

Protected Rather Than Protracted: Strengthening Displaced Persons in Peace Processes

A State-of-the-art Paper

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This *Paper* reviews the current state of the art on the return of displaced persons as a durable solution for long-term displacement situations. It outlines the impact, challenges and actors involved in the return process. The *Paper* shows that present understandings of return, protracted situations and conflict are often too short-sighted and need to be revised and extended. Reintegration as part of the return process in particular has only received little attention until now. The *Paper* further demonstrates that the relationship between displacement, return and peace has not yet been fully understood. More field and comparative research is needed that includes the perspectives of the displaced themselves to fully comprehend the process of return and to be able to identify best practices to guarantee the sustainability of return and reintegration.

CONTENTS

Main Findings	5
The pressing issue of long-term displacement	5
Internally displaced persons are in a particularly vulnerable position	5
Conflict is fluid	5
Return is a process rather than the end of a cycle	5
The preconditions for sustainable return are of a political, legal, economic and social nature	5
Conflict and displacement can change gender roles	6
There are three interlinked sources of insecurity in regard to return	6
Is the participation of displaced persons in peace processes a crucial factor for their sustainable reintegration?	6
Points to Observe when Conducting Future Research	7
Suggestions for Future Programming	8
Introduction: The Pressing Issue of Long-term Displacement	9
2. Historical Overview: The Context of Displacement	12
2.1 Changing responses to forced displacement	12
2.2 Repatriation and return	14
2.3 Refugee regime and peace processes	17
3. Protracted Forced Displacement: Concepts and Dilemmas	21
3.1 Displaced persons, hosts and protracted refugee situations	21
3.2 The concept and practice of return	23
3.3 Stakeholders and programmes	27
4. Repatriation and Peace Agreements: Impact and Challenges	31
4.1 Land issues, labour market, and urbanisation	31
4.2 Gender, age and vulnerability	33
4.3 Security, homeland and social change	35
5. Practical Insights: Conditions and Consequences of Return	39
5.1 Preconditions for return	39
5.2 Factors influencing the outcomes of return	40
Conclusion	43
Bibliography	48

Main Findings

The pressing issue of long-term displacement

Many of the persons affected by forced displacement today find themselves in so-called *protracted refugee situations* (PRS), where refugees have been displaced for over five years and their situation is characterised by particular challenges: private hosts have to shoulder additional financial burdens, host states and the countries of origin often face diplomatic tensions, alternative livelihoods and international assistance shrink over time, while levels of crime, insecurity, domestic or gender-based violence and other security concerns, such as rising intercommunal or interethnic tensions, increase. To not prolong these situations of protracted forced displacement, they need to be addressed and solutions must be found. The failure to address situations of protracted forced displacement may undermine the stability of peace processes.

Internally displaced persons are in a particularly vulnerable position

Contrary to refugees, internally displaced persons (IDPs) remain in the territory of the state whose institutions were unable to prevent their displacement and that often could not guarantee their safety. Contrary to refugees, IDPs do not benefit from specific legal protections even though they are exposed to almost identical risks. The Guiding Principles on Internal Displacement of 1998 that clarify the conditions of return (voluntarily, in safety and dignity), the role of the state (help to ensure full participation of IDPs, assist in recovery of former properties or ensure compensations), and the role of international organisations (should have access to assist in return and reintegration) are not legally binding. To include the role of IDPs in the analysis, we speak of situations of protracted forced displacement (PFD) instead of PRS.

Conflict is fluid

Conflict situations do not pass directly into post-conflict situations, but undergo a transition without clear-cut boundaries. Consequently, the

concept of post-conflict needs to be broadened to include those situations that continues to experience significant levels of violence. In order to analyse and respond adequately to protracted conflict situations, it is necessary to overcome the classical division between pre-, actual, and post-conflict situations and recognise the cyclical re-emergence of conflict.

Return is a process rather than the end of a cycle

First, return does not mean that displaced persons necessarily go back to the exact same place from which they have fled. Second, although return is often considered to be “the end of one cycle”, it is rather a new beginning: that of reintegration. Third, due to the principle of non-refoulement, returnees are guaranteed voluntary return. Yet, displaced persons may have no desire to return, because (i) they belong to a minority group that still risks certain forms of harassment and discrimination, (ii) the degree of destruction in the place of origin is so large that opportunities to secure a livelihood are minimal or non-existent, (iii) the circumstances that originally led to their forced exit were too traumatic, (iv) they lack capital, (v) they have close ethnic ties within the host society, or (vi) have better access to livelihood opportunities in the host area.

The preconditions for sustainable return are of a political, legal, economic and social nature

Sustainability of return depends on the capability of governments to frame the legal conditions for resolving land disputes and inequalities that preceded displacement, guarantee justice and make perpetrators accountable. Opportunities to successfully rebuild one’s livelihood play a decisive role for a displaced person’s decision to return and to stay. Other factors, such as the level of emotional attachment, the actual degree of rule of law, assets and resources, and the quality of reconciliation in the area of return are also crucial. Competition for scarce resources as well as inter-group tensions is one highly important factor.

Conflict and displacement can change gender roles

Women who flee without their husbands may resume more responsibilities and diversify their activities in their host communities. This might have a positive impact on the economic situation, personal freedom, and social independence of women while men may have difficulties to live up to their social role as breadwinners. This change in gender relations as well as age, i.e. the specific needs and resiliencies of elderly persons and children, both decisive factors that define the vulnerability of individuals in PFD, have to be taken into account as not to challenge the success and sustainability of reintegration.

can be included in the various stages of peace processes to make a difference. The oscillation of DPs between the statuses of IDP, refugee, returnee, or displaced returnee, has not been addressed sufficiently. Consequently, more research in this area is needed. A clarification of the link between return and peace in general could yield significant insights for practices that help end PFD.

There are three interlinked sources of insecurity in regard to return

- 1\ security situation of displaced persons in the host region;
- 2\ security situation during passage and
- 3\ security situation once the displaced persons have returned.

These three are often interlinked and cannot always be clearly separated. Forcing displaced persons to return—out of fear of insecurity in the host region—before conflict has subsided in their home region, may re-ignite conflict and consequently generate new waves of refugees; preventing sustainable return and reintegration. This desk review, furthermore, demonstrates that the exclusion of displaced people, local communities, ethnic or political groups can lead to renewed tensions and risk the stability of peace.

Is the participation of displaced persons in peace processes a crucial factor for their sustainable reintegration?

Although scholars have already argued that displacement and peace might be interlinked, it is still unknown under which conditions and to what degree it is necessary to ensure the participation of DPs in peace processes for the sustainability of peace and return in general. Additionally, it is not clear how DPs

Points to Observe when Conducting Future Research

Comprehensive displacement approach

A comprehensive approach to PFD situations including IDPs, refugees, persons in refugee-like situations under the common category of displaced persons (DPs), and host communities is needed. Moreover, perspectives and voices from the DPs and local stakeholders should be included in the analysis.

Role of displaced persons in peace processes

In how far does the inclusion of DPs in peace negotiations and agreements contribute to the stability of peace processes? Under what conditions does the participation of DPs in peace processes contribute to the sustainability of return? Other open questions are related to representation, i.e. who speaks for DPs, or to the differences between first, second, or multiple displacements. Are DPs and the issue of their inclusion in peace processes furthermore constrained by their assumed disadvantaged position as DPs versus a majority society in the host or homeland? It might be worth exploring contract research and negotiation theories to improve the prospects of success and sustainability of peace processes.

Potentials of displaced persons

All too often DPs are perceived as problematic, negative and a burden both for host communities/countries and the international donor community alike. Yet the influx of DPs has been observed to be an impetus for development: the labour market profits from qualified staff, the economy profits from innovations, diversification, and an expansion of trade that comes along with the influx of DPs. In their home countries, attitudes that DPs have acquired in exile, e.g. the empowerment of women, expectations towards the government and understanding of the significance of the rule of law, are important assets that could potentially be tapped in a more targeted way during peace processes.

Resiliencies and the livelihood-making of displaced persons

A complete analysis clarifying the DP's prospective ability to benefit from the access, ownership and user rights to livelihood resources like land, water, and shelter would be beneficial for each situation of PFD and subsequent return programming. Moreover, including donors and implementing stakeholders could provide further insights into the challenges and risks of PFDs and return processes.

Suggestions for Future Programming

Take a comprehensive and co-ordinated approach

In order to strengthen displaced persons in peace processes, an approach is required that includes multidimensional, multilateral, inter-institutional and transregional aspects, and that incorporates the host country and the country of origin as well as geopolitical dimensions. Sustainable projects have to acknowledge positive impacts of hosting DP communities, such as economic growth, the diversification of livelihoods, dynamical adaptation processes, and social development.

independently from each other. However, the more skills (e.g. vocational) displaced persons have learned in their host regions, the more likely they are to better adapt to the conditions in the return region. Promoting local integration measures and supporting education and work opportunities for the displaced in the host region, might also facilitate the return process and make reintegration more sustainable.

Bring relief and development efforts together to achieve sustainable protracted forced displacement policies

Often, PFD situations are approached through short-term interventions like quick impact projects (QIPs) and emergency relief projects implemented by UNHCR or humanitarian NGOs. However, neither UNHCR nor NGOs are in a position to address the structural economic problems in the host countries or in the countries of origin on their own. The desk review shows that any solution to protracted IDP and refugee situations requires an integrated approach of peacebuilding, humanitarian aid and development aid. To proceed with such comprehensive and holistic development and security projects it is furthermore necessary to examine positive and negative effects of PFD situations thoroughly.

Use existing resiliencies and positive impacts of skills acquired in the host country for sustainable return and reintegration

Return and local integration are not mutually exclusive. Although various studies on return and reintegration have pointed out that conditions in the host region, particularly the degree of self-reliance, can shape the prospects for return and reintegration (see below), the two durable solutions of local integration and return are still often regarded as

Introduction

In 2014, there were almost 60 million displaced people, and numbers have not decreased since (see figure 1).¹ Of those nearly 60 million, 38 million persons were internally displaced² and almost 20 million fled into neighbouring countries and surrounding regions (UNHCR, 2015).

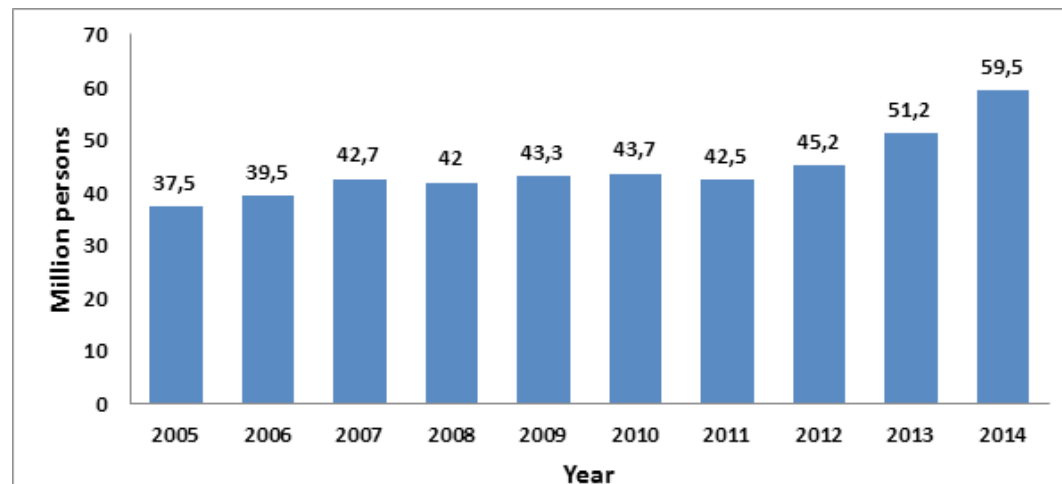
Many of these persons affected by forced displacement have been in exile or have been displaced within their own country for more than five years and, thus, find themselves in so-called protracted refugee situations (PRS). The most commonly used definition of PRS has been coined by the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) who defines them as situations where refugees have been in exile for more than five years,³ have a population of more than 25,000 refugees and situations

in which refugees [and other forcibly displaced] find themselves in a long-lasting and intractable state of limbo. Their lives may not be at risk, but their basic

rights and essential economic, social and psychological needs remain unfulfilled after years in exile. A refugee [or other displaced person] in this situation is often unable to break free from enforced reliance on external assistance (UNHCR, 2004b).

These long-term displacement situations, in camps or other locations, present particular challenges: private households that host forcibly displaced persons carry additional financial burdens, host states and the countries of origin often face diplomatic tensions (UNHCR, 2015, p. 116), alternative livelihoods and international assistance shrink over time, while levels of crime, insecurity, domestic or gender-based violence and other security concerns are often observed to rise (Crisp, 2000; Loescher & Milner, 2008, p. 355). The contest for scarce jobs, housing opportunities or farm land, for example, can lead to rising intercommunal or interethnic tensions potentially culminating in social conflict between refugees

Figure 1
Number of displaced persons from 2005 to 2014



Source: Based on the figure of UNHCR/ 18 June 2015

1 \ UNCHR underlined that this is “A level not previously seen in the post-World War II era” (UNHCR, 2015). It has to be kept in mind that numbers only present those displaced persons who have been registered by UNHCR. There could be many more that have not been registered. Numbers generally have to be taken with a pinch of salt as they come from sources with different degrees of reliability (ibid. p. 15). Some states, for example, might increase the numbers of refugees to receive more aid from the international community.

2 \ IDMC speaks of 38 million IDPs by the end of 2014 (Internal Displacement Monitoring Centre, Norwegian Refugee Council, 2015).

3 \ Palestinian refugees are not included.

and local communities in the host country (Adamson, 2006).

PRS exist in most parts of the world (Crisp, 2003, p. 1), but the overwhelming share is found in least developed countries (LDCs) (Loescher, Milner, Newman, & Troeller, 2007, p. 492). The inability to address PRS is often linked reciprocally to the phenomenon of

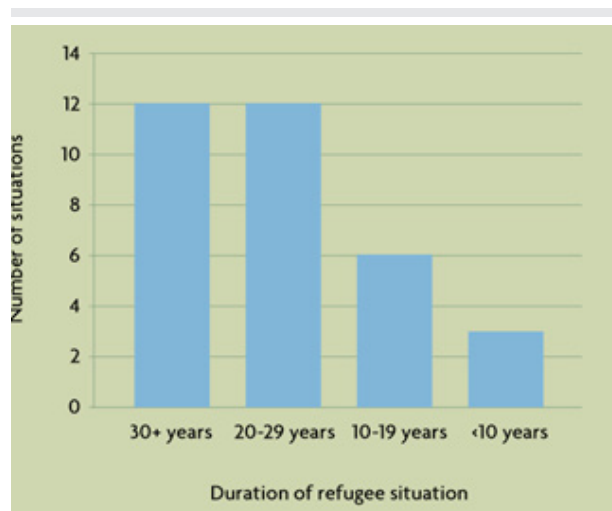
so-called failed and fragile states⁴ (Loescher & Milner, 2008, p. 38). Yet, successful local re/integration activities might still take place even if the state institutions are weak. The most prominent situations of protracted forced displacement (PFD) are found in Afghanistan, Pakistan, Sudan, the Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC),, Rwanda, Burundi, Myanmar, Colombia and Somalia. It is difficult to find reliable numbers (Crisp, 2003, p. 4), but UNHCR assumes that by the end of 2014, 6.4 million refugees found themselves in protracted situations and numbers are rising (UNHCR, 2015, p. 8). Many protracted situations have persisted for more than 10 or 20 years (see figure 2). In order to neither prolong these situations and cause strain on the already poor regions nor destabilise the fragile states, situations of protracted forced displacement (PFD) need to be addressed and “unlocked” (Zetter, 2011, p. 2). The Geneva Convention relating to the status of refugees and other international human rights instruments guarantee in principle the right to freedom of movement and to seek paid employment.

Refugee scholars and policymakers argue that the failure to address situations of PFD may undermine the peace process in the concerned or neighbouring countries (Brookings-Bern Project on Internal Displacement, 2010; Kälin, 2008; Loescher & Milner, 2008; Loescher et al., 2007). Adelman, for example, points out that “the conventional wisdom of most refugee experts holds that there is a necessary connection between forging and implementing a peace agreement and enduring the successful return of refugees” (2002, p. 273). However, this displacement-peace nexus has never been systematically tested. Moreover, it is unclear how return and peace is interlinked. Despite the political prominence of the topic, the high numbers of situations of PFD and its risk for human rights violations and security, there has been

4 \ The discussion about the definition and characteristics of failed states has been ongoing for decades (cf. Englebert & Tull, 2008; Gordon, 1997; Helman & Ratner, 1992; Hippler, 2005). It seems worth noting that it is an externally assigned status description and might not necessarily coincide with the extent that local governance mechanisms are in place and functioning. For example, in many so-called failed, failing and fragile states various actors besides the state have traditionally held or newly taken up tasks that are classically—from a Western-centric perspective—considered to be core competencies of state governments.

little research on return, the displacement-peace nexus⁵ in general and the link between displaced persons and peace processes in particular.

Figure 2
Number of protracted refugee situations by duration



Source: UNHCR, 2015, p. 11

BICC has recently started the research project “Protected rather than protracted—strengthening refugees and peace”. It is funded by the German Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development (BMZ) within the Special Initiative “Fighting the causes of refugee movements, reintegrating refugees”. This Special Initiative aims to reduce the causes, alleviate the negative consequences of flight and displacement through the stabilisation of neighbouring and host countries, as well as the conflict sensitive and sustainable reintegration of refugees. Within this framework, BICC’s project focusses particularly on the sustainable reintegration of refugees. For that, we are investigating the link between displacement, return and peace more closely, analysing under what circumstances the participation of displaced persons is relevant for the peace process. Moreover, we are asking what such an involvement could look like.

5 \ The displacement-peace nexus is a term coined by Koser. The link between return and peace seems much more intuitive. Yet Koser actually agrees that return and reintegration can prevent further displacement. Yet the idea to talk about displacement instead of return it intended to include all displaced persons into such considerations. We therefore use the term whenever we want to stress that displaced persons that are not yet prospective returnees should be integrated into analyses.

The study⁶ focusses on return⁷ as a process of which the reintegration of displaced persons⁸—both refugees and internally displaced persons (IDPs)—is one part. It highlights this process dimension, which so far has received little attention. Research in this area still features many gaps some of which we wish to fill. We suppose that violent conflict, either on the local, national or regional level, may re-emerge if return is not complemented by successful reintegration. Our assumption is that reintegration is successful when returnees no longer have to flee and relocate. In other words, successful reintegration would mean that returnees are able to sustain their livelihoods and face no persecution (Lukunka, 2013, p. ii). Our working hypothesis is that the participation of displaced persons in peace processes is a crucial factor for their sustainable reintegration. Put differently, we assume that there is a link between return and peace in general, and we intend to determine the specifics.

Therefore, we intend to analyse under which conditions the participation of displaced persons in peace processes can be an important basis for their reintegration. With peace process, we not only mean peace agreements, but also the social, political and economic context surrounding it. A peace process can be local, national or regional or all three. Our main research questions are: 1) What chances and risks can be observed during the reintegration of displaced persons? 2) What makes reintegration sustainable and successful? 3) Under which conditions does the participation of displaced persons in peace processes play a key role in the sustainability of their return and peace?

Until now, the perspectives of policymakers or legal scholars have largely dominated the topics of return and reintegration. The experiences and voices of the displaced, as well as those of host communities

and subnational government agencies have been left out. Many peace research studies have also been conducted that did not take the role of displaced persons in the peace process into account. This Paper, in contrast, shows that a more multi-faceted perspective is necessary to fully understand the process of return and to guarantee its sustainability. In our opinion, displaced persons and returnees may be able to stabilise peace (just as well as they can prolong or renew violent conflict). By analysing what makes reintegration successful, renewed displacement may be prevented, and root causes of displacement identified (Koser, 2008).

The *Paper* first provides an overview of previous research on return as well as on the role of returnees in peace processes in recent history. The paper then turns to the current models of responses and presents the major stakeholders in the return and reintegration process. It proceeds by bringing forward some of the challenges and impacts of these processes. In the end, we show the gaps that remain for further studies in this area and discuss their consequences.

6 \ We thank Laura Gerken, Clara Schmitz-Pranghe, and BICC staff for assistance as well as Ulrike Krause for helpful comments.

7 \ We hold the term return to be a global term that encompasses repatriation. Repatriation is defined as an organised return process in which displaced persons return to their country of origin accompanied by a third party.

8 \ The term displaced person (DP) refers to all persons that identify themselves as forcibly displaced. This means that - rather than the (temporary) destination - the starting point of displacement is used to categorize people that are labeled as IDPs, refugees, stateless or unregistered individuals (e.g. urban dwellers).

2. Historical Overview: The Context of Displacement

Today's understanding of what makes an IDP or a refugee⁹, their legal status, approaches towards situations of displacement and PRS, blind spots in practice, and gaps in knowledge production are influenced by past developments and depend on the observer's perspective. Responses to forced displacement and armed conflict have changed fundamentally since World War II. Looking back us not only allows to understand the political, economic and social developments underlying the changing responses to war and forced displacement, but also allows us to gain a more comprehensive understanding of the broad variety of possible solutions vis-à-vis the ones prioritised by policymakers.

2.1 Changing responses to forced displacement

The international refugee regime emerged at a time when armed conflicts were typically interstate conflicts, marked by a clear beginning and a clear end. They were terminated by the victory of one fighting party or alliance, which would then determine the conditions for the post-conflict order. The number of refugees and displaced persons as a consequence of World War II and its aftermath was higher than at any later stage throughout the 20th century. Yet, the overwhelming majority of refugees never returned to where they had fled from. From 1947 to 1950, the International Refugee Organisation (IRO) had adopted repatriation as a possible solution, but only repatriated five per cent of those displaced in Europe (and registered with IRO). It recognised voluntariness as an essential precondition for repatria-

tion (cf. Chimni, 1999). Most of IRO's resources were devoted to resettlement, however, and over one million people were helped to leave Europe and to permanently resettle in the United States, Canada, Australia and Latin America by IRO in the four years between 1947 and 1951 (Kleist, 2015).

World War II, Cold War and resettlement

The founding of the UNHCR and the passing of the Geneva Refugee Convention (convention relating to the status of refugees), both in 1951, were responses to the plight of 50 million refugees and displaced after World War II. It took the UNHCR until the mid-1960s and many appeals, awareness raising activities, etc., until all people displaced by World War II and its aftermath could be resettled. Many of them had spent over a decade in situations of protracted displacement all over Europe. When these situations were eventually overcome this represented an "...often-forgotten precedent for addressing the durable solution and protection needs of refugees for whom neither local integration nor repatriation are viable options" (Milner & Loescher, 2011, p. 7). Not until 1967 were the geographical and temporal restrictions relating to the European heritage of the Geneva Convention removed in an additional protocol.

The politicised nature of responses to armed conflicts during the Cold War era, among them numerous proxy-wars on different continents, rendered repatriation a non-solution. People fleeing from the Soviet Union or associated countries to Western Europe were nearly always offered permanent permission to stay. Hence, the tendency to prioritise resettlement as a durable solution further increased between the end of World War II and about 1985; many, if not most, refugees were resettled in Western countries throughout this time period (Bradley, 2013, p. 1). Partly, this may have been due to the need for additional labour in these economies after the destruction of the world wars (cf. Chimni, 1999). But also in Africa, people who had been forced to flee from armed struggles against colonialism and Apartheid were hosted and offered local integration or resettlement by neighbouring countries (Rutinwa, 2002). Throughout the 1960s and 1970s hardly

⁹ \ Usually, both terms are used as defined in international law according to which a refugee is an individual that "owing to a well-founded fear of being persecuted for reasons of race, religion, nationality, membership of a particular social group or political opinion, is outside the country of his nationality, and is unable to, or owing to such fear, is unwilling to avail himself of the protection of that country" (UN, 1951, Refugee Convention, New York). IDPs (Internally Displaced Persons) are defined as "...persons or groups of persons who have been forced or obliged to flee or to leave their homes or places of habitual residence, in particular as a result of or in order to avoid the effects of armed conflict, situations of generalized violence, violations of human rights or natural or human-made disasters, and who have not crossed an internationally recognized state border (The Brookings Institution Project, 1999)..

any repatriation took place in Africa.¹⁰ Local integration was common and Africa was a “shining example of solidarity and hospitality” (Frelick, quoted in Chimni, 1999, p. 11). As of the 1970s, more and more PFD situations emerged on a global scale. The prolonged conflicts in Indochina, Afghanistan, Central America, the Horn of Africa, and Southern Africa forced millions of people into exile. Between 1977 and 1982, the global refugee population tripled from three to ten million (Milner & Loescher, 2011, p. 7). At that time return did not rank high on the international agenda and was hardly considered an option. Moreover, peace processes were not yet established as a common tool to settle conflicts and, thus, there was no discussion about the role of displaced persons in peace processes either.

From resettlement to repatriation

The end of the Cold War raised hopes for a peaceful new world order and a decrease of new displacements. Contrary to this, however, the global refugee population increased further from 14.9 million in 1990 to 17.2 million in 1991. Initial proxy wars, such as in Angola and Afghanistan, had developed their own dynamics of violence and continued; new conflicts emerged during the transition processes in the former Soviet Union (Nagorno-Karabakh, Georgia, Moldova, Tajikistan, and Chechnya), but also in former Yugoslavia and Liberia (cf. Koser & Black, 1999). Practices and priorities regarding durable solutions changed fundamentally in this context. The interpretation of the Geneva Convention criteria became increasingly strict in Europe and the United States, and the idea of “bogus refugees”¹¹ was born, which turned refugee status from an important safety net for genuinely persecuted people into something at risk of being exploited (cf. Koser & Black, 1999). Against this background, UNHCR started promoting repatriation as a durable solution in 1985, arguing that it was the “preferred solution among most of the world’s refugees” (Bradley, 2013, p. 3). By that time, many of the refugee hosting countries were (and still are) among the poorest in

the world. In the absence of effective burden-sharing mechanisms, both in terms of granting asylum and in terms of resource and wealth distribution, restrictive access to territory, temporary instead of permanent residence or protection status, and restrictions on refugees’ rights quickly spread from the global North to other areas of the world (Chimni, 1999).

The nature of armed conflict had changed fundamentally by that time: conflicts were predominantly intrastate. This trend further continued during the 1990s. Conflicts became increasingly protracted and the share of civilian victims of war had increased significantly (Bermudez Torres, 2005). Whereas at the beginning of the 20th century about 90 per cent of all war casualties were military personnel, in the 1990s it was more likely to be 75-90 per cent civilians. Civilians were more often the deliberate targets of violence. This led to a rising numbers of forced displacements (ibid.). The international community sought to respond by introducing peace processes, negotiated peace agreements as well as other means of conflict resolution, including an increasing number of multilateral peace operations. With the end of the Cold War, attempts to accommodate seemingly intractable ethnic conflicts through peace processes (INCORE, 2004) and settle civil wars by negotiated peace agreements had become more common (Stedman, 2002, p. 1). Since 1980, reflecting the trend towards more repatriations, most major peace agreements have started to include provisions regarding the return of refugees and IDPs (Phuong, 2005). Therefore, such agreements have become crucial in determining the rights and opportunities of displaced persons to return. Otherwise, issues pertaining to return are also often settled in separate tripartite agreements between the country of origin, the host country, and the UNHCR.

In 1989, two comprehensive plans of action, the Comprehensive Plan of Action for Indochinese Refugees (CPA) and the International Conference on Central American Refugees (CIREFCA), both negotiated under the leadership of the UNHCR, proved to be very effective tools for unlocking prolonged or protracted situations of forced displacement (Milner

¹⁰ \ Apart from Algerians in 1962.

¹¹ \ People referred to as “bogus” in the literature are those who apply for refugee status but come for economic reasons instead of persecution.

& Loescher, 2011). The CPA for Indochinese refugees, supported in the end by 70 states, helped to resettle half a million Vietnamese refugees (altogether, 1.3 million were resettled). Thousands of lives were saved as refugees had been taking to unseaworthy boats as a last resort (Kleist, 2015). According to Betts (2006, p. 5), the following factors made these CPAs successful. They

- \ drew on all possible (durable) solutions, not only repatriation, resettlement and local integration,
- \ rather facilitated a general expansion of migration opportunities;
- \ involved countries of origin, host and resettlement countries thus establishing effective burden- and responsibility-sharing mechanisms;
- \ were good examples of co-operation between several United Nations (UN) agencies and non-governmental organizations (NGOs) (cf. Milner & Loescher, 2011, p. 8).

2.2 Repatriation and return

Regardless of these experiences, the push towards repatriation and a further tendency to pull away from protection levels guaranteed under the Geneva Convention and the Organisation of African Unity (OAU) Convention on Refugees continued during the 1990s (cf. Koser & Black, 1999). In Europe, the war in Yugoslavia in the 1990s increased the interest in temporary protection schemes in receiving countries, thus shifting the refugee status from being permanent to being temporary: in the presence of so called internal flight alternatives (Chimni, 1999, p. 8), refugees can hence be sent back to their country of origin. The Yugoslavian example showed the limits of premature repatriation programmes: the involuntary return of over a quarter of a million refugees to Bosnia due to domestic considerations in Germany after 1996 turned the majority of the returnees into IDPs. These IDPs neither had the necessary protection by their government nor by an international organisation (Black, 2006; Koser & Black, 1999). After the war in Rwanda, Tanzania changed its open door policy based on the argument that other much richer nations did the same (Chimni, 1999, p. 12). The push for

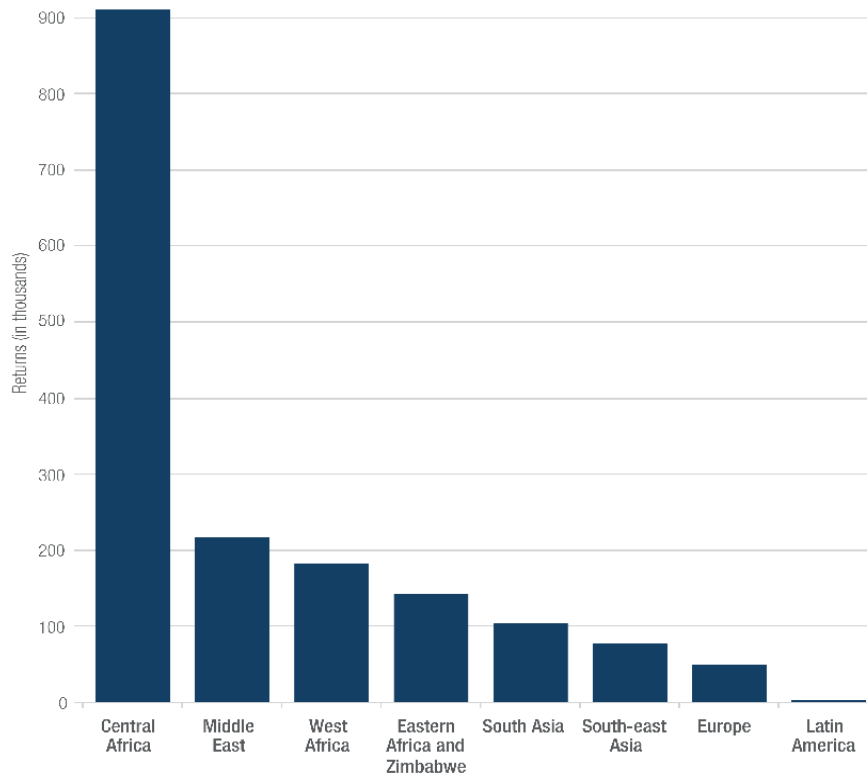
more returns limited the applicability of other durable solutions such as local integration and thereby prolonged displacement: Since the late 1980s, many governments of the global South confined the movement of displaced populations to the camps only. This often had negative effects on “the human rights and livelihoods of those displaced” (Milner & Loescher, 2011, p. 4).

The decade of voluntary repatriation

In 1992, the UNHCR declared a decade of voluntary repatriation to make this the principal durable solution (Bradley, 2013). This increasing involvement of UNHCR in repatriation constituted quite a shift in its focus of activities and also expanded its scope towards more development-oriented activities such as reintegration (Macrae, 1999). Return programmes were expanded significantly: According to the UNHCR, more than nine million refugees repatriated between 1991 and 1996 (Milner & Loescher, 2011, p. 7). These returns were “high profile mass returns to a small group of countries with highly visible peace processes” (Black, 2006, p. 25), e.g. Cambodia, Mozambique, Kosovo, Afghanistan, but also included repatriation to Angola, Sierra Leone, Somalia, Rwanda and Burundi, some of which saw new displacements in the course of that decade. Due to new displacements all over the world, the total number of refugees at the end of the 1990s amounted to 13 million and thus was the same as at the beginning of the decade (Bakewell, 1999). This number consisted to a large part of persons stranded in situations of protracted displacement (UNHCR, 2004b).

In 1996, then Director of UNHCR’s Division of International Protection (DIP), Dennis McNamara, announced that refugees may be sent back to less than optimal conditions in their home country and against their will. The decade of voluntary repatriation led to a “consolidation of repatriation as the preferred political solution (...) not only for UNHCR but also for much of the international humanitarian community” (Black, 2006, p. 26). Increased and accelerated return rates lent “weight and popular legitimacy to a discourse that has come to dominate refugee policy, namely that repatriation is the optimum and most feasible ‘durable solution’ to the refugee

Figure 3
Regional overview of returns



Source: IDMC, Norwegian Refugee Council, 2015, p. 12

crisis” (Koser & Black, 1999).¹² Nevertheless, the sustainability of the returns was often highly uncertain, especially when the issues that had been leading to displacement in the first place remained unresolved (Black, 2006, p. 27). At a time, where repatriation was given more and more significance, not only in peace processes but also as a prerequisite and / or an indicator for peace, the actual practice of increasingly immature and involuntary repatriation risked to severely undermine peacebuilding efforts.

Contents and provisions of peace agreements regarding return changed over time, their focus shifting from return assistance to the adoption of more rights-based approaches. Increasingly, they contained detailed regulations to “address past injustices and prevent future violations of refugees’ rights”

¹² \ An exception may be the case of the Palestinian refugees (Black, 2006).

(Phuong, 2005). The quality of such provisions varies: The 1995 General Framework Agreement for Peace in Bosnia and Herzegovina with its extensive provisions on return is considered a role model; while the 1992 General Peace Agreement for Mozambique and the Interim Agreement for Kosovo are criticised for their lack of provisions on voluntariness (Bradley, 2013, p. 49).

New millennium and new challenges

With the start of the new millennium, the topic of protracted refugee situations (PRS) and protracted forced displacement (PFD) became part of the agendas of UNHCR and other international actors, since a decrease in inter-state conflicts freed capacities for dealing with this pressing, but so far neglected issue. The increased awareness of the negative implications

of PFD situations prompted individual host countries, such as Sierra Leone, Liberia and Tanzania, to move away from the practice of “isolated and insecure refugee camps” to local integration by naturalisation (Milner & Loescher, 2011, p. 10). In 2008, UNHCR launched the PRS initiative, which called for better co-ordination between the agencies involved, involvement of the displaced as well as countries of origin and residence and for a joint effort by affected states and NGOs. The PRS initiative also emphasises that humanitarian aid to displaced populations should focus on increasing their self-reliance as the best precondition for any of the durable solutions and underlines the potential of displaced populations to contribute to broader processes of peacebuilding and development. This process peaked in the adoption of the Conclusion on PRS by the Executive Committee (ExCom) of UNHCR in 2009 (cf. Milner & Loescher, 2011).

At the same time, the repatriation trend seemed to continue. The number of returnees assisted by UNHCR rose from under 500,000 in 2001 to almost 2.5 million in 2002, and over one million in 2003 (Bermudez Torres, 2005). Altogether, 11.4 million refugees returned to their countries of origin between 1998 and 2007. In contrast to the pre-1985 era, when resettlement was the most frequent solution, the ratio was one resettled refugee to fourteen returnees. Since 2008, however, repatriation numbers have been declining, though IDP returns are increasing (Bradley, 2013, p. 3). The ExCom Conclusion of 2009 still upholds this paradigm, even though stating that there can't be a blueprint to PRS, and frequently mentions repatriation as the “preferred durable solution.” It also states that “voluntary repatriation should not necessarily be conditioned on the accomplishment of political solutions in the country of origin” (quoted in Milner & Loescher, 2011, p. 17). Figure 3 demonstrates that in the Central Africa region, including Burundi, Central African Republic, Chad, Republic of the Congo, Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC), South Sudan and Sudan, in 2014 most returns of IDPs have taken place (Internal Displacement Monitoring Centre, Norwegian Refugee Council, 2015, p. 12).

Relation of peace and return

The return of all people displaced by the conflict is now understood as an essential part of peace-building processes. In 2005, Kofi Annan emphasised that the return of refugees and IDPs is a “major part of any post-conflict scenario” and “a critical factor in sustaining a peace process and in revitalizing economic activity” (Annan, 2005). In other words: the successes of refugee repatriation and peace operations are now believed to be closely intertwined. Return movements are expected to help stabilise insecure border regions, serve as an expression of confidence in the peace process, and the formerly exiled populations may contribute to peace-building and development. The concept of return is strongly linked to the idea of transitional justice—namely the ideal that an expulsion of people is not accepted (McGinn, 2000; Sooka, 2006; Williams, 2007). At the same time, tensions are to be expected over property issues, limited access to services such as schools and hospitals, or over assistance that targets returnees only. The case of Afghanistan exemplifies this risk: since 2002, five million refugees have been repatriated, yet returnees were not provided with the support needed to make a sustainable contribution to peace (Bradley, 2013, p. 6f.), which led the UNHCR representative to Afghanistan, Peter Nicolaus, conclude that repatriation to the country was “the biggest mistake UNHCR ever made” (reported by AFP, 2011). Premature and forced return, in sum, poses one of the biggest risks, both to the returnees and to the peace process.

To sum up, over the past 70 years, the international refugee regime has developed from one that promoted resettlement to one that mainly promotes repatriation, even though experiences have shown that increasing the options for refugees and displaced instead of reducing them is the best way to overcome PRS / PFD situations. The success of peace agreements has come to be linked with the repatriation of refugees, even though there is no empirical evidence for such a link and repatriation itself, especially if not entirely voluntary, can spark conflict instead of promoting peace (Adelman, 2002, p. 282). However, experiences made and knowledge gathered in these seven decades places the international

refugee regime in a good position to apply the lessons learned and contribute significantly to overcoming today's PRS / PFD situations. A major impediment to any progress in unlocking protracted displacement is nevertheless the perception of Southern governments that the discussion on PRS is a move by "the North" to contain the refugee problem in the South. Today, 86 per cent of the world's refugees are hosted in developing regions. It is the highest number in more than two decades (UNHCR, 2015, p. 2). These developing countries may perceive "...pressures by the international donor community to encourage solutions for refugees through local integration as 'burden-shifting' and an infringement of their sovereignty" (Milner & Loescher, 2011, p. 6). These countries may hence have reservations about international aid (cf. box 1).

Box 1

Sri Lanka Peace Agreement: Non-compliance or the limits of international aid

Refugees or DPs are not mentioned in the Sri Lanka Peace Agreement (United States Institute of Peace, 2002). Currently, an increasing number of Sri Lankan refugees want to return. Most of them stay in refugee camps in Tamil Nadu in India, others in Malaysia, Europe, the United States and Canada. There are an additional 320,000 IDPs in Sri Lanka who left their homes before and after the conflicts in 2008—approximately 14,000 of them returned to their homes by 2010. The return of 180,000 IDPs who left their home after April 2008 has been linked to a number of problems: First, the land is contaminated with landmines or unexploded ordnances. Second, many returnees who have lost their documents find it difficult to prove land ownership (Dolores, 2011, pp. 7–9). Returnees also face problems with the distribution of so-called standard return packages (cf. Dolores, 2011, p. 8). Another problem regarding the support of IDPs grows from the fact that humanitarian agencies are not allowed to visit the areas where IDPs are located. Every UN agency needs a special permission by the Ministry of Defense to go to the north of the country. Often the Ministry rejects applications without reason. This has hampered the support of IDPs and returnees in the north of Sri Lanka (Dolores, 2011, p. 12–13). The case of Sri Lanka thus underlines how important collaboration of the country of origin with the international community is—especially for IDPs: If a government does not recognise IDPs, it can limit access for international actors or it can refuse to accept returnees or their demands.

2.3 Refugee regime and peace processes

Scientific research on return more often than not has followed policy discourses and practices rather than shaping them. For example, the new attention awarded to PRS situations by the UNHCR after 2000 has resulted in quite a number of research activities that include, for example, the PRS Project at the University of Oxford, and the "Protracted Displacement in Asia" Project based at Griffith University. These research projects contribute to a better understanding of causes and consequences of and possible responses to this problem (Milner & Loescher, 2011). Still, despite more extensive research on return in the last decades, many gaps still remain. Bradley's focus on just return (Bradley, 2008), for example, has taken a long time to be embraced by practitioners even though it has been widely discussed in academic circles and fully meets international legal standards.

Until the 1990s, the topic of return was largely ignored in academia (Koser & Black, 1999, p. 9). Long (2013b) points out that the majority of studies on repatriation has been put forward in the last thirty years, because repatriations were considered largely undisputed before and because the discipline of refugee and forced migration studies started to gain prominence then. Only the controversies emerging from the push for more repatriation have fuelled the expansion of research in refugee return.

In this context, academics started to question the underlying assumptions, such as the motivations of host and home governments, of the international community, which includes the UNHCR, and of the refugees themselves (cf. Bakewell, 1999; Black, 2002; Chimni, 1999; Koser & Black, 1999). Bradley's (2008) just return approach e.g. stressed that it is necessary to respect the choice of the refugees and to assure that returnees were to be re-integrated with full considerations for their legal rights—at least the same rights as all other compatriots are enjoying. Clearly, the decade of voluntary repatriation has triggered a lot of (critical) academic interest throughout and particularly towards its end. Chimni, for example, criticises that the desire of refugees to go home was simply assumed as a fact and not perceived as a "hypothesis to be tested" (Chimni, 1999, p. 5). He also

criticises that the “... idealized image of return helped legitimize measures which compelled refugees to return” (Chimni, 1999, p. 5), rendering voluntariness of return secondary in practice. Repatriation thus, according to some academic critics, showed characteristics of a self-fulfilling prophecy: The more common sense the idea became, the more it tended to render alternatives (seemingly) obsolete. Research, for example, shows how conditions in exile shape prospects for return and that local integration and successful repatriation are not mutually exclusive (Kuschminder, 2014; Long, 2010b; van Hear, 2006). They are rather supportive and complementary to each other. This insight, however, has not yet had a major impact on the refugee regime in practice.

Until now, research on return has centred around three main areas: the conditions for the decision to return, the actual return to the country of origin and the experiences after return, during the reintegration process (Hammond, 2014), whereby the last area of research is the least researched. For a long time, hardly any studies analysed why refugees decide to move back, or what experiences returnees have had and which challenges they have faced. One reason for the scarce literature in this area could be related to the difficulties in studying returnees. Returnees are often dispersed and thus hard to reach and to be identified. Moreover, they are often left on their own without any assistance (Allen & Morsink, 1994, p. 2), although lately there have been improvements in this area.

Koser and Black (1999), for example, identify two major challenges for repatriation programmes in this regard: (i) incorporation of refugees’ own ideas about repatriation, their own perceptions and expectations and changing priorities into repatriation initiatives and (ii) attention to the experiences of refugees after their return, including physical conditions such as land mines, housing, lacking access to key resources like land, labour, working capital and skills, as well as social confrontation (Bakewell, 1999, p. 6ff.).

The disarmament, demobilisation and reintegration (DDR) literature has also pointed to difficulties of return and reintegration (see, for example: Conoir & Verna, 2006). However, while they have made important contributions to understanding reintegration, it is not yet clear how these frameworks can be applied

to the general context of returning displaced persons. It seems, nevertheless, that some lessons can be learnt from them. For example, by excluding certain groups from reintegration programmes might create a feeling of inequality and raise tensions between those taking part in reintegration programmes and those who do not (Specker, 2007); as it might be the case between stayees and returnees in the displacement context.

Box 2

The Rwanda Peace Agreement: The transnational implications of return

The Rwanda Peace Agreement (INCORE, 1993) is mostly considered a success. It addresses questions of repatriation and the resettlement of Rwandan refugees. It includes guidelines regarding property issues, food, shelter and reintegration support. Still, about 100,000 Rwandans, mainly Hutus who fled in 1994, have not yet returned. These Hutus are a typical example of a residual caseload, of DPs who do not feel safe in the country of origin despite effective peace agreements in place (cf. Crisp, 2003, p. 3ff.). Such residual caseloads underline the need to acknowledge subjective opinions of DPs about security and the responsibility of the international community to respect the principle of non-refoulement. The Rwandan case shows that it is not only important to enlarge evaluations of effects of repatriation and peace agreements in time (as in the Liberian case) but also in space—the situation in the Great Lake region is intrinsically linked to Rwanda and its policies towards refugees. .

Furthermore, while the Evaluation and Policy Analysis Unit at UNHCR published a number of important studies on PRS and the return process in the last decade (e.g. Bakewell, 1999; Crisp, 2003; Macrae, 1999), the reintegration process and its link to peace is still understudied. Long (2013b) emphasises that there are few political analyses of return while legal scholars have dominated research. Yet this discussion is not matched by the actual legal practice, as Bradley’s (2013) case studies in Bosnia, Mozambique, Palestina and Guatemala about the minimum legal conditions respectively the rights of refugees show.

In addition, there is even less research on the topic of IDPs. Only the Brookings Bern Project (2010) focussed on IDPs in peace processes. Yet although the

Brookings Bern Project presents the reasons for integrating IDPs in peace processes, they do not investigate the link more closely. Studies by Long (2013b), Loescher and Milner (2008), Bradley (2013), Black and Koser (1999) and Allen and Morsink (1994) which represent the most comprehensive overview of the return process and its challenges in recent years have not yet included IDPs in their discussion. Consequently, research on return, reintegration and the role of displaced persons has been very rudimentary until now. The debate on PFD, in sum, has been largely dominated by policy literature with a strong bias towards states, governments, refugees and the legal context.

Displacement and peace processes

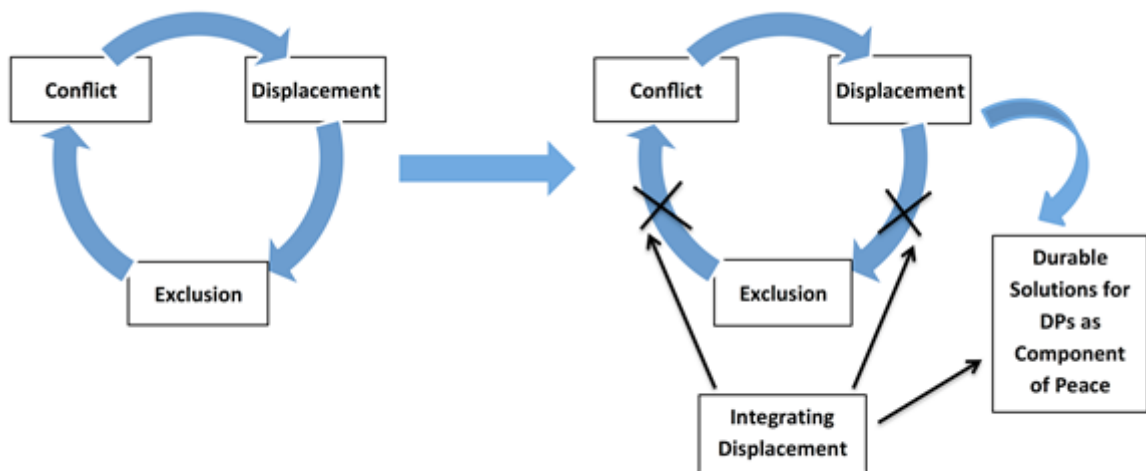
Despite the fact that various scholars (Brookings-Bern Project on Internal Displacement, 2010; Kälin, 2008; Loescher & Milner, 2008; Loescher et al., 2007) assume that the inclusion of displaced persons in peace processes reduces the risk of renewed conflict, as the example of the Rwandan peace agreement in box 2 displays, the link has never been systematically studied. Furthermore, other authors (Adelman, 2002, p. 273ff.) stress that there is, first, no evidence

that refugee repatriation is a precondition for peace, and that, second, peace can be achieved without repatriation and vice versa. They believe that it is rather a question of the type of peace and the type of war that determine the impact of repatriation for peacebuilding.

There is anecdotal evidence that refugees and IDPs can influence the negotiations of peace accords as well as their implementation, for example in Guatemala. However, this does not make return and reintegration to these countries automatically less challenging (Bermudez Torres, 2005). In many other cases, the chances for displaced persons (DPs) to meaningfully participate in peace processes are extremely limited to non-existent, however. The importance attributed to the role of return for the sustainability of peace, the practical disconnect between peace negotiations and refugee participation as well as the lack of knowledge regarding the empirical links makes this a topic for more research.

The literature suggests that DPs are important for the peace process because their participation is crucial for transitional justice, reconciliation, and a rights-based approach in the long run (Sooka, 2006; Sriram & Herman, 2009). If the large populations of DPs are not incorporated in the peace process and

Figure 4
Breaking the conflict cycle



Based on figure 1 of the Brookings-Bern Project 2010, p. 17)

their needs not taken into account, new conflict could arise (Rettig, 2008). As refugees and IDPs in some countries are part of the conflict, their participation could help resolve the conflict. Assisting returnees in the reintegration process can furthermore help to prevent future tensions (Koser, 2008). Agreeing, for example, on property rights and land issues before displaced persons return, might avoid new conflict situations upon return. Including displaced persons could also create more trust in the peace process and, thus, it may be more likely that the newly established peace is respected. Furthermore, it is often assumed by policymakers that early reconciliation work can help to make the reintegration and peace more sustainable. Nevertheless, there is no empirical evidence for this and still need to be analysed further.

Figure 4 gives an overview of the inclusion argument brought forward by the policy literature for displaced persons in peace processes.

The argument is that by finding a durable solution for the inclusion of displaced persons the cycle of conflict can be broken. However, to be able to understand the role of displaced persons in peace processes more clearly, the concepts of return, reintegration and peace, as well as the major stakeholders, need to be investigated more closely. We will start with the discussion of the concepts in the next chapter.

3. Protracted Forced Displacement: Concepts and Dilemmas

The topic of return, reintegration and peace brings together various concepts and stakeholders with different views on the same matter. Concepts of return and post-conflict are often introduced without a clear understanding of their meaning. Additionally, particular world views and subsequent categorisations of conflict, peace, post-conflict, etc. set the frame for potential engagement and the form of projects. The role and position of actors involved generally set the agenda of action. At times, they also create seemingly insurmountable barriers between the different systems, their logic of action and, consequently, ability to communicate with each other in a way that facilitates co-operation instead of disguising divergencies.

This chapter will introduce the concepts developed so far as well as the main stakeholders involved in the return process and will point to the challenges and dilemmas they bring with them. We will also show several key differentiations that we find important when it comes to the role of displaced persons in peace processes:

- \ the term “displaced persons” and the differentiation between refugees and IDPs
- \ the cyclical dimension of post-conflict situations and the different stakeholders involved,
- \ the multiple aspects of the return process and how it is related to peacebuilding.

3.1 Displaced persons, hosts and protracted refugee situations

Refugees and IDPs alike can be involved in peace process or protracted situations. This is why we refer to them as displaced persons as the line between one and the other is often merely administrative. If the borders are porous (and they often are), displaced persons change from one status to the other depending on the advantages connected to such a choice. Experts from the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), the International Organization for Migration (IOM), and others¹³ have confirmed such movements e.g. in the West African region (Senegal, Gambia,

Guinea-Bissau) and the Great Lakes Region (Democratic Republic of the Congo—DRC, Uganda). Long-distance travel requires resources and planning, so when people belong to particularly poor and vulnerable groups and the flight-inducing factors hit them by surprise, they are more likely to stay within the proximity of the place they have fled from, that is they are more likely to become IDPs. However, while the differentiation between refugees and IDPs can be merely administrative, it can have significant effects on how they are potentially involved, recognized and treated in the peace process.

Rigid categories, fluid practice

Globally, numbers of IDPs are rising compared to those of refugees. According to the Internal Displacement Monitoring Centre’s (IDMC’s) most recent report the number of IDPs is three times higher than that of refugees worldwide and their numbers keep rising (Internal Displacement Monitoring Centre, Norwegian Refugee Council, 2015, p. 7, see figure 5).

IDPs are in a particularly vulnerable position as, contrary to refugees, they have not left the territory of the state whose institutions are often those either unable to guarantee their safety and thus responsible for the displacement, or those unable to prevent it. Governments and armed groups are reluctant to respect international standards because IDPs often belong to minorities and they often regard IDPs as rebels, or criminals. At times they prefer to close camps to pretend that they can assure that everybody is safe and secure (Simpson & Sawyer, 2010, p. 49ff.). IDPs, in contrast to refugees, do not benefit from specific legal protection (Brookings-Bern Project on Internal Displacement, 2010). Their legal status is not different from that of other citizens while they are practically exposed to most of the risks refugees are facing (Couldrey & Morris, 2006, p. 12). According to the Guiding Principles on Internal Displacement of 1998 that have been approved by the United Nations but are not legally binding, IDPs, should be helped to return to their area of origin, similarly to refugees (The Brookings Institution Project, 1999). These Guiding Principles clarify the conditions of return (voluntary, in safety and dignity), the role of the state (help to ensure full participation of IDPs, assist in the recovery of former property or ensure compensation) and of

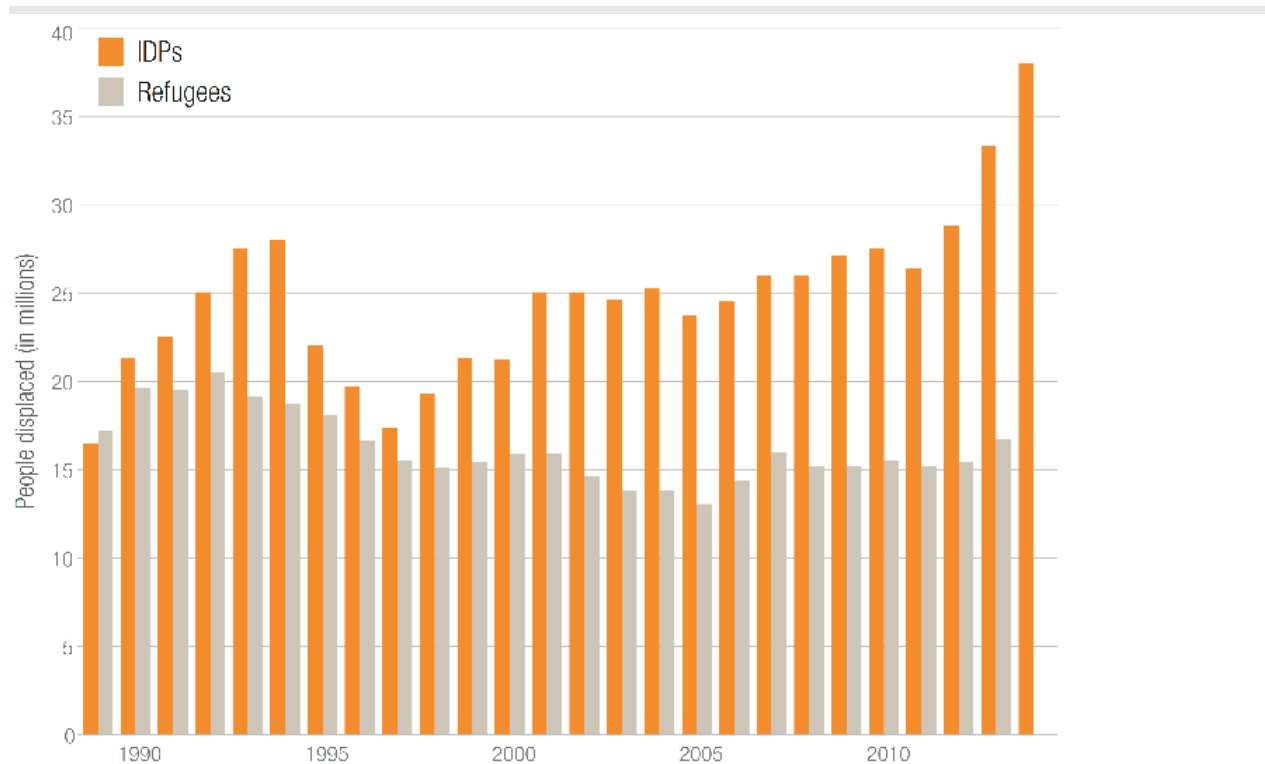
13 \ Personal conversations of co-author Markus Rudolf with various stakeholders, policymakers and experts from international, national, organisations and institutions 2012

international organisations (should have access to assist in return and reintegration). Yet according to various lessons learned it is particularly important for a truly participative process to enhance the protection of the numerous IDPs during and after return and to include them and their needs in peace agreements (Brookings-Bern Project on Internal Displacement, 2010).

Another important distinction to be made is that of host country represented by the host country's government and the actual hosts. Only 30 per cent of refugees live in planned/managed camps, 63 per cent live in private accommodation according to UNHCR (UNHCR, 2015, p. 43). 52 per cent of the nearly 14.7 million IDPs who were under the protection of the UNHCR in 2010 did not stay in formal camps (Brookings-LSE Project on Internal Displacement, 2013). And

a minimum of 50 per cent of the countries under observation by IDMC did not have any or just a few IDP camps (Davies, 2012, p. 4).¹⁴ The number of displaced persons staying with host families is naturally higher, where managed camps do not (yet) exist, such as shortly after the outbreak of a conflict, or in countries where the government is reluctant to establish or maintain camps for its IDPs (DRC, Sudan, Syria, etc.). In such situations, the largest burden rests on the shoulders of private persons and communities who are willing to help without remuneration or support (Davies, 2012; IDMC, Norwegian Refugee Council, 2015, p. 26). In line with the growing concern for IDPs (since 1998; cf. Cohen, 2004) the international community has also become increasingly aware of the importance of addressing the issue of hosting arrangements in PRS in recent years (cf. Davies, 2012).

Figure 5
IDPs versus refugee numbers



Source: IDMC, Norwegian Refugee Council 2015, p. 9

14 \ It should be noted that the percentage refers to IDPs assisted by UNHCR - the actual number is higher

According to our reading of the literature, all three statutory groups—IDPs, refugees, hosts—seem to be inextricably linked to sustainable solutions for PRS.

The final, in our view crucial, distinction concerns the term protracted refugee situations (PRS). The focus of PRS literature is mainly on refugees. We see certain shortfalls in the above-cited UNHCR definition of PRS.¹⁵ The definition does not include a political or strategic dimension, fails to recognise urban and other unaccounted for displaced populations and is too static (cf. Newman & Troeller, 2008, p. 382). In other words, the agency of the affected individuals is, not acknowledged—the total number of members of a population of concern might, for example, remain stable while membership may have shifted (Loescher & Milner, 2008, p. 21). As the term PRS is already established, proposing a new term risks further confusion. Yet, IDPs have been overlooked for too long, and the distinction based on statutory markers is counterproductive as just shown. We therefore propose to speak of situations of protracted forced displacement (PFD) rather than protracted refugee situations (PRS). This means that we define displaced persons as people who have been forced to leave their place of origin due to violent conflict and do not distinguish between those who made it across an international border or not. However, we recognise that while the cause of displacement is similar, the legal, political and social situation of IDPs differs greatly from the situation of refugees and that therefore distinctions are sometimes necessary. In addition, the fact that refugees and IDPs are composed of different (ethnic) groups that face different challenges (Rüegger & Bohnet, 2013) must be taken into account—having analysed the entire context—when looking for tailored recommendations.

15 \ PRS are situations “...in which refugees [and other forcibly displaced] find themselves in a long-lasting and intractable state of limbo. Their lives may not be at risk, but their basic rights and essential economic, social and psychological needs remain unfulfilled after years in exile. A refugee [or other displaced person] in this situation is often unable to break free from enforced reliance on external assistance” (UNHCR 2004b).

3.2 The concept and practice of return

Besides our particular understanding of DPs, PFD, and having to differentiate between host communities and host countries, we also take a differentiated approach to conflict, peace and, hence, also to peace processes.

Post-conflict or cyclical oscillation

We suggest that only an analytical framework that overcomes the classical division between pre-, actual, and post-conflict situations will provide valuable results. This means that the everyday perception of conflict as pathological has to be reconsidered. Conflict is the rule, not the exception (Coser, 1967; Dahrendorf, 1958). It is hard to imagine a situation without any conflict. Conflict can be regarded as the motor of change (Joas, 1996). Situations that appear to be harmonious are not characterised by an absence of conflicts but by the fact that conflicts are ignored, minimised, or, in the best case, resolved rather peacefully. As social conflict is ever present and constitutive for social life, it will not be eradicated through conflict resolution—it will just be channelled institutionally. This means that when a (violent) conflict that has been successfully resolved sparks up again, means of peaceful conflict resolution are in place and snap in.¹⁶ If those means are not in place, violence will resurrect accompanying the expression of differing interests. Thus, the concept of post-conflict needs to be broadened to include those situations that continue to experience significant levels of violence (Macrae, 1999, p. 15). Conflict situations do not pass directly into post-conflict situations, but undergo a transition without clear-cut boundaries (UNHCR, 1999). We therefore consider the use of the concept

16 \ This does not mean that conflicts have to be violent or unresolved. On the contrary, conflict resolution seems to be a driving force of differentiation (Dahrendorf, 1958). But statistics show that conflict—even if violent—is not a non-recurring exception from the rule of sustained peace. This is affirmed in a comparison of recent conflicts: “There has been a tendency ... to assume that the progression from violence to sustained security is fairly linear—and that repeated violence is the exception. But recurring civil wars have become a dominant form of armed conflict in the world today. Every civil war that began since 2003 was a resumption of a previous civil war (World Bank 2011, p. 57).” Syria has been an infamous exception.

“post-conflict” as critical and rather speak of a cyclical oscillation. This oscillation between so-called peace and war is a situation of protracted conflict.

The Oxford dictionary defines the word “protracted” as follows: “...lasting for a long time or longer than expected or usual.” In countries like South Sudan, Afghanistan or the DRC, whole generations have grown up within a violent context that has lasted for a long time. Azar (1990, p. 6ff.) pioneered a descriptive model that situates protracted social conflicts (PSC) within a framework of four factors:

- 1\ international linkages (economic and political networks),
- 2\ the role of the state, respectively the government,
- 3\ deprivation of human needs, and
- 4\ the communal content of society (identity groups involved).

Box 3

The Liberia Peace Agreement and the long-term durability of peace programmes

The Liberia Peace Agreement and the “Community Resettlement and Reintegration Strategy” of 2004 showed the importance of recognising the concerns of returnees. The agreement established a special body to co-ordinate assistance to refugees, internally displaced persons and returnees, the so-called International Stabilisation Force (ISF). A wide range of actors from civil society was integrated to represent the concerns and interests of DPs and returnees on a high governmental level. The programme built upon finished disarmament and demobilisation processes. The programme was extremely successful, as the DPs went back home even faster than had been planned. However, the different treatment of IDPs and refugees remained the pressing problem during the repatriation process. IDPs did not receive the same support as refugees. Even though short-term goals of repatriations seemed to have been achieved quickly in the Liberian case, this case is also a telling statement about the necessity to consider long-term effects. After repatriations, former IDPs have faced a variety of problems that are similar to those of refugees. Young mothers, girls and children have been threatened by human rights violations, like sexual or domestic violence; ethnic-based conflicts about land ownership have increased in regions that were highly contested during civil war; adequate shelter, medical care or sanitation has been lacking as a big part of the infrastructure, especially in home regions of IDPs, was destroyed during civil war and finally, these regions are threatened by food insecurity and a particularly high youth unemployment rate that hamper a complete reintegration (Internal Displacement Monitoring Centre, 2007.

The actual form of each conflict therefore depends on the internal dynamics of the conflict and the strategies employed by international actors. Considering these dimensions when analysing protracted conflict helps to avoid certain shortfalls connected to the differentiation of conflict and post-conflict that is only based on the number of killings in an armed conflict. Using statistics to measure whether a conflict is a full-scale or a limited war, a low intensity conflict or whether an incident is already considered an exception in times of post-conflict (e.g. HIIK, 2014), does not allow an assessment of the situation of an individual caught up in violence.¹⁷

Return: A process and not the end of a cycle

The right of return is established in Article 13 (2) of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights of 1948. It states: “Everyone has the right to leave any country, including his own, and to return to his country” (UNHCR, 1996). However, while a general agreement exists on the right of return to one’s country of origin, there is no such agreement on the right of return to one’s former home (Phuong, 2005, p. 4). As this right is not formally established, these issues have been taken up in peace agreements, for example, in Cambodia, Guatemala, Sierra Leone and Burundi (Phuong, 2005, p. 6). Why it is of benefit to take these issues into considerations can be observed in the Liberia Peace Agreement and its aftermath (box 3).

First, it is to be acknowledged that return does not mean that displaced persons return exactly to the same place from which they have fled. Instead they may settle in an entirely new area within their country of origin (Hammond, 2004). This can depend, for example, on the level of destruction of their former home, on property rights and land availability. Consequently, return cannot be regarded as a simple reversal of displacement (UNHCR, 2008, p.1). Second, although return is often considered to be “the end of one cycle” (Black & Koser, 1999, p. 3), it is rather a new beginning, namely the start of reintegration. However, parameters for this new beginning and the understanding of return and reintegration are not always

17 \ For an in-depth discussion on the difficulty of quantitative, qualitative and biased data cf. Reyna 2011.

clear. Hammond, for example, points out that in the context of return a variety of different terms is used indifferently: “rehabilitation, reconstruction, rebuilding, readjustment, re-adaptation, reacculturation” (Hammond, 1999, p. 230). This demonstrates that return can be seen as a complex process that involves various stages, approaches and dimensions. Peacebuilding can be one of them (Long, 2013b). Third, there are different types of return: (i) Return within the country of origin, (ii) return from neighbouring host countries, and (iii) return from a country of resettlement. All returnees, however, are faced with similar challenges and are subject to the same principle of voluntariness.

The principle of voluntariness and non-refoulement

Repatriation or return usually refers to voluntary return. As Hathaway (2005, p. 4) points out, the UNHCR Executive Committee only supports voluntary repatriation. Voluntary repatriation can be seen as a corollary of the principle of non-refoulement (Long, 2013a, p. 3). As UNHCR writes in its Handbook:

The principle of voluntariness is the cornerstone of international protection with respect to the return of refugees. While the issue of voluntary repatriation as such is not addressed in the 1951 Refugee Convention, it follows directly from the principle of non-refoulement: the involuntary return of refugees would in practice amount to refoulement. A person retaining a well-founded fear of persecution is a refugee, and cannot be compelled to repatriate (UNHCR, 1996).

The principle of non-refoulement demands that no state “expel[s] or return[s] a refugee in any manner [...] where his life or freedom would be threatened on account of his race, religion, nationality, membership of a particular social group or political opinion” (Article 33 of the 1951 Convention). This implies that repatriation should not be promoted if displaced persons are still at risk of persecution (Long, 2013a, p. 3). Yet, occasionally, some parts of the country are safe to return to while others are not (Jamal, 2008, p. 155). Voluntariness does not only mean “the absence of coercion, but also the availability of choice or genuine alternatives” according to Long (2013b, p. 158). Yet this principle is not always respected in practice. As

Macrae (1999) underlines, displaced persons can be pressured to return home to insecure regions.

Although it is assumed that most displaced persons want to return, several cases demonstrate the contrary (see, for example: Rogge, 1994, p. 31). Displaced persons might not desire to return, because

- \ they belong to a minority group that still risks certain forms of harassment and discrimination,
- \ the degree of destruction in the place of origin is so large that opportunities to secure a livelihood are minimal or non-existent,
- \ the circumstances that originally led to their forced exit were traumatic,
- \ they lack capital,
- \ they have close ethnic ties within the host society, or
- \ they have better access to livelihood opportunities in the host area (Crisp, 2003, p. 3-4).

The ability of displaced persons to decide in favour or against a return depends furthermore on the information they can receive regarding the conditions of return as well as the reliability of such information (Black & Koser, 1999, p. 112).

The core components of voluntary repatriation are overall physical, legal and material safety and reconciliation (UNHCR, 2004a). Recently, UNHCR has emphasised that beyond the principle of voluntariness, return should take place under conditions of safety and dignity (Long, 2013b; Phuong, 2005). Yet there is no clear understanding of the term dignity (Bradley, 2007) or the question when safety is guaranteed. Sometimes, states put more emphasis on safety than on the aspect of voluntariness. Once the issue of safety is declared to be resolved, refugee status can be revoked and refugees deported (Long, 2013b).

There is organised and there is spontaneous return. While many peace agreements that consider displaced persons assume that return will be organised by the international community, the majority of returns occur spontaneously (Adelman, 2002, p. 282). Some displaced persons proceed before or directly after a peace agreement, a decision that can challenge peacebuilding efforts (Loescher et al., 2007, p. 497). Furthermore, some DPs may not be registered with

UNHCR, which deprives them of assistance (Rogge, 1994, p. 29). This is particularly true for many IDPs. Generally, UNHCR or other international organisations cannot provide any assistance to them, if not authorised by the national government. Moreover, displaced persons sometimes do not choose to follow the official channels of return as through identification, they could be exposed to risks and discrimination (Rogge, 1994, p. 29). In any case, spontaneous or organised, all refugees have the right of return.

Role of displaced persons for peacebuilding

Peace agreements, are often based on a linear understanding of the transition from war to peace, and the actors involved tend to underestimate the implementation phase of the peace agreement and all related difficulties (Stedman, 2002). Consequently, return often occurs in a situation where the conflict has not yet ended. In the last ten years, to the disappointment of many, history has proven this point: Political peace declarations in various countries like Libya, Mali, the DRC, South Sudan, Yemen and Iraq were not accompanied by an institutionalisation of peaceful conflict resolution mechanisms. Several severe and deadly conflicts only fully escalated after the signing of a peace agreement and its failed implementation as e.g. the conflicts in Rwanda in 1994 and in Angola in 1993 have shown (Stein, 1994, p. 52). But even without such levels of escalation, most peace accords do not succeed in the long-term, especially if they fail to anticipate “post-conflict” problems, and also because they are used as a mere stopover by the warring parties (Bermudez Torres, 2005). Unlike most politicians and experts, civilians often pay a heavy price for assessing the situation incorrectly: they (again) lose livelihoods, investments, hopes and homes, get in-between the lines of warring parties or have to flee (again) (cf. Internal Displacement Monitoring Centre & Norwegian Refugee Council 2014 for the example of Afghanistan).

In protracted conflicts, the rule of the stronger is institutionalised—not the rule of law; and times of peace are moments used to recover, restock and realign for the next round of hostilities. This has wide-ranging consequences for the question of voluntary return, for the individual as well as for the

international actors, it and determines the potential to include DPs in peace agreements.

Box 4

The Afghan peace agreement

The Afghan Peace Agreement contains no guidelines for the repatriation of refugees or displaced persons (United States Institute of Peace, 2003). Nevertheless, the issue of return is pressing and is causing tensions in the region. In Pakistan, 1.7 million refugees and one million unregistered Afghans are suffering from growing discrimination and harassment. A tripartite arrangement between Pakistan, Afghanistan and UNHCR promotes the voluntary return of refugees to their home country—with limited success. Since 2002 so far 4.8 million Afghans have been supported to return home, while 3.8 million have remained in Pakistan and other countries (UN News Service, 2013). The government of Pakistan assures that it respects the principle of voluntary repatriation but has also been reluctant to prolong Proof-of-Residence for Afghans (Integrated Regional Information Networks, 2012). This problem has been re-emerging despite various attempts to find a permanent solution.

Many refugees and IDPs in protracted conflicts have learned by first-hand experience to be cautious about political discourses concerning peace agreements and ended wars (Evans, 2009; Ferris, 2015, p. 8ff.; The World Bank Group, 2015, p. 47ff.). Their ways to verify such information does not necessarily coincide with the flow of information of national and international actors. Furthermore, the assessments of when it is safe to return may differ from the political discourses and the actual realities on the ground regarding discrimination, torture, abuse, corruption, or coercion, which would have a significant impact on the concerned individuals (cf. for the situation of IDPs in Afghanistan, Samuel Hall Consulting, Norwegian Refugee Council, Internal Displacement Monitoring Centre, & Joint IDP Profile Service, 2012). Nevertheless, in a few cases (e.g. Sudanese refugees in Kakuma) refugees are allowed to go and assess the situation for themselves and to come back (cf. John, 2010).

PRS and camps have been associated with domestic insecurity in the host country, with instability in the country of origin and, ultimately, insecure

relations between both countries (Crisp, 2000; Loescher & Milner, 2008, chapter one). Loescher and Milner (2008) underline that PRS are not only a symptom, but also catalysts and triggers for renewed violence in this regard. The same is true for situations of protracted displacement and, most importantly, for return. If the causes of displacement, in particular ethnic tensions or land right issues, have not been addressed or resolved in the place of destination, return will exacerbate existing conflicts and undermine on-going peacebuilding efforts. Humanitarian, security and development actors might suddenly find themselves in a context in which camps become the turning/focal point for violence: Examples of this are lessons learned from Guinea, where camp residents from Sierra Leone became victims of attacks (Crisp, 2003) and where, in various cases young men and children residing in camps were forcefully recruited into armed groups (Achvarina & Reich, 2006; Gates & Reich, 2010, p. 77ff.). In the DRC, whole Rwandan refugees camps were taken hostage (Pottier, 1999, p. 147ff.; see box 4). There are furthermore cases where conflicts had allegedly been prolonged because aid created a safe haven for violent actors. This, in turn, caused military reprisal by the national or neighbouring army (Boutroue, 1998).

3.3 Stakeholders and programmes

The return process involves many divergent actors with their own programmes and priorities, a fact that can lead to tensions between them. The country of origin, the host country, and the UNHCR are the most important actors in the process of return and reintegration and those with the primary responsibility. In particular when government institutions are weak, UNHCR often takes up a leading role in the return process. Besides these main actors there are various other international, national, and regional stakeholders involved in the return process and influence the sustainability of return and reintegration.

The role of UNHCR

UNHCR has become a major player in the process of repatriation, and it regards PRS today as a mainstream policy priority (Jamal, 2008, p. 143). While

UNHCR was once established to protect refugees and to deal mainly with humanitarian issues, it has been directly involved in political matters by bringing together host and origin governments through tripartite agreements (Harrell-Bond, 1989, p. 46). However, while refugees are sometimes mentioned in these agreements, their views are often not taken into account (Long, 2013b, p. 189). UNHCR regards most of its reintegration activities as short-term (UNHCR, 2008, p. 10), yet it also considers reintegration a necessity. This is problematic because reintegration is often a long process and short-term solutions are not always sufficient to guarantee sustainable peace and reintegration.

UNHCR recognises today that its responsibility does not end when returnees have crossed a border (UNHCR, 1996, p. 5). The UN General Assembly widened UNHCR's mandate in the mid-1980s to include assistance for the process of rehabilitation and to guarantee that return is sustainable. UNHCR's function of promoting and facilitating the voluntary repatriation of refugees has also been affirmed (1996 p. 6). UNHCR's role has expanded in the last decade, with an increase in the scope of its reintegration work (Macrae, 1999, p. 1). Also, UNHCR has lately adopted a regional approach towards voluntary, safe and dignified return (UNHCR, 2008, p. 5f.).

Humanitarian actors and those involved in development take different approaches when responding to protracted situations of forced displacement (Mattner, 2008, p. 112). Humanitarian actors are traditionally called upon in emergencies and conflict situations, while development actors assist in post-conflict situations. However, as outlined above, conflicts are often protracted and tend to erupt more than once. More often than not, there is no identifiable clear-cut boundary between conflict and post-conflict. When this is the case, a division between humanitarian and development assistance and actors is not very helpful as the development aspect cannot always be differentiated from the humanitarian one. UNHCR does not consider itself a "development agency". Yet, more involvement in the reintegration process of displaced persons has resulted in an increased focus on development. UNHCR, in consequence, emphasises that reintegration

activities should not neglect the development perspective (UNHCR, 2008, p. 6). Development actors, such as United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), too, have lately seen the necessity to co-operate directly with humanitarian agencies, such as UNHCR, to address both humanitarian and development needs at the same time (Mattner, 2008, p. 112).

To strengthen this co-operation, UNHCR, adopted a new Framework for Durable Solutions in 2003 (Mattner, 2008, p. 114). Within this policy framework, UNHCR started the so-called 4Rs approach of repatriation, reintegration, rehabilitation and reconstruction (Mattner, 2008, p. 115). An inter-agency approach that addresses the full cycle of return and reintegration has to integrate and co-ordinate a larger number of agencies and tasks. Experts (Lippman & Malik, 2004) point out that the concept is not always easily implemented, as it requires the right mix of leadership, national ownership, flexibility, and the right tools. It is, furthermore, challenging to follow the 4Rs approach in areas of return where prospective partners are not present because they are not considered a priority for development or reconstruction agencies (Duffield, Diagne, & Tennant, 2008, p. 12f.). “Development-oriented assistance” as Krause (2012, p. 16) calls it, bridges the gap between relief and development and has considerable potential for the displaced and the hosts. It also includes the provision of aid to local communities. Although Krause (2012) focusses mainly on the host country, her reasoning can also be applied to the return context.

The host country and the country of origin

The role of UNHCR and its priorities depend on the capacities of the state as well as that of other actors, such as the host government, the country of origin, NGOs and other bilateral or multilateral agencies (Slaughter & Crisp, 2008). The main responsibilities of the host country are to respect and guarantee the principle of non-refoulement and to protect refugees according to international law and standards, including the principle of voluntary return (UNHCR, 1996). However, as outlined above, host governments often put pressure on refugees to return. These pressures arise because of the unwillingness of host countries to fund and support DPs or because situations in the

host country are fragile (Macrae, 1999, p. 28).

In addition, the decision about whether and for how long a fear of persecution is well founded (and thus a reason for asylum) is usually made by state authorities that base their decision on objective changes at the macro-level in the country of origin, disregarding the subjective assessment of the person concerned (cf. Chimni, 1999, p. 6). Stein (1994, p. 52) goes even further, stating, “most [...] repatriations occur under conflict, without a decisive political event such as national independence, without any change in the regime or the conditions that originally caused flight,” implying that displaced persons and returnees are particularly vulnerable and reintegration processes are hindered.

But it is not only the host country that needs to assume its responsibility in the return process, the country of origin also plays a major part in the return process to guarantee just return and reintegration. According to international law, the country of origin has the main responsibility in the reintegration process, Koser (2008), too, states that the principal responsibility for guaranteeing safety and justice for the displaced upon return lies with the national government. This responsibility includes the protection of the displaced once they have returned, the responsibility of providing them with the necessary documents for re-entering their home country and for travelling within the country of origin (UNHCR, 1996). Countries of origin do not always assume this role due to economic and political constraints.¹⁸

One also has to bear in mind that governments are not homogenous actors. They are composed of regional and national actors, competing ministries, political parties whose national politics might result in opposing views and priorities that influence refugee policies. Sometimes, “home” governments push for repatriation because refugees undermine their legitimacy or reputation or to reduce a military threat stemming from exiled refugees. For instance in the cases of Ethiopia and Djibouti or Rwanda and the

¹⁸ \ Statistically, countries that rank low on the Human Development Index (HDI) are much more likely to cause forced displacement, both internally and internationally. These countries are not always in a good position to manage the return process in accordance with international human rights. Besides, also the motives behind the demand for repatriation by the country of origin have to be closely scrutinised..

DRC (cf. Black & Koser, 1999). In addition, as returnees often return to countries with weak government structures, their reintegration process can be difficult (UNHCR, 2008, p. 6), especially if the local communities are not receptive to the returnees.

The local communities

The relation between DPs and hosts is often an ambiguous mix of generosity and hospitality on the one hand and suspicion and exploitation on the other (Jacobsen & Rudolf, 2015). Even in an extremely long lasting conflict like that of the DRC, the level of solidarity with refugees and IDPs is exceptionally high (Simpson & Sawyer, 2010, p. 35–37). This represents a significant social capital in regard to local integration. In general it can be said that the choice of destination, and the likelihood of successful integration into the new location depend in part on existing social networks; particularly networks that were developed during other waves of displacement. Such networks generate integration opportunities: According to a comparative UNHCR study that documented 17 hosting experiences in eleven countries, “IDPs in host families and communities usually find greater opportunities for work, business, food production, education and socialization, among other advantages, than those confined to camps” (Davies, 2012, p. 10). Davies (*ibid.*) speaks of host families as the “silent NGO”.

According to observations in the DRC, a few hosts profit from the presence of DPs—they take advantage of the fact that DPs have to sell their labour cheap or even for free in exchange for a place to stay, or a plot of ground to cultivate. Yet most of the time the economic situation of hosts deteriorates: Tensions between IDPs and host families often arise due to lack of resources and services, such as firewood, water, and sanitation facilities. This can also be seen in the case of Liberia where tension rose because of unequal treatment between returnees and stayees, i.e. the local population. Sometimes, the source of tension is even more basic—too many mouths to feed. The poorer the household the greater the strains additional household members put on hosts. Malnutrition rises, family tensions multiply, space gets even more

crowded. This means that families may run out of food and subsequently of seeds (which in the DRC or Casamance, for instance, have to be eaten instead of being saved for the next planting season). Observations in the Casamance and DRC show that gender roles are challenged, divorces, family split ups and domestic violence rises in situations of protracted conflict. DP families sometimes share a few square metres with a dozen of people, living in poor hygienic conditions (Rudolf, 2012, 2014).

The above-mentioned, usually high level of solidarity with individual DPs in the DRC is, nevertheless, strained by various consequences most autochthons consider negative (Rudolf, 2014): As one consequence of massive displacement, whole neighbourhoods in Goma, DRC, are reported to deteriorate as more people are cramped into less space. Prices for land and commodities rise while the labour market is saturated and wages are low—social cohesion diminishes. The development of infrastructure does not match the numbers of IDPs in hosting communities, and the subsequent increase in people living in town impairs the access and quality of basic services. The local population blames DPs in and outside of camps for being responsible for the increase in insecurity, prostitution, and intergroup hostilities while DPs accuse locals of exploitation and discrimination. This observation seems to be exemplary for a general pattern according to various other case studies (cf. Crisp, 2000; Davies, 2012, p. 7f.).

The same challenges and potentials can be observed in the relation of returnees and locals even though competition on scarce resources and intergroup tensions often have a different quality due to the course of conflict and its effects (see below). Just as it does in the integration process in the host country, the local population also plays an important role in the return and reintegration process. Long (2013b) speaks of repatriation as a “community process” that involves various groups of people and stakeholders. As Rogge underlines, the response of the local population to the returnees is essential and determines the success of their reintegration. For example, “... if local chiefs are supportive of return, then an array of response strategies will be available from within the

community [...]. If there is no support, or if local people are hostile to the returnees, then the reintegration process will be seriously impeded” (1994, p. 46). Therefore, the local population also has to be included in the return process to prevent renewed tensions between the returnees and stayees.

The NGOs

NGOs¹⁹ play a monitoring role for the needs of the DPs and returnees and are able to sensitise responsible authorities about these needs, particularly in situations of spontaneous return (Rogge, 1994). Yet NGOs—even within the currently applied cluster system—often face problems of co-ordination and thus are not always able to advocate for the needs of DPs effectively. Humanitarian NGOs are confronted with the challenge to establish protection, non-food items, or food programmes as quickly and as effectively as possible. NGOs are often attributed a corrective role within international aid—they are regarded to be the voice of civil society. Still, their work is often limited to care and maintaining approaches (cf. Büscher & Vlassenroot, 2010). Due to the framework established by conditions and guidelines of donors, the United Nations, and national regulations, NGOs are subject to mostly the same limitations to thinking and acting outside the box as other international actors.

Most repatriation programmes are traditionally confined to fulfilling immediate consumption needs of returnees instead of initiating development processes (Chimni, 1999). This means that NGOs, in principle, also suffer from the missing link between development and humanitarian actors. Yet it is also due to the work of NGOs that today this is changing: Different, more complete, return kits are distributed, and often efforts are made to accompany return with the building of infrastructure, by providing livestock,

vocational trainings, medical care, education, and by supporting mediation and reconciliation processes, etc. for an intermediate period of time. NGOs “... tend to have an unrivalled familiarity with local conflict environments and close contacts with grassroots movements” (Koser, 2008) and could contribute this expertise into the peacebuilding and reintegration process for the benefit of all.

19 \ NGOs are very heterogeneous and their role goes well beyond the aspect that is highlighted here. It should therefore be kept in mind that national and international NGOs act on a local, nationwide or international level. They are embedded socially on varying degrees, yet they usually indeed have a catalyst, intermediary role integrating their beneficiaries into broader social movement (Grawert, 2009). The responsibility to integrate voices of beneficiaries and to provide space for their participation can nevertheless not be made an exclusive obligation of NGOs - it should also remain a concern for governments and international institutions.

4. Repatriation and Peace Agreements: Impact and Challenges

The implementation of repatriation efforts can also be highly problematic. A particular challenge repatriation faces lies in the fact that numerous displacements have lasted for so long that a whole generation has grown up in camps or exile. Furthermore, it can be difficult for aid agencies to identify returnees, especially those who have settled spontaneously and independently (Allen & Morsink, 1994, p. 22) in the country of return. It is also not always easy to provide assistance to and to keep track of returnees that move on or move back into exile. The key challenges identified in the literature until today will be discussed below.

4.1 Land issues, labour market, and urbanisation

Land rights often lie at the heart of conflict and displacement. Interdependencies of land governance, identification, and conflict have been re-emerging issues across protracted conflicts and situations of PFD in the Global South²⁰. The conflicts range from disputes between nations, or armed groups over fertile or mineral-rich areas to disputes between neighbouring communities and individuals over the boundaries that separate their farms or homes. At the very root of conflicts in various post-colonial contexts are often historical asymmetries in resource allocation and inequalities in access to land. Institutions that have been formed to uphold such a system exacerbate this imbalance: Consequently, disputes are more likely to be resolved by violent, extra-judicial means rather than through democratically legitimised institutions. To exclude competitors, align allies and raise group cohesion, certain interest groups instrumentalise ethnicity. Power and resources are eventually accumulated by violence (Eckert, Elwert, Gosztanyi, & Zitelmann, 1999; Elwert, 1999; Schlee, 2000; von Trotha, 2004).²¹

20 \ Generalisations are always difficult as contradicting cases can usually be found. The generalisations are hypotheses that draw upon a certain number of documents consulted for this desk review—they are working hypothesis to be tested in the field in the study to come.

21 \ Besides the rise of violence, the population that does not opt for armed resistance is affected by disputes about land and resources as follows: (i) A diminished access to land or other natural resources decreases income opportunities for herders and farmers, miners and timber workers, etc. significantly; (ii) in consequence, the affected popula-

In other words, the question of return is mostly determined by conditions in the country or region of origin. During protracted conflicts, warlords and other entrepreneurs of violence²² manage to reallocate land and resources. Such allocation processes either directly cause displacements or take place after displacements have occurred and when a third group profits from the situation. In both cases, persons or groups profit directly from displacement and would, in turn, see these profits diminish in the case of return. The continued interest of the ones who profit and their presence in the area of origin is therefore an obstacle to return and a cause for PFD. The shift of resources means that large parts of the population have lost their property, farmlands, cattle ranges, and livelihoods. Entrepreneurs of violence are able to maintain their claim on land and other resources, because they are still in charge, successfully lobbying the government, or because they are already part of the political elite (Reno, 1999; Simpson & Sawyer, 2010, p. 67ff.).

Land rights, resources, and dynamics of violence

The historic roots and the current political economy of conflict are decisive factors for the sustainability of any repatriation process. Some factors that challenge sustainability are the fact that the authority of a government or customary leader to allocate, manage, and defend resources is contested. A weak jurisdiction, too, cannot resolve disputes that arise from this void, and finally violent means enable actors to pursue their interest and allocate resources successfully (Pugh, Copper, & Goodhand, 2004; Reno, 1999). As long as these root causes of conflict remain unchallenged, it is highly unlikely that repatriation will lead to a lasting peace. It is, on the contrary, more likely that the conditions will reproduce the dynamics of violence. The defence of community interests, access to resources and land rights in such a context is often closely linked to the (re-)emergence of armed

tions look for alternative income opportunities; (iii) this accelerates displacement in general and urbanisation in particular. Displacement resulting from the loss of rural income opportunities has been accelerating the process of urbanisation (Rudolf 2014).

22 \ The discussion about warlords, markets of violence, and rational actors in wartime is diverse and far from settled (see below). We do not intend to solve this debate. As a theoretical perspective it is still helpful to assume that violence evolves within an internal logic of action.

groups and so-called warlords. This situation fosters violence, blocks efforts of peacebuilding and makes a process of sustainable repatriation that addresses the root causes of PFD more difficult.

Having these factors in mind, helps to better understand various stalemates and concerns of the affected population in exile in regard to return: Beyond official peace agreements or political declarations on the safety of return, various other factors influence the decisions of displaced groups vis-a-vis so-called durable solutions and broader political and peace-making processes. These factors are property rights (land and other resources such as mining or fishing rights.) and access to justice respectively guarantees for these rights in the place of destination. For returnees, it is often difficult to find a job because they are discriminated against. In South Sudan, Grab-ska observes a “...discrimination against ... returnees by those that stayed here” (2014, p. 106-108). Another problem is that the violent actors that have caused displacement are often opposed to the return of DPs. According to UNICEF, “land occupation [in the DRC] is one of the major obstacles to IDP return...” (Simpson & Sawyer, 2010, pp. 67-68). Cases where return has been causing new waves of tensions are no exceptions. In such cases, return eventually leads to conflict between the displaced and local communities, as well as among the returnees where women, orphans and unaccompanied children are reported to be in a particularly weak position to recover property” (Koser, 2008).

Diversification and adaptation

The principal activity of many displaced persons in the least developed countries that are plagued by protracted conflicts—such as South Sudan, the DRC, Afghanistan, Colombia—prior to displacement has typically been agriculture. Those, who have not been involved directly, have either been engaged with agricultural activities on a part-time basis or have been indirectly benefitting from activities of family members in this field. After displacement, it is essential for DPs who reside outside camps and for many who live inside camps to include farming in their livelihood portfolio in order to assure that access to staple does not depend entirely on unreliable monetary income.

Just as before displacement, agricultural products are shared with family members and neighbours in the camp or hosting arrangement. It is due to farming only that many DPs are able to cope during periods of non-assistance, and, they take great risks to access their fields, as is the case in the DRC, for instance (cf. Simpson & Sawyer, 2010, pp. 41-43).

DPs are often reluctant to return because they do not want to risk a livelihood model that, according to their experience, is more resilient to recurring shocks characteristic for protracted conflicts than their former income generating activities. This means that conditions to engage in activities such as trade in one specific market, agriculture on one specific field, herding, mining, etc. in one specific site have changed. To rely on one source of income only, engage in one principal livelihood has made DPs too vulnerable in the past. DPs in exile have to bridge the urban-rural, host-origin, legal-illegal divide to cope with the pressures of PFD. The DRC is exemplary for this pattern: IDPs survive by adapting the division of work and by innovating livelihood activities. In urban areas, for example, livelihoods are volatile and jobs are harder to get (especially for unqualified labour) due to the increased supply of manpower as a result of massive displacement (Alix-Garcia & Bartlett, 2015; Norwegian Refugee Council, 2014). Due to the influx of DPs, prices for commodities typically go up while wages go down.²³ Therefore, a majority of people have to depend on various revenues and diverse livelihoods. Households adopt several livelihood strategies—usually keeping their traditional livelihood when possible (agricultural activities remain necessary in addition to a salaried job, see above)—that are carried out by different members of the household. Divisions and variations of activities are often organised within family networks and take place on a rural-urban or urban-semi urban axis.

²³ \ These circumstances describe conditions in a specific place and time. The development of prices for commodities and houses depend on a variety of other factors, too. The Congolese example can nevertheless be regarded as exemplifying a general pattern: In Sudan e.g. prices for housing went up because the influx of IDPs brought with it a number of international NGOs who needed housing (Alix-Garcia, Bartlett, and Saah, 2012). Research in Darfur in Sudan showed that the labour market became saturated with low-skill workers, and that households' wealth decreased in general—contrary to the fate of high-skilled workers whose services were more in demand than before displacements occurred (Alix-Garcia and Bartlett, 2015).

IDPs adapt to the protracted conflict with multiple residencies to have a foot in both the rural and the urban area (Rudolf, 2014).

The DRC example shows that IDPs—even in the direst conditions—have a considerable amount of agency. Depending on the circumstances, agency can have different outlets. Malkki (1995) observes that camp residents and urban DPs had developed contradicting everyday strategies in regard to identification and integration, return and assimilation. If the geography allows it, DP’s activities often transcend international borders. They furthermore, try to acquire dual citizenship or disguise their status to assure independent livelihoods (Daley, 2013). Illicit activities may also grow considerably in camps or urban settlements of DPs, especially drug and alcohol production/trade, smuggling, small arms trade, gang criminality, and prostitution. These behaviours are mostly a response to lack of assistance and limited access to income-generating activities (cf. Simpson & Sawyer, 2010, p. 41).

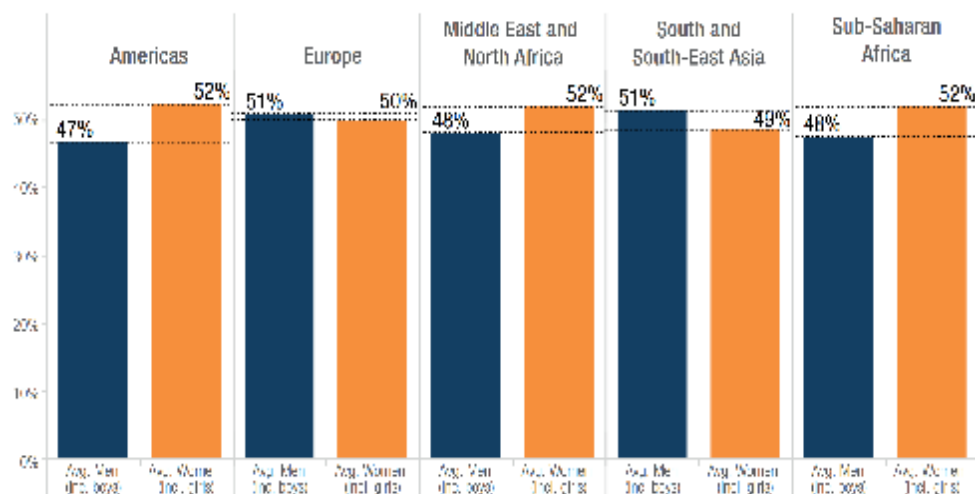
4.2 Gender, age and vulnerability

DPs are far from being a homogenous group. They are as heterogenous and diverse as the societies they come from. The ratio of men and women who are IDPs reflects that of the general population (see figure 6). It is the nature of generalisations that they do not necessarily reflect the fate of individuals. Situations of constraints do not eliminate agency of actors—there is, on the contrary, a high amount of creativity and inventiveness (e.g. in Africa cf. de Bruijn, van Dijk, & Foeken, 2001). Despite the sheer overwhelming structural obstacles that DPs are confronted with, actors develop a high level of strength and resilience. The challenges that boys, girls, men and women, elderly and vulnerable persons manage to adapt to require differentiated analyses and different responses (Inter-Agency Standing Committee, 2006).

Changing roles of men and women

Conflict and displacement change the roles of men and women and shake the traditional balance (Slegh, Barker, & Shand, 2012). Men cannot perform their traditional role as head of family because they are expected to fight (and often die as a result).

Figure 6
Disaggregated data: Sex of IDPs by region



Source: IDMC, Norwegian Refugee Council 2015, p. 13)

Women, who assume the role of father and mother in consequence, take on more responsibilities, diversify their activities, and contribute more to the family than before. On the one hand, this has a positive impact on the economic situation, personal freedom, and social independence for these women. Yet this challenges the position of men upon their return from fighting, and they have difficulties to live up to their expected social duty, which, in turn has dramatic effects on the relation between the two sexes (cf. Bannon & Correia, 2006). Several reports note a rise in domestic violence, divorces, and broken families in situations of PFD (Eriksson Baaz & Stern, 2010; Rudolf, 2012; UN Women, 2006). Also, gender-related cultural norms may change during exile, and this may complicate reintegration after return. For example, when South Sudanese refugee women returned, they were beaten up by police for wearing “tight trousers, mini-skirts and fitted t-shirts” (Grabska, 2014, p. 4), as in exile instead of traditional long skirts as in South Sudan.

The image of men and that of masculinity has become more and more nuanced in conflict research. Attention used to be directed towards men as perpetrators, but more recently, men as victims of violence have also come into the focus (Bannon & Correia, 2006; Slegel et al., 2012). Men traditionally have to provide for the family. Men are expected to act as the head of family households, a position that is based on the command over land, livestock and other resources. Due to this arrangement, men have a lot to lose when they are displaced, as the example of Afghan refugees shows. It is extremely difficult for them to uphold their position and status after displacement (Schetter, 2012). The situation is aggravated by the constraints of a life in displacement (cf. Rudolf, 2012).

Most Western donors usually focus on women’s vulnerability, and aid programs habitually address their special situation in PFD (cf. Carpenter, 2005). These programmes unfortunately do not always address women’s concerns as embedded in a larger (gender) context and thus worsen the imbalance between men and women (cf. Porter & Sweetman, 2005). Beyond any doubt, age and gender play important roles in regard to the impact of displacement on people’s vulnerabilities. The challenge is to disaggregate

these factors and to individually tackle one by one.

The problematic situation of women (cf. Bouta, Frerks and Bannon, 2005) that has to be addressed in repatriation programmes is embedded in the larger social context of a gendered division of labour. Women are particularly vulnerable when they have to provide for a family alone. The status of single mothers, as a consequence of the conflict, varies according to the region the woman lives in, her ethnicity, religion, and status. Women in the Global South often have a higher workload and fewer rights than men (cf. Bouta, Frerks and Bannon, 2005). They are often not entitled to inherit or own land, they have lower levels of education and are less well informed about their rights. They are less likely to pursue their civil rights—partly because they generally do not hold legal documents (birth or marriage certificates, etc.). Traditionally, women are engaged in activities, with high security risks, such as fetching water or firewood. Women and girls who are raped are often discriminated against. They may be abandoned by their families, having to bring up their children alone. All these structural discriminatory practices exacerbate their suffering during PFD and hamper the integration of women in the labour market back home.

Assessing vulnerable groups

Age is also an important factor in defining the vulnerability of individuals in situations of PFD as the specific needs of elderly persons and children need to be addressed during repatriation. In conflict, children suffer in manifold ways: they are made orphans, child soldiers, they are traumatised victims whose families were killed, whose schools were burnt, and whose future has been stolen (Mooney & French, 2005; Oh, 2011; UNHCR, 2005-2007). Many children in conflicts/ situations of PFD work from an early age to support their families. Yet, being outside the custody of schools or families is often very risky for children. Just as women, children are less likely to know and demand their civil and human rights. Special programmes addressing the needs of children are therefore obligatory. Besides children, it is the elderly who also show high levels of vulnerability. They are hard hit by the loss of land and relatives—both often the only reliable social support systems for elderly persons.

Age, just like gender, cannot be per se be equated with vulnerability or a low level of agency—these factors have to be interrelated with others. Still, both age and gender have to be addressed adequately as these vulnerable groups are often less able to raise their voice than others. The social changes that occurred during or after a situation of displacement considering the identity, self-image, sense of belonging, or social role of individuals are crucial for integration and reintegration perspectives for DPs. Displacement is a dynamic process of social change that cannot simply be reversed (e.g. by sending young urban refugees back to their homeland to take up agricultural livelihoods). Urban DPs are largely ignored yet a significant number of refugees stays in urban areas (18 per cent compared to 28 per cent who live in camps) (Jacobsen, 2006). This does not include IDPs, and in all likelihood the number is even higher than estimated.

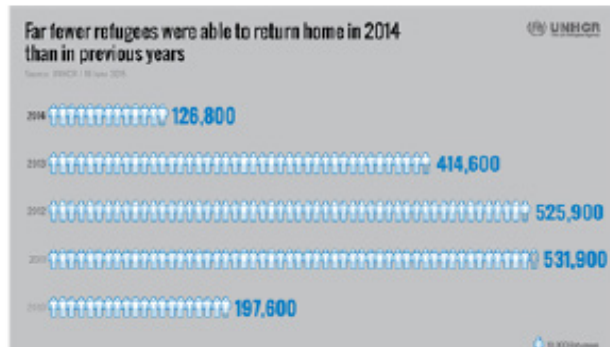
Programmes for DPs have to be able to look beyond cross-cutting categories such as age and gender. Those categories do not constitute needs per se. There must be a differentiated assessment of needs according to the situation, to protect the most vulnerable individuals. Otherwise, such programmes threaten to undermine successful repatriation measures in the long run—cf. the above-mentioned Liberian case. A generalisation of the role of young women, for example, is not always helpful as they may not only be a mother but may, according to local gender perspectives, belong to different categories with different rights and roles. Children and the elderly, who have to depend on others, are also a separate category. In most parts of Sub-Saharan Africa, for instance, young men often constitute a different category than older men, as working and earning a living is usually considered the crucial distinctive feature of manhood. As individuals who are not fully integrated into society as (social) adults, the young men are therefore more at risk of engaging in violent conflict as they aim to achieve manhood, or social adulthood. Criminal armed gangs recruit young men today for illegal activities simply because they are available and cannot find other sources of income. This can create situations of insecurity and cause another challenge for PFD and return (e.g. Sierra Leone, see Fanthorpe & Maconachie, 2010; Peters & Richards, 1998)

4.3 Security, homeland and social change

Besides return and reintegration, security is another major challenge for situations of PFD. Three main sources of insecurity have been identified in the forced displacement literature on return until today: the security situation 1) in the host region of displaced persons; 2) of the passage of return for displaced persons and 3) once the displaced persons have returned. These three are, however, often interlinked and cannot always be clearly separated.

Because of fear of rising insecurity in the host country, host governments, for example in Kenya, try to encourage refugees to return (cf. Crisp, 2000). Forcing displaced persons to return before the conflict has subsided in their home region might expose the returnees to insecurity again and might eventually re-ignite the conflict. Thus fears of insecurity in the host region can be linked to insecurity in the home region. Insecurity in the DRC, for instance, is no abstract likelihood, but first-hand experience of abuse, rape, mutilation, and torture for persons of every age and gender. Indeed, protracted conflict in this region also means that the traumatising experience of loss is repeated over and over again: Houses are burnt, livestock killed, harvest lost, stock looted, household items stolen, money and goods are given to armed groups in order to save lives or to spare children from recruitment. Resources and opportunities to re-establish livelihoods diminish after each incident. Future prospects to recover dwindle in consequence: Seeds kept for the next season are eaten during the moments of crisis. Fields are not cultivated due to the insecurity. Charcoal cannot be produced and sold for extra cash due to the insecurity in the forest. Recurrent waves of violence lead to recurrent waves of displacement. This DRC-specific context is, with nuances, exemplary for many other protracted conflicts. As outlined in section 3.3, people often return before safety is guaranteed, although they should not. Moreover, who decides when it is safe? The perception of safety can vary between actors and can depend on their objectives. In 2014, less people returned than in previous years (cf. figure 7). One reason could have been the perceived lack of security in the place of origin.

Figure 7
Number of refugee returns from 2010 to 2014



Insecurity in the place of refuge

The fact that refugees can cause security concerns in the host country if not adequately addressed has lately been pointed out in the refugee literature (Bohnet, 2015; Rügger, 2013; Salehyan & Gleditsch, 2006). Refugees are no longer regarded as victims of insecurity but as threats to security (cf. Mogire, 2011; Muggah, 2006). Not least since the Rwanda refugee crisis in the 1990s, refugee scholars and policymakers alike have indicated that refugees could cause negative externalities and militarisation (cf. Lebson, 2013; Lischer, 2005). Because of concerns of rising insecurity in the host countries, displaced persons, especially those in PFD, are therefore often regarded through “a security prism”. Refugees are, consequently, not welcomed and thus, host governments no longer promote local integration but return as a solution.

Entrepreneurs of violence profit from the PFD situations in the area of origin and in the place of refuge: Besides the allocation of resources and the forceful recruitment of manpower in the area of origin (see above), violent actors benefit wherever a culture of threat and intimidation is combined with an absence of rule of law (Rudolf, 2012, 2013). Once patterns of violent appropriation become internalised by individuals, they influence perpetrators and victims alike. The residents are victims of crime that plagues their

camp. DPs (i) are exploited as cheap manpower, for legal and illegal activities (cf. Chalamwong, Thabchumpon and Chantavanich, 2013; Norwegian Refugee Council, 2014; Rudolf, 2014), (ii) are used to recruit, hide and nurse members of armed groups (Achvarina and Reich, 2006; Choi & Salehyan, 2013; Crisp & Jacobsen, 1998), (iii) can be taken as hostages (cf. Boutroue, 1998; Pottier, 1999), and (iv) guarantee the influx of benefits from (inter)national aid (cf. Barber, 1997; Büscher and Vlassenroot, 2010; Macrae, 1999). Yet camp residents cannot be seen as mere victims, their role is ambiguous, as they are both suffering from and creating these conditions.

It is thus certain that there will be a strong resistance to change from actors who benefit from illicit activities, distortions, etc. Any risk assessment before a planned repatriation has to consider the entire socio-economic and political context in areas of origin and of displacement. Otherwise, resistance from beneficiaries of land-grabs and all individuals who fear that they can no longer exploit resources in the area of origin as well as from persons whose established profit margins in the host country could be challenged will be unforeseen and unaccounted for. Other factors that have to be taken into account are that the area of return could have been used as retreat areas and safe haven for armed groups, or that after demobilisation, formerly opposed groups have to live together. Taking these elements of mediation and reconciliation into consideration could possibly help to foresee arising tensions between the stayees and returnees.

Returnees in the place of origin

This third issue of insecurity related to return has been particularly emphasised by the DDR literature (see, for example: Conoir and Verna, 2006), although refugee and conflict scholars recently also have underlined that refugee return could create security implications. Within the project at PRIO “Going Home to Fight? Explaining Refugee Return and Violence” led by Kristian Hapviken²⁴, Lischer (2011), for example, shows for Rwanda that previously

²⁴ \ See, for more information: <https://www.prio.org/Projects/Project/?x=843>, extracted on 5 June 2015.

militarised refugees could engage in political violence upon return. She demonstrates that the negative impact of refugee return depends on the “mechanism of socialisation, defined as transformative learning and the development of worldviews” (Lischer, 2011, p. 261). However, her study, as well as others, has mainly been focussing on militarised refugee situations in exile, but not on those returnees coming from no previous experience of fighting. Consequently, gaps remain in understanding the role of returnees in peace processes. More needs to be known about the way in which they destabilise or stabilise the process.

Ethnic minority return has received some attention in the refugee literature and has been argued to cause insecurity of returnees (cf. Adelman, 2002). It has been recognised that power relations of ethnic groups, and ethnic relations between refugees and local populations are important for determining the risk of conflict (cf. Rüegger, 2013). Yet the question how returnees fit into the picture has not been analysed in much detail. Nevertheless, it has been recognised that returning people to areas where they are marked as ethnic minorities or have little prospect of reintegration can generally be problematic and constitutes a break of the UNHCR guidelines (Black and Koser, 1999; Cederman, Gleditsch and Buhaug, 2013). Nonetheless, for example in Bosnia-Herzegovina, minority return was specifically promoted as a means to “right the wrong” of “ethnic cleansing” (Black, 2006, p. 28). UNHCR’s ‘open cities’ project specifically rewarded areas that encouraged minority return with additional aid in Bosnia-Herzegovina (UNHCR, 1997: 21, quoted in Black, 2002, p. 131).

Since “Yugoslavia,” many conflicts are said to have been caused by deep ethnic hatred. This so-called primordial argumentation assumes that ethnic identities and antagonisms between such ethnic groups are fixed and that after the Cold War, the lid was taken off these boiling tensions and ethnic wars re-emerged (Wimmer, Goldstone, Horowitz, Joras & Schetter, 2004). Contrary to this assumption, ethnic identities have proven to be changing and (to a certain degree) flexible. This means that over time the

identification with an ethnic group or the homeland of such groups in PFD is likely to change.

Especially for generations that have spent large parts of their life in exile, the concept of ‘home’ is not straightforward. “It is intimately linked to concepts of identity and memory as much as territory and place. Home can be made, re-made, imagined, remembered or desired; it can refer as much to beliefs, customs or traditions as physical places or buildings. Most important, as a concept it is something that is subject to constant reinterpretation and flux, just as identities are renegotiated (Black, 2002, p. 126).

Identity and belonging

Home usually includes more than a physical location: It can be a community associated with that place (Bakewell, 1999), it might be a location within the country of origin, or a group of persons, it might even be a viable national economic base anywhere in the world (Koser and Black, 1999, p. 7). Meanings of home change over time. The places referred to as home change, too: “The home country and its society may have changed beyond all recognition and [the refugees] themselves will have been changed during their exile” (Bakewell, 1999, p. 3). Home, belonging and identification are closely related concepts: “The scale at which home is defined may be manipulated according to the identity with which it is to be associated, and the extent of power held by the person or group that is defining it” (Black, 2002, p. 127).

DPs are in a position similar to migrants—they are detached more and more from the country of origin and at the same time exposed more and more to the realities of the host country. This also means that the conditions in exile, the relations to compatriots in camps or local settlements and to the host community shape their image of home, ideas about belonging, and ultimately the identity? of each individual (Bakewell, 1999, p. 3-4). Research has proven that time changes the attitude towards the “homeland”. Especially second-generation refugees are unlikely to want to return (Chimni, 1999). PFD situations are defined as putting the individual into a state of limbo, meaning that it is difficult for DPs to decide on the

level of integration in everyday life: Which language, which school system, which education, vocational training, which base for an enterprise, which business model, network etc. should be pursued—the one of the home country or the one of the host? Experiences during displacement and in the host country transform social and economic relationships, gender roles, and others, and have an impact on the case of return (see above and Lopez Zarzosa, 1998).

The concept “homeland”

The fluidity of the concept of “home” is opposed to the idea that all DPs have the will to return. Surveys among refugees found out that “the more distant ‘home’ is in time or space, or the more unlikely or impractical a return ‘home’ might be, the stronger that group’s identification with, and yearning for, such a return becomes” (Black, 2002, p. 126). This glorification is “based on nostalgia for a past that cannot be recreated” (Bakewell, 1999, p. 4). As with migrants or diaspora groups around the world, this point of reference is crucial for the notion of belonging and the enduring identification of community members. Various examples in history and current migrant studies show the gap between expectations and experiences in regard to return. Black stresses that policymakers should therefore evaluate the discourse of DPs cautiously.

After secession wars, people may be expected to return to newly founded countries they have never lived in before (former Yugoslavia, Eritrea) (Black & Koser, 1999). Malkki (1995) observed in her study on Burundian refugees in Tanzania that those in camps created a myth of the Hutu nation in exile and awaited their return to their land while those who self-settled in a Tanzanian border town integrated well and denied their Burundian origins (quoted in Bakewell, 1999, p. 3f.). This example shows the ambiguity of homeland and group identities, which usually have become strongly politicised throughout the conflict and forced displacement (cf. forced redistribution of ethnically mixed populations like in former Yugoslavia, Black, 2002, p. 125). Not always do repatriation programmes address intergroup dynamics. They usually focus assistance on the individual or household level.

Repatriation programmes often leave it open, which kind of unit returnees are meant to reintegrate into. This neglect of the differences in understandings of home is one of the key underlying causes of manifold difficulties faced in repatriation programmes (Black, 2002, p. 124).

5. Practical Insights: Conditions and Consequences of Return

Based on the review of existing literature, the following two sections provide an overview of the factors that have commonly been assigned a central role in the return process. These considerations can be divided into factors that precede the actual return (5.1), and factors that are thought to be significant for the success of the return process (5.2).

5.1 Preconditions for return

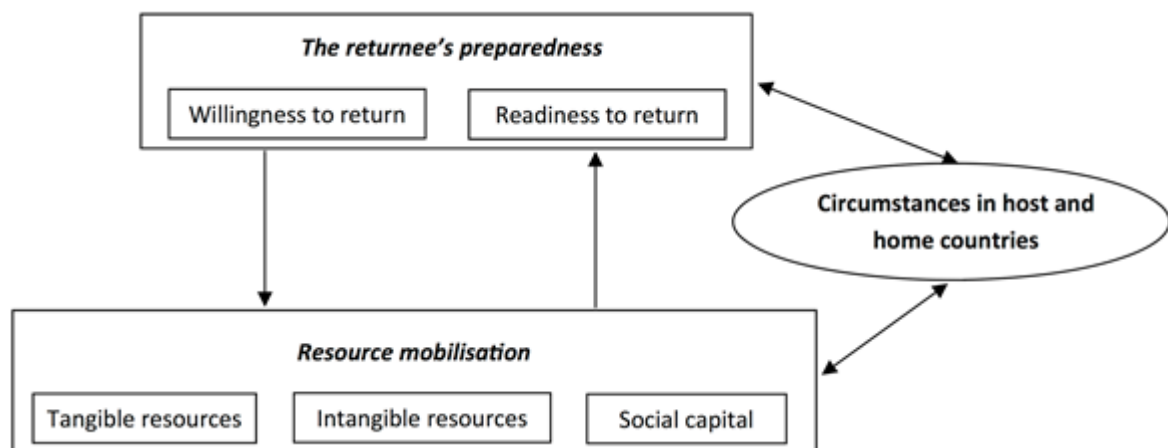
The preconditions for sustainable repatriation and return in general are manifold: political, economic and social factors in the host country and the country of origin, the level of assets and resources that the returnees are able to mobilise (cf. Cassarino, 2004 - figure 8), the level of willingness (cf. 4.3.), the level of integration respectively discrimination of displaced persons in exile or the level of distrust and hostilities after return play a decisive role. This argumentation can also be seen in figure 8 below. An important lesson from past experiences (cf. 3.2.) is that any of these factors can undermine the success of peace agreements and repatriation programmes (cf. 3.3).

Political and economic factors

On the political level, the stability of the government in the country of return, its presence and ability to effectively provide security and establish the rule of law in the area of return affect the success of repatriation. Sustainability depends, in other words, on the capability of governments to enforce the state's monopoly of violence, to frame the legal conditions for resolving land disputes and inequalities that preceded displacement, guarantee justice and make perpetrators accountable (Bradley, 2013, p. 2). Analysts stress that enduring solutions to PFD cannot be found by ignoring the political realm: On the contrary: political solutions are required to solve the causes of PRS (UNHCR, 2004b, p. 4).

Besides the political settings, the economic conditions in the country of return play a decisive role for return: DPs base their decision to return or to stay to a large degree on the possibility of being able to successfully rebuild their livelihoods. In this regard, return is not different from any other migration—individual cost-benefit analysis has a great impact on the choice of DPs to return or not. This is underlined by analyses that have shown how positive change in

Figure 8
Return preparation



Source: Cassarino, 2004, p. 271

the destination areas has an impact on the will to repatriate: According to Wilson and Nunes (1994, p. 22ff.), the general reconstruction of the country of return (in this case Mozambique), especially its economic regeneration, has a much larger impact on repatriation than repatriation assistance to individual households offered by the UNHCR.

Socio-cultural factors

Even though political and economic conditions are held to influence the sustainability of return (cf. figure 8), social factors might be even more decisive: There are strong indications that the agency of returnees plays an important role. For example, education and social capital of returnees are said to be more critical for the decision of DPs to return than is usually acknowledged (Stefanovic, Loizides and Parsons, 2015). Crucial are, in addition, the level of emotional attachment, the actual degree of rule of law, and the quality of reconciliation in/ to the area of return. All these factors have an impact on the will to return to the homeland (cf. above). Return is a process and is not finished when crossing an international border or arriving at one's former place of residence. According to the experience of many DPs, it may involve several cycles of movement and lead to circular migration with processes of secondary or even multiple displacements and re-returns to several places (cf. above).

DPs will try to gradually build up livelihoods after having assessed the odds of success. They usually rely on information provided by their own social networks. Decisive for the commitment to return is therefore the level of security, basic services, economic infrastructure and potential as perceived by DPs. The returnees have to trust in a just implementation of the peace agreement and the reconciliation process (Mander, 2007; Sesay, 2007; Staub, 2006; Theidon, 2006). As disputes over land and resources are usually a major driver of displacement, the question in how far these drivers have been addressed is vital for the prospects to regain livelihoods, political rights, and a life without fear (Fransen & Kuschminder, 2012; Huggins, 2010; Huggins & Clover, 2005).

Repatriation versus return

Many policymakers neglect the question of how DPs evaluate these issues. Policymakers often believe, in parallel to a linear understanding of peace processes, that return is the end of a process (cf. above). They therefore use repatriation and return mostly synonymously instead of defining the former as a third party driven/organised/managed process and the latter as an open development in which the returnee defines start, destination, or end. There is not only a terminological distinction between repatriation as a change from one statutory level or one side of the border to another, and return as a process that is defined by the returnee. Repatriation is a clearly defined programme that is implemented top-down. According to this concept, any return to the host country can only be regarded as a failure of repatriation. If return is, in contrast, not confined by such a linear logic, a new evaluation perspective will come into play: Return becomes an option that needs to be rebuilt. Investments (in vocational trainings) that are related to return; education of children in the school system that corresponds to the area of origin, or vice versa, the decision to opt for multiple residencies and split the family members strategically into different countries, the caution to let only a part of a household return first, the attempts to seek multiple identities, etc.—all these factors can be evaluated as components to build up resilience, diminish dependencies and avoid being trapped in the dichotomy of return or exile.

5.2 Factors influencing the outcomes of return

Yet, even though they are sometimes disguised as humanitarian, refugee policies are mostly determined by non-humanitarian objectives (Chimni, 1999, p. 3). This means that policies are mostly determined by considerations about national protection, economic interests of governments (host and return countries), and to a significant degree also by the interest of donors. The result is in an implicit bias towards the negotiation of interstate agreements (on borders, peace, truce, etc.), conditionalities, and technicalities

of repatriation whereby humanitarian needs are largely neglected and rendered objectives of short-term interventions. The effects of the structural adjustment programmes of the 1980s, which forced poor countries to reduce social public spending and thereby cut the most basic social services, created conflict potential and thus suboptimal conditions for refugee return. The protracted and repeated displacement coupled with diminishing resources put communities under pressure and generated negative perceptions and resentments between groups. This in turn fuels social, in particular ethnic tensions that undermine peaceful cohabitation and increase the risks for future conflicts and violence (e.g. Liberia: Højbjerg, 2012; Great Lakes Region: Lemarchand, 2004; Prunier, 2008).

A UN Secretary General report of 1998 therefore called for “peace friendly adjustment programmes” and pleaded to ease conditionality on loans (UN 1998). Experts underline that it is up to the Development Assistance Committee (DAC) donor governments to create “macro-conditions” that are conducive to peace, development and thus, potentially, for refugee return (Chimni, 1999). They also suggest that the conditions in exile, specifically the degree of self-reliance of refugees, are the most important variables influencing reintegration (Wilson & Nunes, 1994). The experience of displacement and the subsequent struggle to survive has often led to an increase in vocational skills, social competences, trade networks and a diversification of livelihood activities (Rudolf, 2014). These adaptation processes could be fostered. In this context, another lesson learned that is highlighted in the literature, is to avoid a feed and shelter or care and maintenance approach (Milner and Loescher, 2011, p. 15) and so-called warehousing, a practice where refugees are kept in protracted situations of restricted mobility and are denied to work (Smith, 2004). It is a safety risk and a potential source for conflict in camps, host countries and neighbouring regions. If neglected, PFD in general and PRS in particular are, in other words, eventually future security risks: “protracted refugee situations are a driving force of ongoing grievances, instability and insurgency. In some cases protracted refugee situations ... may

have been the principal source or catalyst for conflict rather than a mere consequence” (Loescher & Milner, 2008, p. 5). Instead of a feed and shelter approach most experts recommend an assisted self-reliance approach for the DPs that is accompanied by visible benefits for the host country/communities, such as basic services and infrastructure and an approach to repatriation that takes security, property and reconciliation issues in the area of return seriously.

Insights on the displacement–peace nexus

As outlined in 2.3., the displacement–peace nexus is contested and has thus not yet been sufficiently addressed in the literature. Nevertheless, some few insights can be drawn from the existing literature. As can be seen from the example in Liberia, the inclusion of refugees in peace agreements in not leading to a long-lasting peace unless IDPs and the local population are also involved. Excluding certain groups from reintegration programmes often creates a feeling of inequality and raises tensions between those taking part and those who are not taking part (Specker, 2007). In addition, the composition of groups of displaced persons can play a significant role. In particular, the return of ethnic minorities can increase the risk of new conflict (Adelman, 2002). It has also been pointed out that returning people without having resolved the issues that led to displacement in the first place can undermine peacebuilding efforts (Black, 2006, p. 27). Moreover, forced return can further destabilise the peace process (Bradley, 2013, p. 6). If DPs return voluntarily, the success of reintegration and return is generally more likely. The Rwandan peace agreement has shown that lasting peace only works if a regional approach is taken and if host and origin countries co-operate with each other (cf. box 2). Also neglecting intra- and intergroup dynamics of returnees can hinder successful reintegration and the peace process (Black, 2002) while assisting returnees in the reintegration process could prevent future tensions (Koser, 2008). For the overall success of return, the time and experience in exile may play a significant role (Black and Gent, 2006). It is certain that reintegration is hardly ever sustainable if livelihood opportunities at the location of return are lacking. So, still

no answer is in sight that may answer the question of which activities and programmes are most successful in which context.

Bringing relief and development efforts together

An additional, albeit more fundamental insight that scholars nowadays largely agree upon, is the need to bring relief and development efforts together in order to achieve sustainable PFD policies. PFD situations are often approached with short-term interventions such as quick impact projects (QIPs)²⁵ and “emergency relief projects” implemented by UNHCR or humanitarian NGOs. However, neither UNHCR nor NGOs are in a position to address the structural economic problems in the host countries or in the countries of origin alone. Their involvement is too limited both in terms of their mandate and in terms of a long-term commitment (Chimni, 1999). In contrast, development agencies are in a much better position to foster the potentials of repatriation and thus attain sustainable development (Hammond, 1999). If they co-operated with humanitarian agencies, return could thus be made more sustainable.

Research has shown that the type and the management of settlements for returnees, as well as the extent and type of assistance made available play a role for short-term success of repatriation (Black & Koser, 1999). “Repatriation programmes based on a simplistic idea of refugees returning home are likely to prove ineffective and inefficient” (Bakewell, 1999, p. 1). Such programmes seem to be driven by the hope to end the refugee problem through repatriation. One of the reasons for their failure may be that they do not acknowledge the process dimension of return. Few studies examine long-term effects of repatriation programmes. This is partly due to the nature of humanitarian work (rapid response) and the lack of co-ordination with development aid, partly due to the fact that return happens spontaneously and often under conflict (Stein, 1994). Those studies that look at long-term impacts stress the empirical difficulties to deliver correct assessments (Fransen and Kuschminder, 2012).

²⁵ \ Quick Impact Projects (QIPs) are small-scale, low-cost projects that are planned and implemented within a short timeframe according to the UN Department of Peacekeeping Operations and Department of Field Support (2012).

In sum, this desk study shows that any solution to protracted IDP and refugee situations requires an integrated approach to peacebuilding, humanitarian aid and development aid. For a comprehensive and holistic solution, development and security projects have to foster positive and counter negative effects of PFD situations (Jacobsen, 2002). “Actors within the international protection regime and in development, political affairs and peacebuilding must recognize that the resolution of PRS is not a marginal but an integral part of security and state stability, and goes well beyond the humanitarian realm” (Newman and Troeller, 2008, p. 380). Yet, regarded from a less normative perspective, namely in the wider context of migration in the search for better opportunities, return is but one among various options DP consider (Bakewell, 1999). In the light of aforementioned factors, it can be concluded that local integration, resettlement and repatriation/ return should not be regarded as mutually exclusive while, in effect, one can support and complement the others.

Conclusion: Bringing Displaced Persons and Peace Processes Together

We departed from the working hypothesis that the participation of displaced persons (refugees and IDPs) in peace processes is a crucial factor for their sustainable reintegration. Moreover, we assume that a clarification of the link between return and peace in general could yield significant insights for practices that help end PFD. This desk study indicates that the process dimension of return and its nexus with peace has not been sufficiently researched until now. This section seeks to summarise the gaps and blind spots in research (6.1.) and to subsequently sketch out areas of further inquiry that we consider important for a better understanding of the interrelation between displaced persons and peace processes (6.2.).

Finding the right criteria for assessing the sustainability of reintegration and of peace is still an open issue. Is sustainability the more likely the more displaced persons are included in peace processes? Can it be measured by the numbers of representatives, the equitable composition and the participation of concerned groups and stakeholders, or by the level of their influence in peace processes? Who speaks for the DPs? Which level of participation is appropriate for the varying types of peace processes? When would their presence hamper peace agreements? How can their demands be integrated effectively into peace processes? Should displaced persons be included directly or indirectly in this peace process? Is reintegration of returnees sustainable if they do not need to flee again from where they settled? All these questions will still have to be answered if one wants to fully understand the role displaced persons play in peace processes and to see how they can contribute to strengthening peace processes,.

Gaps in research and blind spots of practice

Certain shortfalls of projects that assist refugees are caused by constraints of the mandate and the practical approach of aid agencies. It has been pointed out that reactions by the international community to PFD have often been confined to emergency responses (cf. 5.2), have overlooked hosting arrangements in urban areas, and have used a statutory

approach for DPs in camps. Such a statutory approach differentiates between IDPs, hosts, refugees, returnees, etc., which is problematic if, as a result of inadequate vulnerability assessments and selective assistance, divisions and tensions between hosts and DPs are created. It is also problematic that most funding is invested in camps as it creates pull factors for the DPs that make it hard to foster opportunities for self-reliance and durable solutions for displaced populations (cf. Rudolf, 2014). Aid agencies are struggling to address these shortfalls, to avoid them or to find exit strategies, partly because adequate theoretical tools are missing.

The complexity of PRS, repatriation and post-conflict

Two issues determine the risk for misperceptions on best solutions for PFD settings: One is the contested adequacy of existing definitions and concepts. The other can be summarised as a lack of understanding of the numbers of return, which, in turn, gives rise to contesting interpretations and resulting policy choices. The question whether existing conceptual tools and definitions are still adequate to grasp the realities and complexity of PFD situations, return and peace processes is fundamental, because concepts and definitions determine researchers' and policy-makers' frames of reference and scope of interpretations.

What is acknowledged as reality has often been fixed in legal frameworks or conceptual approaches. These, however, have not been adjusted to empiric developments and lessons learned in PFD, conflict and peacebuilding settings. We, for example, have highlighted above (cf. 3.1) that UNHCR's definition of PRS is problematic in this regard. To address such situations adequately, many renowned PRS specialists, such as Loescher and Milner demand a revision of the common PRS definition. Such a revision should include "dispersed or urban" refugees (Loescher & Milner, 2008, Ch. 2). Furthermore, the statutory lens through which PFD is viewed, has largely disregarded trans-local life-realities of population groups (Mon-sutti, 2008) such as traditionally mobile people, i.e. nomads (e.g. Afghanistan's Kuchi, cf. Foschini, 2013) and peripatetic [nomadic] groups like the Jogi, Chori

Frosh and Bangriwala in Afghanistan (Kuppers, 2014; Samuel Hall Consulting, 2011). They are often categorised as different types of DPs at different stages of PFD and are framed in the simplistic origin-return logic. Yet their pre-DP existence might never have completely fitted statutory categories of belonging and homeland. In addition, there is hardly any adequate analytical framework for stateless residents (e.g. Rohingya in Myanmar cf. Brinham, 2012; Kiragu, Rosi, & Morris, 2011; Lewa, 2001; Jogi in Afghanistan cf. Samuel Hall Consulting, 2011) in peace processes. Because of a lack of residence status, they are often initially neglected in programmes and are held in prolonged detention. Due to missing documents that prove their identity, they are particularly exposed to discrimination and large-scale human insecurity.

Another example for a problematic conceptual blurring of categories can be found in the definition of peace, the peace process, and sustainable reintegration. We have highlighted above (cf. 3.2.) that a variety of competing and overlapping perspectives exist in this regard and that these lead to different approaches and policy choices. When is peace sustainable? Can the often-observed renewed outbreak of conflict be integrated in investigations, definitions and efforts to understand the DP-return-peace nexus? Is it, on the contrary, necessary to exclude such consideration in order to use/develop a neat conceptual approach? This question is crucial because depending on the answer to this question, some elements of conflict settings on the ground cannot be addressed. The distinction of humanitarian versus development programmes can be partly traced back to such definition issues that underlay narrow mandates of aid organisations and donors' policies.

Displacement–peace nexus and peace processes

Phuong (2005, p. 1) concludes that there is “little academic literature analysing the impact of provisions on forcible displacement in peace agreements.” The reviewed literature indicates that this state of the art has not improved over the last decade. In addition, Bradley (2013) points out that the “theoretical framework underpinning return remains comparatively undeveloped” and core concepts such as “dignified return” remain underspecified (Bradley, 2013, p. 8).

²⁶ The interdependency of peacebuilding and return is thus still largely under-researched. The question whether and how DPs can participate in peace processes and to what end is also largely unanswered. It is in particular unknown under which conditions the participation of DPs in peace agreements matters for the outcome of such agreements, peace processes and return in general. Indeed, it is not clear how DPs can be included in the various stages of peace processes. Should their participation start at the beginning of the negotiation of peace agreements? Should they be represented in transitional political bodies so that their needs are included in the implementation of policies of return and reintegration is ensured?

Due to the statutory approach, the link between PFD and peacebuilding has only been examined from a narrow perspective. This means that the oscillation of DPs from IDP to refugee, or returnee to once-again-displaced returnee has not been addressed sufficiently. In recent years, though, the issue of IDPs has gained considerable prominence (Cernea, 2000; Cohen, 2006; Kälin & Schrepfer, 2012). Still, the circle of scholars and practitioners focussing on this issue is still relatively small (Internal Displacement Monitoring Centre, Norwegian Refugee Council, 2015). Transnational and cross-border studies that focus on dynamical trans-regional processes are similarly very much en vogue (Basch, Glick-Schiller and Szanton-Blanc, 2013; Sökefeld, 2006; Vertovec, 2004). Here again, the number of in-depth studies on this issue is expanding slowly due to severe logistic and administrative constraints in IDP, refugee and return contexts. Both trans-statutory as well as cross-border studies are, in sum, just catching up slowly with the need to address pressing issues in everyday displacement projects.

This is particularly evident in regard to the numbers of undocumented DPs. The total number of undocumented voluntary returnees and of locally integrated persons is highly uncertain (Strand et al., 2008). The lack of a census or a profound estimation of urban and unregistered refugees, respectively IDPs, is also problematic because challenges linked to their presence cannot be addressed. Indeed, the numbers

²⁶ E.g. UNHCR's *Handbook on Voluntary Return*, 1996, Geneva.

of registered refugees and IDPs should be taken with a pinch of salt: There is no sufficient information on to what extent enumerators of DP groups—whether they be national, subnational governments or international agencies—follow their own agendas and how this shapes responses and policies (Kronenfeld, 2008).

Complex interrelations between displaced persons and peace

The overview of scholarly insights into return practices (cf. 5.1 and 5.2) as well as the identified gap of knowledge on the displacement–peace nexus illustrates the need for further research.²⁷ The desk study points to the necessity to explore the viability of alternative long-term solutions, such as local integration in the host country. Yet the major challenge is to decipher the interplay and the complex effects of the various intervening factors in peace and return processes.

Against this background, this final section sketches interconnected focal areas for research and further inquiries that might help to answer the main research questions set out for this project in the introduction: 1) What chances and risks can be observed during the reintegration of refugees and IDPs? 2) What makes reintegration sustainable and successful? 3) Under which conditions does the participation of refugees and IDPs in peace processes play a key role in the sustainability of their return and peace? It should be recalled that peace processes, in our understanding, have to be analytically embedded into the social, political and economic context, and that if we assume that there are no clear-cut linear causalities but rather relationships between DPs/PFD and return/peace.

27 \ The desk review suggests in particular that research on repatriation practices in PFD settings where different donors are in the lead, e.g. Uganda, Kenya, Sierra Leone, Liberia versus e.g. South Sudan, or Myanmar could substantiate the need for increased attention to how different government agencies coordinate or not. A comparative documentation of the coordination processes and the interaction of all stakeholders thus would make sense. Lastly, longitudinal research that raises awareness about the non-linear development of settings that are labelled “post-conflict” and the often cyclical nature of peace-conflict-return-exile etc. should be prioritised.

Preventing unintended impacts

Humanitarian rapid response programmes as well as development programmes face the risk of negative unintended consequences. In-depth-analyses of a conflict-ridden area in the DRC, which is regarded a classical example of so-called tribalism and ethnic hate, shows that aid has indeed played a decisive role in the culmination of violence. Development programmes in Masisi, DRC, had exacerbated tensions between herders and farmers and thereby contributed to inter-ethnic warfare (Jackson, 2009, p. 18). This shows that a detailed knowledge of the history and functioning of different realities (i.e. customary versus state laws) is a prerequisite to avoid doing harm (Anderson, 1999). Studies show that there is a significant impact of categorisations, and subsequent forms of assistance on affected DPs’ level of self-reliance (Davies, 2012). In consequence, an in-depth understanding not only of the local context of PFD and the local social order but also an understanding of the generative effects of the interplay of the refugee regime—enacted by the different external and non-local stakeholders—is needed. Such an understanding will have to deal with questions of definitions, but also with practices of the DP regime as well as return and reintegration policies. What is more, it points at the significance of donors’ worldviews and the question how they evaluate success or failure. The contrasting of different propositions might bear important insights for a reconciliation of views regarding long-term solutions and their implementation. What programmes or activities can foster sustainable return? Does early reconciliation indeed help to reduce tensions between stayees and returnees as assumed by many policymakers?

Comparing the role of DPs for peacebuilding

Analysts stress that the perspective of DPs needs to be highlighted and taken up in policy development (cf. Krause, 2015).²⁸ For this purpose, sustainable PFD and peace policy studies would benefit from including DP’s and other, particularly local stakeholders’ voices. It would give a clearer understanding of the

28 \ „Public policies seeking to reverse forced migration seldom consult the actual victims of displacement, but this should be a key consideration...“ (Stefanovic, Loizides and Parsons 2015, p. 289)..

preferences and aspirations of DPs on the one hand (e.g., local integration versus return) and the options they actually have in the PFD setting on the other. Comparative empirical research is needed to learn about the relationship between DPs and other stakeholders in peace processes. While in-depth case studies will build the base to understand the micro-mechanisms, comparative research will help to make inferences on a larger scale. General open questions can be related to representation, i.e. who speaks for DPs, keeping in mind that they are not a homogeneous group but socially differentiated (with regard to age, gender, education, connectedness and alliances, wealth, access, etc.). It is hardly necessary to mention that the case specific social, political, and economic factors influencing preconditions for return (cf. 5.1) have to be studied as pointed out in the previous section. This includes the above-mentioned focus on cyclical movements. The current situation has to be examined through a diachronic analysis that differentiates consequences of first, second, or multiple displacements. Another set of questions relates to the actual negotiation process for peace in so-called post-conflict settings. Are DPs and their inclusion constrained by their assumed disadvantaged position as DPs versus a majority society in the host or homeland or is it worth exploring negotiation theories to improve the prospects of success and sustainability of peace processes?

Investigating potentials of DPs

All too often, DPs are perceived as problematic, negative and a burden both for host communities/countries and the international donor community (cf. Chapter 4), and their displacement experience is depicted as a hurdle for successful repatriation and reintegration. Analysts have pointed out that little attention has been paid to the positive impact of DPs in the destination sites (cf. Jacobsen, 2006; Kok, 1989; Zetter, 2012). It has been observed that the influx of DPs is an incentive for development, because the labour market profits from qualified staff, the economy profits from innovations, diversification, and expansion of trade that comes along with the influx of

DPs.²⁹ The qualifications that DPs have acquired in exile can again help to develop the country of origin once they have returned (even if this return is only temporary as e.g. in Afghanistan: cf. Kuschminder, 2014). Moreover, attitudes DPs have acquired in exile, e.g. empowerment of women, expectations towards the government and understanding of the significance of the rule of law, are important assets that could potentially be tapped in a more targeted way during peace processes. Against this background, the agency of DPs in respect to the rebuilding of livelihoods and to peacebuilding deserves further research. A related field for further inquiry would be how to protect DPs' and returnees' access to rights, justice and land in the short and long term.

Analysing livelihood-making

It has been pointed out that the prospects of successfully establishing livelihoods in the return process are crucial for DPs' return decision. Although it is not easy to analyse how various factors that contribute to conflict overlap, condition, or influence each other, a complete analysis of the DP's prospective ability to benefit from livelihood resources such as land, water, and shelter, (that is access, ownership and user rights of resource and land) would be beneficial for each situation of PFD and subsequent return programming. Mapping resource disputes is extremely useful in determining the operational scope and availability of dispute resolution mechanisms. In doing so, it seems promising to conduct the analysis by linking different levels, that is by including donors and implementing stakeholders. The refugee protection regime has commonly practiced repatriation with the aim that returnees rebuild livelihoods exactly at their place of origin. In doing so, they neglected social dynamics during displacement such as the increasing family size, land capture by those who had stayed behind in the place of origin, land scarcity,

29 \ „Preliminary research ... suggests that the prolonged presence of refugees and refugee assistance programmes can result in multiple benefits for refugee-populated areas through increased employment opportunities for the local population, investment in local infrastructure, local market opportunities, provision of services for the local population, and availability of labour where refugees are allowed to work outside the camp“ (Milner and Loescher, 2011, p. 19).

losses through natural disasters, changed gender roles and changed lifestyles of DPs during the displacement. As a result of such dynamics, many returnees did not see any future in living in the place of origin/return. Research of how returnees find ways to generate income in the so-called post-conflict economy can yield valuable insights and can contribute to a wider acknowledgement of particular needs and respective programming/policies.

Need to hear the voices of DPs

Given the difficult situation in terms of categorisations, definitions, and an enumeration of different elements in the displacement-peace nexus (cf. 6.1), it is justified to scrutinise several aspects of the contemporary refugee regime and the return-peace nexus. The most obvious is the dominant assumption that repatriation or return is the best long-term solution for PFD. The lack of evidence pointed out so far and the finding that local voices have been severely disregarded in policymaking for DPs call for an investigation of the local integration option besides the focus on repatriation and return. In sum, we recommend to develop a comprehensive displacement approach that addresses PFD situations encompass IDPs, refugees, persons in refugee or refugee-like situations, and hosts. We also believe that it is crucial to acknowledge that displacement, peacebuilding and violence in protracted conflict are re-occurring stages of a vicious circle that will not be broken unless peace processes address root causes. A first step to understand how return and peace could be interlinked might be to include the voices of the displaced in future analysis and to take a regional approach.

Benefit of a comprehensive and co-ordinated approach

Our last point ultimately leads back to the set of macro questions on how to achieve a more comprehensive approach towards successful return, integration and peace. This desk study has shown that it is necessary to address a wide range of issues in order to strengthen displaced persons in peace processes. Such an approach is required to include multidimensional, multi-lateral, interinstitutional and

transregional aspects. It has to include the host country and the country of origin as well as geopolitical dimensions. Sustainable projects have to consider positive impacts of hosting DP communities, such as economic growth, diversification of livelihoods, dynamical adaptation processes, and social development, instead of managing and prolonging miserable conditions, crime, sexual and gender based violence, forced recruitment and general violence. The necessary steps towards such an approach have to start low-key and are likely to rest on methodological considerations in the first place in order to bear robust results. For example, research needs to highlight the necessity of sound analyses of risks and potentials for any measure, programme, or policy; thus, to conduct a comprehensive do-no-harm analysis to avoid certain, otherwise inevitable, shortfalls, such as neglecting property restitution or amnesties for returnees, that have exacerbated grievances and tensions and have led to new violence (Bradley, 2013, p. 49). Analyses that prioritise risks studies over speed of response might help identify and eventually prevent such unintended consequences. One has to bear in mind, however, that difficulties are always specific to the local context and cannot be inferred at a general level.

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LIST OF ACRONYMS AND ABBREVIATIONS

BICC	Bonn International Center for Conversion	BICC
BMZ	Bundesministerium für wirtschaftliche Zusammenarbeit und Entwicklung	BMZ
CIREFCA	International Conference on Central American Refugees	CIREFCA
CPA	Comprehensive Peace Agreement	cpa
DAC	Development Assistance Committee	DAC
DDR	Disarmament, Demobilisation, and Reintegration	ddr
DIP	Division of International Protection	DIP
DRC	Democratic Republic of the Congo	DRC
DP	Displaced person	DP
HDI	Human Development Index	HDI
IDMC	The Internal Displacement Monitoring Centre	IDMC
IDP	Internally displaced person	IDP
IOM	International Organisation for Migration	IOM
IRO	International Refugee Organization	IRO
ISF	International Stabilisation Force	ISF
LDC	Least developed country	LDC
OUA	Organization of African Unity	OUA
PFD	Protracted forced displacement	PFD
PRS	Protracted refugee situations	PRS
PSC	Protracted Social Conflicts	PSC
QIP	Quick impact projects	QIP
SGBV	Sexual and gender-based violence	SGBV
UN	United Nations	UN
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme	UNDP
UNHCR	United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees	UNHCR
UXO	Unexploded ordnance	UXO

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