

# **System of Violence**

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Influence of non-conventional violence on disaster risk reduction in the Northern Triangle of Central America

Lucas Fietz

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Disaster risk reduction, violence, Central America, Northern Triangle.

### Abstract

The purpose of this study is to investigate the influence of non-conventional violence on the implementation of disaster risk reduction projects in the Northern Triangle of Central America. The Northern Triangle is facing substantial disaster risk from various hazards. Hence, there is a need for disaster risk reduction in the region. However, besides the challenges in terms of disasters, this region is characterised by elevated levels of non-conventional violence. This thesis defines non-conventional violence as the criminalized violence. Disaster risk reduction projects are also located in these violent areas.

This research finds that the non-conventional violence influences an interconnected system of eight codes, which consequently has an impact on the implementation of disaster risk reduction projects in the Northern Triangle. Moreover, the context of the Northern Triangle shows differences to other criminal areas. This triggers the assumption of similarities to conflict zones (e.g. Afghanistan). Finally, I assume that a comparable system of influence might have its effect on disaster risk reduction in those conflict zones.

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## Glossary

COPECO - Comisión Permanente de Contingencias (Contingency Agency Honduras)

CONRED - COORDINADORA NACIONAL PARA LA REDUCCIÓN DE DESASTRES (Disaster Management Agency Guatemala)

CEPRENAC - Center for Coordination of the Prevention of Natural Disasters in Central America

Clikas – Lowest level of organization within the Youth gangs (Maras)

DRR – disaster risk reduction

Disaster risk reduction actors – All stakeholders of disaster risk reduction in the Northern Triangle. That includes NGOs, INGOs, the UN system, governmental organizations & institutions and the governments & ministries of the countries of the Northern Triangle.

DRM – Disaster Risk Management

IFRC – International Federation Red Cross

MS-13 – Mara Salvatrucha

NCV - Non-conventional violence

Northern Triangle – Guatemala, El Salvador and Honduras

Protección Civil - Civil Protection El Salvador

UNDSS - An element of the United Nations Security Management System (UNSMS), which is an UN system-wide approach to security

UNODC - United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime

VCA – Vulnerability and Capacity Assessment

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## 1. Introduction

In the last decade, extreme violence is rising in the world. Most of the countries suffering by this violence are challenged by long conflicts including civil war and threats by extremist ideologists. In the Northern Triangle – Guatemala, El Salvador and Honduras – this is different. This region is one of the most violent regions in the world. In difference to other violent contexts, it is not suffering from a conflict in the classical sense but from a high degree of non-conventional violence. This violence is perpetrated by mostly criminal violent groups which can be broadly defined in three categories: Firstly, Maras, youth gangs which have their origin in the USA back in the seventies. Secondly, family clans and organizations in the rural parts of mainly Guatemala which are involved in the drug business. Thirdly, the Mexican drug cartels who are of rising importance for the extent of the non-conventional violence and the crime in the Northern triangle. Additionally, to the great issue of violence in this region, the Northern Triangle is known to be very disaster prone – Honduras and Guatemala are both ranking high in the Climate Risk Index 2016 (Kreft et al. 2017). While serving the most vulnerable by effective disaster risk reduction, the actors involved in these projects must work in areas which are challenged by non-conventional violence.

Therefore, the purpose of this study is to develop an understanding about the influences of non-conventional violence on disaster risk reduction projects in general and more specifically in the Northern Triangle. To satisfy this purpose, I raise the following research question:

*How does non-conventional violence influence the implementation of disaster risk reduction projects in the Northern Triangle?*

After this introduction chapter, this thesis is divided in six main chapters. The methodology is followed by the conceptual framework which is divided in three sub-chapters - describing disaster risk reduction in the context of the Northern Triangle, the general context of the Northern Triangle and the concept of non-conventional violence & its implications for the population in the Northern Triangle. Next, the results chapter describes in two sub-chapters the influence of non-conventional violence on disaster risk reduction and the coping activities of the disaster risk reduction actors. Subsequently, the discussion deals with seven key ideas regarding the influence and the coping activities. Finally, the conclusion answers the research question, followed by the main recommendations.



## **2. Methodology**

### **2.1 Research Design**

I designed this research as an inductive exploratory study using the case study approach (Saunders et al. 2007). The Northern triangle is the basis of the case study which treats it as a single embedded case, while it is still acknowledging the individual national contexts of El Salvador, Honduras and Guatemala. Therefore, I designed this case with an embedded perspective (Saunders et al. 2007). The decision to take a case approach for the Northern Triangle as a single entity can be justified since the Northern Triangle is frequently dealt with in the literature and by the humanitarian actors as such. More importantly, those three countries share the violence as a common challenge for their societies. More specifically, the most significant actors of the non-conventional violence appear in all three of these countries. Furthermore, the geographical proximity and the similarity of the natural hazards threatening those countries of the Northern Triangle offer additional justifications for the decision of a single embedded case study.

### **2.2 The Data Collection & Data Analysis**

I designed the research as a qualitative research study. Due to the nature of this research as a Master thesis with limited time and resources, I undertook the study based on a cross-sectional time horizon. I compiled 15 informants from a population of 150 persons of various backgrounds, e.g., UN staff, NGO staff, Donors, National agencies and Scientists. This population is partly based on an existing database of persons involved in the disaster risk reduction in the Northern Triangle of Central America. All experts are knowledgeable and experienced in the context of the Northern Triangle due to their work assignments or own research. The sampling method of choice was random sampling (Saunders et al. 2007). Hence, I selected the research informants randomly from the population of 150 experts. Additionally, I asked the interviewed experts to identify other knowledgeable informants of the field. Therefore, I selected five other informants by the identification of the experts. I executed the sampling process until a satisfying sample size was reached. However, considering the time-consuming process of analyzing interviews which produce mainly qualitative data, two aspects needed special attention. First, the sample size should on one hand satisfy the need for

acquiring critical, important and beneficial data, but also had to stay in a manageable size considering the limited time frame and resources of this Master thesis. On the other hand, the data analysis had to be well planned prior to the actual data collection. According to these two aspects I proposed a sample size of 20 respondents as satisfying for this research. In addition to the 20 respondents who I interviewed about the influence of violence on disaster risk reduction in the Northern Triangle, I conducted two unstructured interviews with violence experts about the term “non-conventional violence” to deepen the understanding about this term for the thesis. It is important to note that I did not mean to ensure statistical significance by the random sample selection process of the respondents. Since I had a data base of 150 experts, the random selection was only undertaken as a possible method to select the respondents.

I conducted the interview-administered semi-structured interviews mainly via Skype, leading to potential risks of biases which I tried to minimize. This minimization was for example done by establishing trust between the interviewees and the researcher before the actual interview started, the usage of the camera option during the interviews and a neutral voice while asking the questions. The interview guide included four main questions. Furthermore, I developed eleven additional probing questions to clarify the main questions when needed. I pilot-tested the semi-structured interview with two fictional respondents in advance to ensure its quality and validity. Please refer to Appendix 1 for the complete interview guide.

Finally, I transcribed the data collected for this thesis and then coded and analyzed it using the NVIVO software. In the data, I found 13 coding nodes and subsequently divided these in two distinct main categories A) Influence of non-conventional violence on the disaster risk reduction projects in the Northern Triangle and B) Coping activities. Please refer to the table for a better understanding of the coding:

EXPLANATORY CODING TABLE				
Example	Main category	Codes	Reference	Source
Nr 1	Influence of Non-conventional violence on the disaster risk reduction projects in the Northern Triangle	Access	<i>"There are a lot of neighborhoods in which you cannot enter because your life will be threatened; in this sense, the violence is affecting our work as humanitarian institutions"</i>	Interview 5
Nr 2	Coping Activities	Integrated Projects	<i>"We tried to work in the protection group as well with the topic of disaster risk reduction but they did not want to address this topic [...]"</i>	Interview 9

Accordingly, I coded and analyzed the primary data. Both categories together offer the opportunity to answer the research question.

### 2.3 Research Limitations

This research as every research faced certain limitations. It deals with two complex terms: disaster risk reduction and non-conventional violence. In terms of non-conventional violence, I restricted the violence to the part of "criminalized violence". However, because of this focus other types of violence are neglected. But in the special context of the Northern Triangle, the decision to focus on the crime related non-conventional violence has a solid foundation. Furthermore, violence is a delicate issue in the Northern Triangle. Therefore, certain government officials refused to agree to an interview. Hence, most of the informants had an NGO, UN or research background, which potentially gives this work a certain direction.

Moreover, disaster risk reduction is a loose concept which is not even fully understood by those who are practicing it. Therefore, I needed to ensure to be aware of the view of each respondent's vision of disaster risk reduction. I emphasized the clarification of both concepts dealt with in this thesis – disaster risk reduction & non-conventional violence. Thus, this clarification was part of every interview with the different respondents to develop a shared understanding of both concepts. Nevertheless, a certain bias because of a potential misunderstanding could be still possible.

Additionally, the interviews were conducted in English and Spanish. Since both languages are not my mother tongue, a potential bias could be induced here as well. Other limitations involved the limited time frame of this study and the budget limitations. Therefore, I had no opportunity to visit the countries of the Northern Triangle in person and had to perform most

interviews at distance. But this could be as well seen as an advantage since the neutrality of the researcher might have been increased by this modus operandi.

Finally, I tried to avoid and neglect all biases in good faith and conscience.

### **3 Conceptual & Contextual Framework**

The conceptual and contextual framework of this thesis provides the reader with a broad understanding about the concepts and the context this study deals with in relation to the research aim. Hence, it strives to provide the reader with the necessary background to be able to comprehend all results and discussions of the following chapters of the thesis.

#### **3.1 Disaster risk reduction in the Northern Triangle**

Latin America and the Caribbean are one of the most disaster-prone regions in the world. 70% of all climate related disaster costs worldwide are occurring in this region (UNISDR & FAO 2016, p.5). The Northern Triangle as part of the Latin American region is challenged by the impacts of different natural hazards including but not limited to droughts, floods and hurricanes (Kreft et al. 2015, p.5). Hence, there is an urgent need to establish and maintain effective disaster risk reduction. The goal of effective disaster risk reduction is to understand and reduce risk circumstances (UNISDR 2017). Explicitly, disaster risk reduction strives to deal with the vulnerability and exposure of the society towards different hazards. Hence, it focuses on the reduction of disaster impacts in terms of mortality, lesions and economic losses (UNISDR 2017). Moreover, disaster risk reduction is an important part of sustainable development and so is part of the corresponding SDG Agenda (UN 2017b, p.7). Consequently, effective disaster risk reduction must be multi-sectorial (UNISDR & FAO 2016, p.5) and should address every part of the society; e.g. health, governmental institutions and the private sector (UNSDIR 2017). Those efforts should lead to a comprehensive disaster risk reduction strategy within the different countries (UNISDR & FAO 2016, p.5). To support national governments towards this overall goal, the newly developed Sendai Framework for disaster risk reduction strives to deliver the structure for the measurement and coordination of efforts for overall national disaster risk reduction strategies (UNISDR & FAO 2016).

The general development cooperation focuses on three main goals: first, supporting development countries to develop basic services to its citizens. Secondly, enhancing the economic development of those countries and its population. Thirdly, enhancing the development country's procurement of "international public goods". Further, the development cooperation can be composed of three different types of support: financial, capacity development and improvement of policies (Alonso & Glennie 2015, p.2) .

In the context of the Northern Triangle, the national agencies of each country of the Northern Triangle – CONRED - Guatemala (CONRED 2017), COPECO - Honduras (COPECO 2017) and Protección Civil - El Salvador (Proteccion Civil n.d.) – aim to integrate and manage proper disaster risk reduction programs in their respective countries. Furthermore, the inter-governmental organization CEPREDENAC (Coordination Center for the Prevention of Natural Disasters in Central America) seeks to amplify the cooperation of the Central American states in terms of disaster risk reduction (CEPREDENAC 2016). Policies and plans developed by these institutions include the PRRD, the regional disaster reduction plan 2006-2015. It can be understood as a tool for multi-level disaster risk reduction in the framework of sustainable development (CEPREDENAC 2010, p.5). They also include the PCGIR - the “Central American Policy on Comprehensive Disaster Risk Management” (CEPREDENAC 2010, p.7) which was developed to comply to legally binding international disaster risk reduction policies (e.g. Hypo Framework) on the national levels and to support the past efforts as the future targets in terms of disaster risk reduction (CEPREDENAC 2010, pp.10–11). The PCGIR is going to be adapted to the Sendai Framework in the next years (COPECO 2016). Moreover, the countries recognize the importance of community-based disaster risk reduction (as well referred to as community-based DRM) (Hori & Shaw 2012, p.278).

Beside the achievements and attempts of the national governments and intergovernmental organizations, a broad range of other actors – national aid organization, non-governmental organizations, donors and the United Nations – are involved in disaster risk reduction projects and initiatives in the Northern Triangle. For example, Plan International is involved in child-focused disaster risk reduction in Honduras (PLAN International 2017), Habitat for Humanity (Habitat for Humanity 2017) is involved in livelihood disaster risk reduction in Guatemala and ECHO is funding various disaster risk reduction projects (DIPECHO) in all three countries of the Northern Triangle (Cristóbal et al. 2014).

However, the aspect which the stakeholders of the Sendai Framework missed to address is conflict & violence in relation to disaster risk reduction. The SDGs on the other hand recognize violence, climate and disaster but miss to draw the connection between them (Peters 2015). Unfortunately, the World Humanitarian Summit failed to make this connection, either (WHS 2016). Nevertheless, the significance of the potential impact of violence & conflict on disaster risk reduction especially in fragile states needs to be understood and a focus on disaster risk

reduction under the specific conditions in such difficult contexts should not be ignored (Peters & Budimir 2016, p.15). Therefore, the disaster risk reduction actors in the Northern Triangle should take this potential influence of violence on disaster risk reduction into account as well.

The next two sub-chapters deal with the general contextual background of the Northern Triangle and the second conceptual component of this thesis – non-conventional violence (NVC) in the context of this region.

### **3.2 A Short Contextual Overview of the Northern Triangle**

To clarify the necessary contextual background for this thesis, the following sub-chapter provides the reader with a brief overview of the Northern Triangle. The so called “Northern Triangle” of Central America is composed of the three countries Guatemala, El Salvador and Honduras (see Map 1) (Chavez & Avalos 2014). It has a shared border with Mexico in the North and with Nicaragua in the South.

**Guatemala** holds the largest population of 15.47 million people (World Bank 2017a) among the countries of the Northern Triangle; 51.6% of the population lives in urban areas (UN 2016). Moreover, it is recognized as the biggest economy within Central America with a GDP (2015) of 63,79 Billion USD (Trading Economics 2017). Main industries of Guatemala include sugarcane, coffee, bananas, beans, corn, cardamom and cattle (CIA FACTBOOK 2017b). The country suffered from a 36 years long civil war which started in 1960 and ended in 1996 (Miller 2011). The current elected president Morales (Malkin & Wirtz 2015) replaced the previous president Molina who had to resign because of charges of corruption in September 2015 (The Economist 2016). Consequently, Guatemala is ranked in the Corruption Perception Index 2016 on place 136 of 176 countries (Transparency International 2016). This leads to a perception of the country as struggling with a corrupt political and institutional system. Another challenge for Guatemala is an elevated level of violence and crime with a homicide rate of 27.3 per 100,000 inhabitants (Gagne 2017). Furthermore, the Fragile State Index (2016) categorizes Guatemala in the category “High Warning” (Messner et al. 2016). Finally, extensive migration flows towards the USA (Amnesty International 2016) are leading to a number of 33,249 persons deported in 2015 from USA to Guatemala (Seelke 2016, p.9).

In terms of natural challenges, Guatemala is suffering from several hazards which include landslides, volcanic activity, hurricanes, floods, storms and earthquakes (Preventionweb 2017). An indication for Guatemala's disaster-prone position is the 9<sup>th</sup> place in the Long-Term Climate Risk Index 1996-2015 (Kreft et al. 2015).

**Honduras** which has a shared boarder with Guatemala in the North-West and in the South with Nicaragua, holds a population of 8.075 million inhabitants (World Bank 2017b) of which over 52% reside in urban areas (Indexmundi 2017). The economy generated a GDP of 20.42 Billion USD in 2015 (World Bank 2017b). The main products include wood, sugar and coffee (CIA FACTBOOK 2017c). The current president of Honduras is Juan Orlando Hernández. In 2009, left-wing president Zelaya was forced to abandon his position due to a coup d'état by the military (Malkin 2009). Additionally, Honduras ranks on place 123 of 176 countries in the corruption perceptions index 2016 (Transparency International 2016), hence is only marginally better placed than Guatemala. Corruption continues to be a substantial problem for the society in Honduras. Furthermore, Honduras continues to have one of the highest homicide rates of the world with 59 per 100,000 inhabitants (Gagne 2017). The Fragile State Index (2016) categorizes Honduras in the category "Elevated Warning" (Messner et al. 2016). Finally, extensive migration flows towards the USA (Amnesty International 2016) were leading to a number of 20,309 persons deported in 2015 from the USA to Honduras (Seelke 2016, p.9).

In terms of natural challenges and extreme weather events, Honduras is facing the following hazards: floods, storms, rain, cyclones and forest fires (Preventionweb 2014b). The Long-Term Climate Risk Index ranks Honduras in first place (Kreft et al. 2017).

**El Salvador** is the smallest country among the three countries of the Northern Triangle. The population size was 6.34 Million in 2015 of which 4.088 Million lived in the urban areas (World Bank 2017c). Its economy can be perceived as similarly prosperous with a GDP of 25.85 Billion USD in 2015. The main products include food processing, beverages, petroleum, chemicals, fertilizer, textiles, furniture and light metals (CIA FACTBOOK 2017a). The country suffered from a 12 year long civil war from 1980 -1992 in which over 75,000 people were killed (CJA 2009). The current president is Salvador Sánchez Cerén. Transparency International (2016) ranks the country on place 95 of 176 countries in the world. Hence, El Salvador is facing substantial problems in terms of the corruption in its political system (Transparency International, 2016). Moreover, the country is facing an increase in violence since a so-called



gang truce between the state and the major gangs in the country was dismissed in 2014 (Seelke 2016, p.12). Therefore, in 2015, it became the country with the highest homicide rate in the world (Seelke 2016, p.12). In 2016, the homicide rate was at 81.2 per 100,000 persons (Gagne 2017). The Fragile State Index (2016) categorizes El Salvador in the category “Elevated Warning” (Messner et al. 2016). Finally, extensive migration flows towards the USA lead to 21,920 persons who were deported in 2015 from the USA to El Salvador (Amnesty International 2016).



Map 1 The Northern Triangle, Source: The Sydney Herold

The main natural hazards in

El Salvador are earthquakes, floods and landslides (Preventionweb 2014a).

### 3.3 Concepts of violence in the context of the Northern Triangle

I refer to the “criminalized violence” in the Northern Triangle as non-conventional violence (NCV). This terminology is predominately used by the UN system in this region and was developed by the Norwegian Center for Conflict Resolution (Stein & Walch 2016, p.6). Actors of non-conventional violence (NCV) have several more or less strongly developed characteristics in common: a certain degree of internal organization, differentiation and multinational connections (Briscoe 2013, p.3), often a missing political goal (Briscoe 2015, p.1), and at least in the case of the Northern-Triangle an economic interest. I focus in this thesis on the criminal actors of the non-conventional violence. In general, this term is used when the appearances of intense violence fail to be categorized into the normal conflict pattern (Briscoe 2015, p.1).

However, it is important to note that on one hand the violence constructs in the Northern Triangle are never steady but always dynamic, and on the other hand the existence of other labeling for this type of violence (Stein & Walch 2016, p.6). One example would be the

definition of the IFRC as “other situations of violence” which describes almost the same phenomenon and features a comparable meaning in the context of the Northern Triangle (ACAPS 2014, p.1).

Simplified, three different types of non-conventional violent (NCV) criminal groups exist in the Northern Triangle: the Maras (youth gangs), the families & transportistas (smugglers) and the Mexican cartels (Mexican mafia) (Cantor 2014, pp.6–11).

**3.3.1 The Perpetrators of violence**

**The Maras** are the most powerful gangs in Guatemala, El Salvador and Honduras (Rodgers et al. 2009, p.7). These criminal groups have their origin in the USA. The 18<sup>th</sup> street gang (Barrio 18) founded by Mexicans in Los Angeles, was the first Hispanic gang in the USA which allowed members from other countries. Mainly Salvadoran and Guatemalan refugees joined this gang. Their rivals, the MS - 13 were founded by Salvadoran refugees fleeing from the Civil war in the 80s. Both gangs have a massive presence in a majority of states of the USA (Seelke 2016, p.3). The actual development to transnational groups began in the 90s due to the intensification of the US deportation of criminals back to their home countries in Central America (Rodgers et al. 2009, p.8). UNODC estimates that in total, in the Northern Triangle over 57,000 gang members existed in 2012 (see Figure 1) (UNODC 2012b, pp.27–28).

This number is especially alerting when taking into considerations the numbers of police officers. For example, Guatemala employs 14,000 police officers (Corcoran 2014) which would lead to the conclusion that the Maras alone are out numbering the police by 8.000 members.

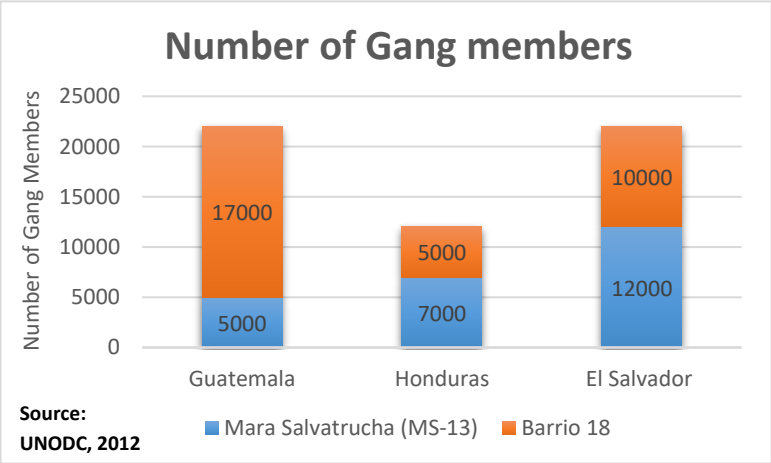


Figure 1 Number of Gang members in the Northern Triangle

Even if both gangs have a transnational body, it is wrong to consider them to collaborate with each other over borders or territories. Hence, the different clikas of the two Maras (local

branches of the gangs in the different territories) do not report to one single command (Seelke 2016). Instead brutal fights between different Maras occur for the control of urban and sub-urban territories (Cantor 2014: p.6) The “basis” of the different clikas is located in poor neighborhoods which are also their source for recruitment. Recruitment itself can be also forced (Amnesty International 2016, p.17). From this basis, the clikas exert territorial control over the surrounding neighborhoods. Certain members of the local community maintain close connection to the Maras and can be considered supporters (Cantor 2014, p.7). Additionally, there are different rules of behavior for the inhabitants to which they must comply. The code of silence in terms of collaboration with the government and the law enforcement might be the most common and important rule (Cantor 2014, p.7). Finally, the main income of the Maras is generated by localized extortions, theft (Rodgers et al. 2009, p.9) and drugs (Seelke 2016, p.7). Furthermore, the Maras are increasingly employed by other actors, predominately the Cartels, to execute contract killings and other “dirty” business for them (Seelke 2016, p.7).

This thesis focuses its findings on the Maras as part of the non-conventional violence. Nevertheless, there are additional groups which have a key role especially in Guatemala & parts of Honduras:

**The Families & Transportistas** make up the second group that must be considered as perpetrators of non-conventional violence. These groups are mainly focused in Guatemala with an increasing influence since 2009 in Honduras (UNODC 2012a, pp.23–25) and are mostly controlled by so called families. These families - the Mendozas, the formerly Leones, the Lorenzanas (Cantor 2014, p.10) and the Chamales (UNODC 2012a, p.24) – exert territorial control over different parts of Guatemala and have several hundreds of members in the country. The non-territorial transportistas (smugglers) are highly dependent on the collaboration with the territorial smuggler families to successfully run their business (Cantor 2014, p.8). These groups are mainly involved in smuggling drugs but also transporting other goods.

The general population in Guatemala is suffering less directly from the violence of the families & transportistas. Additionally, the territorial families are keeping their territories free from a potential influx of other armed groups, e.g., the Maras (Cantor 2014, p.9). However, in recent years this statement loses some validity since the influence of another highly violent group becomes more and more visible especially in Guatemala:

**The Mexican Cartels** always had business relations with the territorial smuggler families in Guatemala. However, since the power structures within the Cartel system have been changing in the last decade, violence spread to the Northern Triangle as well (Cantor 2014, p.10). The most important perpetrator of violence is the comparable new cartel of “Los Zetas”. Started as the most extreme arm of the Gulf Cartel, it separated in 2010 and started a war against its new rivals (Expansion 2011). Moreover, it extended its operation into Guatemala beginning in 2008 and founded a local chapter here (UNODC 2012a, p.23). This situation was amplified by the “war on drugs” of the Mexican government which forced the Cartels more and more to use the land route of Central America for the transportation of cocaine instead of importing it directly (Crisis Group 2014, p.3). It is believed that 75% of all cocaine flights arrive in Honduras. Afterwards, it is then delivered via land to Guatemala (Crisis Group 2014, p.4). Because of the arrival of the Zetas in 2008, the increasingly competitive drug market and the enhanced pressure of the Central American governments towards the drug trafficking actors, the violence generated by these groups - Mexican cartels and local smuggler families - increased tremendously in the last years (Crisis Group 2014, p.4).

**3.3.2 The Implications of Non-Conventional Violence in the Northern Triangle**

The violence in the Northern Triangle has reached a level similar in many aspects to the degree of countries in conflicts. I picked several indicators to express the problem to the reader.

**Homicides:** The homicide rates in the countries of the Northern Triangle remain around the highest in Latin America with El Salvador in the first place and Honduras sharing the second place with Venezuela, with the latter being very close to a civil war. Guatemala remains in 5<sup>th</sup> place

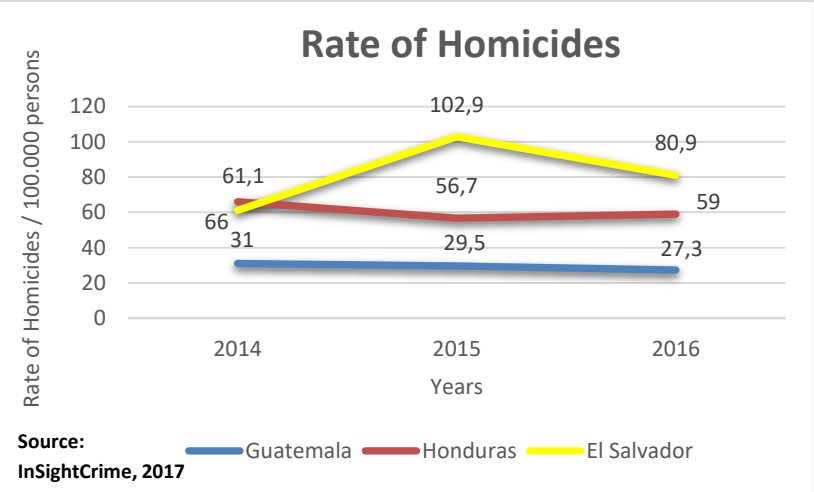


Figure 2 Homicide rates in the Northern Triangle

(Gagne 2017). An important question with regards to this thesis is how much of the intentional homicides can be allocated to the non-conventional violent groups. At least in the

case of El Salvador, it seems very likely that the homicides are strongly related to the operations of the Maras. This hypothesis is based on the developments of the last years. After a truce between the government and the Maras was negotiated under the leadership of the church in 2012, the homicide rate per 100,000 inhabitants fell accordingly from 70.1 in 2011 to 41.2 and 39.4 in 2013. However, after the truce was dismissed in 2014 (Lakhani 2016), the rate jumped back to 102.9 in 2015 which is the highest in the history of El Salvador and the highest worldwide (Gagne 2017) . A ray of hope could be seen in 2016 when the rate reduced again to 80.9. The homicide rates in Honduras stayed slightly stable without great fluctuation between 61.1 and 59 homicides per 100,000 persons (Gagne 2017) in the last years. Guatemala experienced a slightly decrease of its homicide rate in the last years and reached its lowest point in 2016 at 27.3 homicides per 100,000 persons (see Figure 2) (Gagne 2017). However, there are different opinions and assumptions about the percentage of the criminalized violence related homicides. Secondly the statistics of the governments are assumed to lack in accuracy and completeness (Stein & Walch 2016, p.10).

**Extortions:** The main source of income for the Maras remains extortion (Seelke 2016, p.7). Until September 2016, 162 people working in public transportation were murdered due to attempted robberies or extortions (La Prensa 2016). In Guatemala, 101 persons working in public transportation were killed mainly related to extortions (The Economist 2016). According to statistics of the National Police of El Salvador (2017), until August 2016, 1,498 cases of extortions were reported to the police(PNC 2017). It can be assumed that the unreported numbers are even higher due to fear of retaliation. The Maras in El Salvador and Honduras have a regular system of extortions of the residents and nonresidents of their territories. This regular disposal is called “Impuesto de guerra” (war tax) in Honduras (Rivera 2013, p.79) and “renta” (rent) in El Salvador(Antoine et al. 2009). Theses disposals are classical “protection money” targeted at local business owners, transportation companies and street vendors (Cantor 2014, p.13).

**Internal displacements and migration.** Non-conventional violence and its actors have a heavy impact on the number of people being displaced and the migration flows in the Northern Triangle (Amnesty International 2016). The Salvadorian institute, Instituto Universitario de Opinion Publico, identified in 2012 that about 130,000 persons were displaced at least once (2012) due to violence in El Salvador (Aguilar 2012, p.58) . According to Cantor (2014), mainly

the three different actors of non-conventional violence are responsible for this high number of forced displacement. Cantor (2014) distinguished here in terms of three different livelihoods: poor urban area (Mara`s homeland), wealthier urban area and rural areas.

People getting displaced from the poor urban areas typically acted against the rule of behavior enforced by the Maras. Since the breaking of these rules (e.g., collaboration with law enforcement) involves the death penalty, the victims decide to flee from their homes (Cantor 2014, p.17). This already poor and marginalized population normally moves to other poor urban areas in the same city or in another city of the same country. In certain cases, the younger generation gets send unaccompanied to relatives in the USA because of threats of recruitment or sexual violence (ACAPS 2014, pp.15–17).

Displacements from wealthier urban neighborhoods controlled by the Maras usually take place because the victims are not able to pay the protection money to the Maras. Those victims from wealthier parts of the country are more likely to migrate to another country(Cantor 2014, p.14). Displacement of the rural population is less common but happens occasionally because drug smugglers need farm land close to the borders to successfully execute their operations. This displacement is typically of national rural to urban nature (Cantor 2014, p.15). Hence, one can state that the displacement in the Northern Triangle due to non-conventional violence is predominately internal displacement (ACAPS 2014, p.17) but nevertheless the migration flows from the Northern Triangle to destinations worldwide increased from 2010 to 2015 by 597% (Amnesty International 2016, p.1).

**Access.** The last point to be discussed is the limited access in areas which are especially challenged by the non-conventional violence. First, that implies the access of the population in these areas to basic services as for example:

1. **Education:** Children have no access to education (Baizan 2014, p.23) because they might have to pass from their neighborhood through the territory of another Mara than the Mara which has the control over their neighborhood. Hence, it would be life-threatening for these children to go to school because of the risk to be perceived as an enemy by the other Mara while entering their territory (ACAPS 2014, p.22). Furthermore, schools are often dominated by Maras and are a primary place for their recruitment and drug business (Kennedy 2014).

2. **Health:** Access to health facilities can be restricted due to the same reasons as the access to the schools. Because there are located in an area controlled by a different Mara as the one who is controlling the area the patients are coming from (Stein & Walch 2016, p.47). Moreover, the health services are mostly over-stressed because of the intense workload due to the victims of violence (ACAPS 2014, p.12).
3. **Water supply & Sanitation:** Another problem which is related to the violence is the water supply of certain communities especially if these communities are depending on water supply by trucks because no proper sanitation system exists (Bangerter 2010, p.403).

In addition to the lack of access to basic services of the population, the access for humanitarian actors to the areas troubled by violence can also be restricted (ACAPS 2014, p.36). Considerations have to be taken into account by these actors in terms of their security as well as the security of the population they serve (Stein & Walch 2016, p.44). Projects may face increased time demands, need for resources and costs due the special circumstances which the non-conventional violence is stimulating in these contexts (ACAPS 2014, p.37). Further implications of non-conventional violence are economic implications, gender & sexual violence and missing persons.

After clarifying the conceptual framework for this thesis, the actual research aim is dealt with in the results: An understanding of the influences of non-conventional violence on disaster risk reduction projects in the Northern Triangle.

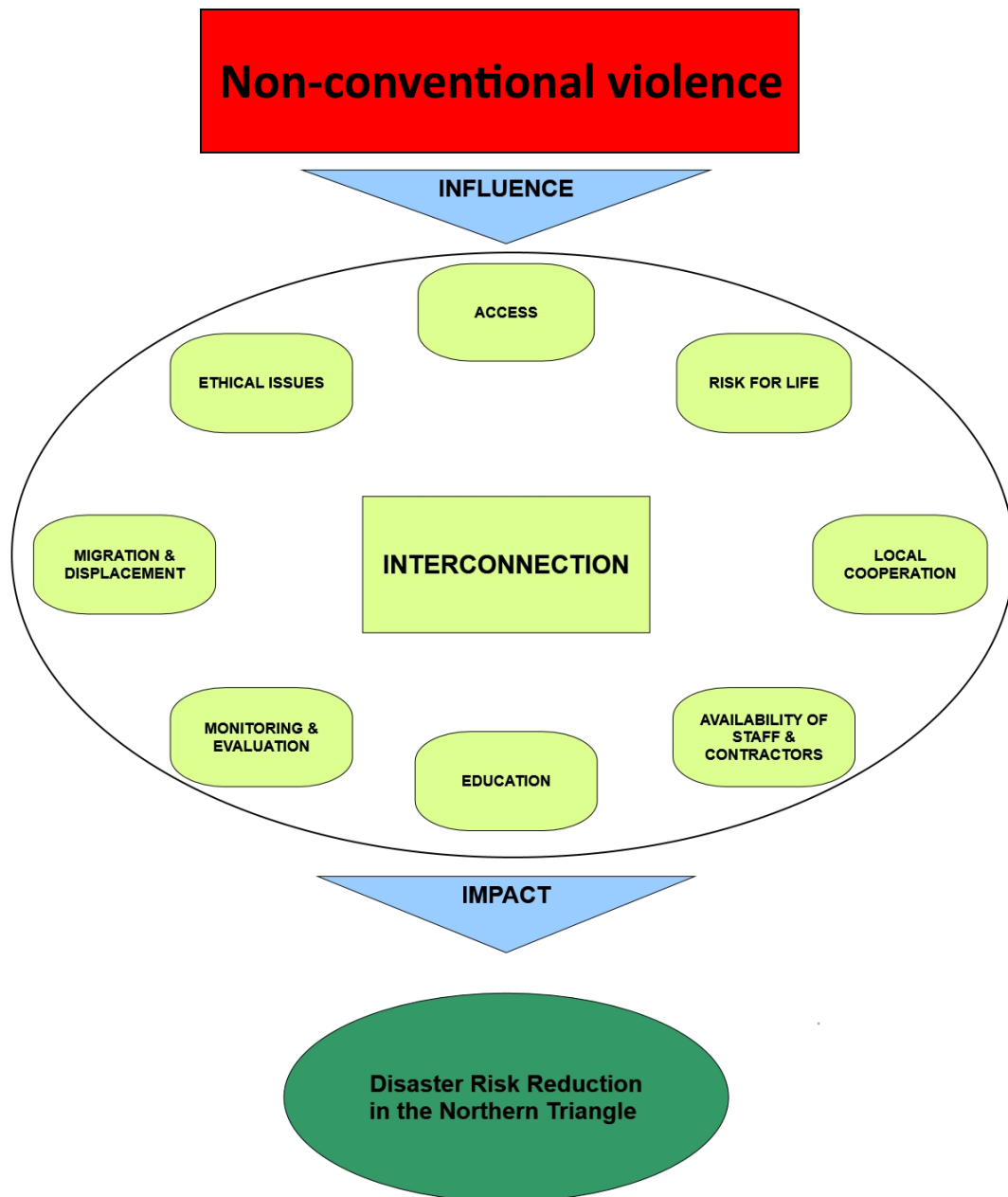
## **4. Results**

I organized the Results part of this thesis in two sub-chapters, corresponding to the two topic categories in which the 13 codes of the interviews are organized. The first part addresses the research aim of this thesis in detail by presenting the results in terms of the influence of non-conventional violence on the disaster risk reduction in the Northern Triangle. Subsequently and strongly connected to the influence of non-conventional violence on disaster risk reduction, I present and discuss several coping activities of the disaster risk reduction actors. I clarify the sub-chapters using direct and indirect quotes; further I translated several direct quotes from Spanish to English.

### **4.1 Influence of Non-conventional violence on the disaster risk reduction in the Northern Triangle**

Most of the 20 respondents interviewed for this thesis identify an influence of the non-conventional violence (NCV) on the implementation of disaster risk reduction projects in the region. Whether these influences can be considered as direct or indirect in nature seems to be especially a matter of definition of these two terms. However, based on the information disclosed by the informants, I identify a complex interconnected system of eight different codes. These codes are influenced by non-conventional violence and consequently have an impact on the successful implementation of disaster risk reduction projects in the Northern Triangle. These codes are: access, risk for life, local cooperation, availability of staff and contractors, monitoring & evaluation, migration & displacement, education and ethical issues (see Conceptual Map 1).





Conceptual Map 1: System of influence of non-conventional violence on disaster risk reduction in the Northern Triangle

#### 4.1.1 Access

80% of the respondents mention that the access to the communities can be limited. Consequently, access is a code which has an influence on the successful implementation of disaster risk reduction projects. One respondent notes that especially governmental institutions such as the ministry of health in Honduras have problems to access some communities. They are very likely to get robbed or killed there. But this problem is not limited to governmental organizations. Other actors as, e.g., the UN or other humanitarian NGOs can

have trouble to access some of these neighborhoods and have tight security protocols to do so.

One respondent mentions:

*„There are a lot of neighborhoods which you cannot enter because your life will be threatened; in this sense, the violence is affecting our work as humanitarian institutions”*

Another respondent discloses with regards to the organizational and territorial power of the violent groups:

*“So, what we understand and see here, are highly organized groups, very high structured and with a very concrete economic goal”<sup>1</sup>*

Another respondent adds to this statement with regards to the Maras:

*“The Maras have a non-declared territorial power of some neighborhoods [...] which is limiting the work of certain actors or certain organizations which want to work in the zone ”<sup>2</sup>*

At the same time, disaster risk reduction is less challenged by non-conventional violence as other activities of the humanitarian actors. One respondent mentions:

*“Disaster risk reduction topics are not generating so many antibodies, so you can access carefully.”<sup>3</sup>*

But while accessing communities troubled by non-conventional violence, the accompanied level of risk for the life of the disaster risk reduction actors as for the cooperating population is still alerting.

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<sup>1</sup> Statement translated from Spanish: “Entonces lo que estamos entendiendo aquí y viendo aquí son grupos altamente organizados, muy bien estructurados con fin económico muy concreto [...]”

<sup>2</sup> Statement translated from Spanish: “La Mara tiene un control territorial no declarado de ciertos barrios que restringen [...] que limiten el trabajo de ciertos actores o de ciertas organizaciones que hacen el trabajo que quieren trabajar en la zona [...]”

<sup>3</sup>Statement translated from Spanish: “El tema de RRD no es , no genera tantos anticuerpos y si puedes ingresar de forma paulatina [...]”

### 4.1.2 Risk for Life

According to more than half of the respondents; disaster risk reduction actors and the cooperating population face elevated levels of risk while being involved in disaster risk reduction projects in the areas troubled by non-conventional violence. Several respondents give examples; one informant claims:

*"[...] identifying the double vulnerability of these communities [...] for natural disasters [...] and the violence is a permanent topic. "*<sup>4</sup>

Another respondent states:

*" When we did a VCA (Vulnerability and Capacity Assessment) in a specific case in Guatemala, a boy gave us a lot of information, about the limits, the streets, the drug selling spots, size of population, number of children etc. This boy appeared dead two days after. We do not know if he was killed because he was helping us or because he was just one more victim"*<sup>5</sup>

A third respondent notes that the actors of non-conventional violence do not show respect and recognition for the humanitarian activities. Further, the people collaborating and participating at capacity development workshops are frequently being asked by the Maras in their neighborhoods what the workshop is about and what they are doing there. Furthermore, other respondents disclose that during workshops in the communities, gang wars escalate sometimes and the staff is in significant risk for losing their life in a cross fire. This situation is being intensified by the fact that hiding in these communities from shootings is very hard because of the mostly used lightweight constructions. However, another respondent remarks that donors probably would cancel their support for the disaster risk reduction projects if they get information about such dangerous instances. Furthermore, the UN Security protocols in Honduras require a police escort in certain areas. These police escort are not uniformed to avoid further trouble with the violent groups. Nevertheless, an informant describes that in some areas the Maras do not even allow the fire fighters to enter their territory:

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<sup>4</sup> Statement translated from Spanish: " [...]identificando pues la doble vulnerabilidad de estas comunidades [...] por desastres naturales [...] la violencia es un tema permanente [...]"

<sup>5</sup> Statement translated from Spanish: "cuando estuvimos haciendo VCA en un caso específico en Guatemala, un chico nos dio mucha información, sobre los límites, las calles, los puntos de venta de drogas, número de población, número de niños etc. Este chico amaneció muerto dos días después, no sabemos si amaneció muerto por haber dado repuesta a nosotros o porque es parte de una víctima más"

*“Because sometimes they bring police inside of the fire fighter trucks, and police is not welcome [...]”*

Connected to this statement, another respondent says that it can have serious effects on the cooperating population if the disaster risk reduction actors would frequently enter the neighborhoods with the police. These risks for life of the people involved in the implementation of such disaster risk reduction projects draw the attention to another important concept for successful disaster risk reduction: *local cooperation*.

### **4.1.3 Local Cooperation & Ownership**

One third of the respondents indicate that the local cooperation & ownership is another code influenced by non-conventional violence. Several respondents indicate that the local cooperation in terms of the local population is minimize due to the influence of non-conventional violence. One respondent states that the local population in the urban communities threatened by the Maras:

*“[...] is getting more and more apathetic and do not want to participate because they are in fear that this participation would be badly perceived by them (the Maras)”<sup>6</sup>.*

Another example comes from a different respondent. It is about a rural community in Guatemala which is in the sphere of control of a local Narco - trafficking family. This community maintains an illegal air landing strip for the drug-trafficking of this family clan. Thus, the community does not want any interference in their village by outsiders and does not accept any proposed disaster risk reduction project. The problem is, as another respondent brings up, that disaster risk reduction needs local cooperation and involvement to be successful. Furthermore, one respondent mentions that the situation of the extreme violence is facing a normalization in the society and in the work of the disaster risk reduction actors.

Another point regarding local cooperation & ownership includes the issue that the disaster risk reduction actors usually must enter those communities with the mayor of the local municipality. These leaders normally maintain connections to the violent groups in their

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<sup>6</sup> Statement translated from Spanish: “[...] la población está volviendo más apática y no quiere participar tienen miedo porque ellos (Maras) pueden ver mal su participación en estas actividades.”

communities and can provide a certain level of security for the disaster risk reduction actors. The downside of this procedure is as one respondent discloses:

*“For example, if you enter with somebody of the municipality and you are asking the people which help they received from the municipality during a disaster, they will not answer to your question with the same openness because the guy of the municipality is there and if those people say something wrong they could lose the support of the municipality.”<sup>7</sup>*

Hence, it is a complex relation and the local authorities might try to manipulate or influence the actors while they are doing assessments, evaluation and monitoring activities. Following the code of local cooperation and ownership, consequently another code of the system catches interest: *monitoring & evaluation*.

#### 4.1.4 Monitoring & Evaluation

More than one third of the respondents note that there is an influence on disaster risk reduction by non-conventional violence in terms of the code of monitoring & evaluation. One respondent says that he sees here the issues mainly in the time delay which this influence produces since his organization applies the same standards for monitoring & evaluation in the violent contexts as in the “normal” peaceful settings. An informant of a national disaster risk reduction agency discloses that it is often not possible to measure the projects in terms of success due to the security risks in the violent areas. Adding on to this, another respondent remarks:

*“We can only realize activities during specific times [...] if we want to measure the water volume of a river [...] we cannot do an efficient monitoring in the raining season because there is a restriction of the gangs”<sup>8</sup>*

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<sup>7</sup> Statement translated from Spanish: “[...] por ejemplo si vas acompañado de alguien de la municipalidad eh vas a hacer las preguntas de por ejemplo que ayuda les ha dado la municipalidad en desastres tal no vas a tener la misma facilidad de responderte con sinceridad porque está la persona de municipalidad ahí presente y se dicen algo malo les pueden quitar la ayuda.”

<sup>8</sup> Statement translated from Spanish: “Podemos desarrollar acciones solamente en un horario específico [...] si nosotros queremos medir el caudal de un río [...] no podemos hacer un monitorio eficiente sobre todo cuando esta la época de lluvia si hay una restricción de las pandillas. “

Another informant confirms this statement and discloses that his organization can only execute their monitoring activities on specific schedules in Honduras.

#### 4.1.5 Availability of Staff & Contractors

Four of the respondents mention problems regarding the availability of staff and contractors. Because of the possibility of life threatening situations in the areas, people tend to be unwilling and frightened of working in these violent areas. Two respondents note that it is hard to get skilled staff to work in there. Even if people with an expertise in disaster risk reduction start to work in those areas and communities, the rate of people leaving those work places after a brief period is high. Another respondent, whose organization recruits mostly national and international volunteers, claims that it is complicated to acquire a satisfying number of international volunteers because the countries of the Northern Triangle are perceived as so violent abroad. In addition to the difficulties of finding experienced staff, an informant of a national disaster risk reduction agency mentions that it is rather complicated to find contractors for disaster risk reduction constructions (e.g. flood dams) due to the security issues. Related to this statement the respondent discloses:

*"[...] the operators are overvaluing the costs of the projects which we handle. There are substantial increases [...]"<sup>9</sup>.*

He adds that they are doing so to compensate the potential losses of materials and/or resources. An additional interconnected code which must be addressed is the influence of non-conventional violence on the migration & displacement of disaster risk reduction projects.

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<sup>9</sup> Statement translated from Spanish: "[...]que nos pasa en esta situación también es sobrevaloración de los costos de los proyectos que queremos hacer, hay incrementos substanciales[...]"

#### 4.1.6 Migration & Displacement

Five interviewees state a connection between migration & displacement due to non-conventional violence and disaster risk reduction projects. According to several respondents, migration and displacement in the Northern Triangle is predominately triggered by non-conventional violence. Moreover, one respondent notes:

*" [...] displaced people are facing double vulnerabilities – they are vulnerable because of non-conventional violence and are particularly vulnerable to disasters"<sup>10</sup>*

Another respondent expresses:

*" Disaster risk reduction typically relies on a concept of communities, relying on people who live there, people who know each other, and people who create social structures [...] what do you do if our concept of a community is falling apart. If you do not know if people are staying in the same place [...]"*

Lastly, two respondents of two different organizations bring up that migration and displacement influence their disaster risk reduction projects. The existing funding for long-term disaster risk reduction projects is not used because the targeted population is not in the country anymore or is forced to move to other areas.

#### 4.1.7 Education

Four respondents mention education as a code which is influenced by non-conventional violence and has an impact on the disaster risk reduction projects in the Northern Triangle. One respondent mentions that the school absence is very high in some urban areas due to the non-conventional violence executed by the Maras. Another respondent reports:

*"[...] they might not be able to get to the local school because they cannot cross certain areas. [...] that impacts their life changes, their ability to understand and receive information and that information could be about reducing disaster risk. [...]"*

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<sup>10</sup> Statement translated from Spanish: "[...] personas desplazados tienen doble vulnerabilidades, ellos están vulnerables a causa de la violencia non-convencional y ellos están vulnerables de desastres."

Another respondent mentions that the Maras perceive schools as their territory, both to recruit new members but also for doing business (e.g. drug distribution). In addition, one respondent describes that the Maras especially do not like educational and capacity development projects because they have the perception that these projects are affecting their recruitment. An educated young person would not join them as easily anymore. One respondent claims:

*“You always have to work a lot regarding education, trying to change the mind sets, enhancing capacities [...] They (the Maras) want something which offers them economic profits [...]”<sup>11</sup>*

#### **4.1.8 Ethical Issues**

One respondent raises this code. This person claims in regard to working with the support of locals in violent context:

*“ [...] there are ethical challenges with that because somebody else is taking your risk and that is somebody who is not a professional humanitarian. It is somebody who had not received a lot of training and it is somebody who is not receiving a salary [...]”*

He refers to concepts of remote programming, which means using existing groups in the community (e.g. church organizations) to execute the work of the actors, to deal with problems of access to violent areas. Another example mentioned above is the case of the killed boy in Guatemala.

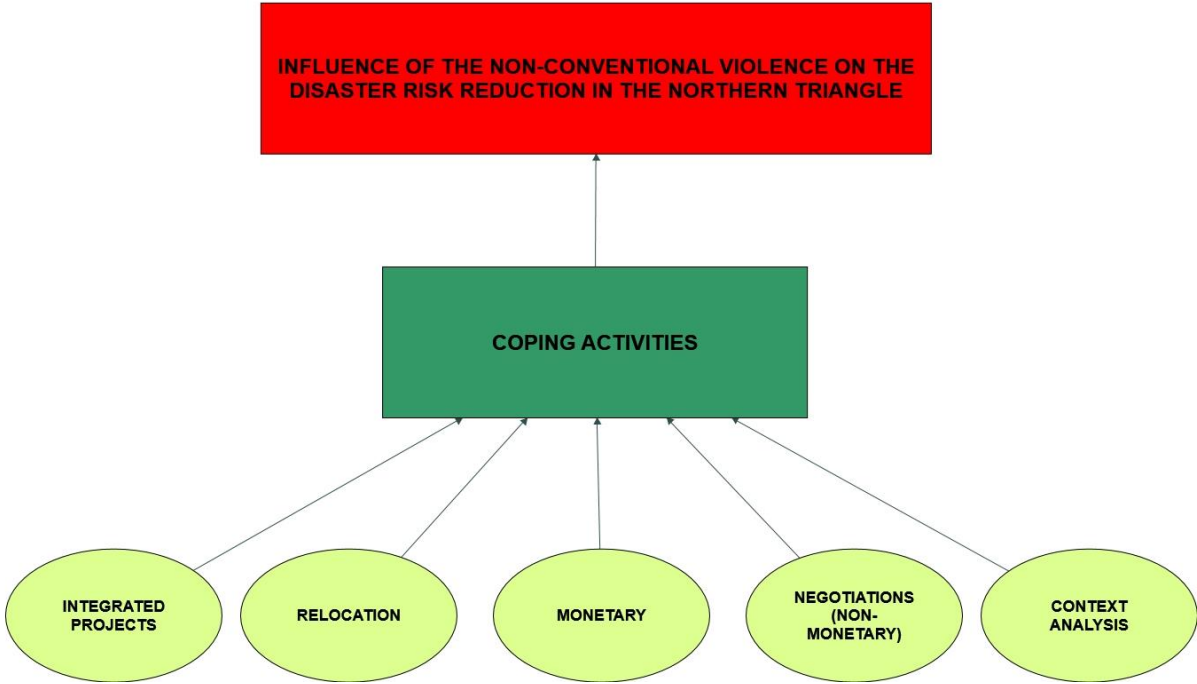
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<sup>11</sup> Statement translated from Spanish: “[...] tienes que trabajar mucho siempre en la educación, verdad, tratando cambiar las mentes fortalecer las capacidades [...]. Quieren ver que se lleve beneficio económico de alguna manera como te digo las obras.



## 4.2 Coping activities

To cope with the influence of non-conventional violence on the implementation of their disaster risk reduction projects, the disaster risk reduction actors use diverse types of coping mechanisms besides the standardized security protocols. In the following sub-chapter, I describe five of these activities according to the statements of the interviewees. These are: monetary measures (bribes), negotiations (non-monetary), relocation, context analysis, and integrated projects (see Conceptual Map 2).



Conceptual Map 2 Coping Activities for the Influence of non-conventional violence on disaster risk reduction

### 4.2.1 Context Analysis & Context Specific Approaches

60% of the respondents indicate that they are performing context analyses and act accordingly in the countries of the Northern Triangle. This approach helps them to reduce the influence in terms of non-conventional violence besides the standardized security protocols. One interviewee claims:

*“Whatever you consider in planning, you need to know the context, you need to know your challenges. Maybe you are working in a Maya area, and you might just have cultural*

*challenges. So, take it into account and then you plan and you plan with the community. You do not plan without the community.”*

However, another informant reports that this context analysis is especially challenging in those violent areas:

*“[...] how can you make an adequate identification of the specific context for the particular needs, if the people do not have the possibility to express what is actually happening in their territory”<sup>12</sup>*

Furthermore, this respondent states that understanding the context of a violent area is difficult because the population has no rights and no values since there is no protection in those areas. The next chapter looks at monetary measures, another coping activity.

#### **4.2.2 Monetary**

To cope with the influence on disaster risk reduction projects of especially the Maras, certain organizations use monetary measures to get an agreement and increase the security for their projects in the community. Six interviewees indicate that they know organizations or that their organizations are using such coping activities to mitigate the influence of non-conventional violence. One respondent states:

*“In El Salvador, I know a DIPECHO project that had to pay the Maras to have the right to work in their neighborhoods and do disaster risk reduction”*

Furthermore, this respondent adds that in Guatemala he never heard about protection money for disaster risk reduction projects. Another respondent describes how the organization he works for is dealing with protection money:

*“ In the disaster risk reduction programs one needs to consider as well, when they are planning a small construction [...] one must include the payment of the members or leaders of the gangs*

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<sup>12</sup> Statement translated from Spanish: “[...] Como puedes hacer una adecuada identificación de contexto específico para las necesidades particulares , si la gente no tiene la posibilidad de expresarse lo que es que está pasando en su territorio”

*in the budget, they demand this payment [...] it is a requirement to let other persons work at this small construction [...]*<sup>13</sup>.

However, these payments are not used by all organizations. One respondent mentions that his organization never pays the violent groups:

*“If at one moment a Mara would demand payments for access from us, we would move out”*<sup>14</sup>

Another respondent remarks one problem of negotiations and monetary measures:

*“[...] the other Mara is going to perceive you as being allied, you have not only run the risk of legitimizing one side but also compromise the neutrality with the other “*

Finally, the same respondent argues that he feels very uncomfortable to pay money to the Maras, but he would still do it because he claims:

*“[...] the greater end goal is that you are trying to save lives.”*

Another coping activity are non-monetary negotiations with the perpetrators of violence.

### 4.2.3 Negotiations

Five respondents declare the strategy of negotiations as being used by their organizations. A respondent describes that in these negotiations, one must explain to the decision makers or affiliates of the violent actors what exactly the organization wants to do in this area. Particularly if these projects seem to be useful for the perpetrators (e.g. strengthening of first aid capacities), the organization might be able to start working in the community. Another respondent mentions an organization in Tegucigalpa, Honduras, which is very successful in negotiating with the Maras for access but they must comply with certain rules:

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<sup>13</sup> Statement translated from Spanish: “ [...] en los programas de reducción de riesgo a desastres hay que considerar también si se van a hacer obras pequeñas [...] hay que incluir en el presupuesto ehm el pago de los miembros o los líderes de las pandillas porque ellos requieren que [...] es requerimiento para dejar que otra persona si trabaje en esta pequeña obra de infraestructura”

<sup>14</sup> Statement translated from Spanish: “Si en algún momento alguna Mara nos pide pagarles para entrar, nosotros nos vamos a retirar.”

*“You must have the windows open when entering the community so that they can see who you are [...] you are just allowed to enter at certain times in the community [...] they also want to know what kind of aid they, the members of the Mara, will receive”<sup>15</sup>*

Two respondents state that they do not negotiate with the perpetrators of violence directly, but with the community leader who often has *“a working relation with the Maras”*. One respondent claims that it is very important that the actor sticks to the results of the negotiations especially in terms of its promised activities. If not, the actor does not only put his own staff in danger but also turns this area into a “no go area” for other disaster risk reduction actors. However, as another respondent notices, even if you have negotiated the access to one area successfully, another neighboring area could be dominated by a different Mara and therefore additional negotiations would be required to get access here as well. Finally, one respondent notes that the non-conventional violence is challenging the general legitimacy of the state, while another informant adds that the security is always a campaign issue during elections.

Another important coping activity for disaster risk reduction actors is the relocation of projects.

#### **4.2.4 Relocation**

Four respondents disclose that the relocation of projects is an option to cope with the influence of non-conventional violence. Some organizations relocate the projects due to the insecurity which they are facing in certain areas. One respondent describes a case in San Salvador where an international organization had to relocate its early warning system from a disaster-prone area because of threats by the gangs. The early warning system was then relocated to a community which was facing a substantially lower risk for floods than the previously intended location.

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<sup>15</sup> Statement translated from Spanish: “[...] hay ciertas normas cuando entras tienes que bajar los vidrios para que pueden ver quién va a venir por ahí no puedes entrar con vidrios arriba. La hora de entrada, tienes cierta hora para poder hacer el trabajo y también como eh siempre también piden que que ayuda que tipo de ayuda van a recibir los de la Mara [...] “

#### 4.2.5 Integrated Projects

Six respondents mention integrated projects which try to include perspectives of protection into the disaster risk reduction projects. Two of these respondents claim that such projects might have good prospects but do not know of any such integrated projects in the region. One respondent notes that the NGO he works for wants to use more integrated projects but does not have a lot of experience in this matter. He further brings up:

*“What I would like to see is to look at the violence as the disaster and then having disaster risk reduction activities or initiatives towards violence that would have a positive impact for disaster risk reduction for natural hazards as well”.*

To do so he wants to explore experiences from war zones such as Afghanistan or Somalia which could also be applied to the context of the Northern Triangle. Another informant discloses that the World Bank is demanding from all its funded projects in Guatemala and Honduras, including the disaster risk reduction projects, to tackle non-conventional violence. However, another respondent mentions that one of the projects he supervises and which is funded by an international donor agency tries to focus on an integrated approach which deals with the integration of protection standards in local contingency plans. But this respondent claims that the lessons learnt indicate:

*“[...] So, when we bring up the issue of protection at the community level, it is a taboo subject, people who participate in the meetings are afraid to talk about the needs and the problem they have because this issue is banned by the Mareros, so it is not a very easy topic [...] we have to use a bit friendlier language at the community level so that we can work”<sup>16</sup>.*

Finally, one informant states that humanitarian actors involved in protection are not always willing to support the integration of disaster risk reduction in their work or vice versa and so lower their efforts towards “integrated projects:” *“We tried to work in the protection group as well with the topic of disaster risk reduction but they did not want to address this topic [...] They are 100% focused on the violence [...]”<sup>17</sup>*

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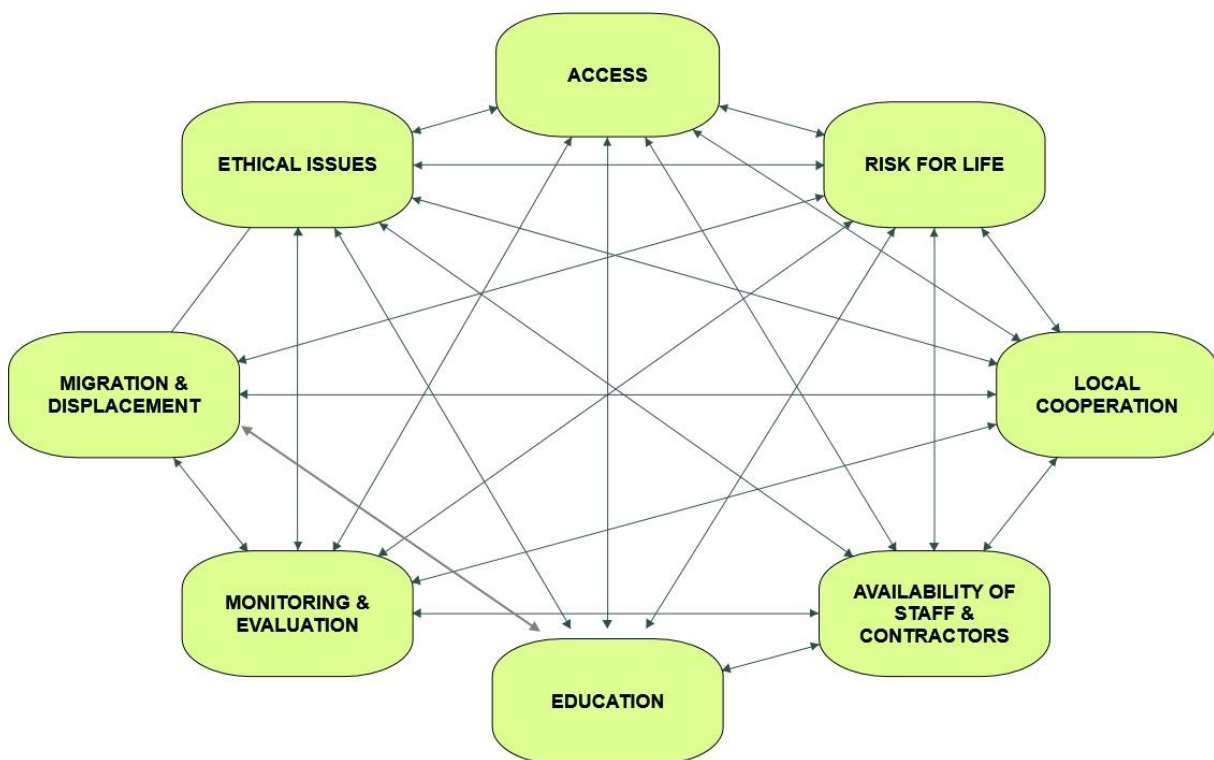
<sup>16</sup> Statement translated from Spanish: “ [...] Entonces cuando llevamos a tratar el tema de protección al nivel comunitario es un tema tabú, [...] los que participan en los reuniones tienen miedo de hablar de las necesidades y de la problemática que tienen porque este tema está prohibido por los Mareros entonces no es un tema muy fácil [...] tenemos que utilizar un poco una lenguaje más amigable al nivel comunitario para que se puede trabajar[.] ”

<sup>17</sup> Statement translated from Spanish: “ [...] Hemos tratar trabajar con el grupo de protección y hablar ahí también de RRD pero no han dejado entrar este tema. Ellos están enfocados cien por ciento en el tema de violencia [...]”

## 5. Discussion

### 5.1 The Influence of Non-Conventional Violence – an Interconnected System

Before diving deeper into the analysis of the results and further discussions, one should recognize the interconnections between the eight codes of the system of influence (see Conceptual Map 3). For a better understanding, I would like to review several of these potential interconnections between the different codes.



Conceptual Map 3 Potential interconnections between the codes

First, the ethical issues code is interconnected with local cooperation. If the local population of a neighborhood or community is getting into trouble because of their collaboration with the disaster risk reduction actors, this poses an ethical issue. The population might increase their risk for life by this collaboration. Another interconnection can be identified between education and ethical issues. If the actors are not able to establish projects which support disaster risk reduction for the youngest members of the most vulnerable communities, there is an ethical issue for sure. Related to this instance is the interconnection between access and ethical issues. If the actors are not able to gain access to a community and therefore decide

to declare it a “no go area”, then the disaster risk reduction actors clearly do not fulfill their mandate to support the most vulnerable communities.

Access is also interconnected with availability of staff & contractors and risk for life. If the violent groups deny access, then on one hand the risk for life increases for everyone associated with the disaster risk reduction projects and on the other hand the number of staff willing to work in these communities reduces. Additionally, costs for contractors increase tremendously. Ethical issues play a role here as well.

Furthermore, migration and displacement relates to local cooperation. There are two aspects. On the one hand, extensive and steady migration & displacement cause the concept of a community to fall apart. Given these circumstances, the disaster risk reduction actors surely cannot expect substantial cooperation for their projects. This lack of community is also related to rising disinterest of the population in the violent areas. Why should they care for the wellbeing of their community if they are constantly looking at an uncertain future as long as they remain in the violent areas? On the other hand, the local cooperation itself might lead to a displacement. If persons associated with disaster risk reduction projects suddenly face a substantial risk for losing their life, they might choose to escape the threat.

Finally, monitoring & evaluation is interconnected with local cooperation, too. Since the actors enter the challenged communities mostly with community leaders, the monitoring & evaluation can be influenced by the presence of those persons. Additional monitoring & evaluation might be connected to risk for life. If the security risks are substantial in a community it is complicated to perform monitoring activities. Moreover, the actors are only able to enter the communities during specific time schedules (e.g. day time), hence the monitoring & evaluation activities are further hampered. Lastly, the availability of staff is also connected to these issues.

After reviewing several interconnections between the codes, one can confirm the assumption of an interconnected system of influence. But what implications does this assumption demonstrate for the practitioner? It seems to be important to recognize exactly these changing interconnections and to avoid separating the different codes by oversimplified thinking. This seems especially important with regards to the coping activities discussed in the next sub-chapters. One example for this are the later described monetary measures.

Consequently, the disaster risk reduction actors could possibly consider the identified system of influence as a loose template to give the required context analysis a certain guideline and thereby ensure an increased validity. Through the improved knowledge, it might be possible to use the additional identified coping activities more successfully and develop them further.

It is important to note that this research cannot assume completeness in terms of the system and coping activities – thus there might be elements missing which have an additional and substantial influence on the implementation of disaster risk reduction projects in the Northern Triangle. The next sub-chapter deals with the remarkable organizational and territorial power which is held by parts of the perpetrators of violence.

## **5.2 Territoriality and Organizational Structure**

It is important to consider that non-conventional violent groups are executing territorial control over parts of those countries in the Northern Triangle. Here the governments lost control of some areas and are only able to enforce their state and territorial rights through extremely rigorous measures.

The territorial power which these groups are executing has an impact on the implementation of disaster risk reduction projects in the Northern Triangle – local cooperation or monitoring are just two of the influenced codes which can be mentioned. Moreover, the perpetrators of non-conventional violence in the region inhibit an elevated level of organizational structure. This high degree of internal structure and authority offers opportunities for the disaster risk reduction actors to cope with the influence of non-conventional violence on the disaster risk reduction.

One of these opportunities is the potential to negotiate with the perpetrators of violence and use monetary measures if necessary. The next sub-chapter deals with these negotiation and monetary measures but also with the potential associated side effects of these coping activities.



### 5.3 Negotiations and Monetary Measures

The fact that the perpetrators of non-conventional violence in the Northern Triangle are mostly territorial groups offers certain opportunities in terms of non-monetary negotiations to potentially enhance access, security and cooperation in the violent areas. However, the phrase “No effect without side effects” has its coherence as well in this environment. One of the greatest disadvantages of this coping activity could be assumed to be a possible legitimization of the territorial groups by inviting them to official negotiations. Even if some of the disaster risk reduction actors are performing these negotiations through affiliated stakeholders to the perpetrators of non-conventional violence (e.g. community leader), one cannot deny which picture might be created to the population by such negotiations. Furthermore, the actors could face the risk of losing their neutrality and therefore getting involved in the gang wars. Additionally this legitimization might support a general normalization of the violence in those areas. Hence, the negotiations of the disaster risk reduction actors could in the long-run undermine projects which are more located in the field of protection and which explicitly focus on a reduction of non-conventional violence. Moreover, the non-conventional violence is a very politicized topic in the Northern Triangle. Therefore, the hosting governments could perceive those negotiations as an affront against their national integrity, which would put especially disaster risk reduction actors belonging to the UN system in a tricky situation. Another side effect which must be considered, is the importance of sticking to the agreements made during the negotiations and deliver the promised advantages of the disaster risk reduction project to the respected community. If promises getting broken the window of opportunity in terms of negotiations with the territorial groups of a specific area is forever closed, not only for the specific actor which was involved in the underlying negotiations but possibly as well for other disaster risk reduction actors who want to pursue a project in this area in the future.

Beside the non-monetary negotiations which several actors are undertaking, some disaster risk reduction actors are also accepting the usage of monetary measures (bribes) to “buy” access and security in these areas. Those bribes come naturally along with a bitter taste and it can be assumed that the actors using these measures balance on a knife’s edge. One possible negative side-effect of the monetary coping activity is an evolving perception by the territorial groups, that the disaster risk reduction actors and their projects are valid sources of income. This perception could put the actors under an ongoing monetary pressure by these territorial

groups. Opening Pandora's box once could lead in the end to the opposite of the desired effect and increase the risk for life – which would again trigger the entire interconnected system of influence and could have effects for example on the availability of staff and local cooperation. Moreover, these monetary measures of one actor might worsen the situation for other disaster risk reduction actors in the same areas who are not capable or not willing to perform monetary measures.

Adding up to the already mentioned disadvantages, both the non-monetary negotiations as the monetary measures might not be able to overcome the problem of the invisible borders in the territories especially in case of the Maras in the urban areas. Each of the territories here can be dominated by a different Mara. Power structures are also subject to change in a territory. Therefore, it is required to have additional negotiations or monetary measures for each of the additional perpetrators. The disaster risk reduction actors should be always aware of the current situation in those neighborhoods and react quickly to newly evolving power structures.

It might not be possible to establish standardized rules for all disaster risk reduction actors in terms of these two coping activities. But it is recommendable to establish a code of conduct in the region as a broad framework for negotiations and monetary measures.

However, it is important to remind oneself as one respondent claims, that saving lives is the most important goal of all disaster risk reduction actors. This implies that the disaster risk reduction actors must decide case by case which coping activities are appropriate for a specific situation and area. The next sub-part discusses another specific coping activity: integrated projects.

#### **5.4 Integrated Projects – The Solution or Just Another Problem?**

Before discussing this issue, one must first define briefly what is meant by the term “integrated project” in this case. This broad terminology describes projects which focus on inhibiting parts of two huge topics in the humanitarian world – protection and disaster risk reduction. Disaster risk reduction strives to deal with the vulnerability and exposure of a society towards different hazards. Protection deals with the insurance of the humanitarian rights in conflict situation as well in other violent circumstances and in disaster situations (UN OCHA 2017).

Potential advantages include the chance to reduce the influence of the non-conventional violence on disaster risk reduction by tackling the roots of this influence themselves by an “integrated project”. Furthermore, treating the violence as a disaster itself could offer the opportunity to work in a more structured way by applying disaster risk reduction methodology and standards to the issue of protection. Most eye-catching is the assumption that disaster risk and violence might not be possible to be tackled isolated because of several potential cross cutting issues (Elisabeth King and John C. Mutter 2014, p.1249). However, one must be careful by raising such points since the academic community is discordant with regards to these questions.

Nevertheless, while focusing on “integrated projects”, this research provides several indications for disadvantages and problems of such approaches. One problem is certainly the organizational structure of most humanitarian players. Most of these stakeholders have departments and working groups which are clearly divided – so there are for example protection working groups of the UN system and different NGOs in Honduras which are solely focusing on this issue and are not keen of integrating disaster risk reduction topics in their work. It goes beyond the scope of this research to evaluate the reasons behind these decisions. Nevertheless, this dispute is threatening the successful implementation of “integrated Projects” right from the beginning. A more practical disadvantage is that the disaster risk reduction actors would explicitly tackle topics which are red flagged by the perpetrators of violence. This might lead to instances where disaster risk reduction projects are considered as a threat by these perpetrators of violence. This certainly could lead to an increased risk for life of everyone attached to these projects, a general decrease in access, a reduction of local cooperation, a shortage of available staff for these projects – in short, the complete system of influence would be triggered. Thus, the overall effectiveness of the project is reduced. Is that worth the trouble? Would this lower the overall quality of disaster risk reduction in the Northern Triangle? Those two questions need to be asked.

However, I would like to assume at this point, that more research in terms of “integrated projects” should be undertaken. Additionally, one should also consider experiences and measures from conflict areas, before specific conclusions and recommendation are drawn.

The next sub-part addresses a coping activity which could be called the most radical since DRR actors might just apply it when everything else is falling apart.

## 5.5 Relocation – Leaving Somebody Behind?

The last resort of every disaster risk reduction actor should be the relocation of their projects due to non-conventional violence. A relocation does not only increase the cost and the organizational complexity of the respective projects but also raises questions which are touching the motivation behind a project and the associated ethical issues.

A possible scenario: the disaster risk reduction actors fail to successfully communicate with the perpetrators of violence and therefore face continuous threats. If the risk for the staff is elevated and crosses the acceptable threshold, the actors might decide to stop all projects in the respective area. Nevertheless, a simple relocation of a project to a different area, probably to avoid losing the pledged funding, would not always follow rational thinking. A project installed in a new area might not deliver the desired effects. Firstly, the new area might not be in need to reduce risk by such a project. Secondly, the project might not be able to address the different contextual needs of this new area since it was customized for the original violent area.

Moreover, the relocation touches ethical issues. By relocating the project, the abandoned population in the violent area would stay at an elevated risk. Even worse, this population faces a double vulnerability in terms of disasters and violence. Therefore, one should emphasize that this population has the greatest demands to be supported by the disaster risk reduction actors. This is even more true if we remember one of the most important commitments of the Sustainable Development Goals: *“Leaving no one behind”*(UN 2017a). The relocation of a disaster risk reduction project should be avoided by the actors even if that requires unusual efforts and elevated stress. It is important to support the population facing those double risks and which is in greatest misery.

If one is screening the world for comparable contexts, one could admit that other criminal contexts might offer different implications for the implementation of disaster risk reduction. Therefore, the next sub-part deals with these potential differences to other criminal areas.

## 5.6 Same, Same but Different – The Potential Implication of Non-Conventional Violence on Disaster Risk Reduction vs. Other Criminal Contexts

Same, same but different. The areas in the Northern triangle suffering from non-conventional violence exhibit features which might offer different implications for the work of disaster risk reduction actors in comparison to other areas suffering under criminalized violence.

The power structures coming along the criminal territorial groups lead to certain challenges for the disaster risk reduction actors in these areas. One of them would be the potentially disrupting effects of existing security protocols of some of the actors. The UNDSS security protocols require from the UN agencies and collaborating stakeholders in some cases a police escort to increase the security of the staff. Nevertheless, protocols like this could lead to several crosscutting issues which in the end potentially decrease the overall chances for success of the individual disaster risk reduction project and even increase security risk, i.e., having a contrary effect. One of these potential issues I assume to be a blurring of the border between disaster risk reduction actors and the law enforcement entities in the heads of the population, but even worse, in the heads of the violent groups. Hence, one result of this “blurring” could be the decrease of local cooperation of the population as it would be life threatening for them to be associated in any way with law enforcement. In general, the entire system of influence could be affected in a negative way by this modus operandi. This could be a major difference to “ordinary” criminal areas which are not challenged by such a density of organized groups exerting territorial control. In fact, this potential issue even leads to a comparison to some conflict areas in the world where exactly this “blurring” of lines between security forces and humanitarian actors is affecting tremendously the work of the latter (Ahmad 2004). However, one must admit without diving too deep into the complicated jungle of the International Humanitarian Law, that states hosting humanitarian actors are legally obligated (Gal 2017:32) to ensure their security. That could lead to a ridiculous dilemma in some cases by again triggering the contrary of the desired effect – decreased risk for life.

But besides the challenges which this fabric is posing for the disaster risk reduction actors, there are also opportunities which a deep understanding of these power structures could offer at least for non-governmental disaster risk reduction actors in the context of the Northern Triangle in difference to “ordinary” criminal violent areas. One of these opportunities are the potential negotiations by the disaster risk reduction actors with those territorial and violent

groups to reach full access to these areas. As discussed, the territorial and organizational structure of the violent group offers the DRR actors access points for those negotiations. Additionally, these negotiations might lead to a decrease of the risk for life for the disaster risk reduction actors and the collaborating population. Consequently, it can enhance the local cooperation and availability of staff. Since the perpetrators of non-conventional violence exhibit a comparably elevated level of hierarchy such negotiations can come to trustworthy agreements. This is an advantage compared with other areas in the world which are troubled by elevated levels of crime but without these high organized structures.

As discussed, the influence of non-conventional violence is offering different advantages and disadvantages for the disaster risk reduction actors in comparison to other criminal contexts. However, it might be the case that other violent contexts are more alike the Northern Triangle. Therefore, the next-chapter discusses the possibility of other violent context that are more comparable: similarities to conflict zones.

## **5.7 Similarities to conflict zones**

A random statement to start this paragraph could be: “The Northern Triangle is alike to Syria, South Sudan and Afghanistan”.

However, this statement seems to be exaggerated and can probably insult national feelings to a substantial extent. On one hand, the economic power and the level of development is not comparable, so one could just disagree with this statement. But on the other hand, if one evaluates non-conventional violence and its influence on the disaster risk reduction projects in the region, as this thesis tries to, one could admit that certain assumptions in terms of congruencies between those contexts could be raised.

First, the number of fatalities due to violence is comparable with those in conflict areas such as Afghanistan (ACAPS 2014), Somalia, Syria or South Sudan. But more important is the nature of territorial power which non-conventional violent groups are executing in the Northern Triangle. Because of this territoriality, the disaster risk reduction projects in those areas are influenced in significant way and disaster risk reduction actors must react to a variety of codes related to this influence. If one takes a brief look at current conflict areas around the world, one thing can be observed right away: asymmetric conflicts executed by different territorial

groups with interests which are not limited to pure political or ideology roots but also to an economic interest.

To narrow this assumption down, one could take the case of Afghanistan into account. Besides extremely violent groups with extremist ideology, there is as well a group of perpetrators of violence that exerts a strong territorial power and which focuses less on ideology but possess more of an economic interest: The warlords. Besides its territorial power, this group possesses a high degree of organizational structure and is predominately focused on economic goals. Several warlords are involved in the drug business (Zalmai 2006, p.1) and use extortion as an additional source of income (Tierney 2010, p.3).

Looking at the fragmented violent stakeholders of the Syrian conflict, one can certainly recognize the territorial power and economic interest of some of these groups. Their attempts at raising funds include kidnappings, drug operations and extortions which are also challenging humanitarian actors (Hallaj 2015, pp.5–6). Moreover, an extensive study of the contexts in Somalia, South Sudan, Afghanistan and Syria (Haver & Carter 2016) identified negotiations with non-state armed actors as one of the most important measures of humanitarians to ensure access. However, in most of these four countries this report indicates the urgent need for shared negotiations guidelines of the humanitarian actors to avoid the pitfall of being played against each other (Haver & Carter 2016, pp.54–57). Furthermore, it recognizes the advantage of using national partners or staff for the negotiation process. Additional monetary measures in those contexts are common and are used to facilitate access. However, in these contexts those coping activities are not perceived without criticism regarding which non-state armed actor would be acceptable for negotiations (Haver & Carter 2016, p.56).

This very short discourse about the situation in known conflict zones lead to the appraisal about certain similarities between those contexts and the Northern Triangle. Indications for these similarities can be seen among others in the territoriality, organization and choice of income sources of the violent groups but also in the choice of coping activities in terms of the involved humanitarian actors. Hence, the stakeholders involved in disaster risk reduction might be challenged by a comparable system of influence like the one existing in the countries of the Northern Triangle. The codes of this system - access, risk for life, local cooperation, monitoring and evaluation, availability of staff and contractors, migration and displacement, education and ethical issues – might be influenced in the context of those countries and so

impact the implementation of disaster risk reduction projects. By accepting this potential relation, new opportunities for sharing experiences, comparing efforts and a development of best practices could be evolved. Hence, it is important to trigger this dialog across countries and actors. However, the official acknowledgement of the potential correlation between the countries of the Northern Triangle and conflict areas in terms of the implications on disaster risk reduction have a political dimension which hampers this necessary dialog.

Nevertheless, rationality should drive this process and the opportunities should outweigh the potential reservations of different stakeholder in the Northern Triangle. A dialog and development of shared “Best Practices” would not only improve the disaster risk reduction in different contexts challenged by comparable systems of influence but would most important: Save Lives!



## 6. Conclusions

*So, how does non-conventional violence influence the implementation of disaster risk reduction projects in the Northern Triangle?*

Non-conventional violence influences a system of eight interconnected codes which in turn have their impact on the disaster risk reduction projects in the Northern Triangle. These codes include access, risk for life, local Cooperation, availability of staff & contractors, monitoring & evaluation, migration & displacement, education and ethical Issues. To cope with the influence of non-conventional violence on the implementation of disaster risk reduction projects, the disaster risk reduction actors utilize different mixes of coping activities. These coping activities include context specific approaches, monetary measures, negotiations, relocation and integrated projects.

One of the most important aspects regarding the influence of non-conventional violence is the territorial and organizational structure of the perpetrators of violence in the Northern Triangle. This distinct feature offers certain opportunities for the disaster risk reduction actors. It makes negotiations and monetary measures feasible because there are existing negotiation partners. This can ensure a proper and safe work environment for the disaster risk reduction actors. However, these coping activities have disadvantages as well. This includes the legitimization of the perpetrators of violence by inviting them to negotiations and the possible aggravation of the situation by not keeping the promised deliveries. Moreover, the monetary measures can trigger the violent groups to perceive disaster risk reduction projects as valid sources of income. In general, all actions of one actor might affect the work of all other disaster risk reduction actors working in the same area. Consequently, the monetary measures of one disaster risk reduction actor can complicate the situation for another actor who is not willing or able to use these financial tools. Therefore, it is recommended to establish a common code of conduct among all disaster risk reduction actors regarding these coping activities.

The additional coping activity of integrated projects assumes that violence and disaster risk in those challenged areas in the Northern Triangle are difficult to be addressed separately. Besides its potential advantages e.g. enhanced structure, this coping activity includes several potential disadvantages. The most important one is the interference of the disaster risk

reduction actors with topics which provoke the perpetrators of violence. Consequently, this coping activity might lead to the contrary effect, an increased influence of the non-conventional violence on the disaster risk reduction projects.

The relocation of projects should be understood as the last resort of the disaster risk reduction actors to cope with the influence of non-conventional violence. While executing this activity, the actors would surely leave people behind which are facing greatest needs. This represents a major ethical issue.

Additional attempts of the disaster risk reduction actors to increase the security of their projects by the support of law enforcement could result in a blurring of the borders between the actors and the police. This most certainly leads to a stimulation of the system of influence and therefore increases the negative impact on disaster risk reduction. However, in difference to other criminal contexts, the Northern Triangle offers several opportunities in terms of the already described potential for negotiations and monetary measures. These differences to other criminal contexts lead to a comparison with conflict zones. Afghanistan, Syria, South Sudan and Somalia show several potential intersections. Those include not only the extent of the violence but also the types of income sources and most importantly the level of organization and territoriality which some of the involved non-state armed actors have. Moreover, in these conflict zones, negotiations with the non-state armed actors and monetary measures for facilitating access play an important role.

Hence, it can be assumed that a comparable system of influence containing similar codes like the one existing in the countries of the Northern Triangle might influence the disaster risk reduction in those countries. Understanding these potential analogies should open the floor for an extensive dialog among practitioners of the different countries and so trigger the development of shared best practices. This would in the long run support the implementation of disaster risk reduction projects in violent contexts around the globe and pursue the greatest of all goals: to save lives.

## 7. Recommendations

1. The territoriality and organized structure of the non-conventional violent groups offer opportunities for disaster risk reduction actors in terms of negotiations and monetary measures

It is important for the disaster risk reduction actors to understand these power structures in detail.

2. The context of Northern Triangle is different in comparison to other criminal violent contexts, the organized structure of the perpetrators of non-conventional violence offer opportunities (e.g negotiations & monetary measures) but also inhibits challenges for the disaster risk reduction actors in the region.
3. It is important to recognize the potential side-effects of coping activities.

For instance:

- a. Negotiations: Legitimation of the violent actors
  - b. Monetary measures: Disaster risk reduction being perceived as source of income by the violent groups
  - c. Relocation: Leaving the most vulnerable behind
4. I recommend developing common guidelines for the coping activities
  5. Integrated projects - combining Protection and Disaster risk reduction – offer a certain potential but can also stimulate the system of influence in a negative and unwanted way. Hence, it can lead to a decrease in access, local Cooperation and availability of staff. Those effects are connected to an increase of risk for life. More research is needed in terms of integrated projects.
  6. The situation in the Northern Triangle offers indications for owning similarities with conflict zones. Those indications should trigger an increased dialog between practitioners working in these different contexts to share experiences, increase understanding and develop “Best practices”.

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## 9. Appendix

### Appendix I - Interview Guide

Topic	Question	
	English	Spanish
Introduction	What is your field of expertise and how long are you working in this field?	¿Qué es su área de experiencia y cuánto tiempo está trabajando en esta área?
Disaster risk reduction - Concept	What is Disaster risk reduction for you?	¿Qué significa reducción de riesgo de desastres para usted?
Challenges for disaster risk reduction	What challenges is disaster risk reduction facing in the context of the Northern Triangle?	¿Qué retos para RRD hay en el contexto del Triángulo Norte?
	Are there any political implications on disaster risk reduction in the Northern Triangle?	¿Retos políticos?
	What are the financial constraints on disaster risk reduction in the Northern Triangle?	¿Retos financieros?
	Are there any cultural challenges for disaster risk reduction in the Northern Triangle?	¿Retos culturales?
Non-conventional violence	What is non-conventional violence for you in the context of the Northern Triangle?	¿Qué significa violencia non-convencional para usted en el contexto del Triángulo Norte?
	How are the societies challenged by the non-conventional violence?	¿Qué retos pone la violencia non-convencional para la sociedad?
	To what extent does the non-conventional violence affect the governmental institutions in the Northern Triangle?	¿Hasta qué punto afecta la violencia non-convencional las instituciones del Gobierno en el Triángulo-Norte?
Explication: This study focuses on the part of the non-conventional violence perpetrated by the organized crime. With the actors: Maras, Narco-traffickers and the Mexican Cartels.		

Explicación: Este estudio se enfoque más al parte de violencia non-convencional como violencia criminal organizada. Con las actores: las maras pandillas, las narcotraficantes, las carteles?		
Non-conventional violence and disaster risk reduction	How is the non-conventional violence influencing the disaster risk reduction initiatives in the región?	¿Cómo influencia la violencia non-convencional las iniciativas y proyectos de RRD en la región?
	What are the impacts of non-conventional violence on the planning of disaster risk reduction projects?	¿Qué están los impactos de la violencia non-convencional a la planificación de RRD proyectos?
	What are the impacts of non-conventional violence on the implementation of disaster risk reduction projects?	¿Qué están los impactos de la violencia non-convencional a la implementación de RRD proyectos?
	To what extent do the security risks influence the monitoring and evaluation of disaster risk reduction projects?	¿Hasta qué punto influencia los riesgos de seguridad el seguimiento y evaluación de RRD?
	Do you include considerations concerning non-conventional violence in your disaster risk reduction work?	¿Incluye consideraciones a respecto a non-convencional violencia en su trabajo de RRD?
	Is your organization addressing violence in these disaster risk reduction projects actively and try to reduce violence by an integrated approach or are the projects trying to avoid the violence dynamics?	¿Está su organización abordando violencia en estas RDD proyectos activamente y así trata de reducir la violencia con un enfoque integrada o están sus proyectos tratando a evitar las dinámicas de la violencia non-convencional?
	Are you as an organization acting differently while implementing disaster risk reduction projects in the Northern Triangle in comparison with other contexts in the Lac region?	¿Está su organización actuando diferente en la implementación de RRD proyectos en el triángulo Norte en comparación con otros contextos en región Lac?
	Why are you acting differently?	¿Por qué está actuando diferente?