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Third-party coordination in conflict resolution: evidence from Nepal and the Philippines

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Abstract

Purpose – This study aims to explore the conditions that lead to the occurrence of third-party interveners' coordination in conflict resolution efforts.

Design/methodology/approach – The studied theme is elaborated by means of an analysis of two case studies: the Maoist armed conflict of Nepal and the Moro conflict of the Philippines. Importantly, this study solicits the views of third-party practitioners and other relevant stakeholders in the field and attempts to demonstrate how they perceive key issues in third-party coordination.

Findings – Third-party coordination is a contingent process, with varying needs and relevance in different phases and types of conflict. The escalation of violence, issues of international concern such as human rights and the homogeneity of interveners are other core elements that have often played a key role in third-party coordination.

Research limitations/implications – In the existing literature, there are no such indicator-based explanations regarding the occurrence of third-party coordination; thus, the findings of this research on this particular theme are well-developed and better conceptualized than what has been discussed in the literature to date.

Practical implications – The analysis undertaken in this study can contribute to the design of better policies and strategies for third-party coordination.

Originality/value – This study is based on in-depth interviews and interactions with a diverse range of third-party practitioners and other stakeholders working in real-world conflicts, who have perhaps the best understanding of various dimensions of third-party coordination. No previous research has been conducted on this particular theme by incorporating direct interaction with a wide range of interveners from two distinct conflict contexts.

Keywords Philippines, Nepal, Coordination, Conflict resolution, Third-party, Multiparty mediation

Paper type Case study

Introduction

Coordination[1] is a conflict resolution process in which a range of third parties – regardless of their origin, power status or role – make attempts such as consultation, coalition and network formation, division of labor, resource sharing and joint planning to work together in various phases of an armed conflict. The aim of third-party coordination is to contribute to the reduction of violence in the initial stages of conflict,

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and ultimately to contribute to the peaceful settlement of a conflict through a variety of intervening activities.

At least two third-party actors have been involved in approximately half of all mediation efforts around the world since the mid-1990s (Beber, 2010; Lindgren *et al.*, 2010). With an enlarged number of third-party interveners acting in various capacities, with myriad roles and in different phases of conflict, the issue of coordination has garnered critical scrutiny. However, our current state of knowledge, particularly regarding the factors that contribute to the occurrence of third-party coordination, is partial and fragmentary, as conclusions are often based on the study of small subsets of third-party coordination, such as diplomatic coordination, official–unofficial coordination and post-war coordination. A solid understanding of all factors that play a role in third-party coordination processes is important, as these factors shape the overall dynamics of third-party coordination. A deeper understanding of the real-world conditions of third-party coordination can also contribute to the design of better policies and strategies for third-party coordination. In this light, the central question posed by this article is: Under what conditions do third parties coordinate their intervention efforts?

This article argues that coordination is a necessary step to be taken by third parties, whether at their own initiative or by the conflicting parties, to play a constructive role in conflict resolution efforts. Coordination among third-party interveners can be instrumental for leveraging collective pressure on the conflicting parties to find a negotiated solution in a timely manner. Third-party coordination can also be instrumental in convincing the conflicting parties to minimize the intensity of conflict, thereby reducing the cost of collateral damage. Moreover, third-party coordination can provide a reliable political guarantee for the conflicting parties to produce a peace agreement and implement it without significant hurdles.

Despite the many advantages of coordination in conflict resolution processes, third parties are often less than willing to coordinate. Conflicting interests, diverse intervention goals, differences in coordination behaviors, existing and past relationships and power differentials among third parties are some of the factors that lead to the breakdown of coordination efforts.

A tentative consensus in the literature is that third-party coordination can be a useful approach to resolving conflicts and supporting a peace process. Scholars have offered many proposals for how coordination can be most effective and have described a broad range of third-party coordination issues. However, although the existing literature captures several important aspects of third-party coordination, a number of gaps remain. This article addresses two major gaps. First, the existing literature does not provide an adequate understanding of the key factors that play a role in the occurrence of third-party coordination. A general argument in the literature is that third-party coordination is largely coincidental, and typically occurs on the basis of the mutual policy interests of third parties or a broad coincidence of commitments (Iji and Fuchinoue, 2009; Crocker *et al.*, 2002; Vukovic, 2012; Griffiths and Whitfield, 2010). These explanations do not provide a comprehensive understanding of contextual and policy factors or motives behind the occurrence of third-party coordination. In light of this research gap, this article explores the key factors that play a role in third-party coordination. An in-depth analysis is crucial because it provides insights into some of

the root causes of third-party coordination problems, thereby potentially contributing to the creation of more effective coordination strategies.

In addition, much previous empirical research has been based on analysis of a single case study, mostly relying on secondary sources of information. This often precludes obtaining an accurate picture of third-party coordination, as the perspectives of third-party practitioners and other relevant stakeholders who are dealing with coordination issues routinely are omitted. This article seeks to address this gap through the solicitation of views of a diverse range of third-party practitioners and other stakeholders working in two real-world conflicts.

There is also an insufficient theoretical/policy framework or any standard, identifiable indicators that could assist in assessing the conditions under which third parties coordinate. This research fills this gap with the identification of key indicators that are the most influential shapers of the overall dynamics of third-party coordination.

Overall, this research suggests that, along with a broad coincidence of interests and commitments, the *readiness* of third parties is the most important condition for their coordination. Contextual, policy and motive (CPM) are three major factors which make third parties ready to coordinate. This research further suggests that coordination does not take place simply as the result of the desires of third parties or conflicting parties; rather, a *ripe moment*, engendered either by the actions of third parties and conflicting parties, or by serendipity, is required to make this happen. Coordination practices change in different *phases* of the conflict. Third parties are often willing to coordinate during the high-intensity conflict phase but evidence less enthusiasm for coordination in the low-intensity phase of violence. Likewise, the policy interests of conflicting parties in bringing third parties together and the convergence of policy interests among third parties often play a prominent role in the occurrence of third-party coordination. In this regard, mandate-based third-party intervention is an important strategy for the occurrence of coordination. Coordination also occurs more readily when third parties feel that certain issues relating to the conflict cohere with their own interests. In this regard, issue-based third-party coordination has been a common practice in both the intensive armed phases and the political normalization phases of both conflicts studied. Finally, this research indicates that third parties, particularly external ones, are interested in collectively intervening in immediate issues related to conflict, but not so much in the structural issues that pushed the country toward violent conflict in the first instance.

Third-party coordination: a theoretical framework

The existing conflict management literature provides an overview of a number of components related to third-party coordination. There is a tentative consensus among scholars that no single third party has sufficient political resources to address the multifaceted issues associated with conflict. For this reason, coordination among interveners is considered vitally important in conflict management processes (Parry, 2004). A coordinated third-party intervention may produce the necessary "political will" and "muscle" to bring the conflicting parties to the negotiation table. It may open up new channels of communication that can lead parties to negotiate a settlement on their own (Crocker *et al.*, 2001).

A number of scholars have examined third-party coordination and its roles in conflict resolution. Campbell and Hartnett define coordination as "an iterative process of

gradually building trust, understanding and working relationships" (Campbell and Hartnett, 2005, p. 7). Fisher suggests that "coordination is directed toward increasing complementarity, either simultaneously or sequentially" (Fisher, 2006, p. 68). Crocker *et al.* define coordination as the sequential or simultaneous involvement of many different interveners to assist peace negotiations in a given conflict; such coordination comprises activities such as:

> […] the careful crafting of a coherent political strategy, building support and finding resources for the strategy, and diminishing the possibilities that other third parties – or interested outsiders – will undermine the peace process by pursuing their own agendas (Crocker *et al.*, 1999, pp. 57-58).

Strimling underscores the importance of interaction between official diplomats and private facilitators "to contribute, directly or indirectly, to the effectiveness of each other's work or to the achievement of complementarity between efforts" (Strimling, 2006, p. 93). Vukovic (2012) highlights cooperation between mediators and consequent coordination of their activities as a crucial challenge in the mediation process (Vukovic, 2012).

Kriesberg was the first scholar to introduce the notion of third-party coordination into scholarly debate. He used the term "intermediary cooperation" to describe the coordination of third-party interveners working within a particular conflict. Activities such as consultation among intermediaries, division of responsibilities in the intervention processes and the selection of leading actors are key aspects of coordination (Kriesberg, 1996). Likewise, Nan coined the term "intervention coordination", which advocates for a stronger interconnectedness between governmental and non-governmental and local and international institutions involved in peacebuilding, for maximum impact (Nan, 2003). Nan suggests that if full coordination among interveners is not possible, a minimal level of coordination, such as information sharing and joint analysis, is pertinent. In long-term efforts, interveners should engage in information- and analysis-sharing, joint planning, resource sharing and collaborative initiatives (Nan, 2003).

Despite the limited use of systematic coordination by third parties, scholars have proposed several effective strategies. Kriesberg (1996) has advocated for formal consultation among intermediaries as an effective way to coordinate and build consensus on the roles that various actors can play in peace processes. Crocker *et al.* (2002), Kriesberg (1996), Rubin (1992) and Susskind and Babbitt (1992) have suggested that coordination at multiple levels and with multiple third-party actors is a prerequisite for sustainable peace. Nan and Strimling argue that, although third parties may collaborate throughout the conflict cycle, the best collaboration occurs when they have established clearly defined "shared goals" (Nan and Strimling, 2004). Susskind and Babbit emphasize the importance of "right moment" collaborative efforts (Susskind and Babbitt, 1992).

By the mid-2000s, more than 30 coordination mechanisms were in existence in several conflict-affected countries. Whitfield classifies these mechanisms in five broad categories: contact group, group of friends, friends of a country, implementation and monitoring groups and coordination mechanisms for implementation processes. These coordination mechanisms do not differ significantly in terms of their core functions, as

many are responsible for the collective implementation of peace agreements, conduct of peacebuilding initiatives and monitoring of peace processes (Whitfield, 2008b).

Leadership, leading actors and the existence of a coordinating institution are seen as vital for coordination among international actors (Iji and Fuchinoue, 2009; Iji, 2005; Fugfugosh, 2008). Emphasis is placed on the leading actor's coordination with a diverse range of international actors, including neighboring states, major powers, international, regional and sub-regional organizations, "groups of friends", non-governmental organizations (NGOs) and even diaspora populations. The leading actor's coordination with such a diverse range of actors can help to make them "engaged and informed" about the intervention process, and willing to seek further cooperation (Fugfugosh, 2008).

Other scholarship has focused on issues such as the advantages and disadvantages of third-party coordination (Beber, 2010; Iji and Fuchinoue, 2009; Kriesberg, 1996; Nan and Strimling, 2006; Strimling, 2006). There have also been discussions of the coordination of official and unofficial intervention efforts (Böhmelt, 2010; Fisher, 2006; Kriesberg, 1991). Some scholars have addressed factors that impede third-party coordination (Crocker *et al.*, 2002; Griffiths and Whitfield, 2010; Iji and Fuchinoue, 2009; Iji, 2005; Kriesberg, 1996; Whitfield, 2008b), and effectiveness in third-party coordination (Crocker *et al.*, 2002; Iji, 2005; Jones, 2001; Kriesberg, 1996; Paris, 2009; Strimling, 2006; Zartman, 2004).

Despite capturing varied dimensions of third-party coordination, scant research has been conducted focusing specifically on factors that are influential in promoting third-party coordination. Iji and Fuchinoue (2009) do highlight several components which are salient for the occurrence of third-party coordination: the motives of third parties for intervening in a particular conflict, their level of commitment to managing the conflict and the role of leading actor in facilitating third-party coordination. They argue that even in the absence of binding coordination mechanisms, structures and policies, third-party interveners such as coalitions of states, states and international organizations choose to coordinate with each other mainly because of their mutual policy interests or a broad coincidence of commitments. Wallensteen and Svensson have focused on how third parties' involvements in armed conflicts and peace processes are driven by their own interests: "Some states will have their own concerns in relation to a specific conflict and thus advocate their own solution to it" (Wallensteen and Svensson, 2014, p. 321).

Griffiths and Whitfield pinpoint coordination difficulties caused by a superficial understanding of the conflict context, lack of diplomatic unity and inconsistent standards and strategies (Griffiths and Whitfield, 2010). According to Kriesberg, activities involving larger agencies and powerful nation states are very difficult to coordinate, because of their larger scale of operations and diverse range of engagements (Kriesberg, 1996). Miall argues that the diverse characteristics of mediators make coordination difficult; they can act at cross-purposes and even "wreck [each other's] efforts" (Miall, 2004, p. 15).

Crocker *et al.* have highlighted particular obstacles associated with coalitions. Some of these have to do with difficulties in managing and connecting the interests of different actors, and in delegating power to each mediator (Crocker *et al.*, 2002). Strimling argues that both official and non-official interveners work in the interests of their institutions or

governments, or the alliance they represent and are accountable to, rather than the interests of the parties in conflict (Strimling, 2006).

Ricigliano has pointed to the "realpolitik" attitude prevalent among governments, larger organizations and NGOs as a barrier to coordination. As a government engaged in a conflict-affected country acts based on its national interests, it is often ambivalent about coordinating with other governments and NGOs. Larger organizations such as the United Nations (UN) and the European Union (EU) and powerful states like the USA may have difficulties coordinating due to their own turf battles. Coordination among NGOs has also been impeded by competitive funding processes and shrinking resources (Ricigliano, 2003).

In sum, a tentative consensus in the existing literature is that third-party coordination can be a useful approach for resolving conflicts and supporting a peace process systematically. Scholars have offered many proposals for how coordination should take place among third parties. Pertinent themes have emerged in the literature related to the advantages and disadvantages of coordination, challenges to coordination, approaches and strategies for coordination and the effectiveness of third-party coordination.

Despite capturing a number of aspects of third-party coordination, the existing literature is not sufficient to deepen our understanding of issues around *conditions for third-party coordination*, which has thus far received very little attention in the literature. There is thus no solid theoretical/policy framework or any standard and identifiable sets of indicators that could assist us in recognizing the occurrence of third-party coordination. Against this backdrop, the two main objectives of this study concern the articulation of a contingency model for better understanding the conditions for third-party coordination, through an empirical study of two under-studied conflict cases. The study constructs a set of empirically identified CPM factors that have both theoretical and policy significance. The CPM framework systematically clusters the factors identified in the research relating to the occurrence of third-party coordination. Some of these issues arise from the context of coordination, such as how the phase of conflict plays a dominant role in coordination processes. Other issues are related to the policy interests of third parties, such as what forms of coordination a third-party intervener seeks and other factors predisposing interveners to coordinate. Motives are partially linked to contextual and policy factors but even more so to third parties' mission-driven or issues-based coordination processes.

The existing literature does in some ways attempt to explain CPM as determining factors in third-party coordination. For example, some of the prominent third-party coordination issues mentioned above, such as compatibility of interests (Crocker *et al.*, 2002; Griffiths and Whitfield, 2010; Iji and Fuchinoue, 2009; Vukovic, 2012), entry points (Crocker *et al.*, 2002, Fisher, 2006) and levels of institutionalization (Nan, 2003; Strimling, 2006; Whitfield, 2008b), come under the CPM framework in one way or another. However, these factors are yet to be presented and consolidated under a concrete framework along with other CPM factors. By examining two different case studies, incorporating some novel and some already explored factors, this research authenticates the ways in which factors related to the occurrence of third-party coordination can be broadly explained under the CPM framework.

Finally, this research aims to make a policy contribution to the field of conflict resolution. A key focus is an analysis of third-party coordination trends in different

phases of conflict, such as the conflict escalation, pre-agreement and post-agreement phases. An understanding of phase-based third-party coordination practices can assist policymakers and third-party practitioners in identifying the spontaneities and constraints of third-party coordination and the reasons behind such fluctuations in different phases of the conflict.

The cases: Maoist conflict in Nepal and Moro conflict in the Philippines

An armed conflict erupted in Nepal in February 1996. The Communist Party of Nepal, Maoist (CPN, Maoist)[2], instigated an armed struggle by means of a number of violent attacks on police posts and government offices in several districts of Mid-Western Nepal. The Maoists articulated three broad objectives of their armed resistance: to wipe out the capitalist class and the state system that had traditionally existed, to abolish the Monarchy[3] that protected and promoted feudalism and to establish a democratic republic ruled by the people (Mahat, 2005). This conflict lasted for 10 years and formally ended after the government and the Maoists signed a Comprehensive Peace Agreement in November 2006.

Due to the presence of a multiplicity of third-party interveners, the Maoist armed conflict of Nepal and its current peace process is a highly relevant case around which to assess coordination efforts in different phases of conflict. A large number of third parties, including global and regional powers (the USA, India, China, the UN and the EU), other nation states (mainly European and Scandinavian countries), donor agencies, local and international peacebuilding and human rights NGOs and individual mediators have all been active third parties in Nepal. Some were active within a particular phase of the conflict, while others were active throughout the conflict cycle. Despite all of this activity, questions about how they coordinated and complemented each other's efforts have yet to be satisfactorily answered.

The Moro conflict comprises two conflicts concentrated in the island of Mindanao: conflict between the Government of the Philippines (GPH) and the Moro National Liberation Front (MNLF), and conflict between the GPH and the Moro Islamic Liberation Front (MILF). This conflict has both religious and nationalist dimensions, with various elements of the Muslim insurgency stressing one or the other dimension. During the two and half decades of sporadic war between the GPH and the MNLF rebels, there were several negotiation efforts. The key outcome of those negotiations was the Tripoli Agreement of 1976 under the auspices of the Organization of Islamic Conference (OIC)[4]. This agreement could not be put into effect, and this failure dragged the MNLF back into off-and-on war until 1995. With a great deal of third-party mediation and intervention, both the government and the MNLF leaders agreed to revisit the Tripoli Agreement and signed a new deal in 1996.

However, the MILF, a splinter group from the mainstream MNLF, was dissatisfied with the 1996 peace agreement, believing that the provision for an Autonomous Region of Muslim Mindanao (ARMM) was too limited compared with the original demand to reclaim a "Bangsamoro homeland". For this reason, the MILF entered into a separate but related armed resistance against the Manila government in early 1997. This armed struggle, with intermittent lulls in fighting, continued for almost 13 years. The last ceasefire was in November 2009 and has been the longest one to date, leading to a Framework Agreement in October 2012 and the eventual signing of a Comprehensive Peace Agreement in March 2014.

Thus far in the GPH–MILF peace process, many local and external third parties have been involved in both formal and informal capacities. Malaysia was facilitator of the high-level negotiation process, while four nation states (Japan, the UK, Turkey and Saudi Arabia) and four international organizations (the Centre for Humanitarian Dialogue, The Asia Foundation, Conciliation Resources and Muhamaddiyah) provided support for the high-level negotiations as members of the International Contact Group (ICG). An additional formal intervention structure, the International Monitoring Team (IMT), has worked mainly at the local level to monitor various aspects of the peace process, particularly civilian protection, human rights protection, socioeconomic progress, rehabilitation and security. IMT members include Malaysia, Japan, Indonesia, Norway and the EU, as well as the Nonviolent Peace Force, Mindanao People Caucus and Mindanao Human Rights Action Centre. In addition, significant numbers of civil society organizations and networks of NGOs are involved as local third-party actors. This plethora of actors makes it a fascinating case study for examining the dynamics of third-party coordination, and this conflict has arguably not yet been studied in this regard.

Research approach

This research adopts a multiple case-study method structured around the observation of two different conflict contexts. This study mainly adopts a theory-building approach, which enables the construction of new perspectives on third-party coordination, supported by representative participants. To some extent, this research also adopts a theory-testing approach, contrasting the explanations of the existing literature with the findings of this research. Using a semi-structured questionnaire design, primary data were collected during three months of field research in Kathmandu, Nepal, from December 2011 to February 2012, and two months of field research in Manila and Mindanao, Philippines, from July to August 2012. I used primarily purposive sampling and secondarily the snowballing method to identify potential research participants. These included peace mediators and facilitators, peace panel members from the government and rebel groups, political leaders, government officials, diplomats, bilateral donors, UN officials, representatives from international NGOs and NGOs and experts familiar with the dynamics of third-party intervention in each country. Altogether 83 participants were interviewed: 40 in Nepal and 43 in the Philippines. Identities of research participants are withheld as per their wish and information drawn from interviews are presented with unique code in the paper[5].

Most of the interviews were one hour in length. The language used in the interview process was mostly English, although a few interviews conducted in Nepal were in Nepali. All interviews were conducted by the researcher and transcribed manually. The interview process draws on Dey's qualitative data analysis approach, which refers to "processes of describing phenomena, classifying it, and seeing how our concepts interconnect" (Dey, 1993, p. 31). Research conclusions are derived from the subjective and objective analysis of in-depth interviews with key informants, as well as relevant secondary sources.

Quality assurance regarding research results is an important aspect of qualitative research. Gagnon (2010) addresses the role of the researcher in the validity process, and suggests that a researcher must adopt three different approaches – the holistic illusion, the elite bias and over-assimilation – to enhance the validity of his/her research. Holistic

illusion means that the researcher includes data most relevant to the research; elite bias means the inclusion only of responses that are well-articulated; and over-assimilation means that the researcher "accepts the facts and perceptions conveyed by local informants […], surrendering his or her own vision and critical faculties" (Gagnon, 2010, pp. 21-22). Burnard *et al.* suggest that a thorough analysis of all data collected for the study is necessary to ensure that the analytic process is systematic and rigorous. Researchers need to "read and re-read data to search for and identify emerging themes in the constant search for understanding the meaning of the data" (Burnard *et al.*, 2008, p. 431). This research has followed the advice of both Gangon and Burnard *et al.*

Verification of data for ensuring validity of research findings involves Morse *et al.*'s five verification strategies, namely, methodological coherence; sampling sufficiency; developing a dynamic relationship between sampling, data collection and analysis; theoretical thinking; and theory development (Morse *et al.*, 2002). Following their suggestions, this research adopts a number of strategies to validate the data and avoid potential biases. The first strategy was the collection of data from diverse sources, such as policy documents, cross-sectional interviews and media reports, along with primary data. Personal insights gained from interviews were useful in validating the data. Results have been presented based on the principle of neutrality and impartiality. Finally, evidence-based analysis of the context and dynamics was given priority, rather than the more general statements given by research participants.

The conditions for third-party coordination in Nepal

The existing political environment and the occurrence of coordination

It appears that the sharp escalation of violence contributed to third-party coordination in Nepal. There was no evident third-party coordination in the first five years of the conflict, between 1996 and early 2001. In this early phase, coordination was not prioritized by local or external third parties, as the low severity of the conflict had little adverse impact on their development efforts and other activities. A lack of common understanding among interveners about possible solutions to the conflict further impeded their coordination. Some interveners were in favor of mainstreaming the Maoists through peaceful negotiations, whereas others favored pursuing military victory (Kievelitz and Polzer, 2002).

With the escalation of violence after November 2001, coordination among third parties began to increase. Between the periods of high escalation of violence and the signing of the peace accord in November 2006, specific issues of concern for third parties included the reduction of violence, stopping human rights abuses, pushing the conflicting parties to sign a formal peace deal and reinstating democracy (Interviews N-5, N-9 and N-24 2012). Third parties had a clear idea of the areas in which they felt they could intervene. They also had a similar analysis of the conflict context and the possible resolution of the conflict. For example, a gradual consensus emerged that the international community would not support the violent takeover of state power by the Maoists, or military victory over the Maoists by the government (Whitfield, 2012). Powerful third parties, namely, India, the USA and the UK, who had been providing military assistance to the government, halted such aid after the Royal takeover in February 2005. An interviewee from the International Crisis Group noted that India and the USA took a lead intervening role in the post-February 2005 political environment, and built a consensus that the takeover by the King was unacceptable. Local third

parties, particularly NGOs and human rights groups, were likewise raising their voices for a peaceful solution to the conflict (Dahal, 2005). Several Western European countries were also advocating for a peaceful solution. In short, the political environment of Nepal from early 2005 until early 2006 created a consensus among interveners that Nepal required a negotiated non-violent end to the conflict.

A strong coordination effort, particularly at the diplomatic level, was also seen in late 2005 and early 2006. During this time, the monarchy-controlled government was not keen to initiate dialogue with the rebels and mainstream parties, and the country was in a deep crisis due to the higher levels of confrontation between the major political forces. To overcome this stalemate, the diplomatic community in Nepal, along with local NGOs, became increasingly vocal about finding a peaceful solution to the conflict and restoring democracy. There was also a sense of unity among local and external third parties in support of the non-violent People's Movement against the King and the ongoing dialogue between the mainstream political parties and the Maoists. Many interviewees, representing both external and local third parties, acknowledged that such third-party coordination had not been seen before in Nepal, with all major interveners and local civil society organizations more or less speaking with a unified voice for ending the political crisis and frequently interacting with each other.

Third-party coordination during the time of conflict can also be linked to interveners' institutional interests. External interveners who were long-time supporters of development initiatives in Nepal experienced a number of challenges at this time in implementing their development programs. Pre-approval from the Maoist rebels before the implementation of any programs and required donations or monthly levies became prevalent during this period (Frieden, 2012). It was in this context that most development interveners, with the exception of the USA, India and China, came together in October 2003 to formulate Basic Operating Guidelines (BOGs). According to Frieden, the BOGs were intended:

> [t]o defend the development space against the pretentions of the insurgents and the interference of the security forces, which were trying to limit the free movement and open communication of development workers (Frieden, 2012, p. 103).

The BOGs also "allowed development agencies to coordinate a common response to challenges and abuse by the parties in conflict" (Frieden, 2012). As development interveners in Nepal were experiencing common problems during this time, most had a shared interest in finding ways to protect their collective interests; BOGs facilitated this.

Cost – benefit analysis was another crucial factor in promoting third-party coordination during this period of intense political crisis. Both civil society coordination and coordination among European and Scandinavian countries were influenced by cost–benefit analysis. Local third parties' incentive for coordination was to ensure a democratic and violence-free society. Having seen how democratic culture flourished in Nepal after the People's Movement of 1990, they were threatened by the upsurge in violence and the King's usurpation of democracy. Coordination among local third parties and with other third parties became essential in defending their newly emerging identity as members of a democratic society (Interviews N-7, N-18 and N-20 2012).

European nations had no visible strategic interests in Nepal during the conflict period; rather, their incentives were values-driven. Skyrocketing violence and the King's takeover were gradually destroying the democratic culture, and human rights violations were

increasing. This situation was an affront to these nations' core values, especially the Scandinavians countries, which had been supporting human rights and democracy initiatives since 1990, the beginning of the era of multiparty democracy in Nepal. The success of the peace process would protect and promote these core values. Some European countries, particularly the UK and Switzerland, were long-time supporters of Nepal's development and wanted to secure their presence in Nepal into the future. The prevalence of violence and autocracy would be viewed as a policy failure of their development efforts (Interviews 2012).

In short, these third parties found that ending the conflict in Nepal would benefit them in one way or another. Although each had distinct policy interests behind their support for ending the conflict, coordination with each other became a priority for fulfilling their individual interests. This finding supports the arguments made in the existing literature that third parties' involvements in civil conflicts are driven by a variety of motives. Opportunism, threat response and security and strategic interests have been identified as common motives behind major and regional powers' intervention interests in armed conflicts (Iji, 2001; Kathman, 2010; Kleiboer, 1995; Stedman, 2001), whereas international organizations and NGOs are interested in demonstrating their usefulness in conflict resolution processes (Iji and Fuchinoue, 2009). Touval and Zartman suggest that third-party motives are often a combination of humanitarian interest and self-interest aimed at extending influence over the conflicting parties, which may provide a long-term political benefit to the interveners by incorporating their interests in the outcome of a mediated conflict (Zartman and Touval, 1985).

Lack of coordination in the post-agreement period (late 2006 onward)

Several respondents in Nepal, representing both local and external third parties, noted that there have been a number of coordination problems in the post-agreement period, because many third parties have held differing opinions about the political context, particularly regarding the rebels. This political atmosphere eventually reduced third-party coordination. A respondent from an international NGO commented:

> […] in 2005 […] it was very easy for all international actors to have the same analysis of what was happening in Nepal […] What happened in 2007 and after that […] [made it] much harder to see things in black and white, after […] [the] CPA [Comprehensive Peace Accord] particularly (Interview N-11 2012).

Another respondent, from a foreign diplomatic mission, stated that while there was genuine coordination among international third-party interveners at the height of the political crisis, momentum decreased once the crisis abated:

> […] in 2005/2006 there was very good coordination among the ambassadors living in Nepal, when the people were fighting for democracy and when the People's Movement was about to start […] Once the political process settled down […] the coordination slowly dispersed (Interview N-5 2012).

Differences in opinion regarding the modality of the peace process also prevented third parties from coordinating, as some actors advocated a fast-track solution while others favored a sustainable but slow-track solution. An analyst from an international NGO commented:

> It seems to me that […] you are lacking [a] common understanding. You get some actors who […] say this [peace process] has gone on long enough […] You get other actors who say […] it's

> gone on quite long and the process is losing legitimacy, but at the same time you don't want to rush people because these decisions are complicated and take time. And you get a third group of international actors who say […] it does not matter to us as long as our relationship remains the same (Interview N-11 2012).

These differences among interveners were the result of many factors, including a lack of shared understanding of the conflict context and shifting priorities in a changing political environment. This can be seen in the differing responses to the introduction of the UN Political Mission in Nepal (UNMIN) and its later termination. In 2007, most third parties, including India, welcomed UNMIN's presence in Nepal to support post-war peace initiatives, particularly the monitoring of the ceasefire, the Constitutional Assembly (CA) election and the management of arms and armies. However, by 2010-2011, no unified voice was heard among external third parties on extending UNMIN's presence in Nepal:

> The United Kingdom was in favor of a technical rollover by a month, while China argued on acting upon the request of Nepal. EU, led by the United Kingdom, wanted to send a strong signal to Nepal that the failure of the local actors couldn't be passed on to the world body (Saurabh, 2010, p. 2).

Many interviewees reported that India was against retaining UNMIN and pressured the Nepalese Government to terminate its mandate, because it wanted to obtain maximum credit for its support for Nepal's peace process, and was not keen to share credit with the UN or other interveners. Consequently, there was a distinct lack of coordination among third parties regarding the implementation of several provisions of the peace agreement. Examples include the lack of a consolidated voice on the formation of a Truth and Reconciliation Commission (TRC), the modality of the federal state and the constitution-writing process.

There are a number of reasons for this lack of third-party coordination in the post-agreement period. First and foremost, the post-agreement environment provided an opportunity for many third parties to analyze the political context from the viewpoint of their own interests, and to predict future scenarios in a broader perspective, whereas during the conflict, their perspective was narrower, focusing on mitigating violence and bringing the conflicting parties to the negotiation table (Interview N-11 2012). Second, the accessibility of third parties to both high-ranking political party leaders and rebel leaders contributed to their lack of coordination in the post-agreement period. Easy access to these leaders gave third parties the opportunity to express their concerns and interests directly to the key stakeholders in the peace process, which was not the case during the period of violent conflict.

The convergence of interests and third-party coordination

Some third-party coordination in Nepal was based on their convergence of interests. Often these were issue-based, and such convergence was observed in both the highly escalated and post-agreement phases of conflict. Several respondents commented that the issue of human rights brought many third parties together. Whether to put pressure on the conflicting parties to stop human rights violations, or to lobby for establishing OHCHR and UNMIN offices in Nepal, most international actors, particularly the Western countries, the UN and human rights organizations, raised a unified voice. This is confirmed by Rawski and Sharma, who report that "During this period, rights

defenders in Nepal became increasingly united in their public advocacy against both Maoist and army violence" (Rawski and Sharma, 2012, p. 179). Local human rights groups also condemned human rights abuses committed by both the Maoists and government security forces. Western countries lobbied at a UN Human Rights Council meeting in Geneva to nominate a special rapporteur to Nepal to investigate conflict-related human rights abuses. This contributed to the establishment of the OHCHR office in Nepal in 2005 (Whitfield, 2008a).

Following the signing of the peace accord in November 2006, many third parties, particularly European nations and local civil society organizations, raised a collective voice for the formation of the TRC and the Disappearance Commission, and against amnesty for those who had committed war crimes (Interviews N-4, N-5, N-17 and N-25 2012). The following statement by a European diplomat describes third-party coordination on human rights issues in this post-agreement period:

> If you look at today's picture […] all the [Western] donors have gone together and are very coordinated on human rights issues, messaging to the Maoists and other parties on the Truth and Reconciliation Commission (TRC) bill. There we are coordinated, we deliver the same message, and the ambassadors all go to the meetings because it is a bigger push (Interview N-4 2012).

The third parties mentioned above had human rights protection as their primary agenda during the period of armed conflict, and their genuine humanitarian interest in safeguarding the fundamental rights of the people was a crucial factor behind their coordinated human rights interventions.

Third-party coordination on issues surrounding a UN interagency integration and rehabilitation program (for more than 4,000 ex-combatants) is another example of third-party coordination based on the convergence of interests. This was a time-consuming but important element of the peace process. Numerous respondents acknowledged that although the third parties had different views on the modality and allocation of resources in support of this initiative, their active participation in the UN-convened meetings on this issue was one of the best examples of post-agreement coordination.

Here virtually the entire international community came under one coordination mechanism chaired by United Nations Development Program (UNDP) resident coordinator Robert Piper (Interviews N-2, N-23, N-24 and N-32 2012). Before the discharge process began, leading officials from different UN agencies, including UNMIN, came together to devise a plan to push the process along, and to coordinate with the government and the Maoists to support the process. There was an effective division of labor. UNMIN undertook political negotiations, the UN team added pressure and the donors allocated the funding required for the successful completion of the process. One interviewee suggested that the occurrence of coordination in this case was also due to strong leadership and having a lead agency to coordinate the process. The convergence of donors' interests also led to their allocating resources equitably and sufficiently (Interview N-2 2011). These examples demonstrate that urgent issues or issues of high interest can motivate third parties to take coordinated action. Third parties realized the urgency of the human rights issue in Nepal, as well as the importance of the integration and rehabilitation of discharged combatants. Yet there are no discussions in the existing literature of urgency and high-priority issues as motivations for third-party coordination.

Clearly there are issues in armed conflicts and peace processes that are quite compelling for third parties, both because they advance their policy interests and because of genuine humanitarian concerns. Third parties who share a similar conflict resolution objective or a common political analysis of the context find coordination to be an effective intervention strategy for producing a desirable outcome that benefits both themselves and the conflict-affected country.

However, the urgency of an issue does not always ensure that third parties will engage in coordinated action. An example is third-party engagement in the first phase of the constitution-building process in Nepal, which began in early 2008 and continued until the collapse of the CA in 2012. Constitution-building is one of the most critical issues associated with Nepal's peace process, and the demand for CA elections was a primary aim of the armed struggle and a key negotiating point between the government and the Maoists. Given its importance to the overall success of the peace process, almost all third parties, both external and internal, focused on this issue. However, as confirmed by many respondents, the constitution-making process, particularly in the post-CA election period (April 2008 onwards), was an uncoordinated and disorganized third-party engagement. Few concrete actions were taken by third parties to initiate a collective stance regarding the future of the Nepalese constitution. Discussions initiated by the UNDP Nepal office collapsed mid-process (Interviews N-7, N-11, N-23 and N-27 2012).

A number of factors contributed to this lack of third-party coordination. First, the constitution-making process was a broad political effort, where elements to be included or excluded in the constitution depended on the negotiation and bargaining capacity of many political actors. Third parties took the side of those political actors and interest groups who were closest to their own ideological orientations. Second, third parties used the constitution-making process as an opportunity to advance their own policy, strategic and values-driven interests. Third, third parties engaged in turf battles over the resources required for the constitution-making process, hoping to be seen as key supporters of Nepal's most historic political event.

Policy interests and third-party coordination

The involvement of external and local third parties in Nepal has been heavily influenced by their policy interests. Consequently, third parties have often had divergent ideas regarding the resolution of the conflict and standards of measurement for the success of their interventions (Interviews N-7 and N-11 2012). A number of examples demonstrate how the lack of a convergence of policy interests has influenced third-party coordination. Excluding India and China, most of the external donors and UN agencies active in Nepal contributed to the formulation of the Peace and Development Strategy (PDS) 2010-2015, which sought to build consensus among donors and avoid the duplication of peace and reconstruction activities. The absence of China and India in the PDS formulation process indicated their unwillingness to coordinate. Instead, India and China provided support to Nepal based on their own development assistance framework, which allowed them to concentrate their support solely in areas of their own policy interests.

A second example is the existence of two different peace funds in Nepal supported by the same donors. There is the Nepal Peace Trust Fund (NPTF), convened by the Nepalese Government with the support of seven donors, and the UN Peacebuilding

Fund. The Terms of Reference of the UN peace fund indicate that it is "designed to complement the Nepal Peace Trust Fund and other existing mechanisms for peace process support by focusing only on tasks that cannot be funded or implemented through existing mechanisms" (UNPFN, 2009, p. 1). However, having two institutions with similar objectives not only increases administrative and other costs, but creates confusion among the public (Interviews 2012). Those who support the existence of both funds claim that the UN peace fund is necessary until the NPTF develops the capacity to manage and regulate the peace fund properly. They also insist that the UN peace fund is an alternative means of support for ongoing peace initiatives when the NPTF is blocked due to political unrest (Interviews 2012). By contrast, those who favor only one peace fund argue that having one mechanism would create greater focus, and could also accumulate resources that have been divided between the two funds (Interview N-9 2012). These examples show how third-party interveners often place the highest priority on their own institutional ideologies, thereby discouraging coordination.

Conditions for third-party coordination in the Philippines

The existing political environment and the occurrence of third-party coordination

The Philippines conflict also demonstrates that a political crisis or severe violence often encourages third parties to coordinate. The Moro conflict is one of the most protracted conflicts in the world, as is its peace process. Third-party coordination was not seriously pursued during the GPH–MNLF peace process, as only a few OIC-member countries intervened in the top-level negotiations, all under the umbrella of the OIC. However, a diverse range of third parties emerged during the GPH–MILF peace process, including NGOs and civil society groups, international peacebuilding organizations, bilateral donors and UN agencies. Some of the diplomatic missions in Manila also supported peace initiatives (Interviews 2012).

The evidence shows that third-party coordination was not a priority during the beginning phase of the GPH–MILF conflict (1997-2000). This is partly because of the perceived lack of intensity and impact of the armed conflict. Another characteristic of this early phase of conflict was the absence of a diverse range of third-party interveners. Those involved at this stage were a small number of local third parties. Third parties began to come together only after a sharp escalation in the fighting between the government and the MILF. After the declaration of all-out war in 2000 by President Estrada, and a major clash between the GPH and MILF in 2003, civil society organizations from both Mindanao and Manila came together to form a number of peace advocacy networks. The Consortium of Bangsamoro Civil Society (CBCS) and Mindanao Peaceweavers (MPW) are examples. One respondent from a Mindanao-based NGO commented on this civil society involvement:

> We were part of the formation of the MPW, because we saw the need to consolidate CSO efforts, to expand participation in the peace process. It was formed actually during the time there was fighting in Mindanao. The main goal was to increase the voice of the civil society in the peace process, but more importantly, strengthening the capacities and constituencies of the different peace networks. […] There were already some peace networks at that time but they are not necessarily coordinating or even talking with each other (Interview 2012).

Similarly, the IMT was initially formed in 2005 after major violence in 2003-2004. It was established as a collective intervention mechanism to monitor the ceasefire. The eruption of violence in late 2008, after the parties failed to sign the Memorandum of

Agreement on Ancestral Domain, was another turning point for advancing third-party coordination, as it led to the establishment of the ICG in 2009, the Civilian Protection Component (CPC) in 2010 and the return of the IMT in early 2010. The conflicting parties realized that structures like the ICG and the IMT could be helpful in minimizing violence and obtaining support for the negotiation process. Both local and international third parties worked together during the crisis. One respondent representing a Mindanao NGO commented:

> […] in 2003 there was an outbreak of war in Mindanao […] we helped organize a network of organizations and […] formed the Mindanao Peace Weavers. We had multiple interventions during that time. We had dialogue with internally displaced people (IDPs), with the Local Governments Units (LGUs), and the rebels […] There was a team organized by the network to dialogue with national officials like congressmen, senators, and cabinet secretaries. We had also a team organized to dialogue with different embassies […] The call of the dialogue was to stop the war between the government and the MILF (Interview 2012).

These examples show that third-party coordination, whether in the form of formalized structures like the ICG and the IMT, or more informal structures like the networks formed by civil society groups, is generated as a by-product of intensified violence.

Coordinated third-party intervention also occurred during the negotiation stalemate phase of the GPH–MILF conflict. Organizing conferences, public meetings and lobbying to put pressure on both parties were some of the coordinated efforts in this phase of the conflict. One of the respondents in Mindanao stated:

> Often when there is an impasse to the negotiations, the civil society networks have the power to call the party […] in an informal process […] [to] in any way explore options […] and break the impasse by creating spaces for dialogue […] between the parties (Interview 2012).

Evidence suggests that coordinated intervention through the ICG, IMT and CPC began after the failure of local and unilateral intervention efforts conducted before 2003 (Interview P-14 2012). Between 1997 and 2001, local third parties were involved as informal facilitators of the peace process. However, such efforts were not successful in accelerating the negotiation process or minimizing the intensity of armed violence. Local mediators were accused of being biased toward the rebels, and their minimal leverage over the conflicting parties was another drawback. The entry of Malaysia as an external third-party facilitator in 2001 also failed to convince the parties to seek a negotiated solution. Its involvement was interpreted by a large number of local third parties as being biased toward the rebels. Malaysia's alleged strategic interests in the disputed island of Sabah provoked further criticism of its engagement in the GPH–MILF peace process (Interviews P-2, P-4, P-13 and P-18 2012).

During this period, the conflicting parties began to accept more local and international third parties, and to form intervention structures such as the IMT and ICG. A respondent from a local NGO on the IMT commented:

> The vehicle of coordination among international actors in pushing for the negotiation itself is the ICG and IMT. Back in 2006, when both sides had an impasse in their negotiations, we thought that local actors are not anymore enough to push the negotiations forward. We needed outside actors […] We brainstormed about the idea of ICG in Manila together with concerned people and diplomats […] But it took another crisis in 2008 […] before this idea was adopted. In 2009, the ICG came about. The idea is […] to have some sort of a pressure group […] to push for the negotiations (Interview P-37 2012).

The convergence of interests and third-party coordination

Although various NGOs and networks are working on a wide range of issues related to the peace process in Mindanao, human rights has remained a key concern that has inspired both local and international third parties to take coordinated action. Several respondents from Manila and Mindanao, representing both local and external third parties, expressed this view:

> Local third-party: [Several of] these networks are already in existence […] I know they have also their own interests but somehow these networks are united [in] the work on peacebuilding and human rights (Interview P-32 2012).

> External third-party: The peace process issues are quite a common ground of agreement of almost everyone who is involved in one way or the other in the peace process. Human rights are another (Interview P-10 2012).

The homogeneity of the interveners also contributed to third-party coordination in the Philippines. One example is the mediation effort by the OIC and its members during the GPH–MNLF peace process (1975 to 1996). Unlike the GPH–MILF peace process, the third-party interveners in the GPH–MNLF peace process were not very diverse. The OIC and its member countries, particularly Libya, Indonesia and Saudi Arabia, monopolized the intervention process. These three countries performed sequential and simultaneous interventions in different stages of the peace process.

Libya was crucial in the beginning phase of the process because it provided a venue for negotiations, which resulted in the signing of the Tripoli agreement in 1975. The role of Libya in later years was more focused on back-channeling and other carrot-and-stick approaches to exert leverage on the conflicting parties, especially the Philippines Government. Saudi Arabia played the role of power mediator, putting pressure on the Philippines Government through an oil embargo in 1983. This occurred when the negotiation process stalled, and helped the parties to resume negotiations. Indonesia took the lead during the final phase of the negotiation process, when it was instrumental in crafting the 1996 peace agreement between the GPH and the MNLF, and became the host country for the pre-1996 negotiation process (Lingga, 2006). There was considerable coordination among the OIC members, facilitated in part because of shared Islamic values, including OIC members' intense desire to support their Muslim brothers and sisters in Mindanao (Santos, 2001).

The structure and function of the ICG was also facilitated by the homogeneity of the interveners. Due to its inclusion of both state and non-state actors, the ICG is generally considered to be a hybrid intervention mechanism. At the same time, it is a homogeneous structure because the majorities of its members are from Western countries and share similar social, political and cultural values. There are four reasons for the occurrence of coordination among ICG members.

First, despite its perceived homogeneity, everybody within the ICG perceived its internal diversity as a major strength (Interview P-16 2012). There was respect for the distinct roles that actors played within the ICG, while at the same time valuing their interdependence. An appreciation of each other's strengths prevents competition. For instance, Japan is more focused on infrastructure; the UK plays a more political role; and NGOs gather information from the grassroots and report to other ICG members and peace panels (Skype Interview P-17 2012).

Second, the ICG has functioned well because of the clear-cut division of labor among its members, which helps everyone to focus on their roles (Interviews P-15 and P-17 2012). An ICG respondent noted this complementarity:

> […] in terms of dividing the work, we never competed in terms of how we work operationally on the ground as NGOs. There is healthy competition, but we are not duplicating. There is a lot of communication among us […] We communicate regularly with each other on the ICG. I think each one brings something special to the table (Interview P-15 2012).

Third, members of the ICG agreed that they were in no rush to produce results until the conflicting parties were ready to do so. Rather than putting pressure on the conflicting parties to come up with a peace agreement, they preferred extending their support for the negotiation process and preventing it from failing (Interviews P-15, P-16 and P-17 2012).

Fourth, while ICG members viewed diversity as a sign of strength, they shared a central vision in support of the negotiation process (Santos, 2001). ICG members met prior to every formal negotiation to make their positions clear. After every session, they met with MILF panel members to clarify their reactions to the talks. On some occasions, the ICG convinced the rebel group not to withdraw from the negotiations. The ICG has also been useful in conveying the interests and positions of the rebel group to the government (Santos, 2001).

Mandate-based intervention and third-party coordination

Mandate-based intervention efforts have been crucial to third-party coordination in the GPH–MILF peace process. Intervention structures such as the IMT and ICG were based on the Terms of Reference set forth by the conflicting parties and agreed upon by Malaysia, the lead facilitator. As a consequence, these third parties could not participate in intervention processes in isolation. The competency-based third-party recruitment required by these mechanisms was another significant factor supporting effective coordination. The conflicting parties initially called for expressions of interest among third parties who wanted to be part of the various intervention structures. Only those who demonstrated a high level of commitment were included. The mandates then bound these third parties to coordinate with each other.

The IMT is a unique example of a mandated intervention. Its members were forced to coordinate with each other *vis-à-vis* their common goals of minimizing human rights violations, protecting civilians and conducting rehabilitation and socioeconomic development programs. Three main factors contributed to effective coordination among IMT members. First, every member was provided with a clear mandate. They also had clarity regarding the roles and functions of various sub-structures within the IMT (Interviews 2012)[6]. Each intervener performed its role under the umbrella of the IMT, without interfering in others' mandates. Second, there was a clear command structure within the IMT, with Malaysia serving as lead agency. Third, there was a convergence of interests among IMT members despite their different responsibilities and working modalities. Every intervener focused on winning the hearts and minds of people on the ground, without undermining the roles of fellow interveners (Interviews 2012).

This evidence suggests that, in the Moro conflict, the conflicting parties' efforts have often been key to bringing a diverse array of third parties together, although civil society initiatives are an exception in this regard. In the GPH–MNLF peace process, it was the GPH who invited the OIC to mediate. In the GPH–MILF peace process, ICG and IMT

intervention mechanisms were formed through the facilitation of the conflicting parties. There are two prominent factors behind the conflicting parties' interests in structuring these intervention mechanisms. First, the growing intensity of the conflict after the failure of negotiations in 2005 and later in 2008 compelled the government to establish different intervention structures, to create an environment for resuming talks with the MILF. Second, the failure of previous single-party intervention efforts inspired both parties to agree on multiparty intervention structures. This statement by an external third-party intervener supports this conclusion:

> [The creation of a multiparty intervention structure] is a shared interest in continuing the process that led them [conflicting parties] to these interventions after every failure. The failure of the local monitoring team led to the creation of the International Monitoring Team. The failure of the Malaysian-facilitated peace talks led to the ICG. The failure of the IMT after 2008 led to the CPC (Interview P-14 2012).

A synchronized analysis of the cases

As mentioned previously, the existing literature posits that third parties coordinate with each other mainly because of their mutual policy interests and a broader coincidence of commitments in the peace process (Iji, 2005). This research confirms that a broad coincidence of interests and commitments is crucial to the occurrence of third-party coordination, but further reveals that the *readiness* of third parties is the first and foremost condition for their coordination. CPM are three major factors which make third parties ready to coordinate.

CPM factors and third-party coordination

Third-party coordination is a contextually contingent process, which means that third-party coordination differs somewhat in each conflict. Third-party coordination in Nepal was primarily *ad hoc*, informal, improvised and largely lacking institutionalization. Third-party coordination in the Philippines assumed varied shapes in different phases of conflict. Informal coordination was found among local third parties, and occurred particularly after the major outbreak of war in 2001. Institutionalized third-party coordination occurred mainly in the later phase of the GPH–MILF conflict (2009 onwards), after domestic and unitary third-party interventions failed to halt violence or to keep the parties engaged in negotiations. There was no formal local–external third-party coordination until the reestablishment of the IMT in 2010, after the resumption of peace talks. Finally, while third-party coordination in the Philippines was initially an impulsive and sporadic event rather than a planned process, it became more institutionalized during the peace negotiations phase from 2009 onwards.

While third-party coordination is contextually conditioned, it also exhibits some common scenarios, at least in the cases selected for this study. One novel finding of this research is that coordination practices change in different *phases* of the conflict. Little or no coordination takes place in the beginning phase, considerable coordination takes place in the intensive armed phase and little or no coordination takes place in the post-agreement or political normalization phase. In Nepal, third-party coordination occurred mainly under the pressure of violence and political crisis, and lessened in the post-conflict period. Before the signing of the peace agreement in November 2006, intervening roles were very clear for third parties, but roles blurred after the signing of the peace agreement because there were many more issues to consider and differing priorities due to divergent political analyses.

Similarly, in the Philippines, little third-party coordination took place during periods of low intensity of violence, particularly during the initial and political normalization phases. Coordination increased only after the violence escalated. Indeed, the number of third parties and intervention structures increased following each major outbreak of violence. The outbreak of war in 2000-2003 gave birth to a number of civil society networks; the 2003-2004 war gave birth to the IMT in 2005 and the further strengthening of civil society networks; and the eruption of war in August 2008 gave birth to the ICG and the CPC and the rebirth of the IMT.

Respondents pinpoint two contributory factors in this regard. First, despite some differences in third-party approaches to conflict resolution, all local and external third parties agreed that violence should cease immediately and conflicting parties should resume negotiation without preconditions. Second, harmonious working relationships between third parties became a growing trend soon after the escalation of violence in Mindanao from 2001 onwards. It was therefore easier for third parties to have a coordinated voice in this phase of the conflict.

By contrast, when there was a low intensity of violence, interveners in both Nepal and the Philippines did not coordinate with the same enthusiasm, but rather competed for resources, dominance and recognition. One respondent from a local NGO in the Philippines stated, "During the crisis, everyone is doing well. After the crisis, people will no longer converge and also resort to blaming, instead of talking and reflecting" (Interview P-29 2012). This finding is important, as it suggests the phases where third-party coordination occurs more spontaneously, and those where greater efforts are needed.

Policy interests are also key criteria for third-party coordination. A policy interest of third parties as one of the conditions for their coordination has been explained in the existing literature. However, my research reveals the influence of policy factors in third-party coordination in two ways: the *policy interests of conflicting parties* in bringing third parties together (mostly observed in the Philippines), and the *convergence of policy interests among third parties* (primarily observed in Nepal and somewhat in the Philippines). Once the conflicting parties agree to accept the intervention of third parties, they initiate mandate-based formalized intervention structures, where a group of homogeneous or even heterogeneous third parties can work together to fulfill their mandates. As argued in the existing literature, when diverse third parties realize that they have similar intervention goals, they often agree to coordinate.

In the existing literature, the formation of institutionalized third-party coordination mechanisms is deemed a useful strategy for conflict resolution and meaningful interaction between intermediaries (Strimling, 2006). The uniqueness of the Philippines case is that intervention structures were mandated by the conflicting parties, amalgamating both state and non-state actors into the intervention structures. The government and the rebels carefully selected the members of the ICG and the IMT. They chose interveners whom they believed would be most useful in supporting their negotiations. A good balance between state and non-state third parties was also helpful. The lack of active intervention by multiple global and regional powers was another crucial reason why the process worked well.

This suggests that mandate-based third-party intervention can be an important strategy for the occurrence of coordination, even among heterogeneous third parties, as mandates compel them to work collectively and put their cultural or ideological differences aside. However, a state suffering from armed conflict needs to have sufficient political capacity to frame mandates wisely and regulate the involvement of third parties through the mandates.

Healthy lines of communication between the conflicting parties are crucial for establishing mandate-based intervention structures, as this helps them to talk openly about which third parties to accept for what intervention actions.

The motives factor is another important aspect of third-party coordination. One novel finding of this research is that coordination may occur more readily when third parties feel that some issues relating to the conflict are primarily in their interests and only secondarily for the benefit of the conflict-affected country. Issue-based third-party coordination has been a common practice in both the intensive armed phase and the political normalization phases of conflict in Nepal and the Philippines. Such coordination has three main characteristics: the majority of third parties have coordinated on issues of international concern, such as human rights; the majority of third parties have coordinated on contentious issues in the peace process, such as the integration and rehabilitation of ex-combatants in the case of Nepal; and, finally, much issue-based coordination occurs only among homogeneous third-party groups, such as those concerned only about human rights, those representing only Western countries or those sharing similar cultural values and political ideologies.

Issues of global interest or that represent the core values of third parties are often driving factors behind coordination. In both case studies, human rights was a core issue that brought many international actors together, because this is an issue of global interest and provides legitimacy to the rhetoric of many Western countries. This finding supports the argument of Zaum, who contends that Western states have shared interests in intervening in a conflict because they "are motivated by liberal objectives such as responding to large-scale human rights violations, or [are] conducted under an international responsibility to protect" (Zaum, 2012, p. 121).

Another unique finding of this research indicates that third parties, particularly external ones, are interested in collectively intervening around immediate issues related to conflict, but not so much in the structural issues that underlie the conflict. This suggests that third-party coordination is often more concerned with addressing symptoms than preventing conflict. There is no discussion in the existing literature of third-party motives to intervene so as to address underlying causes of conflict. This may be because third-party interventions often take place after conflict situations begin to deteriorate, and in such situations, their primary concern is to protect civilians and minimize the risk of genocide and protracted violence. Third parties tend to focus on achieving immediate crisis management goals, such as the reduction of violence and human rights abuses, as these concerns are considered to be within their global responsibilities, rather than addressing the root causes of conflict.

Conclusion

This research demonstrates that coordination does not take place simply as the result of the desires of third parties or conflicting parties; rather, a *ripe moment,* engendered either by the actions of third parties and conflicting parties, or by serendipity, is required for the occurrence of coordination. Coordination also requires the realization of needs, in terms of both supply (third parties) and demand (conflicting parties). Likewise, there are a number of CPM factors which contribute to third-party coordination.

The research also suggests that third-party coordination is an organic or spontaneous process during the escalation phase of an armed conflict. In both case studies, coordination occurred with minimal pre-planning by either the third parties or the conflicting parties. Instead, coordination evolved as a relatively spontaneous process, driven by the needs of the

conflict-ridden country and the interests of third parties. It occurred primarily to achieve a particular outcome, such as the reduction of violence, pressuring the conflicting parties to sign a peace agreement or respecting human rights. However, there is no guarantee that third parties will continue coordinating after addressing such issues. In this sense, third-party coordination is a contingent strategic decision, rather than what Crocker *et al.* (2001) describe as a strategy to gain necessary "political will" and "muscle" to bring conflicting parties to the negotiation table. While third-party efforts often coordinate around issues that are the *outcomes* of an armed conflict, there is a lack of coordination related to the *causes* of conflict.

Based on the finding that coordination drops off in the post-agreement phase, it is important to pay special attention to third-party coordination in the post-agreement or political normalization phase, to ensure that intervention efforts contribute to sustaining the peace process. Conflicting parties, particularly governments, can play a crucial role in ensuring third-party coordination in this phase. They must prioritize the intervention agenda of the post-agreement or political normalization phase, so that they can call for third parties to provide necessary support to address this agenda under a clear intervention mandate.

The existing literature asserts that the role of the lead agency and the mutual policy interests and initiatives of third parties are key to the occurrence of third-party coordination (Iji, 2005; Iji and Fuchinoue, 2009). My research finds that the role of the conflicting parties is also quite crucial. It is the conflicting parties who have the best knowledge regarding how third parties can best support the peace process. They can make judgments about which issues require a coordinated third-party support and which do not. Conflicting parties, with the formation of mandate-based intervention structures, can then encourage a diverse range of third parties to work together, making a measurable and meaningful contribution to the success of the peace process. A careful selection of third parties, the absence of powerful third parties and a sense of interdependence are all crucial in this regard.

Conflicting parties must establish clear intervention structures which support the peace process, incorporating both local and external third parties. For example, conflicting parties can form a Local Contact Group (LCG) to work as a watchdog over the peace process and provide necessary support (which the ICG and IMT were unable to perform due to their limited mandate). An LCG can incorporate a group of selected local third parties, which can bring local voices to the peace process in the form of peace panels. The existence of such a structure can make local third parties feel proud of their direct contribution to the peace process. A Peace Support Donor Group is another such structure with the responsibility of garnering financial support for the peace process. This group can also be useful for launching an integrated peace and development strategy.

It is also important to ensure that third parties coordinate not only around issues that are the product of conflict, such as human rights protection and violence reduction, but also on structural issues related to the source of conflict. Third-party coordination on immediately exposed issues can minimize the cost of conflict and take a country from violence to the cessation of violence. However, such coordination is not necessarily effective for the sustainable solution of the conflict. Third-party coordination should be long-term as well as short-term, addressing all underlying systemic issues related to conflict.

Third-party coordination, despite its present existence as a sporadic conflict intervention strategy, has the potential to demonstrate both the urgency of a particular

issue in armed conflicts and strategies for achieving enduring peace. Managing the competing goals and diverse motives of interveners is one of the most challenging tasks of third-party coordination. Often third parties are not inclined to modify their intervention goals and policy interests until realities on the ground force them to do so. It is for this reason that much work remains to be done in enabling conflicting parties to develop mandate-based guidelines for third-party coordination.

Notes

1. Various authors have used different words to denote the working-together culture of third parties. For example, Kriesberg (1996) and Strimling (2006) have used the term "cooperation" and Crocker *et al.* (1999, 2001, 2002) and Nan (2003) have used the term "coordination". For the purpose of this study, I have generally used the term coordination to denote coordination, collaboration and cooperation.
2. Although they are now popularly known as UCPN (Maoist), I have here described them simply as Maoists.
3. The Monarchy ruled in Nepal until the 1990s. After the success of the People's Movement in 1990, the then King was ready to share power with parliamentary political parties and remain as a constitutional Monarch. However, the King still held some powers, such as Chief of Command of the then Royal Nepal Army.
4. OIC has changed its name since 2005. Now it is known as the Organization of Islamic Cooperation.
5. In this paper, N and P are two unique codes for personal interviews and these refer to the name of country where interview was taken and numbers given after N and P are the serial number of interviews.
6. For example, Malaysia provided overall leadership and directed the security component. Japan led the socioeconomic assistance component, while the EU led the humanitarian, development and rehabilitation component. The Nonviolent Peace Force led the CPC.

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