RESEARCH ARTICLE

Former Military Networks a Threat to Peace? The Demobilisation and Remobilization of Renamo in Central Mozambique

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Renamo's recent upsurge against the Mozambican Frelimo-led government after 22 years of relative stability has challenged the country's often celebrated disarmament, demobilization and reintegration process (1992–1994). Drawing on ethnographic fieldwork conducted in Maringue (Sofala province), the location of the rebels' wartime headquarters and a post-war Renamo stronghold, this paper shows that while the DDR program supposedly ended Renamo's command and control structure, the former rebel network continued to be a central feature of ex-combatants' social worlds. Former Renamo combatants spend most of their time in the company of their 'colleagues of the trenches' and engaged in relationships of dependency with political Renamo leaders and former commanders. These relationships were not only shaped by the former military structure, but also by friendship, marriage, and patronage dynamics, providing ex-Renamo combatants with physical and economic safety, a sense of belonging and economic possibilities.

Recent events in Mozambique suggest that the post-conflict continuation of informal wartime networks is a threat to peace and a failure of demobilization. Nevertheless, the fieldwork conducted in Maringue reveals that the dismantling of the command and control structure is often in vain, as it may be worthwhile for ex-combatants to maintain ties with their former military group for various reasons. Therefore, I argue that it may be useful to consider these networks based on the former armed group in processes of violence reduction, also in the development of DDR programs, as these may offer possibilities for the re-positioning and transformation of (former) armed actors.

Introduction[1]

Twenty years after signing the General Peace Accords that ended the war between the

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government of Mozambique and armed resistance movement Renamo (*Resistência Nacional de Moçambique*), the former rebel leader Afonso Dhlakama returned to 'the bush'. In October 2012, Dhlakama re-established one of Renamo's wartime military bases in Satandjira, in the Gorongosa Mountains, where he was joined by approximately

800 armed Renamo men. Over the course of 2013 various clashes were reported of Renamo combatants with the national police and the increasingly present army in Sofala province, resulting in numerous casualties, including attacks on civilians travelling on Mozambique's sole highway from north to south (Vines 2013: 386–388). Since there has been little direct reporting from the area where Renamo is located, reliable numbers are hard to come by. The number of casualties of the recent violent troubles in central Mozambique has been estimated to be several hundreds,[2] but informal conversations speak also of over a thousand victims.[3] After two years of low-intensity war, a ceasefire declaration was signed in September 2014.[4] Although it left several urgent military matters such as the demobilization of the Renamo combatants unaddressed, the peace agreement allowed for Renamo's participation in the elections in October 2014, in which the former rebels gained significantly with respect to previous elections.[5]

In this article I will focus on an aspect that is largely ignored in post-war analyses of the country, which is the continuing participation of former low and mid-ranked Renamo combatants in networks based on the former armed group (see also Wiegink 2015). By drawing out several post-war social dynamics in which the former armed group is a central feature, this paper aims to disclose certain assumptions underlying the nature of Armed Non-State Actors (ANSA) and provide a critical perspective on the concept and practice of demobilising combatants.

From 2008 to 2010 I conducted various periods of fieldwork in Maringue, a Renamo stronghold in central Mozambique where, it was said, 3,000 former Renamo combatants were living. I found that the main social environment for veterans in Maringue was what I call 'Renamo networks', which consisted of fellow veterans, former commanders, politicians, and civilians who were related to the former rebels. I saw these networks as being based on comradeship and patronage

dynamics, resembling to some extent kinship networks that many of the former combatants lacked (Wiegink 2015). In fact, I regarded these networks as central to what may be called ex-Renamo combatants' reintegration processes. They exemplified how attempts to dismantle the command and control structure (demobilization) of armed groups may be in vain, as ex-combatants may find it worthwhile to maintain ties with the former armed group for a variety of reasons. The recent remobilization of a significant group of Renamo combatants challenged me to rethink my initial interpretations of these networks and motivated me to analyse some implications of the continuation of wartime networks. One of the things I will consider in this article is not only the shared Renamo identity among former combatants, but also its links to the local community as well as the larger political context, in which Renamo's ex-combatants and supporters feel generally excluded.

In the view of the international post-war 'recovery industry', the continuation of war-time networks is often regarded as posing a threat to stability, generally in volatile war or post-war contexts (Bøås and Bjørkhaug 2010: 2; UN 2006; Utas 2012: 19). The fear is that their potential for organized violence remains because groups of ex-combatants could easily be remobilized by rearming them. This is one of the fundamental reasons why Disarmament, Demobilization and Reintegration (DDR) programs have become a standard element in peace-making efforts of national and international actors (McMullin 2013: 1–2). DDR programs are intended to separate combatants from the influence of the command and control structure[6] and to prepare them for a place in civil society without, as it was formulated in the UN Integrated DDR Standards (2006: 387), the 'camaraderie and support system of the structured armed force or armed group.' DDR is considered unsuccessful if the opposite happens; that is, if ex-combatants stick together to chart their paths into civilian life (De Vries and Wiegink 2011: 39).

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The expectation that armed groups will disband after a peace accord is signed and DDR programmes are in place, are strengthened by two erroneous but persistent assumptions about combatants and armed groups, particularly ANSA. First of all, much DDR literature seems to assume that ex-combatants would naturally want to return 'home' (e.g. Alusala 2011: vii; UN 2006). The image of the 'forced fighter' abducted against his or her will from her home contributes further to this idea. As I argued elsewhere, what home is, and how it was transformed during the war is often not taken into consideration (De Vries and Wiegink 2011; Wiegink 2013a). Yet such assumptions feed the expectation that rebel groups will disband after they are disarmed and demobilised.

A second assumption that underlies most conceptualisations of demobilisation is that armed factions function as military organisations (Hoffman 2007: 660), and that they therefore can be terminated by decommissioning weapons and by dismantling the command and control structure. As scholarship on former combatants has shown, however, an armed group consists of far more social relationships than military hierarchy. Consider for example the comradeship among fellow fighters (Grossman 1995), the en masse recruitment of peers from the same village (De Vries and Wiegink 2011), and patron-client relationships (Hoffman 2007: 660; 2011; Munive and Jakobsen 2012; Themnér 2012). In Mozambique, the soldiers did not 'fade away' as Alden (2002) argued. Rather, networks of former combatants continued to exist, for example, around the call for pensions (Wiegink 2013b), and as 'big man' networks (Wiegink 2015).

In this paper, I will build on these studies by analysing Renamo and its former combatants not as an isolated network, but as part of a changing social and political context and in interaction with civilians. I will first provide a brief introduction to Renamo. Then I will analyse 'Renamo networks' and show how and why these sets of relationships continued in the post-war period. In the conclusion I will draw out certain consequences for the notion of demobilization and argue that the continuation of wartime networks may be, in some cases, inevitable and that although the recent upsurge of Renamo combatants seems to suggest otherwise, former wartime networks may even provide an opportunity for violence reduction.

War and Post-War RENAMO

Renamo was founded sometime in 1976–77 by the Southern Rhodesian military, to execute two tasks: to attack guerrillas of the Zimbabwean African National Liberation Army (ZANLA) located in central Mozambique and to destabilize Mozambican politics and economy implemented by Frelimo (the Mozambican Liberation Front, *Frente de Libertação de Moçambique*) (Finnegan 1992; Hall and Young 1997; Vines 1991: 15–17). After Zimbabwe's independence in 1980, support for Renamo shifted to the South African Defence Forces (SADF), which marked an increase in supplies of weapons and intelligence technology, and in Renamo's recruitment activities. By 1985 the rebel movement was present in every province of the vast country (Hall and Young 1997: 128–131). To label Renamo an armed non-state actor is thus also somewhat misleading, as it was firmly supported by Mozambique's neighbouring states (Minter 1994). At the same time, the Renamo leadership developed very much their own agenda over time (Hultman 2009).

Renamo became known for its brutality, forced recruitment, the rape of women and girls, and for enslaving large parts of the rural population (Minter 1989; Nordstrom 1997). At least, that was how the Frelimo government liked to portray the 'armed bandits', as they were called. Several studies have argued against this image of Renamo by drawing attention to the rebels' popular support among the rural population of central and northern Mozambique, mainly due to a process of estrangement between Frelimo and the rural population (Cahen 1993; Geffray 1990).

Renamo's anti-Frelimo objectives were welcomed, as the post-independence government had implemented various revolutionary reforms, but also invasive policies such as prohibiting the traditional authorities, religion and forcing peasants to work on communal lands (Hall and Young 1997). Other studies stress Renamo's strong hierarchic command and control structure, thereby countering the image of a 'roving band' (e.g. Hultman 2009).

Vines' (1990) study was among the first to draw out the rebels' military structure of regional battalions that were divided into two or three companies of 100 to 150 combatants (see also Minter 1989: 20). The former combatants in this study were often assigned to smaller units that fell under a certain company, ranging from ten to forty people under the command of an officer, referred to as a *comendante*. These smaller units were often in close contact with the central leadership through radio communication (Hultman 2009). In the mid-1980s Renamo probably had two or more battalions in each province of the country. My own data confirms Renamo's strong military structure in the party, but also shows variation and contradictions in Renamo's organisation and discipline. In wartime Maringue there was, for example, a strong focus on discipline and control, partially implemented and monitored by Renamo's political members. At the same time, however, former combatants recalled being largely under the influence of a commander, whose attitudes were central to determining how combatants treated civilians.

To capture the different faces of Renamo and how these played out in different modalities of power at play in rural communities, Bertelsen (2012) suggested that Deleuze and Guattari's (1987) concepts of 'state' and 'war machine' provide some insight. Dynamics of the war machine are rhizomatic, connecting any point to any other point, without a beginning or an end: it is indistinct, complex, fluid and mobile. In contrast, the concept of state is characterized by sedentation, territorialisation, control, hierarchy and a lack of mobility.

Renamo arguably tried to erase the state, destroying its physical structures, such as roads and buildings, and by killing its representatives (Hall and Young 1997). Over time, however, Renamo became increasingly sedentary or 'state-like,' as it established zones of control, camps and some kind of administration and public services in some parts of rural Mozambique (Gersony 1988), even though it was often rather inconsistent and 'minimalist' (Finnegan 1992: 80). In the mid-1980s Maringue became one of Renamo's control zones, where the rebels even provided very basic health care and education. Its sedentary strategies were partially rooted in its predatory nature, as the rebels needed the population for food, porter duties and information (contrary to what Weinstein (2007) has argued) (Gersony 1988). At the same time, there is evidence that as Renamo's political agenda became more articulated, its 'zones of control' or 'liberated zones' were also shown to be proof of Renamo's administrative capacities (Hultman 2009). As I will discuss in greater detail below, in areas like Maringue, the inhabitants were deeply implicated in the rebel movement, through forced labour and the provision of food, but also as nurses, teachers, wives and parents-in-law.

The war between Renamo and the Frelimo government ended in 1992 with the signing of the General Peace Accords in Rome. After a sixteen-year war in which an estimated one million people died and over five million were displaced, the political elite opted for silence regarding the war and amnesty for all involved, as there were no formal initiatives for truth-finding and transitional justice.[7] The DDR program, managed by the UN Mission for Mozambique (ONUMOZ) for approximately 90,000 combatants from both Renamo and the Mozambican Armed Forces, is often regarded as one of the main reasons for the successful transition from war to peace (see e.g. Alden 2002; McMullin 2004). Another well-studied factor of the successful transition to peace in Mozambique were 'traditional reintegration mechanisms' that happened at the community level.

These were rituals that enhanced the healing of trauma and restored the balance between humans and spirits and were used to incorporate combatants and war-affected civilians into their families and communities (Cobban 2007; Granjo 2007a, 2007b; Graybill 2004; Honwana 2005, 2006; Lundin 1998; Nordstrom 1997: 145–146). In an evaluation of the process of reintegration of *demobilizados* in Mozambique, Alden (2002: 353) suggested that traditional mechanisms substantially aided in the 'fading away' of 'old soldiers' (see also Boothby 2006).

Yet a decade after the publication of Alden's study, the remobilisation of former Renamo combatants shows that the ex-combatants have not 'faded away.' On the contrary, I would argue that 'ex-combatant' has become an increasingly significant identity in Mozambican politics, even though its meaning varies across the country and between Renamo and veterans of the Mozambican Armed Forces (FAM) (see also Wiegink 2013b). The continuation of Renamo networks has been central to this.

Renamo Networks in Maringue

In this section I will analyse the dynamics of former Renamo combatants' relationships with other veterans, and with the Renamo party leadership, which I situate in 'Renamo networks.' A focus on networks draws attention to the social relationships forged and transformed in war and what legacy they left for the post-war period (Wood 2008: 555). As Sprenkels (2014) showed, peace agreements may involve profound organisational changes for ANSA. This does not necessarily result in the dissolution of the armed group, however. It is more likely to result in a variety of transformations. Following Mark Duffield's (2002: 13–14) understanding of the concept, networks are unstable, changing and adaptable, and are comprised of individuals with very different reasons for participating in them (see also Utas 2012: 13–14).

Applying such an understanding of networks to the former Renamo networks, one notes that ex-Renamo combatants find themselves in a variety of changeable horizontal and vertical relationships, which are informally and formally situated in a political party structure and Maringue's political context at large (Wiegink 2015). There is no *one* Renamo Network, but rather a range of interrelated sets of relationships that transformed in the post-war period and continue to do so, as exemplified by Renamo's recent remobilization. As I have argued elsewhere, these relationships are rooted in military structures, as well as shaped by friendship, reciprocity, and asymmetric relationships of dependency (e.g. patron-client relationships) (Wiegink 2015). In this article I also incorporate the blurring of categories of civilians and combatants, to understand the impact of these networks on a place like Maringue. In order to analyse these networks, the following sections discuss subsequent veterans' relationships with other veterans, their relationships with former commanders, and with other community members.

'The colleagues of the trenches'

During my first weeks of fieldwork in Maringue, I was told several times that if I wanted to meet former Renamo combatants I had to visit the bank (*a margem*) of the Nhamapaze river. Indeed, in this fertile area, on the other side of the river, somewhat secluded from the village, many Renamo veterans were living. I made a habit of visiting the *margem*, and soon I got to know a group of ten to twelve former Renamo combatants, who often got together and shared *nipa* or another kind of home brewed liquor. Excessive drinking is a common characteristic among veterans of multiple wars, as it may be a way to numb the memories of violence and suffering, or to escape a situation of enduring hardship (see also Finley 2011; Schafer 2007). In Maringue, 'sharing a drink' is also a social event that underlines friendship or bonds of trust. For the Renamo veterans these drinking clubs were the principle manifestation of their ties of friendship and such gatherings made me realize that bonds established during the war were integral to

the social network of former Renamo combatants in the *margem* in Maringue town in general (see also Wiegink 2015: 10).

The presence of fellow former combatants was often mentioned when I asked Renamo veterans about their reasons for settling in Maringue after the war ended. Many, in fact did return to their home villages for a while, but for a range of reasons could not settle down. Armando, a former Renamo combatant from Mutarara (Tete Province), said he decided to stay in Maringue after demobilization for two reasons: to be close to the family of his wife and because he did not want to live away from his 'colleagues of the trenches.' Another reason was that he travelled twice to Muturara to look for his family, but he never found them again. They had apparently fled to Malawi.[8] Olivia's story, also presented in Wiegink (2015), demonstrates a similar pattern. After demobilization in Maringue by ONUMOZ, she returned to her village of origin where she found out that her parents had died. Her other relatives did perform the necessary rituals, but she did not feel safe living without direct family members and decided to return to Maringue. 'I grew up in the war, and I got used to being with other soldiers like me. At my home, I did not see anyone that could take care of me. So, I chose to live here [Maringue], with my colleagues of the trenches,' she said.[9]

These stories are typical of many former combatants I met in Maringue. On their return to their places of origin, many demobilized combatants found that their families had disappeared, that family arrangements had changed or that their relatives had expectations the veterans could not meet. One of the insecurities ex-combatants and their families faced was the threat of witchcraft attacks, sparked by rising inequalities due to an influx of cash (the demobilization allowance), reshuffled power positions within the family, and the fact that some ex-combatants returned and others did not (Wiegink 2013a). Their families and home villages turned out to be insecure environments, inciting the ex-combatants to settle elsewhere, away

from their kin. The observation that former combatants did not return home is not new. Coelho and Vines (1994: 59) also found that former combatants were drawn to the economic opportunities of urban areas. Schafer's (2007: 98–99) findings showed that specifically Renamo combatants mainly settled in rural areas, which corresponds with my own findings. In addition, the Renamo combatants I met in Maringue had settled there because it was familiar to them. In many cases, ex-combatants had been stationed in Renamo's headquarters during the war and had, as I will describe, established ties with civilians in the area. In the wake of war, the district also offered military security, access to fertile land, and assurance of remobilization, in case the armed conflict flared up again (Wiegink 2013a). However, most ex-combatants claimed that the company of fellow veterans had been their principal reason for settling in Maringue.

As other studies have shown, co-participation in war seems to generate a sense of belonging and comradeship among combatants (Ben-Ari 1998: 98–101; Finkel 2009; Finley 2011; Grossmann 1995; Kalyvas 2006: 46).[10] According to Grossmann (1995: 90), sharing highly stressful times together and risking one's life in the pursuit of common goals, be they ideological or criminal, creates a particularly strong connection. What happens to this 'strong bond' when the guns are put down? One former combatant said that in his experience, former combatants from the same battalion or platoon feel more comfortable talking to each other as 'there are ghosts that creep up on us. With a friend of the war you can talk about it. "Do you remember that time when the war was hot? When that guy tried to kill me?"'[11] Yet the significance of a shared war past is not limited to being able to talk about traumatic experiences. It may be quite the opposite: that someone understands your experiences without the need to explain them (Finley 2011). Moreover, the sense of shared identity may also be attributable to shared fond recollections. During informal meetings in Maringue, the former combatants recalled

predominantly glorious and adventurous aspects of the war, in which they found a sense of pride, good cheer, and nostalgia (Wiegink 2015: 9–10).

It was these horizontal ties with fellow veterans that offered a network of support for Renamo combatants' daily struggles. On many occasions I observed how Renamo veterans offered each other assistance in building houses or harvesting crops, and in times of acute sickness, death, and urgent need. Additionally, these ties offered a sense of belonging for Renamo veterans who had settled far away from their families. Veterans often referred to each other in kinship terms. They called Dhlakama 'father' (*pai*) and other veterans 'brothers and sisters' (*irmões*).[12] Though these networks did not replace the importance of kin networks in terms of health and the spiritual world (Wiegink 2013a), they were made up by relations of interdependency and reciprocity also central in kinship relations. Very similar to general dynamics of community reciprocity, these networks offered a sense of social security, a social space in which they felt 'taken care of' which therefore made a difference in the former combatants and their families' daily struggles for survival.

Big men and followers: the continuation of the command and control structure?

The continuation of Renamo networks becomes also very much apparent in the vertical relationships between the former rank-and-file and former commanders and the party leadership. These ties show that the command and control structure was not entirely dissolved by ONUMOZ's DDR programme. Instead, these military based structures gained different or additional meaning in the post-war period.

Thomas, a former Renamo commander who was still active at Renamo's base in Maringue, exemplifies the position of former Renamo commanders in Maringue. One day he suggested I visit the Zionist churches in the district which were known for having many former Renamo combatants among their adherents. When I explained some of the difficulties I had encountered in approaching these churches, Thomas offered his help. 'I will take you there and they will talk to you,' he claimed. 'I know them all. I used to be their commander. They are afraid of me.'[13] He was probably boasting about his influence on the Zionist pastors, but then again, he had the reputation of being a brutal and ruthless fighter. I did not take Thomas up on his offer to introduce me to the Zionist pastors, but his remarks clearly demonstrated his position as a big man, albeit one whose power was built on fear rather than loyalty.

The continuation of some kind of command and control structure also became apparent during my first visit to the *margem* of Nhamapaza, as I have described elsewhere more elaborately (Wiegink 2015: 10–11). There, former Renamo combatants said they would not talk to me, unless I first talked to *comendante* Matateo. They considered themselves more or less under his command and would not make an important decision (such as talking to a white woman on sensitive subjects) without his fiat. When I met Matateo, he immediately acknowledged his gatekeeper position, being in between the former combatants and the Renamo party.[14] 'I'm the *chefe* of the former combatants,' was the first thing he said to me, then he asked: 'The Renamo delegate does not know of your work here. What are you doing? Does the administration know you're here?'[15] Yet Matateo was not and had not been the actual commander of the ex-combatants in the *margem*, but rather was one of Renamo's 'presidential guards,' generally regarded as an elite force, and occupied a position in the local party structure. He was called '*comendante*' largely because of his post-war position within the Renamo party and his relationships of dependency with the rank-and-file veterans (Wiegink 2015: 11). Similar to what Hoffman (2007: 651–653) observed among the Sierra Leonean Civil Defense Forces, military titles received a different meaning in the post-war period, as they were used to 'map patronage networks.' As several

studies have pointed out, these asymmetric relationships of dependency are shaped by patrimonial logics and big man dynamics, which have wider resonance with cultural understandings of authority, political and economic power and kinship (Hoffman 2011; Munive and Jakobsen 2012; Murphy 2003; Utas 2012; Wiegink 2015). These 'commanders' can be regarded as 'big men' and the rank-and-file former combatants as 'followers' or 'clients' (Wiegink 2015: 10–11). Maintaining relationships with big men like Matateo and Thomas provided these followers with links to the Renamo party, the Renamo military wing and to expected material benefits.

At the time of fieldwork, Renamo's leaders had however, few resources to divide (in contrast to their Frelimo counterparts). Mario, a seventy-something-year-old Renamo combatant with grey hair and watery blue eyes said he never returned to his village of origin in Tete because he was 'waiting for some things.' This casual remark made it sound as if he was waiting for a bus, when in fact he had been waiting since the end of the war, some sixteen years before the interview took place. I asked him what exactly he was waiting for. 'Things the Big One [*o grande*, i.e. Dhlakama] promised me: money, subsidy. And I did not have the money to go home. When we were more or less at the end of our conversation,' he said gloomily: 'we can only wait for death.'[16] Other former Renamo combatants said they were 'waiting for our time to eat,' referring like Mario to the future possibility that the Renamo party, and Dhlakama in particular, would provide them with some riches and take care of them. These riches, the former combatants imagined, would come from the state when Renamo was to win the elections. Such expectations were born of a mixture of promises made during the war, the post-war continuation of dependency relationships, ubiquitous practices of clientelism and policies regarding *antigos combatentes* (veterans of the liberation war), who receive pensions and other benefits from the state (Cahen 2011; Wiegink 2015).

These expectations, however, were not met as the Renamo party, Dhlakama, and the local Renamo leaders did not have the means to reward the veterans or chose to allocate resources in a different manner. The Renamo leadership was well aware of such expectations and the ex-combatants' increasing frustrations. On a visit to Maringue in 2009, Renamo leader Dhlakama asked for patience. During a public speech in Maringue town, Dhlakama said: 'It is like a woman in labor, she is suffering; you, being Renamo, are suffering. But after labor the new mother is satisfied. She has a baby. Have patience!'[17]

Election time stirred up the hopes of some Renamo veterans and thus reinforced ties between the veterans and the party. To most Renamo veterans, however, at least at the time of fieldwork, Renamo's electoral position seemed rather bleak and its opportunities for clientelism poor (Cahen 2011: 7–8). Several veterans felt their patience had been tested enough. In Maringue there was an increasing number of mainly higher ranked Renamo veterans who 'switched sides' and joined either Frelimo or MDM. Some switched sides openly, but others 'disappeared' with their families to set up a life elsewhere, allegedly with a significant sum of money (Wiegink 2015).

The alliances between Renamo veterans and the party were thus changeable and under tension, a general characteristic of relationships between big men and followers, as Utas argued (2012). However, despite Renamo's leaders' inability to take care of them, most veterans I met in Maringue remained loyal to Renamo. Thus, in order not to overemphasise the flexibility of these networks, it is worthwhile to discuss how these networks were anchored into Maringue's society, showing that these networks were not limited to veterans.

RENAMO and the community: Elephants and grass?

When I asked people in Maringue about the war, several replied with the following well-known expression: 'When two elephants

[or buffalos] fight, the grass suffers.' This is a catchy phrase, often used to highlight that most war victims were civilians. Yet it also appears to downgrade Mozambique's rural population to the lowly position of grass, as a passive entity caught up in the whirlwind of powerful belligerents. Further, it situates the armed groups (the elephants) as merely violent actors, separated from society. In wartime social life, however, there were no clear-cut boundaries between combatants and civilians, and most of Maringue's population that lived under Renamo rule considered itself as being 'with Renamo.' While the DDR mission incorporated some into their mission and others not, the Renamo networks included veterans, supporters, collaborators, teachers, nurses, chiefs and others who considered themselves as (former) Renamo. To be sure, not all those who called themselves former combatants in Maringue were demobilized by the ONUMOZ program, and not all who were demobilized had actually picked up a gun during the war.

All too often, conceptualisations of demobilisation and reintegration depict (former) combatants and civilians in terms of elephant and grass. Wartime life, as Danny Hoffmann (2007: 660) observed, seems to be often defined by the absence of social structures, as it is believed to generate its own military habitus. This focus obscures civil-military entanglements, or renders them only relevant when violence is involved. This results in a flawed understanding of the so-called reintegration process of former combatants and what former military movements are and may become in the post-war period.

The post-war social landscape of Maringue cannot be understood without understanding the merging of Renamo with the local population. Due to Renamo's lengthy occupation of the district, Maringue's inhabitants became willingly or unwillingly part of the Renamo regime. One of Maringue's chiefs summed the situation up as follows: 'Renamo that was us.'[18] He told me that his eldest son was forcibly recruited as a fighter and that he himself was involved in the mobilisation of his community members for forced labor. Others were trained as nurses, teachers and politicians. Civilians engaged with combatants as fellow church members, son-in-laws, and relatives. Thus, in many ways Renamo became part of people's public and private lives. In several interviews over fifteen years after the war ended, people said they had 'worked' for Renamo, and similarly to the ex-combatants, that they expected something in return. This shows that these wartime networks were not merely a 'veteran-thing,' but also part of a wider context.[19] The great density of these networks and connections beyond military links make the networks even more difficult to 'dismantle.'

RENAMO Remobilises

The prevalence of Renamo networks in the post-war period became apparent in Renamo's remobilisation in 2012 and following low-intensity war. This is not to say that all or even most people who participated in what I have called Renamo networks have *en masse* joined Renamo's renewed armed struggle. There is hitherto little empirical research done on Renamo's current ranks, however, secondary sources suggest that Renamo's armed forces consist of 800 individuals that are at least partly made up of former combatants.[20]

The estimate of 800 combatants was provided in 2012. Since then, Renamo's training activities and recruitment suggest that their numbers may have increased. In April 2015, Newspaper Savana interviewed former Renamo combatants in a base in Funhalouro, Inhambane who said that they were waiting for orders. The men were reported to be between 40 and 60 years old and veterans of the civil war with no former record of hostility in the area.[21] Michel Cahen, a scholar on Mozambique, wrote recently that Renamo's quick recovery of its armed wing 'could not be, twenty-one years later, the mere mobilisation of some veteran guerrilla soldiers equipped with rusty Kalashnikovs. Indeed, currently some Renamo fighters appear to be young men.'[22] Renamo's recent struggle thus

seems to attract former rebels as well as new recruits, and is undoubtedly also strengthened by Renamo's presidential guards, who never demobilised after the war.

Renamo's renewed rebellion also generates questions about the party's funding and its possession of weapons. During the ONUMOZ DDR programme Renamo was not disarmed completely, as it was feared that pressuring the rebels too much on this issue could jeopardise the peace process (Littlejohn *forthcoming*). Post-war arms recovery projects such as Operation Rachel were also not able to detect and recover most of the arms. The former rebels maintained arms caches in several locations across the country, although accurate data on the quantity and conditions of these arms is hard to come by (Faltas and Paes 2004: 11–12). Renamo's military base in Maringue contained one of these stockpiles (Littlejohn *forthcoming*: 11). Yet despite recurring rumours of Renamo's presidential guards selling grenades and other weapons from the base, most people, including former Renamo combatants, could only guess what the quality and quantity of the stockpile was. Renamo's current weapons arsenal was complemented by arms they forcefully confiscated from police, FIR and the Mozambican military forces.

One could thus argue that Renamo's recent remobilisation reveals some of the failures of the ONUMOZ DDR programme, as there has only been partial disarmament, demobilisation and reintegration. This is arguably a worthwhile analysis in terms of disarmament, but in relation to demobilisation and reintegration, not a very useful exercise. After all, Renamo's return to violent struggle is, as any violent conflict, a profoundly multi-layered and social process (Demmers 2012). The current low-intensity war reveals much about Mozambique's current postwar political landscape, the growing feelings exclusion of different strata of the population, the country's increasing resource wealth, mischievous electoral strategies, and elite struggles within Renamo, to name only a few possible relevant factors. Arguing

that demobilisation and reintegration have failed after 22 years of relative peace seems futile. Renamo's remobilisation, and in particular the general continuation of Renamo networks, do provide an interesting window for thinking about what 'demobilisation' and 'reintegration' entail and how ANSA may transform from violent actors to non-violent ones. To this I dedicate the following final reflections.

Final reflection: wartime networks and violent reduction

In these final reflections, I want to return to the presumption underlying DDR thinking that was mentioned in the introduction: the idea that the continuation of wartime networks is a threat to peace and hampers reintegration. I do not deny the possible importance of disbanding an armed group for stability, but rather point out that what denotes 'success' in this undertaking is defined in rather technical terms, based on fairly simplistic understandings of what life within an armed group entails and of what 'community reintegration' looks like in practice (see also De Vries and Wiegink 2011). Furthermore, the findings presented in this paper question the viability of disrupting the cohesiveness of non-state armed groups by breaking the command and construct structure and thereby the notion that these former combatants could be sent into civilian life as individuals free from the influence of their commanders and former colleagues.

For former combatants in Maringue the former military network prevailed after the war and functioned as their main network for social, political and economic relations and opportunities. The continuation of Renamo networks shows that the rebel movement was not merely a military organization, which could then be terminated by decommissioning weapons and by dismantling the command and control structure (cf. Hoffman 2007: 660). It was also a social context involving friendships, love affairs, spirits and relationships of dependency, not only shaped by military logic, but by social, cultural and

political understandings, and in interaction with a wider social and political context (involving church communities, traditional authorities, family-in-law). By describing the range of horizontal and vertical relationships between ex-combatants, their fellow veterans, former commanders, and Renamo politicians, and their intertwinement with civilians, I hope to have shown that these networks were crucial for Renamo veterans' post-war social lives as they provided these individuals with a sense of belonging, social protection, and, in some cases, economic opportunities.

Various researchers have shown how former military networks may be involved in a myriad of violent and non-violent, and perhaps more desirable and less desirable, activities, such as their involvement in electoral campaigns (Christensen and Utas 2008; Kriger 2003), as disciplined work forces (Hoffman 2011, 2007), in illicit trade (Persson 2012; Reno 1998), in private security (Christensen and Utas 2008; Cock 2005; Diphoorn 2013; Frerks, Gompelman, and Van Laar 2008), and in violent action and renewed warfare (Hoffman 2007; Themnér 2012). Following recent scholarship on (former) armed groups in Africa (Debos 2008; Hoffman 2007: 660; Munive and Jakobsen 2012; Themnér 2012; Utas 2005), I also showed how Renamo networks were shaped by personal asymmetric relationships of dependencies. These studies show in their own ways how armed actors are not exclusively governed by a military logic, but are also embedded in wider (global and local) power dynamics and sociality.

A conclusion to be drawn from the Renamo networks I described is that the intent to break up these ties may be in vain, at least for certain factions of ANSA. Additionally, by ignoring the ties between former combatants and members of their former armed group, their potential for social and economic integration is left unexplored. As has been argued by several scholars, it might be more productive to make use of these networks, rather than to actively try to dismantle them (Bøås and Bjørkhaug

2010; Munive and Jakobsen 2012; De Vries and Wiegink 2011). As I have tried to show, Renamo networks provided ex-combatants with a sense of belonging, friendships, social security, economic possibilities and expectations for a more tolerable life, which are in fact, all qualities of a meaningful civilian life. This poses certain questions to which I have no definite answers: what advantages would the conservation of (certain parts of) the network of the armed group have over more individualistic approaches that seem to be at the base of most current DDR design? How much depends on the characteristics of the (former) armed group and the political context in which DDR or any other program takes place? A specific characteristic of Renamo that aided in violence reduction was its relatively strong command and control structure, which continued also after the war. Less well-controlled armed groups might pose challenges to any collective approach to reintegration. Nevertheless, a general lesson that can be drawn from these wartime networks is the importance of brokers (see also Themner 2012; Utas 2012). The identification of brokers on different levels within (former) armed groups may provide insight and opportunities for the transformation of armed actors.

Finally, there remains the question of whether Renamo networks contributed to Renamo's possibilities for violence, and more concretely for its recent upsurge. Indeed, the continuation of these wartime networks in the post-war period provided Renamo's leaders with a pool of ready, seasoned, often frustrated and marginalised recruits (although it might be interesting to investigate the perspective of ex-combatants who did not remobilize). Yet, it was not necessarily the Renamo networks that pushed Renamo's leaders back to the bush. Elite instrumentalization, political competition and (increasing) disparities between the rich and poor segments of Mozambique's society are but some of the factors to be considered for explaining the recent violent conflict. In this paper I focused on how armed actors transform—although

there was also discussion about how these networks do not transform very much—by illuminating not the military or violent side of armed actors, but other internal social relationships and their place in larger social and political constellations.

Competing Interests
The author declares that they have no competing interests.

Notes
[1] The data presented in this paper derived from almost two years of ethnographic fieldwork in Maringue spread over the years 2008–2010, during which I also made several research trips to the neighboring districts of Chemba, Caia and Ingaminga, and to the cities of Beira and Maputo. Data was gathered through participant observation, the collection of life histories and semi-structured interviews with over seventy former Renamo combatants. Additional data was gathered during interviews with veterans' family members, political leaders, traditional authorities, and healer-diviners, and by 'being there,' which allowed me to get a grasp of what social and family life, people's daily struggles, and social interactions meant in Maringue. Furthermore, I was able to follow on a day-to-day basis how political contingencies, e.g. the visits of political figures, elections, and violent incidents, took place and were interpreted. Most interviews were conducted in Portuguese; others were conducted in ChiSena with a translator. I was not in Mozambique in 2012 when the low intensity war started. The data presented in the paper is based on media reports, academic papers and several telephone conversations.

[2] Michel Cahen. Review of Stephen A. Emerson, The Battle for Mozambique: The Frelimo-Renamo Struggle (1977–1992). H-Luso-Africa, H-Net Reviews. January, 2015. https://networks.h-net.org/node/7926/reviews/57489/cahen-

stephen-emerson-battle-mozambique-frelimo-renamo-struggle-1977, accessed 27/04/2015.

[3] Communication with an anonymous source present at Dhakama's escort from Gorongosa in order to start his electoral campaign in September 2014.

[4] The major agreements were a ceasefire declaration, a memorandum of understanding, guarantee mechanisms and the terms of reference of the foreign military observers who will monitor the cessation of hostilities. It was commented that the cease-fire accord did not spell out the details of the integration of 'residual forces of Renamo' into the army and police (J Hanlon 7/09/2014, news reports and clippings). At the time of writing (beginning of March 2015) talks between Renamo and the government are deadlocked, and there has been no demobilisation of Renamo fighters yet (J Hanlon 3/4/2015, News Reports and Clippings).

[5] Centro de Integridade Publica (CIP) and Association of European Parliamentarians with Africa (AWEPA), Maputo, 'Elections Results, 28 November 2014', Mozambique Bulletin, 56.

[6] 'Command and control structure' is a commonly used military term that denotes the exercise of authority and direction by a designated commander over his forces in pursuit of a specific mission.

[7] As no substantial research or truth-finding has been done, all statements about the number of casualties are rough estimates and may be exaggerations (Nordstrom 1997a: 48; Igreja, Dias-Lambranca, and Richters 2008). The vast majority of people died from causes related to the war, such as hunger and disease. Food shortages were probably also the main cause of displacement.

[8] Interview with Armando, 06/08/09, Maringue.

[9] Interview with Olivia, 04/08/09, Maringue.

[10] Kalyvas (2006: 46), Grossmann (1995), and Finkel (2009) have noted that what

motivates combatants in war is usually not ideology, hate, or fear, but rather peer pressure, regard for their comrades, respect for their leader, concern for their own reputation, and the desire for the group to succeed. In the aforementioned studies this has been called 'primary group cohesion.'

[11] Interview with Evaristo, a former FAM combatant and member of the association of disabled veterans, Maputo, 16 December 2008.

[12] Schafer (2007: 84) has noted that in the *Forças Armadas de Moçambique* (FAM, Armed Forces of Mozambique) the government was presented as the father, commanding his sons, the soldiers, who were to follow blindly. At the same time, people in Maringue, including veterans from both sides of the armed conflict, often characterized the war as a 'war between brothers,' implying, in contradiction to the international and Frelimo government depiction of Renamo as puppets of the Apartheid regime, that this was a fight fundamentally between Mozambicans.

[13] Conversation with Thomas, 25/08/08, Maringue.

[14] Similarly to what Themnér (2012: 208) described, these ex-combatants can be seen as gatekeepers and brokers who occupy a position in-between rank-and-file ex-combatants and 'big men' in political and military elite groups, for whom ex-combatants may serve as workers, personal security guards, or as fighters in the event of renewed warfare (Wiegink 2015:11).

[15] Conversation with Matateo, 03/10/08 Maringue.

[16] Conversation with Marion, 25/07/09, Maringue.

[17] Observations during visit of Dhlakama to the village of Maringue, on 18 August 2009.

[18] Interview with Chief Palame, 24/05/08, Maringue.

[19] It is important to note that after the war, Maringue district remained a Renamo bastion. Until 1997, Renamo *de facto* governed the district and up until fighting recently resumed, it continued to have an active military base near Maringue town. Maringue is therefore not a representative district of Mozambique, but a place where Renamo maintained a particularly strong presence during and after the war. As a result, the merging of the community and the armed group in Maringue was probably stronger in the post-war period.

[20] Think Africa Press, A. Mambondiyani, 'Mozambique: RENAMO's Leader Returns to Bush', 20/10/12. http://thinkafrica-press.com/mozambique/rebel-leader-dhlakama-returns-bush-renamo, accessed 30/04/2015.

[21] Savana article 3/04/2015, quoted in Hanlon's News Reports and Clippings of 08/04/2015.

[22] Michel Cahen. Review of Stephen A. Emerson, The Battle for Mozambique: The Frelimo-Renamo Struggle (1977–1992). H-Luso-Africa, H-Net Reviews. January, 2015. https://networks.h-net.org/node/7926/reviews/57489/cahen-stephen-emerson-battle-mozambique-frelimo-renamo-struggle-1977, accessed 27/04/2015.

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