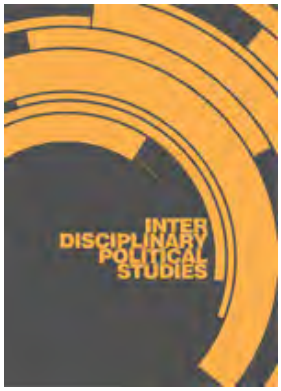

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RESEARCH ARTICLE

Revolt, Navigation and Resistance. A Glimpse on the «Boko Haram» Conflict on Lake Chad

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ABSTRACT (max 150 words)

Purpose of this article is to analyse the role of civilians within the "Boko Haram" terrorism and counter-terrorism dynamics, with special focus on the strategies individually and collectively pursued to navigate between opportunities and constraints of a conflict scenario. Here we will focus on the faction linked to both the Islamic State and to the original founder of the core "Boko Haram" group. The article will discuss the socio-economic landscape of Lake Chad in the years immediately preceding the conflict's outbreak, providing insights on the precarious governance balance regulating access to lands, fishing areas, farming and cattle driving. The analysis will outline the relational dynamic of mobilization among local youth, bringing to light the economic and political rationality of joining an armed insurrection; a special focus will be dedicated to the importance of ideological commitment and pan-Islamic solidarity in driving individuals towards collective violent actions.

KEYWORDS: "Boko Haram"; Lake Chad; armed mobilization ; insurgency

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1. Introduction: Investigating the Drivers of Armed Mobilization in Lake Chad

This contribution will analyse the role of civilians in the terrorism and counter-terrorism dynamics taking place on the shores of Lake Chad, specifically in the Lac region of Chad, in relation to the jihadi insurgency commonly referred to as the "Boko Haram" conflict. The designation "Boko Haram" has been introduced as a derogatory moniker by mainstream Northern Nigerian Salafis in the early 2000s, with the aim to mock some ideological aspects of a group of young teachers centred around the figure of Maiduguri-based Salafi scholar (*ustaẓ*), Muhammad Yusuf. "Boko Haram" is here employed functionally as a label to designate a set of jihadist factions that shared forms of loose coordination in an earlier configuration but that nowadays operate separately, employing diverging tactics, relying on different ideological tenets and with different goals. Here, we will focus on the faction linked both to the Islamic State and to *ustaẓ* Yusuf, whose public face is Abu Mus'ab al-Barnawi, *nom de guerre* of Habib Yusuf, Yusuf's youngest surviving son, and the faction's official denomination is al-Dawlah al-Islāmiyah - Wilāyat Gharb Ifrīqīyyah (Islamic State - West Africa Province, ISWAP).[1] A "Boko Haram" Lake Chad 'franchise' officially marked its debut in a video, sent to Reuters on September 2014. Mimicking the posture of "Boko Haram"'s renowned Abu Bakr Shekau, local *amir* Abdel Aziz, speaking Buduma (the most spread language in the inner lake), welcomes the execution of a group of herdsmen (Farge 2014). Thereafter, the presence of armed groups, collectively referred to as "Boko Haram" on the lake's shores, has been increasingly higher and, on 12 February 2015, the first violent attack was conducted by the local faction in Ngouboua, on the North-Eastern shore of the lake.[2] Between 2015 and 2018, the group, that would be later known as ISWAP, capital-

[1] In March 2019, according to the investigative journalist Ahmed Salkida, al-Barnawi was apparently sacked by the IS leadership and replaced with Abu Abdullah ibn Umar al-Barnawi.

[2] An unclaimed attack was already purported in August 2014 in Dubuwa claiming 6 fatalities, it was attributed to ISWAP, see Idris (2014). The majority of respondents in Lake Chad referred to the armed group as "al-Dawla", "Boko Haram" or interchangeably as "Barnawi's" or "Nur's group". Muhammad (Mamman) Nur was the highly respected military mastermind of ISWAP between 2016 and 2018, year of his murder. The evolution of the Islamic State-linked "Boko Haram" group has been analysed by Brigaglia (2018) drawing on an IS-issued publication entitled "Slicing Off the Tumour" which details the development of Barnawi's cell after disputes with Abu Bakr Shekau.

ized on the grievances related to the lake's resources access and governance while further strengthening its military assets and capability to strike, progressively merging into local informal economic networks which dominate the smoked fish, pepper and livestock trade (Iocchi forthcoming). In the same period a number of sites in the Lac region were hit by "Boko Haram", marking the expansion of the group's operations in the area, including incidents in the island of Choua (May 2015; 37 fatalities), the Kaiga Ngouboua military post (October 2015; 11 soldiers killed), the October 2015 double-bombing in Baga Sola, the May 2017 battle between the faction and Chad's army in Kaiga; also three different attacks were operated in distant capital city of N'Djamena in June and July 2015 collectively claiming 53 fatalities and 181 injured. The rise in attacks draws for the first time attention to an area which was not included in the security priorities of national and international policy-makers. Although the causes and opportunities of Jihadism in the Sahel had already been widely explored by researchers and policy-makers (Harmon 2014; Sandor 2017), scholars' engagement about the drivers towards armed mobilization in the Lake Chad region remains relatively puzzling. The present work aims to complement scholarship about civilians' agency in time of conflicts, and specifically the role of Lake Chad's people vis-à-vis a jihadi insurgency. Employing a micro-level approach aimed to identify concrete modes through which the relationship between combatants and non-combatants is carried out in conflict-affected zones, this work tentatively moves beyond efforts to clear the origin (Perouse de Montclos 2014), detail the history (Thurston 2018) and trace the intellectual roots of "Boko Haram" (Brigaglia 2015), by focusing on situational factors in explaining violent enlistment and following Kalyvas' ground-breaking suggestion to understand violence's own logic, organizational modes and social outcomes and influences (Kalyvas 2006).

In this sense, this contribution needs to be better situated in the broader scholarly literature on the topic, given that many competing and politically-charged narratives are increasingly enabling misleading considerations about the nature and character of Sahel's social context represented as an unstable political periphery of the international system. Literature about processes of radicalisation can be summa-

rily divided into two main clusters: one engaging the reasons behind the shift to political violence and the other engaging the modalities through which this process manifests itself. 'Radicalisation' is an inherently difficult notion to assess by academia (Neumann 2013), given the term's intimate linkage with the post-9/11 political scenario which has normatively defined radicalisation according to Western policymakers' political priorities. As the term will always be contested, in this work, radicalisation will be employed heuristically to define a behavioural process leading social actors into an action pathway (Borum 2011), therefore using it in substantial continuity with the notion of 'armed mobilization'. Identifying the root and facilitative causes behind contentious episodes, such as socio-economic and political grievances, violent ideologies and the bargain between incentives and constraints, is an essential aspect for the investigation of armed mobilization (Collier & Hoeffler 1999; Moghaddam 2005; Braun & Genkin 2014). Nonetheless environmental and root causes, although necessary, rarely appear as sufficient conditions to explain how and when such elements are activated to unfold radicalisation. The role of social interactions has been stressed to explain the emergence of contentious mobilization and violent strategies, thereby showing how root and facilitative causes, values and norms are manipulated, created and transformed in the course of mobilization (Della Porta & Tarrow 1986; Wieviorka 1993; Della Porta 1995; Kalyvas 2006; Weinstein 2006). A "relational perspective" about interactions occurring in radicalisation processes has added further nuances to understand "contentious politics" (Tilly 2003; Diani & McAdam 2003; Alimi, Demetriou & Bosi 2015), allowing to frame the role of social mechanisms and their content (contacts, ties, exchanges, negotiations, mediations) as primary for the unfolding of armed mobilizations. The present work, therefore, connects to the broader scholar debate on contentious episodes analysed as parts of wider social processes, specifically adhering to the Relational Perspective approach, the general theoretical approach that underpins this contribution's hypothesis. McAdam, Tarrow and Tilly's (2001) *Dynamics of Contention* paved the way, posing the epistemological and conceptual basis for the analysis of social phenomena as inter-connected fragments of a far-reaching dynamic, or a

concatenation of mechanisms leading to the development of a wider process. Such an interplay gives rise to processual and multi-dimensional phenomena constituting the set of beliefs and practises social actors interpret and employ as responses to multi-layered crises and resulting in the activation of contentious performances (Steiner & Önnerfors 2018). The non-exhaustive context analysis of Lake Chad's socio-political, religious and resource management issues presented in this work fits in this larger research programme. Moreover, this work tentatively expands the definitional usefulness of "contentious mobilization" as an analytical concept employing a qualitative analysis of some drivers towards militancy in an African Muslim society: such approach attempts to move beyond the rigidified intellectual debate about rebellions, or contentious episodes, as semi-criminal activities purported by disenfranchised "loose molecules" (Kaplan 2000) mainly driven by greed. Instead, drawing on first-hand empirical data collected in the hard-to-reach Lake Chad field, this essay aims to present an interpretation of violent engagement that takes into account the complexity of social realities, including but not limited to greed or grievance models.

ISWAP's presence in Lake Chad represents an off-shoot of the escalation of political violence in Northern Nigeria, namely in Borno State. Two interconnected events mark its origin: first, the split occurred within the ranks of Abu Bakr Shekau-led Jamāʿat Ahl al-Sunna li-daʿwa wa l-Jihād organization in the aftermath of the Caliphate declaration by al-Baghadi and the Islamic State (IS) in Syria in June 2014 (al-Barnawi 2018); and second, Nigerian Army's 'Lafiya Dole' operation in 2015 which progressively pushed insurgents from rural Borno State to rural areas in Eastern Diffa region (Niger), the Extreme-North province (Cameroon) and the Lac region (Chad). ISWAP's targets included military and governmental sites and persons (selective violence), as well as inadvertent harm of civilians - hit while targeting enemy (collateral violence), in a radically different strategy vis-à-vis the indiscriminate use of violence against civilians employed by Jamāʿat Ahl al-Sunna li-daʿwa wa l-Jihād from its Sambisa Forest safe-haven (Borno state) (Brigaglia & Iocchi 2018). The birth and success of ISWAP in Lake Chad challenge usually accepted

over-deterministic views about radicalisation and militant contention, which tend to presume that the rise of violence is mechanically linked to a quality inherent to, or developed by, a militant radical actor. Instead, ISWAP's history shows how armed mobilization results from a complex interplay between the set of different actors involved in contention and the ever-evolving nature of events, circumstances and contingencies occurring during the contention. ISWAP was set up in the aftermath of the Caliphate declaration, as a reaction to the indiscriminate use of violence against fellow Muslims (serial excommunication or *takfir musalsal*), employed by Shekau since his rise as sole leader and *imam*, following *ustaẓ* Yusuf's death in 2009. They interpreted Islamic State's declaration of Caliphate ("the issue of the *Dawla*") as the 'cut-point' to explicitly severe connections with Shekau, to reject his leadership and to establish themselves as the only legitimate advocate of global Jihad in West and Central Africa (Brigaglia 2018). Integration in the informal economic networks which dominate trade and exchanges on Lake Chad provided the group with sufficient capital to engage in operations against regional armies and the competing Shekau faction: exploitation of pre-existing grievances, lack of social mobility and persisting negligence towards local concerns at the hand of the state in the Lac region represented some of the tools employed by ISWAP in its strategy "to win hearts and souls". An important process of ideological mobilization coupled with rather convenient alliances with some Buduma clans in the inner lake enabled the group to activate a dormant claim-making dynamic among (mostly) dispossessed young people and to present a popular narrative of social justice in the name of a presumed version of "pure Islam".

2. Theoretical Framework and Data

The hypothesis discussed in this contribution revolves on the idea that the correlation between terrorism and counter-terrorism, as well as between grievances and radicalisation, is more nuanced than usually assumed. The concept of radicalisation is problematized from the understanding that multiple webs of relational dynamics are at work during contentious politics and that terrorism evolves in a dia-

lectic way with counter-terrorism responses. Critical scholars have already brought to light how notions of terrorism and counter-terrorism, radicalisation and counter-radicalisation, insurgency and counter-insurgency shall not be understood as essentialized entities, but rather as ever evolving processes: as "acts" to be employed, activated or unfolded according to changing circumstances. The aforementioned notions are not inherent features of individuals, ideas or worldviews (Rich & Duyvesteyn 2012). The content and form of social interactions – notions of legitimacy, negotiation and contestation – appear in a continuously shifting relationship of production and re-production: environmental causes, structures, culture, rationality, cognition and relationships are not to be assumed as autonomous entities but rather as active sites of creation that mutually influence each other. Content and form of social interactions are especially enmeshed in a dialectic relation in times of contestation and distress. Borrowing the framework from the toolbox of the mostly anthropological studies on social condition during wartime (Lourenço-Lindell 2002; Nordstrom 2004; Utas 2005; Lubkemann 2008; Vigh 2009; Utas 2012), this study examines organized violence and social existence in war scenarios as a social project that is culturally shaped and embedded in the Lake Chad historical region. Richards (1996) for Sierra Leone, Ellis (1999) for Liberia and Hutchinson (1996) for Sudan have each contributed to unfold how organization of violence is culturally and historically embedded in a given social context. Behrend's fascinating ethnography about the origin of Lord's Resistance Army in Northern Uganda (2000) has showed how specific local histories and interpretations of specific events and ideas reinforce popular perceptions about what the war "is about", i.e. which is the geometry of power and how it comes to be framed: interrelated grievances (spiritual confusion; state abuse\neglect; climatic variations, famines; economic recession) are framed within a moral order which, in turn, forges the claim-making process. Ethnographies about contemporary armed insurgencies demonstrate how these struggles are drawn from a various set of different cultural and social idioms, being able to mobilize both global and local symbols, merging them in unprecedented ways that

openly debunk any claim about a presumed "primordialism" in Africa's 21st century wars.

My argument is that the "Boko Haram" conflict on Lake Chad rather than be interpreted as violent expression of an obscurantist worldview developed at the core of the most ancient Islamic kingdom of Sahelian Africa, should be viewed as the outcome of a «malcontent modernity» (Comaroff & Comaroff 1999), arising from conflicting tensions and pressures. If understood in this way, the "Boko Haram" conflict reveals its complex reality as a "device" to cope with religious volatility, economic insecurity, violence, political immobilism and expectations dashed by a series of predatory authorities.

A preliminary assessment in support of the empirical data provided in the following sections appears helpful in sustaining the hypothesis here advanced. First of all, the author wishes to stress that, despite several efforts to clarify the issue, the overwhelming majority of respondents (being they internally-displaced persons, local dwellers, local traditional authorities or military personnel) provided very different quantitative data about ISWAP's capacity of mobilization in terms of combatants, sympathizers or indirect supporters. Such a confusion about numbers was intensified by the concomitant demobilization and disarmament programmes launched by the Chadian state from the Summer of 2016, that provided some very fragmentary data about local participation in terrorism or terrorism-supporting activities. Moreover, a neat juridical definition of terrorist and combatant was far from being achieved by the set of local, national and international actors engaged on the field. The emergence of such a confounding quantitative frame pushed the author to consider as the most trustworthy assessment the provisional one, conducted by six Army trackers engaged in patrol operations in the inner lake in November 2016, which delivered a figure of combatants estimated between 500 and 800 exclusively in their area of responsibility, i.e. the marshes and open waters between Bol, Baga Sola and Baga Kawa (Nigeria).[3] Such an assessment brings to light the circum-

[3] Interviewed in different facilities, six Army trackers provided the following figures: 500-750; 600-800; 700-800; 500-650; 600-665; 680-780. Interviews conducted between Baga Sola and Bol, 10-20 December 2016.

scribed nature of ISWAP's enlistment dynamic and strategy "to win hearts and souls" on Lake Chad, as the majority of civilians with no real age or social ratio stated indirect support for the Chadian armed forces, although was rare to hear open condemnations of "Boko Haram"'s doctrine or practices –acts of brutality apart. Nonetheless, the majority of Lake Chad's society showed to dispose of sufficient antibodies to detect and avoid attempts to get them directly involved, both on the side of the insurgents and on that of counter-insurgents.

As the radicalisation process appears more nuanced than usually assumed, in order to understand the relational drivers towards mobilization, an effort to partially unpack the degree, intensity and quality of the interplay between different kinds of factors is required. The resurge of religious vitality in turn-of-the-century wider Lake Chad Basin directly questioned how Islam would be professed and sparked a rich and buoyant debate about the role of religious scholars, state and community of believers (*ummah*) in the modern world, investing virtually any aspect of public life. The "Boko Haram" conflict directly arises from the 1990s and early 2000s intra-Salafi debate in Northern Nigeria, that unfolded in conjunction with the much-awaited 1999 'democratic turn'.[4] A process of progressive «objectification» of the Islamic tradition (Eickelmann & Piscatori 1996) – very common in Muslim-majority multi-party political arenas – has been developing in Nigeria and Lake Chad since late 1960s and early 1970s through (mostly) Saudi-sponsored Salafi private and institutional initiatives: an active public engagement vis-à-vis the issue of shari'a was built thereon, while increasingly powerful associations spread the Salafi *da'wa* (missionary call) in the region. The 1999 multi-party turn in Nigeria coincided with the development of a «shari'a politics» (Hefner 2011), which polarised the debate and gave rise to increasingly aggressive forms of contestation and support. Salafi teachings resonated massively among local populations which sought in this doctrine a social project for an uncertain present and an attempt to come together in the aftermath of an emotionally charged post-9/11 religious scenario and formed

[4] After many years of authoritarian regimes and the contested annulment of the 1993 elections, Nigeria held its first multi-party election in 1999, after Sani Abacha's death. See Akinterinwa (1997) and Suberu (1997).

a broad movement in support of shari'a. Popular legitimacy of shari'a is mostly connected to the rise in prominence of Saudi-educated Muslim Nigerian scholars who, despite drawing inspirations from a variety of traditional sources, were largely inspired by Salafi and Wahhabi interpretations of Islam and discourses originated in Saudi Arabia and in Gulf States (Thurston 2016). The weight and value of this kind of discourses have deeply resonated among people who intensely wondered how to live an intellectually vibrant and emotionally significant life as Muslims in their region and in the world: the wish to be engaged in rewarding activities and committed to community-sanctioned notions of piousness, licit and righteous acted as important drivers in shaping the content of popular claim-making and intertwined with interpretations accorded to local as well as global events, such as the 9/11.

In order to support such hypotheses a wide variety of interviews and focus groups conducted with a set of different local research targets is employed: the majority have been conducted in the Lac region of Chad, with internally-displaced persons (IDPs) hailing from the inner lake islands, relocated to the mainland by the Chadian government in the course of counter-terrorism operations against ISWAP. Research has been conducted in the following areas: Bol, Baga Sola, Kindjiria, Dabantchali, Darkani, Yakoua and Maar (Departments of Mamdi and Kaya). Where deemed necessary, names have been omitted in order to protect respondents' anonymity and safety. Interviews with selected public personalities, such as local authorities, religious figures, local councillors and administrators, custom and police enforcers added further value and helped to contextualise the volume of information delivered by IDPs. Fieldwork took place between October and December 2016 in Chad: the importance of qualitative data in conflict-afflicted areas results from the inherent shortcomings of quantitative data produced in such contexts, which often offers short-sighted perspective on drivers of mobilization, while qualitative research serves to recognise the complex web of elements that blend in insecure environments (Newman 2009).[5]

[5] Years of study and exposure to the "Boko Haram" dynamic form the basis to position the amount of data mobilised in Chad in relation to the wider Islamic landscape of Lake Chad Basin and North-

3. Lake Chad as a Backwater System

The remoteness of the Lake Chad region has historically fuelled a sense of marginalisation and isolation. The colonial decoupage turned what used to be the centre of a vibrant trade dynamic into a backwater system, regarded as lacking any economic attractiveness.[6] The major economic interests of colonial rulers and, later, of post-independence head of states focused on more attractive regions of their respective countries, the four riparian states emerged after de-colonization in 1960: Nigeria, Cameroon, Niger and Chad. The development of a colonial market economy stressed the importance of coastal sea-ports as primary hubs for the export of resources and agricultural products, while the Lake Chad region's subsistence farming, herding and fishing proved to be poorly rewarding in financial terms. Early post-independence development policies mostly focused on consolidating central authority neglecting apparently peripheral regions: drought in the 1970s and economic stagnation following the structural adjustment programmes sponsored by international financial institutions (World Bank, International Monetary Fund) in the 1980s dealt a fatal blow to development projects and, in turn, emphasized the role of informal economy as the main sector in the region. Downsizing of public sector and privatization of semi-public companies was partially tempered in early 2000s by a resurge of development investments fuelled by a new high in commodity prices (especially oil which, despite being a core resource for rentier states like Nigeria and Cameroon since the 1960, started to be exploited also in Chad and Niger, respectively in 2003 and 2011). Since the early 1980s, when the partial drying-up of the lake provided fertile soils for farming, agriculture-related activities have been object of special care. The Lac region of Chad, for instance, benefitted in 2000s by new investments by multi-lateral institutions, such as the African Development Bank,

ern Nigeria, which had been the stage of a previous stint of fieldwork in 2014 (conducted for the author's MA thesis), therefore allowing to better attune to the vernacular understanding of local conflict and power dynamics and to individual strategies pursued in the course of the contention.

[6] The first fatal blow was dealt in the immediate pre-colonial period (1800- 1880s) when the major trans-Saharan commercial route came to be semi-monopolised by the Sokoto Caliphate, a more consolidated political and economic power whose trading centre (Kano) replaced the areas of Borno and Kanem as main terminal of caravanserai routes. See Last (1985 [1971]).

mostly focused on polders (Ngaressem & Magrin 2014). Nonetheless the provision of jobs resulted largely inadequate to face the mounting demographic pressure consisting of waves of labour force reversing on the market each year and the wider 'back to the village' process among young people formally settled in larger urban centres of the South, such as N'Djamena. Supply of formal employment in the Lac region has historically been scarce and the situation has been further accentuated by 1980s structural adjustment programmes, thereby pushing large sections of workers to seek employment through trust and informal networks, especially at the crossroads between rural and urban economic landscapes. Roitman's research showed how economic transformations in the Lake Chad Basin pushed for the reconfiguration of sites of wealth creation, such as the *garnison-entrepôt* (Roitman 1998): often employing the colonial border outline as a device to extract profits, these spaces are mostly devoted to circulation of products and attest to a reciprocal dependence of urban sites on rural areas and vice-versa. A long-standing tradition of space-management through circulation has in fact allowed trust-networks to develop as the most prominent job-suppliers of the area: networks provide means to challenge economic marginalization or simply to protect oneself from food vulnerability.

The Chadian state, on the lake's shores, appears as intermittently functioning, one among many governance actors, having incorporated the historically-determined governance mechanisms of 'indirect rule', fostered in colonial times and reinforced in post-colonial period to maintain the 'peace deal' between the political centre and its periphery.[7] The post-colonial regime that ruled Chad right after the independence in 1960 attempted to enforce authoritative rule, increasingly pushing for an "ethnicization" of the state at the expense of Northern Muslim populations. Malcontent opposition organized and formed the Front de Libération Nationale du Tchad (Frolinat) in 1965: the Saharan and Lac regions backed Frolinat's struggle experiencing cycles of rebellion against the central government. During former

[7] In colonial era, the presence of French administrators in the area was extremely light, as the colonial rulers preferred to set up or maintain customary chiefs who were held accountable for the administration of day-to-day affairs on the territory, much along the same lines to the British 'indirect rule' in Northern Nigeria. See Chapelle (1982) about the colonial administration of the Sahelian regions of Chad.

Frolinat's leader Hissène Habré's rule (1982-1990) in N'Djamena, peace was brokered in the Lac region through the awarding of local authority posts to former combatants, nominating customary chiefs and *chefs de canton* – a practice reinforced by the following (and current) president Idriss Déby (1990-). The latter faced an imposing rebellion mounted by Kanembu fighters formerly organized in the so-called "FROLINAT's Troisième armée",[8] in the first half of 1990s which Déby crushed militarily, imposing a set of local clients and allies. In the same period Lake Chad, after some serious droughts that had begun in 1970s and lasted until early 1990s, was transitioning into a small dry lake composed of several inter-connected bodies of water. Consequently also resource management changed. Waves of migrants from West African countries (Mali, Burkina Faso) increased competition in the fishing industry, while the progressive dominant position acquired by a Borno-hailing Hausaphone community in the *banda* (dried fish) trade left many with precarious, underpaid or intermittent jobs.

4. Resource Access Governance in Mamdi Department

On the Chadian side of the lake a small-scale monopoly was developed by fishermen backed by local power-holders (state authorities, capital-endowed entrepreneurs). Households that rely exclusively on fishing and farming for subsistence have seen increasingly shrinking opportunities to extract profit from fish trade and have therefore rationalized production, employing fishing revenues to acquire cheaper food products. They are only rarely able to purchase fishing nets (seine net, dip-net, cast-net) to be employed in high water, where chances to get a bigger catch are higher. Moreover, outboard engines and fishing canoes are required to reach fishing sites in the interior of the lake, which only selected individuals can afford to buy. Affluent fishermen have increasingly started to employ large motorized pi-

[8] A Kanembu-majority armed group formed by Abu Bakr Abdel Rahmane in 1978 that re-grouped as Mouvement Populaire pour la Libération du Tchad after his death the later year. The militia later dissolved and merged with the Forces Armées Occidentales (FAO), another Kanembu-majority armed group led by Moussa Medela. After Déby's rise to power in 1990, FAO regrouped and merged with other Kanembu militias re-branding itself as the Mouvement pour la Démocratie et le Développement.

rogues to reach rich fishing sites in the inner lake's high waters and then move rapidly to market-islands (Kinasserom, Darak) or directly to market-towns on the mainland (Baga on the Nigerian side, Baga Sola and Bol in Chad) and so increase efficiency. The employment of large motorized pirogues has also benefitted small-scale informal cross-border trade between Nigeria, Niger, Chad and Cameroon: calabashes full of agricultural products and handmade packages with various goods bought in Nigeria make their way in apparently remote islands and floating islands (*kirta*) of the inner lake, while pirogues staffed with salt, pepper and fish travel the opposite route. Possession of means of transport not only provides the capability to accrue capital, but also social prestige. Long-standing customary regulatory mechanisms ensure the preservation of fishing rights, land usage and the redistribution of fees within the lake community. This resource governance system makes sure that only autochthonous actors are able to use collective fishing sites, although pressures from increasingly powerful foreign fishermen often lead to disputations and to non-compliance to customary law. The access, timetables and associated rituals for collective fishing sites and ponds is regulated by customarily-nominated 'masters', charged by the *chef de canton* (Mai or Bulama, or local government chief) in accordance with a sub-local chief (*chef de village*, *de polder*, *de ouaddi*): fishing with hook-lines or nets is in turn regulated by customarily-nominated *chefs de categorie*. Traditional local authorities have well-defined boundaries such as those between the Sultan of Bol, who exercises power in Mamdi department and the Buduma-populated islands, and that of the *alifa* of Mao, who rules from Kanem until Bol's polders. For young fishermen, during last decades, has become increasingly harder to find a chance to succeed in the fishing industry without the adequate endowment in financial and social capital. The customary regulation of fishing tends to favour boat or motorised pirogue-owners and, in general, those who can afford boats, pirogues and various types of fishing gear to employ according to the location and season.[9] Usually small-scale fishers, such as many of the young adults interviewed in Bol and Baga Sola, possess only one or two kind of hook and hook-lines and very rarely are able

[9] Interview with local authority representatives, Bol, Chad, 16 December 2016.

to rent a pirogue.[10] They usually find employment in the fishing industry as processors, performing one of the various jobs (descaling, degutting, processing) associated to fishing. As part of fishing families well-integrated in a fishing community, young people often begin to provide labour via informal contacts, family members or relatives.[11] Community elders have often explained that young men and women are considered more suitable for the processing job instead of their aged counterparts as the labour is particularly hard: a strenuous and demanding task to be performed several hours a day, no matter the season.[12] This dynamic, though, tends to reinforce a hierarchical structure both within the family and fishing community, translating into a lever to acquire cheap labour and to maintain social order through constraints. Young people often face great difficulties in tackling labour-related issues as it means to challenge the authority of family or clan members, or simply publicly expressing grievances, a practice that enjoys poor popular legitimacy among Buduma and Kanembu. Moreover, young people explain that is considered «almost useless»[13] to try to seek a better treatment as processors since fish merchants are extremely powerful and influential, related to other stakeholders in fishing industry (retailers, transporters, gear producers) by long-established trust and credit relations: everyone is mutually dependent on each other. For this reason, those who may threat the precarious balance are harshly condemned in public opinion. This kind of bond makes Buduma and Kanembu fishing communities extremely close, as every aspect of daily labour is first and foremost socially sanctioned. This dynamic is further reinforced by the concurrent shrinking of the economic viability of fishing as today appears less attractive vis-à-vis agricultural work. In recent years, the importance of traditional authorities (such as the Sultan of Bol) has come to increasingly lose part of its once extensive influence in the community, partially as a reaction to difficulties related to conflict management, to the multiplication of litigations and to the unavoidable impossibility to maintain that multi-functionality of space which

[10] Interviews with young fishermen, Bol and Baga Sola, 12-20 December 2016.
[11] Know-how and expertise in the job is deemed essential for recruitment and for this reason children and teenagers are often introduced to the job at a young age.
[12] Interviews with market elders, Bol, 18 December 2016.
[13] Author's interview, Bol, 14 December 2016.

has made Lake Chad a unique geographical entity (Bouquet 1990). Facing an increasing number of disputes and litigations among stakeholders, local traditional authorities usually end up with resorting to police or political authorities, outsourcing conflict management to actors which are often part of disputes. Local police, custom and forestry officers are known to apply discretionary rules in the allocation of fines and are well-known to rely on informal taxation for extra-income, targeting people involved in wood-cutting, wood-collecting, fishing and grazing.[14] While the biggest taxation targets motorised pirogue-possessors and employers of static gears (such as the fish-trap dam, or *doumba*), everyday money-collecting practices of customs or forestry officers (known as *oforé* in Chadian Arabic) target common users with very scarce financial possibilities.

5. "Becoming Boko Haram"

The success of "Boko Haram" on Lake Chad is closely related to the impossibility of a concerted and successful action towards resource access management. The superimposition between local traditional authorities, NGOs and administrative entities created after the early 2010s decentralisation process, in spite of having averted the possibility for larger conflicts, has out-stretched a set of small-scale conflicts and litigations related to minute issues. Since 2014 groups claiming membership to "Boko Haram" have installed themselves during the period of high waters and started to operate deadly attacks while attempting to control some towns. The weak process of institutionalisation through which Lake Chad underwent during last decades, with regards to the governance of resource access unfolded as one of the key drivers of lake users' grievances (Amadou *et al.* 2014). The political vacuum left by the decentralisation process appears as affecting everyday practices of many economically-dispossessed and non-capital endowed young people, leading to a reconsideration of the 'autochthony' notion. Especially with regards to the so-called *terres de décrue* (fertile lands leftover by the lake's shrinking) in Mamdi

[14] Interviews with local dwellers from Kinasserom and Darak, Bol and Baga Sola, 10-20 December 2016.

department, where the Societé de Développément du Lac Tchad (Sodelac) has financed the construction of cost-intensive infrastructures (dams, pumping systems), conflicts for the access have multiplied, connecting subtly to the progressive redefinition of the ethnic and cultural identity of lake's users in the very same terms of the 'indigenes' vs. 'settlers' dichotomy, which can be found elsewhere in Africa. Both in terms of conflicts related to resources' usage and "Boko Haram" presence, the inner archipelago of floating islands inhabited by Buduma appears the most-hit area. This appears evidently connected to the resource exploitation system customarily adopted by Buduma which envisages the reprise of activities on lands after three years of cessation (Bouquet 1990), an element of which the ISWAP faction of "Boko Haram" has took advantage between 2014 and 2018. Conflicts often arise from disputations among herders and fishermen about the usage of determined islands.[15] They have often translated into internecine clan accusations of reciprocal mistrust.[16] Violent actions have increased and in times of conflict the great majority of Buduma people residing in Bol have looked at the Sultan as the main dealbroker. Meanwhile, the mobilization process had already began, involving a limited yet significant number of young people from the main Buduma clans living in small villages (40-70 inhabitants on average) in the interior of the lake or on the coast. This new availability of workforce for ISWAP translated in the ability to dispossess herders transiting on the lake, claiming shares of catch from fishermen and extract money from agricultural communities on the coast: thanks to powerful outboards and expert trackers hailing from the maze-wise Buduma clans, ISWAP is able to reach any place in the inner archipelago, assault the targets, collect money or labour and return in its «sanctuary» (Seignobos 2014). In this sense, the interests of ISWAP and those of certain Buduma groups coincided. As underlined by Lubkemann in his ethnography about civil war in Mozambique (2008), collective violence develops opportunities to pursue social objectives under new means: generational-related is-

[15] Usually the islands positioned on the boards of the lake's inner waters are allocated for herding and grazing while those in the interior are for fishing.
[16] Interviews with market elders, Bol, 18 December 2016. Interview with Bol's *chef de canton*, Bol, 17 December 2016.

sues within and outside households are manifested in collective claim-making instances.

5.1. "Us-Them": Spiritual Renovation and ISWAP

Young people in Mamdi and Kaya departments are eager to contrast the oft-referred popular vision about "Boko Haram" as being only a new avatar of old *coupeurs de route* (road-cutters, or rural bandits) (Issa 2010). Many insisted on religious content rather than on profit-seeking practices and viewed ISWAP's literalist devotion to the Salafi canon as the main reason behind its popular legitimacy, echoing the perceived corruption of liberal democratic regimes and persistent victimization of Muslims both locally and globally. '*Devenir Boko Haram'* assumes then a different meaning, which young people associate to a sentiment of vindication and renovation, to the necessity of assuming an identity, often better suited to navigate in a world perceived as complex and twisted. Since Lake Chad is considered as an inherently transnational space, young dwellers appreciate ISWAP's simultaneous attachment to the local context and its claim to regions\institutions outside local settings, a feature that fosters transnational ties without losing the cultural-specific affiliation.[17] ISWAP's and, generally, "Boko Haram"'s rhetoric on Lake Chad invested massively on the role of boundary control as the main mechanism to activate mobilization. Boundary control, or defence of a group's interests from encroachment by outsiders, pushed for the simultaneous convergence of different features: ethnic-based (Buduma) perception of isolation and marginalisation vis-à-vis more powerful and organized groups, often "foreign" or "migrants" such as fishermen arrived between 1990s and 2000s; claims against the diminishing authority of established *mallam* and *goni* (Islamic teachers), deemed to be responsible for the socially-decaying situation; and the engagement in a transnational network defined by adherence to the Salafi canon and pursuing the promotion of a global Islamic project. Coherently with global trends of Salafi doctrines worldwide, "Boko Haram"'s Salafism embodies both fights against secular democracy and Muslim regimes deemed as apostates:

[17] Interview with young fishermen, Bol, 13 December 2016.

the importance of this claim for young Lake Chad dwellers is explained by the oft-referred desire of «being engaged in something more than everyday labour… something providing the occasion to see one's life»[18]. Many young people in Mamdi and Kaya departments feel deprived of the opportunity to seek an emotionally and socially significant life beyond the strict boundaries built around them by family, clan and community, boundaries that force them into those social and economic mechanisms of labour described earlier. Defiance vis-à-vis established *mallam* and *goni* is thereby deemed legitimate as they are blamed for the survival of non-canonical pre-Islamic practices which Salafi doctrine considers as *bid'a* (heretical innovation), such as charm and amulet-making (*laya*) or celebration of the Prophet's birthday (*mawlid*). «*Mallams* [Islamic scholars] teach us… to stay in the past»[19], while Salafi teachers - easily recognizable due to their outfit and defiant attitude - are young and sometimes master the Quran in Arabic, openly challenging the traditional and often poor scholarship of traditional *mallams*. Young people in Bol describe the first contacts occurred with "Boko Haram" members in 2014-2015 as a ground-breaking evidence that a life outside socially-constructed local boundaries could be pursued. They were adult professionals, often capable and successful in their own economic endeavour (butchers, tailors, moto-taxi and taxi drivers, small businessmen), who decided to quit their jobs and pursue a life according to Salafi canon.[20] Such actors appear not as a disenfranchised section of Lake Chad's society nor as a particularly politicized fringe of the youth: enlistment in armed politics results from unexpected circumstances and a commitment imbued with mixed emotions towards social reality as well as from the fragility of alternative allegiances, which forces actors to navigate and maximise feasibility of particular practices (Kalyvas 2006; Vigh 2006).

5.2 Opportunities, Constraints and Levers

[18] Author's interview, Baga Sola, 19 December 2016.
[19] Author's interview., Baga Sola, 19 December 2016.
[20] Interviews with local representatives of Bol's *mairie* (mayor). Bol, December 2016. These "Boko Haram" members are referred to as foreigners (i.e. non-Buduma or Kanembu), hailing from the Shuwa Arab and Kotoko communities at the border between Chad and Cameroon.

'*Devenir Boko Haram'* also happens at the intersection between personal issues and community-based dynamics, such as trust and credit relationships, therefore showing the fundamental relational aspect of armed mobilization (Alimi *et al.* 2015). As explained by a Chadian Army's tracker, many, among ISWAP's members in Lake Chad, are former businessmen and entrepreneurs, who have been able to broker deals with certain *chefs de marché* (market chiefs) in Doro Gowon (Borno), Kinasserom (Chad)[21] and, in recent times, in N'Guigmi and Diffa departments (Niger), where consequently clashes have multiplied. While many markets were formally closed, others maintained a clandestine existence, as they represent an important income-source for local authorities and economic élites. The shadowy nature of these markets allowed ISWAP to keep channels open with traders fearing financial loss. A Baga Sola-hailing Kanembu entrepreneur who run a small-scale family-based trade in *banda*, pepper and other items (cigarettes, telephone cards), after months of decline in business activities and repeated extortion attempts, was forced to look for a compromise between the survival of his business (and, thereby, of his extended family) and pressure from ISWAP.[22] On the other hand, some Buduma clans who felt deprived of their primacy role in fishing and herding at the hand of Gouran, Tubu and, especially, Fulani herders brokered informal deals with ISWAP in order to re-gain portions of fertile territory nearby Ngouboua, a vast area that they deserted in the aftermath of the 1990s droughts and lake's shrinking. In a similar way Kanem-hailing herders have showed some support for ISWAP, at least in the initial stages, being interested in maintaining Buduma clans out of pastor farming areas, as happened in the environs of Liwa in 2016. The communal clashes in the inner lake area at the border between Chad and Niger between Buduma and Fulani acutely involved "Boko Haram"'s armed factions until the *chef de canton* of N'Guigmi (Niger), pushed by Fulani élite, decided to arm a Fulani militia and counter-attack the Buduma-supported ISWAP faction. Off the coast of Baga Kawa (Borno), on the other hand, local Kanuri and Kanembu fishing communities are reported as having

[21] Author's interview, Bol, 11 December 2016.
[22] Author's interview, Bol, 12 December 2016.

indirectly supported a local "Boko Haram" faction that mostly targeted the capital-endowed Hausaphone fish-trading network.[23] The reason behind this support, according to respondents, resides in the convenient tax-regime accorded by "Boko Haram" to fishermen aiming to operate in their controlled areas. Considered cheaper vis-à-vis the informal taxation racket operated by police, custom and forestry officers from the Nigerian side, "Boko Haram"'s low-prized fee-collection allows also to less endowed Kanuri, Kanembu and Buduma fishermen to continue their activity. Moreover, while Nigerian police's racket is regarded as pure arbitrariness and corruption, "Boko Haram" clothes its money-collecting practice as a form of *zakat* (purifying alms-giving),[24] a popularly licit and welcomed conduct. ISWAP's embroilment in local Lake Chad affairs proved veritably to be a double-edged blade: its claims as local power-holder were seriously challenged by conflicting interests between local dwellers and stakeholders, each one concerned in turning the "Boko Haram" card to its benefit. A mechanism of "coalition formation" between factions of "Boko Haram" and selected groups seeking for determined objectives (Fulani herders, Buduma fishermen, Kanuri-Kanembu trading networks) took place when an unequivocal coordination of claims between actors previously unconnected unfolded between 2014 and 2016. Such groups had heterogeneous objectives but, given aforementioned structural constraints, decided to act together. At the same time a relational and cognitional event, "coalition formation" envisages actors' shared understanding of a specific situation and a process of collective meaning-making of events, discourses, practices and experiences resulting in an explicit change, embodied by a successful mobilization process. Such situations are identified as path-breaking, leading social actors to fluidly navigate constraints and opportunities, engage in armed politics as a temporary liberation from routine labour and, thereby, to seek for that «pleasure of agency» described by Wood (2003) and constituting the pattern to amend one's life.

[23] Interview with local customs officers, Bol, 15 December 2016.
[24] Idem

To navigate constraints and opportunities implies to recognize the possibility of defection as a concrete option and part of the «pleasure of agency». While this contribution has focused mostly on the reasons why and how ISWAP and, *latu sensu*, "Boko Haram" have been successful in their enlistment endeavour of potential combatants on Lake Chad, the demobilization and disarmament programmes launched by the Chadian Army with mixed success shows that the circumstantial and situational nature of the engagement to contentious episodes translates also into loose loyalties and fluid allegiances. Moving away from Weinstein's deterministic framing of an 'opportunistic' versus 'activist' participation in violent contention (2006), adherence and engagement shall be seen as acts of navigation strategically instrumental to the achievement of one's goals according to self-perception, motivations and time-horizons. The ISWAP case shows that engagement to violent contention may be represented as a *bricolage* of mutually-reinforcing interests, aspirations and opportunities, coherently with the analyses carried out by Debos in Chad (2008) and Guichaoua in Niger (2012) about armed mobilisation and instrumental loyalties. Support for the Chadian armed forces and for civilian-led vigilante-styled self-protection groups, claimed at various intensity by different respondents, appears as part of the navigation strategy pursued by social actors, according to shifting circumstances.

6. Militancy and Navigation

We have seen how and why sizeable portions of Lake Chad's society had come to partially support ISWAP. But why should we consider ISWAP and, *latu sensu*, "Boko Haram" militancies also in terms of global politics? In short, because not doing so would conceal greatly influential factors in the understanding of the intersection between violence, religion, politics and institutions. Jihadi-Salafi militancy occurs within the contexts of the post-Cold War scenario and the post-9/11 War on Terror. Failing to consider global antagonisms in the development of local struggles translates in a short-sighted exploration of the notions of trans-national claim-making and, quoting Tarrow, «rooted pan-Islamism» (2005, p. 28). Local ac-

tors' agency in developing and shaping notions and modes of contestation should not in fact imply downplaying the relationship occurring with events and discursive antagonisms taking place on the global stage. Supported by the Foucaldian notion of counter-conduct we may argue that certain specific arrangements of power in fact produce their own resistance. The growing popularity of Salafi-driven efforts to redefine the boundaries and identities of Muslims in Nigeria and the Lake Chad Basin from the late 1960s onwards found a match with the political space to pursue claim-making occasioned by the 1999 'democratic turn' in Nigeria. Thereon, the broad-based popular movement for the implementation of shari'a made active use of mass demonstrations, strikes, marches, petitions and vigilante-styled groups succeeding in establishing a legal model and a discourse originated in Saudi Arabia and the Gulf states. Governance crisis, endemic corruption, cyclical communal conflicts and the neo-liberal failure to mobilise resources for public benefit could be easily employed to define political arenas in Nigeria, Chad, Niger and Cameroon. In this same period, *ustaz* Yusuf and the early "Boko Haram" group, drawing techniques from the local history of contention, relied intensively on the outbidding mechanism in shaping mobilization processes. In importing around Lake Chad a largely Saudi-approved Islamic canon, Yusuf and its group initially enjoyed material and intellectual support from the broadly-spread Nigerian Salafi network, which spearheaded the shari'a movement. This network, however, was undergoing a process of progressive institutionalisation, occupying important positions within local administrations, and started to despise potentially-subversive narratives. Unable to restrain the genuine popular wave of support and growing popularity of Yusuf's ideas around Lake Chad, shari'a-supporting élite bargainers (or mainstream Salafis) pointed out to Yusuf's contradictions, de-legitimised his and his group's claims and largely adhered to the Saudi and US-promoted War on Terror narrative. Criminalising Yusuf's increasingly defiant and daring activities, mainstream Salafis attempted to restrain spaces of contestation and to push opponents towards a strategic shift from pro-active political violence to the inclusion of collateral and indiscriminate violence as part of their tactics. The series of recurring Western-led military de-

ployments and interventions in Muslim-populated countries as part of post-9/11 War on Terror and the active backing received by Muslim rulers has entailed acts of incursion and repression against Salafi-Jihadis, deepening the sense of threat and marginalisation popularised among Lake Chad Basin's Muslims by mainstream Salafis during the 1990s and, chiefly, during the 1999-2002 Nigerian multi-party transition. "Boko Haram"'s intensification of outbidding brought to the surface the discordances between factions with regard to goals, techniques and tactics. Concurrently, the need to keep and expand material resources sharpened existing tensions and discord among Salafi-Jihadi actors culminating in the activation of identity boundaries and, in ISWAP's case, in a rift between local and global Jihadi fighters regarding a fundamental event occurred on the global stage: "the *Dawla* issue". Despite strong ideological and military offensives deployed by both mainstream Salafis and regional states, ISWAP seems able to undermine local political actors, overrun armies and military posts and capture massive military hardware and ammunitions (Salkida 2019). ISWAP is not interested in directly holding territories, apparently downplaying the importance of territorial control, but rather seeks to increase popular legitimacy and perception of a secured space among local dwellers. Repelling military presence and ensuring viability for local traders, ISWAP is posing as a legitimate and popular governance actor in contrast to local police and army forces, at which targeted population attributes corruptive practices. The success of many of ISWAP's operations and strenuous defence of a "pure" version of Islam was refreshing and uplifting for all those who couldn't take any more of the crippling injustice faced every day at the hand of local authorities, élites and scholars. ISWAP also acknowledged the importance to avoid alienating general Muslim public, rejecting the *takfiri* worldviews endorsed by Shekau's Jamāʿat Ahl al-Sunna li-daʿwa wa l-Jihād. People generally well-reacted to ISWAP's capacity to broker deals between conflicting parts and protect business environment, although the group's embroilment in local disputes leaves ISWAP vulnerable to local stakeholders' shifting interests and side-switching, that had become increasingly common in the wake of the Nigerian and Chadian's armies demobilization programmes.

7. Conclusion

The form and direction of interactions between different contending actors play a prominent role in the understanding of the "Boko Haram" insurgency. This contribution has sought to discuss the particular role played by civilians' agency in shaping insurgency. "Boko Haram"'s fortunes on Lake Chad would have been thwarted by the multi-sided military effort of regional states unless local economic groups and dispossessed youth decided to support and, partially, hijack the group's striking capability, using it for their interests and to pursue their own agenda. ISWAP's resilience on Lake Chad derives from its increased capacity to operate as a governance actor as well as to its ability to mobilise an imagery of success that points towards the re-making of the world. ISWAP benefitted from its capacity in brokering deals between conflicting parts and limiting interference in existing economic practices while thwarting local police and authorities' presence in the trading realm. State-led counter-insurgency operations have acutely aggravated the socio-economic context, blurring the lines between insurgents and civilians at the expense of humanitarian responsibilities, thereby contributing in legitimating ISWAP's claim as a fair governance actor. Civilians' selective support for ISWAP's acts on Lake Chad are readable as attempts to realise certain narratives, although it is not self-evident to brand this support as a 'choice': individual militants likewise to civilians do not 'choose' the conditions of their situation (contentious political situation, re-definition of religious identity, crisis in resource governance) any more that one can choose the conditions of his or her own birth. The broader narration propagated by "Boko Haram" and embodied by ISWAP in Lake Chad delivered the space of authorisation for alternative social discourses. In this contribution, we have tentatively tried to discuss how an innovative proposition drawn from militant Salafism secured social endorsement to become a legitimate position.

The narrative power of "Boko Haram" as social agent functioned to capture social imagination, while its power as a governance actor capital-endowed enough to redress existing political and economic grievances succeeded in accessing

local credit-based networks. The study of armed politics and radicalisation dynamic in Lake Chad brought to light a nuanced landscape. "Boko Haram" and, specifically, ISWAP's insurgency, far from enjoying overwhelming popular support, nonetheless seems to receive backing from key social actors, trust-based trading groups and dispossessed youth, which for different rationales are investing ISWAP's discourse and practical activity with some authority. Drawing "discourse authorisation" from the works of Feierman (1990) and Lubkemann (2008), we can suggest that the plausibility of ISWAP's framing results from the combined action of two factors: the shrinking attractiveness and seriousness of neo-liberal national states' claimed project to re-engineer economic and political dimensions of local social relations; and the shifting relationship between local stakeholders, who implicitly agreed that ISWAP's innovative frame would deserve direct or indirect engagement. Current counter-insurgency policies adopted short-sightedly by Chad and Nigeria against ISWAP deliberately fail to recognise the «epistemic power» (Mageo & Knauft 2002) held by insurgents while instead focusing almost exclusively on physical coercion. "Boko Haram"'s discursive framing succeeds in the bid for social support, or in purchasing social imagination, because its practice is inscribed in a social discourse on claim-making and «objectification of Islam» (Eickelmann & Piscatori 1996) equally influenced by the local and international power system.

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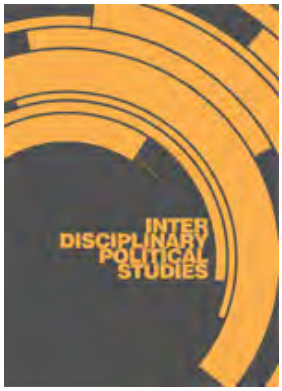

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RESEARCH ARTICLE

After the Apocalypse: Catastrophizing Politics in Post-Civil War Algeria

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ABSTRACT

This paper examines the role of the civil war (1992–1999) in Algerian politics. It draws on Adi Ophir's notion of catastrophization and Walter Benjamin's conception of history to understand the fragile status quo under the presidency of Boutelika (1999–2019). Post-conflict stabilization led to the emergence of a political system in which the "Dark Decade" served as a regulatory framework supporting the existing political equilibrium. The war became a key element in a common political repertoire that shaped discourses, oriented policies, and conditioned the strategies of actors. At the same time, the persistence of structural issues that led to the violence of the 1990s (terrorism, political crisis, economic inequalities) legitimated the idea that the past could repeat itself at any moment. Thus, while ensuring the short-term resilience of the regime, catastrophizing politics also contributed to the pervasive revolutionary situation that characterized post-civil war Algeria.

KEYWORDS: Algeria; Catastrophization; Civil War; Authoritarian Upgrading, Revolution.

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1. Introduction

"*You want me to tell the people to wake up and rise up against the Generals,*
So you'll see me as a tough guy and call me a hero.
So I accept this role and if it's not enough
I will give a speech as did al-Qaradawi against Qaddafi [1]
To destroy the country and return to the time of the disaster"
Lotfi DK – Wesh Heb (2013)

Lotfi Double Kanon is a major figure in North African rap music and a fierce critic of the Algerian regime. His repertoire covers a wide range of social and political issues, from the absurdity of local politics to the denunciation of American imperialism. In 2013, in the aftermath of the Arab uprisings, Lotfi DK released *Wesh Heb*. In this song, he departed from his usually inflammatory tone to address his audience directly and deliver a limpid message: beyond the widespread expression of discontent and the desire to rise up, lies an obvious threat. In Algeria, any popular uprising harbors the possibility of a return to the Dark Decade that once plunged the country into mourning and devastation.

Between 1992 and 1999, Algeria experienced a civil war that caused the death of more than 150.000 people. Situated at the crossroads of a protracted economic crisis, a tense political opening, and longstanding socio-cultural grievances, the conflict resulted in forms of extreme violence that were exceptional in the region. Moreover, the fragmentation of belligerent parties and the psychological confusion inherent to asymmetric conflicts resulted in a durable uncertainty for local and foreign actors (Martinez 1998; Moussaoui 2006; Mundy 2015). Yet, following the ceasefire announced by the Islamic Salvation Army (AIS) in 1997 and Abdelaziz Bouteflika's election in 1999, official discourses have systematically rejected the la-

[1] During the 2011 uprising, the Sheikh Yusuf al-Qaradawi, an Egyptian member of the Muslim Brotherhood living in Qatar, advocated for the killing of Libyan dictator Muammar Qaddafi on Al-Jazeera. Qaddafi was captured, tortured and killed by insurgents in October 2011.

bel of civil war.[2] Instead, they have employed the apolitical term of "National Tragedy" (*al-masâa al-wataniya*). Meanwhile, Bouteflika has based his legitimacy on his ability to pacify the polity, notably by promoting national reconciliation (*al-musâlaha al-wataniya*). While successive governments have portrayed stability as the ultimate goal of politics, the possibility of a new catastrophe remained an underlying theme shaping discourses, orienting policies, and conditioning the strategies of actors.

The Dark Decade has been a crucial milestone in the reconfiguration of the Algerian security-state. Following, this article studies the role of post-conflict stabilization in the reconfiguration of governance in Algeria since 1999. Resulting from a series of structural transformations and contingent upheavals, the civil war contributed to a process of "authoritarian upgrading" that aims "to accommodate and manage changing political, economic, and social conditions" (Heydemann 2007, p. 1). The extreme violence perpetrated by the state and Islamist insurgents was not merely a deviant act. Instead it allowed for the restructuring of state power in a way that prefigured the gruesome reordering currently at work in Bashar al-Assad's Syria (Heydemann 2013).

At the same time, the Arab uprisings of 2010-2011 have shown the limits of an analytical framework centered on authoritarian resilience and its "other", democratization. This approach tends to focus on the flexibility of the structures of power. Thus, it overlooks the contradictory dynamics that accompany social, political and economic restructurings (Cavatorta & Haugbølle 2012; Hinnebusch 2012). Successive transformations do not only strengthen ruling coalitions, they also have unintended consequences. New groups are integrated in networks of power, acting both as supporters of the prevailing political equilibrium and agents of dissent undermining the system's cohesion (Pierret & Selvik 2009; Boubekeur, 2013; Werenfels 2013). In the Algerian case, post-conflict reconfiguration was also characterized by residual terrorism, socioeconomic unrest, and political uncertainty. The fragile status quo resulted in a popular uprising in February 2019.

[2] The AIS was the armed branch of the FIS, an Islamo-populist party whose stunning success in the 1991 legislative elections led to a coup in early January 1992.

This article analyzes the reconfiguration of governance and the persistence of revolutionary possibilities after the civil war by drawing on Adi Ophir's theory of catastrophization (2010) and Walter Benjamin's conception of history (1940). While both authors discuss the notion of catastrophe, Ophir's approach elucidates the function of the Dark Decade in the reproduction of structures of power, while Benjamin allows us to grasp the unbearable experience of those confronted with this system of domination. After presenting this theoretical framework, I describe the role of the civil war in the reconfiguration of the Algerian political order and the advent of new form of governance based on catastrophization. The ensuing policies aimed to suspend an unfolding disaster. In the name of preserving stability, economic reforms contributed to the insertion of the country in transnational regimes of security. While catastrophizing politics undoubtedly ensured the short-term resilience of the regime, they also contributed to the pervasive revolutionary situation that has characterized post-civil war Algeria.

2. Catastrophization and Messianism

The aftermath of the civil war allowed the Algerian government to implement an extreme form of securitization, as national politics were centered on the prevention of a new conflict. Securitization studies, which examines the social construction of problems as a threat for a polity, highlights that this process is not merely fearmongering. Rather it is also rooted in objective factors (Buzan et al. 1998; Balzacq 2005; Wæver 2011). This body of work demonstrates how securitization has become a mundane way to shape public policies around the world. Yet, the exceptional nature of the threats associated with the Algerian civil war convokes an "social imaginary of emergency" based on the anxious waiting for a disastrous turning point (Calhoun 2004).

The notion of catastrophization proposed by Adi Ophir helps elucidate post-conflict Algerian politics in relation to such an imaginary turning point. Indeed, governance was based on the prevention of – or the preparation for – an impending disaster, that is to say the repetition of the Dark Decade. Like securitiza-

tion, catastrophization is at the crossroads of subjective and objective factors. While it is largely discursive, it is also a response to concrete social, economic, environmental, or political conditions (Ophir 2010, p. 63-64). However, if securitization often describes the management of specific risks, catastrophization is a total operational framework for policy-making that aims to prevent a single existential threat. As such, state and non-state actors monitor the unfolding disaster, quantify the rise of "evils", and fix a threshold above which the catastrophe can no longer be prevented (p. 70). In so doing, a government can maintain catastrophic conditions, suspend the unfolding disaster before the turning point, and allow for the daily management of a population and a territory (p. 66-67).

Local and foreign actors both seek to avoid crossing the threshold of catastrophe (p. 80-81). In the name of stability, they facilitate the insertion of the polity in the global system. The shared imaginary of emergency encourages concrete interventions, merging managerial, humanitarian and security-oriented approaches in order to preserve the linearity of development (Calhoun 2004, p. 378-392). State and non-state actors (NGOs, private companies, international organizations) thus partake in the edification of "transnational regimes of human security" that aim to manage populations and limit related risks (Amar 2013).

Ophir's work, and critical security studies more broadly, allow us to apprehend the rationale that underpins the reconfiguration of structures of power and their insertion in transnational networks. Yet, we must also pay attention to the limits inherent to any system of domination. While the prevention of the disaster allows for a form of top-down exercise of power, this situation is also a lived experience at the grassroots level. The cumulative temporality of the state and the fragmented temporality of the individual collide. This tension is captured by Walter Benjamin's historical materialism that draws on the opposition between the ideology of progress and the tradition of the oppressed (1940). Informed by the trauma of WWI and the violence of modern society, Benjamin describes another emergency. Not that of the government, but the emergency of the fragmented and melancholic individual, trapped in a traumatic mental space (*denkraum*) created by war, technolo-

gy and poverty (Stewart 2010). This entrapment has long been characteristic of the Algerian youth. It is expressed in the widespread discourse of "*dégoûtage*" ("*rani karah hayati*" – "I'm disgusted by my life").

Complementing Ophir's notion of catastrophization with Benjamin's historical materialism allows us to account for the indeterminate nature of the process of restructuring. The catastrophic existence of the oppressed keeps open the possibility of a messianic zero-hour (*stillstellung*), which is a revolutionary moment connected to past struggles (Benjamin 1940, XVII). Indeed, forms of popular messianism have been part of the grammar of uprisings and revolutionary movements in Algeria since the colonial era (Clancy-Smith 1997).

Accepting the possibility of a messianic moment also forces us to consider another aspect of Benjamin's philosophy. His critics argue that messianic politics call for a form of pure violence, which may result in an apocalyptic moment marked by intolerance rather than utopia (Rabinbach 1985). Again, the recent history of Algeria illustrates the possibility of sectarian violence inherent to the zero-hour. Between 1988 and 1992, the Islamic Salvation Front (FIS) revisited the messianic tradition of Sufi insurgencies, coupled with violent policing, in the name of freeing Algeria from corruption and saving the "Muslim people" (Carlier 1992). The FIS's intolerance legitimized the military coup and contributed to the advent of the civil war. This episode exemplifies the subtle dialectic between catastrophe and catastrophization, as well as between popular revolt and the resilience of the regime (Luke 2015).

3. The Civil War and the New Order

Algeria is a country with a strong revolutionary tradition. The war of independence (1954–1962) remains a foundational reference in Algerian politics (Carlier 1991; Pervillé 1996). The FLN, the Army and the associations linked to the "Revolutionary family" are essential components of the regime. Similarly, political discourses are infused with populist, egalitarian and sovereignist references. Neverthe-

less, under Bouteflika, the reshaping of the political order was intrinsically based on a second founding moment: the Dark Decade.

Many key features of the order are inherently linked to the conflict. The first set of transformations was the advent of a pluralist institutional framework. After a popular uprising that was violently suppressed in October 1988, the single-party system collapsed rapidly. A new constitution was adopted in February 1989, which allowed for the burgeoning of dozens of political formations. In addition, the government passed a new law on information in April 1990 that resulted in the rapid growth of a remarkably diverse print media landscape. According to then minister of Interior El Hadi Khediri, this process of rapid opening is what led the authorities to underestimate the risks associated with the legalization of new Islamist challengers (Semiane 1998, p. 109). Indeed, the political liberalization contributed to the rising dramatization of the political game. It laid the groundwork for the confrontation between the newly legalized FIS and a divided regime and, ultimately, for the military coup of January 1992, which marked the beginning of the civil war. Institutional transformations continued during the war. After the adoption of a new constitution in 1996, the passing of a new law on political parties in 1997 prohibited references to "fundamental components of national identity" such as Islam. At the end of the civil war, a series of elections (1995, 1997, 1999) aimed at restoring the constitutional order, and ended with the appointment of president Abdelaziz Bouteflika, who remained in power until the uprising of February 2019.

While sometimes described as a "cosmetic democracy" (Benchikh 2003, 2016), the pluralistic framework shaped during the Dark Decade bears many consequences. The ability for journalists or politicians to express criticism in the public space is an integral part of a system of domination that discredits opponents rather than controlling them. Similarly, the fragmentation of the political field is another crucial factor that explains the ability of the ruling coalition to win pluralistic elections. During the 2017 legislative elections, more than 50 parties were able to secure at least one seat in the National Assembly. The ruling FLN dominated the race with only 25% of the votes, with a participation rate of roughly 35%. As a result of the

pluralist framework inherited from the civil war, the regime is championed by two political parties instead of one: the National Democratic Rally (RND) compensated for the temporary defection of the FLN during the 1990s. Thus, the violence of the 1990s appears to have oriented a selective appropriation of the canons of liberal democracy. Yet, as scholars have noted since the early 2000s, such strategic openings do not necessarily question the overall balance of power (Carothers 2002; Camau 2006).

In addition to this new institutional framework, a process of economic restructuring in the 1990s transformed the Algerian state and contributed to the enlargement of the ruling coalition. After an agreement with the IMF in April 1994, the government implemented a program of "structural adjustment". The devaluation of the Algerian dinar contributed to the rapid growth of the external debt of public companies. Their privatization was facilitated by the creation of a national council of privatization in August 1995, which was put under the control of the government. As this new legal framework allowed for direct contracts, it largely benefited entrepreneurs who were protected by the administration, the government or the army. In other words, the transition to a mixed market economy favored the rise of new businessmen who invested in lucrative markets in the food industry, in the pharmaceutical sector, and in construction (Aidoud 1996; Dillman 2000). As the violent context prevented labor mobilization and peaceful social movements, power networks penetrated a growing private sector and crony capitalists were included into circuits of governance. A handful of these new businessmen acquired a genuine power in the decision-making process. For example, former entrepreneur Abdeslam Bouchouareb, who founded the country's first employer organization, served two terms as the minister of Mines and Industry (1996–1997, 2014–2017).

At the same time, the reconfiguration of the Algerian order is not limited to the inclusion of crony capitalists. As the restructuring weakened the state's ability to redistribute wealth, peripheral actors became central in mitigating the economic violence of the system, especially in more rural areas. Post-civil war stabilization also relied on the inclusion of former militias, Sufi brotherhoods, and NGOs in the new

political economy of the country. From this perspective, the Algerian case demonstrates how conflicts facilitate the co-option of local actors, businessmen, and parastatal groups. Coupling violence with economic restructuring, the 1990s upheavals allowed for the preservation of the prevailing political equilibrium in ways observed in other Arab countries, such as Tunisia (Camau & Geisser 2006; Ben Hamouda 2012) or Syria (Pierret & Selvik 2009; Haddad 2011).

Finally, the civil war remains a crucial factor for understanding Algeria's place in the region. Rather than being completely defeated by the Algerian army and its affiliates, the most radical fringe of the Islamist insurgency was displaced from the Northern part of the country to the Sahara. The infamous Armed Islamic Group re-branded itself and formed alliances with Tuareg factions that opposed their governments in the Sahelian space. It ultimately became a franchise of Al-Qaeda (AQIM, for Al-Qaeda in the Islamic Maghreb) (Pernin & Sayad 2011), which is now operating in the whole region. It crosses porous borders to perpetrate terrorist attacks and participate in more ambitious operations, such as the invasion of Northern Mali in 2012 that triggered a French intervention on the ground. In a framework where anti-terrorism is intertwined with energy-related issues, the Algerian regime enjoyed a dramatic reversal of fortune. Once subjected to an arms embargo by Western countries, it now benefits from a geopolitical rent. Over the last twenty years, the Algerian regime has positioned itself as a forerunner to the anti-terrorist struggle. As the main regional military power, it has become an important ally for the United States and hosts the headquarters of the Joint Operational Army Staffs Committee (CEMOC), which coordinates the actions of the four member countries (Algeria, Mali, Niger, Mauritania) in Tamanrasset (Tisseron 2011; Ammour 2012). In turn, the official press never misses an opportunity to present the country as a reference for anti-terrorism and national reconciliation, or to repeat the praises sang by foreign partners. Indeed, once extrapolated from the Algerian polity and inserted into the transnational space of the "war on terror", politically motivated violence became a mere issue of security and stability. In so doing, the

war contributed to the insertion of a fiercely sovereign national order into the global system.

4. Post-Conflict Catastrophization

The footprint of the civil war on Bouteflika's Algeria was also visible in the country's political culture. The rationality that dominated public discourses gave a central role to apocalyptic prophecies and conspiracy theories. Each major electoral milestone, terrorist attack, or controversy was interpreted by a myriad of civilian observers who competed in the public space by announcing the incoming catastrophe and promoting rumors of struggles within the regime. The political life of the country was marked by uncertainty and punctuated by the anxious longing for a decisive event (Silverstein 2002; Serres 2017).

It is worth noticing that this narrative was shared by past and present members of the ruling elite. For example, the 2014 re-election of a mute and paralyzed Bouteflika was accompanied by discourses warning the people of an existential threat for the nation. In February, General Secretary of the FLN Amar Sa'adani publicly denounced the powerful head of the intelligence services, general-major Tewfik Mediene, and accused him of contributing to international maneuvers aimed at destabilizing the country (Mehdi 2014). A month later, Mohand Tahar Yala, the former head of the Algerian Navy, publicly attacked Bouteflika's supporters. He claimed that they represented a threat for the Republican order and could trigger Algeria's implosion.[3] Around the same time, former reformist Prime minister Mouloud Hamrouche repeatedly warned in private media of "a crisis inside the regime" that could once again destabilize the nation (El Watan 2014). Taken together, these declarations show the widespread catastrophization of Algerian politics. Various political figures described the unfolding of a potential catastrophe. At the same time, they objectified the risk by pointing at real tensions within the ruling coalition. This situation echoed the memories of the late 1980s, when a lasting political crisis paved the way to the explosion of violence of the 1990s.

[3] Public declaration of retired general Mohand Tahar Yala, Algiers, 3 March 2014.

Catastrophization is not merely a rhetorical device or a representation, it is also rooted in objective factors and concrete events. For instance, in early January 2013, a combat unit belonging to *al-Muwaqiyun bid-Dima*, an offspring of AQIM, launched a surprise attack on the Tingentourine gas facility, near the Libyan border. The attack rapidly evolved into a massive hostage crisis, as more than 100 foreign nationals were held captive by the terrorist group who demanded the end of the French intervention in Mali. Put on the spot by this sudden emergency, the Algerian security forces ended a two-day siege with a brutal assault, resulting in the killing of 38 civilians (37 of them being foreigners) and most of the hostage-takers. This attack was a major blow for the Algerian government: it revealed the resilience of terrorist groups that were officially defeated during the Dark Decade, the many tensions fracturing the military and security forces, and the vulnerability of the hydrocarbon sector. It also drew criticism from Western partners who denounced a poorly managed operation (Ammour 2013).

Invoking the continued threat of terrorism, political parties, labor unions, and associations linked to the regime highlighted the need for the people to show cohesion and praised the security forces for their swift response to the crisis (Ettouahria 2013). A more paranoid form of discourse responded to international critiques. Following a familiar pattern, rumors denouncing manipulations from foreign elements circulated online and in the private press. They pointed to the undercover actions of a "multinational oligarchy" that aimed at subjugating Algeria and plundering its hydrocarbon riches by instrumentalizing terrorism. Official news outlets also repeated this conspiracy theory. For instance, the official magazine *El-Djezair* dedicated a full issue to the one-year anniversary of the attack, casting Southern regions as vulnerable places where foreign agents manipulated locals and discredited the security forces. One of the journalists highlighted the Algerian commitment to fighting terrorism and the continuous sacrifice of the military. He added that "9/11 has been going on in (the) country for more than 20 years" (Mebarki 2014).

While these discourses bolstered the Algerian regime, in particular by updating the colonial era's anti-imperialist rhetoric, they also described objective aspects of the catastrophization process. When singling out the South as problematic, politicians and journalists also identify a set of concrete "evils" that could destabilize the country. The region has been plagued by unemployment, failed urban development, and regional inequalities. It has also been the epicenter of a movement of socioeconomic unrest that resulted in the creation of a National Committee for the Defense of the Rights of the Unemployed (CNDDC) in 2011, at the height of the Arab uprisings. The CNDDC directly challenged the dominant nationalist narrative and postcolonial social contract, while also calling for a reorganization of state power in the periphery (Belakhdar 2015). Moreover, while the movement appeals to national solidarity, elements of the regime cast its actions as evidence of the risk that the South might secede. If secessionist discourses are marginal, they are nonetheless very real. For example, after discussing the mismanagement of national wealth and the alleged contempt of "Northerners" for the South, a member of the Committee told me that he did not believe in "this borderland called Algeria".[4] The convergence between socioeconomic unrest in the South and political and security risks is certainly not a mere fiction. In the early 2000s, the "Movement for the Children of the South" publicly called for more equal development and economic opportunities. As it was met with fierce state coercion, a fraction of the movement formed an armed group in the neighboring Tassili n'Ajjer. A former member of this *maquis* participated in the terrorist assault in Tingentourine.

Finally, catastrophizing discourses after the attack also emphasized the role of geopolitical factors. An editorial published by the private newspaper *El Watan* argued that the possibility of the country's "descent into hell" was linked to a destabilized regional environment, notably in Mali and Libya (El Watan 2013). From this perspective, the accumulation of "evils" that could lead to a new disaster is particularly tangible in the south, where resilient Jihadism, growing geopolitical uncertain-

[4] Interview with a former journalist from Ouargla, unemployed, member of the CNDDC, Algiers, Spring 2011.

ties, and longstanding socioeconomic grievances are rampant (Hamadouche 2014). In other words, various catastrophizing factors associated with the decade-long civil war were still at work in Bouteflika's Algeria.

5. Mitigating Policies and Suspended Disaster

After the end of the conflict, the Algerian authorities implemented mitigating policies to maintain stability and prevent a new descent into chaos. By intervening in the fields of reconciliation, security, democratization, and economic redistribution, the regime adapted local governance and restored its sovereignty. Catastrophization is a rationale for the management of population and territory, and it relies on "sovereign and biopolitical apparatuses" that allow for the reconstruction of order and the management of life (Ophir 2010, p. 75).

Post-civil war politics in Algeria were still marked by a state of exception. Yet it was not systematically associated with state violence, but rather with the return to a pacified and neutralized political life. After Bouteflika's first election in 1999, the presidency was at the forefront of a strategy of reconciliation based on a mix of amnesty and amnesia. While the first law on *Rahma* (forgiveness) crafted under former president Zeroual barred violent insurgents from amnesty, the notion of Civil Concord (*al-W'iam al-Madani*) that Bouteflika promoted was more ambitious in its aims of reintegrating former rebels in the citizenry. Adopted after a referendum in September 1999, the presidential project benefited from widespread popular support (Lamchichi 2000). A decree extending the possibility of pardon for those who gave up the armed struggle soon followed. The most important step on the way to national reconciliation was taken during Bouteflika's second mandate, with a second referendum to adopt a charter that allowed for the release of more than one thousand prisoners. The charter offered state subsidies to the families of war victims and full amnesty to members of the security forces. In so doing, it also put an end to legal proceedings linked to the war. Article 46 criminalized any public statement that could "instrumentalize the wounds of the national tragedy". This censorship created a rift between the process of reconciliation and the search for justice. It enforced an

official amnesia and strengthened the institutional grip of the presidency (Djerbal 2005; Bustos 2007). The pacification was organized from above by bending the law. It never laid to rest the many questions that surrounded the Dark Decade. Consequently, human rights activists continued to denounce an obfuscation of war memories that prevents a genuine reconciliation.[5]

Mitigating policies also sought to contain socioeconomic unrest and prevent the outbreak of a major cross-sectoral mobilization. The egalitarian political culture inherited from the war of independence and the widespread feeling of *hogra* (contempt, injustice, dispossession) fueled a continuous movement of "*protesta*" that took the form of sit-ins, strikes, occupations, and riots (Bennadji 2011; Davis & Serres 2013). The regime limited military interventions while bolstering the institutions in charge of police repression (General Direction of National Safety – DGSN – and National Gendarmerie), complemented by the intelligence services (Department of Surveillance and Security, DSS). Security forces routinely blocked access to the capital or key infrastructures, preemptively arrested activists or, conversely, permitted the expression of discontent in peripheral spaces, for example in Southern and High-Plateaus regions. This is what the former head of the DGSN, retired general-major Hamel, labeled as "democratic crowd management". The securitization of social unrest also allowed for exceptional forms of coercion that accompanied more mundane acts of regulation. In the name of preventing chaos, groups of protesters were sometimes violently dispersed while isolated activists were abducted and held in administrative detention. Meanwhile, security forces monitored social unrest and produced alarming statistics that amalgamated all forms of protests. In January 2012, after the regime spent a year containing the wave of unrest that followed the Arab uprisings, the DGSN announced that it had intervened 10.910 times for "public-order related issues" in 2011. General-major Hamel praised his troops for being able to "canalize [the population] without impairing its dignity" (El

[5] In an interview with the author, the general secretary of the Algerian League for the Defense of Human Rights (LADDH), Abdelmoumène Khelil, explained: "We know that the civil war has left important traces. We need to go toward an externalization of our traumas, with a genuine process of reconciliation. As long as we don't have it, fears will remain omnipresent. Algeria cannot do without an analysis of its recent history to start a process of change" (Algiers, Spring 2011).

Watan 2012). By monitoring the multiplication of a specific set of "evils" (i.e. protests) and staging a situation of emergency, the DGSN took part in the depoliticization of social unrest. It introduced the idea of a threshold above which the repetition of the civil war could no longer be prevented. By securitizing and quantifying social unrest, the Algerian regime aimed to manage pervasive insurrectionality and to maintain its control despite the popular rejection of systemic injustice (Luke 2015, p. 836-842).

The return to order after the 1990s was also closely tied to the process of democratization, which itself is an appropriation of pluralistic electoral procedures rather than an acceptance of popular sovereignty. The legacy of the civil war limited the scope of the competition. According to article 26 of the Charter for National Reconciliation, all individuals "responsible for the instrumentalization of religion that led to the national tragedy" are banned from any political activity. Thus, when former head of the Islamic Salvation Army Madani Mezrag proclaimed his desire to found his own political party in September 2015, he was met with a swift rebuttal from then Prime minister Abdelmalek Sellal (2012–2017), who declared that "it will not be possible for anybody to replicate the crisis experienced by the Algerian people during the 1990s" (Chennafi 2015). Rather than a genuine competition for political power, the ballot box has become a key feature of the civilizing process undertaken by the regime. Following, while electoral boycott is often politically motivated, it has been defined as a technical and cultural problem that requires a solution. After the legislative elections of 2007, the ministry of Interior sent more than 4 million letters to alleged nonvoters to inquire about the reasons for their non-participation (Dris-Aït Hamadouche 2009). Before the 2012 elections, public figures repeated their injunctions to vote, some of them even calling for sanctions against nonvoters. A few days before the vote, young activist Tarek Mammeri was arrested in the middle of the night and taken into custody for posting videos calling for a boycott of the election. He was condemned to a suspended sentence of eight months and fined 50.000 dinars. Boosting participation rates was framed as a way to instill the values of civility in an undisciplined national body. Yet democratization

also served a more mundane form of redistribution. In 2014, an opposition delegate at the Chlef local assembly described how he positioned himself as a vector of popular demands. He told me that his job was to organize the distribution of public funds with the help of those of his colleagues who were affiliated with ruling parties and had better access to government officials.[6] Indeed, the electoral game remained active at the local level and is an essential component in a system of clientelist mediation that prevented conflicts and incorporated new constituencies in the power structure (Hachemaoui 2003).

This set of policies restored the sovereignty of the state and contributed to the management of the population, therefore mitigating the unfolding of a new catastrophe. As a response to an imminent emergency, catastrophization also served as a tool for depoliticization (Vázquez-Arroyo 2013). At the same time, the process of national reconciliation never addressed the social, political, and cultural conflicts that led to the civil war. The securitization of unrest evacuated the socioeconomic grievances that fueled the ongoing movement of *protesta* and negated its political dimensions. As for democratization, it resulted in a pluralistic yet discredited and fragmented representation. Short of economic retribution, it was thus unable to attract popular support. Far from only mitigating the suspended disaster, these policies also fueled uncertainty and discontent. After participating in a sit-in that was disbanded by police forces, a syndicalist underlined the difficulty of remaining peaceful in the face of systemic injustice. At the end of our discussion, he added bitterly: "The *hogra* and corruption drive people crazy. They are angry. One should not be surprised if one day, everything burns once again".[7] In other words, the Algerian regime was both a catastrophizing and mitigating actor. It fed the unfolding disaster while at the same time trying to prevent it, resulting in a "equilibrium of instability" (Werenfels 2009). As the disaster remained suspended above the polity, the threat

[6] Interview with a representative at the People's Provincial Assembly (APW), member of Jabha al-Mustaqbal (nationalist party, opposition), Chlef, Spring 2014.
[7] Interview with an employee of the direction of public equipment, member of the SNAPAP (autonomous trade union for public servants), Algiers, Spring 2011.

of a new apocalypse persisted and catastrophization became a rationale for routinized governance.

6. Catastrophizing Economics

While catastrophization in Algeria relies mostly on policies implemented by the state, these policies are supported and bolstered by other local and international actors who seek to prevent the suspended disaster. NGOs, businessmen, foreign governments and international organizations take part in the governance by catastrophization. This cooperation is especially visible in the domain of the economy.

Questions of political economy, broken promises, and market liberalization were central to the 2010–2011 uprisings (Hinnebusch 2012; Heydemann 2013). As the Dark Decade was imbricated with a major economic crisis, which resulted in increased unemployment and government debt, the issue of the country's financial health remains central in catastrophizing discourses. The question of wealth redistribution and material progress is thus especially sensitive in Algerian politics, whether formulated in a top-down paternalistic fashion[8] or in a more conflictual manner by engaged social groups.[9] This translates into a set of policies that range from public housing distribution to stipends for members of the "Revolutionary family", food subsidies, or state contracts for unemployed youth. To finance these policies, the Algerian state has benefited from high oil prices. It has also resorted to hoarding in order to prevent a budget crisis similar to the one that undermined government capacities before the civil war. In 2012, the government proudly announced that its currency reserves amounted to more than 200 billion dollars, as the IMF solicited its support for refinancing countries in crisis (El Moudjahid 2012). Shortly thereafter, oil prices began to drop, which resulted in a rapid decrease of currency reserves. This reversal of fortune, symbolized by the exhaustion of the Revenue Regulation Fund, led the state press to adopt a more pessimistic tone, and

[8] In Bouteflika's 2009 program, entitled for an "A Strong and Serene Algeria", p 1 & 11-14.
[9] See the public statement of the CNDDC, entitled "Pain, Travail, Liberté", released on 1 May 2011.

to call for rapid "structural reforms" in light of a worrying situation (El Moudjahid 2017).

Non-state actors participated in the prevention of an economic disaster and used catastrophization to advance their own reformist agenda. For instance, Ali Haddad, the head of the Forum of Business Owners (FCE) and CEO of a major construction company, was at the forefront of the battle for the "economic transformation" (*at-Taḥawûl al-Iqtiṣadî*) announced by the government. In newspapers under his ownership, he frequently posited an opposition between investors who wanted to develop the country through job creation, and individuals who sought unrest and a return to the years of terrorism (Le Temps 2015). He argued that improving the business climate was a national emergency (Le Temps 2018). Such non-state actors as NGOs and think tanks also played a key role in monitoring the rise of "evils" that could lead to an economic breakdown. They provided the techno-scientific expertise that depoliticized the national emergency by drawing on statistics and economic projections. For instance, the think tank Nabni, which is linked to pro-business circles, released various assessments of the deteriorating economic situation and prescribed urgent steps to "avoid the iceberg".[10]

Because Algeria is a key component in the regional system, any potential destabilization is perceived as a major threat. Following, international actors viewed an uprising in Algeria in apocalyptic rather than utopian terms. From their conservative perspective (Costantini 2018), a revolution would trigger increased migration flows, market destabilization, and terrorism. Thus, foreign governments and international organizations promoted reforms, which they perceived as essential to prevent an explosion. For example, shortly after Bouteflika's reelection in 2009, a cable sent by the US embassy in Algiers underlined the fact that the country was "sitting on a volcano" and emphasized the need to support reforms and privately influence local officials.[11]

[10] Nabni, "Plan d'Urgence ABDA – 2016-2018".

[11] Cable 09ALGIERS370_a, sent in April 2009. Available at: <https://wikileaks.org/plusd/cables/09ALGIERS370_a.html>.

The involvement of international financial institutions in the conceptualization of economic reforms in formerly socialist Arab states is limited by the ability of the latter to negotiate and preserve vested interests (Hinnebusch 1993, p. 161-162). These institutions are nonetheless essential in monitoring and mitigating the unfolding economic disaster. Both the World Bank and the IMF closely followed the economic reforms implemented by the Algerian government. For example, the World Bank provided economic and legal studies, as well as training sessions to encourage industrial diversification.[12] Yet again, these transnational partners have their own neoliberal agenda that conflicts with the state-centered rationale that is characteristic of Algerian politics. As a result, they criticized government policies, which they found to "entail significant risks to the economic outlook", including economic imbalances, inflation, and financial instability.[13] The intervention of international financial institutions also contributed to the production of the unfolding disaster. In the 1990s, their push in favor of structural adjustment conflicted with the fierce defense of sovereignty that is paramount in local political culture. It was also detrimental to the interests of the most precarious groups in society (Dillman 1998).

The EU is directly exposed to the consequences of a potential destabilization. The civil war is an unspoken influence on cooperation programs implemented with the Algerian government. The lasting impact of terrorism and the risks of socioeconomic unrest are explicitly mentioned in European action plans. For instance, the document presenting the objectives of EU-Algerian cooperation for 2018-2020 stated that the "strengthening of Algeria's inclusive socioeconomic development [will improve] its resilience in the face of regional instability".[14] According to their own narrative, which views the market as a pacifying force in environments marked by disastrous conditions (Walters & Haahr 2005), European actors securitize the economy while seeking an equilibrium between neoliberal reforms and the prevention of social unrest (Serres 2016). As a result, EU programs in Algeria have led to a

[12] See on the website of the ministry of Industry: <http://www.industrie.gov.dz/?Synthese-diversification>.
[13] IMF Country Report No. 18/168, 1 June 2018, p. 2.
[14] European Delegation in Algeria, "Cadre unique d'appui UE-Algérie (2018–2020)", Algiers, 20 May 2018, p. 2.

set of interventions that aimed at improving the competitiveness of local companies, the training of "human capital", and the inclusion of precarious groups in the labor market.[15] Implemented in partnership with the Algerian government, these programs contributed to population management, human flow regulation, and risk minimization.

Various local and transnational actors participated in the process of economic restructuring. These actors were brought together by their desire to prevent the repetition of the economic crisis that led to the civil war. The imaginary of emergency also allowed for the coexistence of contradictory interests and competing goals while prioritizing techno-scientific expertise and market rationality. It facilitated the insertion of the country in transnational regimes of security. Yet, mitigating policies did not erase the "evils" that could lead to an uprising (state violence, corruption, socioeconomic inequalities, bureaucratic contempt).

7. Progress and the Catastrophic Present

The aftermath of the 2010-2011 Arab Springs highlighted the ambiguous nature of the process of catastrophization. Each country responded to this revolutionary moment in accordance with its specific features and political dynamics (Bayart 2014). In Algeria, the ability of the regime to control change echoed a particular national temporality marked by the specter of the civil war. From 2011 to 2012, the country was progressively removed from the revolutionary momentum and reinstalled in a continuum of security and progress that was portrayed as the only way to prevent the suspended disaster. Governance by catastrophization imposed its political rhythm as well as specific representations of the past and future.

Following the outbreak of the Tunisian revolution and the wave of urban uprising that shook Algeria in early January 2011, the authorities quickly responded through discursive catastrophization. Systematically invoking the National Tragedy and the price of anarchy, Prime minister Ahmed Ouyahia (2003–2006, 2008–2012,

[15] Over the past 10 years, various projects have been implemented in the framework of the following programs funded by the EU: DIVECO, PAPS-ESRS, PME I & II, and PASEA.

2017–2019) repeatedly cast the regional upheaval as an "Arab Winter" or an "Arab Downfall". In a similar vein, the government-owned magazine *El-Djezair* dedicated a full issue to the "Spring of the Arab Curse", which it also described as a "Spring of the Graveyards", in May 2013. These transparent threats echoed a recurring diagnosis, which presents October 1988 as the original sin that led to the civil war. The popular uprising is depicted as a mix of childish resentment and obscure manipulation that resulted in mass terrorism. In the words of then head of the intelligence services Lakehal Ayat: "October was the beginning of disobedience in Algeria, of the contempt for values, of the negation of institutions... A troublemaker gets used to confrontation. He just needs the means to turn into a terrorist, especially if he is supported by the dreadful enemies of Algeria" (Semiane 1998, p. 133). According to this reactionary narrative, radical critique is inherently untimely in a volatile configuration. As a childish strategy, it is opposed to the need to act in an orderly fashion, which is to say in a civil and appropriate manner (Brown 2005, p. 4).

As "'endangerment' became a new operational baseline assumption for making the advances of 'development'" (Luke 2015, p. 843), official discourses presented the 2012 legislative elections as an alternative "spring" that provided a civil and responsible framework for popular expression. It was time to return to the routine of participation, economic reforms and democratic consolidation, and cast away the evils that led to the civil war. As they were campaigning for the RND in the center of Algiers, a group of young men told me that the goal of this election was to finish "rebuilding a house" and that changing direction or leadership could only result in utter destruction.[16] Indeed, the imprint of the civil war has legitimized the paternalism of postcolonial elites, and bolstered bureaucratic structures of power. In the name of order, progress, and curing an "Algerian personality" (*Shakhsiya al-Jazairiya*) shattered by colonialism and the Dark Decade, the ruling coalition proposed the reestablishment of a continuum of development. Population and territory were thus to be reinstalled in Benjamin's homogeneous and empty time. This progressive and cumulative temporality is characteristic of modern governance and na-

[16] Informal discussion with members of the RND, Algiers, Spring 2012.

tional (re)construction (Anderson 2006, p. 24). Benjamin opposes the homogeneous and empty time of positivism, capitalist accumulation and routinized oppression to the here-and-now (*jetztzeit*) (1940, XIV). This qualitative suspension of the present allows for the advent of a messianic zero-hour, for a new revolution that disrupts the time of progression and oppression.

During the presidential race of 2014, as opposition activists protested against the upcoming reelection of a paralyzed Bouteflika, the country was overwhelmed by rumors and uncertainty. While attending a protest organized in the center of Algiers, a member of the Socialist Forces Front pointed with concern at present police forces and explained: "They have Kalashnikov rifles in the center of Algiers. The last time we saw that was 1988".[17] In Algeria, catastrophization has seemingly deprived the here-and-now of its messianic potential. Limited to an apocalyptic meaning, the uprising of 1988 became synonymous with popular chaos and state violence. The catastrophic representation of the past limited the possibility of a revolution in the present.

The civil war remains a reference to regulate political behavior. Opposition activists "have seen what happens when the regime is challenged: it does not hesitate, it shoots".[18] Despite widespread discontent and permanent unrest, opposition actors feared that any attempts to start a revolutionary movement might lead to mass violence. Social movements thus prioritized apolitical claims and peaceful demonstrations in order to avoid confrontation. Consequently, at the peak of the student movement that shook the country in 2010–2011, protesters were cautious to limit their discourse despite the appeal of neighboring revolutions (Baamara 2013). Critiques of the regime thus sought refuge in the empty and homogeneous time of progress, as they emphasized the need to proceed incrementally and educate the population to foster more civil ways of expressing discontent.[19]

[17] Informal discussion with a member of the FFS, Algiers, Spring 2014.
[18] Interview with Abdelwahab Serfaoui, president of the Youth Action Rally (RAJ), Algiers, Spring 2011.
[19] Interview with Abdelmoumène Khelil, general secretary of the Algerian League for the Defense of Human Rights, Algiers, Spring 2011.

Yet, governance based on catastrophization was not sufficient to completely erase the messianic longing for revolution. Indeed, from the vantage point of the population, the reinsertion of the country in the continuum of development was far from evident. If there was a socially shared discourse in Algeria, it was not one that replicated the mythology of a regime reforming the economy and democratizing its people in order to suspend the disaster. Rather, it was a constant lament in the face of frozen time, a political and social glaciation that prevented life from unfolding and entrapped the country in a present without history (Rahal 2013). This sharp criticism dismantled the positivist, nationalist and securitizing mythology of official discourses. It denounced the daily sufferings of a population that was confronted with precariousness, corruption and contempt. Lotfi DK, whose lyrics opened this article, is certainly one of the most iconic carriers of this discourse. In *Houkouma* (2011), he justified the widespread desire to emigrate of a "chained generation" abandoned by its government. A few years later, after declaring his opposition to Bouteflika's fourth mandate, he released *Kleouha* (2014), a violent lyrical charge against a regime that has "eaten" the country and stolen its wealth with the complicity of foreign companies. Far from accepting a reintegration in the continuum of development, this popular criticism revealed the out-of-jointness of time. It depicted a reality that was neither cumulative nor progressive, but disarticulated, dislocated, and shattered (Brown 2005, p. 8). What this popular discourse described was not the suspension of an unfolding disaster. It rather inhabited a catastrophic present that had been separated from a glorious past and where the future was inaccessible (Ophir 2010, p. 61).

While facing the emergency of the catastrophic present, opposition activists had not completely abandoned any references to radical change. Despite apocalyptic discourses and police repression, several organizations gathered every year to commemorate the anniversary of the uprising of October 1988. Some still longed for the moment of the insurrection. As they welcomed me in their room at the university campus of Tizi Ouzou in 2011, two students spoke emotionally of their participation in a protest in the center of Algiers. A few weeks earlier, they had helped

organize the first mass demonstration in the capital for more than a decade. Describing this unique moment, as he felt that the regime was "shaking", one of them stated: "Now I can die peacefully".[20] Indeed, by retaking the center of Algiers, the student movement had exploded the continuum of history (Benjamin 1940, XV). For a brief moment, it interrupted the catastrophic present, avenged past generations and realized the messianic potential of the here-and-now.

8. Conclusion: From the Catastrophe to the Revolution

"*We are the golden generation*"
Soulking & Ouled el-Bahdja – *Liberté* (2019)

As I write the conclusion of this article, protesters have been demonstrating across Algeria for more than ten weeks, demanding the fall of the regime. On February 22nd, millions of Algerians took to the streets rejecting Bouteflika's bid for a fifth mandate. Since then, the president has resigned but peaceful protests have continued. The discourse is radical. "*Yetnahou ga'a*" is their motto: "they [*ie* members of the regime] must all be taken away". This movement is revolutionary. It is festive, cross-sectoral, emancipatory, and full of risks. The army is still the most powerful institution in the country. A minority of radical actors might be tempted to use violence. Protesters, many of them students, are very aware of these risks. Yet they are collectively, massively demanding radical change and an end to an unbearable *status quo*. The resilience of the regime is not the only horizon. The masses are not "trapped in shells of passivity, dependency, and inaction" (*contra* Luke 2015, p. 845).

The lived catastrophe can still conjure utopia rather than cynicism (*contra* Rabinbach 1985, p. 124). In Algeria, the discourse of political sanctity associated with the people inherited from the war of independence never ceased to be relevant. The catastrophe was politicized in the name of the people's dignity, thus averting the depoliticizing dimension inherent to the process of catastrophization

[20] Informal discussion with two members of the local student coordination, Tizi Ouzou, Spring 2011.

(Vázquez-Arroyo 2013, p. 757). Given the poverty of everyday life, the fall of the regime became the real emergency. In a country were more than 50% of the population is under 30 years old, a generation embraced its messianic mission. A sign at the Ecole Normale Supérieure of Algiers quoted Fanon: "Each generation discovers its mission, accomplishes or betrays it". While calls for a second Republic might seem utopian, protesters have also been pragmatic. Many of them grew up in a catastrophized environment. Following, they made pacifism, civility and patriotism their guiding principles. In so doing, they exorcised the demons of the Dark Decade. If the present revolution carries a set of utopian hopes, it still faces forms of catastrophization.

The civil war of the 1990s enabled the rise of a governance based on the suspension of an unfolding catastrophe. This form of rule relied on sovereign and biopolitical apparatuses, and it contributed to the insertion of the country in transnational regimes of security. At the same time, the possibility of an upheaval was ambiguous in nature. Behind the potential repetition of the conflict lied a genuine revolutionary situation. In this uncertain context, one must acknowledge the "social potential for ending as well as unending history" (Haugbolle & Bandak 2017, p. 202-203). Algeria was caught in a standoff between the emergency of a catastrophic present and the existential threat of a potential apocalypse. The current revolutionary moment is the outcome of this confrontation. The positivist order enforced by the national security-state and its transnational partners has collided with the messianic release made possible by a generation of revolutionaries. In the resolution of this tension lies the prospect of a political order finally liberated from the shadows of the civil war.

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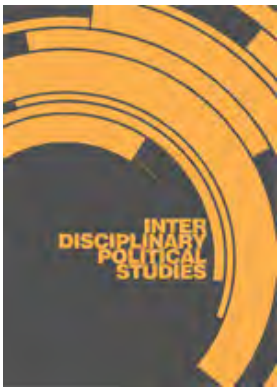

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RESEARCH ARTICLE

Ruling in the Name of the Revolution: The Local Grounding of Non-State Armed Groups in Western Libya

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ABSTRACT

Since the fall of the Qadhafi regime, Libyan armed groups have emerged as the de facto power holders in many parts of the country. Much of the existing research on Libyan non-state armed groups has looked at the relation between the armed groups and the central authorities, or between the armed groups and other powerful actors. This article is based on fieldwork in four cities in Western Libya and shows that the armed groups should be understood as locally grounded actors. Several armed groups from local communities are seen as legitimate powerholders, because of their role during and after the revolution. Many of the armed groups also originate from the same ethnic and social group as the people they set out to rule, which creates a tacit social contract between the militias and the local population. I argue that the main factor which determines how the rule of armed groups in Libya plays out is the legacy of the Qhadafi regime and the revolution. This may have implications for the future organization of the Libyan state.

KEYWORDS: Libya; Informal governance; Armed groups; Revolution; Borderlands

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1. Introduction

Since the fall of the Qadhafi regime, Libyan armed groups have emerged as the de facto power holders in many parts of the country. Qadhafi was deposed by a coalition of Libyan revolutionaries and forces from NATO and regional powers. After the fall of Qadhafi, however, no new central authority has managed to hold on to power and unite the country. An important reason for this is that a plethora of new armed groups emerged in Libya during the revolution. These groups had different interests, different ideologies and different geographical origins. What may have seemed initially like a transitional period of instability, may appear to be a stable feature of Libya for years to come.

At the moment, Libya has two self-proclaimed governments. Political authority is contested and highly fragmented. The Government of National Accord (GNA) – formed following the implementation of the Libyan Political Agreement in December 2015 – has the backing of the UN and the majority of the international community. But the GNA has been unable to function as the unity government it was envisaged to be. The House of Representatives (HoR), elected in 2014 and based in the east of the country, has not recognized the GNA. The mandate of HoR has expired, although its members have voted to renew its term. Military power is equally fragmented, with Field Marshal Khalifa Haftar holding a dominant position in Eastern and Southern Libya but lacking the capacity to control the whole country.

This creates a void in which local and regional armed groups can exercise power and authority. What happens outside the reach of the central authorities? How do the local and regional militias exercise their rule? These are vital questions for the future of the Libyan state. In this article, I look into a question which has not received much attention in the research on Libyan armed groups so far. What is the relationship between the armed groups and the local population? Are they seen as legitimate or illegitimate? To what degree are they grounded in the local societies they attempt to control? How does the legacy of the Qadhafi regime and the revolution affect current local governance? I answer these questions by relying on field-

work that I conducted in the borderlands of Western Libya in the summer months of 2017.

2. Previous Research on Armed Groups and Governance in Libya

I will briefly go through the research on the Libyan case that I draw on in my article. Following the fall of Qadhafi, several studies have looked into the role of armed groups in Libya, during and after the revolution. These studies have used different terms for denoting the armed groups in Libya – either militias, revolutionary brigades, rebels, or armed groups. In this article I will use the term non-state armed groups, as this term is the most neutral.

Several of these studies have emphasized that the non-state armed groups in Libya had a local or regional grounding when they were founded. In a report on armed groups operating in Misrata, McQuinn (2012) draws an overview of local armed groups, focusing on their formation history, their objectives and their leadership structures. He distinguishes between four types of armed groups: Revolutionary brigades emerged during the intense months of the regime's assault on cities like Benghazi and Misrata. They were connected to the local social structures and authorities that emerged during the revolution, like the local councils. Unregulated brigades are revolutionary brigades who broke away from the authority of the local military council and are operating outside its control. Post-revolutionary brigades are local forces that emerged at the end of the fighting to protect locals following the security vacuum. This was the case in cities which did not experience sustained fighting during the uprising, like the pro-Qhadafi cities. Militias are armed groups involved in criminal networks and violent extremism. They lack both the support of the local community and integration with local authorities and are politically and socially isolated.

Lacher (2011) did an influential study in which he analyzed the local players and power holders on the Libyan political landscape following the revolution. He showed that the revolutionary brigades that were formed in Western and Eastern Libya started competing for power and recognition following the liberation of

Tripoli. Revolutionary brigades with strong ties to tribes and local communities acquired military experience and wanted to get political power in the transitional period. The revolutionary brigades thus shifted from being primarily local fighters to becoming military forces who aimed to dominate the political landscape.

Pack and Barfi (2012, p. 5-9) also discussed the local grounding of the groups who rebelled against Qadhafi, using the term militias. They claim that the rebellion had long-standing historical roots. The tribes in the periphery had a long history of contesting the power of the central authorities, all the way back to Ottoman and Italian rule, and also under Qadhafi. After the revolution the Western cities were outside the reach of transitional bodies like the national transitional council. Because they lacked protection from central institutions, the local communities assigned the responsibility over political affairs to the militias. The local militias had acquired the status as heroes and were given power because of their role in defeating the regime. Unlike in the Eastern cities, where power was split between the military and political authorities, political and military power was united under the banner of the militias in the Western cities.

Quesnay (2013) did an empirical study of the local dynamics surrounding those he called insurgents, based on fieldwork in the key revolutionary cities Misrata, Benghazi and Zintan. He focused on the perception and objectives of the individuals who were engaged in fighting against the regime, and their interaction with other social groups. According to him the decentralized nature of the revolution shifted power to the local level because the communities in the revolutionary cities could not rely on the central regime. Alternative types of local management emerged. As the local actors adopted local decision-making processes, the transitional authorities could not penetrate the local level. They therefore transferred judicial, political and military responsibilities to the local structures. Quesnay shows that the even though the local authorities could manage areas like social aid and security, they were not able to do deal with economic shortages and the lack of many public services.

Other studies have looked at the power relations between the non-state armed groups and political actors on the national scene. In the anthology 'The Libyan Revolution and Its Aftermath' several scholars looked at how Libya's revolution and international intervention not only put an end to the Qhadafi regime, but removed key decisions makers and put an end to the governance system that was in place under Qadhafi (Cole & McQuinn 2015). In the article Libya's Militia Menace (Wehrey 2012) Frederic Wehrey looks into the relations between the transitional political authorities and the militias. The transitional authorities adopted a double standard when dealing with armed groups in Libya. On the one hand, the authorities considered armed groups as a threat to the stabilization of the country and adopted programs aiming to disarm, demobilize and reintegrate the "country's countless revolutionary brigades". On the other hand, the transitional authorities relied on the military capacity of the militias to gain authority, because formal security services were weak and associated with the old regime. Mundy (2018) discusses the role of militias as spoilers in the political disorder in the aftermath of the revolution. He considers the revolutionary militias as the main powerholders in post-Qhadafi Libya. He considers the proliferation of the militias not as a mere symptom of the country's political dysfunction, but as a key reason for the chaos. His view is that local militias, who represent weak and marginalized communities, seized control over transitional institutions and held vital economic infrastructure hostage.

In addition to the scholars who focus on the involvement of militias in the political process, other scholars have focused on how the armed groups use access to resources to maintain their power. Other studies have focused on the involvement of militias in the illicit economy and what is becoming a warfare economy in Libya. Shaw and Mangan (2014) provide an overview of the involvement of armed groups in acquiring resources for holding power. The armed groups in Libya compete for resources like illicit trafficking and criminal activities to reinforce their power on the local and national level. According to the authors, illicit trafficking among certain social groups in Libya existed under the Qadhafi regime and took other directions following the revolution. Certain social groups like tribes, trans-

border communities and individuals close to the Qhadaffi regime benefited from droit de passage. But after the revolution, control over illicit trafficking has decentralized and liberalized. A panoply of actors has penetrated the illicit trafficking market and created an illicit economy based on four interconnected markets: weapons, migrants, drugs and smuggling. The dynamics of the illicit economy affects the political process in Libya, and actors involved in it may be against political authorities who try to constrain their activities. A similar picture can be found in a study by Toaldo (2015).

Micallef and Reitano (2017) largely confirm this picture. But they also point out a new phenomenon, which is the involvement of some militia leaders in anti-smuggling activities. The authors attribute this shift in strategy to pressure from European states, who allegedly provide financial aid to militia leaders who cooperate with them and crack down on smuggling. Lacher and al-Idrissi (2018) also emphasize that militias have become involved in economic activities – but claim this involvement goes beyond the illicit economy, and even extends to important institutions such as the banks.

What I aim to do in this study is to extend these studies and focus in particular on the local grounding of the non-state armed groups in Western Libya. How do they interact with the local population, and the communities under their rule?

3. Theoretical Framework

I take my theoretical approach from studies that have been done in other conflict zones, particularly the research on governance in "ungoverned spaces" - which looks into how armed non-state actors create new forms of governance in the absence of a functioning state. Several studies from recent years have looked into how armed groups engage in governance in conflict zones (Reno 2002; Bøås & Dunn 2007; Menkhaus 2007; Clunan & Trinkunas 2010; Arjona et al. 2015; Idler & Forest 2015).

Clunan and Harold (2010) provide an overview of the phenomenon of ungoverned spaces or state-less areas. When state authority is absent or contested, informal governance will often take root. They provide different examples on how this has played out in different areas, like the tribal zone between Pakistan and Afghanistan, Niger, Lebanon, and the borderland areas between Yemen and Saudi Arabia. In all of these areas informal governance emerged as a response to local needs and realities. Other studies have looked in depth on specific areas. Menkhaus (2010) did a study of ungoverned spaces in several areas. He showed that local actors, both armed and non-armed, engage in informal governance, even though there is no state authority. This is particularly evident in areas where state authority had been absent for a long time. Those who engage in informal governance are often from the same local groups as those who were being governed. To cope with the situation, local communities forge systems of security and conflict resolution, and even provide basic services.

For understanding my own data, I will mainly rely on the conceptual work Börzel and Risse (2010) have done on governance without a state. They asked how governance can be possible without a state. In governance with a state they claim that one of the main mechanisms is the shadow of hierarchy. Even though the state typically will not reinforce norms all the time, the mere possibility of intervention from state authorities have a stabilizing effect on social life. So, what happens when there is no state? They claim that governance without a state often happens because of two different factors. One factor is the fear of anarchy. Local actors – like non-state armed groups, companies or civilian leaders – will usually think that anarchy is not in their own interest. They will therefore attempt to institute forms of governance even though the state is not there to control it. But fear of anarchy is not the only factor which may lead to governance without a state. What they call a logic of appropriateness may also be at play. What they mean by this is that local actors are not solely motivated by self-interest, in the short-term at least. They may also be motivated by social and ethical norms about what they regard as the right thing to

do. Local actors may feel a duty to provide security and governance for the local population.

In addition to Börzel and Risse's framework, I will also rely on the general concept of historical legacies. Research on governance and political regimes has shown that historical legacies seem to play a large role for how regime change plays out, even though it may sometimes be unclear what the exact mechanisms are (Wittenberg 2013).

4. Data and Methods

This paper is based on fieldwork data from Western Libya, which was collected from May to August 2017. Zuwara served as the primary field site but research was also conducted in other cities Dirj, Nalut, and Ghadames. Prior to going into the field, I had some general notions of what I was looking for: Who holds political authority? How is security provided? How does the economy interact with security and political authority? During my fieldwork, more precise questions arose. When being in the field, it became clear to me that the local grounding of the militias was an important issue which had not been sufficiently covered in the existing research on Western Libya.

The data collection was based on a combination of participant observation, formal semi-structured interviews and loose informal interviews. I lived with a local family in Zuwara, Dirj and Ghadames, and at the premises of a hospital in Nalut. In total, I conducted 15 formal interviews, and about 50 informal interviews – with locals, smugglers, militias members, NGO activists and public officials. I also attended many social gatherings, and some formal meetings. This gave me a good overview over the situation in each of these sites.

My access to these sites became possible because I speak the north African Arabic dialect, and Amazigh/Berber. It was therefore possible for me to gain the trust of some of the locals, even though I am not Libyan and was perceived as a foreigner. The initial contact happened through Libyans in Zuwara I got acquainted with on social media. After I came to Zuwara, a snowballing method led me to in-

crease my network. But I also encountered locals who were skeptical towards me and did not want to share any information. During the fieldwork I had to navigate carefully between different identities in order to be able to get access to people. When interacting with the locals I made an effort to appear open and emphasized that I was only there to listen to what they had to say.

5. The Borderlands of Western Libya

Before continuing, I will give an overview of the borderlands of Western Libya and the cities I visited. Figure 1 is a map which shows the four cities where I conducted fieldwork: Zuwara, Dirj, Nalut and Ghadames.

Figure 1. A map of the Libyan Western borderlands.

Source: Google maps

5.1. Zuwara

The first city I visited was Zuwara. This is a port city in north-western Libya, which is the main entry point between Tunisia and North Libya. Because it is both a port and border city, is has been important for the local smuggling networks. The port of the city has been regarded as one of the most significant departure points of migrants heading to Europe (Porsia 2014). The city is populated by around 33.000 inhabitants, mostly Amazigh/Berbers. During the Qadhafi era, the inhabitants were strongly opposed to the regime. As Baldinetti (2018, p. 424) shows, Qadhafi had a policy of Arabisation which was strongly discriminatory towards the Berber minority in Libya, who may account for 10 percent of the population:

> "The list of discriminatory measures is long: place names were systematically Arabised, books in Berber and about Berbers were burned, Berbers were not mentioned in textbooks and not represented in the media. In the public administration employees from the Berber areas were moved from their native areas to others. Thus, the Berber component was effaced, and the Libyan linguistic panorama was represented having an exclusively Arab identity".

When visiting Zuwara, the locals I spoke to confirmed this, and explained that they had been very critical to Qadhafi because of his discriminatory policies. They took an active part in the revolution against Qadhafi. After the revolution, they asked for the right to express their cultural heritage (Lane 2011). The city has been ruled by a local revolutionary brigade which came into being during the revolution.

5.2. Nalut

The second city I visited was Nalut. It is located in a mountainous area and is an entry point between Libya and South Tunisia. Smuggling of fuel and goods has become a cornerstone of the local economy. Like in Zuwara, the majority of the population is Berber/Amazigh, estimated at 27.000. Outside the main city there are villages which are populated by Arabs. According to the Berber informants I spoke to in the city, the Arab villagers had been placed there as Arab colonizers by Qadhafi, in order to watch what the Berbers were doing, and serve as the eyes of Qadhafi.

During the revolution, Nalut also took an active part (Lacher 2011). In Western Libya, it was the main hub for the armed resistance against Qadhafi. Both Qadhafi forces and the rebels wanted to control Nalut, because of its central location. Several large battles therefore took place here. After the revolution, Nalut has been ruled by a Berber militia. This militia has ruled both over the main city and the Arab villages in the outskirts.

5.3. Dirj

The third city I visited was Dirj. This is a small oasis town in South Western Libya. It has an estimated population of about 6.000. The inhabitants have mixed ethnic background and consist mostly of Tuaregs and Arabs. During the Qadhafi era, most of the locals were supportive of the regime. During the revolution, men and women took up arms to protect the old regime. When I visited the city, I would often hear people referring to Qadhafi as the brotherly leader, which was one of Qadhafi's unofficial titles.

Following the revolution, Dirj became ruled by an Arab revolutionary group from Zintan. This militia didn't originate in Dirj, however, but in the city of Zintan, which is located further north about five hours by car from Dirj. During the revolution, the revolutionary groups from Zintan invaded Dirj and several other areas outside of Zintan which are populated by pro-Qhadafi communities. After the revolution, this armed groups have maintained their rule over Dirj and other areas in Western and Southern Libya.

5.4. Ghadames

The last city I visited was Ghadames. This city is situated in the South West, bordering both Tunisia and Algeria. It has historically known as an economic hub. It has mainly been populated by Berbers, with an estimated population of 10.000. A part of the population consisted of Tuaregs, who are a group of nomadic Berbers who have maintained a separate identity. During the Qadhafi era, the Tuaregs were friendly towards the Qadhafi regime, and many worked in Qadhafi's

security apparatus. The non-Tuareg local Berbers were mostly opposed to the regime. During the revolution, the local Tuaregs took up arms in order to defend Qadhafi's regime. After the revolution, the other locals took revenge, after the capture of the city by the anti-Qadhafi revolutionaries (Murray 2012). The Tuaregs were forced to flee following acts of violence.

Following the revolution, local revolutionaries from Ghadames have controlled the city. Ghadames didn't have a strong pro-revolutionary local militia during the uprising and was liberated by militias from Tripolitania. The revolutionary brigades in Ghadames are members of the military council of Ghadames, but the armed forces are not visible on the ground like in other places. I will nevertheless include some examples from Ghadames in the article, since it serves as a useful contrast to the other cases.

6. The Local Grounding of the Militias

These four cities are central economic and political hubs in Western Libya. How are they governed? A basic finding from my fieldwork in all of these cities is in line with Ana Arjona's poignant observation:

"Far from being chaotic and anarchic, war zones are often orderly. Although fear and violence exist, chaos is seldom the norm. In many places there is even a sense of normality – even if different from that of peacetime – and people have expectations about what might happen" (Arjona 2016, p. 2).

Even though these cities were not war zones when I visited them, they had fairly recently experienced armed conflict. But all of these places I was in relative security, as long as I stuck to certain rules, and kept myself in the company of locals. A few years earlier, however, the situation had been chaotic. The relative peace I was witnessing was the result of renegotiation of a social contract, in which both militias and other actors took part.

6.1. Fear of Anarchy, and Ethical Norms: The Renegotiation of a Social Contract

In all of the cities I visited, the locals told me about widespread chaos and insecurity in the period following the revolution. A large number of people had access to arms. They used them when they had conflicts with other people, or just to intimidate others. An example is an employee in the educational sector that I interviewed in Zuwara. During the Qadhafi era, powerful people often found ways for their children to cheat at exams. After the revolution, this employee decided that she wanted to change this, and create a new system which it would be more difficult to cheat. When powerful locals found about this, they threatened this employee at gunpoint: "They told me that they would kill me if I changed the system. They also told me that they would burn down the school. For many months after that, I could not move around without armed protection".[1]

A more dramatic example can be given from the Dirj area. Following the revolution, a local man from an Arab tribe had a personal conflict with a member of the Zintan armed groups, who had just begun to rule the area. When this happened, the Zintan armed group decided to punish the whole tribe collectively. They went to the area where tribe lived and burnt down all the houses. I saw myself the remains of the burnt houses. A member of the tribe told me that this had deep consequences for them. They had moved out into the Sahara desert but they were still afraid of the militia: "We were victims of collective punishment. The militia even killed one of our elders, who was handicapped, and who had been against Qadhafi. But they didn't make any distinctions between people".[2]

Both of these examples point to the lack of a proper social order. Many of those I spoke to, used the term social contract, and meant by this an agreement between the members of the community about how to interact with each other. The example in Zuwara shows that norms and laws had broken down between inhabitants. Similar happenings had occurred in Nalut and Ghadames. The example from Dirj shows a lack of a social contract between the armed groups and the people

[1] Interview in Zuwara, May 2017.
[2] Interview in Dirj, July 2017.

they ruled, given that the militias saw the need to employ such excessive violence. But in all of the cities, a stable social order emerged after a period of chaos. In Zuwara, Nalut and Ghadames, this social order partly grew up from below, with deep involvement of the local inhabitants. The armed power-holders were locals, and there was therefore a sense of trust between the militias and the inhabitants. In Dirj, on the other hand, the local population simply decided to give up, and to accept completely the rule of the Zintan militia, which didn't have any local grounding.

In Zuwara and Nalut, the renegotiation of the social was very explicit. After a period of chaos, several of the main actors in society got together in order to create a stable order. The elders, the revolutionary militias, the elected politicians and the public employees met each other. They decided to create an informal justice system which would create security and stability. Even under Qadhafi, conflicts had often been solved outside of the formal judicial system. Now, this system became entrenched. The solution that emerged was that a person who trespassed against the norms would formally lose the protection of his family or tribe. Because of this, all the inhabitants of society knew that there could be dangerous consequences if they trespassed against others. There emerged an informal civilian system of "police" in 2013: persons who were in charge of maintaining law and order. They called themselves the masked men. They were an anti-crime unit composed of approximately 150 local civilians, with kinship or friendship ties, who decided to take matters into their hands in order to tackle the local security issues. They would for example take action if they saw somebody under the influence of alcohol or drugs, as they assumed that drugged people could easily commit crimes. They also took actions against local smugglers because the Zuwara shores were covered by bodies of dead illicit migrants.

This renegotiation of a social contract largely fits with Börzel and Risse's theory about governance in the absence of a state. In the cases I studied, both the fear of anarchy and ethical or social norms seemed to play a role. Ethical and social norms often figured in the narratives of the people I spoke to. Several of my inter-

viewees told me that part of the reason why the elders and the community representatives had agreed to create the Masked Men in Zuwara, was because Zuwara had become an open graveyard for migrants after the revolution. One of the tasks of the Masked Men therefore became to control the smuggling of migrants. I interviewed one of those who had taken part in the negotiations which led to the creation of the Masked Men, who was explicit about this: "Dead bodies of illicit migrants covered the shores every day. We had to take action. Locals were choked and decided to not be responsible for the death of these innocents. They decided to support the Masked Men in their efforts against local smuggling. We started asking volunteers from the red crescent to pick up the bodies and reported to the international organization for migration in Tunis. We also created a cemetery and buried the dead migrants".[3]

Concern about norms and identity – and how they were viewed from the outside – also seemed to play a role when the people of Zuwara decided to institute law and order and to control the smuggling. One interviewee who worked in the municipality told me this: "We did not want to go from being seen as a revolutionary city to being seen mainly as a city of smugglers. This was bad for our image. So we needed to take action".[4] This doesn't mean that people in Zuwara stopped smuggling – they didn't – but they tried to get the smuggling of migrants under control, and to reduce the human toll as much as possible. This was at least partly driven by what Börzel and Risse call a logic of appropriateness – doing what they think is right or appropriate.

The topic of anarchy also figured heavily in many of the interviews I did, in all of the cities I visited. Several local inhabitants appreciated that the local informal security forces provided them with security. A person from a civil society organization in Zuwara said this about the masked men: "The militia brought back security. After the revolution we suffered some negative impacts. Some people didn't understand the concept of freedom and thought that freedom was to do whatever

[3] Interview with a local civil society activist, Zuwara, May 2017.
[4] Interview with an employee of the municipality, Zuwara, May 2017.

they wanted, without thinking about the consequences. The militia have punished people rather severely, but this has been necessary to bring back order".[5] Even though the cities I visited ended up with different kinds of governance, they had all experienced the period after the revolution as a period of anarchy, and many people therefore decided to renegotiate the social order, with the aim of achieving security and stability.

6.2. Ruling in the Name of the Revolution: The Legacy of Qadhafi and the Revolution

In addition to the role of the militias in guaranteeing security and a renewed social contract after the revolution, they can also gain legitimacy and local grounding because of their role during the revolution. This can be understood through the notion of historical legacies (Wittenberg 2013). The experience of living under repression under the rule of Qadhafi seems to have forged strong bonds among the Berber inhabitants of Western Libya. In Zuwara and Nalut, the revolutionary brigades command strong respect because of how they fought against Qadhafi. I will refer to this as revolutionary legitimacy. In Nalut, I interviewed one of the elders, who had traditionally had much influence in the city. He was full of praise when speaking about the militias: "The revolutionaries sacrificed their life for our dignity and freedom. They could not accept anymore the oppression of local Berbers and the denial of our rights. The revolution symbolizes the last battle of our historical combat against the Qadafi regime".[6]

The legitimacy of the armed rulers is thus seen as connected to what they did during the revolution, which lends them continued legitimacy in the period after. But this kind of legitimacy is also intimately connected to the ethnic status of the militias and the population, and their shared history of oppression under Qadhafi. The revolutionary legitimacy is therefore connected to an ethnic legitimacy. This sentiment could be found among most of the Berbers I spoke to in Nalut and Zuwara. A woman in Zuwara told me that her brother had taken part in the uprising, and she was visibly proud of this: "Young local men, among them my broth-

[5] Interview in Zuwara, May 2017.
[6] Interview in Nalut, July 2017.

er who was under eighteen years old, wore symbols of our ethnic group and took arms to combat the regime forces in the different checkpoints. The regime forces used extreme violence and wanted to exterminate us. Because we have never supported the Qadhafi regime. But thanks to God our people stood against the regime".[7]

I could also witness this revolutionary legitimacy directly in the observations I did during my fieldwork. In many public squares, there are huge pictures of rebels who died during combat. The locals in Nalut and Zuwara refer to the local militias as revolutionaries or thuwar. They do not use the word militia, which they use to refer to other armed groups in the region – but not their own people.

Ghadames displays a similar pattern, even though they are not currently ruled by a revolutionary brigade on the ground. Ghadames had never had a history of open conflict with the Qhadafi regime, unlike Nalut and Zuwara, even though they were Berbers. Qhadafi had employed the local Tuaregs in his security service (Wehrey 2017). The other local Berbers often had an acceptable standard of living, compared to people in other cities, because Ghadames played such an important role in the trans-border trade. During the revolution, there didn't arise any local anti-Qadhafi militia. Some of the local Berbers joined anti-Qadhafi militias in other cities, while some of the local Tuaregs took arms to defend the Qadhafi regime. After the conquest of the city by pro-revolutionary forces, the Tuaregs were forced to flee by the other locals, after acts of violence against them. The locals I spoke to referred to this as an act of revenge for what they had suffered from the Tuaregs. Tuareg informants, however, told me that the locals had engaged in indiscriminate violence against their group, with no distinction between the ones who had fought for Qadhafi and those who had not. This inter-ethnic pattern of conflict and violence is also a legacy of the Qadhafi regime: It was Qadhafi's differential treatment of different groups that laid the ground for the hostility and enmity which would flare up after the revolution.

[7] Interview in Zuwara, May 2017.

The rulers who emerged in Ghadames after the revolution are therefore different from the rulers in Nalut and Zuwara. They had not been active as armed militias during the revolution because they were under control of loyal forces inside the city. What they had done, however, was to take action after the fall of the regime and expel the Tuaregs. After the revolution, they continued to rule over the people who were left in the city. They also have a level of revolutionary legitimacy, but this is not as strong as in Nalut and Zuwara. The rulers also have a civilian character. In Nalut and Zuwara I would frequently see people with arms at the checkpoints around the cities. In Ghadames I did not see people with arms at all. The sense of ethnic solidarity and ethnic legitimacy, however, was almost as strong in Ghadames as in Nalut and Zuwara.

Dirj also provides an interesting example of the powerful legacy Qhadafi's regime and the subsequent revolution left behind. Dirj is ruled by the Zintan, an armed group that fought against Qadhafi. But the population in Dirj mostly supported Qadhafi during the revolution. When I visited the city, I witnessed that several of the inhabitants still keep portraits of him, even though they hide them from the Zintan. Because of this difference between the rulers and the ruled, harking back to the days of Qadhafi, the Zintan have resorted to the use of brute force in order to control the population.

6.3. Economic ties Between Militias and Civilians: "Business is Business"

In addition to the revolutionary and ethnic legitimacy of several of the militias, they are also locally grounded through the economic ties that they have tied with the local population. Members of the militias in Nalut, Zuwara and the Zintan-militia in Dirj were heavily involved in licit or illicit economic activities. Because these activities also involve large parts of the local populations, this creates additional ties between the militias and the locals (Chiodelli et al. 2017).

Most of the economy in Western Libya is based on cross-border trade or illicit trafficking. During the Qhadafi regime the local economy was based on illicit trafficking. Borders were considered as sources of revenue for the borderland popu-

lations (Meddeb 2016). It was also a way to gain social peace and guarantee border control, by involving the local populations in the management of borders.

All over Western Libya, it is the armed groups – and not the official security services – who control the checkpoints and the borders (Eaton 2018). At the two main checkpoints between Tunisia and Libya, it is militia members from Zuwara and Nalut who manage the borders. When I visited the checkpoints, I could observe Tunisian soldiers in uniforms standing on the Tunisian side of the border. The Libyan side of the border was mainly staffed by members of the armed groups in civilian clothing, along with a very few officials in uniform.

At the Wazan checkpoint, which is close to Nalut, I interviewed one of the brigade's members who staffed the checkpoint. He confirmed that it was the armed groups who took the ultimate decisions at the border. "We control vehicles and goods at the borders. When we face difficult situations, which has to do with custom law, we ask custom agents who worked under Qadhafi for advice. Then we take decisions by discussing the case with our leader".[8]

This gives the militias the opportunity to collect a border tax – either formal or informal – from people who cross the border, and to impose customs on people who want to bring goods in or out of Libya. This was confirmed to me by several people, both official representatives in the public institutions, and people who staffed the checkpoints themselves. In addition, the illicit trafficking is a large source of income for the armed groups, either directly or indirectly. Some of the members of the armed groups are themselves engaged in illicit trafficking. They will also receive bribes from illicit traffickers who are not members of the armed groups, in exchange for protection or letting them through the border.

Because of this, it becomes of paramount importance for the local inhabitants to be on good terms with the armed groups, or at very least to cooperate with them. One local man who frequently travelled across the border to Tunisia from Zuwara, told me about the relations he enjoyed with the members of the armed groups at the check-point: "Usually nobody controls me because I am a local. We

[8] Interview at Wazan checkpoint, August 2017.

are from the same group. We have a relation based on trust. But if you travelled across the border, they would probably check you, because you are a foreigner".[9]

As can be seen here, it becomes important for the locals to be on good terms with the armed groups. This makes it possible to cross the border without hassle, which is of central importance in the borderlands. For the armed groups in Zuwara and Nalut, these economic ties created an "extra" level of local grounding, in addition to the ethnic and social ties they enjoyed with the locals. For the Zintan militia in Dirj, however, these economic ties were even more essential, given that they didn't enjoy any social legitimacy. In Dirj, the Zintan militia is the main economic player. All of the illicit trafficking is completely under the control of the Zintan. I interviewed several smugglers who cooperated with the Zintan. Many of them had fought for Qadhafi and had been treated very badly by the anti-Qadhafi Zintan militia during the revolution. But at some point, after the revolution they felt that they needed to cooperate economically with the Zintan.

A smuggler I spoke with in Dirj detailed how this change had happened. "I lost everything after the revolution. The Zintan took my camels and tortured me. I also lost my business, because they insisted that I work for them for free in the beginning. But at some point, I decided to take up paid work for them. I started to smuggle for them and use my knowledge of the desert. These militias have power, but they don't know the desert like I do. So, I started to work for them and make money. Even though I like Qadhafi and I'm against their rule. But who cares about politics? Business is business". The story of this man shows that even in the case of a man who had been tortured, the economic realities of the post-Qadhafi era created ties between the militia and the locals.

7. Conclusion: What are the Implications for State-Building in Libya?

How do my findings relate to the literature on governance in "ungoverned spaces", and the literature on militias in Libya? The findings from my fieldwork extend and enrich the existing literature. A basic finding is in line with other studies

[9] Interview in Zuwara, May 2017.

on governance in "ungoverned spaces": The spaces in Western Libya are actually not ungoverned, even though the central authorities don't have any authority there. At the same time, the rule in these cities is very different from each other. The rule in Dirj is to a large degree based on brute force, while the rule in Nalut and Zuwara is based on an implicit social contract between the rulers and the ruled. This may imply that we need concepts for armed rule in the Libyan case that are fine-tuned enough to be able to account for these differences.

My fieldwork implies that the main factor which determines how militia rule in Libya plays out may be the legacy of the Qadhafi regime and the revolution. Militias and local populations who were on the same side during the revolution will be able to create a social governance system more smoothly than militias and local populations who were on different sides during the revolution.

When it comes to generalizing to Libyan areas beyond the cities I visited, an obvious limitation of my study is that most of the areas I visited were dominated by Berber/Amazigh populations. In both Nalut and Zuwara, the experience and history of being oppressed during the Qadhafi regime had profound implications for the legitimacy of the new rulers. Still, the ethnic and tribal ties – and demarcating lines – seem so strong in Libya that we may speculate that governance among co-ethnics can be relatively smooth even in non-Berber areas. To determine whether this is indeed the case, more research will be needed. Given that fieldwork in Libya obviously is a risky endeavor, one can perhaps try to collect data through social media or interviews over phone or skype.

So, what are the implications of these local forms of governance for the future of the Libyan state? In his review of the topic, Menkhaus states that three broad answers have been given to the question of how significant informal non-state governance can be said to be (Menkhaus 2010, p. 183-84). Some claim that local informal governance is insignificant – that is a passing matter that often pales into insignificance after a while. Another answer is that informal local governance matters, but that it's actively harmful, since it can impede the formation of stable formal governance systems. The last answer is that informal local governance mat-

ters and is positive – that it is vital for people's security, and can serve as a stepping stone to more formalized governance structures.

In the borderlands of Western Libya, the first answer does not seem convincing. The non-state armed groups are by now firmly rooted and grounded in local society – through ethnic and social ties, aided by their revolutionary legitimacy, and increasingly through their involvement in the formal and informal economy. They are not a passing matter. On the question on whether these forms of governance are harmful or not, it is difficult to give a definitive answer. At the moment, it is clear that the borderlands of Western Libya have a void of formal authority that is lasting and deep. Without the non-state armed groups, it is probable that these areas would have been far more chaotic than they are today. One public official in Nalut was very explicit about this when I interviewed him: "Without the local non-state armed groups, we wouldn't have any means at all. We have the most important border check point between South Tunisia and Libya. Without the non-state armed groups, we would not be able to staff it. As a public official, I don't have fuel to get to work. And I have not been paid for a long time. Since the revolution, no one from the central authorities have visited us. No one. The non-state armed groups are the only ones who have means and who can control the border".[10]

At the same time, it does seem reasonable to expect that the non-state armed groups have become so powerful that they may challenge future attempts at creating centralized authorities. A large part of their income is due to their role in illicit trafficking and the management of borders. If central authorities were to challenge this, it is likely that they would face opposition from the non-state armed groups. Furthermore, at the moment the non-state armed groups are the law. Formalizing institutions which would reduce their freedom at conducting their affairs as they want, could perhaps be seen as undesirable from their perspective. But at the moment, these questions remain hypothetical, given that a powerful centralized authority has yet to emerge in Libya. For now, the non-state armed groups in Western Libya remain the only powerful players in an area outside the reach of the state.

[10] Interview in Nalut, July 2017.

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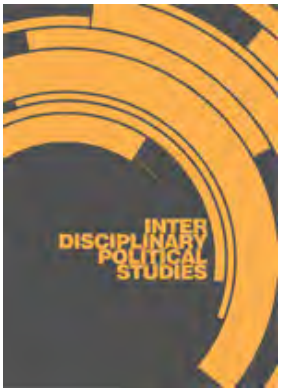

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RESEARCH ARTICLE

What about the Civil Society? A Micro-Level Assessment of Crisis Response Mechanisms in Libya

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ABSTRACT

This study intends to highlight how a holistic approach to stabilization in providing services, improving security, and empowering local actors should pay particular attention to engaging every segment of the Libyan society, especially women. As it is fundamental for the future of Libya's governance to analyze what stabilization implies, the analysis discerns the individual determinants that shape civilians' perceptions of stability. The study employs data from the Third Wave of the Arab Democracy Barometer (2012-2014). Relying on OLS regression analysis, the research finds that including gender equality and women's empowerment in the stabilization agenda, as well as ensuring the promotion of democracy and human rights; the implementation of gradual reforms; establishing a trustworthy and effective government; and fighting corruption are core issues identified by Libyans as elements contributing to a successful stabilization approach, thus avoiding the risk of falling back into a violent path.

KEYWORDS: Stabilization, Libya, Gender mainstreaming, Local actors

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1. Introduction

The relentless nature of Libya's instability is plain for all to see as after several years of power contention of two opposed governments, conflict erupted again at the beginning of April 2019. Field Marshal Khalifa Haftar, leader of the self-styled Libyan National Army, launched a military campaign - Operation Flood of Dignity - to seize Western territories from the Government of National Accord (GNA), while UN Secretary General Antonio Guterres was in Tripoli to prepare a national reconciliation conference aimed at bringing together Libya's rival groups. The situation is getting more worrisome by the day given that allegiances in the Libyan context can swift very quickly, France and the US hold ambiguous stances, and the reawaken civil war rapidly assumed alarming proportions, edging forward a humanitarian catastrophe, that negatively affects especially women.

Overall, considering the complexity and the challenges of the whole situation, a comprehensive research on women's situation in Libya and on the gender dimension of stabilization is almost entirely absent in the scholarly literature. Even though post-conflict interventions can obviously be put in place only after the termination of hostilities, on one hand, it is still valuable to reflect upon the shortcomings of the international approach that set up since the ouster of Gaddafi, and on the other, it can offer useful insight on how to deal with the aftermath of the armed struggle.

While sometimes it is believed that silence on gender issues is useful not to antagonize conservative forces, this study supports the argument that in order for a stabilization process to be successful, the gender dimension needs to be addressed. Therefore, this paper aims to fill the gap in the scarce literature on stabilization through a gender perspective. It argues that a gendered mainstreaming approach to stabilization might prove crucial for laying the foundations of a locally-owned stabilization process. Furthermore, offering a preliminary evaluation of the individual support of socio-economic and institutional factors could foster the debate on the successes and challenges of the current strategies, in order to shed light on how stabilization can avoid the risk of falling back into conflict, especially in a fragile context, such as the case of Libya. The analysis

also reveals that the outcome of stabilization measures will rely on the extent to which women's inclinations and interests are fully accounted for.

Thus, the paper explores the intersection between the role of civilians as agents of change, the liberal template of conflict management, and crisis response mechanisms deployed in Libya. The main research question is: What are the individual determinants that shape support for stabilization measures in Libya? The aim is to provide a link between the micro-level dimension (civilians perspectives) and the macro-level one (institutional responses), paying particular attention to gender. Relying on the most recent data, this study builds on the extant literature to assess whether socio-demographic factors, as well as ideological ones, namely attitudes towards corruption, gender equality, human rights, the performance of the government, reforms and foreign actors, influence Libyans' perceptions of the country's stability. Of course, evaluating stabilization interventions is problematic because of the interplay of different dynamics; the time needed to implement the activities; the complexity of the case in question (van Stolk et al. 2011).

In Libya, stabilization policies and programs aimed at impeding that instability in a failed state becomes a driver for relapsing into conflict and eventually state collapse have been introduced since 2011. When humanitarian needs are ensured, stabilization processes can be set out to ensure the delivery of public services; provide security to the population; restart the economy (Megerisi 2018). The lack of a strong political authority, namely the Government of National Accord (GNA) established in 2015 and the elite's exploitation of instability for lucrative gains have so far hindered international community's efforts. Given the volatility and complexity of the post-2011 situation, stabilization-oriented responses addressed solely the micro and macro socio-political and security-related challenges, without paying particular attention to conflict sensitivity and contextual developments have been counter-productive (Adly 2018). Also, in developing a comprehensive strategy in order to foster a peaceful transition, the disruption or deterioration of social peace within the tribal community should have been avoided. In this regard, the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) and the United States Agency for International Development (USAID) have attempted to actively engage local actors, civil society and the municipalities in the implementation process to enhance the

sustainability of stabilization projects as well as to embed a sense of ownership transcending tribal and political differences.

The research is structured as follows: after discussing the current scholarly debates on the notion of stabilization, possible determinants for individual support are tested, and then some preliminary conclusion are drawn.

2. The Libyan Context

After 2011, Libya has faced a revolution, a civil war and the establishment of two rival governments fighting to control the territory at the expenses of Libyans who live in pervasive insecurity under militia rule and amidst unending conflict. A general absence of functional governance, services shortages, and steep inflation impact on Libyans' daily lives, while network of elites control access to public goods, smugglers concoct to inflate prices, and local militias collude to cut out the citizens from economic opportunities, public services and security structures (Megerisi 2018). The political vacuum favors groups that exploit disorder to profit from illegal trafficking. In the Security Council meeting held on 18 January 2019, Ghassan Salamé, Head of the United Nations Support Mission in Libya (UNSMIL) warned that without the international community's support in Libya, spoilers will sabotage the political process and unravel the fragile and easily reversible progress made amid an already grim backdrop of sporadic violence and rising humanitarian needs (UN SC/13669). Armed groups across Libya continue to commit violations of international humanitarian law in a climate of impunity, while civilians bear the brunt of the escalation of fighting and violence. The clashes between Tripoli-based armed groups and those from the neighbouring cities of Tarhouna and Misrata lasted for nearly the whole month of September 2019, resulting in the destruction of critical infrastructure, the loss of at least 120 civilian lives, the temporary displacement of hundreds of families, and the worsening of socioeconomic conditions. The localized conflicts, the displacement and infrastructure destruction, the interruptions in economic activities, and job loss have all taken their toll on the population. These are exacerbated by the poor conditions found in infrastructure, which was already the case under Gaddafi, and the utter dependence on oil for the generation of growth and state revenue, with little – if

any – links with the domestic economy. To add insult to injury, state collapse had further diminished official institutions' capacity to regulate (or prevent illicit) economic activities ranging from fiddling the fixed exchange rate to human trafficking and arms smuggling. Also, according to the UN Secretary-General Report on the situation in Libya of 7 January 2019, Islamist extremists, particularly those associated to the Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant (ISIL), continue to exploit the fragmentation in Libya, its open land borders and the persistent weakness of State institutions using remote areas of Central and Southern Libya for training, recruitment and the preparation of attacks (UN S/2019/19).

During renewed hostilities in the month of April 2019, Tripoli has been taken under assault, densely populated residential neighborhoods have been shelled, and more than 3300 migrants and refugees held in detention centers around conflict areas are at great risk for their safety. The UN reported that the fight has already killed 102 civilians[1] and forced more than 45200 to flee (OCHA 2019). Haftar was once a Commander under Gaddafi and his offensive echoes how he claimed power 50 years ago, through a military coup that took down King Idris, another leader installed by the UN. Haftar is pitching himself as a strongman capable of driving terrorists out of the country and with strong authoritarian means, he is trying to unite a country split in two, proclaiming that he will bring security and a stable government. Amid chaos, countries are taking sides because the country's ports not only are launch points for many of the migrants that end up in Europe and but also Libya has the biggest oil reserves in Africa and thus the power to shape global prices. The UN Security Council, which is desperate for a ceasefire, drafted an agreement overnight, but Moscow and Washington vetoed it. While General Haftar has rapidly gained territory, the Peace Talks promoted by the UN have been postponed, and the outcomes of his military campaign are difficult to foresee.

[1] This figure includes only individually verified cases and does not represent the actual death toll.

3. Stabilization: a Working Definition

International interventions have transformed over time. If during the 1990s interventions were developed according to a liberal framing constructed upon the discourse of human rights protection enshrined in the moral imperative of acting according to higher laws, in the following decade the security paradigm shifted from the responsibility of Western powers towards the responsibility to protect (R2P), conceived as the mission to ensure resilience to those actors in fragile and failed states in need of capacity-building (Chandler 2012). This shift in the understanding of interventions leveraged on prevention, assuming that local actors should be empowered to become more resilient and the international efforts should focus on facilitating good-governance mechanisms and capacity-build actors and institutions. The case of Libya can be understood as the prime example of this paradigmatic shift, where the intervention was not waged to exert an external sovereign right to protect the population nor in terms of higher ethical and moral reasons, but rather in terms of "human security provision of preventive deployment of force" (Chandler 2012, p. 220) that does not challenge state sovereignty nor assumes full responsibility for the outcome to protect the Libyan population. The 2011-campaign to overthrow Gaddafi can therefore be seen as a way to facilitate the agency of the population which is tasked to secure itself, while no transformative claim, nor responsibility for the outcome was assumed by Western countries. The framing of human security, as the goal of foreign interventions which delegate the Libyan state and people as agents of their own security, is fundamental to understand the different premises that were put in place in the Libyan context and how the main rationale of the intervention cannot be framed as a liberal peace-building or state-building effort. Also, former president Barack Obama in an interview to Fox News aired in April 2016 openly acknowledged the lack of post-intervention planning. While he did not condemn the intervention per se, he said that the worst mistake of his presidency was a lack of planning for the aftermath of the 2011 toppling of Gaddafi, arguing that "Probably failing to plan for the day after what I think was the right thing to do in intervening in Libya" (The Guardian 2016). Thus, the military intervention left a vacuum behind, and the Western post-conflict approach did not willingly entail any societal metamorphic change.

Restoring security and establishing the rule of law in Libya is of the highest importance to the Libyan population (Abou-Khalil & Hargraves 2015). Western countries and international organizations in addressing the challenges posed by states emerging from conflict or experiencing extreme forms of violent organized crime have resorted to the implementation of stabilization operations. It is undisputable that each post-conflict scenario is characterized by its own specific interplay of local, national, regional and international drivers of insecurity and an effective international engagement in fragile states[2] requires a broad understanding of local politics. Nonetheless, in the scholarly literature there is often a misconception on what stabilization entails, because as it usually happens, reality is more convoluted than abstract conceptualizations, and there is yet no generally agreed upon definition. Although the term stabilization has been widely used by international actors and Western countries, it has been employed to refer to a different set of actions, in different contexts. Often the term has been combined with other ones adopted in discussions related to peacekeeping, peace-building, state-building, development and security (Lucarelli et al. 2017, p. 13). Among others, Muggah (2014a) argues "The conceptual and operational parameters of these stabilization interventions are still opaque". But even though the definitional effort has not yet produced an agreed upon conceptualization, there is a broader consensus on some key factors. First of all, it can be assumed that stabilization refers to situations of insecurity and instability in weak and fragile states that require a comprehensive and integrated approach to achieving stability (Muggah 2014b). Secondly, stabilization is pragmatic and problem solving (Lucarelli et al. 2017). It aims to support the delivery of basic services and maintain security when national authorities are not able to exercise effective control over the territory while, at the same time, strengthening the institutions (de Coning et al. 2017). Projects focused on the reconstruction of public services and the delivery of security are central elements for the people's lives on one side, and on the other, to increase the state's legitimacy in their eyes (Gordon 2010). Thirdly, stabilization needs to be a locally-owned process aimed at facilitating agency and empowerment of local actors. Stabiliza-

[2] Although there is no consensus on the definition of the concept of "fragility", as it is still widely used, in this paper it will be used to identify an unstable situation.

tion intends to help state institutions to restore and further develop an effective political power and the ability to withstand external shocks (Mac Ginty & Richmond 2013; Rotmann 2016). As municipalities are delegated to the implementation of quick-impact projects of stabilization, empowering local actors can contribute to building consensus among the population, but local dynamics have to be carefully evaluated. In the East, Libya military officers have replaced some mayors; elsewhere, armed and informal groups have tried to replace democratically elected authorities (Loschi et al. 2018). Extra-legal economies flourish and it is fundamental that the international players do not contribute to the strengthening of these dynamics, rather than aiming at untangling networks of smugglers, local chiefs, and militias. Moreover, according to Marrone (Lucarelli et al. 2017), stabilization no longer entails ambitious transformative goals, but rather focusing on the local political context, where lower benchmarks and standards can be deemed as appropriate. So, the reference point for stabilization efforts has lowered and is based on the assumption that it should reduce and prevent the net harm done to people and polities (Zyck & Muggah 2015). Moreover, compared to liberal peace-building interventions, stabilization operations are generally less metamorphic. To put it more concretely, these operations aim at supporting the legitimacy of state institutions, while opening or enlarging the political space for a viable peace process to take root (Lucarelli et al 2017). Therefore, rather than transplanting liberal democratic institutions, stabilization is based on domestic actors and should take into account what works at the local level.

Thus, many doubts still emerge on what is stabilization in Libya. Is it peace-building or state-building? Is it a process or an end state? Stabilization is an international approach in post-conflict intervention aimed at bringing stability, which is an evolution of peace-building and state-building, and therefore it requires an integrated approach among different dimensions (Lucarelli et al. 2017). It is not a straightforward operation that goes from conflict to peace, or just reconstruction of what was destroyed and re-building from ashes, but it is rather a lengthy and complex political-economic process that involves also re-distributional dynamics, bargaining with the elite, and power struggles. If it merely reflects the balance of power on the ground, opposing winners and los-

er may enhance grievances and contribute to widen the base for future contentions. Even though stabilization is conceived to be a short-term process, the implications it bears at the political, social, institutional, and economic levels are long-term. Otherwise, there is the possibility of setting up the conditions for protracted conflict that may continue for decades along regional, ethnic and sectarian lines (Adly 2018). Thus, it is clear that there seem to be a contradiction between short-term goals focused on the immediate reconstruction of public services and security infrastructure, with more long-term attainments related to development activities.

As there is no established definition of stabilization in the literature, in this paper the concept of stabilization will be broadly operationalized as follows: a set of activities aimed at reestablishing security priorities, service delivery, rule of law; kickstarting the economy; and putting in place measures towards democratic transition. The analysis takes into account the individual perception of stability by the population in order to assess which are the determinants that influence their attitudes, and evaluate which factors are important for the local population and need to be taken into account in the stabilization approach towards Libya.

4. Women in Stabilization Processes

Nearly 18 years have passed since the adoption of the United Nation Security Council resolution 1325 (2000) on Women, Peace and Security, which calls for the protection of women and girls in conflict and for the participation of women in peace processes. On one hand, emerging scholarship on Women, Peace and Security (WPS) agenda is increasingly contributing to security studies and IR literature, and on the other, in policy-making there is the growing recognition that gender equality should be included as a pivotal element fostering sustainable peace and development (de Jonge Oudraat 2013). Nonetheless, gender hierarchies are reproduced as gender-inequality in post-conflict countries remain an issue and peace-building practices continuously fail to include women in the decision-making process (Anderlinini 2007; Bell & O'Rourke 2010). In this context, it is relevant to reflect on how gender is informed and reproduced by practices and processes in post-conflict scenarios. It is very complicated to separate

post-conflict peacekeeping, peacebuilding, security sector reform and stabilization as distinct phases, indeed "the various processes relate to each other and are deeply integrated" (Ní Aoláin et al. 2011, p. 86). Stabilization also entails reflecting upon gender dynamics, and on the extent to which the possibility to reconstruct communities that have been shattered will be based on the reproduction of old exclusions and oppression or will be open to reshaping gender relations. Post-conflict stabilization, a heuristic device that can be only conceptualized in fuzzy temporal terms, entails a timing that comes after the end of conflict, but is not necessarily a time alien to violence, insecurity, militarization (Handrahan 2004). Labelling a post-conflict effort as peace-building, state-building or stabilization bears consequences not quite in terms of which response mechanism is better equipped to bring about the sought-after result, but rather in relations to the mandate, resources and network that international actors have. Thus, the kind of intervention chosen intrinsically bears a specific configuration of the post-conflict scenario, that in turn has gender repercussions (McLeod 2011). Therefore, it is important to ponder on the extent to which stabilization entails transformative goals of the society to be rebuilt and normative assumptions on the kind of society, which include gender relations as well. Efforts to include gender dimensions are generally threefold and include women-focused activities; gender aware-programming; and gender transformation (McLeod 2019). The first entails recognizing that conflict affects women differently and developing ad hoc programs on one side, while on the other aiming at developing strategies to increase women's participation in the political arena. Gender-aware programming refers to idea of gender mainstreaming, where gender issues are considered in all policy formulation and implementation across all areas. Gender transformation requires a pluri-dimensional metamorphosis of society freed from "violence, whether it be military, economic or sexual" (Tickner 1992, p. 66), and therefore a more secure society. Moreover, this analysis wishes to reflect on the interaction between local and international actors, and how different understanding of gender might impact the process of post-conflict stabilization. Within the conceptual model of hybridity in peace and conflict studies, the reflection has been brought on the ways that "local actors subvert, exhaust, renegotiate and resist the liberal peace" (Mac Ginty 2011, p. 6). Thus, different

actors might have different agendas, and it can be a useful analytical tool to understand that there are context-specific power dynamics at play.

In post-reconstruction efforts, it is crucial to highlight possible "gender gaps" through the installation of institutions capable of drafting and implementing gender equality policies (Gizelis & Pierre 2013). Research also points out how states where gender equality is guaranteed are less likely to fall back into internal conflict (Caprioli 2005). At the same time, when transitioning from conflict to post-conflict, implementation of gender rights is slow and complicated, ending in a de-prioritizing of a gender dimension, therefore reinforcing tacitly or explicitly gender hierarchies (Selimovic & Larsson 2014). Thus, the aim of gender mainstreaming is to ensure that men and women are not discriminated against and that they can both benefit from policies and actions and be equally empowered, regardless of their gender. Increasing women's participation is not only a matter of ensuring equal rights to women but also it has developed into a functionalist argument about improved operational effectiveness of crisis management and sustainability of conflict resolution (Meiske 2015). Participation of women in stabilization process implies also inclusion in the various national and transitional forums in which roadmaps for societal transformation are drawn up. It means involving women in the decision-making process of formal structures and informal spaces (such as civil society organizations). Taking into account a broader gender dimension, accounting for how men and women construct their masculinity and femininity (in their daily lives as well), and acknowledging the role of gender norms, constructions, and relations that shape gender inequalities within society risks is deemed to be crucial to understanding opportunities and obstacles to stabilization. Moreover, understanding how the insecurity is framed (from civil and military standpoints) is also functional to shed light on how the latter is related to gender. Adopting a gender dimension to post-conflict settings entails taking stock of women's activities aimed at increasing the overall security of their societies, but it also means recognize that women and men are differently affected by post-conflict destabilization in terms of discriminatory policies, basic human rights violations, poverty and access to justice. It is also fundamental to identify how gender imbalances in stabilization policies produce related deficiencies, which either overlook or actively

marginalize women, moving past a traditional security studies framework that structures the discourse in binary biased conceptualization terms: women as helpless victims *vs.* men as active perpetrators of violence or rights' violations. Focusing on women as agents of social transformation and change, instead of as victims of violence only, presuppose enriching the analytical perspective in order not to underestimate the importance of gender in stabilization policies. Therefore, effective tools to make the gender balance less unfavorable to women could entail (i) promoting women's access to finance (ii) establishing baselines with a gender focus on helping the government to formalize women's participation in national reconstruction efforts (iii) using legal reform initiatives to ensure that existing gender-discriminatory legislation is revised and that new legislation provides a level playing field for women (World Bank 2011). Helping women to recover socially and economically from violence is beneficial for women themselves, but also their families and communities, as involving women in security, justice, and economic empowerment programs can deliver results and support stabilization in the short-term and institutional change in the longer-term.

5. Women's Role in Stabilization in Libya

Alexander and Welzel (2011a) argue that there is strong and pervasive gender inequality in the Muslim countries. The same authors (2011b) also claim that women's empowerment is inherently emancipative and a belief-mediated process. Therefore, those people who support women's empowerment are more likely to support liberal democracy (Kostenko et al. 2015). Inglehart and Norris (2003), in their seminal work, find that attitudes towards gender equality are strong predictors of democratic aspirations around the world. Fish (2002) finds large gaps between female and male literacy in the region, imbalanced sex ratio and segregation at school, work, and leisure places and argues that gender disparity and oil-based economy are the major explanatory factors explaining the lack of democracy in the Muslim countries.

Still, during the anti-regime uprising in Libya, women were at the forefront in the protests against the country's government, as much as their male counterparts. In particular, young women were demonstrating for the creation of a new Libyan society

and were calling for an inclusive and just transition to democracy and national reconciliation (Langhi 2014). Women took active part in the revolution, as they were involved as spokesperson, weapons smugglers, nurses, and fighters (Langhi 2014; Stephen et al. 2011). The operative role that Libyan women played in the revolution, as they did in Tunisia and Egypt, seemed to lay the foundation for their active participation in the rebuilding of the country. But in the following months after the revolution, Libya descended into religious and tribal chaos, reaching a new low with the start of the second civil war in 2014. Acts of violence against women happened routinely, as they suffered threats by Islamist militias, human traffickers and tribal violence - putting the feminist battle back where it started (Bocchi 2017). But if the general feeling is that women don't regret taking part in the revolution, after the second civil war the situation for Libyan women varies according to which group, tribe, family, she belongs to, and where she resides. They hold different roles throughout the country, and it is very hard to divide them among geo-political, religious or tribal lines. The 2014 civil war split the country into various factions, and while in the East, the self-proclaimed anti-Islamist government has in fact many Salafist influences within its ranks whom try to limit women's freedoms, in the South traditionalism has given women stronger roles, as they are customarily the family and tribe decision-makers (Bocchi 2017). Moreover, presently from a legal point of view, Libyan law doesn't consider domestic violence as a criminal offence. Concerning marriage, divorce and inheritance women are discriminated against, as they don't benefit from the same protection accorded to men. Also, the penal code provides that a man killing or injuring his wife or another female relative if she is suspected of having a relationship outside the bond of marriage can be subjected to a reduced sentence. What is more, article 424 of the penal code stipulates that if a rapist marries her victim, the culprit can escape prosecution. On 16 February 2017, the chief of staff of the LNA, Abdelrazeq al-Nadhouri, issued a travel ban for women who wished to leave the country, unless accompanied by a man. After a week, following a wave of public condemnation, the order was replaced by another one, compelling all women and men from 18 years old to 45 to obtain security clearance ahead of any international travel from east Libya (HRW 2018). In terms of political representation, women represented less than

6% in Libya's first post-revolution government and only 3% of the candidates in the first election post-revolution. In fact, women's participation as candidates, registered voters, voters, and observers declined between 2012 and 2014. Consistent with the general rolling back of political gains for women between 2012 and 2014, women's participation during this period declined in the GNC, CDA and HoR elections (UNDP 2014). Evidence indicates that the drop can be attributed to general factors, such as disillusionment with the political direction of the country, security, mobility, access, and social constraints (UNDP 2014). Thus, even though the civil role that women play in the country is more frequently acknowledged, the political role that women could play is less accepted.

After 2014, with the deterioration of the security situation, to support Libyan women in advancing their rights and fostering their inclusion in conflict resolution has become critical. The UNDP contributed to the set-up of the "Libyan Women's Minimum Agenda for Peace" and since 2016 it carries out a project called 'Advancing Libyan Women's Participation During the Transition' to back the Women's Empowerment and Support Unit in the Office of the Prime Minister and play an active role in ensuring that women's rights are integrated in transitional policies and legislations, and to assist women's organizations to provide an effective lobby for women's rights. In this context, two events were organized to ensure a safe space for women for discussion about political decision-making processes and how gender equality can be reflected in the outcomes of political dialogues[3]. In September 2017, a gathering brought together women, policy-makers and civil society to share their experiences and expertise in order to review the draft proposal of the Constitution from a gender perspective and propose gender provisions. In November 2017, a three-days round table discussion was organized to draw up a roadmap for how Libyan women can build peace in their daily life[4]. Some participants explained that there are Libyan laws that support women's rights but need to be rewrit-

[3] UNDP Libya, Press Release, 21 Novembre 2017, http://www.ly.undp.org/content/libya/en/home/presscenter/articles/2017/11/21/women-review-libyan-legislation-within-a-gender-perspective.html

[4] UNDP Libya, Advancing Libyan Women's Participation During the Transition, http://www.ly.undp.org/content/libya/en/home/operations/projects/democratic-governance-and-peacebuilding/advancing-libyan-women-s-participation-during-the-transition.html

ten in a more detailed way, so tradition does not manipulate the law[5]. For instance, in the South women are not allowed to drive because of the conservative culture, even though the law stipulates that every adult person has the right to drive. The UNDP efforts show that taking into account gender issues is crucial, as in a transition process which involves rebuilding society, if given the opportunities and the means, women can assert their presence, voice their concerns, and bring different and constructive perspectives to the table.

Moreover, as women bring different visions on how to share power, address security concerns, and promote human rights (OECD 2007), the Women's Empowerment Section of UNSMIL, through a two-year strategy (2017-2018), promotes women's participation in the security sector and in formal delegations and provides safe spaces for Libyan women from Civil Society Organizations and activists to make their voice heard in peace processes and work towards specific gender provisions. It also advocates for one third of women representation in all governance structures. This is the only venue where women's voices are heard. Indeed, the Stabilization Facility of Libya (SFL), for instance, has not developed a specific gender analysis and its Project Document does not contain gender equality markers, nor sets out a commitment for spending a certain % for gender specific activities (UNDP 2019). Some work is underway on gender mainstreaming in the conflict analysis of local peace structures and through a second initiative on the potential for establishing women's networks for local peace under the SFL (UNDP 2019). Thus, initiatives supporting gender mainstreaming are being initiated by individual partners and they are still too scarce and deprioritized.

6. Data and Method

The next section of the paper will be devoted to the examination of determinants of a bottom-up stabilization approach taking into consideration the preferences of local actors. Relying on OLS regression analysis, the study provides insights on the impact of predictors that influence Libyans' perception of stability. The study tests the hy-

[5] UNDP Libya, Press Release, 21 Novembre 2017, http://www.ly.undp.org/content/libya/en/home/presscenter/articles/2017/11/21/women-review-libyan-legislation-within-a-gender-perspective.html

pothesis of certain ideological attitudes against another hypothesis concerning gender equality that so far has not received sufficient attention. As in general women, along with children, are the most affected group by violent conflict (Crespo-Sancho 2017) and they tend to value more stability and predictability to protect their family's environment (Golebiowska 1999), it is assumed that men and women have different perceptions of stability, with women being more likely to have a perception of instability in a context of fragility. Moreover, attitudes towards corruption, human rights, the government, the implementation of reforms, and foreign intervention are considered as explanatory variables and are hypothesized to contribute in defining the attitudes towards stability in Libya. It is expected that the more people have negative attitudes towards corruption, the government, democracy and human rights and foreign intervention, the more likely they are to perceive a sense of instability. Also, it is hypothesized that the more people have negative attitudes towards gender equality the more likely they are to have a negative perception of stability, due to the fact that gender equality and women's empowerment are considered as predictors of a country's stability and security. Socio-economic variables such as age, level of education, income level, tribal association and area of residence are used as controls.

This study uses data from the Third Wave of the Arab Democracy Barometer[6] (2012-2014)[7]. The survey is based on a nationally representative multi-stage area probability sampling of the population aged 18 and above. The Libyan sample comprises interviews with 1,247 citizens. It is appropriate for this analysis, as it includes information

[6] Arab Democracy Barometer Wave III (2012-2014). The data collection was carried out from 29th March 2014 to 18th April 2014. For online data, see Arab Barometer website: http://www.arabbarometer.org/waves/arab-barometer-wave-iii/#technical-reports. After the Arab Spring surveying became possible in Libya, and to date only two public opinion polling exist on Libya. One is the Arab Democracy Barometer, and the other is the Wave 6 (2010-2014) of the World Value Survey. The first has been preferred as its battery of questions is explicitly designed to be comparable with Barometers in Latin America, Africa and Europe, and can therefore be exploited for future comparative analysis.

[7] This is not the most recent Arab Democracy Barometer, as a fourth wave has been carried out in 2016-2017, but due to internal turmoil the survey doesn't include Libya. Therefore, as of January 2019, Arab Democracy Barometer Wave III is the latest source available for Libyan public polling. The data were conducted in face-to-face public opinion surveys (PAPI). Even if the situation has changed since the survey was conducted, not only it is the most recent data available, but also it is a useful source of information to gauge individual perceptions. The security, political and economic situations have largely deteriorated since 2014, so the discussion of the results refers up until that period.

regarding the opinions of Libyans on the perceived level of security, rule of law, democracy, governance and state of the economy. Moreover, the sample size ensures that there are a sufficient number of cases to be analyzed.

In order to grasp what are the dimensions influencing the perception of stability four regressions models are presented in Table 2. The selected variables are included according to the salience evidenced in previous studies on post-conflict intervention.

To appraise the perception of stability by Libyans, the outcome variable is assessed with an index measuring the aforementioned six dimensions[8]. It is a pseudo-interval variable, whose lower values indicates the respondents have a positive perception of stability and higher values denote a perception of instability [9]. According to the relevant literature mentioned earlier, several dimensions of the perception of stabilization have been taken into account: security; rule of law; economic situation; services delivery and efficiency; performance of political institutions; and democratic transition.

- The security dimension has been assessed through several questions: "Do you currently feel that your own personal as well as your family's safety and security are ensured or not?"; "Based on your actual experience, how difficult or easy is it to obtain assistance from public security when needed"; "Generally speaking, how would you evaluate the performance of the police in carrying out its tasks and duties?; "How would you evaluate the performance of the national army in carrying out its tasks and duties?".
- The opinion on rule of law[10] has been measured using a different set of questions: "How would you evaluate the performance of the judiciary in carrying out its tasks and duties?; "Based on your actual experience, how difficult or easy is it to obtain access the relevant official to file a complaint when you feel that your rights have been violated".

[8] The six variables have all been scaled on a continuum from 0 to 1 to allow comparison among scales. The code is available in the appendix.

[9] Respondents that refused to answer, or replied don't know, or didn't provide an answer have been recoded as missing cases.

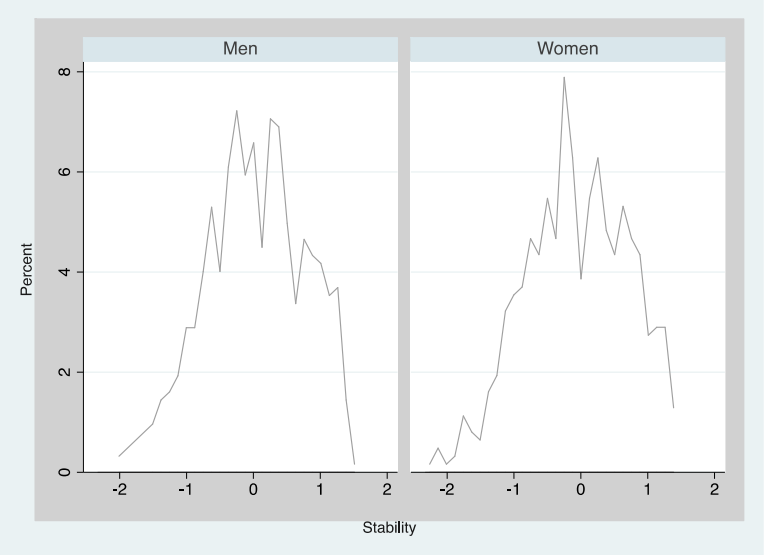
[10] The variable created to measure the perception on rule of law has been scaled and '0' represents a good situation and "1" is a negative one.

- To grasp the satisfaction of the interviewees with the state of the economy[11] in Libya the following question has been taken into consideration: "How would you evaluate the current economic situation in your country";
- "How would you evaluate the current government's performance on improving basic health services" is the selected query employed to estimate the satisfaction with the provision of services[12].
- Three inquiries have been used to create a variable on the perception of the performance of political institutions[13]: "How would you evaluate the performance of the government"; "How would you evaluate the performance of the Parliament"; "How would you evaluate the performance of the local government".
- Concerning democratic transition[14], a question has been included to delve into this dimension as well: "How would you evaluate the government's performance on managing the democratic transition process".

All these factors have been merged to create the dependent variable measuring the perception of stability[15]. Table 1 shows the frequency distribution of the dependent variable. It also shows that women perceive Libya as more stable than men, and also less than one fourth of population think that their country is stabilized.

[11] The variable accounting for the economic situation in the country has been scaled and '0' indicates a good situation and "1" stands for a negative state.
[12] No other question concerning the delivery of public services was included in the questionnaire.
[13] A new index variable has been created and scaled from '0' which is the estimation of a good performance of political institutions towards '1' which implies a negative perception of the political bodies' actions.
[14] The scaled variable on democratic transition goes from '0' for a good assessment to '1' for a negative one.
[15] The value of Cronbach's alpha of the stabilization variable is 0.81. The factor analysis reports that all factors load above 0.50, and the *p* value is significant ($p<0.001$). The Eigen value for the first factor is 2.72, which is well above the common rule that entails an Eigen value > 1. All statistical measures are available in the appendix.

Table 1. Frequency distribution of the perception of stability according to gender



Source: author's elaboration

The models take into account socio-demographic factors, including gender[16], age[17], level of education[18], income level[19], employment[20], tribalism[21] and place of residence (urban or rural area)[22]. This study considers as ideological variables corruption, gender equality, respect of human rights, satisfaction with the government, preference for a gradual reform process, and attitudes towards foreign intervention. All continuous variables have been scaled from 0 to 1 to allow comparison among coefficients.

[16] Dummy variable for gender, coded '0' for men and '1' for women.
[17] This is an interval variable going from 18 years old to 85 years old.
[18] This variable is a pseudo-interval variable with seven categories ranging from illiterate; primary school; middle school; secondary school; professional training; Bachelor's degree; Master's degree.
[19] This variable is a dummy variable coded '0' for 'our household income does not cover our expenses and we face difficulties in meeting our needs', and '1' for 'our household income covers expenses without difficulties'.
[20] Dummy variable for occupation coded '0' for unemployed and '1' for employed. The unemployed category applies to all the respondents that do not perceive a source of income from paid work (unemployed, students, housekeepers, pensioners) while employees, self-employees, and workers for a family business are categorized as employed.
[21] Socio-politically Libya is cluster of different ethnic, cultural, religious and tribal backgrounds, which play a significant role in terms of political disintegration, cultural schism and ideological polarization (Langhi, 2014). Therefore, a variable concerning the respondents belonging to a family or tribal association has been comprised in the model to assess whether membership in such a community can be a factor influencing stabilization. It is a dummy variable coded '0' 'not belonging to a family/tribal association' and '1' for 'member of a family/tribal association'.
[22] This is a dummy variable coded '0' for 'living in a rural area' and '1' for 'living in an urban area'.

6.1 Support for Gender Equality and Women's Empowerment

In order to determine the respondents' attitudes related to the status of women within society, a variable on gender equality has been created merging several questions: "Tell me the extent of your agreement or disagreement with each statement: A married woman can work outside the home; University education for males is more important than university education for females"; "Considering your own country's constitution, what is the importance of insuring equal rights between men and women". This indexed variable is measured continuously (10 positions scaled from 0 to 1) where '0' indicates support for gender equality and women's empowerment and '1' implies more negative attitudes.

6.2 Corruption

Corruption was rampant under Gaddafi's rule, and in the post-revolution period the situation has only worsened. All sectors of Libyan economy suffer from widespread corruption, due to lack of transparency, weak institutional framework and political instability and violence, which undermines the rule of law (Kamba, 2012). Bribery and favoritism are common practices, which coupled with weak judicial authorities, make it difficult to enforce a truly equitable, fair and just system. This variable has been assessed through the item: "Do you think that there is corruption within the state's institutions and agencies?" that aims to gauge into the extent to which corruption influence the perception of stability[23].

6.3 Democracy and Human Rights Situation

Stabilization process involves efforts in different sectors that seek to secure basic needs of the population and support the state-building efforts to strengthen structures that solidify peace in order to prevent relapse into conflict. The aim is to invest post-conflict societies with several elements, including some form of democracy to reduce the ten-

[23] It is codified as a dummy variable, where '0' implies that the respondent doesn't believe that state's institutions and agencies are corrupted and '1' for the interviewees whom think that their actions are tainted by fraud.

dency towards arbitrary power and give voice to all segments of society, and rule of law to reduce human rights violations. To this end, a categorical variable[24] concerning the state of democracy and human rights has been included in the model.

6.4 Satisfaction With the Government

Mounting grievances towards the government and general dissatisfaction and disappointment with its actions are expected to influence the perception of stabilization. A Likert scale 0-10 has been used to appraise the people's attitudes towards the government[25], where '0' is absolutely unsatisfied and '10' is completely satisfied[26].

6.5 Gradual Reform

As reforms after revolutionary events, such as the Arab Spring followed by foreign intervention and the deposition of General Gaddafi in 2011 can bring swift changes within the political system framework, a variable[27] concerning political reforms has been included in the model. It gauges into citizens' preference for gradual reforms rather than immediate ones.

[24] Question q504 recites: "If you were to evaluate the state of democracy and human rights in your country today, would you say that they are: very good, good, neither good nor bad, bad, very bad". The variable has been coded in a categorical variable where '1' stands for a positive situation and '3' for a negative one and the baseline is 2 'neither god nor bad".

[25] The question states: "Suppose that there was a scale from 0-10 to measure the extent of your satisfaction with the government, in which 1 means that you were absolutely unsatisfied with its performance and 10 means that you were very satisfied. To what extent are you satisfied with the government's performance?".

[26] This interval variable has been scaled from 0 to 1.

[27] The item asks: "To what extent do you agree or disagree with the following statement: Political reform must be implemented in stages (gradually) (step by step) rather than immediately?". It has been recoded into a dummy variable, where '0' indicates a preference for gradual reforms, and '1' predilection for immediate political reforms.

6.6 Foreign Interference[28]

Since 2011, the interference of regional actors and international powers contributed to dividing the country and made it harder to engage in a true process of national reconciliation (Mezran & Varvelli 2017). The UN established the United Nations Support Mission in Libya (UNSMIL) in September 2011, as the main international institution that seeks reconciliation between various revolutionary groups. Then, Egypt, the UAE and Russia formally support the UN-led negotiations and al-Sarraj's government, while unofficially they are loyal to Haftar's forces. Turkey, Qatar and Sudan back forces grouped under the Libya Dawn coalition. Western countries, especially the Italy, endorse UN-backed Tobruk based Government of National accord led by al-Sarraj. Therefore, diverging interests and approaches are assumed to influence Libyans' perception of stabilization. Hence, a variable looking into the attitudes towards foreign intervention in the country is taken into account "To what extent to you agree that foreign interference is an obstacle to reform in your country"; "Foreign investment in your country is very positive; somewhat positive; has no impact; negative; very negative"; "Foreign investment people at a similar employment condition as yours is very positive; somewhat positive; has no impact; negative; very negative". This index variable consists of twelve positions, measured on a scale from 0 to 1.

After having defined and coded the variables[29], a multi-variate regression equation[30] is estimated and Table 2 shows the results of the regression.

[28] It has to be stressed that the codebook does not specify whether international interference refers only to State actors or also to international institutions such as the UN and the EU. As the question is inserted in the subset of questions titled "The Arab World and International Relations", which comprises queries on regional actors, Western countries, and the European Union, it is assumed that the question refers to all of the above.

[29] A post-stratification weight has been applied to the model as it adjusts for sampling error and non-response bias as well as different selection probabilities.

[30] The outcome variable meets the measurement assumption, as it is a pseudo-interval variable. Predictors include several dummy variables, interval variables, and one categorical variable taken into consideration as three dummy variables, so they fit the measurement assumptions for independent variables. A multicollinearity check has been carried out. Scores on the outcome variable are statistically independent of each other. The model includes all the relevant predictors, based on the analysis of the relevant literature. The categories of the outcome variable are exhaustive and mutually exclusive, because each case in the study is shown to be a member of one group or the other but not both. All the missing data 'refusals' and 'don't knows' that were present in each variable have been coded in order to exclude them from the analysis.

Table 2. Multi-regression models with standardized regression coefficients on the perception of stability

Predictors	Gender gap Model 1	Socio-demographic Model 2	Gender Equality Model 3	Ideological Model 4
Gender	**-0.12****	**-0.12****	-0.08	**-0.09***
	(0.04)	(0.05)	(0.05)	(0.04)
Age		-0.23	**-0.25***	-0.19
		(0.12)	(0.12)	(0.12)
Education		0.14	0.11	0.08
		(0.08)	(0.08)	(0.08)
Income		**-0.16*****	**-0.17*****	-0.04
		(0.04)	(0.04)	(0.04)
Tribalism		**-0.14***	**-0.16***	-0.11
		(0.07)	(0.07)	(0.06)
Rural/Urban		**0.14***	**0.12***	0.11
		(0.06)	(0.06)	(0.06)
Gender equality			**0.56*****	
			(0.14)	
Corruption				**0.18***
				(0.09)
Human rights 1 *(baseline human rights 2)*				**-0.31***** (0.06)
Human rights 3 *(baseline human rights 2)*				**0.30***** (0.05)
Government satisfaction				**-0.73*****
				(0.08)

Gradual reform				**0.26*****
				(0.07)
Foreign interference				-0.18
				(0.13)
Constant	0.05	0.00	-0.17	-0.08
	(0.03)	(0.10)	(0.12)	(0.14)
N	1247	1165	1108	864
R^2	0.006	0.031	0.045	0.304
adj. R^2	0.006	0.026	0.039	0.295

*Notes: Standard errors in parentheses; * p<0.05; ** p<0.01; *** p<0.001 in two-tailed test of significance*

Source: Arab Democracy Barometer Wave III

7. Discussion of the Results on the Perception of Libya's Stability

The first model shows that women have a slightly less negative perception of stability than men. The coefficient doesn't show a very substantial gender gap but still women have a better perception of the country's stability than men.

The second model accounts for socio-demographic factors influencing the perception of stability. First of all, gender is again a significant element, thus indicating a gender gap, with women being less likely to perceive instability as compared to men. Moreover, the level of household income, which has been used as a proxy for social class, is another statistically significant variable, suggesting that those who have a higher level of income are less likely to feel their country is unstable. Therefore, wealthier people perceive less the consequences of instability, as they have the means to better readjust to adverse security, service provision, and economic concerns. As far tribalism, the people that belong to tribal association have a better perception of stability of the country. Also, those living in an urban area are more likely to perceive the instability of the country as compared to those living in a rural zone. Thus, to sum up, men who don't belong to a family or tribal association, live in urban districts and have lower incomes, are more likely to perceive a worse stability situation in the country. Age and education do no account for any statistically significant variation in the dependent variable[31].

The third model shows that controlling for socio-demographic determinants, gender equality is statistically significant. Gender equality is an essential component in any country's security and stability, as excluding women from actively participating in society can increase the risk of instability. Research has shown that it is also an important element in economic development and a critical predictor of stability and security, which can inform and improve work on conflict prevention (Crespo-Sancho 2017). The respondents who believe in the importance of promoting women's rights tend to have a better perception of stability compared to those who don't support equal opportunities for women and their empowerment. Therefore, it can be argued that policies towards women's empowerment influence the perception on the country's stability, and

[31] The insignificance of the age variable can be explained with the insufficient variation in the variable itself, as notwithstanding the fact that it goes from 18 to 85 years old, the respondents are distributed in the first half of the scale as the population tends to be very young.

gender equality is a factor that is considered by the population as important for the reconstruction of the socio-political system.

The fourth model demonstrates that four ideological attitudes are statistically significant, controlling for socio-demographic variables. First, corruption emerges has a significant variable that has a meaningful impact on the perception of stability. Libyans who believe that corruption is an issue in their country are more likely to have a negative perception of stability as compared to those who believe that there is no corruption within the state's institutions and agencies. Also, Libyans, who evaluate the state of democracy and human rights in the country as poor, have a more negative perception of stability as compared to those who think the state of democracy and human right is neither good nor bad. In contrast, those who evaluate that the situation of human rights and democracy as good have a less negative perception of stability in Libya. To this end, it could be claimed that ensuring the promotion of fundamental human rights is an element contributing to the stability of the country. Furthermore, those who are completely satisfied with the government actions are a lot less likely to perceive instability of the country as compared to those who have a negative image of the government[32]. Hence, in line with the literature and common understanding of crisis management, the model shows that satisfaction and support of the government helps to predict a more stable outcome. Furthermore, those who favor an immediate reform process have a more negative perception of stability, compared to those who support more gradual reforms. Therefore, it can be argued that a step-by-step approach of gradual reforms might give Libyans a more positive perception of the country's stability, rather than immediate, all-encompassing and swift political reform. Interestingly, the model shows that foreign interference is not a significant factor for stabilization.

To sum up, a positive perception of stability of the country is driven by addressing the rampant corruption, promoting gender equality, ensuring the respect of democ-

[32] As the survey was conducted at the beginning of 2014, it should be reminded that the General National Congress (GNC) was the legislative authority following the first Libyan civil war and was tasked primarily with transitioning the country to a permanent democratic constitution, and it was given an 18-month deadline to fulfil this goal. In June 2014, elections (18% voter turnout) to a new House of Representatives were held as the deadline passed and the work on the Constitution had barely started. Since then, the country is split between the House of Representatives in Tobruk in the East and the internationally recognized Presidential Council and Government of National Accord led by Fayez al-Sarraj in Tripoli.

racy and human rights, fully trusting the government and implementing gradual political reforms. After the end of the hostilities, these elements should be taken into account in any stabilization approach in Libya in order to account for citizens' concerns, interests and inclinations.

Conclusions

The security situation in Libya has deteriorated at a fast pace. In the South, the lack of investment in basic public infrastructure, the insecurity posed by ISIS, the presence of foreign mercenaries and common criminals plague the population. In the North-West conflict continues and it is difficult to foresee how and when it will finally end. The political deadlock has been underpinned by a complex web of conflicting interests, a broken legal framework and the plundering of the country's considerable wealth. On one hand, the lack of regional ceasefires between military actors, and on the other, the scant efforts to fight against terrorism hindered the stabilization process. As on 18 January 2019, the Head of the UNSMIL declared that "Only Libyans themselves can plot a path out of this malaise, towards stability and prosperity" (UN 2019), this study examined Libyans' what are the most relevant socio-demographic and ideological factors that shape their perception of stability. Since 2011, several centralized, top-down approaches have systematically failed. Therefore, a bottom-up stabilization approach, deriving from local actors, accounting for the civilians' will and needs is something that has been missing so far. This study showed that adopting a comprehensive agenda concerning women's rights and empowerment, providing equal opportunities for women and their full participation in the Libyan social and political arenas, are aspects that foster positive attitudes towards stability. Also, ensuring full trust in the government's actions correlates to the perception of stability of the country. It is therefore crucial that political institutions have the capacity to rule over the country. It seems also that in order for stability to be appraised by local actors, Libyans would be more inclined to support graduate reforms rather swift ones. Corruption in state's institutions and agencies is another aspect that has a negative impact on stability's perceptions, and it should be an element to be addressed in policy-making. In conclusion, a holistic approach to gender

mainstreaming; a full support for a democratic system ensuring the promotion of human rights; the implementation of graduate reforms establishing a trustworthy and effective government; and fighting corruption are core issues identified by Libyans as components contributing to the stability of the country and should be taken into account in the stabilization approach that will be put in place. Also, ensuring a full participation of all Libyan social groups is crucial to make sure that stabilization measures bring fruitful results. Including women can also enhance international actors' image as a post-modern 'state', sensitive to gender issues rather than reinforcing traditional gender roles of hyper-masculinized organizations of the military, the police, and the diplomatic service that acts to protect the weak.

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Appendix

Variables descriptive statistics

Statistics	**Stability**	**Gender**	**Age**	**Education**	**Income**	**Tribalism**	**Urban/Rural**
Mean	-.008	.499	.299	.686	.556	.134	.844
Variance	.554	.250	.041	.099	.247	.116	.131
Standard Deviation	.744	.500	.204	.314	.497	.341	.362

Statistics	**Corruption**	**Human Rights**	**Government satisfaction**	**Gradual reform**	**Foreign interference**
Mean	.941	2.223	.193	.115	.424
Variance	.054	.690	.077	.102	.028
Standard Deviation	.233	.830	.278	.319	.167

Cronbach's alpha and correlation matrix of dependent variable (Stability)

Average covariance: .0304956

Number of items in the scale: 6

Scale reliability coefficient: .8183

	Observations	Sign	Item-test correlation	Item-rest correlation	Average Interitem correlation	**Alpha**
Security	653	+	0.7472	0.5996	0.4230	0.7856
Rule of law	720	+	0.7638	0.6230	0.4163	0.7810

Economic situation	1230	+	0.6373	0.3991	0.4948	0.8304
Service	1216	+	0.7607	0.5855	0.4210	0.7843
Political performance	1138	+	0.7926	0.6327	0.3962	0.7664
Democratic transition	1091	+	0.7446	0.5751	0.4258	0.7876
Test scale					**0.4287**	**0.8183**

Code

```
**************************************************************
********************IdPS PAPER*******************************
******************LAURA BERLINGOZZI*********************
gen COUNTRY = country
drop if country == 1 | country == 5|country == 7| country == 8 | country == 9|
country == 10 | country == 13| country == 15| country == 19| country == 21|
country == 22
*STABILIZATION - DEPENDENT VARIABLE*
*security*
gen sec1=q105
recode sec1 (8=.a) (9=.b)
gen sec2=q2054
recode sec2 (8=.a) (9=.b) (5=.c)
gen sec3=q2034
recode sec3 (8=.a) (9=.b)
gen sec4=q2034
recode sec4 (8=.a) (9=.b)
gen sec1gp01=(sec1gp-1)/(4-1)
gen sec2gp01=(sec2gp-1)/(4-1)
gen sec3gp01=(sec3gp-1)/(5-1)
gen sec4gp01=(sec4gp-1)/(5-1)
gen secgp2=sec1gp01+sec2gp01+sec3gp01+sec4gp01
gen secgp01=(secgp2-0)/(4-0)
*rule of law*
gen rl1=q2033
recode rl1 (8=.a) (9=.b)
gen rl2=q2055
recode rl2 (8=.a) (9=.b) (5=.c)
gen rl101=(rl1-1)/(5-1)
```

```
gen rl201=(rl2-1)/(4-1)
gen rl4=rl101+rl201
gen rl501=(rl4-0)/(2-0)
*economic situation*
tab q101,nolabel
gen ecsit=q101
recode  ecsit (8=.a) (9=.b)
gen ecsit01=(ecsit-1)/(4-1)
*services*
tab q2044,nolabel
gen service=q2044
recode service (5=.a) (8=.b)
gen service01=(service-1)/(4-1)
*performance*
tab q2031
gen perfopol1=q2031
recode perfopol1 (8=.a) (9=.b)
tab q2032
gen perfopol2=q2032
recode perfopol2 (8=.a) (9=.b)
tab q2035
gen perfopol3=q2035
recode perfopol3 (8=.a) (9=.b)
gen perfopol101=(perfopol1-1)/(5-1)
gen perfopol201=(perfopol2-1)/(5-1)
gen perfopol301=(perfopol3-1)/(5-1)
gen perfol4=perfopol101 + perfopol201 + perfopol301
gen performancepol=(perfol4-0)/(3-0)
*dem transition*
tab q20412
```

gen democtrans=q20412

recode democtrans (5=.a) (8=.b)

gen democtrans01=(democtrans-1)/(4-1)

DEP VARIABLE

alpha secgp01 rl501 ecsit01 service01 performancepol democtrans01, std asis item generate (Stability)

factor secgp01 rl501 ecsit01 service01 performancepol democtrans01

INDEP VARIABLES

gen GENDER = sex

recode GENDER (1=0) (2=1)

*age*18-85

tab q1001, nolabel

gen age= q1001

recode age (0=.a)

gen age01= (age-18)/ (85-18)

level of education

tab q1003, nolabel

gen levedu=q1003

recode levedu (99=7)

gen levedu01 = (levedu -1)/(7-1)

economic level

gen eclev2 = q1016

recode eclev2 (3 4=0) (1 2 =1) (8=.a) (9=.b)

tab eclev2

tribal association

gen tribalass3 = q5015

recode tribalass3 (1=1) (2=0) (8=.a) (9=.b)

tab tribalass3

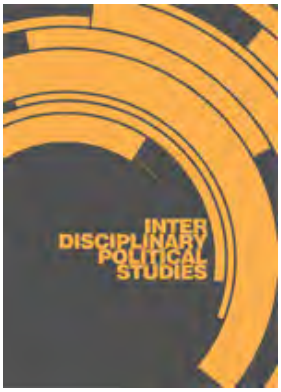
urban/rural

tab q13, nolabel

```
gen Urb_Rur = q13
recode Urb_Rur (1=1) (2=0)
tab Urb_Rur
*gender eq*
gen Gq01=q6012
recode Gq01(8=.a) (9=.b)
tab Gq01
gen Gq02=q6014
recode Gq02 (8=.a) (9=.b)
tab Gq02
gen Gq03=q812a1
recode Gq03 (8=.a) (9=.b)
tab Gq03
gen Gq04 = Gq01 + Gq02 + Gq03
gen Gq05=(Gq04-3)/(12-3)
*corruption*
tab q210
gen Corr1=q210
recode Corr1 (8=.a) (9=.b)
tab Corr1
recode Corr1 (1=1) (2=0)
*Human rights*
gen H3 = q504
recode H3 ( 1 2 = 1) (3 =2) (4 5 =3) (8=.b) (9=.c)
*satisfaction government*
tab q513, nolabel
gen govsatisf = q513
recode govsatisf (96 =.a) (98 =.b) (99=.c)
gen govsatisf01 = (govsatisf - 0) / (10)
*gradual political reforms*
```

```
tab q514, nolabel
gen Gradual_reform = q514
recode Gradual_reform (1 2 = 0) (3 4 =1) (8=.b) (9=.c)
tab Gradual_reform
*foreign interference*
gen Foreign_int = q7113
recode Foreign_int (8=.b) (9=.c)
gen Foreing_int2 = q701d6
recode  Foreing_int2 (4=1) (3=2) (2=3)(1=4)(8=.a) (9=.b)
gen Foreing_int3 = q701d5
recode Foreing_int3(4=1) (3=2) (2=3)(1=4)(8=.a) (9=.b)
alpha Foreign_int Foreing_int2 Foreing_int3, asis item generate (fi)
factorForeign_int Foreing_int2 Foreing_int3
gen F_I2 = Foreign_int Foreing_int2 Foreing_int3
gen forint01 = (F_I2-3)/ (14-3)
***
tabstat Stability GENDER age01 levedu02 eclev2 tribalass3 Urb_Rur, statistics (range
mean var sd)
tabstat Corr1 H3 dem_satsf01 Gradual_reform forint01, statistics (range mean var sd)
*MODELS*
*Model1*
regress Stability GENDER
est table, star b (%8.3f) stats (N) varwidth (40)
fitstat
estimates store mod1, title(Model 1)
*Model2 socio-dem*
regress Stability GENDER age01 levedu01 eclev2 tribalass3 Urb_Rur
est table, star b (%8.3f) stats (N) varwidth (40)
fitstat
estimates store mod2, title(Model 2)
```

```
*gender equality*model 3*
regress Stability GENDER age01 levedu01 eclev2 tribalass3 Urb_Rur Gq05
est table, star b (%8.3f) stats (N) varwidth (40)
fitstat
estimates store mod3, title(Model 3)
*Complete model*model 4*
regress Stability GENDER age01 levedu01 eclev2 tribalass3 Urb_Rur Corr1  ib2.H3
govsatisf01 Gradual_reform  forint01
est table, star b (%8.3f) stats (N) varwidth (40)
fitstat
estimates store mod4, title(Model 4)
estout mod1 mod2 mod3 mod4, cells(b(star fmt(3)) se(par fmt(2)))///
legend label varlabels(_cons constant) ///
stats(r2 df_r bic)fmt(3 0 1) ///
label(R-sqr dfres BIC))
esttab mod1 mod2 mod3 mod4 using
"/Users/lauraberlingozzi15/Desktop/modelli1.rtf", b(2) se(2) r2 ar2
```



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RESEARCH ARTICLE

Violating the State Body: Sexual Violence and Control in the Sri Lankan Civil War as Nation-Building in the Body Politic

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ABSTRACT

This article examines the use of sexual violence and rape during the Sri Lankan civil war by the Government of Sri Lanka (GOSL), as well as the control of sexuality by the insurgent force by the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam (LTTE). While in both circumstances male bodies were also victims of sexual violence by the state, particularly when in custody, or forced celibacy, I specifically examine the political imaginaries which surrounded female bodies during and since the defeat of the LTTE in 2009 as forms of nation-building and state cartographic practices. Following Matthew H. Edney's (2007) observation on the connected imaginaries of mapped bodies and female bodies, as they can be claimed and controlled in much the same way, I argue that sexual violence and/ or control becomes a form of nation-building. I suggest that the Sri Lankan civil war can tell us much about the violence required in nation-building.

KEYWORDS: Postcolonial; Nation-building; Sexual Violence; Sri Lanka; State Violence

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1. Introduction: the (Female) Body Politic in Civil War

It has come to light that during the 26 year, ethnic-religious civil war between the Government of Sri Lanka (GOSL) and the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam (LTTE) that the Sri Lankan police and armed forces used rape and sexual violence as a form of torture against Tamil detainees (United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights 2015; Pinto-Jayawardena & Guthrie 2016).[1] Elisabeth Wood (2009) notes that during the war that common forms of sexual violence as a form of torture included, "rape with plantain flowers soaked in chilies, bottles, or other objects; electric shocks or the application of chilies to the genitals; piercing of male genitals; forced sexual relations with other prisoners; and slamming testicles into a drawer" (p. 145). Sexual violence as a form of torture was particularly associated with the last phase of the war, when President Mahinda Rajapaksa put increased pressure on the insurgent group between January and May 2009 (Kodikara & Emmanuel 2016). The "Report of the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights on Promoting Reconciliation, Accountability and Human Rights in Sri Lanka" (2015) specifically noted that there were:

> "reasonable grounds to believe that rape and other forms of sexual violence by security forces personnel was widespread against both male and female detainees, particularly in the aftermath of the armed conflict. The patterns of sexual violence appear to have been a deliberate means of torture to extract information and to humiliate and punish persons who were presumed to have some link to the LTTE" (p. 6).

Several other reports were published at the end of the conflict by international non-governmental organization, and Chulani Kodikara and Sarala Emmanuel (2016) point to three reports which have identified the use of sexual violence and rape during the conflict: "Sri Lanka: Women's Insecurity in the North and East" (International Crisis Group 2011); "We Will Teach You a Lesson': Sexual Violence

[1] My discussion in this article follows Wood's (2009) definition of rape as "the penetration of the anus or vagina with any object or body part or of any body part of the victim or perpetrator's body with a sexual organ, by force or by threat of force or coercion, or by taking advantage of a coercive environment, or against a person incapable of giving genuine consent", but concedes that sexual violence is a broader category which could include "rape, sexual torture and mutilation, sexual slavery, enforced prostitution, enforced sterilization, and forced pregnancy" (p. 133).

against Tamils by Sri Lankan Security Forces" (Human Rights Watch 2013); and "An Unfinished War: Torture and Sexual Violence in Sri Lanka 2009–2014" (Sooka 2014).

Rohini Mohan notes that feminist scholars have analyzed wartime rape in many different contexts and geographies, "as a weapon of war, a reward for troops, a consequence of masculinity, effects of social breakdown, or an expression of male trauma and frustration" (2016, p. 260). For example, the documentary *Sri Lanka's Killing Fields* from the UK's *Channel 4* additionally depicted such examples of violent hypermasculinity as soldiers goading one another to shoot the back of a naked woman and asking others to comment on the female corpse's breasts (Mohan 2016). State military and police forces were also accused of raping Tamil women and girls at established checkpoints. Other reports have looked at rape of Tamil soldiers, including male on male violence as a form of torture, even contemporarily 'after' the war (Mohan 2016; Pinto-Jayawardena & Anantharajah 2016; AFP 2017; Cronin-Furman 2017).[2] What these reports and documentaries confirm is that, first, sexual violence was perpetrated mainly against Tamil women by security forces, but particularly in custody, men were also victims, and that "[t]hese men and women were targeted because of their actual or perceived involvement with the LTTE" (Mohan 2016).[3]

The civil war was divided along ethnic-religious lines between the majority Sinhala-Buddhist government and the separatists, the minority Tamil population that sought to create their own territorial state, Eelam, within the geography of the island. Tariq Jazeel (2009) has investigated the cartographic imagination of the Sri Lankan nation-state and how it continues to represent the idea of 'Sri Lankan island-ness' from Western, specifically British, colonial mapping practices. A part of this cartographic imagination includes the assumption of island space as a singular,

[2] In this article references such as 'post' civil war and 'reconciliation' are placed in quotes to recognize that although the LTTE were declared defeated by the GOSL in May 2009, the process of reconciliation and post-war ethnic tensions is ongoing.

[3] Although the scope of this article cannot appropriately discuss the nuances, debates, and controversies surrounding them, these reports and documentaries are listed here to validate observations that sexual violence and rape were used by state officials.

coherent political entity. The Constitution of Sri Lankan declares that "The Republic of Sri Lanka is a Unitary State", and it was this coherent and unitary state which the LTTE threatened with their pursuit of a separate Tamil state within island space. Fundamentally, this was a war about territory (Jazeel 2009; Kodikara & Emmanuel 2016). But now, or at least since 2009, "Sri Lanka's geographical and political island-ness is a matter of fact; one that the LTTE has violently contested since its formation in the mid-1970s, but nevertheless a fact recognized by the United Nations, and one that has now been militarily secured" (Jazeel 2009, p. 400). This article contends that the 'naturalization' of the body politic, here seen in the coherent and unitary Sri Lankan island-state, produces particular forms of anxieties, both gendered and racialized, that are made to *fit within* and be *controlled by* such 'frames' as internal and external borders.

This article, therefore, investigates wartime and postwar rape and sexual violence, as well as, the control of sexuality during civil war and nation-building. I maintain that these particular violences indicate much about the nation-state itself as a territorial body in the threat of penetration. Examining the imagined spaces of the state during civil war, I am concerned here with the ways in which rape, sexual violence, and control of sexuality are violent and discursive modes of state mapping practices and nation-building. In all the various cases, the connections between geography, gender, and the state are implicated in the humiliation and feminization of Othered bodies.

Bringing these conversations together, I examine what sexual violence and the control of sexuality can tell us about the cartographic imaginaries of the state, particularly during civil war. I am concerned with the role that the mapped nation-state, specifically the geography of the island-state of Sri Lanka played during the civil war from 1983 to 2009. But I ask more specifically, how might have the imagined geographies of the island-state been 'mapped' onto feminized bodies by a hypermasculine state as a form of nation-building, as seen in acts of sexual violence by the GOSL or in the control of sexuality by the LTTE?

This additionally implicates the imperial and colonial histories of mapping, place, and gender. For example, Anne McClintock (2013) begins her postcolonial investigation of race, class, and gender, which she argues come into existence "in and through relation to each other--if it contradictory and conflictual ways", with a map (p. 5). The map is from Henry Rider Haggard's novel, *King Solomon's Mines*, which for McClintock, serves as a parable of Western imperialism, including white patriarchal power (particularly over colonized women), hegemony of knowledge production, and command of commodity capital. The map graphs the ground that the white men must cross to enter the diamond minds, but if inverted it reveals the diagram of a female body, and the only parts drawn indicate female sexuality, including the 'nipple' of a mountain named for Sheba's Breasts and Solomon's 'treasure chamber' (McClintock 1995, p. 2-3). McClintock notes that both the map and the drawn female body do not exist without the other. The patriarchal right to claim, access, and penetrate space parallels the feminized territory and bodies, and, therefore I suggest, indicates the continued legacies of imperial power within the exclusionary mapping practices of the modern nation-state. This investigation of the Sri Lankan civil war reveals further the implication of the nation-state in the relationship between mapped territory and feminized bodies.

Cartography and the nation-state developed parallel, notably during the period of Western expansion, and as maps "were being transformed by mathematical techniques, they were also being appropriated as an intellectual weapon of the state system" (Harley 1988, p. 59). That is, maps not only allowed the metropole to claim and map the colonies during Western expansion, but simultaneously helped to define the modern nation-state. Cartography is a practice of nation-building, and a practice that historically developed through colonialism and imperialism. Following work that is concerned with the connection between cartographic and geographic practices and the colonial present (e.g. Harley 1988; Sparke 1998; Gregory 2004; Edney 2007; Jazeel 2012), this paper continues to question the dynamic and historical relationships between imperialism, the state, and mapping, but additionally examines how bodies are implicated in these

articulations of power, particularly female bodies, as the patriarchal, Euro-masculine gaze perpetuates in the scientific knowledge production of both the state and its geography. For example, Doreen Massey (1994) has also argued the "intersections and mutual influences of 'geography' and 'gender' are deep and multifarious. Each is, in profound ways, implicated in the construction of the other: geography in its various guises influences the cultural formation of particular genders and gender relations; gender has been deeply influential in the production of 'the geographical'" (p. 177). Matthew H. Edney (2007) takes this intersection of geography and gender one step further and looks at the "intersection of maps and bodies, in the ways in which bodies have been mapped, or maps superimposed on bodies" (p. 85). Specifically, he means here the female body, and as such that "they can be represented – and explored and perhaps controlled – in the same manner" (Edney 2007, p. 85).

Maps are both products of and produce power (Kitchin & Dodge 2007). I also argue that sexual violence during civil war is also a form of cartographic practice which maps the territory of the state (or would-be state) onto marked bodies. Therefore, the act of sexual violence is also a product of violence and power as it also produces violence and power. This cartographic-corporeal practice also indicates the form of power that produces the nation state but is also a product of the nation state. Sexual violence during civil war not only indicates anxieties of identity politics and internal antagonisms of the state, but it also reflects the imperial and masculine politics of vision and space from the development of cartography during the period of Western expansion and colonialism.

This is, of course, not to suggest that violence against women or other identified bodies did not occur before colonialism, but it is to highlight and suggest that the violence on politically gendered bodies in the process of nation-building should also consider how gender has historically been produced within and as the mapped state, which must consider both its Western origins and colonial processes. Additionally, rape and sexual violence are older than the nation-state, and they will likely survive past this contemporary territorial-political governing structure.

Likewise, "Rape is not inevitable in war", as Wood states (2009, p. 153). But I maintain that the changing conditions of power in civil war can indicate how sexual violence is used by the state, or as we will see in the case of the LTTE, the would-be state. In other words, civil war does not necessarily tell us something about sexual violence, but sexual violence can tell us something about the state during civil war, and the imagined cartographies and violence necessary in the process of nation-building. Nation-building is a violent act, and this violence can take on many different forms. The use of sexual violence during civil war is one form of nation-building that indicates a patriarchal, hypermasculine cartographic anxiety of the state as bodies overtly become both the site and practice of nation-building.

I maintain that the state and the body are seen in dual spatio-political imaginaries, each revolving around the notion of mapped territories where the nation-state is understood as a body, and bodies are understood within or as the territory of the state. Therefore, looking at violences done to bodies within the context of civil war, when the body politic is imaginatively severed (or in threat of severing) can also tell us much about the imaginaries surrounding the state and the violence necessary in nation-building. In concerns of postcolonial violence, the emphasis should not be placed on violence in *postcolonial* states, but on *violence* in postcolonial *states*. The postcolonial is the specific political history, but it is the state itself which is the precondition for violence through exclusionary identity politics of nationalism (Mouffe 1994), but also through exclusionary productions of space. That is, looking at acts of rape and sexual violence during the Sri Lankan civil war can also tell us about the conditions and precarity of minorities during inter-state violence.

A couple of caveats are necessary to establish before overviewing the paper. First, I am not providing new empirical data to the ongoing research on sexual violence in Sri Lanka. Nor do I mean to use the case study of the Sri Lankan civil war to reiterate just another example of sexual violence during war time. Instead, I am concerned with what the research already done on sexual violence in Sri Lanka teaches us or indicates about the politics of the state and nation-building

as a dual cartographic and corporeal practice. Second, questions regarding sexual violence, in general should not just be limited to violence against women, but should be concerned with violence against transgender, male, and queer communities. The use of sexual violence of male bodies, for example, does not negate these patterns and connections of political-spatial imaginaries, but such instances allow for us to question or challenge further the feminization of bodies as a practice of state power. Pinto-Jayawardena and Anantharajah (2016) maintain that "[r]egardless of the gender of victims of violence, it remains singularly important to look at sexual violence as a starting point rather than just a 'by-product of war', even as we acknowledge that conflict-related sexual violence also has significant symbolic value" (p. 43). It is exactly the symbolic value of the body as intimately connected with the fight for state territory during civil war that I investigate below. But focusing on the female body, as the primary concern of this article, addresses larger patterns of representation and violence in Sri Lanka, as well as engages the historical connection of place, territory, and the female body as sites and practices of imperial conquest and the ways in which these imaginaries continue in politics of the contemporary nation-state. Additionally, I wish to be very clear that the state was not the only actor to engage in sexual violence or gender-based violence, and as Kishali Pinto-Jayawardena and Jeannine Guthrie (2016) point out, not all victims were Tamil. And the civil war from 1983–2009 was not the first instance of sexual violence being used by the GOSL (Pinto-Jayawardena & Anantharajah 2016).[4] The issue of sexual violence and gender-based violence in Sri Lanka (as elsewhere) is not limited to the civil war itself. It is estimated that nearly half of all domestic violences cases in Sri Lanka go unreported (Pinto-Jayawardena & Guthrie 2016). Kishali Pinto-Jayawardena and Kristy Anantharajah (2016), therefore, argue that to only look at sexual violence connected to the war "risks oversimplifying the problem of gender-based violence in Sri Lanka", and that "Sri Lanka's endemic sexual violence

[4] For more information on the case of Premawathie Manamperi and her "punishment" and the first time wartime rape "stamped itself on the country's conscience" as part of the government's response to the to the southern insurrection of the early 1970s by the Sinhalese Janatha Vimukthi Peramuna (JVP, or People's Liberation Front) (see Pinto-Jayawardena & Anantharajah 2016, p. 37-38).

is more complex in nature, demanding that the correlation between sexual violence and the state be delineated beyond sole reference to the ethnic conflict" (p. 36, see also Thangarajah 2016). Their own study looks at the more pervasive societal attitudes and state impunity that occurs in everyday life and maintain that sexual or gender-based violence "is rooted in a deeply entrenched culture of impunity that pervades across the ethnic spectrum" (Pinto-Jayawardena & Anantharajah 2016, p. 37). It has also been argued that it was because of these entrenched practices and everyday experiences that allowed for the brutalized treatment of the ethnic 'other' during the civil war, particularly in its last phases (Pinto-Jayawardena & Anantharajah 2016). These experiences and practices of everyday life should also be considered when investigating the political and geographic imaginaries of the state during and even after 2009. While acknowledging, therefore, that this is a very narrow experience of sexual violence and the state, I argue that we can learn much about the political, and even moral imagined geographies of the state by looking at sexual violence during the Sri Lankan civil war (Shapiro 1997). Specifically, as Michael Shapiro (1997) states:

> "in the case of Sri Lanka, ethnic strife is read by the dominant Sinhalese Buddhist faction as an assault on the 'nation,' and thus on the moral integrity of persons and of the unity among persons embodied by the state. Ideological contention is moralized in this instance because it is drawn onto an ontological ground, derived from Buddhist moral geography" (p. 21).

In what we might call 'lessons learned in nation-building', I examine in the sections below the imagined relationship of territory and the violence and control of female bodies. By connecting theoretically the maintenance and control of national borders and bodies, I do not mean to suggest that these connections were consciously apart of the active use of sexual violence by the state, or the justifications or reasons behind it. I merely wish to connect the matters of control and exclusionary practices of both the state and the spatial imaginaries of the female body to the state.

In what follows, I first look at the use of sexual violence and rape by the GOSL, including security forces and police as both means of torture and punishment, as well as violence, disappearances, and even murder by state officials

at government checkpoints. The use of sexual violence in this section indicates either systematic or causation of state impunity. Second, I look at anxiety of nation-building through the lens of the LTTE and their strict control of sexuality for both cadre members and civilians. I argue that both the GOSL and the LTTE in these instances indicate the connection between the imagined cartographies of the state and female sexuality, where bodies become both the site and practice of nation-building, at times in its most violent manifestations.

2. The GOSL: Sexual Violence as Punishment for the Threatened State Body

John M. Richardson (2005), describes the "history of post-independence Sri Lanka, from a Sri Lankan Tamil perspective" as a history "of lost privileges, intensifying discrimination failure of democratic institutions to protect their rights and, finally, coercion by an overwhelmingly Sinhalese security establishment" (p. 29). Perhaps, unsurprisingly, ethnic tensions developed in Sri Lanka during the British colonial period, as Tamils were increasingly disproportionately represented in professions and government (Richardson 2005; Wang 2011). As the country gained independence there was an evident push to 'reestablish' island spaces as Sinhala-Buddhist, seen in legislation designed for a majority government. Although the 13th Amendment of the 1978 constitution did recognize Tamil as an official language, the relationship between Sinhala and Buddhism to the state was already established. For example, in 1957 Sinhalese was already established as the official language of the country, which did more than just offend the Tamil communities but caused economic strain and unemployment (Wood 2011).[5] Nationalism engages both real and symbolic representations and practices. The associations of language, identity, and the state are ways that state space is mapped through practices of exclusion and inclusion. Gender, as well as ethnicity, is implicated in these identity politics, including the territorial associations of bodies, particularly feminized bodies, in the production of nationalist identity politics.

[5] For a more nuanced discussion of cultural nationalism and language in postcolonial Sri Lanka, see de Mel (2001).

Practices and representations of language, gender, and identity as modes of nation-building come from historically developed Western associations of state mapping practices. Nation-building for many postcolonial states, particularly after the second World War, involved navigating and establishing the ideal collapse of identity, territory, and polity, indicating what has been referred to as 'cartographic anxiety'. Speaking specifically of India, Sankaran Krishna (1994) has defined cartographic anxiety as "a facet of a larger postcolonial anxiety: of a society suspended forever in the space between the 'former colony' and 'not-yet-nation'. This suspended state can be seen in the discursive production of India as a bounded, sovereign entity and the deployment of this in everyday politics and in the country's violent borders" (p. 508). But it is important to note that this delineating of internal and external borders is not unique to postcolonial states like India or Sri Lanka, but establishing borders is a part of nation-building. Arguably postcolonial violence arises in such circumstances when historically plural societies attempt to create an ideal body politic, but I contend here it is less the status of the postcolonial which precludes violence, but it is the process of exclusionary politics required by nation-state itself. Michael Shapiro (1997), for example has argued that:

> "[a]long with various ethnographic imaginaries – the ethnoscapes that are a part of geographic imaginations – it constitutes a fantasy structure implicated in how territorially elaborated collectivities locate themselves in the world and thus how they practice the meanings of self and Other that provide the conditions of possibility for regarding others as threats or antagonists" (p. xi).

It is the geo-ethnographic imaginaries of the mapped state as political territory which help to determine the historically developed conditions of possibility towards violence. In Sri Lanka this geo-ethnographic body was established as a Sinhala-Buddhist island space, and we can further understand the violence necessary in the process of nation-building by looking at the relationship between bodies and territories when the unitary state as body politic is imaginatively and politically understood to be *penetrated*.

Sri Lanka gained independence from British rule in 1948. The 1950s and the 1960s saw the establishment of an independent country under Dominion status

within the British Commonwealth. However, by 1972 Sri Lanka would declare itself an independent socialist republic. In the decades of post-independence nation-building the state increasingly became a majoritarian, hegemonic Sinhala-Buddhist paternalistic state at the expense of the minorities on the island, including Sri Lankan Tamils. Between the 1972 and 1978 constitutions, Velupillai Prabhakaran, the eventual leader of the LTTE, which would become the most prominent separatist group, carried out the first assassination of a state official in 1975, and in response "[s]tate forces engaged in increasingly draconian tactics" (Wood 2009, p. 144). The ethnic riots of July 1983 would spark the 26-year civil war. During the civil war women often became vulnerable to the majority group, including potential acts of rape and sexual violence (Ahmed 1988; Maunaguru 2009).

It is difficult to assess the exact frequency of sexual violence of Tamil women by security forces and police at checkpoints and other state-controlled spaces. The number of incidents vary drastically between reports. According to Chulani Kodikara and Sarala Emmanuel (2016), D.B.S. Jeyaraj found 37 documented cases of rape by security forces between 1990 and 2001. While "The Sri Lanka Monitor of the British Refugee Council" reported more than 45 cases between 1996 and 1999. And Women's Rights Watch documented 37 rapes by security forces in 1998 alone (Kodikara & Emmanuel 2016, p. 6). The differences between a 10, 3, and 1-year period should indicate not only the difficulty in calculating these kinds of reports, but, perhaps, also the issues surrounding underreporting. There have been several works that look at the issue of underreporting due to the continued stigma surrounding rape and the associations of female sexuality (Kodikara & Emmanuel 2016; Mohan 2016; Thangarajah 2016). The work here is extremely important, because sexual violence, like many places around the world, does not only occur in interstate conflict, or other exceptional times, but is a part of the daily reality for many individuals. My interest in looking at sexual violence as connected to civil war is to specifically see what the imaginary of geography and bodies can tell us about violent politics of nation-states. Therefore, the kind of silence surrounding sexual violence that I am interested in is silence

perpetuated by the state, either represented by individuals or systemically through institutions. Even when such instances of violence are not directly carried out by official orders, they are often done without fear of state punishment (Sooka 2014; Mohan 2016). As Kodikara and Emmanuel contend (2016), "[i]mpunity and lack of accountability for sexual violence have been entrenched features of the war in Sri Lanka" (p. 7; see also, Pinto-Jayawardena & Anantharajah 2016; Thangarajah 2016).

Moreover, I maintain that the conditions possibility of sexual violence by the state are also historically situated in the cartographic practices of the nation-state. Again, while the politics of mapping could never account for sexual violence in general, the use of sexual violence and rape as a tool and instrument of civil war alludes to the complex associations of bodies, territories, and power within statehood. Others, many referenced throughout this article, have looked at various discursive modes of nation-building in Sri Lanka. Sexual violence is another mode of both overt and epistemic nation-building as both a form and product of a historically developed imperial and hypermasculine state. Under such circumstances sexual violence simultaneously works as a mapping practice of the state. Likewise, in civil war the internal/external imagined penetrated state is compensated by or with penetration of feminized territorial-bodies.

For example, in Negombo, police officers arrested Yogalingam Vijitha on 21 June 2000, and used torture, including sexual torture to force a signed confession that she was a paid suicide bomber. This confession was not read or explained to her, and it appeared at first that her detainees would even be held responsible for this 'mistake'. According to Kishali Pinto-Jayawardena's (2009) report on The Rule of Law in Decline, when the plea was filed in the Supreme Court her treatment was considered under 'the strongest terms', but it was not made clear whether the confession she was forced to sign would also fall under equal scrutiny. In many cases, as Pinto-Jayawardena (2009) suggests, the circumstances of confession are not given enough examination during court. Moreover, what is of interest to my study is the abuse of the female body in the hands of state representatives, most especially the perceived right to use sexual torture, in this case, by the police. In

such circumstances, both the confession and sexual torture enabled state police to place this marked and 'unruly' body back under the control of the state. As discussed above, language in these spaces works parallel to state mapping practices through inclusivity and exclusion. For example, state space was determined and produced by the inclusion of Sinhala. State space was also marked by the exclusion of Tamil. Additionally, bodies are also marked and mapped by sexual violence as both a practice and product of the nation-state through hypermasculine power relations. Vijitha's detainees did not just misstep protocol, but they used sexual torture to (re)establish her body as state space or property of the state. Sexual violence can be at times an act of cartography and mapping practice of the state. At times this cartographic practice of sexual violence can even result in death, as was the case of Ida Carmelita.

About a month before her body was found, Ida Carmelita had surrendered herself to security forces and confessed to be a former LTTE cadre member. After a very intense questioning, Carmelita was permitted to return home by the intelligence unit with a temporary stay pass in the Pallimunai village on Mannar Island. According to reports, five masked men broke into the 21-year-old woman's home while she and her family were sleeping, ganged raped, and killed her. It appeared to the district medical officer (DMO) that her lips and breasts were bitten off and had been shot through the vagina. At first, justice for Carmelita appeared to be moving along when the Mannar magistrate ordered an identification line up, and her brother and a neighbor were able to identify two officers from the security force and were arrested. Things got more difficult, however, after the body was requested to be sent to Colombo and the DMO was declared to not be a qualified judicial medical officer (JMO). The JMO of Colombo did discover a second bullet in Carmelita's chest that matched the gun of one of the arrested men, but the trial became more difficult as the witnesses were increasingly threatened by security forces. Two witnesses fled to India, and her mother was one of the last ones to leave, only doing so after the lawyer in the case was killed in 2000. When the case

was transferred to Colombo, the accused were released on bail, and the progress on the case has since all but halted.[6]

Sivamohan Sumathy (2016b) observes that "[g]ender inserts into the story of nationalism through certain discursive sets of identification: of woman and land, territory and nation" and this is true for both the GOSL and the LTTE (p. 371, more on the latter below). These are instances where the violent cartographies of the nation-state get mapped out onto the bodies of Others. Rape becomes a diffracted version of the modes of violence from one cartographed identity group to another. In the context of Sri Lanka there were two simultaneous geospatial imaginaries at work within the violence of the ethnic civil war. One was of a coherent, uniform island state, Sri Lanka, and one was of two states within one island, Sri Lanka and Eelam. It is within the act of rape that we can see how the bodies of victims and survivors get mapped onto or as state space. The act can be a way to enact justice for severing the state or be a way to claim space for one's nationalist cause. In these various circumstances the body of the raped individual comes to represent the body of the state, and rape and sexual violence become ways to stake claim, territory, that is to say, it becomes a form of nation-building itself, particularly in instances of ethnic and nationalist violence. Additionally, the cartographic imaginary of the nation-state also helps to answer for why these particular acts of violence occur within ethnic and nationalist conflicts. For example, Ahmed (1998) and Maunaguru (2009) note that because the nation-state comes from liberal, Western politics it is also based off of exclusionary identity politics.

Sexual violence against women in Sri Lanka, again, is an ongoing issue. Most of the cases of sexual violence at government check-points by security forces were likewise against women. But one of the more interesting facts to come out of the Sooka report, mentioned previously, was that when torture was used men and women "were equally vulnerable to rape in custody, and the violence was equally

[6] The details of the case primarily come from Kodikara and Emmanuel's (2016) "Global Discourses and Local Realities". See also Pinto-Jayawardena (2001) and UTHR (2001).

brutal" (Kodikara & Emmanuel 2016, p. 15). The body in such circumstances is a site and project of power. Arguably, the violence of sexual torture for both male and female detainees is also justified as the body is feminized. Investigating Hindu nationalism, Dibyesh Anand (2007) argues that "an anxious masculinity lies at the heart of right-wing nationalism" (p. 257). Although a hegemonic Sinhala-Buddhist nationalism might also fit under such an analysis, I contend that through the gendered political imaginaries in the development of the state, including particularly the mapping of territory and borders as state space, that the state itself indicates a political form of hypermasculine anxiety. When rape and sexual violence are utilized as acts of civil war they also serve to symbolically, politically, and corporeally establish the territoriality of the state.

As noted, most cases of sexual violence go unreported, particularly when state officials are involved. Even rarer are cases where the accused is sentenced through the legislative process. One prime exception was the disappearance of Krishanthi Kumaraswamy on 7 September 1996. When Kumaraswamy did not return home from school, her mother, brother, and a neighbor went searching for her after receiving information that she had been detained at the Chemmani checkpoint. Her mother, brother, and neighbor subsequently disappeared, as well. Kodikara and Emmanuel (2016) note that unlike hundreds of other disappearances these four disappearances caught unprecedented attention, from the media, feminist activists, international human rights networks, and the United Nations. With an intervention by the president, eight soldiers and three policemen were arrested. The trial "proceeded at an unprecedented pace", and on 3 July 1998 six of the original eight were found guilty on multiple counts of murder, rape, and conspiracy. Those found guilty were given the death penalty, which was automatically converted to life sentences, as there have been no executions in Sri Lanka since 1976 (Kodikara & Emmanuel 2016, p. 11).[7]

[7] Kodikara & Emmanuel (2016) cite here Death Penalty Worldwide (2011), "Death Penalty Database: Sri Lanka", http://www.deathpenaltyworldwide.org/country-search-post.cfm?country=Sri+Lanka.

The difference between Kumaraswamy's case and hundreds of others might have to do more with the attention it was given and the expectations of the state, here as a protector of the body politic. As seen in the previous two examples, sexual violence was a means of mapping and reestablishing state space, where the imagined penetrated body politic is revenged with penetration of the individual cartographic-corporeal body politic. However, Kumaraswamy becomes no less politically symbolic as a cartographic representation and extension of state space. Here it is the paternalistic and patriarchal stewardship of the state as protector of the body politic which maps Kumaraswamy under or as the body of the state and whose rape and death must now be accounted for.

Likewise, Pinto-Jayawardena and Anantharajah (2016) argue that the 'success' of the Kumaraswamy case should not be considered a turning point in the narrative of impunity of the GOSL, but a positive outcome of a single case. They also note that only lower-ranking soldiers were convicted, and that the "[e]fficacy and feasibility of prosecution of members of the security forces should not diminish with elevated rank" (p. 95). Additionally, Sumathy (2016b) states of the few cases, like Kumaraswamy, that garnered public outrage, that they have done so as 'Tamil' deaths, "as a violation of the Tamil woman's body, a rape of the land" (p. 380). Moreover, I suggest that Kumaraswamy's case and the expectations of the state further indicate the geospatial imaginary of the state body as a cohesive whole and the anxiety of the potential penetration of the outside international community.[8] That is, if the state did not take control of the punishment for such violation, it was in threat of a second violation by interference from the outside. Again, nation-building requires ongoing maintenance of internal/external borders. Therefore, the Kumaraswamy case arguably became a cartographic practice and representation of sovereignty.

Sri Lanka is not just another example of sexual violence happening during or as a form of war, instead the work that has been done emphasizing territory,

[8] For more in-depth analysis on the legislative processes supporting state impunity see Pinto-Jayawardena & Anantharajah (2016) and Thangarajah (2016).

gender, and the state in Sri Lanka can teach us about the spatial and political imaginaries of the state during civil war. Jazeel (2009) has argued that "Sri Lankan island-ness is the prism through which all that pertains to the nation-state is refracted" (p. 407). The different political imaginaries of island space during the civil war, unitary island-state vs. separate countries sharing island space, indicates the ways in which gendered bodies, territories, and identity politics manifest within the historically developed imperial and masculine nation-state. As I'll indicate next, if the GOSL used sexual violence as punishment, then LTTE controlled sexuality. Both are corporeal-cartographic practices of the nation-state.

3. The LTTE: Controlling the (Feminine) Body Politic in Nation-Building

Jennifer Hyndman and Amarnath Amarasingam (2014) note that before 2009 if a foreigner wanted to enter Tamil territory, they would need to show a passport: a right and practice of nationalism, even if it was not recognized internationally (p. 563). A part of nation-building is the establishment and regulations of borders. Borders also work as simultaneous inclusionary and exclusionary practices that regulate and perform the unitary entity of the established territorial polity. A passport might indicate the opening of borders but is also only necessary as we understand and agree that borders are closed prior to the appropriate signals and signs of entry. Passports establish a site and performance of territorial practice and power. Controlling the sexuality of its own military force also appears to be another way that borders are protected, as a site and practice of territorial bodies.

As noted above, the Sri Lankan civil war was about territory, "at its most basic level was about land" (Sumathy 2016a, p. 302-303). Early on, post-colonial Tamil leaders had hoped to bring on another minority onto their nationalist cause, Sri Lankan Muslims, who were also largely Tamil speaking. However, Farzana Haniffa (2016) has argued that this project was doomed to fail from the beginning. Although there was a sizable Muslim presence in the Eastern province, 70% of the community lived among Sinhalese, not to mention that the leadership, wealth, history, and culture was also located in the South of the country. Muslim leadership,

therefore, supported the centrist state project endorsed by the majority (Haniffa 2016). In the 1980s relations between the Tamil and Muslim communities increased, just as with the Sinhalese, with notable armed riots in 1985 and 1987, and by 1990 the LTTE had displaced the Muslim community from Jaffna and parts of the Northeast.[9] The purifying and cleansing of territory, as a form of nation-building, is not unconnected, as the argument of this article indicates, to the LTTE's own control of sexuality. Therefore, the GOSL was not the only entity that we can look at during the civil war to investigate the link between mapped territory and female bodies. LTTE recruited female members to its forces, allowing many of them to ascend to ranks and titles. However, the LTTE also demanded celibacy of its members, and placed high value on female chastity (Pinto-Jayawardena & Guthrie 2016).

Starting with its inception in the mid-1970s, the LTTE was vocal in its celebration of its cadres' celibacy. Celibacy was originally for its male members, until the organization began to recruit female members in the 1980s. Celibacy became an important portrayal of control and morality, particularly when appealing to Jaffna society (Sumathy 2016b). In a society which required its unmarried women to be chaste, the military was faced with a particular problem when her sexuality was solely under their protection (Sumathy 2016b). Units were separated by gender and were forbidden from romantic entanglements. That is, until the higher-ranking officers began to marry, and had to relent to allow its own members the same privilege. Romance was allowed then between members, but only with prior approval and in-person meetings between partners were supervised. Therefore, the stance on celibacy eventually changed to allow for pre-approved marriages. However, as relationships had to not only be approved, but also supervised, the boundaries of bodies and sexuality were still highly regulated by the (would-be) state.

[9] Although it is not precisely the scope of the present article, see Haniffa (2016) for an investigation of sexual violence and Muslim masculinity in Sri Lanka, particularly post 2009.

Although Eelam might now be considered a 'failed' state, I contend that at the time through practices such as passports and celibacy it was not only an imagined state but an acting one, as these practices simultaneously established borders and regulated bodies through the mapping of state space. The relationship between the control of sexuality and the modern nation-state is not a new connection to make. Although Michel Foucault (1978) argued that power was effective and more efficient when it worked through discursive, disciplinary-mechanisms of power, this overt control of sexuality by the state indicates that:

> "[i]t was essential that the state know what was happening with its citizens' sex, and the use they made of it, but also that each individual be capable of controlling the use [s]he made of it. Between the state and the individual, sex became an issue, and a public issue no less; a whole web of discourses, special knowledges, analyses, and injunctions settled upon it" (p. 26).

For a state that was in the process of establishing and mapping borders, the relationship between territory, (female) sexuality, and state space manifested itself in an overt and at times violent control of its female cadre members' bodies. The control of sexuality of the LTTE was both a state mapping practice and a mode of nation-building.

Women fighters were, therefore, only as valuable as they were also 'pure'. Pinto-Jayawardena & Guthrie (2016) even note that women who had been raped were also coerced into becoming suicide bombers, in order to maintain their 'integrity'. The most infamous of these cases was that of Dhanu. Dhanu had allegedly been raped by members of the Indian Peace Keeping Force (IPKF), and 'avenged herself' by assassinating Rajiv Gandhi, the former prime minister of India with a suicide bomb. Through sacrifice, a suicide bomb "metaphorically or otherwise, was an act of purification of both the body of the woman and the body of the land-nation" (Sumathy 2016b, p. 375). Once again, in the politics of the nation-state the body politic is simultaneously the political territory and the political body. As such the body politic, as the female body and territory, had to be maintained and protected as a process of controlled, anxious nation-building.

Although unlike the GOSL, the LTTE did not systematically participate in the use of sexual violence as an act of war. Wood (2009) has even used the LTTE as an example of a group, that while engaged in other forms of violence against civilians, rarely engaged in sexual violence. And while Wood does note that it is impossible to say in such cases that rape or other forms of sexual violence never happened, the LTTE were an insurgent group that did not systematically use sexual violence as a means of war. Wood (2009) also points out that the LTTE did not even engage in systematic sexual violence when they forcibly displaced thousands of Sri Lankan Muslims from Jaffna in 1990. Given the connection between the feminine body and the state in the process of nation-building, a compromise of the integrity of sexuality meant a compromised state. Therefore, Wood suggests that "commanders may fear that sexual violence against civilians may evolve into sexual violence against fellow group members, undermining group cohesion and morale" (2009, p. 141).

The connection of territory, land, and the female body can take various discursive and violent forms, and for the LTTE the "rise of nationalist militancy was accompanied by the objectification of the Tamil woman as nation and as land; yet this 'object' does not necessarily remain objectified. The coming into subjecthood and subjectivity of the object forms the curious figure of the woman as agent and as victim within nationalism" (Sumathy 2016b, p. 371). The Tamil woman was simultaneously "virgin, mother, victim, traitor, and freedom fighter" (Sumathy 2016b, p. 371). Additionally, in the fierce control of the gendered national body, although female cadre members could wear uniforms, civilian women were expected to dress in 'traditional', modest dress in LTTE controlled territories.

In terms of perceived deviations of normative and controlled sexuality, transgender men and women were also under threat within the LTTE, as they "posed a threat to state formation by the LTTE and the formation of the nation" (Sumathy 2016b, p. 388). Therefore, even though women liberation might have been a secondary goal after achieving the territorial Tamil Eelam (Wang 2011), it is also apparent that the two cannot be separated. The politics of the nation-state and

nation-building remains connected to its mapped and cartographed status of the feminine body. The territory of the state is played out in the corporeal power relations of feminine sexuality. And feminine sexuality directly represents the integrity and status of the nation-state.

4. Conclusion: the Sexual Politics of Imperial Mapping practices

In the GOSL the potentially severed state is treated as an outside and external enemy. The act of rape then becomes about revenging the body of the state. Not only does the feminine body in this instance take on a form of nation-building, it is a part of the imagined cartographic or geospatial imaginary of the nation-state. However, for those that were not attempting to prevent the severing of the body politic, but establish their own, the female body or female sexuality again becomes a practice and site of power, albeit in different articulations. In the case of the GOSL, sexual violence and rape became a justified punishment over the Other's territorialized body. In the case of the LTTE, corporeal-cartographic anxiety manifested in a heavy-handed control of its members' sexuality. In both circumstances the protection of the (female) body politics falls under the paternalism of the nation-state. For example, Cynthia Enloe (1993) has observed:

> "Rape and prostitution have been central to many men's construction of the nationalist cause. They have permitted men to hear the feminized nation beckoning them to act as 'her' protectors. The external enemy is imagined to be other men, men who would defile or denigrate the nation. Too often missing in this gendered nationalist scenario are the voices of the actual women who have suffered rape or have been compelled to seek an income from prostitution. Thus, Bangladeshi women who had been raped during the war of session from Pakistan were rarely asked to help build the identity of the new nation, though news of their rape had the effect of mobilizing the anger of many Bangladeshi men. Likewise, today, women who have been raped are more symbols than active participants in countries such as Sri Lanka and Kashmir" (p. 239).

Rape survivors are often then written out, or remain unrepresented, in the politics that aided in their rape in the first place. Their bodies are cartographed as the nation-state and become a site of nation-building, but these same individuals are not often asked to build that nation-state as agentic political actors. Ahmed (1998) states

that this implies "that even when women become targets of violence and contribute towards the construction/protection of the nation; the nation makes no effort to free itself from the practice of male/misrepresentation" (p. 28). Indeed, Enloe (2014) also observes that "nationalism typically has sprung from masculinized memory, masculinized humiliation and masculinized hope", and thus "[w]omen haven't had an easy relationship with nationalism. Even when they have suffered abuse at the hands of colonialists and racists, they have often been treated more as symbols than as active participants by nationalist movements organized to end colonialism and racism" (2014, p. 42-44; see also Maunaguru 2009 on the gendered politics of nationalism). In the organization of the LTTE, however, it appeared as if women were given an opportunity to be apart of the nation-building of Tamil Eelam, including the recruitment women cadre members. As noted in the section above, Sivamohan Sumathy (2016b) purposefully connects the nexus of 'land' and 'woman' when it comes to Sri Lankan civil war and maintains that while this formation predates this conflict specifically that the Tamil militancy produced a very specific articulation of it with the woman freedom fighter. Women LTTE members were encouraged to look men in the eye and wear uniforms as they received promotions and rose in ranks. But their sexuality was also a source of anxiety for the LTTE.

Again, there is still evidence that sexual violence is being used against Tamil detainees, particularly for male prisoners. Additionally, sexual violence, impunity, and possible retaliation by the state are still everyday experiences of many Sri Lankans. Perhaps with mounting international pressure, in January 2016 the GOSL endorsed the Declaration of Commitment to End Sexual Violence in Conflict (Pinto-Jayawardena & Guthrie 2016). However, even with this public commitment to end impunity under the new administration of President Maithripala Sirisena, many still have lingering questions and concerns. For example, even though the checkpoints are gone, army and navy camps are still located close to villages in the Northeast (Mohan 2016). Moreover, the progress that is often discussed with the democratic removal of Rajapaksa was clouded in November 2018 when Sirisena

appointed him briefly back as Prime Minister, before being declared unconstitutional.[10] Sivamohan Sumathy (2016a) has observed that "[f]or the state, the war was one of attrition, conquest, triumphalism, and at the same time, one of shame, denial, and consequently renewed repression of dissent at many levels" (p. 338).

While considering the very specific and particular experiences of Sri Lankans that have had and continue to live under such circumstances, explorations of postcolonial violence, might do well to consider the process of nation-building itself and the implications of exclusionary practices that seem inevitable in the cartographic imaginaries of a unitary state. These cartographic imaginaries, described by Krishna (1994) as cartographic anxiety, work by delineating clearly marked internal and external borders. But these imagined political cartographies also allow for the paradox of the internal-external figure when state identity is clearly marked, in this example, as Sinhala-Buddhist. The paradox of the internal foreigner, perhaps, comes to its most extreme in the violence of civil war, when the coherence of the state is threatened of serving from within.

What the Sri Lankan civil war additionally indicates, as a part of the internal-external paradox of the state, is the connection between the imagined territory of the state body as a feminine body. At times the body politic must be protected from potential violations that would penetrate the integrity of the state. This can be seen through the GOSL's punishment of Tamil cadre members, but it was also seen in the fierce practices of celibacy by LTTE members, as they too sought to establish their own coherent state. The sexual and gendered violence is, therefore, not unique to the GOSL alone, but the associations of the state and the feminized body are arguably seen in the process of nation-building itself. Through similar logics, the bodies that would violate the body politic also become the site and practice of power. As extensions of the mapped state, the bodies can be penetrated and controlled in much the same way. The state is a simultaneously a body that must be protected, and a body that can be penetrated.

[10] Ranil Wickramasinghe was then re-appointed as the Prime Minister.

Ethnic tensions in Sri Lanka are far from over, with the brutal defeat of the LTTE the establishment of the Sinhala-Buddhist state perhaps has only been further justified, as attacks surrounding the Muslim minority in 2018 have indicated (Mashal & Bastians 2018; Rasheed & Cader 2018). Sharika Thiranagama (2011) has also expressed concern that "[a] cultural invasion has begun, symbolically expressing the triumphalism and the possible emergent cultural conquest of the Tamil and Muslim periphery and the beginnings of a Buddhist nation" (p. xvi). The most recent iteration of what Qadri Ismail (2019) called the 'catastrophe' of Sinhala Buddhist nationalism was seen by the world on April 21, 2019 with the Easter bombings in Colombo, Negombo, and Batticaloa. The attacks targeted Christians and killed nearly 300 people. Those responsible appear to have an Islamic background, only further exasperating ethnic and religious tensions in the country. Since the attacks, Ismail (2019) observes that "[s]ubaltern Sinhalese harassed Muslims on the street, with covered women, hyper-visible, taking an unequal share of the torment", even though "every single bomber was male" (p. 3). The female body is not just mapped as a representation of state space through sexual violence or control of her sexuality. The woman in black is marked as non-Buddhist as she walks the street, which by its association means less, or even non-Sri Lankan. The connection between female bodies and state space manifests in various forms, practices, and prejudices.

I began this investigation with a claim that interrogating the imagined geographies of the state and the female body can tell us something about the continued violences of the nation-state. The circumstances surrounding the Sri Lankan civil war, from ethnic tensions established from the colonial period to the use of sexual violence by members of the state in and even after 2009 are specific to these conditions and yet are not unconnected to larger patterns of modern history of colonialism, exploitation, and nation-building. Urvashi Butalia, Laxmi Murthy, and Navasharan Singh (2016) ask why had "the end of the 25 years of violent conflict in Sri Lanka in May 2009 not resulted in an open and frank discussion about sexual violence as a weapon of war?" (p. viii). This question is particularly

relevant for the authors given that in other state conflicts, such as Rwanda, Yugoslavia, and Sierra Leone, rape was being discussed and was acknowledged "a weapon of war" and "an instrument of genocide" (Butalia et. al 2016, p. viii-ix; see also Jayawardena & Pinto-Jayawardena 2016). While discussion of sexual violence as a weapon of war and genocide increases in awareness and persistence, it is also equally important to consider the conditions of war itself in the capacity of nation-building, the role that sexual violence reveals and plays in the cartographies of the state. Such investigations acknowledge the violences in the body of the state and individuals, and the ways which feminizing these body politic allows for practices of particular forms of power. As has also been shown, sexual violence is not always practiced on biological female bodies, but sexual violence works to feminize and justify many acts of brutal aggression.

Edney (2007) maintains that "interesting parallels can be drawn between pornography and cartography, especially in terms of the unequal and abusive deployment of power" (p. 85). At these parallels of pornography and cartography there are violent intersections. During this civil war one side indicates the anxiety of a 'penetrated' body politic, and other seeks to establish new, untouched, perhaps 'virginal', boundaries. Patriarchal notions of sexuality and power persists within imperial cartographies. Sexual violence wielded by the state during a civil war indicates the political implications of such geographic imaginaries that are intimately apart of our contemporary realities.

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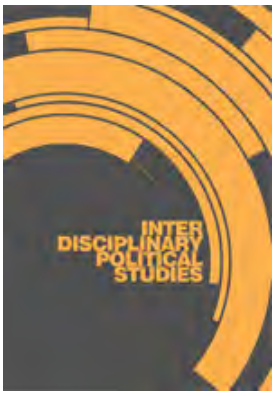

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RESEARCH ARTICLE

Armed Political Orders through the Prism of Arms: Relations between Weapons and Insurgencies in Myanmar And Ukraine

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ABSTRACT (max 150 words)

What is the role of arms in insurgency? Despite growing attention to the study of conflict and non-state belligerents, the linkages between weapons and armed conflict have remained under-researched. This paper explores practices and processes of firearms availability and control in insurgencies and argues that these should be understood in mutual relation with the constitution and distribution of authority. The contributions of the article are twofold. By conceptually systematizing recent shifts in the literature on civil wars and elaborating on small arms and light weapons research, it offers a novel heuristic framework to understand weapons-insurgency relations that revolves around the concept of firearms as "meta-resources" and gestures towards non-deterministic approaches. Second, based on empirical analysis conducted through two embedded case studies, it argues that patterns of authority in the insurgencies taken into consideration in Myanmar and Ukraine dialectically emerged with processes of arms acquisition by armed non-state actors.

KEYWO KEYWORDS: Insurgency; Arms; Armed Groups; Armed Politics; Rebel Governance.

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Zheng Zhou, The sculpture "Non-Violence" by Carl Fredrik Reuterswärd, in front of UN headquarters at New York City, 13 January 2012 (licensed under the GNU Free Documentation License).

1. Introduction

Created in 1985 by Swedish artist Carl Fredrik Reuterswärd, the renown sculpture "non-violence" – an oversized Colt Python .357 magnum revolver with knotted barrel – was initially thought to encapsulate John Lennon's call[1] for a socio-cultural shift to peace and non-violence by playing around the object, its iconography and the unrealistic shape given to it. Undoubtedly, the sculpture quickly became an icon, juxtaposed to other illustrious violence-related artworks such as Picasso's Guernica or John Heartfield's 1933 "The Old Motto in the "New" Reich: Blood and Iron". Unveiled in front of the United Nations building in New York some three years later in 1988, the pistol has since been erected in more than 30 locations around the world with its pointed-up muzzle spreading the message from the centre

[1] The sculpture was initially thought of as a tribute to John Lennon after his death in New York City on December the 8th 1980.

of various political projects (Chaoyang Park, Beijing; U.N. Headquarters, New York; Chennai, India; Kirchberg Plateau, Luxembourg, just to mention a few).

While the knotted gun deconstructs (physically and ideally) the meaning of the weapon and shoots in front of bystanders a limpid message, it could have not been better designed to also draw a problematic veil over a particularly spinous problem: the relations between weapons (technologies, objects) and violence. Nested in the sculpture, behind more apparent and immediate meanings, lies a double reference to what Deleuze defined as direct violence of coercion and indirect violence of control (Buchanan 2017). In addition, and connection to this, "non-violence" poses also a question pertaining the relations between objects/technologies per se (the arms), practices and processes revolving around weapons and broader socio-political relations (violence, armed conflict as a conjugation of the latter, authority and power).

The sculpture's shape, through the knotted barrel, conveys the idea that the weapon is a tool. The presence of this instrument (if unknotted) is deemed to affect the pathologies of society, amongst which is violence (I am purposefully exaggerating). Its materiality is granted prominence – the original version is reproduced in disproportionate dimensions somehow stressing the relevance of quantities and qualities of the object. Its functioning mechanisms, its technology in a sense, is considered relevant and the knot on the muzzle simultaneously acknowledges that the weapon is both "just an object" and "more than just an object", thus depicting a sort of curse of arms proliferation: magical attributes are endowed to the gun that triggers violence. At the same time the artwork also suggests that there is, or at least there might be, somebody at the rear of the weapon and somebody ahead knotting it, both of them with their agency and intentionality. The revolver holds an intrinsically relational character: it enshrines a centre and a periphery, for when it is unknotted the centre lies around the triggering mechanism, and when it is being knotted centre and periphery change. In this sense the relations between objects/weapons and violence could be understood as a matter of intentions and consequent actions for which the tools are irrelevant. Amidst the winding knots of

these seemingly circular readings one smells the contiguities and limits of two main frameworks that according to Bourne have bridled western political thought in its understanding of weapons-violence relations (2012): *substantivist* views asserting the autonomy of weapons as objects that determine socio-political relations; *instrumentalist* perspectives understanding weapons as neutral tools shaped into violence as determined by agents and their intentions.

This paper deals with the relations between weapons and insurgency, as a particular form of violence. Specifically, it explores how availability and control of small arms by non-state armed actors impact on authority in insurgencies[2]. By focusing on practices and processes, it traces arms dynamics and authority dynamics and argues that the former shall be understood in mutual relation with the constitution and distributions of the latter. The paper tries to avoid deterministic approaches and conceives the linkages between arms and authority, not in terms of linear causality, but through a more interpretative sense of understanding (Chojnacki and Engels 2016). In order to overcome the deterministic and dualistic approach of both substantive and instrumentalist blocks, it follows Bourne's Latourian conception of materiality as a dimension of social and political life (Bourne 2012). In other words, material aspects (and material relations) are conceived as dimensions of the constitution, character and distribution of socio-political relations since the two mutually constitute each other.

This schism has characterized also civil war studies, where a systematic analysis of the impact that availability and control over weapons and related processes - as physical/material as well as social aspects of conflicts - have on armed

[2] The enquiry is focused on Small Arms and Light Weapons (SALW) as the most significant category of weapons in possession of non-state armed actors. The text adopts the definition of SALW put forward by the Small Arms Survey on the base of the 1997 U.N. Panel of Governmental Experts on Small Arms. See the Small Arms Survey's definition of Small Arms and Light Weapons, http://www.smallarmssurvey.org/weapons-and-markets/definitions.html; Report of the Panel of Governmental Experts on Small Arms, Annex, General Assembly Resolution A/52/298, para. 16, 25, 27, 27 August 1997, http://www.un.org/Depts/ddar/Firstcom/SGreport52/a52298.html#b6.
The term "small arms" is used in the text to refer to SALW, their ammunition, parts and accessories while "light weapons" refers exclusively to this category. The term "firearms" is employed in the text as a synonym of SALW.

groups and their socio-political action and practices is still missing. Thus, the aim of this paper is two-fold, theoretical and empirical. First, the article attempts to conceptually systematize the interrelations between arms and insurgency by intertwining recent shifts in the literature on civil war with research on firearms and armed violence. In doing so it contributes a novel heuristic framework for understanding small arms-insurgency relations that revolves around a conceptualization of arms as "meta-resources".

Second, the empirical part focuses on one specific aspect of these relations and explores the linkages between armed groups' mode of weapons acquisition and authority in insurgency applying the analytical framework proposed in part I to two case studies: Myanmar and Ukraine. These two contexts, for different reasons and with different characteristics, have been deemed as major areas of firearms proliferation (see Bourne 2007; Duquet ed. 2018), while also being characterized by hybrid orders of authority and governance. Doing so, this part contributes to previous works looking into this specific matter (Marsh 2007; Duquet 2009; Mkutu 2009; Strazzari & Tholens 2010, 2014). In addition, it illustrates how practices and processes of arms acquisition have dialectically emerged with different patterns of authority in the insurgencies analysed in Ukraine and Myanmar and suggests that this has possibly impacted on governance arrangements.

Part II is based on a systematic analysis of primary and secondary sources on firearms proliferation[3]. Concerning Myanmar, the paper draws also on informal

[3] Data sourced from primary and secondary sources have been structured into two different datasets for qualitative analysis. The Ukraine dataset is primarily based on data retrieved from official press releases on firearms seizures issued by the *Sluzhba Bezpeky Ukrayiny* (SBU – the Security Services of Ukraine) and the *Derzhavna Prykordonna Sluzhba Ukrayiny* (DPSU – State Border Guard Service of Ukraine). In addition, it also comprises news sourced from the Norwegian Initiative on Small Arms Transfers (NISAT) database on small arms run by the Peace Research Institute Oslo (PRIO). This dataset consists of 514 cases of official and non-official press releases concerning weapons covering the period 2014-2017. Data for the Myanmar dataset instead were sourced exclusively from the NISAT/PRIO database and resulted in 114 news articles distributed throughout the period 1994-2017.
The author is grateful to Dr. Ekaterina Golovko, who contributed to create the dataset on Ukraine as part of the broader EU-funded SAFTE Project (Studying the Acquisition of illicit Firearms by Terrorist in Europe). The main delivery of the project consisted in the edited book "Triggering Terror. Illicit Gun Markets and Firearms Acquisition of Terrorist Networks in Europe", available here: www.flemishpeaceinstitute.eu/safte/publications (Duquet 2018). The author wishes to thank also

conversations, unstructured and semi-structured interviews carried out through fieldwork in Thailand and Myanmar in September-October 2018.[4] Due to evident caveats connected to the very nature of arms dynamics in conflict-complexes, the flaws of secondary sources, the discrepancies in data considered and methods used for the two cases, a comprehensive study of the interplay between mode of weapons acquisition by non-state armed actors and insurgency in Ukraine and Myanmar is outside the scope of this paper. Thus, Part II constitutes an exploration aimed to generate insights by drawing from available sources rather than a full-fledged comparison.

As the question of the role of arms in insurgencies should be situated in the literature on civil war and armed groups, I first turn to the latter to try and delineate the broader canvas of the paper. Second, drawing from the body of work on arms dynamics in conflict (Marsh 2012), the article strives to frame the links between firearms and insurgency. Lastly, in the empirical part, the case studies from armed conflicts in Myanmar and Ukraine are presented and analysed.

Part I | A Systematization of the Relations between Arms and Insurgency

2. From Civil War to the Meso-levels of Insurgency and Armed Politics

By the end of the 1990s, the relative importance of civil wars had fostered the field of peace and conflict studies to inquire into definitional and explanatory questions pertaining this type of armed conflicts (David 1997; Sambanis 2000). At initial stages, the interest rested mainly on structural and proximate aspects of civil wars.[5] While both macro and micro-level theories of the causes of war found space

Dr. Nicholas Marsh, Senior Researcher at the Peace Research Institute Oslo (PRIO) for granting access and support in navigating NISAT database.

[4] The author would like to acknowledge the financial support received by Sant'Anna School of advanced studies in conducting this research.

[5] In particular frequency and intensity (Collier & Hoeffler 1998), the economic causes of civil war (Collier 2000; Sambanis 2004a), pre-conditions for the onset (Fearon et al. 2004), duration (Hegre 2004), civil war outcomes (Licklider 1995, De Rouen et al. 2004), and peacemaking negotiations (Darby 2001).

during the 2000s[6], the contradictory nature of the causal mechanisms proposed compelled scholars to explore new research areas. In turn, although the field started devoting more attention to the heterogeneity of armed groups, their structures, and behaviour (Weinstein 2007; Kalyvas 2007), an appreciation of the socio-political aspects of intrastate conflict was still missing. Since the end of the decade, three strands of the literature have tried to tackle these gaps: the literature on insurgency fragmentation (Pearlman and Cunningham 2012), rebel governance (Arjona, Kasfir and Mampilly 2015), and armed political orders (Staniland 2017).[7]

These three strands have raised broader issues in the field, questioning some of the axioms underpinning previous research. Monolithic or dyadic understandings of conflict actors have been abandoned to emphasise instead their heterogeneity and complex articulation. As a corollary to this multiplicity and heterogeneity, a more nuanced interpretation of civil war has been advanced. The alleged monopoly of the state over the trajectories of political projects during conflict is fundamentally questioned and civil war comes to be understood as a process of competitive overlapping sovereignties not necessarily moving towards state-building. Highlighting the fluidity of power, violence, and territory distributions, this interpretation has stressed the hybrid character of war and peace distinctions. Overall, these considerations are underpinned by the idea that state-building is essentially always tentative, contingent, negotiated, and state authority and governance are permeated with other forms of sovereignty, especially in spaces and contexts at the limits of state capacity (Korf et al. 2018). In conflict and post-conflict situations, for example, state control of over the means of violence becomes the product of interactions and negotiations at multiple levels between multiple actors. In turn, while sovereign

[6] See Staniland 2012 for a more detailed review.

[7] The literature on insurgency fragmentation focuses on splintering processes in non-state armed actors and emerged from a discontent with dyadic understandings of internal armed conflicts proper of quantitative macro and micro-level analysis. The literature on rebel governance deals with the organization of civilian life during civil war and issues of governance revolving around non-state armed actors. It emerged from a discontent with conceptualizations of civil wars as gloomy spaces of chaos and anarchy and concepts of failed states and ungoverned spaces proper of neorealist approaches. Finally, the literature on armed political orders looks at the interactions between non-state and state actors in an attempt to grasp the fluidity of violence and territorial control during conflict.

violence is closely related to state formation and transformation, the processes connected to availability and control of weapons have an impact on the enforcement of authority and vice versa.

Notwithstanding these crucial developments, which operated a shift towards the study of the meso-levels of civil wars and their politics, arms dynamics have remained relatively under-researched and relegated although evidently relevant.

3. Arms and Insurgency

While some dedicated studies illuminated particular aspects of the links between arms and conflict[8], generally speaking arms issues have been treated as symptoms and implications of conflict by the literature on civil war. At the end of the 2000s, the considerable body of work on SALW was systematized into three main strands: weapons and warfare (particularly civil war), crime and armed violence within societies, and governance matters (Greene & Marsh 2012). The work of Greene and Marsh provided a more comprehensive understanding of the linkages between arms and armed violence through the adoption of localised, non-state-centric, frameworks and epistemologies in line with the broader "local turn" in peace studies (Mac Ginty & Richmond 2013). Some cross-cutting themes were streamlined, highlighting the intersectionality of the relations between firearms and armed violence across the lines of those strands. First, emphasis was placed on the relationships between control over means of violence and processes of state (trans)formation. Moving away from Weberian conceptions, it was pointed out how no monolithic state monopoly over the use of violence exists and patterns of weapons possession and use are instead the result of changing negotiations between different actors (Greene & Marsh 2012, p. 8). Second, small arms governance was understood as multi-level and involving a multiplicity of actors. Third, weapons were conceptualized not as mere artefacts, but as technologies involving more important

[8] Specifically: the links between global diffusion of SALW, conflict intensity, and the potentialities of control instruments (Boutwell & Klare 1999); the role of arms in conflict initiation and escalation (Sislin & Pearson 2001); weapons proliferation, arming patterns, and acquisition of arms in conflict (Krause 1995; Lumpe 2000; Pearson & Sislin 1998; Bourne 2007).

social and political factors. Thus, the conclusion was drawn that 'the interrelationships between SALW availabilities and flows (…) and armed violence, conflict and development (…) are important in a wide range of contexts, but they are more complex, dynamic and context-dependent than generally thought' (Greene & Marsh 2012, p.251). It is on the base of these openings that, drawing from the recent developments in the literature on civil war, I try to offer a systematization of the interrelations between SALW and insurgency.

The focus here is on how the availability and control of weapons impacts on the dynamics of authority in insurgency. As a form of technology, weapons are at interplay with social dynamics/drivers and integral to the formation and character of socio-political orders (Greene & Marsh 2012, p.9, 255). A major implication, that I draw from research on small arms and armed violence, is the reconceptualization of weapons availability and control dynamics as catalysts of the distributive and constitutive functions of violence. In this sense, weapons should be conceptualized as meta-resources, rather than mere resources: in other words, as technologies/tools the acquisition and control of which is mutually interrelated with the constitution of authority and power as well as with the distribution of control over resources, territory, and political arrangements. Certainly, as it has been noted, while violence dynamics are relevant, political orders can emerge, exist, and evolve in its absence (Staniland 2017). Notwithstanding this, violence cannot be reduced to monodimensional understandings, whereby it entails much more than mere physical action and can shape orders even in the absence of actual direct violence, especially considering the long-term duration of its effects (Schlichte 2009; Jabri 2007). Conceiving arms as meta-resources means highlighting the potential impacts that the processes connected to the physical-material and social aspects of availability and control over weapons have on the socio-political dynamics of conflict. It means moving away from a deterministic approach to one emphasising material aspects as a dimension of social and political relations. Along these lines, the relationships between arms and insurgency can be systematized by conceiving weapons as: 1) meta-

resources to be acquired by insurgents in order to uphold a given agenda, 2) meta-resources to be controlled at different levels throughout insurgency.

3.1. Arms as Meta-resources to be Acquired

Concerning the first aspect, I look at how the acquisition of firearms by non-state actors impacts on authority in the structure of insurgency. To do so I draw extensively on and further develop the work of Nicolas Marsh (2007), who first explored the impact of arms availability and acquisition on the trajectories of civil wars. The author argued that the mode of weapons acquisition is a function of availability of weapons and control over their acquisition by insurgents. Marsh defines arms availability as the 'extent to which a group's objectives are not constrained by a lack of specific weapons or ammunition' (Marsh 2007, p.60). Thus, availability is understood not as quantity of arms present, but in terms of access to specific types of weapons in relation to groups' objectives. Access to arms presents both spatial/ geographical aspects and logistic aspects. In fact, the location of weapons in respect to groups' areas of insurgency, morphology, distribution of territorial control, and socio-political relations between different actors in conflict are all crucial. Moreover, the question of who holds weapons supplies, the capacity of state authorities to prevent leakages from stockpiles, or the support of bordering states, represent important factors in determining availability. Control over weapons acquisition, instead, is understood as an organizational aspect of insurgent groups: it has to do with whether control of arms acquisition is diffused or centralized - organized at the individual/unit, sub-commanders, or leadership level. Thus, it is important to note that availability and control over arms acquisition can change over time and the mode of weapons acquisition is interlinked with changes in the structure of insurgency.

Following Marsh's framework, one should expect a correspondence between mode of weapons acquisition by insurgents and the configurations insurgencies. If the former is maintained by the leadership of a single group the insurgency will be unitary, while if different leaders have access and control acquisition then the

civil war will be characterized by 'warlordism'. When instead single combatants or units' commanders can autonomously acquire weapons, the insurgency will be structured around several fragmented groups (Marsh 2007, 2012; Strazzari & Tholens 2014). This framework has proven both instrumental in advancing a more nuanced conception of arms availability and in raising attention to the specificity of the issue of control over weapons acquisition. Nonetheless, in Marsh the concept of insurgency and the structure of insurgency remained underexplored and no consideration was given to internal control of arms subsequent to acquisition and armed groups interactions.

Insurgency shall be conceived as a two-level concept: as the activity of a single non-state actor, and/or as the multiplicity of different insurgent groups operating during conflict and their interactions. To understand the structure of an insurgent group I draw from work by McQuinn (2016). McQuinn argues that a crucial feature of ANSAs' organizations is the command profile, which he defines as the way authority is organized and enforced within the group. Authority can be organized formally, meaning that it is placed in the hierarchy/structure, or it can be organized informally, meaning that it rests on sub-commanders' hands.[9] Essentially, the assumption is that when the command profile of an armed group is formalized, the group is centrally controlled, while when the command profile is informal the group is controlled in a decentralized fashion. Concerning the other aspect of insurgency, meaning the relationships between ANSAs, I propose to draw from the typology of armed orders conceptualised by Staniland (2017, p.460). The author has identified situations of conflict actors' interactions (applicable also to inter-ANSAs relations). These are: hostilities, limited cooperation, alliance, collapse, and incorporation (Ibid). On the base of this canvas, the central question for the second part

[9] McQuinn provides further elements to discern between formal and informal ANSA's command profiles. Formalized armed groups hold a formal code of conduct and quasi-judicial mechanisms to internally control members, while informal command profiles coincide with no or little formalization in the code of conduct and no quasi-judicial mechanism. Indicators that are used to analyse the formalization of the command profile of ANSAs consist in the codes of conduct and induction process (whether these are rituals or formal training). In addition to these two features the presence or absence of uniforms, daily political training, established systems of rank and physical training are also considered (Kenny 2010; McQuinn 2015; Siebold 2007).

concerns how the mode of weapons acquisition by non-state armed actors affects authority in the structure of insurgency.

3.2. Arms as Meta-resources to Be Controlled: Non-State Firearms Controls and Governance

A neglected aspect of the role of weapons in insurgencies is the question of control mechanisms over these meta-resources *during* conflict. While an important strand of the literature on SALW has offered a critical analysis of the functioning and development of multi-level systems of arms governance (Bourne et al 2003; Krause 2002; Laurence & Stohl 2002; Greene & Marsh 2012), research on these themes tended to adopt a compartmentalized perspective focusing on "pre" and "post" phases, disregarding instead forms of firearms control enacted during hostilities. Central to this body of work has been the adoption of the concept of governance (rather than mere government). SALW governance consists in 'the (…) processes, norms, systems and institutions that shape, regulate, manage or control the production, flows, availability and uses of SALW and associated armed violence and insecurity (Greene & Marsh 2012, p.164).'

In areas where state sovereignty and the monopoly over violence are complex and formal institutions absent or constrained, societal forms of arms control are the primary channel of arms governance. Focusing in particular on communities (as locally bounded in a given space), Ashkenazi (2012) has suggested how various non-state actors such as social elites, gangs, and traditional or informal authorities often mobilize informal social processes to control firearms Armed non-state actors as well have a say in the control of firearms possession and use. ANSAs regulate the possession and use of arms internally with their members, and amongst the population in areas they control. In this regard, some considerations can be noted. First, since territorial control is a scope condition for governance to be implemented by insurgents, the acquisition and control of armaments becomes crucial for groups to obtain and hold territory. Second, control over arms by insurgents becomes both a mean to legitimize their role offering (external) protection to civilians, and a mean to ensure the control of violence against civilians internally to the organization. In

this sense, two aspects assume relevance: the internal control of armed violence by members, and the provision of security. Security provision can occur through community policing or other governance arrangements, and includes the issue of *safety* in relation to armaments. Third, while insurgents retain the initiative, civilians can influence how governance is practiced. Although it constitutes a limit to civilian influence, coercion is not a constant but can instead fluctuate from one side to the other and basically depends on what has been termed as the "imbalance of weapons" (Kasfir 2015). Relations between rebels and civilians partly depend on the relative threat armed groups and population pose to each other (Mao 1963). Ashkenazi's contribution identified two main patterns of weapons control by communities: the use of incentives and sanctions; and the symbolic and ritualistic aspects attached to the weapon within societies (Ashkenazi 2012, p.228). The use of incentives and sanctions essentially functions through the establishment of an implicit or explicit social negotiation between weapons holders/users and community members.[10] The characterization of guns by their users and society acts as a controlling mechanism by substituting the actual use for the symbol, and by determining appropriate and inappropriate uses, users, or owners connected to contingencies and social rules (Ibid., p.241-243).

Part II | Acquiring Meta-resources: Mode of Weapons Acquisition and the Configuration of Insurgencies in Myanmar and Ukraine

This part attempts to empirically explore the relationships between ANSAs' mode of weapons acquisition and authority structures of insurgency. The issue of firearms as meta-resources to be controlled is not explored due to lack of data. The two settings of armed conflict in Myanmar and Ukraine are analysed as embedded case studies, i.e. layered on the base of different ANSAs and insurgencies. The following sections look at each setting through the framework presented in Part I.

[10] Ashkenazi notes four types of patterns in which these bargain manifest: the use of prestige and prestige recognition as a bargaining chip; social agreements that violence has surpassed an unbearable threshold and needs to be limited; the bargaining power of civilians in conflict contexts vis à vis combatants in need of resources, information or complicity; the dynamics of feuds (blood vengeance feuds and feuds based upon economic or political power struggles) (Ashkenazi 2012, p. 234-237).

4. Myanmar

After independence from British colonial rule in 1948, Burma descended into civil war and numerous different insurgencies have since swept the country up until today. A very fragmented and heterogeneous control over the use of organized violence characterizes the complex political scenario surrounding the peace process initiated in the first half of the 2000s, which slowly led to the 2015 National Ceasefire Agreement (NCA).[11] To date, ten Ethnic Armed Organizations (EAOs) have signed the NCA, while some of the major armed groups continue fighting with the Tatmadaw (the Myanmar Armed Forces) and the government.[12] In addition, pockets of dissent and de facto autonomy also exist in areas controlled by the latter or by ceasefire EAOs. Against this landscape, weapons have long constituted an important commodity, featuring as both trafficked goods and assets to uphold authority.

4.1. Arms Availability

Although the very concept of firearms market is contested and often misused, Southeast Asia is usually taken as an example of the existence of distinct regional structures of licit and illicit circulation of firearms (Bourne 2007). The major sources and dynamics of arms proliferation in the region have been connected to the legacy of conflicts and legal and covert supplies of arms channelled with involvement of state apparatuses.

[11] The peace process that led to the signature of the NCA was formally initiated by the "roadmap to discipline flourishing democracy" first announced in 2003. The roadmap was a seven-steps process conceived by the Tatmadaw to accompany the country towards the establishment of a stable democratic political system.

[12] Under the Thein Sein administration eight EAOs signed the NCA in 2015: the Karen National Union (KNU), the Karen National Liberation Army-Peace Council (KNLA-PC), the Democratic Karen Benevolent Army (DKBA), the Revolutionary Council of Shan State-Shan State Army South (RCSS-SSAS), the All Burma Student's Democratic Front (ABSDF), the Chin National Front (CNF), the Pa-O National Liberation Organization (PNLO) and the Arakan Liberation Party (ALP). See ACLED (2016), Peace in Myanmar?, https://www.acleddata.com/2016/03/03/peace-in-myanmar/. Two more EAOs joined in February 2018: the New Mon State Party (NMSP) and the Lahu Democratic Union (LDU).
The following EAOs have not signed yet: the United Wa State Army (UWSA), Kachin Independence Organization/Kachin Independence Army (KIO/KIA), their allies of the Ta'ang National Liberation Army (TNLA) and Arakan Army (AA), Karenni National Progressive Party (KNPP), Nationalist Socialist Council of Nagaland-Kaplan (NSCN-K), the National Democratic Alliance Army (NDAA), the Myanmar National Democratic Alliance Army (MNDAA), the Shan State Progressive Party/Shan State Army (SSPP/SSA-N), and the Karenni National Progressive Party (KNPP).

During World War II, Burma emerged as a strategic buffer zone in South-East Asia and in the immediate post-WWII period weapons were widely available in the country (Myint-U 2011; Gibson & Chen 2011). Throughout the 1960s and 70s, considerable flows were channelled into the region by the U.S., China, and USSR (Tholens 2012, p.101; Chouvy 2013, p.92). It has been estimated that in the aftermath of the Vietnam War in 1975, Vietnam and Cambodia were home to 2 million weapons and 150.000 tons of ammunition (Chouvy 2013). At the beginning of the 2000s, before the European Union's Assistance on Curbing Small Arms and Light Weapons (EU-ASAC) disarmament program was carried out, figures estimated the presence of 500.000 to 1 million SALW in Cambodia (Tholens 2012, p.71). The Communist Party of Burma (CPB), as well as armed groups in NE India at times, was supported by China, while Thailand favoured the strengthening of Shan and Karen armed groups to counterbalance the presence of communist formations on its territory. Cold War patterns of arms supply and proliferation seem to have retained significant impact on the creation and consolidation of regional structures of weapons accumulation and circulation (Bourne 2007, p.163). More recently, the main source of SALW has been represented by the Chinese grey market and cross-border supplies to the United Wa State Army (UWSA), especially between the second-half of the 2000s and 2013 ca.[13]

Generally speaking, four main sub-regional areas have represented important hubs of proliferation and trafficking of weapons in Southeast Asia: the Southern trait of the eastern Myanmar border with Thailand; the so-called "Golden Triangle" intersecting Myanmar's Shan State, Laos, and Thailand just beneath Yunnan Province in China; the border areas between Myanmar, Bangladesh, and India; and, lastly, arms have also flowed from the Northern and North-eastern borders of Myanmar to the western borders with India. Interestingly, these areas ideally match with the borderlands of Myanmar and reflect heterogeneous geographical, topographical, and socio-political characteristics of its territory. Across these four main proliferation areas, overall civilian firearms availability has traditionally been poor in

[13] Interview with independent consultant, September 2018, Bangkok.

Myanmar borderlands, although various types of weapons are available to ANSAs. Assault rifles are quite ubiquitous, especially AK patterns of Chinese production.[14] Light weapons are also available and trafficked, although overall less frequently and with prevalence in northern Shan State and Kachin.[15] Ammunition are trafficked as well, although there seem to be a general trend of decreasing availability started around the second half of the 2000s, especially on the Myanmar-Thai border.[16]

Concerning the response of central governments to the proliferation of arms and ANSAs, the year 1988 is generally considered as a watershed for Myanmar civil wars and state-building processes. After decades of repression and political and economic isolationism, in 1988 the country appeared as an isolated core, surrounded by politically and economically connected borderlands, opposing central authorities as a result of longstanding frictions between centrifugal and centripetal political projects (Meehan 2011, p. 384). Massive public protests against Ne Win's regime, China's changing interests concerning its neighbourhood and the falling apart of Cold War structures are often recalled as the main factors underpinning a crucial shift in the Myanmar's state-building process (Myint-U 2011; Meehan 2011; Wood 2016; Gravers 2016). At the core of this shift laid also changing relations between the Tatmadaw and ANSAs controlling the borderlands. Apart from modernizing its arsenal and restructuring its forces[17], the Tatmadaw and military governments revisited their long-held militia programs while shifting strategy to engage

[14] Most common are the Type 56, Type 81, M-22, M-23, M16s and AR15s. Older rifles such as SKS, M1s and M14 are also present.

[15] In particular grenade launchers M79, M203, SAM and SA7, mortars, recoilless rifles, machine guns, heavy machine guns of 12.7 mm calibre, anti-aircraft machine guns, mines and home-made mines. [15] Most light weapons are in the possession of the UWSA, Kachin Independence Army (KIA), Ta'ang National Liberation Army (TNLA), and Shan State Army-North (SSA-N) to a lesser extent. In the last years 107 surface to surface rocket launchers and anti-materiel rifles (Zijiang M99) have been acquired by the UWSA and apparently sold to the KIA and Arakan Army (AA). Interview with independent consultant, September 2018, Bangkok.

[16] Personal conversations with independent researcher specialized in southeast Myanmar and high-level humanitarian worker with more than ten years experience in mine action in Cambodia, September 2018, Yangon. In addition see Suthep Chaviwan, Suthep Chaviwan 2008, Guerrillas battle rising costs, Bangkok Post (recirculated by Thai Asia Church Herald), 21 December, viewed in March and April 2018, < http://thaiasiachurchherald.blogspot.com/2009/08/guerrillas-battle-rising-costs.html >

[17] With purchases of SALW from Pakistan, Israel, Singapore and China and mortar shells from Vietnam.

with EAOs. Arguing that the nature of the governments was a purely transitional one to lead the country towards a new constitution and elections[18], they began to offer pure military truces accompanied by economic incentives to EAOs, concluding a total of 40 ceasefires in about two decades (Buchanan 2016). In such a landscape of ceasefire capitalism (Wood 2011), larger EAOs would receive more favourable incentives and delimitation of territory with relative autonomy. While partial or complete disarmament as well as shrinking of territorial space and transformation into army-controlled militias were reserved to smaller ones or splinter factions[19] (Buchanan 2016, p.14). These agreements concentrated mostly in Kachin and Shan states whereas, notwithstanding some exceptions, hostilities continued throughout the southeast of the country.

The converted groups would retain their weapons and obtain business incentives and concessions while remaining subordinated to the army, in order for the latter to regain control over the borderlands. Between 1989 to 2008-2010, many non-state armed groups were converted into pro-government militias and approximately 16 bilateral ceasefires were signed[20] (Meehan 2011, p.388-9; Jolliffe & Bainbridge 2017). From 2009 on, the Tatmadaw's strategy shifted towards a more aggressive policy pushing for EAOs transformation into paramilitary units directly controlled by the Army and engrafted into its structure with different degrees of integration through the so-called Border Guard Forces (BGF) and People's Militia Forces (PMFs) programs. These programs entailed a sort of disarmament and demobilisation process in combination with indirect reform of the Union forces' structure. If on the one hand the underlying political issues at the roots of hostilities continued to remain unresolved, on the other hand the micro-political economy of the borderlands was being reconfigured. The BGF and PMFs scheme were deployed as proxy forces by the Tatmadaw to exert control over territories outside

[18] In this sense the names of the two military governments in power between 1988 and 2011 are self explanatory: State Law and Order Restoration Council (SLORC) and State Peace and Development Council (SPDC).

[19] The practice of co-optation and militia formation has a long history in Myanmar, as revealed by the use of the term 'Ka Kwe Ye' or 'Pyithusit' as synecdoche to refer to many types of local armed groups somehow connected to the armed forces. See Smith 1999; Ruzza 2015; and Buchanan 2016.

[20] Of these 15 transformed into militias.

their de facto sovereignty (Buchanan 2016, p.22). Consequently, renewed fighting between the Tatmadaw and several EAOs such as the Kachin Independence Army (KIA), Myanmar National Democratic Alliance Army (MNDAA) and TNLA sparked since 2009-11, leading to a further change of attitude by the army. The issue of non-state armed groups transformation was disjointed from the negotiations that later led to the 2015 NCA. The changing geopolitical landscapes and state-building strategy of the Tatmadaw arguably corresponded to different dynamics of weapons proliferation and arms acquisition by non-state armed actors.

4.2. Control Over Acquisition, Authority and Insurgencies

Karen State and Thai-Myanmar Border

Towards the end of the 1980s, these areas were characterized by a plurality of sources of weapons proliferation. At the time, the civil conflict in Cambodia was gradually scaling down and until 1998 weapons continued to proliferate often through systematic larger transfers operated with the involvement of Cambodian, Thai, and at times Burmese authorities. In addition, arms proliferated through leakage from Thai state stockpiles. Thai authorities were also involved in the supply of weapons to Karen groups directly or indirectly deployed as proxies to contain the Communist Party of Burma (CPB) and armed groups involved in drug trafficking (Brenner 2017, p.6; Bourne 2007, p.129 and 167). Generally speaking though, by the end of the 2000s weapons availability and access had become increasingly scarce and difficult along the Thai-Myanmar border. This trend was particularly accentuated with regard to ammunition, as the doubling of prices compared to the 1990s would suggest (Chaiwan 2008).[21] Several factors impinged on the accessibility of Cambodian sources. By 2005-6 efforts to address weapons proliferation in the country had been successfully translated in disarmament activities and significant improvements in Physical Security and Stockpile Management (PSSM) in the framework of EU-ASAC (SEESAC 2006). Furthermore, the Thai government had already started to implement harder policies against alleged terrorist organizations in

[21] Apparently the cost for a single round of ammunition raised from 10 baht to 20-25 baht.

the wake of 9/11 and the 2002 Bali attacks. In addition, since the end of the 1990s economic interests mainly connected to logging concessions in Karen areas and the growing control of the Tatmadaw over that borderland had led to policy change towards the State Peace and Development Council (SPDC) and Thailand's attitude towards the Karen National Union/Karen National Liberation Army (KNU/KNLA) and armed actors in Myanmar had been clearly reversed (Chouvy 2013, p.96-7). Lastly, these shifts coincided with the turn in Tatmadaw's counterinsurgency strategy and increased military pressure on Karen lines as a consequence of the ceasefire agreements signed with armed groups operating in Shan and Kachin areas.

Weapons access and acquisition processes in these areas followed a trajectory similar to that of the most important armed group, the KNU/KNLA, which started shrinking and fragmenting (Irrawaddy 2008). One should note that internal fragmentation has represented a longstanding feature of Karen societies (Gravers 2016, p.389). The same could be said for the KNU/KNLA's structure, which could be described as politically centralized but logistically relatively loosely integrated. Although the group has traditionally organized the territory of Karen state into seven different districts under central command, there have always been discrepancies between corresponding KNLA brigades in charge (Brenner 2017, p.3). Particularly, flow and mobilization processes should have been centralized in principle but in reality, each brigade has been autonomous in recruitment and financing over its areas of competence (Ibid.). The same holds true regarding weapons acquisition, whereby apparently the process has been controlled at brigade rather than leadership level.[22] The quarter master general of the KNU remains a powerful central authority with power over brigades and privileged connection with governments, but brigade structures have managed and procured their own weapons.[23]

The process that led to the signing of the 2012 bilateral ceasefire agreement was one characterized by internal fragmentation, contestations and changing

[22] Interview with independent researcher.
[23] Ibid.

power dynamics amongst brigades. The mid-1990s marked the starting point of the KNU/KNLA's decline. A decline that had already begun with the fragmentation of the group when the Democratic Karen Buddhist Army (DKBA) emerged, formed by Buddhist members of the KNLA and Karen National Defence Organization (KNDO).[24] The DKBA sided with the Tatmadaw and turned against KNLA's brigades 7 and 6 - which represented the organizational core of the KNU, presiding the headquarters in Mannerplaw and the main smuggling routes (Brenner 2017). After years of progressive shrinking, in 2007 a new splinter group named KNU/KNLA Peace Council (KPC) emerged due to the signing of a bilateral ceasefire between brigade 7 commander and the SPDC government. Around the same years, the 5th brigade of the DKBA detached itself from the latter as a consequence of the organization's decision to enter the BGF program. Overall, Brenner has described these events as a progressive 'shifting internal power balance from central to northern units of the KNLA, particularly to Mutraw's Brigade 5' (Brenner 2017, p.3). The latter today represents the last stronghold of the Karen insurgency notwithstanding the group's eventual adherence to the NCA in October 2015. Apparently, the decrease of weapons flows and the loss of control over trafficking routes by Brigades 6 and 7 accentuated already existent decentralized weapons proliferation processes that allowed single brigades to be operationally autonomous.

Kachin State and Shan State

While access to weapons was significantly hampered for groups operating in the South-Eastern regions of Myanmar, different patterns characterized the northern Shan State and Kachin state. Throughout the Cold War the CPB remained the privileged recipient of Chinese weapons supplies. With the fragmentation of the CPB[25], Chinese instances found in the UWSA a primary interlocutor. In the 1990s, the PLA started a severe modernization process of its arsenal, which generated con-

[24] The Karen National Defence Organization (KNDO) is a KNU-affiliated village defence militia from which the armed wing of the movement (the Karen National Liberation Army) first originated (Brenner 2017, p. 3; and Gravers 2016).

[25] The group crumbled apart into four different splinter factions: the UWSA, Myanmar National Democratic Alliance Army (MNDAA), National Democratic Alliance Army (NDAA) and New Democratic Army-Kachin (NDA-K).

siderable SALW surpluses. Despite Bejiing's collection efforts, Yunnan-based former and active military personnel transferred arms to the UWSA (Chouvy 2013, p.99; Lintner 2015, p.133). UWSA has operated control over weapons acquisition processes at leadership level and these supplies created a sort of spill-over effect that triggered the circulation of older weapons in UWSA's hands towards other EAOs in Northern Shan State. Besides, during this period the UWSA also acted as broker facilitating other groups' weapons acquisition through Chinese channels. During the last decades, although Chinese-Burmese relations improved and China direct weapons supplies scaled down, drug trafficking remained a major source of income to purchase arms and the role of peripheral political and military structures in Yunnan was key to entrench the position of the group and its control over Pangkham and the Wa Special Region no.2. The group set up a modernisation process since 2010-12, year in which it signed a renewed ceasefire agreement with the Tatmadaw. Through networks rooted in Yunnan and passive or active support from Beijing, in the last three decades the UWSA was able to consolidate its status of strategic buffer zone between China and Myanmar. In addition, it emerged as the leader group of the Federal Political Negotiation and Consultative Council (FPNCC).[26] To date, the UWSA has remained outside the NCA repeatedly demanding its substitution with a different nationwide truce before taking any step in the actual peace process.

The KIA as well entertained strong relations with the CPB and was able to purchase supplies from the PLA at times (Lintner 2015, p.128; Yawnghwe 1987, p.233). With the crumbling of the CPB, the KIA has been able to secure weapons access with the UWSA, although intermittently and not without difficulties. Apparently, the group severely suffered from lack of ammunition in recent times, although it continues fighting with the Tatmadaw (Chouvy 2013, p.99). In 1994, KIA signed a ceasefire with the government, which remained in place until 2011 (Sadan 2016). The so-called 'ceasefire capitalism' strategy adopted by the Tatmadaw during

[26] Political alliance of seven ANSAs aiming to the substitution of the NCA before embarking on a peace process for the constitution of a federal democratic union in Myanmar.

those years and constant pressure to adhere to the BGF scheme, especially after the demise of Peng Jiasheng's MNDAA in 2009, fuelled internal frictions within the KIO/A (Woods 2011). Since then, the Tatmadaw has steadily scaled up military pressure to unprecedented levels until nowadays while, on the other hand, KIA supported the emergence of other EAOs.[27]

Control over weapons acquisition has been centrally organized at the leadership level by the KIA which is renowned for retaining arms procurement dedicated officers and alleged manufacturing capacity.[28] While the territory controlled by the KIA has always been geographically and logistically isolated, progressive waves of attacks and continued implementation of the 4-cuts counter-insurgency strategy by the Tatmadaw have aggravated the connections between different KIA's brigades and the HQ in Laiza, as well as amongst the former themselves (Davis 2018). Generally speaking the group has always been affected by its isolation and found it difficult to establish regular weapons supply lines. KIA's relations with UWSA have always been more tenuous than those between the latter and other non-state armed actors in Northern Shan State. In very recent times this lack of access to weapons (munitions in particular), has occurred in parallel with an organisational restructuring of forces. Larger territorially fixed brigades have been reshaped into more flexible and smaller ones (Davis 2018).[29] Moreover, single units have also been encouraged to carry out seizures on the battlefields.

Close relations amongst non-state armed actors, characterize also the case of the Palaung State Liberation Front/Ta'ang National Liberation Army (PSLF/TNLA). The roots of the PSLF/TNLA can be traced back to 1991, when another Palaung organization, the Palaung State Liberation Organization/Army (PSLO/A), signed a bilateral ceasefire with the Tatmadaw. PSLO/A was a long-

[27] In particular the Ta'ang National Liberation Army (TNLA) and the Arakan Army (AA).

[28] With the only potential exception being KIA's 4th brigade in Kutkai township, northern Shan State, which is far from KIO structures and potentially more autonomous (interview with independent consultant). Allegedly KIA manufactures Type 81-pattern assault rifles but reports and details concerning its production capacity are limited and difficult to confirm (phone interview with anonymous informant, May 2019).

[29] The group has passed from a total of 5 to 10 brigades, plus two mobile ones. From 4 to 7 brigades in Kachin State, and from 1 to 3 in Northern Shan State.

time ally of the KIA and its 4th Brigade in particular, and relied heavily on supplies provided by the latter (Meehan 2016, p. 368). Left without its primary ally and source of ammunition, when the KIA 4th Brigade fragmented into what would have later become the Kachin Defence Army (KDA) the PSLO/A was practically forced to sign a ceasefire and transform into a government-affiliated militia (Ibid, 369; Kumbun 2018). An internal faction to the PSLO/A rejected the agreement and constituted the Palaung State Liberation Front (PSLF), which continued to oppose the government from the Thai-Myanmar border areas, slowly trying to rebuild its military capacity. In April 2005, under its so-called 'weapons for peace' disarmament program, the Tatmadaw exerted more pressure on the PSLA to hand-in all its arsenal, as it did with other groups (South 2008, p.133). With many former combatants forcibly reintegrated into the ranks of local militia forces and the PSLF forced to withdraw at the Thai border, the PSLA ultimately completely disarmed and ceased to exist (Meethan, 2016, p.357). Meehan has underlined that the 2005 disarmament and demobilisation of the PSLA left many former elite and rank-and-file members dissatisfied and close ties with the KIA allowed to obtain weapons and training needed for the constitution of PSLF's armed wing created in 2009, the TNLA (Ibid). Apparently, many TNLA members actually are former PSLA combatants. The group's weapons in part circulated to local militias under the Tatmadaw scheme when the PSLA was integrated into these forces in 2005 and, from there, ultimately reached the TNLA in 2009 due to former PSLA combatants joining the new armed group (Ibid., p.377). Since its inception, today the TNLA has doubled its size passing from 900-1000 to 6000 combatants.[30] At the same time, it has grown more organized, assuming a brigade structure and controlling weapons acquisition at a central, leadership level.[31] After the initial crucial role of the KIA, in recent years the TNLA has moved closer to UWSA influence/support.[32]

[30] Interview with independent consultant, September 2018, Bangkok.
[31] Interview with anonymous informant, September 2018, Kyaukme.
[32] Ibid.

5. Ukraine

Significant patterns of governance, conflict and criminality have repeatedly brought to the fore the issue of arms proliferation in Ukraine from various angles in the last decades. Over the years, the country's kaleidoscopic past historical experiences have produced very diverse political settings underpinning the current composite and fragmented configuration of the country. Already existent profound societal rifts burst in 2013, triggered by the events of Maidan square[33], and resulted in an ongoing turbulent conjuncture of armed conflict and politico-economic crisis. As claimed by Matveeva (2016), the conflict in the country, perhaps another example of violent peace (Duffield 2001), did not come unexpected and was the result of social and political polarization, lack of one Ukrainian identity and unique statehood model promoted by the central government.

5.1. Arms Availability

With the outbreak of conflict in Donbass in 2014, the sheer number of small arms and light weapons estimated to be present in Ukraine has spotlighted the country as the most complex arms proliferation case in Europe. Firearms are widespread throughout the whole country both in the licit and in the illicit sphere, although not homogeneously. According to (conservative) estimates, Ukraine is considered to be home to a total of 4 to 5 million firearms – 2 million in the licit sphere and from 2 to 3 million in the illicit one (Martyniuk 2017).[34] Weapons are not ubiquitous and access is not without barriers but arms still remain fairly available in considerable quantities and varieties of types.

Several sources of weapons fed the first armed formations sprouted up from the events of Maidan and anti-Maidan. Between the First and the Second

[33] Although several transcription techniques for Ukrainian and Russian languages exist, the text tries to adhere to the more conventional norms and respect the transcriptions used by single authors of the sources consulted.

[34] To put these figures into perspective, suffice it to remind that the Western Balkans is home to 5 to 6 million registered and unregistered firearms. See Carapic, 2014.

World War present-day Ukraine was swept by several armed conflicts[35]: weapons originating from these conflicts have traditionally been stored in households, while those in military stocks later became obsolete and generated surpluses after the manufacture of the AK rifle (Ferguson & Jenzen-Jones 2014). Furthermore, as part of the Soviet Union and the Warsaw Pact, the Ukrainian SSR was home to huge military stockpiles, troop deployments, and weapons factories as it configured a third echelon of defense in the stratified Soviet military strategy (Griffith 2010; Griffith & Karp 2008). With the dismantling of the Pact, vast arsenals were stocked into the country by withdrawing soviet troops deployed in eastern Europe. This generated disproportionate surplus due to the subsequent downsizing of the Ukrainian Army (Chivers 2005).[36] Internal armed conflicts and patterns of state collapse in the crumbling of socialist systems at the regional level, such as the civil war in the adjacent Transnistria region of Moldova, the Wars of Yugoslav Secession, and the two wars in Chechnya, also contributed to firearms proliferation (Munteanu 2014; Martyniuk 2017). Finally, Ukraine is as well home to considerable SALW manufacturers.[37] Other significant sources of illicit firearms are the conversion of replica firearms and craft-production of weapons within criminal milieus (King 2015).

Proliferation and trafficking of arms are not homogeneous phenomena but rather present different characteristics throughout different areas. With the outbreak of the Donbass conflict, though not necessarily as a direct consequence of it, weapons availability has been largely related to the Anti-Terrorist Operation (ATO) zone and movements from/to the ATO. Nonetheless, the Southern, South-Eastern and also Western parts of the country host important logistic hubs for criminal net-

[35] Eastern Galicia was the theatre of the Polish-Ukrainian war fought in 1918 and 1919 following WWI. In the same years, the rest of the country was experiencing a civil conflict that later led to the formation of the Ukrainian SSR in 1922. Two decades later, the extremely fragmented configuration of the country re-emerged once again with the outbreak and unfolding of WWII.

[36] Chivers quantified in 2.5 million tons of conventional munitions and more than 7 million small arms.

[37] In particular, concerning SALW production: the State Enterprise "Lugansk Cartridge", located in the Luhansk region (which produces ammunition for SALW); the State Enterprise "Design Bureau Artillery Armament"; the Tasko Corporation; and the "State-Owned Science-Industrial Association "Fort" of the Ministry of Internal Affairs of Ukraine.

works, such as Odessa, Dnipro, Kharkiv, Kyiv, and Lviv. At a regional level, the bulk of arms trafficking comes from and moves towards the Russian Federation, although episodes of trafficking involving Transnistria and Belarus are sometimes reported. The two border regions between Ukraine and Poland, Volyn and Lviv oblasts, are both renown for their illicit networks, especially concerning amber illicit extraction and commercialization. These networks are often closely entangled with far-right movements. Diversification is a key feature also when it comes to the types of weapons that have circulated in Ukraine. From ammunition to light weapons, small arms and explosives, a wide panoply of arms can be acquired.[38] Light weapons are relatively widespread: the availability of shells for light weapons, various calibers of ammunition, anti-tank weapons, and RPG's[39] turn Ukraine into a very relevant in-land source of weapons in perspective. In the case of Ukraine, the most crucial dynamic of arms proliferation seems to be the leakage of weapons from state stockpiles through various channels: theft, capture during hostilities, or embezzlement. Moreover, seizures often reported cases of trafficking, involving allegedly antagonistic conflict actors and defectors.

5.2. Weapons Acquisition and Armed Orders in Donbass

In order to assess the trajectory of the insurgency and the evolution of non-state actors' control over weapons acquisition, the remainder looks at the outbreak of hostilities and the first phases of the Donbass insurgency in 2013-2014. The insurgency is divided into three phases. Phase one, from Maidan square demonstrations and the rise of anti-maidan movements, to the emergence of the first embryonic organized groups. Phase two, from the creation of Maidan Self-Defence Forces (SDFs) to the constitution of paramilitary Battalions; and from the organization of civil defence forces to the emergence of militias in Donbass. Phase three, from the Donbass militias to the creation of the DNR and LNR armed groups.

[38] For a more detailed description see Duquet 2018.
[39] More specifically RPG-7 and RPG-18, 22 and 26, as well as rocket propelled launchers (MRO-A and RPO-A).

Phase I

As early as the beginning of December of 2013 Self Defence Forces (SDF - Samooborona) began to form in the context of Maidan square demonstrations, supported by political movements opposing former president Viktor Yanukovich and aimed at countering Berkut (special riot police) units (Kudelia 2016). As the bottom-up organization of demonstrators turned into active upheaval and open clashes, the streets' arsenals evolved from everyday objects to stones, smoking and incendiary grenades, legally or illegally possessed civilian firearms (Ferguson & Jenzen-Jones 2014; BBC 2014).[40] Extreme-right wing groups quickly begun to hijack demonstrations especially through direct involvement of SDFs (Ishchenko 2016; Gatehouse 2015). While the heavy crackdown on revolts amplified the role of SDFs, many across the political opposition exploited the key position acquired by extreme-right groups in SDFs (Kudelia 2016). As early depicted by the 18th February 2014 march on Kiev's Instituskaya street, SDFs had quickly consolidated their role amongst protesters lines and were structured into battalions, formally under the unified command of Andriy Parubiy (Gatehouse 2015; Balmforth 2014).[41] In addition, weapons were distributed during protests and firing positions set up in the Conservatory and Hotel Ukraine (Gatehouse 2015). As fighting in the streets unfolded, SDFs raided Kyiv's police departments, prosecutor and SBU's offices and garrisons, seizing weapon caches and literally arming Maidan. The gradual hijacking of the revolts by Pravy Sector culminated with the seizure of government and law enforcement authorities' offices in western and central Ukraine.

Due to the evident intertwining between extreme-right movements and SDFs, in Donbass the spectre of nationalism provided a justification for the creation of civil defence forces to protect people from the new government. The first units of civil defence were formed in Donetsk and Luhansk in the winter 2013/2014 under the auspices of the centrist Russophile Party of Regions (Kudelia 2016). While the latter promoted the creation of these groups, their constitution was

[40] Such as gas and air weapons, hunting and sporting guns and craft-produced weapons.
[41] The Chairman of the Verkhovna Rada (Ukrainian parliament) since 14 April 2016.

financed by businesses in Donbass belonging to party networks. Initially the arming channels of defence groups consisted in the aggregation of civilian firearms and leakages from local official stashes. The overthrowing of the Yanukovich government triggered a re-articulation of the political movement along the lines of different businessmen figures' patronage groups (Kudelia 2016). It should be noted that armed forces personnel were enmeshed in these networks at both the national and local level. The initially bottom-up civil defence groups became embedded into these networks triangulating local and regional patrons, armed forces authorities, and separatist leaders.

Phase II

With the ousting of former president Yanukovich, societal rifts intertwined with the protracted deterioration that had characterized the Ukrainian security apparatuses since independence (Matveeva 2016; Griffith & Karp 2008; Aliyev 2016, 502). Leveraging on the entanglement of political and armed structures, the key groups leading Maidan consolidated and expanded their role, as became clear amidst the worsening of the security context in Donbass during the spring 2014 (Puglisi 2015). The dismantling of Ministry of Interior special forces and their integral substitution with the newly created National Guard can be understood as an attempt to reshape state structures on the outcomes of Maidan. In fact, although the disbandment of all armed groups sprouted up from the revolts was sanctioned with a parliamentary decree dated 1st of April 2014, the formation of territorial defence battalions (Batalony Territorialnoi Oborony) had already been mandated in March with an official presidential decree, and the first volunteer battalions were formed between April and May (Puglisi 2015). Behind the organization of volunteer battalions stood an intertwining of political movements, entrepreneurs and oligarchs (Roth 2014; Baczynska 2015).[42] These non-state armed groups pursued both institutional and political legitimation as reflected by the October 2014 parliamentary elec-

[42] Key politico-business figures financing the creation of paramilitary groups. For instance, the role of Ihor Kolomoisky as funder of Dniepr-1 and Dniepr-2 is well-know. Similarly, Azov battalion, originated from the paramilitary national socialist group founded by Andriy Biletsy that was named "Patriot of Ukraine" and renown for its slogans of white supremacy.

tions, in which six battalions commanders were elected (Aliyev 2016).[43] Furthermore, volunteer battalions retained a conspicuous degree of autonomy and were incorporated into state forces through an extremely blurred and fragile legal process during the first phases of the Anti-Terrorist Operation announced on 15 April by President Turchynov (Aliyev 2016, p.509).[44] These battalions emerged in parallel to state structures to which were only formally subordinated, expanding their influence over the state in a context of political crisis and legal chaos. In this context, they managed to progressively cement a significant monopoly over the use of force.

Although the weapons acquisition processes by paramilitary battalions has remained neglected, the hypothesis has been advanced that supplies were sourced from official stashes (Prentice & Zverev 2016; Aliyev 2016; Puglisi 2015). According to others, these groups received arms through private channels (Gilley 2015; Aliyev 2016, p.509-511). In addition, paramilitary groups carried out firearms seizures or recoveries during military operations and episodes of misappropriation highlighted the incapacity of Kyiv to establish full control over volunteers. Weapons acquisition by volunteer battalions seems to have occurred predominantly through organized top-down distribution, with politico-military leaders on top mediating with oligarchs or state apparatuses.

Meanwhile in Donbass

At the time of the capture of Slavyansk by Igor "Strelkov" Girkin's forces on 12th April (2014), cities in Donbass were controlled by small local militias cooperating with law enforcement authorities and coordinating in councils with other civil defence groups (Kudelia 2016, p.221). The spiral of dissent, forceful repression, and mobilization already into motion culminated with the complete crumbling of law enforcement structures in Donbass, facilitating access to state armouries and

[43] Yurii Beryoza from the Dnipro 1 battalion and Andrii Teteryuk from the Mirotvorcheskii battalion were elected with the Narodniy Front; Semen Semenchenko from the Donbas battalion was elected with Samopomich party; Dmytro Yarosh from the Pravy Sektor battalion, elected with Pravy Sektor; and Andrii Biletsky, commander of the Azov battalion, and Serhiy Mel'nychuk, commander of the Aidar battalion, were independently elected.

[44] All paramilitary formations received the status of territorial self-defense units: some were placed under the Ministry of Defence, others under the National Guard and the Ministry of Interior and a few were left in a legal vacuum for approximately one year, such as the extreme right "Pravyi Sektor".

stockpiles. Fragmentation of large or smaller state stockpiles became a leitmotiv of the insurgency, especially during the very first phases (Loiko 2014; Luhn 2014). The first militia battalions began to emerge as alliances of smaller units in conjunction with fragmentation of the state security sector (Puglisi 2015). Moreover, since the start of the ATO there were numerous defections from the Ukrainian Army and law enforcement authorities.

Arms acquisition by militias occurred primarily through the capture of military stockpiles, bases, posts and checkpoints before and during hostilities as well as through the fragmentation of security structures. Access to weapons in considerable quantities was dependent on either battalions' capacity to assault and raid a position or to network with the fragmenting security apparatus. In the meantime, several leaders emerged in different cities in Donbass forming new battalions. As the prospect of a Russian Federation direct intervention faded away, the lead of military operations was taken by the Vostok Battalion, the Army of the South-East in Luhansk, and Girkin's militia (Luhn 2014). By the end of April, coordination between leaders and the recognition of Girkin as commander-in-chief of the region's militias by the political leadership of the Donetsk republic signalled tendencies towards the integration of different armed formations into an organized structure. Finally, on the 24th of May, the self-proclaimed Donetskaya Narodnaya Respublika (DNR) and Luganskaya Narodnaya Respublika (LNR) jointly declared the formation of the federative Union of Novorossiya.

Phase III

The consolidation of territorial control over the Donbass-Russian border during the first weeks of the summer 2014 was crucial for the development of the insurgency. The ability to obtain control of smuggling routes on the eastern border allowed armed formations, now under the flag of the DNR and LNR, to cope with a militarily unbalanced situation. In particular, control over border areas was key for the mobilization of manpower and allowed the DNR and LNR to expand their arsenals and capabilities acquiring light weapons, heavier systems, and armoured vehicles. Given the similarities between weaponry in Ukrainian stockpiles and arsenals

of former Soviet countries and due to lack of reliable information, it is extremely difficult to certify Russian support in the form of weapons supplies.[45] Ferguson and Jenzen-Jones have found that existing stockpiles were the most important source of weapons in insurgents' hands, although it is very likely that pro-Russian separatist groups have received some level of support from one or more external parties (Ferguson & Jenzen-Jones 2014; Ismay 2015).[46]

In August 2014 the military situation in Donbass battlefields rapidly changed. Forced to retreat from Sloviansk and Kramatorsk to Donetsk and Luhansk, insurgent armed groups were able to respond and push back Ukrainian Armed forces in the areas of Ilovaisk and Debaltseve. It is interesting to note that by the time this happened the insurgency had assumed an organized and integrated structure, whereby this reaction of the DNR and LNR had been preceded by changes in the leadership of both armed organizations. The acceleration imprinted throughout the second half of 2014 was clearly mirrored in the capacity of the DNR and LNR leadership to consolidate and legitimize their authority, while controlling financial flows to the republics, restructuring the armed groups around a single command, and ousting independent warlords (Kudelia 2016, p. 230).

Conclusions

Having delved into the interrelations between firearms dynamics and insurgency, some theoretical and empirical considerations can be drawn. The analysis of the two case studies highlights the close connection between extreme violence and processes of state (trans)formation. In contexts where state capacities are openly challenged it emerges even more clearly how availability and control over the means of violence have an impact on the enforcement of authority and connected configurations of statehood. Control over weapons acquisition processes by armed

[45] An in-depth small-scale research on spent cartridges was conducted by C.J. Chivers in the area of Slovyansk, Andreyevka and Semyonovka. The journallist revealed that of the 54 rounds collected, only five appeared to have been manufactured after the Soviet collapse, while all of them bore stamps from the state owned Luhansk Cartridge, see Chivers 2014.

[46] The support included small arms, light weapons, guided light weapons, heavier weapons systems, and armoured vehicles.

non-state actors seem to influence armed political orders in different ways. For instance, arms availability for ANSAs in Myanmar has been high, facilitated by remote, fairly inaccessible, mountainous areas. The contiguity of ANSA's zones of operation and involvement of state authorities, together with the heterogeneity of terrain, contributed to mould access to weapons and generated an overlapping of actors exercising sovereignty.[47] In the South-East of the country, the control or cutting down of weapons supplies by state actors after 1988 coincided with centripetal shifts in the control over the use of force implemented through collaborative relations and alliances between the Tatmadaw and armed groups. At the same time, in the north, unitary control over weapons acquisition by the UWSA was paralleled by the creation of a kaleidoscopic landscape of armed political orders dominated by the UWSA that still favours centrifugal trajectories of sovereignty and overall manages relations amongst members of the Northern Alliance and FPNCC. While for the Wa there has always been a single privileged source of weapons and the organization has evolved unitarily and integrated, for the KNU/KNLA a relatively decentralized structure corresponded to a plurality of sources and acquisition mechanisms. The scaling down of Cambodian and Thai pipelines around the mid-1990s corresponded to progressive fragmentation of the movement and gradual cooptation by the Tatmadaw. Similar processes apparently characterized the structuring of the Donbass insurgency. The control over weapons acquisition of the first actors involved in hostilities evolved from accumulative to top-down processes mainly connected to the disaggregation of security apparatuses, capture of state stockpiles, and aid provided by oligarchs' networks. In parallel, overall the insurgency evolved from bottom-up formations connected to local politico-business figures and enforcement agencies to militias backed by oligarchs and linked with national security apparatuses that ultimately rearticulated around the binary DNR-LNR configuration under a single command and integrated structure. This would shed light and apparently confirm the general framework developed by Marsh, whereby mode of weapons acquisition and insurgency's structure are related. In

[47] Interviews with two anonymous informants, October 2018.

addition though, it should be noted how arms acquisition and control represents a dimension of, and thus impacts on, the constitution and distribution of authority. Another interesting line of analysis emerging from both cases concerns the interactions between ANSAs and decentralised branches of the state which impacted arms acquisition. A point that in turn highlights the fallacy of monolithic conceptions of the state as conflict actor and the mutually constitutive character of armed actors relations.

Conceptually speaking, these insights essentially question the lines dividing studies on arms issues and research on civil war, calling for a reciprocal integration of two spheres that have traditionally developed along parallel tracks as well as an understanding of weapons-related processes as integral dimensions of conflict. In this regard, the article advances existing frameworks investigating the organizational structure of armed non-state actors. Until now, research in this ambit has delved into groups' command profile, financial architecture, and social networks (McQuinn 2015; Staniland 2012) leaving aside a further dimension: meaning how armed groups organize control over arms acquisition. In parallel, part I attempted to contribute theoretically to the literature on rebel governance by framing arms control as a further activity in which insurgents engage. Spotlighting the role of non-state actors in controlling arms opens room for delving into issues such as relations between communities and ANSAs with regard to arms and armed violence control in conflict and post-conflict contexts, or the practices, norms, and symbols put in place by insurgents in this domain of governance. Political power, as Mao Zedong sustained, grows out of the barrel of a gun (Mao 1963): in this sense my account is one that ultimately strived to emphasise weapons and related processes as physical/material aspects that have a mutual impact on socio-political trajectories of conflict.

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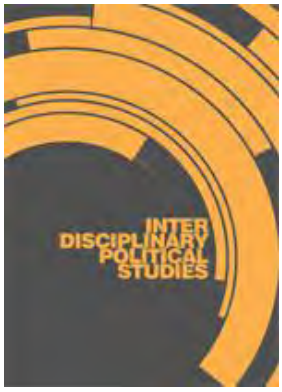

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BOOK REVIEWS

Insurgency and Counterinsurgency. A Global History, by Jeremy Black. London: Rowman & Littlefield, 2016, pp. 1-370

Insurgencies and Counterinsurgencies. National Styles and Strategic Cultures, by Beatrice Heuser & Eitan Shamir (eds.). Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2017, pp. 1-240

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Two recent books, Jeremy Black's *Insurgency and Counterinsurgency: A Global History*, and Beatrice Heuser and Eitan Shamir's edited volume *Insurgencies and Counterinsurgencies: National Styles and Strategic Cultures* challenge the assumption that emerged in the post-Cold War literature that war 'has shifted into a new paradigm' (Smith 2005, p.2). The books encourage the reader to consider that insurgency and counterinsurgency (COIN) are far from being modern phenomena. Irregular forms of warfare have existed in various guises for millennia and a more nuanced understanding of global approaches to both insurgency and COIN is crucial to 'the learning of lessons.' (Black 2016, p. x)

Black offers an all-encompassing account of humanity's experience of insurgency and COIN from antiquity to present moving, in just 240 pages, from the Third Servile War (73-71 BCE) to modern interventions in Iraq and Afghanistan.

As the title of the book suggests, he attempts to avoid viewing the subject merely through a Western lens, opting to explore insurgency from a global perspective. His analysis includes case studies from Africa, Latin America, Russia, the Middle East and China which he lays out chronologically to capture the role of specific events in framing political and public opinion. His overarching objective is to re-define how we view insurgency as a concept; not as a modern phenomenon, but as an enduring, inchoate feature of mankind's military experience.

By contrast, Heuser and Shamir's edited volume is a collection of articles by several prominent scholars dedicated to examining whether states and non-state actors exhibit an identifiable 'pattern of fighting' when conducting either insurgencies or COIN operations. It notes that both insurgents and polities display a degree of intransigence in their martial approaches that contradicts the assumption that COIN should be iterative (i.e., a constant process of drawing lessons from one's own, and others', successes and failures). It asks two main questions: first, whether these patterns are a function of static constants such as geography or climate, or else due to culturally-received habits, expectations, and preferences for the use of force informed by positive, or negative, interpretations of historical experience. And second, whether these geographical and/or cultural bounds limit the extent to which lessons about the successful conduct of insurgency and COIN can be learned.

The two books tackle the subject matter from contrasting perspectives, with clear differences in their respective structures, methodologies, and intended audiences. While Heuser and Shamir are writing for policy makers and academics, Black targets a more general audience; his broader approach epitomised by his use of the Oxford dictionary's definition of insurgency: 'rising in open resistance to established authority.' He concedes that this definition may 'surprise and even irritate,'

but argues overly narrow definitions have skewed public understanding of a concept that often defies categorisation. Consequently, this has led to some entrenched, ahistorical assumptions about insurgency warfare.

Black's book often sacrifices more nuanced analysis in favour of drawing out thematic points such as the role of religion or insurgency's inexorable connection with politics. He discusses both these points in an interesting chapter on the nexus between religion and power in 1500-1700, before moving on to the 'reactionary' insurgencies of the eighteenth century, the large-scale insurgencies of the nineteenth century (where insurgency and COIN was 'as much an essential part of warfare as traditional, conventional warfare.' (p.116) and into the varied and complex campaigns of the twentieth century.

The chapter *Interventionism and its Failings, 2000s* brings Black's argument full circle by discussing how modern interventions encouraged the idea that a reconceptualization of war was necessary. He traces back the key doctrine on COIN that emerged at the beginning of the decade, leveraging on cultural anthropologist Montgomery McFate's belief that 'cultural knowledge' was the key to victory. However, overall the chapter adds little in the way of new evidence for the failings of US-led campaigns in Iraq and Afghanistan.

Black's final chapter, *Speculations about the Future,* is an engaging summary of his argument. He notes that from 1990 to 2007, 220,000 people died in inter-state conflicts, while 3.6 million were killed in intra-state conflicts. The author speculates that intra-state conflicts will increasingly be characterised by clashes in urban environments; criminal activity and insurgency will be increasingly intertwined, while religious fundamentalism will continue to dominate global insurgency movements. Black contends that while the historical context and means used in insurgencies dif-

fers across time, the political dimension of insurgency has been, and always will be, inseparable from the military.

Heuser and Shamir's topic is equally complex and broad, but the book benefits from its clear structure. It is divided into three sections: Part I, 'COIN Strategies,' features seven articles examining the approaches of polities. A highlight is Robert Egnell and David Ucko's contribution (Chapter 2, pp.25-46), which dissects the myth of an enduring COIN tradition in Britain through an examination of campaigns post-1945. They find Britain's assumption of an inherent ability to wage COIN warfare had little historical merit, leaving them underprepared for the conflicts in Afghanistan and Iraq. Part II examines 'Insurgency Strategies' in Algeria, Ireland, Palestine, and Afghanistan and finds that discernible strategic cultures are identifiable in non-state actors' methods. For example, Rob Johnson's chapter explores the Taliban's fighting style (Chapter 12, pp.246-265). He finds they are a hybrid organisation that blends old Afghan approaches to conflict with steadfast Islamic beliefs, opportunism, and a distinctive geographical environment. Part III connects the dots between insurgency and COIN through an 'instrumentarium' of strategic measures with political, social and economic dimensions that have been identified as being used by insurgents and counterinsurgents across time. The taxonomy of strategic measures is divided into two groups: first, the violent means, including brutal large-scale repression, 'scorched earth' tactics, targeted assassinations, ethnic cleansing, and quadrillage. Second, the benign tools, for example deposing a government, installing a new government, economic aid, school/hospital construction, propaganda, and promoting religious/cultural freedom.

The aim is to ascertain whether these tools are specific to particular countries/groups or whether the use of, for example, large-scale repression, is a generalizable trend across all insurgencies and counterinsurgencies. They find that the

tools employed are broadly consistent across time and common to both movements. Thus, 'a simple national tradition' of either insurgency or COIN is a fallacy; instead, actors have 'drawn on a mix of instruments' (p.364). This provides an interesting alternative to David Kilcullen's idea that '[t]here is no standard set of metrics, benchmarks, or operational techniques that apply to all insurgencies …' (Kilcullen 2009, p. 183).

Both books effectively cover non-Western operations, making the valid point that, despite their long history of fighting insurgencies, Russia and China are often overlooked. On China, Black's argues that their perception of insurgency as 'internal war' (*Nei Zhan)* contrasts with the Western view that COIN is conducted overseas. Thus, China's experiences have 'limited relevance' for Europe (p.236). Heuser and Shamir's volume contains two excellent contributions by Stephen Blank and Yiyzhak Shichor, respectively. Blank's analysis of Russian COIN campaigns finds 'constant operating factors' and an ability to learn from their own, and Western, failures (Chapter 4, pp.75-94). Shichor then walks us through insurgency and COIN in modern China arguing that their historical experience with dangerous insurgencies makes the state more prone to heavy-handed crackdowns. He concludes that the administration tends to react proportionately to *potential* rather than *actual* threats. (Chapter 5, pp.95-112)

In summary, Black's is an accessibly-written and interesting read, but the analysis is often too cursory. This is particularly the case in chapter nine (*The Variety of Goals and Means, 1980s),* where Black dedicates just nine pages to a decade of insurgency with just one paragraph of twelve lines on Africa. This is despite the plethora of examples of insurgency across the African continent in the 1980s. While it would be impossible to cover every global insurgency in great detail, the book would certainly have benefitted from being at least twice the length.

Heuser and Shamir's volume is thoughtful, well-structured and successfully tackles a complex subject. The breadth of cases that are covered are tied together effectively by the thematic thread of national styles and strategic cultures. It is a call to scholars and policy makers alike to consider that trends in warfare can change rapidly and that the effective consideration of the strategic environment coupled with an ability to learn from past mistakes are often the decisive factors in conflict.

Both books effectively address the danger of reductionist thinking that has emanated from protracted and largely unsuccessful US-led campaigns in Afghanistan and Iraq. The authors demonstrate, by virtue of their divergent approaches to a similar subject, the complexity of insurgency and COIN. Both warn the reader that correlation is not causation and just because a trend has been identified, does not mean the future is any easier to predict. Instead, to quote Black's final point, insurgency and COIN deserves study 'without political blinkers, national prejudices, or conceptual and historiographical confusion.' (p. 240)

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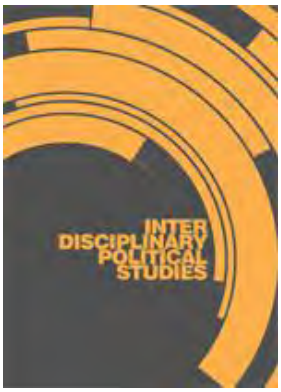

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BOOK REVIEWS

The Syrian Jihad. The evolution of an insurgency, by Charles R. Lister. London: Hurst & Company, 2017, pp. 520.

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"The Syrian Jihad" is an interesting, detailed and comprehensive account of the emergence, evolution and subsequent revolution of Sunni Jihadism. Lister indeed reconstructs the early phases of the Syrian revolution, which since 2011 have unfolded around issues of socio-economic and socio-political grievances such as anti-corruption, freedom, liberty, and democratic governance. The author further points out how the repressive measures of the Assad's regime through its security forces consolidated, rather than discouraging, opposition and also encouraged the mobilization of Syrian jihadists, local militias such as the Free Syrian Army (FSA) and a fledging anti-government insurgency.

Lister argues that the reason behind the proliferation of jihadism could be found in Syria's recent past, when the leadership of the country established, exploited and later attempted to manage a relationship with jihadist militants for the purpose of exporting likely threats against perceived enemies instead of facing them at home. This was also facilitated by Syrian geographic proximity to other jihadist

hotspots such as Lebanon and Iraq. In essence, the repressive nature of the regime, the exploitation of jihadists coupled with their ideological quest to spread Islamic rule are all elements which eventually contributed to the transformation of the revolution into the Syrian Jihad.

Whereas on the one hand Lister looks at endogenous variables and internal actors, on the other hand the book critically takes into consideration the role of international actors. In fact, according to the author, the failures of the international community in supporting Syrian moderate and nationalistic opposition constituted a boon to groups who hold violent and exclusionary ideologies, by reinforcing the emergence of Jihadists as the dominant players in Syria. Lister further expounds this argument by adding that such failures include the United States' quest to resort to a dialogue which neither Assad nor Russia were willing to concede, as well as the Americans' decision to disengage from the North of the country, where there was the bulk of jihadists' presence. Accordingly, in the author's view, Syria's future profoundly depends on Western commitments.

"The Syrian Jihad" has several elements of continuity with other pieces of literature focusing on the same subject. First, the book portrays Syria as a notable hub which appeals to jihadi groups such as al Qaeda because of its unique status in Islamic apocalyptic prophecies . Second, it recalls the ideological underpinnings and interplay of the Sunni Jihadism with Salafism (see, for instance, Maher 2016). Third, Lister is among the authors paying special attention to the strategies and instruments of propaganda employed by the Jihadist groups, especially in their attempt of demonstrating their reputation of professionalism gained form the battlefield.

The very novelty of the book lies in its methodological approach, as the author draws on primary sources collected over four years of fieldwork which comprises of interviews with the Syrian insurgents in Syria to weave a rich and informed account of this experience. A further strength is the well thought out narrative of trajectories of identity-building undertaken by both the Islamic State and its predecessor, that is, the Islamic State in Iraq and Asham, and al-Qaeda. It is thanks to such endeavours, indeed, that these actors stand as unavoidable reference points for other Islamist factions that emerge by alignment with them or emancipation from them. In parallel to these inter-group dynamics, particularly interesting is the account of the discrepancies within the jihadist movement on how to establish Islamic rule which eventually led to its split into two camps.

Despite the book includes a thorough study of the "statics and dynamics" of Jihadist groups in Syria, the bulk of Lister's argument seems to put Western actions (or lack thereof) under the spotlight. In doing so, the author may expose his argument to the criticism of overlooking the role played by the regime's past exploitation of jihadism. Likewise, it overshadows how poor leadership and suppression of open dissent made long-simmering grievances degenerate into violent conflict. In essence, mainly blaming the international community for the role it played in addressing the conflict instead of setting precedence of the state's failure in managing the revolts is debatable. Meanwhile, this very aspect opens up to further debate as regards the Syrian Jihadism.

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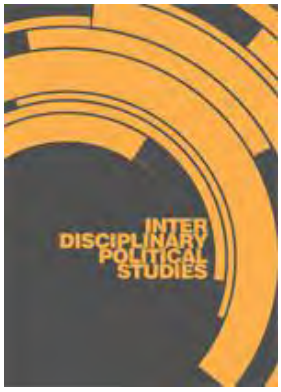

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BOOK REVIEWS

Narratives of Political Violence. Life Stories of Former Militants, by Raquel da Silva. New York: Routledge, 2018, pp. 157.

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In *Narratives of Political Violence*, Raquel da Silva analyses the life stories of twenty-eight former Portuguese militants from six different violent political organizations (four of them leaning to the left and two to the right) dedicated to distinct causes before, during, and after the Revolution of April 25, 1974, which ended the dictatorship of António de Oliveira Salazar.

This work is focused on a phenomenon – political violence – and its discursive representation and illustrates how those who once committed violence in the name of political ideals build, through narrative, their experiences of entry, permanence and exit of armed groups. It takes into account the macro-narratives, "the stories former militants tell about the world works, how they explain the engines of social change, and the role they see themselves," but also the macro ones, "the national and international stories" (p.43). If the former are influenced by the latter,

these are also constructed through a selection of the former. As Da Silva considers, social reality is a narrative construction; the official discourse on how and why events took place will always result from the dominance of one certain narrative over the remnant. History can thus be seen, and as Foucault suggests, as based on a system of exclusion (Gutting & Oksala 2019). In this perspective, there is no single "History," but several of these, and Da Silva seeks to give voice to those who have been marginalized.

In order to demystify political violence, the author argues that the phenomenon can never be considered outside the historical context and its political, cultural and social dynamics, since they function as the triggers of the process, not only of radicalization, but also of de-radicalization. Arthur, for example, one of the ex-militants interviewed, believes that his decision to join a violent organization was motivated by the oppressive regime, which did not allow any form of opposition (p.1). Afonso, on the other hand, blames the Colonial War and his military career for the will to defend the country (p. 2).

However, the author departs from deterministic discourses that usually suggest that violence will inevitably arise in certain social contexts or in individuals exhibiting an identity marked as violent. In fact, one of the most relevant aspects of Raquel da Silva's work is the link between political narrative and identity, traced with the use of Dialogical Self Theory. This perspective rejects the idea of an indivisible "I", and, instead, advocates that one's identity is "plural, dynamic and multivocal," and that, therefore, a single individual contains within himself several "I-positions" ("I as a militant"; "I as a militant who perceives violence as necessary"; "I as one of the few people who is prepared to fight the regime," for example). This means, first of all, that the sense of unity of the self derives precisely from the balance between these "selves" and, secondly, that, at different points in life, the sub-

ject will give preference to a particular "I" (or a certain set of I-positions) in disfavour of others (p.44). Thus, the life narrative of each individual results from the temporary domain of a set of "selves" that are not predefined, but changeable and constantly recreated (p.45). Hence, it can be understood that, at a specific moment in time, the hegemony of an I-position such as "I as militant who perceives violence as necessary" (p. 80) will motivate the individual to join a violent organization. Likewise, the predominance of another "I", such as "I as martyr-hero", legitimates the permanence in that group. Finally, the supremacy of a position as "I as one who does not identify with the role of the militant" will prompt individuals to leave the organization. In this sense, subjects respond to the existing macro-narratives based on their various "I" which help build the "perceptions they [the individuals] hold about themselves, others and their political, social, cultural, economic and historical milieu" (p. 4).

An analysis that values narratives and the relationship settled between them and identity has both theoretical and practical implications. In the first place, and as mentioned above, it allows the identity of a violent actor to be understood as multiple and changeable. It also clarifies how this is simultaneously influenced by, and has an influence on, the construction of life narratives, which in turn conditions action. Secondly, this analysis contributes to a valorisation of the voices of violent actors, countering the tendency of their exclusion and homogenization. It also suggests that both radicalization and de-radicalization are processes and not static realities, and therefore, the abandonment of a violent organization is possible. Da Silva's research also highlights the role of narratives - and their underlying identities - in the concretization of a certain action, thus providing important clues for policy-makers, who must seek to build counter-narratives strong enough to compete with

those in which violence is portrayed as the most efficient way of building a better world.

The investigation of Raquel da Silva also excels by its originality. As the author herself points out, the book marks a contribution to the debate on political violence in general, but particularly, and above all, to the debate on political violence in Portugal. Recently, some works have been published on the theme in Portuguese, such as *Portugal à Lei da Bala – Terrorismo e Violência Política no Século XX*, by Luís Marinho and Mário Carneiro (Agência Lusa 2018), which presents a survey of the most significant moments of political violence of the last century, and even exposes testimonies of some former militants. However, the work of Raquel da Silva is the first to counter the historiographical tendency of the publications on political violence in Portugal, and to rely extensively on the stories told by the ex-militants themselves. It is also the first to do so in English, which may enhance its consideration alongside other publications on the same topic, and favour comparative studies on the narratives of various organizations with a violent nature or, on a broader scale, on violence itself. This book also distinguishes itself from other approaches by resorting to the analysis of discursive identity and by valuing the idea, not always sufficiently explored, that each experience of a subject is associated with an individual process of attribution of meaning and emphasizing that, in fact, the need to attribute a greater sense to events and actions is intrinsic to the human being, and critical to understanding his choices.

Nonetheless, the work would have benefited from a greater articulation between the Dialogical Self Theory and the results from the interviews conducted with the former militants. Although the processes of engagement with and disengagement from organizations have actually been exposed according to the framework of I-positions, it would have been interesting to have the opportunity to know more

extensively the tenets of the theory and to have them more present in the empirical chapters. In addition, the number of I-positions built over the chapters is considerable, and, without a prior or subsequent list of all those mentioned, it can be difficult to recall the totality of them. It might be useful if the conclusion were to retrieve all the I-positions mentioned in a sort of catalogue, which would help to have a more organized and clear idea of the various images invoked by the ex-militants in their narratives.

This said, and aside from the already listed theoretical and methodological contributions of the work, which make it recommendable for researchers of political violence, it should also be noted that Raquel da Silva's work is extremely relevant to the larger society. The dominant narratives persist to constitute the collective memory of a nation and help to establish institutional facts; they become the only known History. Da Silva does justice to the maxim that "memory is not just a private affair" (p. 49) and gives preponderance to other stories within our History, valuing different worldviews and recognizing the importance of these to understand the complexity of society. This is important in any country, but it may be even more so in Portugal, exhorted in 2018 by the European Commission against Racism and Intolerance (ECRI), to rethink its narrative of the "discovery of the new world" and, in particular, the history of the ex-colonies. In the same line of "rebellion of memory" (ECRI 2018, p. 31), and against revisionist discourses that still emerge, it is important to give voice to others forgotten, so that violence is understood, especially when it arises against authoritarian regimes, as a sign of a dysfunctionality in society and as a forewarning to perhaps more persistent and worrying problems.

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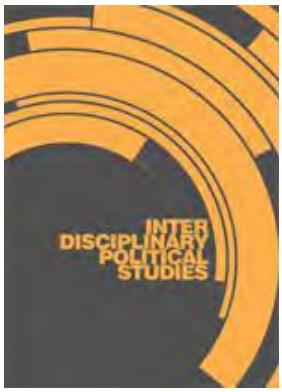

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BOOK REVIEWS

Ethnic Subnationalist Insurgencies in South Asia: Identities, Interests, and Challenges to State Authority, by Jugdip S. Chima (ed.), London: Routledge, 2015, pp. 197.

William R. Patterson
Independent Scholar

In this edited volume editor Jugdip S. Chima and the book's various contributors have produced a valuable addition to the literature on insurgency. The book is useful on two fronts. The first is as a descriptive and historical guide to the most severe and intractable of South Asia's dizzying number of insurgencies. In addition to the introduction and conclusion there are eight chapters that separately deal with ethnic insurrections in Kashmir, Assam, Punjab, northeast India, Sri Lanka, Balochistan, the Chittagong Hills in Bangladesh, and one chapter that covers Maoist ideological insurgencies in India, Pakistan and Nepal. These well-written and deeply analytical chapters provide an important resource to researchers of insurgency on purely historical grounds.

Of even greater importance is how the volume draws common lessons from the disparate case studies that offer important insights into ethnic subnationalist insurgencies as a phenomenon. The volume goes beyond viewing ethnicity as the sole variable in ethnic insurgencies and asks the questions why each of these insurgen-

cies erupted when they did and what other factors caused ethnic differences to turn violent. Ethnicity itself cannot answer these questions since there may have been ethnic differences in a particular society for hundreds of years, yet only at certain times have those differences enflamed into violence. According to Chima, ethnicity itself is a necessary, but not sufficient, cause of ethnic subnationalist insurgencies (p. 3). In addition to the causes of these insurgencies, the volume also draws lessons, further discussed below, about the outcomes of these conflicts and why some insurgencies drag on while others are successfully quashed.

Regarding the first set of questions, Chima comes to the conclusion that "ethnic mobilization and insurgency only emerge when it is 'activated' by tension emerging from political competition between ethnic and central state elites" (p. 2). Attempts by the central state, and dominant ethnic group, to homogenize the society at the expense of minority ethnic groups, "make the ethnic masses primed to accept the often symbolically rich appeals from their leaders to mobilize against the central state" (p. 2). This homogenization can take the form of symbolic or tangible changes in government policy, but they almost always result in the majority group being advantaged over the minority and the minority feeling as if they have been relegated to second-class citizens. Another form of domination by the central state is economic, such as resource extraction from minority areas without compensation to the local people. In sum, ethnic difference is not enough to generate insurgency, it must be accompanied by social, political, or economic policies by the ethnic majority that exclude or disadvantage the minority.

This conclusion is borne out by the case studies. For example, the Tamil minority and Sinhalese majority co-existed peacefully for generations in Sri Lanka. According

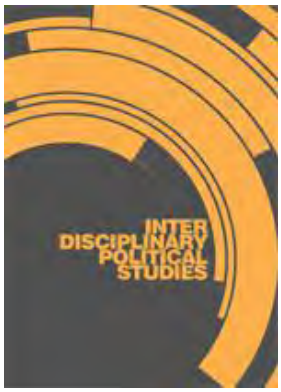
to Jayadeva Uyangoda, in his chapter on the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam (LTTE), it was only in the 1950s, shortly after Sri Lanka gained independence from Great Britain, that severe discord began. Uyangoda contends that conflict arose due to Sinhalese insistence that Sri Lanka become a unified, centralized state, with Sinhalese culture dominating, while the Tamils wanted autonomy in order to protect their own cultural practices and values (p.102). The Sinhalese used their majority to institute discriminatory policies, such as citizenship and franchise legislation in 1948 and 1949 and making Sinhalese the official language in 1956, that pushed Sri Lanka in the direction of becoming a monocultural state. The feelings of exclusion that this generated in the Tamil minority, coupled with their failure to make any changes through the parliamentary system due to their perpetual minority status, led some to believe that violence was the only way to protect their ethnic interests.

Adeel Khan, in his chapter on Balochistan province in Pakistan provides an example of economic domination of the central state over a minority ethnic group. In 2001, the Pakistani government announced that it would construct a port in Gwadar along the southwestern coast of Balochistan. This decision was made without local input and few of the benefits were slated to be returned to the local Baloch people. While wealthy outsiders from other parts of the country flooded the area, building a five-star hotel and lush accommodations for themselves, the local people saw little improvement in their access to basic needs, such as health, education, or sanitation. At the same time, the traditional livelihood of many local people, which revolved around fishing, was disrupted (p. 130). Though just one factor in the Balochistan conflict, this example illustrates the role economics can play in the genesis of ethnic subnationalist insurgencies and how it can be the spark that turns mere ethnic difference into ethnically-based violence.

The other major issue the volume explores is that of the outcomes of insurgencies. Chima notes that none of the insurgencies discussed have been successful in obtaining their primary goals of independence or robust autonomy. Some of these insurgencies have managed to carry on with their struggle, however, while others have been dismantled. Chima concludes that larger states are better able to handle localized insurgencies than smaller states, which by their nature will be less able to contain conflict to certain segments of the country. Secondly, insurgencies are most successfully defeated when there is significant political instability and internal dissension within the insurgent minority group (p. 183).

This volume will amply reward researchers interested in South Asian insurgent conflict. The case studies are valuable in themselves as histories and descriptions of individual conflicts. But more than that, the volume draws out commonalities that provide broader lessons on the causes and outcomes of ethnic insurgent warfare. The case studies support Chima's conclusion that "primary political conditions conducive to ethnic insurgency include either a restricted 'conception' of national identity not inclusive of minority ethnic groups, or the erosion of federalism with the centralized power at the national level" (p. 179).

William R. *Patterson*



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BOOK REVIEWS

Civil War and Uncivil Development. Economic Globalisation and Political Violence in Colombia and Beyond, by David Maher, Palgrave Macmillan, 2018, pp. 326.

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Since the end of the Cold War, security and development have become increasingly interwoven. The security-development nexus has attracted a considerable attention from scholars and practitioners across the social sciences and has informed and sustained donor-driven agendas of liberal interventionism along the unstable and fragile peripheries of the Global South (Duffield 2001). In the post-Cold War period, as the world order shifted from a bipolar system to a triumphant unipolar neoliberal system under the aegis of the United States, new challenges and threats were identified as endangering international peace and security. In particular, the proliferation of intra-state conflicts and civil wars – much of which were now called 'New Wars' – and the trans-border effects of migration flows increasingly were put

at the forefront of a risk-containment, humanitarian agenda promoted by the United Nations and a plethora of Western States (Duffield 2010; Kaldor 1999).

At the policy level, this was translated on the ground with the promotion of peacebuilding and state-building missions, with lasting consequences for the re-definition and transformation of security, state sovereignty and statehood, key pillars upon which the international order was founded (Hameiri 2010).

David Maher's *Civil War and Uncivil Development. Economic Globalisation and Political Violence in Colombia and Beyond* is an ambitious and empirically-rich endeavor that makes a theoretically important contribution to civil war and development scholarships. Central to the security-development agendas and studies has been the link between civil war and (under-) development (Duffield 2001, p. 27). By seeing conflict as a reflection of a developmental *malaise* these studies have postulated a circular and straightforward relationship between the two concepts, i.e., more development would bring more security and *vice versa*, as well as greater liberalization and globalization would be conducive to more peace (Blanton and Apodaca 2007). Maher shy away from both the 'New Wars' debates with their emphasis on human (in)security and from poverty-centered explanatory models of conflict and political violence underpinned by the 'Greed versus Grievance' thesis (Collier and Hoeffler 2000). He does so by addressing a rather overlooked question in the civil war literature: What

are the economic consequences of violent conflict and how do economic development and political violence interact? (p. 6).

While much has been written on how development affects the onset and duration of civil war, Maher's book seeks to understand how civil war affects economic development and processes of economic globalization (chapter 2). The study aims to challenge the 'civil war as development in reverse' logic and asks a rather heterodox and 'uneasy' question: Can violence in civil wars facilitate economic development and integration into the global economy? The book's central claim is that 'violence in Colombia's civil war did not preclude the country's economic development and economic openness. On the contrary, the violence perpetrated by central actors of Colombia's civil war has served to facilitate the country's impressive economic performance and integration into the global economy.' (p. 23-24)

While incorporating some of the critical theoretical approaches that have emphasized the centrality of violence to progress, economic and global capitalist development, the book's original contribution to this debate consists in exploring the nuances and complexities of the types of mechanisms that can lead to economic growth in war-torn countries as well as the different economic effects that certain types of civil war violence can produce. Contrary to most quantitative scholarly research on civil war that focuses on battle-deaths, this book analyses political violence against civilians perpetrated by recognized armed groups, mainly state and

right-wing paramilitary forces (chapter 4 and 5). Theoretically, the book is informed by Critical Theory and largely underpinned by Historical Materialism. This means questioning existing power relations and knowledge on civil war and economic development, in particular those postulating incongruence between capitalism and political violence in civil war. Methodologically, the analysis uses process tracing and benefits from the detailed, individual case study analysis of political violence and economic development in Colombia.

The author shows how during the 2000s when Colombia's civil war intensified, the country witnessed increases in international trade, foreign direct investment (FDI) and economic growth (chapter 3). Maher argues that state/paramilitary violence targeting both armed and unarmed groups has made Colombia attractive for domestic and foreign investors (chapter 3). The analysis sheds light on how a certain type of violence – forced displacement and human rights violations to trade unions and indigenous groups – perpetrated by state forces and paramilitaries protected the interests of investors in the oil industry and indeed facilitated the development of the oil sector in Arauca (chapter 4). The development of the palm oil sector in Meta – the second case study in the book – has followed a similar trajectory, where widespread forced displacement known as 'land grabbing' against indigenous communities and trade unionists and perpetrated by state/paramilitary forces has served the same rationale and has produced the same results: the protection of the

interests of palm oil investors and Colombia's palm oil competitiveness in the global market (chapter 5).

The author shows how violence is highly fluid in civil wars, and different types of violence may simultaneously exist within the same conflict and lead to varied economic effects (chapter 6). He then proceeds to expand the broader implications of the Colombian case study by briefly discussing similar civil wars and their economic trends, i.e., Uganda, Sri Lanka, Peru and Sudan (chapter 6). While he recognizes that trade and FDI are important to the neo-liberal doctrine and to contemporary globalization, Maher also leaves to future research investigating how violence is linked to neo-liberal policies in civil war economies (chapter 7). Although the book has not explicitly engaged with a political economy perspective, it speaks to such a framework by showing who is benefiting and who is loosing from the war and political violence in the Colombian case. The analysis shows how violence is both instrumental and functional to economic development. However, the fact that it is functional to a certain type of economic model, underpinned by neoliberalism, is more assumed than explicitly addressed. Moreover, by focusing on the types of mechanisms of political violence, the analysis overlooks a range of equally instrumental tools – such as Corporate Social Responsibility – that in the same regional case studies have made the violence of development illegible and have often equated resistance with irrationality or subversion (Coleman 2018). As the book seems to

suggest, in specific world's and countries' peripheries, regions and borders, development is not only uncivil but it is also deeply violent and economic progress is ensured through blood, forced displacement and human rights violations (Coleman 2018).

The book speaks to students, scholars, practitioners and human rights activists interested in the relationship between political violence, development and globalization. Moreover, it is relevant for International Relations discipline as well as for peace and conflict scholars interested in the complex relationship between peace, political violence and development in conflict areas. Scholars and students of civil war will find the book a theoretically sound and empirically rich source as it advances knowledge on a particularly relevant yet overlooked area in civil war studies through the lenses of critical theory and historical materialism.

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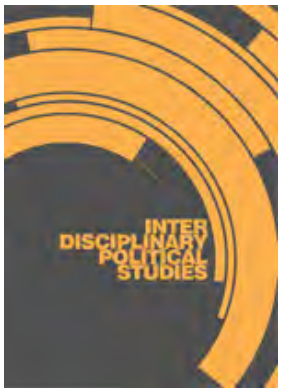

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BOOK REVIEWS

Rape During Civil War, by Dara Kay Cohen. Ithaca and London: Cornell University Press, 2016, pp. 272.

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Sexual violence is a phenomenon that is widely associated with war within the literature on conflicts and contentious politics. At the same time, the extent of how sexual violence is conceptualized, as well as the explanation of its reasons and analysis of its consequences greatly differ depending on the context. In her book *Rape During Civil War*, Dara Kay Cohen successfully answers the question of why wartime rape happens. Based on the analysis of a dataset of ninety-one major civil wars between 1980 and 2012 as well as on her fieldwork in Sierra Leone, Timor-Leste and El Salvador , Cohen introduces a new concept to the literature: 'combatant socialization.'

In Cohen's study, the concept of sexual violence is limited to merely act of 'rape.' In literature, rape is commonly seen as inevitable element of war as it is associated with both revenge and victory from the perpetrators' perspective (Seifert 1996; Vikman 2005). Thus, the likelihood of rape is expected to increase during wartime (Wood 2013). Much of the book is devoted to making readers understand why rape is associated with civil war. Cohen claims that wartime rape happens in

the form of gang rape during civil wars. Evidence from the regression analysis confirms that the armed groups recruit their fighters randomly during civil wars, thus a need to establish bonds is inevitable. Her interviews with the perpetrators also reveal that, rape during civil wars is more than sexual desire, but a motivation of building solidarity and loyalty among the members (p.17). Hence, combatant socialization refers to the establishment of intra-group social ties and cohesion among combatants by wartime gang rape (p13). Unlike other psychological investigations for rape action during wartime in the field, which claim for a correlation between weak psychological position and engagement with sexual violence (Horwood 2007; Kassimeris 2006; Weiner 2006; Staub 1992), Cohen maintains that the perpetrators can be ordinary people with no significant mental problems. Also, psychological variables like ethnic hatred and greed are not statistically significant in her analysis.

As for the book's structure, Chapter One introduces the logic of wartime rape. Drawing on the aforementioned dataset, Chapter Two deals with the perpetrators of rape. Chapter Three, Four, and Five investigate the rape incidents during civil war in Sierra Leone (1991-2002), Timor-Leste (1975-1999) and El Salvador (1980-1992) utilizing the data gathered by Cohen during her extensive fieldworks, including interviews with perpetrators of wartime rape in these countries. And this is exactly the peculiar and innovative dimension of the book: providing insights from both these two perspectives. In addition, particularly interesting is the difference between her case-studies: rape was widespread in the civil wars of the Sierra Leone and Timor-Leste but was less common during El Salvador's civil war. Differently from the cases of Sierra Leone and Timor-Lest, in El Salvador's civil war the National Liberation Front (FMLN) guerilla units engaged in less rape, reportedly because they had less need of socialization, since recruitment into FMLN units was also voluntary and they did not need to 'socialize' to act together.

Most of the previous studies in literature investigate the issue of wartime rape from the victims' perspective. In that sense, Cohen fills a gap by providing new patterns of perpetrators' via her interviews with them during her fieldworks (p. 57). Among other variables tested, the significance of 'combatant socialization' appears as the strongest one (p. 85). Also, another important finding of the study is that the general perception that massive scale rape is ordered by commanders is false (p.195). The strategic selection of the three cases fills another gap in literature by the in-depth and enriched analysis of the issue.

Despite these unique aspects of Cohen's research, a few methodological points can be marked as weaknesses. Selection bias appears to be a common problem in comparative research and seems to affect Cohen's work as well. In addition to a weak justification for the case selection, the collection of data on the phenomenon of rape during civil wars has presented a number of criticalities, as Cohen admits with particular reference the case of El Salvador (p.175). According to the author, the peak of violence during the initial phases of the civil war in 1980s constitutes a memory problem among the interviewees. Moreover, cultural discomfort of interviewees to talk about rape brings in the question of the reliability of the data, especially in the case of El Salvador which is presented as an "outlier" case (p.176). Furthermore, even if a variance in the peak points of sexual violence in civil wars in Sierra Leone, Timor-Leste and El Salvador is analyzed, the explanation for such a variance is not univocal.

Rape During Civil War is a significant contribution to the literature despite few small methodological shortcomings. As one of the first systematic cross-national study on rape during recent civil wars, Cohen's book is an inspiration for future research in academia. The insights of the book about the reasons of rape from both victims and perpetrators perspective are also useful to policymakers and

human rights organizations seeking to understand, prevent and treat the wartime rape. Application of the analysis to other cases and post-2012 time period is very promising to understand the wartime rape phenomenon deeper. Middle East and North Africa is another context that witnessed civil wars due to religious and ethnic conflicts, specifically after 2005. The recent ISIS invasion of the Yezidi land of Sinjar in Iraq and their acts of sexual violence towards Yezidi women including rape, forced marriage, and slavery would specifically be a significant new contribution to the literature if considered by future researchers.

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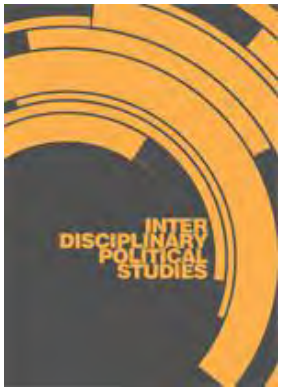
Emel Elif Tugdar



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BOOK REVIEWS

Small Wars, Big Data: The Information Revolution in Modern Conflict, by Eli Berman, Joseph H. Felter, and Jacob N. Shapiro. Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2018, pp. 386.

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Oregon State University

The puzzle Berman, Felter and Shapiro attempt to resolve in this book concerns the differences between asymmetric (i.e., where one side has a substantial material advantage) and symmetric conflict (i.e., conflict between relative peers in material capabilities) at the subnational level. Are asymmetric and symmetric conflicts determined by the same logic, or are there discreet factors in local phenomena? They conclude that particularly the outcomes of asymmetric conflicts are determined not just by state capacity (i.e., military forces and economic wealth), but also depending on how and where these resources are deployed. Furthermore, the salience of building relationships with local populations and the provision of information (i.e., intelligence) functions as an important mechanism by which counterinsurgencies succeed or fail. Consequently, the authors make an important contribution by developing an information-centric theory of explaining outcomes in insurgency and counterinsurgency operations. They argue that not only it is important to understand the tactics used by rebel and government forces, but more importantly

that we must appreciate how these actors interact and exchange information with the civilian populations which are often caught in the middle of these conflicts.

An aspect of this book that should not be overlooked is the practical impact that the authors' backgrounds brings to policymakers and military planners. This is probably not a surprising development considering the practical "real-world" background they possess. Berman and Shapiro are both veterans and have contributed to counterterrorism planning and operations, while Felter has been involved in special operations duties. By leveraging on their hands-on experience, together the authors seamlessly weave it and their academic credentials into an elegant empirical investigation.

One of the many strengths of this book is the authors' understanding of the salience that space plays in subnational asymmetric conflict. With a nod to former U.S. Speaker of the House Tip O'Niell, the authors explicate how all conflict is a product of local political dynamics. The spatial turn toward disaggregated studies of subnational conflict (i.e., georeferenced conflict event data) has helped political scientists and others gain a better understanding of these processes, and this demonstrates the immense practical value of these studies. Beyond the benefit of analysing localized conflict dynamics, disaggregated studies also enable us to examine the effects of apolitical data and geographic features which may be associated with our puzzles (e.g., rugged terrain, distribution of natural resources).

The authors' development of subnational georeferenced data and hypotheses linking insurgency and counterinsurgency outcomes to the civilian information networks is another important contribution to the policy and military community. Augmenting the efforts from important global and regional georeferenced datasets such as PRIO-GRID, UCDP Georeferenced Event Dataset (GED), Armed Conflict Location and Event Data Project (ACLED), Geo-Referencing

Ethnic Power Relations (GeoEPR), and the Social Conflict Analysis Database (SCAD) among others, the authors utilize event data sources like the SIGACT reports of coalition forces. This event data allows the authors to examine nearly 200,000 conflict events and then aggregated at the district level of analysis for all districts in Afghanistan and Iraq. The fine grained detail of the authors' data allows for an excellent analysis which incorporates both the temporal and spatial dimensions of insurgency and counterinsurgency operations. Consequently, what their data and models add to the discussion of subnational conflict is the incorporation of what the authors call an information mechanism. The information mechanism conceptually recognizes the salient role that non-combatant civilian populations play in insurgency and counterinsurgency operations as a distributor of tactical intelligence to the two conflicting parties (i.e., the government and rebel forces). The incorporation of the information mechanism into their models demonstrates the great importance that real-time information and the development of trust plays in these types of conflicts.

The book's acknowledgement of the important role played by civilians is a major accomplishment of this study that should not be overlooked. While many studies have examined how conflict affects civilian populations, this study does an admirable job in incorporating civilians into the tripartite relationship between civilians, the forces of the state and those of an insurgency movement. Understanding this relationship, through the prism of the information mechanism, makes the contributions of this book standout.

There are, however, some limitations to the data and analyses employed in this study. One such limitation is that the authors' data only include observations from conflicts in which the U.S. military was present. Consequently, conflict events wherein U.S. military forces were not present spatially or temporally are not in-

cluded. The data therefore cannot speak to a broader spectrum of conflict events. Additionally, the authors develop a series of policy-relevant propositions, but fail to investigate how the provision of services (by the government or rebel forces) affects a population's desire to provide information. These shortcomings, however, are fouls that the authors readily call on themselves and while their omission makes the reader want to explore these dimensions of their study, such an absence does not attenuate the excellent analyses contained herein.

This book provides an excellent and thoughtful analysis of a subject that continues to play an important role in global politics. The authors approach this task soberly and engage in both a theoretical and methodological pluralism that redounds to their credit. Taking many factors into account the authors demonstrate the complexity of the subject, and yet distill these complexities concerning localized conflict, economics, information mechanisms, and the roles played by civilians in this context into what is a captivating exploration of intrastate conflict for academics and policymakers.

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ERRATUM

Erratum to: Criminal humanitarianism. A visual exploration of criminal legitimisation, between alternative moralities and the political vacuum.

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Due to an error in the production process of the article "Criminal humanitarianism. A visual exploration of criminal legitimisation, between alternative moralities and the political vacuum" (DOI: 10.1285/i20398573v4n2p79) the captions of Figure 37 and 38 have been inverted (pag. 118).
We apologize with the authors Letizia Battaglia and Federico Gama.

Figure 37. 'I due Cristi'

Photo by Battaglia L (1982). In Tamburrino 2016.

38. 'Historias en la piel' series.

Photo by Gama F (2011). In Gama & Mendoza 2011.

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INTER DISCIPLINARY POLITICAL STUDIES