

The London School of Economics and Political Science

Network-centric Peace: An Application of Network Theory to Violent Conflicts.

Reik Christian Kramer

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Declaration

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Abstract

Social networks are complex adaptive systems made up of nodes - human beings - and the links between those nodes. The links in any given network provide individuals with goods and services necessary for survival, including the quest for meaning, narrative and identity. This thesis argues that social networks are not rapidly increasing in complexity (a common view) but that the process of making and breaking links, and the ability to observe and document such processes, has been accelerated and simplified by modern technology. It is this ability to observe the dynamics within networks, networks that are subject to constant and on-going change and evolution, which makes the study of networks useful.

Most approaches to social network analysis focus on spoken and written communication along links between the nodes, but shared suffering or execution of violence, or the simple association with a narrative involving violence, is a powerful dynamic in networks. It is a dynamic which has thus far been largely overlooked, but one which has important implications for international relations. Violence creates a shared identity and provides guidance for the behaviour of individuals, but also destroys life.

The thesis analyses the case studies of Lebanon and Afghanistan from these perspectives. Whilst most studies on the Lebanese Civil War argue that the outbreak of violent conflict was unavoidable due to domestic and regional antagonisms, these studies do not explain why and how the war ended in 1990 in circumstances where the same factors continued to exist yet suddenly with a relative absence of large-scale violence. In contrast, violence has plagued Afghanistan since the 1970s and shows no signs of abating. Violence here is not tied to a specific conflict but has become the defining form of communication between the various network actors.

Network theory can be used to gain a deeper understanding of the causes of violent conflict as well as, importantly, the forces that maintain or limit violence. Once these forces are understood, they can be utilised in an effort to change the prevailing dynamics of violence within a network, and to initiate a more successful approach to peacebuilding efforts within violent conflicts.

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Chapter 1: Introduction

1. Introduction

What is most remarkable about the assassination of the former Lebanese Prime Minister Rafik Hariri in February 2005 is not what happened, but what did not happen. Hariri was one of the country's most influential politicians and wealthiest individuals – he was a central figure in the political and economic landscape of the nation. It would not have been surprising if his execution, by a suicide bomber using 1.8 tons of TNT which not only killed Hariri but also resulted in the deaths of a further 22 innocent bystanders, triggered an immediate and severe violent backlash.. The assassination could easily have triggered a chain of violent reactions, and Lebanon could have been plunged back into the all-out civil war that destroyed much of its urban centres between 1978 and 1990. The perpetrators have still not been identified - an incomplete and still on-going investigation into the incident is being run, not by Lebanese bodies but by a UN special tribunal, and the matter has still not been brought to a conclusion. Hariri was not only a very influential political leader, but had also made much of his financial wealth through what are alleged to have been corrupt and illegal property transactions related to Solidere, a private company tasked with rebuilding Beirut following the civil war. Hariri had emerged on the stage of Lebanese politics thanks to his personal friendship with, and financial support of, the Saudi royal family, especially the Saudi King Khaled. He is also credited with having played a major role in the development of the Taif Accord of 1989 that led to the 1990 Taif agreement, commonly acknowledged as having ended the Lebanese Civil War.

Despite all of this, instead of provoking further violence, the violent and ruthless assassination of Rafik Hariri acted as a unifying force of grief within Lebanon. Rather than deepening the divisions that existed between the different factions it served as a catalyst that united them in joining forces and ultimately led, as part of the 'Cedar Revolution', to the withdrawal of Syrian forces that had been based in the country since 1976 (Knudsen & Kerr, 2012).

This incident is not the only recent occasion in which Lebanon has demonstrated a remarkable resilience to economic, social, sectarian and political stresses. The brutal and on-going civil war that began in Syria in 2011 has all but destroyed Lebanon's most important trading partner, and has led to a general weakening of the economy in the region (Carpenter, 2013). It also has, via the Shiite and Iranian supported Hezbollah, polarised the domestic political debate. With Hezbollah presenting a "state within the state" (Azani, 2009, p. 158) in the south of the country, and Iran having a strong cultural and educational influence in Lebanon (Shaery-Eisenlohr, 2008), the threat of the Lebanese government being pulled into the fighting of the Syrian Civil War is ever present. Add to this the influx of an estimated 1.1 million Syrian refugees (UNHCR, 2015) into a society of only 4.5 million Lebanese, which is having considerable impact on the social services, the education system and employment, and one might assume that Lebanon must be in a highly volatile and instable situation. After all, political and sectarian disagreements, economic and demographic shifts and the country's geographic location (in a region where high levels of tension often turn into violent and protracted conflicts) are often put forward as primary explanations for the outbreak of Lebanon's own civil war (Khalaf, 2002) (Traboulsi, 2007). In fact, the general absence of major violent conflict in Lebanon becomes even more perplexing when assessed in light of the country's executive, legislative and judicative structures and institutions. Far from presenting a unified and strong government with reliable access to resources, a functioning bureaucracy and a solid monopoly of power, the social, economic, sectarian and political divisions and rifts are visible in all levels and functions of the state (Yacoubian, 2009) (Najem, 2012).

Yet, with the horrors of the civil war lying a distant 25 years in the past, it certainly is no longer sheer exhaustion, nor memories of destruction and brutality, that prevent the outbreak of another war in the country. There is an absence of plausible explanation as to why Lebanon has remained largely at peace and has not descended into an all-out civil war, and the reasons beg for further study. This is especially so in light of the many situations around the world where violence on a large scale continues to dominate the discourse.

In these areas it is not uncommon that cease-fires and peace agreements are at least initially unsuccessful, or we see negotiations subsisting over a long period of time

without result, including many attempts at ‘peace’ leading to renewed and even intensified hostilities (E. Newman & Richmond, 2006a). Even today’s most powerful nations and their military, political and diplomatic organisations are often unable to terminate violent conflicts. Led into concepts with neat names such as ‘state-building’ or ‘peace-building’, their efforts often appear to actually prolong or even reinforce grievances and hostilities. The combination of local and international factors in prolonging and amplifying a violent conflict is especially visible in Afghanistan, where despite considerable international resources and funds large scale violence continues to plague the country and its people (Cordesman, 2013).

Assassinations, for example of Vice-President Haji Abdul Qadir in 2002 (Halliday, 2002), or former President Burhanuddin Rabbani in 2011 (Nissenbaum, 2011) have been credited with triggering major armed offensives or military campaigns in the country (Thiessen, 2014). With the persistent and frequently erupting violence between a number of local, regional, national and international actors, Afghanistan appears to share little in common with Lebanon. Yet, a closer look reveals many similarities: they both lack a stable, potent and legitimate central government and political system; both possess uneven economic development with the population divided into a small group of ‘haves’ and a much larger majority of ‘have nots’; corruption and nepotism is rampant and organised crime, for example in smuggling, kidnapping and capital crimes, is rife. Just as the Levant is a politically unstable region, so is Central Asia.

Despite its obvious poverty and underdevelopment in much of the country, Afghanistan has been central to policies of some of the world’s economically, politically and militarily most powerful countries. It has received billions of dollars in foreign aid – both through public and private organisations – and yet remains a hotbed and fertile ground for violence. Observers struggle to explain this continuation of violence that appears to have taken hold of Afghanistan, especially in its urban centres (Kilcullen, 2009), transport infrastructure (Misdag, 2006) and the border region to Pakistan (Shaikh, 2009).

While Afghanistan has a 250 year-long history as a nation-state, those who fight on Afghan soil often claim allegiance to a large number of different actors – both foreign

and domestic. Throughout its history, and at present, much of the country is not ruled by a strong central government but rather through a complex and constantly changing network of regional, professional, ethnic, family and other groups. It is said that shared language and customs, patronage and land ownership relations and, in effect, local self-rule are the factors which have kept the country unified as a nation, but not as a state (Barfield, 2011).

Similarly to Lebanon, Afghanistan is situated in a volatile and politically unstable region where historic and contemporary empires, ideologies and ideas struggle for influence and strategic control. Its strong affinity to stories of conquest and war, vast natural resources, trade routes of legal and illicit goods and strong sense of identification of its people to both nomadic and settled ethnicities, make the entire region prone to conflict (Kremmer, 2002).

Whilst most foreign actors, for example NATO and India, or Russia and Iran, promote the notion of a strong and centralised Afghan state centred on Kabul, this view has largely failed to bear fruit. To the contrary: this strategy appears to alienate Afghans themselves and has worsened the situation (Barfield, 2011). This is especially so since the power structure of today's Afghan state is associated with foreign interests and interference. Rather than being part of a narrative that Afghans can identify with, and feel they can benefit from, they are often at best ambivalent, especially in rural areas and areas distant from the capital.

While Lebanon appears to defy the odds, portraying a remarkable resilience towards what could be seen as an irresistible descent into civil war once more, Afghanistan has, at least for the past half century, failed to end the endemic violence. What these two countries highlight is the weakness of many key concepts employed by contemporary international relations. Already ambiguous and disputed concepts such as 'war' and 'peace' demonstrate their limitations: is Lebanon at war or at peace? Is all of Afghanistan at war all of the time? Many observers would point to indications of both or, most likely, reject the polarity these concepts demand, and argue for a neither-nor, hybrid or why not an entirely different approach?

The neat concepts of ‘war’, ‘peace’ and ‘security’ begin to unravel when applied to individual human beings who are living in the regions being analysed. There is ample evidence that for many Afghans the choice between war and peace, between supporting the nascent central government or cooperating with local strongmen, or between benefitting from the production of opium or finding other forms of providing financial sustenance, is often fluid and dependant on the circumstances. During the day it makes sense to support the government with the armed forces that are allied to it, while at night circumstances might be such that one provides shelter to an insurgent. To classify these individuals as either supporters or opponents of the course favoured by the central government and its international allies is not only counterproductive but impossible (Kilcullen, 2009).

Rather than pointing to hierarchical, absolute and state-centric dynamics, the pictures painted in Lebanon, Afghanistan and elsewhere present a complex and interdependent reality. We see structure and behaviour being adapted to the situation and the challenges faced, rather than adherence to predefined, insular, predictable and linear processes.

2. Complexity and Complex Systems

There are no agreed definitions of ‘complexity’, or ‘complex systems’ (Bousquet, 2012), but there is broad agreement that non-linear phenomena and an inability to observe proportionality between input and output, indicate complexity. Also linked are situations where small changes have major impact (Mitleton-Kelly, 2000), which in turn is linked to bifurcation, explained by Urry as follows: “systems reach points of bifurcation when their behaviour and future pathways become unpredictable and new higher order, more differentiated, structures may emerge” (Urry, 2003, p. 28). Life is thus “the balance between forces of order and forces of disorder, between fixed rigid structures and chaotic motion” (Bousquet, 2009, p. 177). Conversely, any system that is either too rigid or too disorderly will either adapt to a more sustainable state, or cease to exist.

Many of these observations were conceived in the natural sciences where they are now, following initial reluctance from the scientific community, accepted as fundamental components necessary to understand phenomena. They are slowly being incorporated into the social sciences, but there remains a culture of preferring a more ‘Newtonian’ approach; one that relies on causality, aims to distil and to apply absolute laws and reject non-linearity (Byrne, 2001).

In complex systems there is a multitude of simple processes running parallel and impacting each other; the complexity emerges as a result of this rather than due to the underlying processes themselves:

“[W]henever you look at very complicated systems in physics or in biology, you generally find that the basic components and the basic laws are quite simple; the complexity arises because you have a great many of these simple components interacting simultaneously [...] the complexity is actually in the organization - the myriad possible ways that the components of the system can interact” (Stephen Wolfram quoted in Waldrop, 1992, p. 86).

Complex systems are adaptive; this means that they can alter their behaviour through positive feedback loops. In contrast to hierarchical and linear structures, where a change or alteration in process or behaviour has to travel from the top down, complex adaptive systems are able to incorporate challenges within, and become more efficient and resilient in the process.

Rather than relying on a central body to control and moderate a system, and the processes that are taking place within it, it is the interaction, competition and cooperation between individual bodies that make up the system itself. Thus any coherent behaviour of the system is an expression of this rather than that of a controlling authority (Holland, 1992). In order to study these kinds of systems, this means that:

“[W]hen dealing with complex systems in which neither structure nor agency take precedence, in which the different constitutive parts are tightly interconnected and where borders with the broader environment are porous and ill-defined, it is largely futile to seek either to outline linear causal chains or to assign any final causality to a given phenomenon. Rather, one should

strive to identify the points at which feedback loops both drive the emergence and maintain the coherence of such systems.” (Bousquet, 2012, p. 351)

This implies that an analysis of international relations relying on absolute concepts is prone to the weaknesses of what Weber calls “ideal type”. Because of the myriad of different actions happening at the same time the ability of the observer is limited, as well as being subject to bias and accentuation (Shils & Finch, 2011).

As stated, these patterns of complexity and complex adaptive systems were first discovered in the natural sciences. When observing weather patterns in order to deduce a more accurate forecasting, it turned out that the same data computed through the same logarithms would provide entirely different outcomes. The proverbial butterfly flapping its wings at the Amazon River and causing a thunderstorm in New York is in fact more feasible than it seems – despite vast amounts of data and calculating power, the weather cannot be predicted much more reliably today than before the invention of the computer. This highlights the difficulty of extracting causality chains, as well as the weakness of the reductionist approach that argues that a system is nothing but the aggregation of its constituent parts (Gleick, 1998).

Initially the scientific community was hostile towards complexity and chaos theory and unwilling to embrace it as a valid discipline. However, today it is accepted not only as a phenomenon but as a fundamental component in the emergence and existence of life. From evolution theory, climate studies and quantum physics, to astronomy and biology, the view of the world as a network of networks, where linearity and causality are rare, if not non-existent, is widely accepted. Recently, the social sciences have also begun to apply complexity theory to the study of human affairs, and with the explosion of digital communication its effects can be observed as never before (Byrne, 2001) (Bolotin, Tur, & Yanovsky, 2013).

3. Networks

Assuming that a complex adaptive system is a network – which Manuel Castells defines as “a set of interconnected nodes” (Castells, p. 19) - then a focus on emergent

properties¹ will provide a much more useful concept in the analysis of phenomena. In other words it is the marriage of complexity – interactions that take place in non-linear and parallel fashion – and networks that allows the concept of ‘complex-adaptive networks’ to emerge.

Complex-adaptive networks have specific properties and have shown themselves to be the basis of many natural (Winfrey, 1980) (Nowak & May, 1992) and social phenomena (Milgram, 1967) (Kochen, 1989) (Wasserman & Faust, 1994). In order to understand a system it is important to observe interactions within it, and the impact of those interactions, rather than to merely focus on individual actors and their capacity and potentials. Deleuze et al. call this “assemblage theory” - it focuses on the interaction between individual actors, and the effects these interactions have, rather than the actors themselves. Social networks, or “social assemblages” are objects in themselves: by causally affecting their component parts, i.e. the individual ‘nodes’, and providing boundaries and guidance for their actions, the connections or links between actors become their own entities (Deleuze, Guattari, & Massumi, 2011).

Amartya Sen points out that all human beings possess multiple identities that emerge through different associations of the individual (Sen, 2006). Based on shared understandings, patterns of behaviour, ideas, motivations and forms of communication, every identity is a network in which individuals are linked to each other. The establishment and maintenance of connections to other nodes, or individuals, requires energy, and the more stress an individual is faced with the less he or she is able make such connections. For example, a violent conflict causes many links to disappear while at the same time strengthening those judged to be most important for survival (Berg Harpviken, 2009). The stress faced by the nodes of a network will impact their behaviour and, in turn, alter the network or networks they belong to. The less secure an individual feels the more he or she will seek to strengthen his or her association to certain networks. In turn, this will impact the behaviour and performance of the networks themselves. Thus, all phenomena have to be analysed both from the perspective of the individual and the relevant social networks (Bauman, 2007).

¹ Properties of the whole that cannot be deduced from the constituent

When applied to international relations, and more specifically a violent conflict between political bodies, the outcome is that one cannot simply analyse the conflict by comparing the military, economic, social or other resources of the belligerents. Instead, the conflict has to be approached through studying the interactions between the different individual nodes that make up the actors themselves (DeLanda, 2006).

History provides ample ammunition to support this approach: from ancient times until today, many military campaigns have ended not because the initially most potent and powerful actor exerted his power and claimed victory. Rather, seemingly unrelated, random and often uncontrollable factors and events (such as the weather, terrain or epidemics) have made themselves known and had huge impact. Even more confusingly, events taking place far away from the battlefield, such as public opinion, social cohesion or natural disaster, have turned out to be far more decisive than military actions and resources. Thus it is not surprising that military planners and strategists were among the earliest to adopt the emergence of complexity and complex-adaptive networks from science and nature to human interactions.

The concept of 'Network-centric Warfare' emerged following the end of the Cold War, but was driven more by the development of digital communication such as the internet, satellite technology and remote controlled weapons systems (Cebrowski & Garstka, 1998). Further developed as 'Revolution in Military Affairs' (RMA) it aims to place networks at the centre of future military engagements (Lonsdale, 2004). By focusing on technological developments, especially in Information and Communication Technology (ICT), and the changes in human behaviour caused by the emergence of these inventions, it argues that the world is undergoing radical changes. Today's societies differ greatly to those of a mere generation or two ago, in which thanks to technology the centrality of the individual is now being replaced with the network (Castells, 2006).

3.1 Programming networks

Because of the underlying nature of complexity it is futile to try and assess developments based on an analysis of the nodes that make up a network. Not only do individuals create and abandon links on a constant basis, with the result that the instant a map is created it may already be inaccurate and useless, but this method is also unable to reliably describe the *nature* of the connections. While most social network analysis relies on conscious and deliberate cooperation for the mutual benefit of those involved (see for example Kardushin, 2012), scrutinising the nature and quality of relations can only be done in a very limited manner. Early approaches to network theory highlight this (Milgram, 1967; Pool & Kochen, 1978; Verbrugge, 1977) (Wasserman & Faust, 1994). Not only is it difficult to qualitatively and quantitatively analyse the links in social networks, but also it is impossible to reliably predict which links will have the strongest impact on future developments.

Because of the complexity of social networks, attempting to discover causality chains is futile; too many processes take place in a parallel fashion so this approach only works with hindsight to distil how a certain situation has emerged. Castells approaches the issue by promoting the role of what he calls ‘programmes’: since no power relation takes place in isolation, or in a vacuum, they depend on the existence of a form of communication shared by all actors involved:

“[N]etworks do not have fixed boundaries; they are open-ended and multi-edged, and their expansion or contraction depends on the compatibility or competition between the interests and values programmed into each network and the interests and values programmed into the networks they come into contact with in their expansionary movement. [...] A network is defined by the program that assigns its goals and its role of performance.” (Castells, 2009, pp. 19-20)

Therefore, a network’s programme has two purposes: firstly, it describes the network’s purpose and with this its boundaries. Secondly, it illustrates the form of communication that is used within it. Because this approach looks at the forces that keep a network together and unified, instead of focusing on the role of individual nodes, it is able to allow the observation of a network even if the components that make it up change and evolve. It also accounts for the non-permanent borders and

non-homogenous nature of networks: because programmes are not exclusive every individual can belong to different networks at the same time.

Lebanon can be analysed using this approach: instead of relying on abstract and absolute limits, such as geographic borders, it allows individuals to identify with a programme. Rather than to try and define 'Lebanese identity', a Castellan programme of Lebanon would argue for the existence of a network defined by a shared purpose and form of communication. The shared purpose is to provide identity, safety and belonging, both in abstract emotional terms and for the satisfaction of concrete requirements for survival, for example food and shelter. By relying on a shared form of communication – language, music, art, symbols and rituals – it allows the exchange of ideas and provides the framework in which power relations can take place. Even someone living overseas and outside of the geographic entity will be able to belong to this network and identify with 'Lebanon'.

Every form of interaction depends on a form of language that all actors need to share. While spoken and written language may be the first to come to mind, it still requires some sort of earlier mutual agreement regarding grammar, lexis and syntax. Symbols, art and rituals, for example flags, paintings and ceremonies, equally serve to communicate between nodes. This is the avenue on which power relations take place. Because every action takes place in a network, and conversely no action happens in a vacuum, it is the programme of a network that determines the kind and form of interaction. Every observation and any kind of behaviour – both social and otherwise – will be interpreted under the lens of a network's programme. A single spoken word, the waving of a coloured cloth, the drawing of a simple symbol or quick physical contact, will cause a reaction. Whether the action is seen as benevolent or aggressive, constructive or destructive, integrative or disintegrative depends on its interpretation through the programme in which it takes place. Each network has its own programme, and just as the shape and function of a network changes, so does the programme evolve and adapt.

Much of Castells' work focuses on the function and impact of the political discourse through media in technologically highly developed societies. For example, he highlights the role of key individuals or "gatekeepers" in media, politics or

advertising within a particular network – those gatekeepers work as filters or moderators for the kind and range of processed information (Castells, 2001) (Castells, 2009) (Castells, 2010b). Yet Castells' contribution to the debate becomes much more valuable when the scope and application of his work is widened to embrace societies outside the technologically highly developed cluster. If societies are defined as complex adaptive networks the same dynamics apply to all.

In Afghanistan, for example, a trader reaching small communities may provide word-of-mouth information to the people of a remote village. In the absence of a formal position, and possibly even unintentionally – at times even involuntarily, this may render the trader not only the sole provider of information on events outside the small community, but also make him a gatekeeper and increase his ability to shape opinion. Equally obscure, yet potentially very powerful, could be the work of a young Al Qaida sympathizer living in the United Kingdom: thanks to his skills in programming websites he can, without any formal or physical connection to the rest of the network, function as a key node in the organisation. By helping to broadcast the programme on which Al Qaida is based, he can expand the organisation's network.

The mantra 'one person's terrorist is another person's freedom fighter' may, on first impression, sound cynical since it appears to offer justification for destructive and often murderous behaviour. Yet it also highlights the role of the convictions, motivations and ideologies of the individual. Someone growing up in a society marred by war, violence and instability will understandably feel much less reluctant to revert to use those tactics he or she observes in daily life. Based on extensive fieldwork David Kilcullen is able to point out the different motivations for people joining insurgencies; often the reason to pick up arms and join local battles and skirmishes is found within local dynamics rather than national or even international narratives {Kilcullen, 2009 #118}. When observing the impact of nuclear weapons on human affairs, the physicist Werner Heisenberg uses the findings of his research as a natural scientist to reach similar results: just like the uncertainty principle he discovered (also known as the 'Indeterminacy Principle'), which describes the limitations of an observer in measuring certain conditions in quantum physics, Heisenberg warns of the impossibility of differentiating between objective and subjective observations of social phenomena (Coker, 2010). While Christopher Coker concedes the limitations

of the applicability of physical laws to the social sciences, he is right to point out that with the expanding role of information, and information technology, in today's world, the more useful an awareness of the limitations of observations of social phenomena becomes. Heisenberg would argue that the distinction between freedom fighter and terrorist would be irrelevant because the impossibility of providing a definite answer prevents it from being of use. Instead, he would point to the importance of observing the entirety of a system – a network – in order to try and extract regularities which can help to gain further insights into complex networks.

The military strategist Carl von Clausewitz wrote his seminal book 'On War' much before the concepts of quantum physics, complex-adaptive systems and networks were introduced into the natural sciences. Perhaps the most prominent theorist on war, he argues that at the heart of the idea of war is not the military alone but a 'remarkable' trinity:

“As a total phenomenon its dominant tendencies always make war a paradoxical trinity – composed of primordial violence, hatred, and enmity, which are to be regarded as a blind natural force; of the play of chance and probability within which the creative spirit is free to roam; and of its element of subordination, as an instrument of policy, which makes it subject to reason alone. The first of these three aspects mainly concerns the people; the second the commander and his army; the third the government.” (Clausewitz, 2007, p. 30)

In this sense, Clausewitz was much ahead of his times; rather than to subject war to a linear and absolute paradigm for analysis, he highlights its complexity; firstly by showing that the concept of war is approached in a very different manner by each of the three entities he points out above, and secondly by later highlighting that the conduct of war and warfare is subject to incomplete information, action and reaction and uncertainty – in other words complexity.

4. Conflicts, power and complexity

To fight wars and make peace are some of the most powerful and prominent human activities. This is evidenced by the many books that chronicle the past against a framework involving the threat of battles, skirmishes, wars and peace agreements, but the two terms are common not only in the political and military realm but many others. History as a science is more often than not a narration of wars, violence and destruction, with both ‘war’ and ‘peace’ being words and concepts used daily. Confusingly however they are often used outside the historical or political realms. ‘Peace’ is invoked by demonstrators demanding disarmament – yet aren’t they at peace right now? Even more prominently, ‘war’ is used to describe economic conflicts (‘price wars’), sporting events and heated conversations (‘war of words’), and both words often emerge in political speech to indicate, in an Orwellian fashion, the exact opposite. Politicians who call for a ‘war on drugs’ actually want to prevent the destructive power of illicit substances. A ‘war on terror’ is more of a populist rallying cry, rather than the signal to physically pick up weapons and fight (Lakoff, 2004).

Even those instances that serve as undisputed examples of the concepts of ‘war’ and ‘peace’ also demonstrate the inability of establishing clear distinctions between them. The First World War certainly was a war, yet historians continue to debate on who or what caused it, and struggle to mark the specific incident from which onwards there was no longer ‘peace’ and, accordingly, when the war started. There were formal declarations of war, but hostilities between the antagonists started much earlier. Only with hindsight is it possible to try and identify the event in which a system suddenly collapsed, and with the benefit of access to archives and further information, is it possible to make an argument for when the perceived stability of peace was replaced with the apparent chaos of war (C. Clark, 2013). Interestingly enough, the discovery of quantum physics that heralded the end of the ‘clockwork universe’, coincided with the breakdown of the political order in the early 19th century. However, it was not until the emergence of chaos theory in the 1950s and 1960s that this was also applied to the macroscopic world (Kautz, 2001). Just as much as these discoveries in the natural sciences surpassed the Newtonian linear approach and allowed for a deeper

understanding of the dynamics that govern physics and biology, so can they also shed a light on human affairs (Byrne, 2001) (Shils & Finch, 2011).

Say, for example, a Lebanese individual reaps financial benefit from a trade deal he has made with a French customer. He uses part of those benefits to purchase weapons from a foreign arms dealer, and he may aim to use those weapons only to protect himself and his family. Yet he also has a desire to protect his newfound wealth, and this will change the power relations between the different nodes of the networks he is linked to. Several observations can be made here: this transaction is taking place at a junction of a multitude of networks – the local neighbourhood in Lebanon, the commercial network to France, and the links to an arms dealer who himself is linked to other entities. The initially commercial transaction changes power relations, which then subsequently trigger changes to power relations in the other networks to which the Lebanese trader is linked; the complexity of the situation emerges. Furthermore, many other processes and interactions take place in a parallel and non-linear fashion - reverberations are difficult if not impossible to predict accurately.

The initial transaction may trigger unintended consequences that ultimately become detrimental to the power capacity of the instigator. For example, a neighbour might observe the transaction and copy the method – the neighbour will do it at a decreased cost (because, for example, he does not have to spend time analysing the market to find a buyer for his product), he will pursue a positive feedback loop and produce an even more efficient structure. Naturally, he will also feel the desire to protect his own new wealth and, since he is aware of both the level of wealth and protection owned by his neighbour, may conclude he both requires, and has the potential to, purchase more, and more powerful weapons.

The initial trader might now feel less secure, living next to an arsenal of weapons he cannot match, and a neighbour he may accuse of unfairly benefitting from his creativity and expenditure. His reaction, however, cannot be predicted: he could feel forced into making a further transaction in order to try and balance his neighbour's power, which then may cause an arms race. Alternatively, the two could cooperate for mutual benefit. Since the possibilities are virtually inexhaustible, an event such as a

banking or credit crisis, an epidemic or simply moving house, may have its own impact.

So we see that power relations are subject to continuing and endless change, yet they do not take place in a vacuum, and are subject to interpretation and re-interpretation. Waging war, and subsequently making peace, are human behaviours and they emerge out of the complex network of human societies. At the heart of both concepts is how conflicts are being addressed and how power, and changes in power, are played out in networks.

Manuel Castells' work is based on the assumption that networks have to be understood not simply as passive structures but as themselves being actors as well. Instead of being rigid constructions that are useful only as an illustration of infrastructure, networks are, through interactions, the venue of power relations:

“Power is the relational capacity that enables a social actor to influence asymmetrically the decisions of other social actor(s) in ways that favor the empowered actor's will, interests, and values. Power is exercised by means of coercion (or the possibility of it) and/or by the construction of meaning on the basis of the discourses through which social actors guide their action. Power relationships are framed by domination, which is the power that is embedded in the institutions of society. The relational capacity of power is conditioned, but not determined, by the structural capacity of domination.” (Castells, 2009, p. 10)

Conversely, power depends not only on the potential itself, but also on the ability to exert it – which is done through the links between the nodes of networks.

What Castells highlights are the constant and permanent changing power relations that cause the network to change and adapt. Because power is based on relational capacity, in other words it is insufficient to say ‘this node (or human being) has power’, instead one must say ‘this node has power over these other nodes’, power is not always visible. One instance in which it becomes observable is in violent conduct, and likely the most powerful example of violent conduct is war. Despite the popularity of the term ‘war’, which is often invoked in abstract terms (for example in the ‘war on drugs’, or in reference to events in the distant past – the Peloponnesian

War is one instance), it is a concept that is very difficult to define. Equally so its antonym, peace, suffers from the same impediments.

4.1 War

Levy and Thompson define war as "sustained, coordinated violence between political organisations" (Levy & Thompson, 2011, p.5 (a similar definition can be found in Bull, 1977, p. 5) The key to this definition, and to understanding the dynamics of war, is the behaviour of the 'organisation' rather than the behaviour of the individual. Sustained violence by an individual is what his or her, society would consider a crime and be subject to a legal process. This indicates that the organisation, in other words the social network, is of great importance here. At the same time, Levy and Thompson continue to place an emphasis on the individual:

"[...] Causes of sustained, coordinated violence between political organisations are not driven by a clear sense of political interest or the organisation, but instead of the personal or domestic political interests or perhaps by an insubordinate military leader, still qualify as wars." (Levy & Thompson, 2011, p. 10)

This makes war a communal action: while individuals take part in the killing, and are being killed, it is the wider society that warrants, explains and narrates sustained violence – with or without a political interest.

Coker approaches the topic by arguing for what purpose wars are fought, and presents three reasons: the instrumental, the existential and the metaphysical. In the context of international relations this is highly valuable since it presents a convincing categorization that can be applied to virtually all violent conflicts: either they are fought with the aim to obtain certain goods or control territory, are a reaction to an existential threat or attack, or finally are fought for the purpose of creating a sense of community or belonging (Coker, 2008).

What these approaches to defining war share, however, is their failure to provide a clear denotation: for example, paid mercenaries may be involved in major armed conflict yet they lack a political motivation; groups of violent hooligans are organised

and often share political convictions and organised crime – for example drug cartels - can supplant state structures to the extent that not political but criminal interests dominate (Chouvy, 2015).

4.2 Peace

On the other side of the coin lies peace that, as a concept, is suffering from the same difficulty in definition. As Castells points out, power relations within society are constantly changing, meaning that conflicts emerge on a constant basis. Yet for Thomas Hobbes war is an exception:

"[s]o the nature of War, consisteth not in actual fighting; but in the known disposition thereto, during all the time there is no assurance to the contrary. All other time is PEACE." (Hobbes, 1960, p. 23)

More contemporary commentators mirror the argument that peace should be the norm since without it, and the subjective feeling of security, no objective development or improvement of the individual and society is possible (Libschutz, 1995). Yet as Castells states, power relations trigger conflicts over domination, and since complex networks change and adapt disputes, antagonisms and conflicts are an inherent component of human affairs. In other words, daily life is subjected to a constant struggle over resources and the ability to dominate; domestic violence emerges out of disagreements in intimate relationships, children rebel against their parents and co-workers challenge each other. These conflicts can harm and cause damage even if they do not contain physical violence, yet their presence does not shed light on whether or not 'peace' exists.

Equally so, the 'war on drugs' indicates that there does not necessarily need be a component of sustained and coordinated violence in order to allow the use of the word 'war'. Most of the societies in which the conflict is fought are largely at peace and mostly become victim only by chance rather than affiliation (Mallea, 2014). Conversely, there are many situations in which individuals are prosecuted because of their (at time perceived) association or affiliation to a group or identity, but even in this context the distinction between war and peace does not help to provide further insight into why and how.

In regards to international relations peace appears to be elusive and hard to obtain: in fact most attempts at ‘peace-building’ are unsuccessful or even lead to a worsening of the situation (E. Newman & Richmond, 2006a, 2006b). Just as many violent conflicts often appear as miscalculations and unintended effects, so the concept of peace is fraught with ambiguities. In other words, if the triggers and causes of wars – however defined – are in most cases disputed, then peace is equally a detached and broad concept. The only way to provide clarity to both the concepts of war and peace, as well as to allow them to be used as notions in international relations, is to focus on the surrounding discourse.

5. Discourse, language and communication

Let us return to the example of the Lebanese trader who feels threatened by his neighbour’s behaviour. He could react either with hostility, or seek to amicably deal with the challenge. Yet he has little control about what reaction his own actions may trigger. In other words he is unable to predict, let alone determine, the reaction his actions will cause. Conversely, he will feel emotions of security or insecurity, of ambivalence or hostility, inclinations to confront or willingness to accommodate, depending on the wider environment he finds himself in.

According to George Lakoff this is further complicated by the fact that the vast majority of thinking is subconscious, and that every human being will interpret facts, figures and behaviour differently – yet not necessarily consistently. Lakoff focuses on language when he states:

“Since language is used for communicating thought, our view of language must also reflect our new understanding of the nature of thought. Language is at once a surface phenomenon and a source of power. [...] Since we all have similar bodies and brains and live in the same world, it will appear in many cases that language just fits reality directly. But when our understanding of reality differs, what language means has to differ as well, often radically.”
(Lakoff, pp. 14-15)

The emphasis here should be placed on ‘communication’ rather than language. This is because commonly language is, at least initially, limited in its definition to spoken words. Its plural – languages – refers to different constructs of grammar and lexis used in different networks centred on nations, indicating that every network has specific approaches on how to relay information.

Beyond spoken language every network has its own sounds, gestures, symbols and expressions that go far beyond just vocal sounds. Occasionally the same expression can have a completely different meaning in a different network (a nod in India is used to indicate non-acceptance, while in most other parts of the world it stands for agreement and acceptance), but even in the same network they can be oppugnant, depending on context (for example the word ‘black’ in the United States). Most likely, the most exceptional form of communication is violence: yet a punch thrown can stand for hostility as well as friendship and intimacy. The ability to communicate is necessary for power relations to take place, and a shared form of communication indicates the existence of a network – regardless of which form of expression it is based on.

An even more extreme example of communication could be a fist-fight: on the street it would be judged unacceptable and trigger a legal and judicial action; in a boxing ring it would indicate a sporting event and command the attention of spectators, sponsors and judges. In other words, communication depends on the context in which it takes place, and this context is what Manuel Castells refers to as the ‘programme’ - the purpose and the behaviour of a network (Castells, 2009).

Without a shared programme communication, i.e. the relay and exchange of information, is not possible, indicating that the network would cease to exist. Conversely, the programme sets the context in which communication takes place. In Afghanistan a NATO soldier may not be able to speak to a local, but gestures, behaviour, uniforms and signals will provide the basis for communication. NATO’s superior capacity to use violence does not, as its experience in Afghanistan since 2001 shows, indicate superior power. Instead it presents an example of how violence in networks has to be understood as a component of the discourse and a form of communication in an environment in which human activities take place.

How the Lebanese trader will act and react will depend on the wider setting he is faced with. Subsequently, how his neighbour will react will also depend on a number of complex and interacting provisions that may be out of the control of both individuals. To consider the role violence plays in such circumstances and its ties to the programme of the network, requires further analysis of violence itself as a specific form of social interaction.

6. Violence

Power relations in networks are played out through a large number of different forms of communication, including violence. Violence is both in terms of universality and simplicity enormously powerful. Violence causes pain, a sensation known to all human beings and triggers immediate reaction (Ginsberg, 2013). For Hannah Arendt violence is the key concept in human affairs since it has, and continues to, shape our existence throughout life (Arendt, 1969). Violence is never meaningless, but instead always requires and depends on the context (Arendt, 1970). Similarly, Anton Blok presents strong evidence regarding how violence is found in all societies, and the fundamental role it plays in shaping behaviour and narratives (Blok, 2001).

In the first instance, violence is seen as deplorable, triggering pain and evasive behaviour. At the same time, though, human beings have always been and remain closely linked to it; in spite of its negative effects, violence is an important component in the construction of narratives and meaning. The shared experience of violence creates a very powerful sense of identity and belonging, regardless of whether one is the perpetrator, victim or are simply observing a violent act. This becomes especially apparent in the most extreme situations, most notably violent conflict and war. The extreme behaviours and scenarios both require and provide narratives and identities which are much stronger than those found in settings where violence is less intense or absent (Hedges, 2003) (Waltz, 1959). In regards to network theory, it can be argued that violence is an important component in creating and maintaining networks. Violence in this sense is integrative since it provides identity, belonging and association. Additionally, it necessarily creates a strong distinction between the ‘us’

versus ‘the other’, and so provides for a clear understanding of who belongs to a network and who does not.

While violence creates identities it also harms, kills and destroys. Just as spoken language can be positive and negative, so violence also has different functions depending on the context. The violence in a boxing match is integrative, while in a street fight it is disintegrative. In other words the same violence can have different effects in different scenarios. Gilligan argues that violence is often tragic since while perpetrators feel justification before or during their violent acts, they often feel remorse afterwards {Gilligan, 1996 #64}. Ginsberg argues that violence is the source of political power but risks becoming perpetual and increasingly destructive, inhibiting basic human interaction and behaviour and ultimately risking an end of all human societies {Ginsberg, 2013 #125}.

The danger of violence dominating the discourse in a network is three-fold: first of all it tends to escalate and destroys the ability of nodes to compromise, ultimately tending to culminate in the demise of the node with the inferior in power. Secondly, violence becomes perpetual. Its close relation to honour leads to a reinforcement of group identity that prevents reconciliation and instead favours confrontation, as Sharif’s studies on youth groups have shown {Sherif, 1956 #245}. Finally, those actors that are able to exploit and benefit from the violence – especially indirectly by, for example, controlling the supply of scarce goods and services, or those who have access and control to weaponry or troops – will try to maintain their power by perpetuating violence.

Violence is a dynamic that creates, maintains and acts as a catalyst for the evolution of all human behaviour. Networks are delimited by violence since it possesses, more than all other forms of communication, universality. The images of a violent conflict on TV taking place on the other side of the globe are so powerful because they do not require the proficiency in a different grammar or lexis. They are fascinating and revolting at the same time and trigger a reaction in apparently unrelated observers - even they will search for a narrative that can explain the events.

Communication is about power, not just about friendly exchanges for mutual benefit. Rather than limiting network and complexity theory to instances in which nodes communicate for mutual benefit, it is necessary to apply the dynamics of complex adaptive networks to situations where hostility and rejection dominate.

7. Conclusion

The Lebanese trader will determine his behaviour towards his neighbour depending on the environment he finds himself in, yet he will be unable to absolutely predict the impact his actions will have. Both will greatly depend on the programme of the networks both he and his neighbour are associated with. In order for the trader to anticipate motivation, behaviour and risks – both in regards to the primary actors as well as observers – it would be futile to assume absolute and hierarchic concepts and structures since all events take place in complex adaptive networks. Instead, the programme of his networks will determine which form of communication he will use in order to deal with the challenge to his power.

This first chapter has sought to provide an outline to the topic of this thesis and establish basic concepts and definitions.

The second chapter introduces network and complexity theory. In particular, the works of Manuel Castells will be applied to the realm of international relations. Having first emerged in the middle of the last century in the natural sciences, chaos and complexity theory has now slowly made its way into the social sciences and applications. Two broad, yet distinct and seldom combined schools of thought have tended to dominate the debate: on the one hand is the emergence of the internet and wireless communication that has led to rapid changes to human behaviour. On the other hand are military actors that are being faced with the realisation that the traditional strongly hierarchic structure and nature of their organisations and operations is proving vastly inferior to non-hierarchic, flexible and constantly evolving systems. The Arab Awakening was initially labelled as the first ‘Facebook Revolution’ yet reality has shown that this does not conform to reality –

communication is far more multi-faceted than digital interaction pursued for mutual benefit.

The central dynamic that has eluded much of the debate on networks is analysed in chapters three and four: violence. Since all social links are about power relations, violence is at the centre of much communication. The shared experience of violence, for both perpetrators and victims, is a powerful dynamic in creating and developing identity. Because it is a universal and profound component of social behaviour, violence is at the heart of human actions; it provides meaning and shapes social networks. This becomes nowhere more apparent than in wars and large-scale violent conflicts since at their hearts lies a metaphysical struggle. The difference between the digital and analogue world is manifested in the different role violence plays in it. Online violence only exists as an abstract concept, and is unable to compete with the physical experience provided by the analogue.

While chapter three focuses on the integrative impact of violence – its ability to create meaning, identity, to establish and maintain networks and as a powerful social force, chapter four studies the disintegrative effects of violence. The individual experience of violence provides ample evidence for why human beings reject and fear it. Violence causes pain and rejection, takes life and destroys livelihoods and property. The struggle to end violence is as old as human society itself, yet the key here is the realisation that violence has many forms: the violence found in a rugby match is not only socially acceptable and subject to rules and regulations, but can also be assumed to be of benefit for social cohesion and identity. Yet as the murderous reality of civil wars shows, violence can emerge between neighbours and close associates – entirely unacceptable for observers but its perpetrators always possess justification of why no other method would suffice. When applied to Castells' approach to networks, violence is a component of the programme that determines the behaviour and purpose of networks, and since there is a constant process of programming and re-programming networks violence has to be approached, judged and applied under this perspective.

Chapter five analyses the Lebanese Civil War with a Castellian approach; in this way the emergence and end of the violent conflict becomes coherent. Instead of trying to

find both the causes for the conflict in absolute terms, for example the regional history, economic realities, religion or ethnic make-up, the notion that the form and method of communication had changed is more promising. Individuals in the country were under stress of changing economic, social, political and demographic circumstances, and this led to a gradual decline in the number of links into different networks. With each network representing a different identity, a situation emerged in which key individuals became able to alter their programme in a way in which violence became the dominating form of communication. Conversely, the Civil War ended not because the assumed causes for conflict were removed but instead the programme was altered again to allow other forms of communication to flourish above violence.

The violence centred on Afghanistan is studied in chapter six. It dominates the programme of social networks, preventing not only many Afghans from improving their life but also making the country the base for insurgencies and organised crime as well as regional and globally operating terrorist networks. The international community, under the leadership of the United States and NATO, have long tried to alter this situation and ‘build’ a peaceful and stable Afghan and society as well as make the entire region less volatile. Despite having spent vast amounts of resources and attention, with countless deaths on all side of the conflict, the situation shows little improvement – it amounts to a ‘wicked problem’: unable to determine what exactly is causing the events, no actor is able to develop a solution. Violence dominates the network with a programme that allows power relations to be played out in a non-violent and sustainable manner. Since conflicts are found in every social network the key to end the corrosive effects of violence in Afghanistan will therefore not be found in military, political, economic or ethnic realities, but instead in the re-programming of the networks to establish alternatives to violence as a method of addressing power relations.

The final chapter applies the lessons learned above: human beings are always involved in complex and adaptive social networks that continuously evolve and adapt. Changes and challenges that emerge are being addressed not only by the individual but also by the networks he or she is associated with. Since human beings are social animals networks are fundamental for the sustenance of life, yet rather than focusing

on who is connected to whom a different approach has to be taken: what programme - essentially its aim and way to reach it – does a network have? The more secure an individual feels and the less stress he or she faces, the stronger is their ability to own and maintain multiple identities. Following on from this, there is then a lower risk that the node will reject all those outside his or her networks. When applying network theory to the experience of Lebanon in ending its civil war, and of Afghanistan where war continuous to cause misery and despair, important conclusions can be reached. Conclusions that seek to establish that network-centric peacebuilding can be a powerful tool, not only in ending the war in Afghanistan, but also elsewhere in the world where violent conflicts dominate and destroy.

Chapter 2: Networks, complexity and international relations

1. Introduction

The terms ‘network’, ‘networking’, ‘complexity’ and ‘breakdown of order’ have, in recent decades, become increasingly common when analysing and explaining human affairs. People are always ‘networking’; we use social network programmes on the Internet, make global transactions with minimal specialised technological, cultural or linguistic knowledge, and communicate with minimal investment in time or infrastructure across borders, social structures and geographic boundaries. The profound impact of this ‘networking’ is what Manuel Castells terms ‘the Network Society’ in which the position, behaviour and power of an individual depends on how he or she communicates with others (Castells, 2010b). It is now easier than ever before to make new connections with others, to maintain those connections, and to interact much more quickly and with less dependence on physical location, resources and skills. As a result of this, it can appear that traditional structures and order are being eroded. Aided by developments in technology, human communication and interaction is in the process of change, including adaptation to these new tools. Reliance on traditional methods of communication and behaviour, such as those rigid, reliable and often hierarchical structures used to organise human affairs, is disappearing. Modern technology has, for the majority of people, made access to information easier than ever before, but rather than facilitating the creation of more enlightened, educated and aware individuals, this access has in fact resulted in individuals who perceive that they have a lack of control over their own destiny and perceive increased risk and instability due to their own increased awareness of the existence of dangers and threats.

This chapter will introduce networks and their theory, with a particular focus on Manuel Castells’ work on networks and how they affect human affairs. Networks exist between organic and inorganic nodes, and a combination thereof. Whilst this chapter and this thesis focuses on human networks which make up groups and societies, a vast number of other networks exist; for example the internet is a network of computers, the weather is a result of a network of physical effects, and life depends

on neuronal networks that provide the basis for life and survival, allow for interaction with the environment and are the basis for the evolution of life. A common feature of all networks is that, in contrast to other forms of organisation, they are non-linear.

This chapter will also introduce human affairs and chaos theory, followed by an application of it to international relations and violent conflicts. At the heart of the emergence of complexity and network theory, both in the context of social science in general and international relations in particular, is technology. Not only is modern communication technology changing how human beings communicate and interact, but it is also altering how the world is perceived and interpreted.

Finally, the programming of networks and forms of communication used within them will be discussed, with the intention of highlighting the need for further analysis into the role of violence as a form of communication in social networks.

2. Manuel Castells and Network Theory

Networks are everywhere: “A Network is simply a set of relations between objects which could be people, organizations, nations, items found in a Google search, brain cells, or electrical transformers.” (Kardushin, 2012, p. 3). Put even more simply: “A network is a set of interconnected nodes.” (Castells, 2009, p. 19) Castells argues that today’s world can be described as a ‘Network Society’, meaning:

“The core activities that shape and control human life in every corner of the planet are organized in global networks; financial markets; transnational production, management, and the distribution of goods and services; highly skilled labor; science and technology, including higher education; the mass media; the Internet networks of interactive, multi- purpose communication; culture; art; entertainment; sports; international institutions managing the global economy and intergovernmental relations; religion; the criminal economy; and the transnational NGOs and social movements that assert the rights and values of a new, global civil society.” (Castells, 2009, p. 25)

It is perhaps curious that Castells uses ‘Network Society’ to describe today’s society, when in fact it is just as applicable in the context of ancient civilisations - networks

are nothing new. The Roman and Greek Empires relied on highly developed transnational networks that allowed for the exchange of goods, services and information. They also had financial markets, sporting events and social movements which were based on an effective and reliable system of communication and law and order. The Chinese Empire was equally developed, relying on highly skilled labour, a system of higher education, and had in place what today could be labelled a ‘criminal economy’. Similarly, the global Great Depression of the 1920s and 30s produced global turmoil and an economic crisis of which virtually no place in the world was able to escape – the internet was not a necessary pre-condition to this.

Even when one places the internet and modern communication tools (such as mobile phones and social network services) at the centre of today’s human affairs (Castells, 2001), it is clear that only a small, albeit growing, faction of mankind has reliable and constant access to them:

“[T]he uneven globalization of the network society is, in fact, a highly significant feature of its social structure. The coexistence of the network society, as a global structure, with industrial, rural, communal, or survival societies, characterizes the reality of all countries, albeit with different shares of population and territory on both sides of the divide, depending on the relevance of each segment for the dominant logic of each network.”

(Castells, 2009).

Yet despite Castells’ emphasis on this ‘uneven globalization’, it is also not new - these dynamics of unevenness are as old as human civilisation. Equally old are the coexistence of several different networks and sub-networks, and the awareness of being either inside or outside a network. Every individual has several identities relating to their history, interests, sexuality and so forth; therefore they form multiple identities which in turn provide links to different sub-networks.

Networks are made up of individual nodes that change, alter and adapt their behaviour. Connections between the nodes are therefore constantly being created, being eroded and are fluctuating in nature and intensity. Because of these dynamics, the networks the nodes are part of are subject to constant change, not only in their structure or geography – which the nodes are necessarily connected with – but also in

the type, purpose and form of communication that happens along or within the connections that link the nodes:

“Networked individualism is a culture, not an organizational form. A culture that starts with the values and projects of the individual but builds a system of exchange with other individuals, thus reconstructing society rather than reproducing society. [...] [I]n a world of values and norms constantly in flux, in a risk society, people who feel uncertain or vulnerable as individuals seek refuge in communities that respond to their identities, always constructed, either with the materials of history and geography, or with the desires from which projects are made. These communities often become trenches of resistance against a social order perceived as alien and imposed by force, when the institutions that used to provide security (the state, the church, the family) no longer function properly.” (Castells, 2009, p. 362)

Castells' works serve as a basis to understand not only the structure of today's world but also the changes that are taking place on a constant and on-going basis.

2.1 The dynamics of networks

At the core of Castells' focus is not the mere existence of networks, but a change of dynamics that are centred on them. The internet and mobile communication have eroded the principles of “separation between locality and sociability in the formation of community” (Castells, 2001, p. 116). In other words, modern technology is having a profound impact on how societies are structured and function. It follows that it is not networks per se that stand at the heart of this debate, but the dynamics that are taking place within them. Networks are more than ‘just’ the depiction of links between actors, networks themselves act and change the outcome of any process that takes place within it, often with effects that are unintended by the nodes of the structure.

Secondly, it follows that what Castells is describing is the mere emergence of the realisation of the fact that networks are central to human affairs. Networks and interconnectivity have always existed, but because of the lack of technology and knowledge, the scope for awareness of the complexity, size and process was much

more limited than it is today. Castell says: “*We are networks connected to a world of networks*” (Castells, 2009, pp. 139’, italics in the original), meaning that today we are aware that human minds themselves are neural networks of neurons which process information, and we are embedded within a world of others individuals. Basic neural patterns were shaped by the evolutionary dynamics of a species, but while there is a basic pattern that allows survival after birth, a great deal of these patterns are shaped by learned experience, a process that continues until the death of an organism.

Tied to this point is that networks lack finite borders and limits. On the macro-level, it may appear that the human body is a single and self-contained entity, but when looking at the detail it is clear that a constant exchange with the environment is taking place. Nutrients are ingested and used to create energy and biologic matter, oxygen is inhaled and carbon dioxide exhaled and heat is dissipated - the human body itself is a network within a network. Without the links to the outside, the individual could not survive. The same can be seen in the mental sphere, rather than the physical; individuals exchange themselves with others, and social contacts become necessary for survival. The capacity of networks to connect individuals is surprisingly powerful, as some of the earliest researchers into social networks have shown: mathematical models and social experiments on the ‘small-world problem’ showed that every individual in the United States is connected to everyone else via fewer than 6 other individuals (Milgram, 1967) (Pool & Kochen, 1978).

Interconnection is a global phenomenon that may not always be obvious to the casual observer, but can be demonstrated by what is known as the *butterfly effect* – the single move of a butterfly’s wings is able to trigger an unpredictable chain of events leading to an hurricane. The existence of this effect is now not only scientifically proven, but also necessary for sustaining life and the balance of the entire system (Gleick, 1998). The same applies to social networks:

“If [power] relationships exist in specific social structures that are constituted on the basis of spatiotemporal formations, and these spatiotemporal formations are no longer primarily located at the national level, but are global and local at the same time, the boundary of society changes, and so does the frame of reference of power relationships that transcend the national.”
(Castells, 2009, p. 18)

In other words, national borders are becoming increasingly unable to contain the flow of power, because networks are no longer accept these political boundaries as solid and impermeable. Events that may take place in an entirely different setting, being environmentally, spatially and temporally separated may have, or may not have, a profound impact on the domestic sphere of a state. With an infinite number of events taking place at any given moment, the assumption of stability and isolation is mistaken.

This points to the third dynamic: change. “Change be it evolutionary or revolutionary, is the essence of life” (Castells, 2009, p. 299). The nodes of any kind of network compete over finite and unevenly distributed resources, which causes constant conflicts, requires compromise and modifications of behaviour. Regardless of whether the network is made up of neurons, human beings or nation-states, over time the behaviour of the actors, and the interactions between them, will change and adapt to the challenges that emerge from both inside and outside of the network.

3. The agency of networks

The discussion above means that networks can be studied in two distinct schools of analysis. Firstly, ‘networks as structures’ in which the focus lies on whether, and to what extent, any two nodes are linked to each other. This configuration then provides the structure that is emergent from the relationship of nodes. Secondly, ‘networks as actors’ views networks as “a specific institutional form that stands in contrast to the hierarchical organisation of states and to the temporally limited exchange relations of markets” (Kahler, 2009, p. 5). At the core of understanding how networks operate and interact with each other, in other words their agency, are the dynamics that take place within them.

Central to this understanding is power, the most fundamental process in any network. Power in a network is relational, meaning that it is not an attribute but a relationship; it provides the basis of the connection between nodes. In contrast to non-social networks, power relationships are always asymmetrical, i.e. in power relationships there is always one actor who is more influential, or has more power, than the other.

Because of its relational capacity, power in social networks is never rigid and constant but subject to constant change and adaptation. Power is also not an absolute that divides networks by nodes which have the capacity to exert power, and nodes which become subjected to it. Instead, inequalities of power capacities in social networks rely on a wider narrative in which acceptance and compliance are factors that are as fundamental for the existence of a network as the capacity to exert power (Castells, 2009, pp. 10-11). What binds social networks together is a shared narrative or meaning that justifies the different power capacities of the nodes within the networks.

Today's society amounts to what Bauman calls a 'liquid' phase of modernity: individuals can no longer rely on a strong and durable society that uses state structures to channel support against personal failures and ill fate. The ability of narratives to maintain a dominant grasp of networks is increasingly eroded by a process caused by a growing global trend of interconnection and interaction. This trend relies on competition and individual advantage, instead of collaboration with a focus on short-term and immediate gains. Rather than being based on a rigid and formally structured organisation:

“[S]ociety’ is increasingly viewed and treated as a ‘network’ rather than a structure (let alone a solid ‘totality’): it is perceived and treated as a matrix of random connections and of an essentially infinite volume of possible permutations.” (Bauman, 2007, p. 3)

The ‘structure’ that Bauman mentions is key here, echoing Kahler who contrasts the structure of networks with hierarchical organisations {Kahler, 2009 #73}. However, both go too far with the assumption that all nodes in every network are equal, and that all networks are decentralised systems. For example, in a network of individuals who are all members of a karate club, some individuals are more influential and have more numerous and stronger links than others; this indicates that there is, possibly only temporal and for certain actions, a certain hierarchy visible within every network (D. R. White & Harary, 2001).

Instead of using the approach that focuses on ‘networks as structures’ which is trying to assess the constantly changing (and difficult to gauge) structure of networks with the aim of proving the claim that networks are non-hierarchical structures, a deeper study into the dynamics within social networks is more beneficial. What makes social

networks so fascinating is not their structure (or supposed disappearance or absence), but the non-linearity dynamics of the interactions that take place within them. The discussions below invariably will touch on both schools of network analysis.

4. Non-linearity

The term ‘dynamics’ in this context refers to how networks change and adapt. Dynamics can either be linear or non-linear; linear dynamics are based on a Newtonian approach in which change is additive – the result of an equation is the addition of its parts. The core assumption of this process is that it can be repeated indefinitely, always producing the same outcome. In contrast to this linear approach is non-linear dynamics: the result of a process is not a simple addition of its parts, but an indeterminate junction of components. Algebra is linear; two apples added to another two apples will always make four apples, but most systems that human beings encounter on a daily basis are non-linear, or chaotic. For example, the weather cannot be calculated by a mere addition of various components we see are present – it is a system which is nearly impossible to consistently predict. It is an example of an equation that relies on the same components but can have an entirely different result every time it is made:

“Nonlinear systems are highly flexible. Changes that occur in these systems are discontinuous, resulting in sudden jumps in behaviour or organisation. These changes are unpredictable, and that makes them frustratingly difficult to quantify and quite impossible with linear methods. However, mathematical mapping methods can give us snap shots of the patterns these nonlinear systems create.” (McClure, 2005, p. 2)

One main discipline of non-linear dynamics is chaos theory which, perhaps surprisingly, is at the centre of many social narratives.

While chaos, as a contrasting concept to linearity, is a relatively new concept to natural science and even newer to the social sciences, it is in reality an ancient notion. The word chaos, or $\chi\alpha\omicron\varsigma$ in ancient Greek, comes from $\chi\alpha\iota\nu\omega$, which means ‘to open wide’. A great number of civilisations state chaos to be the state of nature before or at the beginning of a narrative (Bolotin et al., 2013). These societies would argue that

their emergence replaced chaos with the ordering of all elements into a harmonious and linear system that presented itself with laws and a structure that was ultimately revealed in Newtonian physics.

4.1 Human affairs and chaos

In human affairs, complexity and chaos are closely interlinked. By describing the various actors and steps that were necessary to build the Roman Colosseum, Homer-Dixon points out that complexity has been a component of human actions since the emergence of civilisation. The evolution of human societies into increasingly intricate structures runs counter to the observations of Bolotin et al. described above; growing societies do not mean a greater order or stability but instead because more and more actors are increasingly more closely linked, and that these links emerge and disappear with growing speed the entire structure becomes more complex. This, in turn, means that increasingly small alterations can have via amplification, accumulation and multiplication, dramatic and potentially fatal effects on the whole. Homer-Dixon points to five *tectonic stresses*²: (i) population inequality; (ii) scarcity of energy; (iii) environmental degradation; (iv) climate change; and (v) global economic instabilities (Homer- Dixon, 2006, p. 11). Rather than a single cause of change that can be clearly attributed and addressed, the *tectonic stresses* affect each other in a non-linear and chaotic manner. It is not the issue itself that causes concern, but the linkage between sub-networks. The linkages are what Castells calls ‘intersections’:

“Ultimately, the traditional notion of society may have to be called into question because each network (economic, cultural, political, technological, military, and the like) has its own spatiotemporal and organizational configurations, so that their points of intersection are subjected to relentless change. Societies as national societies become segmented and are constantly reshaped by the action of dynamic networks on their historically inherited social structures.” (Castells, 2009, p. 18)

Castells’ observations here in the context of networks are similar to the observations made within the natural sciences field from the 1950s onwards, when it was found that traditional models failed to describe phenomena such as the movements of water

² italics in the original see (Homer-Dixon, 2006, p. 11)

molecules in a pipe, the oscillation of radio waves or the analysis and prediction of weather patterns. An increasing precision in the ability to observe, measure and record such matters produced results that could no longer be explained within the isolated rigidity of Newtonian physics. Instead the results pointed towards the reality that the natural world was a single “dynamical system” (Gleick, 1998, p. 47), in which everything is interconnected and has to be treated as such. It was not technological developments that changed molecular movements and created radio waves or the weather but instead these phenomena were possible to be observed due to scientific advances.

In social networks, the same non-linearity of interactions applies. Individuals do not behave like a machine, or a network of machines, that is programmed to behave in a certain pattern. The field of international relations analyses the behaviour of actors in order to study why and how they acted in a situation in order to be able to predict future outcomes. However, this method is limited because it largely fails to incorporate the dynamics of complex adaptive networks:

“[...] [W]e cannot understand systems by examining only the attributes and goals of the interconnected elements. [...] Many crucial effects are delayed and indirect; the relations between two actors often are determined by each one’s relations with others; interactions are central and cannot be understood by additive operations; many outcomes are unintended; regulation is difficult. [...] many of the methods that actors and social scientists use to understand the world are not suited to dealing with systems.” (Jervis, 1997, p. 29)

These individual forms of behaviour are the main component of the dynamics that take place within a network, and are the cause for the uncertainty that is found by Bauman {Bauman, 2007 #169} described above. These dynamics found within networks give the network a ‘life’ of its own by causing the *bifurcation* (Byrne, 2001). Byrne picks up on Nicholis’ {Nicholis, 1995 #215} approach to *bifurcation* as a component of complex systems in the social sciences: bifurcations occur when the change of a single parameter causes an equilibrium to change. One example of this applied to international relations is the self-immolation of Mohamed Bouazizi on 17 December 2011. This event triggered the uprising in Tunisia and the ‘Arab Awakening’ which, in turn, led to the global ‘occupy’ movements demanding more democratic rights for the population and reforms of the global financial and banking

system (Kempf, 2012). None of these developments were predictable, or even thought to be possible, yet precisely because they were possible they happened. Taleb uses the analogy of black swans to illustrate this kind of event: they may be rare but they exist and, just as it is not possible to predict the sighting of a black swan in nature, it is just as difficult to predict when a any rare event will take place because its connection to preceding events only becomes visible afterwards (Taleb, 2007). These events highlight the role non-linearity and chaos play in human affairs; just as in the natural sciences field, the limitations of the Newtonian ‘cause and effect’ in understanding the world became evident.

4.2 The development of chaos theory

Early proponents of chaos theory, such as the physicist Joseph Ford or the mathematician and meteorologist Edward Lorenz, were faced with intense scepticism when they rejected the dominating isolated approach to the study of phenomena. What they called ‘chaos’ was in fact not anarchy, but the description of patterns that can be found within seemingly random observations. In other words:

“In some sense they realized, physics understood perfectly the fundamental mechanisms of [for example] pendulum motion but could not extend that understanding to the long term. The microscopic pieces were perfectly clear; the macroscopic behaviour remained a mystery. The tradition of looking at systems locally- isolating the mechanisms and the adding them together- was beginning to break down. For pendulums, for fluids, for electronic circuits, for lasers, knowledge of the fundamental equations no longer seemed to be the right kind of knowledge at all.’ (Gleick, 1998, p. 44)

For example, the local weather could be measured, described and analysed increasingly accurately, but as soon as the ‘local’ reached a certain spatial or temporal size too many factors could have a potential impact on the overall phenomena, making it impossible to accurately predict. The dynamics that determine weather on a global level have never changed, and limited phenomena such as a rain storm or seasonal change in humidity, for example, can be accurately described, but despite growing computational power the weather forecast is still very limited in accuracy.

This is due to the existence of a virtually unlimited number of factors that may, or may not, have an impact on the overall outcome.

As touched on above, Edward Lorenz coined the term 'butterfly effect' to indicate that arbitrarily small disturbances can influence disturbances on a much larger scale. Lorenz described this by linking the flapping of a butterfly's wings in the Amazon to a consequent hurricane in the United States (Palmer, 2008). Byrne transfers this from the natural world to the social sciences when he writes:

'The issue is that in the social world, and in much of reality including biological reality, causation is complex. Outcomes are determined not by single causes but by multiple causes, and these causes may, and usually do, interact in a non-additive fashion. In other words the combined effect is not necessarily the sum of the separate effects. It may be greater or less, because factors can reinforce or cancel out each other in non-linear ways.' (Byrne, 2001, p. 20)

Despite the fact that today chaos theory and complexity are a fundamental component of the natural sciences, the social sciences continue to struggle with it, as Bauman's approach to modernity as a non-linear phenomenon indicates.

In effect, as Homer-Dixon's analysis of the construction of the Roman Coliseum shows, complexity has always been an inherent component of human behaviour (Homer-Dixon, 2006). Societal evolution is nothing more than the ability to connect higher numbers and less homogenous nodes and factors in different ways; the ability of societies to survive, prosper and evolve has always relied on constant change and adaptation. Societies are resilient to man-made and natural catastrophes precisely because their underlying structures are not fixed and rigid, but because they constantly transform and alter. Instead of being based on a vertical or hierarchic structure that relies on the ability of the top to, via a linear process, manage the relations of attached nodes, human survival in fact depends on complex and constantly changing interactions between a virtually unlimited number of actors and factors (Christakis & Fowler, 2011).

So far, the majority of work on complexity has been grounded in sociology (Castells, 2001; Castells, 2001; Deleuze et al., 2011) (Urry, 2003) (DeLanda, 2006) and, despite

the global impact and observation of phenomena, has only been given limited attention in international relations (Bousquet & Geyer, 2011) (Money, 1998). Moreover, even those recent works that aim to analyse politics under the prism of networks are often more descriptive than analytical. For example, Kahler's study 'Networked Politics' is an important contribution to the field but only describes where and how non-linear networks are at play, rather than providing a fundament for analysis of the underlying dynamics. In particular, the blurring and increasing disappearance of the distinction between traditional institutionalised levels³ presents a challenge for the study of social sciences today. Uncertainty is observed as a phenomenon on a global scale, but the relationship between complexity and human agency lacks analysis and understanding. On the other side of the spectrum is a growing volume of research that focuses on the sociological dynamics of relationships such as homophily (Verbrugge, 1977), multiplexity (Beggs, Haines, & Hurlbert, 1996) or emotional contagion (Kramer, Guillory, & Hancock, 2014). Again, the phenomenon of complexity and networking has found its way into the study of society and politics, and specific dynamics that emerge within networks have been discovered, but there is a gap between these two fields that has not been filled as of today.

4.3 Network-Centric Warfare

Interestingly, the most rigid and hierarchic organisations in the context of international relations are well versed in observing the impact of uncertainty and non-linearity: the military. Military operations are centred on the ability to exert power in order to force others to act in a certain way. Placing Clausewitz' famous words "[...] [W]ar is not merely an act of policy but a true political instrument, a continuation of political intercourse, carried on with other means" (Clausewitz, 2007, p. 29) as the starting point for analysis, the importance of non-linearity is clearly apparent: an individual, or group of individuals, exerts power over others in order to force certain behaviour with the aim of gaining control over resources and actions. Historically, military action has often been analysed from this strongly linear perspective: the strength of actors has been measured in the number of their troops, the amount and

³ Sub-national, national, regional and international; see (Coleman & Perl, 1999)

size of ordnance that could be fired in a given time, the yield of their nuclear weapons or the speed in which their units could be moved. Despite the fact that history provides ample evidence that reliance on numbers and hierarchies fails to determine the success of military outcome, it remains globally employed.

Arguably the first historian, Thucydides, considered that the fall of ancient Athens was so remarkable, and was a story which needed to be heard, simply because it was so incomprehensible when considered in terms of numbers alone. At that time Athens had the by far the biggest and most powerful navy, outrivaling all other powers in the region economically, militarily and even culturally, and was arguably the most influential centre of learning of its time. Yet none of these factors were sufficient to prevent the defeat and fall of the city-state. What brought an end to Athens' domination of the region was not military defeat brought by a single enemy that had managed to amass a military and economic force greater than that of Athens, but a combination of factors that were not related in a linear manner (Strassler & Crawley, 1996). Another example of the weakness in relying on linearity with regards to military action is found through an analysis of the causes of the First World War. It is often argued that the war was inevitable due to growing German industrial output, military expenditure, demographic shifts or developments in military technology or tactics when compared to other European powers (Henig, 1995), but the same dynamics existed in the wake of the Second World War without culminating in violent confrontation within Europe.

This apparent dichotomy is one reason why military organisations are paying so much attention to developments in network theory, far more than other sectors of international relations or political science. Another could be the obvious contradiction in structure: militaries are organisations that are strongly hierarchic, rigid and rely on a power structure that is absolute and distinctively linear. Networks, as described earlier, possess much more diluted and diverse hierarchies, are flexible and adaptive and possess power structures that are opaque and nonlinear. On the basis that social networks are becoming decentralised and increasingly influential, both as actors and as points of analysis, militaries around the world must begin adapting to these dynamics.

While the definition of “network-centric warfare” is disputed (Schmidtchen, 2006), its roots lie in the principles of a US military driven technology based approach, focused on the operational level that, at its centre, is based on information control and its application to warfare. The aim of this approach is to remove the ‘fog of war’, i.e. the “general unreliability of all information [which] presents a special problem in war” (Clausewitz, 2007, p. 89). The approach of relying on technology to address military problems has always been, and remains, central to military culture (Cebrowski & Garstka, 1998).

Castells may talk about ‘firms’ rather than ‘militaries’ or ‘armies’ but his words apply to both:

“Under the conditions of fast technological change, networks, not firms have become the actual operating unit. In other words, through the interaction between organisational crisis and change and new information technologies a new organisational form has emerged as characteristic of the informational, global economy: the network enterprise.” (Castells, 2000, p. 187)

The lesson then is clear: if networks with their non-hierarchic and constantly changing structures are becoming the most influential actors today, then the military has to understand the dynamics found within them in order to be able to maintain its primacy in power relations.

Because “[O]rganisational hierarchies in institutions control the flow of information and direct activity in order to create a sense of certainty” (Schmidtchen, 2006, p. 37), militaries are faced with a dilemma: if their adversaries are becoming increasingly decentralised and reliant on structures that are able to quickly adapt to changes and threats in their environment, then the ability of rigidly structured bodies to dominate them is substantially weakened. The terrorist attacks of 9/11 are a powerful indicator of how a small group of loosely organised individuals is able to overcome a liner organisation such as the security apparatus of the United States. They were able to not only effect a surprise attack on several power centres in the United States without leaving room for the US military to interfere or protect its citizens, but also to bring about a continuing stalemate between the world’s most powerful military on the one hand, and a small number of far less well equipped, trained and funded adversaries in Afghanistan, Iraq and elsewhere.

Establishing whether insurgent, or terrorist, networks are in fact decentralised, and vacant of hierarchies and structures, is difficult, since it is challenging to ascertain reliable resources. Additionally, due to their very nature, they are always changing and adapting; their structure is bound to evolve according to the challenges being faced at any one time (Bousquet, 2012). Decentralised and non-hierarchical organisations also face the problem that they lack stability and coherence, making differences of opinion leading to internal conflicts likely. Internal disputes are probable, and this consequence of their nature could render the entire organisation ineffective (Kilcullen, 2009), thereby increasing the stress on the programmers of the network in seeking to maintain their primacy. Al Qaida, for example, has been unable to retain its position at the helm of global Islamist terrorism because fragmentation within the organisation forced it to spend most of its resources in trying to maintain itself rather than reaching its goals (Gerges, 2011; Jones & Libicki, 2008).

4.4 Fighting networks

When the United States invaded Afghanistan in late 2001, its military joined forces with Afghan groups which had opposed the Taliban-led regime in Kabul. Together they quickly defeated their common enemy, which was accused of having provided support and refuge to Al Qaida, the organisation behind the attacks of 9/11. What followed was not in the United State's plan: rather than accepting defeat and integrating themselves into the 'new' Afghanistan, Mullah Omar who had led the Taliban before the US invasion, joined forces with a number of individuals and groups that shared little in common besides each being opposed to the post-Taliban order. Faced with the reality that their military power was far inferior to the US and, later, NATO forces, this 'New Taliban' (Qazi, April 2011) organised themselves in a decentralised and loose organisation, and were able to rely on their ability to mount an insurgency and exploit a superior knowledge of terrain, language, culture as well as links to providers of funds and resources outside of the country. "Organizationally, the Taleban are a network of networks" assesses Ruttig (2010, p. 13); because of the structure of their organisation, they are able to effectively operate in a way that prevented the NATO forces from defeating them.

General Stanley McChrystal, commander of NATO's International Security Assistance Force (ISAF) and the US forces in Afghanistan, was also faced with the reality of being in the position of having to deal with a structure of command that was complex: his political superiors who developed the strategy for the counterinsurgency under ISAF did not necessarily place Afghanistan at the centre of their analysis but rather the US political system. The resources, tactics and aims of ISAF were not exclusively borne out of military considerations, but included many nodes based in domestic politics in the United States and its NATO allies. For example, through assessing US public opinion, US Vice-President Biden rejected McChrystal's recommendations to increase troop numbers and place them outside fortified bases in Afghanistan despite this making sense in regards to counterinsurgency. Equally troublesome for McChrystal were orders that were aimed at limiting Afghan civilian casualties, put into place because domestic and global opinion, as well as the US supported government in Kabul, was seen as harming NATO's reputation elsewhere. The result of this was that in Afghanistan NATO was unable to achieve its stated goal of establishing a stable and sustainable peace in the country, whilst at the same time minimising the terrorist threat to US and NATO interests (Hastings, 2010).

At the heart of this is what Rittel and Webber describe as *wicked problems*: observers of a given situation do not only differ in their view of how to address the issue, but even more fundamentally cannot agree on how to define the challenge in the first place, often because only contradictory and incomplete information is available (Rittel & Webber, 1973). Levin et al. elaborate this concept and present what they call *super wicked problems* which are characterised by four dynamics: (i) time is running out; (ii) there is an absence of central authority; (iii) the problem is, in part, caused by those who try to solve it; and (iv) possible future outcomes are irrationally discounted (Levin, Cashore, Bernstein, & Auld, 2012). The US and NATO deployment in Afghanistan fits all four of these characteristics, with the result that there is no solution for Afghanistan that will exist indefinitely, as will be shown in chapter six.

Similarly, the war in Iraq has proved to be far from becoming a "strategic success" (Ricks, 2009, p. 9). Despite achieving a rapid and overwhelming military victory

against Saddam Hussein's forces in 2003, the situation in Iraq continued to develop for the worse. Rather than being able to install a stable and non-violent political process in the country, the US forces found themselves in a situation in which their military domination became ineffective. Because domestic opinion in the US had assumed that, following George W. Bush's statement of 'mission accomplished' on 1 May 2003, there would no more casualties returning home in body bags, Washington became reluctant to put its soldiers at risk. Equally, the financial cost of the war had spiralled far past the initial estimates, with the result that much needed further funds and resources became difficult to justify.

The situation deteriorated further in unexpected, and non-linear, ways. For example, the abuse of Iraqi prisoners by US personnel at the prison complex of Abu Ghraib in late 2003 and early 2004, turned public opinion both in Iraq and the United States and its allies distinctively against the invasion. The images depicting violent, sexually abusive behaviour and torture may mirror historical experiences in many other wars and violent conflicts in the past (Eisenman, 2007), but nonetheless caused outrage and resulted in great damage to the image of the United States. US forces were no longer associated with liberating the Iraqi people from the yoke of a dictatorial regime.

Additionally, the earlier assumption made by the US that the Iraqi public would unambiguously support the removal of Saddam Hussein's regime, turned out to be unfounded. Due to slow and ineffective attempts by the US to rebuild Iraq, many former soldiers and beneficiaries of the earlier regime found themselves without income. This led to a rapid growth in crime and instability that the US forces were both unable (due to limited resources), and unwilling (due to their view of having accomplished their aim of removing Saddam Hussein), to counteract. Small conflicts between individuals in the country boiled over quickly and "accidental guerrillas" (Kilcullen, 2009, p. xiv) emerged: local fighters who used violence not because they were hostile to the United States, but because of the situation of societal breakdown that they perceived as a direct threat.

Additionally, the effects of wider dynamics in changes to warfare became felt in the country regarding privatisation of conflict. Following the end of the Cold War, and the increasing trend of globalisation, private armed forces emerged with new vigour.

With the end of the ideological conflict of the superpowers, weak governments were no longer supported and growing economic interests around the globe produced the need for privately owned, organised and deployed armed/security forces (Shearer, 1998). This trend towards private military forces has had a profound impact on how armed hostilities are being fought, and substantially weakens the control of the public sector over the private (Coker, 1999). In Iraq, Private Military Contractors (PMCs) emerged as an additional factor which weakened, rather than strengthened, security. Whilst their employment to protect US diplomats, officials and assets was politically attractive, their often uncontrolled and unregulated behaviour surmounted in a major strategic disadvantage for US interests (Fainaru, 2008). Future warfare will certainly contain at least some networked, horizontally organised and non-linear actors which will continue to have an advantage unless other parties will be able to develop a strategy that will eliminate their expediency.

4.5 Insurgency and counterinsurgency

It is erroneous that assume that it has only been in the recent past that non-linearity and complexity has created a substantial challenge for the armed forces of nation-states. On the contrary, in his seminal work 'Counterinsurgency Warfare', David Galula points out the "asymmetry between the opposite camps of a revolutionary war" (Galula, 1964, 2006, p. 3). Because of the stark differences in numbers, training, resources and equipment between the state on the one hand, and those individuals who reject the existing order of a society on the other, the state will easily succeed in conventional and symmetrical violent conflicts. Galula references, much earlier than Bauman, the concept 'fluidity' as opposed to rigidity:

"The insurgent is fluid because he has neither responsibility nor concrete assets; the counterinsurgent is rigid because he has both, and no amount of wailing can alter this fact for either side." (Galula, 1964, 2006, p. 7)

The 'concrete assets' which Galula talks about are at the centre of military tactics and strategy - the aim of military operations is the destruction or forced inoperability of the adversaries' personnel, weapons, resources, command and control units while protecting one's own and, by extension, the society in which the military is embedded into.

On the other hand, insurgents are aware of this and the superiority of militaries to project force. Because insurgents are fewer in number and lack resources, the existence of obvious assets and a hierarchic organisational structure would make them an easy prey. Instead, they rely on decentralised, largely non-hierarchical structures that are highly manoeuvrable, enabling them to blend into society in a way that makes combatants and civilians indistinguishable and, therefore, difficult to target.

Insurgency, and the tactics employed by insurgents, has evolved at the same speed as the societies they emerge from. The ability of governments to analyse an insurgency and develop an effective counterinsurgency is complicated, because the concept is so broad, increasingly used, and underpinned by a multitude of factors that motivate these individuals to rise up against the status quo. The main lessons that were learned from the early years of the wars in Afghanistan and Iraq (but also elsewhere), were an increased awareness in the military that an exclusive focus on military operations to counter insurgencies is futile. Not only are military operations that rely on massive firepower often unable to address the results desired by those who aim to maintain the status quo, but efforts to do so can even be counter-productive. The military as an organisation is in many cases too rigid and slow to adapt its actions to the continuously changing tactics of insurgents. Additionally, conventional militaries lack training, equipment and resources to be able to understand and address the underlying causes of an armed uprising.

The ability of an organisation to adapt to changes in the wider environment is key in this process; contemporary insurgencies are able to, for example, incorporate technologies very quickly due to their fluid organisational structure and weaker hierarchies:

“Using the Internet, insurgents can now link virtually with allied groups throughout the a state, a region, and even the entire world. Insurgents often join loose organisations with common objectives but different motivations and no central controlling body, which makes identifying leaders difficult.”

(Petraeus & Amos, 2006, p. 16)

Instead of trying to oppose the military forces, insurgencies use their tools to try and communicate with the political and social dynamics of a military. Only a fraction of

the actions of today's insurgencies focus on military operations; instead they try and defeat the opponent by making counterinsurgency operations politically, socially and economically too costly.

The US military reacted to the growing role of technology, and especially information technology, by advocating a 'Revolution in Military Affairs' (RMA). Precision air strikes, GPS guided ordnance, improved intelligence gathering and analysis and distribution were hoped to provide an answer to the Clausewitzian 'fog of war', and provide strategies that would allow militaries to match the capacities of insurgents and eliminate their tactical advantage. Yet this approach has failed, since violent conflicts are non-linear: "Because of the complexity of the environment and the continuous interaction with adaptive enemies, understanding in armed conflict will never be complete"(Valcourt & Morton, 2009, p. 17)

Maoist insurgency is arguably the first 'modern' insurgency, not because of Mao's skills as a military commander, but because of his ability to place the political above the military dimension. Maoist tactics prescribe the inclusion of insurgencies into the local population – an ability that armed forces lack in most theatres. Central here is the development and maintenance of a shared identity between insurgents and the wider population – intelligence, resources, supplies and shelter could be accessed by insurgents without having to establish or maintain them. It also allowed for the rapid deployment of troops to commit acts of sabotage and weaken the enemies' morale and willingness to follow the orders of its commanding structure.

Since then, insurgency tactics have evolved at a much greater speed than military tactics since their most powerful weapon is what Mackinlay calls "Propaganda of the deed" (POTD): "the incitement of an animated or potentially violent audience through dramatic actions, rather than words" (Mackinlay, 2009, pp. 123-124). The aim of this is to use narratives of shared suffering as a tool to strengthen the network that supports the insurgents. Images and recordings of behaviour of the opponent are shared in within the network with the aim of discrediting the opponent, and increasing the number of those who support the insurgency as fighters, donors and sympathisers.

5. Technology

POTD relies on communication technology to create, transmit and maintain the programme of the network with the internet being central to this. The emergence and continuous growth of the internet and communication technologies is changing human affairs on a global scale, including war:

”Deterritorialisation” is an ugly word, but alas it has come to be very useful in describing aspects of post-modern society. Nations have become deterritorialised, social networks reaching around the world are deterritorialised, the virtual communities which exist only on the Internet are deterritorialised. [...] It was therefore hardly surprising that the modern form of insurgency also became deterritorialised, as a response to what was happening on a much larger scale in the world.” (Mackinlay, 2009, p. 149)

Contrary to the perception that an increasingly dense network of global communication will increase the exchange of opinion, moderate the behaviour of actors and lead to a decrease in hostility and violence, technology is actually a central component of wars, violent acts and terrorism:

“In a sense, almost every contemporary savagery is accomplished with the technology of civilisation. In the Rwanda of 1994 the slaughter of the Tutsis was mobilised via radio broadcasts. In the attack against the Twin Towers on 9/11 aircraft were used. [...] There is no longer a ‘primitive’ terrorism. Indeed there is fear precisely because terrorism is no longer primitive: it is financed by flows of international capital; it is organised by electronic communications; it will attack airliners, warships, skyscrapers – and is able to destroy or seriously damage them.” (Chen, 2009, p. 64)

This means that in order to understand the concept of networks, non-linearity and complexity, an understanding of the impact of the enabling technology is required. In fact, the technological developments themselves are the result of networking and the cooperation of a multitude of non-hierarchically linked nodes. Technology itself is not neutral, but has dynamics that cause unintended consequences – in other words it can have non-linear impacts on human behaviour.

Modern forms of communication such as the internet and mobile telephone systems not only present new methods for linking nodes within a network, but they are by themselves the product of non-hierarchical and non-linear cooperation between

different clusters of educational, military and engineering entities. The technology itself, the 'hardware', was much less problematic than the need to develop a method of standardized communication, or a shared language. This shared language was developed between 1973 and 1978 by different research groups at two universities in California, and remains the standard for the operation of the internet today (Castells, 2001).

Citing a number of studies, Castells further argues that internet usage has little effect on the intensity or nature of links between individuals, but instead allows them to remain linked to a higher number of other nodes (*ibid*). The same author stated earlier:

“[...] networking [is the] decentered form of organization and intervention, characteristic of the new social movements, mirroring, and counteracting, the networking logic of domination in the information society.” (Castells, 1997, p. 362)

This indicates that, by their nature, networks are inherently aimed at making themselves more efficient and stable, but it is also clear that this process is not centrally planned or controlled, but rather evolves out of the loose and uncoordinated cooperation between different sub-networks.

However, 'information society' as Castells uses it does not mean that technology now allows for a new and truly global structure that connects individuals on an even level. Before the technological advancements of the internet, mass communication and infrastructure (such as transatlantic passenger air transport), non-hierarchical networks already existed and today's networks are by no means globally uniform. Instead, they are uneven and contain fractures and gaps that are often ignored by those actors that are network-enabled. The role and nature of face-to-face, or primary networks is thus being affected and altered by technology, but not in an even or systematic way. While technological advancements allow the establishment and maintenance of primary networks on a geographically virtually unlimited scale, the image of a single global network as the backbone of the information society is flawed - gaps and fractures emerge and continue to exist (Barry, 2001).

At the same time communication technology has enabled a new global movement of critical citizens. Email and web-based information has created platforms for the exchange of ideas, enabling cooperation, publication and the raising of funds, as well as organizing resistance and civil disobedience movements. The protests against the World Trade Organization's summit in Seattle in 1999 are argued to be a major indicator for the emergence of networks as a political actor, as well as those networks being a symbol for protest. The loose and decentralized cooperation of different and diverse kinds of networks and organizations relies on technology, most importantly the internet, but also on three specific features: (i) they are transnational; (ii) they are informational - meaning that they use symbols and tactics that allow identification and participation by a wide audience; and (iii) they are based on flexible and decentralized networks. These individual components have been used before, but combined they produced an entirely different phenomenon, with an outcome bigger than the sum of its parts (Juris, 2005).

Another important factor regarding technology, its developments and evolution is the growing interconnection and linkage between systems. The power plants that provide the energy to maintain the main servers of the Internet are, for security reasons, not connected to the internet, but as the Tsunami that followed an earthquake in the Pacific of the coast of Japan in 2011 demonstrated, an unpredictable event can cause the failure of a power station and disable backup systems. The result of this was that many Internet servers in Japan lost power and, together with the rupture of fiberglass cables, in much of Japan the internet broke down leading to a freeze of the stock market, failures in air traffic control, seemingly mundane loss of control of traffic lights, hotel bookings and online social networks. The more complex a network becomes, the more likely it is that "x-events" emerge: unpredictable and uncontrollable events that can trigger a failure similar to that where a biologic virus spreads through the system and triggers further events, leading to a major breakdown or even complete loss of capacity (Casti, 2012, p. 14). Just like the initial trigger is often unpredictable, so is the course that the system meltdown is taking. 'X-events' that trigger this kind of cascade are rare, but they do exist and will happen. The only chance to try and prevent this kind of system-wide meltdown is to include backup systems, redundancies and reserve capacities but, paradoxically, this will further

increase technological complexity and expand the number of nodes that can trigger a meltdown (Casti, 2012).

5.1 Self-reflection, knowledge and big data

With the continued growth of computing power and data storage, their relative cost decreases exponentially allowing for more data to be created, stored and evaluated. From complex astronomical models, climate simulation, images, internet search engine data to social networks, an increasing amount of information emerges which in itself can be evaluated and interpreted. The underlying binary data is regarded as ‘big data’, and while this term lacks a clear definition it can be described as follows:

“Big data refers to things one can do at a scale that cannot be done at a smaller one, to extract new insights or create new forms of value, in ways that change markets, organizations, the relationship between citizens and governments, and more.” (Mayer-Schönberger & Cukier, 2013, p. 6)

By decentralising the analytical hardware into giant networks of computers, enormous numbers of calculations can now be made, and bigger sets of data than ever before can be evaluated and analysed. For example, from the first decoding of human DNA in 2003 it took nearly a decade to sequence its three billion base pairs, but today this process can be done within 24 hours. Underpinned by the ability to compare the DNA of thousands of people, it is likely that medical science will evolve from treating a patient after he or she has developed symptoms, to pre-emptive treatment. Also, for an individual, the knowledge that you are genetically at risk from suffering a certain condition will impact your behaviour, for example you may seek to avoid factors that are connected with triggering the development of that condition.

As well as the ability to analyse increasingly large amounts of data, there are two additional components of big data that deserve attention. Firstly, rather than focusing on a small and limited number of examples, ‘big data’ enables observers to embrace data that is much wider and more disarranged, in a way that more closely represents the ‘real’ world than a small sample could be. Secondly, it allows a much deeper analysis into correlation rather than causality (Mayer-Schönberger & Cukier, 2013).

When applied to the analysis of social networks, the effects of big data may mean that human beings are now much more able to comprehend complexity, and reflect on the impact their actions have. The *butterfly effect* is now no longer an abstract analogy but instead can now, due to technology allowing the evaluation of data and a grander scale, be observed in connection to actions taken (or not taken) by individuals. In other words, big data is changing the way human beings self-reflect, which is a fundamental and defining component of our species. Big data has not created the *butterfly effect* but instead is making individuals much more *aware* of their very own role in complex adaptive systems. The agency of individual human beings has always been at the heart of any change, but invariably the very same individuals were not aware of the potentially global impact their actions were having. Today's technology is changing this and, as a result, is changing how human beings behave.

Castells picks up on this and applies it to communication. What he describes as “mass self-communication” (Castells, 2009, p. 55) is the impact of technology and the awareness of it by individuals on their abilities to communicate. Individuals can now not only communicate interpersonally, or via largely undirected mass-communication to many (for example), but also in a way in which the author (the ‘self’) decides who he wants to reach. Communication is an important component of identity of an individual and, because technology allows the breakdown of the traditional limits of human communication, people alter their way of socialising. The radical in Florida who threatened to burn a Quran would most likely not have done this a generation ago, because he lacked the ability to have an impact beyond his immediate social network. Today, however, he can direct his communication in a way in which he assumes to receive the greatest audience and, therefore, reaction - the process of communication outpaces the message that is communicated.

5.2 Inequality, weak hierarchies and self-organisation

Related to the impact of technology in communication is the on-going weakening of structures that determined who could communicate with whom. Traditionally, social hierarchy and individual resources determined the ability of an individual to communicate with others. Leaders, for example, were judged to be powerful because

they had a 'direct line' to others - their message was not at risk of becoming lost in the corridors of power. Today, this is markedly different:

“Network designs are diffusing widely, as new technologies power the expansion of globally connected, yet locally rooted computer-supported social movements. These are increasingly organized around highly flexible all-channel patterns rather than more traditional top-down political formations.”
(Juris, 2005, p. 349)

Juris' statement is echoed by Castells, who does not see society as the passive recipient of technological developments, but instead as a component of a complex feedback process in which technology both answers to demands made by society, but also in which society adapts and modifies its behaviour according to the available technologies. This creates a similar constant change as is seen in the networks the technologies, in effect, provide the structure for:

“Society shapes technology according to the needs, values and interests of people who use the technology, Furthermore, information and communication technologies are particularly sensitive to the effects of social uses on technology.” (Castells, 2006, p. 3)

At the same time, technology alone will be unable to facilitate a network: the software, which is the ability of different nodes to communicate, is equally important. Without a shared language as an enabler, and a shared desire to communicate and cooperate, the network will not become an actor by itself.

Processes in nature are examples of this: what allows fire ants to assemble themselves into a raft enabling whole colonies of ants to remain afloat for weeks at a time? These rafts are constructed without tools or materials, but are rather self-constructing, self-healing and self-deconstructing. They allow ants to cross large bodies of water without suffering any casualties. A single ant would be unable to accomplish this task, and yet a 'superorganism' of an ant colony is able to achieve this without central command; while individual ants can be observed as a colony, their behaviour can be compared to that of fluids (Mlot, Tovey, & Hu, 2011).

Human beings rely on more complex social constructions, and human interaction is influenced by the ability to observe and reflect and, to a certain extent, alter the environment. At the same time, processes in nature prove that non-hierarchical

networks can facilitate cooperation on a large scale even without the existence of technologic infrastructure. Simple human effects, such as the initially random, but suddenly synchronized, clapping of a large, diverse and previously socially unacquainted audience are a great example of social self-organization in the absence of central coordination (Neda, Ravasz, Vicsek, Brechet, & Barabasi, 2000).

The result is that technological developments can have unintended consequences, both in regards to how they are used and how their use impacts on the behaviour of those who operate or are affected by them. RMA, for example, has produced an unprecedented system of global surveillance capable of observing, recording and monitoring electronic communications, yet the adversaries of the United States are able to largely escape this technology by returning to pen, paper and human couriers. At the same time, this weakens their ability to communicate with relative speed and to reach a potentially global audience. It also limits their ability to create and maintain an identity that underlies their actions; this matters because a network's ability to perpetuate itself relies on its ability maintain a unifying identity and narrative. Technological developments, both in terms of computing power and network infrastructure (the hardware), as well as the logarithms and computer code (the software), have a major impact on human behaviour. This process, however, is neither universal for all human beings on the planet, nor is it possible to qualify this process as inherently positive or negative. The growth of communication and information technology is raising a number of new questions and challenges, both morally and technologically, that have not yet been answered.

6. Narrative and identity

Because networks are theoretically unlimited in size and have the inherent capacity to change (i.e. links between nodes emerge and disappear on a constant basis, they alter their character or disappear and are replaced by other nodes), the dynamic that keeps them in existence and unified is of great importance. In social networks, this dynamic is called 'identity'.

Identity provides a narrative of why and how links exist and what kind of communication, and in what form, is taking place along them. Because of the growing speed and fluctuation in which entire networks emerge and disappear, the role of identity and meaning has grown greatly. Castells defines ‘identity’ as

“[...] the existence of specific sets of values and beliefs in which specific human groups recognize themselves. Cultural identification is largely the result of the geography and history of human organization, but it can also be formed on the basis of specific projects of identity-building.” (Castells, 2009, p. 117)

‘Identity’ is related to the ability of an individual to self-reflect and to recognize themselves in the values, norms and beliefs of those he or she is linked to. Identities are not fixed entities, but are subject to conscious and subconscious, or deliberate and accidental changes. Individuals refer to their identity to receive guidance and justifications for their actions and behaviour, but identities are also altered by the actions and behaviour of those who adhere to them. For example, an individual born and raised in a specific country may identify so strongly with it that he or she is willing to risk life and health to defend it when it is perceived to be under threat. Equally so, other identities, such as a person’s religious identity or identity based on personal history, can interfere with this. For example, supporting one’s nation, an individual may feel torn, arguing that his or her religion does not permit violence; this, in turn, can then alter the underlying norms and values that lie at the heart of their national identity.

Unless faced with existential threats, individuals may have multiple identities that do not necessarily compete with each other. Identities are based on a shared narrative of a group; for example the members of a family support each other because they believe that their shared bloodline demands this. Identities also provide structure and reliability regardless of the circumstances; for example, because they share a narrative, children expect their parents to provide security and shelter, and siblings generally support each other regardless of the circumstances. At the heart of every group or network are norms and values that may not be clearly defined, but are shared by those who consider themselves to be part of it. For example, in an analysis of the structure of an internationally operating software company, Orlikowski shows that the ability of organisations to produce a successful product or service does not depend on

a certain technology, infrastructure or leadership, but instead on a shared identity. This shared identity allows the company and its employees to adapt their organisational structure according to the needs and requirements of a certain project. Many employees are involved with multiple projects at any given time and, according to them, the cooperation is possible due to the shared experience of the past and present (Orlikowski, 2002).

The more an individual feels insecure or under threat, however, the more important the identity that ties him or her to a group providing support becomes. At the same time, the importance and intensity of other identities, perceived as being less valuable or important in the context of the threat decreases. Sen argues convincingly that violence, or the threat of violence, forces individuals to shed many of their identities which in turn limits moderation and compromise:

“Many of the conflicts and barbarities in the world are sustained through the illusion of a unique and choiceless identity.” (Sen, 2006, p. xv)

Kalyvas points out that identities and narratives are shaped in order to increase group cohesion, and to justify the use of violence against those who are perceived to be outsiders. It is not the existence of different identities that causes and maintains violence in civil wars, but the shaping of identities within networks to justify violence (Kalyvas, 2006). From this we see that sectarian violence is not the cause of war, but the outcome (Kaldor, 2013).

7. Programming networks

Castells goes further than this when he looks at how and why identities are created and maintained. At the heart of every network lies a purpose and aim. In a family this may be the survival and well being of its members, in a religious network this may be the reaching of salvation and, for a company, it may be the creation of financial value through development of a product. This purpose, and the way the nodes of a network act in order to reach this aim, is determined by the *programme* that is basis for the network's identity:

“A network is defined by the program that assigns the network its goals and its rules of performance. [...] In social and organizational networks, social actors,

fostering their values and interests, and in interaction with other social actors, are at the origin of the creation and programming of networks.” (Castells, 2009, p. 20)

The individuals who are the nodes of a network are responsible for this programming and, in this, way determine the norms and values that are employed to reach the earlier defined goal. In a religious network for example, the person who is able to convince the other members of the network that he or she has the supreme ability to analyse and interpret scripture will be more able than other members of the network to determine the behaviour of the other nodes. Power, or the ability to influence the behaviour of others should not be measured by the title or seniority of an individual, but by her or his ability to influence the programme of a network (Castells, 2011).

In a world in which technology allows the ever-faster creation of links, and therefore networks, there is intense rivalry and competition for by whom, and how, a network's programme is created and maintained. Additionally, different networks compete with each other both in terms of affectivity and their ability to reach their goal. For example, the ability of different companies to create a product will engender competition in attracting the most creative minds and resources (such as funding and infrastructure). The individual at the helm of the company will be under constant pressure, both from the outside of his enterprise and the inside, to show his primacy in the creation of value. If he is judged as unable to do so, or if others are perceived to be more likely to succeed than he, then he will lose his influence in the network and, in this way, his ability to influence the programme of that network.

So, nodes which are more able than others to determine the programme of a network are considered to have the most power, but power is also generated by a node demonstrating ability to link different networks to each other:

“Networks (and the sets of interests and values they embody) cooperate or compete with each other. Cooperation is based on the ability to communicate between networks. This ability depends on the existence of codes of translation and inter-operability between the networks (protocols of communication) and on access to connecting points (switches).” (Castells, 2009, p. 20)

For social networks, this indicates that they are forced to maintain communication with other networks. For example, a terrorist organisation will be unable to reach its goals by killing individuals or causing sabotage. Instead, their success depends on their ability to communicate with other networks. So in the case of terrorism, it is the broadcasting of images and stories of the atrocities with the aim of altering the behaviour of those who do not share its identity and narrative which indicates success. How important the role of these ‘switches’ which are the nodes that link different sub-networks, is can also be seen in the growing influence of press officials and spokespersons in the political realm: they are the link between the political networks and media networks and, in this capacity, are of fundamental importance in determining how the two networks (and the underlying sub-networks) are able to reach their distinct goals. Simplified, their overall goals differ – for the political network its goal is to successfully implement policy, and for the media network it is to increase revenue by broadcasting information. However, each network needs the other in order to be successful on their own terms.

The programming and re-programming of networks allows them to counter their own inherent instability and volatility. Networks will seek to increase their ability to survive in a world in which change and fragmentation is becoming increasingly powerful a force. Powerful nodes with the ability to shape the programme of a network will try and construct a programme for their network that is based on an identity that is singular, and does not allow others to exist in parallel. The statement “you are with us, or with the terrorists” may come from former US President George W. Bush, but applies to all networks. By creating an existentialist threat on the outside of their own network, they try to create an even stronger force to bind the nodes in their own network together. In reality, this in itself is a cause for violence, since it forces individuals to take a side in a conflict in which, in most cases, they do not want to take part in (Kilcullen, 2009). The title of Chris Hedges’ book “War is a Force that Gives Us Meaning” (2003) could not be clearer: war and violence is the most powerful means of creating and maintaining networks. In this light, the impact of violence in the creation, maintenance and functioning of networks demands much further analysis.

7.1 Violence and programming

Castells is not alone when he focuses much of his analysis of networks and their dynamics on circumstances where non-violence dominates. Network analysts predominately look at how individuals choose to create and maintain links between themselves for their mutual benefit. ‘Networking’ is a contemporary buzz-word that represents how individuals try to create links in order to communicate and cooperate on a voluntary basis, but much ‘networking’ takes place in an environment in which no alternative exists. The people of Libya, for example, did not consciously choose to suddenly (and without much precedent) risk their lives in order to remove the political network dominated by Muammar al-Gadhafi. Instead, the programme created and maintained by Gadhafi had become unable to address the challenges of the people who were, due to their citizenship and location, part of the programme. When Gadhafi proved to be unwilling and unable to alter the programme to address these challenges, which ranged from corruption, injustice, and social and economic stagnation, he tried to violently clamp down on rivalling networks and their identities. The result was that the opposition was forced together, and reacted to the mass-violence with counter-violence, which ultimately led to the overthrow of Gadhafi’s regime and the programme it maintained. However, when the opposition was successful and overthrew the old order, it also lost the unifying force that bound it together and provided a shared narrative and identity, causing a fratricide of those who had shortly before fought together successfully.

Galula’s work on revolutionary war describes the effects well. In essence, he explains what Castells would term ‘reprogramming’. When the existing order is unable to address the grievances of the population and tries to maintain a programme in which the sole goal is to maintain the status quo at all costs, then growing repression of alternative programmes follows, ultimately leading to a violent conflict between rivalling programmes.

The growing interconnection of the world, assisted by the technological advances discussed earlier, has created a virtually global audience for competing programmes, in which the programmers are trying to appeal to those who feel left out to join their networks. By creating an existential narrative that depicts the programme of their network as the only one to address their grievances, and as one which provides

meaning and identity, fundamentalists are no longer limited to their immediate geographic surroundings for support and resources. Instead, these programmers rely on technology to create a global network with the aim of overthrowing the existing order. Additionally, because they compete with many other identities and networks, including with others found within their own network who may be competing for power, they will try to maintain their position by using violence. Violence is used as a tool to maintain the existentialist nature of their identity.

In Afghanistan, for example, violence binds all actors together in their struggle for meaning. For the NATO forces in the country, violence is central to their identity, not only in regards to their attempts to install a programme in the country that secures their position as programmers there, but also to show to their domestic audience the existentialist nature of the threat there. Without this, the citizens of the NATO countries would most likely be unwilling to join their armed forces, or to accept the results of the NATO campaign that kills and maims their soldiers in a faraway country. On the other side are the programmers in the insurgent networks, who use violence as a tool to keep their fragmented and often divided networks bound together. Violence is used to maintain their sources of income which, in most cases, depend on financial support from outsiders who share the goals promoted by the insurgents, or proceedings gained from criminal enterprises such as drug smuggling, kidnapping, protection money and ransom.

8. Conclusion

Today's world is not growing more complex than it was in the past but, aided by technology, changes happen both more quickly and can be observed more easily. Complexity and chaos are dynamics that have emerged together with modern forms of communication and the internet, but this is only because technology allows it to be more easily observed, and on a global level. Because complexity has always existed, it is futile to argue that the development of how to deal with complex adaptive systems is the answer. Instead, the approach to complexity has to be broadened to incorporate a study of the underlying dynamics, including the challenges faced within international relations.

Terrorism, for example, has only become the focus of many governments since the attacks of 9/11, due to the effects of the attacks being broadcast live on television to a global audience. In fact, the use of fear as a tool to gain concessions is much older. Today, the risk of becoming the victim of a terrorist attack has only marginally increased, but because the images of terrorism are now omnipresent they have altered the perception of risk and vulnerability.

Instability and insecurity have equally emerged as defining characteristics of modernity, but this is also misleading since, in most parts of the world, life expectancy and quality of life are increasing. For example, in China some 300 million people have emerged from poverty since the early 1980s. Another example - despite the economic turmoil that has affected much of the world since 2007, there are now more people than ever covered by health insurance in the United States. Transnational cooperation has increased the ability of 'civil society' to join forces, and gives a voice to those who earlier would have lost out against more powerful governments and business actors (Juris, 2005).

The challenge for international relations is to understand both the dynamics of complexity and networks, but also how violence impacts the formation and maintenance of identity and meaning and, in this way, the programming of networks. Communication is central to networks, and violence has to be understood as a form of communication in the creation and changes that take place in today's world.

Just as the natural sciences initially rejected the concept of chaos and non-linearity, so do the social sciences need to accept the fact that complexity and non-linearity is an inherently positive concept, and one that is fundamental for the maintenance of the equilibrium of the system that manifests the basis for societies.

Violence is a central component of human behaviour and communication. On the initial view, violence is exclusively harmful, being an unpleasant feeling or emotion, and one which indicates a danger or threat. In most cases it forces a change of behaviour to avoid or eliminate the danger or threat. Only on further observation does the unifying ability of violence emerge. Violence binds social networks together by

helping to create a shared narrative and identity. Additionally, technological advances are causing an ever-faster emergence, change and fragmentation of social networks, and the dynamics that bind these structures together demand further analysis. The terms ‘complexity’ and ‘network’ are more than mere ‘buzz words’ of the present, but as the discussion in this chapter has shown they contain and represent dynamics which need to be understood in order to deal with the challenges the world is faced with today.

Chapter 3: Networks and Violence

1. Introduction

Networks are groups of human beings in which every individual is a node that is linked to other individuals. The links between individuals are made up by communication in a myriad of different forms, including different spoken languages with different grammar and lexis, symbols, music and other forms of human behaviour such as touch, look, sound and smell. In this context, it is important to emphasise that every individual is an element of several networks that may or may not overlap in membership, and that different networks use different forms of communication. For example, a human being can be a member of a family, a company or firm, a religious group, a sports club and a political party (all networks) all at the same time. The association of individuals to certain groups is important not only because human beings need social contacts, but also because they help to provide the goods necessary for survival, such as food, water, security and, in a less visible way, identity and meaning. Group membership provides a means for the creation and maintenance of identity, but it is important to be aware of the fact that identities are plural, and that one identity need not necessarily obliterate the significance of others.

Additionally, every individual or node decides by him or herself how to deal with possible diverging loyalties and priorities between identities that may emerge and compete for dominance (Sen, 2006). For example, a mother who is working as a car mechanic in a family-owned business has relationships that connect her to a myriad of different networks that may compete with each other. She may experience competition between her professional identity and her role as a mother, or she may feel conflict with her identity as a car mechanic and her identity as a woman or as a wife. However, since each of these links can be considered necessary for her (the node's) survival and wellbeing, these possible conflicts may not be acknowledged or considered to exist. Conflicts, however, always exist, because limited resources and an individual's desire to maximise returns and property predetermine that even the most harmonious and homogenous associations to networks contain conflicts. However, only in very few instances do these conflicts actually lead to open hostility

and violence that, in turn, impacts on identity formation and maintenance. Stress and insecurity in the immediate environment damages an individual's ability to maintain multiple identities and affiliations to different networks. In the most extreme cases, it can result in only a single identity remaining, defined not by positive association but increasingly by opposition to others, which acts only to fuel the perception of stress and insecurity (Ibid).

Sen's analysis can be applied to the aforementioned example of the female car mechanic: if her profession as a mechanic is threatened by the establishment of a major car dealership in proximity to her family-owned business, she may be required to invest more of her time and energy at work, neglecting her family, which will result in dissatisfaction. Facing conflicts in both roles, one identity may subconsciously replace her multiple identities with a singular that is defined by the hostility towards the major car dealership. The singular identity also means that her links into other networks – for example, to the network of her family as a wife and mother – disappear. As Sen points out, the members of the immediate network in a conflict will often demand a change in the form of communication with individuals who are outside this network in order to increase group cohesion (Ibid).

Networks are established and maintained by communication between the nodes. If there is no communication between two nodes then the links will degrade and, ultimately, disappear. However, at the same time, new links may be in the process of being established, or existing links may be strengthened or weakened depending on internal and external factors. The forms of communication (the 'how' and 'what') depend on the programme or protocol of the network in question - in other words, the network determines the 'language' and 'grammar' of how its nodes communicate. The most central, and perhaps obvious, form of human communication is spoken and written language and, so far, most analyses of networks and network theory have focused on this form. However, there are other ways in which human beings communicate with each other, including imagery, music, symbols and rituals, and violence. As this chapter will argue, violence is a form of communication that has been excluded from the analyses of networks which, thus far, have focused on vocal communication.

Violence is, and always has been, a form of human communication. Confrontation and cooperation may be based on spoken language, but may also be based on hurting or being hurt, or simply the threat of hurting or being hurt. The sensation of pain is known to all human beings, just as pleasure and satisfaction is, but how pain is regarded will depend on the human environment of the individual. This is highlighted by Clausewitz, who raises a very important question when he states: “Is war not just another expression of their thoughts, another form of speech or writing? Its grammar indeed, may be its own, but not its logic.” (Clausewitz, 2007, p. 253). To use violence as a tool requires there to be a wider system in which it is embedded, which Clausewitz calls ‘policy’ (op.cit). War is not caused only by pure hatred, but rather: “[P]olicy is the guiding intelligence and war only the instrument, not vice versa.” (op.cit). Policy is a creation of human agency and identity; it depends on the interpretation by individuals of the environment around them, leading them to choose and shape their reaction and behaviour.

Akbar Ahmed analyses Osama bin Laden’s justification for killing innocent civilians, and argues that bin Laden is struggling to balance two distinct identities: on the one hand he has his social and kindred links to Yemeni tribes and, on the other hand, he has his political and religious affiliation to Islam. The former identity places great emphasis on honour, revenge and martyrdom, while the latter prominently focuses on the protection of innocents and the categorical prohibition of suicide. In the same way, the US’ reaction to the terrorist attacks of 9/11 was divided between the rhetoric of supporting human rights and democracy on a global level, and the implementation of a strategy that allowed countries such as China and Russia to justify violent campaigns against domestic opposition as part of the US’ led ‘War on Terror’. Ahmed argues that this dichotomy is caused by the struggle between ‘the core’, i.e. the actors who shape the discourse at the centre (the Bush government in Washington DC), and the periphery, i.e. those who are struggling to make their voices heard (generally referred to as ‘The Taliban’) (Ahmed 2013).

However, when applied to the discourse of network analysis, the distinction between core and periphery actors is inconclusive, since those actors who Ahmed categorises as in the periphery, place themselves in the core. In other words, those who fight along Al Qaida’s ideology in Afghanistan and Pakistan see themselves as being at the

heart of the 'War on Terror', and argue that the US government in Washington is the periphery, because it is not directly involved in violence. Instead of a struggle between core and periphery actors, it is the immediate environment that determines the form of communication that is used by individual actors.

Christopher Coker describes this as "the grammar of killing" – the "articulation of an act: how we perceive it, how we reflect on why others do what they do and how we tend to experience once done." (Coker, 2008, p. 115). Violence, says Coker, always has two actors: the victim and the perpetrator. Expressive violence can become symbolic and may indicate fear, loss and humiliation for the victim on the one hand, but create reputation and status for the perpetrator on the other.

An example of expressive violence can be seen in David Kilcullen's study of the motivation for Afghan individuals to join fire-fights between insurgents and coalition forces. Kilcullen found that there was little aversion towards violence: "The Afghan insurgents and former insurgents I have encountered *do* love the fight: they like to win, and are certainly not averse to killing, but what they really love is the fight, *jang* (battle), for its own sake." (Kilcullen, 2009, p. 77). Historically, the absence of governmental presence, the harsh terrain and life of the inhabitants, and the lack of goods to indicate social standing, meant that the reputation and social standing of an individual depended on his, often orally transmitted, fighting record. Particularly in the absence of rules, medical care and social security, every fight comes at a high risk for an Afghan, yet the rewards remain an important motivation.

In a post-modern society, status and personal standing are often displayed in the form of status symbols, such as cars or jewellery. Conversely, in a pre-modern society, or in any society that is experiencing great turmoil such as a war, these items are either scarce or absent. The void is filled with reputation and, in particular, an individual's reputation in his or her immediate social group. This also benefits the network the individual is part of: having fierce and feared warriors in the network's midst will ensure that foes are intimidated and refrain from hostilities against the entire group.

Just like in a network, where the connections between nodes enable communication between nodes, so do "human characteristics and experience exist only and through

people's relations.” (Coker, 2008, p. 124). As a social animal, mankind depends on being embedded in an environment with two-way connections – we influence our environment as much as we are influenced by it.

The role of the environment, and the circumstances of the individual, are also at the centre of John Keegan's work in which he questions the origins of war as an activity that only primates and human beings share. War is not necessarily always about the destruction and control of resources, but it is always about narrative and rituals (Keegan, 1993). Hence, violence is not only a form of communication, but also a tool of human identity. Sharing rituals and creating a narrative relies on shared experiences that are communicated within the network or society. The more that is shared, the closer the network becomes and, importantly, it is communication in its multitude of forms, including violence, which provides the necessary tools to enable this to occur.

In a Hobbesian world, the individual who possesses the greatest ability to cause harm will be able to dominate all others and, in this way, ensure his or her own survival and well-being. Since communication is so central to human nature, individuals constantly interact with each other. In order to be able to carry a message and meaning, however, individuals need to agree on a grammar. This grammar is shaped by the individual nodes in an on-going process. Just like spoken or written language is able to carry an integrative effect – that is, it has a positive and constructive effect - it can also be disintegrative – negative and destructive. A spoken expression can be both, i.e. it can have the effect of supporting the well-being and survival of an individual, or it can have the opposite effect, creating fear and insecurity. Violence conforms to the same dynamics; on the one hand it can provide the means to satisfy the needs so central to human existence, such as food, shelter and meaning. On the other hand, violence has the potential to harm and destroy, including ultimately terminating a human existence.

This dual functionality of violence requires some analysis. In particular, an analysis and application of Castells' approach to the study of communication networks will follow, providing the theoretical underpinnings. This will be followed by a discussion of analogue and digital forms of violence. On this foundation, there will then be a final analysis of the integrative, or positive effect, that violence can have, and

likewise, in the following chapter, the negative or disintegrative outcome. This discussion will highlight the centrality of violence as a component of human interaction, and is intended to demonstrate that in order to fully understand networks and power, all forms of human communication have to be applied - including violence. Only by understanding the dynamics of the range of all behaviours that make up human interaction can network theory be a useful tool for the analysis, as well as the modification, of human behaviour.

2. Castells' network theory and violence

It is telling that Castells chooses to begin his book 'Communication Power' (2009) with a description of how, as a teenager in Franco's Spain, he tried to share information that was deemed to be subversive. Having sensed the suffocating and negative nature of the regime, he decided to print and distribute leaflets aimed to aid the revolution. While Castells uses this as an example in his thesis that power lies not in the individual, but in the links an individual has with others, in the same example he points out the role of violence: the motivation to join the resistance existed regardless of the fact that police repression had severely decimated the opposition, that being caught distributing leaflets meant being beaten up by the police, and highlights the role of coercion as the underlying dynamic that governs society. Castells' thesis evolves around the concept of communication as the link between individuals, and between individuals and the social and natural environment. At the heart of his analysis lies the 'network society' - "the social structure that characterises society in the early twenty-first century, a social structure constructed around (but not determined by) digital networks of communication." (Castells, 2009, p. 4). Accordingly, while developments in communication technology are shaping today's society, other, and older, dynamics are still of great importance. Castells himself points towards the centrality of violence when he writes: "[T]here is complementary and reciprocal support between the two main mechanisms of power formation identified by theories of power: violence and discourse." (Castells, 2009, p. 11). Yet, when Castells studies the emergence and formation of resistance and insurgency, he bypasses the impact of violence and instead focuses on how dissenting individuals organise:

“Throughout history, anger has sparked protests, resistance, and even revolutions, starting from an aggravating event, and escalating into a rejection of the authority responsible, as the accumulation of injuries and insults suddenly becomes intolerable. The price of bread, the suspicion of witchcraft, or the injustice of rulers have been more frequent sources of revolts and social movements than the ideals of emancipation. In fact, it is often the case that these ideals only come to life by germinating in the fertile soil of popular anger against the unjust.” (Castells, 2009, p. 347).

Modern forms of communication, especially digital media, only serve as a tool for processes that have been central to human interaction since the emergence of societies.

2.1 Digital and analogue communication

Digital communication is based on compliance and acceptance on the grounds that it largely lacks the enforcing agent of the physical sensation of pain (the internet does not have a component that is able to exert physical violence or hurt). Analogue communication is far more diverse in its methods, being based on both violent and non-violent forms of communication. Spoken language, for example, can be used as a rewarding and constructive tool by presenting a message of encouragement and support, and as a punishing and rejecting tool by insulting or threatening. Digital communication is much less able to do this. Analogue communication is therefore much more persuasive in its ability to create and maintain, as well as destroy and prevent, links between individuals, or between individuals and society or wider networks. When Castells argues for the power of the network society then, he emphasises the enabling character of digital communication, the somewhat benevolent nature that allows individuals to connect and exchange information based entirely on shared sentiments. In other words, the message in a threatening website, email or mobile-phone conversation is much weaker than if the same message is presented analogue, face-to-face or, in the most extreme case, through direct physical violence. The important point in Castells’ introduction is that violence is as much a form of communication between individuals as language is - the words on a leaflet which aim to stir an individual to a certain kind of action are as much a form of

violence as the baton a police officer brings down on a member of the opposition in order to discourage him or her from continuing their action. At the same time, the action these forms of communication are trying to provoke do not necessarily need to intend to change the status quo; a leaflet can equally argue for inaction, just as much as for action, just as a baton can be used to encourage an individual into inaction, rather than action.

Human beings do not necessarily make a conscious distinction between analogue and digital communication, and are often unaware of the different impact the same information can have when transmitted through different media. For example, an insult made in a face-to-face conversation between two individuals will have very different consequences to when the same insult is made in a Twitter feed read by thousands. This unawareness of impact is particularly amplified in the digital realm, since individuals are often unaware of the network structure they create with their online behaviour, meaning most do not fully comprehend the impact of their digital communication (Kahler, 2009). Communication is thus not always a conscious process, and every form of communication has both intended and unintended consequences. Furthermore, while spoken and written language may be the most obvious forms of communication, there are other important forms such as pictorial and aural. It is possible to transmit both violent and non-violent messages using all of these forms of communication since all communication is an expression of human agency which has the dual aims of satisfying survival and creating and maintaining a narrative. Castells focuses his work on the more obvious component of networks: the integrative human behaviour. In other words he focuses on human behaviour and communication that is generally referred to as positive and non-violent.

2.2 Castells and violence

Castells argues that “[...] sheer imposition by force is not a social relationship because it leads to the obliteration of the dominated social actor, so that the relationship disappears with the extinction of one of its terms.” (Castells, 2009, p. 11), to which he adds “It is, however, a social action with social meaning because the use of force constitutes an intimidating influence over the surviving subjects under similar

domination, helping to reassert power relationships vis-à-vis these subjects” (Ibid.). Here, the distinction between ‘social relationship’ and ‘social action’ seems to be the defining difference: the relationship indicates a link between the imposer and the imposed that is destroyed by the method used by the perpetrator of violence, yet the act itself, that is the use of violence, is as much a form of communication as language is.

Resulting from this there are two forms of constructing, maintaining and breaking links between individuals: violence and discourse (Ibid.). It would be wrong to attach a sense of moral or qualitative judgement to either form, since the shared experience of violence is as much a binding force as the dividing ability of hurtful discourse. In other words, violence can be as much of an empowering dynamic, as a constraining one.

The discussion above points to three weaknesses that preclude a full application of Castells to the discourse of violence and communication. First, his theory does not properly discuss the role of violence as a form of communication. It therefore only focuses on how the individual actors establish networks and create and maintain links, but much less so on the dynamics of violence in networks. Second, this in turn prevents the application of Castells to the realm of international relations, since both cooperation and conflict are central in this field. Thirdly, without the inclusion of the dynamics of violence, Castells’ network theory is too narrow, and cannot explain both transformation and destruction within and between networks.

3. Violence as communication

The utility of violence lies in the universality with which it is experienced; every human being is both the victim and perpetrator of it. Already as an infant, one understands the pain inflicted by others, both verbal and non-verbal, intended and unintended. Equally, the effect of inflicting pain on others is quite likely one of the earliest experiences an individual can have. It is very similar to the sensation of affection and care. The power of violence is so significant as a shared experience that it lies at the heart of basic human social interactions. Compassion, for example, is the

ability to feel with another human being and is only possible because of the underlying shared experience.

This points to another important dynamic of violence: it does not have to be physical in order to cause an effect, but can also be implied or used as a threat. Experiments have shown that all living beings can be conditioned to link certain sensual stimulations with pain, and react with evasive or protective behaviour even when only the trigger is present. All of this highlights the importance of violence in human affairs, yet violence is not only a private experience but is a major and timeless component of society. In this regard, Arendt's assessment is of great interest:

“No one engaged in thought about history and politics can remain unaware of the enormous role violence has always played in human affairs, and it is at first sight surprising that violence has been singled out so seldom for special consideration.”(Arendt, 1969, p. 2).

Arendt later argues that violence is always negative because it prevents compromise and cooperation. Individuals are drawn to maximise their own power beyond their own physical strength, and being 'in power' means to be chosen by society to multiply a single individual's natural strength (Arendt, 1970). The support of society can be gained by both persuasion and coercion, with persuasion being more sustainable and positive. Coercion, on the other hand, is often based on either direct violence or the threat of its use, and is negative since it prevents compromise and conciliation. While ultimately “[A]t the very basic level violence is the deliberate infliction of harm on people.”(Kalyvas, 2006, p. 19), far more analysis is demanded into the dynamics of this concept.

What Arendt overlooks is that this 'negative' nature of violence is only one facet: violence can, similarly to language, be used as much for constructive as destructive (or integrative and disintegrative) means. Equally, violence can be designed to avert an immediate existentialist threat as well as for more instrumental gain. Finally, the shared experience of observing, inflicting and becoming victim to violence is a fundamental component in the construction of identity, which itself is at the heart of human existence (Sen, 2006). Following Castells' approach to networks, the links between individual nodes are being made and eroded on an on-going basis, and these links are nothing but lines of communication. Rather than limiting the analysis of

networks to the use of language, analogue and digital, or spoken and written, networks must also be studied in the context of violence, in both an integrative and disintegrative fashion. The impact of violence needs to be assessed both in the integrative (that is creating links between nodes) and disintegrative (the destruction or prevention of links between nodes). Violence strongly influences the creation and maintenance of a narrative which, via the questions of ‘who am I?’, ‘who are we?’, ‘why do we live?’ and ‘what is the meaning of life?’, lies at the heart of human existence. Returning to Castells, the creation of a narrative, or what he refers to as ‘the transformation of people’s minds’ (Castells, 2009, p. 27), is the most important source of power. The ability to exercise power depends on two different factors:

- i) the ability to constitute and program networks (which describes the purpose and the protocol of communication in networks) - the nodes are called ‘programmers’ and they are the ones that focus on the creation of a narrative since it allows them to legitimise their position; and
- ii) the ability to connect and maintain cooperation between different sub-networks - those nodes are called ‘switchers’, which benefit from their position by providing the link or bridge that is, as a gatekeeper, used for their own benefit (Castells, 2009, p. 46).

With network theory relying heavily on the use of technology, and especially the internet, it is paramount to analyse the relationship between violence and the virtual world. This is highlighted by the recent political upheavals in Spain, North Africa and Brazil, where the role of the internet and mobile communication has moved into the foreground. Commentators have argued that the removal of the Egyptian President Mubarak in 2010 was the first ‘Facebook-revolution’, and that Twitter and text messages now present the new medium to unify the population and coordinate protests and attacks against the authorities, but the success of this is doubted by Morozov precisely because the uprising lacked a clear leader or leaders. Additionally they opposition to Mubarak was so decentralised and loosely organised that it may have been able to overthrow the existing order, but unable to establish a new governance along their ideals and demands (Morozov, 2013). More than ever before, technology permitted real-time communication in a non-hierarchical means of communication that requires minimum resources or skills and, in the case of Egypt

was able to evade the security apparatus. It is argued that new digital communication allows for networks to be even larger, and so efficient and effective in flow that hierarchical and centrally controlled structures cannot counter. To assess the validity of this, the relationship between the virtual-world and violence has to be analysed and compared, and ultimately the question of whether or not the emergence of the 'Network Society' (Castells, 2010b, p. 7) really presents a fundamental shift in human affairs must be examined.

4. The distinction between digital and analogue

Castells' network society relies on digital, rather than analogue, communication (Castells, 2009). Digital communication is as much language based as its analogue sibling, but rather than phonetic codes it is binary electronic signals (on/off) that are the basis of internet protocols. Just as with analogue language, there needs to be, in the digital world, an agreed form of grammar and words in order to be able to communicate. In other words: '[J]ust as cyberspace is communally produced, so in a profound sense are all spaces. Whether we talk about medieval conceptions of spiritual space, or scientific conceptions of physical space, *every* kind of space needs to be conceptualized, and hence "produced" by a community of people' (Wertheim, 1999, p. 305).

What makes digital communication different from analogue forms is the role of technology. New technologies alter not only the way human beings communicate with each other, but also their relationship with their bodies and how they see and value themselves as well as each other. The emotions and biological processes that are at the base of life remain the same, but the patterns and actions in which they are taking place are changing. The history of the internet and the role technology plays in today's human interactions show that it has become more than just a method of communication, such as the telephone or printing press, but has evolved into a phenomenon in which the identity of individuals are made, adopted and shaped in processes that are increasing in speed, grasp and influence. By providing the individual with the ability to access vast quantities of information and to communicate virtually without constraints of time and space with almost every

individual on the planet, and by allowing information to flow both ways, the internet has become the most powerful creator of a hyper-reality. In this realm the distinction between the artificial and real are becoming increasingly blurred (Sardar & Ravetz, 1996). In-process digital communication may cause the establishment of narratives that are fantasies - as utopian as religion but, due to its persuasiveness and entrenchment in the life of every individual, far more destructive. The weakness of technology, then, is the fact that it provides a platform upon which the identity of the individual becomes so dependent that the individual loses the ability to distinguish between the analogue and the digital, the real and the virtual.

4.1 Digital networking

The 'new political order' which is, arguably, provided by the internet - the decentralised, inclusive and anarchist structure without borders and constraints of time and access - is a tempting utopia. The reality is not only that the quality and durability of ad-hoc and virtual communities lack the stability of analogue links between individuals, but also that the internet in itself is becoming increasingly vulnerable. The more individuals depend on the internet, the more they depend on the technology that lies at the heart of it. This technology, both in terms of hardware and software, depends on companies and governments to produce and maintain it. The more individuals rely on the internet, the more vulnerable they become to exploitation and addiction to even faster and deeper integration (Kinney, 1996). When looking, for example, at the role of the internet in the Egyptian Revolution in 2011, it was used as both a tool for opposition forces to cooperate and organise, and as a means for the state to observe and prosecute them. Voicing discontent on the internet did not help to deconstruct the Mubarak regime, but protests by real people in the streets did. In order to organise these large-scale protests, the information about them had to be public and could therefore also be accessed by the authorities that tried to suppress them and prosecute the participants. Accordingly, the internet allows for increased individual participation and democratisation, but at the same time allows for, and provides, more tools for surveillance and prosecution.

This prosecution is not limited to states and their legal and judicial bodies, but also to companies, organisations and ad-hoc groups that pursue a shared goal. The Chinese

‘human flesh search engine’ (人肉搜索) is a phenomenon in which a decentralised, temporary and unstructured collaboration of individuals researches the internet in order to identify individuals accused of misconduct. In the process, individuals use the technology of the internet not only to identify the alleged culprits, but also to prosecute them by prominently posting their personal information and wrongdoing. Even more revealing, perhaps, is the role of the US military in the creation of the internet via DARPA (Defence Advanced Research Projects Agency), as a tool to protect and manage information for the purpose of national security. Although the internet has achieved great success in this context, the internet is also arguably the key element in one of the biggest downfalls of the US military: the transmission and publication of digital images depicting the torture and humiliating treatment of Iraqi prisoners by US forces at Abu Ghraib prison (M. White, 2005).

4.2 The digital creation of meaning

The technology of the internet is not only limited to political and commercial uses, but has a great number of other functions. Nevertheless, it has not yet extinguished the most human of all behaviours: the question of meaning, of a narrative, of answering ‘why are we?’. Schmidt and Cohen even argue: “Identity will be the most valuable commodity for citizens in the future, and will exist primarily online” (Schmidt & Cohen, 2013a, p. 36) since the more fragmented and unstable the world appears, the more pressing and prominently this quest for meaning features in human endeavours. The less desirable the world seems to be to an individual, the more central the question of meaning becomes. Through all of human antecedents, the quest for meaning and identity has been at the forefront of behaviour, shaping the activities of the individual as much as those of groups and societies. Religion, nationalism and history are all at the forefront of the creation of an identity, intended to provide a personalised answer to every individual’s existence. Cyberspace is the most tempting of all spaces to search for meaning: it provides not only a vast source of information, but also allows the individual to ask personalised questions, to provide feedback, discussion and debate, and satisfies emotions such as rejection and support. It is the individual who is searching for identity, and the group provides it. The virtually unlimited sources making up the internet allow every single individual a

personalised environment for their personal quest for meaning – but, by doing this, the internet also weakens the investment individuals make in creating and maintaining communities. The luxury of recreating oneself in cyberspace is distinct from the analogue self, and loses value the moment this alter ego is faced with an unpleasant situation because, in that moment, either the alter ego is abandoned (for example the individual simply goes offline) or a new ego is created in its place.

Margaret Wertheim compares cyberspace to religious constructs of Heaven where technology transcends the body. The internet allows individuals to escape the dominant narrative since the age of enlightenment in which the material dominated over the spiritual (1999). This is contrasted by Castells' 'network society' which is an open community in which, in theory, everybody is able to connect to everybody. Without physical limitation the number of connections is unlimited, and without time-lag information can be transmitted without the constraints of time and space. Yet, human beings are driven by trying to find out where they are, in both a physical and spiritual space. Cyberspace breaks this up: 'When I am online, the question of "where" I am cannot be answered in fully in physical terms' (Wertheim, 1999, p. 41). This leads to a return to the pre-enlightenment duality of physical and spiritual self: 'Once again, then, we see in the discourse about cyberspace a return to dualism, a return to a belief that man is a bipolar being consisting of a mortal material body and an immaterial "essence" that is potentially immortal' (Wertheim, 1999, p. 268). In other words, the difference between the physical or analogue space on the one hand, and the digital or cyberspace on the other, is the absence of physical violence and the absolute nature of death.

Physical violence is central to the distinction between the analogue and the digital world, since the lack of physical violence in cyberspace promotes the illusion that in order to overcome injury or death one simply needs to restart. While it is feasible that human life may enter a stage in which it is possible to download the mind and soul of a person (or 'software') when the physical body dies, and upload it into a new and possibly artificial body, the lack of mortality, of unwanted suffering and physical pain, are fundamental to the inability of the digital world to take over human existence. Arendt's assessment, which places violence at the centre of human affairs, and the fundamental importance of violence in the construction of identity and

meaning (Sen, 2006), indicate the weakness of reliance on digital forms of communication. Whilst violence can be exhibited in cyberspace, and digital information can be destroyed (by flipping the power switch, or through a mere virus), it cannot and does not affect human behaviour in the same way as the actual physical sensation of pain and loss. Narratives of destruction, of insults or of threats are meaningless unless the recipient is able to relate this sensation to an earlier analogue experience. Without this earlier analogue experience the meaning of violence, or of threats of violence and death, disappear, and with them their formative influence on human behaviour. Searching for identity, then, can be guided and influenced by cyberspace, but the ultimate power must always lie in the analogue experience of violence itself.

Christopher Coker looks at probably the most extreme activity that soldiers are prepared for in their training: self-sacrifice. The assumption that certain ideals are worth enough to justify risking one's life for, and to die for, is a fundamental component of why war can be considered a 'sacred' activity, and yet the impact of technology may threaten this: "[A drone pilot] may have greater oversight of the battlefield than ever, but this affords him no greater insight into the moral status of the man he has in his sight." (Coker, 2013, p. 122). The use of drones fundamentally alters the way these soldiers experience the reality of battle. Because the risk of injury or death in battle no longer exists, the experience of war is entirely different. As soon as a drone is damaged or destroyed the pilot can, just like in a computer game, restart.

The existence of a 'delete' or 'escape' function is the most important difference here (these functions can only exist in cyberspace) but, since it is becoming increasingly difficult for human beings to distinguish digital and analogue life, the risks of this growing disjunction are obvious. The human mind is based on sensations of sound, sight and touch which can, and are, being created digitally – the line between these and analogue experiences is becoming blurred. Conversely, the 'delete' or 'escape' functions cannot always be translated from the digital realm over to the analogue realm. The more convincing the digital impressions become, the more individuals will expect that the analogue world will perform along the same lines. Of course, crucially however, there is no sacrifice in the digital; a death in cyberspace is temporary, but the analogue death is final.

Coker also highlights the importance of culture in the process that links digital and analogue violence: empathy. Without the ability to imagine, and empathise with, the experience of another human being, there can be no meaningful interaction. “[T]he ability to experience another person’s pain is a central part of emotional intelligence as too is the ability to read other people’s emotional status.” (Coker, 2013, p. 133). Technology enables empathy in a manner removed from direct contact with another being, but with major limitations; we can distinguish the sight and sound of war in a Hollywood movie from recordings of actual fighting or even the first hand experience of war because we are able to differentiate between the temporarily limited experience of a movie and the continued actions of a war, even when special effects are becoming increasingly able to fool our senses.

Only one dimension of the civil war in Syria, for example, is being fought online, but the destruction of lives and property is exclusively occurring on the street. Mobile phones, the internet, digital imagery and chat protocols may exacerbate the blurring of territorial boundaries of the conflict and, while it is undeniable that information technology is THE link between Syrian and non-Syrian actors, or actors in Syria itself and outside of the country, this technology is not involved in the actual killing that is taking place on the ground.

Schmidt and Cohen argue that technological developments will further increase the duality of digital and analogue, or physical, worlds. Because technology provides access to more information, people will benefit by being able to make more informed decisions, but the same information can be used to diminish their security by subjecting them to increased surveillance and possible exploitation by criminals and authoritarian governments. Especially in the realm of foreign policy, actors will develop an increasing duality in which actions online and offline will differ since they are created for different audiences (Schmidt & Cohen, 2013b).

An additional factor that further complicates the analysis of information technology is the geographic conditions of cyberspace. While the term ‘space’ indicates a geographic location this is no longer the case. The physical infrastructure necessary for the relay of information does not necessarily coincide with the location of the

author or audience. An individual no longer needs to be physically present in order to document an event or communicate information, but instead can do this from any place that facilitates access to the relaying technology. For example, “Radio Télévision Libre des Mille Collines” (RTLM) is considered to have been the most influential tool in the organisation and process of the Rwandan Genocide in the mid-1990s. The owners and editors were using the private radio station to both transmit a narrative of why Tutsis and moderate Hutus were to be killed, and to relay which individuals should be hunted down and where to organise roadblocks and the mob. The radio station allowed a small group of Hutu extremists to organise the genocide without themselves having to enter the field or be actively involved in the slaughter. A radio station was easy to establish, simple to maintain and had the ability to reach a massive audience in real-time; because the technology is so simple and readily available, it does not require literacy or wealth to access it (Metzl).

In contrast to radio as a form of communication, where communication predominately flows in one direction from the station to the audience, the internet provides the single medium that enables communication to flow in all ways. Radio and television are forms of ‘mass communication’ through which information can be relayed to an audience without geographical distance presenting a hindrance. In contrast to this, the internet is a form of “mass self-communication”(Castells, 2009, p. 58) in which the distinction between provider of content and audience is no longer valid. Content on the internet is unlike newspapers, television or radio where content is dominated by the author. Rather, the content of the internet is constantly altered, linked to or edited by every individual who accesses it. In the words of Castells: “[...] any post on the Internet, regardless of the intention of the author, becomes a bottle drifting in the ocean of global communication, a message susceptible to being received and reprocessed in unexpected ways.” (Castells, 2009, p. 66). The result is that the technology of the internet enables every individual who is online to create content and transmit it largely unimpeded by the limitations of time and space. The faster the internet connection and the better the available computer and technology, the more persuasive and life-like cyberspace becomes. As the role of radio in the Rwandan genocide shows, technology does not necessarily mean that people are better informed or make more humane decisions. While the internet and cyberspace become more convincing to human senses, they remain only a medium for the transmission of

human behaviour. In other words, the internet does not kill but it does transmit the violence perpetrated by humans around the world. The effect is that the dynamics and effects of violence, and violence in networks, rather than the digital nature of the communication, need to be analysed in more detail.

5. Integrative Violence

The shortcomings of relying on digital forms of communication are apparent when we consider that its abilities to construct identity and meaning are limited without the underpinning analogue experience. This can be applied in particular to the experience and sensation of violence. In the realm of human interaction, war is the most powerful experience of violence, or in other words the ultimate experience of violence is war. The struggle to define war and differentiate it from other forms of violence has been troubling academics for some considerable time. Diamond bases his definition of war on this difficulty and proposes that violence, in order to be classified as ‘war’, requires three core elements:

1. The violence is carried out by a group, not an individual.
2. The violence is exerted by individuals who belong to two or more different political groups.
3. The violence must be sanctioned by the whole group, even if only some of its members carry it out.

Or: “War is recurrent violence between groups belonging to rival political units, sanctioned by the units.” (Diamond, 2012, p. 131).

What Diamond fails to answer conclusively is *why* groups go to war with each other. He argues that tribal societies were, aside from “the excitement and the prestige” (Diamond, 2012, p. 148), fully aware of the misery caused by war, yet until colonial powers intervened these societies were unable to break the cycle of revenge killings. New Guineans boast of having killed enemies because they grew up in a society that does not condone violence. In contrast, US soldiers experience Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD) after killing someone because their society is based upon non-

violent interaction. An attempt to try to explain the single reason for the use of violence is as futile as trying to explain why human beings talk. Violence is a mere form of communication and has as many functions as language has. Especially in relation to groups, violence and language are both fundamental in defining the group and providing a narrative. Additionally, like language, violence has further functions that address instrumental and existential needs. For example, the conflicts between radical followers of opposing football teams would fit into Diamond's definition of war: very often not all members are perpetrators of violence but sanction it, and in many cases the different football teams have a tendency to attract followers of a certain political, ethnic, economic or religious group. While the argument can be made that there are 'wars' between football hooligans, this is entirely different from the violent conflicts Diamond had in mind. His approach focuses on violent conflicts in which the death of the adversary is not only accepted as an outcome, but in most cases explicitly desired and sought after.

5.1 Sacrifice and war

What makes war so fascinating is its ability to stipulate human sacrifice, or in other words: "[N]ormally society cannot condone one person taking the life of another, but in war the question of legal censure against such acts does not come up" (Gelven, 1994, p. 4). Yet to limit war to killing or being killed is to overlook many of the realities of war, and to do injustice to those who lose their possessions, families and health, those who are the victims of rape and mutilations, and those who become the refugees and survivors. Sacrifice then is not only death in war, but all of the suffering related to the violence found within. Death with its finality is simply the most powerful component of war, but ultimately what distinguishes war from peace is the systematic use of violence in the social discourse. Whilst death and violence have similar power - the mere threat of it causes a reaction - they differ in the fundamental component that in theory war can be fought without death, but not without violence. Further, the concepts differ in their communicative power since death ends the life of the victim, meaning that without a narrative attached it does not have any further effect. Violence, on the other hand, is committed with the explicit desire of altering the behaviour of the victim. A prisoner is kept alive during torture in order to

influence his behaviour after release, and a victim of systemic rape as part of ethnic warfare is permitted to survive in order to influence society even after the war has ended.

Coker's conceptualisation (2004) serves as base for further analysis. Firstly, as an instrumental concept, war is used as a rational instrument to gain specific concessions or interests. For instance, a state will occupy an opponent's territory with the aim of exploiting natural resources that are deemed fundamental for the aggressor's national security. A good example of this is the Japanese expansion into south-east Asia in the late 1930s, in which rubber plantations were targeted by Japan. The resource-poor country depended on the continued import of natural resources in order to maintain the life its people had become accustomed to. Without being able to control the access to rubber and other resources the Japanese government believed it was at the mercy of hostile foreign powers that intended to destroy the country.

Secondly, war is used as an existential concept that is used to counter a threat against national security by a hostile enemy. For example, the British defence against the aggression by Nazi Germany in the Battle of Britain in 1940. The German leadership decided to bomb Britain in an attempt to create discontent in the population, and to force the country to ally with the Nazis. If this proved unsuccessful, then Germany would prepare the invasion and occupation of the country. The defence against the German attacks was thus judged to be necessary to protect the existence of Britain as a sovereign country.

Finally, the third and most abstract, yet most important concept: the metaphysical. Death and dying, the suffering and the destruction, creates a meaning. By sacrificing individuals, war renders itself different from other forms of affliction: it becomes sacred. The death of a kinsman is celebrated by those who survive. The paradox is that the destruction of lives serves to construct meaning and identity, not for those who die, but for those who are left behind. This metaphysical aspect is the most difficult to approach, since it appears to be the most irrational one. From the willingness of Japanese soldiers to sacrifice themselves rather than to become prisoners of war, to the individual who would rather burn to death than leave a burning house without wearing trousers, the influence of the narrative and the

association with the group becomes so powerful that it takes precedent over an individual's drive for self-preservation (Neitzel & Welzer, 2012). For an outsider, it appears to be an irrational choice, but for the person and other members of his or her group, the decision is fully logical if not even encouraged.

5.2 Instrumental and existential purpose of war

Instrumental war is the most rational of these three concepts, since at its core is the satisfaction of human needs. In order to gain what is judged to be necessary, all living creatures have the ability to cause pain; war is merely the translation of this activity into the political sphere, or group. If an individual believes that another individual is in possession of something that is desired, or perceived to be necessary for survival, or an action has to be instigated or terminated, then they will communicate this need. In most cases, the initial means will be vocal, but if the response is not satisfactory the use of force will be announced, followed by the actual use of violence. Since human beings are social animals, both the initial perception of need, as well as the subsequent form of how this need is communicated, will be intrinsically linked to the prevailing patterns of behaviour within the group. For example, a child will simply take whatever it wants from its parents, but if the item is taken back the child will cry or even use force to regain it. Another example of this pattern can be found in the interaction of criminal gangs where a certain form of unwritten codified behaviour can be observed. A gang member will demand a certain action or good, and will initially announce this without using violence, but at the same time using a form of communication that directly implies the urgency and necessity of compliance. If his demands are not met, then the individual will either threaten force or use it. As Gilligan points out, violence is used by those who feel that there is no other way to achieve what they perceive to be just and justified (1996, pp. 11-12).

Closely linked to this instrumental use is the existential use of violence. If, for example, a victim at the hands of the gang member perceives the nature of the demand as an immediate threat to his or her existence, he or she may feel that a non-violent reply is insufficient to avert an existential threat. An alternative could be to seek to retire from the disagreement, but if this is neither possible nor likely to be

successful, then defensive force will be used. The extent of the force will depend on the context, and if the supposed victim of aggression communicates that they are willing to use force for self-defence, or uses force, the gang member in turn has a choice to either abort his demand and leave, or to agree on the challenge and return either the threat of violence or violence itself. In both instrumental and existential forms of violence, the identity of the individual strongly determines which form of communication will be chosen. While other factors also influence how far an individual may go, and at what point non-violent communication becomes violent, it is clear that the identity of the individuals is central. Both instrumental and existential uses of violence highlight the communicative nature of violence, and the fact that violence does not take place in a vacuum. ‘We are meaning-seeking creatures’ writes Karen Armstrong, and what distinguishes human beings from all other creatures is the existence of human imagination, which allows us to search for explanations for experiences we make (Armstrong, 2005, p. 2).

5.3 War as a metaphysical concept

The quest for meaning, a narrative, an answer to the questions of ‘why are we alive?’, ‘what is the purpose of life?’, ‘where do we come from?’, ‘why do we live like we do?’ or ‘what should I do in this situation?’, is engrained in every human being. While some are more conscious than others, when addressing these questions there is no single answer. The absence of a simple and comprehensible answer to these questions, and in fact the absence of a single question, means every individual is left alone to deal with it. Since human beings are, as all humanoids, social animals, the group or network of fellow beings provides guidance in this fundamental quest. The network, be it based on family ties, religious affiliation, political conviction, shared sports or hobbies or bare survival, neither provides the question nor the answer, but provides a metaphysical playground where the question must be asked and the answer becomes obvious: ‘I am alive in order to be part of this group’. It is necessary for a group to feel coherent communication between the individual members. The evolution of spoken language allows groups to invent a common identity or narrative, or in Castells’ words ‘a programme’. Since spoken language is only one form of human communication, gestures, mimic and finally violence are all important

components of the creation and maintenance of networks. Inner-city gangs, for example, have their own language, signs and ritualistic behaviour that are used to both create and deepen bonds between its members and, at the same time, indicate to outsiders that they are not a member of the network. The shared threat of violence, and the shared committing of violent acts, is both a method to satisfy needs and to create a shared identity and meaning.

Even in relation to societies that are arguably the most peaceful and non-destructive are not without violence. What actually sets them apart from other societies is not the complete eradication of violence, but rather their ability to codify violence into rituals. Sacrifice is morphed into rituality, and the most telling example is the existence of sports; more often than not, even linguistic components of war are used to describe a boxing match, different positions in team sports are labelled 'offensive' and 'defensive', and even chess-matches are heralded as 'battles'. The explanation for this is that violence is not neutral, but depends on the context and narrative. Returning to Diamond's definition of war discussed above, the definition could, and often is, satisfied by sports teams and their supporters. They are organised groups and as a group sanction violence. Yet this phenomenon is not limited to the sporting entertainment sector but, as John Keegan shows in his seminal book *The History of Warfare* (1993), a great number of societies have succeeded in eradicating the destructive use of violence by codifying and ritualising it. Thus, what is sanctioned by a group - to continue Diamond's approach to war - is not recurring violence for the sake of violence, but the narrative creating power of a shared experience of a group vis-a-vis another.

Stromberg's analysis of the role elites and intellectuals played in the onset of the First World War highlights the role these individuals played in causing Europe to go to war: violence and destruction, so they argued, was the necessary tool to cleanse, to destroy the old and replace it with a new and meaningful construct (Stromberg, 1982). Here, again, the communicative role of violence is highlighted and the perception of the individual versus the group re-emerges: only due to the construction of a higher meaning, of an identity that stands above the person, could violence have been sold as necessary. Instead of a threat to the life and well-being of the individual, violence, and in its extension war, was transformed into a positive force. The moral bankruptcy of

fascism lays not in that it used violence, or even that it relied on increasing amounts of violence to create and maintain its identity, but that the violence ultimately destroyed those who wielded and relied on it the most. Take the tactic of shouting in order to be heard: this initially works as a tool to attract attention and make gains, but if one overdoes it in terms of volume, duration or reason, then the recipients of the shouting will develop methods to counter it. This comparison demonstrates that more violence does not equal more meaning or a stronger narrative, but rather that there is a certain threshold from which violence destroys more than it creates.

Linking this discussion to Castells' work on networks, it becomes apparent that networks are kept alive and active by the shared narrative of the nodes involved. Networked power, as the relational capacity of one actor over another on the basis of structural capacity (Castells, 2011), is central to the functioning of societies since it provides a structure. On the one hand, this structure must be rigid enough to function without the need to be constantly reaffirmed (and thus becoming too inefficient), but at the same time it must provide stability whilst being able to adapt to changing narratives. Networks are created and programmed by the same dynamics that harm and destroy them: violence and language.

5.4 Conclusion

The discussion above shows the apparent oxymoron of violence; despite its obvious destructiveness and ability to create human suffering, it is also a major component of human identity and meaning. This can be seen particularly through violence in its most destructive notion: war. War has been at the centre of society since the earliest tribes emerged, and remains central today. Both violence and war have the ability to create meaning, but since war is not a universal experience (being limited to those who directly experience it), this is most marked with violence, which is universally experienced by all human beings. Continuing this argument runs counter to Arendt's approach, which argues that all violence is illegitimate; to the contrary, violence can be integrative, which is demonstrated by the separation of violence into instrumental, existential and metaphysical components.

The disintegrative dynamics of violence contradicts this assessment and it does so with utmost clarity; when violence is experienced by an individual directly, rather than in an abstract manner, it is nothing but destructive. However, the more remote and abstract violence becomes, the less human beings seem to shy away from it, and the more compliant they are to facilitate violence for their own interests. This can be demonstrated by returning to the example of football fans: in the safety of the group, in a familiar setting, the language, gestures and threats aimed at an opponent group tend to be far more aggressive and ritualistic compared to when two individuals of opposing teams meet in person. Equally, the way past confrontations with supporters of rival teams are discussed differs greatly depending on the situation. In a group setting, the language often mirrors descriptions of war ('battle', 'let's kill them all' or 'we'll cut their throats'), whilst in a setting composing of two individuals, the discussion of past events use language of unfairness, injustice and pain ('they ambushed us', 'they really hurt him bad' or 'if they would have fought like men we would have won') (King, 1997). Human beings cannot isolate themselves from these experiences because, as social animals, we depend on being embedded in a network that links us with others. The links are created and maintained by communication, but this communication is not limited to integrative or positive messages.

"These connections may take many forms: chance encounters, kinship, friendship, common worship, rivalry, enmity, economic exchange, ecological exchange, political cooperation, even military competition. In all such relationships, people communicate information and use this information to guide their future behaviour. They also communicate, or transfer, useful technologies, goods, crops, ideas, and much else. Furthermore, they inadvertently exchange diseases and weeds, items they cannot use but which affects their lives (and deaths) nonetheless. The exchange and spread of such information, items, and inconveniences, and human responses to them, is what shapes history."(McNeill & McNeill, 2003, pp. 3-4).

Violence is simply another form of communication and, just like other forms of communication, exists both as a direct action between two individuals as well as an abstract concept that can be used for other purposes. The more remote the experience of violence becomes, the more it can be used as a tool to increase the inner cohesion, narrative and identity of a network and, in this way, become a metaphysical force that is integrative. On the other side of the coin is the disintegrative function of violence

that is much less abstract and immediate; yet each side greatly depends on the other. The fact that human beings choose to wage war and try to destroy each other's identities and societies has been at the heart of the establishment of states. Those societies who were victorious benefited greatly and were able to promote civil security, benefit from trade and natural resources, increase the prosperity and well-being of its people, establish domestic peace, stability and develop political and legal structures. The price for this was paid in blood and suffering by individuals, and not only by those who were defeated. While states benefit from war (especially when victorious) the individuals who fight them and are most affected by them lose (Morris, 2014). This dichotomy requires deeper analysis: if violence creates meaning then why are human beings so adverse to it?

Chapter 4: Disintegrative Violence

1. Introduction

As discussed above, the utility of violence as a concept lies in its universal experience. Every individual regardless of their age, history, cultural background, political or social affiliation or religion is able to both feel hurt and cause pain in others, including through the perpetration of violence. Pain can be experienced through all moments of life, and is significant in that there is no sensation that can be neatly said to be its opposite. For example, when someone is feeling cold he or she can, in opposition, equally feel warm, or the opposite of feeling tired is feeling awake or alert. This makes pain a very powerful signal in raising alarm and indicating that harm is imminent, or that something is amiss, and that there is a threat to the wellbeing or survival of a person. Violence is therefore one of the most powerful triggers for initiating action to seek to eliminate the cause of pain, or to remove oneself from the situation in which pain is experienced. Pain is the release of neurons by nerve cells that, in turn, cause an electric signal to run along an axon via intersecting synapses to another cell which, in turn, is connected to a vast network of other cells in the human body. Pain differs from other sensory information such as touch, smell or light because of its strength. Even the most primitive organisms appear to feel pain, sharing the same reaction as human beings to an unpleasant sensory stimulation such as blunt force, electric current or heat. Because of the strength of the signal it overrides most other common sensory experiences such as exhaustion, sleep or hunger, and can trigger a reflex that bypasses the consciousness of the individual. It is considered to be one of the most important actors in evolution and behaviour since it causes organisms to try and avoid harmful situations in the future (Berntson & Cacioppo, 2008).

Past pain has been shown to be a component of human communication precisely because it can be communicated, but also because the sensation of pain is not limited to physical sensation, but can also be felt on an emotional basis. Pain is not necessarily caused by a physical trigger - the mental image relating to an unpleasant or threatening experience is sufficient to trigger the same neurological action as a physical sensation. Because violence and pain are experiences that are universal, they

can be communicated to and understood by others – just as any other form of communication, the universality of violence and the pain it can cause is fundamental to mutual understanding. When violence is communicated, it provides an important component for the creation of identity and group cohesion, but can also trigger pain and suffering. This will cause an individual to endeavour to avoid a situation or confrontation.

In contrast to the integrative function of violence, it is also important to analyse the disintegrative function and the effects this can have on human beings, as well as, importantly, on how social networks deal with violence. Particularly important in this context is what Castells calls the “programming of networks [which is] the instructions inscribed in their [the network’s] operating system, and become[s] capable of self-configuration within the parameters of their assigned goals and procedures.”(Castells, 2009, p. 20). Because power and violence are intimately related, they play a fundamental role in human affairs, ranging from intimate affairs to international relations. When and how violence is communicated depends on how individuals deal with the sensation of violence and the ability of human organisations to differ between acceptable and unacceptable forms of violence.

2. Disintegrative Violence

Every single individual first experiences violence in the most private and intimate of settings, the family. Whether as a child who is being disciplined by its parents, or as a result of conflicts between siblings, violence is found in every family in multiple forms: from physical to mental, from being a victim to being a perpetrator, from being an actor to being an on-looker. Violence is used as a method to solve conflicts between individuals, but also between groups, societies and states. However, Gilligan echoes Arendt’s reflection on violence when he states:

“Human violence is much more complicated, ambiguous and, most of all, tragic, than is commonly realized or acknowledged. Much of what has been written about violence, even by those who study it - criminologists, criminal lawyers, forensic psychiatrists, moral philosophers, political scientists, and historians - comes only from the point of view of their own specialties, which

tend to preclude the tragic dimensions of violence. But those who deal with individual violence on a daily basis, judges and lawyers, criminologists and forensic psychiatrists, law-enforcement professionals and prison administrators, are fully aware of how tragic violence is, not only for victims but also for the perpetrators. Yet the conventions of the professional discourse leave little room for the articulation of the tragic point of view, even for those who see the phenomenon itself most clearly.” (Gilligan, 1996, pp. 5-6).

This warrants a deeper study into the tragedy that violence creates, the destruction and suffering it causes and the disintegrating dynamics unleashed by it. While the discussion in the previous chapter shows the power of violence in creating meaning, it remains clear that violence is nevertheless one of, if not the most, destructive of all human behaviours. Any kind of violence that is experienced by an individual and is perceived to lack a narrative that justifies it, is destructive (Blok, 2001). The ‘senseless’ violence that is so often argued to be present when the parties involved do not share the narrative that explains its existence is inconclusive. In other words violence, just like language, always has a purpose (Pinker, 2011). Blok explains the apparent irrationality:

“There are no direct connections between intentionality and the outcome of pragmatic choice, decision-making, active calculating and strategizing of individual actors. This is so because, first, plans and intentions are drawn up in specific historical contexts and cultural settings (which reduces the presumed autonomy of individual actors to zero). Second, plans and intentions, efforts and implementations are mediated, refracted, thwarted, distorted, transformed by powerful cultural forces, human dependencies, contingencies, imponderabilia, and chance.” (Blok, 2001, pp. 3-4).

Equally so the role of organisation, with the prime example being the nation-state, is also overvalued: Weber’s famous analysis of the centrality of violence in the construction and existence of the state is too narrow, since the state is only a fairly recent invention. The surrender of violence by the people to the organs of the state, with the aim of creating a distinction between illegitimate and legitimate violence (with the ultimate aim of creating a setting in which the state has the absolute monopoly of violence), is intimately tied to the philosophy of the nation state, that itself, is closely linked to the Eurocentric and technologically most advanced countries which supports Blok’s assessment (2001). Furthermore, Weber himself

points out that a monopoly of violence is not necessarily an indicator of the strength and durability of a state: “[...] the masses can nevertheless be decisive for a powerful sentiment of solidarity, in spite of the greatest internal antagonisms” (Weber, 1946, p. 177). This emphasises the earlier argument that violence is not simply a stand-alone experience, but is highly dependent on the wider context, attached narrative and explanation, and the situation in which it is taking place.

2.1 Physical violence, threat and fear

Physical pain is a sensation that all human beings both cause and experience at an early stage in their life, and this experience is so powerful a memory that, later, the simple threat of using violence has a similar effect in shaping behaviour. The link between analogue and digital, between physical and abstract, between direct experience and later narration is created by the earlier actual physical experience of violence. The importance of this is demonstrated by the fact that in many jurisdictions, not only is the physical act of violence a crime, but to threaten violence is also a crime with equally weighty penalties. When faced with the threat of violence, human beings alter their behaviour before they are physically hurt, and even seek to avoid becoming the victim of the mere threat in the first place: “People need protection against physical threats, and protection often takes the form of counter violence.” (Blok, 2001, p. 9). Extending this thought. i.e. that the threat of violence is sufficient to alter or influence behaviour on a universal level, highlights the difficulty in determining when violence is a creative force that constructs identity and meaning, and when violence is negative and purely destructive in nature. The originating act itself becomes secondary and violence takes centre-stage.

This difficulty was the cause for James Gilligan, a psychologist who worked extensively with violent criminals, to try to find out why these individuals could commit crimes that the vast majority of a society could not comprehend, to the extent that they would be labelled as ‘inhumane beasts’ or ‘monsters’. Gilligan discovered that a vast majority of these individuals had, earlier in their life, been victim to mistreatment, grave injustice or violence. If these experiences are grave and sustained enough they can create neuronal and behavioural changes that can lead the individual

to commit atrociously violent acts against themselves, animals and human beings for reasons that, to themselves, make sense. For the wider society, and very often even the immediate families and friends of the perpetrator, these extremely violent acts are incomprehensible and shocking, especially since they were invariably inflicted with remarkable calm and peace. This kind of behaviour is often used as an additional indicator of the 'inhumane nature' of such individuals. Interestingly, however, there appears to be a strong popular interest in individuals who are able to hurt and kill others. While in some circumstances, such as wars, the perpetrators of these acts are considered to be selfless heroes, when similar acts are committed in other circumstances, especially those Gilligan describes, the individuals are considered to be the exact opposite. Yet how Gilligan regards the behaviour of wider society is fascinating when he writes: "The "pornography of violence" - the sensationalizing of violence - is a means that by which we distance ourselves from it, perhaps render it less frightening and more manageable by reducing it to the dimension of titillation and entertainment" (Gilligan, 1996, p. 30). Another angle for analysis is the propensity of violence to denote tragedy. We watch and observe suffering not because of a somewhat morbid *Schadenfreude*, but because we are fascinated with the unknown that may await us. The continuing attraction of Greek tragedies and Shakespearean dramas to audiences is explained by Nuttal as an attempt to improve our ability to "understanding in advance thereal horrors we may meet" (Nuttal, 1996, p. 104). The emotion of empathy may not be caused by a subconscious attempt to understand more about suffering that may lie in the future. The curiosity that all human beings display helps us to understand our environment better and, in this way, may increase our chances of survival. However, because this behaviour is largely subconscious, few are aware of it. This lack of awareness is why audiences are often unable to state why they observe murder trials or watch a play beyond feeling emotionally 'touched' by it, but the depiction of violence makes it difficult to look away. Viewed at home from the safe distance of the television or computer screen, stories and images allow the observer a close and intimate look into other people's tragedies. Geographical or linguistic differences do not hinder the relay. Violence and suffering is known by all human beings just as language is; what prevents understanding is not the inability to communicate but a differing of grammar. Just as a sadistic murderer may be unable to relate the motivations for his crime to the audience, so people who speak different languages are incapable of understanding

each other through the spoken word. This inability is not caused by the absence of communication, but the absence of a shared grammar or structure to the communication. What continues to keep violence central to communication is its dual function as a means of direct and one-on-one action. For example, the primary function of a police officer using his baton against a demonstrator may be to prevent the person from entering a building. The secondary function is that this instance of the use of violence is then transmitted to others. In the first instance, violence is a method of direct action and involves the harming, or at least risk of harm, to a human being. In the second instance, violence becomes an abstract tool to transmit a message; because the description or imagery of violence is able to 'touch' the audience, it is a very powerful means of creating a reaction; as described earlier the 'pornography of violence' makes it difficult for observers to look away (Nuttal, 1996, p. 104).

In the secondary instance of the function of violence, technology plays a much bigger role than in the primary. Weapons to cause harm and pain may have evolved greatly in the course of human evolution but in their function and application they remain elementary: all they need to do is to hurt or kill. In contrast, in the secondary instance technological developments, especially in news media, have greatly changed the nature of the function, while the reaction of the audience remained largely stable. Stories of violence, imagery of war and of victims of aggression can now be relayed in real-time from and to virtually every place in the world, but the emotional reaction of the audience is the same as ever because the very image of violence is all that is needed to fascinate the audience.

The technology may continue to change but the underlying dynamics remain the same: the primary function of violence carries only a very limited message - its aim is to force or elicit certain behaviour. With the secondary function of violence this is much more convoluted, since its abstract nature, that of a message, demands a narrative to be attached. A newsreel depicting a police officer wielding his baton at a person needs to be accompanied by further information. Just as sound and grammar are the mere tools for spoken and written language to carry a message, violence is a tool to relay a narrative. Similarly, and as pointed out earlier, it is the surrounding network that determines both grammars; the spoken and written one as well as that of violence. Castells would call this the 'programme' of a network and this is of

fundamental importance: depending on the message, the bat-wielding police officer becomes either the protector of law and order – and in this sense the violence he uses is considered integrative – or he represents the brutal force employed by an unjust authority – the violence is disintegrative. In both cases the situation, the actors, the recording and the violence involved remain the same, yet the programming determines the outcome.

Returning to James Gilligan's work on violent criminals, we can use this to demonstrate that the same crime could either trigger demands by the audience for the strongest possible prosecution of the accused, or conversely trigger compassion and support for a person perceived as acting not because he is inherently evil but instead has himself, in earlier times, been made a victim (Gilligan, 1996). This underlines the communicative act of violence: as with spoken language it depends on the environment (in other words the 'programme of the network') as to how that violence is ultimately judged and regarded.

2.2 The tendency of violence becoming perpetual

The major distinction between non-violent forms of communication and violent forms is the possible finality of the outcome: a disagreement addressed with words is far more likely to end in a compromise, or a continuation of the disagreement at a later stage. All parties to a conflict will remain active and involved, and where the disagreement cannot be solved with a compromise, either continue to interact or one side will eventually accept defeat and withdraw. Countering this approach is the seeking of an outcome through the use of violence; not only does physical pain increase the urgency of the matter - the use of violence is far stronger in provoking an reaction than the use of words – but the use of violence also introduces the risk that the conflict escalates until one or several of the parties involved are killed. In the dramatic escalation of a conflict that shifts from non-violent to violent communication, it is often observed that the initial issue that instigated the conflict becomes entirely secondary, and that the mutual pain replaces it as the driving force underpinning the conflict. The relatives of victims of violent crimes, as well as the wider community, often call for retaliation and revenge to be taken against an

(alleged) perpetrator, and considerations that concern the mental health and responsibility of the executioner are often not simply rejected, but are viewed as a further insult to the victim (Gilligan, 1996).

The question of rationality of human behaviour in this regard is futile, since the perpetrators would argue that their acts are rational and justified. The question of what kinds of violence are justified and which are not, or the question of which uses of violence are integrative and which are disintegrative, depends on moral considerations that are easily dominated by reference to the 'common good' and at the expense of the individual. The atrocities committed by Nazi Germany against individuals as part of the Holocaust were argued not only to be morally justified, but even necessary in order to protect the German people against the threat of the so-called enemies. It wasn't only political bodies that supported this ideology, but also religious bodies and, most remarkably, the supposedly most rational actors found in science and industry (Bauman, 2000). Here, again, the link to integrative violence is obvious: violence was committed predominately because there was a threat against the wider network, but also in order to strengthen the heterogeneity of the group and the influence of the nodes that Castells calls 'programmers' and 'switchers'. That this debate has not come to a final conclusion is evident in the recent question of the legality of the use of torture against individuals who are suspected to be involved with terrorist attacks – again, violence is argued to be justified because there is a threat against the wider societal group.

3. Accepted and rejected cases of violence

Returning to Sen, he disputes the existence of rational choice in identity creation and regards the attempts to predict an individual's behaviour based on his or her identity as gratuitous. By studying numerous examples of violent conflict, Sen concludes that the existence of different identities and narratives is not enough to explain every incident of violence; there are far more examples of human beings with different religions, political and social convictions and identities living peacefully together. On the contrary, the latter vastly exceeds the former. Furthermore, he argues that under moral and rational considerations violence can never be justified (2006). However, as

the debate on the legality of torture of individuals linked to terrorism shows, this argument is not always taken into account. To declare a 'War on Terror' was, for the Bush Administration, a rational decision following the attacks of 9/11 but the methods and tactics employed turned out to be counterproductive - they were not only ultimately unable to 'defeat' terrorism, but they also permitted other actors to justify their violent actions by referring to the US' behaviour.

Bauman makes a further point in relation to the European nation-states which are argued to have very successfully turned the repulsions individuals have against violence into a virtual elimination of violence from daily life. Instead, they have securely anchored the legal and unquestionable monopoly of its use in the authorities, or in Bauman's words: "Daily manners mellowed mainly because people are now threatened with violence in case they are violent - with violence they cannot match or reasonably hope to repel." (Bauman, 2000, p. 229). Here he should have clarified his position, since this argument only refers to violence that is not accepted as part of the narrative or programme; the societies that Bauman is describing are still prone to violence much more than Bauman's "[...] somewhere in the wings [of society] violence is stored" (Bauman, 2000, p. 228). In sports in particular, violence is not only accepted but often a fundamental component. For example, in the sport of boxing, competitors are both voluntarily the perpetrator and victim of violence. For many of the football fans mentioned earlier, violence is more important a component than their interest in the game itself. Additionally, computer games and movies, as well as literature and news media, are full of violence and violent imagery.

4. Violence as programme

These observations need to be included in the analysis of networks: whether and how a human being will act, both consciously and unconsciously, to the observation of a violent act depends on the programming of the network. For example, in many cases of domestic violence the victim remains convinced that the pain she or he is subjected to is justified and deserved; even extreme attacks are often forgiven despite the victim being released from the fear of potential further attacks or reprisals. So, here, the node

acts this way because the surrounding network is programmed to create such behaviour.

This discussion shows that every human being can relate to violence because they have experienced it from an early stage in their life. When a small child falls and is hurt, the sensation of pain triggers a neuronal process that is geared towards self-preservation. The same self-preservation process is that which makes people resort to using violence when they feel threatened by another human being or situation. A small child will look for support and protection from the parents or known family members and, equally, the parents or family members will protect and support the child. This protection and support stems from communication, which can take many forms, including violence. For example, the parent may use violence, or the threat of violence, to prevent the child from placing him or herself in a dangerous situation, and so a violent act is committed for the common good. The child will also observe the communication occurring within its family and, where it observes cases of domestic violence (as a form of communication), will assume that committing such violent acts is a normal and acceptable form of behaviour. This kind of observation amounts to what Castells calls 'programming' (2009, p. 20), since it influences how a node interacts with the networks it is linked to.

What makes Castells' work so valuable in this context is his approach to how networks are being programmed and re-programmed, in other words how actions are being interpreted and relayed, and especially under the light of growing technological developments. Individuals interact with their environment with the aim of satisfying their personal needs and, by accessing information, to improve their ability to make decisions. The language they use for this depends on the sources they connect with; a Spanish speaker will most likely predominately use Spanish but there are numerous nuances that will depend on the location, age, profession and social background as well as the source's characteristics. The programming of this communication is based on a shared approach to grammar and words that is largely not superimposed on the actors, but changes and adapts to their needs. Furthermore, vocal languages can be learned - for example a native speaker of Spanish will be able to learn Arabic, in relation to which the most successful means would be immersion into an entirely Arabic-speaking environment - and over time different languages that come into

contact with each other start to share and exchange expressions and forms of grammar (Castells, 2011).

Violence performs in a similar way: its grammar and message is dependent on the programme in order to be functional. It means that a punch can be a form of friendly greeting between two adolescents, a part of a boxing match or a fist fight that will end with the death of one of the fighters. The difference is found in the condition that, because of its universality and relative simplicity, violence easily dominates a situation by having an immediate effect that is then interpreted by the actors depending on the narrative of the situation. Because violence is so universal, easy to employ and highly reactive, it is an important tool for the structure of societies that exist in order to protect the individual from threats of all kind. In order to function, societies are based on the maintenance of a certain power structure that has great influence on the programme of this network.

Benjamin Ginsberg (Ginsberg, 2013) argues that violence is the most fundamental tool for the creation and upkeep of these structures. There are four factors that make violence the source of political power:

1. Violence usually dominates all other forms of political action. Insurgencies aimed at altering or overthrowing the existing order are generally more successful when employing violence, and once they dominate the discourse they can often only be overthrown themselves by violence as in contrast to elections, opinion polls or other form of political expression.
2. Violence, or the mere threat of it, because of its centrality in human existence, tends to dominate the political agenda. Following its emergence other issues are pushed out of the centre of interest. This, for example, is used by terrorists who aim to elevate their cause into a global debate in order to raise awareness for their cause.
3. Depending on the level of intensity, violence either helps to maintain the status quo, or transforms or destroys it. Police may use batons and teargas against demonstrators in order to prevent them voicing their opposition. While

the police may be successful in achieving this goal, the same violence can also help to create solidarity within the demonstrators themselves but also with the audience of other members of a society. The more violent and prolonged a conflict becomes, the more it forces the dominating actors to transform.

4. Violence can serve as a catalyst for political mobilisation. Small skirmishes and demonstrations in eastern Libya led to increasingly widespread actions of the people against the existing political order, ultimately culminating in the overthrow and replacement of the government with most of its order and bureaucracy within a very short time. (Ginsberg, 2013, p. ch. 1).

Violence is a dynamic that creates, maintains and acts as a catalyst for the evolution of social networks. On the one hand it functions as a force that creates meaning and guidance for individuals and a feeling of community, as war journalist Chris Hedges' aptly named book "War Is a Force that Gives Us Meaning" describes (Hedges, 2003). On the other hand, it is the most destructive form of human behaviour. It is responsible for the destruction of life, property, rape, and torture and is responsible for an indeterminate amount of pain, suffering and injustice. The same violence that brings a band of fighters closer together separates families and destroys communities, just as a match of rugby unites a team but may cause severe injury to a player.

5. When is violence accepted?

Castells errs when he assumes that destructive violence only emerges when there is no common language (2009, p. 37), since he limits his definition of 'communication' to spoken language. Since violence is also a form of communication, the dynamics within networks cannot be understood without its inclusion. If the programme of a network relies on the use of violence for whatever reason then this will have an impact on the surrounding nodes. Football hooligans, for example, may be separated into different groups of networks depending on their affiliation to a team, but since all of them are also nodes within a wider 'hooligan network' they share violence as means of communication. Thus, the connection between the fans of rival teams relies on violence rather than spoken language. This violence, and the resulting negative

consequences, then creates the link with public security officials such as the police. The complexity of the situation becomes apparent when two rival groups of hooligans are confronted by the police since, in many cases, the police are considered to be even more of an enemy than the rival group. Different in this case is not the use of violence, but the context or narrative it is being used in. Often, the internet is involved and used to organise temporary alliances between rival groups against a shared foe, coordinate fights and display footage of clashes (Campbell, 15 July 2001). While only a small faction of football enthusiasts supports violent behaviour, the impact of their actions is felt across the whole sport with enormous costs to clubs, who lose revenue from non-violent supporters staying away from matches, to the taxpayers, for policing, and to the general public, who are affected by the destruction of property. The use of violence by hooligans is their dominant form of communication, but this alienates them from all other football supporters because those supporters do not share this form of communication or language. The extent of the use of violence as a form of communication, often amplified through the use of media and the internet, is so powerful that the simple threat of it causes a reaction: the constant threat that hooligans may attend a match is sufficient for many families to choose to follow a game on the television, rather than enter the stadium itself.

The example of sport is also helpful when explaining the cultural dimension of the use of violence: rugby or boxing are sports that are, by definition, violent with athletes often being hurt, yet these sports are considered by some of the least violent societies as a positive and inspiring activity. The violence in these sports endures, due to both their formal and informal codification; and this is in strong contrast to the violence used by some of its supporters. Additionally, violence used by the competitors outside of the agreed rules and norms, for example by hitting certain parts of the body in a boxing bout or by directly kicking an opponent in a rugby match, are punished not only because of the existence of a referee and a regulatory authority, but by the awareness that while some forms of violence are acceptable, or even beneficial and necessary, other forms are not. This is not limited to physical violence, but also to spoken language and gestures. Because violence has these two distinct forms, i.e. acceptable and unacceptable, it carries the dual function of immediate and interpretative forms. When sporting events are described as ‘epic battles’, then the analogies with war emerge – they are deliberate. The opponent has to be ‘crushed’

and deserves nothing but ‘an annihilating defeat’ despite the fact that he or she can be an old friend of close acquaintance who has lived in the same town or area and speaks the same language.

This often sudden rupture of identity in which the distinction between friend and foe, between insider and outsider, ally and opponent may, in the case of a sporting event, only be temporary and applicable only in the limited context of it, yet it is but a mirror of what happens in the onset of violent conflicts. Especially civil wars, in which friends and families may find themselves divided by the battle lines only become possible after the programme of the network has been altered in a way in which ‘the other’ is being created and made into an entity that has less or no value in contrast to those who are considered to belong to one’s own group. Returning to Coker’s analysis of war having not only instrumental and existential reasons, but also playing an important metaphysical role shows why the latter can easily dominate the discourse – the ability to create and alter meaning and narrative is found in violence (Coker, 2008).

This behaviour may sound, especially to a post-modern mind, alien and extreme. The thought of de-humanising a fellow human being and establishing and maintaining a system of behaviour that has the explicit aim of the extinction of ‘the other’ appears perverted and un-human, or inhumane. Yet, the underlying dynamic has always been a part of human behaviour. Human creativity, curiosity and the ability to remember the past and reflect on events, forces the individual to make sense of a situation that appears to be out of control; to explain – even if it is only to ones self – why and how an event could, and did, happen. Distant events, chance, complexity and everything that is unknown or appears incomprehensible to the observer, requires an explanation and narrative that enables the individual to make sense of his or her world. Human beings are driven in their aim of discovering timeless truths that present themselves as instructions of how to live and how to make sense of events that are out of reach for the individual (both geographically and physically – for example the stars in the sky, or death). Karen Armstrong struggles in her attempts to draw the line between a materially more sophisticated life that is built on *logos* and rationality which strives to question everything and advertises a life in which choices are made by basing them on verified facts on the one hand, and on the other the continuing susceptibility of

mankind to myth and the inexplicable: “[...] logos had never been able to provide human beings with the sense of significance that they seemed to require.”(Armstrong, 2005, p. 122). How thin and flexible the boundary between logos and myth is becomes apparent in Zygmunt Bauman’s *Modernity and the Holocaust*: an educated, modern, non-isolated community readily accepts an ideology based on evidence that is remarkably easy to discredit, and did not, and does not now, hold up to slightest form of *logos* or rationality. However, its followers are willing to commit unspeakable crimes and murder in its name (Bauman, 1989).

The Holocaust was made possible not by a change in human behaviour, genetic make-up or technological or scientific developments, but by a change in programming: the minister of propaganda Joseph Goebbels was able, through speeches, newspapers, cinema and heavily promoted private radio sets to reprogram the behaviour of most Germans. Suddenly, it seemed, the culprit for all that was wrong had been found and the severity of the situation not only justified, but demanded, the most severe punishment for those labelled as responsible. As it was argued by the Nazis, “they” had started a war of extermination on Germany. The enemy, so the Nazis believed, was so wicked that they only operated clandestinely and dishonourably, and thus operated hidden from the general public (Herf, 2006). The pseudo-science employed by the Nazis was full of errors, it was irrational, had conceptual flaws and none of the evidence presented was able to withstand scrutiny, yet it became the basis for systematic violence and genocide. What the Nazis had done was to establish a programme that made violence acceptable, with the Holocaust being the most extreme case. In education, labour, the penal system and ultimately war, violence became so normal and accepted that only the complete destruction of the German political, social and economic system was able to alter this programming. Even then, it took the catastrophe of the Second World War to do so. Thus we see that it is not violence per se that is irrational and abnormal, but the programme of a network that fails to distinguish between acceptable and unacceptable forms. In wars, but especially in civil wars, violence appears, especially to an outsider, as irrational and perverse as the atrocities committed by the Nazis. The difficulty of distinguishing acceptable and unacceptable forms of violence supports the argument that lies at the heart of Stathis Khalyvas’ work on the logic of violence in civil wars.

6. Civil Wars

Khalyvas points out that the violence in civil wars appears to be irrational and illogic because if, for example, Sunnis are killing Shiites in the Iraqi civil war, then why can Sunnis and Shiites live together in, for example, the city of London without using violence against each other? What matters here are the rules and codes in the differing situations, in the same way as the role of rules and regulations in sports: they codify and sanction violence and how it is to be used in certain situations. Every sport has its own codification and set of rules and regulations, and every network has its own way of dealing with violence.

Fundamental to the distinction between integrative and disintegrative violence is whether violence is the only form of communication. For example, without other shared forms of communication such as language, norms and rituals, a rugby game is not a sports competition but a violent brawl to which non-participants have great difficulty in relating. The direct violence found in this brawl is the same as that found between two antagonistic groups with a strong internal cohesion - without this they would be unable to defend themselves against the violent attacks of the other team - and both antagonistic groups are connected by the violence that they use against each other. In this case, the violence plays such a dominating role that all of the participants are strongly influenced and defined by it. The links between the individuals involved which connect them to their team mates are strengthened to a remarkable extent, up to the point at which an individual is willing to sacrifice his or her life for the other. In order to survive, the members of one team have to trust each other blindly and communicate effectively and reliably. Parallel to this, the links to the antagonist only relay violence that results in a self-perpetuating dynamic, out of which the only escape appears to be the complete annihilation of the other group. The threat of becoming a victim to the violence, or even the experience of violence at the hand of the other, becomes the dominating narrative for the metaphysical, or identity of every individual involved. Finally, the links to any node that is outside this immediate confrontation, are strained, since the fight between the two antagonistic groups does not appear rational and the violence within horrifies the outsider.

Amartya Sen argues that it is this dynamic that lies at the heart of the existence of violent conflict, and that a harmonious world lies in the plurality of human identity

(Sen, 2006). If the word 'identity' is substituted with 'network', then Castells' analysis of the power of networks can be applied; only when an individual is free of the fear of becoming a victim of violence, then the communication power Castells talks about can be utilised, and only when an individual is living free without immediate existentialist threats will he be able to create and maintain links with nodes that are outside the immediate group. These dynamics run both ways, since violent acts need a justification. The violence in civil wars, for example as Kalyvas shows, is only remotely connected to the overall explanation that is given for the conflict (Kalyvas, 2006). The power relations that Castells talks about are what fuels individuals to try and maximise their influence and resources, and in order to do so they resort to violence which, in turn, is justified by connecting it to a greater narrative. For example, if Sunnis and Shiites are somehow predetermined to use violence against each other, then why does this only happen in the Iraqi civil war but not in the city of London or New York that is home to large number of both? Or if Muslims and Jews are 'supposed' to kill each other, how could they share the same regions in Persia and Morocco for centuries?

This comes down to the often asked question of whether there will be an end to war. For those who live in post-modern societies, it is demanded that the answer to this question is a clear 'yes'. Violence must be minimised and should only exist in a tightly codified context, seen by the continuing attempts to further tighten the restrictions on when violence is judged to be acceptable and/or necessary. Even the use of threatening and insulting language is increasingly restricted, because this form of coercion is considered inappropriate and harmful not only in relation to the individuals involved, but in relation to society at large. What is overlooked in this context is how recent many of these developments are. This is because the abstract use of violence in the narration of history allows for a very selective use. Societies often evoke wars and great battles as a means of telling their great and glorious past, creating cohesion and solidarity in the present and future. Schmidt and Cohen argue that much of the future's battles may move online because harassment of opponents is cheap and perceived to be much less a risk for prosecution or physical punishment by authorities than in the analogue sphere. It also opens another battlefield: "Modern communication technologies enable both the victims and the aggressors in a given conflict to cast doubt on the narrative of the other side more persuasively than with

any media in history.” (Schmidt & Cohen, 2013a, p. 190). There are two challenges to this approach: firstly, it only applies to liberal and post-modern societies and, secondly, it will always be tainted by ‘victor’s justice’. This will not change even if the conflict will appear to be predominately fought online since all parties to the conflict will try to destroy any evidence that may imply their involvement in atrocities. Hopes that this will work as a deterrent against barbarous behaviour by the actors involved (Schmidt & Cohen, 2013a) are most likely overly optimistic since the same ‘victor’s justice’ will be at play when assessing and interpreting online data subsequently.

7. Disintegrative violence and network theory

The above analysis demonstrates the corrosive effect of violence on human behaviour, with humans employing violence as a means of altering behaviour and, in this way, power relations. It is erroneous to assume that violence prevents or destroys links between the nodes of networks, but it does shape them. For example, a US soldier in Afghanistan will be embedded in a network that links him with insurgents who aim to destroy the Afghan government allied to the US. Their connection is defined by violence rather than spoken language but, nonetheless, there is a connection which most analyses of networks in a theoretical setting fail to examine. For example, Miles Kahler focuses on the relations of actors in networks with the twin conception. Firstly, he looks at ‘networks as structures’, which aims to provide a map of how nodes are linked to each other, with the aim of showing power relationships. Secondly, he examines ‘networks as actors’, focusing on how networks, in contrast to hierarchical organisations, provide an explanation for policy outcomes (Kahler, 2009). This approach works well in a setting where the links between nodes in a network are based on a mutual agreement to cooperate or, in other words, in a setting in which two actors decide on their own terms that they can mutually benefit by communicating.

This is mirrored by most other studies on the dynamics and functions of networks. For example, friendships in karate clubs (D. R. White & Harary, 2001), the marketing of a novel (Leskovec, Lada, & Huberman Bernardo, 2007), or the strength of relations in a

social network (Freeman, 1992). What each of these studies have in common is that they focus on how people create and maintain networks where it is in their interest to do so. Even Berg Harpviken in his study of social networks in refugee communities in Afghanistan, focuses on the dynamics within a social group faced with a threat coming from what is perceived to be 'the outside'. The study does not include in its scope the fact that the individuals in the refugee networks are linked to perpetrators by violence (2009). Castells himself also places the active and intentional communication between individuals at the centre of his approach to the study of networks and their dynamics (Castells, 2010b, 2011).

Because violence in all its forms has a strong impact on human behaviour, it also greatly affects how networks behave. The US soldier in Afghanistan feels threatened by the possibility of being harmed by an insurgent because he is placed in the same situation and geographic environment which has an impact on their behaviour. The same soldier will approach a situation he perceives to be dangerous or threatening in a distinctively different way in Afghanistan compared to when he is on leave in the US or elsewhere, for example. The difference here is the distinction between different programmes: in Afghanistan violence is so dominant that the soldier will be far more likely refer to violent and aggressive behaviour than in the US, where the violence will have a much weaker ascendancy over non-violent forms of communication.

Due to the potentially existential threats faced by an individual in Afghanistan on a daily basis, his or her behaviour will differ greatly from that of someone elsewhere. This behaviour is determined not predominately by the character of the individual, but by the situation he or she is faced with. In this regard, network theory requires a more extensive study of how violence behaves in networks and its impact. For example, this could be achieved by furthering the studies of Anton Blok (2001) and James Gilligan (1996), who focus on what motivates some individuals to commit violent crimes, and how their environment reacts to them. The motivations for individuals to fight in Afghanistan differs and is prone to change; whether a young man decides to join the US military or an insurgent group will depend on their social networks, which are subject to change and adaptation; but once they are embedded in a network in which violence dominates the discourse, they will act with the same form of communication as others in the network, i.e. violence. This makes it possible for the

same individual to be a loving and caring member of a social network on the one hand, and to be a ruthless and determined fighter in another.

8. Conclusion

The violence between rival groups of hooligans makes little sense to an outsider, because the primal and initial reaction to the neuronal sensation of pain is to withdraw and seek to avoid the pain caused by the violence. For the insider (i.e. someone who identifies as a hooligan), however, the dynamics of violence have been so powerful in shaping their identity and behaviour that it has a huge effect on the structure of their networks, and how links are created or prevented from emerging. Because all human beings are able to experience pain, its experience can be shared and related to within social networks. It can even be argued that, on an evolutionary basis, individuals formed groups because of the realisation that others held the same goal of avoiding unpleasant sensations, and that cooperation could help to limit the risk of pain and harm. Equally, human beings are not passive creatures who simply react to their environment, but we also shape and alter it. Human beings are social animals, and relate experiences to each other - this is the basis of communication. Violence, hurt, pain and suffering are universal and very strong emotions and, accordingly, they are important components of communication and behaviour. In general terms, human beings avoid pain and suffering and alter their behaviour in order to prevent the same harmful situation recurring in the future.

As a social creature in a non-violent environment, an individual has multiple identities and is tied into multiple networks with different programmes and behaviours. Once violence becomes an existential threat to the individual, then identities and networks are reduced to the absolute minimum and the creation of many other potential links is impeded. A hooligan would not talk to a member of a rival group, but rather avoid coming into contact with this individual unless there is a clash in which both groups are present, even if this runs counter to their personal interests; both may, for example, have the same profession, education or interest in music and by communicating with each other, they could help each other and mutually benefit.

When applied to the realm of international relations, the role of sports provides three important conclusions: Firstly, violence is a human activity and whether it has positive or negative effects depends on the context, rules and norms of the situation. Violence is as much a component of human communication as spoken or written language, and as a form of the flows or messages that are found in a social network, it has to be included in order to understand the dynamics or 'programme' of the network. When violence becomes the only form of communication, then it can only be destructive and will cause harm - human beings organise themselves in networks precisely to avoid the threat of becoming a victim of violent acts. Not only does human progress depend on the existence of a network that is programmed to codify violence and protect the individual from arbitrarily suffering from the actions of those who have the strongest capacity to cause hurt and pain (Hobbes, 1960), but also human nature compels the individual to create meaning in their existence. This is done via communicating with others, by creating a narrative that is shared and reflected upon, and as Girard points out, the origin of religions lies in the desire to control and channel violence; or in other words, to prevent forms of violence that have the power to destroy communities while regulating other forms of violence. The acceptable forms are those where violence is used to strengthen the narrative of a community or network (2007).

Secondly, violence has both positive and negative effects; it is positive when it is constructive and integrative, and negative when it is destructive and disintegrative. The violence in a boxing bout is positive since it takes place in a network that is programmed to codify the violence that is taking place within it. The athletes measure themselves in a fair and controlled manner that is full of rituals such as the ring, the bell, the boxing gloves and the names for different punches. The neutrality of the referee and the fairness of the two boxers is assumed by both competitors, because in their absence both boxers could seriously injure or even kill the other. In the sphere of international relations, the same applies: nations and groups compete with each other for resources, or simply over the strength of the narrative that keeps their networks coherent and unified. The simple existence of violent sports and the rhetoric that is used in virtually all forms of competition points to the natural role violence plays. Similarly to this, military parades, manoeuvres and rhetoric are only the modern form of traditional group behaviour in which uniformity of dress, movement and martial

gestures plays the important twin role of defending territory and resources, as well as strengthening the inner cohesion of a group or society (Keegan, 1993).

Thirdly, violence is a form of communication similar to spoken language. As much as language only works as a form of communication when there are shared norms of grammar and lexis, so does violence depend on a narrative or structure. Language without norms is simply sounds with no meaning, and violence without a context is equally nonsensical. Violence depends on the existence of a narrative and explanation, but very often the explanation only appears to make sense to the perpetrator. The demonisation of violence as such is counterproductive, since it defines the relationship between the perpetrator and the victim. Just as language does not function without agreed grammar, syntax and lexis (all of which are constantly evolving and adapting to the changing needs and realities) so does violence require a narrative and context in which it manoeuvres and interacts.

The need for network theory to include violence as a dynamic is fundamental because it includes human behaviour that is against the initial understanding of 'networking', but that is inherent. While at first sight, individual nodes connect and remain connected because they share a common interest and language that allows them to cooperate and create a mutually beneficial outcome, at the same time there is potential for conflict over resources and narratives. Human cooperation is as much a natural phenomenon as human conflict, which means that an understanding of networks must include not only the dynamics that create and maintain links, but also those that corrode and prevent links. The difficulty in this aspect is that violence appears initially only as a behaviour that is counterproductive, but as the discussion above shows, violence is actually also crucial in creating and strengthening other links between nodes. The shared experience of violence, both as a ritual and sacrifice, and in fights, battles and competitions is a very important component in the creation of a narrative and meaning. When Castells writes about the 'programme' that lies at the heart of a network, he has to include all forms of human communication, both constructive and destructive, or integrative and disintegrative. This highlights that network theory, and the understanding of the dynamics in social networks, needs to address not only vocal forms of communication, but all forms of human behaviour.

In a civil war, the 'programme' of the network is dominated by the existence of violence. The identities and narratives that explain and shape the conflict are determined by this form of communication, with its very specific impact on how the links between nodes are created, facilitated and removed. This means that in order to diminish the disintegrative effects of violence, and to increase the integrative results of this form of communication, the programme has to be altered from within the network itself. The key here is that this can be, and is, done without all actors referring to violence in their attempt to either alter or contain the status quo of the programme. There are other ways to re-programme a network that do not rely on violence or, at least, minimise it. Civil disobedience, strikes, demonstrations and boycotts are only some of the methods that are successfully used to confront opponents and either force or prevent change. Paradoxically, in these tactics, often the fear of becoming the victim of violence brings the group closer together, creates identity and increases cohesion and cooperation. The internet, as well as other information and communication technologies, facilitates this process, but also promises to render the group's effort more effective by providing possibly global links, and by opening up venues for information, resources, publications and fund raising.

Chapter 5: Lebanon

1. Introduction

The Lebanese civil war which rocked the country from 1975-1990 (the “Civil War”) is an indicator of how violent and non-violent forms of communication are found in networks, and how these networks shape the domestic and international relations of the country. Lebanon is home to a multitude of different groups or networks that are centered around, for example, historic, ethnic, religious and professional identities, and while its territory has been settled for millennia it has only been an independent country since 1943. With fertile soil, well-established trade hubs, comparatively high levels of education and good infrastructure the country became a regional and global hub that provided a bridge between the oil exporting countries and countries that offered consumer goods, technology and services.

In this regard it is fascinating to study Lebanon, not only because of the sheer number of different networks and identities, but because it also reveals the dynamics that dominate them. Especially in the light of violent and non-violent forms of communication, Lebanon has been in the past and present the place where cooperation and confrontation defy the assumptions of many. Liberal commentators, for example, would argue that the existence of many different identities provides the basis for exchange, cooperation and development in which interaction creates value for all. According to a more conservative view, on the same indicators the country is prone to conflict, and even a breakdown. When looking back at the eighty years of Lebanon’s history since independence both camps can find ample evidence for their position, with that produced by the camp predicting anarchy and a pessimistic future for peace and non-violence being convincing:

‘Lebanon and the city of Beirut are microcosms of our cockeyed world - an incredibly complex mosaic of religions, ethnicities, and ideologies that’s fractured by culture, political interest, and economic disparity. Shiite and Sunni Muslims, Druze, and Maronite Christians - seventeen different sects in all - are packed together in a land that has few natural resources and that’s rife with ancient rivalries and enmity. Lebanon sits at the intersection of East and

West, Islam and Christianity, and the rich and poor worlds. It's also squeezed between dangerous neighbors: to the north and east lies Syria, an avaricious meddler, and to the south is Israel, an insecure regional superpower. In 1975, the combination of internal and external stresses proved too much, and the country spiraled into a fifteen-year civil war that cost 150,000 lives and reduced much of Beirut to rubble. The day I arrived in the city, everyone was talking about whether the country would slide back into that horror.' (Homer-Dixon, 2006, pp. 298-299)

Today does not look much different and especially the political and civil unrest that is taking place in the wider region continues to fuel the feeling of insecurity and instability in Lebanon. The civil war in neighbouring Syria is no longer a Syrian domestic affair but includes religious extremists declaring the aim of establishing an Islamic caliphate that includes the entire Levant. Arms and supplies are purchased by the emirates in the Arabian Gulf and channeled through Lebanon to factions opposing President Assad in Syria which has led to Syrian incursions and has divided much of Lebanon into supporters and opponents of Assad. Refugees have poured into Lebanon and Turkey straining social services and providing an enormous resource of illegal but cheap labour on expense of the local population. In the south the conflict between Israel and Hamas flares up on a regular basis leading many in southern Lebanon to voice their support of Hamas that is accused by many to be a terrorist organisation. Domestically the global economic turmoil that emerged in 2008 has increased unemployment and destitution further straining an already fragile and fragmented social net. Finally property speculation and real estate investments are blamed for a substantial increase in living costs in the major urban centres, but growing un- and underemployment in the rural areas continue to fuel continuous waves of urbanisation.

There exists a large number of volumes of academic works on Lebanon and the Lebanese Civil War, presenting different explanations for the descent of the country into violence. Harris blames the elites and influential families that projected their conflicts and scheming over the entire population (Harris, 2012). Firro largely agrees with this analysis but argues that colonial and post-colonial Europe supported the different factions with the aim of maintaining their influence in the region (Firro,

2003). Other authors, for example Tom Najem, go even further and claim that it the reason for Lebanon's tumultuous history and present solidly lie in the actions of regional powers which use Lebanon as the staging ground for their conflicts (Najem, 2012). Imad Salamey blames the domestic sphere divided along sectarian lines and international conflicts that are fought out on Lebanese soil for having prevented the emergence of a strong and unifying Lebanese identity able to consolidate and stabilise the country's groups (Salamey, 2014). Other, perhaps less academic accounts, see evidence for organised crime colluding with intelligence services as force that perpetually destabilises the country and manipulates the public (Blanford, 2006). In contrast to this Sune Haugbolle presents a well-researched study that highlights how Lebanese themselves were struggling during and after the war in trying to explain its origins and course. He proclaims that precisely the absence of a clear, credible and systemic narrative for the Civil War not only helps the process of conciliation and healing, but also helps to prevent a recurrence of the conflict (Haugbolle, 2010).

All these observers are trying to present a convincing explanation for the Lebanese Civil War. Most likely in an attempt to not only decipher why the war broke out, what happened during the fighting and how it ended, but also with the aim of by eliminating the causes preventing its resurgence. Yet they all fail in answering an apparently simple question that emerges in every civil war: how could people that have often for generations lived together all of a sudden turn against each other with unparalleled viciousness and hatred, and subsequently – and perhaps even more challenging – how could they cease their violent confrontations and learn to share the same geographic, social and political space again?

2. The Civil War

What stands out in the history of the country is the experience of the violent and destructive civil war that plagued and devastated the country from 1975 until 1990. Some 120,000 people lost their life in the fighting, thousands more were made homeless and had to flee the country, vast parts of major cities and infrastructure was destroyed and the political, social and commercial system of the country broke down.

Yet at a closer look the Lebanese Civil War reveals that there is no clear, neat and understandable explanation based simply on religious and ethnic rivalries or the gulf between rich and poor. Neither the outbreak of the armed hostilities, nor the progression of the war, nor the end of it can be explained by reference to the description provided above: the many different sectarian groups had lived in the territory for a great number of generations, and there were many points in which different groups and identities had interacted and interconnected. The distinction between rich and poor had existed for a long time and was not exacerbated enough to account for such a complete societal breakdown. Education, health care and employment were improving and, for the majority of Lebanese, this did translate into their daily lives. Finally, while the Levantine region and the wider Middle East were experiencing large-scale wars and conflicts - for example between Syria, Israel and Egypt, or between Israel and the Palestinian Liberation Organisation - these conflicts were neither a new phenomenon, nor would they cease with the end of the Lebanese Civil War. In other words, as aptly expressed by Picard:

“Towards the latter part of 1990, when the weapons fell silent owing to the utter exhaustion of all military forces and the collapse of the social structure, the hostilities ceased as illogically as they had begun.(Picard, 2002)”

The civil war, or its vicious and destructive nature, can also not be explained by the role of sectarianism in Lebanon and the structure of the political system; the changes seen before and after the Civil War are simply too small and nugatory. In his seminal work *'The Logic of Violence in Civil War'* Stathis Kalyvas points out that the Lebanese Civil War followed patterns of other civil wars: in most cases violence and a perceived existential threat forces individuals to take up an identity that is characterised by two factors . One, an identity that is most promising in providing protection against the perceived threats and, two, one which excludes those who do not adhere to the same single identity. So, rather than multiple identities clashing and, in the wake, causing a large-scale violent conflict, it is the violent conflict itself that causes strict and exclusive alignment of those who find themselves in the middle of it (Kalyvas, 2006).

Many of the most important themes that emerge from the history of the country, such as sectarianism, lack of firm political processes and wider regional instability, tend to be identified as being at the heart of instability and hostility. Those same themes,

however, are at the same time at the heart of Lebanon's prosperity, cultural wealth and why it frequently is referred to as the 'Switzerland of the East'.⁴

This chapter will make the argument that networks exist in Lebanon and that they play a fundamental role, but the significance of this lies elsewhere. It is not the fact that networks exist but how they are structured, how they change, emerge and disappear, and how they interconnect which is fundamental to our understanding of the conflicts that have, and continue to, exist in this diverse country, whose circumstances, setting and history are mirrored in many other places in the world.

The first part of the chapter will analyse a study by Seurat which sought to explain and explain the violence that took place during the Civil War. As demonstrated in the earlier chapters, violence does not exist in a vacuum and even the extreme and vicious violence found in the urban warfare of this Civil War (one which seemed to pit everybody against everybody) allows for observations regarding the narrative of the war to be made. In fact, urban neighbourhoods studied during the war indicate that violence was not an outcome of the reality that different networks were present, but that it was a tool for certain actors within those networks to shape the programming of the networks according to their interests. Castells touches upon the emergence of violence in situations in which the most influential actors believe that they are losing control:

“[...] when their control of communication fails, authoritarian regimes evolve towards their demise, with different levels of violence and human trauma depending on the circumstances of political change.” (Castells, 2009, p. 194).

While Castells is correct in linking the failure of control to the emergence of violence, as demonstrated earlier he too easily argues that violence is the absence of communication, and is automatically destructive or, as he states here, 'evolve[s] towards their demise' (ibid.). The study by Seurat shows that violence did not predate the demise of the authoritarian regime; in other words violence emerged parallel to the regime's perception that it was losing control, not because of this. Thus, violence

⁴ The term was coined by the French travellers Lamartine and Gerard de Nerval to describe and compare the landscape. Later it became a synonym to also describe the banking sector, financial institutions and political structure of a federation of cantons and finally the exploitation of its nature by tourism. See Traboulsi (2007) p.92

determined the communication within and between networks and shaped their programming, i.e. violence molded the purpose and behaviour of the networks.

The second part of this chapter will show that the existence of different networks and identities (according to Castells' this 'networks of networks'(Castells, 2009, p. 73)) has been both beneficial and detrimental for the development of Lebanon. Instead of studying the history of Lebanon as one single and linear timeline it will point out how different networks have determined, and still do determine, the country. This is the case both in the period before and during the Civil War and, in this sense, Lebanon is a great example of how 'networking' can be both advantageous and detrimental.

The third and final part of this chapter will argue that it is not the existence of networks per se that causes violence to emerge, but the centrality of the programming of the networks that determines their form of communication, and whether this is a violent form or otherwise. Since the programming of networks is largely invisible to the observer, he becomes convinced that it is the networks themselves (such as those ethnic or religious networks discussed above), which are much more visible, that create an unstable situation which will therefore lead to Lebanon again breaking down into anarchy and mayhem. The final part of this chapter will, therefore, argue that it is the programming of the networks that determine their purpose, form of communication and relationship to other networks. By applying the insights gained into the structure and dynamics of networks, and the different forms of communication that exist within them a more convincing analysis of the Lebanese Civil War will be introduced.

3. The reasons to fight

The Civil War that raged in Lebanon from 1975 until 1990 was most acutely fought in the urban centres of the country. Tripoli, as the second largest city, was no exception to this and the confusing and often changing front-lines of the war caused an almost complete cessation of normal civic life. As an ancient city with a rich history in trade and commerce, as well as a social and political centre dating back to ancient Greece, come 1975 Tripoli had some 350,000 inhabitants. Its history also meant that Tripoli

was home to large numbers of groups embroiled in the struggle for influence which, at the same time, were not limited by regional borders but instead were deeply connected by personal links across the urban centre. In this, Tripoli mirrors the whole of Lebanon with its myriad of different groups, each linked to a specific territory such as a town, neighbourhood or settlement, as well as to groups outside the country via, for example, religious or economic association. Aside from this, of course, there are a host of daily and personal interactions taking place.

Seurat (1985) aimed to understand the underlying motives for the civil war in Lebanon in general but most specifically why individuals were turning to the use of large-scale and deadly violence against each other. Generally, the existence of the Lebanese Civil War was attributed to the existing hostility between different ethnic, religious and political groups, which meant that a minor incident would spark a vicious violent struggle in which all entities tried to exterminate one another. Within a very short time the previous reality of the different groups coexisting in the same space had become untenable, and was instead replaced with a violent struggle in which almost all actions were placed in a context of absolute hostility.

Seurat tried to understand the motivation of individuals in suddenly turning from mutual acceptance and coexistence, to ultimately dehumanising each other. The sudden breakdown of non-violent communication to almost exclusive use of violence between different groups was puzzling. Seurat interviewed individuals living in the Bab Tebbane neighbourhood of Tripoli seeking to understand this, looking at how the use of violence had been sanctioned and justified. Using Castells' approach to network analysis, Seurat was searching for what had caused the reprogramming of the networks that existed in Tripoli.

3.1. The Creation of Narratives in Neighbourhoods

Seurat's study found that the narrative used by individuals to explain their behaviour in the war was closely tied to the physical neighbourhood, but also that the level of influence on the construction of the overall narrative strongly depended on the relevant individual's position within the immediate social group. More senior

individuals in the neighbourhood, who could be described as ‘traditional leaders’ or ‘elders’ had, in the times predating the Civil War, solved conflicts within the group, provided guidance and advice, aided social cohesion and had served as representatives for the neighborhood when interacting with other groups. These individuals were fundamental during the Civil War in establishing and maintaining a coherent identity that would be used to define the neighbourhood as a group. The position of an elder does not necessarily need to be a formal one, such as a priest or mayor, but is more often informal and attained through both heritable and meritocratic paths. Especially in societies that are undergoing stress or major changes, these influential individuals are very important since they provide and distribute services and goods necessary for survival and wellbeing. Tripoli shared the experience of most Lebanese cities after the Second World War, and saw rapid and prolonged urbanisation which led to a shortage of housing and an oversupply of low and unskilled labour. These were only two of the sectors in which community leaders were paramount in managing and trying to improve. Therefore, the community leaders were already in an established and influential position within those networks before the outbreak of violence and obviously interested in cementing their importance following the outbreak of hostilities.

A second group of individuals which was key in establishing a narrative and acting to maintain it along their interests, were people who connected different neighbourhoods through their profession or position. While the first group of influential individuals, the community leaders or ‘elders’, would highlight the components that supported their elevated and influential position by, for example, referring to religious texts or family ties, this latter group would base their influence on their profession and their position that linked different groups and networks across the divide of neighbourhoods. Cities and urban settlements depend on a constant supply of food, fuel, water and raw materials for trade and industries, as well as infrastructure to transport and trade manufactured goods. Additionally, the exchange of information and funds as well as the transfer of people to and from neighbourhoods depended on people that could work as links between different networks and social groups. For example, the supplier of cooking oil to the neighbourhood would, by his profession, be linked to producers and traders who were based outside the neighbourhood. In the absence of a neighbourhood being able to produce sufficient cooking oil to satisfy its

own demands, the market forces of supply and demand would determine the supply and value. If the supplier would charge too high a price for the commodity, a rival individual would emerge and replace him.

Contrast this with the position of an ‘elder’, whose status was based on kinship and had been cemented over a long period of time. Community elders, therefore, had a generally more stable position than those who presented links between different groups. The influence of the individuals who could link different neighbourhoods (these ‘linking individuals’), however, was substantial due to their financial resources, benefit of their position and the key services they offered to neighbourhoods. A small micro-loan provider could, for example, offer lower rates of credit in exchange for representation within a neighbourhood outside his own.

Seurat’s study found that the neighbourhood of Bab Tebbane reacted to the onset of violence in a manner similar to other communities within the city: following the sudden sensation of fear and insecurity, most connections to people living outside of the immediate neighbourhood were broken off, and a disappearance of all but the strongest links followed as a reaction to the perceived insecurity and hostility of the world outside one’s immediate neighbourhood. When narratives emerged that delegitimised and dehumanised other groups based on ethnical, political or religious identity, all forms of non-violent communication such as language or trade were almost immediately replaced with hostility and an existentialist argumentation that called for the eradication of the opponent. The earlier described key individuals of the community, i.e. elders and individuals who in effect linked different neighbourhoods, reacted to the breakdown of non-violent forms of communication in very specific ways. Importantly, their reactions served to both increase their respective importance within the neighbourhood and their ability to create and maintain a narrative of the conflict.

3.2 Community elders

Community elders were empowered because, in the absence of alternative structures to solve conflicts within the neighbourhood and to manage and distribute resources

and goods necessary for survival, they stepped in. Police and the legal services, social services such as education and health care and, finally, trade and the supply of goods and services, broke down rapidly as soon as a few incidents of violence led to the cessation of peacetime relations and services and sense of security in the whole of Lebanon. Community leaders were fundamental in taking over these services with the aim of providing for the welfare of their neighbourhoods. At the same time, however, leaders were put under increasing stress to deliver: simple hereditary justifications were no longer sufficient to keep the individual in his social position. Rather, his standing depended on his ability to support, protect and develop the group he was leading. His position was equally put under threat by rivals who tried to increase their own influence vis-a-vis the established leadership, and the instability and precarious nature of Tripoli caused a large number of power struggles within neighbourhoods. According to Seurat's research, this furthered the radicalisation of the narrative since, in many cases, rivals would try to increase the hostilities towards other groups in order to increase the pressure on the existing leadership. The result of this was an increasingly inward looking identity in the neighbourhood that created a utopian narrative in which the neighbourhood was seen to be under constant existentialist threat from all other groups and neighbourhoods in the city. The by-product of this dynamic was that attempts to negotiate between neighbourhoods and to try to find common ground between warring parties were labelled disloyal and characterised as betraying the group. Seurat found that the community elders would favour a narrative in which their position in the group would be elevated and protected and, almost as an unintentional side effect, this meant that the hostility towards the outside was maintained.

The prominent position of the 'elders' allowed for a strong influence of the overall group identity and behaviour of every individual of the neighbourhood. On the one hand, the insecurity and hostility found outside the neighbourhood made group members depend more on their own association for support and protection. On the other hand, that same perceived outside insecurity and hostility also meant that the individuals inside the neighbourhood would look to emulate the behaviour of its leaders. Behaving in a non-sanctioned way would place the individual at risk of being expelled from the group and thus having to face physical and psychological insecurity and danger without the support of the group.

3.3 Bridging individuals

The link between different neighbourhoods was also affected by the second group of key individuals able to affect the narrative or 'program' of the networks found in the civil war. These individuals who were providing goods and services necessary for the survival of each neighbourhood, benefited economically during the Civil War.

Returning to the example of the supply of cooking oils, the hostility between groups within the city would limit the number of suppliers that, in turn, would allow the traders to increase their prices and thus returns on their investment. The existence of instability directly supported the economic interests of suppliers of goods necessary for the survival of every neighbourhood in Tripoli. From food-stuff to energy and weaponry, to information and news, medical supplies and modes of transport, those who were in the position to be able to link different networks of providers and consumers would be able to increase their returns manifold. What Seurat found was remarkable in regards to how these individuals would almost cynically promote a narrative that demonised the 'other', since this meant a maximisation of individual returns. The profits made by certain key individuals who linked different neighbourhoods was several times those which they had made before the insecurity and hostility of the Civil War. While these individuals also had a great capacity to function as messengers between different neighbourhoods and were, due to their profession and position, in between hostile parties, they would actually try to prevent the re-emergence of any kind of non-violent communication that would bypass them since this would threaten their current position and livelihood. What Seurat did find is that they would provide channels of communication and broker services such as safe passage or the release of prisoners between different warring parties, but would try their best to prevent non-violent direct contact.

The inherent interest of these two groups of influential actors, the elders and the linking individuals, was to maintain their elevated position. Once the genie of violence had escaped its bottle, it shows that these people determined the programme that managed the communication and identity of the networks. In this way they sidelined anyone who argued for reconciliation and strengthened those who facilitated violence against the perceived outsiders. Utilising violence increased the power of the elders since it caused the polarisation of individuals: anyone who accepted the leadership of the elder was a friend and received support; anyone who did not was an

enemy and was to be killed. Similarly, the individuals who served as links between neighbourhoods and provided goods and services, promoted violence in order to protect their own interests. Since violence and the perception of threat and instability are closely linked, the economic benefits of providing goods and services was far greater. Additionally, the dependence on the supplies was greater and there was far less competition compared to settings in which non-violent forms of communication prevailed.

3.4 Castells and the Civil War

Employing a Castellian analysis of Seurat's study, it can be argued that he isolated the 'programmers' of the network of people that were linked to the neighbourhood of Bab Tebbane. The programme is fundamental in understanding both the identity and the behaviour of these individuals, and lies at the heart of the immediate front lines of the Lebanese Civil War. Seurat's study is remarkable because it shows that the link between an individual's identity and behaviour is far more complex than the assumption that every individual has one single and unitary identity that determines his behaviour. In other words, the violence of the civil war was not caused and maintained by pre-existing hostilities between different groups, but by the facilitation of violence by certain individuals to further their own interests.

The ability to programme networks becomes, therefore, of great importance here and, as Kalyvas (2006) argues in his remarkable study on the logic of violence in civil wars, it is not bloodthirsty madmen who senselessly use violence against anyone, but it is the privatisation of violence that allows individuals to use it for their own interests that is key. He finds precisely the same factors to be at work as Seurat does (Kalyvas, 2006, p. 364), and argues that there is a profound disjunction between violence and a justifying narrative.

"[C]onflicts and violence "on the ground" often seem more related to local issues rather than the "master cleavage"(Kalyvas, 2006, p. 364) that drives the civil war at the national level" was the position from which Seurat set out in his study. Kalyvas argues that: "[d]uring the [civil] war, political actors make concerted efforts to mobilize the population around the cleavage dimension they represent, because they

know both that the population is divided in a multitude of contradictory ways and that civilians tend to avoid risky commitments” (Kalyvas, 2006, p. 78). Kalyvas then continues with a quote of a Lebanese student who states that he detected a sudden shift in mentality that forbade him to see half of his friends since they were of a certain confession (Ibid). This had never mattered before.

Also, Kalyvas looks at the relationship between the kind of irregular warfare and geographical space. In contrast to conventional wars, the boundaries separating the different sides in a civil war are blurred, and maps depicting the fighting are confusing and inconclusive. Together with the absence of uniforms and an inability to distinguish between different actors, this makes the situation confusing to analyse and difficult to understand. The individuals Seurat had interviewed were found inside this zone of confusion which, in turn, created insecurity and forced everybody to take sides in the conflict.

Both Seurat and Kalyvas found a multitude of motivations that could entice an individual to align with a certain group or network, but it is important to observe that this only happens after the prevailing programme has already been altered to one in which violence had become the most prominent and influential form of communication. Kalyvas highlights the role of control and information in a society, while Castells focuses more on the dynamics found within networks but, in the concrete example, a deeper study of the history of Lebanon, and the Lebanese Civil War is necessary in order to address the questions that lie at the heart of the debate: what is the origin of the networks that can be found in Lebanon? What is their nature and how did they interconnect? What explains the switch from predominantly non-violent forms of communication before the Civil War to the violence Seurat describes, and then the end of the armed hostilities? Is there the risk that the violence of the Civil War will return to Lebanon and, if so, can this be avoided?

4. A historical introduction to networks in Lebanon

While Lebanon is a relatively young country - before gaining independence in 1943 it had been a part of a province of the Ottoman empire since 1299 - its territory as part

of the Levant is one of the oldest continuously settled places on the planet. Cradled on the eastern shores of the Mediterranean, and with Mount Lebanon at its centre, the country has fertile plains and an abundance of water in a hot and arid region. Two ancient trade routes that link North Africa with Asia, and Europe with the Silk Route that crosses from East Asia to Europe and North Africa, intersect here. All major monotheistic religions have strong links to the country, with the ancient city of Jerusalem containing holy places of Jewish, Christian and Islamic worship. Agriculture, but later also silk production and commercial activities, made the region rich and subject to both overt and covert influence from the outside. Greek settlers, Roman administrators, Phoenician traders, and Arab farmers were only some of the different people who made the Levant their home. Both history and historiography of Lebanon are closely influenced by this and Traboulsi finds three main themes that dominate: sectarianism, an outward looking liberal economic system and problematic relations with its regional setting (Traboulsi, 2007, p. vii). All of these factors could today be argued to be 'networking': sectarianism means placing importance to perceived differences between subdivisions of groups or sects, but because no group was able to exist autonomously it requires the creation and maintenance of links with others. Equally so the economic system depended on maintaining economic and financial links to sustain trade and investment with actors outside the country. Finally the regional setting also indicates the inability of Lebanon to create barriers to cross-border influences and exchange with its regional neighbours.

4.1 Sectarianism

It is important to note that sectarianism is only one of several themes, and a reduction of Lebanon's history to sectarianism is too simplistic; sects serve the twin function of resisting the inequalities of the market and enlisting outside support for power and survival (Traboulsi, 2007), but sectarian affiliation is but one form of identity and often other interests such as trade, industry, language and ethnicity are present. At the same time sectarianism describes a very important component of human behaviour because it generally refers to a supernatural ideal that provides identity and structure. Precisely because of the supposed absence of human agency in its creation most sectarian identities are based, in some form or the other, on the assumption that they

are based on an absolute truth to which only those who adhere to it have access to. Because it is focused on the supernatural, creation, life and death and the spiritual it allows it to be used to create and maintain the idea of being ‘the chosen people’ which are destined to succeed. In Lebanon the constant influx of different identities and sectarian convictions is the base for many groups, but because of the supposed absence of human agency they are very difficult to moderate or accommodate (Rabil, 2011). Because of its reference to the supernatural sectarianism is part of human nature and fundamental for the creation of group identity and cohesion, two dynamics at the heart of survival.

In the absence of geographic barriers that serve as natural borders, and with social links across the region and political and economic links on a global scale, a history of Lebanon has to contain both international and domestic sway which in turn is important to understand how the country ended up in the throes of a vicious and long-lasting civil war. Similarly, Khalaf finds three ‘aberrations’: protracted hostility, communal solidarity and dependence on foreign intervention and patronage (Khalaf, 2002, p. ix) which are very similar to Traboulsi’s analysis.

In order to offer an alternative and more convincing explanation to the logic of the civil war, the following analysis will be divided into the three themes that Traboulsi argues dominate Lebanese history, followed by a study on how the networks of sectarianism, economics and regional setting overlap and interact and how this in turn ties into Seurat’s study of neighbourhoods during the civil war.

First of all, the sectarian component is of great importance: the basis on which the National Pact of 1943 was built formalised the organisation of the political system along sectarian lines. Despite its fragile nature, the fact that it survived more or less unaltered for over 30 years indicates that the people of Lebanon agreed to a system that was based on sectarian population (Haddad, 2002). Even earlier during the approximately half a century of Ottoman rule, sectarian affiliations not only mattered in regards to the political spectrum, but also greatly influenced social and religious behaviours such as marriages and legal and civil procedures. Especially procedures such as inheritance, marriage, inter-familial disputes and petty crimes were generally managed not by Ottoman officials or the provincial courts but internally within the

various groups. This system was stable since both ordinary members of a group would have little contact with authority outside their group, but also community leaders such as those mentioned in Seurat's study preferred to deal with matters directly. With little demand for authorities above the group, no identity above the sectarian level could emerge which in turn explains the short history of Lebanon as an independent country.

Sectarianism is not idiosyncratic to Lebanon or the Ottoman empire; human beings in their quest for the meaning of life, as guidance for their actions, and in order to create group cohesion often rely on a metaphysical mystique (Sen, 2006). Historically the term 'sect' designates a religiously separate group that is defined by a set of methods, traditions and doctrines which provide guidance and structure to groups of individuals. Since most sects argue that their approach is guided by a superhuman power, they demand an exclusive and unquestionable position vis-a-vis others (Wilson, 1982). Historically sects have provided not only answers to the metaphysical questions of 'where do we come from' and 'what happens before and after death' but also provided traditions and venues to structure daily life such as weddings, legal proceedings and solution for disputes within the group, health care and social services and education. It is also obvious that when two or more different sects or religions get into contact, a struggle for supremacy of meaning, or in other words the demand for exclusivity in both metaphysical but also social functions and traditions creates the potential for conflict. Especially before the establishment of states and nations, the sects would provide the only venue for social and legal affairs in towns and settlements and in the absence of alternatives and the dynamics of groups, most settlements would be almost exclusively adhere to one or the other religions conviction.

The existence of strong sectarian identity also explains the limit of links between different groups. Since most of the legal and social structures were aimed at solving conflicts within members of a distinct group, there was little basis for communication or cooperation between different groups. Financial or commercial transactions, for example, could not be guaranteed, or possible financial conflicts could not be mediated in the absence of mechanisms above a group. It is interesting to note that theological distinctions play very little role here; instead the shared religious or ethnic

heritage was perpetuated by social and political norms and behaviours to a stage in which the different religions themselves played no great role at all. This is captured by Haddad:

“Belonging to a religious group limited, and still does in a sense not only one’s contact with others but also the kind of occupation that was open to the individual. The term religious community, group, or sect is used in order to emphasise its social and political functions and significance. It is not so much the religious principles or theological differences (the faiths) that matter.

Rather, it is the fact that they are religious communities which act as social reference groups.” (Haddad, 2002, p. 295)

In other words, the initial shared doctrine or faith that lay at the heart of a group’s identity was being increasingly replaced by social, political, legal and cultural patterns that made one group distinct from another and in turn hindered cooperation and communication - or linkage - between one group and another.

4.2 Sectarianism and identity

The evidence Haddad presents is a questionnaire handed out in 2001 to a wider cross-section of Lebanese, which asked them about their sectarian identity. Across the range of different sectarian affiliations there was a strong and consistent sense of attachment to the respective sect and outspoken pride in membership. Equally so, most individuals stated that their sect would be able to serve the whole of the country better than any other but also that many did prefer not to interact with members of other groups (Haddad, 2002). The conclusion that can be drawn from this is two-fold: first of all, group identity and affiliation has a fundamental impact on how networks are established and maintained in Lebanon, as well as the opposite: possible links and connections are prevented from being made because the nature of immediate networks of individuals prevents this. Secondly, the absence of any form of communication between the groups includes the absence of violence. The distrust and hostility between different groups in Lebanon indicates the difficulty of establishing a common Lebanese identity and, as will be shown later, hinders economic activities and opens the door for foreign intervention. It is not, however, a sufficient explanation for why the country could so suddenly plunge into the Civil War, and

subsequently emerge out of it again with the same sectarian groups present and identities intact.

Since Lebanon only gained independence in 1943, the notion of an identity that was shared by all Lebanese, and which supersedes their various sectarian structures, is weak. Especially under stress - that is when existing patterns of behaviour and practices are threatened by sudden changes and events - people tend to rely on links that are closest and which appear to be better positioned to satisfy their needs. The perceived distance between the Lebanese national government and the people of the country is thus easily utilised by actors who aim to increase their own power and influence. This phenomenon is demonstrated by the unwritten basis of Lebanon's political system, the National Pact of 1943: next to the written constitution that established judicial, political and civic equality, the parliamentary democratic system was to have a Maronite Christian as president, the speaker of parliament was to be a Shiite Muslim and the prime minister was to be a Sunni Muslim. As a basis for this, the division was an agreement by the leaders of the three largest sectarian groups that was to stabilise and protect their interests, both in regards to their own groups and nationally.

4.3 Networks and identity in Lebanese Politics

While many sectarian networks traditionally rely on kinship and informal links that connect individuals, the same dynamics are used by more formalised and wider, even international, networks. The national borders of Lebanon do not necessarily conform to the boundaries of these networks. The most notable example for this in Lebanon is *Hizbollah*, 'The Party of God'. With logistical, financial and military support by the Syrian and Iranian government, the organisation was established in southern Lebanon in the early 1980s and aims to protect the interests of the Shiite population that are threatened by other sects, as well as the Lebanese state and Israel. It does this by providing social and legal services, religious and political guidance and support, and by maintaining an armed militia aimed at countering Israeli aggression. *Hizbollah* has changed its aims and patterns of behaviour multiple times since its inception, but the underlying notions remained the same: it is geared towards the maintenance of

influence and power of its leadership both within and outside Lebanon, and to play a vital link in two wider conflicts: firstly the Arab-Israeli conflict and secondly the Shiite-Islamic conflict (Azani, 2009). On the domestic level, *Hizbollah* justifies its existence and actions by defending the actions of a specific sect, the Shiites, but within Lebanon the group has shifted from open warfare against other domestic groups to a party that is fully integrated in the day-to-day political process, while at the same time internationally remaining an autonomous actor that is heavily involved in hostility towards Israel and allied to the Iranian government and Assad regime in Syria (Alagha, 2006). *Hizbollah* carefully manoeuvres its use of ideologies and actions to employ sectarianism as a basis, but also balances its rhetoric and behaviour towards other sectarian groups in Lebanon. Reflected in its name as ‘The Party of God’ but not ‘The State of God’, sectarianism guides the actions of its members but does not dominate it in a way that dehumanises those Lebanese who do not share the same sectarian affiliation. While *Hizbollah* continues to refer to the use of violence against those it perceives to be its enemies, it does this because of a situational analysis and not because of its religious ideology.

Thus, the example of *Hizbollah* demonstrates that the alleged close connection between the violence of the Civil War and religion is unconvincing, and that especially the connection between sectarianism and violence, although the two appear to be closely related, is overly simplified and misleading. Religion provides guidance to human behaviour but is abstract and requires interpretation to allow it to be applied to a context.

Kalyvas also warns against the argument that different religious convictions automatically lead to conflict. It simply fails to explain why in most parts of the world people with different religious convictions are not only able to coexist without violence between each other but also how they can often cooperate and communicate for mutual benefit. Furthermore, the argument that people direct violence against others not because of their actions and behaviours but because their identity, affiliation and religious convictions and traditions is unconvincing in most cases (Kalyvas, 2006, pp. 24-25). However, religion is often the basis of identities that lie at the heart of networks, but it is not the existence of different religions or identities that stipulate that conflict is inevitable. Instead it allows, just like Seurat’s study has

indicated, key individuals to exploit these different identities for their own interests. It is therefore the networks that the different identities create and how those networks are programmed, not the identities themselves, that are key. As will be shown later developments in other sectors, most notably economic and political, made sectarianism a powerful tool for exploitation.

The crucial point here applied to Lebanon, then, is that the different sectarian groups of Lebanon are today linked to each other and form networks within networks. Links outside the sectarian identity allow for an exchange of communication and cooperation beyond the violence that often emerges when singular identities are exploited by key actors. Historically, economic development and prosperity had often aligned with sectarian groups. This was because, for example, skilled trades were passed along families and certain communities were better positioned than others in certain economic sectors. However, growing complexity in the commercial sector was driven by the economic liberalism that gradually replaced the feudal system of Mount Levant and weakened long established patterns of behaviour.

5. Traditional economic structure

The second theme mentioned by Traboulsi is Lebanon's long history of economic liberalism that has had a strong influence on the development of the country not only financially but also socially and politically. There are numerous indicators of how sectarianism and the economy overlap and influence each other. In the Ottoman period, most of the territory was dominated by the *iqta'* or tax farming system in which families, the so-called *muqata'ji*, would largely autonomously rule a piece of land in exchange for a fixed amount of payment, supply men in times when requested by the authorities and keep order and peace in their area. As simple as this system may sound, it presented many issues that remain at the heart of the conflicts found in Lebanon today. Firstly the *iqta'* system advantaged Muslims since all Christians and Jews had to pay an additional 'protection' tax and were barred from military service. Political participation and the legal protection heavily favoured Muslims forcing Christians and Jews to focus on the commercial sector that provided a bridge to territories outside of the Ottoman system. Thus, outside links to other networks were

necessarily established. At the same time, many of the *muqata'ji* families were in constant conflict with the Ottoman government in Istanbul in an attempt to gain as much independence and pay the least for their *iqta'* while struggling with intra-familial feuds for domination and altercations with the subjects of their *iqta'* resulting in a weakening of previously dominating structures.

The fertile soil and climate of Mount Levant favoured agriculture, and the geographic position offered a great base for cash crops. In particular, the introduction of silk production to Mount Lebanon in the 16th century changed the economic as well as the social and political realities of Mount Levant. The great demand for silk in renaissance Europe empowered the non-Muslims who were able to amass wealth quickly thanks to their position as merchants. Religious affiliation also meant that many Christian merchants would use their new-found wealth to send their children to Italy and France for education which added further layers to their links outside the region. The value of silk in Europe and the shared religious and social convictions provided the previously disadvantaged non-Muslim subjects of Mount Levant with a position in international networks and elevated their influence in Mount Levant.

5.1 Changing economic patterns

Trade and commerce with the world outside the Levant increased and with it the traditionally dominating system of *iqta'* and its ruling families gradually lost ground and influence. The role of the agricultural land ruled by the noble families quickly shifted vis-a-vis the new commercial centres in the urban areas outside the absolute control of the *muqata'ji*. The changing patterns of production and consumption led to a shift of employment opportunities from rural farming to urban manufacturing, since the manufacturing of silk was more labour intensive than the mulberry leaf cultivation on which the silk worms feed. This subsequent rapid urbanisation required use of different social and judicial institutions than those people would have found in their rural communities, creating new links to new networks, and traditionally influential families and individuals were suddenly unable to provide their services. The new settings also created new challenges, with poverty, crime and low paid manual labour being some examples of these. In the absence of a strong state that is able and willing

to moderate between the 'haves' and the 'not haves', a small group of well-connected individuals was able to amass great wealth through the ownership of urban factories or near-monopolisation of trade. Commerce and transport were also in the hands of a limited number of families and the majority of the population could barely survive as subsistence farmers or manual, often un-skilled or low-skilled labourers. This led to a gap between rich and poor in the population that greatly widened after the Second World War (Winslow, 1996).

So, parallel to the increase in links in the networks of the predominantly non-Muslim merchants and the growing influence of their networks in regards to commercial activities not limited to trade - for example money lending and urban property development - came a decrease in the importance of the links of the *mugata'ji* and the traditionally most dominant actors. This occurred not only at the expense of the predominant Muslim notables but other sects as well. Additionally, because urbanisation allowed for better education facilities and a proliferation of arts, literature, newspapers, publishers and music (to name a few), many identities were challenged and, whilst previously certain professions had often aligned with villages and rural areas, this was no longer the case (Traboulsi, 2007). In the absence of unions and guilds, there was very little that provided stability in the life of the people of Mount Levant and economic links to the outside provided, sometimes more psychologically than otherwise, stability and security to the people who were experiencing great changes in their daily life. Parallel to this, outside actors gained, via economic cooperation, greater influence in Lebanon's domestic sphere: France as the main customer of Lebanese silk would support those it depended on and would seek to strengthen their position. Until the First World War, Beirut became a major centre for maritime transport, insurance and banking, and reached a position in which it rivalled the until then dominating British Empire, who became an important supplier for machines and technology that in turn provided the basis for the manufacturing of goods for export. Within a short period of time Lebanon had emerged as the regional economic centre and hub for commercial activities that linked Europe and Arabia (Winslow, 1996), and it can be argued that the existence of shared cultural, religious and sectarian identities in Lebanon (and the subsequent forced links to new networks which were created) provided an important basis for this.

Just as in the First World War forced a sudden end to this commercial expansion, so did the Lebanese Civil War cause major changes in the economic networks that centred on Lebanon. Wealthy and well-connected individuals used their international links to relocate to the relative safety of elsewhere, and left the poorer Lebanese citizens stuck in the realms of the war and, importantly, open to the economic exploitation by the key individuals that Seurat identified in his study. The dynamics of the hardship caused by war led to an accelerated urbanisation because cities provided both the promise of increased security by the group and a more reliable supply of goods necessary for survival.

The main theme of the change within Lebanon, especially urbanisation and a growing gap in economic fortune between the cities and the countryside, is still present today and is closely related to Traboulsi's third and final theme in analysing the history of Lebanon, the regional setting. In the Lebanese heartland surrounding Mount Levant, the fertility of the soil and the intersection of the ancient routes linking Africa and Europe with Central Asia and the Mediterranean Sea was the natural territory for different groups of people, with their different religious or sectarian convictions, to get into contact with each other. Conflicts over the ownership of land and resources occurred often, and the arrival of a new group could lead to violent conflicts with already established ones. Furthermore, instability and conflicts in neighbouring territories and countries forced many people to flee, and Lebanon's history of being the destination of people who flee poverty, prosecution and violence means that this is most likely to continue. A side-effect of this, as mentioned above, is a further strain on the stability and cohesion of established groups. Lebanon also benefits from the close relation between Lebanon's liberal economic system and its geographic setting:

“Lebanese prosperity also had much to do with the fact that Lebanon had a jump start in economic and social developments over neighboring countries rich in resources but relatively poor in skills, world contacts, and developmental experience. The advanced educational system in Lebanon and the extensive connections the Lebanese had garnered with the West bestowed on Lebanon some real advantages in its ability to act as the indispensable middleman in much of the contact of the Gulf and other Arab countries with the West.” (Kubursi, 1999)

The former colonial powers of France and Britain who ultimately decided on the boundaries of independent Lebanon, tried to establish centralised nation-states in areas where they had not existed before. After the implosion of the Ottoman Empire the question of national identity emerged, and while some territories enjoyed relative stability, for example Turkey under Mustafa Kemal Atatürk, others, such as Syria, did not with different groups struggling for influence and domination. Equally so, the former colonial powers Britain and France that had earlier benefitted from the breakdown of the Ottoman empire, had their own approach and vision of how the region should be structured, and had their own definition of political, religious, ethnic and social groups that were to provide the basis for the newly independent states:

“In a postwar period dominated by the right of nations to self-determination, a principle invoked with equal force by Woodrow Wilson’s America and Lenin’s Soviet Russia, the legitimisation was rooted in the age-old minorities policy, focused on ethnic and religious communities. France justified its claim to Syria by the necessary defence of the Christian, Druze, `Alawi and Shi`i minorities, while Britain claimed Palestine in order to create a ‘national homeland’ for the Jews. The text of the Balfour Declaration of November 1917 is a striking example of this ethnicisation of the peoples of the region. Whereas the Jews are assumed to be a people and a nationality, since the aim was to establish a ‘national home’ for them in Palestine, the Arabs, the majority of the inhabitants of the country, were negatively defined by their non-Jewishness and reduced to the status of religious communities (Muslim and Christian) whose only rights were civil and religious, that is, neither national nor political.” (Traboulsi, 2007, p. 76)

6. Lebanon’s regional setting

The region has remained full of disputes and conflicts since, and in particular Lebanon’s two geographic neighbours, Syria and Israel, have held great sway over the country. Many Syrian nationalists argue that Lebanon is but a province of Syria and have treated it like this. Relying on cultural, ethnic, commercial and kinship ties, the politically and militarily far more powerful Syria has long had great influence over Lebanon. Additionally, the leaders in Damascus worried that the other neighbour of

the country, that is Israel, could exploit its military strength vis-a-vis Lebanon and establish itself (Chaitani, 2007). Lebanon has suffered and benefitted from this in almost equal terms because of the underlying networks that connected the different domestic groups (e.g. ethnic, religious, professional) to others, both regionally and further afield, and while it can be argued that Lebanon's sovereignty was weakened by events and actions of its neighbouring states, it also gained from these. For example, the Syrian military intervention in Lebanon following the 1967 War led to the occupation of the Syrian Golan Heights by Israel and the expulsion of thousands of Palestinian refugees into southern Lebanon, but this at the same time helped different communities within Lebanon to balance each other by preventing one group from dominating the domestic discourse. This in effect indicates how different networks interact and create a balance.

It can also be argued that the wider population of Lebanon agreed to this dynamic, since it provided a certain level of protection from intervention by foreign groups allied with different communities (Haddad, 2002). Non-Lebanese events and political movements, for example the rise of Pan-Arabism, was also cited as a reason why it was so important to maintain the balance of different domestic actors against each other (Ayoub 1994). However, the Israel-Palestine conflict and especially the role and influence of Palestinian refugees in Lebanon is cited to be a main factor for the onset of armed hostilities within Lebanon in 1975 which ultimately led to the Civil War (Winslow, 1996). This highlights the relative weakness of analyses of the Lebanese Civil War that argue that predominately domestic causes were to blame for the outbreak, and underlines the general inability of networks to be interrupted by national borders.

The discussion above shows that networks of different kinds, structure and programming have always been at the centre of Lebanon's history, and that limiting this explanation to ethnic identity is insufficient; it does not and cannot of itself explain Lebanon's past, present and future. To sum up, networks of various kinds, nature and background continue to evolve and adapt to changes in patterns of human behaviour. Networks adapt themselves in order to satisfy the needs of the individuals that they are composed of, both in regards to the emergence and erosion of nodes and links, as well as their programming. The survival of human beings depends on the

balancing act between those two factors and this is Lebanon's fortune. The different networks, including ethnic, economic and regional (among others), managed to balance each other not because of a centralised power maintaining an equilibrium, but because their flexibility and ability to adapt to changes in the domestic, regional and international environment. The arguably greatest collective trauma that Lebanon's people experienced in recent history and appears to work as a counterargument to the nature of networks to maintain a balance and equilibrium is then the Civil War and will be studied in the following section.

7. The Civil War (1975-1990)

This same flexibility of networks that allowed for the prosperity of many Lebanese and propelled the country ahead in the region, also lies at the centre of what can be argued to be the most traumatising experience in Lebanon's modern history, the Civil War. Over the span of 15 years, battles, massacres, assassinations and attacks between ever shifting alliances and groups took place, and caused tens of thousands of deaths, destroyed the cities and infrastructure and led to repeated waves of emigration. Yet, when comparing the sectarian structure, economic and regional situation of Lebanon before and after the war, very little change can be observed. The political structure of the country, especially the domination of sectarian association within the political system, has remained in place with minor changes. Equally so, the liberal economic system is persistently dominated by a small minority of individuals, whilst unemployment and the increase of living costs remain a challenge for the majority. Finally, the wider region remains one in which instability and conflicts prevail. This leaves observer searching for not only an explanation for the emergence of violence in the country in 1975 but also, and maybe even more importantly, its disappearance in 1990.

Just as the assassination of Arch Duke Franz Ferdinand is credited for having started the First World War, the Lebanese Civil War started with a seemingly unrelated and innocuous demonstration by fishermen in the southern city of Sidon on 26 February 1975. The demonstration was against the growing domination of the fishermen's trade by a company owned by members of the ruling classes. The military was called in to

restore order, shooting at and killing a number of the demonstrators. When the Lebanese government refused to investigate the incident, shooting and fighting broke out between different leftist and nationalist groups, but also between the Palestine Liberation Organisation (PLO) on the one side, and the military on the other. The violence was not only an indicator that the stress on the Lebanese society had become too much for the weak political system to moderate or control, but also served as a catalyst for worsening relations between different factions. For the majority of the Lebanese population, the years between 1975 and 1990 were defined by an almost daily struggle for survival in which only the most intimate and close relationships promised protection and support. Recurring massacres, attacks and assassinations maintained an atmosphere of fear and existentialist threats within the country, which was also being further destabilised by repeated interference by Syria, the PLO, Israel, the European countries, the US and other Arab states. The Lebanese Civil War lacked clearly defined adversaries and all actors, both Lebanese and foreign, therefore had little inhibition to break alliances and turn against co-religionists, ignore or even provide support to massacres on civilians, and often successfully try to exploit the violence in Lebanon for their own interests.

The length of the war and the continuous changes in allies and adversaries not only added to the confusion that is found in every violent conflict - the Clausewitzian “fog of war” (Clausewitz, 2007) - but also indicated that there was no coherent narrative. Groups were not fighting each other because of their religious, ethnic or sectarian accounts, but because of short term goals that were tied to real-life necessities rather than more abstract ideological, historical or religious confrontations (O'Ballance, 1998). This absence of a coherent underlying motive made the violence appear illogical and senseless, and both contemporary and historical observers struggle to produce a coherent account or explanation of the Civil War. What is clear, however, is that an explanation based on the uneasy or hostile relationship between different groups within the country can neither account for the outbreak of violence, nor the duration and, finally, the cessation of it. An analysis that focuses on the overall situation of the country on the one hand, and the perceptions of those people who found themselves at the frontline of the fighting on the other hand, is therefore necessary. Seurat's study of the neighbourhood of Bab Tebbane discussed at the beginning of this chapter satisfies the latter, but the former is less conclusive. In other

words while for the people at the frontline of the fighting the narrative for the war was closely related to their social connections, the reasons for the breakdown of the Lebanese state and society as a whole are far less obvious.

The Six Day War in 1967 between Israel and Egypt, Jordan and Syria, but not Lebanon, had reverberations for the whole region in the years to come. Lebanon had neither the ability to close its borders nor could it agree on a policy regarding how to deal with the influx of tens of thousands of Palestinian refugees who fled the fighting and established camps and guerrilla bases on Lebanese soil. The Cairo Accords of 1969 formally provided the PLO with extra-territoriality and the right to bear arms in Lebanon. It opened the door for foreign fighters to enter Lebanon and set a precedent for the establishment and maintenance of armed militias that were not under control or even influence by the government. Not only this, it also imported the, at times, violent conflict between Fatah and the PLO to Lebanon and finally allowed all other countries in the region to expel Palestinian refugees. The same refugees were welcomed for their cheap labour skills by the Lebanese bourgeoisie, and this added to the plight of the majority of the Lebanese population that was becoming increasingly frustrated. Rather than simply being a conflict between different cultures, sects or religions, all of Lebanese felt the increasing tension and stress and reacted by relying on links that were perceived to be more stable and reliable than the Lebanese state (Khalaf, 2002). The Yom Kippur War of 1973 was fought again without direct Lebanese involvement, but the subsequent oil crisis further increased the cost of living that hit the poor in particular. The economic situation alone was enough to create great hostility: “Even without the war, the uneven sectoral, regional, and class development was bound to create social tensions, contradictions, and conflicts.” (Kubursi, 1999). As soon as the hostilities of the Civil War began, the economy was even further weakened by inflation, debt, and disappearance of revenue. The only factors that prevented the country from collapsing outright were the continued remittances of overseas Lebanese, a bartering system that functioned largely without money or financial institutions, and finally because a large percentage of unemployed were absorbed by the various militias (Kubursi, 1999).

The fact that Lebanon avoided the financial and economic collapse is closely tied to the ability of social networks to work as venues for cooperation. Remittances for

example show that even those who left the country because of the growing hardship of life there would maintain social ties and be willing to share their income with those members of their network that remained in Lebanon. The informal economy relied on word of mouth, communication and interaction to provide goods and services that would move in non-hierarchical or rigid flows across the entire country and region. Equally so could the militias not assume trust, reliability and sacrifice of its members in confrontations if they limited themselves to simply paying their members. Instead they tried to appeal to its members by creating and maintaining a narrative that would make them the defender of their communities, real or imagined. Parallel to this were many militias depending on international links to provide them with funds, supplies and arms.

Leenders also places economic inequality at the centre of his study of the breakdown of the Lebanese state; the permanent temporariness of the political system that was controlled by a very small group gave rise to endemic corruption and nepotism. From the Second World War onwards, the economic structure of the country influenced the political system in a way in which legitimacy was less and less based upon merit. The countries' elite would use the political system to stabilise their own position vis-a-vis others, and the national interest or reconciliation between different classes, clans or sectarian groups was not made a subject (Leenders, 2012). Instead of the Lebanese state becoming more consolidated and establishing an inclusive political system that could address the interests of the majority, Beirut remained weak and divided. With the people relying on informal, traditional and sectarian alliances, the system was bound to break down sooner or later and pit the different groups against each other, regardless of their make-up, philosophy or structure (Bulloch, 1977).

A further indicator of the almost complete absence of debate of the national interest on the political system was the weakness of the military. Beirut feared that a strong national army could become a domestic political force of its own that would escape the control of the elites, and in this way weaken their position or even stage a coup d'état as had happened in many other countries in the region. This meant that Lebanon lacked the ability to isolate or at least distance itself from the volatility in the region because it could not match the armed forces, both state militaries and armed militias. "The official philosophy was expressed by Pierre Jumayil's famous formula:

‘Lebanon’s strength lies in its weakness’. Lebanon was desperately trying to extricate itself from any responsibility for belonging to a region dominated by the Arab–Israeli conflict. The army was there to defend the system, not the homeland.” (Traboulsi, 2007, p. 174). Similarly, the military weakness of Lebanon also gave Syria reason enough to send troops into Lebanon. Never having accepted Lebanon’s independence in the first place, the Syrian government feared that the conflict between Israel and the PLO could lead to an invasion of Lebanon by Israel, and in this way give Israel a staging ground for an attack on its enemy Syria. With the global Cold War being at its height, both countries found that they had the support of one of the two antagonistic superpowers for their actions, and since the Lebanese government was both unable and unwilling to focus on national, rather than factional interests, Beirut found itself at the heart of proxy war by global powers without defence or strong allies (Harris, 1997).

Over the course of the fifteen years of the Civil War, most of these factors remained the same or even gained in urgency: the hostilities within the country had crippled the already troubled economic system in which the elites had been able to leave the country, often with their wealth and assets intact, but still maintaining a strong influence on those who lacked the ability to flee themselves or to extricate themselves from the violence. As demonstrated above, the Cold War and the hostility in the wider region also remained a constant destabilising factor; the conflict between Palestinians and Israel, the struggle for regional leadership between Egypt and Syria, the destabilising influence of the Iraq-Iran war, the emergence of Saudi-Arabia as international actor following the 1973 Oil Crisis and overarching superpower rivalry, meant that every faction within Lebanon could count on foreign support. While it may be too far to argue that these outside actors were responsible for the violent conflict within Lebanon, they certainly kept it from coming to an end since a weak and divided Lebanon was more in their interests than a peaceful and stable player in the region.

7.1 Ending the Civil War

The first attempts at bringing to an end the armed hostilities in Lebanon took place as early as 1976, when Lebanon's President Suleiman Frangieh called for Syrian intervention on the grounds that further economic damage would be inflicted on Syria by the fighting in Lebanon. Syria agreed to send in troops and, in doing so, ended its longstanding support of the Palestinians in their struggle against Israel. One of the major problems that this, and subsequent attempts of reconciliation efforts were facing, was the difficulty of establishing who exactly was fighting, and where and with what aim, resources and motivations. The only shared ground, it seems, was the use of the violence that had become commonplace. The Civil War underwent a number of phases that were subject to, at times, more and, at times, less fighting, but since violence had almost entirely replaced the non-violent methods of dealing with issues and problems it appeared as if no end to the fighting was possible.

The agreement that is ultimately credited for having ended the Civil War, the Taif Agreement signed in October 1989, initially also appeared to be unable to stop the carnage that was taking place in Lebanon. After the end of the Iraq-Iran War in 1988 and following a massive influx of weapons by Syria and Iraq to their respective allied factions with Lebanon in early 1989, saw some of the heaviest fighting and highest number of civilian casualties in the war. The 'troika' of the Saudi-Arabian, Moroccan and Algerian heads of state called for a cease-fire in May of the same year but this was not observed by any of the adversaries until September. The negotiations turned out to be much more difficult and time-consuming than anticipated, and assassinations of influential individuals and journalists continued to take place in Lebanon. Even after the approval of the peace accord by the Lebanese Parliament in November 1989, the faction of the former head of the military Michael Aoun would continue to fight the government, leading to the most destructive fighting of the war in the first half of 1990. What seems to have ultimately ended the Civil War was the invasion of Kuwait by Iraq in August 1990. With regional and global attention shifting away from Lebanon and towards the Gulf, none of the fighting factions could any longer count on foreign support and supplies.

The conclusion of the 'Document of National Understanding' in Saudi-Arabia in 1989 was aimed not only at ending the Civil War, but also at providing a basis for a new

constitution for Lebanon. By this stage, all of the Lebanese factions had exhausted their resources and could no longer count on the willingness of people willing to risk their life and fight (Picard, 2002). The sheer exhaustion is expressed by O'Ballance: "There were no outright winners [...] only survivors." (O'Ballance, 1998, p. 223), and while some state that Lebanon as a country may have emerged even stronger than before (Salibi, 1988) the end of the war is as discombobulated as its beginnings. The society remained as fragmented as it had been before and maybe, due to the viciousness of much of the fighting, was even more divided than before. Many of the people who lacked the ability to leave the region and the fighting had had social contact with anyone other than those who made up their immediate group, and with the destruction of the cities and infrastructure, and the 'brain drain' of the majority of skilled and educated Lebanese poverty, destitution was rife. The economy had come to a standstill and Lebanon had lost most of the position and resources it had had before the Civil War. No longer a hub for regional and global trade, banking, finance, industry or agriculture, the country was in far worse a situation than it had been before the war. Since most of the elite had, in contrast to the majority of the population, been able to protect most of their assets by moving them abroad, the great divide between rich and poor remained [and was compounded]. Also the regional setting remained troublesome: Syria continued to dominate Lebanon and had even gained the right to base troops in the country, the Iranian-backed Hizballah had in effect established a state within the state in southern Lebanon and, in the absence of a solution for the conflict between Palestine and Israel, Lebanon continues to be involved. Most importantly perhaps, the war highlighted the vulnerability of every individual involved, and this feeling had been greatly exacerbated by the fact that virtually every militia and faction involved in the fighting had at some stage betrayed their allies, sectarian brethren and even family (Khalaf, 2002). The changes of the political system brought by the Agreement were minor as well, and the confessional nature of the political system remained almost unchanged. In light of the lengthy process of what became the Taif Agreement aimed at ending the war, the parties involved even agreed not to have a census, of which the first and last of 1943 was still the base for the calculation of political participation and offices.

8. Violence and its effects

The beginning of the violence, and equally so the cessation of it, appears from a distance to be explained easily by pointing out the existence of sectarianism in Lebanon. If this explanation is insufficient then factors such as the nature of the economy, the distribution of wealth and political influence and corruption is offered. The geographic setting of Lebanon in a highly volatile region with a multitude of other armed inter- and intrastate conflicts is a further factor that is relied on as an explanation. Yet all of these factors are unconvincing since they cannot, and do not, even in combination, explain the sudden and abrupt rupture and the emergence of fifteen years of Civil War. Possibly even more perplexing is then the end of the Civil War; not only did each of the above remain, but many of these factors were also either unchanged, or had in fact, due to the war, worsened considerably. The exhaustion that is stated by a number of authors (Chaitani, 2007; Cobban, 1987; Gilmour, 1983) to have ultimately caused the end of the fighting also fails to convince; if this had been the case why did the fighting not flare up again once resources had been replenished?

What unites all of these explanations is that they focus on the macro-level. The point of departure for analysis is the Lebanese state as a whole. As pointed out earlier, the Lebanese state is, in contrast to many of the people who are settled there, a very recent creation. Instead of adding the short history of Lebanon to the reasons for the emergence of violence in the country, it should raise the question of the validity of the approach that nominates the short national history of Lebanon as culprit. What makes the Civil War in Lebanon the “Lebanese Civil War” is the mere fact that fighting took place on Lebanese soil, but since there were various foreign fighters, militias, entities, supporters and suppliers, the historically already weak Lebanese government and state cannot serve as the basis for a study on why violence emerged and disappeared. A further illustration of the weakness of this explanation is that none of the fighting between 1975 and 1990 appears to have been undertaken with the aim of dominating the whole of Lebanon. Instead, the different factions would appear to struggle for control of specific areas and sectors, and would be willing to pursue these goals by using various and continuously changing alliances. Finally, as Kalyvas points out, the confusing nature of non-state combat - lacking clear structures of command, uniforms and conduct as well as often unaccountable resources and logistics - create the temptation for combatants and observers alike to explain a local conflict with

reference to a wider, at times regional, national or even global context (Kalyvas, 2006).

9. Networks and war and peace

In other words, the narrative behind the violence that took hold of Lebanon is explained without allusion to many of those who found themselves at the frontline of the fighting. Since, as analysed in the earlier chapter, violence is a form of communication, it plays a multitude of roles in a conflict. The critique above highlights where violence is fundamental in the metaphysical dimension: violence as an indicator or evidence of economic inequality, political or social injustice or religious and ethnic division. The important distinction is that in all of these instances violence is symbolic and embedded in a greater narrative, but in most cases is not existential. For example, a firefight between two groups would not break out because each member would actively threaten an individual opponent, but rather because each would argue that the mere existence of the other manifests a threat in itself. The apparent discrepancy in why violence broke out and was maintained is what brought Seurat to his study on the nature of the fighting in the neighbourhoods. It is there that he encountered key individuals who would promote and encourage violence as a tool to benefit their own interests and strengthen their position within groups. Seurat discovered two kinds of individuals that would stand out: firstly the community elders or leaders and secondly the suppliers of goods and services necessary for survival.

The link between the micro- and macro level is described by Castells in his analysis of 'reprogramming communication networks' (Castells, 2009, p. 299): assuming a that life is in a constant atmosphere of change, and in which a interactions between cultural and political change produce social change do multiple instances proceed parallel at different paces and different domains and groups. This makes any change both unpredictable in terms of outcome, but also in terms of the impact it has on the individuals that are most fervent in pursuing it (Castells, 2009, pp. 299-303). "Social movements are formed by communicating messages of rage and hope" (Castells, 2009, p. 301), and are centred around the public space, or the multimodal

communication networks, in which confrontation and cooperation take place and interact with social norms and institutions.

10. Conclusion

The emergence of violence that triggered the Lebanese Civil War was not based on the logic and culminating force of pre-existing conditions in Lebanon. Instead, a possibly accidental incident that took place in an atmosphere that was charged by the multitude of factors that had brought the demands and expectations for great social and economic change into conflict with forces that tried to maintain the status quo of the political system, led to a sudden mutation. The pre-existing feeling of stress - for example the ability to provide enough food for one's family, or the fear of foreign gun-carrying militias, or the apparent impotence of small businessmen against great conglomerates that threatened their livelihoods - was suddenly made acute by a sudden violent incident. In the case of Lebanon, it was the violent reaction by the authorities to the demonstrations by fishermen against the interests of the oligarchy. This incident is, albeit only remotely, related to the later battles of the Civil War: it caused the reprogramming of the communication networks from a lingual level to a violent one. The violence then became, as Seurat observed, the defining factor for the life of those who could not escape. For these people, the violence had become an existentialist threat that, in turn, empowered the two kinds of influential individuals that could, by referencing the situation to the wider macro level - national, regional or even global - rely on it for their own advantage. Thus, the violence on the micro level, that is the neighbourhoods or the immediate frontline of the fighting, and on the macro level, the national, regional or global level, are closely interwoven and are networked; at the same time this makes a linear explanation of a civil war so attractive yet fundamentally flawed. On the macro-level, for example, the hostility between Shi'ites and Sunnis had existed for a long time and yet in most instances individual adherers to both faiths had been able to live alongside each other without previously feeling the need for violent confrontation.

Further proof for this analysis can be found at the end of the violence, both in certain theatres during the war, but ultimately in the early 1990s: the existentialist fear that created the singular identities, and created a narrative of 'us against them', had

strongly divided communication between violent and non-violent forms. Necessary for the disappearance of disintegrative violence and the strengthening of integrative and non-violent forms of communication was not the eradication of 'THE' other but simply a reprogramming of the networks. Since the reprogramming of networks is a constant occurrence in human affairs (Castells, 2009) no specific and formal peace agreement was necessary. Before, during and after the Lebanese Civil War, people were making and breaking links and no massacre or atrocity was absolute in preventing communication. This can be seen in the fact that multiple times in course of the war, alliances were made and broken and often natural allies would become enemies or cooperate with former adversaries because the situation seemed to have demanded it.

It is thus the very nature that is often argued to be a threat for Lebanon that may as well be its greatest asset: a vast number of different networks that constantly interact and propel each other in different directions allow the Lebanese people to adapt to changes and developments. On the one hand, human nature is driving for security and stability, but on the other hand "Change, be it evolutionary or revolutionary, is the essence of life." (Castells, 2009, p. 299). A society such as Lebanon's is constantly exposed to a continuing influx of interconnected factors driving cultural and political and, in this way, social change. Especially with the memory of the Civil War in mind to some observers, for example Homer Dixon (2006), Lebanon appears to be constantly on the edge of disappearing into yet another abyss of carnage and massacres between different networks that all call the territory their home, but are all connected to networks centred far away from the country. However, when looking at the experience of the country through the lens of a Castellian analysis of the dynamics found in networks, the apparent instability is also Lebanon's greatest asset, as its history shows. Today's Lebanon has retained the same actors and networks that had fought each other in the long Civil War, but the same networks had brought great achievements and wealth to its people. This different perspective on the Civil War shows that the prosperity and safety of its people depends on the multitude of networks that interact in the country, and it is precisely the absence of a rigid, absolute and hierarchical system that provides continuity and balance.

Chapter 6: Afghanistan

1. Introduction

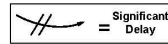
In summer 2009, General Stanley A. McChrystal, then Commander of the US and NATO forces in Afghanistan, was shown a Microsoft PowerPoint presentation with a slide with the title “Afghanistan Stability/COIN Dynamics” depicting the reality of events that take place in Afghanistan. His reaction has been reported to have been “When we understand that slide, we’ll have won the war.” (Bumiller, 2010).

Commenting on the overwhelming amount of information and content of the slide, the journalist who is credited to have initially discovered the slide coined the term “spaghetti logic” (Engel, 2009).

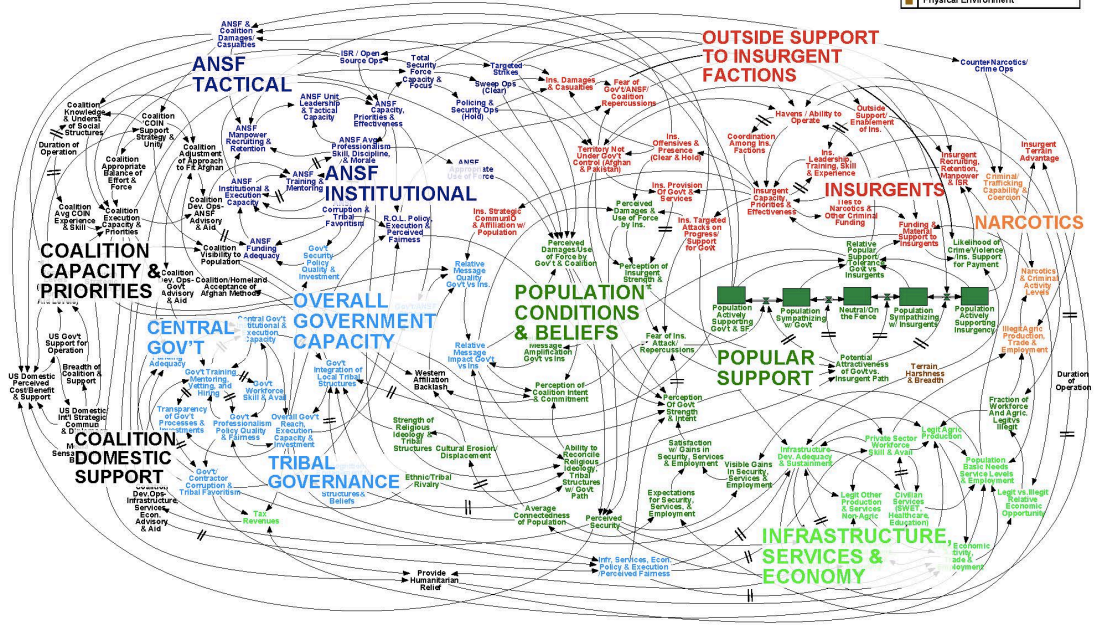
The slide is titled “Afghanistan Stability/COIN Dynamics” and presented the eight factors that NATO’s analysts considered to be most influential in increasing stability in Afghanistan. The slide earned the “spaghetti” label due to the complexity of the slide, which has a very large number of arrows linking the eight main factors, often via sub-factors, to each other. For example the “legitimacy and reputation of Afghanistan’s federal government” is one factor in the slide. It is linked by an arrow to “corruption” that is then linked to “tax revenue”, which in turn is linked to the “basic needs of the population”. From there it is connected with “visible gains in security, services and employment” followed by “perception of government strength and intent” to return to the initial factor of the legitimacy of the Afghan federal government. The myriad number of further arrows which connect each of the factors indicates how influence is not hierarchical but dispersed and interconnected. This is also what caused General McChrystal’s exclamation of the slide being impossible to understand or utilise.



Afghanistan Stability / COIN Dynamics



- Population/Popular Support
- Infrastructure, Economy, & Services
- Government
- Afghanistan Security Forces
- Insurgents
- Clitics and Narcotics
- Coalition Forces & Actions
- Physical Environment



WORKING DRAFT - V3

Curiously, both the authors of the slide as well as General McChrystal were aware of the fact that the reality of Afghanistan was even more complicated. While the slide purports to depict the Afghan theatre in which all factors and links are contained, a more exhaustive diagram would show an even larger and more complex map that links in a multitude of further factors, including ones which are far remote from Afghanistan itself. For example, the prices of heroin on the streets of a European city, or the US American Congressional elections both, directly or indirectly, influence Afghanistan.

A small box on the margins of the slide hints at further detail that has also been largely excluded: time. The two lines that cross some of the arrows, or the links, on the slide indicate “significant delay”, meaning that some links represent not instantaneous effects but effects that may take place over days, months or even years. Accordingly, the whole slide is just a snapshot at a certain moment; over time both the factors depicted and the connecting links change. For example, the “training and mentoring” of Afghan National Security Forces by NATO will not immediately increase the “institutional and execution capacity” of Afghan soldiers. This is evident

by the events that have taken place since publication of the slide regarding the attacks of Afghan soldiers on their NATO trainers and instructors. These so-called “Green-on-Blue attacks” have severely complicated the training process referred to in the slide, and has allowed the insurgents to significantly slow the process of increasing Afghan National Force capabilities (Roggio & Lundquist, 2012).

The obvious oversimplification of the slide, and the (therefore) ironic exasperated comment by General McChrystal regarding its complexity, does not render the slide of no utilitarian value. The slide highlights a number of important factors: first of all it shows that the ultimate aim of “Afghan Stability” is far less straight forward than it may appear. The definition of the term, and the grounds on which “Afghan Stability” is to be measured, will differ from one actor to the other and to agree on specific indicators will be either impossible or inaccurate. Secondly, as already touched upon above, Afghanistan may lie at the centre of the analysis of the slide, but it is notable that extraneous factors – for example the domestic situation in the NATO and ISAF coalition countries, or the role of foreign support for the insurgency – are not included. Even actions of US Forces outside Afghanistan (such as drone attacks in Pakistan, for example) cause reverberations that can be felt in Afghanistan (Johnston & Sarbahi, 2013). Thirdly, the slide was produced on behalf of NATO by PA Consulting Group, a UK based business-consulting company. The slide may or may not be accurate and, most likely, other observers would produce a different map with different factors and different links. However, what it likely is that a similar outcome would result in terms of complexity. Finally, the slide depicts a snapshot in time – both actors and factors emerge and disappear, and links are made and fade away on a constant basis – and the situation is subject to constant and random change. The diagram was already out of date when it was published because of the constant fluidity of the network it is attempting to depict.

2. Castells and Afghanistan

None of these four dynamics are specific to the Afghan situation, but can be found everywhere. What Manuel Castells calls “the two macro-trends that characterize the Information Age” being: (i) “the globalization of economy, technology and

communication”; and (ii) “the parallel affirmation of identity as a source of meaning” (Castells, 2010a, p. 343), are what placed Afghanistan on the agenda of the NATO member states in the first place, and are the reason that NATO remains involved there. This is because nation-states, so Castells says, are unable to isolate themselves from events that take place elsewhere on the planet. The “black holes of informational capitalism” (Castells, 2010a, p. 167) emerge in instances where a nation-state is absent and unable to provide institutions of civil society. The connection between these “black holes” and the established nation-states are of both economic nature via generally illicit trade (i.e. drugs or human trafficking) and bureaucratic nature (via agencies aimed at the containment of these effects – for example law enforcement and aid agencies).

An additional form of connection between the “black holes” and the established nation-states not mentioned by Castells is violence. On 11 September 2001 a non-state group allied to the Taliban, which at that time controlled most parts of Afghanistan, perpetrated the terrorist attacks of 11 September 2001 on US soil. But this was not the first time that Afghanistan and the United States were linked by violence. An earlier instance was the US support of the Afghan and foreign fighters, the *Mujahidin*, against Soviet invaders. Here, Afghanistan presented a proxy conflict between the US and the USSR in the wider, global Cold War. Equally in 2001, the US invasion of Afghanistan was clad in the rhetoric of a global “War on Terror” in which Al Qaida was the primary target and the fate of the Taliban was only secondary, just as earlier the weakening of the USSR was the dominant reason for US involvement. Even before the connivance of the two superpowers in Afghanistan, violence had emerged as a powerful force and, throughout the change in actors, it remained and remains central to Afghanistan. Equally so, the US government sees a clear link between stability and violence: a decrease in violence indicates an increase in stability (Defense, 2010) and, conversely, “Afghanistan Stability” is the title of the powerpoint slide McChrystal was shown and referred to above (Bumiller, 2010).

Most studies on Afghanistan, its people and history have titles with negative connotations: “The Fragmentation of Afghanistan” (B. R. Rubin, 1995), “Modern Afghanistan – A History of Struggle and Survival” (Saikal, 2004), “In the the Graveyard of Empires” (Jones, 2009) or even more bluntly “The Afghan Wars” (Maley, 2002) or “The Wars of Afghanistan” (Tomsen, 2011). They indicate that

Afghanistan is a perpetually hostile and warlike place where violent conflict prevails. Yet authors disagree on why supposedly this is the case. Some blame the landlocked and resource-poor geographic location of the country that causes its people to literally fight for survival (Roberts, 2003). Others find that Islamic traditions complicate stable and non-violent governance (Rasanayagam, 2003), while for example Giustozzi argues that it is the absence of governance that allows internationally recruiting, acting and resourcing groups to use the umbrella of Islam in order to justify their violent actions in the country (Giustozzi, 2008). Bird and Marshall claim cycles of intense foreign interventions and abandonment by the international community are exploited by local elites for their criminal activities, most notably the cultivation of opium poppies. This, they argue, provides criminal networks with financial resources that vastly exceed that of the central government and incentivise insurgencies (Bird & Marshall, 2011). Especially the US-led invasion in 2001 is often cited as a major cause not only for violence in the country, but also for a situation in which any supporter of the Afghan national government is assumed to be a traitor (Gopal, 2014). Jones supports this notion and claims that following the invasion the US failed to commit sufficient resources to stabilise the country (Jones, 2009), but for former U.S. special envoy to the Mujahidin the US-led invasion is only the latest in disastrous Great Power invasions (Tomsen, 2011).

Broadly speaking according to these observers there is no, or at best very little evidence that would indicate that Afghanistan would be able to ever become a country that is not 'at war'. Yet when assessing the works above the arguments presented fail to provide a convincing argumentation in which other countries in the region, with a similar ethnographic reality or level of development, political history or religion fare differently. Rather than to assume that Afghanistan's society differs from others an alternative narrative to explain the violence that centres on the country is necessary. Rather than to argue that certain factors or experiences do not allow any other response than destruction and war it is violence itself that has to be approached with in the Afghan context.

Castells' analysis is correct in highlighting the inability of states to isolate themselves from developments elsewhere in the world, but this leaves the question of why and how Afghanistan emerged in a situation of instability and violence in the first place.

The mountainous terrain, the lack of infrastructure, education and health care, and low economic development place Afghanistan in the bottom ten countries on the United Nations Human Development Index (Programme, 2013), but first and foremost it is violence that has had huge influence on the country and its people over several generations, leaving one commentator to state:

“Afghanistan was and would remain a singularly wild and anarchic place that would only be managed (if at all) by men of ruthless violence and ambition.”
(Edwards, 1996, p. 3)

In this regard, Afghanistan’s history must be analysed under the lens of violence; not just the emergence of this dynamic, but its ability to emerge as an issue in which arguably the most potent nation-states of the planet see this poor, remote and underdeveloped country as being at the heart of their own instability.

3. A history of Afghan violence

From the mid-19th century, a bureaucratic elite ran Afghanistan, with the monarch being represented outside the capital by individuals and families who based their influence and behaviour on traditions and hereditary patterns (Misdag, 2006). Due to the difficult terrain, lack of modern forms of communication, poverty and geographical isolation, the Afghan state lacked the resources to modernise in line with other countries in the wider region such as that of the Young Turk movement in Turkey. The slow and difficult process of centralising the Afghan state vis-à-vis regional clans and tribes was strengthened after the Second World War and it involved often military force, assassinations and intrigue which were used to subjugate local and regional structures. Standardisation of languages, currency, measurement, but also jurisdiction and trade, was a slow and arduous process in which many grievances against the central government emerged. While Kabul appeared to be slowly gaining the upper hand, these events created sentiments in which any representation of the Kabul-centred national authority is met with hostility:

“Within a number of years a hierarchical tribal system had given way to a disorganised assembly of notables of whom the state made use as local agents. These traumatic events were to give rise to a strong sentiment of identity which was to have its consequences in the present conflict” (Dorransoro,

2005, p. 46).

At the heart of the Afghan dilemma lies the absence of a national identity in a form which is able to unify the Afghan people and provide a shared cohesion on which a strong and Kabul centralised state and bureaucracy is able to emerge. The federal government is largely based on a foreign ideology of liberal, capitalist and democratic values, and relies on international financial, military and logistic support. It is doubtful that in these current circumstances the state institutions will be able to function effectively and sustainably. Besides the alienation that many Afghans feel towards what they perceive as government installed by foreign actors, and the functioning of that government itself, there are also many other obstacles to the emergence of an Afghan state (Misdag, 2006).

These obstacles are found in the multitude of diverse cultures, languages, religions and histories of peoples who live mostly a very poor and fragile life, often lacking the ability to communicate over long distances. Most services found in a community are not provided by the Afghan national government, and many facilities, goods and services are donated by foreign non-governmental organisations. This only serves to further weaken the ability of Kabul to establish itself as the central and legitimate authority.

The strength of violence as a force to create and maintain an identity despite the existence of otherwise very diverse actors becomes apparent in this context of Afghanistan. Afghanistan as a geographic and social entity, a nation-state, or simply a state that is surrounded by national borders, was only able come into existence due to outside forces which created sufficient momentum to bond the diverse and often feuding sub-networks into a loose, largely non-hierarchical and constantly adapting sub-network. What emerged was that violence became and remained a fundamental component in determining the position, reputation and influence of individuals embedded in that network.

3.1 The Struggle for National Unity

National unity depends on the position of the individual and the circumstances at the

time: the existence of an aggressor who was seen to be ‘on the outside’ always increased the emotive force of Afghan unity, encouraging the differing groups within the country to co-operate and place the possible conflicts between them as secondary matters. The earliest times in which Afghanistan could be considered a political entity on roughly the same geographic as it is today was under Ahmad Shah. Ahmad Shah was an elected military leader, or *amir*, under whom the local Durrani tribes in the 17th century sought to expand their influence and secure resources. In the absence of defined natural borders, the Afghan entity was at that time under constant threat from the outside – the fluid boundaries of the country invited occupation by weaker neighbouring tribes or families, but later on also British and Russian colonial endeavours. Even on the inside, domestic revolts weakened the state and prevented the emergence of a strong and accepted centre.

Ultimately, the national borders of Afghanistan were drawn by the imperial desires of Russia and Great Britain leading to the curious situation in which the borders of a country existed before the country that they enclosed (Gregorian, 1969). For example, in 1891 the British created the ‘Wakhan Corridor’, the thin strip of land that connects Afghanistan and China, with the desire to eliminate a Russian-Indian border. The also British-drawn ‘Durand Line’ of 1893 was also based on British interests in Pakistan and India, but in effect created a border that did not collide with ethnic and linguistic limits. From the declaration of this border onwards, Pakistan has sought to destabilise the Afghan area of Baluchistan and Waziristan (among others) in the hope of annexing the territory. This process has been on-going since then and has resulted in an area on both sides of the border that largely lacks any form of representative authority, and is out of control of both governments in Kabul and Islamabad. The struggle between the two governments has created a vacuum in which non-state actors and militants are able to establish bases and find refuge from pursuit by the authorities. Occasionally, fire-fights erupt between different groups in the area but even for the actors involved it is often difficult or impossible to establish the immediate reasons for these skirmishes (Stratfor, 2011). What is clear is that neither Pakistan nor Afghanistan is able to control the area, and strained relations between the two governments prevent the trans-border pursuit of militants. This has the effect of making the border not just ineffective but counterproductive for the state’s security (Lalwani, 2013).

At the same time, the national borders were of great importance for raising revenue: in the absence of a domestic structure to raise, manage and distribute taxes on the population from the 1930s onwards, some two-thirds of the national budget depended on customs revenues. This left Afghanistan highly vulnerable to upheavals in the international sphere and, for example, during the Second World War the state was on the brink of bankruptcy. Modernisation of the country depended on raising the necessary capital, but outside the major urban centres the virtual absence of the federal state hindered this. The only areas in which taxes could be raised were the cities, but corruption and banditry meant that additional taxation disappeared before it could reach the federal state. At the same time, this made the state an easy target for regional and local actors who attempted to install themselves through the federal administration. By the late 1940s, the Afghan federal government could no longer resist the temptation of trading sovereignty for foreign aid. Foreign aid allowed the federal state the freedom to largely ignore the rural population and limit attention to the urban centres. The percentage of foreign aid in state revenue continually increased and, from the 1960s onwards, provided more than 40% of the budget (B. Rubin, 1992). This influx of foreign aid was fuelled by the competition between the United States and the Soviet Union as part of the global Cold War.

Bossin describes three distinct periods of foreign assistance that prevented the emergence of a stable and sustainable political and social structure in Afghanistan: first, the subsidies paid by the British Empire from the mid-nineteenth century until the end of the Second World War which had the aim of enticing cooperation from intractable local leaders. Second, the Cold War period during which the competition between the United States and the Soviet Union dominated their agenda for foreign development aid. Finally, the third period which began during the Afghan Civil War in 1979 and continued until the fall of the Taliban in 2001 when the military, rather than economic or social assistance, dominated. Additionally, from the 1980s onwards non-governmental organisations (NGOs) and countries such as Canada, Japan and Australia became involved in regional or local aid projects. In all three stages, international assistance was dominated and undermined by political elites which exploited the foreign support for their own interests, as well as competition between the donors and local rivalries which rendered most of it unsuccessful. The absence of

domestic mechanisms to ensure transparency and accountability meant that the local elites benefitted far more than intended from the international support, and this prevented the emergence or reform of a central, stable and legitimate domestic political system (Bossin, 2004).

3.2 Domestic Attempts to Modernise the Country

With regards to modernisation of Afghanistan, its political system was unable to deal with the challenges it was confronted with: the influence of the constitutional monarchy was largely limited to Kabul and other urban centres, the political system was dominated by a small elite, and the government lacked the funds for modernisation, infrastructure investments or national security. Any increase in taxation was prevented by the members of parliament, most of whom were illiterate and uneducated rural landowners whose political actions were dominated by the desire to cement their position vis-à-vis the rural population rather than the federal or national interests. This left the latter alienated and uninvolved in federal politics. The stability of the government therefore rested only on weak institutions that could easily be taken over. As Dorronsoro describes:

“Given the lack of widespread mobilisation of the population, everything depended in the event on the ability of the actors to control the country’s institutions, and in particular the army from within. From the 1950s onwards, the military establishment became the primary objective for any group which wished to take control of the state. Up to this point the normal route to power had been to seek external support, tribal or foreign, and to intrigue within the royal clan. Henceforth, however, conflicts would be settled within the state apparatus by way of coups.” (Dorronsoro, 2005, pp. 79-80)

In this way, political insurrections became institutionalized but, due to the fragmented nature of the country, none of the coups was able to install itself as the dominant system and every coup became susceptible to either being overthrown by other groups or by infighting within their own. This became evident from the beginning of the 1970s onwards and is illustrated by the example of King Zahir Shah who, in 1973, was ousted by his cousin Daud Khan. A long period of successive revolts and insurgencies followed, and not only that, but violence between different groups

become commonplace. Even before this time different groups – often based on kinship such as clans or families – had at times used violence as a tool to address conflicts between them. However, these conflicts were predominately limited by way of space, time and scope, and lacked the invoking of identity or ideology as an underlying reason.

In the period before the 1970s, this type of violence between groups was generally used for instrumental purposes such as access to water or arable land. The political deadlock that emerged in the 1970s changed this in a way in which violence was becoming the norm for communication; as Dorronsoro states, violence became opportune and began to emerge as the standard behaviour for these actors:

“The salient characteristics of this period [the 1970s] was the opportunism of various protagonists in a situation which none succeeded in resolving to their own advantage” (Dorronsoro, 2005, p. 79).

Due to the fragmentation of the country, even massacres committed in the course of coups or attempted coups would not invoke much of a reaction by those Afghans who were not the immediate target. Because of the absence of a singular national identity and the gulf between urban and rural groups, political actors would end up looking for support from foreign powers rather than fellow Afghans. This foreign support had two major components: first of all, foreign funds were used for the purchase of weapons since, as touched on above, it only required a small number of individuals armed with small arms to hope to be able to overthrow the government in place at the time (Bhatia & Sedra, 2008). Secondly, once foreign actors observed the increasing violence and instability in the country, they became concerned about losing their influence and investments clad (either overtly or covertly) as development aid. The culmination of this was the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan in 1979 but, instead of bringing stability and decreasing the violence that had taken hold of the country, it further deepened the rift between urban and rural population. Furthermore, the Cold War caused the US to provide financial and military support to those Afghans that had started an insurgency against the Soviets and the Afghan factions it supported. Barfield summarises the period between the late 1970s and 2001 well:

“In retrospect, Afghanistan’s troubles over these twenty-three years can be divided into three unholy parts. The first phase began in 1978 with a bloody coup by members of the Marxist People’s Democratic Party of Afghanistan

(PDPA), who murdered Daud and declared a socialist regime. After only twenty months, internal dissent within the regime's own ranks and a growing insurrection against its radical policies brought the government to near collapse. In an attempt to stabilize the situation the Soviet Union invaded Afghanistan in December 1979. This initiated a ten-year occupation that pitted the Soviets and the PDPA against the Islamist-led mujahideen (holy warrior) factions that waged war against them. The mujahideen party leaders based themselves in Pakistan, but were funded by the United States and Saudi Arabia. The Soviet war would leave a million Afghans dead and create three million refugees before the Russians withdrew their troops in 1989. Against the odds, the PDPA regime under Najibullah (r. 1986–92) maintained its power in Kabul after the Russians left. Najibullah's stability, however, was fatally undermined when the Soviet Union collapsed. The PDPA dissolved itself in April 1992, and its internal factions joined with competing mujahideen parties, mostly on the basis of ethnicity or regional affiliation [until 2001 when the third phase was initiated by the invasion of the United States following 9/11]. (Barfield, 2010, pp. 170-171)

Giustozzi and Ibrahim agree with Barfield's description. Prior to 1978, political mobilization was generally limited to a small, Kabul-based elite but this rapidly changed following the Soviet entry in 1979. Not only the United States, but also Saudi-Arabia and Pakistan, believed that they could benefit from providing support to various factions within Afghanistan.

In turn, Afghan actors would change their rhetoric and behaviour in order to maximise the funds that came from these outside actors leading to an increase in radicalisation and decrease in the influence that domestic and local support would play for these actors (B. R. Rubin, 1995). Equally, foreign actors readily exploited internal divisions of Afghanistan; the fragmented nature of the society and the political system provided openings that could be used to weaken Afghanistan and ensure that actors involved in the 'Great Game' over Central Asia could make use of the internal fragmentation (Misdag, 2006). Domestic and international actors behaved in a similar fashion leading to violence, coercion and threats which replaced the moderating and dispute resolution abilities that traditional community leaders were able to provide:

“It seems clear that the control exercised by the communities over the *kumandan* [community leaders or commanders] was strongest where community structures were strongest and that the longer and more violent the conflict, the more destabilising the impact on the community on its ability to restrain an emerging professionalization of violence. Even in areas not known for the strength of community links, mobilisation by elders played an important role. Where community authority was weak, commanders had the strongest power even in the absence of a reciprocal relationship. (Giustozzi & Ibrahimi, January 2012, p. 13)

Of great interest here is the reference to the duration and the level of violence in the conflict, since the authors indicate that it was these two factors which led to a deterioration of the situation of the Afghan population. Previously, most of the fighting which had the aim of establishing control over the country involved only a small group of individuals, but this was changing rapidly.

3.3 The Soviet Invasion

This situation was to be the backdrop for the Soviet Invasion that, similar to the US involvement in Vietnam earlier, was based not on a single and clear factor, but rather a combination of events and developments in Afghanistan and the Soviet Union, as well as wider ideological, political and developmental events. Mohammad Daoud, cousin and brother-in-law to the king in Afghanistan, had been involved in Afghan politics since the 1930s and had, over the years, gained the support and approval of a number of different domestic and international actors. This support led to a bloodless coup against the king in 1973. Wary of relying on a single pillar of support, Mohammad Daoud carefully manoeuvred in a bid to benefit from domestic instability that had emerged as a result of the failed political and social modernisation attempts, as well as a major famine in 1969-71. In addition, international competition had fragmented the Communist Block into a Soviet and Chinese one – Afghanistan was sharing a land border with both blocks – and the wider global Cold War. Regardless of these factors, Daoud was unable to unite his different camps of support and failed to stabilise the country. Ultimately, the emergence of conflicts and fragmentation of communist groups that had become one of his main pillars for power, led to both his

own demise as well as the gradual and progressive attempts by the Soviet Union to dominate the country.

In the absence of a clear strategy for the future of Afghanistan, Moscow's support of the Afghan system was a piecemeal attempt to bring to the country what no domestic leader had been able to do: a stable and sustainable country that was able to solve the open questions that modernisation had opened up. Initially, Daoud had been supported by the Soviets but, because he refused to accept the authority of Moscow, he grew wary of Moscow and the influence it was gaining through supporting, training and instructing Afghan Communists. Daoud tried to exploit different groups for his own interests and was increasingly becoming seen as a liability, ultimately leading Moscow to instruct communist factions in the country to lead in a coup d'état (Misdag, 2006).

In theory the Soviet Union had two options: either to allow the Afghan population more freedom to choose their own leadership and policies, or to try and install their own *modus operandi*. The instability of the Afghan government in the first place is what Casti calls the "complexity gap" (Casti, 2012, p. 10), the space that emerges between the population on the one hand and the government on the other. When the government as programming authority is unable to close this gap either by repressing the population or by making concessions to their demands then a revolution will break out with unknown outcome (Casti, 2012).

By this stage, Moscow was already deeply involved in Afghanistan's domestic affairs, but despite vastly increasing political, military and social resources the Soviet Union it was unable to alter the dynamics that had already established themselves in the country. Additionally was Moscow perceive the domestic opinion in the Soviet Union as being unable to support a withdrawal of forces or to make concessions – fearing that this would lead to demands for reform in the Soviet Union itself. Despite the fact that one of the two global superpowers invaded Afghanistan and continued to commit vast reserves and resources, Moscow was unable to untangle the complexity of the fighting:

“This *muqawomat* (resistance) which later played a decisive role against the Soviet forces (1979–89) started as an embryonic movement in the 1960s and

was turned into a small fighting force by Pakistan against Daoud, because of his demand of autonomy for ‘Pashtunistan’.” (Misdag, 2006, p. 143).

Following the increasing Soviet presence, one which was felt most acutely due to the heavy-handed and arrogant behaviour of Soviet armed forces, *jirgas* came together to organise a resistance and an army made up of local forces (*lashkar*) was established. Due to the formidable fighting power of the Soviets vis-à-vis these Afghan forces, all possible support was to be covered, including the religious networks of the *ulemas* that reached far outside of the country. Funds, support and even personnel were sent from these countries to Afghanistan, and often this was done not because of the primacy of the motivation to support the sovereignty of Afghanistan, but because of domestic and other reasons. For example, the Saudi government believed that by sending the most outspoken and aggressive members of the *ulemas* to fight in Afghanistan, it could maintain or even strengthen its control (Barfield, 2010; Misdag, 2006). Equally so, the US ended up supporting the Afghan resistance (the *mujahidin*) not because it supported its motivation or ideology, but because of wider, geo-political considerations that were aimed at weakening the Soviet Union at all costs; arming the *mujahidin* occurred almost entirely as a side effect (Abdullaev, 2004). The support of the Afghan forces was not limited to funds, weapons, logistics and media but by invoking a *Jihad*, a struggle on religious grounds, many foreign volunteers joined the resistance as a religious duty. The Afghan context was largely lost in the recruitment drive in which foreign authorities were often supportive of young men, often unemployed and critical of their governments, who could be neutralised by encouraging them to leave for Afghanistan (McCauley, 2002).

The inability of the Soviet Union to alter the situation in her interests can be traced back to the programming that already existed in the country before the invasion. The Soviets assumed that their capacity to use violence, inflict pain and prosecute the opposition, would exceed the abilities of the other actors involved and, in this way, lead to a Soviet ‘victory’. What they did not appreciate was the already firmly established role that violence played in the country and, in effect, the Soviet Union became simply another actor in this network. Additionally, in the course of the Soviet involvement, Moscow revealed itself not to be the unitary and strongly hierarchical actor it had assumed itself to be, but became trapped between different sub-networks both within Afghanistan, the Soviet Union and the wider world.

Domestic limitations, most notably the willingness of the Soviet population to support an escalation of a war that had never been popular or seen as being in their interests, meant that Moscow lacked the political, financial and military resources to try and fight the Afghan resistance in its supply and training bases in Pakistan, or to force an end of Saudi or US American support. Other issues, especially the economic situation, further weakened the Soviet Union's ability to put political or other pressure on the foreign supporters of the Afghan resistance. The Soviet Union failed to install a programme in the country that would not be challenged. They aimed to install a stable and non-violent programme that would allow communication and a basis to mediate conflicts, but they became only one of the multitude of actors involved.

Central here is the different function violence played in the different contexts. For example, the United States supported the violence in Afghanistan because weakening the Soviet Union gave Washington a largely instrumental benefit, not because it had any form of historic involvement. Moscow will most likely have concluded that there were both instrumental and metaphysical gains; instrumental in trying to increase its share of political influence and economic reach, and metaphysical as a component of the Leninist notion of exporting its communist ideology abroad (McCauley, 2002). Equally so for many Afghans, the thought of a foreign intervention in what they perceived to be their sphere would have triggered an instrumental and metaphysical reaction aiming to defend or regain their autonomy and independence. These motivations are not exclusive and ultimately depend on the position of the individual in his or her social networks. The major change, however, comes when an individual is faced with the immediate experience of existentialist violence.

The longer the war in Afghanistan lasted, the more it became apparent that there were no benefits, or only limited ones, for the Soviet Union. To the contrary, the more suffering, pain and death was relayed back to the Soviets, the less they became willing to support their government's attempts to use the violence for their own purposes. Equally in Afghanistan, major financial and developmental support during the Soviet invasion and occupation did little to increase support in the population for the Soviet forces (Johnson & Leslie, 2008), and the instrumental and metaphysical possibilities for the violence to be integrative or positive diminished.

The Soviet invasion into Afghanistan highlights the inability of one at the time most powerful states to control a complex situation. The hierarchical structure of Soviet government was, due to its structure and rigidity unable to alter its behaviour or policies and found itself in a situation that exemplifies a “wicked problem” (Rittel & Webber, 1973): was the domestic audience in the Soviet Union the driver for the invasion of the country or was it the believe in the Stalinist ideology that demanded Moscow’s control over communist regime in the world? If so then the strategy pursued by Moscow in Afghanistan could not be altered even if it turned out to be not only unsuccessful but even couter-productive. For the Afghan population the interests of the Soviet Union were at secondary at best; what mattered for them was not which form of ideology the government would pursue but whether a strong national government was needed in the first place and secondly whether Kabul would be able to address their grievances and demands. The multitude of other actors that emerged and became involved in the fighting further highlight the complexity of the situation and the impossibility of one single actor to dominate the situation.

Thus, the Soviet invasion and, ultimately, the withdrawal in 1989, did in terms of motivation and course differ little from earlier or later attempts to conquer the country. However, just like the Soviet Union had determined to use violence in Afghanistan for its own benefits, so did a multitude of other actors; they all relied on a programme in which violence worked as primary form of communication in the network centred on Afghanistan. In the 1970s, Afghanistan had descended into violence partly because of domestic developments, but what worsened and maintained the violence is highlighted by Giustozzi and Ullah:

“One of the major catalysts for this new development [the emergence of warlords and ‘tribal entrepreneurs] was foreign interference. I do not refer here to the Soviet Army, whose role in 1979-1989 demonstrated similarities with the role of the British Army during the nineteenth century. Instead, I focus on the patronage of political organizations active among the tribes by foreign powers, such as Pakistan, Saudi Arabia and the United States. [...] This was a major factor in the emergence of entrepreneurs, who exploited these new opportunities for raising revenue and establishing a following.“
(Giustozzi & Ullah, 2010, p. 139)

Yet this description also falls short in explaining the developments in Afghanistan following the sudden withdrawal of Soviet forces in 1989. With the end of the Cold War, the United States also lost its interest in the region and funding and support quickly dried up. Saudi Arabia and Pakistan focused on domestic issues (although there were concerted efforts from within Pakistan to continue to try and weaken Afghanistan for political, economic and criminal benefits (Dorransoro, 2005)) and there was a substantial drop in foreign interest and support. If the involvement of foreign governments was the reason for violence in Afghanistan, then its sudden withdrawal should have led to a weakening of the warlords, a substantial drop in violence and a parallel increase of stability and security in the country. That this was not the case quickly became apparent in the civil war that followed, a civil war which engulfed most of the country from the time the Soviets withdrew to the US-led invasion following the terrorist attacks of September 2011. This civil war was by no means fought by Afghan actors for Afghan reasons alone, and there was no central authority that could prevent foreign involvement. Local warlords continued to rely on the ability to exploit their links by, for example, trading raw opium for weapons which in turn could be used to force farmers to grow opium poppies.

3.4 The Civil War

Despite the Soviet Union's withdrawal in 1989, the Communist government was able to maintain itself until 1992, but violence continued in an unabated fashion to dominate the affairs of Afghanistan. In this second phase of Afghanistan's history since the end of the monarchy in 1972, the United Nations tried to support attempts by the central government to increase its influence in the country and develop methods to address the challenges it faced. These challenges were both domestic and international, especially with regards to Afghanistan's neighbour, Pakistan. Ultimately these attempts were doomed to fail. Success would have required a change in the programming of the country's networks away from violence to a more inclusive system; the simple disappearance of one actor, even one as powerful as the Soviet Union, or by extension, the fading of some foreign support for the resistance, ultimately had little effect on the violence embedded in the country.

Whilst it can be argued that a large number of Afghans, perhaps even the majority, supported an end to the violence and believed that the withdrawal of Soviet forces could bring this goal, ultimately the same dynamics that had emerged in the 1970s were still present (Misdag, 2006). In other words, the struggle for power and domination continued to fuel violence as the dominant form of communication in and between Afghan networks. Different warlords, strongmen and tribal leaders continued to fight each other over resources which, due to the withdrawal of foreign forces and support, became even more scarce. Some authors regard this period as driven by economic conflict, as compared to the earlier political drivers (Giustozzi & Ibrahimi, January 2012).

Despite the fact that religion had served as the backdrop for much of the narrative and motivation for violent resistance against forces who were judged to be heretical, religion was unable to provide the basis for a non-violent state of affairs in Afghanistan. If, as one author puts it: “The Islamists were the major groups who organised resistance against Daoud (1973–78), against the communists (1974–79), against the Soviet invasion (1979–89), against one another for power (1992–96), and finally against the Taleban (1994–2001).” (Misdag, 2006, p. 167) then why was it never able to stabilise its rule and the country?

Already by 1990, the violence in Afghanistan had become a “forgotten war” (UN Special Rapporteur on Afghanistan Felix Ermacora quoted in Johnson & Leslie, 2008, p. 21) in which violence continued to inflict suffering and misery for the population, with little attention paid to it by major powers. Just as the Soviet withdrawal had not eliminated existentialist violence in Afghanistan, the disappearance of the initial policies that had pitted the urban elites against the rest of the population was no longer active in the 1990, and yet violence continued to be the most prominent form of communication of the networks found in Afghanistan. Furthermore, the scarcity of goods and high levels of poverty had made crime, especially smuggling and drug cultivation, the most attractive economy (Bhatia & Sedra, 2008).

The continued instability and volatility may have benefitted those who were able to use their position in the networks to extract rents from the population, through smuggling and crime and by exploiting their ability to dominate trade and the

exchange of goods and services. The majority of these individuals had little or no ability to use an alternative to violence in their approach to address conflicts and threats, since they lacked the ability to rely on, for example, a *Jirga* in order to address disagreements. The legitimacy of these individuals was almost entirely based on violence, so they lacked a narrative that would allow them to participate in a network with an alternative programming and, as a result, violence largely continued – with regional and temporal patterns - to haunt Afghanistan. This period between the Soviet withdrawal in 1989 and the next major invasion in 2001 is often referred to as ‘civil war’ in precisely the way Stathis Kalyvas describes it: it is not the existence of different identities that causes the violence that is found in a civil war, but instead violence is retroactively explained and legitimised by reference to a clash of identities and belonging (Kalyvas, 2006). In fact the reference to ethnicity as fundamental component of the war shows that the complexity of the situation; ethnic identities are not rigid or prescribe the behaviour of those who share this identity. Instead they are a welcome tool to be used in justifying actions that benefit only the interests of few individuals.

For many actors, especially those outside the country, instability and violence in Afghanistan were beneficial since their business interests and power depended on the maintenance of a violent programme dominating the country. For the Soviet Union on the other hand, the violence in Afghanistan was no longer acceptable since the domestic programme had changed and it no longer supported the perils, injury and death of Soviet soldiers in pursuit of an ideological goal. In short, the Soviet Union’s withdrawal meant that Afghanistan disappeared back into the same dynamics of different networks fighting each other with the aim of dominating the country and installing a programme that they perceived to provide legitimacy to their rule, just as had existed prior to 1978.

3.5 The Taliban

Another development, in comparison to the Soviet invasion and withdrawal and the subsequent civil war, was the emergence of the Taliban. The Taliban was a group that emerged in the southern Afghan city of Kandahar in 1994, and was led by a

charismatic leader, Mullah Omar. It was a loosely structured organisation that differed to other groups because of its change of narrative to gain and justify legitimacy. In contrast to the many groups that would exclusively base their legitimacy and power on the use of violence, the Taliban sought to establish themselves as a political and social authority. Basing themselves on a number of *madrassas* that had been established in Pakistan with the help of Saudi Arabian funds, they based their actions on a strict code of Islam. Instead of using violence for the immediate maximisation of their power and interests, they aimed to garner the support of the local population by offering religious, legal and security services. By prosecuting bandits, drug addicts and small gangs who were harassing and extorting others, the Taliban rapidly increased their influence. Its ideology and behaviour differed greatly from other groups and was far more inclusive; it invoked the shared religion of Islam, albeit a far more conservative school than that which had been found in Afghanistan before (Dorrnsoro, 2005).

Its links to the Pakistani *madrassas* enabled the Taliban to command military supplies and weapons to hold off against other armed factions in the country, but most importantly the Mullah Omar instilled a sense of law and order after a long and increasingly lawless period of war:

“In this situation the Taliban appeared to present an alternative to disorder. Its programme was based on the restoration of order: freedom of movement and of trade, the end of banditry, a ban on drug use, and so on.” (Dorrnsoro, 2005, p. 246)

In no sense were the Taliban a benevolent and liberal force and often, if not directly involved, they colluded with the opium industry. However, their sudden success as a state within the state was based on their ability to widen their legitimacy in the population while remaining heavily armed and ready to use violence against anyone who dared to oppose them (Davis, 1988). There was little economic and long-term investment made by the Taliban and most of their activities were focused on the creation of administrative structures, the judicial system and religious activities (Dorrnsoro, 2005). With the combination of governance and violence the Taliban were able, far more than other factious groups, to expand their field of influence across Afghanistan. Yet, in order to maintain the support of more orthodox and conservative donors, their interpretation of Islam was alien to Afghanistan and

remained a cause for dispute within.

This means that most of the support for the Taliban was not in exchange for aid or goods and services but was offered because of the Taliban's ability to offer a sense of stability, security and identity in a society in which existentialist violence was dominating. In a sense, in their organisation and narrative, the Taliban would have fit well into the period before the Soviet invasion:

“Their [the Taliban] rise to power, the result of a collective mobilisation, enabled them to occupy positions of prestige and authority out of proportion to what they could have expected within the Afghan society of the 1970s, when the prestige of the *ulema* had been in decline.” (Dorransoro, 2005, p. 273)

The shortage of supplies and funding, and the invoking of religious laws also opened the door for further foreign influence. In many other places in the Middle East jihadists and Islamists had failed in trying to use violence in order to place themselves and their programming in power, and Afghanistan became one of the last remaining areas in which Jihadists of different affiliations could find refuge and were welcomed because of their ability to provide a link to resources and advice (Stenersen, 2013).

The most aggressive of these at the time was lead by a Saudi millionaire who promoted himself and his organisation by calling for a global *Jihad* aimed against the last remaining superpower in the world, the US (Gerges, 2011).

Fuelled by the desire to participate in the Afghan *Jihad* against the Soviets, Osama bin Laden came first to Afghanistan in the 1980s. The wealth of his family made him a very important and influential figure throughout his life. While formally the head of Al Qaida, he focused his actions not towards increasing his own power or influence but saw his main purpose in providing funds and resources to those who would share his understanding of Islam. By promoting a strategy which legitimised the indifferent use of violence and the rejection of any form of authority that was not sanctioned by his definition of *Wahhabi* Islam, he became a fugitive and was forced to operate from underground. Because neither the Taliban nor Al Qaida were, or are, homogenous actors, it is difficult to examine and qualify their relationship (Stenersen, 2013). For the Taliban he was a welcome ally: in exchange for them adopting his understanding of religion he would continue to provide them with much needed funds (Misdag, 2006), but his prescribed religious conservatism, the global aims and the disregard to

Afghan culture continued to cause great friction (Barfield, 2010; Dorronsoro, 2005). An additional cause of conflict was the cultivation of opium poppies: many Afghans lived off the rents but many of the foreign Islamists rejected the opium economy as being against Islamic law (Giustozzi & Ibrahimi, January 2012).

3.6 Post 9/11

The invasion of Afghanistan by the United States at the end of 2001 brought the third, and so far final, stage of Afghanistan's history since the 1970s. Quickly following the terrorist attacks on the World Trade Centre and the Pentagon on 11 September 2001, Al-Qaida and Osama bin Laden was widely understood to be the perpetrator. Fuelled by a domestic programme that demanded revenge and retribution, the US government was quick to demand the Taliban, at that time the de facto government of Afghanistan, to hand over the accused. Initially, the Taliban refused to obey the request citing *Pashtunwali* (the unwritten Pashtun code of honour) and Islamic principles which forbid the handing over of guests to their enemies and organised a meeting of religious scholars and elders – a *Jirga* - to decide on the matter (Misdag, 2006). This highlighted two facts: first, Osama Bin Laden was considered to be a guest and not an Afghan, and this was despite the resources he had provided and the shared religious and possibly cultural background. Second, it was a *Jirga* that was to decide the course of action, an example of the traditional decision-making process.

When the *Jirga* had made the decision, which was that Bin Laden was asked to leave on his own terms, this effectively told the United States that Bin Laden was no longer protected by the customary laws of Afghanistan and could be arrested by the US in Afghanistan. Nevertheless, Washington continued to demand from the Taliban to hand him over. The behaviour of the US was seen by the Taliban, and the member of the *Jirga*, as a means of using Bin Laden as an excuse to force Afghanistan to comply with the US regarding other issues, such as form of government, the eradication of opium production, women rights and separation of religion and state (A. R. Clark, 2004). As it became clear that the issue would not be solved, the US made the decision, in October 2001, to support Afghan factions that were against the Taliban, bomb Taliban positions and invade the country.

The most important observation here is the conflict of programmes that both sides felt they could not alter; traditional laws regarding hospitality stood above even the differences between the Taliban and other Afghan networks, and for Washington a compromise was judged to be a sign of weakness in the eyes of the US public who was seen to demand an aggressive sign of revenge for the attacks of September 2001.

For Afghanistan, the invasion of the US was yet another foreign armed intervention, differing little from earlier attempts to alter the programming of the networks centred on Afghanistan, with the exception that this time there was no existing state or, as Barfield puts it: “United States invaded Afghanistan at a time when the state structure had ceased to function” (Barfield, 2010, p. 272). Yet for the networks that were most influential at the time, the US and later NATO troops manifested a substantial threat not only because of their military abilities, which were far superior, but also because of their aim to install a programme in the country that would create a major challenge for the legitimacy and power of the existing networks. This is corroborated by the fact that only a very small number of foreign fighters killed in Afghanistan were actually involved in international terrorism, indicating that their motivation to fight was closely tied to their personal position and power rather than to the global endeavour promoted by Al Qaida (Stenersen, 2011). The previous uneasy relationship between many of the foreign actors who had found refuge in Afghanistan on one side and Afghan networks on the other, for example the Taliban, was replaced with increasingly closer co-operation (Stenersen, 2013).

The relative ease in which the US was able to find and support factions in Afghanistan who were aimed at defeating the Taliban and its allies shows how fragile their power and legitimacy had been, but also how much the US was able to insert itself very quickly into the networks in Afghanistan. They did this by using violence. This was not by choice but because no other form of communication was available, both by reference to the domestic audience in the US that expected an act of revenge and a sign of relentless destruction and in Afghanistan, where non-violent communication would have required the ability to use the local language, customs and traditions in order to try and influence the local networks. The result of the US invasion was a removal of the Taliban from power but, as Giustozzi and Ibrahimi

point out, the US and its allies were unable to establish the supremacy of their networks:

“From 2002 to 2009, the strongmen were largely southern-based; mostly part of either [president] Karzai’s own patrimonial network or the CIA’s network. [...] The rival networks coexisted uneasily, as each tried to maximise its influence over the government structure at the expense of the other.”

(Giustozzi & Ibrahimi, January 2012, p. 29)

This means that the US and NATO may have been able to militarily defeat the Taliban and prevent them from providing the de-facto government, but they were incapable of instilling a programme that was able to alter the existing realities in the country. The reason for this is not only found in Afghanistan itself, but also in the limit to the resources which the US can mobilise. Rather than being a homogenous and hierarchical actor, Washington depends on factors such as public opinion in the US, economic and financial resources, the support of its international allies and the actions of a myriad of other actors to try and to break the circle of violence.

The PowerPoint slide that General Stanley A. McChrystal was presented with highlights this; violence is so firmly embedded as the dominant form of communication in Afghanistan and the obviously complex nature of the multitude of different actors and their behaviour being interlinked made the aim to alter the existing programme incredibly complex. Because all actors in Afghanistan rely on violence as a tool to increase their power instability, volatility and fear is commonplace and becomes self-reinforcing. As Castells points out:

“Anger is one of the most potent emotions behind rebellious practices as it reduces the perception of risk and increases the acceptance of risk-taking behaviour. Furthermore, anger intensifies with the perception of an unjust action and with the identification of the agent responsible for the action. [...] The price of bread, the suspicion of witchcraft, or the injustice of rulers have been more frequent sources of revolts and social movements than the ideals of emancipation. In fact, it is often the case that these ideals only come to life by germinating in the fertile soil of popular anger against the unjust.” (Castells, 2009, p. 347)

All actors in Afghanistan are faced with the same dilemma: regardless of their motivations any of their actions, intended or not, takes place in a complex network,

and is being interpreted and amplified along the multitude of different interests of the actors. The opening of a school can be narrated as either a benevolent act to help the local population or an attempt to subvert and weaken social cohesion and local culture. Similarly, a traffic accident that costs the life of a child may trigger violent action against the network the perpetrator is being allied with and cause great harm. One example of this is the destruction of Qurans by NATO staff in February 2012; on Bagram Air Base in Afghanistan books were used by prisoners to write clandestine messages to each other, and so were ordered for destruction. When this was witnessed by Afghan workers, word spread causing several days of violent protest against foreigners regardless of their nationality, affiliation or whether the causing incident had been deliberate or accidental (Rahimi & Rubin, 2012).

An analysis of the history of Afghanistan between the 1970s and the current day demonstrates why the United States and its allies have been as unsuccessful as all other actors in seeking to establish a stable programme in Afghanistan. The separation of Afghanistan's history, promoted by Barfield (2010) and Giustozzi and Ibrahim (January 2012), is far less powerful a tool for analysis than it appears since all actors, foreign and domestic, state and non-state, military and political were faced with the same dynamics of a programme that relied on a violence they could not control.

However, violence does not cause a complete and absolute descent into anarchy and destruction. People not directly involved in the fighting, either as perpetrator or victim, did not automatically leave the area or flee. As Dorronsoro states: "[...] there was no automatic linkage between the number of departures and the intensity of the fighting [...]" (Dorronsoro, 2005, p. 170). This suggests that people would instead seek to adapt their behaviour to the situation they were faced with. A study of the social networks of two villages in Herat province Harpviken, was able to show that violence, or the threat of it, would create anxiety in people. This anxiety, and the increasing insecurity of access to goods and services necessary for survival (such as housing, water and information) would be answered by key individuals who had links to sources able to provide these services. This increased the power of those individuals as well as the community leaders who had traditionally led a community (Berg Harpviken, 2009).

Almost as an unintended consequence, this rendered violence the most powerful factor in altering social networks: in a society in which non-violent communication would dominate decision-making, and power depended on a system such as the *Jirga* that was slow, transitions of power required time and commitment over time. When the traditional system becomes unable to address the challenges it is faced with – as happened in Afghanistan in the 1960s and 1970s – the system breaks down. Violence becomes the most powerful influence that determines the power of an individual and his position in the network. The narrative that is attached to this violence, the reason why violent acts are being committed or the context in which violent behaviour takes places, becomes secondary and is easily manipulated. This was found by David Kilcullen when trying to assess why individuals would join a fight or violent confrontation. In the case of Afghanistan, local adolescents joined an insurgent-led ambush on a NATO convoy not because they identified with the insurgents, but largely because their reputation and social standing would be enhanced by the fact that they had participated in a battle (Kilcullen, 2009).

4. Institutionalisation of Violence

The analysis of Afghanistan's history since the 1970s demonstrates the centrality of violence in the discourse. Parallel to the political developments that have emerged, there has been an on-going proliferation of small arms in the country caused by the conjunction of continuous fighting between and within different factions. The inability of the traditional networks to address issues such as modernisation, industrialisation and urbanisation led to a growth of fear, insecurity and mistrust to which the *Jirga* system did not provide a platform for moderation or a venue to deal with the issues faced by its members. Growing insecurity and absence of moderating institutions led to increasing levels of insecurity, fear, anger and mistrust leading to a surge in demand for arms and protection.

With the entrance of the Soviet military and a great proliferation of weapons in the hands of the elite, other foreign actors, most notably the US, realised that their previous investments were coming under threat. Foreign aid and financial support were increasingly used to purchase small arms which were then shipped to

Afghanistan and distributed along the various groups, accelerating the process discussed earlier in which domestic actors would focus their behaviour and rhetoric not on the interests of the local population but on foreign supporters (Bhatia & Sedra, 2008).

This indicates not that the issues of contention or causes of conflict changed, but the way in which they were being dealt with. Traditionally, Afghans had relied on a system in which all matters of public life were debated and decided within a loose and largely unregulated system of irregular meetings. The nature of the issue, threat or contention defined the make-up, urgency and scope of the meetings in which unelected representatives of different families, neighbourhoods, regions, clans, ethnicities or interest groups would meet and decide, often via lengthy process, on a compromise that all attendees could agree on.

This traditional system, of which the various different groups within Afghanistan had relied, and which has been mentioned on some occasions already, is called *Jirga* – customary meetings that were held on an irregular basis to regulate a multitude of facets in daily life ranging from trade to the resolution of property issues to foreign policy:

“The Jirga is an assembly or council that renders decisions on particular issues or cases. The latter are binding on all parties to any conflict. Decisions are based on Pashtunwali and Islamic law. The traditional function of the Jirga has been the equitable distribution of power in tribal social organisations.”

(Abdullaev, 2004, p. 117)

Violent conflicts between the members of these assemblies were not uncommon nor an exception. Disagreements about land, honour or reputation often only led to a *Jirga* coming together in the first place because they became so violent that they harmed the wider community. Because of their relative social isolation in the countryside, families or tribes often develop a very strong sense of identity that is centred on loyalty, honour and ancestry. The strong sense of identity and the role of violence for the standing of an individual in isolated communities is also found in other places in the world, for example in Turkish Kurdistan. Similar to Afghanistan, the people in this region base much of their identity and behaviour on ritual and actual violence, and perceptions of honour, strength and shared ancestry are major determinants for

the behaviour of individuals (de Bellaigue, 2011). An example for this in Afghanistan is the largely unwritten *Pashtunwali*, a shared code of behaviour for those who consider themselves to belong to the tribe of Pashtuns. A different word for ‘code’ could be ‘programme’: in order to maintain a network its members agree on a shared pattern of behaviour that will protect their interests, provide for their needs and also be the basis of identity and cultural narrative.

One of the factors that determined a man’s membership and position in the community were his abilities as a fighter and, because of the scarcity of goods and the largely absent authority, aggressive behaviour often paid off. However, the *jirga* system was generally capable of moderating conflicts that were considered to be too harmful. Nevertheless, this largely non-hierarchical and fragmented system was not universal; especially in and around cities and larger settlements where a system called *Galang* can be found. This differs from the *Jirga* system because of its quasi-feudal and strongly hierarchical structure, but a growing fragmentation and weakness of the state also weakened or threatened the position of these leaders.

4.1 Violence as a reaction to modernisation

From the late 1940s, the *Jirga* system was slowly undermined by the forced modernisation coming from Kabul and other urban centres. The attempts of the state to increase its influence and control in rural areas were implemented by trying to establish schools teaching a national curriculum, building and maintaining transport and communication infrastructure, and implementing a legal system based on federal law. In order to pool resources and to hinder or prevent governmental policies that would weaken the influence of the elders, the *Jirgas* became the centres of an anti-governmental movement. The different ethnic, social, linguistic and geographic background of the delegates of the *Jirga* system relied on the most common denominator as basis: Islam. Over centuries a network of Islamic seminaries had become established in Central Asia in which *Madrassas*, or schools, taught basic education and law and provided resources for the *Jirga* system.

The weakness of this system is based in its non-hierarchical and fragmented structure

in which conflicts were common. Its strength were its flexibility, adaptability and, largely due to its religious underpinnings, its ability to link a multitude of actors together, even internationally. By invoking religious motives, the Afghan elders were able to source support from the outside in order to maintain their, in effect, shadow-government in the country, as well as labelling the resistance against the common enemy an essential religious duty. After the communist takeover the government arrested, tortured and killed a large number of religious and local leaders and, following the Soviet Invasion, this process accelerated but was met with strong opposition:

“In response to the violence of the state, and afterwards to invasion by a foreign power, the population rose up in revolt and embarked on a Holy War, a *jihad*. The mobilization of the countryside took place in a context of local solidarity networks, organized around ‘commanders’.” (Dorransoro, 2005, p. 93)

Both sides, the state and the rural population, now had the ability to rely on large funds to purchase weapons and supplies that facilitated a form of violence that had previously been absent. The increasing proliferation of weapons led to a spiral in which violence became endemic and spread into all sectors and areas, and the *Jirga* system struggled to contain it. There was violence between its members, similar to the federal government which was equally faced with vicious infighting. Those individuals that used their connections most effectively were able to raise their own militias and became convinced that violence would allow them to maximise their power and ability to collect rents (Barfield, 2010):

“Whether over land, water, business or marriage, conflicts between individuals, families and communities become all the more violent by the ready stockpiles of mines, explosive ordnance and guns, While the possession of weapons is the most visible way of distinguishing the power of commanders and militias, it is not the exclusive manifestation of power. Availability and victimization are only one determinant of influence and impact.” (Bhatia & Sedra, 2008, p. 14)

When in the 1970s, the political elites began to utilise the majority of their resources to fight each other for the control of foreign funds, the already weak governmental presence in the rural areas disappeared quickly. The influx of weapons began in conjunction with the fading away of a controlling and regulating authority of the state,

and gradually the *Jirga* system lost its ability to moderate conflicts. Suddenly, conflicts that earlier had been contained within the social structure had changed their nature and forced a change of behaviour in the networks. Those who had links to suppliers of funds, weapons and supplies had now gained control of the programming of the networks, and relied on the extortion of rents while trying to increase their influence in comparison to others.

Parallel to the improved weapons and the provision of training by Pakistan, the US and European powers' communication equipment and training was also fundamental for the effectiveness of a group of fighters. Yet, upgrading these tools also fuelled rivalry between different factions that may, on the macro-level, share the same enemy, but on the micro-level would compete against each other:

“Relationships between commanders [of the mujahidin] were generally characterised by competition arising out of personal rivalries, logistical issues, control over strategic positions, and humanitarian aid among other considerations.” (Dorrnsoro, 2005, p. 209)

The image that these forces and their leaders are backwards, archaic or primitive is disputed by Hussain, who counters that warlords replaced ‘traditional’ power structures because the changes in their environments demanded this. Power and social standing was no longer being maintained by a slow-acting and moderating loose network, but “by building patron-client networks through control over the opium economy, arms and foreign aid” (2012).

5. The emergence of warlords

Increasingly numerous and powerful weapons were discriminately used and in this way violence became the dominating form of communication, replacing those forms that had build the basis for the *Jirga* system. Warlords emerged – leaders of a small group of armed men who, because of their ability to carry weapons and cause great harm, were able to exploit violence for a varying and often changing and conflicting means. The same actor could claim to be motivated by gaining political control within Afghanistan, using religious arguments to gain support from outside actors, while exploiting rent from the local population and benefiting from the control of smuggling

and illicit trade.

The definition of ‘warlord’ is disputed, because most of the literature argues that these are individuals who, through violence and the leadership of military forces, dominate a territory without political legitimacy (Zisk Marten, 2012). Supposedly, they differ from political actors because they lack a political or ideological goal, and from ‘strongmen’ who lack a military background but are similarly able to directly or indirectly coerce the local population (Giustozzi & Ullah, 2010). Although warlords do not exist everywhere where central political control has broken down (Giustozzi, 2005), there is a close link between instability, the chance to extort rents, especially from otherwise illegal or forbidden goods or activities such as smuggling, drug trade or extortion and the emergence of warlords (Hussain, 2012).

In contrast to traditional community leaders who had gained their position, influence and power by gaining the support of the wider group over time (for example by making just judgements in legal disputes, or through the maintenance of kinship ties and decisions that helped the community to survive), warlords differ, lacking this kind of political legitimacy. Instead, they rely on military legitimacy – the ability to inflict pain (Giustozzi & Ullah, 2010).

At the same time, these warlords are under constant pressure to both fulfil the expectations and demands of followers and fight off rivals. Charisma and superior personal abilities may provide the basis for elevation to a prominent position in the network, but survival will depend on striking the balance between providing the goods and services the community requires, and the provision of too much which in turn may make him and his position superfluous. The methods that a warlord may employ for this will depend on the programming of the network he is in: in an environment with little or no occurrence of unsanctioned violence, he will be stripped of his major tool for the extraction of rents and power because his use of violence will alienate the local network. Equally, the more that violence dominates the programming of the local environment, the more resources the warlord will have to employ to maintain his position as a provider of necessary goods, supplies and security (Glatzer, 2002).

The emergence and spread of violence in Afghanistan was not a result of political instability and failed attempts to modernise the country per se, but a change of the programming of the social networks in the country. Because violence became so readily available, through increased weapons and training, it was used for a multitude of reasons causing destruction and further fragmentation. The violence was focused on Afghanistan, but international links supplied the goods and supplies that were necessary for the maintenance of the expansion of violence. Porous borders and the fragmented nature of the country provided the fertile ground on which different actors from outside the country could benefit from the violence in Afghanistan, which serves to highlight the difficulty in identifying a unified and shared cause for this.

It is remarkable that the existence of warlords, and with it the existence of violence as a main method of communication, does not require a narrative of conflict which is caused by different and conflicting identities. In other words, there is no indication that identity and narrative are at the root of the conflict. Rather, they become a retrospective tool to seek to explain and justify instability, hostility and violence.

6. The Myth of Hierarchy

Because violence is so universal, it allowed a multitude of narratives for the use of violence to emerge. Every actor had different, and at times multiple, explanations for his violent actions. Moscow was, for example, led by wishes to expand its political reach, counter a perceived entrenchment of the United States in the region as well as possibly emotional reasons for its increasing activity in the country. In interviewing many of the Soviet decision makers at the time, Feifer finds that every one of them had a different motivation and narrative for their actions (Feifer, 2010).

Similarly, the United States felt that it could, via the proxy of Afghanistan, weaken its Cold War antagonist, find a market to which to sell its weapons, and allow certain individuals to be able to fight for their understanding of ideology and political and personal rights. Other countries, for example Pakistan and India, equally became involved in Afghanistan because of the antagonism against each other, while financial support came from many Islamic societies motivated by what they perceived to be a religious duty.

Besides state actors, there were also a multitude of other nodes involved in the use of violence, ranging from arms dealers, smugglers, politicians and elders to financiers, religious authorities and journalists. The fighting was not controlled by any single actor, and levels of violence differed across time and place. Dorronsoro points to the only constant that appears from the 1970s:

“The guerrillas existed in a wide variety of local circumstances, and the Shi’ite and Sunni groups developed in different ways, while the priorities of the commanders on the ground diverged from those of the leaderships in exile. A common thread nevertheless emerges: the tendency towards professionalisation among the *mujahidin*, which emerged in parallel with the prevalence of institutional styles of leadership over the patrimonial model.”
(Dorronsoro, 2005, p. 207)

This shows that it mattered less who was fighting whom or for what purpose, but that there was fighting in the first place. Once violence had been able to emerge and establish itself within the networks in Afghanistan, a dynamic emerged in which violence became increasingly prevalent and effective, demanding an evolution of weapons and tactics of those who wanted to remain able to exert power and influence.

In this sense, the thought of ‘the *mujahidin*’ or ‘the *Taliban*’ appears to be tempting, but is not helpful since these networks exist without a controlling central actor who is able to dominate the organisation in a hierarchical structure. They are what Dorronsoro refers to when he describes “the prevalence of institutional styles of leadership” (Dorronsoro, 2005, p. 207), but these institutions were not hierarchical but remained complex non-hierarchical networks in a constant state of change and adaptation. Because of this circumstance, any actor would aim to increase the stability, security and prevalence – which could also be called ‘legitimacy’ - in the network by trying to formalise it through gaining validation and respect by others. However, because other actors would follow the same path they would assume a zero-sum game in which the gain of one actor would be considered detrimental to another.

7. Conclusion

The powerpoint slide that General McChrystal was shown does not explain the war in Afghanistan, nor does it provide much guidance for how to end it. What it does show is the complexity of the situation and the difficulty in establishing a single narrative that could both explain the continued existence of violence and decipher which agents were promoting its use.

The United States and its allies are faced with the same challenge as all other actors in Afghanistan: they aim to establish a programme in the country in which their form of communication dominates, and in which their primacy of creating a narrative is secured. Just as little as Afghanistan can be described by a graph printed on a single sheet of paper lacking links to the outside, so is neither the programme nor the related narrative limited to Afghanistan itself. To add further complexity, the entire situation and the underlying networks are subject to constant change. Seemingly unrelated incidents – for example the threat to burn copies of the Quran by a radical in Florida – may have profound impact on the events in Afghanistan.

The emergence of instability in Afghanistan can be traced back to rapid changes caused by events taking place outside the country, mainly the Second World War and decolonisation. This in turn created great imbalance between traditional power structures and those who relied on newly emerging links which increased their power and influence. Traditionally, power and influence was based on factors such as kinship, exchange and cooperation and conflicts were addressed within a fluid and flexible system such as a *Jirga*. When relatively sudden new skills, for example education, linguistic skills or access to foreign funds became far more influential in determining an individual's power, conflicts emerged in which the traditional systems were unable to cope with.

Links to actors outside of Afghanistan suddenly emerged, challenging the influence and power of traditional rulers. Often without negative intent, these links provided an existential threat to them. For example, the construction of a dam and irrigation channels empowered those who controlled it above the landowners. When schools were built to decrease child mortality and improve awareness on health issues, those who relied on religion, superstition and traditional medicine lost their influence and

livelihood. Especially in a country such as Afghanistan, where the absence of transport and communication infrastructure had prevented the emergence of a centralised power, the sudden improvements in these fields caused conflicts and, in the absence of agreed structures to address them, they became more heated and ultimately violent.

In a simplified way, these new links pitted old against new, traditional against modern. Ideological rifts emerged between those who advocated rapid modernisation and those who feared that this would weaken their power, but neither side was a hierarchical or unified entity, as the 1970s show: political factions in the urban centres would be faced by violent struggles against each other for the leadership of reform. Depending on their links to foreign bodies, actors would try to dominate the discourse based on ideology, as much as they subscribed to it because their power, influence and wealth would depend on the support of these foreign entities. The result was an increase in instability, marred with the emerging narrative of a unified and centralised Afghan nation-state resulting in a zero-sum game in which the winner would dominate the entire country.

The growing instability and insecurity led all actors, both domestic and foreign, to feel that they and their investments were under threat. In the absence of an authority that could address this, different actors began to arm themselves, clashes ensued and violence emerged as the most influential force for the struggle of security, power and influence. Due to the fragmentation of the society and the absence of a functional and hierarchic state structure, it was easy for outside actors to become involved in fighting. For the Soviet Union, the violence in Afghanistan served two distinct purposes: firstly, Moscow believed it could gain political capital by trying to export its ideology abroad and to benefit from being able to dominate Kabul. Secondly, fighting between different factions in the Afghan capital and the weakness of communist influence in the rural areas manifested a threat to the investments that the Soviet Union had made in the country.

Only in the second phase, lasting from 1992 until 2001, did ethnic identity replace ideology in defining the fault lines in the narrative of conflict. This was a gradual process that only accelerated after the emergence of the Taliban, an organization

largely financed and ideologically led by non-Afghans. At the same time, there is the view that many Afghans do not share the rigid division into different ethnic identities, and there are also foreign observers who argue that ethnic divisions are overemphasised due to foreign observers academic bias (Dorronsoro, 2005).

Beginning in 2001, the third phase is characterised by the ingress of the United States, NATO and other foreign actors that, under a auspices of the ‘Global War on Terror’, led to a renewed fragmentation of Afghanistan and, to an extent neighbouring Pakistan, that is defining the country today (Giustozzi & Ibrahimi, January 2012).

Using a Castellan approach to the analysis of Afghanistan’s history, the fragmentation into periods involving different actors and phases of the conflict becomes secondary, since the underlying dynamics do not change. The narrative and justifications for the behaviour across the periods may differ, but what they each share is an attempt to install a programme into the country which would ensure their own primacy and domination. To consider Afghanistan or the Afghans as unitary and hierarchical actors is erroneous, because the country is tied into a multitude of different networks, leading to the result that the entire violent conflict in the country relies on networks shaped by a programme in which violence is the most powerful dynamic. Regardless of the different actors involved, those in the country all share the conviction that violence would work for them.

The approach promoted by NATO and many international non-governmental organisations is to focus on human rights, education, health care etc, to try to alter the current embedded violence, but this is only successful to a limited degree. For those who hold power, this approach manifests a threat to their power and position to which they answer with the only weapon they have: violence. On the basis that their legitimacy is almost exclusively built on violence, they need to maintain a programme in their network that is dominated by this.

Conversely therefore, a change of the programme of the network in Afghanistan that replaces violence with a non-violent form of communication, will rely on the support of the individuals who benefit from violence. This is much more difficult than it appears since it would, for example, require the United States to cooperate with

individuals involved in the production or smuggle of opium, or religious extremists.

Chapter 7: Network-centric peacebuilding

1. Introduction

‘Network’ and ‘networking’ are words that have, in recent years, become common in all aspects of science and human behaviour. They represent a new and modern form of understanding of interaction that, due largely to the development and adaptation of new technologies, is claimed to be revolutionising human behaviour and interaction as well as the understanding of natural phenomena. Equally, it is seen as part of a solution to many challenges such as environmental destruction and climate change. Despite the absence of a clear and uncontested definition of ‘network’ and ‘networking’, it can be argued that there are a number of key elements at the heart of the terms. Firstly, networks focus on the links between nodes rather than the nodes alone. With respect to natural phenomena, this could be the electric flow between atoms or the impact of the introduction of an alien species into a biotope. With respect to human behaviour, this indicates a focus on human communication and interaction. In other words, rather than assessing a person’s position in a social network as a basis for analysis of agency, the focus now lies on how and in what form that person communicates with others. Secondly, ‘networking’ indicates a weakening of hierarchical, linear and vertical flows in favour of ad-hoc, spontaneous and horizontal influences. Thirdly, rather than relying on rigid and formal dynamics, networks are structures that are subject to constant change, modification and evolution. Not only do links emerge, change and disappear, but the very aim and purpose of a network (in the words of Manuel Castells the “programme” (Castells, 2009, p. 22)) is subject to permanent, although not necessarily steady, transformation.

Human beings have always ‘networked’ (Kardushin, 2012), and stability and control has always been at the heart of human quest for greater knowledge. This is visible in the initial rejection of the scientific community as regards to the emergence of chaos and complexity theory (Gleick, 1998). However, just as the natural sciences have come to accept non-linearity as a fundamental dynamic of nature, so have the social sciences embraced complexity in human affairs. This is demonstrated by debates on topics such as risk (Beck, 2010) and liquidity in human affairs (Bauman,

2007). Manuel Castells makes a number of important observations of how human beings are adapting to inventions such as the Internet, mobile communication and satellite technology (Castells, 2000) (Castells, 2001) (Castells, 2009) (Castells, 2012). The impact of these technologies on human behaviour is what propelled networks to the heart of recent debate and analysis. This is not only because technology alters the methods of communication between nodes, but also because it renders the observation of communication, and of links between nodes, possible.

Despite the on-going analysis of networks and the dynamics found within them, the focus of research has been almost exclusively placed on specific forms of behaviour that assume the desire for mutual gain through cooperation. In other words, ‘networking’ is understood as a conscious activity by individuals who are interacting with each other for mutual benefit. This can be seen in particular in the political sector which, aided by modern communication technology, is subject to much deeper, efficient and spontaneous association (Kahler, 2009).

However, the so-called ‘facebook revolutions’ in North Africa and the Levant highlight the weakness of this approach, since it fails to include involuntary and forced behaviour based on coercion and threat. Networking technology played a major role in the uprisings but, as Castells points out, this is insufficient to explain the course of the protests: the people who joined together to rise up in Tunisia, Egypt, Libya, Syria and elsewhere, did not do so (and in the process risk their health and well-being) simply because they had read a communication about it on social media (Castells, 2012). Instead, violence played a major role in shaping behaviour: many of those who demonstrated against the existing regimes shared the long-held common sensation of suffering from injustice and impotence. What triggered the “Yom al-Ghadab” – the “Days of Rage” was a sudden violent event of perceived injustice related to the regime. The self-immolation of the street vendor Mohamed Bouazizi in Tunisia, or the violent crackdown of state authorities on demonstrators, served as catalysts for changes within social networks. The shared grievance, suffering and threat of becoming a victim of violence brought people together because it provided a shared narrative and identity. In other words, it was not social networks or social network technology that caused the uprising, but the shared threat of violence. Social

networks are only the venue on which the creation of a shared identity and narrative takes place and where the programme of the network is shaped.

The implication of this is that the study of networks must embrace not only cooperation under the assumption of mutual benefit, but also how shared threats, and especially ones of violence, shape those networks. This is especially important since violence is not only a common emotion capable of causing a negative reaction, but because it also fuels the feeling of community, group identity and shared experience - sensations that lie at the centre of networks.

This type of analysis or study has particular implications in the field of international relations, where it can assist in an understanding of the dynamics of violence and conflicts. This chapter will pursue this by analysing the relationships between violence and war and, subsequently, violence and peace. Social networks are groups of human beings who share a narrative and identity which guides their actions, behaviour and beliefs. Since the world is a 'network of networks' (Christakis & Fowler, 2011), the relationship between different networks will also be analysed. States and its organs are specific kinds of networks; they are networks which tend to be hierarchical, rigid and clearly structured, differing from the loose, flexible and non-hierarchical social networks found, for example, at the heart of the Arab Awakening. Often, when rigid structures become unable to adapt and engage with the demands they are facing, violence emerges. On the one hand, this violence aids in the creation of meaning, the feeling of community and shared narrative and identity, but on the other hand violence also hurts, destroys and rejects, triggering behaviour that is aimed at avoiding violence. This disintegrative violence hinders the likelihood of compromises being made to address the inherent conflicts, which are found in every network. Violence also tends to be corrosive and infectious and, especially in the context of international relations, causes negative effects such as large-scale migration movements, organised crime and destruction of infrastructure, livelihoods, agriculture and industry. 'Peacebuilding', 'statebuilding', 'stability operations' and 'post-war reconstruction' are just some of the terms used to describe international efforts aimed at mitigating these issues. In Lebanon and Afghanistan attempts to end violence produced quite different results. Following an analysis of this under the auspices of

network theory, recommendations will be offered as to how the negative effects of violence in international affairs can be minimised.

2. War

Because violence is a central component of everyday human behaviour its presence and impact on societies, or social networks, is not surprising. Because of its often destructive and harmful impact on both individuals and their networks however, violence is tightly embedded into a narrative that determines when and how violence is to be used. There are instances where these narratives seem to be largely absent and, in such absence, violence, with the death and destruction it causes, dominates human affairs. The largely unrestricted and unmediated actuality of violence between human beings can be defined as war.

The profoundly human activity of war is by nature confusing and difficult to both define and explain. In fact the word ‘war’ has its roots in the Old English ‘wyrre’ meaning ‘to bring into confusion’. Yet, when asking why someone is participating in combat, the answer that is presented is generally straightforward and simple. No more than a single sentence is needed to explain why they are not only permitted to kill other human beings and to destroy their livelihoods, but why this becomes the primary aim of all actions. Only in war is the taboo of taking another’s life, a taboo found in all social primates, suspended (Smith, 2007) and replaced by something that is difficult to describe. This difficulty arises because, to those who are not participating or sharing in the suspension, the situation appears illogical and morally wrong.

For Thomas Hobbes, war is the outcome of the fact that all resources are finite in nature:

“And therefore if any two men desire the same thing, which nevertheless they cannot both enjoy, they become enemies; and in the way to the End, [...] endeavour to destroy, or subdue one another [...] If one plant, sow, build, or possess a convenient Seat, others may probably be expected to come

prepared with forces united, to dispossesse, and deprive him, not only of the fruit of his labour, but also of his life, or liberty.” (Hobbes, 1960, p. 184)

Although most likely unintended, the most important word here is ‘united’: as much as war destroys, kills and maims it also works as a force that brings people together. This is true not only in circumstances of physical combat itself, but also in the more abstract form of a narrative. Human beings are social animals, and it is hardwired into their nature to form groups and societies for both pleasure and to aid the survival of the individual. What binds groups together is a shared narrative that can be based on a multitude of identities such as family ties, language, ceremonies and a shared history. The shared history of battles lost and won, of heroic deeds by individuals who died in the process of defending the group, of hardships that were endured together, are important dynamics which stand in stark contrast to the destruction that war brings. Every capital city in the world has places named after famous battles or military commanders, regardless how present people of the country perceive war today.

So war has two duties: firstly, it provides for the attainment of resources and, secondly, it creates the narrative that underlies the identity of groups. Because both of these are of such great importance to human beings, war has evolved along with scientific developments: “We exploit science to make war *because we are warlike creatures*. If science did not exist, we would still be killing one another.” (Smith, 2007, p. 29). Science has made war ever more destructive and on a larger scale (from the raids of hominoids that involved a dozen or so to the destructive power of nuclear weapons) and perhaps because of this a growing opposition to war – pacifism – emerged. Pacifism fits well with the concept of the enlightened creature, one who is able to self-reflect and to make conscious decisions undisturbed by emotion and dogma. One who is able to assess that war has become so dangerous, destructive and full of risk that it should no longer exist. Finite resources could be dealt with by trade and exchange, and history could be written by events that did not emerge out of violence.

2.1 Peace

The difficulty of defining 'war' also emerges when trying to define its antonym - peace. If war is defined by the existence of violence, then even the most peaceful society would be considered to be 'at war' since its historiography, traditions, rituals and sporting events will most likely either include or directly refer to violence. Equally cumbersome would be the distinction between war and non-war where the latter is demarked as violence being present in the discourse but with a predominately non-destructive or harmful intent. In other words, the presence of, for example, boxing matches, military ceremonies or the teaching of the societies' history in schools by reference to the past wars and battles it has fought, do not mean that this population is not at 'peace'. Equally, the dissection of peace into 'positive' peace in which violence is entirely absent from the discourse and 'negative' peace where potential conflicts will likely cause further violence (Galtung, 1969, 1996), does not provide further insights into why human beings at times refer to the use of violence, and at other times do not.

The use of violence is strongly dependent on the surrounding context to which the narrative is tied. This is demonstrated by the fact that even the most inhumane behaviour, such as the beheading of women, children and the elderly by groups such as the Islamic State (IS), is almost always accompanied by references to the necessity of the action due to interpretation of scripture. This example highlights the dual function of violence: IS justifies the actions of its members by referring to the group's narrative, and equally so do those who commit violent acts indicate their affiliation to IS by their behaviour. The same act of violence is destructive, or disintegrative, for the victims, and constructive, or integrative for the perpetrators.

Identities and narratives are not fixed entities, and are subject to constant change, emergence and disappearance. In particular, communication technology is breaking down many barriers to identity creation and maintenance, facilitating further these constant changes. In addition to the analogue social networks of the past, social networks now also exist in the digital realm in which time, space and singularity of character no longer apply. In earlier times an identity positioned an individual in her or his social network limited by time, space and the cost associated with maintaining

links. Now, the dynamics of identity are changing on a constant basis, and today the number of narratives and therefore linked networks are virtually infinite:

“What matters most [...] is to retain the ability to *reshape* ‘identity’ and the ‘network’ the moment the need (or, indeed, a whim) to reshape them arises or is suspected to have arrived. The worry of their ancestors about their one-off *identification* is increasingly elbowed out by a worry about perpetual *reidentification*. Identities must be *disposable*; an unsatisfying or not-sufficiently satisfying identity, or an identity betraying its advanced age, needs to be *easy to abandon*; perhaps biodegradability would be the ideal attribute of the identity most strongly desired nowadays.” (Bauman, 2010, p. 16)

It is important to note that Bauman’s assessment only applies to settings in which existential threat is absent; similar to authors who focus on, for example, policy networks (Kahler, 2009).

An alternative definition of war is the use of violence by individuals, who are sanctioned by the narrative of the society they associate themselves with, to pursue the aim of killing or destroying livelihoods of those who do not share that singular narrative. Peace, on the other hand, is when individuals belong to multiple identities and networks and are able to maintain multiple narratives.

2.2 Between war and peace

The discussion above shows that the perspective of the observer determines whether he or she sees ‘war’ or ‘peace’, similar to whether war is seen as a fundamental component of human behaviour, or a dynamic that only emerges when all other forms of human agency have broken down. Gray exemplifies the importance of violence in human affairs when he states:

“[...] force and the threat of force have had a greater impact upon the many contexts for human behaviour than has any other source of influence.” (2007, p. 265)

Most societies, states and groups refer to past battles, wars, victories and defeats in order to construct a history that can serve as a basis for the present. George Orwell expresses bluntly but ardently: “Who controls the past controls the future, and who

controls the present controls the past.” (1954, p. 199). I.e. any kind of power structure in a network will depend, either directly or indirectly, on coercion and dominance. It can be argued that ‘winners write history’, but the language used is one of violence and war. Even those societies that place the protection and wellbeing of the individual at their heart, teach a history in their schools that is shaped by battles, destruction and heroism.

The most liberal and democratic States maintain militaries, celebrate wars that ended generations ago, and maintain ceremonies, uniforms and monuments that are distinctively military. The British Poppy Day Memorial, the annual Commemoration of the Gallipoli Attack in Australia or Bastille Day in France are events of great importance for many individuals. Yet most of these people would, when questioned, regard war and violence as out-dated and morally indefensible. “[M]ost conflicts are in effect *bargaining* situations” (Schelling, 1960, p. 5), an opinion echoed by Kalyvas: all actors are struggling to dominate the narrative, firstly to maintain the cohesion of their own identity, and secondly as a tool to evince concessions from adversaries. Far from being coherent, every leader of a faction will need to make concessions in order to maintain his own position, a task as complex as actual conflict with the adversary (Kalyvas, 2006). For example, Wilhelm II had to accept defeat and abdicate not because he was militarily defeated but because his troops refused to obey his orders. Castells would argue that the programme that determined Germany’s policies towards the end of the First World War had lost their strength and ability to create a narrative convincing enough for German soldiers to fight in the name of the Kaiser.

Whether the ceremonies commemorate a battle won (such as the annual celebration of Russia’s victory over Nazi Germany on 9 May), or a crushing defeat (for example the Serbian defeat at the Battle of Kosovo Polje in 1389), they manifest important components of the narrative that maintains power relations within the social networks they are embedded in.

This raises important considerations for the termination of violent conflicts, since it appears that victory or defeat are only secondary in a war:

“The idea that engagement with the enemy provides wartime leaders with accurate, predictive information about the relative capacity of the two belligerents for continued warfare needs to be modified. The idea that wars end when calculations based on wartime data reveal that the anticipated cost of continued war exceed the expected benefits is too simple. Yet wars do end.” (Rosen, 2005, p. 110)

The role of the violence, fighting and suffering becomes secondary since the interpretation of events is far more potent a force than the events themselves. Reiter furthers this argument, stating:

“[...] combat is a relatively ineffective means of hastening war termination [...]. The fog of war makes combat outcomes often quite ambiguous, impeding the process in which expectations might converge sufficiently to permit war termination.” (2009, pp. 220-221)

However, the dictum that the character of war changes while its nature does not, remains valid. War always contains uncertainty, which is what motivated Clausewitz to compare war to “a game of cards” (Clausewitz, 2007, p. 86). War is destructive and “composed of primordial violence, hatred, and enmity[...] ; of the play of chance and probability[...] ; and of its element of subordination, as an instrument of policy, which makes it subject to reason alone.” (Clausewitz, 2007, p. 89).

The dependency of war on interpretation, its complexity, uncertainty and absence of perfect information, the inability of establishing a clear winner and, finally, the reluctance of some societies to associate themselves with violence being fought in their name, means that the character of war is changing. War is no longer accepted as a natural and common human activity (Storr, 2009). Yet at the same time, there is a re-enchantment of war that is not necessarily based on development in biotechnology (Coker, 2004), but because war is so powerful a tool for group cohesion; identities and narratives are remarkably resilient against violence because they are shaped by it. In other words, it remains permissible for a society to base its narrative, ceremonies, identity and history on war and violence, yet it is no longer permissible to engage in the physical act of fighting itself.

2.3. An end to war?

The experience of the First and Second World Wars indicates the danger of seeking to maintain a system at all costs: the Treaty of Versailles was to provide security by solidifying a power structure that, even before the outbreak of global war, had proven to be under great stress. Rather than providing lasting stability, the Treaty in fact laid the foundation for Nazi Germany, a fascist state that exemplifies the extremes that narrative and identity can develop. Parallel to this, the evolution of weapons made the disintegrative effect of violence far stronger than ever before. Thirdly, trade, transport and communication led not only to a growing global interconnectivity, but also created further strains on identity and narratives, as exemplified in the anti-colonialist movement that emerged in parallel to the World Wars.

The need for the establishment of a venue in which conflicts both within and between States could be addressed in a way that would minimise the corrosive use of violence, resulted in the establishment of the United Nations Charter. It had the explicit aim of preventing the destructive impact of war (Nations, 1945). Violence remained central as a tool of international relations but, in order to minimise its destabilising impact, the UN Chapters VI ‘Pacific Settlement of Disputes’ and VII ‘Actions with Respect to Threats to the Peace, Breaches of the Peace, and Acts of Aggression’ (Nations) were established. However, these do not prevent States from pursuing foreign policies geared towards defending their national interests. For example, the three key factors of US foreign policy listed by former US Ambassador to the United Nations Jeane Kirkpatrick, were: (i) protection of freedom and wellbeing of the US and its interests; (ii) global spread of democracy; and (iii) the prevention of violent expansions of power (Kirkpatrick, 2007). These factors show both the interest in change (global democratisation) and stability (preventing violent expansion of power).

The end of the Cold War did not manifest an end to history as Fukuyama predicted – he argued that since ‘history’ was the description of past wars and battles, this was no longer necessary in a world where conflicts could now be solved by supply and demand (Fukuyama, 1992). The precise opposite was the case; with the end of the ideological division of the Cold War, identity and narratives did not fade away or decrease in importance, but instead emerge as the culprits for an increase in violence and turmoil:

“A post-ideological world stokes its frenzies in the flames of nationalism, ethnicity, and tribal triumphalism. Old injustices and older enmities are reviewed and intensified; history becomes a whip with which to flail those who are inclined to compromise. Few rules are observed in these wars, fewer still in the tenuous moments of peace that punctate them. The techniques of a calmer era, peacekeeping included, seem inadequate at the moment.”

(Tharoor, 1996, pp. 213-214).

With hindsight, the apparent volatile atmosphere of the Cold War turned out to be much more stable than it appeared; the ideological conflict between the superpowers provided a strong and reliable narrative that divided the world into ‘us versus them’. The underlying power structures lost their most important tool when this unifying dynamic disappeared. In most of the former Soviet Republics in Eastern Europe, Tharoor’s bleak assessment did not apply. For example, the people of Poland were able to develop a power structure based on national identity and narrative with hardly any utilisation of violence. In other places, for example in the Balkans, the disappearance of the unifying narrative caused a power struggle that quickly turned violent, forcing its people to associate with a single identity. Similarly to the Sheriff’s experiment of boys at a summer camp (discussed below), the violence that emerged in former Yugoslavia appears to be incomprehensible to outsiders, yet to those who are involved or directly affected it dictates all their actions, behaviours and convictions.

Violence emerged following the end of the Cold War not because there were unsolved conflicts, or because there was an absence of a venue able to support the development of compromise and cooperation, but because a struggle over meaning and identity emerged. To recall Coker: wars are fought either because of an existential threat, instrumental benefits, or because of the metaphysical ability of war to create the image of a shared destiny (Coker, 2004). The existing order in international relations was equipped to deal with the two former causes of war, but unable to deal with the complexities that emerged out of the latter. Some authors even argued that the violent conflicts that emerged after the end of the Cold War were a necessary evil in order to prevent instability emerging from a continuation of a vacuum of power (Luttwak, 1999).

2.4 Group identity and hostility

In his landmark 1957 experiment of group behaviour, Muzafer Sherif invited a number of schoolboys to a summer camp in Oklahoma. The boys all had a similar socioeconomic background and had also enjoyed an otherwise similar upbringing. Prior to arriving at the camp, the boys were split into two groups. Each group was kept separate, and each was unaware of the existence of the other. For one week the groups went camping and hiking, establishing social bonds and an esprit de corps. Afterwards, the councillors brought the two groups together in a series of competitions, involving baseball, touch football and tug-of-war. Although amicable at first, the relationship between the two groups quickly turned hostile; each accused the other of cheating, there was name calling and even stealing and burning of the rival group's flag. Even social events such as a shared dinner did not improve the relationship between the groups, as insults were traded and paper and food were thrown at each other. In short, despite the similarity of the boys' background, the comparability of their experience in the camp and the absence of a predisposition of animosity, the relationship between the two groups turned sour and even shared social events were unable to eradicate the animosity that had grown up between them (Sherif, 1956).

This experiment indicates that group dynamics and the struggle over resources (in this case the victory of one group over the other in a competition) were enough to create a group identity that determined the behaviour of each member of one group towards the 'other'. A number of other experiments have confirmed these findings (Tajfel, Billig, Bundy, & Flament, 1971) (Brader, Valentino, & Suhay, 2008).

The existence of group dynamics may even be denied by group members in some situations, as the election of President Obama shows. There are clear indications that President Obama's racial background, his name or suspected religious background, caused people who otherwise agreed with his policy proposals to not vote for him. When questioned about this, only a small number of people were willing to admit their true reasons for voting as they had (Glaser & Ryan, 2013). There are indications that the opinion of people in political matters are often more influenced by their group identity than their self-interest (Kinder, 1998) as, for example, the Tea Party movement in the US shows. Despite the fact that many of its members will benefit

from universal healthcare, they object to it because their group dismisses any policy forwarded by the Democratic Party and President Obama.

This discussion demonstrates that group identity is very powerful as a tool for a group to manipulate its members, standing against the assumption that individuals possess free will and act on a rational basis. The behaviour of the boys at the summer camp does not make sense to an observer who does not share the same group identity as the boys, but it is safe to assume that most of the boys involved will not agree. Instead, they will be willing to risk their health and well-being, and accept the possibility of getting hurt in the enmities between the groups, above their self-interest as individuals. This is similar to the political ideology and actions pursued by individuals; rather than assessing their own interests and acting accordingly, they base their behaviour on that of the group they perceive to be part of. When applied to war this means:

“The individual is a volitional being, whose cognition is free to use and direct; and in group activity such as a battle, each individual must contribute his thought and effort – even if only by accepting the orders of others.

Metaphysically, such concerted action is always voluntary- that is, it requires the compliance of the individual. War arises when individuals *decide* to aggress or defend values in a group endeavour, either by joining up or by delegating others to fight. The group does not decide, for groups do not think or act – action and thoughts always pertain to individuals.” (Moseley, 2002, p. 39)

Therefore, war is a social phenomenon and has to be understood as such. Hostility and enmity always exist but, as Sherif’s study (1956) has shown, often appear nonsensical to those who are not immediately associated with the parties involved. Additionally, whilst such an individual may not feel associated to any of the parties involved, the violence in the conflict also negatively affects them as a mere observer.

2.5 Outsiders and third parties

These ‘outsiders’ to conflicts are often not able to protect themselves from the harmful effects hostility and violence between others can have on their life. Social

networks, as power relationships, mean that those who use violence are able to dominate others (Castells, 2006), but violence has harmful effects beyond the immediate incident. For example, supply chains become interrupted increasing competition over resources, individuals feel less secure leading to growing demands for weaponry and protection, and criminal behaviour such as robberies, theft and rape become more common since rewards appear to increase whilst the risk of punishment falls. Violence is contagious and its effects are very difficult to predict and isolate. For example, the civil war in Syria is creating major challenges in neighbouring Lebanon: people fleeing the violence are hoping for shelter, food and support. Smuggling goods, information and individuals in and out of Syria challenges Lebanon's authorities, and violent confrontation between hostile groups can easily rekindle even outside of Syria. Often, these different groups refer to religion since one of the main foundations of monotheistic religions is their ability to provide an equal approach to the entire human existence: there is a beginning, then a period of human life, generally associated with suffering and hardship, followed by paradise. This pattern applies the course of human life to the entirety of mankind in order to try to explain the existence of the individual by referring to the entire group. This is not the origin of linearity as the underlying pattern, but instead shows the need for meaning in human existence (Halpern, 2000).

Once conflicts can no longer be addressed in a non-violent manner that allows for compromise, then multiple identities are increasingly difficult to maintain. For example, the boys at the summer camp were unable to share an identity that would associate them with members of the other group such as the support of a sports team, a shared hobby, social class or religion. The ability of the boys to bridge the gap between the two groups is much lesser compared to that of an individual who does not associate him or herself with one of the two groups. In other words, the 'outside actors' are much more able to change the programme – to 're-programme the network'. As Castells argues:

“Yet, once set and programmed, networks follow the instructions inscribed in their operating system, and become capable of self configuring within the parameters of their assigned goals and procedures. To alter the outcomes of the network, a new program (a set of goal-oriented, compatible codes) needs

to be installed in the network – from outside the network.” (Castells, 2009, p. 20)

Yet the separation into ‘insiders’ and ‘outsiders’ appears to be blurred; a violent conflict can have negative effects far beyond those people it immediately impacts. For example, the civil war in Eastern Ukraine may be fuelled by a conflict over whether the population prefers to be associated with Moscow or Kiev, but the ripple effects of this violent conflict can affect apparently unconnected issues such as the security of civilian air travel, the transport of fossil fuels or the negative impact of economic warfare such as sanctions on agricultural products. Castells is correct in the sense that those who are at the centre of a violent conflict are less able to alter their behaviour, but at the same time it is strongly in the interests of those outside the immediate conflict to intervene with the aim of reducing the negative impacts of violence felt outside the relevant network.

2.6 Programming networks and violence

Once violence emerges as the programme of the network, it will become self-perpetuating since it becomes the dominant tool and component to manage power relations at the expense of other forms of communication. As discussed above, this makes it very difficult for those on the inside to alter the programme and replace violence as the dominating form of communication in the network.

For example, in Sherif’s experiment (1956) members of the two hostile groups of boys would have risked being branded as traitors if they argued against the group’s narrative based on its hostility towards the other group. All power relations both within and between the two groups of boys will be built on the conflict between the two. Alternative programming could only have come from the outside from, for example, the supervisors, councillors or from boys who were not part of either group. What Moseley calls ‘cultural and traditional ideas’ is nothing but a different word for programme or narrative:

“What is required for peace is a combination of changes in man’s liminal and explicit thinking regarding the metaphysical status of his own choice: man is free to choose; therefore he is free to choose war. But he is also “free” to

renounce his freedom and to offer his body to others to determine his fate. However, since much of the reason for war is generated by a thoughtless or unthinking acceptance of cultural and traditional ideas – which often denounce man’s ability to choose, peace is best secured by dissemination of a pro-reason (critically rational) mindset *and* the evolution and development of the alternative culture of the market system, in which the use of physical force is renounced in favor of voluntary contracts.” (Moseley, 2002, p. 40)

Stathis Kalyvas follows this argument and argues that violence in civil wars cannot be explained by simple reference to an existing grievance since this would imply that man had no choice but to continuously fight (Kalyvas, 2006).

Combining Kalyvas’ argument with the programming of networks advocated by Castells, the role of the underlying narrative emerges clearly: if a network’s identity becomes shaped by the hostility towards another group, the interactions between those two networks will be bellicose. This emotion can then be exploited by specific individuals within a group who are interested in increasing their personal power within their network. The more hostile and threatening an atmosphere exists, the easier the exploitation of the conflict becomes.

3. The changing role of violence in international relations

War and violence have strongly influenced the study of international relations and of history, but their role is subject to constant change. Following the Napoleonic Wars, Clausewitz could write: “War is a clash between major interests, which is resolved by bloodshed” (Clausewitz, 2007, p. 100), but the destruction brought by ever more cataclysmic weapons and strategies, and the growing negative global repercussions war and violence anywhere on the planet can have, has evolved greatly. Throughout history inventors and scientists, such as Alfred Nobel or J. Robert Oppenheimer, assumed that their inventions had, intentionally or unintentionally, such a potential for destruction that they made war impossible (Ellis, 1975).

However, growing technological developments have not created an end to war; instead, some of the most savage and inhumane violent conflicts depended on newly

developed technology for their destructive abilities. The Nazi regime depended on a highly developed communications infrastructure to maintain control of its own people and of its enemies. Instead of relying on technology and human progress and development to bring an end to the catastrophes caused by war, a venue that would allow conflicts between states to be approached in non-violent manners had to be created. The unprecedented destruction caused by the Second World War in particular demanded drastic action: “the clashes between major interests that cause bloodshed” were threatening to become too costly for the survival of mankind, and the only apparent solution was to outlaw the use of violence. The United Nations Charter was drafted with the explicit preamble “to save succeeding generations from the scourge of war” (Nations, 1945). A body was needed that could maintain peace and alleviate human suffering.

During the Cold War, the decision to outlaw the use of violence as a tool in international relations (which was enshrined in the UN Charter) was largely ignored by the ‘superpowers’. For example, the war in Vietnam was never declared by the United States, and it was not the UN but the US Congress which was considered to be the ultimate authority in deciding on the armed intervention in sovereign Vietnam. Similarly, the Soviet invasion into Afghanistan in 1979 was not subject to a UN declaration but unilateral actions emanating from Moscow. Similarly, these two superpowers were not reluctant to support the use of violence by governments even against their own people, when they perceived this to be in their interests, or would (as in Vietnam or Afghanistan) support armed factions in sovereign States that fought against their ideological rival. Proxy-interventions were justified since they increased the national security of one actor by binding the military forces of the other (Loveman, 2002).

3.1 States and violence

Only after the end of the Cold War did the debate on the role of violence, and with it the centrality of States in the international sphere, re-emerge. The disappearance of the ‘superpower conflict’ created an international system in which the reasons for

States to go to war against each other had dwindled, but now it was intrastate conflicts that came to present the greatest challenge to human beings.

Nevertheless, despite the destruction of the two World Wars, the intense global instability and arms race of the Cold War, and the genocide that followed, States maintained armed forces, both military to counter threats from the outside, and police to deal with internal domestic unrest. This decision of a State as to whether or not to use violence is much less the choice of individuals or governments, but a component of the international system:

“When states are challenged in their power, they respond according to their institutional rules, be they democratic, dictatorial, or a mix of both. When they fail to integrate the demands or projects of their challengers without jeopardizing the fundamentals of the power relationships they embody, they resort to their ultimate essence: their monopoly of violence in their sphere of action. Their willingness to use extreme violence depends on the extent of their legitimacy, the intensity of the challenges they have to face, and their operational and social capacity to use violence. When movements are determined enough to keep up their relentless pressure on the state regardless of the violence they endure, and the state resorts to extreme violence (tanks against unarmed demonstrators), the outcome of the conflict depends on the interplay between political interests in the country and geopolitical interests related to the country. (Castells, 2012, p. 97)

By referring to the monopoly of violence, Castells equally sees the State at the centre of his analysis of the wave of political turmoil that emerged in North Africa in 2011 and became known as the ‘Arab Awakening’. Yet where they had been successful in overthrowing the old regimes, the new governments may have, at least theoretically, gained control of the monopoly of violence. But this did not mean much. More pressing issues such as unemployment, the fight against corruption, inequality and high and rising costs of living remained the most destabilising forces – all of which largely exist outside the control of a State.

Lu compares the shift in the role of violence and State sovereignty to the domestic violence. Traditionally, the use of force within intimate relationships and as a component of the education of children was perceived to be acceptable because it

took place within the family, a body that was legally regarded as a private realm. Today this has changed - social and legal regulations establish boundaries of acceptable behaviour both inside and outside the family. The same is the case with State sovereignty; the concept of sovereignty no longer protects those who commit atrocities against their own people (Lu, 2006). This analogy may serve well in theory, but the practical implications are less clear: just as domestic violence has not been eradicated by laws that now threaten to prosecute those who use violence within their family, so has violence not been eradicated by a change in global attitudes. Violence, as shown earlier, is too central a component of human behaviour to be capable of removal. Precisely because domestic violence could not be eradicated, laws and a legal structure aimed at enforcing the ban on violence was needed. States continue to arm themselves even in the absence of a clear and distinguished enemy, and they continue to try and maintain their social cohesion by reference to past battles, skirmishes, military deeds and tales of heroism and gallantry of its people.

3.2 Nationalism as a programme

States are a product of human social actions aimed at creating a structure that provides the needs of the people who share a same interpretative understanding (Weber, 1946). Yet States are too rigid a system to be able to accommodate the constant changes that emerge from within and without. As Ernest Gellner describes, unpredictable changes in the climate, environment, economic development and social events cause an unceasing movement of people and ideas. A good example is of a city where wages and living standards rise and, in this way, an influx of people from the poorer rural areas to the city takes place, each in search of a better life. However, because in the city they are clearly identifiable as foreigners they are discriminated against and grow frustrated; they return to their rural origins where they then declare that the differences between them and the people of the city are so great that they claim nationalism and demand a state of their own (Gellner, 1983). If the city, or in other words State, resists this then an intense pressure is placed on the structure, regardless of which kind of identity the state was initially based on, be it language, religion, ethnicity or mythic origin. This emergence of an opponent who defines itself along a specific identity will force the other society to do the same. This results in the

emergence of different networks that are defined by differences in the underlying programme, but they nevertheless coexist and share a number of connections. This is comparable to dense clusters of sub-networks in a universe of networks. “People belonging to different ethnic groups cooperate nearly all the time” (Laitin, 2007, p. 11), because as long as they are able to communicate in ways that are non-violent they can address their challenges and needs for mutual benefit.

However, when economic, environmental or social stresses emerge and the existing programme is unable to embrace these challenges, then strains on the power structures of both networks will emerge. This means that States are under constant pressure to bolster the unifying narrative in order to maintain the power structure within the network they assemble. If States fail to satisfy the needs of the people, its power structure that is embedded within the unifying narrative becomes increasingly more difficult and costly to maintain. A seemingly minor act such as the demonstration by fishermen against a conglomerate can cause the outbreak of the Lebanese Civil War, or the anti-governmental graffiti of young boys can lead to Syria descending into a vicious war. To repeatedly quote Castells:

“When [the state] fail to integrate the demands or projects of their challengers without jeopardizing the fundamentals of the power relationship they embody, they resort to their ultimate essence: their monopoly of violence in their sphere of action.” (Castells, 2012, p. 97)

The importance of a shared narrative in providing a programme to the network of individual nodes it assembles is also visible in cases where a disappearance of the State’s identity forces the power structure to fade. For example, the Ottoman Empire, after hundreds of years, dissolved remarkably quickly following the First World War. Since the State’s narrative is only one identity of many that existed within the Ottoman Empire, its subjects were able to switch to others which could provide them with goods and services necessary for their survival, social contact, meaning and sense of belonging.

3.3 Stability and security

Even those forms of political organisation that are arguably more flexible and inclusive are not immune to this, as the independence movements in Scotland or Andalucía show. The weakness of the democracies in the world to advertise their form of society lies in the parallel existence of laissez-faire capitalism, since at the heart of social democracy is security that in free-market capitalism does not exist (Elliott & Atkinson, 1998). The conjunction of these two ideologies creates winners and losers, a fact that is obvious to outside observers more than to those elites that dominate social democracies and can be considered to be the winners. This is not dissimilar to dictatorial or absolute regime in which those who are winners and losers are clearly visible. The assumption of many with social democratic backgrounds who observe political upheaval, as for example in Egypt or Syria since 2011, and see a motivation for the establishment of democratic structures is thus flawed. What motivates people to rise up against the status quo is less found in abstract political ideologies and more in the desire to no longer be one of the ‘losers’. In the words of Castells’ network theory, the desire to change the programme of a network is not caused by a defined and elaborated alternative to replace the existing, but instead because the prevailing programme is no longer perceived as able to address the challenges faced by the nodes that make up its network.

The often-made mistake of the international community is to equate ‘stability’ with ‘security’; the present may not be perfect, but it is to be preferred to everything due to it being perceived as being stable and, thus, secure. There are plenty of examples of this in history, but most famously Franklin Roosevelt is alleged to have said about Nicaragua’s dictator: “Somoza may be a son of a bitch, but he’s our son of a bitch” (quoted in Cavendish, 2011). Similarly, the US government continued to support the Egyptian President Mubarak even after having earlier announced the US’ support for democratic reforms. Equally, the former Iraqi President al-Maliki continued to receive support from the former members of the ‘Coalition of the Willing’ despite having shown that his rule based on ethnic division, corruption and nepotism was neither liberal nor democratic. Contrary to the assumption that stability and the maintenance of the status quo are beneficial and positive at all times, power structures that prove to be too rigid and too unable to address challenges and to embrace change are likely to break down.

Following the atrocities of the Second World War, States became concerned with how they could heighten domestic and international support for their foreign policy. Rather than pursuing rhetorics of aggression and war, they sought to use language aimed at creating a positive emotion. Words such as ‘stability’, ‘peace’ and ‘protection’ became central to the discourse (James, 1969).

The result of this is that almost all foreign interventions have become enveloped into a language that relies on creating positive emotions, a process that has continued to the present. For example, the Russian military actions in the Chechnya since the 1990s or the US led intervention in Iraq in 2003 are described by the pursuers as ‘peacebuilding’, a description which is fiercely contested by those who doubt the motives and activities of the occupying forces (MacQueen, 2006).

Many States then, or international State-centric actors such as the UN or NATO, engage anywhere in the world by focussing on stabilising the status quo. This results in strategies that are often aimed at producing outcomes in which the actual causes for violence are secondary to the interests of the actors. This is firstly caused by self-interest that is geared towards preventing or minimising the negative effects that the spread of violence, and the associated instability, may have on their interests. Secondly, there is also the limitation these networks experience due to their own programming that may limit the resources and tactics that can be deployed. This pattern of behaviour is not only found in the political sector but also elsewhere. The global reaction to the financial turmoil that emerged following the subprime mortgage crisis in the US in 2007, clearly showed most surreptitiously how the rules of free-market capitalism were halted in order to prevent structural reform. Maintaining the current system is perceived as maintaining security, least from the unknown that may emerge instead of the present system.

By extending the reasoning that the maintenance of the status quo ‘equates to stability’, and subsequently security, to what is generally referred to as ‘peacebuilding’, the sporadic success of the latter (Miller, 2005) can be observed. For most people who live in a network in which the status quo is not desirable, the motivation of outside actors to maintain an order is inherently unattractive. For example, the population in Afghanistan do not associate the presence of the US military in the

country with security, but with the attempt to maintain an existing state of affairs – the power structure - which for most people in the country is not regarded as satisfactory or desirable to maintain. They simply do not share the narrative needed in order for the power structure within the network to continue to exist.

4. Peacebuilding

In the absence of an agreed and precise definition of ‘peacebuilding’ (Berdal, 2009), it can be described as the strategy to employ third actors to interfere in a violent conflict with the aim of replacing armed confrontations with a peaceful system that allows the local populations to address conflicts in a non-violent manner (James, 1969). This approach is pursued by a wide range of actors including NGOs, civilian actors, the business community, intergovernmental actors and states, all using tools such as military force, education, training, disaster and poverty relieve and venues to exchange information and to use as platforms of cooperation (M. Newman, 2009). Similarly worded is ‘statebuilding’, where State-led actors follow a narrower strategy focused on the installation and functioning of State organs such as domestic political bodies, the judiciary, security forces and a bureaucracy able to provide healthcare, education and infrastructure services such as roads and communication. Statebuilding is largely led and managed by States but can involve actors such NGOs, private enterprises, academics and military units, often working as together as teams on individual projects. Both approaches share the goal of ending hostilities, alleviating human suffering and preventing the further spread of the instability and suffering brought by violence.

Especially since the end of the Cold War, the number and scope of these kinds of operations had increased. Despite “their decidedly uneven record of achievement” (Berdal, 2009, p. 15), this trend has continued to increase, bringing it into the centre of international relations.

“Indeed, if anything, interests in the subject – whether it is measured in terms of new missions or of the institutional provisions increasingly made for ‘post-conflict’, ‘peacebuilding’ or ‘stability’ operations within the decision-making

machinery of states and international organisations and among armed forces – has intensified since 2003.” (Berdal, 2009, p. 15)

In places such as Somalia, Bosnia, Kosovo, Rwanda, Chechnya, Lebanon, Afghanistan and elsewhere, violent conflicts erupted. None of these conflicts seem to share much in the way of a cause of contention, the actors involved, their strategies and behaviour or the impact they had on their regional environment and the global sphere. Yet all of these conflicts had an impact that could be felt at various places and in varying degrees. Violence changes the programme of a network that in itself is a sub-network in a network of networks. The negative impact was, for example, sudden mass migration of people fleeing the violence causing strain on the networks they found refuge at, as was the case with Palestinians fleeing into Lebanon following their expulsion out of Jordan in 1971. Similarly, the Civil War in Somalia is endangering the international shipping routes off its coast. In the case of Afghanistan, a global terrorist organisation could claim, through bribery and reference to a shared ideology, a base to organise the attacks of 9/11.

Miller makes a sound case for why moral considerations cannot be ignored in regards to humanitarian intervention, since policy makers will feel under pressure by their constituents to act in order to alleviate suffering. This can lead to situations in which foreign policy is not made under the auspices of national interest or relations with allies, but instead on the basis of domestic opinion (Miller, 2005). In contrast to the ideological constraints of the Cold War, it was now domestic considerations that, for example, limited the effectiveness of UN peacebuilding mandates. The governments of member states were highly reluctant to risk getting involved for fear of harm to their soldiers, and subsequently their domestic position. On the basis that often there was no peace to keep, even the supposedly neutral parties were drawn into a violent conflict (Tharoor, 1996). However, even if this is the case, the criticism of humanitarian intervention being nothing but the violation of a State’s sovereignty by other name, remains. Aiming to soften the claim that humanitarian intervention was just an excuse for an armed intervention in the sovereign sphere of a State on a far less altruistic motivation, “The key question was: Should the international community move toward the development of collective *mechanisms* for responding to large scale suffering within states?” (Ramsbotham & Woodhouse, 1996, p. 79).

At various times different actors had tried to improve the success rate of these endeavors: For example the publication of *An Agenda for Peace* by UN secretary Boutros Boutros-Gali in 1992 (Boutros-Ghali, 1995) is as much an indicator of the changes taking place within the UN and the international community following the end of the Cold War, as a result of an inability to end violent and destructive conflicts (M. Newman, 2009). Boutros-Gali recommend the widening of the concept of peacebuilding from the mere focus on managing military actions, to include the transformation of violent conflicts by rebuilding civil society, institutions, the economy and facilitates reconciliation. While Boutros-Gali's approach manifested an important widening of the scope of peacebuilding operations, it proved to be largely incapable of success.

Another attempt was the "Comprehensive Approach" (CA) to statebuilding that emerged within NATO in 2004. It also acknowledges the inability of military actors alone to control or end local violence and highlights the complexity of peace and statebuilding operations. Rather than comprising a strict set of rules, the CA was seen as an attempt to increase the success of this kind of operation by increasing cooperation and coordination between the multitudes of different actors involved (Williams, 2011).

Even the US military approached the topic of counterinsurgencies (COIN) via a very similar language and strategy. Due to the expectation of becoming involved in combat, it is argued that COIN operations differ from peacebuilding (Petraeus & Amos, 2006), but its major argument is that:

"Military efforts are necessary and important to counterinsurgency (COIN) efforts, but they are only effective when integrated into a comprehensive strategy employing all instruments of national power." (Petraeus & Amos, 2006 p. 43)

Underlying this repeated call for deeper integration is the assumption that the cooperation and coordination of all actors involved would make the termination of a violent conflict possible.

4.1 A Castellan critique of peacebuilding

According to Castells, ‘network society’ “originated in the historical coincidence [...] of three *independent* processes: the information technology revolution; the economic crisis of both capitalism and statism, and their subsequent restructuring; and the blooming of cultural social movements, such as libertarianism, human rights, feminism, and environmentalism” (Castells, 2010a, p. 372). This on-going process has emerged in the public discourse only recently, but its roots are much older which allows his insight to be applied to past events.

As indicated by the growing trend of identity-based, highly flexible, social movements replacing rigid power structures with the aim of addressing the needs of nodes that share a common narrative:

“The relative importance of a node does not stem from its specific features but from its ability to contribute to the network’s effectiveness in achieving its goals, as defined by the values and interests programmed into the networks.” (Castells, 2009, p. 20)

‘Programmed’ refers to the underlying narrative of the network:

“A network is defined by the program that assigns the network its goals and its rules of performance.” (Castells, 2009, p. 20)

Narratives, or Castells’ wording ‘programmes’, are what maintain the links that function as the venue for communication between nodes of a network. The programme determines what the aim of the network is (for example, the support of a sports club) and how this is going to be achieved – the form of communication, norms of behaviour and the shared interest in the network’s aim:

“*In sum*: in the network society, the battle of images and frames, at the source of the battle for minds and souls, takes place in multimedia communication networks. These networks are programmed by the power relationships embedded within the networks [...]. Therefore, the process of social change requires the reprogramming of the communication networks in terms of their cultural codes and in terms of the implicit social and political values and interests that they convey.” (Castells, 2009, p. 302)

If, for example, one of the nodes of the network of sports club supporters is also linked to a political party, he could try to increase his power by gaining the support of

the club supporters who would operate along a different programming of their network.

This kind of social network is subject to constant change through the emergence and dissolution of links between nodes, as well as changing relational capacities of power of the nodes. A further important element of networks is their borderless-ness:

“[N]etworks do not have fixed boundaries; they are open-ended and multiedged, and their expansion or contraction depends on the compatibility or competition between the interests and values programmed into each network and the interests and values programmed into the networks they come into contact with in their expansionary movement.” (Castells, 2009, p. 19)

Since increasingly faster and easier communication allows not only for more social intercourse, but also provides the means, especially via the internet (Howard, 2011), for the creation of links that are unaffected by the traditional ‘analogue’ limits on time and space.

While a rigid structure is tightly controlled by a power hierarchy, these complex networks are constantly changing and adapting to their environment which makes controlling them nearly impossible:

“Law of requisite complexity: “This ‘law’ states that in order to fully regulate/control a system, the complexity of the controller has to be at least as great as the complexity of the system that has to be controlled. To put it in even simpler terms, only complexity can control complexity. An obvious corollary is that if the gap is too large, you’re going to have trouble. And in the world of politics, ‘trouble’ is often spelled r-e-v-o-l-u-t-i-o-n.” (Casti, 2012, p. 12)

This equally underscores the inability to predict the behaviour of complex networks. Due to their human agency they do not necessarily act in a linear or rational manner in any given situation. Additionally, the emergence of random events to which reactions and impact cannot be predicted further complicates this.

While Castells mentions anger as one of the most powerful emotions that shapes behaviour, he also touches on the role of violence and threats in social networks:

“[P]olitical violence is a form of communication by acting on the minds of people through images of death to instill fear and intimidation. [V]iolence and the threat of violence always combine, at least in the contemporary context, with the construction of meaning in the production and reproduction of power relationships in all domains of social life.

(Castells, 2009, p. 436)

Castells approaches violence in a perspective that is limited to its disintegrative dynamic of destruction and suffering, but the ‘construction of meaning’ already indicates that violence also has integrative abilities. Since the programming determines the goals and rules of performance of a network, it also installs which forms of communication the nodes within the network use. This is not limited to spoken or written language but contains all forms of human expressions, including the ability to threaten or commit violent acts.

4.2 Lebanon

This became visible in the Lebanese civil war when the rigid political system turned out to be unable to deal with stresses that were placed on it by growing urbanisation, economic stress and regional political developments. The mysterious shooting of a former mayor in Sidon led to the sudden eruption of violence in which social networks that had, before the war, interacted through predominately non-violent means of communication, all of a sudden turned against each other. Armed men required support and supplies and relied on their social networks to provide these, causing the rapid replacement of non-violent communication with violence.

Over the next fifteen years, groups were founded and abolished, alliances announced and rejected and a multitude of domestic and foreign actors became involved in the violence of the war. Observers struggle to describe the course of the war in a linear fashion (Khalaf, 2002; O'Ballance, 1998; Traboulsi, 2007) and often point to either domestic sectarianism (Gilmour, 1983) or to foreign interference and regional instability as cause for the war (Deeb, 2003; Picard, 2002).

Network theory as presented by Castells provides a more credible analysis: The rigid and slow-moving Lebanese political system had firmly established itself following independence. When challenges such as rapid urbanisation, growing unemployment, regional instability and demands for a greater distribution of wealth, resources and influence emerged, the political system appeared to be unable to address these issues. Suddenly, a minor incident was enough to cause a rapid reprogramming. Non-violent communication based on spoken language had proven to be ineffectual, so violence emerged instead, rapidly spreading and engulfing the country in its wake. The causes for the conflict became secondary, since the dynamics of violence in Lebanon profoundly altered the narrative of social networks demanding people to choose a single, steady and absolute identity, contrary to the multiple identities that exist outside situations of existential threat.

There is no senseless violence. Instead, it served as a tool for those who had relative power to placate an existential threat that existed outside of the network. This allowed them to create a narrative able to maximise and solidify their position of influence. The protracted course of the Lebanese civil war with its combatants adhering to a multitude of different narratives shows that identities were altered depending on whether alliances were deemed to be successful or not. In other words, once violence had emerged in the struggle to re-programme the network centred on Lebanon, it had come to dominate the discourse, causing widespread suffering and destruction.

Conversely, what was then needed for violence to gradually decline was a reprogramming of the network. A number of authors proffer different factors as causes for the outbreak of the civil war, yet none of these multitude of factors was addressed either by peacebuilding operations from the outside, or by the fighting inside the country. The hypothesis presented here is that during the fifteen years of the Lebanese civil war, the fighting had taken place not everywhere with the same intensity at all times, but that violence had increased and decreased in different theatres. In areas with a low intensity of violence, individual nodes would be able to maintain more than one identity. The more different identities a node possesses, the less likely it is that he or she will need the metaphysical integrative use of violence. To express it in different terms, the more a node could rely on different identities, the easier cooperation and communication became, lessening the dependence on violence.

From these 'islands', links would emerge based on mutual benefit. Growing slowly and unevenly this allowed those who had initially benefitted from violence to alter their group's identity in conflicts, allowing hostilities to be engaged with in a non-violent fashion.

The end of the Lebanese civil war does not mean that there will be no more violence, and that fighting as was seen then cannot again break out again. The strength of this system is its flexibility and, in the absence of a rigid structure, the ability to adapt and alter the shape, purpose and programming of the social networks able to provide meaning and the goods and services necessary for the survival of its people. Instead of a rigid and formal 'peace' forced on the people without addressing their needs, it is the flexibility and adaptability of network dynamics that maintain a condition that neither fits into traditional definitions of war nor peace. In a complex network, fixed end states do not exist; rather there is a constant flow (Bauman, 2007), and it is this dynamic adaptive nature that is the strength of the hypothesis presented.

4.3 Afghanistan

In contrast to the Lebanese experience, Afghanistan has been unable to break out of the violence which engulfs it. However, the assumption that Afghanistan is by definition destined to be subject to continuous and atrocious violence is flawed, and the flaws become apparent when trying to isolate the explanations. Similarly to as in Lebanon, an often referred to national, in this case 'Afghan', identity exists (B. R. Rubin, 2013). Yet identification with this identity does not provide an indication of the programming of this network or, in Castells' words, "the purpose and its goals and its rules of performance." (Castells, 2009, p. 20).

The harsh realities and the often existential threats and dangers that the people in Afghanistan are facing is having a major impact on their social networks. Even areas that are not subject to immediate fighting display enormous rates of poverty and other substantial threats due to a multitude of factors which are mostly out of control of the people (Berg Harpviken, 2009). The complexity of the situation is indicated by the powerpoint slide that General Petraeus was presented. It provides a snapshot

highlighting the multitude of actors, strategies and interests that exist in the country but does not present much of a unifying narrative, besides the fact that violence plays a major role. Violence connects the domestic audience of the NATO member states to Afghanistan, violence determines the reputation and influence of an individual (especially poor young men in the rural areas (Kilcullen, 2009)), and violence provides the base for the zero-sum game that dominates the political process of the country in which the gain of one actor is assumed to unavoidably indicate the loss of all others. For example, NATO regards that the Afghan national government has been elected and, in this way, gained exclusive legitimacy, a perception that NATO is willing to defend with its armed forces.

Yet military operations today are becoming wicked problems, leading to the inability of the military to cope with the demands it is being faced with. Militaries around the world are trying to adapt themselves to the constant changing realities of the network society (Schmidtchen, 2006), but only with moderate success, as demonstrated by the situation in Afghanistan. Despite the growing role of technology and ICT, war is and remains a very human endeavour and will continue to do so. Human beings have always been the weakest actor in the chain, since contrary to machines they require identities to guide their actions (Storr, 2009).

Afghanistan has not, in contrast to Lebanon, been able to benefit from a reprogramming of the network which is capable of ending the violence in the country. This is primarily because the discourse is almost entirely dominated by violence, leaving no room for reprogramming. Instead of the further and deeper coordination that it demanded efforts to end the violence in the country cannot be successful as long as hierarchic methods are applied to the complex adaptive network centred on the country.

5. Conclusion

As the example of Afghanistan shows attempts to install a rigid power structure of a nation-state is futile unless its programme is able to provide the nodes it addresses with the goods and services they require. Because violence is such a corrosive

dynamic, non-hierarchical and adaptive networks are much more resilient to the disintegrative effects it can have. Especially when human beings are faced with existential threats the role of belonging, community, narrative and identity is becoming increasingly important.

Afghanistan's social networks are often remote from each other - only a small number of relatively weak links many of the individuals that live in isolated and closely knit communities, and many do not have access to modern Information and Communication Technology (ICT). Many Afghan's adhere to an national identity and consider themselves to be 'Afghans' (B. R. Rubin, 2013), yet the nation-state with its authorities and policies does only play a minor role at best. This is even the case when parts or an entire social group migrates, including a relocation into the urban centres (Berg Harpviken, 2009).

Social networks tend to be relatively small and are based on a highly codified and structured narrative. In contrast to societies such as the Lebanese following the Second World War the survival of an individual depended almost exclusively on the social network. Conflicts that emerge outside this structure are often dealt with violently not because of the severity of the issue at hand, but because of the absence of a shared identity that could provide for behaviour geared towards addressing the conflict in a cooperative and consolidative way. Additionally is violence and the threat of violence a welcome tool for both community leaders to try and cement their position within the network, and for those who are able to link different networks to provide income. These two different kinds of nodes are, as shown in the example of Lebanon, hostile against any kind attempts to moderate since they perceive this as a threat.

For example when, as part of a multilateral peacebuilding and development efforts and international actors builds a primary school the majority of the population will welcome this. At the same time certain actors and groups may perceive this to be a threat to their position; for example the local Madrassa will fear that another school will limit their influence and position. The network of individuals that associate themselves with the Madrassa will try and destroy the newly build school and hinder its functioning, not because they are against education, the foreign actor or the

possible economic gain of the construction work, but because they feel threatened in their position and identity.

Additionally, and further complicating the field of peacebuilding is that violence and destruction may even be of benefit for a community: since the attention of outside actors, for example NGOs, reconstruction and poverty relief, tend to focus on the most deprived and volatile areas. Finally a weak and ineffective state is often beneficial to organised crime. Weak police authority, corruption often being attractive or even necessary to low salaried officials, and low-wage workers provide resources for criminal activity. In these cases violence is used to protect business interests to threats from the outside - for example as part of peacebuilding measures - and the inside - for example forced labour.

Violence is a form of communication with both integrative and disintegrative functions. When integrative then the shared experience of violence creates meaning and a shared narrative that is the basis of human behaviour. Because violence is so central to life it retains much of its power even if it is abstracted or used in cyberspace. This does not mean that people who watch the videos of fighting of the Syrian Civil War will automatically take up arms, but an individual that lacks identity and narrative will be easily identify him or herself with one of the factions. In other words for a young Briton online videos of violence that are presented together with a simple to understand identity and narrative are already enough to join a militia in Syria or Iraq to become quickly willing to kill and die, often inexplicable to those who do not share this narrative.

Lebanon shows that a focus on the causes that are presented to explain a war is futile. Violence requires a reason and narrative to explain and justify it, but almost anything can be interpreted as cause, depending only on the position of the observer. The hostility that Sherif (1956) found to emerge between groups is similar to what Kalyvas (Kalyvas, 2006) sees in civil wars; the need for identity and narrative increases in situations of stress, and since violence is an important provider of identity the supposed cause to justify violence becomes secondary.

With a growing awareness of the non-linearity, complexity and inability to predict the course of events comes the realisation that hierarchic and rigid structures are unable to address the challenges that emerge. Unpredictable and seemingly random events do trigger an equally unpredictable cascade of other events (Taleb, 2007). Non-hierarchic, fluid and adaptive organisations are much faster and more efficient to minimise the harmful effects of these events on those affected (Homer-Dixon, 2006). Just like an individual soldier can make the difference between winning and losing an entire war (Schmidtchen, 2006), and a single node can cause disproportional damage to a peace process (E. Newman & Richmond, 2006a) so is it a single individual node that shifts from violent to non-violent forms of communication.

The lack of success in peacebuilding operations should not be understood as a signal that these endeavours should not be undertaken. Moral considerations alone make this position difficult to maintain. Instead of hierarchical strategies and deeper coordination between actors approaches should focus on re-programming social networks of those most affected by violence. 'Peace' can be defined with the possibility of nodes to have multiple identities that co-exist. The process of reprogramming a network and to alter how identities are being made is slow, uneven and yet constant. After being founded by Charles de Gaulle in 1940 it took the Free French Army three years to unify, and even longer before this network was no longer primarily occupied to deal with international conflicts, despite the existence of a shared and highly dangerous enemy. Ultimately they were successful not only in defeating the enemy and ending the war, but also in providing France with an identity in which the now abstract violence of the Second World War has become part of the French identity.

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