Theorising the EU's Role in Regional Conflict Management

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ABSTRACT *This article seeks to contribute to the underdeveloped discussion about the way we theorise and conceptualise externally induced peace and security operations in regional conflict, with a particular focus on the EU's role. The framework draws on three theoretical components emphasised in this special issue: the construction of conflict, security governance, and the impact of EU security practices. The EU's construction of the conflict is tightly linked to decisions about the mode of security governance and here we need to pay more attention to the often-neglected relationship between the external intervening party and the parties in conflict that are subject to the intervention. Furthermore, the impact of peace operations are usually analysed in terms of implementation and coordination failures, and in our view it is necessary to step back and address the construction of the criteria by which*

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interventions are assessed – in particular, the way intervening actors construct and define 'success and failure'.

Regional conflict has proved to be a particularly important security issue, and the European Union (EU) is actively involved in a large number of conflicts around the world. The complexity of contemporary regional conflicts and the myriad of actors, levels and conflict issues involved require a considerable rethinking of certain aspects of the way we analyse and theorise the role of external actors such as the EU in regional conflicts. Although the literature is growing, current theorising about the EU's role in regional conflicts outside its own borders is fragmented. There is still a lack of understanding about how third party involvement in regional conflicts is linked to the securitisation of regional conflicts, and how this connection impacts on the regional conflict itself. We need to know more about how a regional conflict is constructed, how it becomes securitised and the impact on policymaking and governance (Christou et al., 2010, 15).

The purpose of this article is to contribute to theorising about the EU's role in regional conflict, departing from and bringing together the three dimensions outlined by Christou et al. in the introductory article to this special issue: the construction of

conflict, security governance, and impact due to the practices of the security actor. In this article each of these dimensions are further problematised and theorised, with a particular focus on the security issues surrounding regional conflict.

The regionalisation of conflict in a global era

This section discusses the new security agenda, new security referents and actors, and the regionalisation of conflict. In most contemporary conflicts there is a blurred boundary between inter-state and intra-state conflicts. Conflicts defined as intra-state are usually directly connected to state failures and the inability to maintain stability inside national borders. Hence, and because of the increasingly globalised nature of the world, where borders are becoming less and less sacrosant, an internal conflict seldom stays within state borders. That is, notwithstanding that most contemporary conflicts around the world are often defined as 'domestic' or as 'civil' wars, these are often deeply embedded in a cross-border regional (rather than a national or an ambiguous global) context. Many of today's conflicts become 'regionalised', meaning that they spill over into neighbouring countries, or draw regional actors into the conflict. The reverse may also occur – where neighbouring states have a direct impact on the causes of a country's internal conflict (see Gleditsch 2007; Woodward 2008). The regional implications of a local conflict depend on the nature of the security complex and the ways in which security problems are vertically and horizontally linked in particular regions, which can vary markedly. Some local conflicts primarily affect relations with

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different forms of higher authority, while others may concern political rivalry among ethnic groups or cross-border competition for land and other natural resources. The inward impact from the region may also be seen in the form of more or less diplomatic interference, military intervention, and conflict resolution, carried out by some regional or multilateral body. Most conflicts in Africa are regionalised, the one in the Great Lakes region being the primary example.

The changing nature of (regionalised) conflict is intimately related to the changing conceptualisation of security. The conventional view of security emanates from the position of the individual nation state in an anarchic international system. This conception essentially concerns the survival of the state as such; that is, the preservation of its sovereignty. Security problems today, however, usually refer to much more than mere military threat. The United Nations Development Programe's (UNDP's) Human Development Report in 1994 first took up the question of human security, defined as 'safety from hunger, disease, and repression', thereby moving security towards the development corner. In later UNDP reports the concept was connected to 'human development', and ultimately to the entire complex of human rights. Other relevant links are 'humanitarian emergency' and 'humanitarian intervention'. One can see this contemporary focus on 'the human' as part of a paradigm shift that gives rise to a post-national logic. This relationship between post-nationalism and the changed conceptions of security is mutually reinforcing.

The focus upon human security rather than state security is significant for understanding the change in security and development discourse, and the fundamental

challenge to sovereignty during the 1990s. Implied in concepts such as 'human security', 'human development', 'human emergency', and 'humanitarian intervention' is the idea of a transnational responsibility for human welfare (the responsibility to protect – R2P). After the 11 September 2001 attacks in the US, this discourse has been overshadowed by the discourse on global terrorism. Yet the R2P concept still has wide support, and this normative order has had a deep impact on international peace operations and regional organisations around the world. For instance, the Constitutive Act of the African Union (AU) concedes to 'the right to intervene' in another AU member state in grave circumstances such as war crimes, genocide and crimes against humanity. Whether or not such intervention requires endorsement from the United Nations Security Council is not yet settled.

The above discussion implies that conventional (realist) state-centric approaches to understanding conflict and peacebuilding are problematic (Buzan, Weaver and de Wilde, 1998). Sometimes the state is merely a fiction, and as an actor the state often fuels conflict, threatening human security. But at other times, the state undoubtedly provides human security in a hostile environment. It is important to recognise that non-state actors are also part of the security logic, both in a positive and a negative sense. For instance, private security companies may sometimes be providers of security, and at the same time, be part of the problem. This implies that the conventional distinctions between international and domestic, and between state actors and other actors, have become blurred, losing much of their earlier significance. In this new situation it is relevant to ask, 'who threatens who', and 'who should be secured from what'? The state

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cannot be taken for granted, but it cannot be wished away either. The state is thus both part of the problem and the solution. A useful analytical strategy is to integrate both the *region* and *human security* as referents, and as units of analysis (Buzan and Weaver, 2003). In our attempt to conceptualise and theorise below, we will try to elaborate on what is needed in order to integrate both the region and human security aspects. Thus, it is necessary to assess to what extent external actors such as the EU and the regional actors of the conflict conceive the conflict as regionalised, and the purpose of conflict management. Hence, we need to find out how the EU has constructed the conflict, which players they have identified as the most proper ones to approach (if not the state), and how the EU sees that human security can be established. The point of departure for such an exercise is revealing state-society structures, and to simultaneously focus on the primary actors, asking 'who is security for' and 'whose security is promoted' by peace operations. Importantly, these questions also lead us to a more explicit focus on the interplay between the external intervener and the targets of intervention.

The construction of regional conflict

Any actor that is involved in a conflict – in this case a regional conflict – makes certain assumptions about the logic and dynamics of the conflict, who the actors are, and what needs to be done in terms of external engagement and intervention. These are complex questions, of which there can never be just objective answers, and by implication all conflicts are (at least to some extent) 'constructed'. As pointed out by Christou et al. (2010: 21), critical questions are: How and why has this issue been constructed as

security? What sort of security logic was constructed for this issue area and how was it constituted and legitimised? What actors are involved in this construction? Through considering these questions we are equipped to understand how the EU sees the regional conflict in security terminology.

Of crucial importance is how the EU (and also other actors) constructs and securitises regional conflict. Several aspects can be considered. Firstly, is the EU defining the dynamic of the conflict as ethnic, resource, or ideologically driven? Depending on how the EU defines the dynamic of the conflict, we can judge whether the conflict incorporates old security issues, primarily linked to state security. Particularly important is to assess whether the EU, and other actors, understand the implications of the *regionalisation* of conflict. It is quite clear that the policy community (both in Africa and elsewhere) to a large extent uses state-centric rather than 'regional' lenses. For instance, the fact that the Commissioner for Development and Humanitarian Aid, Louis Michel, in a press release from 20 January 2009, emphasises regional conflict management is promising: 'I remain convinced that a lasting solution to the continuing crises in Eastern DRC will be possible only within the framework of cooperation at regional level.' The fundamental problem is that such statements ought to have been made from the very beginning of the conflict. Important reasons are that there is poor understanding of regionalisation of conflict in the global era (construction of conflict), and that the instruments of intervention (security governance) need to be adjusted accordingly.

Further, the way the EU securitises the issue of the regional conflict will tell us whether the EU considers the human security aspects as problematic (for instance risk of refugee flows to Europe, terrorism spill-over effects, etc), or whether these aspects are seen as responsibilities in relation to which the international community must take action from a human point of view (normative EU), or both. This analysis will also tell us more about whom the EU intervention is intended for, and thereby will answer the question 'security for whom?' (see Crocker et al., 2001).

The way the EU constructs the conflict can fruitfully be analysed with regard to the so-called conflict cycle, which is well established within peace research as a simplified way of understanding conflict dynamics (Ramsbotham et al., 2005). Although scholars may use different distinctions, a conflict is usually divided into: (1) the pre-escalation phase; (2) armed conflict phase; (3) ceasefire/ peace agreement phase; and (4) the post-violent phase. It is tempting to perceive the phases of the conflict cycle as a linear process (from violence, to ceasefire, to conflict recovery, and so on), but it is often difficult to distinguish between the different phases. The notion of a 'conflict circle' is of course a simplified way of understanding conflict dynamics, because there is in reality no 'natural history of conflict'. The 'conflict circle' can be either relatively short, if conflict prevention and resolution takes place before the conflict turns violent, or alternatively very long, if early conflict prevention fails.

The question about the construction of the conflict relates to where in the cycle the conflict can be placed (as will be seen below, this construction is intimately related to security governance, and to what forms of interventions are proposed and

implemented). For instance, forces in combat may have entered into a ceasefire in an internal war situation, and that could be identified as the first step in a recovery and peacebuilding phase. The reverse may also be the case – that is, only a temporary ceasefire, in which the parties re-arm, regroup, and prepare for the next battle (Höglund and Svensson 2009). Furthermore, other actors in society are likely to carry opinions, feelings and positions in the conflict that are different from the warring armies (and the EU). In essence, we need to know not only how the EU defines the conflict in the conflict cycle, but also what is done in order to distinguish between different phases — an issue which is closely connected to the dimension of *security governance*.

Peace and security governance

The key question in this section is how the EU construction of a particular conflict has led to certain peace and security governance strategies. Such goverance will also, in the third and final step, reveal something about how the EU sees the importance and potential impact of the regional conflict on the EU's own security. Which actors and agencies are involved, and what institutions, tools and instruments are utilised and implemented? What role does the EU ascribe for itself; in particular, is it a part of multilateral security mechanisms (especially the UN), or is it part of an autonomous mechanism? What does that mean in terms of the legitimacy and legality of the peace operation? Have these security structures changed over time, and in relation to the security logic? (Christou et al., 2010, 22-3).

With the assumption that conflicts are not sudden events, but are rather historical structures that are transformed over time, we need to make a basic distinction between the forms of intervention during different phases of the conflict cycle. It is well established in peace research that each of these phases in the conflict cycle contains corresponding forms of (external) engagement and intervention: conflict prevention, peacemaking, peacekeeping, and post-conflict peacebuilding (peace enforcement can be used in several phases) (Doyle 2001). The idea of different forms of intervention (or peace and security governance) in relation to the conflict cycle is not new, but it was brought to the forefront of the peace and security discussion with the presentation of the *Agenda for Peace* by the UN Secretary-General Boutros Boutros-Ghali in 1992.

The phases are useful in that they can help us identify how the EU constructs the conflict and how it links it to governance strategy and forms of intervention. Is there an awareness of what the form of intervention can provide during the particular phase in the conflict cycle? In addition, what is the EU's timeframe for its involvement? This is relevant because the crucial question is whether the EU includes both a short-term, action-oriented perspective, as well as a long-term perspective in which transitions to other forms of interventions are considered.

Figure 1 – HERE

Multilateralism and regionalism in peace and security governance

Given the EU's emphasis on 'effective multilateralism' it is clear that the EU is often involved in multilateralism, but this involvement may also be in combination with other modes of interventions. Unilateral and most plurilateral interventions lack legality in terms of international law but may on some occasions appear legitimate (as the case of Kosovo demonstrates). Hence, analytically, it is necessary to make a basic distinction between the different modes of third party involvement in a particular conflict:

• The *unilateral*, carried out by one intervenor without asking for permission (a state or the EU).

• The *bilateral*, where there is some kind of (more-or-less voluntary) agreement between the intervenor and the country in which the intervention is made (an EU member state and the 'receiver').

• The *plurilateral* by an ad hoc group of countries, or some more permanent form of non-territorial security alliance (e.g. a 'coalition of the willing').

• The *regional*, carried out by a regional organisation (e.g. the AU, EU, etc).

• The *interregional*, carried out by one regional organisation in cooperation with another regional organisation (EU-AU coordination in the DRC).

• The *multilateral*, which normally means a UN-led, or at least UN-sanctioned, operation, which implies the involvement of the entire 'international community' (of which the EU can be a part).

With these distinctions as a base, it is then possible to deepen the analysis and discover patterns of how the EU's peace and security governance in different regional conflicts. Is there a common pattern, built upon security strategies, principles, norms and values, or is the EU adopting different strategies, and if so, why? For instance, in the Israeli-Palestinian conflict the EU pushed hard for becoming involved in the peace process that was launched in the beginning of the 1990s. Was this because of the security impact the conflict had on the EU itself (such as increased migration to the EU, terrorism demonstrations against Israeli targets in Europe, tense relations with other Arab states, the Islamic world, with the US etc.)? Or was it linked to the EU's need to become a globally important security player next to the US, or merely due to normative values of solving this conflict by peaceful and democratic means (see Peters, this Issue). If we compare this case with others we can identify whether there are different motives, or a more coherent EU security strategy for all cases.

Since the establishment of the UN, the prevailing view has been that a dominant UN should delegate tasks to subordinate regional organisations or other actors (whoever is willing to take the lead, such as NATO for example) in peace and security affairs. It was not until the post-Cold War era, with the R2P doctrine, and the multiplication of state fragility, that the role of regional organisations in global security increased. Today, it is even voiced that 'Europe should manage its own crises', and that there needs to be 'African solutions to African problems'.

Even if threats may originate from different sources, and from different levels of society, conflict management is becoming increasingly internationalised. From having

been seen as a rival approach to universalism and multilateralism, regional approaches to conflict prevention and management have become increasingly important (especially in view of the increased regionalisation of conflict).

The idea that conflicts within a certain region are best dealt with directly by the region concerned is not new; in fact this idea was discussed upon the formation of the UN, and was mentioned in the UN Charter. In earlier debate, however, the 'region' was conceived simply as an intermediate actor, to which a security task could be *delegated* from the multilateral level. However, hand-in-hand with increasing regionalisation, the relationship between multilateral (UN) and regional approaches has become both complex and increasingly strenuous[1].

Most observers claim that the UN constitutes the foundation of a rules-based world order. Go-it-alone strategies outside a UN framework –for instance, through NATO plurilateralism or US unilateralism – are controversial. Regionalism constitutes the main rules-based alternative to UN-based multilateralism, and its role has been intensively discussed at various junctures over the course of the last century. Since 1992 the UN Secretary-General convened six high-level meetings with the main regional organisations involved in security matters. The Secretary-General's 2005 *In Larger Freedom* stated that 'the United Nations and regional organisations should play complementary roles in facing the challenges to peace and security' (Annan, 2005, 52). Likewise, the High Level Panel on Threats, Challenges and Change, set up by the Secretary-General to reflect on UN reform, acknowledged in its 2004 report that regional groupings have made "important contributions to the stability and prosperity of

their members" (UN, 2004: 85). The High Level Panel also urged the Security Council to make greater use of Chapter VIII provisions to use regional organisations to prevent and respond to threats. The critical requirements from a UN perspective are that: (a) regional action should be organised within the UN Charter and be consistent with its purposes and principles; and (b) the UN and regional organisations should collaborate more effectively and in a more integrated fashion than in the past (c.f. Thakur, 2005a).

Some proponents of this line have promoted greater recognition of the role of regional organisations. For example, Thakur has acknowledged that there is an increasing gap between legality and legitimacy in multilateralism, and that the UN cannot deliver a legitimate world order on its own. Regional arrangements closer to home can, in this view, counter perceptions of 'external imposition' by a distant global UN. Yet this approach stresses that to be legitimate such regionalism must be compatible with and contribute to UN-based multilateralism. For Thakur, regional organisations 'may insert fresh blood into multilateralism', and fill some of its gaps, but they must do so within the UN framework (Takhur, 2005b). In other words, legality and legitimacy for regional interventions is to be found in a vertical order, requiring multilateral sanction.

The general emphasis on regional conflict management is triggered by the belief that a 'region', or a regional organisation, is in a better position than the immediately concerned states to take the role of mediator in ethnic and other conflicts, and in terms of culture and values still be closer to the parties, or understand them better, than extra-regional mediators.

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A discussion of the comparative advantage of regional cooperation must consider the realistic alternatives, and the effectiveness of relevant regional organisations. There are certainly distinct problems with regional approaches (Diehl, 1994: Tavares, 2009; Söderbaum and Tavares, 2009), such as resource constraints, organisational weaknesses, lack of neutrality, and the role of the regional hegemon. There is, however, also the risk of taking sides in the conflict, or exploiting the situation for political and economic gain (Söderbaum and Tavares, 2009). Diehl's conclusion is somewhat negative for regional, as opposed to multilateral, peacekeeping (Diehl, 1994, 131). However, it is necessary to acknowledge that multilateral peacekeeping is not always forthcoming, and if it comes it usually comes late and for the wrong reasons. Regionalisation of conflict may have such dire consequences for a region with weak institutions that intervention has to be improvised as an emergency. There is much empirical evidence indicating that such interventions are often suboptimal; but ineffectiveness may nevertheless sometimes be preferable to inaction. At least there are learning processes involved. It must be recognised that most international and regional (and unilateral) interventions in domestic conflicts have been failures, mainly because of the extreme complexity of intervening in a society in conflict. Hence, the framework we propose should enable us to ascertain, which of the various roles of multilateral and regional peace operations – with a partiular focus on the EU's role – gains most support.

Furthermore, it is also important to understand in what way the EU differs in its construction of conflict regarding conflicts closer to its own borders compared with

more geographically distant regional conflicts (for instance in Africa). Is it constructing these distant conflicts differently compared with the closer areas, and then jointly with the UN and other global players, and what governance logic is fleshed out in relation to these security and conflict constructions?

Intervener and targets of intervention in peace and security governance

There is a vast amount of research analysing the way in which peace operations and interventions are executed and implemented. A significant portion of this literature focuses on the strategy and the implementation of the peace operation, such as the lack of political will, the under-financing of missions, insufficient force, poor logistics, issues of coordination between actors, and interaction dilemmas between civil and military forces, which in turn lead to legitimacy and authority problems, and undesirable outcomes (Doyle and Sambanis, 2006; Thakhur, 2005; Weiss, 1999). These issues require attention.

A particular problem in contemporary conflict theory is that peace and security governance is designed and analysed from the standpoint of the intervener, with less attention given to the national context and the targets of the intervention. For example, there is a vigorous debate around the idea of 'liberal peace'. Paris (2004) analyses all 14 major UN peacebuilding missions in civil wars conducted between 1989 and 1999, highlighting that they were all built on a common strategy of immediate

democratisation and marketisation. Paris calls for an approach that first establishes domestic institutions capable of managing the disruptive and destabilising effects of democratisation and marketisation. Hence, the relevance of the national and local context, as well as the relationship between intervener and the targets of intervention, are crucial in the choice of policies carried out (Richmond, 2005, 217).

This issue is also a key theme in anthropological research. As pointed out by Rubinstein (2005, 529), whether implicitly or explicitly, all interventions involve the assertion by the interveners that what they are doing is the right thing to do. But what is 'right' is seldom self-evidently clear, especially considering that the targets of intervention are rarely consulted. Power asymmetries are crucial: 'Whether or not the intervention is invited, there is always a delicate hierarchical relation between the intervener and the intervened. Vested interests such as political gain, access to resources or simply the assertion of power may constitute the muted, key motivation that ultimately dominates the process' (Rubinstein, 2005, 529; cf. Paris, 2004; Ottaway, 2003).

Indeed, in contrast to the majority of research in the field, our framework emphasises national/local dynamics and, in particular, the much-ignored relationship between intervener and the targets of intervention. The targets of intervention are neither a homogenous group, nor objects deprived of agency. Notwithstanding, even if it is argued that the exclusion of the targets of intervention has led to poor peace and security governance, it is not necessarily correct to assume that their inclusion will ensure the best outcome in all cases. There is a considerable lack of research on this

aspect, and further theoretical development depends on more empirical research on the patterns and degree of inclusion/exclusion.

For this purpose, and in order to analyse the empirical pattern of the relationship between intervener and the targets of intervention, our framework makes a distinction between different tracks of intervention. A considerable degree of the attention in the study of peace and security governance is placed on the so-called top level or elites in inter-state diplomatic relations. The analysis of the EU is no exception. However, building on peace research, we claim that it is necessary to include other tracks of society in the analysis. Hence, we argue that too much focus has been placed on the top leaders in the conflict, and not enough on building long-term capacities for peace at other levels of societiy especially at the grassroots level (Orjuela, 2008, Goodhand, 2006, Reychler and Paffenholz, 2001; Doyle, 2001, Lederach, 1997). We anticipate that the distinction between different tracks will help us to understand the uneasy relationship between short-term crisis management and long-term peacebuilding, as well as the relationship between intervener and the targets of intervention.

There is a vast amount of research on third party involvement in violent conflicts. However, few studies systematically analyse the different tracks and approaches a third party can use[2]. For the purpose of this analysis, Lederach's (1997, 39) pyramidal societal model, with three overarching tracks of entry for a third party, will be used. One can further divide third party actions in a given conflict into direct and indirect interventions. This gives us six different overarching options for a third party to intervene. The most commonly used approach is the diplomatic – so-called Track 1 –

method (row 1 in table 1), by top-leader politicians that act as mediators and negotiate with the core parties to the conflict. One example of this is the US's and NATO's use of coercion against Serbia in the 1999 Kosovo war. Another is Norway's secret mediation that led to a ceasefire agreement between the Sri Lankan government and the Tamil Tigers (LTTE) in 2002. A third party actor can also approach an agency that will act as a third party (see row 2). A clear example was when member states urged the UN to expel Iraq from Kuwait in the conflict between 1990 and 1991. A further example of this indirect track was when the Arab states asked King Hussein of Jordan to mediate with Saddam Hussein to leave Kuwait in that same conflict. This 'new' agency (for instance the UN or a single mediator) takes the role to directly intervene on behalf of the original third party actor.

Table 1 — HERE

The approach applied at the intermediate level concerns direct interventions towards different Track 2 actors, such as think-thanks, civil society organisations, influential religious and local leaders, and so on (see box 3, above). The idea is to build peace capacities that can pressure the elite to work for peace from below. This track can be exemplified in the situation when the Swedish Foreign Minister, Sten Andersson, facilitated several track 2 initiatives between the Israelis and the Palestinians in the 1980s. This could also be done indirectly by approaching the third parties' own intermediate level that, in turn, networks with the conflict parties; Track 2 agencies. The

UN and the Swedish NGO Life And Peace Institute working to build municipalities and regional institutions in Somalia in 1992 is an example of this track (box 4, above). In a similar way, the third party can choose to support the grassroots levels in the conflicting societies, such as social movements and peace movements, local workshops, and so on (see box 5, above). One example of this track is when the EU was acting in the eastern Democratic Republic of Congo, and gave direct support to local communities aiming to build peace from the local level. This can also be done indirectly with the third party's own intermediate and grassroots agencies (see box 6, above), as exemplified when several European NGOs received support for starting grassroots reconciliation activities in Bosnia & Herzegovina in the 1990s.

In short, by identifying how the EU believes that peace and security best can be established, and by identifying how the EU constructs the transformation process of the conflict we will also be able to understand the construction and defintion of security governance, including for whom and for what purpose such security governance emerges.

Impact

Impact assessment constitutes the third component of our framework. As noted above, whereas a rich menu of tools is available for the analysis of security governance, impact remains more weakly theorised and far less understood. Drawing on Christou et al., key questions include: What is the impact and influence of the EU's security logic(s) and governance on any security issue, such as regional conflict? What role has the EU

played? What effect has the outcome and impact of the security governance practices had on the EU's identity and projection as a peace and security actor? In other words, has the EU managed to increase its global status as a valuable and effective peace and security actor? (Christou et al., 2010, 23).

The first step of such an analysis is to identify the EU's goals and the underlying assumptions of the EU's involvement in a particular intervention (i.e. the EU's construction of the conflict). The next step is to make a fundamental distinction between output, outcome and impact. As mentioned in the section on security goverance, there is an abundance of literature on the intervention strategy and processes of implementation in a rather narrow sense. Indeed, literature in the field is heavily geared towards 'output' (e.g. training of soldiers in human rights) and 'outcome' (e.g. soldiers are respecting human rights in their activities) of interventions, rather than whether any peacebuilding impact on society in a broader sense. The societal impact is particularly relevant for assessing more comprehensive interventions (even if some evaluators and researchers claim that only output and outcome should be assessed, not impact). However, as pointed out by Woodrow and Chigas (2008), impact need not be elusive and unreachable, too long-term or impossible to assess, but can be identifiable everyday occurrences. Such understanding is also consistent with the OECD-DAC's definition of impact as including: 'the primary and secondary, direct and indirect, positive and negative, intended and unintended, immediate and long-term, short-term and lasting efforts of the effort' (quoted in Woodrow and Chigas, 2008, 19). Importantly, 'if projects are not accountable for how their interventions contribute to

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the broader peace, one runs the risk of investing a lot of time, resources, and effort in programmes with excellent outcomes, but that make no measable difference to the conflict' (ibid).

Impact assessment is a difficult task. Research has shown that in terms of actually measuring the results and impact of peacebuilding some of the most important (methodological) weaknesses include: the general lack of planning (i.e. a conflict analysis was often missing as a foundation to develop and implement the intervention); often there is a weak connection between the conflict analysis and intervention itself (and in some cases the conflict analysis is completely missing); the goals of intervention are often so general and vague ('contribution to peace') that they are not measurable, and it is verry difficult to evaluate their impact (Spurk, 2008; Woodrow, and Chigas, 2008).

Hence, a proper impact assessment requires planning and conflict analysis (including the extent of regionalisation of conflict). The intervention thus needs to be planned and designed before it is implemented (it is at least very difficult to get solid answers about impact when such assessments are carried out in retrospect). Furthermore, impact assessment requires understanding of causality, or at least 'a convincing estimate of causal relationship' (Svensson and Brattberg, 2008, 24), and this requires 'a theory of change', which is able to describe/explain how and why a particular intervention will contribute to broader peace and security.

Impact is frequently expressed in terms of the success or failure of an intervention. There is however no consensus among academics, policy makers or

recipients of intervention as to what constitutes or explains successful intervention; assessments are subject to bias and politicisation. Our framework seeks to problematise the way the EU defines the success or failure of its engagements. We need to acknowledge two general weaknesses of the way success and failure is defined and how impact is assessed.

The first general weakness is that interventions are often predicated upon very sweeping definitions of 'successful' outcomes, and are justified with morally charged and normative propositions by interveners, such as human rights, human security and the responsibility to protect. The strategies adopted by interveners are justified on the basis that they lead to greater security, stability and development of the targets of intervention and/or of the global community. Such rhetoric usually emerges from a western philosophical tradition (Der Derian, 1995) that clothes raw economic and political interest. Notions of success are thus deeply embedded in cultural values and politico-economic interests; they are always ambiguous, meaning one thing for those loyal to the values of a global 'outsider' community, and another for those who identify themselves as 'insiders' (Rubinstein, 2005). Notably, the values and understandings of those for whom the impact of intervention is experienced as largely excluded from interveners' definitions and measures of success.

This behaviour can be explained by the fact that it is politically expedient for interveners to claim that their initiative has been successful, regardless of its real effects. Many broad-based international interventions arise from the assumptions of the 'liberal peace' model – that democratisation, human rights, liberal market economics

and the integration of societies into the global community bring peace and stability (MacMillan, 1998). Success then tends to be measured according to how closely these objectives have been achieved, rather than according to how intervention has impacted upon the everyday worlds of the targets of intervention – particularly the less visible. By paying attention to actors that are usually invisible in the formulation of success and failure, we seek to problematise prevailing conceptualisations and discourses of success and the frameworks of analysis, design and evaluation that sustain them.

A second and somewhat related feature of many interventions is that they often lead to negative side-effects of the intervention and that there is a need to question for whom and for what purpose the intervention is actually carried out. Interveners' criteria for success have been criticised for being narrow and short-sighted, ignoring past experience (Jenkins et al., 2006) and broad-reaching (particularly negative) effects. In widely different settings, such as Sierra Leone, Bosnia, Cambodia and Afghanistan, empirical research has shown that intervention can exacerbate or accommodate the inequalities in the target society that give rise to conflict (Duffield, 2001; Keen, 2005: 177; Kostic, 2007; Springer, 2009), leaving a culture of impunity in their wake (Fatima Ayub and Kouvo, 2008).

More perniciously, researchers have noted that global elites may benefit from this state of affairs, turning a blind eye to the brutal exclusion of the poor by national power-holders (Hughes, 2003; Springer, 2009). If so, interventions that are successful for 'outsiders' may be failing 'insiders' in devastating ways. Hence, we find it

necessary to include these dimensions in the analysis in order to empirically determine the output/outcome/impact that EU interventions have on regional conflicts.

Finally, impact assessment then needs to be related to the effect on the EU's identity and projection as a peace and security actor. As an example, the EU's engagement in security sector reform of the Fatah controlled Palestinian Authourity police and security police, done partly in cooperation with the US, has not included those two security branches that work with cracking down on the opposition Hamas. These activities have impact on how the EU is perceived by the external world, and more important by the conflict parties themselves (e.g. as an ally to the US, Israeli biased, pro-Fatah, anti-Hamas etc.), and this differs sharply from the EU's self-image as the proponent of human rights and democracy, a human security oriented power, or as an 'civilian power'. Operation Atalanta in Somalia is another example of the impact of the conflict on the EU. The offical aim of this operation is to secure ships navigating close to the Somalia's coastline, but this tend to create a negative image of the EU due to emphasis on securing ships involved in EU trade or with boats with EU passengers on board. The lack of EU's involvement in the resolution of the conflict in Somalia. One way or the other, the perception in Somalia (but also in the rest of the horn) is very much that the EU is not undertaking this operation out of humanitarian concerns or security concerns for the region but for much narrower interests.

Thereby, we are able to identify both sides of the coin: one that identifies the actual output, outcome and impact in terms of increased peace and security in the regional conflict itself, and the other that identifies the impact on the EU itself.

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Conclusion

The purpose of this article was to theorise and conceptualise externally induced peace and security operations (especially those of the EU) during various phases of a regional conflict. The theoretical argument is that we need to find out how a regional actor, such as the EU, is 'constructing' the regional conflict, how this leads to the security governance practices it proposes and builds, and what impacts these practices have on the regional conflict, as well as on the EU itself.

With regard to the first component in the framework, we emphasised the way the conflict was constructed in view of the conflict cycle. The construction is closely related to the way EU would define its role in multilateral security governance strategy. Any mode of security governance contains a particular relationship between the external intervening party and the parties that are subject to the intervention. Our framework is based on the assumption that this relationship needs to be analysed in detail. Given the limited empirical evidence available in the field (and hence the problems to formulate well founded hypotheses), we outlined an analytical scheme, which could help us to consolidate the empirical base for how this relationshiop looks and the way it influences security governance in particular cases.

The third general component in the framework is about assessing impact of the intervention. To an overwhelming extent, policy and research in the field focus mainly on the intervention strategy, its implementation and more narrow goals such as output and outcomes. These are pertinent questions, but any assessment of the EU's role as a

global actor in peace and security is tightly connected to the broader criteria such as impact, societal consequences of the intervention as well as for whom and for what purpose EU is engaged in international interventions.

To sum up, the EU construction of conflict, and the role it is ascribing itself to in the conflict, will also influence the governace strategy that will be outlined. These governance strategies will impact on the type of intervention (which level, and in which form) the EU will propose as well as the impact of such practices.

Notes

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[1] The effort to situate the study of peacekeeping and peacebuilding within broader international relations theory (James, 1990; Barnett, 1995; Paris, 1997, 2004; Ayoob, 2004), culminated in recent appeals for a 'broadening of the study of peace operations' (Paris, 2000; Pugh, 2003; Bellamy and Williams, 2005; Bellamy, Williams and Griffin, 2004). Some prominent international relations theorists have begun to turn their attention to peacekeeping and peacebuilding (Keohane, 2003; Krasner, 2004, 2005) from the perspective of the concept of sovereignty. Mostly inspired by post-9-11 events, scholars such as Caplan (2005), Fukuyama (2004), Chesterman (2004) Dobbins et al. (2005) and Chesterman, Ignatieff and Thakur (2005) have written books on state building, or nation building. Meanwhile, some scholars are sceptical about the basic premise of state building (Bain, 2006; Chandler, 2006; Duffield, 2001). The importance of the regional perspective is reflected in what Pugh and Cooper (2004) describe as the phenomenon of conflict displacement: an unintended consequence of averting the risk of state failure in one state may cause relocation of the conflict into a neighouring state.

[2] For an overview of different tracks that can be used in peacebuilding see Diamond & McDonald 1996

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