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Solene Souplet-Wilson
The politics of Recognition: did the exception become the rule? Lessons from Kosovo, South Ossetia and Abkhazia

Fanny Candido

Abstract

Kosovo unilaterally declared independence from Serbia on the 17th of February 2008 and was promptly recognized by some of the most authoritative states in the international community, most of which attributed their choice to the sui generis character of the Kosovo case. This dissertation investigates the reasoning behind the argument of exceptionality employed in the Kosovo case and aims to establish whether such argument could be applicable in other cases. The Russian recognition of two other sui generis cases just months following Kosovo’s independence, South Ossetia and Abkhazia, suggests that the argument of exceptionality did ironically become a precedent in itself. Therefore, this dissertation holds that the lack of a strong legal and normative framework determining the legitimacy of statehood makes recognition an entirely political expression of preference and could lead to the exception becoming the rule in state practice.
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Introduction

Kosovo unilaterally declared its independence from Serbia on the 17th of February 2008, and was promptly recognized by a number of influential states, including the United States and most members of the European Union. The greater number of Western supporters of its independence was clear on the sui generis nature of the Kosovar secession. The argument of Kosovo’s exceptionality was justified by the special circumstances from which the state emerged, including the gross violations of human rights perpetrated by the Milosevic regime, the exhaustion of negotiations with Serbia and the extended period of international administration under the 1999 United Nations Security Council (UNSC) Resolution 1244. However, the argument of Kosovo’s exceptionality, which should have had the effect of reducing the degree of opposition met in the international community, especially by states facing secessionist threats in their own territory, and of postponing the need to address other separatist claims, ironically became a precedent in itself.

On the 26th of August 2008, just some months after Kosovo’s declaration of independence, Russian President Dmitry Medvedev granted recognition to the two Georgian breakaway regions, South Ossetia and Abkhazia, declaring that “[o]ur colleagues said more than once that Kosovo was a casus sui generis, a special case. But in that case, we can say that South Ossetia and Abkhazia are also sui generis” (2008b). The Russian recognition of the two post-Soviet de facto states has been explained as a result of a security dilemma arising from the disruption of its Serbian ally’s territorial integrity, which could be defined as a “recognition dilemma” (Bolton and Visoka, 2010), or as a quid pro quo to restore the country’s international prestige and increase its domestic reputation for honour following the events in Kosovo (Schaeffer, 2009; Nalbandov, 2009; Tsygankov, 2009).

While all these themes are relevant in gaining a broader understanding of the 2008 events, the aim of this dissertation is to investigate whether the Kosovo case can truly be
considered as an exception to the rule, or whether the “exception” has effectively become the rule in matters of recognition. In fact, the employment of the exceptionality argument does not address a normative or legal lacuna, but rather contributes to the creation of a “fictitious lacuna”, which therefore becomes a fictitious point of reference, or a precedent (Agamben, 2005; Sahin, 2013). While the language of exception reveals a security discourse, “which instrumentalizes some policies and practices as necessary exceptions to norms”, the existence of a norm or a rule in the practice of state recognition is dubious (Sahin, 2013: 17).

The legitimacy of statehood is legally regarded in terms of two contradicting principles, those of self-determination and territorial integrity. Whereas state practice has generally shown a normative preference to perpetuate the existence of states within their established international boundaries, the legal principle of territorial integrity does not contemplate cases of internal secession, which is generally considered to be a domestic matter for the state in question. Nonetheless, as the three cases discussed in this dissertation show, secession is not always just a matter of domestic politics; the political status of a seceding entity can be determined by members of the international community on an ad hoc, discretionary basis, allowing for the “exception” to be the rule in the recognition of new states.

This dissertation will be divided into four chapters. The first will provide a brief historical background of the events leading to the independence of Kosovo, South Ossetia and Abkhazia, as well as a summary of the history of their recognition.

The second will set out the theoretical background to the argument, providing an account of the theories of recognition in international law and international relations, and of the law on secession and statehood. It will seek to establish whether the practice of state recognition by members of the international community is consistent with the legal criteria of statehood and, given the ambiguity of the law, whether there is a predilection for the principle of self-determination or for the principle of territorial integrity. Drawing on Krasner’s neorealist analysis of sovereignty, this chapter will conclude that state practice is not consistent with the theoretical and legal framework; this results in practices of recognition becoming “organized hypocrisy” (1999; 2013).

The third chapter will firstly assess the reasoning behind the argument of Kosovo’s exceptionality, and take into consideration the elements justifying Kosovo’s “uniqueness”. While the nature of the conflict of the 1990s and the extended period of international administration account predominantly for the “special conditions” invoked (EU, 2008), other
states also listed elements such as the exhaustion of negotiations with Serbia, the persecution of the Kosovo Albanians and unilateral changes in Kosovo’s constitutional status by the metropolitan state.

Secondly, it will seek to establish whether the cases of South Ossetia and Abkhazia are comparable to that of Kosovo, and whether they could claim the right to recognition on the basis of the same special conditions. Findings show that, while differing under some aspects, the three cases present numerous similarities; such resemblances, if sought, could be found in other secessionist conflicts, and could result in the recognition of other “exceptions”.

Thus, the final chapter will seek to establish whether the exception has become the rule in the practice of state recognition. It will firstly provide an account of the political reasoning behind the Russian decision to recognize South Ossetia and Abkhazia, showing how the exception became a political precedent. Recent events leading to the Russian annexation of the Crimean peninsula seem to confirm this notion, with Russian President Vladimir Putin referring to the Kosovo precedent as a means to justify the legitimacy of his actions. The section hence concludes that the exception could become the rule if the international community does not seek a common solution to these three cases and establish a new, universal precedent.

Methodology
This dissertation uses both primary and secondary sources. The research is related both to the debate in international relations and in international law to provide the basis for the argument. While the second chapter is mainly theoretical and is informed by the general literature on the subject, as well as from the texts of treaties and other legal documents, the analysis pursued in the third chapter generally relied on individual recognition statements, declarations by politicians and government representatives as well as on the written proceedings individual members of the international community addressed to the ICJ in relation to the request to release an Advisory Opinion concerning the legality of Kosovo’s secession.

Nota Bene: Not all the recognition statements and written proceedings contemplated in this research are listed in the bibliography. For the full list, see the references: Kosovo Thanks You (2014a), and ICJ (2010a). For a comprehensive analysis of the recognition statements, see Bolton and Visoka (2010).
Historical Background

Events leading to Kosovo's independence

The conflict between Albanians and Serbians in Kosovo dates back to the 14th century, when the region was under Ottoman rule; such nationalistic tensions could not be overcome during the rule of the Kingdom of Yugoslavia (1918-1941) or during the years of the Federative People’s Republic of Yugoslavia. Furthermore, they continued to be in evidence during the post-Tito era of the Yugoslav regime (Fawn, 2008).

Whereas Kosovo enjoyed political autonomy under the Yugoslav constitution, its status changed under Milosevic’s regime, which openly pursued a policy of Serbian nationalism. In 1990 representatives of the Kosovar Parliament adopted a declaration of independence, which was the main cause of the central government’s subsequent decision to dissolve Kosovo’s parliament. Milosevic in this period inflicted a cultural “serbinization” of Kosovo, accompanied by systematic human rights violations (Dietrich 2010:124). Albanian nationals boycotted Serbian institutions, refraining from violence until the beginning of 1996 (Weller, 1999).

Following the Dayton Agreements in 1995, where the Kosovar issue was not addressed, thereby causing bitter disappointment, the Kosovo Liberation Army (KLA) was founded and took up arms. Attacks by the KLA and Serbian responses led to the escalation of the conflict, with the KLA changing from a guerrilla tactic to a strategy of attempting to seize territory. The Serbian army responded with a massive offensive which caused many ethnic Albanian civilians to flee their homes, and which was met by the North Atlantic Treaty Organization’s (NATO) call for the withdrawal of Serbian forces and threat of implementing air strikes (Fawn 2008).

The 1999 Rambouillet Agreement called for “substantial autonomy for Kosovo, including on mechanisms for free and fair elections to democratic institutions for the governance of Kosovo, for the protection of human rights and the rights of members of national communities; and for the establishment of a fair judicial system”, as well as for an international military presence (BBC, 1999). Russian and Serbian opposition to the implementation of a NATO administration of Kosovo, sparked the NATO-led large-scale military operation and subsequent transition of Kosovo into a de facto protectorate of the United Nations, under the UNMIK mission (United Nations Interim Administration Mission in Kosovo) established by the United Nations Security Council Resolution 1244 (Dietrich, 2010; UN, 1999). The resolution on the one side reaffirmed the call for “substantial autonomy and meaningful self-administration for Kosovo”, on the other cited “the commitment of all Member States to
the sovereignty and territorial integrity of the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia and the other States of the region” (UN, 1999).

The process for Kosovo’s future status was led by UN Special Envoy Martti Ahtisaari; the 2007 Ahtisaari Plan proposed a decentralized local government for Kosovo able to enter international agreements (UN, 2007); Serbian President Tadic rejected the proposal, and referred to the plan as a cunning move that would pave the way to Kosovo’s independence, as it did not “explicitly mention independence for Kosovo, but it also [did] not mention the territorial integrity of Serbia” (BBC, 2007a).

The recognition of Kosovo

International legal recognition allows participation of the state in global economic, political and security structures, as well as membership of international organizations. In a post-conflict situation, similar to that in Kosovo, “such international participation is vital for political stability and economic development. Regionally, the resolution of contested borders promotes stability and integration” (Bolton and Visoka, 2010: 5)

On 17 February 2008, the parliament in Pristina unilaterally declared Kosovo’s independence from Serbia, causing mixed reactions in the international community. At the moment of writing, Kosovo is recognized by 108 out of 193 UN Member States; in order to achieve a seat at the UN it will need a two-thirds majority of the UN member states’ recognition in the General Assembly and approval from the Security Council, according to rule 136 of the UN Rules of Procedure (Kosovo Thanks You, 2014a).

Most of the states extending their recognition to Kosovo are members of Western multilateral and regional political, economic and security organizations. For example, Kosovo is recognized by 23 out of 27 European Union member states, 85% of NATO member states, 72% of Council of Europe member states and 64% of OSCE member states (Kosovo Thanks You, 2014b). It is noteworthy that the European Union could not find a common accord in the recognition of Kosovo, with Spain and Cyprus refusing to accept the independent sovereign condition of Kosovo so as not to exacerbate their domestic conflicts. Around 60% of state-members of the Arab League and the Organization of Islamic Cooperation recognized the new state.

States supporting Kosovo’s independence have justified their choice in relation to a number of factors, namely: the persecution of the Kosovo Albanians under the Milosevic regime; a decade of international administration (1999-2008); the statehood capacity achieved during the interim government; (EU, 2008). Amongst other factors mentioned, were Kosovo’s
compliance with UN Security Council Resolution 1244, the exhaustion of negotiations with Serbia, the commitment to respect minority rights and accept supervised independence according to the Ahtisaari plan (Kosovo Thanks You, 2014a; Fabry, 2012; Almqvist, 2013; Bolton and Visoka, 2010). An outstanding number of the parties extending their recognition emphasized that Kosovo’s independence was the only viable means to promote and maintain regional peace and stability. Such reasons were also used to legitimize the argument of Kosovo’s exceptionality, as will be further discussed in the third chapter.

On 22 July 2010, following a request from the UN General Assembly, the ICJ released an Advisory Opinion regarding the legality of Kosovo’s Unilateral Declaration of Independence. Contrary to the hopes expressed by many international lawyers and theorists, the Court’s opinion did not shed light on any of the problems concerning the legal or normative right to secession, instead limiting its judgement to the statement that “the adoption of the declaration of independence of 17 February 2008 did not violate general international law, Security Council resolution 1244 (1999) or the Constitutional Framework. Consequently the adoption of that declaration did not violate any applicable rule of international law” (ICJ, 2010a: 53). The Court furthermore failed to provide a position on Kosovo’s actual status, since, it claimed, the question posed by the General Assembly was “narrow and specific; it asks for the Court’s opinion on whether or not the declaration of independence is in accordance with international law. It does not ask about the legal consequences of that declaration” (ICJ, 2010a: para 51).

While the Court maintained that declarations of independence were not a breach of international law, it did not clarify as to whether Kosovo, or other states, had the positive right to declare independence; moreover, other normative questions on the right to secede or the right to statehood were not endorsed as it was not “necessary to resolve these questions in the present case” (ICJ, 2010a: 83). As for what concerns the arguments of Kosovo’s uniqueness, the Court avoided considerations on Kosovo being a *sui generis* case (Christakis 2011). The most controversial statement the Court made concerned the scope of the principle of territorial integrity, which it maintained “is confined to the sphere of relations between States” (ICJ, 2010a: 6)

Thus, the position taken by the Court regarding the Kosovo case would suggest a number of considerations: first, that Kosovo is not a unique case, as claimed by many states supporting its independence, and thus does stand as a precedent for other secessionist claims (Ker-Lindsay, 2011); second, that unilateral declarations of independence, while possibly breaking domestic laws, do not violate international law; third, that there is no legal right to remedial secession; fourth, that the principle of territorial integrity is confined to the sphere of relations between
Throughout the Soviet period South Ossetia enjoyed a status of autonomous oblast [region], but nonetheless benefitted from a lesser degree of independence compared with the North Ossetians or the Abkhaz, who both possessed the status of Autonomous Republics (Wolff, 2014; Lynch, 2004). With the intensification of Georgian nationalism in the late-1980s, tensions started rising between the region and its parent state, with South Ossetia attempting to gain greater autonomy in 1988, the year that Ademon Nykhaz (South Ossetian Popular Front) was created (ICG, 2004).

In 1989, amid the permissive glasnost policy implemented by the Gorbachev government, South Ossetian nationalists demanded separation from Georgia, and unification with the republic of North Ossetia, a subject of the Russian Soviet Federative Socialist Republic. The Georgian authorities reacted with violence, causing over 1,000 deaths and 100,000 displaced persons (Fawn, 2008: 273; Popescu 2006). Prior to the national elections held in 1990, the Georgian Supreme Council passed a law banning regional parties from the national elections, thus excluding Ademon Nykhaz; South Ossetia reacted by boycotting the elections and soon after, on September 20 1990, proclaimed the South Ossetian Democratic Republic, a fully sovereign entity within the USSR (ICG, 2004). The Georgian government led by Gamsakhurdia reacted to the political elections held in South Ossetia a few months following the declaration of independence by removing the autonomous regional status and annulling the election result. These events led to the armed intervention of Georgian forces in South Ossetia, which ended with a ceasefire and peace implementation program (composed of CIS peacekeeping forces, an OSCE Observer Mission and the so-called Joint Control Commission) set up by the 1992 Sochi Agreement.

In the aftermath of the Rose Revolution and Saakashvili’s subsequent ascent to power, the Georgian policy started to support the restoration of sovereignty throughout the territory of Georgia (Wolff, 2014). In April 2004 Saakashvili’s government undertook a successful campaign to regain the Adjara region, which emboldened him to intervene in South Ossetia later that year. These events contributed to the polarisation of both sides of the conflict, causing the frequency and the magnitude of the clashes to escalate, and leading to the full-scale Georgian invasion on the 7th of August 2008 (King, 2008).
Abkhazia enjoyed the status of autonomous republic throughout Soviet times. After Georgia’s 1991 declaration of independence abolished its autonomy, Abkhazia sought to immediately re-establish their 1925 constitution, which defined it as an independent entity, and declared its will to secede from Georgia and reunite with the Russian Federation (Lynch 2004). Georgian forces immediately reacted to these events by taking over the Gali region, isolating the region from Russia. The Abkhaz expelled the Georgian fighters with the aid of international contingents ranging from Russian armed forces to Chechen irregulars; this resulted in an exodus of most of the non-Abkhaz population (Wolff, 2014).

The 1994 Moscow Agreement established a ceasefire with military exclusion on both sides and planned the dispatch of CIS peacekeeping forces to the region; meanwhile, the UN Security Council passed Resolution 854 setting up the UN Observer Mission in Georgia (UNOMIG). The general security situation nonetheless remained unstable, deteriorating successively in 1998, 2001, 2006, and 2008, when Abkhaz and Russian forces drove Georgia out of the Kodori gorge, which was still under Georgian control (Harding, 2008).

The recognition of South Ossetia and Abkhazia: a brief history

On the 25th of August 2008, the Russian state Duma and Federation Council passed bills calling on President Dmitry Medvedev to recognize the two Georgian breakaway regions (Fabry, 2012). Russia had warned the West that the recognition of Kosovo would have grave consequences, and that it would be “impossible, after that, to tell the Abkhazians and Ossetians that what was good for Kosovo was not good for them” (Medvedev, 2008a). In his interview with the CNN he claimed that “for more than 17 years Russia has done its best trying to prevent this development and trying to maintain the territorial integrity of Georgia. [...] And even when Kosovo was proclaimed a subject of international law we did not make a similar statement with regards to these two republics. But we were obliged to recognize their independence after people were killed” (2008b).

While Russia had earlier called for the implementation of universal norms and respect of the existing international institutions, Medvedev also used the discourse of exceptionality, justified by the special circumstances which had emerged. Medvedev stated that “our colleagues said more than once that Kosovo was a casus sui generis, a special case. But in that case, we can also say that South Ossetia and Abkhazia are sui generis” (2008b). However, in the
same interview, Medvedev also attempted to stress the potential legality of his decision, as “the situation existed for 17 years, during which ethnic cleansing was conducted and cases of genocide took place, both in the early 90s and now it has happened again [...] therefore we believe that under the UN Charter, the Declaration of 1970 and the Helsinki Act of 1975 we have every legal ground to recognize the independence of these two republics” (2008b).

The international community almost unanimously denounced the recognition of South Ossetia and Abkhazia as a breach of the territorial integrity of Georgia. In April 2008, the United Nations Security Council had passed Resolution 1808 which reaffirmed “the commitment of all Member States to the sovereignty, independence and territorial integrity of Georgia within its internationally recognized borders”, and recalled “their determination to promote a peaceful settlement of the Georgian-Abkhaz conflict only by peaceful means” (UN, 2008). Many countries also invoked the fact that the recognition of the two de facto states violated OSCE accords and UN accords.

Nonetheless, the Russian recognition of South Ossetia was followed by Venezuela, Nauru, Nicaragua and Tuvalu, even though the latter withdrew its recognition in 2014. Abkhazia was also subsequently recognized by Venezuela, Nauru, Nicaragua, Vanuatu and Tuvalu (with the last two withdrawing their recognition in 2013 and 2014). The separatist regions recognize each other and are recognized by some other non-UN member states, such as Transnistria (Steinsdorff, 2012).

**Recognition: Law and Practice**

The following chapter will provide a brief discussion of aspects of international recognition related to various understandings of sovereignty. Recognition has been regarded as a “speech act” – a symbolic act that “communicates the acknowledgement of the ontological, legal and moral status of certain objects and subjects” (Bartelson, 2013: 110; Kessler et al., 2013). It is held that in order for a speech act to be effective there must be a legal, normative or political context where it can be meaningfully pronounced (Kessler et al., 2013).

This section will firstly provide an overview of theories of recognition and of the laws concerning the legitimacy of statehood. It will then analyse whether the legal and normative “context” in which recognition is practiced can account for a solid framework to understand state practice. Drawing on Krasner’s neorealist analysis of sovereignty, it will be argued that the theoretical “context” is flawed, resulting in practices of recognition being “organized hypocrisy” (1999; 2013).

March and Olsen wrote that every political and social environment can be defined
according to two logics of action: they refer to the first as the “logics of consequences”, and to the second as the “logics of appropriateness” (1989). The logics of consequences view “all political action and outcomes, including institutions, as the product of rational calculating behaviour designed to maximize a given set of unexplained preferences” (Krasner 1999:5). The logics of appropriateness consider “political action as a product of rules, roles and identities that stipulate appropriate behaviour in given situations” (Krasner 1999:5). In matters of recognition, Krasner argues that the violation is the norm, as “principles and rules matter, but only as a part of a calculation that incorporates logics of consequences as well as logics of appropriateness” (Krasner, 2013: 175).

**Recognition Theories**

Recognition is a political act, which is not subject to legal evaluation, or is in other words legally neutral (Closson, 2011). As Russia President Dmitry Medvedev stated after the recognition of the two Georgian breakaway republics, “each state can determine whether it wants to recognize a certain people as a subject of international law or not” (2008b). Recognition confers a number of advantages: firstly and most importantly the ability of entering treaties and agreements with other states; secondly, being a participant to the creation and adjudication of international law and norms (Buchanan 2004). It follows that a strategy of non-recognition could be considered as a “code for a policy of hostility short of armed conflict” (Brownlie, 1983: 198).

There is an ongoing debate in international law and international relations contending the significance of recognition in the achievement of legitimate statehood (Aust 2010). Views amongst international lawyers generally discard the role of recognition: proponents of the declaratory theory maintain that the creation of a state is a matter of fact and not of law, as the state ontologically exists prior to the international system (Crawford, 2006; Brownlie, 1983). Hence, the act of declaring a state’s existence is considered to be merely a formality, as “statehood is a legal status independent of recognition” (Crawford, 2006: 4). According to this theory, effectiveness, rather than legitimacy, is the essential criterion to determine statehood; thus, the act of recognition by other members of the international community is a logical result of the creation of a state, which does not hold a normative role (Peterson, 1997). Nonetheless, Brownlie rightly notes that a distinction should be drawn between “cognition” and “recognition”, hence between “the cognition of the fact that some entity is in existence, calling for some characterization, and the nature of the consequent legal and political characterization which may be made” (1983:204).
International law provides the general framework to determine internal statehood, following the criteria set out most famously by the 1933 Montevideo Convention. The treaty defines a sovereign state as an entity which retains 1) a defined territory 2) a permanent population 3) a governing entity 4) the capacity to enter into relations with other states (CFR, 2014). The Declaration on the Guidelines on the Recognition of New States in Eastern Europe and in the Soviet Union, signed in December 1991, broadened the scope of internal state legitimacy, by including: the observation of human rights and democracy, the upholding of the rule of law, the assurance of minority rights, the acceptance of nuclear non-proliferation, and the prohibition to recognize states which emerge as a result of aggression, in accordance with the 1932 Stimson doctrine (Public International Law Resources, 2014).

Proponents of rationalist theories in international relations tend to share these views, as they consider states to be “self-constituted and self-constrained bodies” (Fabry, 2010:3). The main assumptions underlying this statement is that states exist as a result of their capability to implement and maintain domestic order and functioning government; likewise, new states emerge thanks to the establishment of authority structures upheld by a coercive power apparatus (Fabry, 2010; Krasner, 1999; Morgenthau, 1993; Waltz, 1979).

The constitutive theory on the contrary maintains that recognition is an indispensable condition for achieving legal status as a sovereign state; thus recognition covers a normative role (Crawford, 2006; Peterson, 1997). Early proponents of the theory were influenced by the thought of legal positivists, who stressed consent as the essential basis for legitimacy; thus, a legal entity comes into being solely as a result of recognition by other states (Erman, 2013).

While most of these early supporters of the theory focused on legal features of recognition, constructivist theorists have deepened the debate by shifting the attention to the normative role of recognition (Ringmar, 2011; Erman, 2013). Alexander Wendt maintained in his seminal Social Theory of International Politics that “in the particular culture of the Westphalian state system sovereignty [there is] a right constituted by mutual recognition, which confers on each state certain freedoms (for example, from intervention), and capacities (equal standing before international law)” (1999: 182).

The constitutive nature of statehood is rooted in the concept of international legitimacy (Wight, 1972), according to which “existing states have a definite constitutive and prescriptive role in the birth of new states” (Fabry, 2012:3). Wight’s conception of international legitimacy suggests the existence of an internationally accepted normative structure, providing the rules of rightful political authority, accompanied nonetheless by the lack of centralized institutions in the system. The absence of such a hierarchic authority is namely the
circumstance from which “the constitutive theory of recognition gains most of its plausibility from” (Brierly, 2012: 131).

State practice does not show consistency with either of the two theories, as the third section of this chapter will seek to demonstrate through a number of empirical examples; I would thus agree with Brownlie’s words, whereby “in the case of ‘recognition’, theory has not only failed to enhance the subject but has created a tertium quid which stands, like a bank of fog on a still day, between the observer and the contours of the ground which calls for investigation” (1983: 197).

International legal recognition appears rather as a judgement formulated on the basis of standards and empirical facts; these are usually highly heterogeneous and differ according to the situation. For example, a state can base its decision to grant or withhold recognition in the light of considerations, such as inter alia the preservation of regional peace and stability, historical justice, or the resolution of conflicts (Chwaszcza, 2013). The practice of state recognition furthermore reflects the structure of the existing international system, characterized by complexity, a plurality of sometimes conflicting norms and principles, and instrumental structures of authority and legitimacy (Krasner, 2013)

The Legitimacy of Statehood: Sovereignty, Self-determination and Territorial Integrity

The classical definition of the concept of sovereignty is provided in Emer de Vattel’s Droit des gens, which maintains that “every nation which governs itself, under whatever form, and which does not depend on any other nation, is a sovereign state” (cited in Crawford, 2006: 7). Whereas the Vattelian conception of sovereignty emphasises the autonomy of the state, the ideal conception of sovereignty in contemporary international society relates to a number of other attributes, namely recognition (or international legal sovereignty), effective governance (or domestic sovereignty) and interdependence sovereignty (Krasner, 1999; 2013).

In legal terms, sovereignty generally refers to two conflicting principles in international law: the right to national self-determination and the norm of territorial integrity (Moore, 2003; Crawford, 2006). Both principles are intrinsic to the purpose of the United Nations, where article 1(2) of the Charter stresses the essentiality of “respect for the principle of equal rights and self-determination of peoples” and article 2(4) maintains that “all Members shall refrain in their international relations from the threat or use of force against the territorial integrity or political independence of any state, or in any other manner inconsistent with the Purposes of the United Nations” (UN, 1945). Both are regarded as peremptory norms in international law, and as established and regulatory norms in international society, thus deemed as standards “of
appropriate behaviour for actors with a given identity” (Finnemore and Sikkink, 1999: 251; Crawford, 2006).

In normative terms, national self-determination is based on the collective rights of a nation as a whole. In other words, independence is justified by the relevance of national identity, where the right to secede from the parent state would arise not from the majority’s will, but rather from national claims of the entity wishing to secede (Freeman, 1999). Although the principle of self-determination dates back to the eighteenth century, its interpretation as a positive right emerged with Woodrow Wilson’s reconceptualization of the principle in the aftermath of the First World War. It follows that “a people’s right to determine their political future imposed an active obligation on the international society to help bring it about” (Fabry, 2010:12). While early formulations of the concept were based on the liberal premise that people, as rational creatures, had the right to determine and arrange their lives as individuals and as a community, Wilson’s understanding required the international community to outline the three conditions of self-determination: which “peoples” could qualify; an assessment of the will of these peoples; and the scope of the obligation the international community incurred (Fabry, 2010).

Nonetheless, the political map of the world’s sovereign states generally remained unchanged throughout the entire past century. James Mayall attributes such a state of affairs to an irony of history, that the once-revolutionary principle of national self-determination which, in its post-1945 variant has emphasized the sanctity of existing territorial borders, and ended up “attempting to freeze the political map in a way which has never previously been attempted” (1990: 96). The norm of territorial integrity emerged in Latin American treaty agreements in the 19th century, which established the modern interpretation of the uti possidetis iuris principle, referring it to the legal sovereignty of a state over its territory, which can by no means be taken away from it (Zacher, 2011).

In fact, throughout the past century statehood has generally been related to questions of decolonization, as described in the UN Declaration on Decolonisation, following the principle of uti possidetis iuris (UN, 1960; Crawford, 2006). This precept, while deriving its origin from Roman law on property, was adopted to indicate a state’s legal possession of its territory. The ICJ Frontier Dispute case recalled that the principle’s “obvious purpose is to prevent the independence and stability of new States being endangered by fratricidal struggles provoked by the challenging of frontiers following the withdrawal of the administering power” (1986: para 20). Hence, during the years of decolonization, the international community generally upheld the principle of territorial integrity, committing to the preservation of the existing
borders and confined the exercise of the right to self-determination within those territorial boundaries: between 1947 and 1991 Bangladesh was the only case of secession to occur (Moore, 1998).

Secession “is neither legal nor illegal in international law, but a legally neutral act the consequences of which are regulated internationally” (Crawford, 2006: 390). The principle of territorial integrity does not legally regulate matters of internal secession, which should be dealt with according to domestic law. As Crawford rightly notes, secession is a matter of concern to the entire international community since it allegedly undermines stability and peace between states. Unilateral declarations of independence were generally repudiated through universal denouncements, as for instance in the cases of Katanga, South Rhodesia, North Cyprus and the Bantustans (Grant, 2000; Vidmar, 2013). Nonetheless, the last twenty years might have shown a shift in state practice and in the legal understanding in secession (Dugard, 1993; Eastwood, 1992).

The recent Kosovo case is a prime example of emerging trends of recognition: many of the parties granting Kosovo recognition claimed that declarations of independence fall completely outside the scope of international law, and their acceptance depends entirely on the will of the international community. On the other side, the ICJ’s Kosovo Advisory Opinion clearly stated that unilateral declarations of independence are not against international law, if proclaimed by effective authorities (Hannum, 2011). In fact, the Kosovo declaration of independence was rendered effective by the fact that it was not the organs of Kosovo’s self-governing institutions from the interim administration to produce the declaration, but “persons who acted together in their capacity as representatives of the people of Kosovo” (ICJ 2010: para.109).

**Theory vs Practice: Organized Hypocrisy?**

This section will assess the consistency of state practice with theories of recognition, and with legal and moral doctrines. The argument holds that recognition is “organized hypocrisy”, in accordance with Krasner’s views (1999; 2013). This is because “many of the political entities in the international environment […] do not conform with the ideal-typical conception of sovereignty”, as a result of the attributes of the international system, namely: complexity, a plurality of (conflicting) norms and instrumental structures of authority and legitimacy (Krasner, 2013: 171).

**Recognition with no governance**
Recognition of legitimate sovereignty is ultimately a political decision. It opens the path to a number of benefits, such as membership to international political and economic institutions, as well as security organizations (Bolton and Visoka, 2010). Nonetheless, it can also be considered as a cause of domestic conflicts and civil wars (Linderman, 2013). As British Foreign Secretary George Canning stated in 1824: “We ought not to acknowledge the separate and independent existence of any [state], which is so doubtfully established, that the mere effect of that acknowledgment shall be to mix parties again in internal squabbles, if not in open hostilities” (Fabry, 2010:1). The “doubtful establishment” of states has been viewed as a cause of many conflicts which arose after the process of decolonisation, and resulted, according to Jackson, in an international system characterized by a great number of ‘quasi-states’ (1987). Quasi-states are described as states that are internationally recognized as sovereign and juridical equals, but lack factual capabilities as governing entities (Jackson, 1987). In fact, the “unqualified insistence on the positive right to self-determination is bound to undermine the basic reason for sovereignty: self-government” (Fabry, 2010: 12).

The aftermath of the Cold War is a prime example of these problematic aspects of recognition; over twenty new sovereign states appeared on the world map from the dissolution of the Soviet Union and Yugoslavia, leading some observers to conclude that unilateral secession from sovereign states had become acceptable in international society (Dugard, 1993; Eastwood, 1992). Fabry argues that, as in the decolonization processes, contemporary state practice is characterized by the depreciation of the effectiveness criteria, and does not suggest a departure from the positive right to self-determination conceptualized in the second half of the nineteenth century (2010).

In fact, some entities that did not meet the Montevideo criteria, as they did not possess effective control over portions of their territory, have since been recognized by the entire international community; such are the cases of Bosnia-Herzegovina, Croatia, Azerbaijan, Georgia and Moldova. The 1992 recognition of Bosnia-Herzegovina by the international community, justified by the US by the fact that “the requisite criteria for recognition had been met” and that “the will of citizens of [Bosnia and Herzegovina] for sovereignty had been expressed peacefully and democratically” nonetheless triggered off a harrowing civil war (Fabry, 2010: 20; Turk, 1993). It is doubtful as to whether the case of Kosovo accounted for the third criterion (effective governance), since at the time of recognition the administrative, judiciary and military apparatuses were governed by foreign-built institutions (namely UNMIK, EULEX and NATO).
De facto states: governance without recognition

Recognition of a seceding state is rarely consensual: the recent case of South Sudan, recognized as an independent state by the entire international community in 2011 stands out amongst a number of claims to statehood that have otherwise been met by mixed reactions or complete international rejection (Agne, 2013; Casperson, 2011). Such entities are usually defined as de facto states. Pegg Scott defines a de facto state as an entity that “exists where there is an organized political leadership, which has risen to power through some degree of indigenous capacity; receives popular support; and has achieved sufficient capacity to provide governmental services to a given population in a specific territorial area, over which effective control is maintained for a significant period of time. The de facto state sees itself as capable of entering into relations with other states and it seeks full constitutional independence and widespread international recognition as a sovereign state” (1998: 26).

Many political entities have existed as states de facto for decades and, while meeting the requisites of statehood, have failed to date to achieve de jure recognition. These cases include Somaliland, some post-Soviet de facto states (such as Transnistria), Palestine and Taiwan, although the latter never formally asserted its independence from the People’s Republic of China (Ronen, 2013).

Moral recognition

Some commenters have argued that as decolonisation progressed, the legal definition of the right to self-determination became more lax, embracing a wider understanding of “peoples” entitled to secede and a less severe perception of territorial integrity (McCorquodale, 1994).

The scope of self-determination was broadened to embrace a more “human” approach in the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, in the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights and in the African Charter on Human and People’s Rights (UN, 1966a; UN, 1966b; ACHPR, 1981). The latter held in article 20(3), that “colonized or oppressed peoples shall have the right to free themselves from the bonds of domination by resorting to any means recognized by the international community” (ACHPR, 1981). In its Kosovo Advisory the ICJ stated that the international law on self-determination had developed, in the second half of the 20th century “in such a way as to create a right to independence for the peoples of non-self-governing territories and peoples subject to alien subjugation, domination and exploitation”, where the Court quoted the cases of South West Africa, East Timor, and Palestine (ICJ, 2010: 37). Nonetheless, it appears that the right to successfully exercise self-determination is ultimately confined to political considerations taken by influential
actors. At a press conference following the 2007 G8 Summit in Heiligendamm, Russian Prime Minister Vladimir Putin noted in reference to the Kosovo case, that “if we decide that in today’s world the principle of a nation’s right to self-determination is more important than the principle of territorial integrity, then we must apply this principle to all parts of the world and not only to regions where it suits our partners” (Putin 2007).

The 1970 Declaration on Friendly Relations, introduced a new understanding of state legitimacy over its population, based on governmental representation of “the whole people belonging to a territory without distinction as to race, creed or colour” and on the respect of equal rights and self-determination. In its safeguard clause, often invoked in support of the principle territorial integrity\(^1\), the declaration nonetheless maintained that “nothing in the foregoing paragraphs shall be construed as authorizing or encouraging any action which would dismember or impair [...] the territorial integrity or political unity of sovereign and independent States conducting themselves in compliance with the principle of equal rights and self-determination of peoples as described above and thus possessed of a government representing the whole people belonging to the territory without distinction as to race, creed or colour” (UN, 1970). Therefore, if this concept is reversed, a state which does not possess a government representing the entire population and which does not conduct itself in compliance with the principles of equal rights and self-determination of peoples, is not legitimate. This is the basis of the doctrine of remedial secession (Bolton 2013; Buchanan, 2004). Thus, consent is the main assumption underlying legitimacy; it follows that democratic governance could be deemed as a necessary requisite for a state to deserve international recognition (Buchanan, 2004). This has been considered by some scholars as a deviation from the principle of non-interference between states and as a return to imperial legal practices (Bartelson, 2013; Anghie, 2009; Zacher, 2001).

A number of states recognizing Kosovo acknowledged moral rights such as that to remedial secession and to self-determination as a last resort. Most of these nonetheless also referred to the Kosovo case as a unique exception to the norm of territorial integrity, thus undermining the universality of potentially emerging moral norms.

Is Kosovo unique?

Reasons behind the argument of exceptionality

Kosovo’s Unilateral Declaration of independence declares that “Kosovo is a special case arising from Yugoslavia's non-consensual breakup and is not a precedent for any other situation” (BBC, 2008).

\(^{1}\) See for example Reference Re Secession of Quebec (1999)
2008). Many countries echoed these words: the position of EU members widely conformed with the 2008 EU Council Conclusions on Kosovo, whereby “Kosovo constitutes a sui generis case which does not call into question these principles [sovereignty and territorial integrity] and resolutions” (EU 2008). When questioned by journalists on the possibility of recognizing the Georgian secessionist states, US Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice declared that “we’ve been very clear that Kosovo is sui generis and that that is because of the special circumstances out of which the breakup of Yugoslavia came” (US Department of State, 2008). Italian foreign minister D’Alema went as far as ruling out what he referred to as a “domino effect” resulting in the recognition of South Ossetia and Abkhazia, since the Kosovo case was “unquestionably sui generis” (Partito Democratico, 2008). The Special Envoy Martti Ahtisaari himself referred to the circumstances as “extraordinary”, and to Kosovo as “a unique case that demanded a unique solution” (UN, 2007).

Members of the international community recognizing Kosovo as a sui generis case provided a number of reasons justifying its uniqueness. Finland, in its written statement to the ICJ, provides perhaps the most comprehensive list of reasons, namely: the violent breakup of the SFRY, the unilateral changes in Kosovo’s constitutional status, the persecution of Kosovo Albanians in the decade 1989-1999, the international recognition of the special nature of the situation (as stated in UN Security Council Resolution 1244) and the failure of negotiations with Serbia (ICJ, 2010c). Germany considered other aspects contributing to the uniqueness of Kosovo to be the antecedents of the 1990 conflict dating back as far as 1912, and the involvement of the international community, most specifically of the UN (ICJ, 2010d: 27).

The appeal to an argument of exceptionality would indicate the general will to uphold the principle of territorial integrity and reject unilateral claims of secession. At the same time, the use of a language of exceptionality undermined the potentiality of a normative framework based on conceptions of justice and ethics to emerge (as those formulated in Buchanan, 1991; Buchanan, 2004; Freeman, 1999). Coppieters rightly states that the issue at stake is not whether the Kosovo case should become a model to be universally applied, but rather whether the norms invoked to justify the exceptionality of Kosovo are universal. In fact, “the emphasis this argument puts on the uniqueness of the Kosovo experience could lead to an interpretation whereby the question of status should not be decided by universal principles but rather on the basis of ad hoc criteria” (Coppieters, 2006).

When Russian President Medvedev recognized the two Georgian breakaway republics, in his comments published in the Financial Times he claimed that, whilst Russia “restored the peace [through its armed intervention], [it] could not calm the fears and aspirations of the
South Ossetian and Abkhazian peoples – not when Mr Saakashvili continued (with the complicity and encouragement of the US and some other NATO members) to talk of rearming his forces and reclaiming Georgian territory” (2008a). However, the Russian recognition was also based on an argument of exceptionality. Medvedev defined the two Georgian breakaway *sui generis* cases, and defended his claim by giving a number of reasons, which echo those invoked in the Kosovo case (2008a; 2008b; 2008c).

This chapter will firstly provide a brief description of the reasoning behind aspects legitimizing Kosovo’s uniqueness, putting them into relation to philosophical and normative theories of secession. It will then consider whether these claims were employed by Russia in the recognition of South Ossetia and Abkhazia or whether such conditions could have been applicable to these two cases.

**Kosovo and the reasoning behind the argument of exceptionality**

**The violent breakup of the SFRY**

Kosovo was at the core of the political upheaval that led to the breakup of the Yugoslavia, with Serbia curbing its desires for independence; even after the dissolution of the Yugoslav Federal State occurred, the region remained at the centre of an unstable security situation (ICJ, 2010c).

**Unilateral changes in Kosovo’s constitutional status**

While the 2008 Unilateral Declaration of Independence was not accompanied by a referendum, a plebiscite had been organized in 1991, where 99% of voters supported the idea of the creation of a sovereign state (Dietrich, 2010). The central government in Belgrade reacted by cancelling the referendum and withdrawing Kosovo’s autonomous status (Almqvist, 2013).

Nine states referred to the withdrawal of Kosovo’s constitutional status in their written proceedings to the ICJ. While this would suggest that the right to self-determination could be exercised as a last resort, all these states defined Kosovo a unique case.

**The Persecution of Kosovo Albanians**

The remedial right doctrine originates from the just cause principle, advocated in just war theory; if this principle is applied to secession, it follows that the injustice to be avoided or remedied has to be of a grave enough nature to justify recognition (Coppieters et al., 2003; Buchanan, 1991; Buchanan, 2004). Allen Buchanan launched the contemporary debate on the

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2 Estonia, Finland, Ireland, Japan, Netherlands, Poland, Switzerland, the United Kingdom and the United States
morality of secession in 1991, with the development of his “remedial right only” in his 2004 seminal *Justice, Legitimacy, and Self-Determination*. In his book he proposes the adoption of a justice-based criterion for the recognition of new states. He maintains that the remedial right to secede arises mainly from three forms of injustice: 1) large-scale and persistent violations of basic individual human rights; 2) unjust annexation of a legitimate state’s territory or 3) the state’s persistent violations of intrastate autonomy agreement (Buchanan, 2004).

Nonetheless, the existence of such a norm in state practice and in international law is dubious. The adequacy of the doctrine to justify cases of secession is questionable, “since a state is a legal entity, not a human right solution” (Del Mar, 2013: 81). The Kosovo advisory proceedings revealed the uncertain nature of the doctrine in the law and in state practice. In its Advisory Opinion, the ICJ acknowledged the fact that participants justified the independence of Kosovo with reference to the doctrine of remedial secession, but nonetheless refused such stances because “radically different views were expressed” (ICJ, 2010a: para.82). The Court also acknowledged that there were those who inquired as to whether ‘the circumstances which some participants maintained would give rise to a right of ‘remedial secession’ were actually present in Kosovo” (ICJ, 2010a: para.82). Nonetheless, the Court concluded such considerations were “beyond the scope of the question posed by the General Assembly” (ICJ, 2010a para. 83).

Of the seven states acknowledging the persecution of the Kosovo Albanians as an element justifying its secession, four also claimed Kosovo to be a unique case. Amongst them, Costa Rica provided the explicit articulation of the remedial secession doctrine, claiming that “after the crimes against humanity (ethnic cleansing) perpetrated by the regime of Slobodan Milosevic, the decision of the authorities and of people of Kosovo not to remain part of the Republic of Serbia is explicable” (cited in Bolton and Visoka 2010:19). In a similar fashion, Ireland claimed that “the legacy of the conflict of the late 1990s made the return of Serb dominion in Kosovo unthinkable, and also undermined the prospects for a long-sought compromise” (Irish Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade, 2008). Nonetheless, the application of the doctrine to this case has been criticized by some commentators, since it has been argued that the distinction between offenders and victims is not clear cut, as the KLA might have in fact overstepped the mark in what can legitimately be considered the right to self-defence (Dietrich, 2010).

The international recognition of the special nature of the situation

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3 Australia, Ireland, Costa Rica, Canada, Samoa, Finland, Germany
4 Ireland, Canada, Germany, Finland
The special nature of the situation was acknowledged in Security Council Resolution 1244, which called for the establishment of an international security presence in the region defining the situation in Kosovo as a “threat to international peace and security”. Significantly, twenty-five states\(^5\) justified their choice in granting Kosovo recognition as being crucial for regional peace and stability in the Balkans, giving primary considerations to concerns regarding the containment of threats posed to international peace and security by protracted sovereignty disputes and through the contesting of territories, as well as a variety of geostrategic perspectives (Bolton and Visoka, 2010). Switzerland’s recognition statement for example underlines an international aspect of the crisis in the Balkans, concerning the migration burden that would have resulted from the prolongation of the conflict, asserting furthermore that the “clarification of the status of Kosovo is a precondition for the stability as well as for the economic and political development of the whole of the Western Balkans” (Swiss Federal Department of Foreign Affairs, 2008).

Interestingly, seventeen of these countries\(^6\) also claimed Kosovo was a unique, *sui generis* case. The decision to securitize the issue in the Balkans would have allowed the international community to institute a “twilight zone”, where in the name of international peace and stability, international law would not be applicable (Christakis, 2011: 81), given that “the special nature of security threats justify the use of extraordinary means to handle them” (Buzan et al., 1998: 21).

**The exhaustion of negotiations with Serbia**

This point relates to the “failure by Serbian authorities to provide a credible framework for internal self-determination” (ICJ, 2010c). UNSC Resolution 1244 left the question of Kosovo’s final status pending, promoting nonetheless a negotiation process. By 2007, the two contesting parties had not attained a common solution to the issue, which resulted in the exhaustion of potential to find an agreement. Sixteen countries referred to the exhaustion of negotiations in their written statements\(^7\), nine of which also acknowledged Kosovo’s *sui generis* status\(^8\).

Such views seem to suggest that if a matter of secession is not resolvable domestically, self-determination can be implemented by external actors. In fact, the Netherlands, in its

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\(^5\) USA, France, Albania, Turkey, Australia, Senegal, Luxembourg, Switzerland, Austria, Sweden, Japan, Finland, Canada, Hungary, Croatia, Bulgaria, Republic of Korea, Burkina Faso, San Marino, Macedonia, Montenegro, Saudi Arabia, Lithuania, Samoa, Dominican Republic and Costa Rica

\(^6\) USA, France, Albania, Luxembourg, Switzerland, Sweden, Japan, Finland, Canada, Hungary, Bulgaria, Croatia, Lithuania, Denmark, Italy, Estonia and Germany

\(^7\) Luxembourg, Austria, Costa Rica, Peru, Iceland, Croatia, Hungary, Bulgaria, Macedonia, Montenegro, Canada, Malta, Finland, Germany, Norway

\(^8\) Luxembourg, Ireland, Croatia, Hungary, Bulgaria, Canada, Finland, Germany, Norway
written statement to the ICJ, acknowledged the existence of a right to external self-determination, which should be applied only in unique cases, such as the Kosovo case, and should be considered as a “ultimum remedium” (2010b).

As was discussed previously, national self-determination theories consider questions concerning national communities’ moral right to establish a state. Since the Kosovar Albanian population differs from the Serbian community in many aspects, including the spoken language and religious affiliation, it has been argued that Kosovo’s secession could have been justified by the right to self-determination (see Dietrich, 2010). Judge Yusuf in his Separate Opinion supported the view that “under exceptional circumstances, the right of people to self-determination may support a claim to separate statehood, provided it meets the conditions prescribed by international law, in a specific situation, taking into account the historical context” (ICJ, 2010a:223).

The Involvement of the International Community
Twenty-one countries acknowledged the involvement of the international community (including the interim administration led by UNMIK and Kosovo’s acceptance of ‘supervised independence’ as part of the Ahtisaari Proposal) as a legitimizing condition for Kosovo’s secession⁹; the majority of them related this circumstance to Kosovo’s unique nature¹⁰.

It has been argued that a new doctrine of legitimate secession emerged from the Kosovo case, namely that of “earned sovereignty” (Bolton and Visoka, 2010). Such theory was conceptualized in relation to the involvement of the international community: the Public International Law and Policy Group (PILPG) and the International Crisis Group (ICG) expressed a position in their 1998 memorandum which reflected on the one side the remedial right stance, thereby justifying Kosovo’s secession on the basis of human rights violations, but on the other maintained that Kosovo would earn its right to sovereignty if at the end of the interim period if it could prove a commitment to the protection of human rights, effective and democratic self-governance and the promotion of security in the region (ICG, 1999).

Are South Ossetia and Abkhazia comparable?

Violent Breakup

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⁹ USA, Estonia, Italy, Luxembourg, Switzerland, Ireland, Sweden, Finland, Japan, Canada, Hungary, Croatia, Norway, San Marino, Sierra Leone, Costa Rica, Austria, Peru, Burkina Faso, Malta, Germany
¹⁰ USA, Estonia, Italy, Luxembourg, Switzerland, Ireland, Sweden, Finland, Japan, Canada, Hungary, Croatia, Norway, Germany
As was discussed in the first chapter, the breakup of the Soviet Union and national self-determination of Georgia also resulted in an instable situation in the Caucasus. In 1991 civil war broke out between the Georgian sovereign state and the two separatist republics, which resulted in an intervention by Russian peacekeeping forces (Simon, 2011). Furthermore the aspirations to self-determination of the two *de facto* states were steadily curtailed by the Georgian will to maintain control over its territory.

Medvedev used this rationale to justify his recognition of the two regions in 2008: “The first time bloodshed occurred was under President Gamsakhurdia at the beginning of the 90s and now, unfortunately, it happened again in 2008 under President Saakashvili. [...] In doing so he dashed all the hopes that these three peoples - Georgians, Ossetians and the Abkhaz - could live together in one state” (2008b).

**Unilateral Changes in the constitutional status**

South Ossetia’s autonomy was withdrawn by its parent state as soon as the region declared independence on the 21st of December 1990 (Simon, 2011; Wolff, 2014). It subsequently held a referendum in 2006 where more than 99% voted in favour of secession from Georgia. International reactions to the referendum were critical; Council of Europe Secretary General Terry Davis affirmed that “the secessionist authorities of the South Ossetian region of Georgia are wasting time and effort on the organisation of a “referendum on independence” [...] I do not think that anyone will recognise the result of such a referendum” (COE, 2006).

Abkhazia declared its independence after its war with Georgia in 1992–1993, and adopted its constitution in 1994 whereby it defined itself as a “sovereign, democratic, legal state, firmly established on its historical exercise of the right to self-determination” (Government of the Autonomous Republic of Abkhazia, 2014); this declaration led to an armed intervention on behalf of the Georgian government, which generated a high number of civilian casualties and gross human right violations committed by both armies (Human Rights Watch, 2005).

In his comments published on the Financial Times, Medvedev recalled that amongst the reasons that led him to the recognition of the *de facto* states, was the fact that “Georgia immediately stripped its “autonomous regions” of Abkhazia and South Ossetia of their autonomy” (2008a). Medvedev also referred to the right to secede based on the majority’s will, stating that “the Presidents of South Ossetia and Abkhazia, based on the results of the referendums conducted [...] , appealed to Russia to recognize the state sovereignty of South Ossetia and Abkhazia. The Federation Council and the State Duma voted in support of those
appeals” (2008c).

Persecution
In his recognition statements President Medvedev nonetheless put the greatest emphasis on the question of persecution. In his words: “We were obliged to recognize their independence after people were killed [...] And for us to take this step was the only way we could prevent further bloodshed, prevent further escalation of the conflict, and prevent the deaths of thousands of innocent civilians” (2008a).

The lack of a legal authority defining and regulating the remedial right to secede and establish sovereignty, as the Russian invocation of the doctrine has shown, “illustrated the risk that the doctrine can be abused by states who wish to weaken an opponent” (Bolton and Visoka, 2010: 22).

Nonetheless, Medvedev stated that the two Georgian breakaway republics had a more legitimate right to statehood than Kosovo, as “in this particular case, the situation existed for 17 years, during which ethnic cleansing was conducted and cases of genocide took place, both in the early 90s, and now it has happened again. [...] Therefore we believe that under the UN Charter, the Declaration of 1970 and the Helsinki Act of 1975 we have every legal ground to recognize the independence of these two republics” (2008b).

International Recognition of the Special Nature of the Situation
The 1993 United Nations Resolution 858, which established the United Nations Observer Mission in Georgia, mirrors the 1999 Resolution 1244 under a number of aspects. Notably, it also emphasises that the protraction of the Georgian conflict represents a threat to peace and stability in the region, while stressing the multilateral will to preserve Georgian territorial integrity (UN, 1993).

The argument of the preservation of security was employed in the Russian recognition statement, whereby intervention in Georgia was indispensable also to re-establish peace in the region and “help ensure the security of South Ossetia and Abkhazia” (2008b). However, while restoring peace, Russia “could not calm the fears and aspirations of the South Ossetian and Abkhazian peoples”, and thus recognized them, seemingly to provide a security guarantee (Medvedev, 2008a).

The exhaustion of negotiations
The state of affairs between Georgia and the two breakaway republics shows a history of failed
negotiations and not least the failure to establish an agreed framework on self-determination. The 1992/1993 Sochi Agreement and 1994 Moscow Agreement did not prevent the perpetration of clashes between the two sides and the deterioration of the general security situation (Fawn, 2008). Medvedev mentioned that Russia “persistently tried to persuade the Georgians to sign an agreement on the non-use of force with the Ossetians and Abkhazians” (2008a). Furthermore, no agreement was found to implement a framework that would have satisfied South Ossetian and Abkhazian desires for autonomy and self-determination.

The Involvement of External Actors
A mission of the Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe (OSCE) was established in 1992 and worked alongside the UN Mission to Georgia (UNOMIG) in promoting the 1993 peace process. UNOMIG was established in August 1993 to verify Georgian and Abkhaz compliance with the ceasefire agreement. The mandate of the UN Mission was broadened following the signing of the 1994 Agreement on a Ceasefire and Separation of Forces (UN, 2014). A Commonwealth of Independent States (CIS) peacekeeping mission was established by the Moscow Agreement in 1994 and is to date present in the two Georgian regions.

While the objective of these missions was to observe compliance with the ceasefire agreement rather than to promote the establishment of institutions (such as in the cases of UNMIK and EULEX in Kosovo), they had the effect of freezing the conflict and in fact preserving de jure Georgian territorial integrity, and de facto the territorial existence of the two breakaway regions.

Is the Kosovo case unique?

This chapter sought to establish whether the Kosovo case is indeed unique. Those who invoked a sui generis case, claimed that “Kosovo [fell] outside the general normative framework and [could not] be guided by existing principles” (Coppieters et al, 2003: 192). Nonetheless, while it was advocated that Kosovo’s sui generis nature derived from a combination of elements, which made the situation exceptional, many other regional entities requesting de jure recognition could seek to apply the same criteria to their cases, or claim their exceptional status on the basis of other exceptional situations.

The cases of South Ossetia and Abkhazia show that the Kosovo case did indeed set a precedent, with President Medvedev recalling in his recognition statements most of those elements used to justify Kosovo’s unique status.
Is the exception the rule?
The following chapter will seek to answer the initial research question: has the exception become the rule in matters of recognition? It will firstly address the Russian rationale behind the recognition of the two Georgian breakaway republics, considering whether Russia pursued a rational cost-benefit analysis following the “logic of consequentiality”, or whether it took this particular decision because it deemed it to be appropriate (Risse, 2000; March and Olsen, 1989).

This evaluation will show that the “logics of appropriateness”, corresponding to the Russian distinct identity, norms and values, was at the basis of this specific act of recognition. The use of a constructivist approach, underlining the importance of norms and identities, allows for broader questions on the existence of a universal normative framework dealing with matters of recognition. While, as it has been argued in the second chapter, the principle of territorial integrity can be regarded as a settled norm in the international community, the differing identities and norms shaping the interests of single states play a crucial role in the understanding of the practice of state recognition (Risse, 2000). In fact, the norms and principles related to sovereignty are consequential but not dispositive, as they serve as a “focal point to coordinate behaviour”, but can be employed or violated according to individual state’s calculations (Krasner, 2013: 175).

Russia’s use of the argument of exceptionality: a quid pro quo
In order to establish whether the exception has become the rule in matters of recognition, one must look at what caused the Russian decision to recognize South Ossetia and Abkhazia. The United States plans for constructing a missile shield installations for a Ground-Based Midcourse Defence System in Poland and the Czech Republic in 2007, together with the procrastination of negotiations on this issue, meant that Russia was challenged to re-establish its international position as a great power. Russia responded with the deployment of Iskander missiles near to the EU border (BBC, 2007b). Medvedev declared in a state of the nation speech that “from what we have seen in recent years — the creation of a missile defence system, the encirclement of Russia with military bases, the relentless expansion of NATO — we have gotten the clear impression that they are testing our strength” (The Guardian, 2008).

In this context, the recognition of Kosovo could be considered as the cause of a “recognition” dilemma (Bolton and Visoka, 2010), a term deriving from the concept of security dilemma, formulated by John Herz in his seminal work Political Realism and Political Idealism.
Herz describes a security dilemma as a “structural notion in which the self-help attempts of states to look after their security needs tend, regardless of intention, to lead to rising insecurity for others as each interprets its own measures as defensive and measures of others as potentially threatening” (1951: 7). Thus, Russia’s incapacity of blocking the independence of Kosovo resulted in its pushing for the recognition of Abkhazia and South Ossetia. In the initial phase of recognition of Kosovo, Russia posed the threat of reacting with a quid pro quo. Such action would have followed the logics of appropriateness, with the objective of increasing its prestige at international level (Nalbandov, 2009).

The argument of exceptionality and the politics of honour
While the recognition of South Ossetia and Abkhazia could be seen as a way of restoring the balance of power or international prestige between Russia and the West, many analysts have discarded the view that Russia’s move was rational, considering it rather to be impulsive and imprudent (Yannis, 2009; Fabry, 2012; Tsygankov, 2012). This is for a number of reasons. Firstly, Russia would have gained more advantage by maintaining its influence in the Caucasus, without relinquishing the diplomatic high ground gained in questioning the legality of the recognition of Kosovo (Yannis, 2009). Secondly, Russia could have exploited the Post-Soviet de facto states as “trouble spots to keep Moldova and Georgia off balance and outside the EU and NATO [in order to pursue] a ‘Eurasian alternative’ to democratic rule and trans-Atlantic security” (Bugajski, 2007).

Nonetheless, Russian recognition of South Ossetia and Abkhazia “consolidated the Russian society’s normative support to the domestic and foreign policies of their government” (Nalbandov, 2009). Such normative support by domestic audiences is explained by scholar Tsygankov in terms of honour (2009; 2013). Since Russia views itself as a historically-established “honest broker” and a guarantor of peace in the region - with such perception being largely supported by Russian domestic audiences, the recognition of South Ossetia and Abkhazia could be understood a means to increase internal honour. In fact, the Russian public and the media widely supported the government’s actions throughout the 2008 Georgian war (Tsygankov, 2009; 2013).

The Rule of Exception
The legal maxim exceptio probat regulam in casibus non exceptis [that is, the exception proves the rule in cases not excepted] calls for a number of considerations in relation to the three cases examined. Firstly, if these exceptions do prove a rule, such practice of states would
confirm that the international legal norm of territorial integrity supersedes that of national self-determination, despite the fact the latter was invoked in many of its derivations to justify the secession of all three entities. And secondly, if we consider that normative rather than structural principles of legitimacy are concerned with the “collective judgement of international society about the rightful membership of the family of nations” (Wight, 1972:1), then the language of exceptionality adopted in the recognition of Kosovo and the two Georgian breakaway regions would result in disproving the universality of the norms invoked to justify unique nature of these three cases.

Arguments of exceptionality represent a no-man’s land between law and political fact. Their employment in the three cases discussed displays a means to rationalize a choice which would have potentially marked a normative shift in the understanding of secession, and which would have called for a general commitment to solve other analogous cases, as well as reducing opposition from other states facing the menace of secession on their own territory, such as Spain, Russia and China (Agamben, 2005; Sahin, 2009). In fact, the implementation of a discourse of exceptionality follows the Latin aphorism “necessitas non habet legem” [necessity has no law], and does not address a normative lacuna, but rather contributes to the creation of a “fictitious lacuna”, which can thus become a “fictitious” point of reference or precedent (Agamben, 2005; Sahin, 2013).

Did Kosovo set a precedent?

Whilst having been justified as a sui generis case, the legitimacy granted to Kosovo’s secession certainly had an impact on states seeking status de jure and on the international community as a whole.

Kosovo’s uniqueness does not justify claims of it being an exception to principles and norms. On the other side, the nature of the international system, with its instrumental structures of legitimacy and authority, does. Thus the conditions invoked to justify the sui generis nature, or the “fictitious lacuna” created by invoking Kosovo’s uniqueness, could be applied to other cases of territories seeking independence, if it serves the interest of other political leaders (Krasner, 2013). This was the case with the Russian recognition of South Ossetia and Abkhazia.

Furthermore, the Kosovo case could potentially legitimize the claims of other separatist entities on the basis of their unique nature, since “if you want to find a connection you will find it, and the governments of the affected states will find arguments” (Schaeffer, 2009). As Medvedev declared, he had warned his Western counterparts that “it would be impossible, […]
to tell the Abkhazians and the Ossentians (and dozens of other groups around the world) that what was good for the Kosovo Albanians was not good for them. In international relations, you cannot have one rule for some and another rule for others” (Medvedev, 2008a).

However, the 2010 Kosovo Advisory Opinion, whilst foregoing an opportunity to shed light on the contemporary scope of self-determination and normative approaches to secession, declared that Unilateral Declarations of Independence are not against international law. Even though advisory opinions are not legally-binding documents, this statement has effectively set a precedent for other territorial entities claiming statehood, whilst leaving questions regarding Kosovo’s positive right to statehood pending (Christakis, 2011; Vidmar, 2011; Ker-Lindsay, 2011).

An exception to no rules?
As was mentioned in the second chapter, international legal recognition is essentially a political act. It can be defined as a judgement guided by a number of general standards and empirical facts, such as the preservation or promotion of peace and stability, the pragmatic resolution of conflicts or the implementation of historical justice (Chwaszcza, 2013). While all these considerations have been employed to justify the granting or withholding of recognition, their heterogeneous nature does not allow for them to provide a defining parameter to understand the practice of states.

Wight argued the existence of a normative, rather than structural principle of legitimacy about “rightful membership of the family of nations”, which in the modern era evolved to encompass the principle of popular rule and a changing conception of justice (1972:1, 28). The employment of an argument of exceptionality in the three cases scrutinized suggests that there has not been a departure from a predilection for the norm of territorial integrity over that of self-determination, even though “a rule can have only so many exceptions until it is no rule at all” (Dubinsky, 2009: 246).

Krasner maintained that recognition is, as sovereignty, organized hypocrisy; this is a result of attributes of the international system, such as complexity or the lack of perfect information, multiple and conflicting norms, and instrumental structures of authority and legitimacy (2013). Principles of legitimacy are instrumental, rather than constitutive, thus allowing conflicting and contradictory principles and norms to be implemented by political leaders to serve their interests (Krasner, 2013).

In conclusion, the practice of state recognition, while seemingly upholding the principle of territorial integrity, is based on a plurality of (instrumental) considerations and facts that do
not allow the establishment of an ideal normative structure. The fact that the law upholds two conflicting principles, those of self-determination and territorial integrity, adds to the confusion, making rulers more likely to respond to “domestic material and ideational incentives than international ones” (Krasner, 1999: 42).

**Conclusion**

Having considered the recent practices of state recognition, it can be argued, in the light of the three cases examined and of the recent events which led to the separation of the Crimean peninsula from Ukraine, that the international recognition of Kosovo, whilst justified as a *casus sui generis*, has become a precedent influencing state practice. The argument of exceptionality, which on the one side seeks to uphold the territorial integrity norm, could be applicable to a number of other situations, as has been the case of the two Georgian breakaway regions. Claims of Kosovo being a *sui generis* case do not provide a sufficient reason to legitimize it as an exception to international principles and norms. Nonetheless, violations to norms can be explained by the instrumental structures of legitimacy and authority that characterize the international system (Krasner, 2013). The “fictitious lacuna” created by invoking Kosovo’s uniqueness, could therefore become a point of reference in the recognition of other territorial entities (Agamben, 2005; Sahin, 2013).

Furthermore, the International Court of Justice in the *Kosovo* advisory proceedings, in supporting the view that unilateral declarations of independence are not illegal in international law, and avoiding any reference to the Kosovo case as a *casus sui generis*, has created a potential case for other secessionist claims (2010a). The contradictory nature of the law on statehood, which incorporates two peremptory but opposing principles, self-determination and territorial integrity, together with the lack of a common international legal or normative framework to deal with contemporary cases of secession, which often cannot be regulated domestically, constitute the reasons which allow for the “exception” to become the rule.

Such findings would seem to justify the position taken by the Russian Federation in its recent annexation of the Crimean peninsula. Russian President Vladimir Putin invoked the Kosovo precedent to vindicate the separation of Crimea from Ukraine and its annexation to Russia: he maintained that Kosovo was “a precedent our western colleagues created with their own hands in a very similar situation, when they agreed that the unilateral separation of Kosovo from Serbia, exactly what Crimea is doing now, was legitimate and did not require any permission from the country’s central authorities” (2014).

The reasons listed to legitimize Kosovo’s *sui generis* nature have furthermore not been
acknowledged on the legal plane: with the ICJ’s avoidance in taking a stance on principles such as remedial secession or “earned sovereignty”, these potentially emerging norms have been denied universality. To quote Putin’s words again: “We keep hearing from the United States and Western Europe that Kosovo is some special case. What makes it so special in the eyes of our colleagues? It turns out that it is the fact that the conflict in Kosovo resulted in so many human casualties. Is this a legal argument? The ruling of the International Court says nothing about this” (2014). As a result, these principles have been invoked in highly differing circumstances. One example of this, as was discussed in this dissertation, is the recognition of South Ossetia and Abkhazia; another more recent case is that of the 2014 Crimean referendum. Putin specified that “if the Crimean local self-defence units had not taken the situation under control, there could have been casualties as well. Fortunately this did not happen. There was not a single armed confrontation in Crimea and no casualties” (2014).

The scope of this dissertation is restricted to cases in Eastern Europe – an area still highly divided between bi-polar spheres of influence. Some view the Russian quest for international recognition as a great power in response to the events in the Balkans as a possible cause of this recent trend of recognition (Schaeffer, 2009; Nalbandov, 2009). Vladimir Putin in fact recently declared: “Today, it is imperative to end this hysteria, to refute the rhetoric of the cold war and to accept the obvious fact: Russia is an independent, active participant in international affairs; like other countries, it has its own national interests that need to be taken into account and respected” (2014).

In conclusion, the aim of this dissertation has been to draw attention to matters concerning the recognition of states emerging from non-consensual secession. It is an issue which should be at the very centre of the international political and legal agenda. Yet, through the adoption of a language of exception it has become a matter confined to a “no-man’s-land between public law and political fact” (Agamben, 2005:1). In the light of the recent events that took place in Ukraine, it is crucial for the international community to seek a common agreement on questions regarding the legitimacy of statehood and secession. Until a new universal precedent is established, the Kosovo case will serve as a point of reference for yet other exceptions. And there can be only so many exceptions before the rule ends up being disproved altogether.

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Violence & The Global Food Economy: Food sovereignty as a precondition for genuine food security

Edward Colbert

Abstract
The global food economy is a system that is defined by violence. Its current manifestation is the result of decades of global dispossession that has separated producers and consumers of food from each other. As a result it has allowed the winners of this system, those that are food secure, to live at the continued expense of its losers. Yet violence is ultimately self-destructive (Kim, 1984), and therefore the continued marginalisation and exploitation of food producers will eventually affect those who benefit from this system. Combining Galtung’s (1969) theory of structural violence with Sen’s (1981) entitlements approach, this paper aims to reconceptualise the global food economy as a system that is promoting food related violence. Food sovereignty shall be offered as a viable alternative to current ‘food security’ policies that seek to expand the current status quo and thus exacerbate this violent system.
“Food is first and foremost a source of nutrition and only secondarily an item of trade”
La Via Campesina, 1996:3

"[F]ood is a commodity. Access to it is largely a function of income and asset distribution, as well as of the functioning...of food production and market systems" World Bank, 1994:134

Introduction
The way in which food is produced and consumed has changed dramatically over the last century. Today there is an unprecedented global abundance of food, which has created the illusion of an endless supply of edible resources in the Global North. Yet whilst countries like the US and UK seem to have bitten off more than they can chew, the Global South continues to experience high levels of hunger. Hunger and malnutrition have become the greatest threat to health worldwide, affecting one in eight people who do not have adequate access to food to sustain a healthy and productive lifestyle (World Food Program, 2014). Paradoxically it is widely documented that there are currently more people overweight on earth than there are those living with hunger. Last year 842 million people did not have enough access to nutritional food (FAO, 2013:8) compared to a global population of 1.46 billion overweight and obese people (Keats & Wiggins, 2013:i). Although ninety-eight percent of the world’s hungriest people live in developing regions (FAO, 2013:8), the phenomenon of chronic hunger in a world of plenty is not restricted to the poorest nations. Even in countries experiencing extraordinary availability of food, such as the UK, there is a rising trend of hunger and food insecurity (Lambie-Mumford et al, 2014). What is even more disturbing than these initial statistics is the fact that those who produce food are generally the first to be affected by hunger and starvation (Spitz, 1981:191; Bush, 1996:169).

The global food economy is a violent structure that produces inequalities in access to food. It does so by dispossessing states of their production entitlements, which in turn creates dependencies based on varying levels of exchange entitlements. This paper aims to demonstrate how current inequalities found in the global food economy are a result of the structural violence of this system. In doing so it shall uncover the violent processes that have led to the growth of the current system in order to link inequalities in power, in relation to food, to experiences of food related violence. Food related violence should be understood as a form of personal violence that stems from issues surrounding the production and consumption of food. Examples of food related violence include, but are not limited to: hunger, malnutrition, starvation, famine, farmer suicides, and land grabbing. Obesity and other food
related diseases of affluence are also forms of food related violence insomuch as the overconsumption of food can lead to reductions in an individual’s life potential. In order to develop a conceptual understanding of the way global inequalities relate to manifest cases of food related violence this paper will first define violence in the global context with specific regard to the food economy. Using Galtung’s theory of structural violence (1969) it shall be argued that the social injustice caused by the global food economy benefits a minority of winners at the expense of global losers (Duffield, 1994; Bush, 1996). The monopolisation of power throughout the food chain has been made possible by persistent processes of accumulation by dispossession (Harvey, 2003) that have disconnected producers and consumers of food (Wittman, 2010:5). The concept of slow violence (Nixon, 2011) shall be used to demonstrate how violence in the global food economy is exponential and attritional; leading to the conclusion that violence is ultimately self-destructive (Kim, 1984). Sen’s (1981) entitlements approach to understanding hunger and famine shall be employed to explain how this system of structural violence has led to reductions in the ability of people to buy and grow their own food and thus feed themselves. The entitlement approach will be developed from the personal to national level to show how reductions in the production entitlements, or food sovereignty, of producers to grow for a domestic market, produce local and global food insecurity.

Building upon this analytical framework the second chapter will unpack three major stages that have led to the increased globalisation of the food system, namely Development, Neoliberalism and the Green Revolution. Although each of these processes have led to unprecedented levels of food production, they have also increased global inequality in access to food.

Moreover, the multilateral dependencies through which food is now procured are vulnerable to social, economic, political and ecological shocks. If the world population consumed a similar diet to that of the UK, that relies on six times its domestically available land and sea, it would require a far greater amount of land and energy than the planet would be able to provide (Millstone & Lang, 2008:10). Hence the interconnected nature of food and hydrocarbons within mainstream development ideology sets the stage for global ‘collective suicide’ by promoting aspirations of unsustainable westernisation on a global scale (Bush, 2013). The global inequalities produced by this system are fuelled by the unsustainable means of production that seek to ‘feed the world’ through industrial agriculture.

Food security as a policy for hunger prevention emphasises this agenda by encouraging increased free trade, intensive agriculture and technological development as a
solution to food related violence. Yet it does not concern itself with other forms of food related violence nor does it seek to address the structural violence that causes such manifestations in the first place. Food sovereignty as an alternative policy measure calls for a radical restructuring of the food system and demands that nation states should empower and protect domestic agricultural sectors to create genuine food security. Whilst food security encourages the use of exchange entitlements to gain food security, food sovereignty is concerned with guaranteeing production entitlements to change the power relations of the food system. The final chapter shall therefore critically discuss both of these concepts to provide suggestions as to how to alter the way food is currently produced and consumed in order to reduce food related violence.

Entitlement Failure as an Expression of Structural Violence
Food related violence is symptomatic of extreme inequalities in the global food economy. These underlying inequalities can best be described as examples of “structural violence” (Galtung, 1969). In order to reach the conclusion that the global food economy is structurally violent this term must first be dissected in order to analyse how this form of violence manifests itself.

Sen’s entitlements approach to famine (1981) will then be discussed to show the linkage between the structure of the global food economy and the social injustice it produces. Moreover, this connection shall demonstrate how this structure has produced multilateral dependencies between the Global North and South that have decreased genuine food security by reducing the production entitlements (Sen, 1981) of citizens in both these regions of the world.

Defining Violence
Writing in 1969, Johan Galtung first differentiated structural violence from personal violence in an attempt to better understand the vast spectrum of violent processes that have continued to prevent peace from being fully achieved. Galtung regarded peace as an “absence of violence”, yet he argued this definition was misleading given the vast forms of violence that exist (1969:167). Instead, Galtung developed the following description of violence as a basic understanding from which to extract a broader explanation of what constitutes whether or not something is violent: “violence is present when human beings are being influenced so that their actual somatic and mental realizations are below their potential realizations.” (1969:168)
Whilst Galtung’s concept of violence presents a broad viewpoint from which to describe individual cases as ‘violent’ it’s ability to explain the severity of violent acts is too subtle. Samuel Kim offers an alternative, more explicit understanding in defining violence as, “a pathological element that destroys or diminishes life-sustaining and life-enhancing processes” (1984:181).

However, neither of these definitions challenge the common notion of violence that conjures up images of event-based bodily (somatic) harm as a result of an interaction between two parties – the perpetrator and the victim (Galtung, 1969; Nixon, 2011). Galtung refers to this particular concept of violence as personal violence, as the context in which such actions take place occurs between an object and a subject (1969). These types of violence are readily recognisable and familiar as it is possible to relate to either an identifiable oppressor or the victim, upon observing the process.

One of the most significant and widely observed examples of direct personal violence associated with the global food economy in recent years was the suicide of Korean farmer and activist Lee Kyung Hae. On the 10th September 2003 Lee climbed one of the fences separating the World Trade Organization’s (WTO) Ministerial meeting in Cancun from the protestors surrounding them. Exclaiming ‘the WTO kills farmers’ Lee then ended his own life by stabbing himself in the heart (Weis, 2007:148; Patel, 2007:35). This example of violence clearly portrays an object and subject (the perpetrator and victim), albeit that they are the same person. This could lead us to believe that Lee’s death was in fact a result of physical personal violence that was both direct and intended in its nature. However, when the root cause of Lee’s being in Cancun is traced back to his connection with the global food economy as a farmer there appears to be a far more indirect cause of this violence.

Galtung suggests that indirect or structural violence describes any act of violence in which there appears to be no specific perpetrator (1969). Furthermore, this type of violence is “built into [a] structure and shows up as unequal power and... unequal life chances” (1969:171). What can be taken from these descriptions of structural violence is that it is neither a time bound, nor targeted form of violence – it is unintentional.

Whilst there appears to be a dichotomous relationship between personal and structural violence, Galtung argues that both are inextricably linked: “Personal violence represents change and dynamism – not only ripples on waves, but waves on otherwise tranquil waters. Structural violence is silent, it does not show – it is essentially static, it is the tranquil waters.” (1969:173)
This essentially poetic portrayal of the way violence permeates the world demonstrates how personal violence is event based, whilst structural violence is ongoing and frequently unseen. The two forms of violence presented by Galtung are located within a continuum of violence (Kelly, 1998) as acute symptoms of personal violence manifest themselves from deeper patterns of structural violence.

Given the hidden nature of structural violence the global food crisis might indeed be described as a “silent tsunami” (World Food Program, 2008). Nixon argues that Galtung’s definition of structural violence as ‘static’ does not do justice to the cumulative effects of violence over a period of time (2011:11). Nixon introduces the concept of ‘slow violence’ as that of “attritional violence, a violence of delayed effects scattered across time and space that is typically not viewed as violence at all” (2011:2). That slow violence generally goes unnoticed is an indication of its ability to multiply its effects over a period of time. Viewing violence as exponential (Nixon, 2011:5) when left untreated, one can extend Galtung’s aquatic analogy to describe the way in which ripples can become tsunamis. As Nixon suggests “it can fuel, long term, proliferating conflicts wrought from desperation as the conditions for sustaining life become increasingly degraded” (2011:3).

Lee’s death was, “symbolic of the suicides of thousands of farmers” (Shiva and Jalees, 2003:iv). It represented “the plight of the world’s small farmers and peasants and of the global opposition to the WTO” (Bello, 2009:126). This is a testament to the fact that the violence associated with the phenomenon of farmer suicides globally is a result of structural violence in the global food economy - his suicide was his swan song against the economic pressures faced by farmers around the world. In the case of epidemic starvation D’Souza argues that famine is a 'long-onset disaster' that typically manifests itself from an earlier warning period (1994:369). This warning period, the number of people who die from starvation before a famine is declared, quite obviously displays violence. Yet it is the lack of action against this violence prior to formal recognition that has the resultant effect of famine. As Kim suggests, “the failure to see this hidden dimension of global violence is in itself a major cause of growing violence” (1984:184). Structural violence is therefore a ‘catalyst’ (Nixon, 2011:11) for more acute acts of personal violence in the global food economy that emerge out of desperation. In the case of Lee’s suicide it would appear that the violence of the global food economy did indeed build slowly over time to the point that his desperate situation led him to suicide.

The argument that violence has a cumulative effect over time leads to the logical conclusion that violence may inevitably consume itself; or as Kim suggests, that it is ultimately “self-destructive” (1984:182). The idea that violence is fundamentally unsustainable provides a
critical warning about the global food economy. That this system is the result of myriad violent processes and that it is supported by and produces structural violence globally must therefore be a central feature to any analysis of this system insomuch as it exposes the long-term vulnerability of this system to its own implosion. An implosion of the current global food economy without adequate safety nets in place would result in explosions of personal violence, as hunger, starvation, suicide and conflict would manifest to extreme levels. Such violence may occur between regions, nations or indeed individuals in an attempt to survive.

Structural violence has yet to fully explain why it is the poorest and most marginalised individuals who are most vulnerable to social injustice. Kim’s understanding of violence presents an additional social dynamic to structural violence: “Violence has a structural ‘trickle-down’ tendency, generally moving downward on the ladder of social stratification as an instrument of social control and dominance…Violence, like disease, hits hardest at weak, defenseless, and subordinate human groups in both domestic and international settings…” (1984:182)

Describing violence in this way suggests that a hierarchy exists in which marginalised groups are to be found at the bottom rungs. Farmer develops this argument in proposing that there are multiple social axis (including race, gender and class) that must be considered to understand why certain groups are more likely to experience violence than others (1996:274). However, at the global level, he argues that it is the world’s poorest who “are the chief victims of structural violence” (1996:280). In the case of structural violence relating to hunger this demographic explains the reason why 98% of those experiencing chronic hunger are located in the Global South and furthermore why the total number of people suffering from undernourishment continues to rise in the sub-Saharan Africa and Western Asia regions1 (FAO, 2013:8).

There is of course a degree of intersectionality that should be observed that places people at different levels within this violent hierarchy based upon class, gender, race and location (both internationally, and within the urbanrural dichotomy). Galtung gave greater emphasis to this area of concern in his later work with Höivik by highlighting that “a great number of deaths from illnesses and accidents [are] caused [by] the existing distribution of wealth and power (1971:73). Höivik, in a further study, argued that, “the victims of structural violence are social groups rather than individual persons” (1977:60).

In the global context this social dynamic is framed by the recognition of a developed ‘Global North’ and an underdeveloped ‘Global South’. That Lee Kyung Hae was a citizen of the Global South highlights the greater vulnerability of those living in this region of the world. Yet
farmer suicides are a global problem with high rates of suicide amongst farmers in Australia, China, Ireland, France, the UK and US as a result of economic pressures (Greenberg, 2013; Kutner, 2014). Whilst those in the Global South are more prone to food related violence, producers of food worldwide systemically suffer from structural violence in order for consumers to benefit.

Moving beyond farmer suicides, it is clearer to understand issues of hunger, malnutrition, starvation and ultimately famine. Despite the much celebrated statistic that the overall prevalence of undernourished people in world has decreased, the total number of undernourished people in sub-Saharan Africa and Western Asia has increased by 49.6 million and 12.2 million between 1990 and 2013 respectively. See FAO’s report *The State of Food Insecurity in the World 2013* for further information.

Holtgimenez and Patel argue that women are doubly vulnerable to food related violence, firstly as consumers with lower exchange entitlements and secondly as producers who are increasingly vulnerable to price volatility (2009). In the case of starvation, Galtung states that, “if people are starving when this is objectively avoidable, then violence is committed, regardless of whether there is a clear subject-action-object relation” (1969:171).

Here Galtung constructs a clear framework in which a structural cause of starvation is present given the avoidable nature of this violence. This is to say that in a situation where someone is starving where it is unavoidable, the process of starvation is not violent. Issues of personal food deprivation including hunger, malnutrition and starvation all manifest themselves as forms of violence as these relative levels of deprivation reduce the actual potentials of the individuals affected. This recognition of hunger as violent, however, does not yet provide a causal relationship between the global food economy and hunger. What must be first established is an understanding of why people experience hunger in the first place.

**Hunger as a Failure of National Production Entitlements**

Sen’s notion of ‘entitlements’ can be understood as either the economic ability to obtain food through transactions (exchange), or the physical ability to grow one’s own food (production) (1981). The former entitlement relates to inequalities in wealth distribution, whilst the latter entitlement is comparable to the concept of food sovereignty. Sen argues that famine, the cumulative result of mass hunger, is not caused by food availability decline but instead because of a failure of entitlements (1976; 1981). His argument is that “starvation is a matter of some people not having enough food to eat, and not a matter of there being not enough food to eat” (1981:434). As such hunger nowadays occurs during an abundance of food rather...
than a scarcity (Araghi, 2000:155). Quite simply, “[i]f you don’t have land on which to grow food or the money to buy it, you go hungry no matter how dramatically technology pushes up food production” (Lappe et al. 1998:60).

Whilst Sen is concerned with starvation and famine, the entitlements approach can also be applied to one off cases of food insecurity. It is important to consider that “individuals who are materially poor face excessive food insecurities even during normal periods” (Watts, 1991:13). That is to say that there is a structural characteristic to the entitlement approach that means those who “do not have access to cash to purchase food... will experience food insecurity, malnutrition and worse, death” (Bush, 2010:119). Whilst Sen applies this methodology to three major famines it is his application of this understanding of famine to the Irish case of the 1840s that is most fitting with this study’s focus. Sen highlights the gross injustice associated with the exporting of food from Ireland to England during a time of famine as an example of how “market forces...tend to encourage such food movements when failure of purchasing ability outweighs availability decline” (1981:461). Those in Ireland who could not afford food therefore went hungry, as those who controlled the means to production of such commodities pursued greater financial exchange.

Those who suffered from the Irish famine did so not only because of a decline in exchange entitlements however, but also because they lacked their own production entitlements. Would it be correct to argue therefore, that if those who were affected by the famine could afford food then they would not have suffered? Given the current demand and dependence of many nations on imported foodstuffs, the country with the greatest buying power would of course secure access to the food. Gartuala et al. argue that the, “entitlement approach calls for such a provision that people’s engagement with agriculture and food production is not a necessary condition for food security. As long as they have access to income, they do not starve; they can buy food from the market” (2013:5).

This is not however a reason to completely discredit the entitlement approach as this critique is only aimed at the role of exchange entitlements. What Gartuala et al. are trying to highlight is the ability of successful exchange entitlements to guarantee food simply through purchase, either from the domestic market or via imports. Exchange entitlements do of course play a large role in people’s access to food, as many people do not have sufficient production entitlements to feed themselves. This is indicative of industrial society as those who once had access to land and were able to produce food became dispossessed by the enclosure of agricultural land. Such a reduction in production entitlements is the result of restrictive
measures applied to common land in order to force individuals into alternative means of subsistence, namely through wage labour. This process is what Harvey refers to as accumulation by dispossession (2003) and shall be returned to in the following chapter. The commodification of food has reduced the national capacity of many countries to provide food for their own populations leading to a greater dependence on imports. Successful production entitlements on the other hand secure access to food provisions for people as this form of entitlements guarantees the means of food production to the individual that produces it.

Illich argues that those who loose the ability to feed themselves, either through lack of cash or through lack of subsistence “are neither members of the economy, nor are they capable of living, feeling and acting as they did before they lost the support of a moral economy of subsistence” (2010:102). Illich describes a ‘before and after’ imagery in this sense by showing that without the ability to subsist oneself, one’s ability to sustainably exist is severely diminished. ‘Lack of cash’ here is a relative term, it should be noted, as food prices today are subject to international fluctuations meaning that what can be afforded today may not be attainable with the same capital tomorrow. Whilst production entitlements secure access to food through ownership of the means of production, exchange entitlements can only guarantee food to those who can afford to pay the price. Such a reliance on exchange entitlements is inherently vulnerable to external pressures such as market fluctuations or moments of crisis and therefore places poorer individuals at greater risks to food insecurity.

Whilst Sen’s (1981) ideas have been used to demonstrate differences in the individual capacity of people to survive, the same argument can be applied to nation states. That is to say that reductions in the exchange entitlements of a nation state (its ability to purchase food imports) can lead to food insecurity when supply is low and prices are high. If the production entitlement (ie food sovereignty) of the same state is of a low value, due to the encouragement of extractive industries or monocultures at the expense of a domestically produced food reserves, then this state will be vulnerable to hunger and potentially famine in its poorest regions. If food aid is not available then this situation may lead to broader violence across the country. Speaking generally of the Global North and Global South, the entitlements approach can be applied in the global context as countries in the former have greater exchange entitlements to the latter. Although it may be hard to distinguish which geopolitical region has the greatest production entitlements, there are a larger number of people who depend on agriculture for their livelihood in the Global South than the Global North (Tudge, 2011). There is arguably greater knowledge and skills available and therefore a greater
potential for increasing national production entitlements in the Global South – that is to increase the right of access to food via an increase in national production of food for a domestic population. However, as shall unfold during the following chapter, the rise of the global food economy has systematically undermined the production entitlements of both the Global North and South.

The application of an entitlements approach to the national rather than individual level should not neglect the original intentions of Sen’s work. The transfer of production entitlements for exchange entitlements clearly produces a pattern of winners and losers (Duffield, 1994; Bush, 1996). Such entitlement exchanges are a form of “active underdevelopment” as Duffield argues, as they result in “resource depletion, the spread of absolute poverty and the collapse of social and economic infrastructure” (1994:52). That is to say, there is a degree of slow violence (Nixon, 2011) associated with entitlement exchanges that reduces the overall food security of an individual over time. There are those who benefit from this structural violence (Galtung, 1969:179), as there are also those who benefit from famines (Keen 1994). The same can be said of farmer suicides, chronic hunger and malnutrition, and even food related diseases of affluence. The winners of the global food economy, those with the greatest exchange entitlements, therefore exist at the expense of the system’s losers.

Summary

Linking structural violence with an entitlements approach provides a clear framework from which to view the global food economy as a violent system. A broad and critical definition of violence has been provided in order to highlight the temporal and spatial characteristics of the violence witnessed in the global food economy. Structural violence (Galtung, 1969) is attritional (Nixon, 2011) and ultimately self-destructive (Kim, 1984). By situating violence within a continuum, entitlement failure can now be seen as an expression of structural violence.

Sen’s entitlements approach (1981) has been developed to assess the way in which the structural violence of the global food economy has reduced the production entitlements of countries in both the Global North and South, which has in turn undermined the ability of people to feed themselves and thus guarantee absolute food security. The following chapter will provide a historical analysis of the rise of the global food economy through the lens of this framework. This analysis will highlight how food related violence is directly linked to the structural violence of the food system and can therefore be situated within a continuum.
A History of Violence

The global trade of food is not necessarily a bad thing, nor is it at all new. What has changed in relation to the way food is traded is the concentration of power with agribusinesses and corporate middlemen. A clear hierarchy of wealth and power has emerged during the last century that’s structural violence benefits a ‘consumer class’ (McMichael, 2005:277) at the expense of those who produce food.

Three distinct processes have played catalytic roles in the progression of the global food economy, namely Development, Neoliberalism, and the Green Revolution. Whilst each of these processes have led to the increased production of food globally, they have equally exacerbated inequalities in access to food and to the means of food production (Lappe et.al, 1998). It is these inequalities in access that should be understood as the difference in global levels of exchange and production entitlements. These inequalities are the result of multilateral dependencies that are promoting food related violence and thus preventing positive peace from being achieved in the food system. The fact that this economy is the product of a violent history and that it continues to produce violence exposes the current insecurity and long-term vulnerability to its inevitable collapse.

Development, Neoliberalism & The Green Revolution

Holt-Gimenez and Patel identify the advent of Development - “the North’s modernization project for the Global South” - as a root factor for the emergence of the current global food economy (2009). This post-colonial term suggested that a duty of the developed states was to lend a helping hand to the Global South in order to pull them out of a state of underdevelopment (Illich, 2010:99). Such an idea was epitomised in Walt Rostow’s The Stages of Economic Growth (1969) in which a five-stage template was proposed for developing nations to help them successfully follow in the footsteps of the industrialised Global North. Whilst Rostow’s teleological ‘one size fits all’ mode of economic growth has been generally discredited for being over-simplified and ethnocentric by advocates of more recent themes of human, sustainable, and grassroots development, (Rahnema & Bawtree, 1997; Chang & Grabel, 2004; Brett, 2009; Sachs et al, 2010) it is important to understand its influence on international agricultural trade. Rostow’s final destination for states argued that to be completely ‘developed’ (in the Western sense), a state must achieve a level of high mass consumption (1969:73). As has already been touched upon, such a high level of global economic development, attributed to the likes of the UK and USA, is completely unsustainable.
as it depends on a mass of goods to be available beyond the limits of a given land mass (Club of Rome 1972; Millstone & Lang 2008:10). This is not to suggest a reductionist Malthusian problematic of population increase outstripping resources availability, but rather to emphasise the violent impacts of over and under consumption of food across the globe. Moreover, the nutrition transition (Popkin, 2002) that has become normalised during periods of modernisation coupled with an expectation of unprecedented surplus availability may eventually lead to a global crisis. There is also an implication in Popkin’s (2002) work on the ‘nutrition transition’ describes the way in which shifts in diets and consumption patterns can be related to different levels of development throughout history. The transition that is of the greatest concern at present is the movement towards high-impact diets consisting largely of grain and meat products.

The Club of Rome was careful to warn of pre-crisis episodes of violence in The Limits to Growth: “[s]ymptoms of the crisis will begin to appear long before the crisis point is reached. This has resulted in a process of ‘depeasantisation’ as the rural poor have been dispossessed from the land to seek subsistence in urban centres (Bryceson, 2000). This latter process laid the foundations for future land grabbing and the contemporary exploitation of land and labour not just for agriculture but also for extractive industries such as mining.

International Finance Institutions such as the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund gave further legitimacy to this mode of development by providing loans to the Global South to help them follow the supposed path of the West. This financial assistance came in the form of structural adjustment programs, which required certain conditions of structural reform to be implemented to mold the recipient economies to suit maximum integration into the post 1970s global neoliberal economy. The reshaping of many of the third world economies required drastically reduced tariffs on imports (which undermined domestic production) and exports, the privatisation of state enterprises, and the devaluation of local currency in order to attract foreign investment. These reforms were an “indispensable step towards a large-scale integrated capitalist industrial agriculture” which triggered the current food crisis as a result of the displacement of peasant agriculture by capitalist agriculture (Bello, 2009:11).

In order to create equal terms of trade, international trading guidelines were established under various rounds of the General Agreement on Tarriffs Food prices will rise so high that some people will starve; others will be forced to decrease the effective amount of land they use and shift to lower quality diets. These symptoms are already occurring in many parts of the world.” (Meadows et al., 1972:52) Despite agricultural having been exempt for
many years, the completion of the agreement’s Uruguay Round in 1994 resulted in the inclusion of this sector’s activities, further exacerbating the impacts of structural adjustment policies (Menezes, 2001).

This direct application of neoliberal economics to agriculture severely curtailed the ability of nation states to support their domestic food supplies. That is to say it reduced the production entitlements of developing nations instantly causing a degree of food insecurity. Ironically the success of many of the most developed states’ agricultural sectors have come from years of fierce protectionism, either in the form of direct subsidisation in the case of the US and EU, or through land reforms and support for major industries in some of the Asian Tiger economies (Lappe et. al, 1998). Prior to the inclusion of agriculture in the GATT, government support in agriculture was valued at 20% of US production, and 40% and 70% in the EC and Japan (ODI, 1987:2). The additional advantages of colonialism and “overseas plunder” has also benefited the industrialisation of much of the Global North (Bush, 1996:171). What was therefore understood by the Global South as a mode of development, i.e. trade liberalisation, was not a lesson learnt from ‘the west’. The experience of the most developed states has been a story of government intervention, global exploitation, and a concentration of power via colonisation – processes developing nations are now actively discouraged to follow or unable to achieve.

Whilst the world’s markets were becoming increasingly integrated under neoliberal policies, the world of agriculture was undergoing equally defining revisions. The Green Revolution that occurred during the mid-20th century used technology and industry to boost agricultural yields to unprecedented levels, although the majority of these increases were seen only in the capitalist exchange of commodity crops (Escobar, 1992:155). The increased application of agrichemicals and oil to agriculture presented a role reversal of industry and agriculture. As industrial society once depended on national and international agricultural surplus to feed its workforce (Friedmann & Michael, 1989:100), now it is the global agricultural sector that depends on industry to boost production and thus attract further investment (Holt-Gimenez & Shattuck, 2010:85-86). This revolution initially resulted in world food prices plummeting as food availability soared creating global surpluses. This sounds like a good thing, however, the dumping of a large amount of these surpluses on the global market at artificially low prices5 had the knock on effect of farmers in the developing world not being able to compete, forcing them to produce more in order to break even.

Whilst this period of global development is championed for having saved millions of people from starving, the cruel irony is that it also caused just as many people to become
hungry (Escobar, 1992:155; Lappe et al., 1998). This bizarre paradox relates to the quick-fix motives of food dumping during the cold war political climate, which had the knock on effect of causing longer term localised forms of violence through the disruption of local communities and ecosystems (Shiva, 2010:191). The availability of cheap imports and food aid undermined the production entitlements of farmers and thus forced them out of business. In part these surpluses were used to Government subsidisation in the US was valued at $200 billion during 2007 (Weis, 2007:25).

Such high levels of subsidisation distort the true cost of production and undermine producers (in both the North and South) who can’t compete due to lack of investment and technology. Yet rather than seeing this as the outcome of generosity it should be noted that the use of surplus food to alleviate acute hunger was politically selfserving to the donor. During the cold war the East and West would regularly use food aid, amongst other incentives including weapons, to win over developing state’s political allegiance to strengthen their position (Wallenstein, 1976; McMichael, 2005).

The violent process of forcing farmers either off the land or into bondages of economic dependency is an example of ‘accumulation by dispossession’ (Harvey, 2003). Money that had been accrued by processes of primitive accumulation6 in the capital centres of the Global North required further frontiers to invest in; the Global South was such a frontier, untapped of its riches. Foreign direct investment became the means by which to exploit such resources in the post-colonial era. Just as “[s]ettler agriculture cheapened agricultural commodity production, via the political appropriation and colonisation of new lands” (Friedmann & McMichael, 1989:101) now it is agribusinesses who are acquiring land leading to enclave development at the expense of local communities. By undermining the value of local food production and in turn encouraging crop production intended for exportation, the production entitlements of those lucky enough to retain their land has been reduced. Such patterns of violence have caused farmers to produce Marx identified ‘primitive accumulation’ as “the process which takes away from the labourer the possession of his means of production; a process that transforms on the one hand, the social means of subsistence and of production into capital, on the other, the immediate producers into wage labourers” (1967:714).

However, whilst Marx suggested this process as a fundamental immediate stage for capitalist development Harvey argues that it is in fact reoccurring throughout history (2003). This process of dispossession originated during the 16th century British enclosure movement during which two fifths of the population were shifted from land into factories (Weis, 2007:49). The enclosure of common land was encouraged as a means to reducing the independence of the

This separation causes a reduction in the production entitlements of an individual and therefore causes an increased reliance on exchange entitlements for survival. This initial driver for capitalist production eventually outgrew England and was superseded by a new logic of enclosure: Imperialism. This process sought to acquire more land, resources and labour across borders through the continued expansion of accumulation by dispossession. Processes of enclosure still occur today, albeit on a much larger global scale (Hand and Fehr 2010:58). The Global North have become more reliant on food imports to feed a growing urban population as over time more people have been driven from the land into cities (Weis, 2007:50). Cheap food imports and dumping, alongside forced evictions from land for export industries have in turn undermined the production entitlements of farmers in the Global South (McMichael, 2005). The emphasis on growing food for exports is subject to the buying power of agribusinesses that seek the greatest profit from the lowest costs causing a race to the bottom for producers.

Nally interestingly posits that a process of ‘accumulation by molecularisation’ is now occurring as basic components of agriculture, such as seeds, are increasingly controlled by corporations as a result of the merging of interests between agribusiness and the biosciences industry (2010:48). As such, producers of food are now ‘consumers’ of agricultural inputs from corporations (Shiva, 2004). Even those who are able to retain their land are ultimately dispossessed of their production entitlements as a result of structural violence, therefore making them more vulnerable to food related violence.

The contemporary global food economy is decreasing the food security of those living in both the Global North and South. The emphasis on uniformity in economies through global economic models of comparative advantage has created multilateral dependencies that in turn are undermining the sustainability of the global food economy, and thus the ability to feed a growing population. Whereas enclosure policies in Britain sought to reduce the production entitlements of peasants, the global food economy separates producers from consumers creating greater vulnerabilities to food related violence.

**Multilateral Dependencies**

The combination of neoliberalism alongside the industrialisation of agriculture made David Ricardo’s economic theory of comparative advantage (1817) increasingly attractive to foreign
investors, who saw an opportunity to profit from the commodification of foodstuffs. Exportable produce was favoured across the developing world over locally appropriate and culturally sensitive food, in turn concentrating the produce, skills, wealth and power involved in the global food supply chain. The idea behind the liberalisation of third world economies was that increased foreign investment, in parallel with export revenues, would provide states with adequate financial resources to purchase foodstuffs on the world market for their people (Weis, 2007:23). Madeley argues however, that this theory only works “if trade takes place between countries at roughly equal stages of economic development” as he suggests that “when [comparative advantage] takes place between wealthy countries selling industrial goods and much poorer countries selling primary products, the former are likely to gain most from the deal” (2000:50). Inequalities in access to technology and economies of scale are exacerbated too by agricultural subsidisation in the Global North (Weis, 2007:25). McMichael argues that the political nature of the corporate ‘food regime’ is rooted in the imperial legacy of colonisation, which has subjugated people of the developing world to a necessary level of racialised underconsumption on which the overconsumption of the developed states is now dependent (2005:278). Today it is the “large growers, processors, exporters [and] shippers” who, with concentrated power and wealth, are the true benefactors of this economic process, removing food from those who need it most (Lappe et al, 1998:109).

Two dependencies can be drawn from this imbalance in trade and power. The first follows the Dependency Theory school of thought (Frank, 1966; Amin, 1976), that the Global South has become reliant on the Global North for finance, both through foreign exchange and investment. In addition to these two sources of income, the dynamic between the Northern consumer and the Southern producer has meant developing nations will continue to rely on exports to fund their economies and imports to feed their populations. Furthermore, relatively lower human (labor) and environmental costs to business (through deregulation) will proliferate an interest in the free trade of goods out of the South and in to the North. This dependency is purely economic – it is driven by a demand, for which at present there is a supply. The second dependency is that of the developed nations’ markets on the cheap importing of a surplus of food products. As Wittman et al suggest, “The globalized food system distances eaters from the people who produce food and from the places where food is produced...[t]he more industrialized, processed and distant food is, the less connected to and knowledgeable about it the consumer becomes” (2010:5).

This connection is essentially a trade off between production and exchange entitlements. It is structurally violent, at the global level, as it favors rich consumers in the
Global North who have greater purchasing power than those in the South. Yet by importing an abundance of the food that is eaten in countries such as the UK, the nations’ domestic agriculture sector has diminished drastically, therefore reducing the countries production entitlements. The global division of labour within agricultural is what has given rise to a ‘consumer class’ whose survival relies on a subjugated producer class (McMichael, 2005:277).

The notion that society is nine meals (or three days) away from anarchy has reoccurred throughout history in relation to the vulnerability of regimes to maintain power amid hunger, yet it has become increasingly poignant given the current situation of the global trading of food. In 2013 the British International Development Committee published a report on Global Food Security that gained much public attention during its launch when chair of the committee, Sir Malcolm Bruce, warned that “the UK is never more than a few days away from a significant food shortage” (Parliament). Although the report did not explicitly state this fact, it did critique the country’s ‘just-intime’ food economy. In his oral evidence for the report, Professor Tim Lang described the UK’s food supply as “parasitic” stating that Britain no longer feeds itself (International Development Committee, 2013:79). This description highlights the international nature of the food supply chain and the UK’s dependency on imported goods for survival. Quite simply, not enough food is produced in the UK to nutritionally sustain its population in the event of being cut off from food imports.

A further issue is that of the reliance on fuel-dependent transportation for much of the food to arrive in the UK. In 2000 this reliance on fuel almost led to a food crisis when truck drivers and farmers around the UK blockaded fuel depots in protest to the rising cost of keeping their vehicles on the road (Simms 2008:3). Once the public picked up on this impending threat, panic buying began in an attempt to create household food stocks to buffer any long-term impacts of the protest. Thus the double-effect of a lack of infrastructure and emergency over-purchasing laid the foundations for what could have been a genuine food shortage in the UK. The fact that an emergency situation did not arise is not to say import-dependent countries like the UK are safe from future just-in-time vulnerabilities. War, trade embargoes, economic crises and environmental disasters all present threats to just-in-time food economics but a greater source of current consternation is the growing food insecurity of those at the bottom of the food supply chain. As Simms remarks, “we are increasingly dependent on imports at precisely the time when, for several reasons to do with climate, energy, economics and changing consumption patterns, the guarantee of the rest of the world’s ability to provide for us is weakening.” (2008:7)
Linking the two dependencies suggested above together, Holt-Gimenez and Patel recognise the history of the global food economy as “one that stitches the livelihoods, diets, environments and economies of producers and consumers in the industrial North to those in the Global South – often to the detriment of both” (2009:18). The dependence on food imports to feed the world population is vulnerable to insecurity regardless of whether or not there is an imminent threat to trading procedures. If violence is self-destructive (Kim, 1984), then the way that food is currently traded can be taken to the logical conclusion that it will ultimately fail to feed even those with the greatest exchange entitlements. As the production entitlements of citizens in the Global North have been reduced over time through the process of ‘depeasantisation’ (Bryceson, 2000), they have become reliant on exchange entitlements to secure food. If the producers that these populations rely on can no longer produce food, and the land on which intensive agriculture is grown becomes so degraded that crops begin to fail, exchange entitlements will not provide an adequate means through which to secure food. Food riots attest to such vulnerabilities as when urban centres are shocked by unaffordable food prices, people resort to violence as their only means to securing food. When exchange and production entitlements fail in such situations looting provides an alternative means to survival. Such a scenario did not arise from the 2000 fuel protests in the UK, yet the immediate onset of panic buying by the public showed the perceived threat to survival that is exemplified by looting during food riots. Panic buying may well have become a last-ditch attempt at utilising exchange entitlements were the protests to have a lasting effect on the British supply chain.

Summary
The history of the global food economy is entrenched with violence as a result of the continued dispossession of food producers. Food related violence can now be seen as the result of structural violence that has grown over time to a point that even those who benefit from the structure, the consumers, are now vulnerable to food insecurity. The concern now is how to reduce these dependencies in the face of a growing world population. For many the solution to this problem can be found through the securitisation of our food chain by the continuation of the status quo. However, as the following chapter shall illustrate, a far more radical restructuring of the global food economy is required if the structural causes of violence in this system are to be extinguished.

Food Sovereignty as a Precondition for Genuine Food Security
The contemporary interpretation of ‘food security’ through maximising production suggests the inevitability of international dependencies on food. These dependencies systematically produce winners and losers and therefore are structurally violent. Food sovereignty as a policy rejects this global framework by arguing that solution lies in the protected right of a nation’s people to grow their own food for their own use (La Via Campesina, 1996). Whereas food security relies on export-driven agriculture, and therefore increased dependence on economies of scale and fossil fuels, food sovereignty seeks to develop secure and diverse domestic food sectors to feed people. Viewing these concepts in light of an entitlements approach (Sen, 1981), food sovereignty prioritises production entitlements to ensure people have adequate access to food, whilst current food security policies encourages the use of exchange entitlements to secure access to food. As has been uncovered in the previous chapters, such a reliance on exchange entitlements is inherently violent. Not only does it benefit the wealthiest individuals at the expense of others, but a total reduction in production entitlements has led to the world population being food insecure despite a global abundance of food.

Does ‘food security’ promote violence?

The most commonly cited definition of ‘food security’ is that of the Food and Agricultural Organization (FAO). This definition suggests that food security describes, “a situation that exists when all people at all times have physical, social and economic access to sufficient safe and nutritious food to meet dietary needs and food preferences for an active and healthy life” (FAO, 2009:8) This definition lacks any spatial boundaries and disregards the provenance and sustainability of food (Rosset, 2011:85). It entails no acknowledgment of the power relations between producers and consumers of food (Wittman, 2010:3). It also neglects to imply anybody of responsibility to ensure such a situation of ‘food security’ can be met. Instead this broad definition allows for myriad interpretations and thus has been used to support the continued growth of the global food economy (Handy & Fehr, 2010:45; Wittman, 2010:3). It’s concern lies only with hunger, and so fails to acknowledge other symptoms of social injustice in the global food economy such as farmer suicides. Obesity and diseases of affluence are equally remiss in the FAO’s definition, which seeks simply to extrapolate global food production infinitely.

The use of food security as a policy for reducing world hunger is thus contradictory as it encourages the violent processes of economic liberalisation in order to free the international flow of agricultural commodities. Whilst this definition defines itself temporally, with regards
to ‘all people at all times’, it does not concern itself with the slow violence (Nixon, 2011) of
intensive agricultural practice that wreaks havoc on environments and communities through
air, land and water pollution and repeated processes of accumulation by dispossession
(Harvey, 2003). These processes produce attritional violence insomuch as they reduce the
production entitlements of people over time through land degradation or forced eviction. As
many rural communities lack sufficient exchange entitlements to secure access to food, the
dispossession of production entitlements makes these communities vulnerable to food
insecurity. For many poor farmers, environmental or economic crises often leave them worse
off than their previous situation (Lappe et al; 1998:23).

It may seem counter-intuitive to describe food security as violent, but it is important to
recognise that this concept is designed to protect those that benefit from the system at the
expense of others. It is for this reason that the securitisation of the global food economy is
being approached from the top down (Fairbarn, 2010:22) via a process that emphasises the
removal of peasant populations, land reform, technology intensive agriculture and a
concentration of power. Personal violence in the global food economy threatens the structure
of food security policies as issues including hunger and farmer suicides highlight the structural
violence that they perpetuate. As food related violence becomes persistent the global food
economy becomes vulnerable to widespread criticism and dissent, as the 2007 and 2008 food
riots demonstrated (Holt- Gimenez & Patel, 2009; Bush, 2010). For Galtung, such a crisis can
lead to protective measures to ensure those in control of a system maintain their power:
“When the structure is threatened, those who benefit from structural violence, above all those
who are at the top, will try to preserve the status quo so well geared to protect their
interests.” (1969:179)

Galtung suggests that ‘thugs’ may be employed to carry out direct violence (for
eexample the police and military) to defend the status quo (1969:179). Yet it would appear that
in the case of those benefiting from the global food economy there is no such need for direct
violence. Given the global dynamic of structural violence within the food system, and given the
elusiveness of any identifiable oppressors involved, it would appear that the structural
violence of this system has become so engrained and thus so hidden that personal violence is
no longer needed to protect it. Instead the dogma of food security, which prescribes ‘more of
the same’ or ‘bigger and better’ policies to deal with hunger, promotes the very causes of
structural violence to quell dissent, i.e. greater dispossession as a result of corporate
agricultural expansion (Handy & Fehr, 2010:45).
Accumulation by dispossession (Harvey, 2003) in this sense plays a critical roll in controlling populations as it reduces the production entitlements of people in the North and the South in order to boost the exchange entitlements of those in the Global North through the continued availability of cheap food. The FAO would appear to have predicted this outcome in 1996 when discussing the need for greater industrial agricultural practice and economic reform in the Global South: “Because small-scale producers often lack the resources necessary to grow export-orientated crops, they may not be able to participate in this growth. On the contrary they may find that commercial expansion has an inflationary effect on production costs and on land rent that may even make their traditional production less feasible. Small producers may abandon their land or be bought by larger commercial interests...inegalitarian social relationship may predominate and export agriculture may worsen the position of [the] poor majority” (FAO 1996 cited in Mittal & Krishnan 1997:202).

This quote does not do justice to the force by which accumulation by dispossession occurs as it suggests that producers may choose to leave or sell their land, rather than facing forced evictions. Nonetheless its tone suggests that the reduction in production entitlements of the rural poor is an inevitable outcome of the continued growth of the global food economy. Although the FAO was cautious to commit to any certainty on agrarian questions it appears that at least some form of dispossession was planned. Escobar argues that ‘planning’, in the context of ‘progress’, “requires a degree of normalization and standardization of reality, which in turn entails injustice and the erasure of difference and diversity” (1992:147). Such thinking has become normalised as a result of the ideology of developmentalism imposed on countries in the Global South. This ideology is “exclusively concerned with the conversion of nature into a resource and the use of natural resources for commodity production and capital accumulation” and it “ignores the requirements of the huge numbers of people whose needs are not being satisfied through market mechanisms” (Shiva, 1992:239). Just as the English enclosure movement pushed people off the land as a planned means of controlling surplus people, this thinking informs current day food security policies and so continues to promote violence in the food system by disconnecting people from the land (Handy & Fehr 2010:45, 51).

As the contemporary concept of food security has become ‘normalised’ during the latter half of the 20th century (Lang & Barling 2012:315), so too has the structural violence of the global food economy. Handy and Fehr put the point somewhat more bluntly in arguing that food securitisation, “confronts a crisis in food production by driving more producers from the land, addresses the fragility of the current system of agricultural production by advocating
The insistence that food security should be a matter of global rather than local concern is a further flaw in the fight against hunger. Global solutions for local problems reduce the genuine food security of people in different nations (Esteva & Prakash, 1997:280). Food security as a global policy encourages the growth of food for export (to feed the world) rather than domestic consumption and thus makes producers and consumers vulnerable to international price fluctuations. This policy favours large-scale producers and agribusinesses over indigenous people and small-scale farmers (Mittal & Krishnan, 1997:202). Food security is therefore concerned with the securitisation of exchange entitlements as a means to purchase food as a commodity. The fact that this commodity is of absolute necessity for life, yet access to it is dependent on adequate exchange entitlements, demonstrates the way in which ‘food security’ benefits winners at the expense of losers. In light of this paper’s definition of violence, food security can be seen to reduce life-sustaining processes by influencing the actions of individuals in a way that greatly diminishes their potential realisations (Galtung, 1969:168; Kim, 1984:181). Levels of exchange entitlements vary in different locations both domestically and globally. This means that an individual’s vulnerability to food insecurity is increased as a result of structural violence; however, this is not just a concern for the poorest populations of the Global South. The slow violence of food import dependencies across the Global North has shifted food policies away from encouraging production entitlements almost entirely towards a dependence on exchange entitlements. This reduction in the ability of a population to feed itself, coupled with the increased violence of the system towards producers of food in the Global South, hence creates vulnerability for future food shortages and thus greater violence. If food security supports the structural violence of the global food economy, and therefore promotes negative peace (Galtung, 1969), does food sovereignty offer an alternative for positive peace within the food supply chain?

Is ‘food sovereignty’ a prerequisite for genuine food security?

Food sovereignty is a progressive reaction to earlier concepts on hunger alleviation such as the ‘right to food’ and more recently ‘food security’ (Fairbarn, 2010:15). However as Fairbarn argues, “food sovereignty is the only [concept] to attack [hunger] at the root by drawing attention to its systemic causes and striving to create a radically different food system” (2010:16). In contrast to food security, food sovereignty aims to stop the causes of food related violence instead of simply treating them. The ability of food sovereignty to present...
such a radical alternative to current international food policy is in part due to its origins. Whereas recent attempts to increase global food security have been developed in international institutions of power, food sovereignty “speaks the language of those affected directly by food crises” (Fairbarn, 2010:22). This language is political and refers to ownership and the means of production of food (Masioli & Nicholson, 2010:33).

La Via Campesina (translated as ‘The Peasant Way’) is an international organisation that represents millions of peasant and small-scale farmers across the world. They define food sovereignty as “the right of each nation to maintain and develop its own capacity to produce its basic foods respecting cultural and productive diversity” (La Via Campesina, 1996:1). In comparison to food security, this concept focuses on empowering the production entitlements of sustainable food producers rather than the exchange entitlements of large agribusiness firms. At the heart of this concept is its value for diversity, both socially and ecologically. Food sovereignty therefore can manifest itself in a broad range of ways, which are culturally sensitive to different locations; however a number of commitments can be identified in La Via Campesina’s definition that give a loose idea of how food sovereignty should be implemented (Patel, 2009).

Common to concepts of ‘food security’ and the ‘right to food’, food sovereignty assumes that food is a basic human right. La Via Campesina however demands that nation states should “declare that access to food is a constitutional right and guarantee the development of the primary sector to ensure the concrete realisation of this fundamental right” (La Via Campesina, 1996:2). Such government intervention, food sovereignty advocates argue, should be managed democratically in order to represent and empower the needs and aspirations of food producers. Significant agrarian reform is also required in order to secure access to land for farmers and landless peoples to practice sustainable agriculture. Since La Via Campesina’s 1996 declaration this constitutional demand has to varying degrees been progressed in Bolivia, Cuba, Ecuador, Mali, Nepal, Nicaragua, Paraguay, Senegal, and Venezuela (Wittman, 2010:8; Rosset, 2011:86; Beauchelt & Virchow, 2012:264). One of most important aspects of the food sovereignty movement is its desire to radically reorganise the way food is traded. “Food is first and foremost a source of nutrition and only secondarily an item of trade”, declares La Via Campesina (1996:1). This statement emphasises the duty of producers, national governments, and international institutions to guarantee that food produced within a nation is used to feed its population. This duty encourages nation states to prioritise their national production entitlements over exchange entitlements in order to wean their food supply off imports. Advocates of food sovereignty do not completely reject the idea
that food can be traded, but instead demand that only when the hunger of a nation’s population is sustainably satisfied should surplus produce be offered to the global market. Food sovereignty differs radically from food security in this sense as it attempts to structurally change the way in which food is produced and consumed. In doing so it reduces the structural violence associated with agricultural models of export-led production and import-dependent consumption by greatly reducing the multilateral dependencies identified in the previous chapter. Despite the attractiveness of this concept food sovereignty has come under criticism, especially with regards to its concern with ‘the peasant way’. Criticisms of this nature manifest themselves within the context of agrarian questions and are important in order to truly understand what food sovereignty is. Bernstein expresses skepticism in the universal romanticism of ‘the peasantry’ found in the movement’s discourse (2014:12). Arguing that there exists no such thing as a peasant, he instead suggests that the “commodification of subsistence” has led to the “transformation of peasants into petty commodity producers” or “classes of labour” (2014:14). Furthermore these ‘petty commodity producers’, Bernstein argues, engage with a wide variety of economic activities aside from land-based agriculture (2014:14); what van der Ploeg calls ‘pluriactivity’ (2009). Whilst Bernstein uses this term to infer that peasants no longer exist as a result of global capitalism, van der Ploeg argues that pluriactivity occurs as a form of agency that enables peasants to invest further in on-farm activities, thus aiding a process of ‘repeasantisation’ (2009:7). Pluriactivity can to some extent be seen as process of utilising both exchange and production entitlements in order to achieve livelihood security. Exchange entitlements in this sense support the extension of production entitlements whether through land, seed or equipment purchase, or alternatively through marketing and business diversification.

Whilst food sovereignty should therefore not be viewed as synonymous with ‘the peasant way’ it is certainly concerned with nurturing the production entitlements of a diverse range of sustainable food producers. The discussion around the nature of ‘pluriactivity’ informs a further discussion regarding the way in which the global food economy is shaped by changes in the relationship between rural and urban landscapes. Food sovereignty, through the promotion of pluriactivity as a means to securing the production entitlements of food producers, attempts to break down the growing polarisation of consumers and producers. This dichotomous relationship does not only exist between countries in the Global North and South (McMichael, 2005), but is also apparent between rural and urban areas within countries. On first inspection it would appear that food is generally produced in rural peripheries to then be traded and consumed en mass in the urban metropolis. Lerner and Eakin argue however that
this perception presents a false dichotomy as a growing number of producers are mobilising themselves in peri-urban environments (2011). The shift of large number of people migrating towards capital centres, or indeed marginalised slums (Davis, 2006), as a result of urbanisation has created an increased demand for food which in turn provides market opportunities for producers to reduce transportation and marketing costs. The expansion of food production in peri-urban and urban environments (in the case of city farms and community support agriculture (CSA) schemes) can be seen as a means to support the pluriactivity of food producers. Lerner and Eakin argue that individuals living in peri-urban environments may pursue food production not only for subsistence purposes but also to commercially supply to economic and cultural demands for food (2011:316). Whereas urbanisation and the establishment of large slums can be seen as a result of a historic process of accumulation by dispossession (Harvey, 2003), the growth of peri-urban and urban food producers provides a form of resistance to this process. Beyond catering for urban consumer demands, peri-urban dwellers may also produce food as a means to reducing their own risk of food insecurity (Lerner and Eakin, 2011:313). Growing food for personal consumption therefore acts as a buffer to household food security by easing the pressures of a complete reliance on exchange entitlements for food. It simultaneously brings consumers into closer relationships with the producers of their food.

For food sovereignty to be fully realised the distance between producers and consumers in a country must be bridged, and in some cases these concepts should be merged. A relocalisation of the food chain must take place in order to boost food production across all geographies (Hendrickson & Hefferman, 2002). The debates around agrarian questions, posed by Bernstein (2014) and van der Ploeg (2009), highlight the tendency for advocates to focus too heavily on peasants rather than citizens at large. Such discourse maintains a separation between producers and consumers of food, albeit at a national rather than global level, and therefore prevents positive peace from being fully achieved. Food sovereignty can however promote social justice for food producers, and in turn generate genuine domestic food security for nation states, so long as this separation is minimised. Food producers in rural, peri-urban, and urban spaces must have their production entitlements empowered through equal access to technology, land and basic inputs such as seeds in order for this to be achieved. In doing so the nationwide production of food will not only bring producers and consumers closer together, but it also has the potential for surplus production that can be traded internationally for foreign products. When paired with effective land redistribution to ensure the right of rural producers to land, food sovereignty can lead to “poverty reduction, economic development,
food production, and environmental stewardship” (Rosset, 2011:8). Food sovereignty has the potential to boost a nation’s production entitlements and therefore genuine food security, whilst also generating exchange entitlements for the purposes of fair trade, ultimately securing positive peace with regards to the politics of food.

Summary

Food sovereignty should be viewed as a precondition for genuine food security as it emphasizes the use of production entitlements to guarantee a nation with a direct and sustainable source of food. By doing so it directly addresses issues of hunger and malnutrition but what is more important is the way in which it seeks to alleviate other forms of food related violence. Unlike food security, food sovereignty seeks to empower producers of food to expand their capabilities through transfers of knowledge, asset and technology. In doing so it gives greater power to a diverse range of food producers to cater for a national market. If food security ever-widens the gap between producers and consumers, food sovereignty seeks to bridge this separation in order to reduce the personal violence of the global food economy. Food sovereignty doesn’t have to be about ‘the peasant way’ but instead should be about embracing the dual roles of citizens as consumers and producers of food to varying degrees. It is important to recognise the potential of non-rural spaces for food production in order to dispel the notion that food production must take place in the countryside. By not embracing food sovereignty, and therefore promoting production entitlements to boost access to food, negative peace (Galtung, 1969) with relation to food related violence shall continue to be perpetuated.

Conclusion

The global food economy is a system that is defined by violence. The winners of this system, those who are food secure through successful exchange entitlements, live at the increasing expense of those who are losing out. In the case of food related violence, being a winner or loser can be a matter of life or death. Death, as much as hunger or other causes of suffering in relation to the politics of food, is first and foremost a personal violence. Yet these experiences exist within a continuum of violence (Kelly, 1998) and are best understood as acute manifestations of structural violence (Galtung, 1969). This hidden violence is built into the structure of the global food economy and is a ‘catalyst’ for greater personal violence (Nixon, 2011:11). The history of the global food economy is based upon the continued deepening of inequality and social injustice characterised by periods of accumulation by dispossession.
This persistent feature of neoliberal capitalist development has led to the continued separation of consumers and producers. As a result, ‘consumers’ have been stripped of their production entitlements (Sen, 1981) in order to aid the growth of urban industrial centres through investment in secondary and tertiary sectors. Producers of food, on the other hand, continue to be marginalised in order to make way for greater investment in industrial agriculture. The global dynamic of these violent processes means that land is now being acquired in the Global South in order to supply the North with surplus foodstuffs. Where land is not being seized, farmers are increasingly being forced to grow food for export rather than domestic consumption.

Although the consumer classes of the Global North are currently experiencing greater ‘food security’ compared to their Southern counterparts, this food security is vulnerable to international shocks and pressures, and is ultimately unsustainable. This system therefore perpetuates a global state of negative peace (Galtung, 1969) with regards to the politics of food. Both those who are starving and those who eat too much are symptomatic characters of structural violence in the global food economy. People across the world today, in both the Global North and South, suffer from food related violence as a result of not having sufficient exchange or production entitlements. Each variant of this type of violence can now be seen as a result of an imbalance of power. Lee Kyung Hae’s suicide testifies to this inequality as it highlights the violent relationship between international trading bodies and agribusinesses on the one hand, and marginalised farmers on the other. Food riots are yet another form of food-related violence that show the vulnerability of food import dependencies and their connection to world food price fluctuations. Just-intime economies present even greater risks as the 2000 fuel protests in Britain demonstrated. Not only have the production entitlements of consumers been eroded, but now exchange entitlements cannot guarantee access to food either. That violence is ultimately self-destructive (Kim, 1984), any system that produces and depends on violence to develop itself is unsustainable in the most explicit sense. The current food system lends itself to future crises, as the hidden nature of its structural violence is attritional when left untreated (Nixon, 2011). Such crises may be economic in terms of food price spikes or food dumping. They may be social in terms of increasing levels of food related violence. Or they may be environmental in relation to increasing soil degradation, water and air pollution, bio-diversity loss, climate change, and deforestation. Whatever the characteristics of such a global food crisis, their roots can be found in the structural violence that has been highlighted in this paper.
Each expression of personal violence in the global food economy is a threat to the legitimacy of this system, and a critique of its potential to solve issues such as hunger. Those who control and benefit from this violent system will however continue to defend and promote it (Galtung, 1969:180). This paper has shown how ‘food security’ actually promotes food insecurities. Its intentions are to solve world hunger through the expansion of the current global food economy and increased investment in strengthening the link between industry and agriculture (Handy & Fehr, 2010:45). If this system has the power to dispossess food producers of land, entitlements and even life, then the continued growth of such a violent system is guaranteed for collapse, as consumers will no longer be able to rely on producers, and therefore their exchange entitlements, for food. A further cause for concern is the linkage of hydrocarbon fuelled industry and big agriculture. Given the current peak oil crisis and rising cost of fuel such a dependence on oil for food is a pathway to ‘collective suicide’ (Bush, 2013).

The world currently produces enough food to feed the growing population. However the planet does not and cannot produce enough food to satisfy the stomachs of seven billion people wishing to live like those in the developed nations. Not only must the way in which food is produced be changed, but global consumption and dietary trends must also be reduced to a sustainable level. As the world population continues to grow, the distance between producers and consumers must be reduced in order to curtail food related violence. Food sovereignty offers such a framework from which to narrow this gap and should be taken seriously as a policy measure for governments seeking to reduce not just hunger but all forms of food related violence. It offers a radical alternative to the current food system by empowering producers through the relocalising of food production and consumption, therefore creating the potential for positive peace with regards to food related violence.

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Adolescent Maternal Mortality in Sub-Saharan Africa: Risk, Structural Violence and Progress

Naomi Dunn

Abstract
With the end date of the Millennium Development Goals fast approaching, and maternal mortality rates still far higher than target levels, it is timely to consider the reasons why progress in this area has been so fragmented and slow, particularly for teenagers. Through a structural violence perspective, it is argued that high level policy making is not being translated into significant change at grassroots level because it fails to take full account of the reasons why young women are at risk of maternal death. By addressing the structural violence present in three key areas of risk, and recognising that pregnant adolescents require a more targeted approach, there is a greater chance of boosting progress through an increasingly holistic approach to maternal mortality reduction post-2015.

Introduction
For many across the world, ‘pregnancy’ is a word synonymous with joyful excitement, the growth of families and the celebration of new life. Childbirth is an event regarded with nervous anticipation, but – for those fortunate enough to live in societies with strong healthcare systems – trust in medical professionals that any problems will be dealt with efficiently and effectively. Yet for others, the pregnancy process can be one shrouded with fear – well founded, perhaps, when the risks of either mother or child dying are both real and significant, as in many developing countries. For these women, access to healthcare may be difficult or non-existent; their bodies may pose a threat to their unborn child rather than being a safe
vessel and the child in turn can endanger the mother’s life should complications arise.
Maternal mortality refers to the death of women during or soon after pregnancy, the cause of which is directly linked to the carrying or labour of the child. The most commonly accepted, though not the only created, criterion for this was formulated by the World Health Organisation (WHO). This includes deaths during pregnancy or within 42 days of termination, which are directly or indirectly attributable to the process of gestation. Direct causes are physical complications during pregnancy or birth, and indirect refers to cases in which the pregnancy aggravates pre-existing or recently developed non-related health conditions (WHO 2003). For a variety of reasons, the life circumstances of many women in the developing world can place them at increased risk of such maternal mortality.

Current figures from the United Nations (UN) show that there are around 210 maternal deaths per 100,000 live births globally, but this more than doubles to 500 deaths in Sub-Saharan Africa (SSA) and is the highest in any region across the world (2013 p.5). Whilst this presents challenges in itself, it is important to remember that the inclusionary criterion for such research often fails to account for all those affected and the real figures are likely to be higher. SSA is also, according to Ronsman and Graham (2006), the only area of the world expected to experience a rise in fertility and birth rates in the near future. The combination of these two issues presents a strong case for research attention, as the failure to address maternal mortality as it stands is likely to result in it becoming an even more crucial issue in the future. There has, indeed, been a great deal of attention on maternal mortality in SSA, particularly in response to its inclusion in the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) under Goal 5. Yet with the end date of 2015 fast approaching, it is clear that SSA is still falling far short of its targets. Further attention is required in order to understand why the region is unlikely to meet the targets, and to assist in the development of a strategy for 2016 onwards.

The WHO (2011) estimates that there are around 16 million viable teenage pregnancies each year, accounting for 11 percent of all births worldwide. Of this, 95 percent are thought to be occurring in the developing world, with a high proportion in SSA (ibid p.9). Though teenage pregnancy is prevalent across the region, each case carries with it the threat of adverse consequences. Statistical data indicates that complications arising from pregnancy are the leading cause of death for teenage girls in developing countries, and this view is receiving increasing attention in academia and by NGOs and policy-makers (Women Deliver 2009 p.15). Comparatively, this means that women aged 15-19 are twice as likely as those over 20 to die during pregnancy and childbirth, rising to five times as likely for those under 15 years old (WHO 2011 p.12). It is apparent that adolescents are disproportionately affected by
maternal mortality, and research suggests they are also the group within which least progress has been made since 1990 (UN 2013). Hence this dissertation will focus on adolescent maternal mortality in SSA in an attempt to understand both why they are so susceptible to death during pregnancy and childbirth, and the ways in which their unique issues are accounted for in policy.

This susceptibility of pregnant teenagers to maternal mortality will be analysed utilising risk theory, which attempts to explain and categorise the factors which can prove hazardous in any given situation. Using such theoretical viewpoints will enable the identification of teenage ‘risk factors’ – issues which have the potential to lead to death but which can be avoided through risk mitigation. These risk factors will then be explored through a lens of structural violence in order to determine the extent to which wider societal forces, rather than individual characteristics, can account for the increased number of teenage deaths across SSA. As both risk and structural violence are fairly extensive concepts, the interpretations which will be used within this work are explored in the boxes below.

What is risk?
The evident susceptibility of adolescents to maternal death can be explained by the unique set of circumstances that often accompany teenage pregnancies in SSA, and which are potentially hazardous to the health of both mother and child if not properly addressed. These factors give teenagers an increased propensity towards some of the causes of mortality outlined above and can thus be identified as ‘risk factors’. Using this terminology allows examination based upon theoretical concepts of risk, which are arguably more analytically rigorous than simply assessing danger or vulnerability. In its simplest form, risk theory is based around the idea that different groups of people can be more, or less, susceptible to experiencing negative outcomes from particular events or processes. Alaszewski et al (1998) describe risk as encompassing both probability and consequence. This means that though there may be a likelihood of adverse outcomes, this can be managed and mitigated through effective perception and decision making. In short, the consequences are not pre-determined. Lupton (1999) distinguishes two dominant strands within risk theory – one based on scientific identification and rational, autonomous management of risk; and the other shaped by ever changing socio-cultural circumstances, in which management can be affected by power imbalances. Teenage risk factors will be shown to encompass both of these categories.

What is structural violence?
Galtung describes violence as an “extended concept” encompassing not only intentional harm but also the harmful social orders which provoke such actions (1969 p.168). Structural violence encompasses the latter part of Galtung’s definition, referring to violence which occurs as a result of high-level decision making, value promotion or inequality. In this light, violence is viewed as a consequence of wider social forces rather than an action committed by one person against another. Farmer, a well respected scholar in the field of structural violence, reflects this viewpoint in his succinct definition of structural violence as “violence exerted systematically by everyone who belongs to a certain social order” (2001 p.308). The use of the word ‘social’ suggests that it is distinctions evident within society that form the lines along which structural violence occurs. Indeed, Anglin refers to systems of social “categorisation” which place labels upon people that affect their ability to access resources and chances of survival (2010 p.145). Such labels create boundaries of race, age, gender, class, wealth and other factors, around which structural violence can develop and inequality can thus be seen.

Though there is widespread agreement on what structural violence is, the debate and contrasting viewpoints over its consequences affects what can or cannot be classed as structural violence in the eyes of different scholars. Farmer (2001) includes any structures which lead to death; injury; illness; subjugation; stigmatisation or psychological terror. This gives a broad scope to the study of structural violence, yet is perhaps too expansive as it would be possible to argue that almost anything is structural violence. Additionally, the notions of subjugation and stigmatisation are highly subjective, and Farmer makes no further reference to who would decide when this was taking place. Anglin is similarly vague, describing violence as that which “[denies people] the opportunity for emotional and physical well-being” (2010 p.145). Again, what constitutes ‘well-being’ is open to debate. Høvik, on the other hand, uses a tighter definition based on death and what he terms “loss of life-years” (1977 p.60). He argues that structural violence represents the difference between the potential and the actual state of society, and this is seen most clearly in the reduction of life expectancy amongst certain groups (ibid 1977). This definition is plainly applicable to the case of adolescent maternal mortality, as each individual’s death in childbirth represents a life which was often avoidably cut short. Whilst Høvik’s definition could be criticised as too simplistic and ignorant of structural violence which causes great suffering but not death, it is arguably the most applicable to the study of maternal mortality. Though this dissertation is primarily concerned with forces of structural violence which increase risk of death, it will also make reference to those which result in significant harm, rather than morbidity. For this reason a holistic view of structural violence will be taken and reference made to the work of several scholars, rather
than just one singular viewpoint. This is also done to decrease the likelihood of excluding relevant and useful analysis which may fall outside of one scholar’s sphere of work.

Chapter One will take the form of a literature review, exploring key academic viewpoints on the causes of maternal mortality. This will include both physiological and sociological perspectives, in recognition of the multifaceted discourse that comprises the field. The second chapter will then unpack this further, specifically in relation to adolescent pregnancies. Factors which increase the likelihood of death during the gestational or post-partum period will be outlined in relation to theories of risk, as outlined above, to give three key risk factors. These are bodily immaturity increasing the likelihood of obstetric complications; the unmet need to access timely obstetric care; and the prevalence of unsafe abortion. Following each factor will be an exploration of the ways in which structural violence contributes to, and perhaps even exacerbates, this risk. The final chapter will then assess how such structural violence against adolescents is being addressed in policy, and the impact this is having on progress. International policy will be considered using the Millennium Development Goals, as these represent the most expansive international effort to reduce maternal mortality, at the current time. The targets are also of particular interest given that the allocated time frame is almost at an end. National policy will also be included, using two country case studies of Rwanda and South Africa. It will ultimately be argued that continued underlying structural violence is a central factor accounting for a lack of progress in teenage maternal mortality rates, and that top-down policy is too broad to address specific issues in communities across the region. Though international policy is successful in drawing attention to the issues, grassroots approaches which holistically deal with structural violence are necessary in order to promote safe pregnancy for teenagers.

Methodology
Due to a lack of time and other constraints, it was not possible to conduct first-hand research in the field for this dissertation. Thus, a range of secondary sources are utilised throughout to provide the basis for original analysis. These were found through the University libraries as well as online scholarly archive websites. The academic sources were chosen to reflect a wide scope of academic debate, encompassing opinion from within both the social and health sciences in order to gain a more balanced understanding – given that maternal health has a place in both fields. A conscious effort was also made to try and include scholarly opinion from those born or living in the countries being studied, with the aim of reducing Western bias. Though this was possible to some extent, it is clear that the majority of literature published on
the issue is from Western countries, thus some caution should be exercised when drawing conclusions from these arguments. Non-academic sources are also used, predominantly in the form of reports published by NGOs and inter-governmental organisations such as the UN, WHO and World Bank (WB). Documentary analysis of national policy documents is also undertaken in Chapter Three, where these were publically accessible through the official websites of the governments and subsidiary health bodies in question. This predominantly takes the form of a content analysis, to assess which issues and approaches were or were not included in the document. Where reference has been made to statistics, this is usually data published by the UN or WHO. Though data is readily available from a number of organisations, the use of statistics to make comparisons or assessments of progress is likely to be inaccurate if not from the same source. For example, AbouZahr (2011) points out that UN-reported maternal mortality rates are higher than those published by the Institute for Health Metrics and Evaluation, due to the different methods used, and also have a higher range of uncertainty. Clearly this could affect the conclusions gained. It became apparent that where it was included, the majority of scholarly work used in this dissertation referenced data from either the UN or WHO, thus it was logical to adopt the same approach.

What are the causes of maternal mortality?

The statistics clearly reveal that maternal mortality is a pressing issue in Sub-Saharan Africa. Still, the reasoning behind its prevalence in this region, compared to others and in particular the West, is highly complex and contested in academic and political circles. Being intersectional in nature – encompassing health; gender; poverty; governance and service provision, among others – the field of maternal and reproductive health continues to challenge those seeking to explain it. This chapter will review academic viewpoints on the causes of maternal mortality. It has become apparent that there are two dominant spheres of understanding within the literature, one basing analysis purely upon health and physiological complications during pregnancy and birth, and the other looking from a broader sociological standpoint. Both approaches to the literature will be explored, as each provides a valuable contribution to the debate and to the theoretical foundation upon which the analysis and evaluation within this dissertation will be built.

Considering first the literature which is concerned with direct obstetric issues leading to maternal death, there is widespread consensus that a small number of complications are the dominant factor. These include haemorrhage, hypertensive disease, infection, obstructed labour and eclampsia (Bouvier-Colle et al 2001, Ronsmans and Graham 2006, WHO 2012). The
latter two sources have gleaned this information from meta-analyses of hospital reports and case histories. Though there is usefulness in this, it is limited in the fact that many women in SSA do not give birth at health facilities or even in the presence of a trained professional at home. Indeed, it is estimated that only 40-76% of births in SSA are attended by a skilled professional, the wide disparity being between rural and urban areas (UN 2013 p.31). Clearly, this methodology for collecting data fails to account for the experiences of a large sector of women who give birth outside of such facilities and so should be treated with caution. Killewo and Urassa (1994) outline the usefulness of using alternative population-based studies of mortality, which collect data through censuses and family interviews.

Though they acknowledge that this is perhaps less reliable, it does overcome some shortcomings. Bouvier-Colle et al (2001) reached their conclusions on the causes of maternal mortality through conducting a study which utilised an unconventional method. Their survey team followed the progress of 23,000 pregnant women living in seven defined areas of West Africa and independently assessed any deaths that did occur for the causal factors. This methodology arguably increases the validity of the results and provides a good indication of why maternal deaths are occurring, particularly as the findings are largely the same as the other sources too.

It is important to note that these complications are not a definitive precursor to morbidity as they can all be successfully treated in the majority of cases. Opinion varies, thus, on why cases within SSA more frequently result in death than elsewhere. Several scholars discuss issues surrounding service use, including the shortage of health workers. Gerein labels the main cause of maternal mortality to be the “inability of a health system to deal effectively with complications”, discussing the consequences of the consistent shortage of nurses and midwives throughout the region (2006 p.40). Whilst this is a recognised problem, Hogan et al (2010) point out that the presence of skilled health workers has increased over recent years, which has not necessarily been matched by a decrease in mortality rates. This indicates that the lack of trained professionals cannot be the only issue. Tlebere et al (2010) use the case study of South Africa, which has arguably one of the most advanced health systems in the region, to demonstrate that it is not the number of healthcare professionals which is the issue, but the quality of care they offer. They point to the results of their own research which indicates that women often feel belittled or treated harshly by nurses in particular, and this prevents them from wanting to seek care (ibid 2010). Interestingly, this shifts the debate from looking at supply-side issues, to more anthropological factors affected by the autonomy of individuals.
Driven potentially by the MDGs and other policy-based debates, there is a great deal of literature discussing issues of access to, and take up of, maternity care in SSA. Several scholars make reference to statistical links between a lack of care and mortality (Harrison 1997, Nasah et al 1994, Ronsmans et al 2003), with Reynolds et al describing the seeking of treatment as a “key proximate determinant of maternal and infant outcomes” (2006 p.6). A recurring issue is that of women presenting late, if at all, for treatment which diminishes opportunities for successful prevention or treatment of complications if they have become too advanced. Magadi et al’s (2007) research utilising information from demographic and health surveys indicates that, despite this, the majority of women in SSA still only seek care in their third trimester, or during labour. Though their study is limited in terms of its methods used – as such surveys tend to exclude sectors of women such as those who didn’t give birth at a health facility, or who are illiterate – it is still concerning. Given that the majority of health surveys are comprised of data collected from hospitals and clinics, it also suggests that women who didn’t feature in the study were excluded because they did not attend such facilities at all, still worsening the problem.

Whilst the argument surrounding take up of care is both logical and useful, it is also culturally biased according to the birth practices of the West. Historically, the majority of births in SSA have been attended only by relatives or traditional birth attendants (TBAs), and this practice continues in many rural areas of the region. Whilst TBAs frequently do not meet the ‘skilled’ criteria outlined by Western institutions, De Brouwere and Van Lerberghe (2001) and Walraven and Weeks (1999) caution against dismissing their usefulness in reducing mortality rates. The authors point out that although the use of TBAs is not strategically ideal, they do assist in overcoming issues of cultural insensitivity, lack of access to health facilities in rural areas and fear / mistrust of modern treatment (ibid 2001, ibid 1999). Furthermore, many have received additional skills training as part of national strategies since the 1970s, and particularly in response to the Safe Motherhood Initiative of 1987 (Eades et al 1993). Thus it is important to take a holistic view of both care and the needs of pregnant women across SSA – each is affected by their own individual circumstances and so care should be taken to understand context and avoid homogenous analysis.

There is much debate over the effect of such circumstances on accessing care within social science and anthropological research. Gyimah et al (2006) discuss the role of religion, presenting research which indicates that women identifying themselves as of ‘traditional’ religion are the least likely to access services of any religious group, whereas Christians are the most likely.
Though they admit this could be because Christians generally have higher levels of education and wealth in Ghana, the data still proved statistically significant after this was accounted for. Others point to poverty as a key factor, arguing that care is often not prioritised in household budgets or that there is simply no finance available for transport to a facility, diagnostic tests and medicines (Tlebere et al 2010, Harrison 1997). Islam and Yoshida (2009) identify culturally inappropriate care as a key barrier to access, noting that different groups across the region have very different standards of acceptability when it comes to issues of modesty, medicine, birthing positions and post-natal practices amongst others. These viewpoints are but a few, yet they give a clear indication of the vast scope of research in this area – and the different perspectives yielded. It is beyond the scope of this dissertation to fully explore all the reasons which prevent women from seeking care during pregnancy, yet the following section will unpack this further within the specific context of adolescents – in aid of the key focus of this study.

One final important factor within maternal health is HIV/AIDS and its effect upon both mother and child during pregnancy. The role of HIV/AIDS is studied from both a health and sociological perspective, encompassing physiological consequences of the disease as well as its social implications. McIntyre argues that “AIDS is becoming the leading cause of maternal death in some African settings” due to its link with other conditions such as tuberculosis and anaemia, which are highly dangerous in pregnancy (2005 p.131). He suggests that AIDS can also make pregnant women more susceptible to complications during, and after, birth – particularly haemorrhage and infection following caesarean sections (ibid 2005). As has already been indicated, these are two of the leading causes of death – thus the impact of HIV/AIDS is potentially crucial. McIntyre’s research is well respected within the field, and supported by others including Ronsmans and Graham (2006) who also point out the way in which the disease exacerbates direct obstetric complications. In their review of global advancement within the field of maternal health, Hogan et al (2010) describe HIV as the key factor accounting for a lack of progress over recent years. They note that although some areas of SSA have seen decreases in maternal mortality rates, the figures on the whole are misleading and inaccurate. The authors state that there is a major problem with misclassification of causes of mortality, and that many AIDS-related deaths are instead being put down to factors outside of the inclusionary criteria for maternal mortality – giving a false appearance of progress. Though their article is perhaps limited in its stance, identifying only HIV as a reason for lack of progress, it does refer back to common criticisms of the data used within this field. HIV can not only threaten the mother’s life during pregnancy, but also her
child’s if they too become infected during pregnancy, birth or breastfeeding. Dabis and Ekpini (2002) note that although mother-to-child transmission is easily preventable, the risk in SSA is still high at 25-45% due to a failure to seek treatment, and inadequate care provided.

It is clear to see that there are a plethora of reasons accounting for why women succumb to maternal mortality. From a physiological perspective, direct obstetric complications including haemorrhage and infection account for the vast majority of cases – yet the data that indicates this predominantly draws on hospital-based studies which are limited in scope. For this reason, it is important to analyse more closely and identify sociocultural similarities. Doing so highlights issues surrounding service use, quality of care offered, failure to seek timely treatment, and religious or cultural beliefs. These issues affect women’s probability of developing complications, or can prevent them from being able or willing to seek treatment should symptoms appear. The impact of HIV/AIDS on maternal mortality introduces another angle to the debate – calling into question the validity of data which ignores the role of the disease and impacts negatively upon our understanding. It is apparent that HIV/AIDS is widely affecting women across the region, and contributing significantly to deaths during pregnancy and childbirth. Evidently the combination of social and physiological factors is central to a true understanding of maternal mortality.

**How can adolescent mortality risk be understood in the context of structural violence?**

Before analysing the situation of pregnant teenagers in SSA, it is first crucial to understand that they do not represent one homogenous group. Though similar in terms of age, their life circumstances can be very different and it is important to take account of this when drawing conclusions. The age of puberty-onset steadily decreasing has meant African teenagers are increasingly exposed to sexual activity at a young age. As a result, patterns of early marriage and young childbearing, or premarital pregnancy and late marriage are evident within many societies (Zabin and Kiragu 1998). Though it may at first appear that these two groups would face different issues within pregnancy and birth, the changing landscape of culture and tradition across SSA is blurring boundaries between the two and many risk factors are equally attributable. It is, therefore, important to approach adolescent pregnancy with the understanding that it can be either planned or unplanned, to single or married women, and wanted or unwanted. Taking a holistic view will enable the exploration of risk in various adolescent circumstances, and appreciate that teenagers can experience pregnancy and birth in very different ways. This chapter will explore particular issues and characteristics found within teenage pregnancies which increase the likelihood of death from the causes outlined in
Chapter One. This will be done utilising risk theory, as discussed in the introduction, and an analysis of the underlying issues which cause or exacerbate risk will be undertaken. Determining these causal issues is no easy task, as they cannot be empirically measured. Rather the study of this is largely subjective and likely to highlight many factors; therefore developing a multifaceted understanding is useful. One thing that is evident, however, is that the risk factors of teenagers in SSA are not wholly replicated in young people worldwide. This suggests that the contributing circumstances and issues found within the region may be largely unique. Given that SSA covers a broad expanse of countries, cultures and socio-political structures, it is arguably necessary to look for far-reaching commonalities and overarching characteristics that are having a widespread impact. Structural violence is a lens through which precisely these factors can be explored – and is done so within the context of the harm that they may cause. This chapter will draw upon both risk and structural violence in an attempt to identify why pregnancy and birth is so dangerous to adolescent health.

**Bodily immaturity increasing propensity to obstetric complications**

Obstetric complications are hazardous for all women, yet clinical research suggests that teenagers are at increased risk of developing such complications due to bodily immaturity (Nasah et al 1994). Underdevelopment of the pelvis, due to still being in the process of puberty, can lead to physical complications including anaemia, eclampsia and obstructed labour – all of which are relatively easy for health professionals to treat, but can be fatal if gone unnoticed (Nsekela et al 1994). Indeed, obstructed labour can usually be resolved without harm to mother or child through caesarean section, and yet is responsible for 8% of all maternal deaths because of women failing to seek medical assistance or doing so too late (Women Deliver 2009). Bodily immaturity can be identified as a risk factor according to scientific notions of risk, outlined by Chadwick and Foster (2013) as that which is identified and controlled by expert technical knowledge (ibid 2013). Certainly, it is through long-standing scientific investigation that the link between physical underdevelopment and complications has been found. Given that bodily immaturity is a biological and not social issue; it could be argued that structural violence is irrelevant to analysis. However, structural violence can be seen in the forces which lead young girls to conceive in the first place – before they are ready for the physical demands of pregnancy. Structural violence is not limited to the breaking of social norms, but also the promotion of them. The active encouragement of behaviour which is physically or emotionally harmful can, just as equally, be perceived as structural violence according to the definitions outlined by Farmer (2001) and Anglin (2010). One example of this
is the normalisation of teenage pregnancy within some communities and cultures of SSA which sanctions or even encourages girls to conceive early. In South Africa, for example, Jewkes describes “pre-marital childbearing and impregnation [as] socially accepted”, with many teenage pregnancies occurring whilst the mother is still at school (2001 p.733). Though at first glance this could be seen as positive, given that these adolescents may feel no need to conceal their pregnancies or be more inclined and able to seek care, it is also potentially dangerous as their bodies are not yet equipped for the stresses of childbirth and could lead to death. Whilst some societies accept premarital childbearing as the norm, others actively promote child marriage in order to prevent premarital sex occurring. This is arguably not done in order to protect the child from sexual activity before she is physically and emotionally prepared for it, but to avoid the shame and negative repercussions of sex outside of marriage which exists in many cultures. Indeed, Nour (2009) states that young brides are expected to immediately take on the role of wife following the wedding, which includes childbearing as well as domestic duties. Social acceptance of teenage pregnancy in both situations suggests a lack of concern over the vulnerability of these young women during the gestational period, or perhaps a lack of knowledge about the need to be concerned. Regardless of the reason, it is clear that such adolescents are subjected to structural violence through the demands that society places upon them to reproduce at a young age.

It is not only in South Africa that young pregnancy is readily accepted, but can be seen in various cultures across the region. Several ethnic groups in Kenya are reported as also being accepting of early childbirth, due to the cultural importance of fertility and continuing the family bloodline (Gage 1998). Fertility is highly valued by both men and women for different reasons. Multiple children are often seen as a male status symbol, representing power and bringing with them the potential for future social, economic and political advantage (Bledsoe and Cohen 1993). Women, too, can seek to have many offspring as a means of proving their ‘worth’ as a wife (ibid 1993). There is, then, often a perceived need to begin trying to conceive immediately after marriage, in order to maximise fertility potential. This can lead to young women being forced into sexual activity with their husbands, either literally or through a psychological sense of duty, and subsequent childbearing - whether or not they are emotionally and physically developed enough for it yet. Maximising fertility potential can also lead to young women having multiple children within a short space of time. Though the recommended gap between pregnancies is at least two years, many women fall pregnant again before this time and so are at higher risk of physical harm or death (Nasah et al 1994).
Furthermore, the earlier that women begin this process of closely spaced births, the more likely they are to also face the mortality risks associated with grand multiparity (ibid 1994).

The scholarly viewpoints outlined in the introduction are indicative of the saturation of negative and dissociative lexis within the study of structural violence. This insinuates that individuals are subjected to violence when behaving outside of societal norms, stigmatised or subjected to inequality. Young women in the above situation arguably do not fall into any of these categories, yet are surely still victims of structural violence. They are encouraged, or feel duty bound, to reproduce at a young age even though the risk of morbidity is significantly increased by doing so. The fact that this view is communicated by spouses and families only exacerbates the issue, as it gives an arguably false air of legitimacy of the practice to the young women involved and may make them more likely to reinforce this with their own children in the future. In this way, structural violence continues and becomes an accepted element of ‘tradition’ and culture, yet is potentially ignored by policy makers and academics who continue to view structural violence too narrowly.

**Unmet need to access timely care**

The increased likelihood of developing complications suggests a need for quality obstetric care throughout adolescent pregnancies. It has been found, however, that teenagers are the group most likely to access obstetric care late in pregnancy, and are also least likely to have a skilled attendant at the delivery (Magadi et al 2007). Should complications arise, this lack of professional care poses a significant danger to the health of both mother and baby. Research conducted by Tlebere et al showed that “patient-related factors” – that is, the failure to seek care or delay in doing so – are involved in 54.1% of maternal deaths in South Africa alone (2010 p.342). Given that South Africa’s healthcare system is above average for SSA, it is arguably better equipped to handle late emergencies. Thus it is plausible to suggest that other countries may well have even higher rates. This is reinforced by the literature, as Bouvier-Colle (2001) places the percentage at around 69% for West Africa. The data shows that failing to access care can prove fatal when complications occur, despite many of the issues being treatable if presented to medics in time. In essence, late presentation for care and obstetric complications are mutually reinforcing and highly dangerous. The unmet need to access timely care can be identified as risk factor as it is an issue which could be mitigated in order to decrease mortality rates. Successfully doing so, however, requires an understanding of why teenagers present later in their pregnancies. It is through gaining this knowledge that the role of structural violence becomes apparent.
Many societies have widely-held views on issues of morality and acceptability of behaviour, and those within SSA are no exception. Structural violence can occur if such communities ostracise individuals who, whether purposefully or not, violate these verbal agreements and codes of conduct. Teenage pregnancy is one such ‘moral’ issue which can divide opinion, particularly if the conception is outside of marriage. Communities or cultures with strong views on premarital sex often reinforce their ideas through the process of normalisation within families, education or religious groups. When someone is perceived to have gone against these norms, gossip and ridicule can quickly spread and reputations can be damaged. The social standing of single teenagers is usually still understood within the context of the nuclear family unit, thus a loss of reputation can affect not only the individual but their family too. Some members of the community may even attempt to distance themselves from the family to avoid association, the consequences of which can be highly damaging for their prospects in terms of employment, marriage and social standing, amongst others. This is often seen within communities that prize female virginity, as a teenager’s pregnancy marks her as ‘damaged goods’ which have lost their worth (Mathur et al 2003). The ensuing financial hardship, through the necessary continuation of provision for the daughter and her child as well as the potential loss of bride wealth (where still practised), can be significant for the family.

Whilst social ostracism leading to financial hardship could be seen to fit within Farmer’s (2001) criteria for structural violence in itself, the consequences of ostracism can also be more severe. Gage claims that the consequences of premarital childbearing are more severe for teenagers than any other age group, and that this “fear of ostracism or school expulsion may deter young pregnant single women from seeking prenatal care” (1998 p.21). As has already been indicated, failing to seek care during pregnancy is highly dangerous to the health of both mother and child, and is a leading cause of mortality. Gage’s (1998) argument is limited, however, in that it only references teenagers themselves being deterred from seeking care. Nsekela et al (1994) point out that many families, too, encourage the concealment of pregnancy in order to maintain their reputation and place in society. Concealment of pregnancy is not dangerous within itself, yet if the pregnancy is being concealed from health professionals too then complications or issues to which adolescents are more prone can also remain hidden. Whether due to the staffing or proximity of the healthcare facility, it poses a significant risk of maternal mortality. Parental encouragement of pregnancy concealment highlights the invasive nature of structural violence throughout society, as many would expect them to place the health of the adolescent first, above reputation. Yet fear of the
consequences of social ostracism, particularly in poverty-stricken areas of SSA, is clearly a major issue impacting upon maternal health.

Limited power and autonomy within the family also plays a role. Mathur et al (2003) note that young women often have little decision-making power within their households, and this adversely affects their pregnancy outcomes. For single women, this may be a result of still living in their familial households and so being under the jurisdiction of their parents. Though African societies can be either patrilineal or matrilineal in their approach to domestic power, in reality it is usually the father, brother or uncle who acts as leader of the family, responsible for much of the high level decision-making and subsequent classifying of priorities. This can manifest itself in the adolescent being effectively denied control over her pregnancy, as every aspect is controlled by a male relative – whether with positive intent or not. Married women, too, can face similar constraints placed on them by their husbands. The danger in this is evident, as it is logical to suggest that it would be the women themselves who would be most receptive to changes in their pregnancies signalling a need for care. Despite this, decision-making power is rarely given to adolescents in pregnancy, leading Bledsoe and Cohen (1993) to conclude that “only those bereft of kin must make their own decisions in adolescence” (ibid p.39).

As well as a lack of general decision-making power, adolescent girls can also experience the inability to control their own finances and thus make their own budgeting choices (Reynolds et al 2006). Maternal health services can be seen as an expensive investment, therefore if the husband or relative does not see obstetric care as a budgetary priority, the woman is unlikely to be able to access it. This is particularly the case within families in poverty, as resources are scarce whilst needs are far-reaching. Research suggests that this is the case – if families do not have the finance available, or believe it is not the best use of any available funds, then teenagers often cannot access maternal healthcare that has to be paid for (Harrison 1997, Gyimah et al 2006). A lack of autonomy within pregnancy which affects access to care could prove fatal. Thus both gender and age inequalities are increasing adolescent risk.

**Prevalence of unsafe abortion**

It is important to recognise that, whilst many teenagers in SSA carry their pregnancies to full-term, others choose to terminate. Within SSA, South Africa is currently the only country in which abortion is legal without restriction as to the reason (World Abortion Laws 2014). Thus in all other countries, the only option for women seeking to terminate their pregnancy is an
illegal, often unsafe, abortion. Meekers (2010) states that even though the practice is against the law, abortion amongst adolescents is still considered common. Indeed, it is widely believed that young, particularly unmarried, women are those most likely to seek abortion – particularly so-called ‘backstreet’ procedures (Leke and Chikamata 1994, Meekers 2010, Varga 2003, Zabin and Kiragu 1998). This term refers to abortions conducted in illegal, often unhygienic or unsterile, environments where the likelihood of infection is high. Risk is found here in the possibility of dying during the procedure or developing severe post-operative infections or complications. Indicatively, a study conducted in Cameroon found that women who underwent an abortion were fifty times more likely to die as a result than if they had given birth (Leke and Tikum 1991). Though this study was conducted over twenty years ago, and the situation is likely to have improved somewhat, it still highlights the scale of the risk of abortion for teenage girls.

While the risk of mortality is due to biological forces, it is arguably structural violence which provokes teenagers to undergo illegal terminations. Societal forces may leave an adolescent feeling she has no alternative but to abort, despite the risks involved. As well as social ostracism, which is discussed above, educational ostracism plays a key role in the termination of pregnancy. As a tool for enhancing family prospects, education is highly prized in numerous cultures across SSA. Despite this, Mpanza and Nzima describe an ongoing stigma in many schools which stereotypes teenage mothers as having “low achievement scores and low vocational aspiration” (2010 p.432). They then become undesirable students, and being viewed as such – regardless of the accuracy of the claims - can lead to forced expulsion or a perceived need to withdraw, often evoking with it a sense of shame. Mpanza and Nzima’s (2010) research with South African teachers indicated that, although national legislation prevents expulsion simply because of pregnancy, it still often happens as educators refuse to teach them out of prejudice or a sense of embarrassment. It is wise to avoid over-generalising, as this will clearly not be the case across a country as large and diverse as South Africa, let alone the whole of SSA, yet stigma is likely to exist in many areas. This is surely structural violence, as teenagers see no option but to terminate if they wish to continue with their education. Not doing so may well result in a loss of opportunity as well as reputation, thus having a long-term impact. Though school expulsion can be socially isolating, it also has wider consequences. Adolescents may miss out on vital knowledge, such as on reproductive health / rights and how to prevent further pregnancies, which are crucial in managing the sexual health of teenagers (World Health Organisation 2011). Furthermore, if women have a distorted or fragmented understanding of reproductive health due to the age at which they left education,
they may be unable to recognise symptoms or potential warning signs in subsequent pregnancies. This could lead to further unsafe abortions as well as increase the risk of mortality from untreated complications in kept pregnancies. In this way, lack of education and pregnancy risk become cyclical issues caused by structural violence. School expulsion also violates adolescents’ right to an education, which can be viewed as a further example of structural violence through the knowledge and opportunities they are denied.

The decision to terminate a pregnancy is not only affected by structural violence during the gestational period, but also pre-conception. Research indicates, for example, that girls whose first sexual experience was coerced are more likely to engage in risky sexual and reproductive behaviour including unsafe abortion (Saewyc et al 2007). Whilst sexual coercion could be seen as simply physical, rather than structural, violence, Moore et al point to regional “gender scripts [which] play a significant role in establishing the way sexual interaction takes place” (2007 p.64). They argue that there are commonalities in the understanding of female sexuality across SSA and that the lack of regard for sexual rights and choice makes women vulnerable to assault (ibid 2007). Although this argument can be criticised for over-simplification, societal-wide views which cause harm to others are, by definition, structural violence (Farmer 2001). Violence here is two-fold – seen first in the act of sexual coercion and second in the propensity towards unsafe abortion, which can cause significant health problems or death.

The three key risk factors of bodily immaturity, the unmet need to access timely care and the prevalence of unsafe abortion indicate that there is risk at every stage of teenage pregnancy – from pre-conception right through to birth or termination. Each risk factor represents a threat to the health of the mother which, though possible to mitigate, frequently results in death during or soon after the gestational period. This failure of mitigation is shown to have strong links with structural violence in each of the three risk factors. Teenagers dying because their bodies are not yet equipped to deal with labour are arguably put at such risk by the societal forces which encourage them to conceive too soon. Communities which normalise teenage pregnancy, promote early marriage or place too high a value on fertility fail to protect their adolescents from the physical harm which pregnancy can cause and thus commit violence against them.

On the other hand, societies which actively denounce teenage pregnancy as shameful can affect a young woman’s ability to access care, thus putting her at risk of death if she has complications which require medical attention. Social ostracism of pregnant teenagers can severely impact upon the whole family’s reputation and prospects, thus concealment of
pregnancy is common. A lack of decision making power or finance can also prevent young women from seeking care. Finally, structural violence can be seen in the decision to terminate a pregnancy, despite it being illegal and highly dangerous. Teenagers may face the long term consequences of educational exclusion if they continue with the pregnancy, which can affect their subsequent pregnancies as well as employment prospects. They can also be more likely to undergo terminations if they have been a victim of structural violence previously.

With the knowledge that structural violence is affecting teenage risk, we can now put risk into the context of progress. It seems logical that progress will be achieved if the underlying issues causing maternal mortality are addressed, yet it is rarely this simple in reality. The following chapter will look at the extent to which structural violence, as discussed here, is addressed in policy and the impact that this is or isn’t having upon progress.

**Is structural violence being addressed in policy response, and how does this affect progress?**

As a key factor in the risk of maternal death, addressing structural violence should arguably be high on the global policy agenda for maternal health. Yet the following analysis will indicate that this is not always the case, as policy-making is affected by multiple forces including violence within its own structures. The impact of policy inclusion upon progress is substantial, as it frequently determines the direction in which limited resources, time and effort are pointed. This chapter will aim to assess progress in the light of policy, both on an international and national scale. Policy-making is, however, a vast arena and so case studies will be utilised in order to gain useful understanding within the space limitations of this dissertation.

An analysis of global and regional progress will first be undertaken within the context of the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs). Though there are a plethora of international policy and strategic frameworks in place relating to maternal mortality, the MDGs represent undoubtedly the largest international effort of the current time. They are also a timely consideration given their enddate of 2015. National policy frameworks and progress will then be assessed within two target countries – Rwanda and South Africa. Rwanda is a nation which has seen great improvement in maternal mortality rates over recent years, due to some bold shifts in policy making. South Africa on the other hand, a country widely regarded as having governance and healthcare structures which are among the more successful in SSA, has seen mortality rates increase. This analysis will indicate whether links can legitimately be made between the inclusion of measures tackling structural violence in policy and progress in mortality rates.
International policy and the Millennium Development Goals

Since the turn of the 21st Century, political attention to global development issues has been centred on the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs). The MDGs arose out of the Millennium Declaration – a commitment to international co-operation in alleviating poverty and inequality – which was signed by 189 countries in 2000. There are eight time-specific and empirically measurable goals, the fifth of which is specifically dedicated to improving maternal health. With this in mind, it seems unsurprising that progress in reducing maternal mortality rates has been made both globally and within SSA. Globally, deaths have fallen from 400 per 100,000 live births in 1990 to 210 per 100,000 in 2010 and within SSA rates have decreased from 850 to 500 per 100,000 over the same period (UN 2013). Whilst this is undeniably positive, three questions still need to be considered – to what extent progress is the result of structural violence being addressed, why progress is still far behind target levels and why rates within SSA are by far the highest in the world.

Taking a disaggregated look at the content of Goal 5 should give some indication as to the answers. Target 5.A is to “reduce by three quarters, between 1990 and 2015, the maternal mortality ratio” (UN 2000). This indicates a recognition that poor maternal health is actually leading to death and suggests that structural violence, as a leading factor behind maternal mortality, may well be addressed. Progress towards the target is only measured, however, by maternal mortality ratio and the proportion of births attended by a skilled professional (ibid 2000). This raises several issues. Firstly, although we know that a lack of care during labour does contribute to the risk of mortality, there are also many other causal issues. Failing to reference these is arguably not conducive to gaining a holistic understanding of the causes of mortality, and may well affect the translation of the MDG into appropriate and targeted national policy. Linked to this is that whilst measuring the numbers of women seeking skilled care during delivery is not useless, it crucially does not provide information on why women do or don’t choose to do so. There are many facets of structural violence which prevent women from delivering in institutions, including a lack of finance or decisionmaking power, forced concealment of pregnancy and inappropriate care offered. It could thus be argued that Target 5.A fails to acknowledge the role of structural violence in maternal mortality and subsequently affects the likelihood of the target being reached.

Target 5.B is wider in scope, seeking to “achieve, by 2015, universal access to reproductive health” (UN 2000). Whilst three of the indicators appear a logical reflection of this (contraceptive prevalence, antenatal care coverage and unmet need for family planning), the inclusion of adolescent birth rate as another is arguably less so (ibid 2000). Using this as an
indication of access to reproductive health arguably essentialises adolescent pregnancy, suggesting that all cases are unplanned, unwanted or the result of a lack of contraception or awareness. Whilst some indeed are, others can be planned and conceived within marriages or long term relationships. Bruce (2000) also notes that the vast differences between adolescent girls are unaccounted for in policy, even though targeted policy would likely prove strategically wise in terms of the benefits to both mother and child throughout later life. Given that adolescent pregnancies are all high risk, regardless of the circumstances surrounding them, it is arguably necessary to try and minimise this risk within young women who are already pregnant as well as simply trying to prevent them conceiving.

Doing so requires an appreciation of the many elements of structural violence which affect such women, an understanding which appears lacking in Goal 5. The positive elements of Goal 5 are likely to have contributed to supplyside improvements boosting maternal health through effective national policies increasing training of skilled professionals, contraceptive promotion and family planning services, amongst others. The provision of services such as these is certainly positive and developmental, and likely accounts for the reduction in maternal mortality that has been seen over recent years. Yet the gaps that exist within Goal 5 remain substantial and significant. It is thus plausible to suggest that they may well have prevented progress in SSA from reaching the target levels outlined in back 2000. Maternal mortality is intrinsically affected by structural violence, particularly among adolescents, and it is extremely unlikely that widespread progress will be achieved without taking account of this. As such, Goal 5 is a useful tool for drawing attention to the issue of poor maternal health in SSA but should not be regarded as a blueprint for national policy attempting to tackle this. Given that this was never the intention, though, the MDGs could be viewed as achieving their key purpose of raising awareness.

Whilst the UN (2013) has subsequently acknowledged structural violence in the form of the barriers adolescents face in accessing services, it may prove a case of too little, too late for the MDG target date of 2015.

**Rwanda**

Recent figures for maternal mortality in Rwanda show rates have decreased from 1071 per 100,000 live births in 2000 to 340 per 100,000 in 2010 (Rwandan Ministry of Health 2003, World Bank 2014). Such substantial improvement over this period coincides with some fairly drastic changes within the health sector, thus linking the two seems a logical assumption. Yet it is important to take a deconstructed view of the policy changes and assess them critically, in
order to more accurately determine the factors which were instrumental in bringing about improvement. This case study will focus on policy changes that have arisen out of Rwanda’s Vision 2020 framework, with particular reference made to the National Reproductive Health Policy (NRHP) of 2003 and subsequent initiatives. A documentary analysis will be undertaken as well as an exploration of how these changes might be linked to the progress made nationwide.

Vision 2020 is the Rwandan Government’s overarching development framework, published in 2000. It outlines the development aspirations of the country – namely to transform Rwanda into a middle-income nation with prosperous citizens – and establishes a facilitatory policy framework to bring this about. The Vision expressly identifies reducing maternal mortality as a key objective within the field of health, outlining the need to improve access to and quality of care, as well as reduce its cost (Rwandan Government 2000). Though adolescents are not explicitly mentioned within the document, several facets of structural violence against them are. We have seen that a lack of finance, inability or unwillingness to access care and inappropriate care offered all contribute to adolescent risk, thus their inclusion in this overall framework is a strong indication of high-level commitment to it.

In line with Vision 2020, the MDGs and several International Conference recommendations, more specific policies relating to sexual and reproductive health have been implemented. The NRHP is likely the most expansive, outlining six priority areas of which at least two directly address structural violence. One such priority is addressing sexual violence. The policy document makes reference to the role played by sexual violence in increasing maternal risk, encompassing forced marriage of young girls; rape leading to unwanted pregnancy and illegal abortions (Rwandan Ministry of Health 2003). Five initial interventions are then outlined, including facilitating community awareness raising campaigns and strengthening law enforcement (ibid 2003). The adoption of both top-down (law) and bottom-up (community campaigns) approaches to tackling structural violence suggests an understanding of the multifaceted and complex nature of bringing about change when such issues are deep-rooted within society. A second priority area is described as “social changes to increase women’s decision-making power” and interventions outlined which are aimed at increasing autonomy in life choices, decreasing academic drop-out rates, publicising the danger of encouraging girls to conceive too early and promoting female economic power (ibid 2003 p.21-22). Again, these are all issues of structural violence that adversely affect pregnant adolescents and increase their risk of mortality. It thus seems likely that the progress made in Rwanda over recent years may well be linked to the implementation of this policy.
One problem with the NRHP, however, is that it addresses adolescent reproductive health solely within one priority area which is dedicated to teenage issues. Whilst this may initially seem positive, signalling an understanding of the unique circumstances surrounding teenage pregnancy, it actually serves to separate adolescents from the issues of structural violence outlined above. Instead, adolescent reproductive health concerns are limited to the lack of knowledge about sexual health; reducing STIs, HIV and unwanted pregnancies; and increasing utilisation of services (NRHP 2003). These are all addressed through supply-side interventions such as improving practitioner training; increasing STI testing and offering contraception (ibid 2003). Crucially, this fails to account for the complexities of adolescent pregnancy and the many social forces which affect them from pre-conception right through to birth. It also arguably insinuates that all teenage pregnancies are either unwanted or unplanned, which is just not the case. Whilst the NRHP clearly contains some useful strategies to address structural violence, failing to address adolescents within this is undoubtedly a missed opportunity to make further progress.

Despite these criticisms, research suggests that changes resulting from the NRHP have boosted progress in reducing maternal mortality in Rwanda. One major change was the implementation of a national P4P programme, which rewards well-performing healthcare facilities financially, in 2005. The aim of such programmes is to provide an incentive for facilities to better meet the needs of their patients and encourage the communities in which they are based to access care when it is required. It is assumed that through increasing the provision and quality of care this will be achieved. Research conducted by Basinga et al (2011) indicates that substantial progress was made in the numbers of women having institutional deliveries – thus reducing mortality through timely access to care – and the quality of care offered. There is, however, still a major issue with women’s health-seeking behaviour, as the research showed no increase in the frequency of antenatal appointments (ibid 2011). This may well suggest that the underlying structural violence is not being addressed by the P4P programme, as women are still failing to access care even when it is available. Further evidence of this can be found in research suggesting that the scaling up of mutuelles de santé (Rwanda’s community based health insurance) has similarly failed to make any significant impact (Bucagu et al 2012). Given that both Vision 2020 (Rwandan Government 2000) and the NRHP (Rwandan Ministry of Health 2003) cite poverty and a lack of available finance as a key factor constraining progress in maternal health, it is clearly more complex than originally envisioned.
Perhaps in response to this realisation, the Rwandan Government have introduced several additional initiatives over recent years which appear more targeted to demand-side improvements. The Strategic Plan to Accelerate Progress towards Reducing Maternal and Neonatal Morbidity and Mortality, 2009-2012 expressly identifies issues of religious and cultural opposition; gender inequality; misconceptions and a lack of youth-friendly services as having held back progress (Rwandan Ministry of Health 2012). The interventions outlined to counter such factors represent a significant step towards addressing structural violence within the field of maternal health, particularly in relation to adolescents. This shift in direction was compounded by the implementation of the Adolescent Sexual and Reproductive Health and Rights Policy and Strategic Plan in 2011. The document recognises the complexity of obstacles hindering adolescents’ access to, and experience of, care and proposes holistic measures to boost improvement (Rwandan Ministry of Health 2011). Though it is still apparent that the Government’s focus on adolescents is centred on the prevention of pregnancy and need for family planning services, there is definitely an increased commitment to reducing mortality amongst this group through tackling structural violence.

Progress made in maternal mortality rates indicate that policies and initiatives such as those explored above are having a positive impact, yet more can still be done. Many of the interventions targeted at adolescents are for those aged 15 or 16 and above, ignoring the needs of younger girls and the opportunity to embed knowledge of sexual and reproductive health pre-puberty. Adams and Lundgren’s research (2013) into the impact of the CycleSmart kit, a fertility awareness package which promotes understanding of sexual and reproductive health amongst 10-12 year olds in Rwanda, highlights the potential of such early-stage interventions. They argue that through educating girls earlier, many unwanted pregnancies and pregnancy problems arising from a lack of knowledge may be avoided (ibid 2013). This certainly seems logical, and the inclusion of boys in their strategy may also overcome issues of gender inequality and disparity in decision-making which has been found to increase risk among adolescents.

Another key area of improvement could be in the handling of unsafe abortion. Policy documents readily discuss the impact of unsafe abortion and outline the need to reduce numbers of abortions as well as offering postabortion counselling (Rwandan Ministry of Health 2003 and 2012). Yet they fail to take account of the fact that teenage abortions are indeed so risky because of the Government’s refusal to freely legalise abortion and provide safer environments in which they can take place. Current legislation permits abortion only within limited circumstances, such as if the conception occurred as a result of rape or incest, though
even within these limits it is very difficult to obtain a safe abortion (World Abortion Laws 2014). Women have to have permission of the courts and two doctors to access a termination within a licensed health facility, a process which few women are likely to have the means to pursue (Basinga et al 2012). This is particularly true with regards to adolescents, very few of whom would have the finance or knowledge to take this route. Basinga et al (2012) recommend that through reducing the bureaucracy involved in this process and training mid-level health professionals to carry out terminations, much of the abortion risk could be avoided.

Rwandan policy has increasingly taken account of structural violence affecting teenagers since the development of Vision 2020 in 2000. This arguably reflects an understanding of the ways in which purely supply-side interventions fail to account for women who choose not to seek care, even when it is available. It is undoubtedly positive that the Government have responded to the limitations of their earlier policies and implemented more holistic initiatives to tackle the issues faced by so many within the country. It is highly probable that such policies have contributed to the substantial reduction of maternal mortality rates within Rwanda, though there are still changes that could made to further promote progress.

South Africa
Published maternal mortality rates for South Africa have caused great debate as they vary significantly between sources due to the different research methods used. What is clear, however, is that they all show a marked increase in mortality rates between 1998 and the present. Utilising data from the World Bank (2014) and MDG baselines (South African Government 2013), this means an increase from 150 deaths per 100,000 live births in 1998 to 300 per 100,000 in 2010 – the most recent estimate. Whilst the latest figure still remains lower than that of Rwanda, it is crucial to recognise that this represents a 100 percent increase in just twelve years and may be even higher now, four years on. This case study will look at South African policy in light of that of Rwanda, analysing the extent to which the lack of progress could be a result of policy failures.

Since the early 2000s, the South African Department of Health (2001, 2007b, 2008, 2012) has continually pointed to HIV/AIDS as the key factor accounting for the lack of progress made. Consequently, Chopra et al (2009) argue that policy-making is centred on biomedical interventions designed to identify HIV positive women and target them with anti-retrovirals and family planning services more effectively. Certainly, the recommendations and strategies which have arisen from the Saving Mothers Reports are heavily centred on addressing HIV-
related pregnancy deaths (South African Department of Health 2007a, 2008, 2012). Whilst HIV is clearly a key issue increasing maternal deaths in the country, it is not necessarily the most pressing. Udjo and Lalthapersad-Pillay (2013) point out that there is actually only a weak link between HIV prevalence and maternal mortality rates, when looked at by geographical area. This indicates that HIV may well not be the principle factor behind mortality. Indeed, looking more closely at the data in the Department of Health reports above reveals a methodological problem. Any deaths of HIV positive women during pregnancy and childbirth are attributed directly to the disease, and recorded as such. Yet these women may have died from something completely unrelated. This poses a significant challenge to the accuracy of data used in policy-making. Even with this methodological issue, data suggests that HIV/AIDS is not the key problem causing maternal mortality amongst adolescents. Hypertension is the leading cause of death among this age group (South African Department of Health 2012). Prioritising HIV/AIDS in policy may well mean other issues are overlooked, and could be a factor holding back progress.

South African health policy is nonetheless regarded as among the most progressive in SSA (Cooper et al 2004, Coovadia et al 2009, Human Rights Watch 2011). Policy encompasses sexual and reproductive rights and has led to the provision of free maternal healthcare; pro-choice abortion legislation and an increased numbers of clinics (Chopra et al 2009). With policies such as these tackling structural violence, it seems the country should have experienced a reduction in maternal deaths. Yet the failure to achieve this suggests deeper issues. One such issue is of poor implementation, as it is argued that this has been flawed on many levels. Coovadia et al (2009) state that crises in leadership, dating back to the apartheid era, continually limit the usefulness of good policies through ineffective application. They point to ongoing inequalities in maternal healthcare which contribute to significantly higher death rates among black, rural sectors of the population than their white, urban counterparts (ibid 2009). Chopra et al (2009) similarly identify a concentration of funding (30% of the entire healthcare budget) in just three hospitals located in Johannesburg, Cape Town and Durban. This can be seen to represent structural violence within the policy-making structure itself, ensuring that investment is not equally distributed and certain socio-demographic groups will always remain disadvantaged. Furthermore, this refutes Magadi’s (2007) claim that higher healthcare spending per capita is, in itself, enough to reduce maternal mortality rates.

Structural violence can also be seen in direct relation to adolescent care. Wood and Jewkes (2006) claim that the judgemental and unkind attitude of nurses towards pregnant teenagers is preventing them from voluntarily accessing care. Despite having the facilities
available, it seems logical that young women would not want to attend clinics if the quality of care they receive is low. Pregnant adolescents arguably need and have a right to sensitive care, especially if there are difficult circumstances surrounding the conception such as forced marriage or sexual abuse. Failing to provide this can however result in a lack of timely care or increase in non-institutional deliveries, which could ultimately lead to death. This is a classic example of structural violence against adolescents which increases risk. The need for further training amongst health professionals is mentioned in more than one Saving Mothers Report (South African Department of Health 2008, 2012) yet does not seem to have been translated into improvement on the ground. Perhaps this is because it is not mentioned explicitly in relation to adolescents, but rather as a general recommendation.

Despite implementing increasingly specific guidelines on maternal health since 2011, the Department of Health still fails to adequately account for issues of structural violence against adolescents. South Africa’s leading initiatives, the Strategic Plan for Maternal, Newborn, Child and Women’s Health and Campaign for Accelerated Reduction of Maternal and Child Mortality, barely reference teenagers despite citing a key strategy as “addressing inequity and social determinants of health” (Health Systems Trust 2012 p.2). It seems unlikely that this can be wholly achieved without taking account of the structural violence affecting them. The most recent Saving Mothers Report (2012), however, suggests that progress has been made in adolescent maternal health as the birth rate has decreased. Whilst this is an arguably poor measure of maternal health, given that it simply records fewer pregnancies rather than how healthy they are, it is the methodology behind the statistics that is more problematic. The conclusions are drawn from data showing that the numbers of teenagers delivering in hospitals or clinics has fallen. Rather than showing a reduction in number of pregnancies this could plausibly indicate a rise in the number of young women delivering at home, potentially reflecting a reluctance or inability to seek care. Drawing expansive conclusions from basic data highlights the unwillingness of the South African Government to take seriously the needs of pregnant adolescents in the country. False belief that their situation is improving could even increase adolescent risk further if there is no perceived need to change policy.

In contrast with Rwanda, the South African Government has implemented little policy focused on the needs of pregnant adolescents, and even less addressing structural violence against them. Whilst great strides have been made in the provision of healthcare and progressive legislation, the failure to implement this in a manner that targets some of the most vulnerable within society significantly limits its success. Providing the best facilities in the
region will still fail to reduce mortality rates if women do not wish to use them. Furthermore, continuing to base policy decisions on limited or incoherent data will mask the realities of maternal mortality and could divert funding away from the most pressing issues. Though South Africa could benefit from introducing additional policies focused on teenage needs, their first priority should arguably be improving accountability and implementation of their existing guidelines. It is likely that this would boost public trust in the healthcare profession and Department of Health significantly more than by creating new policies which would similarly fail to translate into action at grassroots level. Only then will the country truly be able to overcome “the pattern of missed opportunities, avoidable factors and sub-optimal care [that] has remained” over recent years (South African Department of Health 2012 p.26).

Structural violence is inherently difficult to tackle through policy, as it reflects deep-set beliefs and practices which pervade society and are not easy to change. Nonetheless, the impact of structural violence upon maternal mortality means that such efforts do need to be made. Whilst the MDGs have been successful in raising awareness of the issue, Goal 5 has simplified the problem and largely ignored the role of structural violence within it. This is potentially dangerous if countries use the framework as a model on which national policy is built. South African national policy can be viewed similarly, as it is centred on supply-side interventions improving the provision of care and addressing the problem of HIV/AIDS. Furthermore, where legislation has been more expansive, it has largely failed to translate into progress on the ground.

Rwanda, on the other hand, has much more directly addressed the needs of pregnant adolescents through taking some account of the societal barriers which place them at risk. Its policies have focused on addressing structural violence alongside improving health systems, which seems to have translated into significant progress at grassroots level. Though Rwanda still has a fairly high maternal mortality ratio and could certainly improve further, it can offer useful insights into effective holistic methods of tackling maternal mortality.

**Conclusion**

This dissertation set out to explore the role of structural violence in increasing adolescent risk of maternal mortality, within the context of policy and progress. It has been found that maternal mortality risk is manifest in three distinct areas for teenagers – physical immaturity, late presentation for care and unsafe abortion. Despite the significant variation in life circumstances of girls this age, structural violence can be seen to contribute to or exacerbate risk in each area. Structural violence is present not only in local structures and practices, such
as the quality of care available or societal views on early pregnancy, but also at a higher level. Poverty creates substantial economic barriers to accessing care, alongside gender and age inequality which affect young women’s autonomy in pregnancy. Though there is certainly a need for improved facilities and services, particularly those appropriate for teenagers, interventions to address maternal mortality arguably need to address structural violence as well.

This, however, has not wholly been the case across SSA. Policy-making and health interventions over recent years have been centred on international frameworks such as the MDGs. Though these large over-arching guidelines are useful in drawing attention to global development issues, they fail to take any substantial account of social forces affecting women’s maternal health. Furthermore they seem to oversimplify adolescent pregnancy as unplanned and the result of a lack of resources or education. Structural violence is deeply rooted in society, thus it makes sense that global frameworks may not make specific reference to such issues which vary across the globe. The problem comes when national policies implemented in line with the MDGs also fail to address structural issues. The relative lack of young women, or indeed women in general, in policy-making roles contributes to this and indicates that maternal health is unlikely to ever top the agenda. Such violence even within the structures of policy-making is not a problem solely confined to SSA however, and can be seen across the world.

Innovative grassroots initiatives such as the CycleSmart programme in Rwanda show that structural violence can be addressed through holistic, community-led interventions. Such projects overcome top-down issues of oversimplification, incomplete or incorrect understanding and cultural insensitivity. Instead, they are driven by the community to address the needs of its people. It is important to note, however, that such projects are usually externally funded by NGOs or international organisations. Funding is thus restricted according to the current aims or target areas of the organisation, which may or may not be in line with the perceived priorities of communities. This could be viewed as another type of structural violence. Nonetheless, it is plausible to suggest that an increase in grassroots projects addressing structural violence may lead to further progress in reducing maternal mortality. Within this and despite its limitations, there is still a role for effective policy-making. It has become clear that policy is a useful tool for drawing attention to the issue of maternal mortality, and so could be used to ensure that maternal health does remain high on the international agenda. This would increase the likelihood of NGO funding being available for smaller projects promoting safe pregnancy for adolescents. In order to promote sustainable
development and lasting change, however, governments need to provide funding and support for such projects themselves. The adoption of adolescent specific policy would certainly be a step towards this. International bodies such as the UN should also seek to lead by example when formulating a new framework for development post-2015. Whilst the MDGs have been successful in some ways, the goal for maternal health has been far too reductionist and is unlikely to be achieved by many countries. Directly addressing structural violence at this level may well ensure smoother and more effective transition into national policy and programming, which should boost progress.

Whilst the lens of structural violence has been useful for exploring societal issues relating to maternal health in this dissertation, it is a viewpoint which must be regarded with some caution. The nature of the discourse is that it relies on interpretation and as such there is great internal debate within the field over what does or doesn’t constitute structural violence. Furthermore, it is not yet a particularly well-resourced field, and I found no resources specifically linking maternal health to structural violence as a concept. As a result, the analysis in this dissertation has been a personal assessment of how well-known sociological and health issues affecting maternal mortality can be explained through structural violence theory. What has become apparent is that structural violence may fail to account for individual differences and autonomy in seeking to identify structural constraints which explain young women’s behaviour in pregnancy. Decisions are not always solely made as a result of societal forces, though a structural violence perspective could argue this is the case. Despite this, it is clear that further exploration of the relationship between structural violence and adolescent maternal health is necessary, as there are evident links between the two which could inform and enhance policy-making, intervention planning and academic study.

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How has the framing of polio influenced the GPEI in Nigeria and what impact has this had on the local level in Kano State?

Ella Foggitt

Abstract

At the time of the inception of the Global Polio Eradication Initiative (GPEI), polio had a global disease burden of less than 50% of that of diarrhoeal diseases (WHO 2000, p.7; Murray et al 2012, p.2204). Despite this comparatively small disease burden, the world’s largest global health initiative was promoted to eradicate polio. Meanwhile, diarrhoeal diseases, and other less “glamorous” health issues continue to be neglected (Smith et al 2004, p.272). This dissertation argues that framing mechanisms have been utilised by elite, self-interested actors in the global health community to elevate polio eradication above basic health issues in the global health agenda. This has resulted in a top-down, “one size fits all” approach being taken to polio eradication, which has ultimately forfeited the success of the initiative. The case study of Kano State, north-western Nigeria, will be examined to demonstrate the detrimental impact of the approach taken by the GPEI at the local level.
Introduction

This dissertation argues that the way in which polio has been framed has resulted in a vertical, “one size fits all” approach to global polio eradication. It is argued that this approach has forfeited the success of the Global Polio Eradication Initiative (GPEI) in Nigeria, particularly in Kano state, north-western Nigeria.

The GPEI is the single largest global health initiative (GHI) (Yayha 206 8; Tebbens et al 2010: 334). The aim of the initiative is to eradicate polio worldwide (GPEI 2010). It is currently in its 25th year of operation and has succeeded in reducing the number of countries in which polio is endemic from over 125 in 1988 to just 3 in the present day (GPEI 2013). One of the countries where polio remains endemic is Nigeria, largely due to the polio vaccination boycott in the north of the country in 2003.

Methodology

There are a number of limitations to studying the GPEI in Nigeria. The main limitations lie with studying the polio boycott in Kano state. A great deal of the literature on the boycott involved authors who had conflicting interests. This resulted in many articles giving a biased account of the boycott. Furthermore, there were relatively few books written on the topic, resulting in heavy reliance on journal and newspaper articles. In order to overcome this potential barrier, efforts were made to ensure the reliability of each source.

Analysis of the GPEI in Nigeria is necessary because it is the only country in the world where the rate of new polio cases has risen since polio eradication was declared a global emergency by the World Health Assembly (WHA) in 2012 (ERC 2014:2). Additionally, there is a lack of literature discussing the global and national context in which the GPEI was implemented in Nigeria. Likewise, there is limited literature which explores the local conditions, specific to Kano state, which led to the polio vaccine boycott. Furthermore, the case study of Nigeria is particularly interesting due to the cultural, political and ethnic diversity of the country. These specific conditions pose as barriers to the success of a top-down, one size fits all approach such as that taken by the GPEI. This dissertation uses the case study of Kano to demonstrate the importance of taking into account the conditions specific to the locality and the detrimental impact failing to take these conditions into account can have on the outcome of global health initiatives.
The dissertation will commence by outlining the economic and geopolitical situation in Nigeria. Chapter I will situate polio eradication in the global health agenda. Particular focus will be on how and why, health issues feature where they do on the agenda of global health actors. Chapter II will situate polio eradication in Nigeria’s health agenda. The impact of the imposition of the GPEI in a country that lacks a functioning health system will be examined. Chapter III will explore the impact of the top-down, one size fits all approach of the GPEI at the local level, in Kano state, north-western Nigeria.

Background to the Nigerian state

Historically, Nigeria endured decades of exploitation by its British colonial rulers, prior to gaining independence in October 1960 (Chen 2003: 206; Federal Republic of Nigeria, no date; Gascoigne 2001). British rule was accompanied by the imposition of Christianity, Western education and the English language onto Nigeria’s population. These inflictions were opposed especially by Muslims in the country and led to resentment of the West (Chen 2003: 206; Gascoigne 2001). This resentment remains to the present day and has culminated in the formation of the Islamic extremist group Boko Haram, whose name translates to “Western education is forbidden” (Adekoya 2012; Chothia 2012). These anti-western sentiments have been accentuated following the September 11 terrorist attacks and the West’s resultant “war on terror” (Okonko et al 2008: 143). This distrust of the West is extremely problematic in the field of global health (Chen 2003, p.206; Yayha 2006, p.16), as will be discussed in Chapter III.

Furthermore, in part due to the legacy of British colonialism, Nigeria lacks a collective identity. British colonial powers carved up the country, creating artificial new boundaries which failed to take into account the diverse ethnicity, language and culture of the population (Afigbo 1991: 15). Nigeria’s 374 ethnic groups are split between the 36 states (NDHS 2009, p.1; Udonwa et al 2004: 2). Thus, each state was, and remains a “bewildering agglomeration of ethnic nationalities” (Afigbo 1991: 15). As a result of the lack of national identity, many Nigerians gain their identity from their religion. There is a north-south divide in the country, with the savannah in the north home predominantly to Muslims, while the tropical south is predominantly inhabited by Christians (Clements et al 2006: 117; Afigbo 1991: 14; BBC 2012; Adekoya 2012; Chothia 2012). This divide has proved to be problematic to the politics of the country, with both religions wanting their own representative to lead the Federal Republic (Udoh et al 2008: 671). The struggle for power is exacerbated by the disparity in educational opportunities, health outcomes and overall poverty between the north and south, with 90% of
states with severely underweight children found in the north, for example (UNICEF 2007, p.5). These tensions have led to demands for the north and south of the country to break off from one another (Adekoya 2012).

Another issue contributing to the political instability in the country is rooted in the country’s natural resource wealth, which directly conflicts with attempts at democratic development (Pegg 2003: 12). Nigeria is extremely rich in crude oil and as a result of this, is potentially the richest state in Africa (IRIN 2002). Ironically, however, development indicators suggest the country’s population of 168.8 million (World Bank 2012) is experiencing some of the lowest standards of living on the continent (WHO 2009: 1; IRIN 2002; Pegg 2003: 14). One of the major reasons for the disparity between the country’s theoretical wealth and actual poverty is opportunism and corruption among political elites (Agbiboa 2013: 448; Watts 2010: 40). This behaviour is characteristic of many countries rich in natural resources (Allen 2012: 50). However, it is especially pronounced in Nigeria, where rent-seeking and “politics of the belly” (Bayart 1993) are particularly widely-practiced (Anugwom 2011: 204), whereby the country’s resources are considered the “national cake” are divided between elites to serve patron-client ties. This demonstrates the “resource curse” (Idemudia 2012) Nigeria is experiencing. Thus, Nigeria has a number of unique characteristics which GHIs must take into account or risk failing, as this dissertation will proceed to examine in the case of the GPEI.

What is the position of polio in the global health agenda?

“Health policy shifts . . . are an embarrassing testament to donors’ unreasonable caprice, where trends often seem to matter more than teleology in setting public health policy” (Perin and Attaran 2003: 1216)

The prioritisation of polio over other health issues, such as diarrhoea, which have a greater disease burden than polio (WHO 2004), demonstrates the political and economic leverage industrialised countries and donors have to frame specific diseases which threaten their interests. Firstly, the impact of globalisation on the global health agenda will be examined. Secondly, the widely accepted global health priorities will be discussed. It will be argued that the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) clearly reflect these priorities and steer global health policy towards an even narrower health agenda. Thirdly, framing mechanisms will be examined and it will be argued that diseases are framed in certain ways by global health actors.
in an attempt to elevate the disease in the global health agenda. Specific focus will be on the impact of the securitisation framework on the response to combatting AIDS, with debates around the exceptional status of AIDS being critically engaged with. Fourthly, it will be argued that the current global health priorities reflect the interests of donors and industrialised countries. The impact of donor-led health initiatives on steering towards selective approaches to health will be discussed. The dissertation will argue that this selective approach is characteristic of global health initiatives (GHIs), particularly those led by global public-private partnerships (GPPPs), which tend to favour the selection of ‘low-hanging fruit’ (Yamey 2002: 1238). Fifthly, the dissertation will provide the background to the Global Polio Eradication Initiative (GPEI). Sixthly, it will be argued that it is in the economic interests of the developed world to eradicate the polio, thus the disease has been framed in a manner that has prioritised it over other health issues on the global agenda. Seventhly, it will be argued that the top-down approach of the GPEI has forfeited the success of the initiative by artificially prioritising polio eradication above health issues considered more pressing by developing countries. Eighthly, the impact of the classification of polio eradication as a global public health emergency will be discussed with regards to the sustainability of the health initiative. It will be concluded that the manner in which polio has been framed and prioritised over other diseases has ultimately sacrificed the success the GPEI due to the top-down, “one size fits all” approach that has been taken.

How has globalisation impacted on the global health agenda?

Globalisation has played a major role in shaping the global health agenda over recent years by highlighting the interconnectedness of health outcomes across the world (Smith et al 2004, p.271). For example, the threat of transborder disease transmission has become ever more a reality through the vast temporal changes in worldwide travel and trade that globalisation has facilitated (UN 2004: 9 ; Lee 2004 : 157; Martens et al 2010: 2; Taylor 2004 : 500; Woodward et al 2002: 6 ; Barks-Ruggles 2001: 1 ; Smith 2003: 475). This “transnationalisation of health” has resulted in a shift away from traditional sovereign health governance towards an emphasis on global health governance (Taylor 2004: 500; Lee et al 2009: 289, 293). This shift has occurred due to the threat of communicable diseases to the peace and security of developed states as well as the positive externality effects of eradicating these diseases for industrialised countries (Kickbusch 2006: 7 ; Lee 2004: 157 ; Taylor 2004: 501; Smith et al 2004: 272 ; UN 2004: 9), a concept which this chapter will explore in more depth later. The focus of the global health
agenda is now on global public goods (GPGs), such as polio eradication which benefits all countries without detriment to others (Smith 2003 : 475 ; Woodward et al 2002 : 10). Meanwhile, diarrhoeal disease and other “diseases of poverty” continue to be neglected due to their concentration in the developing world and limited threat to industrialised states (Smith et al 2004 : 272). Thus, globalisation has steered the global health agenda towards a narrow focus on communicable diseases.

**Background to the global health agenda**

Despite globalisation having narrowed the global health agenda, there has been a rise in health as a foreign policy issue, as indicated by the dramatic increase of global health financing over the past decade (Labonte and Gagnon 2010: 1; McCoy et al, 2009:407; MacKellar, 2005: 296). Between 2000 and 2005, global financial investments in health more than doubled from US$6 billion to $14 billion (Prah-Rugger 2007: 1741). Likewise, development assistance for health (DAH) increased dramatically from $5.6 billion in 1990 to $21.8 billion in 2007 (Ravishankar et al 2009: 2113). Meanwhile, the global health agenda and resulting global health policy have become increasingly fragmented with a proliferation of GHIs focused on specific health issues and on the technological solutions for them (Ollila 2005: 1, 4; McCoy et al, 2009: 407, 413). This has resulted in the “10/90 disequilibrium” evident today, with diseases that account for 90% of the global disease burden receiving less than 10% of global health research (MSF and DNDWG 2001: 10). The widely accepted health priorities are “communicable diseases, malnutrition which exacerbates childhood infections and maternal and perinatal mortality” (Ollila 2005: 2). This consensus has been reached by many global health bodies, including the Commission on Macroeconomics and Health in December 2001, which concluded that public health resources should be directed towards those prioritised goals (Commission on Macroeconomics and Health, no date, p.7). Similarly, the prevention of pandemics is the most cited GPG by the World Health Organisation (WHO) and other major actors in global public health (Labonte and Gagnon 2010: 7). Meanwhile, health systems and broader health determinants, such as socioeconomic factors are being neglected (Ollila 2005: 4). This situation has been exacerbated by the increased prominence of donors in health policy-making. The Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation (BMGF), for example, now provides roughly the same amount of health funding as the USA and has become a very significant actor in setting health policy (Ollila 2005: 1; McCoy et al 2009: 410; Prah-Rugger 2007: 1741; Olmen et al 2012: 5). BMGF’s Global Health Programme focusses on communicable disease
prevention, while failing to finance chronic conditions or acknowledge recurrent costs related to the host country’s health system (Ollila 2005: 2). Neglect of these elements of public infrastructure exists despite around one-third of the global disease burden being directly caused by poverty, which suggests that when poverty is reduced, health outcomes will be improved (Benetar et al 2009: 350; Stevens 2004: 4, 10). This oversight is all the more disturbing since the strengthening of such elements greatly reduced communicable diseases in industrialising countries in the 19th century (Labonte and Gagnon 2010:8).

Millennium Development Goals (MDGs)

The priorities of the global health agenda are clearly reflected in the MDGs. The MDGs have eight goals, three of which are health-focused, namely those on child mortality, maternal health and HIV/AIDS, malaria and other diseases (WHO 2013). Despite significant commitments being made by countries of the WHO African region, such as the 2001 Abuja Declaration, progress towards the health MDGs have been extremely slow and varied (WHO 2010: 1, 5). Out of 44 nations studied by Arita and Nakane (2008), 26 had excessively high under-five mortality ratios greater than 150 (Arita and Nakane 2008: 172). Progress towards reducing maternal mortality has also been minimal in many countries (Wagstaff et al 2006: 18). Meanwhile, since the inception of the MDGs in 2000, the whole system of the United Nations (UN) has been adapted to address the targets outlined by the MDG framework (Ollila 2005: 1). Thus, they have played a leading role in steering policy towards selective, donor-led interventions within a narrower global development agenda (Olmen et al 2012: 5; Hotez et al 2007: 1018; Ollila 2005: 1). The MDGs have also been instrumental in opening policy windows for the health issues included in the framework (Shiffman 2007: 1372). This is evident in the extraordinary targeted focus of resources towards reaching Goal 6: To combat HIV/AIDS, malaria and other diseases (Rushton 2014). Furthermore, despite a growing consensus that inefficient health systems in developing countries are preventing the MDGs from being reached (Dodd and Cassels 2006: 379; Travis et al 2004: 900; van Olmen et al 2012: 1), little effective action has been taken as global health actors continue to focus solely on the specified targets.

How does disease framing impact on the response taken to the health issue?

The health issues represented in the MDGs, have been elevated in the global health agenda due to the way they have been framed (van Olmen et al 2012: 2). Powerful actors in the global health community use framing as a mechanism to influence the public’s perception of certain
health issues, thus prioritising specific health issues above competing issues (Aronowitz 2008: 2; van Olmen et al 2012: 2). Communicable diseases, for example, specifically HIV/AIDS, have received vast amounts of attention due to the way they have been framed by the global health community (Rushton 2010: 2; Shiffman and Smith 2007: 1371). Meanwhile, non-communicable diseases receive far less funding in proportion to their overall disease burden (MacKellar 2005: 301-302). Thus, the narrative by which specific health issues are portrayed has great implications for the response to the health issue (Coyne 1985: 338; Jernbeck and Olsson 2011: 255; Shiffman and Smith 2007). One method of framing is securitisation. All health issues are situated on a continuum of prioritisation in relation to their threat to the national security of developed nations. On one end of the continuum are non-communicable diseases which rank low in aid and development discourse and are completely absent from the MDGs. This is partly because infectious pandemics pose a far greater risk to international security than chronic diseases (Labonte and Gagnon 2010: 5). On the other end of the continuum, are communicable diseases which are considered a “key threat to global security” and as a result, are central to international security frameworks (UN 2004: 2; Fidler 2007: 49; UN in Drager and Sunderland 2007: 71). Some of these securitised diseases are, however, only considered security issues on account of being framed and presented as threats rather than actually posing “real existential threats” (Buzan et al 1998: 24 cited in McInnes and Rushton 2011: 117). Therefore, the significance of the “fear factor” generated by the securitisation of a disease cannot be ignored (MacKellar 2005:303; Aronowitz 2008:4).

The impact of framing: the case of AIDS

Central to the securitisation framework is AIDS. Since the 1980s, AIDS has gained exceptional status (Smith and Whiteside 2010: 2) and is now widely accepted as a threat to national security around the world. The connotation of the term “exceptionalism” as applied to AIDS has changed over time, but the impact has remained the same: a disease-specific, top-down approach to “fight AIDS” (Smith and Whiteside 2010:1). The major outcome of AIDS exceptionalism and securitisation has been the creation of a financing imbalance in favour of AIDS and disproportionate to the burden it represents (MacKellar 2005: 301; Labonte 2011: 45).

Some scholars argue that AIDS’ status as an exceptional “public health crisis” (Piot 2005; de Lay et al. 2007:345) is justified. One justification of its status is that most epidemics “create their own brutal equilibrium” (Piot, 2005:3). In contrast, instead of plateauing, AIDS
continues to increase (Piot, 2005:3). Thus, the cost of inaction against AIDS in comparison to any other public health crisis could prove to be far more significant (de Lay et al, 2007:345). Additionally, Elbe (2006) claims that the securitisation of HIV has great potential to benefit millions of victims of the disease socially, economically and politically (Elbe 2006:120). Piot (2005) goes as far as to argue that AIDS should be incorporated into the global security agenda alongside climate change and nuclear weaponry (Piot 2005:2).

While it is accepted that HIV/AIDS is a huge threat to human security, the approach that is being taken to combat the disease is having many negative impacts and its prioritisation over other diseases is contested. For example, the securitisation and “development-isation” (Rushton, 2010:2) of AIDS is having deleterious effects on other public health issues as well as diverting resources (Smith and Whiteside 2010; England 2007). Well-funded HIV programmes for example, attract staff from other health services, thereby intensifying existing problems (England 2007:344). Thus regardless of the need to combat AIDS, the threat of uneven health-system development that accompanies the selective approach being taken, must be addressed (MacKellar 2005: 308). Additionally, the securitisation of diseases has shifted responses away from an emphasis on altruism to one of states’ self-interest by bringing into play a “threat-defence logic” (Labonte and Gagnon 2010: 5; Elbe 2006; Fidler 2007: 45). This demonstrates how powerful framing mechanisms can be.

Whose interests are represented in the global health agenda?
The domination of industrialised countries and donors within the global health community is such that their own interests are prioritised. The framing of diseases is one such potent mechanism (Nichter 2008: 107; Lee 2003:148). Health issues in developing countries which are perceived to threaten the interests of the industrialised world, such as HIV, have been prioritised over those that disproportionately affect the developing world (Ollila 2005:3). This demonstrates how support for health initiatives is motivated by a country or donor’s self-interest (Labonte 2011:45). Health interventions led by self-interest have become especially relevant since the 1990s when industrialised countries came to the forefront of international decision-making on health, using their economic and reputational leverage to their advantage (Zacher and Keefe 2008:21; Fox 2006:1724; Birn and Solorzano 1999:1198). Furthermore, the rise of globalisation, as previously discussed, has increased the threat of diseases in developing countries spreading to industrialised countries (Smith et al 2004 :271; Lee 2004 :157; Martens et al 2010 :2). Thus, health initiatives are increasingly considered as investments by which
developed countries can improve their own health (Smith et al 2004:274; Barrett 2004:683). This reinforces the understanding that global health is driven by politics rather than need (The Lancet 2009:2083; Pearlman and Roy 2009, xiv in Esser and Bench 2011:5). For example, the number of people who died of AIDS in 2007 in Nigeria and Ethiopia was less than half the number of children who died of pneumonia and diarrhoea in the two countries, yet US financing to combat AIDS in Nigeria and Ethiopia was greater than the total amount the US spent on maternal and child health across the world in the same year (Dugger 2009). Thus contrary to claims that health financing and disease burden are positively correlated (Beer et al 2002:226; Ravishankar et al 2009:2120), this case demonstrates that disease burdens are often irrelevant in decisions to finance specific diseases, with self-interest being the key motivation (Esser and Bench 2011:16; MacKellar 2005:302).

**What impact does it have if a health initiative is donor-led?**

The leverage donors have over the global health agenda has resulted in selective rather than comprehensive approaches to healthcare being taken in an attempt to attract donor funding (Nichter 2008:107). For example, the Expanded Programme on Immunisation (EPI) and the Global Alliance for Vaccines and Immunisation (GAVI), which favour the selective, disease-specific approach, have recently received substantial funding. Meanwhile, the socioeconomic conditions causing heightened disease susceptibility in children, such as poor housing and sanitation continue to be neglected by donors (Lee et al 2009:305; Samb et al 2009:2175). One of the reasons for the “compartmentalisation” of specific diseases (Jerneck 2011:257), is that it enables donors to exercise their economic power to further influence the decision-making process in a top-down manner (Vaughan et al 1995; Lucas et al 1997 cited in Lee et al 2009:306). Another reason for the focus on selective approaches to healthcare provision is that progress towards combatting communicable diseases can be monitored and assessed with relative ease, as they often have easily quantifiable goals (Bennet 2011:477). Meanwhile, some actors within the global health community believe health systems strengthening is unrealistic and perceive health systems as “bottomless pits in which external support disappears without a trace” (Marchal et al 2009:3; Olmen et al 2012:10). As a result of this, “banner diseases” continue to be the focus of donor funding while health systems strengthening is neglected, as the following chapter will discuss in more detail.

**Background to global public-private partnerships (GPPPs) and global health initiatives (GHIs)**
The failure of global health initiatives to address health determinants other than the specific disease is a deep-rooted characteristic of global public-private partnerships (GPPPs) and global health initiatives (GHIs), such as the GPEI. There is a persistent tendency of these partnerships and initiatives to “pick the low hanging fruit” by concentrating on quantitative results rather than strengthening health systems which would help to reduce the overall burden of the disease (Yamey 2002: 1238; Bennet 2011:477). Furthermore, GPPPs are a concern, since their vertical approach often undermines local health systems and threatens the long-term sustainability of the initiatives (Lee et al 2009; Ollila 2005). Likewise, the selective, disease-focused approach exacerbates the “over-crowded landscape” and fragmentation of global health governance (McCoy et al 2009:414; Ollila 2005). GAVI and the GPEI are two GPPPs whose aims substantially overlap, yet this has not been recognised due to poor governance (Beigbeder 2004:125). While it is acknowledged that GPPPs should be praised for their success in attracting attention to specific diseases; they are inherently based on self-interest thus fail to meet the actual needs of the recipients. This is clearly demonstrated in the case of the GPEI.

**Background to the GPEI**

The World Health Organisation (WHO), Rotary International, US Centre for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) and United Nations Children’s Fund (UNICEF) are spearheading partners and work alongside national governments to form the GPPP of the GPEI. The strategy of the GPEI which involves immunising children under the age of five with the oral polio vaccine (OPV), fits into the mandate of the Expanded Programme of Immunisation (EPI), which was created by the World Health Assembly (WHA) in 1974 (Beigbeder 2004: 117-119). Subsequently, the WHA unanimously approved the goal of polio eradication by the year 2000 in 1988. Since this date, the initiative has received over $8.2 billion of international investment, with every additional year costing near $1 billion (GPEI 2010; Maurice 2013: 1261). However, twenty five years after the inception of the GPEI, three deadlines have been missed (GPEI 2013, p.14) and polio remains endemic in Nigeria, Afghanistan and Pakistan. This reinforces concerns over the wisdom and feasibility of channeling billions of dollars towards a specific disease (Modlin 2010: 2348). Despite these failures, the great successes of the GPEI must not be ignored. The number of polio cases worldwide has decreased by more than 99% since 1988 and an estimated five million children have been saved from transmitting polio because of the initiative (GPEI 2010). Likewise, the number of people paralysed by polio each year is now less than the number of new cases there previously were on a daily basis (Barrett 2011:1). Furthermore, “it is
estimated that the programme will save about 855,000 deaths” by 2040 (Khan and Ehreth 2003: 704). However, the repeated failures of the GPEI are consistent with numerous other global initiatives, including aspects of the MDGs. Therefore, the reasons behind the failures and the impact they have on the supposed beneficiaries of the initiative must be examined.

Who would benefit economically from global polio eradication?

From an economic perspective, especially now that polio has been eradicated from the developed world, the success of the GPEI is in the interests of the industrialised world (Smith et al 2004:274). Not only is polio eradication frequently cited as the most efficient use of the “development dollar”, polio can in turn save the developed world millions of dollars by rendering the immunisation of their own populations unnecessary, giving polio eradication a relatively high “eradication dividend” (Barrett 2009:1079; Kickbush 2002:134; Arita and Nakane 2008:172). Cost-benefit analysis illustrates that there will be cumulative savings from the eradication of polio of $13.6 billion by 2040 (Taylor 1997: 922). However, these savings are primarily in areas such as acute care and rehabilitation from paralysis, which the majority of children in developing countries do not have access to anyway. Furthermore, the cost-effectiveness ratios for developing states are comparatively high, which suggests that given the choice, many developing countries would abandon the polio eradication effort if donor funding stopped (Barrett 2009: 1082). This is because they would re-focus their scarce health resources towards areas of higher priority (Khan and Ehreth 2003:705; Taylor et al 1997:923). This supports the argument that it is in the interests of industrialised countries to remain actively involved in the GPEI in order to protect their own net savings through the eradication of polio. This is because “global health security is only as strong as its weakest link” (Labonte and Gagnon 2010:4; Smith et al 2004: 274). This economic-driven approach to health is very concerning as the actual needs of the recipients are likely to be ignored in the “scramble for profit” (Whitehead 2008: 1155).

How does the top-down approach of the GPEI effect its chances of achieving a “polio free world?”

The prioritisation of polio by global health actors, over other health issues considered more pressing in the developing world, has threatened the success of the GPEI in a number of ways. The top-down, vertical nature of the GPEI has failed to take into account the recipients’ actual needs. While it is accepted that this is characteristic of most major public health programmes since the 1980s, and is becoming increasingly so, this approach threatens the success of the
GPEI in reaching polio’s endgame (Nichter 2008: 107; Ollila 2005: 1). There is clearly an imbalance of power between donors and recipients which reflect broader global power politics (Lee et al 2009: 302). As long as the institutional structures which sustain this power imbalance remain unaddressed, the disproportionate power distribution will persist and the actual needs of the populations in developing countries will never be met (Lee et al 2009: 302). Furthermore, the top-down imposition of the GPEI onto populations that do not consider polio as a pressing health concern, such as the population of Nigeria, threatens to frame polio as a ‘foreign disease’ (Mbakwem and Smith 2009: 224). This happened in the case of AIDS in Nigeria, where some local communities believed foreigners had deliberately spread the disease to their population, as they did not perceive AIDS to be problematic before foreign intervention (Mbakwem and Smith 2009: 224). Likewise, the way in which the GPEI’s publicity campaign was aimed at western countries reinforced beliefs that polio eradication was western-driven rather than a truly global priority (Pirio and Kaufmann 2010: 67). Thus the imposition of the GPEI in countries where polio eradication is not perceived to be a priority has resulted in minimal public support for the initiative, as will be discussed in the case of Nigeria in the following chapter.

How sustainable is the progress made by GPEI?

The low perceived importance of polio eradication by countries in which the initiative has been implemented has resulted in “polio fatigue” (Renne 2006: 1866; Modlin 2010: 2348; Maurice 2013: 1261). This has been exacerbated by the repeated failures of the GPEI to meet targets, leading people to question the initiative’s credibility (Pirio and Kaufmann 2010: 68). These issues have resulted in reduced support and funding for the GPEI. In an attempt to tackle this issue, the WHA classified polio eradication as a “global public health emergency” in 2012 (ERC 2012: 5). As the GPEI’s funding was waning, reframing polio as an emergency is a way of encouraging people to think that an exciting new initiative is afoot, thus attracting funding from previously “anaesthetized” donors (Nichter 2008: 109). This “development speak” plays an important role in attempts to raise public consciousness and facilitate dialogue over a health issue (Nichter 2008: 109). However, the urgency implied by the term “emergency” may threaten the initiative’s long-term sustainability due to a focus of quantitative rather than qualitative results (Bradford 2007: 79).

Conclusion
In conclusion, framing is an extremely powerful mechanism by which self-interested actors, often donors, influence the global health agenda. It is in the interests of industrialised countries to eradicate polio in the rest of the world as their populations are already polio-free. Therefore, polio has been elevated in the global health agenda above health issues with a greater burden of disease. Thus, the use of framing has steered the global health agenda towards a selective and vertical, donor-led approach to health issues. These characteristics can be detrimental to the health systems of the host countries, as this dissertation will examine in the following chapter in the case of the GPEI in Nigeria.

**What are Nigeria’s national health priorities and what impact has the top-down, one size fits all approach taken by the GPEI had on them?**

“We are looking for medicine in the hospital to give to our children and we can’t get it but this one (polio vaccine), they are following us to our houses to give it”

(Zaria community member in Renne 2006: 1862)

Polio eradication in Nigeria receives a disproportionate amount of funding relative to its disease burden and perceived importance by the Nigerian state (Renne 2006, p.1866; Shiffman 2007: 1372). The low perceived importance of polio in Nigeria alongside other issues such as the country’s collapsed health system have been barriers to the realisation of polio eradication in Nigeria. The top-down, “one size fits all” approach taken by the Global Polio Eradication Initiative (GPEI) and resultant failure of the initiative to take into account conditions specific to Nigeria, have forfeited the success of the initiative and detrimentally impacted on Nigeria’s health system, as this chapter will proceed to examine. Firstly, the background to neoliberal health reform in Nigeria will be outlined. Secondly, it will be argued that health is not a major priority of the Nigerian government. Thirdly, it will be argued that decades of health sector reform and neglect has resulted in the collapse of the country’s health system. The barriers this poses to the realisation of polio eradication will be discussed. Specific focus will be on the country’s failed National Programme on Immunisation (NPI) and it will be argued that the GPEI missed an opportunity by failing to learn from previous immunisation attempts in the country. Fourthly, the most significant health problems in Nigeria will be discussed. Fifthly, it will be argued that polio is not a health priority in the country which has resulted in waning political support for the GPEI. Sixthly, it will be argued that another impact of the GPEI failing to
account for the specific conditions of Nigeria has been further weakening of the country’s health system. Scholars who contend that the GPEI has strengthened the health system, will be critically engaged with. Seventhly, it will be argued that the GPEI has demonstrated the importance of the centrality of health systems strengthening in the future. It will be concluded that polio eradication in Nigeria is only being actively pursued in the country because the global health community have forced it upon the Nigerian government.

**Background to the global health reform in Nigeria**

The development of Nigeria’s health system has not enhanced the well-being of its population (Tandon et al 2000: 15). The health system in the country has been undermined by decades of profit-driven colonialism, followed by structural adjustment which has resulted in a dysfunctional health system, failing to meet the needs of Nigeria’s population. Decades of British colonial rule resulted in extremely unequal provision of healthcare in Nigeria, with health establishments concentrated specifically in areas where high profit was anticipated (Ityavyar 1988: 1226). Thus, colonialism built the foundations for extremely unequal healthcare provision in the country (Alubo 1990: 642). Following independence, these poor foundations were accentuated during a period of economic crisis by the imposition of structural adjustment programmes (SAPs) by Bretton-Woods institutions (Peabody 1996: 826; Lewis and Stein 1997: 5; Olmen et al 2012: 4; Benetar et al 2009: 354; Ihonvbere 1993: 142).

Nigeria was one of the first of over a dozen countries in sub-Saharan Africa which undertook health sector reforms between 1985 and 1992 (Sahn and Bernier 1995: 205). The neoliberal ideology on which SAPs are based, has ultimately led to the collapse of the country’s health system through providing the justification of the privatisation, reform and weakening of the state health system, a pattern seen around the globe (McGregor 2001: 82). This ideology is based on the premise that private markets are far more efficient than state-led enterprises, resulting in a market-oriented system whereby health provision is considered a commodity to be sold rather than a public good (Ihonvbere 1993: 144; Kanji et al 1991: 988; McGregor 2001: 82, 83). Thus health service subsidies and spending were cut. This involved the introduction of user fees to access healthcare with poor members of the populations forced to pay the same as their rich counterparts, leading to exclusion of the poor from health services, exacerbating the already vast disparities in health outcomes in Nigeria (WHO date unknown: 23; Benetar et al 2009: 354, 357; Peabody 1996: 826; Samb et al 2009: 2142; McGregor 2001: 82; Alubo 1990: 644; Yayha 2006: 23; Kanji et al 1991: 990). Furthermore, structural adjustment in Nigeria
involved deregulation of the pharmaceutical industry, which reduced the accessibility of basic medicines to a great proportion of the population (Yayha 2006: 23). These austerity programmes are viewed in the context of “present pain for future gain” (Peabody 1996: 823). The “present pain” was certainly very severe, with the cost of living in Nigeria doubling during the first year of implementation of the SAPs (Alubo 1990: 639). However the positive impacts of structural adjustment on the country’s health system are questionable. Thus, the SAPs accelerated the decay of Nigeria’s institutions, a process that was initiated by decades of colonial rule (Ihonvbere 1993: 142). This outcome has led some scholars to claim that SAPs are a form of neo-colonialism (Kanji et al 1991: 986) and were implemented in Africa to maintain the master-servant inequality between the former colonial powers and the continent (Alubo 1990: 639; Kanji et al 1991: 985).

Is the health of the population a priority of Nigeria’s government?

Following the neoliberal health reform in Nigeria, health has remained a low priority of the government, as indicated by the country’s relatively minimal health expenditure which has decreased significantly since 1999 (WHO 2011: 47; Lu et al 2010: 1375). The total general government expenditure of 44% of the country’s GDP is relatively large for the African region (WHO 2011: 47). In contrast, Nigeria’s government expenditure on health as a percentage of GDP is low, at only 2% (WHO 2011: 47). Likewise, government expenditure on health per capita is US$8 lower than the regional average at only US$24 (World Bank 2010). Furthermore, the health status of the population as a whole has remained below benchmarks set by the international community (The World Bank 2010; Nigerian Ministry of Health 2010) with the health status of the population having deteriorated over the past decade (Nigerian Ministry of Health 2010: 24) despite the country having experienced economic growth over the same period (World Bank 2014). Likewise, Nigeria’s health indicators remain some of the worst in the world (Nigerian Ministry of Health 2010: 15) despite having one of the largest stocks of human resources for health in Africa (WHO 2006 cited in WHO 2009: 7). Thus, the Nigerian state was in a poor condition to receive the GPEI as the government was failing to meet even the basic needs of the population.

Background to Nigeria’s health system

Similarly, after decades of neglect, Nigeria’s collapsed health system has remained in a poor state of repair (Yayha 2006: 22, 23) with fewer than 15% of local government areas having
more than one fully functioning primary health care facility and “most in need of serious repair or replacement to deliver even the basic services” (WHO 2009: 4). Disregard for health by the government has exacerbated the poor health system that emerged from neoliberal reform through inadequate financing due to lack of political will, as well as corruption (Udoh et al 2008: 671; Ministry of Health 2010; Yayha 2006: 27). As a result of the Nigerian government’s failure to finance the public health system, the economic burden of health care lies with households (Nigerian Ministry of Health, 2010: 35). For 12% of Nigeria’s population, over a 25% of their total household expenditure is consumed by costs to access healthcare (WHO 2009: 7). Thus poverty poses a great obstacle to accessing healthcare to those families who do not have a sufficient income, with inability to pay for health care being one of the greatest constraints to health care access (WHO, date unknown: 25). As a result of this, there is a huge health disparity in Nigeria with children among the poorest 20% of the population being around 3 times more likely to die than those among the richest 20% (Ministry of Health 2010). Furthermore, there is a great urban-rural disparity in access to healthcare due to lack of an effective stewardship role of the federal government and poor distribution of the workforce (Federal Ministry of Health 2010: 21). Health indicators and access to qualified health professionals are especially low in rural areas of the country, where immunisation rates are also extremely low (WHO 2009: 7). These huge disparities in health and immunisation coverage pose great barriers to polio eradication in Nigeria (Abraham 2012: 2; Shah et al 2006: 1059). Despite this, the GPEI failed to take into account the country’s collapsed health system due to the “one size fits all approach” it adopted.

Nigeria’s National Programme on Immunisation (NPI)

Furthermore, the GPEI failed to address the failures of Nigeria’s NPI, missing out on a valuable chance to learn from a previous immunisation initiative in the country. The NPI has failed spectacularly in ensuring high rates of childhood immunisation, with coverage rates having worsened since its establishment (NDHS 2003 in Yayha 2006: 23). As a result of this, over the past 40 years, Nigeria has been one of the least successful countries on the continent in reducing its under-five mortality rate (Ngowu et al 2008: 161). Current vaccination rates in the country are as low as 13% (NDHS 2003; NPI 2003 in Yayha 2006: 17) giving Nigeria the lowest routine vaccination rate in Africa (Peplow 2013; WHO 2005; Yayha 2006: 18). Nigeria remains in earliest stages of the epidemiological transition despite billions of dollars of funding towards immunisation (Federal Ministry of Health 2010). Furthermore, Nigeria is the only country in
the world where the rate of new polio cases has increased since the eradication of the disease was classified as a “global public health emergency” in May 2012 (ERC 2012: p.2). These poor disease indicators remain, despite Nigeria spending double the amount of money that other developing countries spend per child on immunisation (NDHS 2003 in Yayha 2006: 23). This suggests that factors specific to Nigeria, other than monetary funding are obstacles to eradicating vaccine-preventable diseases in the country. Despite this, the GPEI was implemented in a manner that failed to consider the conditions specific to Nigeria, such as its history of failed immunisation campaigns.

What are the health priorities of the Nigerian state?

Additionally, the GPEI failed to take into account the lack of importance associated with polio in Nigeria and the resultant failure of political will which created a major barrier to its success. Polio is very low on the agendas of the Nigerian Ministry of Health in comparison to malaria, the country’s most significant public health problem (WHO 2009: 6; Yayha, 2006: 7; Taylor and Shimp 2010: 54). Malaria is responsible for 30% of under-five mortality with the economic cost of the disease as high as 1.3% of economic growth per annum (WHO 2009: 6). HIV/AIDS is also a major threat to the health of the Nigerian population (Institute for Health Metric and Evaluation 2010: 1). Even road traffic accidents cause a significantly greater proportion of premature mortality and disability in Nigeria than polio (Institute for Health Metric and Evaluation 2010: 1, 2). Despite the relatively small burden that polio represents in Nigeria, the GPEI in the country receives vastly greater amounts of funding than other life-threatening diseases (Shiffman 2007: 1372). Thus polio eradication is perceived to be a “misdirected priority” by a large proportion of Nigeria’s population (Barrett, 2009: 1081). Furthermore, “only in 1 in 200 people infected develop paralysis” (Altman 2004, p.3) and the prominence of polio victims in society has decreased in recent years so polio is no longer a major preoccupation of the population (Yayha 2006: 28). As a result of this, there is disenchantment and resentment in many Nigerian communities that the federal government is supporting the international community in channelling huge human and financial resources to eradicate polio when the national health system is in a poor state of repair and the average person cannot access basic medicines to treat other ailments (Yayha 2006: 28; Heymann 2012 in Callaway 2013: 291). Furthermore, the prioritisation of polio over other health needs has led communities to question the benefit of the GPEI as they view strengthening of the health care system as a whole a greater priority (Renne 2006: 1858). Thus, the top-down implementation
of the GPEI in Nigeria has conflicted with, and distorted the country’s national health policies by disregarding the actual needs of the recipients (Biesma 2009: 239; MacKellar 2005: 305). This characteristic is common among donor-led health initiatives (Samb et al 2009: 2151; Prah-Ruger 2007: 1741 Smith et al 2004: 273-274). As a result of these conflicting interests, the GPEI has faced a number of barriers to achieving polio eradication in Nigeria as well as impacting negatively on the country’s health system.

What impact has the low perceived importance of polio eradication in Nigeria had on support for the GPEI?

As a result of the imposition of the GPEI in a country where polio eradication is not perceived to be a priority, the population has been unreceptive and political support for the initiative has fluctuated over recent years (Yayha 2006: 22, 27). The federal government on the whole has been the most supportive of the initiative out of the three tiers of governance in Nigeria. However, political support at all levels of governance for the GPEI is waning in the lead up to the 2015 presidential elections (Polio Oversight Board 2013: 1). Likewise, political support for the GPEI has declined significantly in recent years, especially at the local government area (LGA) level with governors and chairmen becoming increasingly less involved in the programme (Expert Review Committee 2011). This lack of political support and involvement is particularly evident in northern Nigeria (Callaway 2013: 291) with dozens of officials in Kano state, being fired in October 2012 for treating polio eradication as a “money making venture” (Callaway 2013: 292). Likewise, there are concerns that positive feedback on the door-to-door polio immunisation campaign are strategic rather than honest, in an attempt to sustain the campaign due to the abundance of resources for patronage it supplies (Yayha 2006: 27). This rent-seeking tactic demonstrates the failure of the GPEI to consider the cultural context in which the programme was implemented. The importance of kinship networks and patron-clientalism in Nigerian society (Smith 2003: 706, 707; Yayha 2006: 27) could have been used to the advantage of the GPEI. Instead, it was used by the locals as a means to exploit the resources provided by the initiative. Additionally, this lack of honest political support for the GPEI reinforces the understanding that polio eradication would not be considered a health priority were it not for the framing of the disease by the global health community, as discussed in the previous chapter. Furthermore, without the full political support for the GPEI from the national to sub-regional level, it is unlikely that polio eradication will succeed in Nigeria.

How has the GPEI impacted on Nigeria’s health system? : Health system weakening
Another impact of the failure of the GPEI to consider the conditions specific to Nigeria is that the polio eradication initiative has been forced through the country’s health system despite it clearly lacking the capacity to support it (Yayha 2006: 27). This happened despite the GPEI’s record of being most successful in countries with well-established, effective health care systems and least successful in countries where routine immunization for other childhood diseases is poor (Taylor at el 1997: 922; Abraham 2012: 2). The implementation of the GPEI in the absence of a functioning health system in Nigeria has led to further weakening of the country’s health system. Likewise, the selective focus on polio has increased pressure on the NPI (Malik et al 2013; Yayha 2006: 22; Taylor et al 1997: 923), while the sporadic large sums of donor funding for the GPEI has increased pressure on the country’s weak health system (Bennet 2011: 473). Furthermore, the polio eradication programme has diverted human and monetary resources away from health needs other than polio (Yayha 2006: 27; Taylor et al 1997: 923; Smith et al 2004: 273; Travis et al 2004: 900). Dr. Olayemi, senior programme advisor at Save the Children, Nigeria, explains the detrimental effect this has had as health facilities severely lack a workforce due to emphasis on polio eradication, which provides greater monetary incentives than working for the national health system (Dr. Olayemi 2012 cited in Boseley 2012). As a result of this, many children are missing out on routine vaccinations which could have a greater effect on child mortality than polio eradication (Boseley 2012; Miller et al 2006: 241, 1169). Furthermore, the increased workload on public health workers has led many to become overburdened with work and de-motivated as a result (Biesma 2009: 247, 249; The Lancet 2009: 2083; Samb et al 2009: 2143). Likewise, the focus on quantitative results reduces the quality of care due to pressure to meet targets (The Lancet 2009: 2083). These impacts are characteristic of numerous disease-specific health initiatives, which have failed to be complemented by investments in national health care, resulting in local health systems being undermined (Travis et al 2004 cited in Bennet 2011: 475). A study into the impact of selective immunisation initiatives by Bryce et al (2003), illustrated that the extremely high staff turnover rates associated with GHIs, as high as 40% in some countries, led to the decline of healthcare on the whole (Bryce et al 2003, p.160). Thus, there is a clear tension between the short-term, specific goals of GHIs and the need for investment in local health systems (Yamey 2002: 1238). While the Nigerian Ministry of Health acknowledge that in order to improve the health and well-being of the country’s population the health system needs to be strengthened (Ministry of Health 2010), top-down global initiatives such as the GPEI pose obstacles to this realisation (Yayha 2006: 22; WHO 2009:2, 8). Therefore as long as
selective, top-down health programmes remain the norm, health care on the whole will continue to be neglected.

How has the GPEI impacted on Nigeria’s health system? Health system strengthening

In contrast, it must be recognised that the GPEI has helped to address childhood malnutrition and diseases associated with vitamin A deficiency (Loevinsohn 2002; Tebbens 2011: 334; Sutter 1997: 914). The promotion and delivery of vitamin A supplements through the GPEI, has led to a reduction of between 1.1 and 5.4 million deaths worldwide (Tebbens 2011: 341). It has also helped to save between $17-90 billion due to the life-saving impact of taking vitamin A supplements (GPEI 2012). The GPEI has also helped address childhood malnutrition by enabling outreach staff to refer cases of malnutrition to the local therapy programme during door-to-door vaccination visits (Polio Oversight Board 2013: 5). While these positive externalities are impressive, the positive impact of the GPEI on health outcomes other than those stated are negligible.

Claims by Kimman and Boot (2006) that the GPEI has brought about great improvements in the public health infrastructure of Nigeria are unfounded. These scholars claim that the provision of diagnostic equipment and the means to deliver vaccines other than for polio have positively impacted on the NPI as well as the wider health system (Kimman and Boot 2006: 1). These claims are certainly not evidenced in the national immunisation coverage rates (World Bank 2013; WHO and UNICEF 2013, p.1). Furthermore, the claim that the GPEI will strengthen the health system by leaving in place health infrastructure that can be repurposed to address other health issues is not very encouraging (GPEI 2012: 2). The health infrastructure is not in the places which need it the most so it is likely to increase the disparity in health outcomes rather than be beneficial to communities. Thus, on the whole, the implementation of the GPEI in Nigeria has had an overall negative effect on the country’s health system and NPI and claims that the eradication programme has had far-reaching positive impacts are unsubstantiated.

Health systems strengthening should be central to health initiatives in the future

The GPEI’s failures in Nigeria have highlighted that there really is no substitute for health system strengthening or capacity building in health promotion (Frenk and Gomez-Dantes 2011: 150). Health system strengthening is often avoided because the goals are rarely simple to articulate in comparison to disease-specific programmes (Bennet 2011: 476, 477; Marchal et al
2009: 3). Despite this, health system strengthening is of vital importance because it will help to improve the health of the population as a whole, rather than specific enclaves of the population (Bradford 2007:79; Travis et al 2004: 900). As well as this, poor health systems are likely to pose substantive barriers to the success of health initiatives such as the GPEI (Bennet 2011:475; Callaway 2013; Abraham 2012: 1; Smith et al 2004:273; Atun et al 2010:2174), especially in countries where the health infrastructure is unable to deliver routine immunisation (Abraham 2012:2; Shah et al 2006:1059). Thus, Nigeria needs to have a functioning health system in order to sustain the progress made by the GPEI and to address the broader determinants of disease in the country (Barnhart and Hagopian 2013:19; Bryce et al 2003:163). Despite acknowledgement by the GPEI that Nigeria’s poor health system is threatening the success of the initiative (BMGF 2014), in practice the focus remains solely on polio eradication. This is characteristic of many global health initiatives (Marchal et al 2009:2).

On the other hand, it must be acknowledged that the “Health for All” resolution did encourage the GPEI to be implemented in a manner which would help to strengthen the NPI and health system (Callaway 2012:2). However, quantitative results took priority over higher quality health care as deadlines slipped by.

A diagonal approach to health systems strengthening should be adopted

The vertical, disease-specific approach to health interventions, such as that taken by the GPEI, tends to create unsustainable outcomes (Travis 2004: 903; Ooms et al 2008:3) and often increases health disparities through creating “islands of excellence in seas of under-provision” (Pearson 1999 in Buse and Waxman 2001:750). In order to reduce the negative impacts of such interventions, a diagonal approach to health systems is proposed. This approach will assist in ensuring specific, as well as system-wide effects are achieved (Marchal et al 2009:2), in part through increasing resources to expand the capacity of health systems (Sepulveda et al 2006:2020; Ooms et al 2008:3). Thus, the diagonal approach will assist in reducing the vast inequality in health outcomes in Nigeria, providing a vital move away from selective, donor-driven health initiatives (Ooms et al 2008:2, 3). This approach will also help to act as a stepping stone towards a horizontal framework whereby the emphasis is on exploring the ways in which selective interventions can be designed to promote health systems in the host countries (Smith et al 2004:273). This is fitting with the current shift away from “small development” (Woolcock 2012) such as disease-specific programmes, towards infrastructural development (Harmen no date:10). This shift towards “big development” (Woolcock 2012) will help to facilitate the
realisation of health system development which is vital in order to improve the health outcomes of Nigeria’s population as a whole (Bradford 2007:79; Travis et al 2004:900).

Conclusion

In conclusion, if polio eradication had not been imposed on Nigeria, it is unlikely the country would have diverted its human and monetary resources towards the cause. This is because health does not appear to be high on the agenda of the Nigerian government; polio eradication most certainly is not. Therefore, the centrality and prioritisation of polio eradication in Nigeria’s NPI is no doubt a result of the global framing of polio (Yayha 2006:22; Taylor et al 1997). If donors were not exerting such influence and pressure on the Nigerian government and Ministry of Health to focus on polio eradication, human and monetary resources could have been spent on health needs perceived to be more pressing by the country’s population (Taylor et al 1997:924). The “override approach” (Sen 1994 cited in Renne 2012:496) taken by influential actors in the global health community to prioritise polio, has led to diversion of funding away from health issues considered to be more important by the recipients. Furthermore, the “one size fits all” approach taken by the GPEI has resulted in its failure to take into account the local conditions. Nigeria’s dysfunctional health system, lack of political will to eradicate polio and history of failed immunisation campaigns all suggested that a “unified approach to healthcare delivery” would have been more beneficial than another disease-specific programme (Ngowu 2008:162). Despite this, the GPEI ignored the country-specific conditions and as a result, weakened the country’s health infrastructure and sacrificed the success of the GPEI (Bennet 2011:475; Callaway 2013; Abraham 2012:1).

What impact did the top-down, “one size fits all” approach of the GPEI have on the polio vaccination boycott in Kano state, north western Nigeria?

“By ignoring local concerns and related national and international issues while assuming that the virtues of disease eradication would trump all others, the initiative (GPEI) foundered” (Renne 2012:496)

The Global Polio Eradication Initiative (GPEI) failed to take into account the specific political, cultural and religious conditions in which the eradication programme was implemented. Instead, polio eradication was approached in a top-down, “one size fits all” manner. The
outcome was an 11 month boycott against polio immunisation by residents of Kano state, north western Nigeria. This chapter will examine to what extent the top-down, uniform approach of the GPEI fuelled the boycott. Firstly, the background to ongoing resistance against the polio eradication campaign will be outlined. Secondly, the polio vaccine boycott in Kano state will be examined. Thirdly, it will be argued that the approach taken by the GPEI which failed to acknowledge the distrust of Muslims in northern Nigeria, in the West, exacerbated the situation. Particular focus will be on the tainted history of Western biomedicine in the region, through examining the case of the Pfizer drug trial. Fourthly, it will argued that the failure to take into account the political and religious context in which the GPEI was implemented, exacerbated longstanding political and religious tensions between the Muslim north of the country and the Christian south. Fifthly, the “one size fits all” approach of the GPEI will be critiqued in reference to the religious diversity of Nigeria. It will be concluded that the polio vaccine boycott in Kano state demonstrates that taking into account the context in which health initiatives are implemented, is of vital importance. In view of this, bottom-up decision making and community ownership of health initiatives is advocated.

**Background to the resistance to polio immunisation**

While this chapter is focusing specifically on the polio boycott in 2003, it must be acknowledged that immunisation rates in northern Nigeria were extremely low, well before the boycott and that there had been a steady increase in polio cases in northern Nigeria long before 2003 (Barrett 2009:1081). In 2000, reported polio cases were below 50 and by 2003 they had risen above 350 (Yayha 2006, p.17). Furthermore, the health outcomes in Kano state were especially poor, with a 34% parental refusal rate for polio immunisation (PolioInfo 2012:1). A lack of functioning medical services in the state exacerbated this situation, resulting in less than 16% of children being immunised to a level where they were resistant to polio (Kapp 2003:1631). A number of factors explain the resistance towards polio vaccination including distrust by the people of Kano state in the national government and distrust in the motives of the West (Barrett 2009:1081). These factors along with others culminated and resulted in the polio vaccination boycott in 2003 as this chapter will proceed to examine.

**The polio immunisation boycott**

The population of Kano state is primarily Hausa, of which the majority practice Islam (Adu-Kuraway 2003 in Lockwood et al 2008: 27). The state’s legal and governing system is based on Shari’a law, characteristic of many northern states in Nigeria. This form of law is subjective, as
it is characterized by the interpretation of Islamic texts by local Muslim leaders (Lockwood et al. 2008:27). At the time of the boycott Dr. Datti Ahmed was the head of the Sharia Supreme Council in Kano state, thus he had the discretion to interpret Islamic texts as he wished. Dr. Datti Ahmed, along with other Muslim leaders in the region, perceived polio immunisation to be anti-Islam and announced this to their followers. As a result of this, parents across Kano state refused to vaccinate their children, thus polio transmission in the region increased. Following this, the vast temporal changes in transport, facilitated by globalisation as discussed in Chapter I, led to the trans-border transmission of polio. Thus, the polio immunisation boycott in Kano state resulted in Nigeria becoming a “net exporter” of the polio virus (Barrett 2009:1081). Between the August 2003 and July 2004, 15 countries in Africa, as well as Indonesia and Yemen where polio had previously been eradicated, had cases of polio traced back to Kano state in Nigeria (Clements et al 2006:117; The Lancet 2013:1; Katz 2006:164). Thus, after the expenditure of over $3 billion and the involvement of 20 million volunteers over a period of 16 years, the global achievements of the GPEI and its goal of making the world polio free by 2005 were threatened by the actions of Kano state’s population (Miller et al 2006; Okonko et al 2008:138). Furthermore, the boycott led to costs exceeding $500 million to prevent the polio outbreak spreading further (Kaufmann and Feldbaum 2009:1091).

What role did distrust of the West play in the polio vaccine boycott?

Distrust of the West by Muslims in Nigeria, provided an enabling environment for the boycott of the GPEI (Okonko et al 2008:143; Chen 2003:207). This distrust was exploited by the Muslims leaders who claimed that the vaccine was part of a covert operation by the West to reduce the Muslim population (Taylor and Shimp 2010; Barrett 2009; Yahya 2006; Kapp 2003; Renne 2006; Okonko et al 2008:140; Arie 2013:954). The Muslim clerics were specifically concerned that the vaccines contained HIV and cancerous agents (Callaway 2013:291; Barrett 2006:1081 Kaufmann and Feldbaum 2009:1091; Kapp 2003:1631; Raufu 2002; Chen 2004:206; Katx 2006:164; Jegede 2007:418; Lockwood 2008:23) and were a vehicle for a sterilisation campaign by the USA (Kapp 2003: 1631; Chen 2004: 206; Murphy 2004). These concerns led Dr. Datti Ahmed to publicly declare that “we believe that modern-day Hitlers have deliberately adulterated the oral polio vaccines with anti-fertility drugs and contaminated it with certain viruses which are known to cause HIV and AIDS” (Dr Ahmed cited in Yayha 2006: 9). Likewise, Governor Shekarau of Kano state explained that the polio boycott was “a lesser of two evils” by sacrificing a few children to polio, millions of girls would be saved from infertility caused by
the polio vaccine (Governor Shekarau in Yayha 2006:10). This demonstrates how the global emphasis on polio eradication in Nigeria and the top-down approach taken by the GPEI, directly resulted in resentment and suspicion over the vaccine. In the light of these failures, a community development approach is advocated, which would be driven by community needs rather than donors’ self-interest (Tatar 1996:1494). If polio eradication had been perceived to be a priority by the Nigerian population and the immunisation programme had been initiated by the local government with the involvement of local leaders, the programme would have had far greater support because there would not have been concerns over the motives of the West. Furthermore, if there had been increased communication of both the risks and the benefits of the vaccine, it is less likely that suspicion over the safety of the vaccine would have become so widespread.

**What role did past experiences of Western biomedicine in Kano state play in the polio vaccine boycott?**

The tainted history of Western biomedicine in northern Nigeria reinforced and arguably validated, the safety concerns relating to the polio vaccine (Raufu 2002:1414; Jegede 2007:418). In 1996 Trovan, a trial antibiotic was given free of charge to the population of Kano during the cerebrospinal meningitis epidemic. It is claimed that the inhabitants of Kano were not fully informed of the risks (Kapp 2003:1631). Subsequently, the trial antibiotic killed 11 children in the region and left dozens of other children irreversibly disfigured (Ozuhu-Seleiman 2010:2; Lockwood 2008:28). Thus, the population of Kano was understandably anxious when foreign health organisations began compelling parents to immunise their children against polio. This lack of public trust in the polio vaccine was exacerbated by the lack of communication between the global health organisations implementing the GPEI and the recipients (Chen 2003:203). The approach taken by the GPEI was that vaccine providers should receive instant gratification from the recipients by simply supplying their product (Lockwood 2008:28). It is well understood that gaining local support for health initiatives entails a great deal more than simply publicising information and supplying medicine (Brunton 2007:128). However, the GPEI failed to acknowledge this, and as a result, suspicions over the safety of the vaccine were reinforced and attempts to gain community buy-in to the eradication campaign failed momentously (Chen 2003:206; Lockwood 2008:24). Thus the approach taken by the GPEI became “as deadly as any disease” (Majiyagbe 2003 in Lockwood 200:28). Also, risk communication and listening to the concerns of the local community could have played an
extremely important role in preventing the boycott (Okonko et al, 2008:144, 145; Nichter 2008:116). Furthermore, local leadership was vitally important, especially because of the community’s memories of the Pfizer drug trial and also because traditionally Hausa people in Kano state would seek traditional healers to treat polio rather than bio-medically trained health professionals (Yayha 2006:31). However, effective communication and local leadership were both absent from the GPEI, largely due to the emphasis on quantitative rather than qualitative results.

**What role did distrust of the national government by the population of Kano state play in the polio vaccine boycott?**

The underlying cause of the polio immunisation boycott was distrust of northern Nigerians in the national government (Barrett 2009:1081; Ozohu Seleiman 2010:2; Kapp 2003: 1631; Kaufmann and Feldbaum 2009:1093; Okonko et al 2008:143). This was exacerbated by the top-down implementation of the GPEI which failed to give any sense of ownership and decision-making to Muslim leaders and prominent members of the community in Kano state. This lack of decision-making on behalf of the Muslim leaders in Kano state exacerbated the longstanding dispute over the religious and political power of Abuja between the Christian south and the Muslim north (Clements 2006:117). The elections in April 2003 saw General Obasanjo, a Baptist from the south being elected for a second term over General Buhari, a Muslim from the north. It is no coincidence that the polio immunisation boycott began in Kano, a Muslim state, three months after the election of a Christian President, especially as there is resentment over the disparity in health service quality across the country, with much poorer services in the north (Kaufman and Feldbaum 2009:1092). Boycotting the polio vaccine was a means for the North to humiliate President Obasanjo because of the international pressure on Nigeria to eradicate polio and the global media attention the campaign was receiving. Thus, the political undertone of the boycott helps to explain the causal factors. However, the lack of decision-making at the local level meant that the GPEI was extremely vulnerable to being boycotted (Obregon and Waisbord 2010:29; Chen 2003: 206; Okonko et al 2008:143). If a bottom-up, rather than top-down approach had been taken, with an emphasis on local ownership and community participation, the GPEI would have been more likely to succeed in eradicating polio from Nigeria (Schwab and Syme 1997:2050). Community participation helps community members to demonstrate their agency and is essential for generating public support, both of which were lacking in the GPEI (Merzel and D’Afflitti
Likewise, community involvement in the planning and implementation of health initiatives is vital to ensure effective community ownership is achieved (Marks and Davis 2012:1570). This approach shifts the “fundamental position of people from being viewers and spectators to that of agents of development and progress” (Lucas 1976:142 in Ibem 2009:126). Thus, if community participation was central to the implementation of the GPEI in Nigeria, it is likely that residents in Kano state would feel responsible for the outcome of the eradication initiative and as a result would be less likely to boycott the initiative.

**What role did religion play in the polio eradication boycott?**

Religion also played a major role in the polio eradication boycott, as the great majority who boycotted the vaccine were Muslim (Callaway 2013:291; Warraich 2009:978). This is no coincidence, as the GPEI completely failed to consider the religious and cultural dimensions of the Nigerian population, due to the “one size fits all” approach it has adopted. This has been the case throughout the GPEI, with all the remaining polio endemic countries having majority Muslim populations and under-vaccinated children being disproportionately found in Muslim communities (Taylor and Shimp 2010:51). The concentrated efforts of the GPEI in Muslim communities led to concerns that the supply of the polio vaccine to Muslim populations by “Christian countries” was not a “charitable gesture but self-interested and dangerous” (Last 2005: 651 in Renne 2006:1863). This demonstrates how the GPEI has disregarded the “social embeddedness” of medicine (Obadere 2005 in Taylor and Shimp 2010:62). Thus the “one size fits all” approach of the GPEI has sacrificed the success of the program and fuelled the boycott by failing to take into account the diversity of the population in which the polio vaccine was being administered. This demonstrates the importance of a culturally-grounded approach to health initiatives in creating sustained improvements in health outcomes (Airhihenbuwa et al 2014:78, 82; Merzel and D’Afflitti 2003:562; Ozohu-Suleiman 2010:4).

**Conclusion**

In conclusion, the GPEI exacerbated political and religious tensions which culminated and resulted in the 11 month boycott against polio immunisation in Kano state. The top-down, uniform implementation of the GPEI failed to take into account the specific conditions in Nigeria, especially northern Nigeria, which made resistance to immunisation extremely likely. Instead of focusing on risk communication, local leadership and community ownership, the GPEI was ignorant of vital implementation strategies and failed to go beyond the “polio only”
agenda (O’Reily 2013:1). Thus the polio immunisation boycott in Kano state illustrates the hidden complexities of global health initiatives (Minor 2004: 476). The boycott also highlighted the importance of tailoring health initiatives to local contexts or run the risk of being resisted (Leach 2010: 16; Ozohu-Suleiman 2010:4). This is especially significant in Nigeria, a country with highly unique social and cultural factors (Ngowu 2008: 164). Likewise, the GPEI has demonstrated the vital role of local leadership and bottom-up decision making in increasing community buy-in to GHIs. Furthermore, the boycott demonstrated the global effects that a health initiative can potentially have if it fails to effectively meet these criteria.

Conclusion

This dissertation has explored the impact of the framing mechanisms applied to polio by the global health community, on the outcome of the Global Polio Eradication Initiative (GPEI) in Nigeria. In order to establish the type of framing applied to polio, the disease was firstly examined in the context of the global health agenda. The dissertation next proceeded to explore the position of polio within Nigeria’s national health agenda to determine whether polio eradication was perceived to be a priority by the Nigerian population. Finally, the impact of the GPEI in Kano state was explored in order to ascertain the effect of the approach taken by the GPEI at the local level.

The main conclusion is that the top-down, “one size fits all” approach of the GPEI has been detrimental to the success of the initiative in Nigeria, especially in Kano state. Nigeria has particularly unique circumstances (Ngowu 2008: 164), such as its north-south ethnic divide and dysfunctional health system. These factors were overlooked by the “one size fits all” approach taken by the GPEI. As a result of this oversight, local political and cultural factors became barriers to achieving universal polio eradication, as demonstrated by the polio vaccine boycott in Kano state. For example, instead of using the community leaders’ local knowledge and leverage over the community, the GPEI failed to effectively communicate the intentions of the initiative with the community. This lack of communication exacerbated existing distrust in the vaccine and fuelled concerns over the intentions of the national government and the West. In view of the failures of the top-down, “one size fits all” approach of the GPEI, a bottom-up approach, with emphasis on community ownership is advocated in order to encourage local ownership of the polio eradication initiative. This approach would also help to facilitate community buy-in and collective responsibility for the outcome of the programme. These factors are vital in order to reduce the likelihood of another polio vaccine boycott.
Another conclusion is that polio eradication is in the interests of industrialised states. The disease burden of polio did not justify the implementation of the largest international public health initiative (WHO 2000: 7; Murray et al 2012: 2204). However, it was in the strategic interests of industrialised countries to eradicate the disease. This is because the “eradication dividend” is greatest in countries where the disease prevalence is low (Kickbush 2002: 134; Barrett 2009: 1079; Arita and Nakane 2008: 172). Thus, polio eradication would not only help to improve the health outcomes in developed states but would also be economically beneficial to them. These incentives for industrialised countries to eradicate the disease has resulted in some of them using their political and economic leverage to frame polio as a disease worthy of a GHI, and steer the global health agenda towards communicable disease eradication. This top-down, donor-led approach has forced the GPEI onto countries whose populations are unreceptive to the eradication efforts as they do not perceive polio eradication to be a national priority. This “override approach” adopted by the GPEI (Sen 1994 in Renne 2012: 496) has distorted developing countries’ health agendas, such as that of Nigeria (MacKellar 2005: 305; Biesma 2009: 239). Furthermore, implementation of the GPEI in Nigeria has resulted in fluctuating political support for the initiative as the Nigerian population believe other health issues to be of greater concern (Yayha 2006: 22, 27; Callaway 2013: 291). Thus, the imposition of the GPEI in countries with far more pressing health concerns has been detrimental to the eradication initiative, as the relevance of the health issue to the local community is vital to gain interest and acceptance for the health initiative (Nichter 2008: 119). What is most concerning however, is that donor-led health initiatives often fail to address the needs of the most vulnerable in society, instead focussing on diseases that give them the best spend of the “development dollar”.

Furthermore, this dissertation has established that the implementation of the GPEI in Nigeria, a country with a dysfunctional health system, has exacerbated existing problems. Once again, this is due to the “one size fits all” approach taken by the GPEI which failed to consider the decades of neglect the country’s health system has experienced. The GPEI has weakened the country’s health system through a number of channels, diversion of human and monetary resources away from public health services, being one of them (Smith et al 2004: 273; Travis et al 2004: 900; Yayha 2006: 27). It is vital that this negative externality of the GPEI, and numerous other GHIs are addressed urgently. This is because, effective health systems are required to improve the health of the population as a whole, rather than specific pockets of the population. Furthermore, health outcomes such as polio eradication, cannot be sustained
in countries with health systems that are failing to meet the basic needs of the population (Barnhart and Hagopian 2013: 19; Bryce et al 2003:163; Modlin 2010:2346; (Yayha 2006: 31). Despite the GPEI acknowledging this, claims that “instead of competing with the primary health care services, the eradication programme fosters the development of primary health care” (Pirio and Kaufmann 2010: 73), have not been evidenced. In light of this, a diagonal approach to health system strengthening is advocated. This approach will provide an enabling environment for health system strengthening, which is vital for improving health outcomes in Nigeria (Marchal et al 2009:2; Sepulveda et al 2006: 2020; Ooms et al 2008:3).

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Buying the Peace: assessing the role of corruption in post-conflict Chechnya

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Abstract

Conventional approaches to corruption in post-conflict scenarios have treated such practices as an impediment to the restoral of peace and stability. However, recent work has offered a more ambiguous approach: a tolerance of corruption can have positive impacts by ‘buying off’ those with the capability to reignite conflict, and by providing civilians with a means of survival. This dissertation looks at how such an approach can be applied to the case of Chechnya, arguing that a tolerance of corruption has been an integral part of the Russian Federation’s strategy in the North Caucasus republic. Ultimately, corruption has been a key component in achieving Russia’s goals of maintaining relative stability and territorial integrity.
Introduction

Post-conflict situations pose a number of challenges for those working to prevent a return to war. Animosity between previously warring factions persists, breakdown of infrastructure and state institutions, and social upheaval offer peace-keepers a Herculean task, and seriously undermine reconstruction efforts. What is able to thrive in such conditions is corruption: absence of order, non-existence of legal authority, and lack of mainstream economic opportunity means that armed groups readily engage in corruption for financial gain, whilst civilians caught up in the turbulence will participate in corrupt activities as a means of survival.

Conventional approaches to corruption in post-conflict scenarios have viewed such practices as a major impediment to restoring peace and stability. The lack of transparency and accountability that comes with corruption is said to undermine attempts to rebuild state apparatuses, and prevents the regaining of societal trust that is destroyed in the chaos of war. However, recent approaches to post-conflict scenarios have questioned whether corruption can offer a positive role. Such approaches question if corruption is able to play a role in subduing those actors that have the ability to reignite conflict. Allowing potential ‘peace-spoilers’ to engage in corrupt practices and seek financial gain from newly acquired positions of power can be tolerated in preference to a renewed outbreak of conflict. A tolerance of corruption at an individual level also offers civilians a means with which to survive: conflicts destroys state institutions and the infrastructures of a formal economy, so bribery of corrupt officials offers a means of accessing goods and services otherwise unavailable. This dissertation seeks to establish whether corruption can indeed offer the positive outcomes described above when applied to post-conflict scenarios. The post-conflict situation under scrutiny is that present in the Chechen Republic, in the Russian Federation.

Since the dissolution of the Soviet Union in the early 1990s, Russian federal forces have been engaged in a protracted conflict against separatist insurgents (both secular nationalist and later radical Islamic) in the republic, which is situated in the strategically significant North Caucasus. Corruption has been a major facet of the conflict since its outbreak, with all sides participating in its practice. Whilst a low scale Islamic insurgency is ongoing, major conflict in the republic has come to an end, in large part due to Russia’s policy of ‘Chechenisation’. At present, major reconstruction efforts are underway to rebuild from the huge devastation caused by the wars. Corruption persists in the republic, and is essentially considered endemic. Yet rather than approach its presence negatively, this dissertation seeks to show that a toleration, and even active engagement in certain corrupt activities by Russian
and pro-federal Chechen have served as a catalyst to the restoral of relative peace and stability in the republic.

It obvious that there a major obstacles to studying corruption, especially if, as is claimed in this dissertation, legal authorities are engaged in such practices themselves. The opaque nature of corruption means that solid figures on the rate of such incidences are hard to come by. So whilst this dissertation seeks to include quantitative data on corruption, the scarcity of such data means there is also reliance upon qualitative information. This includes surveys conducted regarding individuals’ experiences of corruption in Chechnya, reports and articles composed from the firsthand experiences academics, investigators and journalists, and in-depth analyses conducted by experts over a long-term period. With such information available, we should be able to make a solid assessment as to corruption’s role in post-conflict Chechnya.

Chapter 1 conducts a literature survey concerning the role of corruption in postconflict situations. What emerges is that there is a growing body of recent work that argues, contrary to conventional understandings, that corruption can play a positive role in reducing the likelihood of further political violence and by providing civilians with the means for survival. The second chapter offers a background to the situation in Chechnya, charting the rise of elite figures key to the republic’s present situation whilst contextualising corruption as a major aspect of the conflict and beyond.

Chapter 3 follows on by analysing how a tolerance for, and active engagement in corrupt practices came to constitute a key component of the Russian and pro-federal forces strategy for achieving relative peace and stability, whilst realising the goals held by the Russian leadership.

Chapter 4 looks at the situation in Chechnya today by making an assessment of the quality of the peace gained following the continuation of the aforementioned strategy for peace in the republic, whilst Chapter 5 looks at how the corruption that persists in Chechnya may politically affect both the Kremlin and the loyalist Chechen leadership in the future.

This dissertation concludes by stating that in the case of Chechnya, the practice of corruption can be said to have played a substantial and positive role in the restoral of relative peace and stability.

Literature Survey
Traditional accounts of corruption in post-conflict scenarios have speculated that the practice is an impediment to peace and stability. Following the end of the Cold War, there has been a notable increase both in the number of interventions in post-conflict situations. The ‘victory’ of the liberal-democratic ideals translated into a consensus regarding the role of interventions as a means of peace-keeping and enforcement throughout protracted conflicts (Cheng & Zaum, 2008, p. 301). Once some semblance of peace and stability is achieved, liberal-democratic values are carried through to the reconstruction stage. The emphasis is placed upon establishing and nurturing liberal-democratic institutions. Such institutions are deemed necessary for they are presumed to be the only way in which all stakeholders in the post-conflict scenario are given assurance of fair representation and freedom from political marginalisation, which may have been an underlying cause of the conflict.

Associated with these institutions are the protection of human rights, the rule of law and implementing the conditions for economic growth. The liberal-democratic tradition assumes a deviation from this path undermines the chances for a permanent conclusion to conflict. Corruption is deemed to be such a threat. Corruption thrives on a distinct lack of transparency and accountability, which allows those engaging in its practices to utilise the apparatus of government to ensure illegitimate streams of revenue are maintained. The corrupt practices of elites are particularly damaging. Elite corruption in post-conflict situations is most likely orientated along factional lines. This can exacerbate the dynamics which may have served to foster conflict in the first instance, by enforcing political differences and grievances amongst political factions. Moreover, in post-conflict scenarios financial aid is an essential component for reconstruction efforts: corrupt practices siphon off such aid and prolong the process of establishing the conditions necessary for stable economic growth and effective public services: When money and resources available to government are diverted by corrupt officials instead of being channelled for the benefit of citizens, the clock turns back on social and economic development (United States Institute for Peace, 2010, p. 4).

If the local population is unable to rely upon the government in place to deliver public services and denied political access, alternative centres of power may be sought and established, along with alternative means of service deliverance. The divisions created heighten instability and the possibility of conflict as loyalties and recognitions of authority become distinct. However, recent approaches to the subject are far more ambiguous concerning its role. The origins of this once again derive from the increased usage of international intervention for peace-keeping purposes in the last decade of the 20th Century.
Studying these interventions and the internal dynamics of the states where they were taking place highlights the role of war-time economies in perpetuating conflict. Even with the attainment of peace or a ceasefire, the structure of these wartime economies would persists. An understanding of the political economy of conflict becomes an important asset in determining how to achieve peace, or at least hold off conflict (Berdal & Malone, 2000; Berdal, 2005; Pugh, et al., 2003). The approaches resulting from these assessments of war economies have led to a more ambiguous understanding of corrupt practices during post-conflict situations. With the increased study of corruption in post-conflict scenarios, however, there is a risk of the concept becoming a catch-all term that hides the underlying dynamics and structures at work.

It is therefore important to define what we mean by corruption. Recent works on the subject of corruption have used broad definitions. Michael Johnston has defined corruption as, ‘the abuse of public roles or resources for private benefit’ (2007, p. 12), International agencies such as Transparency International have adopted definitions along a similar line with, ‘the misuse of entrusted power for private gain’ (2014). Mark Philp outlines three problems with these definitions (2008). Firstly, they fail to distinguish acts of corruption from other forms of wrong-doing, such misappropriation and general stealing: as Philp points out, stealing is illegal yet we should be careful not to regard certain actions committed by those in public office as acts of corruption. Whilst the use of the phrases ‘the misuse of entrusted power’ and ‘the abuse of public roles’ denote that it is a public position which is being manipulated, they fail to capture a particular type of abuse that distinguishes corruption from other forms of transgression. In addition, while these aforementioned definitions highlight the role of private gain in corrupt practices, they fail to mention the use of public office to ‘benefit one’s party, sectional interest, or some organization or group’ (2008, p. 311). A further problem arises over what we should label a ‘misuse’ or ‘abuse’ of public office. The previously mentioned definitions certainly raise this question. One step is to apply a universal set of rules and standards, yet such a move would be highly unfeasible given the complexities and intricacies of different political systems. Equally, however, it would be unwise to simply utilise the rules and norms present in each country as a means for determining what abuse is. On one level it renders any definition relative, and in some cases, where there are little to no agreed upon rules and norms, there can almost be no acknowledgment of corruption existing (pp. 311-312).
Philp seeks to overcome these definitional challenges by offering the following: Corruption in politics occurs where a public official (A), acting in ways that violate the rules and norms of office, and that involves personal, partisan or sectional gain, harms the interests of the public (B) (or some subsection thereof) who is the designated beneficiary of that office, to benefit themselves and/or a third party (C) who rewards or otherwise incentivizes A to gain access to goods or services they would not otherwise obtain’ (p. 315).

This definition has significant analytical precision. This precision lies in the fact that Philp states that corruption can be distinguished from other misdemeanours given that corruption involves a violation of the expected standards of the public office held. Having a conception of corruption is to recognise that a political office has both a particular function within society, and that particular standards are attributed with the carrying out of that function (p. 312). An act of corruption, as opposed to another act of malfeasance, has particular negative political consequences. It is also important to note that this definition recognises that not all acts of corruption are necessarily illegal. This builds upon work by the World Bank regarding the notion of ‘state capture’: a process of political subversion by corrupt networks which embed, extend and renders corrupt gains legitimate through the introduction of legislation (World Bank, 2002). This strengthens this definition compared to other legal forms which ultimately overlook important instances of corruption. Philp’s definition also highlights the difficulties of constituting what corruption actually is, given that different societies and cultures will undoubtedly retain differing political and legal norms, and thus have differing expectations regarding the duties of political office. Yet while differing expectations persist, it is hoped, with this definition, that a degree of universality can be achieved through agreement over the general point that corruption concerns the subversion of public office.

Using this more precise definition of corruption, we can begin to look at what effect corruption may have during post-conflict situations, such as that which has existed in Chechnya since the end of major hostilities, and most notably since the ascension of Ramzan Kadyrov to power. As previously mentioned, recent approaches to corruption have fostered an ambiguous understanding of the phenomenon. Whilst corruption in post-conflict situations has a wide variety of consequences, the literature reveals two major themes. The first looks at the ability of corrupt practices to potentially buy off ‘peace spoilers’ (Cheng & Zaum, 2008, p. 303). The second looks at the quality of peace achieved in a post-conflict where corruption takes place. What is important about the two themes is an admission that corruption has the potential to play some role in achieving peace in a post-conflict environment. The creation of
power-sharing arrangements amongst warring factions has frequently been an important apparatus for ending intra-state conflict. Even with the end of major conflict, a security dilemma still exists amongst the parties concerned. Research has shown that establishing power-sharing institutions can help to dissolve the mistrust present through inspiring mutual confidence, with a view to a more enduring peace (Hartzell & Hoddie, 2003; Le Billon, 2003). These agreements, whilst solving the larger, more immediate issue of ending hostilities and securing peace, often come with the understanding that those in power are able to exploit the positions they hold via the economic opportunities presented. Such opportunities could include assuming control of ‘state resources, building patronage networks and political power structures, allowing illicit economic activities to continue, and receiving bribes for public contracts’ (Cheng & Zaum, 2008, p. 303). Following the brutal series of wars within the Democratic Republic of Congo, rival rebel leaders were given unrestricted access to state coffers and resources having signed the 2002 Global and All Inclusive Agreement. Bergling has noted how NATO supported local actors in Bosnia that favoured their troops presence, over those that expressed reluctance, in spite of real concerns about corruption (2008). It’s fair to say that in cases of intra-state conflict, there is a resolution for peace as soon as possible, especially when the international community or outside actors become involved in one way or another. This seems obvious, but the overwhelming interest for peace means that negotiators are often willing to make concessions that will more than likely foster corrupt practices. Reno has stated that many of those negotiating for peace often have little appetite for any genuine political reform, especially if such reform threatens to reverse a tentative peace settlement or ceasefire in place: hence negotiators will ‘tolerate the incorporation of elements of patrimonial politics with only partial reform’ (Reno, 2008, p. 398). In effect, peace negotiators come to condone the institutionalisation of corrupt practices in the interest of peace, a fact which local actors are fully aware of it seems (Keen, 2000).

The literature has also recognised the potential for the buying-off strategy to backfire. For such a strategy to work requires that all factions feel they garner an equal benefit from the terms of peace. In post-conflict situations, it is highly likely that the elites still hold significant influence over the previously warring factions, factions that may have access to arms, or at least are capable of wielding violence against rivals. Such a situation was witnessed in the case of Chechnya and the tumultuous inter-war period of de facto independence between 1996 and 1999. Problems can arise intrafactionally as well. Rebel groups may have fostered a significant degree of support through promises to eradicate corruption rampant in the government they
fought against. If the group’s leaders fail to make headway with this manifesto, when they themselves becoming embroiled in corrupt activity, it is foreseeable that the political grievances of the rebel base toward such activity will persist, now being directed toward those that once led them. The persistence of such grievances leaves any peace achieved highly unstable.

A further risk with the condonement of corruption from peace settlements is the potential for destabilising social inequalities: As groups empowered by the outcome of the war continue to sustain dominant political and economic positions through corruption, they may prevent the redistribution of power by stifling institutional checks and balances (Le Billon, 2008, p. 353).

As inequalities persist and become ingrained as a result of the new elites’ corrupt practices, social divisions and new political grievances arise that can serve as a future source of conflict. The risk of conflict can become increasingly likely through the formation of a vicious cycle, whereby entrenched social inequalities as a result of corruption, lead to a greater reliance upon corrupt practices, thereby further entrenching inequality (You & Khagram, 2005).

This point brings us onto the second prevailing theme in the literature: that of the quality of peace that exists in the presence of corruption. Ultimately, what peacekeeping and the subsequent peace-building attempt to do is restore intra-societal trust to a level which is conducive to peace. This means trust between individuals, between identifiable groups and between the population and those governing them. Intra-state conflict shatters much of this trust: population displacement, focused atrocities as well as conventional fighting, along with general fear all contribute to the creation of a pre-societal state. The bonds of trust broken by acts of war are a necessity for establishing a functioning modern economy and society (Looney, 2008). Once again in the case of Bosnia, it was found that the absence of a social contract was one of the main hindrances to fighting corruption effectively (Pugh & Divjak, 2008, p. 374).

Interpersonal trust is an incredibly important aspect of a well-functioning economy. Financial exchanges are grounded upon certain guarantees: that all transactions are fair and no one party in the exchange is being cheated. In a properly functioning society, individuals can expect government agencies and certain regulatory bodies to act as guarantors of fair exchange, and give assurances that those engaging in unfair transactions can expect to be suitably prosecuted for their misdeed. However, corruption can effectively lower these levels of trust, which have already been severely compromised as a result of war (Seligson, 2002).
Corrupt practices can also jeopardise chances for stable economic recovery, given corruption’s detrimental effects upon trust and predictability (Anderson & Marcouiller, 2002). Consequently, with a lack of trust, and lack of support from relevant authorities, individuals will seek protection from private sources, often unsanctioned legally (Gambetta, 1999). As Rose-Ackerman demonstrates, corruption has severe consequences for a postconflict country’s potential for economic growth and investment (2008), as well as undermining the legitimacy of the country’s political institutions (Anderson & Tverdova, 2003). The case of Afghanistan is a good example as to how the exposure and influence of corruption on the daily routines of individuals can be detrimental to the purposes of peacebuilding and state reconstruction in a postconflict scenario. It has been found that 70 per cent of the Afghan population have been forced to engage in bribery for various reasons: every year the average person pays the equivalent of US$100 in bribes, a figure equal to two month’s salary for a civil servant. (Torabi & Delesgues, 2007). As Goodhand notes: If the key challenge of post-conflict peacebuilding is the construction of legitimate political authority, the widespread perception of corruption undermines the emergence of this authority. Corrupt officials are the face of government in the districts and the discourse on corruption has been skilfully mobilized by the Taliban and anti-government elements (Goodhand, 2008, p. 412).

The prevailing trend in the literature heavily suggests that, in the long-term, corruption is highly detrimental to the process of reconstruction and state-building. However, this dissertation will argue that corrupt practices do not necessarily undermine the quality of peace vis-à-vis the break down in societal trust. As indicated by the experiences of individuals in Chechnya, corrupt practices can attain a degree of trust through the shared complicity of engaging in corruption itself, and through the establishment of trusting relationships due corrupt activities having patron-client or ‘quid pro quo’ character.

The literature has raised some important questions and areas for analysis relevant to our investigation of the post-conflict situation in Chechnya. The themes emergent from the literature of corruption as a buy-off for potential peace spoilers and as a factor in the quality of peace, each with their own routes of investigation, can be aptly applied to the functioning of the Russian backed government of Ramzan Kadyrov. What is interesting to note is that much of the literature regarding the role of corruption in post-conflict peace-keeping has a heavy focus upon the role of international actors such as United Nations. Such actors have a certain vision when it comes to what kind of state should be ultimately achieved once the process of peace-building and reconstruction is ‘completed’. In Chechnya, no such organisation has a
significant presence or role to play in the reconstruction process. This role has been played by
the Russian Federation, importantly with Vladimir Putin as its president. An important part of
this essay will be to see how the priorities of the Russian Federation, as the main benefactor to
the reconstruction efforts in Chechnya, perhaps differ from those of a more ‘conventional’,
‘UN-style’ post-conflict handling effort.

A History Corruption and Elites in post-Soviet Chechnya
The recent history of Russia’s southern frontier with the Caucasus has been largely defined by
Moscow’s attempts to subdue and control the Chechen people. For more than a century and a
half following Peter the Great’s annexation of the littoral areas of Dagestan in 1722, Russia has
employed both military force and colonialist policies in an attempt to quell what became a
notoriously rebellious corner of their vast empire. The Russian literary greats of Lermontov,
Pushkin and Tolstoy through recanting their experiences in the region romanticised the
concept of the Chechen ‘freedom fighter’ struggling against imperial occupation. Such
romanticism has been adopted by a number of journalistic accounts of the most recent wars
(Bennett, 1998; Politkovskaya, 2001; Smith, 1998), and to a certain extent has shaped the
analyses of some academics, which promote the role of ethnic hatred in the conflict (Dunlop,
1998; Tishkov, 1997). A notable addition to this discourse is the mass deportations to Central
Asia under Stalin in 1944. Russian ‘hatred’, or at the least intense mistrust, toward their
Caucasian subjects is an explanatory factor behind the exceptional power structure that
existed following the reestablishment of the Chechen republic in 1957. Central control was
maintained and nationalism subdued in most Soviet republics with a ‘dyarchy of native first
secretary and Russian second secretary’ (Miller, 1977), with the Russian deputy retaining the
most power.

However, in the case of Chechnya no such structure existed. The mistrust between
that Chechens were excluded from most positions of power in the Soviet nomenklatura
(Gakaev, 2005, p. 24), and it was not until 1989 that a Chechen, Doku Zavgaev, headed the
Communist Party of the Soviet Union (CPSU) in the Chechen-Ingush Autonomous Republic.
Hence, the development of Chechen elites has been relatively recent historically. It is only with
the disintegration of the Soviet Union and the initiation of events leading up to the Chechen
wars that we see elite structures begin to emerge in Chechen politics. It is in studying the
formation of these elite structures that we might gain an understanding of the dynamics of
elite corruption in Chechnya today.
Whilst the literature may vary on how to exactly characterise their motivations, what does arise about the emergent Chechen elite is their status as ‘outsiders’ (Gakaev, 2005; Hughes, 2007). Chechens had been offered little in the way of opportunity within the strictures of the Soviet nomenklatura, and the upheavals of the 1920s through to the 1940s had disrupted the traditional patterns which would ordinarily garner political and religious elites. What is indicated from the literature about the collapse of the Soviet Union is the dawn of Chechen opportunism. This opportunism is complex, given that it can be understood in several ways. Certainly one aspect notable for this investigation is the economic opportunity created in the post-Soviet space for Chechens who were in majority poorly educated and disenfranchised:

Accompanying the seizure of power by Dudaev and his outsider groups was the development of a dismissive attitude to work, to accumulating personal and public wealth through honest labour. Easy criminal ways of making money through financial manipulations, robbery of Russians in the towns and other forms of banditry, fabulously enriched thousands of people without kith or kin or any occupation very quickly, creating a ‘new elite’ out of yesterday’s poorly-educated outsiders. They became the social basis of the new regime (Gakaev, 2005, p. 24).

Whilst the economic opportunities created for Chechen in the last days of the Soviet Union are no doubt of significance, their importance must not be overstated as Gakaev later indicates by stating that the root cause of the Chechen wars lies in the competition between the elites of the federal centre and Chechen mafia groupings over oil profits (p. 25). Due deference must be given to the genuine desires for Chechen nation building exhibited by Dzhokar Dudaev, the figurehead of the Chechen separatist movement, and those around him such as Zelimkhan Yandarbiev (Hughes, 2007). What is more accurate to say is that among the elites genuinely aspiring for Chechen independence were those who bandwagon in order to seek financial gain. For example, Dudaev received significant political and military support from former Moscow crime boss, Beslan Gantemirov, of whom Hughes describes as a ‘freebooting criminal warlord interested in the opportunistic material gains’ (p. 24) that would come from independence (Dunlop, 1998, p. 95; Gall & de Waal, 1998, pp. 92-93).

Accompanying this opportunism and more subversive element of criminalisation of the elite was the de-Russification of Chechnya in the years preceding the first conflict (Russell, 2011). The ethnic Russians living in the republic had been encouraged to do so by the Russian
authorities since the late nineteenth century (Hughes, 2007, pp. 9-10). In doing so they had effectively become an instrument of modernisation, with each new wave of migrants to the region bringing specialist expertise for economic and infrastructural development. With the emigration of ethnic Russians in the early 1990’s, Chechnya underwent a process of ‘de-modernization and archaization of life’ that came with the disruption of ‘the existing balance in the social, economic and labour spheres’ (Markedonov, 2009). Consequently, the retreat of Russian dominance from elite structures in Chechnya allowed for ‘natives’ to take their place, all the while creating conditions for unruly competition as positions of power sought to be filled. In spite of this turbulent environment, Chechens were mostly united in their fight against Russians following the invasion of December 1994, albeit under the banner of various local warlords such as Shamil Basaev, Arbi Baraev, Salman Raduev and Ruslan Gelaev. Dudaev alongside a fellow former Soviet Army officer, Aslan Maskhadov, oversaw the Chechen defence.

Corruption and illicit activity for private gain have been central features of Chechen politics and society ever since the collapse of the Soviet Union and the consequent turbulence as separatist elements in the republic fought for statehood. Dudaev and Mashkadov, both of whom had served with high rank in the Soviet military, were acutely aware of the need to muster and militarise a force capable of resisting the inevitable attempts by the Russian Federation to regain control of the republic. The Chechen leadership ordered the mobilisation of all men of fighting age (between 15 and 55 years old). Given that Chechnya was a key regional base for Soviet military stockpiles, the armament of these men was made all the more possible. In addition, in one of the first major instances of corruption in Chechnya, this process would be facilitated by Russia itself. In late 1991 to 1992, extraordinary quantities of military hardware and munitions would be transferred into Chechen hands: some of it was formally handed over, some seized outright and others sold illicitly. According to Soviet garrison commanders, when Dudaev ordered the immediate withdrawal of troops from Chechnya, the word from their superior Pavel Grachev was for a swift withdrawal and to leave all stockpiles behind. It is claimed by some officers that Dudaev and Grachev, who were both acquainted from their time serving in Afghanistan, had agreed to split the weapons stocks between them. Such a claim was denied by Grachev (Bespalov, 1995; Hughes, 2007, p. 26; Khlystun, 2001). It is also generally acknowledged that, whilst the authority of the Russians had been removed from Chechnya, Dudaev’s government kept in close contact with individuals within the command structures of the Russian military. This relationship between the secessionists and corrupt
elements facilitated a number of activities such as oil sales, the importation of Western goods into Russia, drug trafficking and arms trading, all of which sought to empower the Chechens and enrich the Russians (Hughes, 2007, p. 26). Journalists reporting from Grozny at this point in time commented on how the city had established an open arms bazaar (Seely, 2001). The chaos of the Soviet Union’s collapse was mirrored by the situation on the ground in Chechnya itself. The Chechen republic did have potential when it came to gaining income: it did not pay taxes to the Russian government, yet received pension funds and other social subsidies, and whilst small compared to the rest of Russia, there was an established oil and petrochemicals industry. Much of the welfare and subsidies supplied by the Russians failed to reach their intended recipients, and dealing with oil and petrochemicals became rampant with criminal and corrupt activity. In the period of 1992 to 1993, due to a failure of salary payments and a flight of ethnic Russians who largely operated them, state services and functions began to disintegrate. There was a general breakdown in civil order, a process accelerated by the availability of weapons to the male population: many of these men have been left destitute by the breakdown of the Soviet support system and were deprived of sources of employment in both Chechnya and Russia, leading many to form armed groups. These groups frequently preyed upon the vulnerable, in particular ethnic Russians, who were relatively wealthy and were unable to rely upon clientelist protection schemes (Hughes, 2007, pp. 63-64). The situation in Chechnya under Dudaev meant that Russia and the outside world readily labelled the republic as under the control of criminals, an image no doubt enhanced by the fact that Dudaev’s own entourage included criminalistic elements. It must bore in mind, however that much of this criminality was a consequence of Russia’s blockade of Chechnya: the Russian authorities control of the ground and air outside of Chechnya meant that much of the illicit trade that crossed the borders involved at least some complicity with the Russians.

The victory of the Chechen separatist forces only gave rise to further elite competition in the now de facto independent republic. Whilst pro-Russian elites had ceased to be of significance, what emerged following the triumph of the opportunists was a wide range of victors, including criminalistic warlords, more secular separatists and fundamentalist Islamic jihadists. The variance in the motivations of these groups would undermine any serious prospect for state-building in the republic. Following the end of the first conflict in 1996, Aslan Maskhadov (having assumed the presidency following the death of Dudaev) was left with an economy that was virtually destroyed, with around 40% of the pre-war population of the country now internally displaced or living in overcrowded villages (Hughes, 2007).
warlords had little interest in restoring any sense of law and order: many had profited greatly from the ransoms collected from kidnapping and contract assassinations. Hostagetaking and contract assassinations were now lucrative business. The OSCE Assistance Group in Chechnya 1999 report offered a bleak picture of the situation in the republic: Against the backdrop of ever-worsening socio-economic conditions; crime, unrest and acts of terrorism have acquired endemic proportions, adding to a volatile political situation and a general break-down of law and order. In particular, hostage-taking and abductions for ransom have seen a sharp rise. Expatriates believed to be capable of raising large ransoms, have become prime targets for perpetrators of kidnappings (OSCE, 1999, p. 29).

Maskhadov’s campaign against the hostage crisis of 1999 was severely undermined, if suggestions that members of the Chechen leadership were themselves regular beneficiaries of extortion payments (Tishkov, 2004, p. 111). The profiteering by armed groups from the conditions created by warfare was by no means confined to hostage-taking. The Chechen Republic had lost control of its income or expenditure, not having composed a budget since 1992. Tax collection ceased, and as a consequence the state treasury received none of the expected revenue from the sale of oil and its by-products in 1999. From 1998, the pillaging of oil resources reached unparalleled proportions and fighting erupted between the government and the armed opposition over oil assets and other economic interests. As the majority of oil wells were seized by armed groups, the state’s industrial oil production dropped from 4,200 tons a day in 1998 to 400 in the following year (p. 188). Large scale embezzlement and corruption only grew following the first conflict. As a local newspaper described: Billions embezzled in Chechnya’s agriculture, construction industry, and oil production show that corruption has entered the war. It’s no longer an exception when bribe-takers, extortionists, and swindlers in public offices trample the law underfoot. They use their posts and influence in various power structures to grab millions before withdrawing into the shadows and the commercial sector. The new era has opened many opportunities for state officials. The old proverb “Would you sit near a spring and not drink?” has acquired a new, sinister meaning (p. 190).

With such extreme conditions, engaging in corruption proved to be an essential means of survival for the civilian population. With most state institutions and services in complete disarray or simply non-existent, ‘cushioning the shocks of the conflict’ or survival itself would not have been possible without engaging in illicit activities or bribery (Zabyelina, 2014, p. 41). Through forced collaboration with those that held access to resources, the military
commanders and the representatives of ruined state institutions, an environment was created where the practice of buying services and favours, including illegal ones, was common place (p. 41).

A key explanation for this continued chaos within Chechnya-Ichkeria and cause of concern for Maskhadov was the pervasive rise of radical forms of Islam amongst the warlord elites, in particular Shamil Basaev, who promoted Wahhabist doctrine. The evolution of this radical Islamism within Chechnya was an important aspect of the manoeuvrings of elites groups. Whilst at its inception, the struggle for independence had been motivated by a largely anti-colonialist, secular sentiment, the Chechen leadership had utilised Islamist rhetoric as a tool of mobilisation and propaganda in the years leading up to and during the conflict: Dudaev characterised the fighting with Russia in the tradition of ghazavat (holy war), mosques were sponsored in the organisation of resistance, and, following the death of Dudaev, Yandarbiev supported the Islamisation of the judiciary by proposing the introduction of shari’a courts. However, it was the influence of Shamil Basaev and his militia that proved the biggest factor in the rise of political Islam amongst the Chechen elite (Hughes, 2007; Russell, 2007; 2011). Basaev had evolved over the course of the war from a secular nationalist into a proponent of Wahhabism. His infamous Abkhaz Battalion were heavily utilised in the conflict for their use of powerful shock tactics in the form of terrorism and suicide bombing. The success of this unit attracted admiration from many of Chechnya’s young fighters. In spite of Basaev’s heroic status amongst the Chechen people, few trusted him: the extreme form of Islam he promoted was unattractive and foreign to a predominantly Sufist population. Such mistrust was demonstrated in the results of the 1997 presidential election. The more moderate Maskhadov received 64.8% of the vote, compared with Basaev who gained just 23.5% (Souleimanov, 2007, p. 132). Consequently, the only foreseeable way for the more radical elements of Islam to maintain a foothold was, as criminal elements had done, to maintain the lack of law and order in the republic. Indeed the threat of violence from Basaev and his heavily armed, radicalised militiamen spurred Maskhadov to accommodate. In early 1999, he furthered Yandarbiev’s work by decreeing the transition to shari’a, and later suspended the Parliament in preparation for the introduction of an Islamic constitution (Hughes, 2007, p. 104). Such moves provoked shocked reactions from the international community.

By the end of 1997, discussions with the federal centre regarding the status of Chechnya had reached an impasse. There was now little prospect of any substantial reconstruction aid being sent, and upon the advice of his Minister of Foreign Affairs, Yevgenii
Primakov, Yeltsin did all he could to prevent *de jure* independence of the republic, including threatening to cut off all diplomatic ties with any country that engaged with the Chechens (Kullberg, 2003). The only source of external aid that Maskhadov could hope to receive would be from Wahhabist organisations based in the Arab World, which only further consolidated the position of Basaev and the *jihadists* (Hughes, 2007, p. 102). Amidst this turmoil was the Grand Mufti of the republic, Ahkmet Kadyrov. As the religious leader of the country’s more traditional Sufi Islam, Kadyrov held a far more moderate stance amongst the Chechen elite and had been a source of support for the beleaguered Maskhadov against the rising tide of Wahhabist influence in the country. But with each concession that the president made to Basaev and the radical elements of the Chechen elite, Kadyrov’s support became steadily less forthcoming. As the leader and effective embodiment of Chechnya’s more moderate religious sentiments, fundamentalist Islam was a serious threat to his political position. Kadyrov ‘had been appalled by Mashkadov’s toleration of the emergence of... (the so-called Wahhabis)’ (Sakwa, 2005, p. 19). It seems the Mufti, who had already survived an attempt on his life in October 1998 (Akaev, 2005), would finally relinquish his support for Maskhadov following the president’s decision to concede to Basaev through the said establishment of a *shari’a* government in early 1999 (Russell, 2011, pp. 1079-1080).

Opportunity arose in the form of Russia’s Chechenisation policy, in which Moscow sought Chechen proxies to support and manage the turbulent situation within the republic. As Hughes notes, the ‘policy was driven by the paramount importance for Russia of achieving a peace settlement that retains Chechnya under Russian sovereignty – decolonization is not an option’ (Hughes, 2007, p. 118).

Chechenisation had been a policy within the region since 1995, having been suggested by presidential advisor Emil Pain (Fuller, 2004), and a number of prominent Chechens had been co-opted to the Russian side, but it was only the former mayor of Grozny, Gantemirov, upon his release from a Russian prison, who had played a significant role in the second conflict, leading his *gantemirovtsy* (‘followers of Gantemirov’) a paramilitary force under Russian direction. As Vladimir Putin replaced Yeltsin as president of the Federation, a greater emphasis was given to the Chechenisation policy. The policy was given greater importance considering that it would allow the federal centre to undermine Maskhadov’s presidency further. However, the viability of Chechenisation only became realised following Kadyrov’s decision to abandon Maskhadov and engage with the Russians. Kadyrov’s revulsion of the encroachment of Wahhabism into Chechen elite politics, seemingly facilitated by his former ally, finally
convinced the former Mufti (relieved of his status by Maskhadov in August 1999) that his interests now lay with the Russians. In October 1999, shortly after the commencement of the second conflict, Kadyrov diverted his loyalty to Moscow and the federal centre. As we shall see in the next chapter, a tolerance and implicit support for corruption amongst the newly converted Chechen loyalist would become a key component of Russia’s Chechenisation policy. This component can said be to the ‘buying the peace’ strategy.

**Perspectives on the ‘Buying the Peace’ Strategy**

**The Russian/ Putin perspective**

There is an interesting question regarding as to why Chechenisation was a policy given heavy emphasis in the second conflict by Putin. When the former FSB officer was chosen by Yeltsin to succeed as Prime Minister in 1999, Putin had strong support from the military/security establishment within the federal government, known typically as the *siloviki*. Within their ranks were a desire and an expectation to take a hard stance against the Chechens. The *siloviki*, in particular those from a military background had viewed the First Chechen War as a great humiliation, one exacerbated by the cuts to their budgets in subsequent years. The second Chechen conflict provided an opportunity for the armed forces to reclaim some greatness and take revenge against the ‘bandits’ who had somehow defeated them a few years beforehand. Furthermore, there was a genuine security concern about the North Caucasian republic, which had become all too evident due to the criminality rampant in everyday life, the increasingly radicalised nature of the Chechen leadership and the risk of terrorist action against the Russian heartland (the attack launched by Basaev and his forces into Dagestan also proved a concern for energy orientated elites in Moscow, as destabilisation of Chechnya’s neighbour would threaten at the time Russia’s only viable land corridor the newly constructed Transneft pipeline between the Caspian Sea and Novorossiisk).

At the heart of the *siloviki* philosophy are the concepts of *derzhavnost* (holding that Russia should remain a great power) and *gosudarstvennost* (maintaining that the Russian state should be strong in order to keep the country together): the situation in Chechnya in 1999 was a threat to these ideals (Russell, 2007). Putin’s assumption to power pushed these ideas to the forefront, and the new president was under pressure to let the generals unleash their forces in Chechnya once more with no toleration for negotiation.

Putin and those around him had already recognised the fruitlessness of any potential negotiations with Maskhadov and the moderates given their impotence over the rampant
radical Islamic elements in Chechnya (Lentini, 2005). And yet despite this and the objections of his generals, Putin was fully prepared to engage the Chechenisation policy once Ahkmet Kadyrov had revealed himself as a suitable collaborator. The most satisfactory explanation for the co-option of Kadyrov rests upon two motivations. Firstly, the collaboration of native elites by an imperial power was a classic counterinsurgency tactic, utilised several times beforehand, notably by the British in Malaya and Kenya during the Mau Mau rebellion (Hughes, 2007).

Employing Kadyrov and those fighters loyal to the Mufti (the initial core of the kadyrovtsy) provided the Russians with an additional force with which to subdue the fundamentalist insurgents. Given this militia force’s notoriety for heavy-handed tactics, little concern lay with notion of a morally fought counterinsurgency. Secondly, Kadyrov’s appointment as head of the civil administration in Chechnya (following his surrender of the republic’s second city of Gudermes), in which the Mufti was given relative autonomy whilst still answering to Moscow in some capacity, was a means by which to incorporate Chechnya into the power vertikal that was developing under the new president. Given his position as head of mainstream Sufi Islam in the republic, Kadyrov retained a great degree of political clout amongst the population and other elites. The quality of this relationship continued, as Ramzan assumed power following his father’s assassination (and the necessary time had passed for him to reach 30, the minimum age for the Chechen presidency).

The Kremlin, it seems, has been comfortable to maintain Ramzan Kadyrov’s position as the undisputed leader of the Chechen republic for several years now. The second war presented many of the same dynamics as the first. In conjunction with the support and promotion of the pro-Moscow Kadyrov family came a recognition that securing stability and order in Chechnya was as much about economics and financial support as it was about suppressing and eliminating separatist forces. Reconstruction aid had always been included into the Russian federal budget, even by Yeltsin from 1997 to 1998. Following the re-establishment of Russian control, the Program for Reconstruction in Chechnya was set up in 2001, through which huge sums of federal money was pumped into the republic. Between 2002 and 2006, the Russia devoted 30.6 billion roubles (US$916 million) to the republic’s restoration programme (Kommersant, 2009). According to the Chamber of Accounts, in 2010 the North Caucasus Federal District received 167.8 billion roubles (US$5.4 billion) and 270 billion roubles (US$8.6 billion) in the following year (Kavkazskiy Uzel, 2012).

At the end of 2012, the Russian government approved the State Program for the North Caucasus through 2025, which dedicated 2.5 trillion roubles (US$ 80.9 billion) of spending
towards the region over the next 13 years (RIA, 2012). Unsurprisingly, such enormous expenditure in region with a history of corrupt practices has not been without issues. Further problems lie with the Russian state itself, frequently touted as being riddled with corruption, with even the Federal Audit Chamber making admissions to such activity in both the central and Chechen administrations: a bulletin of the Audit Chamber makes reference to ‘cases of illegal payments and embezzlements’ of funds earmarked for the republic (Accounts Chamber of the Russian Federation, 2003). Two years later, Sergei Ryabukhin, the chief accountant of the Audit Chamber, stated in an interview that around 2.23 billion roubles in 2003 and 1.8 billion in 2004 were lost though ‘financial violations’ on a scale ‘that could make one simply cry’ (Muradov, 2005). Of the funds that do reach Chechnya, a similar pattern occurs: A significant portion of the aid very often ends up in the pockets of high officials and those closest to them, who are from what are in effect closed power clans (Souleimanov, 2011).

In 2012, the Prosecutor General’s Office announced that 2.5 billion roubles of state funds were embezzled in the republics of the North Caucasus. Alexei Melnikov, the head of the prosecutor office in the North Caucasus branch, blamed “corrupt officials working in cahoots with law enforcements for the money drain” (Arsovka & Zabyelina, 2013, p. 18). A total of 1,400 corruption-related violations were reported in the region in 2011 with more than 1,000 leading to criminal cases (p. 18). Most of the cases were brought in action against state officials, law enforcement agencies and other power agencies. The rapid inflow of aid indeed provided ample opportunities for embezzlement and rent-seeking. According to the Prosecutor General’s Office, accountants of the Chechen military units allegedly misappropriated 113 million roubles intended as rewards to the soldiers participating in counter terrorism operations in the North Caucasus. Interfax reported that the perpetrators purchased luxury cars and immobile property with the embezzled money. In another case in 2009, the embezzlement of 64 million roubles was discovered in the Chechen military unit (p. 18). Yet whilst cases occur, the Kremlin has continued to maintain the flow of aid to the republic. Much of this reasoning can be revealed by the loyalist Chechen perspective of the Chechenisation policy.

The Chechen/ Kadyrov perspective

Following the ‘Chechenisation’ policy instituted by Putin’s government, the guarantor of stability in the North Caucasian republic has been Ramzan Kadyrov. Kadyrov, with substantial financial support and subsidisation from the Kremlin, has engaged in a strategy best
characterised as ‘buy or die’. Perhaps in recognising that one of the major dynamics driving the conflict were the economic opportunities that arose from the instability, Kadyrov has continued a programme of amnesty for former rebel fighters, or boeviki, that began under his father’s tenure. In 2005, Alu Alkhanov admitted that 7,000 former boeviki made up half of Chechnya’s forces of law and order, a figure which is considered to have risen: three years after Alkhanov’s admission it was thought that around 15,000 former rebel fighters constituted the kadyrovtsy (Russell, 2008, p. 670). Such amnesties, initially established by the Russians as means of ensuring that federal servicemen would be exempt from war crimes tribunals, were subsequently handled by the Kadyrov administration. Through pledging allegiance to Kadyrov, former rebels given pardon and gain a lucrative position within government agencies or the Chechen security services, often termed the kadyrovtsy (followers of Kadyrov). In terms of ‘legitimate’ expenditure, it has been estimated that the payroll for the kadyrovtsy alone comes to at least $72 million per year (p. 671). Given the alternatives, engaging in these amnesties is a highly attractive proposition for former boeviki. A steady source of legitimate income (it is said that former rebels earn around $500 a month (Russell, 2009, p. 219) along with any subsequent ‘perks’ are surely more preferable to engaging in high risk activities, such as kidnappings, or associating one’s self with radical separatist elements, which are regularly targeted by federal and pro-Russian forces. As Russell states: It is hardly surprising, therefore, that many potential Chechen opponents of Kadyrov have allowed themselves to be co-opted into his elite in order to gain their share of the relatively abundant booty currently on offer (2011, p. 1075).

The new kadyrovtsy, thanks to the flood of money from Moscow, have substantial opportunities for enrichment through corruption and illicit activities. One of the key areas for such profiteering has been the construction sector. As previously stated, the wars destroyed much of, if not completely levelled Chechen towns and cities. As a result massive building projects and reconstruction efforts have been undertaken as an exemplar of the success of Kadyrov and pro-federal forces in bringing peace and stability. Much has been made of the construction and completion of Europe’s largest mosque in the centre of Grozny for example, the opening of which was attended by both Kadyrov and Putin. The construction boom in the capital and other towns has meant ample opportunity for embezzlement and rent-seeking by the corrupt officials supervising the projects. There has been an array of ways construction companies have engaged in manipulations through the creation of fictional workers or through announcing fictitious, non-functioning or false project costs, all of which have been devised as
a means of siphoning off federal subsidies or avoiding the payment of taxes (Zabyelina, 2014, p. 43). The frequency of the embezzlement centres on the fact that construction firm managers feel perfectly within their rights to do so, as they themselves are expected to pay higher ranking government officials for their privilege: as an industry explained following such a case, the problem cannot rectified by the dismissal of certain officials, as it is a system that is ingrained and has been functioning for many years (Ibragimov & Ivanov, 2012). Significant incidences of corruption have also taken place in areas such as healthcare, housing and war compensation (Zabyelina, 2014, pp. 43-45).

Whilst the incidence of corrupt activities in the Chechen republic is rampant, Kadyrov is careful in ensuring that there is at least some dissemination of the money that has been flowing into the North Caucasus. The Chechen leader has complete control over the Ahmed Kadyrov Memorial Fund, for example. All those working in the public sector are obliged to pay tribute to the fund. Whilst it’s fair to say that a substantial proportion of these tributes remain with Kadyrov (as indicated by his extravagant lifestyle), this body is responsible for funding much of the reconstruction efforts in the republic. As a result, it is hard to distinguish between overt corruption and what is really an ‘unofficial’/‘quid pro quo’ tax (p. 46). One may also view the ‘buying off the peace spoilers’ strategy occurring in Chechnya in terms of securing reparations: though unorthodox in Western eyes, the cyclical nature of public sector corruption in Chechnya lubricated largely through Russian funding, works as a means gaining compensation for the republic’s woes over the years.

The Quality of Peace in Chechnya

Clans, Political-Military Groupings and the Structure of Corruption

There is some dispute as to how large a part clans (or teips as they are referred to in Chechnya) actually play. Some have emphasised their importance: Russian ethnologist Sergei Aroutiunov describes the existence of around 150 teip units in the Chechen republic, with various fragmentations into smaller village based units and lineages, which in turn are united into around nine larger units known as tukhums. Aroutiunov, along Chechen traditionalists such as Khozh-Akhmet Nukhaev, have advocated for the Chechen institutions to be reflective of this social make-up. For example, it is posited that the republic should be split into mountainous and lowland regions, with the latter being governed by secular Russian laws and the former to be left to the rule of Tribal elders (Sokirianskaia, 2006, p. 454). Others have rejected the teip system’s existence outright: the Rector of the Ingush State University has
claimed that the trappings of the teip system, with its elders and customary laws, are constructs to promote the image of a primitive society which in turn are used to rationalise control by the federal centre (p. 454). In spite of these divergent viewpoints, the teip continues to play a role in the morphology of corruption in postconflict Chechnya, yet at the same time it is important to note that the dynamics of said corrupt practices do not orientate solely along teip lines. Sokirianskaia’s fieldwork study of the significance of Vainakh (Chechen-Ingush) family structures rejected the idea that, following the collapse of the Soviet Union, teips in their traditional social context as a large tribal grouping consisting of hundreds of family units have very little political or social relevance in modern Chechen society.

However, the notion of the teip still retains some significance on a smaller colloquial scale with reference to extended families, and in this context is said to be an important source of nepotism and social mobility (Sokirianskaia, 2006). Viewing the teip in this form is important with reference to corruption in Chechnya today. The Kadyrov family is part of the Benoi clan, the largest clan in Chechnya. Under Ramzan Kadyrov’s administration, the ease with which an individual can gain employment is greatly facilitated should that individual happen to be a member of the Benoi clan. As Jonathan Littell describes: If you’re not a native of Benoi, you’ll find life much more difficult. But any lad from Khosi-Yurt will get a job simply as his birthright...The Benoi teip is a very large one, and in the corruption process it gets narrowed down to a village, or to close and distant relatives. But if you’re a native of Benoi, you will have an easier time than the members of other teips (Prague Watchdog, 2009).

Though very relevant, it is important for us not to overstate the emphasis placed upon teip affiliation today. As Sokirianskaia’s study argues, the concept of the teip has little significance when compared to what she refers to as ‘political-military groupings’, a unit formed on the principles of personal loyalty that includes the supporters of an influential public figure (2006, p. 464). Such units revolve around the nucleus of these influential public figures. The kadyrovtsy grouping is a prime example of this. Whilst many of the kadyrovtsy may be drawn from the Benoi, this is less so about maintaining deeply felt blood ties and teip loyalties than it is about ensuring levels of trust amongst those with the Kadyrov unit. Indeed, prominent members of the kadyrovtsy, such as Muslim Khuchiyev, the mayor of Grozny, belong to other teips. Granted, as Jonathon Littell further elaborates, these men are ‘isolated individuals, and they can’t provide protection to their fellow teip members, i.e. they can’t create their own clans in government’ (Prague Watchdog, 2009), but as their inclusion shows, loyalty to the figure heads of these political groupings usurps that to a teip. Chechen politics
has been dominated by the interactions of these political groupings. One only needs to look at the rivalries and vying for power seen following the Second Chechen War to see that strongmen attachment rather than clan origin are what matters. The aggression between the kadyrovtsy and those loyal to the Yamadaev brothers is a prime example, and all the more important when bearing in mind that both the Kadyrov and Yamadaev families are of the Benoi teip.

Whilst it is certainly the case that members of the Benoi clan are given preference when it comes to gaining employment in the Chechen government, what this masks is a preference given to the Kadyrov extended family: Ramzan Kadyrov simply doesn’t trust strangers, people who are not his relatives or who don’t belong to his teip. And so what you have in the government are its representatives – not the whole teip, of course, but a segment of it – the Kadyrov family (Prague Watchdog, 2009).

One must bear in mind that the Benoi teip, being the largest in Chechnya, will not always consist of individuals or other families known or liked by the kadyrovtsy (we may point once again to the case of the Yamadaevs). It is more a case of those closest to Kadyrov and members of his extended family, with whom he places the greatest trust, are Benoi themselves. Therefore, we can re-iterate the point that the political dynamics of Chechnya, and hence the incidence of corrupt practices, are shaped by modern political-military groupings rather than traditional clan structures.

The Quality of ‘Peace’

It easy to draw comparisons between the Chechnya of today and that of the height of the war: safe to say, one can easily remark on the impact of the reconstruction program being rolled out across the country, most notably in the centre of Grozny (Weir, 2012). Chechen officials have been to remark on the republic’s transformation: Kadyrov himself has even claimed that the situation in Chechnya is ever ‘safer than in England’ (Radio Free Europe/ Radio Liberty, 2013). Assessments by Western commentators have noted the situation: Mark Gaelotti has stated that, ‘considering the rise of chaos in the rest of the North Caucasus, the irony is that Chechnya is a haven of peace’ (Barry & Schwitz, 2009). But many of these same commentators have held reservations, and upon scratching the veneer reveal that what exists in Chechnya today may not be the Western archetype of a functioning society i.e. in terms of our discussion, one with low levels of corruption/ high levels of societal trust: In Chechnya, money solves everything. Money buys you a degree in medicine even if you cannot give an
injection...You can become a university professor even if you have nothing to teach. In a country where young people under the age of 30 can have impressive careers and quasi-magically become representatives, deans, and Heroes of Russia, there is nothing money cannot buy - it is only a matter of price.

Those with less money buy pensions and benefits. Those with more money buy posts that give them power over the distribution of pensions and benefits. But the problem is not corruption per se, but the fact that it has somehow become normal. This system undermines the very foundations of society and creates a climate in which those who do not have the opportunity to collect bribes envy those who do, and those who are forced to pay a bribe today will extort one tomorrow if they have the chance (Kurbanova, 2012).

Such a situation is very much a product of the experiences of war: beyond being able to affiliate oneself with a political-military grouping, the only way one can gain protection or access to goods and services is through paying the resource holders, who in the case of Chechnya are usually political-military groupings. It is somewhat of a generalisation to think that Chechnya is awash weapons that can ensure one’s protection. Even during the war, unless one was attached to a large political-military grouping, arming oneself was quite a struggle (Tishkov, 2004). Money is thus the only guarantor of survival. With the ascendance of the Kadyrov political-military grouping to power, the same system prevailed, now in the guise of state institutions.

It is easy to bemoan such a system, but there are perhaps some interesting outcomes from said system that are not recognisable when perceived through a Western perspective. As we have stated, the ultimate goal of peacekeeping is to restore societal trust that is shattered from war. Regaining such trust through corrupt practices may seem unorthodox, but one can argue that the endemic nature of corrupt and the necessity to engage in it means there must some trust gained through complicity. If corruption permeates all levels of state function, then so too must varying degrees of patron-client relationship. What cannot be guaranteed in such a situation however are assurances of fair exchange, and the presence of an unbiased regulator to rectified any injustice. Gaining an incite into public perceptions in Chechnya is a good way to gauge how corruption affects society and everyday life. Between December 2008 and May 2009, a survey was carried out by the Caucasus Times in each of the capitals of the republics constituting the North Causasian Federal District. This survey found that 83% of respondents were repeatedly exposed to corruption. In addition, the results of the survey also suggest that the most corrupt are the local government (45%) and federal agencies (33%).
With regard to Chechnya itself, approximately 30% of respondents consider that the source of corruption is the problem of its citizens recurrently engaging in corrupt exchanges as a simpler and faster way to get hold of goods and services they need.

When answering as to which areas of the public sector where corruption is most prominent, the respondents listed: law enforcement (53%), higher education (51%), health services (49%), judiciary (39%) and tax agencies (28%) (Tekushev, 2009). A further survey was conducted by the Higher School of Economics at Moscow’s National Research University in 2010. According to respondents in Chechnya, the situation with regard to corrupt practices had deteriorated in recent years. As the survey data reveals, 34% of respondents recognised some increase in the diffusion of corruption arrangements, and 49% of respondents confessed they were expecting corruption to intensify in the future. Only 4% were optimistic and believed that situation with corruption in Chechnya and in the wider region of the North Caucasus was going to improve.

What was particularly interesting about this the survey was its coverage of questions and responses regarding the links between corruption and culture. The survey revealed that most respondents in Chechnya do not agree that there is a direct link between corruption and culture in the North Caucasus. Rather, the respondents acknowledge, there are corrupt officials who abuse their mandate and office privileges for private gain (60%). The problem of fighting corruption is thus a problem engrained in the lack of any real concernment of authorities against it (20%) (HSE, 2010). The respondents admitted that living in the North Caucasus is impossible without paying bribes. Socio-economic and political exchange based corrupt arrangements not only enrich the elite, but also help to enhance the safety and wellbeing of ordinary citizens by providing them with access to education and health services. This view is shared by 60% of respondents. The remaining 40% agreed with the statement that the entire society is built on ‘quid pro quo’ relationships (HSE, 2010). Whilst by no means an optimal state, corruption has ingrained itself so much so that it is a function of Chechen society, and in many ways such activities garner trust through said ‘quid pro quo’ and patron-client relationships. Though this takes place without adjudication, the character of such relationships means that those paying bribes have certain expectations about goods or services due. In terms of peace, it means there is no longer a strong reason to engage in, or be subject to violence in order to achieve the necessities of survival. It is this semblance of peace, that allows Russian and Chechen officials to claim that the republic is on a positive path.
Whilst the experiences of ordinary citizens matter, assessing the quality of ‘peace’ in Chechnya is best informed by looking at what affect corruption has had on those those most capable of commencing conflict: those Russell has labelled the ‘entrepreneurs of violence’ (Russell, 2007). The radical Islamic insurgency, which has spread beyond the Chechen borders, is the most ever present threat to the ‘peace’ in the republic. The Islamic insurgency is still able able to attract many young male fighters to its ranks, in spite of claims made by Kadyrov that they are a spent force (Fuller, 2014). Even though many former boeviki have been persuaded to join the ranks of loyalist forces through financial opportunities, poverty, youth unemployment and the desire to attain a sense of dignity have driven many young men to go ‘into the woods’ and join the insurgency (Kurbanova, 2012). Whilst certainly not a ‘spent’ force as shown by the numerous suicide bombings and ambushes that take place both in the North Caucasus and the Russian heartland, the ability of the insurgency to make a serious bid for overthrowing the Kadyrov government is questionable given the strength and support given to the pro-Russian Chechens, the extent to which they are targeted by loyalist security forces and the distaste many in Chechnya’s population have for the extreme form of Islam they extoll. One might also query how intractable and resistant to corruption the insurgency can be: in an interview conducted by Reuters, a senior commander of the Islamic resistance claimed funds had been channelled to them by the Chechen leadership for ‘insurance’ purposes (Radio Free Europe/Radio Liberty, 2010).

The other major potential for violence stems from within the pro-Russian camp: as we have discussed, former rebels constitute a significant part of the security forces in the republic today, and we must also consider the existence of political-military groupings that rival the kadyrovsty. In terms of the former boeviki, the incentives gained from their current positions in the loyalist camp surpass the alternatives offered, as then US Ambassador William J Burns summarised: The thousands of guerrillas who have joined [the] militias have by now lost all ideological incentive. Since they already run the country, they feel themselves, not the Russians, to be the masters, and are not responsive to...nationalist calls; Basayev’s [Wahabbist] message has even less appeal to them. Even if their current leaders are eliminated, all they will need is a new warlord, easily generated from within their organizations, and they can continue on their current paths (The Guardian, 2010).

The attractive salaries, the significant opportunities for financial gain through corrupt practices and the positions of power offered to the former rebels as part of the loyalist camp means that most have become sedated: whilst they are still armed and capable of violence,
few would seek to bring down the established system of rule that proves highly beneficial to them. The potential for serious destabilisation in the republic through major challenges to Kadyrov have dissipated in recent years as the Chechen leader has sought to consolidate his position. On one front, Kadyrov’s main rival grouping led by the Yamadaev brothers has ceased to exist following the assassinations of Sulim and Ruslan (Doukaev, 2009), and the demobilisation of the Russian Defence Intelligence’s ‘Vostok’ battalion they headed (Caucasian Knot, 2008). Kadyrov has also seen off the challenge of Said-Magomed Kakiev. One of the few Chechen militants to support the Russians from the first war onwards, his *kakievtsy* came to form the Russian Defence Intelligence’s ‘Zapad’ battalion, which in tandem with the Yamadaev’s ‘Vostok’ battalion sought to balance those militia loyal to Kadyrov (Leahy, 2009).

Whilst Kakiev escaped the fate of the Yamadaevs, the ‘Zapad’ battalion was likewise disbanded following pressure from Kadyrov, and its commander being forced to assume a role in the Russian military (Doukaev, 2009).

Whilst this vision of ‘peace’ is certainly not perfect in Western eyes, the violence that takes place in Chechnya, either from small scale attacks from the insurgency and that conducted by Kadyrov’s security forces can be considered ‘acceptable’ in the eyes of the Kremlin. What insurgency exists it is being tackled for the most part by Chechen forces, and whilst a significant degree of power and autonomy has been given to the North Caucasian republic, it crucially remains a part of the Russian Federation. The attainment of this relative stabilisation has been in part due a policy of tolerating corruption and state capture, and manipulation of corrupt practices in order to ‘buy off’ potential peace spoilers. The strategy is aggressive: the alternative offered to those unwilling to be brought into the pro-Russian fold is neutralisation through violence and assassination. Yet as evidenced by the relative peace and stability present today, it has been an effective one.

**Corruption in Chechnya and Future Implications**

The question of corruption in Chechnya comes at an uncertain stage both for the republic itself and for the Russian Federation. As was witnessed with the recent annexation of the Crimean peninsula in Ukraine, Putin’s Russia has become an increasingly vivid presence in world affairs. All too much has been made of this as a resurgence of once thought deceased geo-political structures, indeed a new challenge to American dominance over the global political system. Whilst some claims made are exaggerated, no doubt the fallout of the crisis will have significant implications for how the West deals with Russia. Nominally labelled as a
‘counterterrorist’ operation by Putin’s government, the second war and consequent counterinsurgency activity of recent years has fitted into the West’s narrative of the ‘War on Terror’. The need for good diplomatic ties with Russia for reasons including negotiations with Iran had meant that there was a reluctance to highlight other aspects of the Chechen situation, including Kadyrov’s rule and the question of corruption. This is not to say that strong views were felt by the United States on such matters: the WikiLeaks release of US diplomatic cables showed how the American ambassador to Russia viewed Kadyrov as a ‘warlord pure and simple’, and that sound ‘policy in Chechnya is likely to continue to founder in the swap of corruption, Kremlin infighting, and succession politics’ (Harding, 2010). Whilst such views had the intention of remaining hidden, future remarks are perhaps less likely to remain concealed. Should relations between the West and the Russian Federation continue to sour and stagnate, uninhibited criticism against Kadyrov’s endemically corrupt regime, the existence of which rests upon Putin’s endorsement, is set to be ‘free game’ for Western officials. As we have noted, the strategy of ensuring ‘peace’ in Chechnya employed by the Russian Federation is outside the purview of international law, yet this does not restrict Western commentators from making comparisons with a peacekeeping scenario that does, and from pressuring the Kremlin to concede greater international involvement in the republic’s future (Draganova, 2005). Whilst there is a seeming futility in such calls, they would nonetheless draw international attention to the incidence of corruption and other issues in the North Caucasian republic.

Interestingly, questions have been also been raised as to the longevity of Kadyrov as leader of Chechnya (Fuller, 2014). A draft law recently submitted to the State Duma allows the Kremlin to delegate authority to regions over various areas that were until recently under the remit of the federal centre. In addition, the new law would also give the Kremlin the ability to dismiss any regional leaders who failed to live up to these new responsibilities. Whilst many in both Russian and Chechnya have expressed concern over Ramzan Kadyrov’s tenure as leader, given his extravagant lifestyle and former opposition to the Russians, his ability to ensure some semblance of order in the republic labelled him a necessity for ensuring such conditions continued. Indeed, the thousands of police and security personnel under his control were an integral part of the security operation for the 2014 Winter Olympics in Sochi that largely focused on preventing terrorist attacks conducted by the Islamic insurgency still present in the North Caucasus. Yet not only did the event take place without incident, FSB director Aleksandr Bortnikov thanked the security services of several countries for their support in preventing
planned attacks targeting the games, with no such input being accredited to any Chechen agencies (Caucasian Knot, 2014). In a similar move, the FSB director failed to mention any Chechen support in last year’s assassination of the leader of the Islamic insurgency, Doku Umarov (Caucasian Knot, 2014). Signs of Kremlin irritation towards the Chechen leader had also emerged in late 2012 when Kadyrov advanced territorial claims over neighbouring Ingushetia. This incident is thought to be the reason behind Kadyrov’s absence at Putin’s address to the Federation council in December 2012 (Radio Free Europe/ Radio Liberty, 2012). Much of this is speculation: for the most part federal pronouncements on the Chechen republic are largely positive. For example, the head of Russia’s Audit Chamber Sergei Stepashin has praised the post-conflict reconstruction efforts in Chechnya under Kadyrov’s leadership, characterising the republic as one of the regions in the Federation where subsidies are utilised with maximum effectiveness (Fuller, 2014). But nevertheless, the shadowy nature of Russian politics means that unveiling the true status of relations between the Kremlin and Kadyrov are far from certain. The new draft law aligns with the comments made by Maksim Shevchenko that Moscow is adjusting its approach to the North Caucasus: no longer will leaders in the region be given ‘carte blanche’, provided they maintain ‘order and stability’. In future these leaders will be required to promote economic development and ensure they respect the vertikal of power that Putin heads (Fuller, 2014). Should this approach come to apply increasingly to Kadyrov, the prevalence of corruption in the republic could very well become an issue that the Kremlin demands reform on. Then President Medvedev raised concerns that corruption in the North Caucasus is a major problem, the urgency with which it must be tackled being a matter of national security (Vesti, 2010).

**Conclusion**

Having conducted a review of the recent literature, this dissertation has found a substantial body of work that demonstrates that conventional ideas regarding the role of corruption in post-conflict scenarios to be unbalanced. Contrary to the view that corrupt practices in post-conflict scenarios undermine peacebuilding and reconstruction efforts, a tolerance for corruption to take place can be a boon for peace-seekers. By allowing former warring elites to assume power with the understanding that they may use their new positions to take advantage of financial opportunities presented via corruption, the likelihood of further conflict begins to diminish. This diminishment occurs as formerly dissenting elites and factions leaders...
gain a vested interest in preserving a system that allows for greater enrichment, both for themselves and for those who express fealty to them.

As this dissertation has shown, such an understanding of the import of corruption has been successfully applied to peacebuilding efforts in Chechnya. An investigation into the trends of the Chechen Wars, inter-war period and counterinsurgency operation show that corrupt practices have been present. This demonstrates that an underlying cause of the protraction of the conflict was due to the financial opportunities available in the turbulence of war. The conditions of the second conflict, with the rise of radical Islamic factions over secular nationalists in the Chechen camp, the Chechenisation policy could be renewed under Putin. The acceptance of corrupt practices (effectively bankrolled the Kremlin) amongst the new loyalist Chechen elites and their followers became a key facet of the success of the Chechenisation policy. The Kadyrov family, holding great sway over the majority Sufi population of the republic, assume leadership of the new pro-Russian government.

As well as allowing them to stem the tide of Wahhabist influence infiltrating the republic, the Kadyrovs and their followers were able to gain considerable sums through the siphoning off of the large funds sent from Moscow for reconstruction purposes. Chechenisation was translated to lower levels, as these same subsidies were used to offer financial incentives to those boeviki willing to realign. These incentives carried over into the positions they would hold in the loyalist security and government agencies. Through these incentives, integration into the pro-Russian authorities has effectively removed the ideological predilections once held. The system in place, which both implicitly condones and institutionalises corrupt practices, means that few would have a desire to see a return to large-scale conflict. Bringing former rebels into the fold has meant that Moscow has been able to ‘outsource’ continuing counterinsurgency operations back to Chechens. For the Russians, tolerating and funding corrupt activity in the republic has meant Putin and the siloviki goals of retaining sovereignty and the integrity of the Russian state have been achieved.

This dissertation has also argued that contrary to the prevailing literature, postconflict societies where corruption is endemic can garner societal trust through the complicity of engaging in corrupt practices and the patron-client/ ‘quid pro quo’ relationships that are inherent in them. Chechnya has shown to be an exemplar of such a situation. The infiltration of corruption into state institutions and other sectors means that many Chechens view engaging in corruption as a necessary means of gaining goods and services, and a recognition that such engagements are ‘quid pro quo’ in nature. Chechen citizens also benefit from the cyclical
nature of corruption in the republic as the ‘unofficial tax’ payable to the Kadyrov family goes towards funding the reconstruction programs in the republic. In these ways, the tolerance of corruption can also be said to be of benefit to the general population, as well as elites, in post-conflict settings like Chechnya.

Questions still remain as to the future of Chechnya, as do questions about the role of corruption in the republic’s future. Speculations as to a new approach being adopted by the Kremlin towards the federation’s regions means the endemic corruption present in Chechnya could under increasing scrutiny, with the issue being used to realign Ramzan Kadyrov and the Chechen leadership under Putin’s power vertikal. Shifts in Russia’s diplomatic relations resultant of the Ukrainian Crisis could also mean that corruption in Chechnya becomes a cause for international pressure from the West.

Regardless, the case of Chechnya has shown that a tolerance for corruption (when used in conjunction with other measures) can have a positive impact in the strive for peace-building and reconstruction efforts in a post-conflict scenario.

**Bibliography**


‘O Dono do Morro’: militarized masculinities and the Unidade Polícia Pacificadora programme in the favelas of Rio de Janeiro, Brazil.

Amy Jaffa

Abstract

The Unidade Policia Pacificadora (UPP) aims to bring peace to favela communities through replacing drug trafficker control with that of the state. This paper assesses the UPP’s ability to reduce violence through an investigation of its potential to reshape hegemonic masculine identities, which are identified as a key underlying cause of violence. After establishing the ways in which socially constructed militarised masculinities are fundamental to the clientelistic strategies of power maintenance used by drug traffickers to control communities, the UPP, which seeks to supplant such authorities, will be assessed as a potential window of opportunity to reshape gender identities. It will be argued that the military police occupation merely serves to reproduce existing associations between masculinity, violence, firearms and power. Moreover, the rising cost of living, authoritarian social controls, and prejudicial treatment of residents associated with the UPP may cause some male residents to identify with subordinate masculinities, and use compensatory violence to reinstate a sense of masculine authority.
Acknowledgements

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Introduction

On the 20th of September 2012, I watched from the window of my house in the favela Rocinha as military police marched into the community, and helicopters circled above. I listened to my crackling television, as the news reporter described the ‘pacification’ that I was witnessing first hand. It was the 28th of its kind to be reported in Rio de Janeiro as part of the Unidade Policia Pacificadora (UPP) process, a new government programme aiming to combat the high levels of violence associated with the drug trade in Rio de Janeiro’s favelas in the run up to the FIFA World Cup (2014) and the Olympic Games (2016).

There has been a general consensus in Brazilian and international reports that the UPP has been largely successful in reducing violence in the favelas, and a drop in homicide rates is frequently cited as evidence. However, there has been little attention paid to the effects of the programme on the underlying causes of violence. This paper focuses on one such element that has been identified as an important cause, which is that of gender relations.

Perhaps as a consequence of the divide cited by Wilding (2012: 3) between ‘gender experts’ and ‘social justice experts’, considerations of unequal gendered power relations as an underlying cause of violence have been largely neglected in discussions of the UPP. Instead, gendered discourse on this topic has tended to focus on domestic violence (Schwartz, 2014).
I acknowledge the importance of gendered social relations to all forms of violence (Cockburn, 2001, p28; Scheper-Hughes and Bourgois, 2004: 22) and recognise the centrality of a hegemonic form of militarised masculinities to the understanding of both male-male violence and male-female violence. Therefore, I aim to assess the UPP programme’s potential to successfully reduce violence in favela communities through an investigation into the extent to which the UPP reshapes gender constructions.

In the first chapter, I provide an overview of theories concerning gender and violence to establish the link between militarised masculinities and violence from a theoretical perspective. This is followed by a brief outline of the situation in Rio de Janeiro’s favelas, in order to provide an understanding of the way violence is manifested in the lives of favela residents.

In the second chapter, I highlight the fundamental linkages between the power held by the drug traffickers and the social promotion of militarised masculinities. I investigate the use of clientelistic networks by the drug traffickers, and look at the ways in which militarised masculinities are inherent to the success of this system of control. This includes the ways in which both drug traffickers and residents engage with, and actively reproduce, societal constructions of militarised masculinities to promote their own self-interest.

In the third chapter, I consider the impact of the UPP on socially constructed gender relations. Theories extracted from the academic study of gender relations in post-conflict settings are applied to this government strategy to end the conflict in favelas, in an attempt to consider whether the UPP can be considered a ‘window of opportunity’ for change (Meintjies, Pillay and Turshen, 2001: 10). The extent to which societies involved in the UPP process are being demilitarised is assessed, with reference to the effects on the drug traffic’s patronage networks and the status of authority in these communities. This is followed by an analysis of the possible effects that key societal changes which follow the UPP may have on gender constructions, specifically in terms of militarised masculinities.

I will argue that whilst the UPP has the potential to reshape social and gender relations through its ability to largely replace the patronage networks maintaining the drug traffic’s authority, which is integrally linked to existing constructions of aggressive masculinities, the new policing strategy has not been successful in demilitarizing societies, and similar dominant gender constructions prevail. Moreover, the presence of UPP may serve as a threat to the
masculine identities of many residents, and in turn may cause an increase in compensatory violence.

**Methodology**

This paper uses a combination of primary and secondary sources. An understanding of the situation in favelas prior to UPP intervention is provided through reference to academic sources written in both English and Portuguese by anthropologists, sociologists and political scientists originating from Latin America, North America and Europe. Although the inclusion of Brazilian authors implies an avoidance of euro-centrism, Brazilian academics tend to originate from wealthier areas outside the favelas due to inequalities in educational opportunity, and still may not necessarily have a full understanding of the realities faced by favela residents. For this reason, sources written by favela residents, such as MV Bill and Celso Athayde, are also included.

In terms of the direct analysis of gender and the UPP, sources are more limited. The growing body of research associated with the policing strategy tends to focus on quantitative crime and violence statistics, or qualitative interviews with residents concerning their reactions to the UPP programme. Little exists in relation to underlying causes of violence such as gender.

Due to the short time period that the UPP has been in existence, and the gradual, fluid and complex nature of socially constructed gender identities, it is not currently possible to quantitatively measure any direct effects of the policing strategy on gendered social relations. Instead, specific societal changes that accompany the UPP are identified through the use of academic articles, think-tank reports and sources originating within favelas, such as the Complexo de Alemão’s newspaper ‘Voz da Comunidade’ and the Rocinha Facebook portal ‘Viva Rocinha’. These changes are then analysed in terms of their potential effect on gender relations, through the use of theories drawn from wider academic spheres, including patronage politics, masculinities, urban violence and gender in post-conflict settings. The use of social media sources presents limitations of credibility and generalizability, as it is not possible to know the true identities of Facebook users, and the views of individuals are not representative of whole communities. It can, however, provide interesting insights into examples of resident’s experiences.
In addition, my own experiences, from my year living in Rocinha and working in Final Feliz, Nova Brasilia, and Tabajaras and an additional six months spent over the previous three years working in these and other communities, have also shaped my understanding of favela communities in Rio de Janeiro, both prior to and post pacification. At some points, I cite examples of my experiences to elaborate on statements made in the literature. I acknowledge that although these experiences can provide helpful insights into the nature of violence and gender relations in favelas, they are not representative of the experiences of all favela residents. Not only is this due to my status as a foreigner, which will have affected the way in which I was treated and in which I perceived events, but also due to the lack of generalizability from one person’s experience.

This leads us to another limitation: the danger of generalising when discussing ‘favelas’. As the UPP only targets communities dominated by drug traffic (with the exception of Borel), the scope of this paper is limited to the discussion of such communities, and excludes those run by the militia or other groups. However, even within those included in the UPP programme, which only accounts for approximately 5% of favelas in Rio de Janeiro (IBGE, 2010), there exists a large range in terms of size, location, average income, and levels of violence. Case studies of communities with UPP presence will include Rocinha, Santa Marta, Complexo de Alemão, Manguinhos, Pavão-Pavãozinho and Cidade de Deus. Whilst these are not representative of all pacified communities they represent a diverse range. However, I accept that any conclusions drawn will not necessarily be applicable to all pacified communities.

**Gender and Violence in Rio de Janeiro**

**Theories of Gender and Violence**

The ‘biological determinism’ approach to gender has long been discredited (Connell, 2010:23). It is now commonly acknowledged that gendered characteristics and identities are not consequential of purely ‘biological differences’ (Tickner, 1992:7), but are ‘actively produced’ (Connell, 2002:36) ‘social constructions’ (Vigoya, 2001:245). Contrary to the understanding of gender identities as a form of ‘inner nature’ (Tillner, 2000, p53), the ‘sex-role theory’ (Connell,

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11 In line with UPP discourse, this term will be used to describe communities in which the UPP has been implemented. However, I acknowledge the debate surrounding the use of the term ‘pacification’.
identifies norms as a ‘set of culturally shaped and defined characteristics’ (Tickner, 1992:7), transmitted by ‘peer networks, society’ (Greig, 2009) ‘family’ and ‘mass media’ (Connell, 2010:3).

Whilst the sex-role theory offers an important introduction to the understanding of gender as a social construction, it has been criticised for failing to recognise the complexities of gender in terms of ‘inequality, power, diversity and processes of change’ (Connell, 2010:23). The centrality of society in shaping gender norms suggests that, as with other forms of social customs, gender relations are ‘plural, fluid and contingent’ (Henry, 2007:65) and subject to continuous change over time (Kabeer, 2004:3) and ‘across cultures’ (Zalewski, 2000:97). Gender norms must be understood as a ‘process’, in which they are constantly being ‘constructed and reconstructed in a never-ending effort’ (Tillner, 2000:53). Moreover, it is important to acknowledge that identity is not solely shaped by gender. It is a ‘multifaceted intersection’ (Hudson, 2005:161), in which class, age, ethnicity, race, nationality and sexuality all have an important influence (Henry, 2007:64; Cockburn, 2007:7; Kaufman, 2000:214).

In order to truly comprehend the importance of gender identities, they must not be compartmentalised and analysed individually. Gender identities do not exist in isolation; a focus must be placed on the processes by which constructions of gender are ‘put into practice in society’ (Henry, 2007:64).

Gender is commonly understood to be ‘a relationship of power’ (Zalewski, 2000:101), which is ‘produced and reproduced in social processes’ (Cockburn, 2007:6). Tillner (2010, p53) states that although the concept of a ‘stable and whole identity’ is an ‘illusion’, it is used as ‘a function of power’. Oftung (2000:148) supports this view, stating that it is ‘our own social constructions’ that ‘become power’. Cockburn (2007:6) describes the structuring of society along a ‘gender order’ as a ‘necessary feature of all societies’. Both women and men ‘participate actively in’ and ‘sustain’ hierarchical societal structures of gender (Cockburn, 2007:6).

Whilst these power imbalances tend to benefit men over women (Di Leonardo and Lancaster, 1997:2), and that which is ‘associated with masculinity’ is often ‘valued higher’ than that which is associated with femininity (Zalewski, 2000:101), a binary dichotomy of a single masculinity dominating a single femininity must be avoided (Butler, 1993). Hierarchies and unequal power relations exist within masculinities and within femininities (Henry, 2007:64), as
well as between them (Carrigan, Connell and Lee, 2002:111). Both genders can be ‘damaged by the gender order we live in’ (Cockburn, 2007:6), as men can ‘also be the losers in patriarchal systems’ (Oftung, 2000:148). For a greater understanding of gendered power relations, it is essential to ‘deconstruct conceptual dichotomies of male and female’ (Klein, 2000:164) and look beyond simplified portrayals of all men as ‘perpetrators’ and all women as ‘victims’ (Henry, 2007:65).

Investigation of gendered hierarchical power structures can provide an important contribution to the understanding of the broader context of violence. There are many competing definitions of violence, ranging from a sole focus on the use of ‘physical force’ (Keane, 1996), to an understanding of situations of ‘symbolic disadvantage’ (Schroder and Schmidt, 2001). For the purpose of this paper, violence will be understood as defined by Galtung (1969:168), as any cause of a ‘difference between the potential and the actual’ in terms of an individual’s ‘somatic and mental realizations’. Accordingly, violence can be ‘structural’ in nature, such as inequalities ‘within structures and cultures’ that serve to legitimate and reinforce one another, or ‘personal’ which consist of direct, visible violence with an identifiable actor (Galtung, 1969:170). Whilst this paper places an emphasis on direct, personal violence, it recognises that this takes place within a context of structural violence, and that the two are fundamentally interlinked.

Although most discussions of violence and gender tend to focus on violence against women (Henry, 2007:63), it becomes clear that all forms of violence are in fact highly gendered, and must not be assumed to be gender neutral (Cockburn, 2001:28). The relevance of masculinities becomes apparent when considering the way in which ‘men predominate across the spectrum of violence’ (Connell, 2002:34). Within the realm of personal violence, there is evidence that a significantly higher proportion of perpetrators are male (Holzmann, 2006:22). This includes violence against both men and women (Holter, 2000:73). A greater number of homicide victims are also male (Holzmann, 2006:22). In addition, structural violence is present throughout many societies in the form of a ‘patriarchal dividend’, in which men generally have a higher access to power, resources, and opportunities than women (Connell, 1995:79). Clearly, a deeper understanding of masculinities can enable a greater comprehension of ‘male-male as well as male-female lines of violence and aggression’ (Holter, 2000:73).
Consideration of different forms of masculinities and their consequent relation to violence is enhanced by an understanding of Connell’s (1987) theory of ‘hegemonic masculinity’. There are a ‘whole diversity of lived masculinities’ (Tillner, 2000:54) which ‘exist in definite relations’ of ‘hierarchy and exclusion’ with one another (Connell, 2002:35). At the ‘centre of the system of gendered power’ lies a form of hegemonic masculinity (Connell, 2002:35) which has a greater ‘access to power and social privilege’ (Ertürk, 2004). It is important to note that the hegemonic conception is not the most commonly found manifestation of masculinity in a society (Connell, 2002:35). In fact it is often claimed that it can never be ‘fully determinate of reality’ (Cockburn and Zarkov, 2002:13). Instead, hegemonic masculinities are constructed ‘injunctions and aspirations’ portrayed by ‘individuals’, ‘groups, institutions and cultural forms’ as an ideal to strive for (Connell, 2002:36). This ‘hegemonic’ form of masculinity is established as being superior to others (Connell and Messerschmidt, 2005:856) and many men ‘experience social pressure to conform’ to dominant ideas ‘about being a man’ (Cornwall, 1997:11).

The elevated status of power associated with hegemonic masculinities is maintained through the suppression of alternative gender identities (Cockburn and Zarkov, 2002:13). Those who do not conform to the hegemonic masculinity are often portrayed as being ‘subordinate’ (Connell, 1995:183), and are often ‘marginalised’ (Klein, 2000:165) and ‘culturally discredited or despised’ (Connell, 2002:35). To reinforce the superiority of hegemonic masculinities, associated characteristics often include the ability to be financially independent, to provide for a family, and to exert power over others (Bannon and Correia, 2006). Thus, power imbalances are justified through a discourse of protecting and providing for weaker ‘subordinate’ members of society (Stiehm, 1982). In order to justify this association between ‘manhood’ and the protector/provider, women are often portrayed as passive ‘victims’ or ‘carers’ (Wilding, 2012:55), thus rendering femininity as synonymous with ‘weakness, vulnerability and feebleness’ (Clarke, 2008:52).

Within militarised societies, hegemonic masculinities tend to resemble ‘militarised models of masculinity’ (Myrttinen, 2003:41). Such societies are those that have experienced ‘perpetual’ conflict or a threat of violence over a prolonged time period (Keynan, 2000:196), and are often characterised by ‘heavily militarized cultures, institutions and ethos’ (Keynan, 2000:196), competition for power, a proliferation of firearms, ‘warfare-orientated politics’ and an ‘entrenchment of extreme inequalities’ (Clarke, 2008:57). The ‘long-term effects of conflict
and militarisation’ create a ‘culture of violence’ (Rehn and Sirleaf, 2002:2), in which certain ‘narrow views of masculinity’ are encouraged (Myrttinen, 2003:43). Worldwide, combat forces are ‘overwhelmingly’ dominated by men (Connell, 2010:19), and rely on the reinforcement of those ‘who behave in a certain way’, and the ‘suppressing’ of others (Rehn and Sirleaf, 2002:4). Constructions of gender become shaped by ongoing conflict (Goldstein, 2001:266), and characteristics commonly associated with soldiers come to be seen as the ‘embodiment of traditional male sex role attitudes and behaviours’ (Klein, 2000:164) and the epitome of a ‘real man’ (Clarke, 2008:52). The male role of protector/ provider is further emphasised as the ‘ideal assets of soldiery’ are emphasised as being socially desirable. These include ‘toughness’ (Klein, 2000:165), ‘physical strength’ and ‘courage’, the ability to ‘endure trauma’ and pain (Goldstein, 2001, p264), forcefulness, ‘aggression’ (Breines, Connell and Eide, 2000:15), ‘heterosexuality’, ‘sociability’, ‘self-control’ (Clarke, 2008:52), the use of violence (Bryson, 1987), and the ‘censure of emotional expression’ (Cock, 1991:59). Fear, weakness, or any other characteristics considered to be ‘effeminate’ are sought to be eliminated (Klein, 2000:165).

The prevalence of hegemonic militarised masculinities in a society serves to encourage violence in various ways (Keynan, 2000:196; Connell, 2002:38). Firstly, as with any strategy of power maintenance that relies on the suppression of others, structural violence is inherent to the success of hegemonic masculinities (Heyzer, 2003:5). Those who do not conform are often left in a ‘vulnerable’ position (Rehn and Sirleaf, 2002:2). The gendered hierarchies ‘exaggerate gender difference and inequality’, and ‘elevate men to the world of arms and glory’ whilst relegating women ‘to the world of birthing and mourning’ (Cockburn and Zarkov, 2002:13). This ‘imbalance in gender power’ is inherent to the nature of hegemonic masculinities and becomes entrenched, permeating societies at all levels from the everyday interactions to the top institutions (Nascimento, Segundo and Barker, 2009:23).

Secondly, it associates ‘manliness’ with the ‘sanctioned use of aggression, force and violence’ (Bryson, 1987) and creates a ‘widespread acceptance of violence’ as a means of ‘solving differences and asserting power and control’ (Kaufman, 2000:215). Violence, or the threat of it, is used as a strategy to ensure the ‘continued reaping of privileges’ (Kaufman, 2000:214). This form of violence is often visible in the public sphere, in order to assert one’s masculinity in front of others (Nascimento, Segundo and Barker, 2009:25). This use of violence as a strategy to maintain power over others has been described by Hautzinger (2007:22) as ‘dominating violence’.
Thirdly, the social endorsement of militarised masculinities can result in an increased use of violence amongst individuals that embody subordinate masculine identities. For those that find ‘internalised expectations of masculinity’ to be ‘impossible to satisfy or attain’ (Kaufman, 2000:214), it can leave them feeling ‘threatened or undermined’ (Agathangelou and Ling, 2004:519). Any threat to one’s ‘identity as a man’ (Cleaver, 2002) can propel individuals into ‘a vortex of fear, isolation, anger, self-punishment, self-hatred and aggression (Kaufman, 2000:214), which has been described by Dolan (2002) as a ‘thwarted masculinity’. As aggression and violence are socially constructed as being inherent to being a ‘real man’, they often become key ‘problem-solving strategies’ (Oftung, 2000:148) used by men when faced with being ‘forced into a feminised position’ (Page, 2009:4). Thus, thwarted masculinities can result in ‘compensatory violence’ (Hautzinger, 2007:95), an attempt to reinstate a socially constructed hegemonic masculine identity (Connell, 2002:36). This form of ‘compensatory violence’ is often directed at subordinate identities, in an attempt to ‘re-establish the masculine equilibrium’ (Kaufman, 2000:215). For this reason, women disproportionately suffer as its victims (Barker, 2001:95). The ‘private sphere’ is often portrayed as a ‘zone of masculine prerogative’ (Penglase, 2010:332), in which violence is more socially acceptable (Rebhun, 1999:114). This vision increases the likelihood of violence against women, and serves to reinforce the authority of militarized masculinities (Barker, 2001:95).

Connell draws on new-Marxist theory to highlight the way in which thwarted masculinities may be more likely in contexts of ‘poverty and oppression’ (Connell, 2002:38). ‘Stigmatised work’, a low socio-economic position and ‘working-class alienation’ can reduce the availability of positive alternatives to assert one’s masculine status, and thus lead to feelings of ‘powerlessness and insecurity’ (Walker, 2006:7). Unable to fulfil the role of provider, some males may ‘frantically grasp’ (Walker, 2006:8) for the ‘patriarchal dividend’ (Chen, 1999) in an attempt to reassert a sense of power, and emphasise other characteristics of hegemonic masculinities such as aggression and violence. ‘Manhood’ thus becomes a ‘cultural resource’ (Walker, 2006:5), and a vital claim to power in contexts where few alternatives are available (Harland et al, 2005:3). Connell (1995:111) defines this as ‘protest masculinity’, which she describes as a ‘tense, freaky façade, making a claim for power where there are no real resources for power’ (Connell, 1995:111).

Clearly, the existence of militarised hegemonic masculinities and the gendered hierarchies that these entail can result in an increase of ‘dominating’ and ‘compensatory’
violence, particularly in low-socio economic contexts where there are fewer alternative strategies available. Violence is used by those who have power, to maintain it, and by those who do not, as a means of empowerment. The entire system of hegemonic masculinities is based on structural violence, in which some individuals have greater opportunities than others.

The nature of violence in Rio de Janeiro


High levels of violence are not pervasive throughout the whole city, but centralized in Rio de Janeiro’s favela communities. As Dowdney (2003:94) states, in some regions of the city, located in the asfalto12, violence rates are comparable to Europe or the United States ‘with less than 10 homicides per 100,000 residents’, whilst other regions ‘have rates similar to areas in armed conflict or at war… with rates between 100 and 501 homicides per 100,000 residents’. Within favelas, this personal violence is accompanied by markedly ‘high levels of poverty and inequality’ (Wilding, 2012:3).

According to the IBGE 2010 census there are 763 favelas in Rio de Janeiro, which are home to almost 1.4 million residents, equivalent to 22% of the city’s population (IBGE, 2010). Although often translated as ‘slums’, ‘shantytowns’, or ‘squatter communities’, none of these terms accurately encompass the diverse group of communities classed as ‘favelas’. Contrary to common media depictions, many residents’ homes are not in conditions of squalor, nor are they illegal, and 95% are built from bricks and concrete (Williamson, 2014). Teresa Williamson (2014), the Executive Director of the Rio de Janeiro based think tank Catalytic Communities, defines them as low-socioeconomic communities, which emerged ‘from an unmet need for

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12 The term ‘asfalto’ literally translates as ‘tarmac’, but is used to describe the areas of the city which are not favelas.
housing’, established and developed ‘with no outside or governmental regulation’ and ‘by individual residents’. She states that favelas are ‘continuously evolving based on culture and access to resources, jobs, knowledge, and the city’ (Williamson, 2014).

With the state largely absent from the favelas (Silva, 2011:5), the majority are controlled by one of three drug trafficking factions (Comando Vermelho, Amigos dos Amigos and Terceiro Comando) or by independent militia groups formed of ex or off-duty policemen (Peace Studies Group, 2012:16). The drug trafficking factions are ‘not ideologically different’ to one another (Moura, 2007, p4), but act as ‘effective horizontal structures’ to offer support to groups with the same allegiance (Zaluar, 2004:147). Each group works at a local community level, ‘structured hierarchically’ and defined by their ‘geographical territory’ (Moura, 2007:4). Since the 1980s, they have controlled communities through strategies of ‘ruthless violence against any opponents’ and a ‘forced reciprocity’ with the favela’s residents (Penglase, 2010:139). They function as ‘paramilitary organisations’ through the extensive use of firearms (Dowdney, 2003:200), constituting a ‘permanent armed presence’ in the communities’ (Moura, 2007:4). Despite originating from a political resistance group formed by prison inmates during the military dictatorship (Amorim, 1993), the factions are motivated economically rather than ideologically (Moura, 2007:4). They are ‘financially self-sufficient’ (Moura, 2007:4), earning substantial amounts of money through the sale of illegal drugs to the city’s wealthy residents, and to a lesser extent to other favela residents (Penglase, 2010:319). The groups consist mainly of adolescents from the communities, drawn into the drug trafficking through incentives such as wealth, respect, designer clothes and women (Zaluar, 2004:149). Children become involved when as young as seven years old (Monteiro, 2005), and the mean life expectancy of a bandido is just 23 years (Williams et al, 2009:190). The drug factions function as ‘parallel powers’ (Moura, 2007:2), not aiming to replace the state, but run alongside them. That said, the system does involve high levels of police involvement, particularly in the circulation of money and firearms (Dowdney, 2003:88).

Favelas exhibit high levels of both structural and personal forms of violence (Holzmann, 2006:55; Penglase, 2010:318; Moser and Mcilwaine, 2006:97). As favelas were born out of a context of continued structural violence (Pino, 1998), it is not surprising that socio-economic inequalities remain widespread (Strozemburg, 2009). In spite of the nation’s growing economy, new ‘upper middle income’ status (World Bank, 2014) and recent growth of the middle class (World Bank, 2012), favela communities remain highly marginalised, and
subject to an ‘unprecedented social crisis’ (Phillips, 2007:58) affecting education, public health and public security (Paiva and Burgos, 2009:18). Brazil has the tenth highest Gini coefficient globally, at 54.7 (World Bank, 2014), and favela residents have limited access to ‘citizenship, socio-economic services and the rule of law and order’ (Wilding, 2012:23).

Direct violence is also clearly visible, and as emphasized by Wilding (2012:54), transcends artificial public-private distinctions. It commonly involves the drug traffickers, police, or rival factions (Goldstein, 2003:188). Direct violence relating to the drug traffic often involves firearms, and is used in the face of threat from rival factions or the police, or as retributive justice against those from the community who violate favela law (Gay, 2005:187). However, not all violence in favelas is directly caused by drug traffickers. Levels of intimate partner violence are also high (Barker and Nascimento, 2001). According to police summaries of reported crimes, women form 93% of all victims of threat, 87% of all victims reporting grievous bodily harm, and 81.2% of rape victims (Teixeira et al, 2010). Barker (2001:95) states that approximately 300,000 women report being victims of violence from their intimate partners every year in Brazil, and this is likely to be an underestimate as the majority of such crimes remain unreported. As apparent in the well-known Brazilian proverb ‘Entre marido e mulher, ninguem me te colher’ (between husband and wife, nobody stirs the spoon), intimate partner violence is regarded as a private matter which should not be interfered with from the outside. Furthermore, in his interviews with young men in the favelas, Barker (2001:95) found that domestic violence is sometimes even condoned, providing mutual support and reinforcing a ‘double morality’ of violence being acceptable in the private sphere but not in public. It is important to note that, due to the structural layout of favelas with houses being in very close proximity to each other, what might be thought of as ‘private sphere’ events often take place ‘in the public eye’ (Wilding, 2012:16).

Violence, both structural and personal in nature, is pervasive throughout everyday life in the favelas of Rio de Janeiro. These communities are characterised by low socio-economic status, high levels of inequality, and the constant conflict between different armed groups struggling for power, which is maintained through violence and aggression. Thus, they can be considered as archetypal examples of militarised societies, in which hegemonic militarised masculinities prosper. An understanding of masculine identities is fundamental to the comprehension of the ‘normalization’ and ‘routinization’ of violence (Pecaut, 1999).
Militarized masculinities and the drug traffic

This chapter investigates the relationship between the rule of drug trafficking factions over favela communities and widespread acceptance of dominant, militarized masculinities. In order to understand the way in which social constructions of masculinities are used and reinforced by the drug traffickers, it is essential to have a basic comprehension of the strategies of patronage they adopt to maintain power.

Clientelism in Rio de Janeiro’s favelas

Structures of patronage, or clientelism, have been deeply engrained into the societal makeup of favelas throughout their existence (Gay, 1990:648; Rebhun, 1999; Sarti, 1992). Originating from strategies of indirect rule used by colonial powers (Penglase, 2010:324), patron-client relations have played an important role in the distribution of resources within poor communities, particularly since the military dictatorship in Brazil (Arias, 2006:430).

Patronage structures centre around the ‘big man’, who profits from a position of power and easy access to resources (Berman, 1998:305). As a form of ‘personal rule’ (Jackson and Rosberg, 1982:421), these resources are used for the big man’s own self benefit to maintain the position of power. They are dispensed through patronage empires to ‘little men’ in exchange for continued support. This creates a reciprocal relationship, whereby resources are passed down through hierarchical linkages and those at the top maintain authority and legitimacy.

Traditionally, this has been discussed within social sciences in relation to political processes, whereby a leader maintains power by distributing resources in exchange for votes (Bayart, 2009). However, Arias (2006:429) states that the presence of the drug traffic has changed the nature of the clientelistic networks that are engrained in the social structuring of favelas. Structural hierarchies still involve ‘unequal, reciprocal, non-institutionalized, face-to-face exchange relations’, in which ‘clients work in the personal interest of their patrons’. However, Arias claims that a ‘two-tiered’ form of clientelism has evolved, incorporating elements of both ‘neo-clientelism’ and ‘fixed-patron clientelism’ (2006:429). Components of neo-clientelism (Mainwaring, 1995:175-181) are evident in the exchanges between drug traffickers and politicians, in which traffickers grant politicians exclusive access to favela communities in return for negotiated resources (Gay, 1990). Simultaneously, elements of
fixed-patron clientelism are apparent, as the resources are distributed to favela residents by
drug traffickers in order to maintain power and legitimacy.

The patronage that residents receive from the drug traffickers can take many forms
(Goldstein, 2003:174-225; Gay, 2005:54-58). In the absence of the state (Leeds, 1996), drug
trafficking factions assist with services such as street lighting, waste collection, water services,
health care, burial services, the renovation of homes, organise community events and create a
justice system (Arias, 2006:432). Although this assistance is ‘limited, sporadic, and very much
based on personal relationships’, it represents an opportunity for support to many
communities who face high levels of structural violence and have few alternatives (Arias,

In return, residents must remain loyal to the drug faction against police and rival
groups. The ‘big man’ or ‘dono’ must be treated as the absolute authority and hegemonic
power. Residents are not permitted to enter favelas ruled by rival factions, or communicate
with the police. They must live in accordance with the alternative justice system, or risk being
exiled, tortured or killed (Dowdney, 2003:66). Whilst politicians spend extremely limited time
in favelas, the drug traffickers represent a permanent presence, regular security, and a more

Clientelism and Militarized Masculinities.

Specific social constructions of gender are fundamentally interlinked with the system of
man’ is deeply immersed in patriarchal rhetoric. In Rio de Janeiro, the head drug trafficker is
called the ‘dono do morro’, which can be translated as the boss, or owner (in the masculine
form of the word) of the hill. Constructions of certain masculinities and femininities are used
and reinforced by the drug traffickers to maintain effective control of the patronage networks.

Fundamental to this process is the grouping of men into two main identities: the
‘bandido’ (drug trafficker) and the ‘trabalhador’ (working man) (Barker, 2005:10). Bandidos are
associated with a ‘masculine warrior ethos’ (Zaluar, 2004:149); a superior militarized
masculinity based on strength, courage, power and control (Coelho, 2012:14; Cecchetto,
2004). Bandidos assert their status as ‘O Sujeito Homem’ (a ‘real man’) (Oliveira, 2004:31)
through high levels of violence, the ownership of a firearm, designer clothes, and often having
numerous relationships with ‘novinhas’ (young girls) (Athayde and Bill, 2007:194).
Trabalhadores are considered to be law-abiding yet inferior, working long hours for minimum wage, often in the service sector. This distinction enables a ‘moral taxonomy’ (Herzfield, 1980:340), which validates the traffickers’ roles as protectors and providers in the community, legitimizes unequal hierarchies caused by the clientelistic networks, and maintains fear and respect amongst residents (Penglase, 2010:332).

This is primarily achieved through the use of ‘patriarchal family’ discourse (Freyre, 1945), in which those embodying the dominant, militarized masculinities (the drug traffickers) are representative of the head of the family and demand respect, authority, and the right to a higher proportion of resources in return for protection and support for the vulnerable family members. This serves to justify the ‘reciprocal’ and ‘hierarchical’ nature of the patronage structures, as it is widely acknowledged that it is the man of the household’s role to protect and provide, and that in order to fulfil this role he needs to have the authority to control possessions, family members and resources (Penglase, 2010:325). This has a significant influence over social relations in favela societies, and becomes ‘a kind of cultural grammar’ (Parker, 1999:29). The ‘family feel’ is embraced by many residents, often as a reaction to negative portrayals of favelas in the media (Penglase, 2010:326). In an interview with Penglase (2010:328), a favela resident described the drug traffickers as ‘cria’¹³, implying a form of social contract as exists between family members.

This rhetoric of the strong protector is fundamental to the longevity of the patronage networks, and the drug traffickers’ control. The social construction of a dominant militarized masculinity results in the assumed necessity of the drug traffickers to protect trabalhadores and other men who are considered to be of an inferior masculinity as well as others who are portrayed as vulnerable, such as women, the elderly and children. Their role as protector is most visible in their permanent armed presence in the streets and readiness for combat in the case of incursion by police or rival factions. Furthermore, the alternative justice system headed by the drug traffickers includes specific laws aimed at protecting vulnerable members of favela society. Crimes considered the most grave include rape and the sexual abuse of children, which are often punished by being dismembered and burnt alive in a tyre (Dowdney, 2003, p66). An example of the drug traffickers’ role as protector can be found in a statement issued

¹³ Refers to someone who has been present since childhood, often informally adopted and raised by the family.
by the Commando Vermelho in 2003, when they ordered a temporary shutdown of businesses as an act of protest against inadequate prison conditions:

‘It is no longer possible to put up with these politicians and their oppressive and cowardly policies which are creating terror in poor communities, ordering their inferior worms, the police, to invade favelas and create terror, causing the deaths of many innocents, including old ladies, children and adolescents. Someone has to put an end to this violence, and that someone will have to be us, because the people aren’t able to fight for their rights, but they are aware of who is robbing and killing them’

-Folha de Sao Paulo, 24 February 2003

Clientelism, Gender Identities and ‘Trabalhadores’.

Despite establishing an understanding of the underlying motivations behind the drug traffickers’ use and reproduction of gender constructions such as dominant, militarized masculinities, an important question still remains. Individuals involved in the drug traffic only represent a small percentage of favela residents, and yet the social values associated with them transform favela societies and alter the ‘ethical vision’ of residents (Zaluar, 1994:19). There is much research concerning the pervasive acceptance of violent masculinities in favelas (Moura, 2007). Zaluar (2004:149) states that the version of masculinity constructed through the drug traffic has become ‘a natural component of social interaction’. The process by which gender identities constructed by the drug traffickers are adopted and reproduced by the rest of favela communities must be investigated.

Perhaps the answer is in part that the drug dealers demonstrate an alternative way of life for many youth, who look to them as ‘role models’ (Goldstein, 2003:99). For adolescents growing up with limited opportunities, inadequate schooling, and restricted job prospects, the drug traffickers represent an alternative way of life, which seems otherwise unachievable.

Reasons for the widespread prevalence of values associated with the drug traffic in favelas can also be seen through an investigation of the nature of their control. The values associated with the drug traffic are promoted in various ways. Some, such as the acceptable use of violence in certain situations, and the differing levels of respect paid to individuals demonstrating different gender identities, are directly visible. Others are transmitted through popular culture. Constructions of gender are commonly conveyed through slang, which often
associates masculinity, virility and violence (da Matta, 1997). In addition, *funk*\(^{14}\) music plays an important role as propaganda for drug factions, and is used to communicate their values and opinions. Drug factions finance *funk* musicians to write lyrics in homage to them, reflecting their constructions of social and gender norms. Many songs have been criticised for condoning violence against women, an example being ‘*uma tapinha não dói*’ (A little slap doesn’t hurt) (MC Naldinho). Due to their explicit lyrics about the power of the drug factions and the use of violence against the police, many *funk* songs are banned from the radio. However, they are played at the frequent favela *baile funk* parties organised by the drug traffickers, and recorded and distributed to residents afterwards (Sneed, 2007, p12). Many lyrics explicitly dictate values and behaviours considered acceptable to the drug traffickers, as can be seen in the example ‘*Dez Mandamentos da Favela*’ (The Ten Commandments of the Favela):

Now I’m going to tell you how it is, see you don’t get in a scrape  

The Ten Commandments here in the favela  

The first commandment is not to snitch  

A snitch can’t live in the favela  

The second commandment I’ll tell you right now  

You shouldn’t mess with the women of your friends  

The third commandment I will also say  

Put the gang first and don’t double-cross anybody  

The fourth commandment is not difficult to say  

The favela is a good school but you should not rob here  

The fifth commandment is that I am pissed off  

I’ll cut down any son-of-a-bitch with my G3\(^{15}\)  

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\(^{14}\) Popular form of music originating from favelas.  

\(^{15}\) Author’s translation
The alternative system of justice headed by the drug traffic also contains certain implications for gendered norms and acceptable behaviour. Rules convey differences in the ways women and men should behave. Aggression is understood as inherently masculine. In contrast, women caught arguing have their heads shaved as punishment (Ramos, 2011:262; Cano, 2012:116). Additionally, although it is generally acceptable for men to have more than one sexual partner at a time, women are expected to remain faithful (Cabral, 2003:288).

Goldstein (2003:227) states that the tight control the drug traffic holds over favelas leaves a ‘lack of alternative public discourse’. Thus, ‘communal perceptions of appropriate behaviour’, such as those associated with different gender identities, are permeated by codes of conduct encouraged by the drug traffickers (El-Bushra, 2000:80). However, it can also be seen that these constructed gender norms constitute part of ‘a fluid and dynamic social reality’ in which individuals have the agency to interpret and manipulate the ‘malleable framework’ of identities for their own benefit (Penglase, 2010:333). Penglase (2010:317) argues that many residents engage with the gendered ideology of masculine authority in order to ‘negotiate relationships with drug traffickers’ and be included into patronage networks and have a greater access to resources and support. Schneider and Schneider (2003:118-126) describe a similar strategy in the context of the Sicilian Mafia, in which ideologies of masculine authority are essential to the ways in which mafia members and citizens engage with one another.

Men and women engage with dominant masculinities in different ways to interact with drug traffickers and access resources and support through patronage networks. For men, those who are most successful at climbing patronage hierarchies and becoming involved with the drug traffic are those who exhibit characteristics of militarized masculinities. This often involves the use of ‘dominating violence’ to prove ones masculinity (Hautzinger, 2007:22).

However, many men do not share the same respect for drug traffickers or desire for involvement (Barker, 2001:78). Instead, these men use a strategy of treating the bandidos with respect in order to maintain access to patronage networks and support, whilst simultaneously keeping their distance. Instead of trying to achieve the status of a ‘Sujeito Homem’, they identify with a form of subordinate masculinity. This consists of treating those who exhibit a ‘superior masculinity’ with the upmost respect, whilst ‘avoiding eye contact, pretending you don’t see, looking down at the ground and keeping quiet’ (Barker, 2001:78). This behaviour too reinforces the hegemonic militarised masculinities.
Identifying with a subordinate masculinity can generate ‘destabilizing experiences of anxiety’ (Penglase, 2010:317), and a ‘sense of disempowerment’ (Page, 2009:4). ‘Social, economic and political’ marginalisation within the broader societal context, as well as being treated as inferior within the community can lead to ‘thwarted’ masculinities (Dolan, 2002) and ‘compensatory violence’ (Hautzinger, 2007:95) as outlined in the previous chapter. This association between thwarted masculinities and violence is visible in statistics surrounding domestic violence. In a study conducted by Barker, one third of female victims of domestic violence in a Rio de Janeiro hospital stated that their partners were unemployed at the time of violence (Barker, 2001:95). This can be seen as reflecting the strategy of resorting to violence and identifying with the ‘strong’ characteristics associated with masculinity when unable to fulfil the ‘provider’ characteristics (Katz, 2003).

Collier (2005:223) describes two principal survival strategies used by women to access the support of drug traffickers. These are defined as ‘liberty’ and ‘security’. For women who have a lesser need for male support, for example if they own a house or have no children, they can revert to the ‘liberty’ strategy, in which they reflect the ‘hot mulata nature’, having many sexual partners and conforming to the sexualised woman identity (Collier, 2005:223). Alternatively, for those seeking a higher level of support and inclusion into patronage networks, the ‘security’ strategy consists of complying with the ‘submissive femininity’ directly linked to the ‘aggressive model of masculinity’ (Wilding, 2012:127). Women are expected to be vulnerable, emotional, sexually faithful, ‘confined to their homes’, fulfilling the roles of caregiver, mother, wife and daughter (Coelho, 2012, p14). Moura (2007, p5) highlights the significant vulnerability of women who ‘depend on the status, power, and protection of men’ in the face of inadequate state security infrastructure.

Many females who engage with the drug traffickers in order to access patronage support do so romantically (Demetriou, 2001:337-361). It should not be a surprise that women emphasize those feminine characteristics that are encouraged by society, nor that they are attracted to qualities associated with the hegemonic masculine equivalents. However, the desire to form a relationship with a drug trafficker may also be viewed as a strategic decision. Although drug traffickers have a short life expectancy, and have been described as ‘beating their women like dolls’ (Barker, 2001:96), a relationship with a drug trafficker represents a strategy to access clientelistic networks and levels of respect, status, resources and wealth which are considered otherwise unachievable (Netto, 2004). This has been noted by many
researchers, who have reported a large number of females who seek romantic involvement with drug traffickers (Moura, 2007, p6), nicknamed by favela residents as ‘Maria AK47s’ (Hillier and Wood, 2003:47).

The female strategy of conforming to emphasized femininities and treating militarized masculinities with respect and admiration plays an important role in reinforcing the power of these socially constructed gender identities within favelas, just as the strategies employed by men do. Due to the integral nexus between the system of patronage and constructions of militarized masculinities, dominant gender identities are continuously used and reinforced by drug traffickers and residents alike as they attempt to claim power, resources and respect. Furthermore, violent masculinities encourage violent practices not only with those who aspire to them, but also with those who avoid them and accept an ‘inferior masculinity’. The clientelistic structures of the drug traffic and the limited gender constructions they promote are responsible for violence on many levels, including structural violence and interpersonal violence between men-men and men-women.

Chapter Three; The UPP: a ‘window of opportunity’?

Clearly, the rule of the drug traffic is inherently interlinked with the social promotion of violent masculinities. In line with the post-conflict literature from the gender field, this chapter assesses the extent to which the UPP can be considered as a ‘window of opportunity’ to reshape hegemonic militarised masculinities. This will include an investigation into whether the UPP succeeds in replacing the drug traffickers’ control and in demilitarising societies. The effect of the pacification process on gender identities will then be assessed in terms of the gendered values propagated by police officers, and potential consequences of key societal changes caused by the UPP.

An introduction to the UPP

The UPP has been recognised internationally as a ‘very promising initiative’ and a programme to be replicated in other countries experiencing high levels of urban violence related to drug cartels (World Bank, 2012:24). The UPP is currently present in 37 communities (UPP, 2014), and the state government aims to increase this number to 40 by the end of 2014. According to
UPP statistics, this directly affects 1,500 residents and involves 9,293 police officers (UPP, 2014).

According to Sergio Cabral, as quoted on the UPP website, the main objectives of the programme are to combat criminal factions and bring peace and security to the population (UPP, 2014). Other commonly cited aims include the implementation of state control, breaking the prevalent ‘logic of war’, and reducing the number of weapons available in communities (Peace Studies Group, 2012:17). Although the precise goals of the UPP tend to vary from source to source, there is a general consensus that the principle objective is not to end drug trafficking, but rather to address the ‘collateral damage’ associated with it (Hendee, 2013, p37), through the regaining of state territorial control (Lacerda and Brulon, 2012:134).

The process is most commonly considered to have three stages, although some sources quote four. The first is described as the ‘retomada’, and is a ‘massive coordinated operation to retake control’ (Hendee, 2013:37). The community receives prior warning of the time and date that the ‘invasion’ will take place, thus providing drug traffickers with an opportunity to leave or to hide any firearms or drugs. Any illegal substances or weapons are seized if found by the police (Hendee, 2013:37). Due to this warning process, high levels of violence tend to be avoided during the retomada. Second is the ‘stabilization stage’, in which BOPE establishes a presence in the streets and patrols the community (Peace Studies Group, 2012:17). The third stage consists of a ‘definitive occupation’, in which the military UPP police replace BOPE from a UPP headquarters constructed within the community (Ramos, 2011:263)). This involves ‘intensive patrolling, questioning and searching of incoming visitors and residents’, and a clampdown on informal businesses and services (Hendee, 2013:37). Police are encouraged to attend community meetings in an attempt to build better relations with residents (Soares, 2010). A fourth step, which is only sometimes cited, is the ‘post-occupation’, in which police control is ‘consolidated’ and services beyond the realm of public security are introduced (Peace Studies Group, 2012:17).

Officially, the UPP targets any poor communities, with low institutionalism, high informality and a strong presence of armed criminal groups (Hendee, 2013:38). However,

16 The mayor of Rio de Janeiro
17 Roughly translates as the taking back, or recovery.
18 The Batalhão de Operações Policiais Especiais, or Special Operations Police Battalion. Commonly associated with high levels of violence and armed combat, as evident from their logo- a skull with two guns and a dagger sticking through it.
many commentators have criticised the state’s choice of communities as being ‘strategic’ (Cano, 2012; Hendee, 2013). The first twenty communities affected by the UPP form ‘almost a perfect ring around the most touristic parts of the city’ (Hendee, 2013:38), and many are in the wealthier south zone. Meanwhile, the majority of the communities with the highest rates of violence are in the northern metropolitan region, which is ‘not even included within the scope of the UPP programme’ (Cano, 2012). This has generated a feeling amongst the population that the UPP exists to benefit the Brazilian middle and upper classes and tourism industry as opposed to the favela residents.

**A window of opportunity?**

Post-conflict transitions are considered to be important ‘windows of opportunity’ for the potential transformation of gender relations (Smet, 2009:147). Any peace-building process accompanying the cessation of conflict has a ‘dual function’, to end conflict and to ensure peace (Chinkin, 2003:7). Societal change is an important element of this, and peace efforts can provide the ‘framework for the reconstruction of political, legal, economic and social structures’ (Chinkin, 2003:2), and an ‘atmosphere pervasive with the desire to build a new type of society’ (Pankhurst, 2008:7). With a basis in the theory that gendered relations of power are ‘produced and reproduced in social processes’ (Cockburn, 2007:6), many academics within the field of gender studies understand this time of social transformation as an opportunity for the reshaping of gender roles and hierarchies (Connell, 2002; Koen, 2006; Mientjes et al, 2001). It can be ‘a crucial moment’ for altering gender constructions, and has been described by Cockburn and Zarkov (2002, p10-11) as a key moment to ‘open a door to the changes we hope for’.

‘Transformation of the gender order’ is an important part of any lasting peace process (Cockburn and Zarkov, 2002:11), and must be considered as an ‘essential component of post-conflict reconstruction projects’ (Kuehnast, 2011:4). A failure to reform gender relations may hinder a peace processes’ ability to attain peace (Greenberg and Zuckerman, 2006), whether that is ‘negative peace’ (the absence of direct violence) or ‘positive peace’ (the absence of structural violence) (Galtung, 1969:183). Negative peace is not achievable whilst ‘violence, confrontation and domination’ are promoted as key strategies to assert masculinity and maintain power (Connell, 2002:38). Positive peace is not possible whilst ‘familiar old exclusions and oppressions’ are reproduced, including that of gender (Cockburn and Zarkov, 2002:11). Moreover, direct violence and structural violence are inextricably linked (Galtung, 1969:178). If
existing ‘aggressive and predatory forces’ and ‘entrenched violent and unstable environments’ are reinforced during a peace process (Cockburn and Zarkov, 2002:11), it may serve to ‘perpetuate or re-create societal inequalities that encourage conflict’ (Kuehnast, 2011:4). The dependence of a peace process’ success on the ‘opportunity to turn a society towards gender equality’ (Cockburn and Zarkov, 2002:11) has been acknowledged internationally, and incorporated into United Nations legislation through the UN Security Council Resolution 1325, which promotes the importance of women’s involvement in peace processes to ensure a societal transformation in regards to gender (UN, 2000).

Although theorisation of a post-conflict ‘window of opportunity’ is often discussed in the context of international interventions such as in the cases of Afghanistan (Kandiyoti, 2007), Bosnia (Cockburn and Zarkov, 2002; Helms, 2003) and Sierra Leone (Higate, 2004), it can provide important contributions to the understanding of the potential effects of UPP on gender constructions in Rio de Janeiro’s favelas. Given the fundamental link between the drug trafficking cartels’ control over favelas and the reinforcement of militarised masculinities, it seems clear that any programme such as the UPP with the aims of reclaiming power for the state and bringing ‘peace’ to favela communities may have the potential to reshape dominant gender constructions. The replacing of drug traffickers with state control implies a potential reshaping of societal structures, and with it a chance to reform hegemonic gender identities.

A demilitarisation of societies?

As outlined above, hegemonic militarised masculinities are often dominant in militarised societies with high levels of violence and conflict. Therefore, any investigation into the effectiveness of the UPP as a window of opportunity to reshape gender relations must first assess its effect on the social context in which they are formed. Changes currently being experienced by residents are highlighted through examples from social media, community newspapers, and quantitative and qualitative research projects into crime rates and violence, and residents’ attitudes.

There is evidence to suggest that the UPP has been somewhat successful in fulfilling its objective of bringing peace to communities and regaining territory from the drug traffickers. The power of the drug traffickers’ clientelistic networks have been reduced, and private companies have become responsible for the provision of services such as electricity, water and cable television (World Bank, 2012:92). Compromised into a position where they are unable to
openly display firearms, forced to hide from the police, and left with diminished resources to ensure support, the drug traffickers’ clientelistic links with the community are weakened. The reduction in power possessed by the drug traffickers in many pacified communities is evident in statistics gathered by Instituto Mapear’s (2010) research project, which, for example, found that in a sample of 4,000 residents from 8 pacified favelas, 91% agreed that there are fewer visibly armed bandidos in the streets.

Many of the research statistics suggest that this reduction of drug traffic authority in the favelas has indeed led to a less militarised society (Muggah, 2013). Cano’s (2012:32) analysis of crime rates between January 2006 and June 2011 in the first thirteen communities to be pacified highlights a decrease in the rate of violent deaths of almost 75%, and a reduction in robberies of over 50%. The research conducted by Instituto Mapear (2010) indicates that 71% of residents interviewed believe children to be able to play in the street more safely than before, due to a reduced fear of shoot-outs between the police and drug traffickers.

However, other sources highlight the continued ‘militarised nature’ of pacified societies (Peace Studies Group, 2012:18). Evidence is cited of continuous widespread violence, a militarised police force, and a constant threat of conflict from remaining drug traffickers (Willis et al, 2014:2). Although homicide rates have been reduced, violent non-lethal injuries and threats of violence have almost tripled (Cano, 2012:33). Reports of disappearances, domestic violence and rape have also significantly risen (Cano, 2012:32). Although these figures may be partly due to a growing tendency to report crimes to the police, they still serve as evidence for the continued high levels of violence in pacified communities, and thus suggest a continued militarisation of society.

It is important to note that in addition to this continued personal violence, structural violence also remains widespread. Whilst the UPP weakens the drug traffickers’ ability to sustain patronage networks, it does not necessarily provide better services to the residents than were previously available. There are often complaints of a poor quality of services provided to pacified communities (Ost and Fleury, 2013:648). Examples of such complaints in relation to water, sewers and roads can be seen on the Viva Rocinha Facebook forum (see Figures 1-3). Complexo de Alemão’s newspaper Voz da Comunidade highlights similar incidents, of periods of months weeks without water (Silva, 2014a), and of multiple open sewers (Silva, 2014b). According to Galtung (1969:178), structural violence such as this often
precipitates an increase in personal violence. Clarke (2008, p.57) echoes this in the assertion that marginalised societies are more prone to militarisation.

Figure 1: Viva Rocinha Facebook post (Facebook, 2014)

‘Hundreds of Rocinha’s residents are complaining of a lack of water and constant power cuts. In Vila Vermelha, residents haven’t had water for a week’

Figure 2: Viva Rocinha Facebook post (Facebook, 2014)

‘A resident has sent photos of a dangerous manhole in Beco 43 by Rua Nova at Rua 4. According to him, the manhole has been covered with wood for over one year. Many residents pass through this alley and injure themselves when not paying attention’
The role of the military police in the UPP is another factor often associated with the continued militarisation of societies. The authority previously held by armed drug traffickers is replaced by the occupation of a military police force which, like the drug traffickers, also uses the visibility of firearms as a strategy to incite fear and maintain control (Lacerda e Brulon, 2012:135). Despite the UPP’s claimed emphasis on community policing strategies, the use of military police suggests elements of zero-tolerance strategies (Herringer et al, 2013) and risks the reinforcement of ‘a repressive, militarised system of fighting crime’ (Dammert and Malone, 2006:37).

The perceived importance of visible weapons to police officers’ maintenance of power is highlighted in research conducted by CESec (2011), in which 94% of police officers interviewed across 9 UPP communities stated that it was essential for them to carry a lethal weapon with them at all times. The similarities between strategies for the maintenance of power used by the drug traffickers and those used by the UPP police are highlighted in the
following quote from an interview Cano (2012:115) conducted with a resident of Manguinhos: ‘It seems to me that we just are ruled by a new boss. I think it is just a different hand holding the whip’.

This understanding of UPP presence as a militarised occupation based on fear is reinforced by the frequent examples of police brutality against residents. Research conducted by Instituto Mapear (2010) reports that 80% of residents stated a tense relationship with police officers, and 25% described personal experiences of police brutality. Qualitative interviews convey similar findings, with many reported incidents of unprovoked torture, beatings and use of pepper spray (Cano, 2012:120-1). Two cases of extreme police brutality have recently gained unprecedented international attention. In July 2013, UPP police tortured and killed Amarildo de Souza, a bricklayer’s assistant from Rocinha (Carneiro, 2013). In April 2014, it was reported that UPP police murdered the television dancer Douglas Pereira as he visited his daughter in the Pavão-Pavãozinho favela (Watts, 2014). Another resident was shot in the head by police in protests following his funeral (Alves, 2014a), and witnesses to this have reported being threatened by police (Alves, 2014b). Based on my experiences living in Rocinha for a year, reported examples of brutality are far from unique, and it remains an extremely militarised society. Police regularly patrol the streets with their guns pointing at residents. One resident was shot at while running from the police in an alley. Another, when caught with marijuana, was forced to run naked around the local tennis court whilst smoking until he collapsed. Another, also caught with marijuana, ‘disappeared’ for two days whilst he was beaten and asked for the equivalent of three months wages for his release. Whilst incidents such of these are in no way generalizable to the behaviour of all UPP officers, they influence the ways in which residents view the police presence and characterise the tactics of aggression and the incitement of fear used by many UPP agents to maintain control.

The continuous threat of conflict generated by the remaining drug traffickers is also problematic, and an important factor in the continuous militarisation of society. Interviews conducted by Cano (2012:114-7) with residents of Cidade de Deus highlight the continued control exerted by the drug traffickers. Residents emphasised the continued influence of the alternative justice system, control of community spaces, and monopoly of profits from industries such as informal transport, gas sales, and commercial stalls (Cano, 2012:114-7). There are various examples of the drug traffickers challenging the authority of the UPP, such as

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when they took back power in Pavão-Pavãozinho (Heringer et al, 2013), and prohibited all shops and cafes from serving police officers in the Complexo de Alemão. During my time spent living in Rocinha, there were frequent shootings during the night between police and drug traffickers, and the community would often go without electricity when the drug traffickers disconnected it as a method of disorientating the police in the dark alleys. Clearly, despite great improvements in the reductions of shootings and a greater freedom of movement for residents, many favela communities remain highly militarised under UPP occupation.

A demilitarisation of masculinities?

The continuous militarised nature of many pacified communities has important implications for the gender relations constructed within them. The two kinds of police involved in the UPP process, BOPE and the UPP subsection of the Military Police, both use aggression and violence (or the threat of it) to maintain power, which can be instrumental in reproducing hegemonic identities associated with militarised masculinities. According to dominant UPP discourse\(^{20}\), police officers are ‘heroes’ and ‘champions’, a force to combat the drug traffic whilst serving as protectors and providers in the ‘lawless land’ of the ‘urban jungle’ favelas (Lacerda e Brulon, 2012:137-8). They are portrayed as the epitome of what it means to be a ‘real man’ in line with ideologies of militarised masculinities.

Some reports have argued the possibility for an improvement in gender relations as a consequence of the growing number of women serving as UPP officers (Ramos, 2011:265). However, studies into the presence of women in the military and police forces (Cock, 1991) suggest that this can in fact serve to ‘further entrench oppressive gender constructions’, as women are seen to either achieve power through embodying the militarised masculine roles, or to accept a subordinate position and behave in ways understood as feminine (Clarke, 2008:53). In the case of the UPP, the influence of pre-existing gender identities amongst police officers can be clearly seen in the following two photos, which are currently displayed on the UPP’s official website:

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\(^{20}\) Quotes are extracted from a speech given by the Mayor in September 2011
Figure 4; Image from UPP’s official website (UPP, 2014)

Figure 5; Image from UPP’s official website (UPP, 2014)


The first image is accompanied by the headline: ‘Military Police complete an Intervention Tactics course to work with the UPPs’. The headline attached to the second image states: ‘Female Military Police from UPP Providência participate in a beauty workshop’

The two images can be seen as examples of the way in which gender identities resembling those associated with militarised masculinities, of strong males with firearms and passive, superficial females, are propagated by the UPP police force, in spite of a growing female involvement.

If the UPP officers reinforce similar gender identities as the drug traffickers did previously, of strong masculine protectors and providers who maintain power through the threat of violence, consolidated through the use of constantly visible weapons, then the effect of this on residents must be considered. Just as when aggressive masculine identities are employed as a strategy for the maintenance of authority by drug traffickers, this may result in the emasculation of those who do not have access to power and are treated as subordinate, which may lead to the embodiment of ‘thwarted masculinities’ and subsequent use of ‘compensatory violence’. Moreover, it can be argued that the position of the UPP officers as the communities’ central authorities can serve to generate a greater number of ‘thwarted masculinities’ amongst resident populations than when the drug traffickers were in full control. Three reasons will be highlighted for this: a lack of distinction between trabalhadores and bandidos, arbitrary social controls, and a rising cost of living.

Firstly, UPP officers do not share the same ‘cria’ background as the drug traffickers (Ramos, 2011:264). They have not grown up within the communities, and do not have the same level of understanding of the residents (Peace Studies Group, 2012:17). This means that the previously enjoyed protection associated with the status of ‘trabalhador’ no longer stands, as police officers are unable to distinguish between trabalhadores and bandidos, and accordingly treat all residents as potential criminals until proven otherwise (Lacerda and Brulon, 2012:139). Drug traffickers from within the community are more ‘fluent in speaking with residents using the language of respect’ (Penglase, 2010:323). Penglase (2010:327) highlights the most commonly identified complaint by the male residents he interviewed from pacified communities as being the humiliating police invasions of residents’ homes. The invasion of a man’s home by police not only ‘insults his status as a man’, but does so ‘publically, in front of other men’ (Penglase, 2010:323). This creates a contradiction between

23 Author’s translations
‘ideals of masculine autonomy’ and the ‘reality of submission’, which may serve to challenge the hegemonic masculine identities of residents (Penglase, 2010:323).

A second factor with a potential to similarly encourage thwarted masculinities amongst residents is the ‘authoritarian and arbitrary social control’ that accompanies the UPP process (Cano, 2012:115). In interviews about residents’ attitudes towards the UPP, another commonly cited complaint concerns the prohibition of baile funk events (Melicio et al, 2012:615). These constitute an important cultural expression, originating from within Rio de Janeiro’s favelas with a unique style of music and dance (Arruda et al, 2010). However, their association with the drug traffickers, who previously organised the funk parties, has led to a ‘criminalisation of funk’ and the banning of these and other events (Melicio et al, 2012:616). Instead, events for middle class citizens who come from other areas are allowed, which are not part of the culture in favelas and the majority of residents cannot afford to attend. This is highlighted in an interview with a local tradesman in Santa Marta, who said that now at community events ‘there are only outsiders, there isn’t anyone from the favela’24 (Ost and Fleury, 2013:646). Other controls include restrictions of informal transport industries created by drug traffickers, such as moto-taxis and vans, which play an important role in the lives of residents. For example, in the case of Rocinha, routes have been restricted and the number of vehicles cut by almost two thirds. This has not only led to unemployment within the community and difficulties in moving up and down the steep hills on which the favela is built, but also the cessation of social roles provided by such industries, such as free transportation for the families of prison inmates for visiting purposes. Such prohibitions foster a sense of anger but little possibility to express this. The resulting feeling of powerlessness may also serve to threaten the authority, and implied masculine status, of residents.

A third factor with the potential to threaten the masculine identities of residents is the rising cost of living that accompanies the UPP interventions (Cano, 2012:177). This rise in expenses is caused by a combination of factors. There is a rise in rental prices, as the new level of security creates a greater demand for houses (Peace Studies Group, 2012:18). In Santa Marta, the first community to receive the UPP, rental prices rose by 200% following the entrance of the programme (Ost and Fleury, 2013:660). Additionally, the role of private businesses in the planning, funding, and execution of the UPP has led to increased costs for many services (Ost and Fleury, 2013:638). These services, such as electricity, water, light and

24 Author’s translation
cable television, were all previously provided through illegal means by the drug traffickers for free, or at a minimal price (Peace Studies Group, 2012:18). For example, before the UPP in Santa Marta 90% of residents had free access to electricity (Ost and Fleury, 2013:648). The influence of private business in the UPP process has led to the commonly cited joke: ‘Sky is already waiting in the BOPE trucks’25 (World Bank, 2013). Despite an inadequate quality of services, these costs are constantly rising. For example, in Santa Marta electricity bills rose from R$1,585.64 when the UPP entered in December 2008, to R$87,799 by December 2011 (Ost and Fleury, 2013:648). The rising cost of living is causing increased poverty, and many residents are moving out of the pacified favelas to more marginalised and violent communities in the city’s periphery (Cunha and Melo, 2011). The significant rise in living costs can serve to challenge the head of the household’s role as provider for the family. This undermines his status in the home, and may create feelings of subordination.

Clearly, these three elements of the UPP process can be seen as potential threats to the militarised, hegemonic masculinities which continue under the military police occupation. Male residents’ sense of ‘manhood’ may be threatened as their authority over their own homes and communities is challenged, along with their ability to provide for their families. As we have seen, this risks subordinating individuals and encouraging them to identify with thwarted masculinities. In a situation where few other alternatives are available, compensatory violence is often used as a strategy to reassert ones masculinity.

Conclusion

This paper has sought to highlight the importance of socially constructed militarised masculine identities to all forms of violence. Inequalities of power between genders result in a society with ingrained structural violence. Inequalities of power within genders create a context in which violence and aggression are encouraged as strategies to achieve hegemonic power over others. In the case of men, those who are at the bottom of these power hierarchies are associated with subordinate masculine identities. Compensatory violence, often within their own private domain as the man of the house, can be used as a strategy to reassert their status of hegemonic masculinity.

The dominance of the drug traffic in favelas creates a context characterised by high levels of structural and personal violence which serves to produce and reinforce such gender

25 Author’s translation
identities. Power is maintained through pervasive patronage networks, in which heavily armed, violent drug traffickers dispense resources and services amongst the community in return for obedience, loyalty and respect. Societal constructions of hegemonic militarised masculinities are encouraged by the drug traffickers in order to justify their power over the community. They are construed as the strong, aggressive protectors and providers, and other community members are portrayed as vulnerable and in need of protection. In order to maintain a continued access to the benefits of the drug traffic’s patronage structures, residents engage with these constructions of militarised masculinities in different ways. Whether it be males conforming to the hegemonic identity or accepting a subordinate one, or females seeking relationships with those who display characteristics of one, the hegemonic construction of militarised masculinities is reinforced throughout society, resulting in high levels of dominating and compensatory violence.

The UPP programme aims to bring an end to the violence in favela communities through replacing the drug traffickers’ control with that of the state. As an effort to reshape social relations and bring peace, it can be understood as a ‘window of opportunity’ to reshape gender constructions, in line with theories from the post-conflict literature. Due to the inherently violent nature of socially dominant hegemonic identities, this can be seen as imperative if peace, whether positive or negative, is truly to be achieved.

Whilst the UPP has made important steps in reducing homicides, the frequency of shootouts, and the number of visibly armed drug traffickers in the streets, this paper argues that it has not filled its potential in reshaping gender relations. The use of BOPE and military police, who can be seen to represent the epitome of socially constructed ideas of what it means to be ‘a real man’, has merely served to reinforce the dominance of militarised masculinities. This paper highlights the argument that armed drug traffickers have simply been replaced with armed military police officers, both of whom use their status as the hegemonic masculine identity and the threat of violence to maintain power over others.

Moreover, the control of communities by UPP officers presents a potential for a higher number of male residents to be forced into positions of subordinate masculinities. Whilst the drug traffickers distinguished between trabalhadores and bandidos, and acknowledged the hard-working lifestyles of the former, police officers do not share the same understanding of the community and its residents, and thus treat all with suspicion. Residents are forced to comply with the police occupation, acknowledging the authoritative power of officers as they
exert their power in both the private and public spheres, through stop-searches of residents, police brutality, home invasions, and the closure of leisure events and transport industries. Being forced to accept such events, especially in the head of the household’s private domain, can serve to humiliate residents, forcing men to identify with subordinate masculinities as their role of protector is challenged. At the same time, their role of provider is challenged as the cost of living significantly increases following UPP occupation. There is a danger that males being forced to accept subordinate masculine identities may result in an increase of thwarted masculinities and the consequent use of compensatory violence in an attempt to reassert a traditional view of masculine identity. The rise in reports of rape and domestic violence that has taken place in pacified communities may be relevant to such an analysis.

However, it is important to highlight that both the UPP and the reshaping of gender identities are both fluid processes, varying over time and between communities. This commentary merely aims to speculate on the possible effects that the current stage of the UPP is having on social and gender relations within pacified communities, and not to discount the potential the UPP has for positive change. The UPP has still achieved important reductions in homicide rates and provided residents with new levels of security and freedom of movement, and has important potential for the future. However, the reduction of violence and militarised masculinities will require the development of an alternative form of control which relies less on aggression, provides greater socio-economic support, and in which residents are treated with respect.

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Has ideological convergence occurred in contemporary British politics? Assessing the extent of Cameron’s Conservatives accommodation with New Labour’s third way

Harriet Orchard

Abstract
This paper seeks to examine the notion of ideological convergence in contemporary British politics through assessing the Conservative Party’s accommodation with New Labour’s third way. Firstly, an ideational framework of the third way will be constructed, within which the policies and discourses of the New Labour government will be analysed and portrayed as largely consistent and coherent, representing the party’s sustained uptake of third way thought. Against this framework, Cameron’s Conservatives adoption of third way politics will be systematically assessed, with the central argument being that any accommodation with the third way has been shifting and unsustained, thus challenging the case for ideological convergence. This recent shift away from the third way terrain will be explicated through the primacy of entrenched right-wing values within Cameronite thought, thus substantiating the final interpretation of Cameronism as preserving the ideological trajectory of the party within established Conservative parameters.
Introduction

The early years of David Cameron’s leadership of the Conservative Party generated considerable speculation over the party’s adaptation to the post-New Labour political terrain (Pattie and Johnston, 2011; Prabhakar, 2011). Similarities between the modernisation of Labour under Blair and the Conservatives under Cameron were readily apparent, leading some authors to question whether third way politics were becoming “further entrenched” by Cameron’s Conservatives (McAnulla, 2010:287). The validity of a current consensus period in British politics is contentious and thus far unresolved, elucidating the purpose of formulating this assessment. Moreover, ascertaining contraction of the ideological space between the two parties can be seen as fundamental to comprehending future directional change in British politics.

Assertions of an emerging consensus in British politics surfaced amidst claims that “traditional ideologies of ‘left’ and ‘right’ have declined” (Denham and Garnett, 2006:156), which came in response to the collapse of the USSR after the Cold War (see Fukuyama, 1992). Yet, a degree of caution when encountering consensus theories is needed (Pimlott, 1988); Kerr (2007) argues a normative desire to proclaim ideological convergence exists within British political academia, leading to the inevitability of the Conservative Party’s apparent shift leftwards being highlighted to evidence the absence of ideological conflict. This paper will assess ideological convergence in British politics specifically in relation to the third way, as the clearly definable contours of the third way philosophy allow for a meticulous and systematic comparison between the two parties to be conducted.

The ‘third way’ was intellectually shaped by Tony Blair and Anthony Giddens, and resolved Labour’s quest for a single defining ‘big idea’ capable of combating the success of Thatcherism (McAnulla, 2010: 289). Although speculation of ideological continuity was prevalent following New Labour’s apparent accommodation with Thatcherism in embracing neo-liberal economics, the purpose of this paper is to examine convergence in the post-1997 period between New Labour and the Conservatives under Cameron’s leadership; however, it should be acknowledged that Thatcher’s 18 years in government “radically altered the social, economic and political terrain in British society” (Hall, 2003:10), and thus profoundly shaped the political context inherited by Blair’s government (Driver and Martell, 1998; Heffernan, 2001).
This dissertation will assess ideological convergence in contemporary British politics through evaluating Cameron’s Conservatives accommodation with New Labour’s third way. The first chapter will establish an ideational framework of the third way, which will portray the philosophy as the serious and sustained combination of themes drawn from both sides of the political spectrum - the final interpretation as forwarded by this paper. Within this structure, an analysis of the policies and discourses of New Labour’s period in government will be conducted, and a high level of consistency and coherence will be evidenced (Coates, 2005), signifying the party’s sustained uptake of third way politics and genuine ideological renewal. Thus, a frame of reference against which to determine the Conservative Party’s degree of accommodation will be established.

The second chapter will utilise this framework as a platform upon which to assess the extent of Conservative accommodation. Evaluation of the notion of an ideological consensus will thus be attempted from a currently unprecedented angle: identification of each of the key compositional ideas of the third way, exploration of the policies and discourses of New Labour in power in relation to each of these ideas, and the systematic comparison of the Conservative Party’s ideological trajectory against this structure can be seen to constitute an originative approach in assessing ideological convergence in British politics. Within each key component of the third way framework, fundamental disparity between New Labour and Cameron’s Conservatives will be illustrated in regards to the consistency of the uptake of third way politics, thus rationalising the eventual contestation of ideological convergence. More precisely, Conservative accommodation with New Labour’s positioning upon the centre-ground will be shown to be shifting and unsustained, with the party switching between exuding third way, centrist themes and traditional ‘tough’ Conservative messages (Bale, 2008), providing a direct contrast with Labour’s largely coherent implementation of third way policies and practices. The transient nature of the accommodation with third way politics will be attributed to the prevailing influence of traditional right-wing values on Cameron, indicating Cameron’s leadership has failed to represent the true ideological transformation of the Conservative party.

The final chapter will seek to further explicate the preceding chapter’s illustration of the impermanent accommodation with the third way through providing a final interpretation of Cameron’s politics. The validity of interpreting Cameron’s politics as ‘one nation’ conservatism, or as analogous to a repeat of Thatcherism will be challenged, and chameleonic
leadership theory (Gormley-Heenan, 2006) will be explored but deemed unsatisfactory in fully explicating Cameronism. The final interpretation offered will emphasise Cameron’s endorsement of traditional Tory sentiments, contending that his rule has ideologically sustained the party within established Conservative parameters, but will acknowledge his leadership has overseen a novel direction in the successful modernisation of the party’s outer face: however, this new direction (and any initial engagement with the third way) has conceded to the dominance of entrenched right-wing values within Cameronite thought in recent years, a process which has been significantly facilitated by the financial crisis and the power of the party’s right wing.

New Labour

To assess the validity of ideological convergence in contemporary British politics, examination of New Labour’s third way is necessary to provide a foundation against which Cameron’s Conservatives can be evaluated. After an initial brief exploration of the development of the third way, this chapter will arrive at a final interpretation of third way politics - the combination of left and right-wing political thought in a serious and sustained manner – thus facilitating the formulation of an assessment of the Conservative Party’s convergence. The compositional ideas and values within the third way will then be identified through construction of an ideational framework, providing a basis for the systematic assessment of Conservative accommodation. The central argument of this chapter is that New Labour exhibited relatively high consistency in the policies and discourses within each component of the third way framework, showing an “unusually sustained capacity to hold to... [policy initiatives] and to maintain their coherence over time” (Coates, 2005: 185), thus indicating a genuine ideological shift. The sustained nature of New Labour’s uptake of the third way will then be contrasted with the shifting, transitory engagement of Cameron’s Conservatives, challenging the notion of ideological convergence.

The development of New Labour’s third way

Examination of the development of New Labour’s third way can go some way in supporting the contention that the project represented legitimate ideological renewal. The third way philosophy was influenced by the post-Cold War ‘end of history’ discourse, which proposed
ideological divisions would cease to exist following the uniform acceptance of a liberal democratic paradigm (Fukuyama, 1992). Giddens explicitly attributed the reform of the centre-left to a desire to “cut loose from the past” following the fall of the USSR (1998:17). Across Europe, social democratic parties began serious consideration of an alternate, middle path which accepted the free market whilst maintaining left-wing concerns such as social inclusion. Labour’s shift towards the centre was thus interwoven with the fabric of centre-left renewal across several different nations, reflecting a “broader, international trend” (White and Giaimo, 2001:213). These entrenched international roots of Labour’s third way indicate inherent legitimacy within the party’s ideological transformation, challenging the critique that renewal came solely in response to poor domestic electoral fortunes. As Bastow and Martin argue, dismissing the third way as mere rebranding overlooks a “wider effort on the British (and European) left to redefine the terms of social democratic discourse” (2003:46).

Blair’s third way was also highly influenced by the work of Giddens, who advocated the renewal of social democratic values against contextual changes such as “globalisation, transformations in personal life and our relationship to nature” (Giddens, 1998:64). Globalisation had induced rapid societal changes such as increasingly individualistic tendencies and the decline of traditions, and most significantly, was rendering left and right approaches to governance irrelevant (Giddens, 1998; 2000; 2001). Blair’s endorsement of this narrative was enthusiastic, arguing that static and inflexible ideologies were inappropriate in responding to societal changes arising from globalisation (Blair, 1998:5-7); in particular, old-style social democracy and its inherent Keynesian commitment to full employment were seen as increasingly less viable within a globalised economy. Broad consensus existed between Blair’s and Giddens’s third way accounts, although subtle divergence could be seen in specific areas: Blair adopted an acquiescent stance towards globalisation by supporting the notion of greater global economic integration, whilst Giddens took a less passive view, proposing global governance was needed to effectively manage the phenomenon (Driver and Martell, 2001; 2002). Perspectives on individualism also differed, with Blair attributing growing individualistic tendencies to the economics of the New Right, as opposed to the detraditionalisation of society as advocated by Giddens (Driver and Martell, 2001; 2002).

Interpretations of the third way
Arriving at an interpretation of New Labour’s third way is necessary as to elucidate assessment of the convergence displayed by Cameron’s Conservatives. New Labour’s third way has been subject to various academic interpretations, and this section seeks to evaluate the most significant of these. Some academics refute the third way as constituting a significant new political direction, interpreting it as little more than a facade for the Left’s acceptance of neo-liberalism (Hay, 1997; Anderson, 2000; Callinicos, 2001). In a similar vein, Jessop (2007) argued the third way merely amounted to slight modification of Thatcherism, and could be deemed the ‘routinization’ of neo-liberalism. Others saw the third way as abandonment of traditional socialist values, appealing for Labour to “repossess itself of its traditional foundations” (Cohen, 1994:4).

However, perspectives of this nature can be criticised for simplifying the New Labour project to “a bland surface” of positive rhetoric, serving solely to camouflage the surrender to global capitalism (Bastow and Martin, 2003:58). Viewing the third way as the embrace of neo-liberalism fails to recognize the sustained interplay between the combined themes from both sides of the political spectrum. Hall (2003) also sees the third way as predominantly neo-liberal, but acknowledges that the neo-liberal philosophy has undergone significant and novel adaptation under Labour. Overall, the result has been a social democratic party accepting neo-liberal economics whilst maintaining its support for the working class, causing “compromises and confusions” to arise (Hall, 2003:14). This leads Hall to deem New Labour’s third way a “hybrid regime” with one dominant strand, neo-liberalism, intertwined with the second, subordinate strand of social democratic values (2003:17).

Others have interpreted the third way as political marketing, highlighting the emphasis on managing media relations, the use of focus groups and the importance of press secretaries within the party. These perspectives were fuelled by extensive media manipulation techniques and Peter Mandelson’s own acknowledgement of an “over-zealous” focus on portraying the correct image (2002:xliv). Although the third way label was conducive to heightening electoral appeal by implying a break from the other two discredited ‘ways’ of state-interventionism and neo-liberalism, dismissing the third way as a marketing ploy fails to recognize the genuine and sustained attempt by the continental centre-left to re-establish social democratic values within a contemporary context (Bastow and Martin, 2003:46). This dissertation will also seek to challenge accounts equating the third way to the mere pursuit of electability by highlighting the ideological shift undergone by the Labour Party, as can be indicated through the
abolishment of Clause IV, through Blair’s “major revisions” to Labour’s aims and values (Lee, 2009a:9), and through the largely sustained encapsulation of third way thought across the Blair and Brown administrations.

Instead, Bastow and Martin conceive the third way as a discourse which “operates across the range of ideologies from left, centre and right” (2003:i). The primary purpose of this discourse is to manage “a broad coalition of interests” in government, uniting values which are sometimes contradictory in nature, leading to the inevitability of some authors dismissing third way politics as an “exercise in rhetorical inventiveness, manipulation and audacity” (Bastow and Martin, 2003:64). Fairclough also conceives the third way as a discourse, “ongoingly constituted and reconstituted” by Labour politicians in speeches and documents, with new language constantly utilised to unify various third way values into a “coherent whole” (2000:4-9). Viewing the third way as a discursive strategy is arguably somewhat simplistic, failing to take into account the physical implications of the third way in terms of policy and governmental practices, indicating the philosophy to operate at a more substantial level; this will be illustrated throughout the policy exploration within the third way framework in the following section. However, this paper will draw on the discursive interpretation when establishing the main ideational components of the third way, arguing that discursive positioning was a central facet of the third way.

Other authors have critiqued the third way as a set of contradictory and ambiguous ideas, relying on capaciousness and the principle of pragmatism to unite various policies and actions (Powell, 2000; Lister, 2001; White, 2001:xii). Temple emphasises the centrality of pragmatism to the third way, arguing greater local governance and public-private partnerships indicated flexibility in embracing new methods, showing that “outputs and not ideology are driving the new agenda of governance under New Labour” (2000:302). Pragmatism can be shown to underpin third way thinking to some extent, but deeming the third way as merely the operation of government in a pragmatic manner is overly simplistic, and overlooks the sustained extraction of ideas from each ideological school of thought. As Plant argues, criticisms of New Labour as operating with “rootless pragmatism” are unfounded, as Blair’s political views are “rooted in a set of fundamental political values” (2001:556).

Driver and Martell acknowledge the existence of pragmatism in New Labour’s governing programme, but their central argument is that the third way combines themes from left and right in significant ways, rather than transcending the division between the two
The third way thus exists as the combination of principles traditionally associated with the two opposing ideological systems, social democracy and neoliberalism, rather than the invention of an entirely new programme. As Driver and Martell (2001; 2002) argue, this combination allows for a more pluralistic, pragmatic approach to policy development, unconstrained by any one pre-established ideological principle. Bastow and Martin declare this to be a positive view in considering the possibilities of the third way, showing it to hold “opportunities for... different combinations of policy, and therefore different ‘ways’ to move beyond the old antagonisms” (2003:63).

This paper will draw upon Driver and Martell’s argument to arrive at the following interpretation of the third way: a serious and sustained attempt to combine themes from both sides of the political spectrum. Indeed, Coates’s (2005:186) assertion that the New Labour project was “intellectually informed and academically sustained” indicates the existence of a high degree of theoretical coherency behind Labour’s amalgamation of left and right-wing themes. Viewing the third way as a completely new arena beyond left and right overlooks the influence of traditional ideology on third way thinking, failing to recognise the philosophy’s embrace of neo-liberal economics or the left-wing concern with social justice. As Driver and Martell argue, it is “probably impossible to... transcend the old dichotomies” due to the essential and enduring nature of questions about equality, human nature, individual rights, freedoms, and responsibilities (1998:179). Therefore, a more compelling interpretation of the third way is the sustained combination of principles from both ideological traditions, as will be illustrated in the ideational framework of the third way formulated below.

**Ideational framework of the third way**

Examining the main compositional ideas within the third way will allow the construction of an ideational framework, upon which the Conservative Party’s espousal of third way politics can be evaluated. These conceptual components will be identified through integration of Giddens’s and Blair’s accounts of the third way, across which broad theoretical consensus existed, despite aforementioned subtle differences. When examined in coalescence, these components constitute the serious and sustained combination of thought from both sides of the political spectrum. Indeed, the amalgamation of left and right-wing political thought is evident in the discursive repositioning of the party upon the centre-ground; the unification of right-wing neo-
liberal economics and the social democratic concern with societal equality; and the emphasis upon the traditional Conservative issue of responsibility alongside the leftist notion of rights. Within each constituent part to the ideational framework, the relative coherence of New Labour across the governing period will be established through the exemplification of consistency within policies and discourses.

Discursive positioning

A key component of the third way was discursive political positioning, through the modernisation of Labour’s image, critique of excessive individualism and statism, and attempting the transcension of traditional ideological lines by encroaching upon opposition territory. Certain authors have placed heavy emphasis on the discursive element of the third way (Fairclough, 2000; Bastow and Martin, 2003), indicating its integrality in legitimising Labour’s new political thinking. Firstly, it should be established that third way discourse was used throughout the period in office in a sustained attempt to maintain the centrist political positioning of New Labour. This consistency illustrated genuine engagement with third way politics, as shown by Coates’s assertion that the New Labour project did not represent government by ‘soundbites’, instead demonstrating an “unusually sustained capacity” to prolong policy coherence over time (2005:185). The discourse and rhetoric of Brown was “largely unchanged” from Blair, and although Brown did not explicitly use the phrase ‘third way’, his leadership brought no significant shift in ideology (McAnulla, 2010:287). The inherent consistency within New Labour’s discursive strategy, then, must be borne in mind when comparing Cameron’s Conservatives utilisation of third way discourse.

Across the period in office, New Labour’s third way discourse entailed an emphasis on modernisation in an attempt at repositioning within the centre-ground of British politics. The language of modernisation was thoroughly enshrined in Labour’s third way, with Blair emphasising the introduction of “new politics” for the centre-left (1998:1). A continuous narrative emphasising the innovative and forward-thinking nature of third way ideas was employed, with Blair (2006a) declaring ideological “cross-dressing” was ahead of its time and would eventually permeate the modern political landscape. This reinforced the claim that Labour were the “new progressive force in British politics” capable of leading modern-day
Britain (Blair, 1999). The discourse of the third way thus facilitated New Labour’s self-presentation as modernised, renewed and representative of British society.

Third way discourse was also utilised to politically position the party by critiquing the embroilment in ideological battles that characterised post-war politics. Presentation of a third option highlighted the closed and dogmatic character of the other two opposing alternatives, illustrating them as “limited or exhausted in some way” (Bastow and Martin, 2003:40). Explicit acknowledgement of ‘Old’ Labour’s overly-excessive focus on worker interests was made in conjunction with the concession that economic changes under Thatcher were mostly necessary, although her failure to alleviate the negative social impacts of the free market was deemed unacceptable (McAnulla, 2010:289-290). Blair (2010) argued that “clashes of fundamentalist political ideology” were receding due to their lack of relevance in the contemporary, globalised world, thus further highlighting the “transcendent, transparent and pragmatic” nature of the third way (McAnulla, 2010:293). Through this centrist positioning, third way rhetoric was designed to “appeal to people with contrasting political dispositions... and unite diverse groups” (McAnulla, 2010:293-294). The discursive element of the third way thus provided a consistent critique of the ideological warfare within post-war British politics, aiding the centrist positioning of the party.

A further strategy of the third way discourse was to transcend the left-right divide by appropriating issues that had traditionally belonged to the opposition. Blair (1998:1) made clear his intention to reconcile themes previously seen as antagonistic, such as “patriotism and internationalism; rights and responsibilities; the promotion of enterprise and the attack on poverty and discrimination”, leading Fairclough (2000:viii) to deem third way language as the “rhetoric of reconciliation”. Political values appropriated from traditional Conservative territory, such as “enterprise, self reliance, anti-statism”, were reflected in the discourse of Labour ministers (Heffernan, 2001:65), demonstrating a comprehensive engagement with third way values across the bulk of the party. The consistency of the discourse was also evident across the duration of New Labour’s time in office: in the final days of Blair’s leadership, the focus on reconciling left and right wing themes was still heavily maintained, as shown by Blair’s (2006b) appraisal of the Labour Party as having successfully proved “economic efficiency and social justice are not opposites but partners in progress”. Significantly, the emphasis on combining opposing themes was continued under the rhetoric of Brown’s leadership, as shown by the declaration in one of his later speeches that Labour was “the party of British
enterprise”, whilst acknowledging that “markets need what they cannot generate themselves… markets need morals” (Brown, 2009a). The third way discourse thus convincingly and systematically combined themes from both sides of the political spectrum across New Labour’s period in office, effectively maintaining the party’s positioning upon the centre-ground.

Neo-liberal economics

The acceptance of neo-liberal economics constituted an integral component of the third way, with the market economy promoted as “the best way of promoting prosperity and economic efficiency” (Giddens, 2001:7). Giddens argued the Left must become “comfortable with markets” and abandon the anachronistic perception that the free market economy was dangerous if unharnessed by the state (2000:34). Blair’s desire for a dynamic and competitive market economy was made explicit from the outset, with the traditional social democratic belief in the state providing the primary motivation behind the economy discarded. The emergence of a global economy had arguably detracted from the power of the nation state, rendering Keynesian demand management insufficient in attaining national objectives (Giddens, 1998:30-31). Blair and Giddens thus both promoted the third way as “a renewal of the social democratic tradition which takes account of this profoundly altered context” (McAnulla, 2010:298).

New Labour “willingly peered at the world in economic terms through neo-liberal lenses” (Heffernan, 2001:19), illustrating the thorough and far-reaching nature of the embrace of free market economics. The party’s 1997 manifesto recognised healthy profits as an “essential motor” of the market economy (The Labour Party, 1997); an affirmation which manifested itself in increased taxes on consumption combined with decreased taxes on income, with the basic rate of tax reduced by 1p and a new lower 10p rate introduced (Driver and Martell, 2002). The manifesto also echoed many economic goals of the previous Conservative administration, including prioritising the reduction of inflation, less state involvement in the market, and exerting greater control over the trade unions by ensuring they received ‘fairness’ as opposed to ‘favours’ (Heffernan, 2001). Indeed, the primary aim of New Labour’s macro-economic policy remained the control of inflation across the time in office, rather than the Keynesian commitment to full employment. The control of inflation,
also viewed as a key achievement of Brown’s administration, was seen as “one of the constants of economic policy under Labour” (Conway, 2010, para.2), illustrating consistency within New Labour’s commitment to the third way facet of neo-liberal economics.

Significantly, Labour no longer explicitly sought to expand public ownership, and did not seek to reverse moves towards privatisation by the previous Conservative government. Blair emphasised the health of the private sector as a priority for the British economy: a genuine belief which was demonstrable through part-privatisation and the process of deregulation. Private finance initiatives introduced private company funding for public sector institutions such as the London Underground and the NHS. Coates argues Labour’s embrace of PFI arose from a genuine enthusiasm for the private sector and its increased levels of efficiency and effective managerialism (2005:193). Public-private partnerships were also seen as part-privatisation, introduced to finance the creation of new hospitals and transport services. Although the government was still highly involved in “setting standards and often continues to own or regulate”, many on the Left regarded these moves as a full endorsement of neo-liberal economics (Bastow and Martin, 2003:52).

A substantially reduced version of government participation in the economy was evident under New Labour, with Blair and Brown both endorsing the notion of an ‘enabling’ as opposed to a ‘commanding’ state (Blair, 2006c; Brown, 2009b). For much of the New Labour period, the view was that governmental involvement in the economy should be limited to promoting competition to encourage efficiency and stimulating greater training and research. Limited state intervention in the economy has historically been viewed as a key facet of neo-liberalism, with the uptake of this position demonstrating New Labour’s commitment to third way values. However, it should be acknowledged that the financial crisis of 2008 evoked a more social democratic stance from Labour (McAnulla, 2010; Smith, 2010). Labour’s response to the crisis was labelled Keynesian by Smith, as the bank bailouts, investments in technology and infrastructure, and desire to maintain public expenditure constituted utilising “state resources to stimulate demand at a time when the private sector was reducing investment” (2010:826). This represents a divergence from the third way facet of neo-liberal economics, illustrating that although New Labour’s uptake of the third way was largely sustained and coherent, this consistency was not absolute in the later years of government.
Equal opportunity

Labour’s aforementioned adaption to neo-liberal economics was presented alongside a commitment to equal opportunity, the combination of which typified third way politics. As Giddens proposed, an integral third way idea was to “preserve a core concern with social justice” (1998:65). The traditional leftist notion of equality of outcome was perceived as somewhat outdated by both Blair and Giddens, due to their recognition of the diversity of modern society. As Giddens (2000) argued, a diverse society was incompatible with an insistence on equality of outcome, and so third way politics instead sought to maximise equality of opportunity. Blair also advocated the notion of opportunity for all, which stemmed from his belief that the Left had “too readily downplayed its duty to promote a wide range of opportunities for individuals”, and at worst, had potentially smothered opportunity in the dogmatic promotion of equal outcome (1998:3).

An integral component of the third way was thus to provide all individuals with opportunity in recognition of the value of equal worth, entailing a shift from the previous focus on equality of outcome, but retaining a social democratic concern with social justice. The promotion of equal opportunity manifested itself in several ways across the course of the New Labour era. Driver and Martell (2002) argue that leftist sentiments were identifiable in the introduction of the national minimum wage, constitutional reform, and the desire to guarantee uniform access to effective public services. The commitment to equality of opportunity was particularly visible in sustained high spending on education and health, illustrating a desire to assist the more vulnerable in society through extending the reach and scope of certain public services. In particular, increased spending on education sought to provide those from a variety of backgrounds a greater breadth of opportunities. There was “real force” in the party’s efforts to modernise public service provision (Coates, 2005:185), with the objective being the attainment of national standards, thus promoting the notion of equality of opportunity across Britain. This concern with providing uniform access to public services was maintained across the duration of New Labour’s governmental record, coming into sharper focus in the second term, when there was “a substantial injection of public funds into health and education” (Hall, 2003:18). By 1998, £2.2 billion had been taken from the contingency reserve to provide extra funding for education and healthcare, and in 2000, further spending increases of around 5.5 percent in education and health were announced.
(Driver and Martell, 2002, p.31). According to Quinn, consistently high public spending in these areas provided an “indication of New Labour’s social-democratic hue” (2010:387).

The genuine nature of the commitment to equal opportunity was further illustrated by the extent to which policy-making favoured the least advantaged individuals, “producing clear and undeniable benefits for some of Britain’s most disadvantaged citizens” (White and Giaimo, 2001:215). Changes to public policy, such as the introduction of the national minimum wage, benefitted the most disadvantaged within Britain in a “sustained way” (Coates, 2005:170).

Redistributive policy initiatives served to combat social exclusion, increasing the prevalence of social mobility and widening the range of opportunities open to citizens. Labour’s introduction of tax credits attained significant income redistribution, although the party did not openly publicise this fact due to potential electoral backlash, which Taylor-Goodby and Martin (2008) labelled ‘doing good by stealth’. A widespread consensus existed over the progressive nature of fiscal policy initiatives (Taylor-Goodby and Stoker, 2011), with some authors arguing such improvement in prospects for the disadvantaged had not occurred since the creation of the welfare state (Toynbee and Walker, 2001). Giddens declared Blair’s government was arguably the first Labour administration “actually to effect redistribution, rather than just talk about it” (2004, para.7), illustrating the success of redistributive fiscal policies in advancing equality of opportunity.

New Labour’s success in promoting equal opportunity through fiscal policy manifested itself in steadily decreasing levels of poverty, as shown by income poverty receding to pre-1990 levels for the first time just after the new millennium (Palmer et al., 2003). Overall, an estimated two million people, including 800,000 children, were removed from poverty between 1997 and 2005 (Giddens, 2007). The reduction of child poverty was a constant objective for the New Labour government, demonstrating the centrality of equal opportunity to the third way, as equal starts in life are contingent on the low prevalence of child poverty in society. Brown’s Chancellorship entailed “repeated if modest attempts” at eliminating child poverty, such as easing the burden of childcare for working parents through the implementation of Child Tax Credit and Working Families’ Tax Credit (Coates, 2005:170). Eradication of child poverty was clearly a long-term goal which remained firmly on track throughout the Blair and Brown administrations (Coates, 2005), illustrating the sustained nature of the commitment to social justice and equal opportunity within New Labour’s third way.
Rights and responsibilities

The notion of rights from the state counterbalanced with citizen responsibility was a key ideational component of third way politics. ‘No rights without responsibilities’ was the guiding principle that Giddens (1998; 2000; 2001) claimed should apply to everyone in society, as the increasing prevalence of individualism should bring an extension of individual responsibilities. Giddens argued unemployment benefits should come with the obligation to actively seek work, and that the state must “ensure that welfare systems do not discourage active search” (1998:65). Blair fully endorsed this concept across his time in office, displaying a firm, genuine belief that “the rights we enjoy reflect the duties we owe” (1998:4). Blair argued the Left had overseen a depreciation of individual responsibility, while the Right had traditionally overlooked the impact of social conditions on actions, which had adverse consequences such as the increasing prevalence of crime (1996:218). Rights balanced with responsibilities thus materialised as an integral component of the third way, which was emphasised throughout New Labour’s time in office.

A new-found emphasis on responsibility, alongside the traditional left-wing belief in provision of rights from the state, could be seen in family policy under Labour: parental duties to children following a breakdown in marriage were re-established, countering the perception that the state should manage the aftermath of divorce (Bastow and Martin, 2003). The hardening of Labour’s stance on responsibility was also evident in the party’s abandonment of support for liberal laws, radical protest movements, and strikes by miners (Downes and Morgan, 1997). The value of responsibility was also inherent in Blair’s proclaimed desire to see a “strengthening of civil society, in the voluntary sector and individual volunteering”, arising from his wish to reverse the gradual extraction of responsibility from civil society, which he deemed the “grievous twentieth century error of the fundamentalist Left” (Plant, 2001:564).

‘Rights and responsibilities’ were also enshrined in policy on crime, with a renewed emphasis on criminals taking responsibility for their actions. There was a commitment to ensuring perpetrators ‘paid for their crimes’, through measures like removing money from bank accounts of suspected organised criminals, unless it could be proven the fortune was obtained legally (Blair, 2002). Reinforced notions of responsibility were also reflected in tougher sentencing guidelines with the implementation of minimum and mandatory sentencing, and the system was re-balanced in favour of the victims of crime, forcing more
responsibility onto offenders (Blair, 2002). These developments were counterbalanced with recognition of the state’s duty in tackling the causes of crime by combating social exclusion and ameliorating circumstances which foster criminal activity. For example, tougher young offender sentencing was balanced with a commitment to reforming substandard state schools to enhance prospects for disadvantaged youths. The 1988 Crime and Disorder Act further highlighted the obligation of the state in crime prevention by ensuring “local authorities, the police, health authorities and the probation service work in partnership to make communities safer in the first place” (Driver and Martell, 2002:59).

Bevir asserts welfare reform under New Labour also embodied the belief that “the state should be an enabling partner that promotes responsibility as well as guaranteeing rights” (2005:89-90). Labour launched the New Deal in 1998, which made entitlement to benefits conditional on whether the claimant had sought paid employment. Increasingly severe sanctions were implemented for citizens who repeatedly refused New Deal work offers without good reason. However, the New Deal programme provided support for welfare claimants applying for jobs and attending interviews, taught basic skills, and provided the chance to return to education. As Brown (1999) declared, the government would meet their responsibility in ensuring job opportunities existed and offering job-seekers the chance to learn new skills, while welfare claimants would be required to meet their responsibility in earning a wage. Thus, as Driver and Martell (2002) assert, responsibility was enforced through more stringent tests in certifying claimant entitlement to benefits, with rights encapsulated by greater governmental support for job-seekers, fully enshrining the third way notion of rights and responsibilities in welfare-to-work programmes.

Cameron’s Conservatives: assessing ideological convergence

This chapter will seek to utilise the proposed third way framework as a platform upon which to assess the Conservative Party’s accommodation with third way ideas under Cameron’s leadership. Before the coalition government formation in 2010, Driver declared “potential continuities between the Labour government and a future Conservative government are striking” (2009:89). Whilst acknowledging the existence of some parity with New Labour in the early years of Cameron’s leadership, most notably before the financial crisis, this chapter will argue that Cameronism has not constituted any true degree of adoption of third way ideas in
practice, through illustrating the lack of sustained adherence to the proposed ideational third way framework. Instead, Conservative accommodation has been inconstant and shifting, thus leading to the consequent incompatibility between Cameronism and the final interpretation of the third way (the serious and sustained combination of left and right-wing politics). The lack of maintained engagement with third way politics can be attributed to Cameron’s successful presentation of the party as a modernised, renewed and credible alternative to Labour, eventually earning voter consideration, warranting the shift back to traditional Conservative ideology. It will be contended that this reversion has been significantly facilitated by the financial crisis, which provided justification for the adoption of an austere, Thatcherite approach, whilst also highlighting Cameron’s influenceability to dominant right-wing views within the Conservative Party as another acceleratory factor. It should also be acknowledged that despite the coalition government formation, governmental practices and policies since 2010 have been largely dominated by the Conservatives, with the Liberal Democrats “marginalised in terms of their capacity to influence policy trajectory” (Heppell, 2013:272), thus rationalising this paper’s analysis of governmental policies in examining Cameronism.

**Discursive positioning**

The early years of Cameron’s leadership did, to some extent, appear to further entrench third way ideas through echoing Blairite discourse and rhetoric. Cameron mirrored the key techniques of third way discourse through focusing on Conservative modernisation; acknowledging that the party had made grave errors in the past; and appropriating ideas from the opposition, in what Bale deemed a “fairly daring move onto traditional Labour territory” (2008:277). This section will argue that, despite initial emulation of the discursive positioning techniques of New Labour, once in government, any parity with third way discourse had almost entirely faded.

Central to Blair’s third way was a discursive emphasis on modernisation; similarly, the early days of Cameron’s leadership entailed pursuing a modernisation strategy through discourse. The discourse of modernisation can be seen to facilitate the transcendence of left and right-wing ideologies due to its “politically neutral character” (Byrne et al., 2012:24). Forward-thinking, modernising language was used, such as the term ‘progressive’, aiding the decontamination and repositioning of the Conservative Party (Hayton, 2014:9). Cameron also made the claim that he was the ‘heir to Blair’ (Pierce, 2005), striving to present himself as a
moderniser who could “drag the party into the twenty-first century” (Byrne et al., 2012:16-17). The introduction of the A-list in 2006, which aimed to increase the numbers of MPs belonging to minority groups, was a key initiative serving the modernisation agenda; however, it was quietly dropped in 2012 when the “appearance (and at least modicum) of change had been achieved” (Bale, 2010:382). The discontinuation of the A-list was also likely to be influenced by the aversion towards it by many party members: the majority “specifically disliked” this initiative, seeing it as excessively politically correct (Childs et al., 2009:212). Phillip Blond, once a notable influence on Cameron, has also recently highlighted the cessation of the modernisation agenda, arguing that the forward-thinking, ‘compassionate conservatism’ approach has been abandoned since in power, with a regressive, “re-toxifying” approach to deficit reduction (2012, para.5). Danny Kruger, a former advisor who helped shape early Cameronite thinking, recently endorsed Blond’s critique, declaring Cameron’s modernising vision has been lost due to right-wing media pressure and Tory backbenchers (Kruger, 2013). The eventual desertion of modernisation rhetoric across the time in government can thus illustrate the failure of Cameron’s Conservatives to engage consistently with the discourse of the third way.

Blair also used third way discourses to politically position Labour through critiquing the idealistic and overly statist focus of the Left and the ‘nasty’, excessively individualistic Right (Bale, 2010). Cameron attempted to emulate this positioning, explicitly critiquing previous errors made by the Conservative Party (Dorey, 2007; Garnett, 2009). For example, Cameron (2007) criticised Thatcher’s local government reforms for causing an “unwelcome move towards centralisation of power and control”. Further distance from Thatcherism was forged through the declaration that “there is such a thing as society, it’s just not the same thing as the state” (Cameron, 2005a). Reversing one of Thatcher’s most infamous phrases formed clear rhetorical distinction, leading Hayton (2014:8) to argue that distancing from Thatcherism was more symbolic than it was substantial. Cameron’s recent failure to adhere to this critique of the past can go some way to support Hayton’s claim, as the declaration that “we are all Thatcherites now” (Cameron, 2013) shortly after Thatcher’s funeral contradicted earlier attempts at discursive centrist positioning. Evans (2010) argues that Thatcher’s legacy has highly influenced Cameron’s approach from the outset, but this influence has recently become more pronounced due to the need for austerity. The economic crisis has thus caused the discourse of modernisation to give way to an “openly more Thatcherite” style of language (Evans, 2010:325). The initial distancing from Thatcher thus acted as “sorbet between courses,
intended to cleanse the electorate’s palate of late Thatcherism”, and with the taste vanquished, the party could revert to rearticulation of traditionalist sentiments (Reeves, 2008:64).

New Labour’s attempt to transcend ideological divisions through encroaching on the opposition’s territory was another third way discursive technique emulated in the early days of Cameron’s leadership. The appropriation of traditional Labour values was evident in the claim that the Conservatives were now “the party of the NHS, environment and social justice” (Cameron, 2009). Labour’s ownership of the NHS and state schooling was further challenged through an emphasis on Cameron’s own reliance on these state institutions, which sought to highlight to the electorate the transcension of the party’s right-wing credentials (Bale, 2009; 2010). New, ‘compassionate’ issues were also adopted to symbolise the party’s change, such as international aid, climate change and feminisation (Heppell and Seawright, 2012; Heppell, 2013a). Changing the logo to a tree was connotative of environmental concerns, aiding the repositioning of the party in the eyes of the electorate, as did the new slogan, ‘vote blue, go green’. As Carter argues, the enthusiastic embrace of environmental concerns had a largely tactical agenda, with the primary objective being “brand decontamination” (2009:234).

Indeed, once the emphasis on environmental concerns had served its purpose, the ‘green’ focus faded almost entirely, as shown by the termination of funding to the Sustainable Development Commission, and Cameron’s recent pledge to significantly reduce green taxes on bills (Watt and Wintour, 2013). Connelly (2011) alleges that the focus on environmental concerns has declined due to the incompatibility of the deficit reduction strategy and the costs of implementing a green agenda. Overall, the uptake of more ‘tender’ issues and the silence over traditional Tory concerns constituted a process of decontamination, which eventually earned the party ‘permission to be heard’ (Bale, 2009:227; 2010:381). Upon obtaining this permission, the underlying plan to return to traditional Conservative territory was implemented, with the party beginning “to hum some of the old tunes as well as the new ones” (Bale, 2010:381). The lack of consistency within the discursive positioning of the party became evident through the “rebalancing that the leadership had always planned” (Bale, 2010:382), as shown by tougher language on crime and the signature pledge on reducing inheritance tax, a commitment dropped under the coalition agreement which has recently been revived (Mason, 2014).
Overall, Conservative engagement with the discursive positioning element of the third way and the attempt to establish centrist credentials has been largely unsustained. When compared with New Labour’s discursive positioning - which operated across the duration of the period in office, was consistent and coherent in nature, and was embraced by the bulk of the party - there are striking disparities with Cameron’s Conservatives. Cameron’s emulation of Blair’s discursive positioning has faded in government, illustrating the utilisation of third way discourse as a means to enhance electability. Once the brand decontamination strategy had proven successful, underlying ideological beliefs gradually resurfaced, illustrating the party to have fallen short of true ideological transformation, whilst New Labour’s use of third way discourse was sustained across the period in office. Contrasting the roles of Blair and Cameron can go some way to explicate this, as Blair was arguably the conduit for the pro-modernisation agenda of Labour, with his election as leader “consolidating a process of reform that had been under way for a decade” (Driver and Martell, 2002:7). Some have argued that Labour would have still been victorious in 1997 irrespective of Blair’s ascension to the leadership (Worcester and Mortimore, 1999). In contrast, Cameron acted as the primary driving force behind the attempt to construct a more centrist position, proving “central to resuscitating the Conservative Party as a party of government” (Norton, 2009:42). The internal backlash over certain ‘modernising’ policies, such as the legalisation of gay marriage, can indicate that the Parliamentary Conservative Party had failed to undergo ideological transformation (see Heppell, 2013b). Indeed, Evans has argued the most significant constraint upon Cameron’s modernisation agenda was “undoubtedly the prevalence of right-wing views among Conservative MPs and party members in general” (2008:293), which goes some way to explicate the fundamental imbalance between New Labour’s success in genuine political repositioning and the more limited extent of the Conservative Party’s ideological renewal.

**Neo-liberal economics**

Conservative economic policy in the earlier years of Cameron’s leadership displayed a high degree of convergence with New Labour, fuelling claims of an emerging consensus. From 2005 onwards, the Conservatives chose to “endorse incumbent government” in terms of economic policy (Gamble, 2012:61), pledging to match Labour’s spending plans in areas such as healthcare (Griffiths, 2009:104). There was little political capital to be gained from critiquing the economy under Labour at this stage, which was characterised by steady growth, high
employment and low inflation, thus leading to a so-called period of economic ‘convergence’ (Lee, 2009b).

The financial crisis of 2008 dropped these “comfortable narratives... into turmoil” (McAnulla, 2010:291), with the Conservatives immediately abandoning their shadowing of Labour’s economic policy, instead reverting to “fiscal conservatism, opposing bank bailouts and calling for tougher cuts from the beginning” (Gamble, 2012:62). This approach to the recession was “austere, Thatcherite... in opposition to Labour attempts to borrow and spend their way through the crisis” (McAnulla, 2010:290). As Beech argues, this shift depicted the party as more “akin to traditional neo-liberals than reformed centrists in their economic and social thinking” (2009a:210). During the lead-up to the 2010 election, the Conservatives advocated the implementation of much heavier and more immediate public spending cuts than Labour. A critique of Labour causing the crisis through excessive public sector spending was developed, allowing the Conservatives to claim superiority in fiscal responsibility. However, in an attempt to maintain the constructed image of a softer, more ‘compassionate’ Conservative Party, specific pledges were made on maintaining spending in particular areas, such as in healthcare, foreign aid, and the winter fuel allowance (Gamble, 2012). Yet, divergence with Labour over the correct response to the crisis represented a resounding attempt to define a Conservative alternative to Brown’s economic policy (Lee, 2009b).

Once governing as part of the coalition, the Conservatives strongly maintained that deficit reduction should be funded through spending cuts, which should be far-reaching enough to abolish the budget deficit within one parliamentary term. The coalition agreement pledged that deficit reduction should mainly be “borne by reduced spending rather than increased taxes” (HM Government, 2010:15). The championing of heavy cuts in public spending meant exposure of the coalition’s ideological preferences sooner than initially desired (McAnulla, 2012). Post-recession Conservative economic policies have been deemed Hayekian by some commentators, due to the emphasis on austerity to finance the structural deficit, the reduction of public expenditure and minimisation of the size and scope of the state (Wapshott, 2012). Reducing the deficit has thus provided a means for the party to fulfil their ideological objective of shrinking the state whilst claiming to be operating pragmatically (Hayton, 2012a:137), with the cuts in public spending “quintessentially political choices” rather than absolute necessity (Lee, 2011:64). The discourse of national interest surrounding spending cuts has concealed ideological sentiments, with the insistence that ‘there is no
alternative’ to austerity creating a parallel with Thatcherite rhetoric (Hayton, 2014). Post-recession, Cameron’s brand of neo-liberalism has been heavily influenced by anti-statist, Thatcherite thought, as shown by the antipathy towards increasing taxation and towards high public spending. This illustrates the dominance of traditional right-wing beliefs on Cameronism, fracturing the economic consensus that previously existed and challenging the notion of accommodation with the third way politics of New Labour.

**Equal opportunity**

The combination of a dynamic market economy and a commitment to the attainment of social justice has been illustrated to be a consistent and sustained feature of New Labour’s archetypal third way politics. Observations of Conservative accommodation with third way politics have thus partially stemmed from speculation over their perceived commitment to social justice and equal opportunity. In the early days of Cameron’s leadership, a softening position on certain social issues was perceptible, leading Kerr to claim the party was shifting “towards a post-Thatcherite style of liberal Conservatism” (2007:47). Initially, Cameron promoted the need for a greater focus on social issues amidst the contemporary neo-liberal economic paradigm, indicating endorsement of “Labour’s emphasis on ‘social justice and economic efficiency’ as constituting common ground in British politics” (McAnulla, 2010:294).

This emphasis on equality of opportunity arose in an attempt to rectify the negative perception of the Conservative Party amongst the electorate. Quinn (2008:189-193) argues the lack of electoral success was linked to perceptions of the party as being ‘nasty’ and unsympathetic as indicated by a harsh stance on immigration and crime; only concerned with the interests of the wealthy; and too antiquated to govern over the diversifying and increasingly pluralistic British society. Indeed, many saw the party as unrepresentative of contemporary Britain (Lee, 2009a), with its Parliamentary composition remaining overwhelmingly white, middle-class and male, seeming to signify the “last stand of yesterday over tomorrow” (Cooper, 2005:42). The promotion of equality of opportunity would thus go some way to alleviate these image problems. The early days of Cameron’s leadership oversaw an emphasis on social justice which was seemingly underpinned by tangible policy initiatives, prompting claims of Conservative adoption of third way politics. There was a pledge to stick to Labour spending plans on public services, an approach which would emphasise divergence
from the cuts of the Thatcher years, and would portray a desire to mend the ‘broken’ British society by combatting societal inequality (Dorey, 2009:260).

However, the onset of recession fractured the basis of engagement with the promotion of equal opportunity, with the Conservatives abolishing their commitment to matching Labour’s spending plans and instead advocating far-reaching public sector cuts. An IFS forecast has placed public sector spending as a percentage of GDP to fall by 6.29 percentage points from 2012-2017, the largest decrease of any developed country (Rogers, 2012). Conservative ministers conceded the ‘compassionate conservatism’ vision set out in the early days of Cameron’s leadership had been “derailed by the need to cut spending in the age of austerity” (Girce, 2014, para.2). As Taylor-Goodby and Stoker (2011:8) argue, the Conservative-led coalition’s public service cuts have had a regressive impact, as they equate to a 2 percent loss of income for the poorest 60 percent of the population, compared with only a 1 percent loss for the richest 20 percent. Moreover, uniform access to public services was integral to the equal opportunity facet of New Labour’s third way, yet Taylor-Goodby and Stoker have contended that public sector restructuring under the coalition has fragmented service provision, generating “variations in scope, range and standards in provision in different areas” (2011, p.10). Restructuring and significant cutbacks to public service provision can be seen to undermine the perceived Conservative commitment to greater equality of opportunity, as the effect of declining spending on health, education and welfare is highly pronounced upon the least advantaged in society.

Initially, assertions of Conservative accommodation with New Labour’s third way were given weight through Cameron’s early attempts to promote social justice by committing to tackling poverty, including his commitment to keep Labour’s pledge on eradicating child poverty by 2020. Labour maintained a consistent and unrelenting focus on combating poverty, championing redistributive fiscal policies and improving financial circumstances for low-income families in a sustained and serious way (Coates, 2005). At first, Cameron’s Conservatives seemed to continue this emphasis, as shown by the pledge to make “the creation of wealth and the elimination of poverty the central objectives of Conservative economic strategy” (Cameron, 2005b). The failure of Thatcher to recognise relative poverty was also acknowledged, with Cameron (2006) declaring that a future Conservative government would recognise relative poverty and act on it in the future.
However, this focus on equality of opportunity through alleviating poverty was unmaintained by the Conservative-led coalition in practice. Whilst New Labour’s efforts at using welfare to promote equality of opportunity utilised tax credits, which achieved redistribution through increasing in-work income thus reducing the prevalence of rightist anti-scrounger rhetoric, Mabbett (2013:45) argues the coalition is in the process of reversing Labour’s initiatives in this area. Requirements for benefit eligibility have been raised, tax credits have been sharply reduced, and benefits have been “curtailed in both duration and generosity”, leading Mabbett to label the coalition’s welfare policies “regressive” (2013:45). The effects of these benefit changes have been most pronounced on low-income families, the main group in receipt of Child Benefit, Housing Benefit and Child Tax Credit (Taylor-Goodby and Stoker, 2011).

Additionally, the government’s Universal Credit scheme, which seeks to combine tax credits and benefits in one system, has sharpened punitive sanctions for behaviour such as turning down an offer of work; subsequently, the element of compulsion and coercion in the system has increased, leading Mabbett to label Universal Credit a “highly illiberal” reform (2013:45).

Further to the unsustained, initial poverty-tackling efforts, the promotion of equality of opportunity also featured through an emphasis on social liberalism, which would prove “central to the effort to detoxify the Conservative brand” (Hayton, 2010:492). This socially liberal stance was reflected in the discontinuation of the Conservative Party’s antipathy towards single mothers, as shown by Cameron’s declaration that the party was ‘on the side’ of working single parents (Cameron, 2010). Cameron’s emphasis on supporting gay rights also seemed to show “departure from the more socially prescriptive, moralistic dimensions of traditional conservatism” (McAnulla, 2012:169). The apology for section 28, legislation prohibiting promoting homosexuality in schools, constituted “another major step in the modernisation of the Conservative Party” (Watt, 2009, para.1).

However, viewing this socially liberal stance as representative of a permanent ideological shift is problematic. A more accurate interpretation is that, rather than signifying accommodation with the equal opportunity component of the third way, the party’s liberal stance on societal matters solely served to decontaminate the Conservative brand, constructing an electorally attractive image of tolerance and progressiveness. As Hayton (2010) argues, a more liberal position on certain issues, notably gay marriage, helped Cameron
detoxify the brand while preserving an ingrained belief in traditional Conservative values. Cameron has retained a core right-wing belief in marriage and in the family as the best institution for raising children (see Kirby, 2009), previously voicing his disapproval of politicians evading these topics in a bid to avoid appearing old-fashioned (Cameron, 2008a). Cameron also supported the emphasis on marriage within a report by the Social Justice Policy Group, which suggested societal disintegration was somewhat attributable to unmarried couples, as cohabitation was “less stable than marriage” (Social Justice Policy Group, 2007:3). Cameron’s wish to resurrect marriage as a positive social norm led to the unveiling of plans for tax breaks for married couples in 2013, despite Clegg (2011) condemning this use of the state to “encourage a particular family form”. This championing of traditionalistic models of family “remains compatible with the fundamental tenants of Thatcherism” (Hayton, 2010, p.498), thus indicating the limits to Cameron’s perceived shift to a more socially liberal stance, and the heavy influence of traditional, right-wing values on Cameronite thinking.

The limited extent of social liberalisation can also reveal Cameron’s susceptibility to dominant, right-wing attitudes within his party. Cameron has pressed ahead with pursuing the legalisation of gay marriage across his time in power, indicating he may indeed possess a genuine belief in equal rights in relation to sexual orientation, whilst also signifying the entrenched nature of his commitment to Conservative modernisation. However, the pre-limelight days of 2003 saw Cameron vote for the continuation of section 28, demonstrating his desire to align with the dominant sentiments within the party at the time. Some commentators have also speculated that Cameron would not have pursued gay marriage if able to predict the backlash that would unfurl across the party (Rawnsley, 2013; D’Ancona, 2013). O’Hara argues this tendency to align with prevailing sentiments within the party provides exemplification of ‘his “Dave the Chameleon’ side” (2007:218). Rawnsley (2013) attributes this chameleonic shifting to Cameron’s lack of ideological convictions: an interpretation which is lent some weight by Cameron’s own admission of not being “deeply ideological” (Cameron, 2005c). However, rather than interpreting Cameron as non-ideological, it is more plausible that by appeasing dominant party voices, Cameron is attempting to minimise fissures and divisions in the party, as the image of disunity would incontestably destabilise the modernisation strategy.

Rights and responsibilities
Focus on the notion of ‘no rights without responsibilities’ was maintained throughout New Labour’s time in office, and advocates of ideological convergence have highlighted supposed Conservative engagement with this value. Just as New Labour began to emphasise the importance of individual responsibility, the Conservative Party ventured from traditional territory by articulating the importance of citizen rights bestowed by the state. As Driver (2009:92) highlights, Blair announced a tough stance on crime and its social causes, and Cameron mirrored this by articulating the necessity of rehabilitating criminals and ameliorating the societal causes of criminal activity, emphasising the need to focus on the ‘context’ behind crime (Cameron, 2008b). Continuity regarding rights and responsibilities is also evident between New Labour welfare programmes and welfare reform under the Conservative-led coalition. Prabhakar argues that convergence can be seen between the two parties as the coalition’s Universal Credit scheme extends New Labour’s emphasis on “work as the best route out of poverty”, and reinforces citizens have a duty to take up paid employment (2011:32). Universal Credit thus continues New Labour’s ‘responsibility’ narrative, by accentuating what individuals “are capable of doing rather than highlighting the ways in which they are incapable of working” (Prabhakar, 2011:32).

However, the emphasis on rights and responsibilities cannot be seen to automatically signal Cameron’s Conservatives espousal of third way ideas. When comparing the Conservative Party’s recent endorsement of rights and responsibilities to New Labour’s, although Cameron “adopts and amplifies discussion of responsibility, there is much less emphasis on rights” (McAnulla, 2010:305). Any accommodation with the third way is thus restricted by Cameron’s limited conception of the rights belonging to an individual. Instead, Cameron’s view is that citizens should assume responsibility within their society, with individual freedom arising from fulfilment of duties (McAnulla, 2010). Cameron’s language in this area emphasises the individual “being free from constraint rather than enjoying a positive range of rights”, as he generally presents ‘responsibility’ alongside ‘freedom’, as opposed to Labour’s preferred term, ‘rights’ (McAnulla, 2010:305). Therefore, any accommodation with the third way component of rights and responsibilities can be seen to be somewhat limited, posing a challenge to the case for convergence. Instead, this emphasis on responsibility can be demonstrated to arise from right-wing sentiments within Cameron’s thinking, namely his heavy scepticism towards the state and its granting of extensive ‘rights’. 
This anti-statist emphasis on responsibility further manifested itself within the Big Society agenda, which was introduced in the lead-up to the 2010 election. The agenda initially seemed to draw on “similar philosophical foundations” to New Labour’s third way in its advocation of citizen responsibility and endorsement of community (Mycock and Tonge, 2011:57). Citizen assumption of societal responsibility was promoted through encouraging voluntary sector activity and community control over local amenities, representing “significant transfers of responsibility from the state” (Taylor-Goodby and Stoker, 2011:4). The Big Society initially appeared to draw influence from Phillip Blond’s Red Toryism (2009), which promoted empowering local communities and organisations whilst rolling back the state, and the work of Danny Kruger (2007), which drew upon historic Conservative thought to evoke the concept of the self-regulating local community.

Yet, many critics have convincingly condemned the Big Society to serve as an electorally acceptable exterior for the ideological aspiration of reducing the size and scope of the state (Kisby, 2010; Smith, 2010; Kerr et al., 2011; Dorey and Garnett, 2012). As Mycock and Tonge contend, the Big Society’s focus on citizen responsibility and empowerment of local communities can be viewed as a “smokescreen” for heavy cuts to public services and governmental spending (2011:56). Hayton (2014) argues the scheme constitutes little more than concealment of traditional anti-statist sentiments, invoking Thatcherite economics by championing the roll-back of the state. The Conservative Party’s most recent manifesto pledged to expand the private sector’s share of Britain’s economy, illustrating the plausibility of this interpretation (The Conservative Party, 2010:5). Indeed, Kruger (2013) and Blond (2012), previously both notable influences on Cameronite thinking, have since criticised the leader for giving way to the dominance of Thatcherite factions within the party. Although the Big Society may not have originally been intended as a means to “continue and extend the Thatcherite revolution”, the financial crisis and subsequent prevailing concern with reducing the deficit meant that the scheme soon became a “fig leaf for the withdrawal of state support from significant areas of civil society” (Hayton, 2012b:134). As opposed to demonstrating convergence with the ‘rights and responsibilities’ component of New Labour’s third way, the party’s recent focus on responsibility has instead encompassed entrenched anti-statist undertones, thus significantly drawing upon traditional Conservative thought.

**Interpretations of Cameronism**
With the final interpretation of New Labour’s third way borne in mind, this chapter will arrive at an interpretation of Cameronism, which will substantiate the contention that Cameron’s leadership has failed to represent a true ideological shift in accommodation with the terrain of New Labour’s third way.

Firstly, it should be acknowledged that some authors have drawn parallels between ‘one nation’ conservatism in interpreting Cameron’s political thought: Dorey (2007) argues Cameron’s brand of compassionate and socially tolerant conservatism represents an attempt to revive the ‘one nation’ strand. Yet, the validity of ‘one nation’ conservatism in explicating Cameronism can be challenged (Lee, 2009a:10; Hayton, 2012b:146), as Cameron’s aversion towards state intervention is incompatible with the ‘one nation’ school’s belief that the state should prioritise preserving social order and act as the “key player in ameliorating social problems” (Beech, 2009b, p.21).

Others have interpreted Cameron’s politics as essentially analogous to a rerun of Thatcherism (Evans, 2010; Mabbett, 2013). It has been argued that Thatcher’s legacy has wielded a profound effect on Cameron’s politics, with this influence becoming increasingly heavy with the intensifying need for austerity post-2008 (Evans, 2010). Hayton contends Cameron’s Conservatives possess a Thatcherite outlook in social policy as well as in the economic sphere, due to the Thatcherite desire to shrink the welfare state and limit the scope of state provision (2012a:144). The reduction of the welfare state under the Big Society agenda is indeed “reminiscent of the unfulfilled aspiration of Thatcher” (Beech, 2011:277). The influence of Thatcherite thought is also present in the Big Society’s attempt to shift the onus of responsibility away from the state and onto families and individuals (Hayton, 2012a). Yet, although many of Cameron’s entrenched beliefs do appear to be consistent with core Thatcherite convictions, certain policies under Cameron are entirely at odds with Thatcherite philosophy, challenging her “conservative orthodoxy on the social, sexual and moral policy agenda” (Heppell, 2013b:341). Although serving to supplement the decontamination strategy by painting the party in a ‘compassionate’ light, thus casting doubt over a significant ideological shift, divergence from Thatcherism was evident in Cameron’s early emphasis on social justice, international development concerns, and the acceptance of modern conceptions of family, such as calling an end to the Tory war on single mothers. The continuation of Labour’s pledge on spending 0.7% of GDP on overseas aid - a commitment that has been maintained even within the age of austerity - and the highly momentous legalisation of gay
marriage provide exemplification of policies which sit uncomfortably with the interpretation of Cameronism as merely a rerun of Thatcherism.

Another way of interpreting Cameron’s politics is through the application of chameleonic leadership theory, developed by Gormley-Heenan (2006) in regards to the Northern Ireland peace process. Chameleonic leadership is characterised by its inconstant nature, changing continuously in accordance with the political environment and opinions of others. Gormley-Heenan argues the actions of Northern Irish political leaders were chameleonic across the peace process, seeking to adopt an alternative position if “broader political circumstances and changes in the political environment” compromised their intentions (2006:70). Cameron’s initial perceived accommodation with the third way has been illustrated as inconstant and shifting, indicating some parity with the characteristic of “inherent contradictions and inconsistencies” (Gormley-Heenan, 2006:70). Kerr (2007:48) argues Cameron has possessed “fluidity of political identity”, as indicated by widespread criticism of the leader for overly pursuing style as opposed to substance. Cameron’s susceptibility to the right of his party may also support the applicability of chameleonic leadership theory, illustrating a tendency to shift “according to the opinions of others” (Gormley-Heenan, 2006:70). As Rawnsley (2013) argues, the right has consistently pressurised Cameron for concessions, the most notable of which has been the EU membership referendum. Yet, chameleonic leadership theory implies a dearth of underlying core beliefs and the absence of ideological inclinations, shifting solely in accordance with the political environment. As Lee (2009a:11) argues, it would be wrong to class Cameron as non-ideological: he clearly does subscribe to certain ideological beliefs, such as the importance of family and marriage, heavy scepticism towards the benefits of state intervention, and the need for citizen responsibility, challenging the applicability of the largely non-ideological, malleable nature of chameleonic leadership theory to Cameronism.

Indeed, Cameron’s endorsement of particular ideological beliefs has been illustrated throughout the preceding chapter. Cameron can be seen to subscribe to many traditional Conservative sentiments, such as anti-statism, responsibility, the institution of marriage, and preservation of societal morals. Antipathy towards the state became notably more pronounced after the recession, with Reeves declaring Cameron to be “at risk of an unthinking anti-statism” (2008:68), due to heavy public spending cuts, vast reduction of the public sector workforce, and the privatisation of assets such as several government-owned prisons since
2011 and the Royal Mail in 2013. Cameron’s cynical view towards state intervention and his belief in responsibility were further demonstrable through the Big Society’s focus on empowering communities to manage local amenities as opposed to direct state control, and transferral of public service provision into the private and third sectors. Moreover, Cameron’s stances on various societal trends have remained “fundamentally Conservative and consistent with that of his predecessors”, through his promotion of marriage as the preferred model for raising children, and his endorsement of state recognition and incentivisation of married life (Hayton, 2012a:115). The commitment to tax breaks for married couples was maintained, despite criticism of its outdated and anachronistic nature. Beech accurately describes Cameron’s branch of conservatism as traditional, as he “values the institutions of marriage, family, monarchy, nation-state and the union of Great Britain and Northern Ireland” (2009b:30).

However, belief in the need for modernisation has been shown to have taken temporary precedence over adherence to traditional Conservative ideology in the early years of Cameron’s leadership. The modernisation process engendered claims that the party was engaging with third way politics, highlighting the case for possible ideological convergence. Yet, any accommodation with the third way has been shown to be largely impermanent and unsustainable. Once the initial attempt to emulate Blair’s politically centrist repositioning had attained its objective in presenting the party as renewed and capable of governing in 21st century Britain, earning the party ‘permission to be heard’ (Bale, 2009; 2010), Cameron’s underlying ideological convictions could resurface, explicating the inconsistency in the party’s espousal of third way politics. Thus, Cameron subscribes to traditional Conservative ideological sentiments, but illustrated a willingness to moderate these in the early days of his leadership in pursuit of electoral appeal. An interpretation of Cameron’s politics, then, must take into account his genuine belief in the necessity of party modernisation. Cameron’s unprecedented progress in changing the face of the party can signify wholehearted dedication to the modernisation agenda, illustrating the integrality of renewal to his political thought. Indeed, Conservative renovation under Cameron went considerably further than the efforts of his predecessors, none of whom had appeared “comfortable or convincing in their advocacy of such an approach” (Dorey, 2007:139). Concrete developments in the modernisation process, such as gay marriage legalisation, can demonstrate Cameron’s conviction that the party needed to change in accordance with modern British society, although, it must be borne in
mind that these developments were balanced with a repeated emphasis on traditional values such as family and marriage (Hayton, 2010).

Overall, Cameronism can be best interpreted as a continuation of the traditional ideological sentiments which have historically characterised the party, showing significant antipathy towards the state, insistence on the importance of citizen responsibility, and a desire for the preservation of societal morals and conventions; however, these core ideological sentiments were initially uncomfortably juxtaposed with a genuine belief in the need to construct a compassionate, tolerant outer surface to the Conservative Party so as to garner electoral credibility. Although Cameron arguably has illustrated a genuine comprehension of the changing, diversifying nature of modern British society, this has been gradually subordinated by the long-term persistence of entrenched Conservative values - a process which has been facilitated by the impact of recession and the party’s right wing - illustrating that a true degree of ideological convergence has not occurred. Following the success of the detoxification strategy in earning voter consideration, recent years have witnessed the fading of ‘compassionate conservatism’ since in government and the gradual retraction to traditionalist stances (Blond, 2012; Kruger, 2013). Thus, Cameronism cannot be seen to represent deep-seated ideological transformation in the Conservative Party. Instead, pursuit of a modernised and electorally competent appearance as opposed to ideological renovation, deemed by Hayton a “refashioning of style rather than a transformation of substance” (2012b:135), has been attributable for social policy reform, attitudinal liberalisation regarding societal and moralistic concerns, and movements towards greater equality of opportunity. Although treating Cameronism as analogous to Thatcherism is something of an overstatement - as Cameron has demonstrated understanding of modern conceptions of British society, with brand decontamination instigating a degree of attitudinal liberalisation which would have been inconceivable under Thatcher’s rule - the ideological trajectory of Cameron’s Conservatives has remained firmly within the parameters of traditional, right-wing thought, challenging the notion of accommodation with New Labour’s third way.

It has also been alleged that the reversion to traditional Conservative positioning was notably facilitated by the financial crisis. The party’s disengagement with third way politics became increasingly apparent following the onset of recession. The financial crisis fractured the economic consensus between the two parties, with the Conservative commitment to greater equality of opportunity undermined through the emphasis on the need for austerity
and heavy public sector cuts. As Smith argues, the deficit reduction strategy allowed Cameron’s Conservatives to “appeal to the Thatcherite desire for small government and an expanded private sector role” (2010:832). Thus, the financial crisis was instrumental in the establishment of the austerity narrative, providing a pretext for pursuit of the long-term ideological objective of reducing the scope of the state.

Additionally, the departure from the perceived accommodation with third way politics was facilitated by the considerable susceptibility of Cameron to the right of the party. The ideological composition of the Parliamentary Conservative Party has been identified to be predominantly Thatcherite (Heppell, 2013b), and the “latent power” of the right has served as a constraint on Cameron’s process of brand decontamination (Evans, 2008:291). Rawnsley (2013, para.14) attributes Cameron’s susceptibility to a “lack of many deep-seated convictions”, resulting in his propensity to default to traditional Conservative standpoints when under pressure from backbenchers. Yet, this susceptibility is arguably more accurately explicated through a desire to appease rightist factions within the party in order to reduce the appearance of divisions. Quinn (2008) highlights internal divisions as being hugely problematic for the party across the Major years; thus, the appearance of disunity would significantly damage the image of competence, modernisation and renewal that Cameron had long-endeavoured to construct, which may go some way in explicating his desire to appease party traditionalists.

Conclusion

New Labour’s third way has been interpreted as the serious and sustained combination of principles belonging to both sides of the political spectrum. This sustained amalgamation of left and right-wing themes is evident throughout the third way framework, the key components of which have been identified as: discursive positioning in an attempt to establish centrist credentials, the embracement of right-wing neo-liberal economics, pursuit of the left-wing ideal of equality of opportunity, and promotion of state-bestowed rights whilst emphasising individual responsibilities. Against this ideational framework, New Labour’s governmental record has been illustrated to be largely coherent and sustained, demonstrating a high degree of adherence to the third way philosophy and consequently indicating the extensive nature of the party’s ideological renewal. The discourse, policies and values
championed by New Labour have been shown to reflect the consistent uptake of third way thought, although it has been acknowledged that divergence from the third way framework was evident in the party’s response to the recession (Smith, 2010; McAnulla, 2010). In stark contrast to the Conservatives, Labour’s engagement with the third way was perceptible across the bulk of the party, with Blair’s election as leader serving to consolidate a prolonged process of party transformation (Driver and Martell, 2002). Moreover, third way thinking remained mostly relevant across the course of Brown’s leadership (McAnulla, 2010), illustrating the largely sustained uptake of the philosophy across the entirety of New Labour’s period in office.

The ideational framework of New Labour’s third way has provided a platform upon which the degree of ideological convergence shown by Cameron’s Conservatives has been assessed. Although some initial convergence with New Labour was perceptible within each of the key components of the third way, analysis of discourse, values, and policy-making throughout Cameron’s leadership has shown this convergence to be provisional.

Indeed, Cameron’s mirroring of Blair’s discursive positioning techniques - which included emphasising the modernisation undergone by the party, establishing distancing from the party’s dogmatic, ideological past, and appropriating themes from the opposition - has been portrayed as unsustained in practice, fading entirely in recent years. Convergence with New Labour over economic policy was also transient, with an austere, Thatcherite economic outlook adopted following the recession. The financial crisis also shook the foundations of the Conservative commitment to greater equality of opportunity, due to heavy public service cuts and restructuring of the welfare system with a disproportionately negative effect on the most disadvantaged (Taylor-Goodby and Stoker, 2011). Equality of opportunity was also promoted through a pronounced initial shift away from the moralistic prescriptivism which had previously characterised the Conservative Party’s approach to social policy, reflecting a newfound understanding of the changing nature of British society. However, attitudinal liberalisation under Cameron’s leadership can more accurately be viewed as conducive to brand decontamination, rather than representative of a permanent ideological shift, due to the continued articulation of traditional moralistic sentiments. Apparent engagement with the third way in emphasising citizen rights and responsibilities was also unsustained, with the increasingly heavy emphasis on the notion of responsibility illustrating the influence of conventional right-wing values on Cameronism. Indeed, endorsement of the staple value of ‘responsibility’ through the Big Society agenda has been shown to serve as an “electorally
acceptable” front for the long-term Conservative goal of reducing the state (Elliott and Hanning, 2007:313).

Cameron’s initial perceived engagement with the third way has thus been demonstrated as shifting and unsustained in practice, challenging the notion of ideological convergence. The accommodation with each component of the third way framework initially shown by Cameron’s Conservatives has been explicated through its advancement of the modernisation agenda, as opposed to representing a significant ideological shift. Blair and Cameron were both intent on the successful modernisation and renewal of their respective parties, a similarity which may have initially provided further consolidation of claims of consensus. Whilst Blair’s third way did undeniably possess the objective of enhancing electability in an attempt to break from the ‘Old’ Labour of the past, just as the Conservative Party’s supposed move to the centre sought to enhance electoral appeal, Labour’s uptake of the third way under Blair represented a deep-seated, ideological change in the party, as illustrated by Labour’s sustained and coherent embodiment of third way ideas across the period in office. The eradication of Clause IV from the Labour Party’s constitution encapsulated the depth of this fundamental ideological transformation. In comparison, the Conservative Party’s attempt to increase electability was unaccompanied by any genuine degree of ideological transformation, as illustrated by the reversion to endorsing traditional sentiments once a ‘modicum’ of change had been attained (Bale, 2010:382).

This paper has also placed emphasis on certain factors in facilitating the Conservative Party’s shift away from the third way terrain. The financial crisis was instrumental in facilitating the return to emanation of right-wing sentiments, with the focus on deficit reduction providing justification for pursuing the Thatcherite objective of limited state intervention in the economy and expansion of the private sector (Smith, 2010; Hayton, 2012a). Cameron’s desire to appease dominant voices from the right of the party, arguably attributable to his dedication to the modernisation agenda and his wish to portray an image of party unity and cohesion, also was significant in accelerating the shift back to traditional Conservative ideology.

Cameronism can thus be interpreted as the preservation of the Conservative Party within long-established ideological parameters, as shown by Cameron’s inherent anti-statism, belief in free market economics, desired preservation of morals, endorsement of traditional models of family and advocation of individual responsibility; yet, it has also been emphasised that manoeuvring within these ideological parameters was initially uneasily juxtaposed with a
genuine commitment to party modernisation. Fulfilment of this commitment to modernisation subsequently led to assertions that the party was engaging with Labour’s third way, prompting speculation of ideological convergence in contemporary British politics. However, once the modernisation strategy attained its objective in obtaining electoral credibility, dispelling the party’s unfavourable image amongst voters, the lapse back to conventional Conservative values could be seen to indicate the “limited extent of Conservative ideological renewal” under Cameron’s leadership (Hayton, 2012b:147). The primacy of traditional Conservative ideological sentiments within Cameronite thought has extinguished any true degree of initial accommodation with New Labour’s third way, thus disputing the occurrence of ideological convergence in contemporary British politics.

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A study into the effects of economic decline on UK extreme right political party support

Declan Turner

Abstract

This paper argues that the recent economic crisis has had a profound effect on UK politics and that there has been a demonstrable shift in electoral support from the mainstream central parties toward the extreme right as a consequence. We gather and test data to find a causal association between the decline of the economy and a rising support for the extreme right in the UK. This supports earlier works on economic voting and extreme right support and details this important development in UK politics.
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Introduction

The effects of the economic recession that has swept across the UK and most of the world have been immense and lasting. The run on Northern Rock, the collapse of Lehman Brothers and the sub-prime crisis in the US that spread through the entire financial system and subsequently caused an economic crisis across the entire globe has had a profound impact on society. In many areas of society we are yet to see the true extent of the impact that such a financial collapse has had and this applies to politics with many of the issues of policy, economic recovery and restabilising still to be tackled. What can be observed is the effect the economic crisis has had on party support with changes in government in many countries across Europe and the rest of the world. In the UK the changes could not be more astonishing; the extreme right has markedly improved its position in British politics with the United Kingdom Independence Party winning the third most votes in 2013 local elections and clearing 10% in the national polls. This paper demonstrates that this rise, and the impact it has had on traditional British parties, can be attributed to the economic factors associated with the decline of the world and the UK economy.

As a student of both economics and politics the interplay of the two fields obviously has an appeal and the financial crisis and its fallout effects across society have made this interaction more significant and important to understand. Conducting this research into the effects of the economic recession on political parties and the extreme right in Britain is important because not only is it needed to explain the recent events, it also allows us to begin to build a picture about growing developments of the extreme right in the UK and whether it is here to stay. By developing the work of theorists such as Lewis-Beck (1988), Goodhart and Bhansali (1970), and Lubbers (2001), we look at how the theory of economic voting is applied to the extreme right in Britain, a dynamic of the literature that is less discussed because of its
reduced scope compared to Europe. It is therefore important that this paper be as thorough as possible in its analysis; though the breadth of the area, the recentness of the events and the limitations of the data available do reduce the amount that can be achieved, the association identified between the economic decline and the increased support of the extreme right is sufficient to start investigating this relationship. The objective is to provide an insight into the effects the recent economic crisis has had on the political scene in the UK and begin to fill some of the gaps in the literature on economic voting for the extreme right in the UK.

To test the impact of the economic crisis on the support for political parties we have gathered data on electoral and polling performance for the mainstream central and extreme right parties in the UK and compared them to the position of the British economy. This involves local election results, opinion polls, economic indicators such as inflation and unemployment and observing the relationships and trends over time these aspects have had when compared with one another. Traditionally in Britain the extreme right features as a very minor aspect of politics and its parties generally don’t even have their own column in results pages, tending to be collated into the ‘other’ category and making their recent rise more unusual and worth study. The two main parties that fit the criteria of being extreme right in the UK are the UK Independence Party (UKIP) and the British National Party (BNP) and are the focus of this papers analysis. Both want fundamental change to the system and manifest themselves as protest parties, separate from the mainstream, evidenced by their fundamental ideologies and policies, and, in the case of UKIP, the distance candidates live from their voters having less effect on their support than those of the mainstream parties (Lubbers, 2001, p.8; Arzheimer & Evans, 2014). Although some may argue UKIP are not an extreme right party we take it that they meet these criteria and form a part of the extreme right. From our tests we find the economic crisis has had a fundamental effect on the composition of British politics, certainly at a local level, but also to some extent at a national level as well, and has significantly benefitted the extreme right.

This paper begins by looking at the theories of economic voting and the literature behind it to establish that there is merit to us treating the financial crisis as a confounding influence on voting support for political parties. We then consider theories of extreme right voting and look to show that economic factors can impact on extreme right support, before setting out the methods and results of our own analysis. The paper culminates in a discussion of the strengths of its findings and concludes that the economic crisis from 2008 has had a dramatic effect on the structure of the British political party system and especially the extreme
right. It remains to be seen whether these changes are permanent or will fade as recovery returns the economy to its traditional position. We are limited by the degree we can locate all the success of the extreme right on economic factors and whilst we are unable to discuss the other influences in much detail here we do accept they exist. As more data becomes available we hope that our findings will be corroborated and the causal associations we make will be reinforced.

**Economic Voting**

The economic theory of voting looks at whether voters reward or punish the incumbent party for the economic circumstances in which the nation finds itself. It is expected that in an economic decline the incumbent party is punished for its economic management, whereas when the economy is strong the government is not re-elected, although the asymmetry hypothesis suggests success is not rewarded by the same degree (Denver, 2003, p.111). This chapter addresses the existing debate in the importance of economic voting theory and how effective it can be in predicting voting behaviour, evaluating its strengths and weaknesses. In assessing these factors it will be important to draw on the work of academics such as Lewis-Beck (1988), whose work on voting behaviour and the impact of economics combines many studies and provides detailed analysis of economic voting as a theory. These various arguments are identified and assessed, establishing the applicability of economic voting and whether it can therefore be used to explain the increases made by the extreme right in modern Britain, as this paper hypothesises. Economic voting theory does not pretend to be the only determinant of election outcomes; the debate surrounds the extent to which it is an important component of voting behaviour or not. The argument is developed by looking more closely into the applicability of economic voting since the current financial crisis and its resurgence in academic literature and how it has been used to explain the latest governmental shifts across many democracies suffering from poor economic performance.

**Basic Hypothesis**

Lewis-Beck identifies the fundamental voting hypothesis in his key work *Economics & Elections*: “as the economy worsens, the government loses votes” with all the elements such as attribution of blame that this implies (Lewis-Beck, 1998, p.8). It is not the only factor that
influences voting behaviour, as Clarke et al. state with party identification and party leader models being important determinants, but economic conditions are fundamental components of voter choice (Clarke et al., 2004, p. 326-7). In their study into economic voting on a cross national basis Palmer and Whitten find strong statistical evidence for the impacts of responsibility, which they label “clarity of responsibility”, on incumbent parties to various economic indicators (Whitten & Palmer, 1999, p.63). Where responsibility is blurred vote loss is reduced; this is an important and widely agreed upon feature of economic voting theory and the responsibility hypothesis forms the basis of most economic voting models (Nannestad & Paldam, 1994 p.233). Hellwig (2001) contributes an interesting point that responsibility need not be confined to the government but that voters recognise the impact of other factors such as the global economy. If the world economy is responsible for a domestic recession or fall in output due to international trade then voters are less likely to directly blame the government for the national position, this “dampens the strength of domestic economic evaluations on support” for incumbent parties (Hellwig, 2001, p.1160). Economic voting therefore is determined by the extent to which blame can be attributed on the government for the economic circumstances and this can be distorted by the origins of the economic decline. This has obvious implications for whether incumbency during the current economic crisis is sufficient to warrant a decline in support given that the crisis is global, and we will return to this point in our own analysis.

The impact of economic voting on the public’s choice of party is also limited to the existing prejudices and beliefs that they hold. Anderson notes that few citizens are objective enough to change their party allegiance based solely on the economic performance of their country during the time it is presided over by a party (Anderson, 2007, p.280). As suggested by Evans and Andersen, among others, supporters of the incumbent party are likely to view current economic policies and performance more favourably and would be unlikely to vote for the opposition unless other external factors are at work as this would challenge their beliefs (Evans & Anderson, 2006, p.195; Dettrey & Palmer, 2013, p.726). Indeed Parker-Stephen has even recently suggested that the clarity of responsibility interacts with beliefs so the more obvious the economic responsibility the more supporters of incumbents consider the economy to be strong and the supporters of the opposition think it weak (Parker-Stephen, 2013, p.509). Individual judgement of the economy is blurred by the media and this has further effects on the perceptions of blame attribution and beliefs as partisans generally interpret the news to suit their existing perceptions (Rudolph, 2003, p.196; Sanders & Gavin, 2004, p.1246; Stanig,
2013, p.429). Of important note are the differences this may explain between polling support and actual electoral success and between national and local elections. Karyotis and Rüdig (2013) observe that at the primary (general election) level, an individual’s support remains with the party they generally associate themselves with, and despite a few changes borne out of economic consequence, there will be less of a shift in electoral support if the economy is in decline compared to the secondary order election (local and international). Here voting may be used to protest about the situation of the economy and represents the public’s feelings towards the incumbent party on topical issues (Karyotis & Rüdig, 2013, p.3). This slightly contradicts the clarity of responsibility argument as local politicians are penalised for national factors that are far beyond their control, simply because they belong to the national governing party. This is also a significant consideration for our own analysis of voting data and choice of election type.

Extensive research has been conducted into the nature from which economic voting is born; whether it is sociotropic and based on the voters perceptions of the economy as a whole, or based on individual circumstances, so called ‘egocentric’ voting where the electorate are influenced by their own economic position and stability (Denver, 2003, p.111). Feldman finds that in general, the macroeconomic analysis of the overall national position can be seen to impact on the position of politicians and pocketbook voting is less prevalent (Feldman, 1984, p.231). Lewis-Beck and Stegmaier also indentify the importance of sociotropic voting in US presidential elections; of those who thought the economy had improved 87% voted Bush in 2004 compared to only 20% of those who thought the economy had worsened (Lewis-Beck & Stegmaier, 2007, p.521). Whilst pocketbook voting exists the impact of the whole economy on voter choice is far stronger than individual economic circumstances in national elections and the findings of Lewis-Beck and Stegmaier (2007) have been supported by Alvarez and Nagler and Nannestad and Paldam in this regard (Alvarez & Nagler, 1998, p.1360; Nannestad & Paldam, 1994, p.238). It is also worth noting that whilst national economic effects clearly matter, the voter’s perceptions of the economy are also very important (as we consider later) and in times of economic decline the media increases its provision of information on the state of the country having a consequence on the public’s choice of party (Soroka, 2006, p.372).

In Britain it is recognised that there is a strong tendency towards voting in both a prospective and retrospective manner, future expectations and past experiences are both considered by the voter (Clarke et al., 2004, p.100; Lewis-Beck, 1988, p.64). If an incumbent has been in office before then voters can assess their past performance and judge that they
will also perform well in the future (Lippényi et al., 2013, p.839). When studying presidential popularity in the US Norpoth finds that the inflation rate four to five months previous is the key determinant of the public support of the incumbent suggesting again that it is retrospective considerations that impact on the electorate (Norpoth, 1984, p268). As Clarke et al. notes the conditions of sociotropic and egocentric voting are also influenced by past and future party performance; the electorate will vote for a party if they think their own material position will improve under them and will punish one for poor management of the whole economy (Clarke et al., 2004, p.26). There is a general tendency that the more prevalent retrospective considerations (as this is more easily identifiable to the voter) are based on the whole economic performance whereas prospective voting is judged on both individual and national potential wellbeing.

**Analysis**

The number of alternative parties has an important consequence for the power of economic voting amongst the electorate. Where there are many viable alternative parties, Anderson (2000) notes the significance of a dissident vote is dispersed making it less likely that the incumbent will be re-elected than where there is only one or very few alternatives and voters have a clear choice to re-elect or vote in the opposition (Anderson, 2000, p.156). This can be made more important when the majority in a two, or just a few, party system is small and a minor shift in votes can change the governing party. This is not to say economic voting does not exist, merely that its effects may be reduced or harder to measure when there are more alternatives to the incumbent. Duch and Stevenson notice that economic voting is not always present in the electorate’s choice of party and its magnitude and importance vary dramatically depending on the nation and election (Duch & Stevenson, 2010, p.121). Again whilst this does not state economic voting doesn’t exist, it reduces its applicability in all cases and makes us question when its effects can be demonstrated. In fact one of the conditions Duch and Stevenson argue makes economic voting stronger is when there has been a major macroeconomic shock (Duch & Stevenson, 2010, p.122).

Goodhart and Bhansali (1970) and others take the basic economic voting hypothesis of blame attribution and apply it to actual economic indicators to demonstrate how different economic consequences have differing impacts on overall election outcomes. Findings from the Goodhart and Bhansali study indicate that in Britain the major predictive factors are the
annual inflation rate and unemployment six months previous, however they do note that there
is a regular election swing that features as part of the vote, similar to the atrophy effect and
general decline of support identified by Mueller’s presidential study (Goodhart & Bhansali,
1970, pp.85-6; Mueller, 1970, p.34). Other studies by Powell and Whitten, reach similar
conclusions that changing economic indicators have a demonstrative impact on overall
election results; every percentage point inflation is above international average the incumbent
loses 0.4% of the vote (Powell & Whitten, 1993, p.408). Norpoth (1984) extends this
investigation by looking at the economic impact compared to other factors on Presidential
polls. Here he finds a poor economy may damage polling support however this can be more
than offset by other factors such as foreign policy success, further reinforcing the role of other
factors and that economic voting rises and falls in importance (Norpoth, 1984, p.269).

In Elections, Parties, Democracy by McDonald and Budge, the authors conclude that
the unstable and inconsistent nature of the evidence for economic voting across different
studies means that its use as a key predictor of party support and punishment is limited
(McDonald & Budge, 2005, p.93). Methodologically, comparing the vote for the incumbent
party in the current election to the previous one, as is the case in studies into economic voting,
presents problems because in most cases the previous election is the one that propelled the
incumbent into power, often with overemphasised favourable public support. The second
election will automatically see a reduction in the vote for the incumbent as a natural dropout
and atrophy (McDonald and Budge state this is generally a 2.3% fall per election), therefore to
compare the two elections and cite economic factors as the explanation for a fall is merely a
correlation and may not represent the true reason for the loss of support for the incumbent
(McDonald & Budge, 2005, p.93). Anderson consolidates McDonald and Budge’s findings
identifying that the individual differences between voters will have an effect on their economic
perception (Anderson, 2007, p.287). For one voter the importance of inflation may be the
determinant of their party support whereas another may favour national growth, further still
another voter may regard their own pocketbook position as being more important and blame
the government as a consequence of their individual position.1 All these factors, which
Anderson (2007), and McDonald and Budge (2005) argue, make the results of studies into
economic voting unstable, even if it does exist.

Current Application
Since the financial crisis in late 2007 and the onset of recession in many countries in 2008, economic voting theory has resurfaced as a tool of analysis and prediction for democratic governments across the globe. Borges et al. (2013) consider the impacts of widespread austerity in Britain and notes the risks and benefits to the incumbent Conservative-Liberal Democrat coalition of such policy. If the economy recovers, Cameron can claim it was because of his small state policy, if it continues to be stagnant Milliband and the leaders of other opposition parties in the UK, can claim that the policies of austerity have prohibited the recovery and only benefitted the wealthy (Borges et al., 2013, p.401). Borges et al. go on to highlight the unemployment rate as the fundamental indicator in Britain because of its headline use in the media and ease of recognition by the public and its subsequent attribution of blame on the incumbent party (Borges et al., 2013, p.398). Economics has an obvious impact on the rhetoric used by party leaders and forces them to make risky decisions in policies which will have important electoral consequences for their success and failure. As established, attribution of blame forms an important part of the economic voting hypothesis and such attributions are easily distorted. LeDuc and Pammett comment on the current scenario of international politics and suggest that the involvement of international economic bodies and supranational coordinators like the European Union (EU) and International Monetary Fund (IMF) all have various impacts on the extent to which national governments can be blamed (LeDuc & Pammett, 2013, p.495). This being said, their broad investigation into elections across Europe since the start of the financial crisis in 2008 found that despite the blur created by international organisations on the clarity of responsibility there has been a large number of government changes indicating that the electorate still hold the government responsible to some extent (LeDuc & Pammett, 2013, p.496; Gamble, 2010, p.18). A further point made by Singer is that not only should “government support be lower in countries where the economy has been slowest to recover” since 2008, but the economic crisis is changing the “dimension on which policy is discussed and governments held accountable” (Singer, 2013, p.404). This has important implications for our research and the way the electorate are able to pass accountability on to the central parties in government and shift their support to the extreme right despite the wider radical considerations; desperate times may call for desperate measures. An interesting note LeDuc and Pammett make for our study is that “in many of the cases in which the governing party was defeated, a government of the centre-left was replaced by one of the centre-right” giving rise to the suggestion that poor economic circumstances are responded to by a shift toward
LeDuc and Pammett find that both prospective and retrospective perceptions of the economy correlate to vote loss further evidencing punishment of the incumbent (LeDuc & Pammett, 2013, p.498). This can be inferred from the evidence they gathered that the timing of the elections had dramatic consequences for different nations. In Austria and Lithuania elections were held soon after the crisis had begun meaning it was hard to judge its magnitude and whether the incumbent governments were able to effectively deal with the scenario. In Spain, Ireland, and Portugal however, elections were not held until 2011 when all three nations were facing dire economic situations; there were corresponding overwhelming defeats for the incumbent governments demonstrating that the voters were not pleased by their record of economic management and did not feel confident that they would improve the position in the future (LeDuc & Pammett, 2013, p.497). Countries such as Germany that have been reasonably successful in their economic management have, in accordance with the asymmetry hypothesis, not been punished, but neither have they been well rewarded with one coalition partner (the Free Democrats) not gaining a single seat in parliament after the election (Traynor, 2013). This serves to demonstrate the obvious importance of the economy to political success and why the economic crisis since 2008 has served as an interesting backdrop to the events in elections across the UK and the West (Hellwig & Coffey, 2011, p.418).

**Summary**

This chapter has addressed the key points of the theory of economic voting, identifying the egocentric and sociotropic characteristics as well as the prospective and retrospective factors that influence the voters’ decisions. Whilst there are some generally agreed findings such as blame being the standard basis for economic voting and application of this blame through the clarity of responsibility being an important determinant, other parts of the theory are not so clear cut. Anderson (2007) raises concerns over how the voter gets and perceives the information from which they make their decision while McDonald and Budge (2005), and Nannestad and Paldam (1994) raise methodological concerns with the studies on which economic voting theory is based. These factors contribute to the understanding that economics may provide an influence on how the electorate votes, but as Lewis-Beck and Stegmaier (2007), and Clarke et al. (2004) note, the extent to which it has an impact is not
clearly defined; there are other influences such as party identification that are also prevalent in determining voting behaviour. However the evidence for economic voting and the magnitude of the recent financial crisis means that it can be used to assess the role the economic decline has to some extent had in determining voter support in the UK. Whilst extreme right support in the UK has risen in recent years, it is essential for us to look at why the electorate supports the extreme right and whether the decline of the economy will have an impact on the extreme right voter, or bring others round to their policies.

**Extreme Right Voting**

Extreme right parties are a common feature across the European political spectrum and have varied success throughout the continent. In the UK however, the extreme right is far less prominent than its European counterparts and is principally represented in mainstream politics by the United Kingdom Independence Party and the British National Party (Bowyer, 2008, p.611; John & Margetts, 2009, p.496). As already suggested, these parties typically receive very small percentages of the overall vote in British elections, but they do attract some supporters with diverse motivations for voting. By looking at the evidence from various studies into why citizens vote for these parties and the theories that have been formulated to explain such support this chapter will explain why some of the electorate may vote for the extreme right. It is in attributing some of this voting support to economic factors that this paper shall look to establish as the reason for the increases in extreme right support in the UK since the start of the financial crisis.

The extreme right has traditionally been a minor force in the UK but one that is frequently played upon in the media. However there has been a significant increase in support, by comparative standards, over the past five years. The BNP posted a rise in votes at the European Parliament elections in 2009 when they secured nearly one million votes which was rewarded with two representatives at the parliament (Cutts et al., 2011, p.418; BBC News, 2009a). Similarly UKIP also posted another seat in the European Parliament elections taking their total to 13 seats, on par with the Labour party (BBC News, 2009a). In May 2013 UKIP attracted around a fifth of the overall vote in the Council Elections and finished second in the South Shields parliamentary by-election; staggering figures for a political organisation that has been considered a single-issue, fringe party (Humphrys, 2013). The performance of these two extreme right parties has clearly been demonstrated recently but what incentives do their
supporters have for voting for them?

**Extreme Right Voters**

Various works have attempted to model the extreme right voter and consider the sociological, psychological and economic motivation to help explain the reason they vote the way they do. Characteristics at the individual level, such as racism and social groups, rather than contextual factors, can help explain why some vote for the extreme right. In attempting to identify the typical UKIP voter at the 2009 European Parliamentary elections Ford et al. suggest that “UKIP support is concentrated among middle aged, financially insecure men with a conservative background and is significantly higher among the skilled working classes who have been most exposed to competition from the European common market” (Ford et al., 2012, p.206). This is echoed by other studies into extreme right supporters who find that they are predominantly male, blue collar working class, with a low level of education (Givens, 2005, p.46). For their investigation into the BNP at the same election Cutts et al. find that racial prejudice still forms the strongest indicator of BNP support, although the common trait amongst extreme right parties of hostility or dissatisfaction to the mainstream also prominently features (Cutts et al. 2011, p.419). In composing this picture of the extreme right voter there are of course exceptions and limitations, for instance although generally most extreme right supporters are male UKIP’s support is almost fifty percent female (Ford et al., 2012, p.207). Rydgren also notes that although some vote for the extreme right this does not make them xenophobic because that’s what the party stands for, they may choose the party for another issue that they feel strongly about (Rydgren, 2008, p.760). These characteristics that are commonly observed in extreme right voters suggest why some may always vote for the extreme right, however there are changing contextual conditions that can impact on the short term decision to vote for the extreme right.

As has already been highlighted contextual factors can have an important impact on the decisions to vote for the extreme right and Lubbers (2001) recognises these in his volume on extreme right voting in Western Europe. Failure of main parties to solve socioeconomic problems causes voters, especially among the working class, to lose faith in them and seek alternatives at the extremes (Lubbers, 2001, p.66). At an individual level present and perceived future deprivation can be reinforced by the wider context of unemployment and immigration, when combined with dissatisfaction with the main parties for failing to deal with
the competition for employment especially where migrant workers are concerned, extreme right voting may increase (Lubbers, 2001, p.69). As Temin and Vines note unemployed workers may vent their frustration in politics and are prone to voting against anyone who has not solved the economic problems as well as being receptive to extreme views (Temin & Vines, 2013, p.6). Intrinsic psychological and social characteristics have an important influence on the likelihoods of citizens voting for the extreme right but contextual aspects and single issues are also key determinants to extreme right voting. The diagram shows how some of these factors may interact with one another and influence the voter into choosing the extreme right. The competition over scarce resources and the failure of the main parties to address some of the issues such as immigration and unemployment form the basis of the contextual factors that provide a short term influence on the public voter.

The recent financial crisis has become a massive contextual factor to the backdrop of politics across not only Britain but the world. The rising levels of unemployment and inflation, with falling growth and widespread austerity coupled with reduced standards of living force incumbent parties into difficult situations and provide an opportunity for the extreme fringe parties to offer an alternative. The issues that the extreme parties represent such as immigration and notions of British jobs for British workers, nationalism and strong free-market economics are attached greater importance when times are hard and extreme right parties are able to play on this to attract voters who feel threatened (Givens, 2005, p.48). The issue of Eurozone crisis and problems caused by EU economic rules that seem to be contributing to more economic woes than they are solving has given UKIP easy ammunition for leaving the EU. UKIP membership now exceeds 30,000 having gained an additional 13,000 members in 2013 alone, prompting leader Nigel Farage to state that UKIP was attracting people who had previously “given up on politics altogether” (quoted by the BBC – BBC News, 2013). This notion of political apathy or alienation reflects the failure of incumbent governments to deal with the high unemployment, large scale debt, funding of international bailouts and weakening currency that have come as a consequence of the financial crisis.

The reasons for voting for the extreme right are numerous and often highly individual. However, some patterns of voting and voter have emerged and show us that extreme right support traditionally comes from the less educated, blue collar working class groups, who are economically insecure. In the case of UKIP supporters there is a tendency for them to be of a conservative background and are equally likely to be female or male. The voters are all influenced by their context as well as their individual characteristics and in this way economics
plays an important part in determining support for the extreme right; recent contextual factors have enabled extreme right parties to canvas to a more open audience and given the electorate a potentially viable alternative. Although there are many reasons for voting for the extreme right, some of which having no economic grounding at all, there are a number of factors that are influenced by the state of the economy and contribute to extreme right support. Having established that aspects of extreme right support do stem from economic factors this paper has tested various economic indicators to see the extent to which this has been a major factor in the rise of the extreme right in recent years.

Method

The purpose of this paper is to demonstrate that the recent performance of the extreme right in the UK is attributable to economic factors and that the more central mainstream parties have suffered accordingly. To test this hypothesis and apply some of the theory considered in previous chapters to the recent case of Britain, where less extreme right voting for any reason let alone economic is found, requires consideration of statistical data as some evidence. This chapter will discuss the methods this paper has used to test whether economics has an impact on the voting levels for the extreme right parties of UKIP and the BNP in the UK. Through explanation of the various statistical and qualitative methods it will better prepare the ground for the analysis of the data and the conclusions it draws and why other methods that may be more rigorous in their analysis have been omitted. Many of the works into economic voting theory in the previous chapters were able to construct large econometric models to validate their arguments of extreme right support on the continent. Whilst this paper does not reach the same level of analysis for different reasons considered later, it displays links between economics and its related voting theory and the support for the extreme right in Britain.

Analysis is conducted on polling data, electoral results, economic indicators and proxy measures of voter position. Methods used will be graphs; of both local and national figures of voting and economic indicators showing trends and correlations of voting, public perceptions and the state of the economy, and general observations of percentage changes and patterns. Evaluation of this data will show that the economic crisis that has plagued Britain since 2008 has had a demonstrable impact on voting and caused a shift from the mainstream parties to the extreme right.

To begin with it must be noted that the limited amount of data available for extreme
right parties poses problems for large data statistical computations, therefore limiting the
types of analysis we can conduct. Comparing the electoral support for the extreme right and
central parties in modern Britain will return a very insignificant level of support for extreme
right parties (even if they have been improving) and throughout their history the BNP and UKIP
have been unable to gain a seat in Parliament. One way round this is to use the data from local
elections in the UK as not only do these offer more substantial numbers for the British extreme
right, they also allow greater representation for voter sentiment on economic management;
an obvious advantage for this paper. However even here we have had to use the ‘other’
category of data for total local election results in 2001 and 2005 as the BNP and UKIP were not
separated (although this overemphasises their position, as the total is still small and that we
are able to demonstrate bigger gains than these for 2009 and 2013 when the two parties have
their own results, we are confident this little changes our results). The data are gathered from
a variety of sources such as research papers from the UK Parliament, the electoral commission
results, local councils own declaration of results, BBC reports, YouGov polls and office of
national statistics (ONS) publications. In some cases we have had to gather data through
private correspondence with the relevant councils in order that all analyses are the same and
comparable. However, some limitations in how local the economic indicators are recorded
have meant that proxies such as public sector employment have been used to test against
electoral patterns.

Proxy data is the use of alternative data to that which is desirable when the latter is
not available. The use of this alternative data enables research and comparisons to be carried
out on levels unattainable by the target data so as to allow the evaluation to be continued. In
our research we have used public employment figures as proxy measures of employment, and
whilst they may not be perfect they generally represent the employment figures of the overall
economy. As the economy declines and the government is forced to make cuts in order to
meet the growing costs of debt and low tax incomes, redundancies will be made in the public
sector and the amounts of services provided shrink, reflecting what is going on across the
wider economy. As the data for public employment is more readily available at the lower level
on which our analysis will be conducted and there is a fair representation of the actual
employment rates across all sectors this paper will be able to extrapolate this to the economy
as a whole and the total local results covering the councils where data is more scarce.

Compiling this widely dispersed data into manageable and useable format has been
done using Microsoft Excel for its ease of use and being the most common data format in the
data collected. This has an effect on the complexity of the analysis conducted, where other analyses may use IT programs such as Stata and other packages the limitations on the data gathered here mean that Excel is sufficient for our purposes to find the link between electoral increase in UK support for the extreme right and the recent economic crisis. Simple bivariate analysis observing trends of different variables against UKIP and BNP support are used to look for associations which would support our theoretical premises for extreme right support. In our data the BNP and UKIP are taken together because they are both characterised as extreme right parties and their support is broadly drawn from the same social groups although the higher number of UKIP candidates gives them a larger dataset (Ford et al., 2012, p.205). Such bivariate analysis takes voting proportions and total votes with economic indicators, such as inflation and unemployment, in the months or quarter prior to the election to identify how the vote structures have changed as the economy has declined. As identified earlier, the impact of the whole economy on voter choice is more important than individual position and so much of the economic data we use are national figures. However, we also look at individual party identification and opinion polls compared to economic perceptions such as satisfaction with the incumbent government’s handling of economic issues and welfare position to see how the electorate responds when times are hard. And finally our analysis computes a correlation between the proxy employment levels and local election results to identify the association between unemployment and extreme right voting.

By breaking down the local council elections into their individual wards and plotting the results against the proxy unemployment data from a local authority level we create a case study example of the voting trends caused by the financial crisis for three counties. By producing the trend lines and calculating the correlation coefficients we can begin to build a picture of how much the financial crisis is responsible for the surge in votes and support experienced by the extreme right. In addition to simple bivariate testing, data analysis involves observations on percentage changes and patterns of voting behaviour alongside individual and national welfare positions against a base year of 2005; used because no major vote swing occurred and economic conditions were stable. As well as these behavioural tests, data gathered by YouGov are analysed to confirm the growing support for the extreme right in the UK is down to economic factors. To show how blame and lack of faith in the incumbent parties can have an impact on support for the extreme right and lead to a shift away from the central parties, polling data on blame has been taken from YouGov to be compared with voting intention to build a picture of how voters behave when they blame a particular party or group
of parties for an incident. Graphs are again used here to consider the effects that personal circumstance has on voting intentions and whether this corroborates previous findings on pocketbook voting.

These methods test whether there has been a demonstrable impact on politics and voting behaviour as a consequence of the financial crisis that has negatively impacted on national output and the lives of individual voters. While there are more rigorous methods of statistical analysis like econometric modelling that could have been used to build a more complete representation and evidence base for this paper’s hypothesis, the fact that it is so recent and the scope at which this paper is attempting to prove some causal link means such methods are more difficult to implement and the assumptions that would have to be made would render the results no more robust than what is achieved in the following chapters. With the data being restrictive because of how recent and raw it is since publication this initial straightforward analysis provides an effective means of establishing a relationship between the recent financial crisis and the shifts in political support for the extreme right and central parties in the UK.

Results

The results of our tests on whether the recent economic crisis in Britain has had an impact on the levels of support for the political parties and the extreme right in particular show a causal relationship between the two. Our first sets of results are computed from bivariate analysis on local election data and economic indicators such as unemployment and demonstrate the association between a declining economy and growing extreme right support. We have then shown that the local election findings can be applied to constituency level in a national by-election case study for South Shields using similar bivariate analysis and observations on percentage changes when compared to worsening economic factors. The behavioural analysis is concluded with a correlation plot of proxy unemployment data against ward level local election results which gives a demonstration of how the effects of the economic crisis have affected the electorate employment position and welfare and how this has shifted their vote towards the extreme right. To further reinforce our hypothesis, we have then looked at the results from attitudinal data that show how voter’s thoughts and attitudes, revealed through polling data and displayed here in graphs, determine their behaviour and support for the central and extreme right parties. The combination of these results supports our hypothesis
that as the economy has worsened and the governing central parties have failed to institute a recovery, the electorate has tended to move away from the central parties and began to vote for the extreme right in numbers previously not experienced in the United Kingdom.

**Local Election Case Studies**

At a local election level the results have been computed by county giving us different case study examples for the association between economic indicators such as inflation and rising support for the extreme right. Looking at the case of Devon County Council (Figure 2) we can observe that as rates of inflation have worsened the level of support for the extreme right has improved. This pattern is also apparent for the unemployment and wage growth indicators (Appendix 6-7) used; having the combined effect of showing that deterioration of the economy in

![Devon CC - Inflation](image)

Britain has returned a larger vote share for the extreme right parties in Devon. Observing the percentage increases between 2005 and 2013 the extreme right improved its vote share by almost 20 percentage points at the expense of the central parties, especially the Liberal Democrats and the Labour Party who are frequently beaten to second place. Indeed the 13.8 percentage point increase in votes for the extreme right between 2009 and 2013 exactly matches the decline in votes for the Liberal Democrats who, after 2010, found themselves a part of the government for the first time since the second world war, and so suffered...
accordingly, along with their Tory coalition partners, when they were criticised for not resolving the financial situation. We can see in the inflation example how it increases as the recession bites in 2009, and following quantitative easing up to 2013, the votes for the extreme right increase and the Liberal Democrats vote share plummets. For the Labour and Conservative parties we can observe the standard incumbency effect governing over an economic downturn has on their support with voters switching from Labour to Conservative in 2009 and back again in 2013 as each party failed to deal with the economic crisis when in power.

A similar effect is observed across the other councils we have considered with five out of six reporting the extreme right moving from behind the three main parties to second place behind the Conservatives, and increasing their vote by an average of 23.7 percentage points as the economy degenerated. Looking at Kent County Council (Appendix 8-10) over the past 8 years we can also observe the growing trends of extreme right support against economic data; where the economic indicators have got worse support for the extreme right has improved throughout whilst the central governments who are incumbent at the time of the poor economy are forced to incur a loss of support. In Buckinghamshire (Figure 3) falling annual wage growth during the recession and the crisis afterwards follows an almost perfect ratio each election; when earning increases have fallen by another point extreme right voting increases by approximately 13.5%. For the Labour and Conservative parties in Cambridgeshire (Appendix 3-5), every 100,000 more people nationally unemployed while they
were in charge of the economy equated to an average vote loss of 1.22% at the next election. Interestingly in the Cambridgeshire case study we see that the 2013 votes for the Tories have shrunk below their 2005 stable level indicating that here at least being in power had a massively detrimental effect on the party. The extreme right, by contrast, made massive gains on both 2005 and 2009 as economic hardship and failed central party policies increased their vote share. These patterns are also noticeable across the county councils of Staffordshire and Norfolk (Appendix 11-16) and confirm that there is an association present between the decline of the UK economy after 2008 and the rise in support of the extreme right since 2009 when compared to the 2005 base year of a stable economy.

**Overall Local Elections**

![Graph of Total Unemployment & Inflation](image)

Developing this we can suggest that the similar trends Devon, Cambridgeshire, Norfolk, Staffordshire, Kent and Buckinghamshire experienced over the last three elections compared to economic conditions can be broadly applied to the national position. Indeed it appears that these are not just isolated examples and the patterns observed in the six case studies mentioned above are reflected in the overall figures for the local elections since 2001. It would appear that as the consequences of the financial crisis took its toll on the UK economy the levels of support for the central parties fell measurably and the votes shifted to the extreme right, mostly in the form of UKIP. Overall local statistics show that as unemployment reached
the high levels of around 7.8% in 2009 (Figure 4) and stayed there for a prolonged period this had a massive impact on increasing votes for the extreme right. The same can be observed for inflation levels which also follow the trend of high levels after 2009 and correspond to the higher votes for the extreme right. For the central parties even if there was some recoupment of votes in 2013 lost to the Tories in 2009 Labour did not regain their former position of 2005 suggesting that some voters had switched to other parties. The same can be applied to the Conservatives whose lost votes in 2013 moved them far past their 2005 and 2001 levels again reinforcing the notion of a change of voting behaviour as a consequence of unemployment and its cause during the financial crisis. The Liberal Democrats appear to have suffered throughout the economic crisis, with many voters perhaps seeing their lack of experience as a hindrance, but not taking the harder line that the extreme right propose to resolve the situation.

In order to test how the individual position of voters has impacted on support we analyse the effects of changing earnings across the nation. As with inflation and unemployment the overall local election results follow the trends seen in the case study examples for different counties (Appendix 1-16); as the growth in wages falls, and indeed shrinks below inflation leading to a decline of real wages and thereby living standards, support for the extreme right rises (Figure 5). The pattern for wage growth is also complete in 2005 when the percentage increase in wages also fell and the level of extreme right support across the UK rose. When the economic decline really hits the electorate in terms of income we can see their vote begins to shift towards more radical extreme right means of solution; often the
attraction of restrictive immigration policies being seen as a means to return people to jobs and higher wages. In this way the extreme right strikes a chord with the electorate, especially those in sectors where jobs and wages are under pressure from foreign labour. From these findings the effect people’s personal incomes has on voting for the extreme right is clearly demonstrated, and as wages fall behind inflation between 2009 and 2013, the marked increase in extreme right support is shown as peoples standards of living materially decline.

National By-Election

The shift to the extreme right over the past eight years is most evident in the local elections where the dates have better coincided with the financial crisis in the UK. However, the by-election in South Shields in 2013 allows us to examine how extreme right voting has changed in primary elections as well as secondary. The results reinforce the trends observed at local elections; the electorate are moving to the extreme right as the economy has deteriorated. The ONS provides employment data at a constituency level allowing us to investigate the actual effect of local joblessness on voter’s party support. As the level of unemployment reached 10% in 2010 (Figure 6) there is a rise in extreme right support to the detriment of the Labour and Liberal Democrats whose vote share diminishes.

![South Shields - Unemployment](image)

The continued high unemployment level in South Shields (a constituency with one of the highest rates of unemployment nationally) from 2010 to 2013 is what tips the balance in favour of the extreme right with a 22.6 percentage point increase in support. Most notably in these results is that all the central parties vote share diminishes as UKIP and the BNP gain and
whose total vote share reaches 27.1%. It is clear from this that there are not just the incumbency effects of failing to deal with the situation whilst in power, as observed in the local elections, there has been an overall shift from all central party in favour of the extreme right. This suggests that it is not the failure to provide recovery that shifts electoral support, rather economic hardships for the voters in South Shields have led many to endorse the extreme right and all central parties have suffered accordingly.

Alternatively this may be a result of lacking faith in all central parties who have all now attempted to remedy the situation and failed, or because the electorate think the policies of the extreme right offer a better solution. What is telling is that when all other parties are losing votes it is the extreme right that are gaining them.

Proxy Data

In order to confirm that there is a correlation between the extreme right voting experienced in recent years and the financial crisis which has coincided with this timeframe
we plot the employment levels in various areas against the vote share in the same local areas and find mixed results for the extreme right. Using proxy employment data of local public sectors in Devon, Cambridge and Suffolk (Figure 7) we find that the correlations are weak for the Conservatives, Liberal Democrats and the extreme right. Although Labour does exhibit the positive relationship we would expect this is possibly over amplified here with proxy data used being public sector employment and traditionally Labour support emanates from the public sector putting them at a disadvantage in this instance. However, when we break down the data to look at just Devon and Suffolk (Appendix 20) we can observe that in these two counties the patterns for the mainstream move toward being more strongly positive and show that as employment falls, so does their number of votes. If we consider Devon on its own (Figure 8) we can see that here the extreme right correlation of -0.47 clearly suggests that as the level of employment falls there is a rise in support.

This would indicate that the results of these three counties are not generalisable,

![Public Sector Employment (Devon)](image)

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<th>Cons</th>
<th>Lib Dem</th>
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<th>UKIP/BNP</th>
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<td>Correlation</td>
<td>-0.21</td>
<td>-0.001</td>
<td>0.4</td>
<td>-0.47</td>
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but as some counties are clearer in their trends than others it may be that a broader sample
could support our hypothesis if the data were available. That there are some examples where the proxy employment figures do pertain to a voting influence suggests that such influences may occur although it is difficult to ascertain whether this is down to a relationship or another factor. As these results do not look at wider economic indicators or sociotropic factors we consider that employment alone is not enough to determine voting behaviour; it may apply in some cases but not in others. These discrepancies may be explained by differences of opinion in regions, with the more affluent areas such as the South West and South East being less concerned by unemployment or indeed by higher unemployment in one county compared to another; information that this proxy data used cannot specify. The efficacy of trying to specify that single economic factors like employment alone are sufficient to warrant changes in voting behaviour maybe too far and we should look to more general economic considerations as backgrounds to economic voting as a whole.

**Attitudinal Data**

The economic data demonstrates the association between the decline of the economy and the rise in support for the extreme right to the detriment of the central parties who are punished for failing to provide a solution to the situation as we have hypothesised. In order to confirm that these economic trends are really how voters think and feel we now consider the results from attitudinal data gathered from YouGov polls that consider the personal beliefs of a sample of the population. Unfortunately these polls do not include a section for the BNP so we have had to base this next section on UKIP alone. To reinforce the findings that personal circumstance has a major impact on the levels of support for the extreme right we have looked at a YouGov poll that breaks down intended polling support from a 1,814 adult sample into the electorates present financial situation.
compared to four years ago. It shows that of the 11.5% who support UKIP in the polls 66% considered their household financial position to have deteriorated since 2010. The party also has the lowest proportion of people who consider their economic position to have improved; demonstrating that the financial situation of the electorate clearly has an impact on the way they vote and this informs the majority of voters support for the extreme right. This reinforces the findings from the behavioural economic data that personal circumstances are an important factor in whether the economy has an effect on extreme right voting and the improving support for UKIP can in part be attributed to a loss of economic welfare for voters.

Figure 10 shows how the British electorate blame the various parties who have been in power at some stage during the financial crisis. Unsurprisingly there is a fairly equal spread overall, but when subdivided into which parties the voter’s support we can quickly see that the Labour and Conservative voters blame each other. UKIP supporters by contrast blame all the central parties either equally or with a fairly shared split between the coalition and the Labour party. This helps to show that extreme right voters are frequently those who have become dissatisfied
with the central parties handling of the economy and feel alienated by their policies and attitudes. This also confirms the point from chapter one that the attribution of blame is important to economic voting and determining support for a party.

By plotting the public’s perception of the state of the economy against the polling data since UKIP began to be separated from the ‘other’ category in 2012, we can see how the negative perceptions impact on the support for the three central parties and UKIP. As can be observed in Figure 11 the trends seem to indicate that as the bad perceptions of the economy were high, support for UKIP slowly grew, and as the perceptions have improved UKIP support has flat lined. The graph shows that there is a delay of about a year between the strength of economic perceptions being registered with rising support for the United Kingdom Independence Party. The bad perceptions falling to 70% and below (indicated by the red dashed line) is the cut-off point where UKIP support reaches its all-time high of 17%, from here we have seen a fall in support and then a sustained level
of around 12%. It therefore remains to be seen whether support for UKIP will fall as economic perceptions continue to improve, with the possible delay of a year or so, or whether the party’s presence in British politics is here to stay. From the graph we can also observe how the support for the Labour party also closely matches the electorate’s negative perceptions of the economy, with a high rate being met with higher support and as it falls so does Labour’s position in the polls.

This, and the opposite trend in the Conservative polls, would once again reinforce the general contrary patterns between Labour and the Tories, with voters moving between the two popular parties in the UK depending on who is in power and how well they are managing the economy. Similarly to the Tories the negative perceptions of the economy have had a slight effect on the Liberal Democrats who benefit from the improving beliefs of the electorate. However, this effect is very marginal, and from the trend lines we can clearly see the real winner out of the poorly performing economy (according to the electorate) has been the extreme right with the UK Independence Party.

Our results find that there is a casual link between the rise of the extreme right in the UK over the past few years and the economic decline since 2008. This has been demonstrated by observing where poor economic indicators correspond to higher levels of support for the
extreme right in various county council elections and a national by-election, and by considering the correlations of unemployment to vote share at local elections as the effects of the crisis were felt. These results have then been supported by attitudinal results from YouGov polls which look at blame and the economic position of the electorate to determine that much of their incentive to vote for the extreme right and against the mainstream comes from economic factors. Whilst the data shows that there is an economic basis for voting extreme right recently in the UK and this can explain their impressive performance compared to previous years it must be acknowledged that other factors have had an influence on the increased support of UKIP and the BNP. These and some conclusions will be discussed in the following chapter.

**Discussion**

From our results it is clear that there is an association between the decline of the economy and the rise in support for UKIP and the extreme right. Whilst our results show a clear association it must be noted that there are limitations in the data and therefore the extent to which we could conduct more detailed analysis that would provide stronger assessment of the situation. Despite this the results do corroborate previous theories on economic voting such as those of Goodhart and Bhansali (1970) and if they were to be developed when better data becomes available it shall be interesting to see how this will affect the models of extreme right parties and behaviour in the UK as Lubbers (2001) and others have done for Europe. It is hard to predict whether the presence of the extreme right in British politics is now here to stay, or whether with the ever strengthening signs of recovery in the economy the fringe will decline again as faith in the mainstream central parties is restored. What is discernible and important is the shake up the extreme right has provided to British politics and how this has impacted on the behaviour of the mainstream parties. In this chapter these consequences shall be discussed as well as considering the implications of some of the findings from our analysis to conclude the paper and its position.

**Methodological Issues**

In an ideal world we would have tested all wards and constituencies (had there been an election to test) to show how the economy has impacted across the nation, but given that many councils do not publish all their electoral data, or if they do it is done by seats won or
another format or type that does not help with our analysis, we are limited to what is available, and have had to contact councils directly to gain some additional information that was not published. Therefore whilst the results we have gained demonstrate a causal link between the decline of the economy and the increased support for the extreme right in the UK it is of course recognised that in other wards less correlation may have been shown if they had been used. However, with the data we have been able to use, we are confident that the levels of extreme right support have been impacted by the collapse of economic performance, and as is shown by the 20% average level of extreme right support at local elections in 2013 even if we had been able to use other wards the results should have been reasonably similar.

The data is also based heavily on the performance of UKIP rather than the BNP due to their larger field of candidates at elections. Whilst our analysis for the extreme right still generally applies further research needs to be taken to look at the extent of the difference between the two extreme right parties successes and whether economic voting is more measured within one group of supporters or the other. The correlations conducted earlier also pose some analytical restrictions to being generalisable and it would be interesting to see how a broader range of wards and counties would influence the relationships if the data was available.

Analysis

The extreme right has been able to galvanise a level of support unheard of in the UK and in doing so challenged the existing fabric of British politics. It has achieved this through maximising its appeal to voters when economic times are hard, and playing on the weakness of the mainstream parties that alienate many in their attempts to stabilise and fix the economy. As the hardship reaches some members of society and their distresses are not abetted by the state, many voters become despondent with politics and particularly the parties that are in power and failing to serve them. It is these voters that begin to see the extreme right as a way to either protest against the mainstream parties, who they feel forgotten by, or as a means to improve their financial position by supporting more radical policies. The longer the state of the economy remains poor the greater the numbers of people who are going to feel disaffected with mainstream parties and either withdraw from voting or find alternative ways to register their discontent. A point observed in our study with the levels of extreme right support in 2013 after 5 years of poor economic performance being much higher (by 13% points) than in 2009
only one year after the recession began.

This paper set out to establish an economic justification for the recent rise in support for the extreme right in the UK, however we recognised from the outset, along with other theorists, that economics is not the only determinant of voting behaviour (Clarke et al., 2004, p.326-7; Lewis-Beck & Stegmaier, 2007, p.524). Whilst we have not considered the extent to which other factors play a role in the support for extreme right parties in Britain except to highlight that they do exist, there are ways that they can complement economic causes and have a reinforcing effect on the levels of support. Party leadership, widely cited as an important aspect in voter choice, can have an effect on how voters respond to economic hardship and align themselves with the party (Clarke et al. 2004, p.326-7). UKIP’s leader Nigel Farage has been able to gain the support of many sections of society through his ability to play on what the electorate want to hear and chastise the mainstream for failure to find a solution to the situation. As well as strong leadership coupled with economic decline, manifesto policies can be updated to suit the national climate; the BNP promising British jobs for British workers when unemployment is rising as a means of convincing many of those without jobs or in low skilled employment at risk of competition from immigrants to support them in exchange for greater job security (BBC NEWS, 2009b). For the fringe extreme right parties in the UK it is even easier to promise such excessive agendas as it is unlikely that they will be elected to such a position where they have to deliver on such promises. It is clear how economic factors may not act alone in determining the levels of support for a party and the state of the economy can be amplified by the ability of the party to play on the poor performance of the mainstream and for its policy adjustment to attract votes.

Debate

The contextual factor of economic recession and decline has provided a massive motivation for economic voting, as Duch & Stevenson argued it would, and this has affected all parties for better or worse (Duch & Stevenson, 2010, p.122). Our study indicates that voting in the UK is both sociotropic and egotropic, with personal issues such as falling wages impacting on voting as well as wider issues and perceptions of the economy as a whole, demonstrated by indicators such as inflation. In looking at how the electorate has voted over the last few years we can generally observe a retrospective attitude towards the mainstream parties as each have failed to deal effectively with the crisis. Also reinforced by our investigation is
Givens’ suggestion that extreme right voters are those who are economically exposed; our research finding the majority of extreme right voters see their household financial position to have deteriorated in the last four years (Givens, 2005, p.48). One interesting area of development for this work would be to look at how the extreme right voter has changed, as the new levels of extreme right voting have moved beyond the traditional inherently xenophobic, poorly educated, blue collar working class. Wider issues like Europe have served to add fuel to the fire of debate in British politics and begin to blur the lines between political and economic issues. One argument against the conclusion of this paper could be that the much of the support for the extreme right and especially UKIP (given their main policy remit of an UK exit) comes from its tougher stance on the EU. Many see the issue of Europe as being one of great importance to the future direction of modern Britain and a large contingent of traditional Conservatives have seen voting for the UK Independence Party as being either a strong signal to the Tories of their feelings on leaving Europe, or as a viable means of achieving their desired exit. This may of course be a factor, but arguably the issue of EU membership is an economic one; it was not as prominent when times were good and has been emphasised by the crisis. UKIP has not changed its position on Europe to suit the growing discontentment rather the growing discontentment has come to see UKIP as an established and viable means of achieving its goal. Indeed it can be argued that the referendum promised if the Tories win the next election is Cameron’s reaction to pressure from Nigel Farage and to appease the eurosceptic elements of the Conservative party and to avoid defection (Watt, 2013). We can even go so far as to say that as a consequence of their pro position on the European Union the performance of the Liberal Democrats in recent years has suffered as many turn to UKIP instead; this would help explain the shift in public support from the Liberal Democrats to UKIP. Despite the role of the EU and Hellwig’s theory that they distort the blame the electorate places on the government, similar to LeDuc and Pammett’s findings on the continent, our research indicates a significant level of blame is still placed on domestic government (Hellwig, 2001, p.1160; LeDuc & Pammett, 2013, p.496).

It is the impact the increased support has already had on the behaviour of the three traditional parties in the UK and how they have had to adapt to counter this threat, especially from Nigel Farage, that has been the most emphatic dynamic of the increased support for the extreme right. That Deputy Prime Minister Nick Clegg recently felt the need to enter into a live debate with the UKIP leader demonstrates the change that has come to domestic British politics and indeed the level at which the mainstream parties feel they need to challenge the
rise of UKIP. A point made more significant by the fact the party has no seat in Parliament and exercises no real direct influence on government policy aside from its wide media coverage. Indeed the fact that Clegg felt such a debate prudent shows how real his Liberal Democrats perceive the extreme right threat to their position, and given they have lost the most at local level to UKIP this may not be an incorrect judgement, but it does perhaps give Nigel Farage far more respect than he deserves given his parties record at national elections. Interestingly the outcome of the debate suggests Farage was a clear winner at 68% to 27% on the polls, further demonstrating the success of the man and his extreme right party and reinforcing the notion that UKIP are here to stay. Despite all this, the media frenzy that surrounds the extreme right in Britain does serve to exaggerate the position of the extreme right and encourage greater publicity for these parties. All this works to break up the normal routine of UK politics and perhaps bring some fresh opinions and ideas to an area that has perhaps become both consensual and stagnant in recent years (Marsh, 2013, p.229).

As Dommett identifies, for the Liberal Democrats the impact of the economic decline and their position in government has clearly been detrimental and we too have observed their fall in support (Dommett, 2013, p.281). Electorally the Labour and Conservative parties have also suffered, albeit in a less consistent way and often making up in some areas where they lost out in others. Where the impact has been greatest for these mainstream parties has been the rhetoric and policy implications that to investigate thoroughly would merit a whole paper each. UKIP and the extreme right have clearly been getting the balance of public image and policy right at the moment as their recent membership figures can attest (Figure 12). Whilst it remains to be seen whether these trends are to continue and the extreme right becomes a force in UK politics as it is in Europe is difficult to
ascertain and will require more data and greater analysis of the recent patterns. Constraints on the availability of data mean our research has provided a strong early analysis of the effects the economic crisis has had on the extreme right and mainstream parties in the UK, and as more data becomes available development of our work may serve to explain in more detail the association between the economic crash of 2008 and its subsequent recession and economic deterioration on the performance of the extreme right.

**Conclusion**

We have to some extent proved our hypothesis that poor economic performance has led to increased support for the extreme right in the UK we have shown with the limited data available that there is a causal association. Our data and analysis shows the economic crisis of 2008 to the present has had an important effect on the levels of voter support for the mainstream parties and the extreme right. Both the BNP and UKIP have been able to capitalise on the falling standard of living, higher inflation and issues of national debt and the failings of the incumbent parties to provide a solution to increase their positions in the councils of the UK and threaten to become a force in national politics. As the financial troubles have gone on and the recovery seems to continue to falter voters have increasingly becomes despondent with central parties and turned their support towards the extreme right as a possible solution as predicted by other theorists of extreme right voting. This has also clearly had an effect on the
mainstream parties and we have observed how damaging being in power has been for the Liberal Democrats with polling support and electoral votes falling and how the pressure from the extreme right has pushed the Conservatives in particular policy directions. We have found good evidence for the incumbency effect on both the coalition partners and the Labour party, and the public perceptions of the economy and blame do matter in determining vote choice. The extreme right has made an impressive advance in UK politics to the detriment of the mainstream central parties as a consequence of the financial crisis and economic decline. It remains to be seen whether recovery will bring an end to their electoral success or they are to remain a force on the UK political scene.

Data Sources


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Made in Bangladesh: A critical analysis of the empowerment dynamics related to female workers in the Bangladeshi Ready-Made-Garment sector

Solene Souplet-Wilson

Abstract
The social construction of gender is a structure of constraint to women in Bangladesh. Their gender role has confined them to the private sphere, as they have continually been placed in a position of disempowerment vis-à-vis men. However, the rise of the Ready-Made-Garment (RMG) industry since the 1970s has provided opportunities for women to participate in the productive economy, and thus drawn women into the public sphere. By using Naila Kabeer’s definition of empowerment as a lens of analysis, this paper will explore the impact of the sector on the everyday lives of women. It will argue that the RMG sector has not completely transformed gendered structures of constraints and their position vis-à-vis men. Instead, it has enhanced women’s ability to formulate choice and act upon those choices, which challenge those structures of constraints.
Introduction

On the 24th April 2013, the collapse of the Rana Plaza factory complex, in the suburb of Dhaka, Bangladesh, claimed 1,132 lives of mainly female garment workers, and has since been described as the world’s worst industrial accident (Foxvog et al., 2013; Seabrook, 2013). As Bangladesh is currently the world’s second largest clothing producer after China (McVeigh, 2014), the Rana Plaza incident has revealed the reality behind the RMG sector and the conditions in which female garment workers are subject to. This incident has been a catalyst for the international fashion community to examine issues of transparency within the supply chains of multinational brands (shown with Fashion Revolution Day launched on 24th April, 2014), concentrating on improving working conditions for women. However, what has been absent from these discussions is a focus on the greater impact of the RMG work on the everyday lives of female employees. Furthermore, there has been a lack of analysis on how the RMG sector has empowered women to negotiate their position within society, which often subjugates them, to work in these conditions in the first place.

The position of women in Bangladeshi society has been dictated by the social construction of gender. Gender is distinct from sex, as sex is biologically determined and unchanging overtime. Gender describes characteristics, tasks and responsibilities of both men and women that are socially determined, as well as historically and culturally conditioned (Anderson, 2013). The stereotyped beliefs surrounding gender have thus served to subordinate women to men: the alternative gender category (Whitehead, 1979, p.10). The subordination of women is reflected in the patriarchal nature of Bangladeshi society and households. The organisation of family and kinship systems is of “patrilineal” descent (where sons inherit their father’s property) and “patrilocal” residence patterns (a daughter is required to live with her husband and his kin after marriage). This is what Cain et al., describe as “patriarchal risk”, which captures women’s lifelong dependence on men, and the strong likelihood women will face a precipitous decline in both social status and material conditions should they find themselves deprived of male protection (cited in Kabeer et al., 2011, p.7). Subsequently, as 31.5% of the population currently live below the poverty line (World Bank, 2010), poor women in Bangladesh are doubly marginalised, as they are not only poor but also are disempowered vis-à-vis men (Mahmud and Tasneem, 2013). The social construction of gender which leads to female subordination to men can thus be described as what Nancy Folbre describes as a “structure of constraint” (1994), as there is a structural distribution of patriarchal rules and norms that serve to limit women (Kabeer, 2012). By using empowerment
as a lens of analysis, this paper will analyse the ways in which the RMG sector has enabled women to negotiate the structures of constraints that serve to put them at a disadvantage.

Female empowerment has been promoted in Bangladesh on the basis of a dual argument: that social justice is an important aspect to human welfare and is intrinsically worth pursuing; and, that women’s empowerment is a means to other ends (World Bank, 2012; Malhotra et al., 2002; Elson and Pearson, 1981). The empowerment of women has been adopted in a variety of different contexts in Bangladesh, from the microcredit initiatives associated with the Grameen Bank, to projects with Bangladesh Rural Advancement Committee (BRAC) (Hossain et al. 2012). The very fact that women are the leaders of two major political parties (Khaleda Zia for Bangladesh National Party and Sheikj Hasina for Awami League) further indicates how the nation has made progressive gains in female empowerment and gender equality (Kabeer et al., 2013). Despite these factors, the country has been ranked 116th in the Gender Inequality Index of the UNDP’s Human Development Index in 2010 (Hossain, 2012). Hence, there has been a need amongst policymakers and state actors to continue addressing the issues of female empowerment. As the RMG industry is currently Bangladesh’s leading export industry and employs approximately four million people, with 80% being women (BGMEA, 2014), it is potentially a great source of producing social change and fostering empowerment.

This paper will build on Naila Kabeer’s conceptualisation of empowerment as the expansion of choice (1999), with the main section of the paper organised in a binary structure. The first section of this structure- chapter three- will explore women’s experiences at work and in their communities. The second section of this structure –chapter four- will examine women’s experiences at the household level. The reason for adopting a binary structure is to critically assess women’s experiences in both the private and public spheres. This is important, as it has been argued by a variety of authors (Elson, 1999; Feldman 2001; Pearson, 2007; Chant and Brickell 2014), that policy makers have neglected the private sphere when analysing women’s life experiences.

The private sphere refers to Carol Pateman’s conceptualisation of the social contract. The realm of the private has been considered a sacred ground upon which the state has not interfered in, as it has assumed that women are subject to the rule of men. It is only when the public and private dyad is made visible that a renegotiation of the patriarchal norms and the condition of women can be tackled (cited in Feldman, 2001, p.115). Additionally, this paper will explore the experiences of women using ethnographic studies, as well as quantitative and
qualitative data. By using real life accounts, and theorising from women’s experiences, this paper will avoid analysing women in the RMG sector as one homogenous group. It will show subjectivity and the multi-dimensional nature of empowerment (Pearson, 2014), as each experience examined will be different. The final chapter entitled critical reflections will seek to analyse the threads within these accounts. This paper will argue that the RMG sector has not completely transformed the structures of constraints that serve to constrict women and the processes that empower them. Instead, the sector has enhanced women’s ability to formulate choice and act upon those choices, which challenge those structures of constraints. In this way, the RMG sector has allowed women to play an active role in their empowerment process.

Defining Empowerment, Analytical Framework and Historical Context

Introduction

This chapter aims to situate this paper within the wider debate of female empowerment. Firstly through a literature review, it will seek to define female empowerment, to show how Naila Kabeer’s conceptualisation is the most appropriate analytical framework. It will pinpoint key research questions that will be answered. It will then examine the emergence of the RMG sector and theorise how and why women constitute as the dominant labour force within this industry, as to analyse the complexities and emerging empowerment dynamics.

Defining Empowerment for Women

Feminist scholars such as Gita Sen and Caren Grown (1987), Jo Rowlands (1997) and Naila Kabeer (1999) were precursors of the concept of empowerment for women of developing countries. Their publications led to the incorporation of female empowerment into various policymaking arena in the international development sector, as state actors sought to adopt a more progressive approach to improving the lives of women in the South, due to the widespread criticism of previous gender mainstreaming policies (such as Women in Development initiative in the 1970s). Henceforth, female empowerment became a central component in policy making with regards to gender, exemplified with UN Women’s Conference in Beijing 1995, and its incorporation into the third Millennium Development Goal (Batiwala, 2007; Townsend, et al., 1999). Nonetheless, as female empowerment has been heavily incorporated into the international development agenda, there are a variety of views on what it actually entails. Proponents of the orthodox neoliberal discourse (World Bank, 2012; International Finance Corporation, 2011; Hussain,
define empowerment as an end itself and depict women’s empowerment in purely economic terms. For example, the OECD-DAC Network on Gender Equality defines female empowerment as: “The capacity to participate in, contribute to and benefit from growth processes in ways that recognise the value of their contributions” (cited in Kabeer, 2012, p.8). This compares to the World Bank’s definition of empowerment as “making markets work for women (at the policy level) and empowering women to compete in markets (at the agency level)” (cited in Kabeer, 2012, p.8). Even though expanding women’s access to employment may enable women to gain financial independence in which strengthens their fallback position, it is still is a narrow view. By focusing solely on the earning potential of an individual, it ignores the underlying power structures in political and social systems that serve to uphold female’s unequal position within society. Furthermore, by making female incorporation into the labour market as a benchmark for progress, it places local women in a narrative of ‘victim’ and ‘saviour’. Elora Halim Chowdhury highlights this, as she argues that for women as a category to be “intervened” upon and “empowered” by Western experts through global development practice indicates that power is bestowed onto another (2010, p.303) However, if it can be bestowed, it can also be withdrawn as if empowerment is a gift, it reinforces the notion that empowerment does not involve any structural change in power relations (Rowlands, 1997).

Other critiques include Srilatha Batliwala, a feminist political economist, who argues that empowerment has become a buzzword for proponents of the neoliberal ideology. For her, there is not a “one-shot magic-bullet” route to female empowerment, as rather than simply being a goal towards individual change, Batliwala takes a metaphysical approach in viewing empowerment as a process that entails a shift in social, economic and political power between and across both individuals and social groups (2007, p.559). Similar to Batliwala, other feminist scholars (Oakley, 2001; Kabeer, 1999; Rowlands, 1997; Townsend et al., 1999) use the key terms of options, choice, control and power, when defining female empowerment (Malhotra et al., 2002).

Exerting control over one’s own life and over resources are also stressed. For example, Gita Sen defines empowerment as “altering relations of power…which constrain women’s options and autonomy and adversely affect health and well-being” (cited in Malhotra et al. 2002, p.5). Feminist scholars also focus on human agency, arguing that a shift in one’s perceptions, through an “inner transformation”, is essential to the formulation of choices and
empowerment (Malhotra et al., 2002, p.6). For example, Caroline Moser defines empowerment as “the capacity of women to increase their own self-reliance and *internal strength*”, which is identified as the “right to determine choices...through the ability to gain control over material and non-material resources” (cited in Rowlands, 1997, p.17 emphasis added). Unlike the neoliberal discourse therefore, feminist scholars consider that for women to experience empowerment, it is not simply by entering the workforce and changing their condition, but about self-efficacy for women to be able to change their position within social structures. In this way, empowerment is built upon the construction of ‘power to’, ‘power with’, ‘power from within’ as well as ‘power over’. For feminist scholars who have conceptualised empowerment (Townsend et al., 1999; Rowlands, 1997; Kabeer, 1999), ‘power over’ relates to controlling power, which may be responded to with compliance or resistance. ‘Power to’ is the productive or decision-making power, also referred to as “generative or productive power” which creates new possibilities and actions without domination. ‘Power with’ is collective power and ‘power within’ is personal power (Rowlands cited in Said-Allsopp, 2013, p.22). This allows one to view empowerment as a process as well as an end point, as these constructions of power show how people’s states evolve over time. Moreover, this construction is useful as it shows that empowerment is multifaceted, showing that rather than simply increasing someone’s income, it includes the economic, social, psychological and physical wellbeing of people (Said-Allsopp, 2013).

**Analytical Framework and Research Questions**

Therefore, when analysing the empowerment dynamics related to female workers in the RMG sector, it is necessary to employ these wider factors. This paper will adopt Naila Kabeer’s conceptualisation of empowerment, which can be defined as: “the expansion in people's ability to make strategic life choices in a context where this ability was previously denied to them” (cited in Malhotra et al., 2002, p.6). Kabeer’s definition encompasses key terminology used in feminist literature. This conceptualisation defines power in terms of one’s ability to make choices, and thus empowerment refers to the processes by which those who have been denied the ability to make choices acquire such ability. As those who exercise choice in their lives may be very powerful but are not empowered, as they were never disempowered in the first place (1999; 2010, pp.13-14). This definition is useful, as it does not assume that people are powerless (Oakley, 2001) but rather situates them within a process of change, illustrating a shift in power dynamics. When analysing choice, Kabeer creates two distinct categories: first
order choices and second order choices. First order choices are strategic choices that affect women’s lives. This includes: choosing where to live; whether to marry and who to; whether to have children and if so how many; rights over children; freedom of movement; and being able to decide one’s friendship networks. First order choices help frame second order choices, which affect the quality of life, but are not choices that define life’s parameters (1999). By differentiating between the kinds of choices, Kabeer recognises that particular choices women make, can in fact harm their wellbeing, as certain women will seek to uphold the status quo, as they have “internalised their lesser social value” in society (1999, p.7). Therefore when analysing the process of empowerment, Kabeer focuses on strategic life choices that foster a “transformatory significance”, being choices with the potential for challenging and destabilising social inequalities (1999, p.16). The merit of differentiating between strategic life choices and second order choices allows this paper to focus on the kinds of choices that foster a “transformatory significance” in the lives of women, thus having an impact on the life’s parameters: the structures of constraint.

Kabeer’s understanding of choice and the process of empowerment comprise three interrelated components: resources, agency and achievements. Resources encompass human, economic and social resources that enhance one’s ability to make choices: the condition under which empowerment is likely to occur (Kabeer, 1999; Molhotra et al., 2002). She builds on Anthony Gidden’s structuration theory, to argue that the distribution of resources tends to be embedded within those who have the “authoritative resources”, which is the ability to define priorities and enforce claims. Rules and norms can also enable or disable social resources and serve to demarcate boundaries. For example, heads of households are endowed with the decision-making ability by virtue of positioning within their given context (1999, p.3). This is useful, as it allows this paper to analyse the embedded rules and norms that serve to confine women, and assess whether working in the RMG sector has helped challenge those norms. Agency is the ability to define one’s goals and act upon them. It is not only an action, but includes the meaning, motivation and purpose that individuals bring to their activity, their sense of agency, or what has been defined as “the power within” (1999, p.3). This is important as it shows that power cannot be bestowed, as it is developed from how a person views the world and their place within it (Said-Allsopp, 2013). This is useful as the ability to define one’s goals enables this paper to examine the potential to formulate choices that bring change, as well as the ‘power to’ act upon those choices. The last component is achievements, which
simply refers to the results of making the strategic choices that lead to a change with a “transformatory significance”.

In adopting Kabeer’s conceptualisation of empowerment as an analytical framework, this paper will seek to answer three questions: In what ways has the RMG sector enhanced women’s ability to formulate strategic life choices that were previously denied to them? How has the RMG sector increased women’s ability to act upon those choices? What is the “transformatory significance” of those choices? Before explicitly addressing these questions, the following section will seek to pinpoint the emergence of the sector, in order to understand why women constitute as the dominant labour force. This will allow this paper to analyse the greater political, social and economic changes within the country, and thus place women within this context.

**The Rise of the RMG Sector and its Female Workforce**

The growth of the RMG is widely attributed to the macroeconomic changes on a global level, as well as the changes within Bangladesh at a national level. Within the context of the 1973 world recession, intensified competition fostered a new pattern of accumulation marked by flexible strategies, whereby the flow of capital was directed to economies with low labour costs (Standing, 1999; Ong, 1991). A catalyst for the relocation of production and the expansion of the RMG in Bangladesh was through the 1974-2005 Multifibre Agreement (MFA), which was created by governments of industrialised countries. MFA set the acceptable rate of increase in exports from developing to developed countries at 6% a year, and all-owed importing countries to impose quotas on the volume of exports from developing countries which grew at a rate higher than bilaterally agreed levels (Kabeer and Mahmud, 2004, p.135). As the MFA restricted the sale of Chinese textiles and garments in particular, this was advantageous at the initial stages of the Bangladeshi RMG industry, as in what was known as ‘quota-hopping’, investors from South Korea sought to circumvent this quota by subcontracting production in sites in Bangladesh and Cambodia, in the search for cheaper sites of production (Ahmed et al., 2014). As the cost of production was rising in Eastern Asia, the Bangladeshi government’s export enclaves enabled entrepreneurs to build or rent bonded warehouses in Dhaka and Chittagong, and initiate production immediately (Feldman, 2009). This is exemplified with South Korean firm Daewoo, who partnered with the Bangladeshi firm Desh Garments in 1979, and trained 130 entrepreneurs from Bangladesh, to then allocate them as managerial advisors (Ahmed et al., 2014; Wichterich, 2002, p.6). At a national level,
the Bangladeshi government facilitated the growth of the sector by creating incentives for foreign investment. For example, the 1982 National Industrial Policy, later revised in 1986 under General Ershad, meant that projects financed from nongovernment sources received automatic registration, and from 1991, private investments in ‘free sectors’, funded by entrepreneurs’ own funds, were no longer required government authorisations (Ahmed et al., 2014, p.264). The emergence of this export-orientated industry fostered a need for a flexible and cheap workforce, in which women supplied the demand.

The need for a cheap and flexible workforce has meant that female incorporation into the RMG sector is widely attributed to the images constructed on their gender. What has occurred in Bangladesh is the rise in the female labour force and a relative fall in men’s employment, in which Guy Standing describes as the “feminisation of labour” (1999), as in the period of 1984 to 2000, women’s labour force participation rate grew faster than that of men (Hossain, 2012). Dolan and Sorby reinforce Standing’s theory, as they argue that the feminisation of labour is accompanied by a “dual employment strategy”. In order to manage risk, there is a nucleus of largely male, skilled, permanent workers and a large periphery of ‘flexible’, relatively ‘unskilled’ female workers (cited in Razavi, 2011, p.427). Women comprise this large periphery, as it is assumed by employers that they are a flexible, docile and largely compliant workforce unlikely to unionise, in which enables them to manage risk. These assumptions are based on images constructed around their gender, in which Pearson and Elson describe as their “nimble fingers” (1981). For example, in a study by the International Finance Corporation (IFC), they interviewed male factory managers who commented on their preference for female workers because of their reduced likelihood of unrest, their smaller hands, and their higher patience levels vis-à-vis men (2011).

Furthermore, there is a male breadwinner bias in Bangladesh, as the preference for a cheap female workforce is also constructed on the belief that women can be paid less on the grounds that are secondary earners (Elson, 2014). This is exemplified in 1974 before the growth of the RMG sector, where women accounted for 4% of the national labour force as they would be financially dependent on men to provide for them (Kabeer et al., 2013). These assumptions of women’s ‘nimble fingers’ and the belief that they can be paid lower wages as they are secondary earners, gives women a comparative disadvantage vis-à-vis men (Lim, 1983, p.76), as their gender consigns them to largely unskilled and lower paid roles.

Consequently, far from being neutral arenas in which buyers and sellers interact, labour markets reflect the gender relations of the society in which the labour market is embedded.
The labour market is thus what Kabeer describes as a “bearer of gender” (2012), in which is a structure of constraint, as men and women are appointed different roles by the virtue of their gender.

Additionally, the rise of the female labour force is also due to the socioeconomic changes within Bangladesh. The struggle for independence in 1971 after the Liberation War against Pakistan, had a huge impact on the dynamics between women and men, as the assurances of male protection under the patriarchal bargain was questioned, as approximately 350,000 women were victims of rape (Kabeer cited in Hossain, 2012). Patriarchal bargain refers to the idea wherein patriarchal societies, women strategise within these sets of constraints in order to maximise security and optimise life options (Kandiyoti, 1988).

Subsequently, the rupture in patriarchal bargain meant that more women were in the position of having to support themselves. Moreover, the famine and wider economic crisis that followed in the mid-1970s produced growing evidence that women were seeking paid work outside the home, even though they faced considerable amount of resistance from members of their family and community, who still assumed a norm of female seclusion (Kabeer cited in Hossain, 2012). Nazli Kibria supports this, as she argues that despite the stigma attached to garments work, acute poverty was a key “push factor” for first generation garment workers, as she interviews one fifteen-year-old sewing machine operator who stated that she entered RMG to support her family after her father’s store burned down (1998). This demonstrates a distress sale of labour, as women are compelled to sell their labour out of survival (Kabeer, 2012).

Initial resistance to the sector was overcome by entrepreneurs of the RMG sector-hiring women through the creative deployment of traditional village relations. Shelley Feldman supports this as she advocates that when factories opened in the early 1980s, employers could claim that the factory was an extension of the household with guardianship, which were a signifier of patriarchal control and security. Some workers even used their village networks to secure accommodation in Dhaka (2009). The socio-economic context thus provided an impetus for women to enter the RMG sector, as well as illustrating how entry into RMG is intrinsically connected to women’s renegotiation of the patriarchal regime and structures that constrain them.

Conclusion
This chapter has shown the range of viewpoints concerning female empowerment, in order to situate Naila Kabeer’s conceptualisation of empowerment within the wider debate. Kabeer
shows the relationship between choice and power, and how empowerment is a process that entails resources, agency and achievements. Furthermore, this chapter shows how the social construction of gender has had a direct affect on the incorporation of women into the RMG sector. Built on the images of women being docile and being secondary earners, women supplied the demand for a cheap and flexible workforce. In addition, the context of acute poverty and the loosening of the patriarchal bargain facilitated the employment of women into the RMG sector. This chapter has demonstrated the importance of gender as a social construction, in which has shaped women’s incorporation into the labour market. It is thus necessary to examine the nature of RMG work, to assess the empowerment dynamics.

Female Experiences of Work and its impact within the Public Sphere

Introduction

This chapter will explore the empowerment dynamics emerging through women’s experiences within the work environment and its impact within the public sphere, by analysing five key factors: the nature of the RMG sector; the gender wage gap; upward mobility; social interaction; and, exposure to new relationships. This chapter will illustrate how structures of constraints remain untransformed as the very nature of RMG is constructed on the need for a docile workforce. Subsequently, RMG work serves to bring women into new forms of exploitation. Nevertheless, the impact of the work has enhanced women’s ability to formulate choices and act upon them, which allows women to challenge those structures of constraint.

Buyer-led Value Chains

As multinational retailers prioritise profit-maximisation over the needs of human welfare, this limits the extent to which women experience empowerment, as their needs are continually subjugated, as the structures of constraints remain untransformed. As the Bangladeshi state has continually sought to create incentives to attract foreign capital, this has fostered buyer-led value chains. This concept refers to the fact that in the global production network (GPN) in which RMG sector is a part of, multinational brands have used their economic power at their disposal to exert commercial ends, as through diverse bargaining strategies, weaker suppliers have been forced to meet the demands of stronger buyers (Barrientos and Evers, 2014). This is evident in Bangladesh, as multinational brands have been reluctant to negotiate with Bangladeshi RMG firms on wage prices. Until 2006, wages in Bangladesh were among the
lowest in the world at US$0.15 an hour, compared to US$0.30 in Nepal and US$0.35 in China (Kabeer, 2004).

Nevertheless, in 2006 when 1.8million RMG workers went on strike between March and October, a new minimum wage was set (Mondal, 2009). Furthermore, in December 2013, there was a 77% increase in the minimum monthly wage to $68. Consequently, buyers have been reluctant to negotiate and have shifted orders to countries like India, Vietnam and Cambodia, which has slowed Bangladesh’s garment growth to its lowest rate in fifteen years (Quadir, 2014). In the “race to the bottom” to find the cheapest sites of production (Hossain, 2012, p.15), wages are kept low to attract investment. As soon as the state starts to readjust the balance of power within the GPN, by increasing wages, multinational brands are unwilling to compromise. The buyer-led nature of value chains has borne costs specific to women, as low wages do not cover the costs of living.

Due to the gender role given to women in Bangladesh, women participate in the productive economy (activities which make a living) and are responsible reproductive economy (unpaid activities that reproduce, on a daily and intergenerational basis, the labour force in the productive economy) (Chant and Brickell, 2014). As it is assumed women are supplementary earners and can thus be paid at a minimum wage level, the RMG has failed to consider the extra costs incurred by women due to their gender role. Until 2013, wages paid to female garment workers only met 12% of the national living wage, despite 8 to 10% inflation rates (Foxvog et al., 2013). This is significant, as since the state adoption of Structural Adjustment Programmes in 1974, welfare safety nets and general costs towards household reproduction is not provided for by the state (Feldman, 2009; Kapos, 2008). Despite the rise in minimum wage in 2013, this still falls short to the estimated monthly living wage rate of $359 (Asian Floor Wage Alliance, 2014). Hence, without the adequate wages to cover living costs, the extent to which women experience empowerment is limited. Even though women are given a wage, which may allow them to formulate strategic life choices, low wages limit the extent to which they can act upon those choices, as they do not have the means to cover living costs and the reproductive economy in which they are responsible for. The buyer-led nature of value chains impinges the empowerment process, as by paying women low wages to accommodate to the needs of multinational brands, this restricts the extent to which women can act upon choices with a transformatory significance. The very fact that women are employed due to the virtue of their gender, assumed as supplementary earners, highlights how gendered structures of constraints remain untransformed as RMG sector relies on those structures of constraints to
pay women at the lowest levels, in order to accommodate to multinational brands in the first place.

As the RMG sector relies on gendered structures of constraints, assuming that women are not only the supplementary earners but also are a flexible workforce, this has meant that women have been subject to long and erratic hours which has borne a cost to their health. The RMG sector is part of the GPN of “Fast Fashion”, whereby the multinational brands sell a huge number of units at the quickest time and cheapest price possible. As the ‘time to market’ (the period in which factories sew garments to meet orders and then deliver them to stores) is extremely short, suppliers often force workers to work at all hours of the day to meet tight schedules (Siegle, 2011, p.20). This is exemplified in Kidder and Raworth’s cross-country research, where they interviewed female garment workers across seven factories in Bangladesh, who reported to have worked an average of eighty hours in overtime per month. What is more, women did not receive a written pay slip and thus were not aware of the underpayment (2004). Similarly, the Human Development Research Centre calculated the pay that they should have received with the premium due on overtime. The results showed that their actual pay was just 60-80% of their due earnings, and the loss was equivalent to doing twentyfour hours of unpaid work per month (cited in Raworth and Kidder, 2004). This is significant, as excessive and underpaid overtime bears costs to women’s health. The stress of the work has lead to excessive weight loss, eyesight and illness complaints. In Amin et al. study in Dhaka, 73% of the female garments workers had made head or ear complaints, and 69% suffered from general fatigue (1998). As the Bangladeshi RMG sector accommodates to the demands of the retailers instead of negotiating with them, this bears to costs in human development. The buyer-led nature of the value chains and the continued belief that women provide a flexible workforce, remain unchanged, and thus women are brought into new forms of exploitation. Furthermore, prioritising profit-maximisation has meant that costs to ensure the safety of workers are neglected, and thus as women are brought into the RMG sector due to the notion that they are a docile workforce, they have been subject to deplorable working conditions. Since 27th December 1990, where a fire a factory fire at Saraka Garments in Dhaka, over 2,200 garment workers have been killed and thousand injured in at least 300 safety incidents (Foxvog et al. 2013). These incidents are not ‘accidents’, as this implies that no one is to blame. Instead, they are a result of compliance on the part of various stakeholders. This is exemplified with the recent Rana Plaza complex, where auditors carried out an inspection a day before its collapse declaring the building to be unsafe however, the factory owner Sohel
Rana, pressured to meet the deadlines set by buyers, publically announced the building to be safe. Reports of survivors stated that they were threatened that if they did not work, their wages would be cut (Exposure, 2014). The trigger result for the collapse was negligence on the part of the factory owners nevertheless; it is also due to multinational brands failing to take responsibility for ensuring the correct working conditions for the workers in their supply chains.

Multinational fashion brands have taken steps to ensure worker safety since the Rana Plaza incident, as over 150 brands have signed the Accord on Fire and Building Safety in Bangladesh, which seeks to improve working conditions. However, this accord is undermined, as there is still a continued negligence amongst brands to take responsibility for worker safety. This is exemplified in the Rana Plaza Agreement, which is a fund whereby multinational brands such as Primark, who produced clothes at Rana Plaza, are to financially provide compensation to victims and families. As the fund has received only one-third of the funds needed, (Foxvog et al., 2013; Clean Clothes, 2014) stakeholders continually negate of their responsibility.

Moreover, as Bangladeshi Labour Law, amended July 15, 2013, is still out of compliance with core ILO standards including Convention No. 98 on the right to organise and bargain collectively, it illustrates how the state is still aiming to create incentives for foreign investment, as workers are unable to voice their legal rights collectively. Where strike activity has manifested, it has been met with extreme resistance, shown in February to October 2013, when Bangladeshi security forces used excessive force and killed at least 150 protesters (Human Rights Watch, 2014). As the RMG sector thus places the needs of corporations above human welfare of workers, this limits the extent to which female workers are empowered, as they are forced to work in an industry where by its very nature relies on the gendered structures of constraints that women are docile, in order to supply multinational demands of a cheap, flexible and compliant workforce.

Gender Wage Gap
Furthermore, not only has there been inadequate efforts to prioritise human welfare needs, but the consistent gender wage gap serves to limit the empowerment process as women still placed in an inferior position vis-à-vis men. In Steven Kapos’ study for the ILO, by using an occupational wage survey conducted by the Bangladesh Bureau of Statistics, he found that women earn an average of 21% less per hour than men. In addition, differences in age, educational background, industry, occupation and geographic location yields an estimated
gender wage gap of 15.9%, but including the effects of industrial and occupational segregation increases the overall wage gap by 7% (2008). This wage gap is partly due to the dual employment strategy, but also a result of a variety of other factors including: faster growth in the female labour force vis-à-vis the male labour force due to the favouring of female employment; higher female unemployment and underemployment rates; higher poverty rates among female wage workers’ households, which reduces their relative bargaining power; as well as occupational segregation along gender lines. Although this is a study not unique to the RMG sector, it does serve to highlight how the surplus female labour, in the context of occupational segregation (sexual division of labour whereby women are appropriated jobs due to their gender role) tends to depress female wages (Kapos, 2008, p.20; Kabeer, 2012). This is significant, as occupational segregation exists in the RMG sector. This indicates that the labour market is a “bearer of gender” and the persistence in gender wage gap illustrates that women are unable to transform the structures of constraint, as their very gender places them at a disadvantage vis-à-vis men, as it serves to limit the very jobs they can do.

**Upward Mobility**

In contrast, as the very nature of the labour market relies on gendered structures of constraints to thus determine the jobs in which are seen as appropriate to women, there are instances where this has not necessarily been transformed but challenged. Even though women are subject to inequalities with regards to wages, there has been a negotiation of gendered structures of constraint, as women who stay in RMG work can be promoted. On a macro scale, Al-Samarrai found that the wage gap among salaried workers narrowed from 52% in 2000 to 32% in 2005, due to the upward shift of female workers in occupation hierarchy (cited in Kapos, 2008). In the RMG sector, there are opportunities for upward mobility, which is unavailable in other industries. For example, in Nazli Kibria’ ethnographic study, she interviewed a fifteen year old who went to the RMG sector after having worked as a domestic work. She stated, “I think this is better than working in people’s homes. If I can become an operator then my salary will be higher and my family will be able to live better” (1998, p.7). The possibility of promotion fosters upward aspiration for women, which demonstrates how the RMG has given women the ‘power to’ formulate strategic life choices that were previously denied to them, as by choosing to work in this sector, there is possibility for upward mobility that is not available in others.
Furthermore, the culture of female entrepreneurship is growing in Bangladesh, due to initiatives such as the Bangladesh Federation of Women Entrepreneurs, and the Grameen Foundation (IFC, 2011). In an IFC study of RMG factories in Chittagong and Dhaka, of the thirteen factories interviewed, the two with the highest percentages of female supervisors had 71 and 45% in managers who valued female supervisors over male ones. In a workshop in May 2010, representatives from one factory commented that they had over 90% female supervisors and felt women made excellent managers (2011, p.21). Even though gendered structures of constraints are not completely transformed, as occupational segregation means that women in senior positions are the minority, this study does demonstrate a renegotiation of those structures of constraints and signals the process of empowerment. As women are given the ‘power to’ formulate strategic life choices, the transformatory significance of those choices is located in women challenging the patriarchal norm and status quo, as for women to be in a higher position to men is not the norm.

Purdah, Sexual Identity and Social Stigma

By challenging social norms and the status quo, RMG workers do experience new forms of empowerment, as they are negotiating structures that constrain their lives, even if those structures are not completely transformed. A tradition in Bangladesh is that of purdah (veil or curtain), which denotes to a set of religious and cultural rules that control sexuality by minimising interactions between persons of the opposite sex. Purdah is observed through a variety of ways such as women wearing scarves over their heads and bodies to avoid being observed by men (Amin et al., 1998). Purdah has served to keep women financially dependent on men, and even placed them subordinate to them, as it serves to isolate women and defines what is socially acceptable behaviour for them (Khosla, 2009). Subsequently, as women take up work in the RMG sector, they are working in close proximity to men on a daily basis, in which causes a shift in the definition of how the purdah is observed. For example, Sajeda Amin et al. argue that women workers tend to redefine purdah as a state of mind, rather than a physical separation and a questioning of the morality of the custom itself. Feldman and Beneria support this (1992), as they argue that new dependencies on wage work have contributed to a renegotiation of purdah by women interpreting it in new ways. In Kabeer’s ethnographic research of garment workers in Dhaka, women interviewed stated, “the best purdah is the burkha within oneself, the burkha of the mind” (1991, p.150). This shows that where purdah has served to isolate women and limit their activities to the private sphere, by
working in the RMG sector, women have the ‘power to’ formulate strategic life choices over their religious practice and their mobility. What is apparent therefore is a renegotiation of the gendered structures of constraints, as women are challenging traditional identities attributed to them by the patriarchal norms of society and their gender role within it.

Nevertheless, women working within the RMG sector are stigmatised by members of their community, as their daily contact with men not only challenges purdah, but also fosters highly sexualised images of themselves. Purdah operates not only at a personal level, but also at the level of the samaj, which refers to rules and norms that are upheld by the community member’s women are a part of. As purdah is thus a “cultural constraint”, upheld by the rules and norms of specific to the Bangladeshi culture, female garment workers are stigmatised as their daily contact with men is seen to compromise their virtue (Kabeer, 1991, p.137). Garment workers are stigmatised for their greater autonomy and mobility, as they are assumed to be at risk of sexual activity outside marriage, because they spend extended part of the day beyond the supervision of their families (Amin et al., 1998). In addition, due to the gender hierarchy with regards to job allocations, there is a sexual element in the relation between the female employee and the male boss, as this relationship is not contained by kin relations, and is one of the reasons to why factory girls are often regarded as not quite respectable (Elson and Pearson, 1981). Dina Siddiqi supports this by arguing that garment workers have come to represent a socially disruptive labour force, as women are traditionally a matter out of place. As young women are thus creating new identities in this urban space of new interaction, this has violated cultural expectations, as amongst their community RMG workers are symbols of an inverted moral order: women working in the place of men (2000, p.16). The transformative significance of increasing mobility is thus a challenge of the status quo, met with resistance. Nevertheless, resistance to change does not necessarily limit women’s ability to formulate strategic life choices and thus empowerment. Rather, what is more challenging to the process of empowerment are the new forms of exploitation women are exposed to. Due to the occupational segregation, where male managers supervise women, sexualised language is often employed in order to discipline and intimidate workers. For example, the television-documentary Exposure, through undercover filming, male supervisors called a fourteen-year old girl a “whore” and a “daughter of a pig” waving a baton stating “shall I shove it up there?” (2014). Even though this example is popular media, academic research undertaken by Pearson and Seyfang (2002) and the IFC (2011) further highlight the wide use of expletives which foster a sexually charged environment (Siddiqi, 2000). This supports Elson and Pearson’s concept,
where women may be able to decompose some forms of gender subordination by entering paid work, but in doing so, there is a “re-composition and an intensification of a new form of gender subordination” as women are subject to the authority of men who are not in any family relation to them (1981, p.100). Moreover, as women were previously isolated to the private sphere, the greater mobility women have when travelling to and from work has created what Naomi Hossain describes as “the feminisation of public space” (2012). Consequently, women are vulnerable to new forms of exploitation, as certain public spaces are traditionally not their domain. For example, in a 2002 media survey which found reports of 51 rapes of working women, 31 of whom were garments workers. Not only are they victims of harassment at work, but to and from also, as late working hours, and inadequate transport create the conditions under which sexual violence thrives. Both the BNP and Jamaat-e-Islami political party manifestos for the 2008 election even mentioned the safety of female garment workers when travelling (Hossain, 2012). These examples reinforce Elson’s idea on how the labour market reflects local power relations, as inequality between men and women is reproduced within the RMG sector.

Consequently, the nature of the RMG sector exposes women to new forms of exploitation, as women are subject to new public spaces that provide a space for harassment, which shows that gendered structures of constraint have not completely transformed. Nevertheless, the RMG has allowed women to challenge and renegotiate the gendered structure of constraints, as they have the ‘power to’ create new identities that contrast to their previous confinement to the private sphere.

New Spaces and New Relationships
As women are exposed to new relationships outside of the kinship and patriarchal structures, this has fostered new forms of agency as women are given the ability to formulate and act upon strategic life choices that lead to a transformatory significance of collective power. As previously mentioned, collective bargaining through union activity has been prohibited in the RMG sector, nevertheless, where trade unions do exist, they are extremely male dominated, as patriarchal patterns of the wider society are reproduced (Kabeer, 2004). Male dominance is significant, as it has meant that few unions are willing to take up ‘women’s issues’, such as harassment, maternal rights and childcare (Wichterich, 2002). For example, in Petra Dannecker’s research of union activity in Dhaka, she has found that interaction between male
representatives and female workers is a central component in explaining women’s reluctance to participate in the unions. As one female worker states, “He asked what problems we have. What can I say? He will not understand. I felt very uneasy with all these people around” (2000, p. 34). In addition, Dannecker illustrates how the federation representatives treat women workers in a similar way to the authoritarian and patriarchal treatment they experience with male supervisors in the factories (2000). Traditionally therefore, rules and norms of patriarchy have been reproduced in union activity, which has in turn demarcated boundaries for women. However, through informal unions, and new relationships between women, this is changing. Entry into RMG has meant that women are exposed to new relationships outside of the traditional kinship structure in which is an expansion of strategic life choice as women have control over their friendship networks. In Dannecker’s research, she found that experienced female senior machine operators were significant in rallying support as they took the initiative to convince others to follow them, and then negotiate with the mainly male management. Helpers and junior operators would never plan an activity without the support of a senior operator. On one hand, as younger workers would never take the initiative by themselves to organise themselves, it shows that there is a replication of social hierarchy and power structures in the labour market, not just between men and women, but also between women of different age groups. Kabeer describes this as “fictive kinship” (1991), as female senior operators are called apa (older sister) by younger workers (Dannecker, 2000, p.32). On the other hand, the production of fictive kinship has helped younger women gain confidence within themselves, through the creation of relationships with co-workers. Chowdhury supports this, as she argues that new fictive kinship structures do not necessarily subvert patriarchal relationships, but they do create new relationships patterns of the urban space (2010). New relationship patterns of urban space are significant with regards to women’s living situation. Although most workers live with their relatives, some women are now deciding to share a room with other workers (Dannecker, 2000). Even though structures of constraints are not completely transformed, they have been challenged, as the transformatory significance of women deciding to live with each other, is a clear break from traditional patrilocal residence patterns. The RMG sector has allowed women to exercise ‘power with’ others to define life’s parameters.

The exercise of ‘power with’ is further exemplified in the informal unions, as even though women do not seem to participate and associate themselves with formal unions, informal unions allow women to exercise new forms of agency. For example, the Bangladesh
Independent Garment Worker Union, was founded by four women garment workers who have increased fellow RMG workers agency to make strategic life choices, by teaching them of their legal rights, allowing new relationships to form, and opportunities to increase in self-efficacy. This union has an executive committee of fifteen workers, where women must hold ten out of the fifteen positions. What was previously denied under the paternalistic nature of formal trade union has now changed as the female leadership allows this union to be sensitive to ‘women’s issues’. This is shown by various initiatives the union provides: the employment of female lawyers from Bangladesh National Women’s Lawyers Association; evening schools offering literacy programmes as well as English classes; and, medical clinics in different areas of town. The workers requested all these services, which shows that women are given the ‘power to’ formulate strategic life choices and the union provides the opportunity for women to act upon them. Additionally, the union does not aim to solve the problems of garment workers, but seek to assist them in solving them for themselves (Dannecker, 2000). This illustrates how the informal union intends to foster ‘power within’, which is an important component in the process of empowerment, as women are given the ability to create purpose and meaning to their own activity. Women may operate within gendered structures of constraints, but they are being equipped with the knowledge to challenge those structures. The impact of RMG sector has thus led to an expansion in women’s ability to formulate strategic life choices and act upon those choices which lead to transformatory significance, as they have been exposed to relationships outside of kinship structures, which in turn fosters women’s ability to exercise ‘power with’ one another.

Conclusion

This chapter has shown the varied experiences of working within RMG, and its direct impact of women in the public sphere of society in which they are a part of. The buyer-led nature, of the GPN in which the RMG sector is a part of, subjects women to long and erratic hours, poor working conditions, and insufficient wages. As the labour market is a bearer of gender, women are at a disadvantage, shown through the gender wage gap. However, unlike other sectors the RMG sector gives women the opportunity for upward mobility. Furthermore, where women were confined to the private sphere, women are forging new identities, despite the social stigma attached to RMG sector. Additionally, as women are brought into this public sphere, women are forging new relationships outside of the tradition of kinship structures. This shows that the nature of garments work itself limits women’s ability to expand choices, as it relies on
gendered structures of constraints to employ women. However, the impact of the work has expanded women’s ability to formulate and act upon strategic life choices, and thus challenge those structures of constraint.

The Impact of the RMG sector on the private lives of female workers

Introduction

After having examined the everyday experiences of garment workers within the public sphere, it is necessary to examine the greater impact of the sector in the private sphere of women’s lives. This chapter will assess how employment in the sector has affected the lives of women at a household level, by examining the experiences of both single and married women. It will explore five factors: exercising control over one’s life; investing in daughters; decision-making; intimate partner violence; and, social reproduction. It will argue that the RMG sector has enabled women to gain new forms of agency, as they are in new positions to make strategic life choices, of which was originally decided for them by others. Employment in the garment sector has not eradicated gendered structures of constraints but rather it has allowed women to renegotiate their position within their households, which thus impacts those structures.

Control over one’s life

The RMG sector has increased the socio-economic autonomy of young women, and in consequence has improved their self-esteem and thus their sense of agency. Despite the social stigma attached to garments work, for young and often single women, the new identities women are forging through RMG, holds certain attractions. Earning an income increases their personal purchasing power, representing a certain measure of socio-economic independence. For example, according to Amin et al., the RMG sector has allowed young women to maintain a higher standard of dress then compared to their nonworking sisters, as they can adhere to the latest fashions, and spend their money on makeup and jewellery (1998, p.9). Mary Mills describes this as a “new autonomy”, as women are participating in new patterns of consumption that are linked to globally orientated standards of modernity (2003, p.50). This new autonomy increases women’s self-esteem, as they are becoming increasingly self-reliant. This is shown in Mahmud and Tasneem’s quantitative household survey, interviewing over 35,000 women across eight different districts. The overwhelming majority (96%) of women in their sample believed that having an income was important for women’s sense of self-sufficiency.
This is significant, as if women are self-reliant; it allows them to exercise a greater control over their own lives. This is shown in Amin et al. study, where they interviewed Aleya, a twenty-year old operator who stated, “my married friends...are not as confident or as brave as I am...I have learnt a new trade and have a job, and they sit in the corner of the house and cook all day” (1998, p.195). This illustrates that the RMG sector enables women to participate in new forms of autonomy, which in turn fosters self-efficacy and increases their ‘power within’ themselves to believe that they are more in control of their lives than their nonworking peers. There is thus the process of empowerment as entry into garments work expands the potential to formulate and act upon life choices, as women believe they are more in control over their lives through work. The transformatory significance is found in the fact that women are challenging structures of constraint, as they are resisting to gender-ascribed roles of household confinement and dependence upon men.

The transformatory significance of entering RMG sector is further shown through the expansion of choices women with regards to marriage and childbearing. Girls in Bangladesh have traditionally got married upon attaining puberty, thus transitioning abruptly from childhood to womanhood. This is partly due to patriarchal risk and the lack of expectations about future monetary rewards acted as a disincentive to invest in the health and education of girls. In the early 1970s, the average age at marriage for girls was around 16 (Amin et al., 1998). However, in Amin et al. study in 1998, in a group of female garment workers between the ages of fifteen to nineteen, 74% of them were single. Moreover, only 56% of garment workers aged twenty to twenty-four were married by the age of twenty, compared with 83% of women in their sending villages. Employment in the RMG sector creates a period of transition in contrast to the abrupt assumption of adult roles at a very young age that marriage and childbearing mandate (p.197). Elson and Pearson support this, “gender subordination may be decomposed as factory work can be a way of escaping an early arranged marriage” (1981, p.100).

Although it is still expected that girls are to have children, as the fertility rate for girls aged fifteen to nineteen is at 147 per 1000 girls (Khosla, 2009), there is a renegotiation of this gendered structure of constraint. The RMG sector has expanded of young women of when to marry and have children, which is extremely significant as this has not been an option traditionally given to them. Additionally, entry into RMG has enabled women to choose not only when to marry, but expanded their ability to choose whom to. In Bangladesh, a traditional custom related to marriage is the practice of the dowry, which favours the groom’s family in
marriage transactions and has thus made daughters an even greater economic liability to their parents (Kabeer, 2011).

Even though the custom is illegal under the Dowry Prohibition Act 1980 (Human Rights Watch, 2012), it is still widely practiced among poorer rural families, who are motivated to send their daughters to work in order to pay for it. Subsequently the pressure and the necessity of marriage leaves women vulnerable to enter a marriage at which she has no choice over (Amin et al., 1998; Hossain, 2012). Nevertheless, the RMG sector has meant that potential marriage partners would be attracted to a garments worker proven ability to generate income (Kibria, 1998). Moreover, earning an income can allow women greater options when choosing whom to marry. This is shown in Amin et al., study, where an unmarried garments worker stated, “Money has to be paid for marriage. I don’t know how much will be needed. If you can give a larger amount of money, you can get a better groom” (1998, p.194). Furthermore, as the sector has loosened women’s dependence on men for financial security, this has not only expanded their ability to choose whom to marry but also given them greater choices within marriages. For instance, in Ahmed and Bould’s ethnographic study in Dhaka, they found that many female garment workers decided to leave their husbands, as they had married a second wife (2004). This is extremely important, as Bangladesh’s personal laws permit polygamy for Muslim and Hindu men (Human Rights Watch, 2012), which further shows the state has not intervened within the private sphere which serves to place women at a subordinate level to men. In a Human Rights Watch report, women from a range of locations such as Dhaka, Naokhali and Gazipurdi were interviewed. The report found at least forty cases of women in polygamous marriages, and found that in all cases, polygamy had an adverse impact on women and their rights (2012).

Therefore, even though structures of constraints still remain, as the dowry is still practiced, and personal laws serve to disadvantage women, women working in the RMG sector have greater choices than their peers. The sector has given women the ‘power to’ challenge structures of constraints, as they can choose whom to marry, and even choose to leave certain marriages, as they are no longer solely dependent upon a male figure to be the sole breadwinner.

Investing in daughters
The decrease in the male breadwinner bias has also led to a decline in son preference. Patriarchal norms have fostered a culture of son preference, severe discrimination against
young girls and even excess level of female mortality, leading to what Amartya Sen described as the phenomenon of “missing women” (cited in Kabeer et al., 2013). For example, in the 1975 Bangladesh Fertility Survey, of the married women who wanted another child, only 8% wanted a girl. However, by 2011, the United Nations Children’s Fund suggested that female mortality rates in the under-5 age group had fallen below those of boys (cited in Kabeer et al., 2013). These improvements are linked to the decline gender discrimination, which is connected to the economic contribution women are making to their households (Kabeer et al., 2013). Through RMG work, women are able to contribute to their families of origin and even their in-laws, which indicate that a woman’s family can benefit from the contributions of an employed adult daughter, even a daughter who is married. An even more radical change to the patriarchal system is found in new residence patterns, where the parent is living with the working adult daughter and not the adult son and daughter-in-law (Ahmed and Bould, 2004). Women are thus able to take care of their parents in their old age, which thus challenges gendered structures of constraints. Women are no longer confined to being the dependent within a household, which has led to a change in patrilocal residence patterns and a decrease in son preference.

There is a greater dependence on women to meet their own survival needs, further shown in Shelley Feldman’s interview of a garments worker in Dhaka, who states, “if my husband cannot feed me, who are they to say I cannot work?” (2001, p.1115). As the patriarchal system no longer provides a social security net for women, women have made the strategic life choice in working RMG sector. Consequently, their increased economic value has given them more options on where to live and allows them to contribute to the familial income. The transformatory significance is shown with the deconstruction of patriarchal norms that uphold gendered structures of constraint, and a decrease in son preference, as women are investing in daughters. Female workers from the RMG sector are investing in their daughters through education as RMG work has increased their agency to formulate choices that impact their own lives and the lives of their children. RMG workers have learnt from their experiences at work, and seek to invest in their child’s education, regardless of their sex. Kabeer supports this as she identifies a “revaluing of girls and a willingness to invest in their education among some women workers” who have learnt “from their own experiences of entry into paid work” (cited in Hossain, 2012, p. 25). This indicates that RMG work has enabled women to revaluate the worth of their daughters, which not only leads to a decline in son preference, but an increase in the education of girls. This is exemplified in Heath and
Mobarak’s empirical study, as they used data from a survey of 1395 households conducted in various subdistricts of Bangladesh, such as Savar and Dhamrai. They compared changes in girls’ enrolment (relative to boys) in garment villages (relative to non-garment villages). Their findings show how arrival of garment jobs increases schooling for girls: a ten percent increase in garment jobs corresponds to a 1.53 percentage point percent increase in the probability that a 5-year-old girl in school (2011, p.1).

They argue that the fact there is the possibility of women being promoted within RMG sector, entices them invest in their daughters education (2011). Therefore, the gendered structures of constraints are being challenged, as the social norm of women’s identity, linked solely to childbearing and marriage, is being questioned through parents investing in their daughter’s education. Moreover, as garment workers recognise the value of investing in their daughter’s education, this expands their daughter’s ability to make choices that will define the parameters of their lives in the future.

Intra-household gender dynamics of decision-making

The fact that gendered structures of constraints are being challenged, but still remain, is further shown through the intra-household dynamics of married couples. Working in the RMG sector does not automatically signal an increase in control over resources, as even though women may earn an income, it does not mean they have an influence on how that income is spent. Through Kabeer’s ethnographic study of households in Dhaka, she found two main ways of decision-making: household income management and independent income management. The independent income management system is typified Hanufa, who lived with her husband and a young daughter. Hanufa was the main breadwinner in a “conflictual marriage”, as her entry into the RMG sector had been precipitated by the erratic and inadequate nature of her husband’s earnings. He had opposed her entry into the sector on the grounds that it would make her immoral. Her income was spent on household consumption whilst he retained for his own income for personal consumption. Even though Hanufa managed the household income, she would often conceal her overtime earnings (1997). What can be observed is James Scott’s concept of a hidden transcript of everyday forms of resistance. Those in weaker positions are unable to resist in direct and outward forms. Instead resistance occurs on an everyday level, located through expressions of dissent (1987). As Hanufa resorts to secrecy by hiding her income, in the context of unequal power relations, she is using what Scott refers to as a weapon of the weak (cited in Kabeer, 1997, p.286). This example demonstrates that even...
though women may not have control over their income due to the unequal power relations within marriage, the RMG sector has enabled women to challenge the structures of constraints through expressions of dissent.

In contrast, in a variety of cases the increased economic value of women has given them greater bargaining power to exercise control in decision-making, without resorting to secrecy. For example, Manju, who was married to a garments worker stated, “when one earns, one’s value goes up” (Kabeer, 1997, p.271). This shows that RMG sector has improved women’s position within the household, which in turn correlates to their bargaining power. This is shown in Amartya Sen’s cooperative conflict model, where he argues that women’s bargaining power and their entitlement to the household resources, are determined by economic and extra environmental factors. He draws on game-theoretic bargaining models, suggesting that when different household members have conflicting preferences, decision-making will occur through a process of bargaining and negotiation (Hossain et al., 2012). This is exemplified in Ahmed and Bould’s study, where they interviewed one garments worker who was able to reject her husbands’ request for more children in order to have a son, “one able daughter is better than ten illiterate sons...I am bringing a substantial amount of money to the family income and he knows he depends on that too” (2004, p. 1335). In this context where the wife and husband expressed conflicting preferences, the fact that she was working as a RMG worker improved her bargaining position within the household, and thus enabled her to make strategic life choices over childbearing. This shows that women are able to renegotiate the terms of pre-existing patriarchal domination and gendered structures of constraint, as enumerated work has improved their bargaining position, which in turn gives them the capacity to make strategic life choices.

**Intimate Partner Violence**

The increased bargaining power women exercise within their relationships has also had a direct impact on relationships where women are abused. Women in Bangladesh, as well as on a global scale, are subject to Intimate Partner Violence (IPV), in which serves to perpetuate gender subordination within the household. Chant and Brickell support this, “violence is one of the most extreme expressions of inequitable household relations” (2014, p.99).

What is significant in Bangladesh is the fact that women’s increased bargaining position, due to their work in the RMG sector, is linked with IPV. For example, in Rachel Heath’s recent study (2014), using data gathered from 60 villages in the outskirts of Dhaka, she
examines the impact of women’s employment in the RMG sector to IPV. On the one hand, she found that women with low bargaining power (due to their young age or low education level) face increased risk of domestic violence upon entering the labour force as their husbands seek to counteract their increased bargaining power. This shows that due to the unequal power relations before their entry into the RMG sector, an increase in bargaining power will lead to men trying to readjust to those changes, using violence as a means. Syed Masud Ahmed supports this, as he argues that empowerment programmes in Bangladesh increase domestic violence in the short run, as the household adjusts to the newly empowered women (2005).

On the other hand, an increase in bargaining power for women who already have high bargaining power can decrease domestic violence, since work opportunities increase her ability to flee a bad marriage. This is evident in Kabeer’s study (1997), where garment workers Aleya and Saleha decided to take their violent husbands back after having separated, and reported less violence in their relationships as a result of their earnings. These cases illustrate how RMG work has increased women’s ability to make strategic life choices that have been previously denied to them, as these women were able to renegotiate the terms of abusive relationships. This indicates that the RMG sector also holds the potential to transform relationships, norms and beliefs that are intrinsically gendered, as women are prepared to take risks of being the sole breadwinner, which challenges the male-breadwinner norm. What can be observed therefore is a questioning of the andocentric bias within Bangladeshi society, as female-headed households are considered an option (Kabeer, 2014; Chant and Brickell, 2014). This is shown with Renu, a garments worker who defied the status quo of male-led households, as she had left her violent husband entirely. However, Renu expressed sentiments of loneliness and anxiety, “When I was married... at least I was with him. No one could say anything to me. Now... I feel afraid...don’t all women have this fear?” (Kabeer, 1997, p.296).

The rules and norms of patriarchal bargain and structures of constraint thus still remain, however, the RMG sector has given women choices that were previously denied to them as they can leave abusive relationships and thus directly challenge the structures that constrain them.

Social Reproduction

The continued pressures of structures of constraints are apparent through the sexual division of labour within households, as even though women are able to challenge certain aspects of the structures that constrain them, they still operate within them. As women participate in the
reproductive economy, entry into RMG sector has intensified their workload, as women are forced to work a “double shift” (Hossain, 2012, p.57), leading to what Naila Kabeer defines as “time poverty” (2012), as it has been assumed that women’s capacity to work is elastic (Elson, 2014). This is evident in Diane Elson’s research, where she argues that women work not only more hours then men, but undertakes much longer hours of unpaid work in the reproductive economy. Women worked on average 31 hours compared to 13 hours for men (1999, p.613). Furthermore, in Mahmud and Tasneem’s study (2013), they found it difficult to interview garment workers, as many of them were working over twelve-hour working days, seven days a week. More importantly, when they managed to interview them, it was mostly in the early morning before they home for work, while doing household chores. Kabeer’s recent research (2014) further reinforces this as she argues that married women were only able to take up and remain in the waged work, after they had reassured their husbands that their domestic chores would not be neglected. This shows that social relationships of family and kinship are “intrinsically gendered”, as norms and beliefs and values define models of masculinity and femininity (Kabeer, 2012).

The resistance on the part of husbands to undertake unpaid household activities is partly due to the fact that they are aiming to uphold the patriarchal order. This is exemplified with Firoze, a married man who prohibits his wife from working, “women have to stay at home and look after the family’s needs. Some of these girls, who are earning their own income, are becoming too free to the point where they are not paying attention to their husbands needs” (Kabeer, 1997, p.271). His identity is thus based in upholding the status quo of the sexual division of labour, as if these gender roles change, this challenges his masculine. Kabeer supports this, as she argues that men are protecting the remaining vestiges of heterosexual masculinity identity, as if they share in domestic work when women take up breadwinning roles, it will lead one to question what is left to distinguish them from women (2014). Even though this analysis adopts a satirical tone, it does highlight that men are upholding the status quo in order to maintain their unequal share power within their relationships with women. Entry into garments work does not liberate women of structures of constraint, as their assumed responsibility of the reproductive economy shows that they are unable to transform their gender roles.

Conclusion
This chapter has shown the varied impact of RMG work on the private lives of women. Women are being empowered, as they are given more choices with regards to childbearing, when to marry and whom to, decision-making power, the ability to lead female-headed houses. Nevertheless, it has also illustrated that the impact of the work may expand women’s choices, but women still operate within the gendered structures of constraints. Their position vis-à-vis men may be transforming, as their increased economic value has decreased son preference and increased education of girls. Nevertheless, women’s position vis-à-vis men have not completely transformed, as women are still responsible for the reproductive economy and they are subject to IPV.

Critical Reflections

It can be argued that whenever one embarks upon measuring whether a person or a group are being empowered, the analysis is limited as the criterion by which one judges empowerment is extremely subjective. For Western observers, their definition of empowerment can be extremely different to those from different cultures to their own. It has thus been necessary to avoid creating a universal image of what an empowered woman looks like.

This paper has used Naila Kabeer’s notion of empowerment as choice, as to avoid creating an ideal to aim towards. Instead, empowerment is a process that varies according to the historical and cultural framework of a specific location. Kabeer’s conceptualisation of empowerment as choice, has allowed this paper to analyse the underlying power dynamics within Bangladeshi culture, and the issues that are specific to it.

This paper has found that the issues specific to Bangladeshi women, and the process of empowerment, relates to their gender role, which serves to be a structure of constraint as it serves to perpetuate unequal power relations between men and women. As gendered structures of constraint have not been transformed, the process of empowerment is limited as there has not been a complete change in the unequal power relations between men and women. This is evident in the public and private lives of female garment workers. In the public sphere, women’s gender serves to constrain them in a variety of ways. Due to male breadwinner bias, women are the assumed supplementary earners and are brought into a sector that does not pay them enough money to cover the costs of living, which impacts their role in the reproductive economy. It is assumed that women are flexible to work the long and erratic hours, which are often underpaid, which bears costs to their health. Due to their gender role, it is assumed that women are docile and unlikely to unionise. This has meant that
as the state prioritises the needs of multinationals instead of garment workers, they are forced to work in deplorable conditions and without any means to keep stakeholders accountable to improve those conditions, as the right of freedom of association being repressed. Due to their inferior position vis-à-vis men and their gender role, women are paid less and are confined to certain jobs. Hence, their comparative advantage of being able to supply cheap and flexible labour, serves to disadvantage women. This illustrates how women’s gender serves to constrict the process of empowerment, as women are brought into new forms of exploitation at work, which limits their ability to formulate and act on choices with a transformatory significance. Gendered structures of constraint have not been transformed within the private spheres of women’s lives. Cultural constraints of the dowry show that female-headed houses are not the norm. The unequal power relations within marriage are not transformed, as women are still subject to IPV. Women’s gender role forces them to work a double shift, both in the reproductive and productive economy. Gendered structures of constraint, and women’s inferior position vis-à-vis men, thus continue to shape their life experiences and conditions.

Nevertheless, as women’s inferior position in society shapes their life experiences and their conditions, the RMG has allowed women to not transform structures of constraint, but to challenge them. In the public sphere, this is exemplified through women’s upward mobility and the opportunity to be in a leadership position at work. The transformatory significance of this, is highlighted by the fact that the status quo of male leadership is being challenged, as women are in a position higher to men. Gendered structures of constraint are being challenged, as the cultural constraint of purdah is being renegotiated. RMG work has given women the ‘power to’ make strategic life choices over their religious practice, as well as the ‘power within’ themselves to create meaning behind their actions. Even though this is faced with resistance and has meant that women are exposed to new forms of sexual harassment, women’s increased mobility shows a change from being confined to the household. Moreover, gendered structures of constraints are being challenged through the new residential patterns that defy the norm of patrilocality. The RMG sector has exposed women to new relationships outside of the kinship structure, which demonstrates an expansion of life choices, as women exercise ‘power with’ each other to create new relationships of solidarity through informal unions. In the private sphere, the impact of the RMG sector is even more significant. Young women have more independence, and thus an increased sense of control over their lives. This is a process of change as beforehand; women were entirely dependent upon men for financial security, exposing them to patriarchal risk. Subsequently, the reduced patriarchal
risk has fostered a decrease in son preference and investment in girl’s education. Moreover, women have more options regarding when to marry, and whom to. Women’s enumerated activities has increased their bargaining power within their relationships with their husbands, and thus in times of conflict, women’s opinions are more valued. When women are subject to violence, their choices are expanded as they can leave abusive relationships.

It is evident that the RMG sector has placed women further along the disempowered to empowered continuum. What this paper has shown is that rather than simply being an end goal, empowerment is a process of change. A woman’s social position vis-à-vis a man’s has not completely changed, as they still operate within gendered structures of constraints. However, the RMG sector has allowed women to renegotiate and challenge those structures, as they have the ‘power to’ formulate, and act on choices that define the parameters of their lives.

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