

RESEARCH ARTICLE

Surviving Violence: Transgressing Categories and Boundaries in Armed Conflicts

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Since the early 1990s, activities intended for the protection of civilians have been steadily incorporated into humanitarian, peacekeeping, and development operations across the globe. Yet, what was initially perceived as a progressive step in the advancement of human security (Goldberg and Hubert 2001) is now coming under increasing scrutiny (Fox 2002; Thakur 2002). The civilian protection agenda involves a series of inter-related activities designed to prevent, mitigate, respond to, and recover from physical harm caused by armed conflict. Despite the steady elaboration and execution of this agenda, however, critics point to key challenges including the lack of compliance by states and non-state armed actors (Ferris 2011), problems with coordination and efficiency among aid organizations (Barnett 2009), under-resourced peacekeeping operations with limited training and equipment (Williams 2013), and the lack of capacity and will on the part of the 'international community' (Barr 2010).

The persistent limitations in the civilian protection agenda have led some scholars, practitioners, and policy-makers to turn their attention away from the 'top-down' macro level and towards the 'bottom-up' micro level of analysis (King 2004). Instead of understanding civilian protection as activities to be conducted in compliance with international law by states, multilateral institutions, or international organisations, attention is rapidly shifting towards the strategies used by civilians themselves. Conflict-affected populations rely on a sophisticated knowledge and assessment of their environment while simultaneously deploying and adapting their coping strategies to navigate violence. The aim of this new area of praxis is to examine the various self-protection strategies undertaken

by individuals and communities affected by mass violence and atrocities. This emerging literature is largely based on the premise that individuals are often the first and last to guarantee their own safety during times of armed violence. Despite increasing attention towards self-protection tactics, however, there is little consensus on what self-protection means in both theory and practice.

Part of the challenge lies in the various conceptual frameworks used to explore the topic, which often differ among academic disciplines. For instance, anthropologists analyze the interplay between structure and agency through *social navigation* processes (Utas 2005; Vigh 2006; Vigh 2008; Scheper-Hughes 2008); social workers develop models that illuminate the factors that hinder or contribute to individual and community *resilience* (Ungar 2011; Carpenter 2012; Suarez 2014); political scientists are known

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for their studies of overt and covert forms of *resistance* (Scott 1985; Thomson 2011; Chenoweth and Cunningham 2013; Shock 2013); and development experts examine *coping strategies* often related to livelihood issues (Horn 2009). While there are both important similarities and distinctions among these frameworks, drawing upon these varied perspectives can aid in our understanding of civilian agency and protection.

In this Special Issue, we build and expand upon previous scholarly work outlining the various modes of human agency, resistance, and resilience by examining how these conceptual frameworks relate to the civilian protection agenda. In order to cut across the various disciplinary frameworks noted above, we introduce the idea of survival. We define survival as a highly fluid process that involves any activities that individuals and communities undertake to counter, mitigate, deter, avoid or overcome threats during armed conflict (Gorur 2013). Rather than understanding survival as a series of short-term tactics, responses or strategies aimed towards meeting the 'bare necessities of life' (Das and Kleinman 2001), we view it as a long-term process deeply embedded within social, economic and political contexts. In doing so, we recognize that the presence of violence does not necessarily preclude other 'life projects,' and that violence is not the main determinant of agency during wartime processes and experiences (Lubkemann 2008)¹.

The concept of survival was specifically chosen as it moves current analyses of self-protection from a series of short-term tactics towards long-term processes. Thus, it offers a more nuanced approach towards the conceptualization of civilian agency in armed conflict for a couple of reasons. First, the spatial and temporal delineations of war and peace, and conflict and post-conflict are difficult to disentangle for those who are systematically enmeshed in them (Vigh 2008). The notion of survival effectively transcends these spatial and temporal delineations. Second, the roles that individuals and communities

undertake to survive often challenge the boundaries between victim, perpetrator, survivor, and witness, revealing the grey zone of violence. The concept of survival helps to challenge these standard spatial and temporal boundaries, and the categories found in the literature on civil wars.

In the following introductory article, we begin by offering a brief overview of the main criticisms concerning the way that humanitarianism, peacekeeping and development operations have been designed and implemented. We argue that these broader criticisms have given impetus towards the current shift from the macro- to the micro-level analysis of civilian protection. We then turn our attention to the current typologies of self-protection, and some of the current debates within this emerging literature. Unsatisfied with relatively static conceptions of self-protection as a tactic or strategy, we turn towards the notion of survival in pursuit of a more nuanced understanding of wartime experiences and processes. We conclude by summarizing how the contributions in this Special Issue advance old and new debates within the civilian protection agenda.

The Civilian Protection Agenda and its Critics

As noted above, the increasing academic and policy attention focused on civilian self-protection largely emerged from the various criticisms of humanitarian, peacekeeping and development operations. The starting point of most civilian protection interventions is to assume and assess the vulnerability rather than the resilience of individuals and communities affected by armed conflict (Schepper-Hughes 2008). This approach is problematic, as it underestimates human agency and capacity to respond to and overcome periods of mass violence and atrocities, while at the same time reducing civilian protection to a series of commodities and services provided by the international community.

Embedded within the so called 'salvation paradigm', the civilian protection framework

effectively fosters a false dichotomy between *saviours* (external actors who rescue and protect) and *victims* (internal actors who are in need of saving) (Mégret 2009). The concept of victimhood is so deeply engrained within standard humanitarian and peacekeeping operations that it has resulted in discourses and processes that construct, in effect, 'deserving' and 'undeserving' victims (Malkii 1996). Conflict-affected populations have learnt that they must 'look and act' the part in order to be considered 'true' beneficiaries (Harrell-Bond 2002). These narratives, performances, and self-representations of 'victimhood' are a salient tactic used by affected populations to increase their opportunities to receive assistance during and after war (Utas 2005; Armstrong 2008). These strategies also become a means by which individuals and communities actively subvert dominant structures and relations produced within the civilian protection framework. The main concern with regard to the normative and structural underpinnings of the civilian protection framework, then, is that it can further victimize or disempower conflict-affected populations (Bouris 2007).

To rectify this, there have been sustained efforts to increase the consultation and participation of conflict-affected populations. However, these initiatives have often proven cursory. Simon Addison (2009) elucidates the numerous factors that hinder the international community's engagement with local communities, including: (1) insecure environments that restrict access to communities; (2) organizational priorities that emphasize implementing activities and meeting budget expenditure targets rather than programme quality and impact; and (3) inability to create and sustain relations with local populations due to short-term project cycles. Ashley South and Simon Harragin (2012) also note that relatively remote agency headquarters typically take the lead in determining the objectives and mandates of field operations, often leaving little flexibility to amend these guidelines on the basis of conditions 'on the ground'.

Most efforts to strengthen the civilian protection framework have focused on the institutional practices of humanitarian, peacekeeping, and development operations, often by endeavouring to strengthen relief-to-development links and practices. Missing from this approach is an analysis and understanding of the self-protection strategies that civilians use themselves, and how or whether these could be further supported by the international community. In short, the civilian protection framework could be significantly strengthened if there was a stronger understanding of the tactics people *already* use to survive situations of mass violence (Bonwick 2006).

Civilian Self-Protection: Theory and Practice

Towards this end, academics and practitioners have developed a series of typologies categorizing various self-protection tactics. These repertoires of self-protection can be conceptualized along a broad spectrum including: (1) *hiding and fleeing* – temporarily or permanently leaving an insecure area; (2) *submission and/or cooperation* – collaborating by providing information, supplies or other types of assistance to an armed group, either out of duress or support; (3) *contestation and witnessing* – mobilizing public opinion to challenge an armed group, through human rights monitoring, reporting and advocacy; and (4) *confrontation* – forming a community-led group that will deter and confront armed groups or join one of the fighting parties (Bonwick 2006; Schepper-Hughes 2008; Mégret 2009; Barr 2010; Baines and Paddon 2012; Barter 2012; South and Harragin 2012; Levine 2013; Williams 2013; Gorur 2013).

In practice, civilians will often use a combination of these and other strategies, depending on the specific context and dynamics of the armed conflict. While many of these self-protection mechanisms have been used to mitigate threats, they rarely provide the degree of safety that people deserve (South and Harragin 2012). Individuals and

communities affected by violence are often forced to make difficult decisions, pursuing strategies that may expose them to different vulnerabilities. For instance, planting and collecting crops in order to feed one's family and community is an essential livelihood strategy for subsistence farmers. However, this often involves long walks into remote areas where rebel groups may be hiding, illustrating the trade-offs that must often be made between safety and subsistence.

Although it is important to evaluate the success or failure of self-protection tactics, this has proven to be difficult for a variety of reasons. First, there are different perceptions and standards regarding civilian protection among local, national and international actors. A comparative study of self-protection strategies in Myanmar, Sudan, South Sudan and Zimbabwe found that local understandings and practices of self-protection went beyond the physical to include social, cultural and spiritual needs (South and Harrigan 2012). In such contexts, these different spheres of life are interwoven and difficult to disentangle. These aspects are often overlooked in humanitarian, peacekeeping and development activities aimed at mitigating and limiting the effects of human rights abuses. For example, the case study in South Kordofan, Sudan demonstrates that building morale among communities hiding in the Nuba Mountains, whether it be through music, dance, ceremonies or festivals, is considered to be of the utmost importance as it also fosters a sense of belonging and solidarity (Corbett 2011). These holistic approaches are often considered to be just as important as immediate relief and aid, suggesting the need for a shift in how the international community defines and approaches civilian protection².

Second, there are several contextual dynamics that affect the possibility of self-protection actions. These vary from internal factors, such as the location, size and geography of the community, to external factors, including the presence and responsiveness of state security actors, access to the justice

system, and strength of civil society (Gorur 2013). Furthermore, self-protection strategies are frequently shaped by the activities of humanitarian, peacekeeping, and development operations. The provision of food, health and education services in displacement camps will greatly influence the decisions individuals and communities take with respect to staying or fleeing their homes, and the period they remain away from their homes (Branch 2008; Steele 2009; Bellamy and Williams 2009).

Some scholars are beginning to examine how individuals and communities influence the course of the armed conflict as a key element in evaluating the effectiveness of self-protection. Oliver Kaplan's (2013) work in Colombia highlights the institutional structures and procedures that communities developed in order to verify individuals that were suspected of collaboration with armed groups. These systems were successful at reducing the exposure of civilians to violence by forces on both sides of the conflict. Daniel Levine's (2013) study of Liberia shows that women were highly organized and trained to look for possible opportunities to advance peace. Risking their lives, they would go to the 'bush', meet with rebel leaders and members and try to convince them to take steps toward peace.

The self-protection typologies outlined in this article provide a glimpse into how individuals and communities survive violence. In many situations, knowledge gained from these experiences can determine the difference between life and death. Scholars, practitioners, and policy-makers have persuasively argued that self-protection should be the starting point of any activities related to civilian protection (Bonwick 2007; Williams 2013). In particular, local knowledge and experience about self-protection could strengthen early warning mechanisms that are already in place (Baines and Paddon 2012).

While there is clearly a need to foster synergies between the various activities related to civilian protection, there is also need for caution. Incorporating self-protection strategies

within the civilian protection framework adopted by humanitarian, peacekeeping, and development operations could result in the concept and associated strategies becoming more bureaucratic and rigid. The challenge is to not reduce civilian protection to an objective or service by turning it into another check box, among other considerations such as gender and age, without meaningfully applying it (South and Harrigan 2012). There are also concerns that the emerging discourse on resilience, which is closely related to self-protection, is another form of neo-liberal governance (Duffield 2012; Chandler 2013).

While the various self-protection categories outlined above can help to make sense of messy realities (Barter 2012), there is a need to be flexible in how these categories are interpreted and applied among scholars, practitioners and policy-makers. As Lee-Ann Fujii (2009) notes, scholars of civil wars must look not only at how individuals and communities conform to and exemplify these categories, but also how they defy them. Fujii's work on Rwanda demonstrates how individuals involved in genocide 'did not confine their activities to one category [e.g. victims, perpetrators, rescuers] – rather they often moved back and forth between categories, or straddled multiple categories at the same time. [In fact,] involvement in a particular set of actions did not preclude or substitute motives for the other' (Fujii 2009: 8). The notion of survival conveys a dynamic and fluid process of protection that is difficult to capture in these commonly applied categories and boundaries outlined in the civil wars literature. The concept of survival introduced here assists in looking at the whole panorama instead of focusing on snapshots, promoting a more comprehensive analysis of wartime processes and experiences.

Transgressing Categorization and Boundaries

The study of survival during armed conflict requires us to shift our analytical lenses to the strategies and networks that individuals and communities use to live through violence in

the context of the everyday. In reference to societies recovering from mass violence and atrocities, Veena Das (2007) notes that there is a tendency to frame agency as something that escapes from rather than descends into the ordinary life. The impulse is to find a grand gesture, perhaps a particular event, that tells us what protection looks like. Yet it is often the return to the 'everyday' by the establishing of mundane and minute routines that helps to resist, contest and defy violence among its survivors. Pilar Riaño-Alcala and Erin Baines (2012) refer to this as the moments that make everyday life more livable.

Studying survival during and after war is an invitation to appreciate the subtle ways that individuals and communities reconfigure their lives in order to evade social, political, cultural, and economic death. As Henrik Vigh (2008) eloquently explains, 'agency is not a question of capacity – we all have the ability to act – but of possibility; that is, to what extent we are able to act within a given context' (10–11). In the context of survival, these are subjective decisions and actions of how to live with dignity amid extreme violence and atrocities. If we move beyond categorical descriptions and analyses of self-protection, the concept of survival can tell us a lot about war.

The field of conflict studies has been increasingly criticized for focusing on the macro-level causes and effects of violence, while ignoring the micro-level dimensions of individuals and groups (Verwimp, Justino and Bruck 2009; Barter 2012; Luckham and Kirk 2013). The notion of everyday survival advances our knowledge by challenging standard boundaries and categorizations commonly applied in conflict studies. The dynamic and complex processes through which individuals and communities survive armed conflict demonstrate the limitations of fixed categories and boundaries. We focus on two aspects of this need to disrupt conventional boundaries: the categorization of actors (e.g. victim, perpetrator, witness, etc.) during armed conflict, and the boundaries of what is defined as conflict and peace.

Categories

Civilians living through violence will make morally impossible choices to protect themselves and their families. Nancy Sheper-Hughes (2008) notes that many repertoires of survival may offend our moral sensibilities, as they are shaped by different subjectivities of what type of life is worth living. In some instances, individuals and communities may be making choices that we might not consider to be choices at all (Sylvester 2013). Many of these decisions and actions blur the line between innocent and complicit, challenging the assumptions underlying the liberal agendas of peace-making and peacebuilding.

For example, neighbours living next to each other may turn on each other in order to secure their own family's safety. They may reveal secrets, such as a hiding spot, or provide information that may lead to the detention of other community members in order to settle an old dispute (Weinstein and Stover 2004; Baines and Paddon 2012). Young men and women may join armed groups as a reaction to socio-economic and political marginalization. Embracing 'gun culture' may appear to be the only way to reassert control in marginalized contexts (Richards 1996; Denov and MacClure 2006; Christiansen, Utas and Vigh 2006). Mothers, wives, or sisters may 'barter sex' to protect their loved ones from armed forces. These decisions have often been made to in order 'protect' oneself from forced impregnation or prevent rape of a mother, sister or daughter (Utas 2005; Theidon 2007; Coulter 2009; Baines 2011).

These examples illustrate some of the difficult decisions civilians make in the context of armed conflict, which often transgress categorizations of perpetrators, victims, bystanders, collaborators, and informants. Studying survival therefore requires that we look not only at how individuals and communities move within their social environments, but also how their social environments move them (Vigh 2008). All of this highlights the importance of better understanding what it

actually means to survive violence, beyond a focus on the how, where and why of people's survival. These are perhaps the most political decisions that individuals and communities will make, as they will have to live with them in the aftermath of violence (Nordstrom 1997). How individuals and communities choose to live with these memories is a form of survival in itself. Some may choose to remain silent about these stories (Green 1995) while others may narrate them in a way that makes them meaningful and purposeful (Scheper-Hughes 2008). Furthermore, these decisions and actions within the 'gray zone' of violence illustrate the complexity of moral and political judgements in relation to the civilian protection regime, especially in the aftermath of violence (Baines 2009; Leebaw 2011). The complex realities of survival also bring into question how the international community may (or may not) support and enhance some of these strategies in politically justifiable ways.

Boundaries

For many individuals and communities, the challenge of survival typically does not end with the agreements for the cessation of hostilities among armed groups. As Swati Parashar (2013) astutely notes: 'People live in wars, with wars and wars live with them after it ends... War begins with peace and there is peace in wars ... The smell, taste, sounds, etc., of war linger within and beyond war' (618). The physical and emotional embodiment of war requires us to consider a holistic approach to protection that far exceeds spatial and temporal standards of war and peace or conflict and post-conflict. As Christine Sylvester (2013) argues, studies on war, especially from an international relations perspective, focus on states, organizations, laws, norms and discourses. Missing from this are the lived experiences of individuals. Violence is highly fluid: its peaks and troughs are sporadic and seldom linear as they are typically portrayed. Survival responds to this complex and dynamic condition and is often an

ongoing way of life. It also transcends analytical distinctions concerning causality between explanations rooted in materialism ('greed') or identity ('grievance') (Richards 2005: 196). We must therefore look beyond artificial boundaries concerning war and peace, as they often fail to capture lived realities.

To this end, we draw upon the work of Henrik Vigh (2008) who introduces the notion of 'chronicity', which re-conceptualizes crisis as a constant rather than a moment, marked by instability and unpredictability (see also Denov and Bucitelli, this Special Issue). Chronicity challenges the temporal and spatial categorizations of conflict underpinning the civilian protection framework, notably the 'pre', 'during' and 'post' stages of violence. These boundaries fail to capture the continuum of violence experienced by the 'structurally violated [and] socially marginalized' around the world (Vigh 2008: 5).

The elasticity embedded in the concept of chronicity allows us to include sites of continuous violence, sometimes persisting for decades (e.g. Colombia, Sudan); areas marked by fragile and easily reversible commitments and agreements towards peace (e.g. DRC); and those that do not have a clear 'end' in sight (e.g. Palestine/Israel). In all of these contexts, civilians develop innovative strategies to live through the violence that fractures their everyday. Indeed, survival often becomes a 'way of life'. These repertoires are often both creative and indispensable, but can also make the quest for a durable peace even more elusive. In sum, chronicity helps us to redefine 'war', 'peace', and everything that exists in between – the reality characteristically faced by too many of the world's civilians.

Contributions

The emphasis in this Special Issue on civilian self-protection and survival must be set against the steady elaboration of ideas concerning civilian protection norms in the international domain. The process by which Protection of Civilians (POC) norms and practices has become institutionalized in UN

peacekeeping has been rapid and dramatic. From a standing start in the late 1990s, they have come to be embedded in virtually all peacekeeping mandates. Nevertheless, these POC advances have been highly experimental and marked by dramatic shortcomings. The principal field of experimentation has been the DRC, where MONUC/MONUSCO was one of the first two operations to embed a POC mandate. Arthur Boutellis tracks the process by which this mandate and the expectations associated with it grew from a very limited to an increasingly comprehensive and ambitious one. Yet throughout this process, POC principles have generated expectations that the UN operation has been simply unable to meet, for a variety of reasons. The result is that UN peacekeepers have struggled with persistent challenges to their legitimacy. Boutellis argues that in seeking to enhance multilateral POC capacity, and the associated bureaucracy, the UN has neglected the Congolese state's primary responsibility for civilian protection, and the fundamental need for more ambitious and effective SSR programming as a result. The profound limitations of the DRC state mean that the primary responsibility for civilian protection will often continue to rest with people in communities – the main focus of this Special Issue.

In light of the strains on and inadequacies of UN efforts, international peace operations and, by extension, POC efforts are increasingly falling to regional organizations – particularly where demands are greatest, in Africa. Paul Williams' study of the POC repercussions for the African Union's AMISOM force in Somalia highlights the challenges associated with this trend. As Boutellis shows, UN operations have increasingly institutionalized POC mandates and modalities, albeit with very uneven results. In contrast, the African Union has had very little history or experience with such efforts, and AMISOM has been accused of actually *increasing* risk and causing harm to Somali civilians. Since 2011, efforts have been made to correct both

these perceptions and the operational weaknesses that underpin them; and since May 2013 AMISOM has been given a pro-active POC mandate. Nevertheless, Williams' analysis raises concerns that unless these steps are accompanied by the appropriate balance and volume of financial and human resources, there is a strong risk that expectations will be raised that cannot possibly be met. These trends and challenges highlight the weaknesses associated with international POC efforts, and the need for greater understanding of, and engagement with, the self-protection efforts of people and communities.

Oliver Kaplan's study of the ways in which civilian communities can 'nudge' armed groups toward the incorporation of norms of civilian protection – often, he argues, with considerably greater effect than international humanitarian organizations – extends the potential parameters of civilian agency and 'active' self-protection in challenging ways. His application of these theoretical propositions to the cases of civilian interaction with the FARC in Colombia, and various branches of the Free Syrian Army in Syria provides clear evidence that this nudging process has in fact worked, at least at times and in places – though he also acknowledges that it has limits and dangers. For external actors, both state and non-state, Kaplan's ideas raise important and challenging questions about how they can identify and support promising local initiatives, without actually compromising their credibility and effectiveness by engaging illegal armed groups.

Frederic Mégret delves in greater depth into the complex responses of civilians attempting to navigate the space between government and opposition combatants in the ongoing civil war in Syria. This sobering analysis of a conflict in which no protagonist has been able or inclined to provide adequate protection to civilians, highlights the necessity but also the very real limits of civilian self-protection and resilience. Mégret highlights the importance of strategies that emerge 'at the point of connection between local and international initiatives', and

enjoins scholars and practitioners to be alert to unorthodox possibilities. Finally, and most importantly, he stresses the importance of listening to and engaging with the expressed views of civilians on their own protection, as a way of maximizing the effectiveness and legitimacy of international interventions in what remains a deeply fraught and morally ambiguous context.

Pushing beyond situations of highly internationalized and high-intensity armed conflicts and peace operations, Myriam Denov and Andi Bucitelli apply Henrik Vigh's notions of 'chronicity' and 'social navigation' to explore the capacity of former child combatants in 'post-war' Sierra Leone now living on the urban streets of a marginalized community within Freetown to protect themselves and survive, physically, economically, and socio-psychologically. Their research with eleven such youths serves to emphasize the uncertain line between 'conflict' and 'peace', and the degree to which many war-affected people live in an ongoing context of insecurity even in ostensibly post-conflict settings. They also emphasize the repertoire of tactics and strategies these youths have developed to navigate this insecure landscape, through patronage and mutual self-help. Their resilience and creativity is remarkable, yet the 'life' they have succeeded in securing is highly uncertain and marginal. Their experience underscores both the importance of self-protection and its limits in transcending the barest forms or survival. It raises important practical and ethical challenges for Sierra Leonean and international 'outsiders' who aspire to ameliorate their situation.

Christina Clark-Kazak's analysis of the range of responses of Congolese refugee youth in Uganda, navigating situations of vulnerability and structural violence, draws on Ruth Lister's conceptualization of agency to highlight the ways in which these youth have 'gotten out', 'gotten by', 'gotten back at', and 'gotten organized' as responses to their situation. She stresses the salience of their often-discounted strategic and political roles while enjoining us, like Denov and

Bucitelli, not to romanticize their situations or absolve governments and international actors of responsibility for their vulnerability. Finally, and consistent with the overall emphasis of this Special Issue, she calls for a deeper understanding of these issues through better research into the diversity of youth experiences and the differentiated strategic responses they elicit and imply.

Carmen Logie and CarolAnn Daniel's practice note on the unintended repercussions of tent distribution practices in post-earthquake Haiti serves two key purposes in relation to the overall theme of this Special Issue. First, it highlights the unintended and destructive consequences that can flow from well-intentioned interventions by international humanitarian actors when they *fail* to take adequate account of local contexts, priorities and capacities. In this case, the tent distribution practices of these agencies, providing multiple tents to individual family members without regard to age, had the consequence of exacerbating the vulnerability of Internally Displaced youths, with particularly negative consequences in exacerbating sexual assault and gender-based violence. Second, it illustrates the importance of understanding the *specificities* of particular contexts. In this case, Logie and Daniel's finding that more emphasis should have been placed on consulting 'heads of households' and keeping family groups together is at least partially at odds with Clark-Kazak's emphasis on the self-protecting agency of youths, both individually and collectively, and the degree to which seeking autonomy from traditional family groupings can in some cases enhance self-protection.

Eliana Suarez' analysis of the role of indigenous Quechua women in post-conflict Ayacucho, Peru highlights several distinctive and potentially comparable features of civilian protection and agency in contexts of protracted armed conflict and their aftermath. Suarez highlights the degree to which understanding the incidences of violence and insecurity requires an emphasis on both gender and ethnicity. She also emphasizes the

degree to which those traditionally viewed as most marginal and most severely victimized – in this case indigenous women – can be the most robust and resilient sources of protection, resistance, and advocacy for reparations. These efforts draw on both formal, 'western' legal and political resources, and on indigenous practices and resources. Practitioners need to be alert and responsive to both domains of capacity and response.

Finally, Linda Dale's practice note concerning her longstanding work with youth who have grown up in the context of 'La Violencia' in Colombia reflects both important substantive insights and methodological practices. Substantively, her work highlights the dynamic character of extremely protracted civil conflicts, and the complex ways in which young people have sought to navigate them. Methodologically, it demonstrates the important role that arts-based interventions and forms of expression can play in adapting to, resisting, and recovering from the deprivations of prolonged exposure to violence. In short, it highlights the rich repertoire of meanings and practises associated with civilian survival.

Notes

¹ As Stephen Lubkemann (2008) reminds us, there is a real danger in giving violence a 'hegemonic status' whereby it is treated as the main determinant of agency during 'warscape' social processes.

² For similar results on northern Uganda see: Horn, 2009.

Editor's note

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