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The COMPRAM Methodology and Complex Societal Problems – an Analysis of the Case of Children Born of War

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During and after wars children are born where the father is a member of an occupation or peacekeeping force and the mother a local citizen. Securing the human rights of children born of war is often highly complex and involves researchers and practitioners from different disciplines. The Compram methodology on handling complex societal problems will be applied to analyse whether the methodology is suitable on this group of war-affected children. The Compram methodology is a multi disciplined, multi level, multi actor methodology based on the theory of societal complexity. The methodology gives guidelines to handle real life complex societal problems.

Keywords: OR in societal problem analysis; Taboo research; COMPRAM methodology; children; war.

1 Introduction

In this article we will analyse the applicability of the Compram methodology to the group of children born of war. Children born of war are children born during and after wars and conflicts where the father is or has been a member of an enemy, allied or peacekeeping force and the mother a local citizen (cf. Grieg, 2001:6, Mochmann, 2006:198)[1]. The Compram methodology is a method for handling complex societal problems in a transparent and structured way developed by DeTombe (1994, 2003). The Compram methodology can be applied to a variety of complex societal problems; natural problems such as flu pandemic, earth quakes and floods as well as man-made problems like terrorism, healthcare problems and agricultural problems. The research question is: Is the Compram methodology applicable to a war affected, hidden and marginalised population as that of the children born of war? The fact that children are born who have parents from two opposing sides of a conflict is not a new phenomenon of modern warfare. There have always been children born as a result of either consensual relationships or sexual exploitation and rape during and after wars. Kuwert and Freyberger (2007) point out that sexual violence against women and women as part of war booty are even found in mythology as well as in several parts of the Bible. Remarkably little is known about the children born out of such relationships. To the best of our knowledge the children are addressed for the first time in connection with World War I in Magnus Hirschfeld's book *The Sexual History of The World War* (Grieg, 2001:21). Explanations for this lack of attention devoted to children born of war both among academics and practitioners are at least threefold:

1. *There are not many children born of war.* Looking at the estimated number of children born of war during World War II and thereafter clearly falsifies this assumption. An estimate by Grieg (2001:8ff) indicates that from 1945 until 2001 more than 500.000 children born out of relationships with foreign soldiers and local women were born. The conflicts range from World Wars I and II to wars in Vietnam and Bangladesh in the 1960s and 70s to Bosnia and Rwanda in the 1990s. Taking into account that many women hide the real origin of their children because they are ashamed or fear stigmatisation the number is probably much higher. Also abortions and infanticides are likely to have taken place. Finally, children are still

1 Often the term "war child" is used when describing this group. This is an ambiguous concept which is used also to describe other war affected children. A group of researchers thus decided at the meeting "Consolidating the evidence base of children born of war" in Cologne in 2006 to apply the term "children born of war" for this particular group of children. For further details see Mochmann (2006, 198f.)

being born in present and ongoing conflicts so the overall number is thus higher.

2. *The children born of war do not differ from other children of their home country*. Their biological background does not matter and therefore does not need special attention. In some cases this may be the fact. However, information available from several wars indicates that many children born of war are exposed to discrimination and stigmatisation both within family, community and society. Problems range from the rejection by close relatives to the lack of citizenship.
3. *The topic is taboo both within family and community*. If the topic is a taboo then information is less likely to reach the surface. Many cases are known in which children born of war grew up in families where they from early childhood felt something was different with them, but did not know why. Often the children were exposed to mobbing, psychical and psychological violence in family, school and neighbourhood. In many countries occupied by the German soldiers during World War II only during the past decades the children fathered by German soldiers and local women have stepped forward and told about their childhood and experiences. Often they did not learn about their real biological background until they were grown-up and then understood why they had been treated so differently to other family members.

The third explanation is closely connected with both previous ones. If children born of war exist in a country or region, but the topic is taboo it is difficult to know the size of this population group. And if the topic is taboo it is difficult to gain knowledge about the real treatment of the child in family, school etc. Usually one may assume that a mother would be the closest person to the child and also act in the interest of the child. When it comes to children born of war, however, this is not always the case, particularly if the child was conceived by rape. However, not even when the child was conceived in a love relationship the mother can or will always act in the interest of the child. Examples from World War II show that the mothers themselves often were exposed to stigmatisation and discrimination as single mothers and/or "enemy sweethearts". This often made it difficult for them to protect their children both against violence within the family, for example, from the stepfather or mobbing in school and neighbourhood. Often the mother left the child in children's homes, gave him/her up for adoption or left him/her with the grandparents in order to move away to a place she was anonymous and could start a new life. The children, however, were left behind in an environment where their biological origin was well known and where they were seen as enemies and treated accordingly (for details see among others Ericsson & Simonsen, 2005b; Mochmann et. al. 2009).

This article will start with a short presentation of children born of war in different wars. Thereafter the Compram methodology will be introduced and then analysed in relation to the problems occurring among the group of children born of war. Finally, the results will be summarised and discussed.

2 Children born of war as a complex societal problem

Mochmann (2008; see also Mochmann & Larsen, 2008) defines four main categories of children born of war. The first category is children of enemy soldiers. In this case children are fathered by foreign soldiers who are clearly defined as enemies in the country or region of location. The second category embeds children of soldiers from occupational forces. These children can be seen as enemies or allies, depending on the view of the local population. The allied forces occupying Germany in the post World War II years, for example, were conceived as saviours by some and as enemies by others. Children of child soldiers are the third category. Female child soldiers are often forced to serve as wives and sex slaves to rebel leaders and children may be born as a consequence of these abuses. The last category includes children fathered by members of peacekeeping forces. Within these categories Mochmann and Larsen (2008:351) suggest that a further distinction may be drawn between children born out of consensual relationships, rape and sexual abuse and prostitution. In situations of war and crisis the borders between sexual abuse, prostitution and consensual relationship are often blurred, however. They thus advice that from the perspective of the child and his/her rights children born of war should not be distinguished based on background of origin before more reliable information and data has been gathered which clarifies similarities and differences between the children (see also Mochmann & Lee, forthcoming).

Although no standardised comparative analysis has yet been carried out, sources so far available indicate that children born of war grow up in a more hostile environment simply due to their biological background, i.e. having a father belonging to the 'enemy' or the 'others', and are thus exposed to stigmatisation and discrimination. These circumstances, in turn, have an impact on their development and even on their right to live. Information on the children and their destinies is rather sketchy as the mothers are often too ashamed or traumatised to address the issue and fear stigmatisation if the child's biological origin is revealed. Over the past decades information from grown up children born of war – particularly from World War II – has become available. The most extensive systematic research has been carried out for the Norwegian children fathered by German soldiers and Norwegian women during World War II. Based on historical documents, qualitative interviews, register data (Olsen, 1998; Borgersrud, 2004; Ellingsen, 2004; Ericsson & Simonsen, 2004; 2005a, 2005b) and quantitative interviews (Mochmann & Larsen, 2008) the life courses of Norwegian children born of war have been analysed. The results indicate that many of these children are born with a stigma of belonging to the enemy and are, among others, often more likely to be exposed to poverty, infanticide, lack of citizenship and lack of education compared to other children. Also many seem to face identity problems due to the lack of information on and knowledge about their biological origin. Literature from other countries such as Denmark (Øland 2001; Mochmann & Larsen, 2005, 2008; Mochmann & Øland, 2009), France (Picaper & Norz, 2004; Virigili, 2009), Greece (Muth, 2008), the Netherlands (Diederichs, 2009), Austria

(Stelz-Marx, 2009), Britain and Germany (Lemke Muniz de Faria, 2002; Lee, 2009) and Vietnam (McKelvey, 1999) prove many similarities, but also differences in the life developments and treatments of this group of children in the respective countries and also differences regarding the treatment these children were given by the military authorities of their fathers. Children born of war as a result of sexual violence in more recent conflicts have been analysed by Carpenter in *Born of war* (Carpenter ed., 2007). This book offers case studies on children born of war and the extension of the 'problem' in conflict zones such as East Timor, Sierra Leone, Northern Uganda, and Bosnia. This research indicates that children born of war in these conflict zones are exposed to many of the same risks as children fathered by occupation soldiers during and after World War II ranging from infanticide to lack of citizenship and social exclusion. Finally, also information available – although very sketchy – on children fathered by members of peacekeeping troops emphasise similarities to other children born of war. Although these troops are often welcomed by the population in the country located, the children may be exposed to discrimination due to a different ethnical look which clearly identifies their father as a soldier. The child is more likely to be exposed to poverty as the mother may have to leave school or work to care for the child as there is no father and no financial support from the father (Eide Andersen, 2008). Children born of war may of course also include children who grow up with both their parents in a normal family, for example, where the mother marries the father and returns with him to his home country as so-called "war bride", in particular if the father was part of an allied troop such as Canadian and US troops in Britain during Second World War (cf. Lee, 2009). Even in countries where the soldiers belong to the occupation army such as in Norway, women married German soldiers and moved to Germany with the children after the war (cf. Aarnes, 2009). To the best of our knowledge this includes a minority of the children born of war, however. Furthermore, these children are not likely to have experienced the same difficulties as those who grew up in their country of birth.[2]

The purpose of this section is to give a brief introduction to emphasise the complexity of this issue. Different dimensions, factors and contexts which are expected to have an impact on the child and his/her development are presented in the Figure 1 below developed by Mochmann (2009).

The four dimensions are: socio-economic, psychological, medical/biological and political/juridical. Factors relevant at the socio-economic dimension include for example poverty, stigma, social exclusion and social deprivation. The psychological dimension includes factors such as identity, lies and taboo. The medical dimension includes factors such as infanticide, trauma, abuse and poor health. The political and juridical dimension covers for example lack of citizenship, exclusion from social services and lack of access to personal informa-

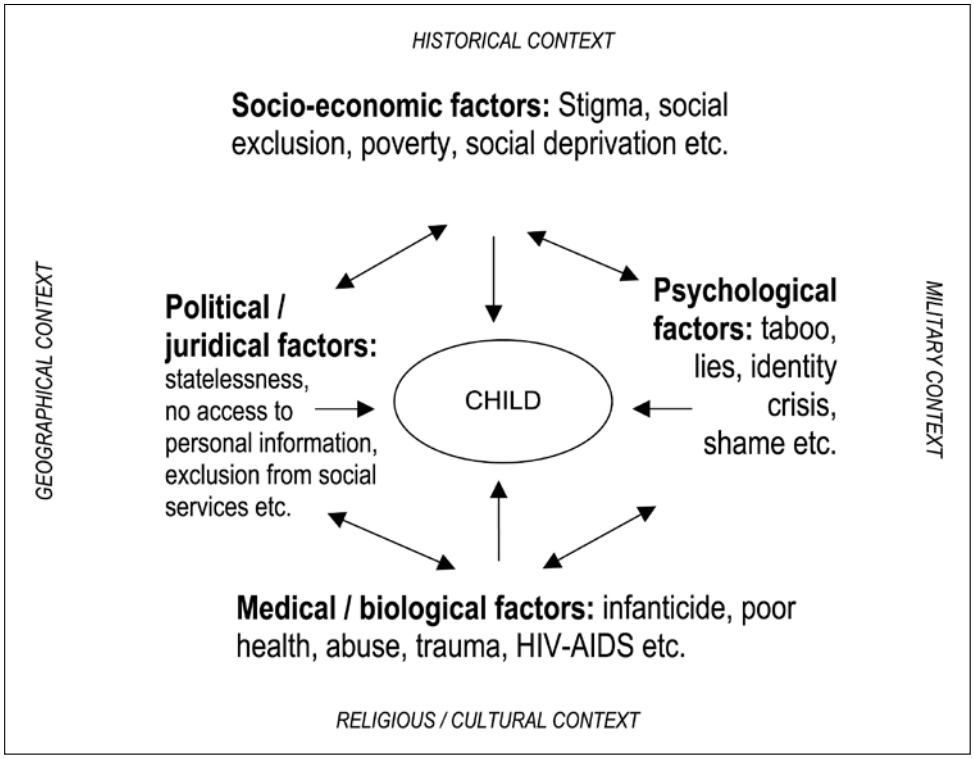


Figure 1: Dimensions, factors and contexts influencing the situation and life development of children born of war (Source: Mochmann 2009)

2 This does not mean that these children and their mothers did not experience difficulties in their new families and countries, such as cultural and language barriers, but this is not the focus of this article.

tion such as information stored in archives or governmental registers. These four dimensions are interrelated and have an impact on the child. For example if a child lacks citizenship he/she may be denied access to social services such as education and child benefit and the taboo surrounding the child's biological identity may cause depression and trauma. How the different factors influence the child is also dependent on the historical, military, geographical and religious/cultural context the child is born into.

All these factors listed in Figure 1 are of course of importance to the development of other groups of children as well. Nevertheless, a major difference is the fact that children born of war are exposed to many of the factors on the different dimensions simultaneously as was shown in the examples given above. Mochmann and Lee (forthcoming) have analysed the human rights of children born of war using the Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC) (Unicef, 1989) as the starting point of the analysis. In their article children born of war selected from four different wars and conflicts are discussed. They find that although the children differ with respect to background of conception, biological origin, historical and cultural contexts, many children are exposed to the same kind of difficulties and dangers. These range from securing basic rights such as the right to live and survival as well as health, development and education. They argue that there is a tension between protecting the children's right to know and live with their parents on the one hand and the parents', particularly the mother's, right to stay anonymous on the other. Also, the children often face difficulties of integration and are discriminated against, because they are treated as enemies due to their parentage.

Securing the human rights of this group is thus a highly complex societal problem. How the Compram methodology may guide this process will be elaborated after a general introduction to the methodology presented in the next section.

3 The Compram methodology and the handling of complex societal problems

According to DeTombe (2003) complex societal problems are problems where the 'solution' is to be found at the societal level. A problem exists when there is a discrepancy between the actual or (near) future situation and the desired future situation and/or there is a lack of knowledge and/or lack of know-how, and/or lack of relevant data. As for complex interdisciplinary societal problems, the problem is often undefined and the desired situation is not always clear (DeTombe, 1994:58).

DeTombe argues that most large, and important real-life problems are complex societal problems, such as global environmental problems, flooding problems relating to large rivers, extending airports in crowded areas, traffic congestion and water supply problems. The field of complex societal problems also includes unemployment problems, poverty problems, healthcare problems, as well as organisational problems. According to DeTombe complex societal problems are often ill- or multi-defined, hard to analyse and to handle. Knowledge and data are missing or contradictory, the causes of the problem are vague and it is often not clear in which direction the problem is going. Many parties, private and governmental are involved and the problem often has or will have a large impact on (parts of) society.

Complex societal problems themselves are interdisciplinary, involving aspects that are subject of study in several disciplines. The methodology for handling complex societal problems is multi-disciplinary. The scientists working in this field have backgrounds in different disciplines, and use methods derived from their original field combined with methods drawn from other fields. These combined methods are derived from fields like medicine, law, economics, social sciences, mathematics, computer sciences, technology, engineering sciences and operational research. As can be seen from Figure 1 this interdisciplinary approach is essential in the case of children born of war and will be analysed in the next section after a brief introduction of the basic elements and steps of the Compram methodology.

The Compram method is developed by DeTombe in 1994 for handling complex societal problems in a transparent and structured way (1994, 2003). It is based on three basic elements in the management of complex societal problems: knowledge, power and emotion. Knowledge includes having information about the problem. According to DeTombe information is often missing crucial elements and data is often missing or has internal contradictions. The element of power is related to the management of complex societal problems. The management process involves different actors each which dif-

step 1 analysis and description of the problem by a team of neutral content experts (knowledge)
step 2 analysis and description of the problem by different teams of actors (power)
step 3 identification and negotiation of interventions by experts and actors
step 4 anticipation of the societal reactions
step 5 implementation of the interventions
step 6 evaluation of the changes

Figure 2: The six steps of the Compram methodology

ferent power, different views and different goals. Power plays an important role in reaching agreement on the definition of the problem and selecting the interventions. Finally, the third basic element in problem handling is the influence of emotions. Emotions can stimulate or obstruct cooperation between people and between groups.

The Compram methodology includes six steps: knowledge, power, negotiation, societal reaction, implementation and evaluation (Figure 2).

The steps are described in the following:

1. Knowledge: The methodology starts by making an integrated simulation model of the problem by content experts who have knowledge of the different aspects of the problem. Each expert has knowledge of a part of the problem (Figure 3).

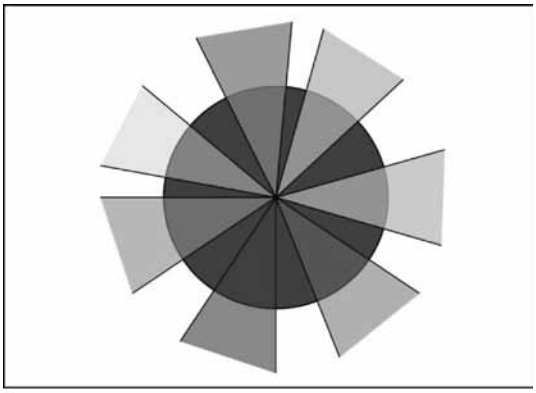


Figure 3: Each expert sees only part of the problem

This is the knowledge step. Questions that should be answered are: What do we know? What do we not know? What are the elements and how are they related? The experts make a simulation model of the elements of the problem supported by a seven-layer model of DeTombe (for details on the 7-layer model see Annex).

2. Power: In step two of the Compram methodology a power analysis is made. The different power groups, the actors, discuss the problem in their own groups and give their perception of the problem, indicate what their desired goals are, on which points they want to cooperate. 3. Negotiation: Then the actors and experts discuss some possibilities for change. Based on the scenarios mutually acceptable interventions are discussed.
4. Societal reaction: The selected interventions are discussed with the public before implementation in step five of the Compram methodology.
5. Implementation: After that interventions are performed in step five.
6. Evaluation: In step six the results and the handling process are evaluated.

In addition to these six steps a phase 0 or so called Quick start workshop is proposed in those cases an emergency situation demands direct handling in order to for example save lives immediately after a Tsunami or earthquake.

DeTombe (2003) argues that problem handling is preferred to problem solving because solving refers to a certain desired goal, and, as the desired goal potentially differs from actor to actor, the end of one problem process might mean a solved problem for one actor and a new problem for another actor. The case of children born of war is a very good example here: Military units may forbid any kind of private contacts and relationships with local women. This does not mean that these do not take place, though, and that children are born out of these relationships. For the military unit the problem is solved by introducing the regulation. For the woman and child the problem gets only worse with this regulation as no paternity proof, alimentation etc. can be requested.

In the next section the basic elements and six steps of the Compram methodology and the roles of different actors will be analysed in the case of children born of war.

4. Analysing children born of war within the framework of the Compram methodology

4.1 The basic elements of Compram: knowledge, power and emotions

The lack of knowledge is a severe problem in the case of children born of war. This group is related to war and post-war times where the situation is usually highly complex per se as many societal problems exist. Children born of war is a typical "blind spot", i.e. it is an area were information would be valuable, but due to the complexity of the problem and due to all the other pressing problems to be solved the area is overlooked. In addition, securing the rights of children fathered by enemies is likely to be low on the priority list in post-conflict situations. Research by Carpenter (2005) among humanitarian organisations in conflict zones shows that these are often not aware that children born of war exist in the country of presence. And in those cases where awareness of such a group existed very little is known about these children. In addition to the blind spots, DeTombe defines the white spots of knowledge (2003:285). These are spots where it is known that information is lacking and that it takes time and money to obtain it. This is the case with many conflicts where the children in the meantime are adults and provide information on their lives. A good example is children born of war and occupation during and after World War II. As presented in section two it is known that German soldiers fathered children all over Europe during this war, even in territories where it was forbidden to them to have relationships with local women such as in Eastern Central Europe and Russia. Yet, only for a few countries research based knowledge is available and in others information has only recently reached the surface. For more than six decades it is likely to have been known that this group of children exists in all occupied countries. At least since the Norwegian children raised their voice in the mid 1980s it is known that these children were often exposed to violations of basic human rights. Still the white spots of knowledge on children born of war during World War II remain. This is also the case with regard to

children born by allied soldiers during and after the Second World War such as Canadian and American troops in Britain, the Netherlands and Germany and Soviet troops in Austria and Germany. These – in the meantime – grown-up children could provide important information for comparative analysis on understanding the impact of different contexts on the treatment of children born during and after World War II. This information could again be helpful in order to understand and evaluate risks children born of war in present day and future conflicts may be exposed to.

The second basic element in Compram is the power related to the management of complex societal problems. The management process involves different actors, each with different power. Actors play an important role in reaching agreement on definition of the problem and in selecting interventions. With regard to children born of war the first challenge lies in the fact that someone must define it as a problem that this group may not have the same rights in the country they are born into as other children have. Even if this is defined, however, it does not automatically imply that this may serve these children. For example, in Norway a government based committee was established in 1945 to discuss the problem of the Norwegian children fathered by German soldiers and how to proceed with them. It was recognised that this group would have a difficult childhood in Norway and several ideas were proposed in order "to solve the problem." Clearly the main concern was not the children's well-being. Among the ideas proposed was offering the children to an Australian delegation who were looking for manpower which was quite absurd as these children were maximum five years old in 1945. There were fears in the Norwegian society that these children would become a German-friendly marching troop in future so authorities were quite interested in finding solutions to send the children out of the country. As they were Norwegian citizens this was not possible unless their mother had married a German soldier and thereby lost their Norwegian citizenship. The women who married a German soldier were sent to Germany with their children. Well-known psychiatrists claimed that the children were less intelligent than other Norwegian children because their mothers had had affairs with German soldiers. The argument was that these mothers were less intelligent because of their behaviour. Therefore the children born by these mothers were also less intelligent. Many children fathered by German soldiers in Norway were therefore put in homes for mentally retarded, treated as such in school etc. (see among others Borgersrud, 2004; Ericsson & Simonsen 2005a, 2008; Mochmann & Larsen, 2008). It was acknowledged that this group of children would have a particularly difficult life. Still, the regulation of child benefit[3] was constructed in such a way that most children of German soldiers did not profit from it. The difficult financial situation already existing because most mothers were single mothers was thereby worsened. Another example is the situation of children fathered by American GI's in post-war Germany.[4] The US authorities refused to take any responsibility for children born by German women and GI's. There were no payments, no citizenships rights and no right to establish paternity. In the case of African-American GI's these children were exposed to similar supposedly "best" solutions by authorities such as juvenile agencies, which sent children away from their families to children homes with the argument that it would be easier for them to be in a closed environment instead of being exposed to public discrimination (see Lemke Muniz de Faria, 2002; Lee, 2009). Unlike in many other wartime or post-war scenarios, in Bosnia, the existence of children born of rape was acknowledged as a challenge for the mothers, for society and it was recognised that the children required protection. This is evident in a 'Fatwa on children born by raped women in Bosnia-Herzegovina' which was issued by the Islamic authority in Bosnia during the civil war. The fatwa ruled that women who had been raped were martyrs of Islam (shahida), and all Muslims were asked to respect and support these women and their children during the healing process. The Islamic leadership urged women and communities to accept and raise war-rape orphans, to integrate them as much as possible into their local communities and secure their social adaptation (see Daniel-Wrabitz, 2007; Weitsman, 2008; Mochmann & Lee, forthcoming).

Finally, the third basic element in problem handling which is emphasised by DeTombe is the influence of emotions which is often underestimated. Emotions can stimulate or obstruct cooperation between people and between groups. Emotions can include anxiety, fear, joy, sympathy and hate and they can be rational or irrational and based on prejudice or discrimination. Emotions play a highly significant role in the problem handling of children born of war and are closely related to the element of power as was shown in the examples above. It is often difficult for (public) authorities, scientists and other actors to hide their emotions when defining the problems, even among allegedly "neutral experts". As these are human beings with their own values and beliefs the questions of objective analyses and measures may be in conflict with their own subjective feelings and interests.

Before continuing with the six steps of Compram the different actors in problem handling and their tasks and positions will be presented. Compram starts when the legitimate problem owner, perhaps supported by one or more content experts, together with a facilitator invites participants to address the problem by forming problem handling teams.

4.2 Problem handling persons: problem owner, facilitator, experts and actors

Different groups of persons can be defined in the handling teams: the legitimate problem owner, the facilitator, the experts and the actors. The problem owner and the facilitator are the first group of persons in the problem handling process. The legitimate problem owner has by law, habit or convention the legitimate task, right or duty to handle the problem. A legitimate problem owner may be a group or institution as

3 Social security payment disbursed to the parents or guardians of children.
4 GI describes members of the U.S. armed forces.

well as an individual. In the case of children born of war the problem owner is usually the state in which the child is born. However, it may also be a national military force or international force who is the problem owner. To which extent the military considers itself responsible for children fathered by members of their forces with local women differs in different conflicts, however. Also in many conflicts it is necessary to differentiate between the situation during and after the conflict. If a military force is occupying a country and their soldiers engage or sexually exploit civilians during this period, the occupying military regime would be the problem owner of the children born out of such relationships. After an occupation or war, however, when the occupying troops withdraw, the problem owner is likely to be the previously occupied state. DeTombe argues that it is important that the problem owner has the right to manage the problem as it increases chances that teams that are invited to discuss the problem will participate and the outcome of the problem handling process has a greater chance of being accepted and implemented. This unclear and changing position regarding who the problem owner for children born of war is may be one of the problems why it has been and still is difficult to address the issue of this group of children in post-conflict settings. In many cases a state has to take over the responsibility as problem owner for children they are not interested in and who very often are also considered as enemies due to their biological origin. It is thus essential that the question of problem ownership is solved and that the problem owner in the different phases of a conflict is redefined should this be necessary. The facilitator is invited by the problem owner to guide the problem handling process. In the case of children born of war facilitators could be organisations such as Unicef, Save the Children, Red Cross and other national and international humanitarian organisations, etc.

The second group of persons in the handling process are the experts. In this phase of the Compram methodology, the process of cooperative problem handling begins by selecting a team of 'neutral' experts by the facilitator in cooperation with the problem owner. The selection of experts depends on the major fields, phenomena, actors that are involved in the problem. If this is not clear at the start of the process the facilitator undertakes in depth interviews with the experts and actors that are known in order to gain more information about the elements that ought to be involved. In the problem handling process two kinds of problem handling teams are involved. The problem handling methodology starts with a team of neutral content experts with knowledge in one of the areas connected with the problem. These experts are more or less neutral towards a certain outcome of the problem handling process. Step one (see Figure 2) of the problem handling process is performed with the experts. In the case of children born of war in present and on-going conflicts in depth interviews with humanitarian workers and medical staff in refugee camps, health centres and similar facilities should take place as early as possible in order to raise the awareness of this particular hidden and marginalised group of children and their mothers. If the interviews indicate that children born of war already exist or are being expected by pregnant women, further experts should join the team such as for example psychologists specialised on trauma related to sexual abuse.

The third and final group of persons in the methodology are teams of actors. Each actor team has its own definition of the problem, its own desires and goals. Actors have a direct interest in the goals and outcomes of the problem handling process as the process affects them directly. The actors can be distinguished into well-organised and unorganised groups where the latter are often forgotten. DeTombe argues that unorganised and less organised groups like children, handicapped and elderly do not have a defender of their interests. She argues that in theory policy makers should take care of the interest of both the well-organised and less-organised groups, but that in practise it is exceptional that the interests of the unorganised groups are taken just as seriously as those of the well-organised groups (DeTombe, 2003:287).

The children are often too small to speak for their own interests and rights. Usually, the mother would act in the interest of the child. However, as elaborated above among children born of war this is not always the case. Often the mother has to protect her own interests which may be opposite to those of the child. The group of children born of war and their mothers are good examples of unorganised groups who have no defender of their interest. As argued previously the mothers are often too traumatised or ashamed to fight for their own rights. Even in present conflicts where women are raped as a military strategy such as in the Democratic Republic of Congo, women are held responsible for being raped and treated as whores in their family and local community. There is a reasonable chance that these women try to hide that they were raped. If they get pregnant this is not always possible and many husbands then leave their wives. Bosnia, where the religious leaders demanded the Muslim community to support women raped by Serb soldiers and children born as a consequence, is an important example of how policy makers may make a difference to unorganised groups. In summary, it may be assumed that the actors have different views on the problem, their own definition and own goals and also often have hidden agendas. In the Compram methodology, the actors and experts join the handling process at an early stage and all participants should agree on the way the problem handling process is guided. In the case of children born of war and their mothers the process may, for example, reveal that the situation and interests of the mothers and children have to be handled separately as a conflict of interest between the two groups may exist.

In the next section the case of children born of war will be discussed for each step of Compram described in section three.

4.3 The six steps of Compram and children born of war

1. Knowledge: As emphasised at the beginning of this article the research area of children born of war is still full of white and blind spots. Still, enough information exists which enables the identification of different dimensions and factors relevant to children born of war. In this process in-depth interviews with the facilitator may indicate additional dimensions and factors of importance to the well-being of children born of war in a particular conflict. In wars these interviews are likely to take place with personnel from humanitarian organisations and health personnel as these experts are usually the first to be in the conflict zone. If interviews confirm that children born of

war already exist or that there are pregnant women and girls who are likely to give birth to such children, measures should be taken to secure the position of the mother or mother-to-be and the child. In this first step, existing knowledge is gathered and potential new analysed.

The facilitator guides the problem handling process of the experts. The problems will become clearer by discussion and making a simulation model of the situation. In the simulation model the relationship between the phenomena which influence each other can be shown. After each round of discussion (step) reports are made in which the result of the problem handling process is described, the selections process of the persons who are invited as well as the discussions points. The content experts will at least include medical staff, psychologists, lawyers, human rights activists and social scientists. This way the handling process is more transparent.

Should the in-depth interviews indicate that the lives of raped women, pregnant women or children of war already born may be endangered phase 0 or the so-called Quick start workshop will be the first step in the process. This step is envisaged in the case of an emergency situation and would include measures such as, in particular, immediate medical and psychological support of the mother and medical support of the child.

2. Power: In step two each actor, guided by the facilitator, discusses the problem in their own group and gives his/her perception of the problem, indicates what the desired goals are, on which points he/she wants to cooperate and on which points not. Groups of persons participating in this process are in this case the countries (problem owner) where the children are born or the military forces if these accept responsibility as problem owners. In any case the military should be included in the process as actors. Other actors are the mothers and children, but also whole families and communities may have a direct interest in the outcome of the process. In many cases whole communities are traumatised such as Northern Uganda where the Lord's Resistance Army (LRA) has terrorised the population since the late 1980s. The reintegration process of abducted former child soldiers is very difficult, particularly for female child soldiers who return with children who were fathered by LRA rebel leaders during captivity. In such cases it seems important that the unorganised groups are represented by authorities representing the interests of these actors, promoting communication and mediation. Such authorities could be religious institutions, respected community leaders, women's groups, local police and NGO's, etc.
3. Negotiation: In this step the views, knowledge and power of the contents experts and different actors are combined. In this phase a representative selection of the actors and experts try to find interventions that are acceptable to the majority of the actors in different areas. It is, for example, asked: Who is responsible for establishing paternity and citizenship? Who is responsible for child benefit? Who is responsible for birth registration and maintenance of biological information? Who is responsible for prosecution if the mother was sexually abused?
4. Societal reaction: In the fourth step the selected interventions are discussed with the public before implementation to try to anticipate the social reactions which the interventions may provoke in order to avoid opposition. In the case of children born of war this step is quite critical. On the one hand a public debate may raise awareness and increase sensitivity and support towards the group of children born of war. On the other hand, singling them out may increase discrimination and stigmatisation. Public resistance may also arise if special attention is paid to this particular population and other war-affected groups feel that children born of war are "positively discriminated". How and to which extent the interventions should be discussed with the public before implementation should be analysed carefully from case to case. In conflicts and post-conflict situations it may also be possible to implement interventions which benefit the group of children born of war without making explicit that the intervention is aimed at this group (and their mothers).

   The two final steps are 5. Implementation and 6. Evaluation. The implementation of the interventions and later on the evaluations of the interventions take time. Both processes require close monitoring over several years in order to be able to evaluate the actual outcome of the intervention. An example may help to illustrate the dilemma. Bosnian children born of rape and their mothers were protected and supported by their religious Muslim community. The religious authorities also decided that in order to avoid discrimination all information which could reveal the real biological identity of the children should be destroyed. The problem is that many children still learn about their real background because there are always relatives, neighbour or schoolmates who know something and share this information. This often results in identity crises and the need to find out more about one's origin. Destroying such files is thus contrary to the interest of the child. To many children of World War II having access to archives and personal files has been tremendously important in order to receive knowledge on "black holes" in their lives and to be able to leave the past behind and look forward.

5 Conclusion and outlook

In this article the group of children born of war was introduced and some of the human rights issues related to this particular group were described and discussed. The situation of these children as "war left-overs" makes difficult an objective treatment and evaluation of the position of this group during conflicts, but in particular in post-conflict settings. The aim of this article was to analyse to which extent the Compram methodology is applicable to this hidden and marginalised population group of the children born of war. In conclusion, the Compram methodology is useful for analysing and handling the complex problems that occur around the children born of war. The methodology makes it possible to analyse the inter-disciplined knowledge by multi-disciplined experts who are able to include and combine the many complicated

factors into the problem handling model. Based on jointly built simulation models interventions can be explored. Handling according to the Compram methodology supports defining and changing a complex societal problem in a sustainable way. In a six step approach experts, actors and policy makers discuss the content of the problem and the possible changes. This framework methodology uses interviewing, the simulation models and scenarios in a cooperative way. The methodology emphasises the exchange of knowledge and understanding by communication among and between the experts, actors and politicians meanwhile keeping emotion in mind. These kinds of complex societal problems include much emotion, both inside and outside the problem handling process. The facilitator is aware of the role emotions play in these kinds of problems and tries to take care of these. The Compram methodology also includes power factors. Each actor has different power, a different definition of the problem and has different desires and goals towards the intervention of the problem. By finding mutually acceptable interventions and looking at the societal reactions, the sustainability of the problem handling process is enlarged. The fifth and sixth step of the methodology considers the implementation and evaluation of the interventions and the effects they have on real life and the process of the problem handling. Reports are made after each step in the methodology which makes it possible to follow the problem handling process. This way the problem handlers can revisit earlier decisions.

In a complex societal problem as that of the children born of war the Compram methodology reveals two important difficulties. The first problem is getting the issue on the agenda. As discussed in this article both shame, taboo, fear of discrimination and stigmatisation may keep mothers and children from coming forward. The Compram methodology may help revealing this issue, thereby providing help to the mothers and children without singling them out. Secondly, finding a legitimate problem owner is a challenge. The problem owner should be legitimate, as neutral as can be, above all parties and should be accepted and respected by all parties. If not, the interventions will not be implemented by the actors or not be accepted by the public. The selection of problem owner and facilitator should be analysed and defined carefully from conflict to conflict. The elaboration of international military guidelines which include the forces' responsibility towards children born of war as well as their mothers would be an important step in this process and would facilitate the definition of the legitimate problem owner. Such an international guideline could be based on the "United Nation Comprehensive Strategy on Assistance and Support to Victims of Sexual Exploitation and Abuse by United Nations Staff and Related Personnel" which was accepted by the UN General Assembly in 2007. This resolution defines all relationships between UN personnel and civilians as sexual abuse and thus ignores the fact that also consensual relationships may occur. Nevertheless, it is a milestone when it comes to recognising the fact that children are born as a consequence of such relationships and that these children and their mothers may need particular support and protection. The impact this resolution has "in real life" still needs to be evaluated, however.

The Compram methodology stimulates creative interventions which supports the sustainability of the intervention. However, even with this sustainable and very transparent methodology handling these kinds of problems will be complicated and difficult: handling a complex societal problem will never be easy.

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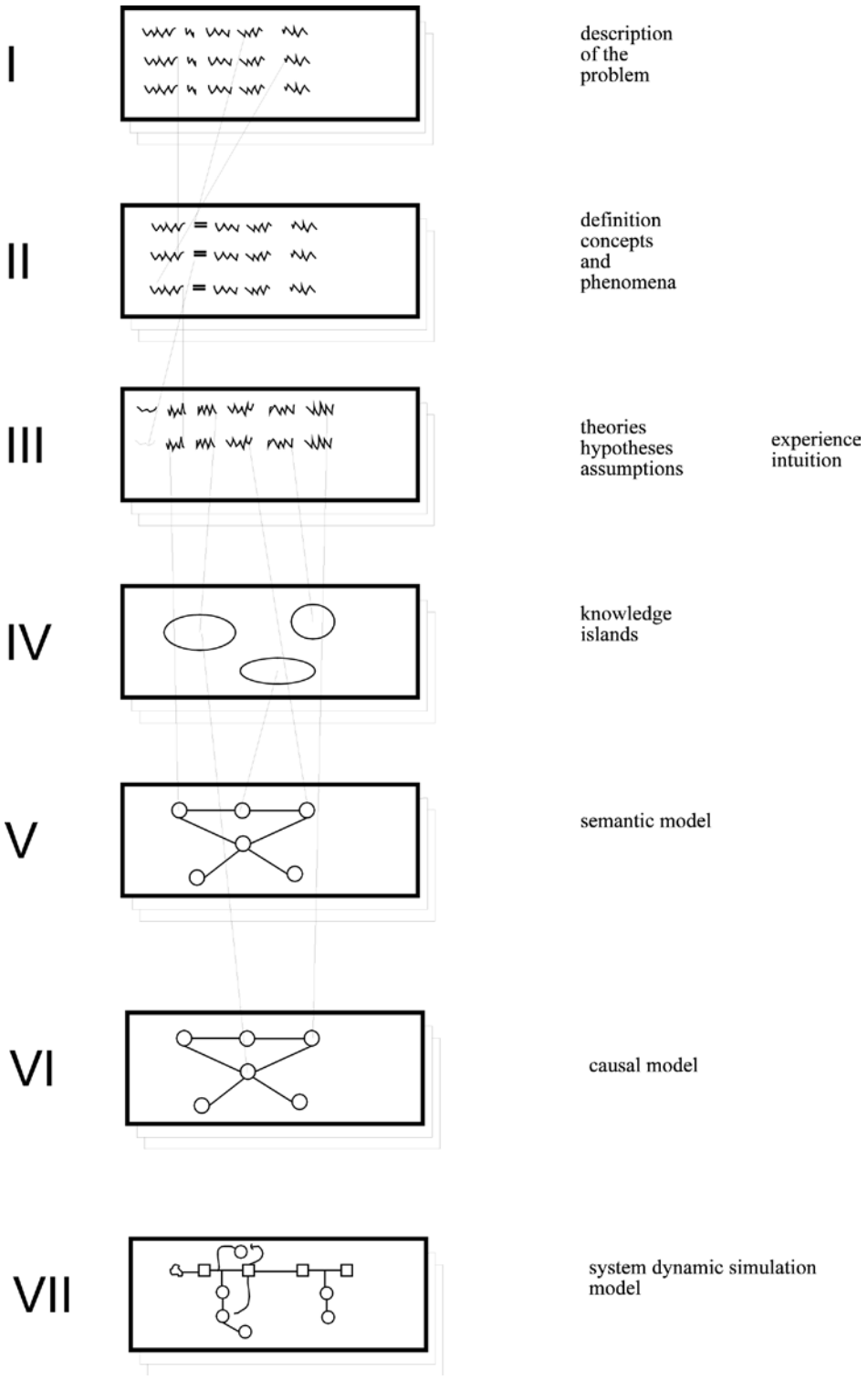
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Annex: The seven-layer communication model (DeTombe, 1994)



In Layer I the problem is described in a natural language, in words, each team member understands.

In Layer II the concepts and the phenomena used in the description of the problem in Layer I are defined. In this way the team members are stimulated to operationalise and define the concepts and phenomena they use. This gives other team members the opportunity to learn the concepts of other professions, and it prevents verbalism[i].

In Layer III the relations between the concepts and the phenomena of the problem are described in natural language. These relations can be based on theories, hypotheses, assumptions, experiences or intuition. This indicates the status of

the knowledge. This Layer is related to the description of the problem in Layer I, to the definition of the concepts and the phenomena in Layer I and to Layers IV, V, VI, and VII.

Layer IV shows the knowledge islands. This is a graphic representation of the knowledge of the problem that is needed for handling the problem. The way the knowledge islands are filled indicates the completeness of the knowledge.

In Layer V a semantic model of the problem is made. A semantic model is a graphic representation of the relations between the concepts and the phenomena of the problem described in Layer I.

In Layer VI a graphic representation of the causal relations between the concepts and the phenomena of the problem is shown.

Layer VII contains a system dynamic model of the problem based on the causal model in Layer VI. The system dynamic model contains non-linear connections because of the repetitive interactions between the phenomena and the actors in the model.

Parts of the problem and of the different domain knowledge can be worked out in more detail in sub-sheets of the Layers I to VII. The sub-sheets of one domain are internally connected and are externally connected to the overall problem. It is often necessary to focus on a part of the problem in detail to get a better view, otherwise the models are too large to comprehend. The seven-layer model can be used to support the first sub-cycle of the problem-handling process as well as the second sub-cycle (see DeTombe, 1994) (see Figure 3).

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i Verbalism is using words without knowing what they mean.