Military-Civilian Relations in Interventions

PhD thesis

to obtain the degree of PhD at the University of Groningen on the authority of the Rector Magnificus Prof. E. Sterken and in accordance with the decision by the College of Deans.

This thesis will be defended in public on

15 November 2018 at 11.00 uur

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Preface and Acknowledgements

I would like to first and foremost thank Professor Jaap de Wilde who supervised this dissertation and made sure I made necessary revisions and adjustments to finalize the project. I would also like to thank him for taking me on board at the International Relations and World Politics division at the Faculty of Arts, University of Groningen.

I would also like to thank my co-supervisor, Professor Iver B. Neumann. He has urged me to do a doctoral thesis since we first met in the mid-1990s. Without his friendly pressuring, mentoring, guidance and inspiration throughout the years, I would never have completed this work. My debt to him is considerable.

I also wish to thank Professor Patrick Porter at Exeter University, UK, and dr. Jens Ringsmose, Director at the Institute for Military Operations, Royal Danish Defence Academy, for reading through the entire dissertation and providing valuable comments at earlier stages of the work.

Many colleagues at the NUPI have also contributed, and in particular my thanks go to the following persons, for their support and advice: Morten Skumsrud Andersen, Benjamin de Carvalho, Cedric de Coning, Patrick Cullen, Kristian Lundby Gjerde, Susan Hoivik, John Karlsrud, Halvard Leira, John Harald Sande Lie, Kari Osland, Erik Reichborn-Kjennerud, Pernille Rieker, Ole Jacob Sending, Ulf Sverdrup and Jan-Morten Torrissen. I would also like to thank Elin-Marie Fiane and Tore Gustavsson of the NUPI library for their excellent assistance.

Lastly, I would like to thank the staff and fellow IR-students at Groningen for their warm welcome and support during my time there. It was highly appreciated.
Chapter 1

Setting the Scene:
Military–Civilian Relations in Interventions

1. Introduction

In the decades after the Cold War, the world has witnessed a growth in international interventions. The number of such interventions, the number of intervening actors, the number of total personnel and the amounts of money spent all increased. A predominantly Western group of intervening actors (states and other organizations), have been forcing, imposing, compelling, teaching or offering their various forms of order, values, systems, principles, techniques, organizations and governance on other actors. There have been UN-sanctioned post-conflict peacebuilding interventions, as well as controversial military invasions conducted without UN approval. Despite their differences, all these interventions represent a form of international politics where various military and civilian organizations are deployed to engage people, groups and organizations in a politically tense environment. Sometimes these encounters with the local actors are conflictual and violent, in other instances they may be mutually beneficial for intervener and those intervened upon.

To some extent these interventions are illustrative of the post-Cold War Western-dominated liberal international order, fuelled by optimism and universalism, as well as hegemonic power and military dominance. The limited success of many of the interventions may also illustrate the shortcomings of this Western liberal hegemonic power. Recognising this, Western states

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1 For instance, between 1988 and 1993 alone, more UN troops and civilian personnel were deployed than in the previous forty years. As of September 2017, there were 16 UN Peacekeeping missions with about 110 000 personnel. Similarly, NATO deployed troops ‘out of area’ in places such as Bosnia-Herzegovina, Kosovo and Afghanistan from the mid-1990’s on. At the same time, development aid, or official assistance budgets, increased from USD 2 billion in 1990 to USD 25 billion by 2015. See ‘2015 State of the Humanitarian System report (SOHS)’, published by ALNAP on http://www.alnap.org/. See also Michael N. Barnett, Empire of Humanity: A History of Humanitarianism (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 2011), 2–3.
appear to have become more reluctant to engage in large, comprehensive interventions today than they were a decade ago. Still, the UN continues to operate several complex peace operations, at times with significant use of force. Also NATO and the USA continue to engage globally in various missions. In short, interventions remain to be arenas for the conduct of global politics, and merit attention as a phenomenon in international relations.

Scholars have carefully and critically scrutinized many aspects of the interventions of the last decades, finding some successes but more often universalizing tendencies and neo-colonial implications. Interventions aimed at ‘saving strangers’ or ‘fixing failed states’ have been shown to be political endeavours. The Western promotion of such things as ‘good governance’, ‘best practices’, ‘gender equality’ and other human rights is found to be politically sensitive, even if these are represented as universal values, or downplayed as merely ‘technical advice’. The Western use of military force in so-called humanitarian interventions, stabilization operations, counter-insurgency, counter-terrorism and similar operations, have also been politically contested and critically examined by academics.

This dissertation focuses on one less researched aspect of the post-Cold War interventions, namely the relationship between the military and the various civilian intervening actors. This is an important relationship, because it is frequently claimed that success in interventions hinges largely on military–civilian coherence. For example, we often hear that ‘there is no military solution’: that military force alone is incapable of resolving the conflict or winning a war, but

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6 Coherence is defined as ‘the quality or state of cohering: as a: systematic or logical connection or consistency, b: integration of diverse elements, relationships, or values’. Cohere is defined as ‘to be combined or united in a logical and effective way’. See Merriam-Webster Dictionary [http://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/cohering](http://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/cohering). In the context of this thesis, coherence will be used primarily in connection with attempts at getting various actors in an intervention to act consistently and in tune with each other. This is discussed further in Chapter 2.

The twining of military and civilian efforts is nothing new in the history of warfare. War has never taken place in a political vacuum: diplomacy has always been present in parallel with the fighting.\footnote{Tarak Barkawi, ‘Diplomacy, War and World Politics’, in Diplomacy: The Making of World Politics, eds Ole Jacob Sending, Vincent Pouliot and Iver B. Neumann (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2015), 55–79; Beatrice Heuser, Reading Clausewitz (London: Pimlico, 2002); John Keegan, A History of Warfare (London: Hutchinson, 1993); Holger Afflerbach and Hew Strachan, How Fighting Ends: A History of Surrender (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2012).} Even in cases of crushing military victories and unconditional military surrenders, diplomatic activity has been an integral part of the process. Nothing is decided solely on the battlefield. Rather, the military have generally served as a tool for politicians and diplomats to strengthen their negotiating position towards each other. When the enemy has been weakened militarily, economically and socially, the conditions of the peace agreement tend to be more favourable for the stronger army.\footnote{See e.g. Keegan, A History of Warfare; Afflerbach and Strachan, How Fighting Ends.}

However, when people say that there is ‘no military solution’ to today’s interventions, they are not only referring to the need for a diplomatic side-track to the fighting; they are also implying that political and other non-military efforts should be conducted simultaneously with the military operations \textit{in the field}. In today’s interventions, military and security efforts are expected to operate in conjunction with other, civilian, lines of efforts in the theatre of operations.\footnote{Soeters, Joseph L. ‘Ambidextrous Military: Coping with Contradictions of New Security Policies’, in The Viability of Human Security, eds. Monica den Boer and Jaap de Wilde (Amsterdam: Amsterdam University Press), 109–124.} As I will show below, this applies to forced interventions, like the US operations
in Iraq and Afghanistan, and to UN-sanctioned peacekeeping interventions alike.  

Such comprehensiveness is not entirely new: also colonial powers and other historical interventions sought varying degrees of civilian and military coherence. However, the military tended to dominate the partnership, and the objective was control, exploitation and subjugation of the colonies. In today’s interventions, the civilian actors are more numerous, and are involved in everything from humanitarian relief, to development projects, state administration, legislation, political engagement and diplomacy. Interventions may still be politically controversial, but the majority are sanctioned by the UN Security Council, which provides greater international political legitimacy than in colonial times.

Military–civilian coherence is often referred to as a precondition for peace and stability; also civilian agencies, with the UN at the forefront, have since the end of the Cold War stressed the importance of combining hard security, human security and development: you cannot have one without the other, it is argued. Similarly, security vacuums must be filled with stabilizing forces; and political and economic vacuums must be filled with governance and resources – or so it is held. Such broad and comprehensive engagement simultaneously in various sectors is a shared recipe for most of today’s interventions.

Concepts such as ‘comprehensive approach’ and ‘integrated missions’ have been launched by NATO, the EU and the UN to implement these ambitions.

11 I discuss peacekeeping further below and in Chapter 3; here we may note that the UN defines it as ‘a technique designed to preserve the peace, however fragile, where fighting has been halted, and to assist in implementing agreements achieved by the peacemakers.’ See DPKO, United Nations Peacekeeping Operations: Principles and Guidelines (New York: United Nations, 2008), 17.


And yet, despite high ambitions among politicians and organizations, coherence among intervening actors has proven challenging to achieve in practice. This applies not least to the military–civilian dimension. The relationships between the intervening actors are often either controversial and heated, or ignorant and inconsiderate. There may not be any interest in building coherence or to stay in close contact with the others. Why is this so? Is it a result of limited resources, poor implementation or competition between actors? Or is something deeper and perhaps insurmountable involved? More precisely, this dissertation asks:

- How can we theorize and analyse the challenges facing intervening actors to achieve military–civilian coherence in post-Cold War interventions?

1.1. Delimitations of the dissertation
Before proceeding it is necessary to set out the scope of this study. First, this dissertation is limited in time to the post-Cold War period, in other words from the early 1990s until 2018. This was when the number of interventions increased – in UN peacekeeping, in the humanitarian sector and among Western armed forces. The focus is primarily on interventions flavoured by the liberal Western discourse of peace, stability, human security and democratization. In this period, the West remained the dominant voice in UN diplomacy, peacebuilding, reconstruction, good governance and economic reform. Western-flavoured interventions of recent decades have all sought peace through stabilization and institution building, founded on such Western-modelled ‘best practices’ as democratization and good governance. Also African Union (AU) missions and operations may be regarded as part of this process, and the AU cooperates closely with the UN in several places.²⁶

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²⁶ Karlsrud, The UN at War. For an assessment and comparison of the AU and UN in this context, see Cedric de Coning, Implications of a Comprehensive or Integrated Approach for Training in United Nations and African Union Peace Operations (Oslo: Norwegian Institute of International Affairs (NUPI), 2009).
Intense combat situations where the military operate basically alone, as in the initial phases of the wars in Afghanistan and Iraq, are beyond the scope of this study, because the military–civilian interaction is smaller than in the later phases. Furthermore, non-Western interventions like Russian incursions into Ukraine have not been included. Russian military invasions in neighbouring countries have been largely limited to military means. Russia may have available a broad range of tools (propaganda, cyber-attacks, local rebels), and have for instance attempted to legitimise the annexation of Crimea through a referendum. But hardly any civilian agencies, whether Russian or international organizations, have been present in these interventions. The Western discourse on peace- and state-building, human security, and comprehensive approach, is hardly present in Russia.

Note also that I focus on international interventions – not on countries that intervene in insurgencies or unruly regions within their own borders. This dissertation is a study of international relations – and also primarily of political relations, not international law. International humanitarian law is briefly discussed in Chapter 4 and a few other places, but it is not a central element of the present study.

The problems in focus are the challenges related to coherence between military and civilian actors in these interventions. Not that this is the only or necessarily most important reason why interventions often face challenges. My aim is not to assess challenges in interventions per se, but to narrow in on one dimension or component often singled out by political leaders as important for mission success. In many cases, interventions may struggle because of factors like far too few resources (troops, people, money, equipment); too broad and unrealistic mandates; political resistance or foot-dragging; second agendas; competition for donor funds; or incompetent leadership.

For instance, an often-used way of estimating success in interventions is to examine the recurrence of violence. The statistics on recurrence of violence after civil wars are contested among scholars, with estimates varying between 50% and 20%. However, whatever the

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correct recurrence rate happens to be, the form and shape of the external intervention will necessarily be only one of several factors affecting recidivism. Common explanatory factors are the economic situation in the conflict area, or the nature of the peace settlement. It will always be difficult to single out – in quantitative figures – what impact the intervening actors have on the recurrence of violence, although several studies have pointed to errors made by the intervening actors which have destabilized the situation. Examples include premature elections, and limited local knowledge or understanding of the conflict. In addition, there may be factors outside the intervention itself, in global politics and power relations, which negatively affect the stability in an area of intervention. All the same, there have been few – if any – studies that directly indicate inadequate coherence among intervening actors as the reason for renewed violence after civil wars. The correlation here remains uncertain.

I am not going to claim that future interventions are likely to be more successful if the shortcomings discussed here could somehow be fixed. I choose to focus on the military–civilian dimension of interventions because of the attention this has attracted on political and strategic levels in Western capitals, as well as in the UN, the EU and NATO. Furthermore, by examining, comprehensively and comparatively, all the intervening actors in an intervention, military as well as civilian, we can get a better grasp on how interventions evolve – without, however, claiming that it is an exhaustive analysis of their successes and failures. The theorizing and analysis in this dissertation is a contribution to the debate, not a resolution of it.

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Relapse and the Sustainability of Peace, World Development Report 2011 Background Paper (San Diego, CA: Graduate School of International Relations and Pacific Studies, University of California, 2010).


2. Background and Context – Coherence in Interventions

2.1. New wars and new responses
The pervasive demand for civil–military coherence in interventions has emerged partly as a result of the perceived nature of wars and conflicts in the post-Cold War-world. In recent theorizing on war, terms like ‘war amongst the people’, 21 ‘5th generation warfare’, 22 ‘small wars’, 23 ‘new wars’, 24 and ‘hybrid war’ 25 are applied to describe the nature of warfare today. US military doctrine draws a distinction between ‘traditional warfare’ and ‘irregular warfare’, 26 where the former is state-to-state warfare and the latter encapsulates all the above-mentioned ‘new’ forms of warfare. A characteristic often highlighted is the blurring of the traditional distinction between combatants and civilians, criminals, terrorists and warriors, battlefields and civilian resident areas, and ultimately between war and peace. 27 There is – as always in military theorizing – discussion of whether what we are seeing in today’s wars is something ‘new’ or merely re-articulations of well-known concepts, but it is widely agreed that many of these wars represent a challenge to conventionally organized and equipped armed forces. 28 There is also an accompanying debate over the driving force behind wars, civil wars in particular – whether

it is ‘greed’, or ‘grievances’, or something else.\textsuperscript{29} I refrain from entering into that debate here, as it is less relevant to this study. The important point in this context is rather that all these discussions about the nature of today’s wars have triggered new thinking about how best to respond to them, how to counter these – new or old – forms of warfare. New academic terms such as ‘policing wars’\textsuperscript{30} have appeared, and a host of military doctrinal concepts such as ‘stability operations’\textsuperscript{31}, ‘peace enforcement’\textsuperscript{32}, ‘irregular warfare’\textsuperscript{33}, ‘counter-insurgency’\textsuperscript{34} and ‘counter-unconventional warfare’\textsuperscript{35} have emerged or been updated, particularly in the USA. These concepts largely share the view that such wars cannot be won by military means alone. There are no decisive victories, only degrees of intensity of conflict. Armies involved in such wars must rely on other factors and actors – the police, the judiciary, strategic communications, economic development and general political governance – to be able to accomplish their mission.

Similar reasoning can be found in the UN. From the 1990s on it was argued – and commonly recognized – that there is a link between poverty, weak states, violence and security. This ‘security–development nexus’ holds that there can be no development without security and no security without development in fragile societies.\textsuperscript{36} A tandem effort is required. In consequence, UN agencies developed broad and comprehensive approaches to security. Seminal reports, like the 1992 ‘Agenda for Peace’, argued that the end of the Cold War represented an opportunity

\textsuperscript{29} Collier and Hoeffler, ‘Greed and Grievance in Civil War’.


\textsuperscript{33} ‘Irregular warfare’ may describe both the nature of the threat and the response of own forces. See Joint Chiefs of Staff, \textit{Doctrine for the Armed Forces of the United States, JP 1}.


\textsuperscript{36} Duffield, \textit{Development, Security and Unending War}.
for a wide UN approach to achieve sustainable peace. With the 1994 Human Development Report, the United Nations Development Programme brought attention to human security. Security is about individuals as much as about states, it was argued, and to achieve peace people need both freedom from fear and freedom from want. Human security therefore implies both physical security and economic security, food security, health security etc. In 2001 the UN Security Council reaffirmed ‘that the quest for peace requires a comprehensive, concerted and determined approach that addresses the root causes of conflicts, including their economic and social dimensions’. Following this, UN peacekeeping became more ‘robust’ than before, begun intervening more often and in earlier stages of conflict, and engaged broadly in conflict resolution, negotiations and a whole range of post-conflict peace-building measures and institution building.

The comprehensive approach to security is clearly evident with international organizations like the UN, the EU and NATO, each of which has developed specific approaches aimed at fostering greater coherence – internally and with each other. The UN stands out as having developed perhaps the most sophisticated system to date: the ‘integrated approach’. According to the UN, ‘integration is the guiding principle for the design and implementation of complex UN operations in post-conflict situations’. Similarly, the EU’s European Global Strategy, adopted in 2016, stresses the importance of ‘unity in action by implementing together coherent policies’. A Comprehensive Approach to external conflict and crises was developed by the

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41 For the latter, see e.g. Joachim A. Koops, Peace Operations Partnerships: Assessing Cooperation Mechanisms between Secretariats (Berlin: Center for International Peace Operations (ZIF), 2012).

42 United Nations, Note of Guidance on Integrated Missions from the Secretary-General, paragraph 4.

EU High Representative in 2013. Lastly, in NATO’s 2006 Riga Summit declaration and all subsequent summit declarations, there is explicit reference to the importance of a comprehensive approach for responding to the challenges in Afghanistan and elsewhere. As stated in the NATO 2010 Strategic Concept: ‘a comprehensive political, civilian and military approach is necessary for effective crisis management.’ NATO as a military alliance stresses that it favours a broad, comprehensive approach with other actors, recognizing that it relies on civilian capacities to achieve security.

In short, therefore, since the end of the Cold War, wars have widely been seen in the West as being qualitatively different from most previous wars, and this has resulted in new thinking about how to best respond to them. The increase in both the number of interventions and the resources put into them has also exacerbated discussions about efficiency, effectiveness and end results. Military–civilian coherence and various forms of comprehensive approaches have in this context often been regarded as part of the solution. In the next chapter I discuss more closely the various constellations and degrees of cooperation and collaboration between the intervening actors, but throughout this dissertation I will consider them all as attempts at achieving coherence.

### 2.2. The intervening actors

The conglomerate of intervening actors in recent interventions is what distinguishes these the most from colonial possessions or traditional conquest of land in historical warfare. The military actors can be everything from occupying forces to unarmed observers; the civilians may represent a host of countries, organizations and corporations. If we are to analyse interventions, this diversity needs to be detangled and structured.

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45 See *Riga Summit Declaration*, [http://www.nato.int/docu/pr/2006/p06-150e.htm](http://www.nato.int/docu/pr/2006/p06-150e.htm). All NATO summit declarations can be found at [http://www.nato.int](http://www.nato.int).


47 I return to these efforts of the UN, the EU and NATO in Chapter 2.
Firstly, the *military actors* may be from one country, or they may be an ad hoc coalition of states. Or they can represent a formal alliance (NATO). Furthermore, they may be deployed under the umbrella of other regional organizations, such as the EU, the African Union (AU) or the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS). Troops deployed by these organizations often have a mandate from the UN, authorizing them to restore or keep a fragile peace. And of course the UN itself deploy troops in numerous interventions. In April 2018 there were about 90,000 troops from 124 troop-contributing nations in the UN system, deployed in 14 peacekeeping operations globally.48

If we are to understand the relationship between ‘the military’ and the various civilian actors in an intervention, we need to be able to differentiate the military’s different mandates, training, military doctrines and role-perceptions. These variations naturally impact significantly on how the military intervening actors behave and relate to other actors – locals as well as civilian interveners.49 In some cases, the military represent a highly politicized force, as, for instance, when engaging in support of one of the belligerents in a local conflict. At other times an armed force may seek to be as politically impartial as possible, typically in a traditional peacekeeping setting. I return to this in Chapter 3; the important point here is that an analysis of an intervention will have to take these variations into account.

However, the armed forces do share something. They all have the capacity and mandate to apply force – in one form or the other – to implement their mandate.50 Armed forces distinguish themselves from civilians in numerous other ways as well: by heavy weaponry, military vehicles, uniforms and fortified camps. Furthermore, they are often deployed as military units (battle groups, battalions, brigades, etc.) that were formed prior to deployment, giving them time to train and prepare together. This is in contrast to many civilian organizations that take shape in the field when deploying, with individuals being seconded from supporting nations or hired directly. Furthermore, as I argue in Chapter 3, there are also certain striking similarities across presumably different military approaches and doctrines. Thus, we can safely separate


49 Soeters, ‘Ambidextrous Military’.

50 With the exception of missions with unarmed military observer and advisors.
‘the military’ as a separate set of actors from the civilian interveners, while recognizing the nuances and differences between the various military actors.

Secondly, the category ‘civilians’ needs to be opened up similarly. The only thing they seem to share is that they are not military. Civilian intervening actors in an intervention may range from international police (occasionally mandated to use force), to UN peacebuilding missions, international diplomats, UN and regional agencies, national development agencies, non-governmental development actors, and humanitarian actors. Lumping all these together is not very fruitful. Depending on the intervention in question, various actors may be more relevant, or less so. For instance, UN Police in Kosovo and East Timor had an executive mandate: they could apprehend people and bring them to justice, which gave them a far more significant role and influence in the intervention than the traditional training and monitoring missions in other UN Police interventions.\textsuperscript{51} Furthermore, in many interventions the UN plays a leading role on the civilian side, in peacebuilding and democratization – but also international finance institutions, like the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund (IMF), may be important. In other cases, embassies, diplomats or special envoys representing global or regional powers may be crucial to how an intervention evolves.

One way of distinguishing among civilian actors is to separate those with a political mandate from those without such a mandate: in other words, separating the humanitarian actors from the rest (see Figure 1). This has some merit, as humanitarians often are present in a country long before the rest arrive – as in Afghanistan during Taliban rule prior to the US intervention. They are present in an area independently of the specific outcome of a conflict (a ceasefire, peace accords) that often allow the other civilians to enter the area. Humanitarians are not necessarily mandated by UN Security Council Resolutions. Furthermore, they themselves take pride in being neutral, independent and impartial.\textsuperscript{52} These are deep-rooted principles of their humanitarian identity, dating back to the 19\textsuperscript{th} century. This, they argue, provides them with better access to the victims among all parties in a conflict, and is also – crucially – their best security guarantee. If, they go on to explain, these principles are violated and they are perceived

\textsuperscript{51} Kari Margrethe Osland, \textit{Much Ado About Nothing? The Impact of International Assistance to Post-Conflict Police Reform in Afghanistan, Bosnia & Herzegovina, Kosovo, Serbia and South Sudan.} PhD Thesis. (Oslo: Department of Political Science, Faculty of Social Sciences, University of Oslo, 2014).

\textsuperscript{52} See for instance the Sphere Project Humanitarian Charter: \url{http://www.spherehandbook.org/en/the-humanitarian-charter/}. 

13
to be parties to a conflict, they no longer operate in the field. Nonetheless, this ideal has been challenged, as neutrality often becomes an untenable objective in practice. I return to this in Chapters 4 and 6, but the bottom line here is that the humanitarians are nevertheless likely to be the most distinguishable group of civilians in most interventions. Therefore it can be assumed that study of the relationship between the military and civilian actors will generally require specific analytical attention to the military-humanitarian dimension, so I have devoted Chapter 4 to this question.

Figure 1: A simple way of defining the main actors in an intervention. Civilian actors are in blue, but with a separation between the political civilian actors and the (self-proclaimed) non-political humanitarian actors.

How to group or organize for analysis the other civilians, labelled ‘political civilians’ in Figure 1, will depend largely on the case and the research question in focus. We may, for instance, envisage an analytical separation between, on the one hand, the diplomatic and politically engaged actors; and the bureaucrats, technical advisers and development actors on the other. International police could also be a separate category in many cases. What unites the ‘political civilians’ is that they often represent a political body, a state or an organization (the UN, EU, World Bank, etc.), and have an explicitly political mandate. They are there to help to reform
the society, build institutions, redistribute wealth, create a justice system, and so forth. However, also non-governmental development agencies may be categorized as ‘political civilians’, if their activities are political. Capacity building in local communities may appear to be a relatively mundane or non-political activity, but that is usually not the case. For instance, building schools for girls, strengthening local governance, and drilling wells may all have huge political impact locally. Some people benefit (girls, authorities, villages), while others may lose relative wealth and influence – there are many examples of unintended political side-effects of development programmes. In short therefore, ‘political civilians’ are all actors that have a political impact on the intervention and the local environment, even if many technocrats, development workers and peacebuilders are sometimes unaware of this political influence.

To simplify, I employ the term ‘military–civilian relations’ throughout the dissertation, acknowledging that it is a crude simplification, as discussed above. In the more specific and nuanced discussions, I will of course split the intervening actors into different categories as required.

### 2.3. The practical challenges of achieving coherence

Despite the widespread praise for coherence and cooperation, most interventions face conflicts between military, humanitarian and political civilian actors. Lack of coherence among international (and local) actors has at times resulted in inter-agency rivalry, actors working at cross-purposes, competition for funding, duplication of effort, and sub-optimal economies of scale, among other things. This lack of coherence is one factor often cited as contributing to the poor success rate and low sustainability of international peace and stability operations. For instance, as stated in the 2005 UN Report on Integrated Missions: ‘While there is a tendency to blame the limited success rate on lack of resources, it is equally possible that the main problem is more related to a lack of coherent application of the resources already available.’

The humanitarians in particular have generally refused to become directly connected with integrated missions or comprehensive approaches – for fear of being politicized, as mentioned above and discussed in Chapters 4 and 6. But also other civilian actors may find it difficult to

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54 Victoria Metcalfe, Alison Giffen and Samir Elhawary, *UN Integration and Humanitarian Space: An Independent Study Commissioned by the UN Integration Steering Group* (London: Humanitarian Policy Group
cooperate with the military – or indeed with each other. The lack of coherence within and among the humanitarian relief, development, political and security communities has been well documented in evaluation reports and studies. These studies have consistently found that the most interventions undertaken to date have lacked coherence, and that this has undermined their sustainability and ability to achieve their strategic objectives. For example, the Joint Utstein Study of Peacebuilding, which analysed 336 peacebuilding projects implemented by Germany, the Netherlands, the United Kingdom and Norway in the 1990s, identified lack of coherence at the strategic level – what it termed a ‘strategic deficit’ – as the most significant obstacle to sustainable peacebuilding. This study found that more than 55% of the programmes it evaluated did not show any link to a larger country strategy. Sub-optimal results are also evident on the ground: deteriorating security situations, political setbacks or humanitarian crises are not uncommon.

Obviously, some of the challenges now facing the military and civilian actors in the field stem from historical developments dating back much further than modern-day interventions. The Western tradition of a sharp divide between the armed forces and the civilian population has grown out of the professionalization of the military and the democratization of the West. The role of the armed forces evolved over the centuries, from being the armies of ruling monarchs to protectors of the republic and of liberal democracy. War-fighting helped to forge the states

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of Europe – and in the process the armed forces gradually became oriented towards external threats and enemies, not domestic ones.\(^5^9\) In this context, civilian control over the armed forces and its strict de-politicization has been regarded as a bulwark against *coups d’état*. By having a military corps which is loyal, obedient and under civilian oversight, liberal democracy can be defended against threats from the (presumably) anarchical society outside the borders of the state.\(^6^0\) The Clausewitzian ideal of the ‘technical’ and ‘depoliticized’ soldier who executes whatever orders he gets from his political masters is part of this line of thinking, an ethos still present in Western armed forces today. The military shall not interfere in politics. On the other hand, the military have developed their own professionalization rules, procedures and symbols that keep them duly separated from civilian population.\(^6^1\) Any political interference in the conduct or operations of war (or ‘war by committee’) is denounced by military leaders. This is a principle still present in many Western militaries, and is still taught in most military academies. Soldiering and politics are separate professions.\(^6^2\) Although concepts and doctrines for civil–military cooperation (CIMIC) have been adopted, they have never gained much influence in military units. They have usually come as an add-on to existing military command structures, aimed at supporting the military commander’s mission, not cooperation on equal footing.\(^6^3\)

Thus, it is hardly surprising that armed forces find it challenging to engage with civilian actors, let alone develop some level of coherence with them in a field of operations. That being said, in practice the demarcation line between the military and political spheres has never been clear-


cut, and is becoming less and less so. If today’s conflicts and operational environments are changing, if unconventional wars have become the norm, we might expect to see some development and evolution within the armed forces as well. Although some armed forces have taken initiatives to strengthen their own understanding of the civilian terrain of operations (through ‘Human Terrain Teams’, political intelligence, etc.), the focus has been on enhancing the military operation, not at building coherence with civilian actors.

Hence, the fact that civilians and military have kept apart historically cannot fully explain why this continues to be the case – or why some of the historical hurdles have not been overcome despite new circumstances and new operational needs. Understanding the origin of a phenomenon is not necessarily sufficient to make sense if its continued existence.

A next question then is if this has been addressed in international relations (IR) theory. Can extant theorizing of interventions provide help in understanding the challenges of coherence?

3. Theories of Interventions

Starting with the term ‘intervention’ itself, the Merriam-Webster Dictionary defines ‘intervene’ as ‘to become involved in something (such as a conflict) in order to have an influence on what happens’. The etymological root is the Latin verb *intervenire*, which, according to Thomas G. Otte, has three different meanings: to step between; to confront or hinder; and to interfere in order to hinder or mediate. All three meanings indicate that intervention entails an interruption of normal relations and that it is of a temporary nature. An intervention is a deviation from the norm of non-intervention in the international system, as well as from normal behaviour among or between the states in question. It is an act more than a condition, in distinction to occupation

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65 This is one of three definitions, and the one relevant in this context. See [http://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/intervention](http://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/intervention)


67 Ibid.
or colonial possession, which are usually intended as less temporary nature. Most scholars in the field of IR also regard interventions as acts undertaken against the will of an existing political and legal authority, a violation of a state’s territorial sovereignty. Christian Reus-Smit however, argues that intervention may also take place in other dimensions than the territorial one, and describes international intervention as ‘the transgression of a unit’s realm of jurisdiction, conducted by other units in the system’. For instance, some might argue that international financial institutions (like the IMF), have been intervening in the financial sphere of sovereign states, without physically entering the territory. Such interventions may also come in response to a call for assistance from a state facing severe financial difficulties. However, also territorial intervention may be voluntary in this sense: a state may call for international assistance to quell an insurgency or stop a civil war. To insist that, in order to be defined as an intervention, an action must necessarily be against the will of the state in question is therefore not very fruitful. The UN Security Council has mandated most international interventions over the last decades, and omitting all those cases out of the analysis would not make sense, at least in this dissertation. Intervention will therefore be described as international military and civilian deployment in a country or a place where there is, or has been, violent conflict.

3.1. Theories of the rationale for interventions
An early attempt to theorize interventions in IR was made by James N. Rosenau in 1969. In ‘Intervention as a Scientific Concept’, he argues that most previous writings on interventions lack scientific scrutiny. They do not test hypotheses or explore ‘factors that foster, precipitate, sustain, channel, constrain, and/or curb intervention(s)’. To remedy this, Rosenau outlines the basic elements of a scientific theory of intervention. He identifies two characteristics associated with interventionary behaviour: that it is convention-breaking (represents a sharp break with existing forms) and authority-oriented (is directed at changing or preserving political authority in target society). He then asks: ‘under what conditions [is] a nation or an international

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70 Ibid., 150.
71 Ibid., 161.
organization likely to be ready to break with the prevailing mode of conduct and attempt to alter or preserve the structure of authority in another society?’, and proposes five variables (societal, individual, bureaucratic, governmental, and systemic), arguing that individual and bureaucratic variables matter the most, given the right systemic or international preconditions.\(^\text{72}\)

In 1974 R. J. Vincent defined intervention as ‘that activity undertaken by a state, a group of states, or an international organization which interferes coercively in the domestic affairs of another state (…) it is aimed at the authority structure of the target state’.\(^\text{73}\) Similarly, Hedley Bull in 1984 defined interventions as ‘dictatorial or coercive interference, by an outside party or parties, in the sphere of jurisdiction of a sovereign state, or more broadly of an independent political community’, adding that interventions are ‘generally believed to be legally and morally wrong’ due to respect for sovereignty.\(^\text{74}\) In the same volume Stanley Hoffmann restricted the concept of intervention to an ‘act which tries to affect not the external activities, but the domestic affairs of a state’.\(^\text{75}\) He also discusses the classical liberal dilemma of protecting universal human rights versus respecting sovereign space, as well as the challenges related to imposing liberty upon others, debated ever since John Stuart Mill.\(^\text{76}\) These recurrent themes in the academic, legal and political debate have been thoroughly analysed in Michael Walzer’s modern classic Just and Unjust Wars from 1977.\(^\text{77}\)

Most of these writings are somewhat flavoured by the Cold War, when interventions were rare and usually very controversial. UN-sanctioned interventions were uncommon and typically came with limited peacekeeping or observation mandates.\(^\text{78}\) Therefore, they all take for granted that interventions will primarily be military. Later definitions are sometimes broader and may address economic, social and political interventions, when for instance in connection with

\(^{72}\) Ibid., 165.


\(^{76}\) Ibid., 23–24.


\(^{78}\) In the period 1948 to 1989 the UN sanctioned only a dozen peacekeeping or observation missions, and they were often unarmed. See https://peacekeeping.un.org/en/past-peacekeeping-operations
development aid. Here, however, I confine myself to interventions with a military dimension. Interestingly, early theorizing clearly recognized the importance of the political objectives of interventions (authority-oriented, in Rosenau’s terminology): the aim of an intervention is to preserve or alter the political affairs of the target territory. Unfortunately, later theories have paid less attention to this political aspect of interventions, and have focussed more on the moral and legal factors that prohibit or allow interventions. Although Rosenau seeks to avoid the legalistic debates by focusing on probability of interventions, his primary concern is with the process leading up to an intervention, not the intervention itself. The same applies to all theories discussed here. Also more recent work, such as Martha Finnemore’s The Purpose of Intervention (2003), is limited in this regard. She examines military intervention ‘as a window onto the changing character of international society – the purpose to which its members will use force, the ends they value.’ Finnemore claims that it is the purpose or motivation for interventions that changes historically, not the pattern of intervention per se. However, as the title shows, her analysis is confined to the ‘purpose’ of an intervention, not its conduct or effects. The politics of interventions thus remains under-theorized.

With the end of the Cold War and the subsequent rapid increase in interventions came greater academic interest in the questions of legality and foundations of interventions. In particular the matter of humanitarian intervention was widely debated in academic and policy circles. Questions addressed by early scholars, such as Hoffmann and Walzer, were at the forefront. When does the international community have not only a right but indeed an obligation to interfere – for instance, to prevent genocide or other humanitarian catastrophes? In fact, these are old debates. As argued by Stephen Krasner and others, intervention was seen as compatible

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with sovereignty even before the establishment of the Westphalian system.\textsuperscript{82} Intervention for the protection of religious minorities was legally mandated, at the expense of central sovereignty, back in the 16\textsuperscript{th} and 17\textsuperscript{th} centuries.\textsuperscript{83} Furthermore, international treaties, like the 1815 Vienna Settlement, have legitimized intervention to support governments, not only oppressed minorities.\textsuperscript{84}

Taken together, theories of interventions are mainly concerned with moral, legal and political considerations prior to the act of intervening. Crucially, early theories note the political nature of intervention, a point less evident in the debates about humanitarian intervention. This is probably because the primary focus is ‘saving lives’, but also because humanitarian legitimation of an intervention would be undermined if the interveners also had a political agenda.\textsuperscript{85} As a result, the political aspects and consequences of interventions have been largely overlooked also in the academic literature. Despite these nuances, most IR theories of intervention appear to be addressing the prelude to the actual intervention, and not the intervention itself.

\subsection*{3.2. Theories about interventions}
In what has been published on interventions (and not the run-up to them), most works tend to be case-specific or narrow in scope, and with limited theoretical ambitions. For example, there are several books on the Western interventions in Iraq and in Afghanistan, but they tend to restrict the analysis to the specific case only. Theoretical terms like ‘liberal peacebuilding’, ‘essentialization’, ‘Islamic modernism’ may be applied, but rarely in a systematic manner.\textsuperscript{86}


\textsuperscript{85} On this, see also Nicolas J. Wheeler, Saving Strangers.

The same applies to studies of most of today’s interventions. Some studies have taken a regional or comparative approach, but also these tend to be primarily empirically oriented. Numerous publications on specific programmes, activities or events also follow in the wake of most interventions – typically donor evaluations of development programmes, and journalistic analyses of success, failure or corrupted activities, with a few deeper academic studies on specific topics or areas. Less common are attempts to understand the phenomenon of interventions more generally. Scholarly work on interventions has been less concerned with generalizations and theorizing, and more with the empirical cases at hand. There are, nonetheless, some important exceptions, which I discuss in the following.

Where analysis of the military dimension of an intervention is concerned, Taylor B. Seybolt’s *Humanitarian Military Intervention* offers a good starting point. This comparative study of 17 military operations in six conflict areas enquires into why some have been more successful at saving lives than others. Seybolt theorizes four types of humanitarian military interventions, and also extrapolates four important generic tasks an intervener must heed, for greater likelihood of success in saving lives. Military strategy, he argues, is a key factor in determining success or failure, provided that the political objective of the intervention has been defined. Is it, for example, more effective to focus on the victims, or on the perpetrators, if one is tasked with protecting civilians? The findings are generalized into a set of generic guidelines for those contemplating an intervention, such as ‘the causes of death and displacement’, ‘best way to

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87 UN peacekeeping and -building have been analysed and theorized, but most case studies of interventions have been predominantly empirical in nature.


91 Specialized academic journals such as *International Peacekeeping, Journal of Intervention and Statebuilding, Journal of International Peacekeeping* and *Journal of Peacebuilding and Development* regularly publish studies of specific aspects of interventions.

92 Seybolt, *Humanitarian Military Intervention*. 
implement an intervention’, ‘own capabilities’ and ‘military and political risks.’ Hence, while offering an excellent analytical model, Seybolt’s theorizing is nonetheless policy-oriented and ‘problem solving’.

But first and foremost it is limited in scope: it seeks to identify the conditions under which military humanitarian intervention can save lives – the broader political considerations of an intervention are deliberately left out of the equation. The relationship between military and civilian actors is not absent from his analysis, but it is not a main element. Furthermore, the victims and the perpetrators of the violence tend to be objectified in the analysis – presented as challenges to the intervening military, but without much agency. After all, Seybolt’s focus is on saving lives, not on finding political solutions. Seybolt is not alone: there are numerous studies measuring the effect or results of military interventions in civil wars, often through quantitative approaches. Most share the same limitations as Seybolt when it comes to relevance for this particular dissertation.

Another work with emphasis on the military dimension of an intervention is *The Politics of Military Occupation* by Peter M.R. Stirk. He analyses military occupation as a form of government (as opposed to merely administration), thus bringing the focus back to politics, authority and legitimacy. This is partly a legal and normative discussion, but it also indicates some crucial practical dilemmas. Military occupiers have historically been ill-prepared, under-resourced and fragmented. They may undermine domestic institutions and the political potential of those occupied, thereby complicating regime transformation or later transition of power. These are important insights, many of which are relevant in theorizing other forms of foreign governance, including UN-sanctioned governance as in Bosnia-Herzegovina, East Timor and

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Kosovo.\textsuperscript{97} Stirk’s analysis brings attention back to the politics of an intervention following the initial phase. It is nonetheless limited in scope, as it focuses on military governance. It does not examine the relationship between the occupational authority and other actors in the field, nor does it aim to offer an analytical model for theorizing occupational governance.

An interesting recent approach to theorizing interventions employs the concept of ‘assemblage’.\textsuperscript{98} Inspired by the theorizing of Gilles Deleuze and Félix Guattari,\textsuperscript{99} scholars have applied assemblage ‘to signal equal concern for discourses (political, legal, ethical), practices and materialisms’.\textsuperscript{100} Assemblage is defined as ‘a grouping of heterogeneous elements that, at some point, displays a kind of collective synergy and consistency’.\textsuperscript{101} In the context of interventions, this can draw attention to the ‘broad ensemble of institutions, agents, practices, knowledges, and relationships that mark contemporary forms of international intervention’.\textsuperscript{102} ‘Assemblage’ is a looser and more ad hoc concept than for instance ‘structures’, but it includes technology and other non-human components. Some have defined ‘assemblage’ as a descriptive, rather than an analytical term; and the combination of a rather open-ended approach and the absence of a clear epistemology may make it a relatively ‘anodyne analytical tool’.\textsuperscript{103} Still, several scholars have used it to analyse important aspects of interventions – in particular the linkages between several sectors, such as policing and warfare. It can help demonstrate, for instance, how ‘failures and contradictions inherent in modern interventions (…) are typically represented as merely superficial and thus rectifiable (rather than fundamental),


\textsuperscript{99} Gilles Deleuze and Félix Guattari, \textit{A Thousand Plateaus: Capitalism and Schizophrenia} (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1987).


\textsuperscript{101} Ibid.


\textsuperscript{103} Ibid., 5.
deficiencies’. This approach to theorizing interventions is still under development, but may prove fruitful for studying constellations other than policing and warfare as well.

The largest strand of literature on interventions focuses on UN peacekeeping and peacebuilding, emerging primarily from the 1990s following the surge in such missions. Most interventions since that time have differed from military occupations because they have a UN mandate and are thus formally endorsed by the host nation. Following the logic of many IR definitions, these missions do not count as ‘proper’ interventions, since they do not take place against the will of the state in question. However, as mentioned, I will treat them as interventions here – partly following Reus-Smit’s broader conceptualization of intervention as something more than a question of sovereignty, partly because the question of forceful entry or not is of less relevance to the research question in this dissertation. As shown above, the military–civilian dimension is present in most cases, so it would be unfortunate to exclude UN peacekeeping from this study because of definitional limitations.

Today’s UN peacekeeping and building missions tend to be broad and comprehensive, seeking to deal with the causes of war in a sustainable way. The UN therefore often plays a supportive role in such areas as disarmament and demobilization, security sector reform, democratization, judicial reform, economic reform, development assistance, and others. There have been numerous studies of the effectiveness, efficiency, and ethical standards of UN troops and staff, vested interests, and relations between the military and civilian parts of the UN family.

However, much of this literature is empirical and case-specific, or of little theoretical relevance beyond the UN system. One exception is the growing body of literature that questions the liberal foundations underpinning most peacebuilding missions. In particular this involves critique of ‘liberal peacebuilding’ – the assumption that the remedy for war-torn societies is liberalization through democratization and marketization. For instance, international financial institutions

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105 See for example, James Dobbins et al., The UN’s Role in Nation-Building – from the Congo to Iraq (Santa Monica, CA: Rand Corporation, 2005); Michael W. Doyle and Nicholas Sambanis, Making War and Building Peace: United Nations Peace Operations (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2006); Lise Morjé Howard, UN Peacekeeping in Civil Wars (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2008); Bellamy and Williams, Understanding Peacekeeping; Stephen John Stedman, Donald Rothchild and Elizabeth M. Cousens, Ending Civil Wars: The Implementation of Peace Agreements (Boulder, CO: Lynne Rienner, 2002); Berdal, Building Peace after War.

106 The original ‘democratic peace’ theory of Michael Doyle stressed that democracies are less prone to go to war against each other, but it never ruled out democracies waging war against non-democracies. However, the liberal
like the World Bank and the IMF have built their reform packages on relatively specific Western economic policy prescriptions, aptly labelled the ‘Washington consensus’.  

Such liberal political and economic models have been the basically unstated foundation of all peacebuilding operations since the 1990s. Critics claim that these liberal institutions are often imposed too rapidly and in non-liberal ways, which is why they fail to deliver the expected stability. Roland Paris and others hold that in many cases these policies have actually destabilized the fragile peace, as through premature elections, rapid privatizations and general lack of local ownership of the processes.  

Yet others have argued that the templates and institutions introduced are uniquely Western in nature and cannot gain a foothold in other socio-cultural environments. This ‘liberal peacebuilding’ critique seeks to unmask the universalizing tendencies in the peace-building strategies, and stresses the need for more indigenous peace-making. The tendency to ignore the political aspects of interventions is also taken up in this literature. For instance, in Empire in Denial, David Chandler argues that state-building interventions are often cast as neutral, technical assistance, thereby failing to acknowledge the huge power the intervening actors have over the local polity. 

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Many of these studies provide valuable insights into the underlying and implicit assumptions of most interventions and peace-building efforts. Such criticisms of the ‘givens’ in the ‘liberal peacebuilding’ and the often non-liberal implementations are useful, as they reveal inefficiencies, flaws, and the lack of cultural insight in many of the peace-building strategies promoted by the international community. They reveal how deeply political interventions are, despite their technocratic or liberal wrappings. Together they represent a theoretically informed and critical study of international interventions on which I will draw in several places in this dissertation. However, this critique may tend to the normative, and usually concentrates on the civilian and political actors in UN peacebuilding missions.111 Although theoretically rich, the liberal peacebuilding critique does not attempt to build theoretical models for interventions as such. Importantly, peacekeepers or other armed forces are not analysed to the same extent in these studies, and military–civilian interaction even less so.

The little that has been published on military–civilian relations in interventions tends to focus on practical or operational challenges, with less reflection on the more fundamental issues.112 There have been a few academic publications on military–civilian relations, but the topic is generally under-theorized and under-analysed.113 To understand the challenges indicated here we must look more closely at the military and the civilian actors involved in interventions today. We need to analyse systematically the civilian and military interaction – or lack thereof – in interventions. That is the ambition of this dissertation.


4. Theory and Methodology

Methodology, as defined by Giovanni Sartori, is ‘a concern with the logical structure and procedure of scientific enquiry’.\textsuperscript{114} A first step in methodological positioning of the current work is to state that it is predominantly theoretical. With the exception of a few interviews related to Chapter 4, it involved no field visits or first-hand collection of empirical materials. Rather, this study seeks to develop better ways of making sense of existing empirical findings. It is a response to the new empirical developments noted above, as well as what I see as the under-theorized nature of the literature on these developments. Further, I hope my analytical framework can prove useful for future empirical analyses of interventions. However, this is not a meta-theoretical work; it does not aim at debating and assessing the various theoretical ‘isms’, ‘schools’ or ‘paradigms’ found within the social sciences or among students of IR.\textsuperscript{115}

The term ‘theory’ has varying connotations and meanings within the social sciences. It is therefore necessary to discuss briefly what this study intends to deliver, and what it does not. What does a theoretical analytical framework entail here? Let me present some relevant concepts and principles to be applied in the ensuing chapters.

In basic terms, theory can be described as ‘simplified pictures of reality’ that ‘make the world comprehensible by zeroing in on the most important factors’. Theories may be compared with maps: ‘Both aim to simplify a complex reality so we can grasp it better.’\textsuperscript{116} Or: ‘a theory is a picture, mentally formed, of a bounded realm or domain of activity.’\textsuperscript{117} Or one may say that doing theory ‘means relating conceptual tools to empirical observations’.\textsuperscript{118} However, theories do more than offer simplified snapshots or maps of the world. They seek to explain or make

\textsuperscript{114} Quoted in Patrick Thaddeus Jackson, \textit{The Conduct of Inquiry in International Relations: Philosophy of Science and Its Implications for the Study of World Politics} (London: Routledge, 2011), 25.

\textsuperscript{115} I will necessarily engage in some of these discussions in this section, to position this work within the larger IR literature. But the aim of the thesis is not meta-theoretical as such.


sense of things: ‘Unlike maps, (...) theories provide a causal story’; ‘theories are built on simplifying assumptions about which factors matter the most for explaining how the world works.’ A theory of IR thus ‘has an explanatory purpose: it is supposed to help us make sense of world politics.’ These views are widely shared within IR; the quotes above are deliberately cited from scholars with differing philosophical-scientific positions to illustrate this point.

There are nevertheless deep divisions and debates within social sciences and academic communities in general about some of the key components mentioned above. Most controversial is perhaps the basic question of reference to ‘reality’ or ‘the world’, and the related question of what constitutes ‘proper science’. Does reality exist independently of our conceptions of it? Can science offer insights on the world that are not – to some extent – dependent upon existing perceptions, worldviews or theories?

4.1. Methodological positions in International Relations

These debates also feature among students of global politics and IR. The positions have often been framed along fault-lines such as positivist/post-positivist, rational/reflexive, casual inference/descriptive inference, or explaining/understanding, to mention some. The crudest simplification holds that the positivist, rationalistic camp believes in objective truths, and that subject and object can be kept separate (i.e. that the researcher can maintain an objective distance to the phenomenon under study), and that the social sciences should build their scientific models on the natural sciences: quantitative data, hypothesis testing, etc. Most


importantly perhaps, empirical observations are regarded as the cornerstone of research. In contrast, the post-positivist or constructivist camp builds more on the interpretive tradition in humanities, on ethnography, history, and hermeneutics. Here it is stressed that there are no objective social truths (for instance: yes, Holocaust did take place but we can never conclude exactly why and how), and that empirical observation is not sufficient to explain and understand social phenomena. Rather, the researcher needs to understand why social subjects act the way they do. In explaining behaviour, ‘soft’ factors like values, norms and identities are given more emphasis than rational calculations.

Such categorization of social science into two camps is rudimentary and may be of limited value, at least in meta-theoretical debates where nuances need to be explored. Furthermore, such categorization may eschew similarities, and create entrenched ‘camps’ with mutual straw-man categorizations of the others. In many cases, ‘scales of difference’ may be a better description than ‘camps’. ‘Rationalists’ and ‘positivists’ may, for instance, recognize that there are no universal social laws, that social truths are limited in time and space, and that quantitative methods need to be supplemented with qualitative ones. Similarly, ‘constructivists’ seek to build the most likely (or ‘true’) explanations, and to develop theories and methods applicable and relevant across a range of cases.

A more fruitful categorization of IR scholarship offered by Patrick T. Jackson has gained increased attraction. He distinguishes four IR methodologies: neo-positivism, critical realism, critical constructivism, and the societal level of analysis.

123 King et al., Designing Social Inquiry.

124 I will not discuss the question of the application of historical data here, but the challenges related to selecting and interpreting knowledge of the past are arguably even more demanding and context-dependent than the usage of current data. See e.g. Edward Hallett Carr, What Is History?, 2nd edn. (Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1990); Friedrich Kratochwil, ‘History, Action and Identity: Revisiting the “Second Great Debate” and Assessing its Importance for Social Theory’, European Journal of International Relations 12, no. 1 (2006), 5–29; Bartelson, A Genealogy of Sovereignty.

125 Historian Hayden White draws a distinction between ‘facts’ and ‘events’, arguing that while facts exist, they rely on narratives, stories or theories (events) to make sense to us. Hayden V. White, The Content of the Form: Narrative Discourse and Historical Representation (Baltimore, MD: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1987).

analyticism, and reflexivity. The four categories are based on two dimensions, with two categories in each. Jackson calls these dimensions wagers – or provisional commitments about matters of philosophical ontology. Philosophical ontology refers to the ‘conceptual and philosophical basis on which claims about the world are formulated in the first place: ontology as our “hook up” to the world’. This is different from scientific ontology, which is more frequently discussed in IR: it concerns the stuff that exists – ‘a catalogue of objects, processes and factors’, such as states and organizations. Philosophical ontology, on the other hand, explicitly addresses methodology, or how we as researchers ‘hook up’ to the world. A wager thus specifies three things: ‘the researcher, the world to be researched and the character of the relationship between them’.

Jackson’s first philosophical ‘wager’ is the researcher’s relation to the world. Do we consider there to be an independent existing reality ‘out there’, existing independently of the knowledge of the researcher? If so, the scientific work is based on a notion of mind–world dualism. Validity of knowledge is based on correspondence between the empirical and theoretical claims. The alternative position Jackson calls mind–world monism: it maintains that the ‘world’ is ‘endogenous to social practices of knowledge–production’. This is not to be confused with an ‘idealist’ position – that mind matters more than the physical world – but should rather be seen as a rejection of such a dichotomy between mind and world. In short: ‘the dualist would be very concerned about making statements that are correct, while the monist would be more interested in making statements that were useful in advancing some specific explanatory goal.’

The second ‘wager’ concerns the status of empirical knowledge. Is it possible to know things beyond observable facts? Can we go ‘beyond the facts and grasp the deeper processes and factors that generate those facts’? Jackson categorizes research that claims to do so as

127 Jackson, The Conduct of Inquiry in International Relations, 28.

128 Ibid.

129 Ibid., 35.

130 Ibid., 36.


transfactualism, the most common example in IR being the claim of the existence of a ‘social structure’. Social structures are not unlike the grammatical rules of a language: they are not observable, but they determine linguistic ‘behaviour’\textsuperscript{133}. The opposite position Jackson calls phenomenalism: it is based upon the classical empiricist tradition, but expanded beyond the empiricist limitation to human senses. Experience can take place with the help of equipment, like a microscope in natural science, or an appropriate conceptual apparatus for understanding social events.

Table 1: Commitments in philosophical ontology and the associated methodologies

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Relationship between the knower and the known</th>
<th>Relationship between knowledge and observation</th>
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<tr>
<td>mind–world dualism</td>
<td>neo-positivism</td>
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<td>mind–world monism</td>
<td>critical realism</td>
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<tr>
<td>Analyticism</td>
<td>reflexivity</td>
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Table 1 illustrates these wagers and locates the four methodologies of IR scholarship (neo-positivism, critical realism, analyticism and reflexivity). Neo-positivism and critical realism share the notion that there is an independent world ‘out there’ to be studied, and empirical facts from which we can assess our hypotheses and theories (mind–world dualism). However, they differ in their position on non-observable facts. Neo-positivists focus on hypothesis testing and see no point in looking for something beyond the observable world (phenomenalism); critical realists claim we cannot understand the world without doing exactly that (transfactualism). On the other hand, both analyticism and reflexivity see knowledge as interwoven with the objects of study, that scholars are embedded in the social world they analyse (mind–world monism). Analyticism rejects the sharp distinction between theory and the empirical reality as upheld by neo-positivism, and regards theory not as a reflection of reality but as a reality of its own. Hence,

\textsuperscript{133} Ibid., 90–91.
in this view, there is no point in testing hypotheses against ‘the world’, as the world is always mediated through our theoretical concepts. Instead, theory is an instrument for simplifying and categorizing complex empirical reality. This monism is shared by the reflexivity methodology, but it rejects analyticism as being restricted to the study of the potentially experience-able. Reflexivity explicitly includes the self-awareness of the researcher, as well as the practice of knowledge production and its embeddedness in power relations. These are not outside the researcher, as with ‘social structures’, but are often unconsciously part of terminology, categories and language.

Some examples will help to clarify these four methodologies. Concerning reflexivity, much feminist or post-colonial scholarship here would typically be placed here, but possibly also studies critical of analytical categories, such as ‘refugees’, or the term ‘field’ in the context of interventions. Both terms come with certain assumptions with implications for social behaviour, such as victim, backwardness or conflict. Analyticism will include much of what has been labelled ‘constructivism’ in IR, but also, perhaps surprisingly, Kenneth Waltz’ 1979 classic *Theory of International Politics*. Waltz’s notion of theory involves not reflecting reality, but simplifying it; it is an instrumental view of theorizing. Neo-positivism is best exemplified with the approach championed by King et al.: theory testing based on a positivist heritage; while critical realism is perhaps best exemplified with Alexander Wendt’s *Social Theory of International Politics*. However, Jackson takes care to stress that this is an ideal-type model, and aimed at ‘clarifying the implications of particular wagers in philosophical ontology’, rather than ‘classifying ways that IR research is actually done’. It is intended to trigger reflection and debate, not as a meta-sociological ordering of an academic field.

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135 Waltz, *Theory of International Politics*.


137 King et al., *Designing Social Inquiry*.

138 Wendt, *Social Theory of International Politics*.

139 Jackson, ‘Preparing the Ground for a More Hospitable International Relations’, 376.
4.2. Positioning the dissertation: Analyticism

This dissertation fits best in the category of analyticism. Firstly, I do not regard abstract categories such as ‘structures’, ‘frame’, ‘culture’ or ‘identity’ as entities that actually exist empirically. Rather, I consider them to be part of theory, hooks that we use for explaining and understanding the world (phenomenalism). This is further elaborated in Chapter 5. However, as discussed below, I agree with the emphasis that reflexivity methodology puts on self-awareness, and the importance of self-critical usage of words and concepts. But I find it difficult to claim that these somehow exist beyond the empirical world. Secondly, I do not think that theorizing is about finding a theory that matches the world accurately: I see theorizing an instrument to help simplify, explain or make sense of aspects of the world we are interested in (monism). The theoretical approach chosen here is but one of an array of possible approaches for studying interventions. Different research questions will generate different research models and approaches.

A typical analyticist approach to scientific puzzles is to develop what Max Weber called ‘ideal-types’, which may be described as ‘deliberate over-simplification of a complex empirical actuality for the purpose of highlighting certain themes or aspects that are never as clear in the actual world as they are in the ideal-typical description of it’. For Weber, theories and concepts are instrumental idealizations of the world, developed for pragmatic reasons to explain or understand something. They are not intended as accurate representations of the world – which a theory embedded in mind–world dualism would strive for. From this follows that it does not make sense to test and falsify theories if they do not match empirical reality: their success is based upon their utility. If they do not illuminate the research question very well, if they do not reveal relevant things about the object to which they are applied, they may be revised or rejected. The use of ideal-types is, ‘first and foremost, a way of organizing our scholarly thoughts about a specific case’. From this it follows that a general theory (such as Kenneth Waltz’ neo-realism) would need to be accompanied by a case-specific narrative

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140 We are entering challenging philosophical terrain here. How can mind–world monism (all knowledge is mind-dependent) be combined with position that there are objects than transcend experience? Are they somehow in us without us knowing it? Jackson discusses this in detail, but I will not enter into this here. See his The Conduct of Inquiry in International Relations, ch. 6.

141 Jackson, The Conduct of Inquiry in International Relations, 37.

142 Ibid., 142–46.

143 Ibid., 150.
adapting the general theory to the case. In this way, the ideal-type proves its worth in each individual case, but does not aim to be a general theory about world phenomena. Comparative analysis is therefore not a relevant strategy of inquiry for ideal-types, as the value of the theory not will hinge on broad empirics, but on its case-specific utility. Nonetheless, when developing the theoretical ideal-type, a broad empirical foundation may prove useful for establishing analytical categories and concepts.

My development of an analytical framework in Chapter 5 is based loosely on this Weberian ideal-type. It aims at understanding the challenges that military and civilian actors face when encountering each other in expeditionary interventions. The framework will be based partly upon the analytical findings in the preceding chapters, partly on theoretical models developed for other purposes. In Chapter 6, I apply this analytical framework to the Afghanistan case – not to test the theory empirically, but to see if it can help with the research question. The theory will be fitted to the case, just as it would be adjusted and adapted for other cases.

In the social sciences, a distinction is often drawn between casual and descriptive inference, or casual and constitutive theories. Casual theories are typically neo-positivist and build on a threefold logic: a) X and Y exist independent of each other, b) that X precedes Y in time, and c) that but for X, Y would not have occurred. As a result, they tend to ask why-questions, like why did the USA intervene in Iraq? A constitutive theory, however, would focus on ‘how-possible’ and ‘what’ questions, such as ‘how was the intervention in Iraq possible?’, ‘what is the European Union?’. As Barnett and Finnemore put it: ‘constitutive explanation does not allow us to offer law-like statements such as "if X happens, then Y must follow." Rather by providing a more complete understanding of what bureaucracy is, we can provide explanations of how certain kinds of bureaucratic behavior are possible, or even probable and why.’ Therefore, constitutive theories do not include independent and dependent variables as a neo-positivist theory would, because they are based on the premise that nothing is ever ‘independent’ in the social world. Instead, constitutive theories seek to shed light on the social emergence and

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144 King et al., Designing Social Inquiry, Chapters 2 and 3.


146 Wendt, ‘On Constitution and Causation in International Relations’, 105.

maintenance of the bandwidth of normal and accepted behaviour; or the shared perceptions and understandings of things; or they explore the borderlines of acceptability, alternative ways of looking at a phenomenon and those pushing for new approaches and new spaces for political action. Throughout history, mainstream taboos, normalities and borders have often been challenged, by for instance activist groups or liberation movements – like anti-colonialists, women’s liberation movements, LGBT groups or ‘black movements’. As a result, policies, perceptions and language have changed. But also in more mundane day-to-day politics there are normalities and generally accepted social truths about matters like economic developments, market behaviour, or – closer to the topic of this dissertation – shared views in the international community about the needs of refugees, the causes of civil war, the nature of an enemy, the traditions in a society, etc. All such shared views contribute to defining what policies and actions are regarded feasible, effective, or moral, for an intervening actor.

The analyses in this dissertation can be regarded as constitutive. It follows from the analyticist approach and from mind–world monism. I do not develop independent and dependent variables to be empirically tested. My research question is ‘how’, not ‘why’.

Within this approach I will also apply the terms ‘inductive’ and ‘deductive’ theorizing, but in a very loose sense. Inductive reasoning is typically connected with statements such as ‘all the swans I see are white, therefore all swans are white’.148 A similar erroneous conclusion could be to say that ‘humanitarians and the armed forces are in conflict in Afghanistan, therefore they are always in conflict.’ Of course, nobody is arguing that this is the case. Nonetheless, there are many studies where the theorizing is aimed at explaining or understanding one case, and that particular case only. I will refer to this ‘inductive theorizing’ as well, because it constructs a theoretical framework tailor-made for a singular case. My point (see Chapter 5) is that this has limited theoretical value beyond the case in question. I aim at a similarly loosely defined deductive theory: to offer an analytical framework that can be applied and adapted to several cases. As stressed above, my framework is not intended to be universal and applicable across time and space. It is anchored in the post-Cold War world of comprehensive interventions, and is unlikely to have much validity beyond that. In line with the analyticist methodological approach, I will not develop hypotheses to be tested and eventually verified, as in the conventional meaning of the induction process. My use of the terms ‘inductive’ and ‘deductive’

148 Generalizing beyond what is contained in the premises is not the only problem with induction, but I will not discuss that here. See Chalmers, What Is This Thing Called Science?, ch. 4.
in this work is not about verifying or falsifying hypotheses, but about the role of theory more generally: is it applied from a case or constructed before the case study?

4.3. Reflections on reflexivity
Certain important insights from the reflexivity position are worth discussing, also from an analyticist position. This relates to the societal implications of social science. Social science has an impact on ‘the world’: politicians and others may use, or misuse, social science to own ends. Note for instance how Samuel Huntington’s ‘clash of civilizations’ and Francis Fukayama’s ‘end of history’ have been used – and still are – in the media, public debate and among activists and leaders.¹⁴⁹ Perhaps the original works have been turned into caricatures of themselves – but they are nonetheless employed to legitimize certain policies, positions and attitudes.¹⁵⁰

Most researchers – including those who apply neo-positivist methodology – recognize that this is part of social science: the research subject may respond to your findings and change your behaviour. This is perhaps the most crucial distinction between the social and the natural sciences. One may argue, as Bruno Latour and others have done, that the natural sciences are as culturally biased and subjective as the social sciences – but a key difference remains in the potential of response from the research subjects.¹⁵¹ Unlike humans, mice and stem-cells are not avid readers of Science; they remain completely ignorant of the researchers’ findings. In social science, however, this becomes a main ethical issue worth reflecting on. Some scholars respond by striving for maximum truth and objectivity in their work so that the (always unpredictable) societal response can at least be based on facts. Others say that as long as the social phenomenon has limitations in time and space, such objective truth can never be achieved. Furthermore, such claims to objectiveness and truths may have totalizing effects. Scientific knowledge promoted as value-neutral and objective carries considerable political weight, at the potential expense of equally valuable and alternative insights, perspectives or facts. Social scientists who do not reflect critically on their own role in this regard may end up contributing to self-fulfilling


¹⁵⁰ Note that Fukuyama himself has since abandoned the ‘End of History’-thesis.

prophesies (e.g. clashes of civilizations), legitimizing existing practices (e.g. the nuclear arms race) or ignoring alternative perspectives (e.g. orientalism).

Robert W. Cox’s famous statement that theory always is ‘for someone and for some purpose’ is a position mirrored in much post-colonial theory, neo-Marxism, feminist writings and elsewhere.\textsuperscript{152} Scientific theorizing is neither neutral nor objective: it imposes prejudices, values and power upon the world; thus, social science is inescapably political and may reinforce existing structures such as colonialism or sexism.\textsuperscript{153} Further, according to Cox, theories can serve two purposes: to help solve problems (problem-solving theory) or to ‘stand apart from the prevailing order of the world and ask how that order came about’ (critical theory).\textsuperscript{154}

However, being aware of one’s own bias and historical-cultural luggage does not mean that social science can be equated with politics and campaigning. This is the ‘demarcation problem’ within the philosophy of science: how to distinguish science from other forms of knowledge, such as journalism? Leaning again on Patrick T. Jackson, we can say that a scientific knowledge claim consists of three components: it is a) systematically related to its presuppositions (conclusions must be logically based on premises); b) capable of public criticism within the scientific community (must be comprehensible and recognized as logical inference); and c) intended to produce worldly (as opposed to for instance religious) knowledge.\textsuperscript{155} These three characteristics, argues Jackson, are what distinguish a scientific endeavour from other modes of activity, such as politics and art. It provides a ‘tent’ big enough for most IR scholarship to fit inside, but is simultaneously a clear demarcation toward other forms of knowledge.\textsuperscript{156} We can


\textsuperscript{154} Cox, ‘Social Forces, States and World Orders’.

\textsuperscript{155} Jackson, The Conduct of Inquiry in International Relations, 193–95. See also his ‘Must International Studies Be a Science?’, Millennium: Journal of International Studies 43, no. 3 (2015), 942–65.

\textsuperscript{156} Jackson, The Conduct of Inquiry in International Relations, 195. Jackson explicitly limits his definition to IR, but it could probably be used in other academic fields as well.
therefore define social science, or IR, as a distinct endeavour, while recognizing that there are several theoretical paths to ‘the world’ or ‘reality’.\textsuperscript{157}

The following chapters will engage with theory to varying degrees. Chapters 2, 3 and 4 are primarily analytical: mapping, categorizing and discussing the many challenges related to interventions. In Chapter 5 the focus becomes more theoretical, as discussed here, and I will develop an analytical framework for understanding challenges related to coherence. In Chapter 6 I apply this framework to the case of Afghanistan, and in Chapter 7 I explore some further potential analytical developments of the framework.

5. Outline

This study begins by investigating the idea of coherence in interventions more broadly in \textbf{Chapter 2}, asking why international actors seem to find it necessary to assign such high importance to coherence, and why coherence has become a key ingredient for success in the context of international operations today. I offer a taxonomy of various forms of relationships between intervening actors, and of various degrees of coherence. One of the categories identified in the taxonomy, inter-agency coherence, will be the primary focus throughout the dissertation. Chapter 2 also discusses some difficulties that may limit the prospects for coherence. I will argue that the level of coherence achievable in one situation will not necessarily be achievable in the next one. As a result, our approach to studying and understanding the challenges related to coherence needs to be able to account for contextual and political variation. Chapter 2 is a significantly revised version of the article ‘Coherence and Coordination: The Limits of the Comprehensive Approach’, written with Cedric de Coning and published in \textit{Journal of International Peacekeeping}, Vol. 15, nos. 1–2 (2011): 243–72.

I then look closer at the military actors in \textbf{Chapter 3}. Their role in an intervention is generally a dominant one. They often have significant resources at their disposal, in terms of personnel and equipment. However, they differ significantly in terms of mandates, resources and doctrines: from conventional peacekeeping to robust counter-insurgencies. The chapter compares the

peacekeeping and counter-insurgency (COIN) doctrines, noting their striking similarities. The UN is more of a political player now than in traditional peacekeeping, but it is usually less so than e.g. the US was in Iraq. The point is that these are sliding scales, not fixed positions. The nature of each mission will determine how political a UN or a COIN operation will be regarded as being, in the eyes of the host population. As a result, I argue, an understanding of the challenges related to achieving coherence between military and civilian actors cannot be based on the type of actor or mission, but must be embedded in the political context of the intervention.


In **Chapter 4** the focus is narrowed down to the nature and intensity of the conflicts between military and humanitarian actors. The humanitarians require special attention because of their insistence on being above or outside of politics. Are there certain constant differences between humanitarians and the military actors that always are present across interventions? If so, we can develop generic analyses of the challenges to coherence between these actors. I answer this by offering a taxonomy of military operations and the associated challenges with humanitarian issues which reveals it is not merely the intensity of warfare that impacts on the relationship – there appear to be fewer conflicts in heated combat such as conventional warfare and other enemy-centric approaches. The most serious difficulties appear when humanitarian actors feel themselves politicized: as when military and humanitarian mandates become stretched beyond core competencies, when military approaches enter new spheres, or then humanitarians fail to recognize the political nature or implications of projects they engage in. Hence, politicization depends on context and what the actors do, not who they are. This, I hold, implies that humanitarians can be approached through the same analytical framework as other civilians.


These three chapters map the terrain in terms of categorizing different forms of relationships between actors intervening in a conflict, analysed the tensions and similarities between them. Taken together, they offer a nuanced picture with taxonomies of the nature of military–civilian relations in interventions and the similarities and differences between various operations. They show that coherence is a deeply political endeavour, and faces both resistance and ignorance. The next step then, is to find out more concretely how all this can be analysed.
In Chapter 5, the focus shifts to developing an analytical framework for analysing the tensions between intervening actors, the dynamics within an intervention. Therefore, the chapter differs from the preceding three in both style and content. I start with a discussion of the most comprehensive attempt at theorizing an intervention to date: Séverine Autesserre’s analysis of the intervention in the DRC.\textsuperscript{158} I see Autesserre’s theorizing as primarily inductive, tailormade for her specific case, and therefore not directly transferrable to other cases. I propose an analytical model that builds on some of Autesserre’s elements, but takes the identity of the intervening actors as its starting point. Analysis of the identity formation (or identification) of the main sets of actors can provide insights into deeper questions of how they ascribe meaning to their mission: how they regard their role and how they regard the other actors, international as well as local, in the field of intervention. Here I argue that the very existence of these actors is largely built on interventions, because part of their legitimacy and raison d’être is based on their role or expertise in engaging other people in interventions. Therefore, if we want to get to the heart of an intervention, we need to understand how the intervening actors regard their tasks and the reason for their presence. I propose an analytical framework based on this, and argue that it is applicable deductively on any intervention, and on any set of actors. And finally, I argue that this is also better suited for accounting for change and power struggles than is Autesserre’s model.

In Chapter 6 I apply this analytical framework to the case of Afghanistan, using it to help in understanding the limited military–civilian coherence there. A similar set of analytical frames will be applied to analyse the identities of three sets of actors – the military, the humanitarians and the state-builders – so that we can compare them, noting their differences and similarities. How do these different sets of actors ascribe meaning to Afghanistan and to themselves? What do they see as their purpose of their being in Afghanistan? Here I will show how understandings of the very purpose of the intervention differed significantly among the groups – and in some cases within them. The three entities appeared largely ignorant of each other, operating in parallel but not in conjunction. There was not one, single, ‘Western approach’ to Afghanistan, but at least three, with numerous conflicting representations of the Afghans associated to them. If the three sets of actors had such fundamentally different reasons for being in Afghanistan, that may help us understand why a comprehensive approach was never achieved. Chapter 6 is

\textsuperscript{158} Séverine Autesserre, ‘Hobbes and the Congo: Frames, Local Violence, and International Intervention’, \textit{International Organization} 63, no. 2 (2009), 249–80; also her \textit{The Trouble with the Congo}. 

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The concluding Chapter 7 indicates some avenues for further expanding the theoretical approach developed in this dissertation. I begin by examining how we can better theorize the interrelationships among groups of intervening actors. Drawing on theories of ontological security, I indicate how micro-level interactions could be scrutinized in more detail than in this dissertation. Also the power relations between intervener and those intervened upon could be explored in greater depth than here. Building on insights from social anthropology and on relational notions of power, I conclude by discussing potential applications to the study of interventions.
Chapter 2

Understanding Coherence and its Limitations

1. Introduction

In the previous chapter I briefly discussed the various actors in an intervention, dividing them roughly into three categories: military, humanitarian and political civilian actors. However, there are alternative ways of categorizing the intervening actors. Some can be classified as international entities, others as national agencies; some are governmental, others non-governmental, and yet others inter-governmental. All these groups of actors face different challenges related to coherence, but we can also find similarities. There are degrees of coherence, from mere co-existence of actors, to full integration – all with unique challenges and opportunities. Moreover, different actors may be seeking – or resisting – coherence or cooperation at different levels.

The purpose of this chapter is to offer a better understanding of all these relationships, but also to make a first attempt at a more critical assessment of the idea of coherence. I begin with a taxonomy of various relationships between the actors in an intervention: four types of relationships (intra-agency, whole-of-government, inter-agency and international-local), and six degrees of coherence (ranging from competing to united actors). Of these 24 constellations, some are more relevant than others when it comes to discussing military–civilian relations, but the taxonomy provides us with a framework for assessing these relations better.

Coordination can bring obvious benefits, like de-conflicting, avoiding overlap, firmer long-term perspectives – in short, efficient use of donor resources. But is coherence merely a technical question of inter-actor coordination and communication? Are there other challenges related to the mandates and perspectives of the various organizations involved? In this chapter I discuss in greater detail some of the obstacles that restrict the prospects of coherence: output vs. impact; conflicting mandates and values; and internal/external imbalance. I then argue that there are obvious limits to coherence, and that ‘success’ in this regard is highly context-dependent.
Whether there is cooperation or conflict between intervening actors in an intervention may vary from case to case, depending on the political circumstances.

This implies, I will conclude, that analysis of the challenges related to achieving coherence must take the social and political circumstances into account. The inductively generated categories of challenges discussed may not be valid across several cases. Hence, we need an analytical framework which can be applied to all interventions, but which may yield different answers in each case, depending on the circumstances, the nature of the conflict and involved intervening actors, etc.

2. Emergence of the Comprehensive Approach

As discussed in Chapter 1, the pursuit of coherence has become an increasingly central objective among intervening actors and their programmes and activities in interventions since the end of the Cold War. Seeking to improve the overall success rate of these missions, various agencies, governments and organizations have developed a range of concepts, models and tools aimed at enhancing overall coherence. All these initiatives have a similar goal: greater harmonization and synchronization in the activities of the international and local actors, as well as across the analysis, planning, implementation and evaluation phases of the programme cycle. For simplicity, I refer to these as ‘comprehensive approach’ in this section.

Already in 1992 the UN stressed the need for holistic approaches to peace. In the ‘An Agenda for Peace’ report an extensive ‘toolbox’ of instruments was envisaged for peacebuilders to employ in response to the ‘new wars’ of the post-Cold War era.159 Since the ‘Agenda for Peace’ and subsequent documents and reports throughout the 1990s and the early years of the new millennium, the UN has focused increasingly on internal coherence. A major step was taken in 2006, when then UN Secretary-General Kofi Annan established the initial ‘integrated mission’ concept as the guiding principle for future post-conflict complex operations. As explained in his ‘Note of Guidance’: ‘Integration is the guiding principle for the design and implementation of complex UN operations in post-conflict situations and for linking the different dimensions of peacebuilding (political, development, humanitarian, human rights, rule of law, social and

security aspects) into a coherent support strategy.’ The ‘Guidance Note’ on integration issued in 2008 by the next UN Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon revised this, introducing the concept of an ‘integrated approach’. This differs from the integrated mission concept in not requiring structural integration, although providing for it where appropriate. What the integrated approach refers to is a strategic partnership between the UN peacekeeping operation and the UN Country Team, aimed at ensuring that all components of the UN system operate in a coherent and mutually supportive manner, and in close collaboration with other partners. Although the level of implementation will differ from mission to mission, the ambition of coherence remains strong on the part of the DPKO and the Secretary-General. Resistance has emerged from humanitarian circles in the UN (OCHA), which fear that their impartiality and neutrality will be undermined if they are too closely associated with the rest of the UN. I return to this in Chapters 4 and 6.

The EU, with its Common Security and Defence Policy (CSDP), has been developing its crisis management capabilities in the wake of the Cold War, the Balkan crises, the 9/11 attacks in the USA and the subsequent operations in Afghanistan. Much of the focus has been on weak, failed or failing states, seen as potential breeding grounds and exporters of threats to Europe, like terrorism, organized crime and trafficking. To coordinate the various EU instruments in field operations, a civilian–military coordination (CMCO) process has been established, but thus far its impact has been limited. The 2003 EU European Security Strategy stressed that the EU must ‘pursue coherent policies’ – ‘bring together the different tools and capabilities of EU policy, such as European assistance programmes, the European Development Fund and the

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161 Decision Number 2008/24 – Integration, Decisions of the Secretary-General, 25 June 2008 Policy Committee, United Nations


164 Previously called the European Security and Defence Policy (ESDP)

Member States’ military and civilian capabilities’. Based on this, the EU has developed sophisticated crisis-management capabilities, including military, police and civilian capacities, but has not yet deployed these capacities together in one integrated operation. They have been deployed in parallel missions in military or police missions alongside other EU presences in the same countries, such as election monitoring missions, development and humanitarian missions, and political/diplomatic Council and Commission representation. Internal institutional divisions, the pillar divide and the lengthy ratification process of the Lisbon Treaty have been among the factors impeding a more coherent EU, despite the huge potentials in the military, political and economic sectors.

Progress has nonetheless been significant over the past decade. The Lisbon Treaty was finally ratified, the European External Action Service has been established, and in December 2013 the Council and the European Parliament adopted a joint communication on a comprehensive approach to external conflict and crises, developed by the High Representative. An Action Plan was adopted in 2015 to implement this. In addition, the EU adopted a ‘Global Strategy for the European Union’s Foreign and Security Policy’ in 2016, prescribing an ‘Integrated Approach to Conflicts and Crises’. The document states that ‘implementing the “comprehensive approach to conflicts and crises” through a coherent use of all policies at the

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EU’s disposal is essential’. Still, the EU has yet to fully implement these visions in practice, and many internal challenges remain among and between the various EU institutions.\footnote{172}{The 2016 European Union Global Strategy is available at: \url{https://eeas.europa.eu/top_stories/pdf/eugs_review_web.pdf}. The quote is from page 9.}

NATO has had a comprehensive approach as part of its official policies since the Riga Summit in 2006.\footnote{173}{For a discussion of the analytical challenges related to this, see Carmen Gebhard and Per Martin Norheim-Martenssen, ‘Making Sense of EU Comprehensive Security Towards Conceptual and Analytical Clarity’, European Security 20, no. 2 (2011), 221–41.} As the NATO Secretary General declared in August 2009: ‘we need a comprehensive approach, a reinforced interaction between our military efforts and our endeavours with regard to civil reconstruction’,\footnote{174}{NATO Riga Summit Declaration, \url{http://www.nato.int/docu/pr/2006/p06-150e.htm}} and, in a 2010 speech: ‘The days when the military could defeat the enemy, then hand the baton off to the civilians and go home, are past us’.\footnote{175}{First NATO Press Conference, 3 August 2009, available at \url{http://www.nato.int/cps/en/natolive/opinions_56776.htm}.} The 2010 NATO Strategic Concept declares: ‘The Alliance will engage actively with other international actors before, during and after crises to encourage collaborative analysis, planning and conduct of activities on the ground, in order to maximize coherence and effectiveness of the overall international effort.’\footnote{176}{Afghanistan and the Future of Peace Operations, University of Chicago, 15 April 2010, available at \url{http://www.nato.int/cps/en/natolive/opinions_62510.htm}.}

This outreach is crucial, as it has been stressed that NATO is not to compete with the UN or the EU, or develop its own civilian capabilities: it will pursue the comprehensive approach in coordination with other organizations.\footnote{177}{NATO, Active Engagement, Modern Defence: Strategic Concept for the Defence and Security of the Members of the North Atlantic Treaty Organization.} The Allied Joint Doctrine therefore states that NATO should be regarded as a contributor to the comprehensive approach of the wider international community.\footnote{178}{See Peter Viggo Jacobsen, NATO’s Comprehensive Approach to Crisis Response Operations – a Work in Slow Progress (Copenhagen: Danish Institute for International Studies (DIIS), 2008), 11.} NATO has also developed, and largely implemented, a comprehensive approach

\begin{itemize}
\item \footnote{172}{The 2016 European Union Global Strategy is available at: \url{https://eeas.europa.eu/top_stories/pdf/eugs_review_web.pdf}. The quote is from page 9.}
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\item \footnote{174}{NATO Riga Summit Declaration, \url{http://www.nato.int/docu/pr/2006/p06-150e.htm}}
\item \footnote{175}{First NATO Press Conference, 3 August 2009, available at \url{http://www.nato.int/cps/en/natolive/opinions_56776.htm}.}
\item \footnote{176}{Afghanistan and the Future of Peace Operations, University of Chicago, 15 April 2010, available at \url{http://www.nato.int/cps/en/natolive/opinions_62510.htm}.}
\item \footnote{177}{NATO, Active Engagement, Modern Defence: Strategic Concept for the Defence and Security of the Members of the North Atlantic Treaty Organization.}
\item \footnote{178}{See Peter Viggo Jacobsen, NATO’s Comprehensive Approach to Crisis Response Operations – a Work in Slow Progress (Copenhagen: Danish Institute for International Studies (DIIS), 2008), 11.}
\end{itemize}
action plan. Nevertheless, it has been accused of ‘slow progress’ in developing its contribution to a comprehensive approach. International partners have, for varying reasons, often been reluctant to be seen as too closely associated with the Western military alliance. For instance, it was not until in 2008 that NATO and the UN signed their first Joint Declaration. Although they have since exchanged liaison officers in their respective headquarters, interaction has been relatively modest due to political sensitivities. This proved challenging in Afghanistan, where NATO was unable or unwilling to build the kind of coherence with other actors that official documents envisaged. On the tactical level, the introduction of Provincial Reconstruction Teams (PRTs), with civilian actors embedded in these otherwise military units, may be regarded as an attempt to remedy this. However, the PRTs were too few and too small, and entailed their own set of challenges. I return to this below and in Chapter 6.

In addition to these international efforts, many governments – predominately in the West – have developed whole-of-government approaches (WHOJA) to their international engagements. This typically entails some form of systematic process aimed at ensuring that the ministries or departments engaged in the country’s international peace and stability operations do so in a coherent manner. The original Canadian 3D concept – referring to the relationship between defence, development and diplomacy – is the signature example of the whole-of-government approach. However, today most WHOGA proponents, including Canada, engage not only the three ministries mentioned, but also typically the office of the prime minister or president, as well as the ministries responsible for justice, police, correctional services, home affairs and finance. Some countries, among them Canada, the UK and the USA, have developed institutional approaches to coherence and have established dedicated units, usually housed in their foreign ministries, to manage their whole-of-government systems. Others, such as the Netherlands, Norway and Sweden, have developed a process approach, typically based on a White-Paper-level requirement for policy integration, backed up by meetings at the ministerial

180 See https://www.nato.int/cps/su/natohq/topics_51633.htm


and technical levels. They generally have had an in-country process as well, designed around the ambassador, to ensure operational coherence among the various government agencies present on the ground. However, although national cohesion may look good on paper, it is far from certain that this actually contributes to coherence on the international level. In most cases, each national sector (defence, diplomatic, development) will be simultaneously engaged with international partners with whom they will need to adapt and coordinate. Pressure for national cohesion may make such adjustments more cumbersome. If so, WHOGA may even become an impediment to international or mission coherence.

This we can see in the case of Afghanistan. Most Western countries that adopted a whole-of-government approach did so in relation to their engagement in Afghanistan. Many of them were responsible for, or participated in, a Provincial Reconstruction Team (PRT). This was an attempt to apply the whole-of-government model to a nationally deployed entity, consisting of a military component responsible for security-related tasks, development advisors responsible for development projects, political advisors responsible for engagement with local authorities and political analysis, and police and/or judicial advisors (in some cases including correctional service officers) responsible for rule-of-law assistance. There was no commonly agreed PRT model or structure. Each lead-nation developed its own model, and the degree of whole-of-government integration differed significantly. For instance, the UK PRT in Helmand Province was headed by a senior civilian; others were led by the military, with hardly any civilians at all. In general, civilians were a small minority in these PRTs. Coordination between the PRTs and the ISAF HQ was limited, leading to significant regional differences in terms of scope, resources and approaches.

Thus, we see that the ‘comprehensive approach’ means different things to different organizations and individual countries. The UN’s integrated approach is primarily concerned with the security–development nexus: with coherence between the peace, security,
development and humanitarian elements of the UN family. The EU’s comprehensive approach focuses on the civil–military relationship in the elements of its crisis management approach: the military, rule of law, protection and conflict management aspects. NATO’s comprehensive approach concept aims at addressing the relationship between NATO and the other internal actors engaged in the same theatre. The various national WHOGAs are primarily concerned with coherence among the government departments and agencies of the specific country (see Table 2 for an overview). The objectives of the various initiatives differ, as do the practical actions taken. The results of all initiatives appear somewhat meagre – but this is admittedly a very provisional overview.

*Table 2: International organizations’ attempts to build coherence*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Objective</th>
<th>Actions</th>
<th>Challenges</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>UN</td>
<td>Internal cohesion</td>
<td>Reorganized Missions</td>
<td>Resistance from OCHA</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>EU</td>
<td>Internal cohesion</td>
<td>Ongoing policy process</td>
<td>Internal institutional divisions</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NATO</td>
<td>Outreach, external cohesion</td>
<td>Political declarations with UN &amp; EU; PRTs in Afghanistan; anti-piracy off Somalia</td>
<td>Suspicion among partners</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>WHOGA (whole-of-government)</td>
<td>National cohesion</td>
<td>3D and similar national strategies, coordination offices, PRTs in Afghanistan</td>
<td>Limited international or mission effect</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

While there are numerous practical challenges associated with building coherence, most actors also share an implicit theoretical assumption. There appears to be consensus that peace and stability operations will be more efficient and effective, and will thus have more meaningful impact, when the various actors engaged have a common strategy, based on a common understanding of the problem, a common theory of change, and an agreed synchronized plan for implementing and evaluating such a strategy. Thus we can note an assumed cause-and-

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186 Karsten Friis and Pia Jarmyr, *Comprehensive Approach: Challenges and Opportunities in Complex Crisis Management* (Oslo: Norwegian Institute of International Affairs (NUPI), 2008); Nilsson et al., *Contextualising the Comprehensive Approach.*
effect relationship between coherence, effectiveness, efficiency and sustainability, and this rationale is extended from the national to the international context, or vice versa.

More specifically, policy-makers appear to base the call for coherence on the assumption that inconsistent policies and fragmented programmes entail a higher risk of duplication, inefficient spending, lower quality of service, difficulty in achieving goals and, ultimately, reduced capacity for delivery. Consequently, the policy community has come to believe that improved coherence will also improve the efficiency of operations, with more efficient operations translating into operations that are more effective and more sustainable. While this may appear to be merely common sense, it is also a rather ‘technical’ approach to the problem, searching for organizational and systemic solutions to the challenges of coherence. However, such assumptions may overlook several deeper impediments to enhanced coherence. I will return to these challenges in section 4. First we need a better understanding of what coherence means – all the potential modalities, levels of interaction and relationship associated with coherence in an intervention. Mapping this out in a broad sense can show where military–civilian relations matter the most, and the kinds of conflicts that may occur in different constellations.

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188 According to the OECD Glossary of Key Terms, ‘efficiency’ is ‘a measure of how economically resources and inputs (funds, expertise, time, etc.) are converted to results’. ‘Economy’ in this context refers to the absence of waste for a given output: ‘an activity is economical when the costs of the scarce resources used approximate the minimum needed to achieve planned objectives’, OECD Glossary of Key Terms, 2002, pp. 20 – 21, available at http://www.oecd.org/dac/evaluation/2754804.pdf

189 Effectiveness refers to ‘the extent to which a development intervention’s objectives were achieved, or are expected to be achieved, taking into account their relative importance.’ OECD Glossary of Key Terms, p. 20.

190 The OECD defines ‘sustainability’ as ‘the continuation of benefits from a development intervention after major development assistance has been completed’, OECD Glossary of Key Terms, p. 36.

191 Robert Egnell has put forward a similar argument from a theoretical position. He calls for an integrated civil–military organization, arguing it would enhance conduct and effectiveness. However, he ignores potential deeper conflicts, such as diverging mandates, to which we return below. Robert Egnell, Complex Peace Operations and Civil–Military Relations: Winning the Peace (London: Routledge, 2009); Egnell, ‘Civil–Military Coordination for Operational Effectiveness: Towards a Measured Approach’, Small Wars & Insurgencies 24, no. 2 (2013), 237–56.
3. Coherence in Interventions

We need to understand better what kinds of inter-organizational relationships can be expected in an intervention. More sophisticated analysis should be done only after these various have been mapped and grasped. Let us therefore now establish the various forms of relationships and the corresponding degrees of coherence. This can be pursued among a broad range of actors, across various dimensions, and at various levels. In discussions, however, the levels, dimensions and actors often get mixed up and cause confusion. To remedy this, I draw up a comprehensive approach taxonomy that distinguishes between four types of relationships and six degrees of coherence.\(^{192}\) This is a broad framework that captures more than just the various military–civilian constellations: it aims at mapping all possible relations among intervening actors, which is necessary to get the full overview. The categories are logically induced from the various kinds of actors that usually engage in an intervention, as discussed above and in Chapter 1. Four types of relationships emerge: *intra-agency coherence*, *whole-of-government coherence*, *inter-agency coherence* and *international-local coherence*.

- *Intra-agency coherence*: consistency\(^ {193}\) among the policies and actions of an individual agency, including the internal consistency of a specific policy or programme. Examples could be the internal coherence of a ministry of foreign affairs, or an agency such as the UN High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR).

- *Whole-of-government coherence*: consistency among the policies and actions of the various government agencies of a country – e.g. among the ministries of defence, foreign affairs and international development assistance of the UK.

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\(^{192}\) To simplify I use ‘comprehensive approach’ here as a general term when referring to all the various attempts in the UN, EU, NATO and others, discussed above.

\(^{193}\) ‘Consistency’ in this context is not necessarily ethical, i.e. doing the same under similar circumstances with respect to any one rule or norm, and avoiding double standards. Instead it refers to one agency, government, or system not working at cross-purposes with itself in a more general sense.
• **Inter-agency coherence:** consistency among the policies pursued by the various international actors in a given country context (harmonization).\(^{194}\) An example could be NATO–EU–UN coherence in the previous Kosovo pillar system.

• **International-local coherence:** consistency between and among the policies of the internal and external actors (the host nation and international actors) in a given country context (alignment).\(^{195}\) Examples here could be an agreed national strategic framework between the international community and host government, such as the Poverty Reduction Strategy of Liberia.

This categorization is not meant to indicate that coherence is pursued exclusively with one specific type of relations only – quite the contrary, actors are likely to pursue coherence with all four types where feasible. For instance, an actor like the Foreign Ministry of the Netherlands would be concerned with coherence in connection with its policies towards, e.g. Afghanistan, and would be likely to pursue coherence at the same time: firstly, among the various units within the Foreign Ministry; secondly, in a whole-of-government context with other government agencies; thirdly, in the inter-agency context among donors or as a member state of NATO, the EU and the UN; and lastly, in the internal/external coherence context in its bilateral relations with Afghanistan and its participation in collective efforts aimed at international–local coherence, such as international donor conferences. Hence, the degree to which a specific international state actor can be considered more coherent or less coherent will be a factor of all four types of relationships.

In addition, the comprehensive approach taxonomy can be provided with a range of relationships that represent differing degrees of coherence, depending on the context within which these relationships emerge. Pursuing a comprehensive approach need not mean that all the actors involved must have the same degree of coherence towards each other, or as regards an agreed common strategy. Although the context is crucial in shaping the climate within which

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\(^{195}\) ‘Alignment’ is a development concept referring to the alignment between the interests of international donors and the needs and priorities of the recipients. See the *OECD Paris Declaration on Aid Effectiveness*, available at [http://www.oecd.org/dac/effectiveness/parisdeclarationandaccraagendaforaction.htm](http://www.oecd.org/dac/effectiveness/parisdeclarationandaccraagendaforaction.htm)
relationships function, there are also many other factors that determine relationships – such as perceived roles and responsibilities, legitimacy, credibility and mandates. The degree of potential coherence can be represented on a scale ranging from unity to competition:

- **Actors are united**: Actors voluntarily agree to establish a unified structure and undertake joint action directed by a unified leadership and command arrangement, e.g. a multinational military coalition. This level of coherent action will typically require an agreed strategic vision and specific aims and objectives formulated in an official mandate and/or campaign plan. In the military context this is often termed ‘unity of purpose’. Such unity of purpose is a prerequisite for unity of effort. This level of coherence will require a unified organizational structure with a high degree of discipline, and clear command and control arrangements that determine and direct joint assessments, joint planning, joint implementation and joint monitoring and evaluation. However, in the real world, such a level of coherence is rare between independent agents. It tends to occur only in certain unique circumstances and cannot be sustained for long. Examples include the US-led multinational coalition that undertook the 1991 Gulf War (Operation Desert Storm) and the Australian-led multinational coalition ‘INTERFET’ that stabilized East Timor in 1999.

- **Actors are integrated**: Actors agree to seek ways to integrate their approaches and activities, but without giving up their individual identities or their right to take independent decisions about the allocation of resources. The individual agencies come together to undertake joint assessments, joint planning, and even some degree of joint implementation and monitoring and implementation – but they implement separately, each using its own resources and own organizational means. The UN’s integrated approach model would be a clear example here.

- **Actors cooperate**: Actors with complementary and/or overlapping mandates and objectives may choose to cooperate, including joint or collaborative action. They retain their organizational independence, but are willing to go rather far in organizing activities
together with others, although such arrangements are usually temporary, context-specific and may need to be renegotiated on a case-by-case basis.

• **Actors coordinate:** This would describe an activity aimed at sharing information and acting on that information with a view to avoiding conflict, duplication or overlap, so as to ensure a more coherent overall undertaking. Such activity may take place between independent actors with different mandates, or between those who require strong organizational independence but who nonetheless share some similar interests or strategic vision and thus see the need for a degree of coordination with others. There will often be a network of coordination mechanisms – some more densely connected than others, some operating in hierarchies at various levels between the same actors, whereas others are only loosely connected. An example of a standing arrangement in this category would be the UN humanitarian coordination system: it is pre-arranged and agreed, but allows for maximum independence and voluntary participation. Another example could be the former pillar structure used by the UN, NATO, the EU and the OSCE in Kosovo. An ad hoc arrangement would be the coordination between military and humanitarian actors in a natural disaster like an earthquake or a major flood. The difference between coordination and cooperation is that, in the latter category, coordination results in joint action; in the former, in independent or separate action. In both cases, the behaviour of the agents has changed as a result of the coordination that has taken place, but ‘cooperation’ implies that they have reached agreement on and have actually implemented joint action.

• **Actors co-exist:** This would describe the relationship between actors that are forced to interact but that have very limited ambitions concerning coordination – for example, neutral humanitarian actors who wish to maintain a distance to other, more political, actors in the field. It could also describe a relationship involving sceptical or even opposing political and military forces: they may not be directly hostile but could resist activities that threaten to interfere in their spheres of interest. A certain amount of communication and de-conflicting may take place, as well as some opportunistic or pragmatic cooperation, but the normal state of their relationship can be categorized as co-existence. For instance, humanitarian and military actors operating alongside each
other in a complex emergency may, under normal circumstances, follow a policy of deliberately maintaining separate identities; but when the humanitarian agencies come under direct attack, they may seek shelter in military compounds, or be evacuated under military protection.

- **Actors compete**: This category would describe the relationship among actors that have competing values, visions and strategies. It could describe the relationship between an NGO committed to non-violence and an international military force with a mandate to use force; or it can refer to groups that politically, even violently, oppose the presence of an international operation in their country.

In short, this comprehensive approach taxonomy has the following characteristics:

(a) Four types of relationships: intra-agency coherence, whole-of-government coherence, inter-agency coherence, and international–local coherence

(b) Six degrees of coherence: actors are united; actors are integrated; actors cooperate; actors coordinate; actors co-exist; and actors compete.

Taken together, these characteristics offer a composite understanding of coherence in the context of interventions. There may be many other characteristics which could be considered as well. Various combinations of these characteristics could be used to explore the interlinkages among them, or to develop typologies useful for further analysing the complex range of relationships among actors involved in interventions.

Given the four types of relationships and the six degrees of coherence, we can distinguish among 24 different types of coherence (see Table 3). Some are obviously more realistic than others, and, as with any taxonomy or model, there are real-world cases that would straddle some of these typologies. Most real-world cases will move between them in the course of the lifetime of a mission. First and foremost, such frameworks can help us to gain a better understanding of the complexity of the comprehensive approach.
Table 3: Comprehensive Approach Matrix: Types of relationships and degrees of coherence

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Actors are united</th>
<th>Intra-agency</th>
<th>Whole-of-government</th>
<th>Inter-agency</th>
<th>Internal–External</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Various sections of the Swedish Foreign Ministry</td>
<td>Various Canadian government agencies</td>
<td>Members of the coalition Operation Desert Storm, 1991 Gulf War</td>
<td>International agencies and national IEC work together to organize elections in DRC, 2006</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Actors are integrated</td>
<td>Various components of a UN Peacekeeping mission</td>
<td>UK Stabilisation Unit, or Canadian Stabilization and Reconstruction Task Force (START)</td>
<td>UN Peacekeeping mission and UN Country Team in, e.g. Liberia</td>
<td>Liberia 2009: International agencies and local actors agree to use PRS as common framework and action plan</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Actors cooperate</td>
<td>DPKO and OCHA (both UN Secretariat) work together on UN Protection of Civilians guidelines</td>
<td>Civilian and military pillars of USA or NED PRTs in Afghanistan</td>
<td>Afghanistan Bonn-Process 2003; UN–EU cooperation in Chad, 2008</td>
<td>EULEX and the Kosovo government</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Actors coordinate</td>
<td>DPKO and OCHA in the field</td>
<td>Civilian and military pillars of Norwegian PRT in Afghanistan, 2009</td>
<td>Humanitarian cluster approach to coordination; Kosovo UNMIK pillars</td>
<td>UN and Sudanese Independent Electoral Commission in April 2010 elections</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Actors co-exist</td>
<td>Various parts of EU in Chad, 2008</td>
<td>DFID and MOD fail to agree on common evaluation criteria for UK PRT in Afghanistan, 2008</td>
<td>Humanitarian community and MONUC in Eastern DRC, 2009</td>
<td>UNAMID and Government of Sudan in Darfur</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Actors compete</td>
<td>Various sections of a ministry compete for funding</td>
<td>US State Department, US Department of Defense and the CIA in Afghanistan, 2007</td>
<td>Humanitarian agencies and UNMIL disagree on movement of IDPs from Monrovia, 2005</td>
<td>Taliban and ISAF/UNAMA; Government of Chad and MINURCAT</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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198 Rashid, Descent into Chaos.
The 24 categories outlined here represent different challenges to coherence – although there also are obvious similarities and overlaps. For the discussion in this dissertation, the intra-agency relationships are of less relevance. Military–civilian relations are unlikely ever to fall within these categories, but is nonetheless useful to single them out, to get a broader understanding of the complexities and challenges. Of the other relationships, inter-agency relations are typically associated with comprehensive approach and similar concepts. The policy debates about comprehensive approach and the above-mentioned initiatives taken by the UN, EU and NATO have all primarily concerned this relationship, and it is also here most of the controversies seem to have emerged. On the other hand, the internal/external dimension is arguably the most important one in an intervention, as sustainability and lasting results may hinge on this. I return to this below and in Chapter 5 when developing the analytical framework.

Whole-of-government relations may also cause tensions, for instance when governments seek to cajole military and other government agencies into one national strategy. The U.S. COIN doctrine may be an example of this, as discussed in the next chapter.

There are also certain general or overarching challenges to coherence that may occur in all the above categories. Although not limited to military–civilian relations, they may very well impact these as well. This discussion will help us to understand more systematically what the challenges to coherence are, in turn laying the foundations for subsequent deliberations in later chapters, not least the analytical framework in Chapter 5.

4. The Limits of Coherence

Although comprehensive approach, unity of effort, and similar concepts seem logical and rational from a principled point of view, the fact that they have proven difficult to implement in practice indicates that these concepts overlook certain impediments present on the ground. These could lie in conflicting ideologies, theories of change or politics – and they cannot be resolved simply through improved organizational measures, coordination bodies or weekly meetings. Some might be better managed through careful politically informed processes, while others appear to be insurmountable. This section explores three such limitations to coherence: output–impact limitations; conflicting values, principles and mandates; and external–internal
power imbalances. This is not meant to be an exhaustive list, but as illustrations of typical challenges to coherence in interventions. Discussing them can bring us one step further towards understanding the challenges facing military–civilian coherence.  

4.1. Short-term output vs. long-term impact
The concepts of comprehensive approach or unity of effort, as discussed above in the context of UN, EU and NATO, address strategic coherence. They are about securing a country or a region; about sustainable peace and ultimately about the exit of the intervening actors. This means that coherency involves making sure various activities contribute to achieving an impact sought by all involved actors. The overall effect of the combined activities of all actors is usually observable only from an overall impact perspective and the sustainability of their individual activities; its combined effect can be measured only over the medium to long term. This means that the actors need to shift attention from the immediate output level to the strategic or longer-term impact level. That can prove difficult, as the interdependence among the actors, and the benefits of improving coherence among them, are not immediately obvious to actors at the programme or output level. There is a potential disconnect between those who measure progress at the strategic or impact level and those who do measure progress at the programme or output level.

Furthermore, very few actors actually work at the impact level, and those that do – for instance, a UN Special Representative or Resident Coordinator – are usually individual figures, with staffs that have agency for short periods of time and in specific contexts only. They are thus

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199 I am particularly grateful to Cedric de Coning for his insights and contributions to this section of the chapter.

200 Results-Based Management typically operates with a Results Chain, defined by the OECD as: ‘The causal sequence for a development intervention that stipulates the necessary sequence to achieve desired objectives – beginning with inputs, moving through activities and outputs, and culminating in outcomes, impacts, and feedback’. In this context the OECD defines impact as: ‘Positive and negative, primary and secondary long-term effects produced by a development intervention, directly or indirectly, intended or unintended.’ See [http://www.oecd.org/dac/evaluation/2754804.pdf](http://www.oecd.org/dac/evaluation/2754804.pdf).

201 Output is defined as: ‘The products, capital goods and services which result from a development intervention; may also include changes resulting from the intervention which are relevant to the achievement of outcomes.’ See [http://www.oecd.org/dac/evaluation/2754804.pdf](http://www.oecd.org/dac/evaluation/2754804.pdf).
less influential, over time, than organizations that work primarily at the output level, pursuing their own interests, persistently over time in many contexts.

This tension between impact and output undermines coherence. For two reasons, the incentives that favour the output level are unlikely to change, and will thus continue to limit the scope for coherence. The first reason is that organizations and donors are part of a funding and assessment system based on short-term feedback and continuous adjustments. Hence, intervening organizations are particularly interested in measuring their output and the immediate feedback from that output. They usually cannot afford to wait for the long-term effects of their output before making decisions about the next activity, but are forced to act on immediately available information. Such organizations tend to be under political pressure to demonstrate results, or in financial competition with other actors for further funding: both act as incentives for demonstrating quick results. On the other hand, organizations might be expected to monitor longer-term progress in order to learn from and improve programme-level action. However – and this is the second reason – it is extremely difficult to measure meaningfully the causal effect of one given activity on a highly complex non-linear and dynamic set of systemic events. It is almost impossible to single out one specific activity and then authoritatively determine its effect on the outcome of a specific sector or phase, let alone the peace process as a whole. The further away we move, over time and in terms of the scope of factors taken into consideration, the more difficult it is to determine impact – in turn making it very difficult for organizations to focus on impact, and thereby on coherence.

These output/impact challenges are likely to be present in most of today’s interventions and complex crisis management operations. Challenging as they are, however, these challenges are not insurmountable: significant progress can be achieved through improved communication, organization, systems and dialogue between tactical and strategic levels within and between actors. By contrast, the next set of challenges to be discussed are of a more deep-structured nature, and are less likely to be resolved.

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4.2. Conflicting values, principles and mandates

The values, principles and mandates of some actors in an intervention may be inherently incoherent. Each actor has emerged within a specific context – humanitarian, military, human rights, development, law enforcement, etc. – schooled in the values, principles, philosophy and theories of change specific to that discipline or profession. This will usually result in the actors having fundamentally different approaches as to which aspects to prioritize. Political and security actors may prefer to, or be mandated to, focus on stabilizing a situation. This will result in their giving priority to stability rather than to human rights violations or to dealing with issues like corruption, black-market trading, racketeering or narcotics – especially if actors they perceive to be the key to stabilizing the situation are also suspected of being responsible for human rights atrocities or criminal behaviour. Those actors for whom justice and human rights are paramount will have a directly opposing view. They may argue that enforcing national and international laws and safeguarding human rights will have a far greater sustainable stabilizing effect in the longer term, because it will also have a deterrent effect on others in future conflicts, who will realize that they are likely to be punished, nationally or internationally, for their crimes and abuses. This fundamental tension between justice and peace drove the debate about the International Criminal Court and its indictment of Sudan’s President Omar Al-Bashir for alleged atrocities in Darfur. He was accused of ‘criminal responsibility in relation to 10 counts of genocide, crimes against humanity and war crimes’. 204 Those opposed to the indictment argued that it benefited ‘almost no one’, but would undermine the fragile peace process in Darfur. 205

Even among the actors engaged in security there may be differences in the emphasis on state security versus human security. The latter is often seen as ‘soft’ security, since it focuses on individuals and the civilian population, and has traditionally enjoyed lower priority among peacekeepers or stabilization forces. Advocates of human security, by contrast, often stress that sustainable peace can be achieved only by focusing on the needs of the population, including

204 ICC Prosecutor presents case against Sudanese President, Hassan Ahmad Al-Bashir, for genocide, crimes against humanity and war crimes in Darfur, ICC Press Release ICC-OTP-20080714-PR341, available at https://www.icc-cpi.int/Pages/item.aspx?name=a

their security needs as the local people perceive them; and that any security operation which fails to take this into account is likely to fail in the end.

In some cases, the timetable of one actor or dimension may be in conflict with the principles of another. One case in point is the elections timetable in Liberia, which motivated those responsible for the elections to encourage Internally Displaced Persons (IDPs) in Monrovia to return to their home communities in 2005, to register there to vote. The Special Representative of the Secretary-General (SRSG) of the UN Mission in Liberia (UNMIL) put pressure on the agencies responsible for reintegration to persuade the IDPs to return, and to start offering them reintegration support in their communities of origin. However, these agencies disagreed with the return timetable proposed by UNMIL, because their own assessments informed them that conditions in the original communities were not yet conducive to sustainable returns. This situation caused tension between the political and developmental/humanitarian actors because their respective goals – short-term vs. long-term – and operating values and principles brought them into direct opposition with one another.206

The approaches highlighted in these two examples reflect fundamental differences in the mandates, value systems and principles of some of the actors engaged. It would be naïve to assume that these differences can be resolved through coordination. As these examples indicate, such differences will need to be negotiated and trade-offs agreed in the specific context. These case-specific trade-offs cannot resolve the fundamental value differences. They often leave the specific actors less tolerant towards each other than before they were forced into the situation that required them to enter into such a transaction, so the end-result will not necessarily be greater coherence. And yet, such trade-offs do take place in in certain situations, so that actors can move beyond the conflict and continue to carry out their respective mandates. Such ad hoc transactions should not be confused with strategic coherence, however, which aims to achieve a common understanding of a situation as well as a common strategic response to it.

As mentioned, humanitarian relief organizations constitute one particular set of actors which operate under a different mandate than all the others. International humanitarian law and the

shared Code of Conduct stress their independence, neutrality and impartiality.\textsuperscript{207} As a result of this operational framework, humanitarian actors have resisted outside attempts to integrate them into a comprehensive approach. In Chapter 4 I scrutinize the relationship between the military and the humanitarians – as this appears to represent the most polarized relationship of all actors in an intervention.

All the above-mentioned differences in mandates, values and principles tend to become even more acute when the security situation is volatile. If security forces are engaged in combat operations against spoilers or insurgents, that is likely to have at least short-term negative effects on the space for progress elsewhere in the system, for instance in the political, governance, humanitarian and developmental domains. Casualties, refugees/IDPs, destruction of livelihoods and infrastructure are typical consequences of war. Other actors engaged in humanitarian relief operations or development programmes may be outraged by the human suffering and destruction taking place. Not surprisingly, this impedes coherence.

\textbf{4.3. Internal–external power imbalance}

A precondition for sustainability in external interventions is often considered to be engagement and involvement of the relevant internal actors. In the context of international development, the idea of ‘local ownership’ was established as a principle in 1996 by the Development Assistance Committee (DAC) of the Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD). In what is often regarded as a seminal report, DAC stated: ‘the most important contributions for development, as in the past, will be made by the people and governments of the developing countries themselves’.\textsuperscript{208} This is also a central principle underlying the 2000 UN Millennium Development Goals, and in numerous other statements and reports from the World Bank, international organizations and development agencies.\textsuperscript{209}

\textsuperscript{207} See the \textit{Code of Conduct for the International Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement and NGOs in Disaster Relief}, available at \url{http://www.ifrc.org/en/publications-and-reports/code-of-conduct/}.


Similarly, post-conflict peace processes that are predominantly driven by the external intervening actors tend to be unsustainable.\textsuperscript{210} It is commonly recognized that, in order to succeed, peace and stability operations must be needs-based; and the priorities, sequencing and pace of delivery must be informed by the dynamics of the conflict, through local ownership and meaningful internal/external coordination. Peace and stability operations that are not grounded in the socio-cultural belief systems that shape the worldview of the internal actors tend to cause dysfunction.\textsuperscript{211} Achieving a coherent partnership between internal and external actors is thus a major success factor for any comprehensive approach strategy.\textsuperscript{212} It is also one of the most difficult to achieve. There are two main sets of challenges: one concerns the reluctance or inability of the external actors to empower local actors; the other, the limited resources and capacities of the internal actors.

The Rome Declaration\textsuperscript{213} and related aid-effectiveness policies aim at addressing the core structural inequality of the international assistance regime: that the external agency is empowered by virtue of being the benefactor. If left unchecked, external agencies tend to dominate the internal/external actor relationship. The most effective counterweight to this structural imbalance is the recognition that peace and stabilization processes can be sustainable only when they are owned and led by internal actors.

However, that is easier said than done. External actors often encounter a range of obstacles when trying to implement policies that encourage local ownership, especially in fragile-state and post-conflict contexts. For instance, external actors may find it difficult to identify credible internal actors with whom they can enter into meaningful partnerships, especially in the stabilization and transitional phases before elections. The parties emerging out of conflict typically represent ambiguous constituencies, and there are often conflicting claims of ownership and support. Engagement by external actors with internal post-war actors may


\textsuperscript{211} Berdal, Building Peace after War.


reinforce the fault-lines of the war and strengthen warlords at the expense of civilian leaders, ultimately undermining the peace process.\textsuperscript{214}

Internal actors also generally lack the time, resources, technical expertise and support systems needed to engage meaningfully with external actors. In fact, the concept of ‘fragile states’ was initially developed in the donor context to refer to countries where the government is unable or unwilling to establish a meaningful relationship with bilateral and multilateral donors.\textsuperscript{215}

Internal actors often feel intimidated by the momentum, scope and depth of an external intervention. They are overwhelmed by the pressure to engage with all the assessments, proposals and plans generated by the sudden influx of external actors. Moreover, they feel frustrated that, despite all this activity, there is typically little to show, in terms of clear peace dividends in the first few years of a peace process, for their time and effort. This is especially the case in the stabilization and transitional phases, before or while the necessary capacities have been developed/are developing, but it can remain a problem long afterwards.\textsuperscript{216}

External actors also point to the dysfunction caused by their own institutional cultures that emphasize output rather than long-term sustainable impact, as discussed above. Pressures to respond rapidly, achieve planned outputs and to disburse funds within fixed time-frames (like annual donor budget-cycles) often lead external actors to compromise on the time and resources needed to invest in identifying credible internal counterparts, to generate consultative processes and develop meaningful local ownership. Consultations undertaken under pressure, for instance during rapid needs assessments, often serve to legitimize preconceived perceptions rather than adding value by generating independent and objective opinions and analysis: they thus fail to reflect the true needs and priorities of the internal actors. Under pressure from the internal/external power imbalance, internal actor representatives may make the common mistake of telling the external actors what they think the external agents would like to hear –


\textsuperscript{216} Mats Berdal and Achim Wennmann, \textit{Ending Wars, Consolidating Peace}.
rather than sharing with them their own perceptions and opinions as to the kind of support they think they need, and the priorities as they perceive them.

Hence, external actors tend sometimes to deny the existence of enormous differences in power and influence – like seeing oneself as merely a ‘technical’ adviser, whereas in reality the local actors may have only a marginal say in the priorities, content and pace of the programmes being implemented. Drafting of laws, for instance, is often conducted by external experts who ignore the fact that those who are to implement the legislation neither know it nor have a feeling of ownership or understanding of it.217 This approach on the part of the external actors also indicates a further attitude: that international norms and standards by default trump domestic legitimacy.218 Poverty reduction strategies and comprehensive peacebuilding strategies are often based on standardized templates, not on country-specific and needs-based analyses.219

The lack of accountability of external actors towards the local population is another challenge that may undermine the sustainability of a peace process. This applies not only to extreme cases of criminal behaviour by e.g. peacekeepers, but also to the fact that powerful SRSGs, Special Envoys, Troop Commanders and Police Commissioners report to their headquarters in New York, Brussels or elsewhere – but not to the host-nation capital. That may undermine local ownership over time, even if ‘things get done’ in the short term. In the worst case, these tendencies may be described as neo-colonial ‘empire lite’ or as ‘empires in denial’.220

One of the most critical aspects of the comprehensive approach is thus the role of the internal actors and the degree of coherence that can be achieved between the external actors and the local actors. Yet, internal actors are often ignored in the context of comprehensive approach. On the one hand, it is clear that no peace process can succeed without local ownership. On the other hand – whether during the conflict phase, in the immediate post-conflict phase and often even beyond – some key local stakeholders may either be engaged in the conflict or be overt or


220 Ignatieff, *Empire Lite*; Chandler, *Empire in Denial*. 
covert spoilers in the peace process. Under such circumstances it would be counterproductive to include them in a comprehensive approach.

The internal–external relationship is arguably the most important one in an intervention. External actors usually intervene to engage internal actors, and success is measured largely in terms of the impact the interveners have on the internal society (political, economic, social). These engagements can be direct and forceful, or indirect and discreet, but these engagements and relationship are in any case at the core of an intervention. I return to this in developing the analytical framework in Chapter 5.

5. Conclusions

This chapter has sought to shed light on coherence – and how coherence has come to be regarded as a key ingredient for success in today’s international interventions. To get a better understanding of coherence and comprehensive approach I offered a taxonomy of various relationships: four types of relationships and six degrees of coherence. Of these, the various inter-agency relations appear the most relevant for military–civilian relations (but not exclusively). Lastly, the chapter has discussed some of the obstacles that restrict the prospects of coherence: output vs. impact; conflicting mandates and values; and internal/external imbalance. These are examples – the list of challenges could have been extended.

We have seen that many interventions suffer from poor coordination, training, organization and systems. Some of this can be addressed through improved coherence. However, there appears to be less room for coherence than generally acknowledged in policy debates. The latter often set ambitious targets for coherence that are impossible to achieve in practice, because of the inherent contradictions in the mandates, interests and value systems of some actors. The degree to which these actors can be coherent with each other is therefore limited. In short, it seems that coherence is not a good in and of itself to be pursued in equal measure, in all circumstances, by all stakeholders. It is a context-specific function aimed at managing interdependencies – and those interdependencies change from situation to situation. The level of coherence achievable in one situation will not necessarily be achievable in the next one.

Nevertheless, from a principled point of view, all the challenges discussed in this chapter – short-term vs. long-term results, conflicting values, principles and mandates, and the internal-
external power imbalance – are social and political in nature. They may be deep-rooted, but in
theory they can all be negotiated, and trade-offs and compromises be found. But, as pointed out,
the form and kind of differences will vary significantly from intervention to intervention,
depending largely on whether there are conflicts between intervening actors, or the nature of
these, in intervention X and not in intervention Y. That means that an analysis of the challenges
related to achieving coherence must take the social and political circumstances into account.
We cannot base an understanding on inductively generated categories of challenges – such as
those discussed here – that are assumed to be valid across several cases. We need a different
approach. As argued further in Chapter 5, we need an analytical framework which can be
applied to all interventions, but which may yield different answers in each case, depending on
the circumstances: the nature of the conflict, the intervening actors involved, etc.

This chapter also has shown the complex and highly political relationships in an intervention.
This applies to all: peace- and state-builders, diplomats and UN staff, and others. Intervening
actors, despite their varying mandates and objectives, are all political actors. They intervene
with a vision of change and with power and tools to implement this – sometimes with success,
sometimes not. Power and politics are therefore constants in interventions. Consequently,
coherence cannot be assessed without taking this into account: there may be resistance and
conflict or cooperation and progress, but they are all political power struggles.

One possible exception to this are the humanitarian actors, as mentioned. I discuss this
particular humanitarian claim – of being above politics – in Chapter 4, as it requires deeper
scrutiny. Are humanitarian actors really apolitical, and do they need to be treated analytically
differently from the political actors?

To some extent, this chapter has also ignored another crucial actor in interventions – indeed,
the most central one in this dissertation: the military. On the one hand, the military is a political
actor like the rest, and may therefore not require separate treatment. But the aim of this
dissertation is to find out how we can understand the challenging relationship between the
military and the civilian actors as regards achieving coherence. It is not limited to mapping the
challenges in general – as I have done in this chapter. We therefore need to develop a better
understanding of the military. The various forms of political challenges discussed in this chapter
will – presumably – be affected differently depending on how the military actors in the
interventions operates. We therefore need to nuance and discuss the category ‘military’.
Depending on the nature of the intervention, military actors will differ significantly in terms of

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mandates, resources and doctrines, from conventional peacekeeping to robust counter-insurgencies.

The next chapter will seek to find out more precisely what today’s military interventions share and what differentiates them, by comparing the UN peacekeeping and the US counter-insurgency doctrines. Are there similarities between them which we can generalize to get a better understanding of how they operate in an intervention? In my view, these two military approaches may have more in common than often perceived. And that means that we should not assume a priori that military–civilian relations will be less conflictual in the UN context than in other interventions.
Chapter 3

The Military Dimension:
Peacekeeping and Counter-Insurgency

1. Introduction

The previous chapter gave us a general overview and taxonomy of the various constellations between the actors in an intervention, and discussed some of the most challenging obstacles to achieving coherence. With this in mind, it is time to return to what is usually the most dominant actor in an intervention: the armed forces. To assess the challenges related to military-civilian coherence, we need to understand the military component better. In most cases the military is a dominant actor. It tends to be the largest intervening actor in terms of number of personnel, equipment and physical manifestation. Its use of force/threat of force makes it the most intrusive element in an intervention, with the most visible impact on the ground. The heavy vehicles, uniforms and fortified camps all contribute to the image of a strong and dominant actor. However, there are also clear differences as regards intervening military actors. A forced intervention, such as the US invasion of Iraq, is hardly comparable to a UN lightly armed ceasefire-monitoring mission. The impact on the people, society and infrastructure will obviously be very different. That makes it problematic to generalize about ‘the military’ in interventions, without taking account of the mandate, mission or political context.

Since the 1990s, intervening armed forces have been conducting traditional ceasefire-monitoring and peacekeeping operations (as in Lebanon), more robust stabilization operations (e.g., Bosnia, DRC, Sudan), counter-terrorism and counter-insurgency operations (Afghanistan and Iraq), offensive operations without ground forces (Kosovo, Libya) and with ground forces, including invasion and occupation (Iraq).\textsuperscript{221} Traditional lightly armed UN ceasefire-monitoring

\textsuperscript{221} Some interventions have also been covert and limited, using special forces, military advisers or other similar units. Such operations have usually been restricted to the military dimension and are beyond the scope of this thesis.
missions have become rare,\textsuperscript{222} as most interventions today involve a relatively robust military component. Also, with the exception of the offensive phase of forced interventions (such as in Afghanistan and Iraq), the military and the civilians have been parts of the larger post-conflict stabilization efforts in all these interventions.\textsuperscript{223} Arguably, all operations after an intense combat phase share some features. Today’s peacekeeping, stabilization operations and counter-insurgency operations all seek to preserve the status quo, support incumbent authorities, protect a fragile peace, or to prevent violence from re-erupting. Of course there are important differences between impartial peacekeepers and stabilization forces and external counter-insurgency forces (to which I return below) – but they share a certain commonality in terms of operational context. In short, most military interventions since the 1990s are – to some extent – comparable.

This chapter undertakes such a comparison to find out more precisely what today’s military interventions share and what differentiates them. Are there similarities between them which we can generalize to get a better understanding of how they operate in an intervention as well as their relationship to other actors – local and intervening ones? To answer this I will analyse and compare what are often regarded as two opposing ends on the spectrum of the use of military force: namely peacekeeping, and counter-insurgency (COIN). The former has traditionally rested on three core principles: impartiality, consent by the parties and use of force in self-defence only. Peacekeeping typically presupposes a peace agreement and consent from the warring parties, and hence a minimum need for the use of force by the peacekeepers. COIN operations, by contrast, are situated in a war-like situation, where significant force is used to counter the attacks from insurgents that are attempting to topple the authorities. In practice,

\textsuperscript{222} The UN still has a handful of such missions, but most of these have been running for decades, such as UNDOF on Golan (1974), UNFICYP in Cyprus (1964) and UNMOGIP in Pakistan and India (1949). See: https://peacekeeping.un.org/en/past-peacekeeping-operations

\textsuperscript{223} There are also several military concepts that fall between peacekeeping and COIN. NATO and the UK have doctrines for ‘Peace Support Operations’; the USA has a doctrine for ‘Stability Operations’, and all have concepts and doctrines related to stabilization. Despite their differences, they all concern post-(major) conflict operations, not unlike the UN doctrine. However, the latter is more explicitly based on principles of consent and impartiality, which makes it a better case for a comparison with the more politically embedded COIN doctrine. See NATO, Peace Support Operations AJP-3.4.1 (Brussels: NATO, 2001); Joint Doctrine & Concepts Centre, The Military Contribution to Peace Support Operations, Joint Warfare Publication 3-50 (Shrivenham: UK Ministry of Defence, 2004); U.S. Army, The U.S. Army Stability Operations Field Manual, FM 3-07; NATO, Allied Joint Doctrine AJP-01(D) (Brussels: NATO Standardization Agency, 2010); Development Concept and Doctrine Centre, Security and Stabilisation: The Military Contribution, Joint Doctrine Pulication 3-40 (Shrivenham: UK Ministry of Defence, 2009).
however, the two concepts may share several features, as we shall see, the difference between UN and COIN may not be that significant. Military-civilian relations may be just as tense in the UN context as in other interventions. It is the nature of each mission will determine how ‘political’ a UN or a COIN operation will be regarded by the host population.

As discussed in the Chapter 1, various military concepts have been developed for ‘irregular’ wars. I focus on COIN here because the two largest military interventions of recent years, Iraq and Afghanistan, officially adopted COIN as their doctrine or guiding principle in the phase following the initial intervention. COIN is therefore the most manifest and concrete expression of the kind of warfare in which interveners engage, beside peacekeeping and stabilization.

The chapter explores these questions by comparing the UN Department of Peacekeeping Operations (DPKO)’s ‘Capstone Doctrine’ and the US Army Counterinsurgency Field Manual, as well as related theoretical and field experience-based literature. It also draws on some recent developments in UN missions. For simplicity, I refer to the two as ‘the COIN doctrine’ and ‘the UN doctrine’.

Through a comparative reading of the two doctrines I will demonstrate that there are important similarities between the two concepts. In today’s irregular wars, where criminals, so-called spoilers and ideological extremists represent the main security threat, both the idea of a neutral impartial peacekeeper and the idea of a traditional military victory have been largely eradicated. As a result, the two concepts face many of the same challenges vis-à-vis host nation representatives and civilian intervening actors.

To simplify comparison, I have classified the similarities along six dimensions:

- the focus on civilian – not military – solutions
- stress on the need for protection of civilians
- the need for international coherence (unity of effort, integrated approach)
- the importance of host-nation ownership
- the use of intelligence in support of operations
- acknowledgement of the limitations of the use of force.

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225 Kaldor, New and Old Wars.
I have identified these dimensions by comparing the two doctrines, by a careful reading of their respective emphasis and priorities, as well as their implementation in the missions. As I also will point out, there are still important differences between COIN operations and UN operations, in terms of mandates, political foundation, equipment, rules of engagement etc. However, the trend is towards greater convergence of these concepts, not divergence. The UN is becoming increasingly robust – which is why it merits closer scrutiny. However, this chapter is primarily about how, not why: it is about comparing military doctrines and operations, not the mandates and political motivations that have triggered the military operations. Hence, in the following I will discuss each of doctrines along these same six comparable dimensions and thereby demonstrate both similarities and the most significant differences.

2. The COIN Doctrine

The US experience of facing insurgencies after the invasions of Iraq and Afghanistan forced a need to rethink the traditional doctrines. Neither conventional war-fighting doctrines nor the stabilization doctrines of the 1990s were adequate for countering the violent insurgencies in these countries. Old lessons were taken off the shelf and re-read. As always in military theorizing, COIN was nothing new. There had been insurgencies and counter-insurgency operations in China, Algeria, Indochina, as well in Malaysia and Vietnam, and the architects the COIN doctrine drew on the lessons learnt there. John Kiszely described the challenge in this way:

…war and peace are not easily delineated; ‘defeat’ and ‘victory’ require definition. The enemy is not obvious, nor easily identifiable, literally or figuratively, and may change on an almost-daily basis; success depends not on destruction of the enemy, but on out-

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manoeuvring opponents – in particular depriving them of popular support, and winning it oneself.\textsuperscript{228}

The most cited publication of the COIN doctrine is the \textit{US Army and Marine Corps Counterinsurgency Field Manual}, adopted in 2006.\textsuperscript{229} The adoption of the doctrine was in itself a result of, and was highly flavoured by, the Iraq experiences of several of its authors, including General David H. Petraeus, who later became commander of the NATO forces in Afghanistan. Many Western states and NATO have since followed suit, developing new doctrines\textsuperscript{230} and redesigning the setup of their troops. The relatively ‘soft’ approach of stability operations of the 1990s (limited use of armour, helmets or heavy weapons) was replaced with more robust and agile forces with more firepower.

‘Insurgency’ is usually defined as a form of irregular warfare – typically an internal conflict where the insurgents seek to topple the incumbent government (including colonizers or occupying forces). Although this is an internal struggle, regional repercussions are common. Neighbouring countries may, for instance, serve as sanctuaries for the insurgents, or as supporter of one of the sides. Some early theorizing defined insurgency as ‘revolutionary war’,\textsuperscript{231} but this is less common today. But insurgency is about regime change, since the objective is to topple a government.\textsuperscript{232} This makes the political dimension crucial: the armed efforts of an insurgency are in support of the political objective. The aim may not be to win in military terms, but to make the authorities lose. By, for instance, provoking the latter to over-react and apply indiscriminate use of force, the insurgents may try to make the population turn against the government. Discrediting the opponent is more important than winning on the battlefield. Furthermore, by being seen as supportive of the civilian population, by providing assistance and needs, the insurgents build support for their own cause. Typically, insurgents have limited resources and need time to build momentum. This means that insurgencies may

\textsuperscript{228} John Kiszely, \textit{Post-Modern Challenges for Modern Warriors}, Shrivenham Papers (Shrivenham: Defence Academy of the United Kingdom, 2007), 7.

\textsuperscript{229} U.S. Army/Marine Corps, \textit{Counterinsurgency Field Manual}.

\textsuperscript{230} British Army, \textit{British Army Field Manual, Volume 1 Part 10, Countering Insurgency} (London: Ministry of Defence, 2009); NATO, \textit{Allied Joint Doctrine for Counterinsurgency (COIN)}, AJP 3.4.4.

\textsuperscript{231} Galula, \textit{Counterinsurgency Warfare; Theory and Practice}.

\textsuperscript{232} Harald Håvoll, \textit{COIN Revisited: Lessons of the Classical Literature on Counterinsurgency and Its Applicability to the Afghan Hybrid Insurgency}, (Oslo: Norwegian Institute of International Affairs (NUPI), 2008), 6.
turn into lengthy wars, a point which also tends to play to the advantage of the insurgents. The population may grow increasingly frustrated with lack of stability and blame the incumbent authorities. The inability to prevail militarily against insurgents has often also frustrated conventional armies.

Given the nature of insurgency, the counter-insurgents have had to rethink their conceptual approach as well. Firstly, it is recognized that armed force is of relatively less relevance to settle such conflicts. The military is but one of several lines of efforts working towards the same political objective: to quell and defeat the insurgency. Thus, restraint in the use of violence may at times serve the political purpose better than overwhelming firepower. It is the immediate, tactical-level, political effects of the use of force that matter. This is because the battle often takes place in populated areas, ‘amongst the people’ as retired British General Rupert Smith described it. It is a low-intensity war and civilians have not fled the battlefield: the two adversaries face each other in villages and urban centres. Not only may excessive use of force prove inefficient, it may also backfire, with the population turning against the counter-insurgents. As we shall see below, this political-contextual awareness is incorporated in the COIN doctrine.

Nathaniel Fick and John Nagl summarize some of the main tenets of COIN this way: ‘Focus on protecting civilians over killing the enemy; assume greater risk; use minimum, not maximum force’. Furthermore, they (and the doctrine itself) stress several paradoxes that distinguish COIN from many traditional military doctrines: ‘Some of the best weapons do not shoot; sometimes the more you protect your force, the less secure you may be; the hosts doing something tolerably is often better than foreigners doing it well; sometimes the more force is used, the less effective it is; sometimes doing nothing is the best reaction.’ All this points towards less use of force; to political rather than military processes; and to local ownership.

In the following, I discuss five core elements of the COIN doctrine that all stem from these basic preconditions: the importance of civilian primacy and the protection of civilians; the need

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235 Ibid.
for coherence and unity of effort; the importance of host-nation ownership; the role of intelligence; and the need for restrictive use of force.

2.1. Civilian primacy and protection of civilians

The COIN doctrine defines an insurgency as ‘an organized movement aimed at the overthrow of a constituted government through the use of subversion and armed conflict’.\textsuperscript{236} Counter-insurgency is thus conducted by the authorities to defend their institutions and political system. International actors engaged in a theatre would under most circumstances be there to support the host nation.\textsuperscript{237} Further, the doctrine states: ‘political power is the central issue in insurgencies and counter-insurgencies; each side aims to get the people to accept its governance or authority as legitimate’.\textsuperscript{238}

The ‘centre of gravity’—defined as ‘the source of power that provides moral or physical strength, freedom of action, or will to act’\textsuperscript{239}—is therefore the protection of the civilian population in COIN, as opposed to military strength, as in many traditional military doctrines. This turns the driving momentum upside–down. From chasing the enemy, the focus is shifted to building political support for the host authorities. As a result, there are no military solutions to a COIN campaign, only part-solutions. According to one of the most known analysts of COIN, David Galula, a COIN strategy is 80% civilian and 20% military.\textsuperscript{240} The military, according to the COIN doctrine, cannot win the war in traditional sense, by eliminating or entirely pacifying the enemy. All it can achieve is to control the situation by suppressing the insurgents to such an extent that others (civilians) can build a positive peace process.

\textsuperscript{236} U.S. Army/Marine Corps, \textit{Counterinsurgency Field Manual}, 2.

\textsuperscript{237} There are many other instances of insurgence and counter-insurgence. Early scholars drew on the experience as imperial rulers fighting liberation movements; and in modern-day war theatres like Iraq and Afghanistan, the intervention had a different backdrop than support for the government. However, there is nothing in the COIN doctrine that presupposes an occupation: the focus is on assisting and strengthening the host nation. Still, it might be a more political or bilateral engagement than a UN peacekeeping operation. But, as mentioned, this chapter is primarily about how, not why.

\textsuperscript{238} U.S. Army/Marine Corps, \textit{Counterinsurgency Field Manual}, 2.


\textsuperscript{240} Galula, \textit{Counterinsurgency Warfare; Theory and Practice}.
This approach is often summarized in the maxim ‘clear–hold–build’. The military is to clear an area of insurgents, then hold the territory and keep it safe, while civilian actors are supposed to build/secure a sustainable peace by providing the population with essential services and assistance in reconstruction and development. Through this, host-nation authorities are expected to be enabled to expand their authority and support to new regions previously controlled by the insurgents. Although written by the military, the COIN literature downplays the role of the military, recognizing that military efforts are likely to fail unless civilian actors think and operate along the same lines. If nobody is there to ‘build’ after the military ‘clearing’ operation, it may end up as a waste of resources, lives and money.

However, a serious challenge has been the absence of an overarching civilian strategic framework from which such a doctrine could naturally emerge. In a sense this is a ‘bottom–up’ contribution to a more comprehensive strategic COIN approach, put in place while waiting for the civilian departments and agencies to follow suit (or so it is hoped). In Sarah Sewall’s words, ‘the doctrine is a moon without a planet to orbit’. The missing planet is a strategic partnership between civilian and military interveners, as well as between internal (in the doctrine, termed ‘host-nation’) and external (intervening) actors. Without a successful ‘build’ and ‘hold’, the ‘clear’ will usually be futile. Furthermore, for COIN to be sustainable, one would assume that local authorities would need to do the build-up, as foreign actors lack the necessary trust, knowledge, skillset and cultural awareness to do so. And they tend to leave. None of this is much discussed in the doctrine – whereas, as I return to in Chapter 6, practice both Iraq and Afghanistan demonstrated these challenges in practice.

Despite these shortcomings, the protection of civilians is highlighted as a critical element of COIN. Persistent physical presence among the population is recommended in the ‘hold’ phase: ‘…living among the population in small groups, staying in villages overnight for months at a time…it’s the only way to protect the population effectively’. By protecting the people, legitimacy, support and valuable intelligence may follow. Strikingly, though, while the centre of gravity is the civilian population, and the operationalization is the protection of civilians, this is not based on any moral imperative of protection of human rights or notions of human security, as in the UN context, as we shall see below. It is a means to an end: the end being to reduce


popular support of the insurgence and thereby prevail in the political fight. Moving the focus from the enemy to the population is nonetheless a fundamental aspect of COIN: ‘military effectiveness is not limited by taking protection [of civilians] into consideration; it is based upon it’. Ståle Ulriksen, *Power to Protect? The Evolution of Military Structures and Doctrine in Relation to the Responsibility to Prevent and Protect* (Oslo: Norwegian Institute of International Affairs, (NUPI), 2008).

243 It does represent a significant shift compared to traditional warfare.

2.2. **Coherence – Unity of Effort**

Stemming logically from the focus on the civilian primacy, the doctrine particularly stresses the need for ‘Unity of Effort’. Integration of civilian and military efforts is crucial to successful COIN operations, it claims, acknowledging also the value of ‘political, social and economic programmes’ in addressing ‘root causes of conflict’.

Through what are described as Logical Lines of Operations (LLOs) (governance, essential services, economic development etc.), the various instruments of power are to be coordinated (see Figure 1). A COIN operation therefore involves all these aspects; and it is stressed that successful achievement of the end-state (popular support for the authorities) requires careful coordination of actions undertaken along all LLOs. COIN operations are described as a rope, where all the LLOs are the individual strings that comprise the rope. COIN refers therefore not only to military operations, but to the whole range of activities aimed at working towards the same political goal.

The need for a complex and comprehensive COIN doctrine was stressed by General David W. Barno, in his summary of his 2003–2005 experience in Afghanistan. The COIN strategy which he led was based on a Unity of Purpose model consisting of five pillars: defeating terrorism and denying sanctuary; enabling Afghan security structures; sustaining area ownership; enabling reconstruction and good governance; and engaging regional states. The centre of gravity was defined as the Afghan people. His success, according to Barno himself, was due to close integration with US civilians (the embassy), but also to an open approach to


international and host-nation actors in developing the strategy. The setbacks since 2005, he argues, were due largely to the high turnover of leadership and the loss of unity of effort.246

On the basis of his Iraq experience, General Petraeus stresses how ‘everyone must do nation building’.247 He explains how it would have been impossible to carry out large-scale reconstruction, like re-opening a huge university, without the support of the military and all the relevant host-nation ministries. Connected to this is also his observation that one must ‘help build institutions, not just units’ – ministries, administration and logistics, education systems etc. Whether the military itself is best suited to undertake such nation-building is contested within the military ranks and among civilian intervening actors.248 But the idea that the soldiers contribute to a larger effort and do not possess the sole key to victory is nonetheless conveyed.

The COIN doctrine is not very developed when it comes to understanding the multinational environment in the theatre. The UN and other organizations are mentioned, but not systematically included in the doctrine. The Unity of Effort is primarily a US-Whole of Government approach; the other actors typically present in the field – NGOs, coalition partners, international organizations and developmental agencies – are not addressed systematically. Some scholars, such as retired US Marine Bing West, reject the idea that if the ‘government dispensed to a population projects, money, and free services – along with security – then the people would reciprocate by rejecting an insurgency’s cause, be it political, religious, or nationalistic’.249 He argues that it was the bottom–up soldiering that worked in Iraq: physical presence in local communities, partnering and patrolling created success among the Sunni tribes – not nation-building, sewage construction, governance or gifts. This is a valid point, which strikes at the heart of the Unity of Effort logic. Civilian efforts often yield results (contribute to peace) decades after they are initiated, possibly long after the intervening troops have left. This does not need to imply that coordination, coherence and communication with civilians is

246 The degree of ‘success’ in the early years of the Afghanistan operation is contested, however. See e.g. Rashid, Descent into Chaos.


248 I return to this point in subsequent chapters, but for criticisms from within the military sector, see for instance West, The Strongest Tribe: War, Politics, and the Endgame in Iraq; West, ‘Counterinsurgency Lessons from Iraq’, Military Review 89, no. 2 (2009), 2–12.

249 ‘Counterinsurgency Lessons from Iraq’, 5.
unnecessary – merely that military doctrines that rely on achievements in the civilian sectors to achieve their own ends may fail.²⁵⁰

But again, regarding the civilian dimensions as crucial elements of the very same rope is a relatively new element in US military doctrine. While the doctrine fails to engage the full spectrum of civilian actors in an intervention, and involves some naïve assumptions about how development can create peace, it nevertheless makes the military reader aware of the importance of other actors in the field, and that engagement on the local level is crucial.

Figure 2. Example of COIN LLOs

2.3. Host-nation ownership

The observation that peace, security and development tend to be more sustainable if not simply imposed from the outside is nothing new, and is central also in the COIN doctrine. As discussed in the previous chapter, ‘local ownership’ has over the years become a widely acknowledged precondition for sustainability in external interventions. Also within the security sector the same logic is applied, including in the COIN doctrine. Realizing that the outsiders cannot win a COIN operation, the doctrine puts considerable emphasis on the host nation, the security forces in particular. To have success in COIN, the host nation is must ‘…defeat insurgents or render them irrelevant, uphold the rule of law, and provide a basic level of essential services and security for the populace’. The host nation’s security forces are thus a crucial element in the success of a COIN operation; and an important part of the COIN doctrine is devoted to the training and support of these, including the military, police, correction personnel and border guards. In Iraq and Afghanistan, the training and equipping of local security forces gradually became the major task of the international forces. The COIN doctrine is nonetheless rather narrow, as it does not consider the wider security apparatus. The judiciary and the rule of law in general are not mentioned, nor are human security aspects such as human rights. The doctrine focuses on what the armed forces can deliver, apparently assuming that others will take care of the rest.

This strategy follows logically from the focus on the political aspect of the struggle, and experiences like the ‘the host nation doing something tolerably is normally better than us doing it well.’ After all, the COIN doctrine is primarily about supporting authorities that are being challenged in a weak state. Also General Petraeus stresses the importance of local ownership. ‘Do not try to do too much with your own hands’, he urges, underlining the importance of host-nation involvement. ‘Empowering Iraqis to do the job themselves has, in fact, become the essence of our strategy’, he goes on to say, adding that ‘more important than our winning Iraqi hearts and minds was doing all that we could to ensure that as many Iraqis as possible felt a stake in the success of the new Iraq’. Furthermore, ‘…we began asking, when considering new

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251 OECD Development Assistance Committee (DAC), *Shaping the 21st Century*.


initiatives, projects, or programmes, whether they would help increase the number of Iraqis who felt they had a stake in the country’s success’. However, in Afghanistan it proved far from simple to achieve local ownership in practice. COM ISAF, General S.A. McChrystal, attempted to implement his version of COIN in 2010 by, *inter alia*, introducing what he called ‘a government in a box’ in the city of Marjah after the coalition forces had cleared it of Taliban fighters. This ‘box’ consisted of a group of Afghans who were to build civilian governance instead of the Taliban. This venture was reported as a ‘flop’ and criticized for being naïve and doomed to fail, as the US-supported civilians lacked local legitimacy as well. Furthermore, as we shall see in Chapter 6, the overwhelming dominance of the intervening parties in terms of resources, money and political agendas, made local ownership almost impossible to achieve. In addition, as the central government was often seen as illegitimate, corrupt and incapable of providing the population with security and essential services on the local level, the very idea of local ownership proved hard to implement.

2.4. Intelligence-supported operations

Intelligence is a cornerstone of the COIN doctrine. An entire chapter is dedicated to it in FM 3-24, where it is stated that counter-insurgency is

…an intelligence-driven endeavor. The function of intelligence in COIN is to facilitate understanding of the operational environment, with emphasis on the populace, host nation, and insurgents. [...] Intelligence in COIN is about people. U.S. forces must understand the people of the host nation, the insurgents, and the host-nation (HN)


government. Commanders and planners require insight into cultures, perceptions, values, beliefs, interests and decision-making processes of individuals and groups.\textsuperscript{258} Whereas intelligence is important in any military operation, its focus in COIN is different from traditional military doctrine. The attention is less on the capabilities and intentions of the adversary, and more on a broader understanding of the cultural terrain and the civilian population where the operation takes place. Cultural awareness and local understanding are crucial when the campaign objective concerns the political leanings of the population. Knowledge of the concerns, attitudes and values of this population is of utmost importance. That means that the intelligence needs to focus not only on the insurgents but on the entire population and the relevant area, which may include neighbouring states. This all follows logically when the ‘centre of gravity’ is transferred from the enemy to the wider population. However, it also requires different kinds of skills and approaches on the part of the intelligence community when the focus shifts from the ‘order of battle’ of the adversary to the socio-cultural terrain of the operation.

To implement this, the US Army introduced the Human Terrain System (HTS) in 2006 to ‘address cultural awareness shortcomings at the operational and tactical levels’.\textsuperscript{259} The HTS was intended to ‘provide deployed brigade commanders and their staffs direct social-sciences support in the form of ethnographic and social research, and social data analysis…’\textsuperscript{260} through five-person Human Terrains Teams (HTT) embedded in a brigade staff. This effort at building contextual cultural awareness went beyond the traditional intelligence, as it engaged the entire military structure, and was not limited to security-related issues, as regular intelligence would be.

The HTTs attracted considerable attention and were accused of being unethical and undermining the professional integrity of social scientists. The American Anthropological Association, for instance, expressed disapproval of anthropologists’ work in Afghanistan and Iraq, claiming that they were helping in ‘identifying and selecting specific populations as targets


\textsuperscript{260} Ibid.
of U.S. military operations’. 261 Also some military commentators questioned the virtue of adding ‘a quick fix layer of social science expertise’ to the military organizations, arguing instead that the US doctrine (including COIN) mandated the US military to train and maintain organic cultural expertise. Irrespective of the specific model, the urgent need for cultural understanding was recognized in COIN. But in practice it proved challenging. As late as in 2010, Flynn et al. argued that ‘because the United States has focused the overwhelming majority of collection efforts and analytical brainpower on insurgent groups, our intelligence apparatus still finds itself unable to answer fundamental questions about the environment in which we operate and the people we are trying to protect and persuade.’ 262 They recommended ‘sweeping changes to the way the intelligence community thinks about itself – from a focus on the enemy to a focus on the people of Afghanistan’. 263

Not only should intelligence be broader in scope in COIN, it should also be shared outside the military ranks as a part of the Unity of Effort:

> Knowledge of these organizations [non-Department of Defense (DOD) agencies, multinational forces, nongovernmental organizations, and HN organizations in the AO] is needed to establish working relationships and procedures for sharing information. These relationships and procedures are critical to developing a comprehensive common operational picture and enabling unity of effort. 264

Despite these intentions, the realities in the field were often very different. Intelligence sharing remained a sensitive issue, constrained by prejudices and legal obstacles. Non-military organizations often complained that they felt they provided information, without receiving anything of relevance in return, like threat assessments.

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263 Ibid.

264 U.S. Army/Marine Corps, Counterinsurgency Field Manual, 83.
But the very fact that the **intention** of sharing was stated in the doctrine indicates a new way of thinking. It was recognized that success in a COIN campaign hinged on a wide range of socio-economic intelligence – and that improved liaison and communication with civilian actors were a necessity to this end.

All in all, good intelligence and cultural awareness in COIN reduce the need for use of force, by indicating alternative routes to achieve the goals. Furthermore, they assist in improved targeting when forces are used, thus reducing collateral casualties. Basic knowledge of local customs also helps to avoid unnecessarily alienating the population, for example when house searches are conducted. In this context the introduction of the HTTs represented important recognition of the significance of contextual understanding for the armed forces. Despite these insights, it proved challenging to implement in practice, due to resistance from within and outside the military ranks. But this seems to be more a struggle over how to compile information and by whom – not disagreement over the crucial importance of such information for a COIN operation.

### 2.5. Restrictive use of force

Lastly, the doctrine stresses the importance of applying *appropriate* levels of force. Given the potentially severe consequences of collateral damage, it notes paradoxes like ‘sometimes the more force is used, the less effective it is’; or ‘sometimes doing nothing is the best reaction’. These may seem counter-intuitive, but are reflective of the political nature and the true centre of gravity of the mission.\(^\text{265}\) The need to keep in sight the longer-term goal of gaining political, rather than military, victory is clear in statements such as: ‘An operation that kills five insurgents is counter-productive if collateral damage leads to the recruitment of fifty more insurgents’.\(^\text{266}\) It is thus acknowledged that collateral damage is far more damaging here than in traditional warfare, because the focus has shifted from victory over the enemy forces to winning over the host population. This was a difficult doctrinal shift for Western forces, the US military in particular, as the deeply ingrained doctrine of using overwhelming force against the

\(^{265}\) Ibid., 48ff.

\(^{266}\) Ibid., 45.
enemy, to ensure maximum force protection, had to be overcome at the tactical level, in every encounter.

Whereas traditional military doctrines have often advocated large-scale ‘sweeps’ thorough use of kinetic means to shock the enemy, such tactics are not advised in the COIN doctrine. Similarly, traditional ‘battle damage assessment’ and body counts are no longer considered suitable for measuring progress. Here the use of air strikes is particularly cautioned against, as ‘inappropriate or indiscriminate use of air strikes can erode popular support and fuel insurgent propaganda’. Since the objective in COIN is defined as to increase popular support for the host-nation authorities, it is the perceptions of the population that define progress. Losses inflicted on the insurgents are an indication of success only to the extent that they have a bearing on the perceptions of the local population.

Again, the practice in Afghanistan proved challenging. What is an appropriate level of force? At what times should restraint be shown, and when not? Troops under fire tend to respond with whatever weapons they have at hand – it is, after all, a matter of personal survival in the midst of combat. As a result, some critics have voiced dissatisfaction with the idea of restraint, and argued for a return to a focus on incapacitating the enemy. The restrictive use of force is perhaps the area where the COIN doctrine differs the most from other doctrines of offensive warfare, and is also apparently an area where practice has not always matched theory.

To summarize, the COIN doctrine contains several aspects that seem to alter war-fighting somehow. First and foremost, it is focused more on the immediate, tactical-level political effects, as these often also are strategic effects. Actual practice has often differed from the doctrine, as will always be the case. Nonetheless the explicit attempt by Western powers to tune their armed forces in the direction of the COIN doctrine indicates a renewed understanding of insurgencies

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267 Ibid., 365. Many observers see the sharp increase in the use of air strikes by ISAF and the rise in civilian deaths as main reasons for the strengthening of the Taliban in Afghanistan in recent years. It therefore appears that these prerogatives are not fully implemented in practice, at least not in Afghanistan. See also Adam Roberts, ‘Doctrine and Reality in Afghanistan’, Survival 51, no. 1 (2009), 29–60.

268 This is another element of the COIN doctrine that has been severely criticized. See e.g. Ellis and Sisco, ‘Implementing COIN Doctrine in the Absence of a Legitimate State’.

and irregular wars. As we shall see, also the UN has responded to the changed security landscape, albeit from the opposite position towards a more assertive use of force.

3. The UN Doctrine

UN peacekeeping underwent dramatic changes after the end of the Cold War. According to Bellamy and Williams, there was ‘a triple transformation’ in the 1990s: UN peacekeeping changed quantitatively, qualitatively as well as normative ways. Quantitatively it transformed by deploying a vast number of new missions. Between 1988 and 1993 alone, more troops were deployed than in the previous forty years and twenty new missions deployed. In qualitative terms peacekeeping evolved by beginning to take upon itself new and complex tasks – state-building, local peace-making, etc. The normative change came through the predominantly Western promotion of a post-Westphalian world order – a world where universal human rights trump national sovereignty. Associated with this was also the liberal-democratic peace theorem, that building democracy is the best bulwark against the recurrence of violence after civil wars.

As a result of new demands for peacekeepers (inter alia with the end of many conflicts that had been fuelled by the Cold War) and a new willingness to mandate operations and to provide troops (with a more permissive Security Council and greater global media attention to conflicts),

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270 Bellamy and Williams, Understanding Peacekeeping, ch. 4.

271 Building on Francis Fukuyama, ‘state-building’ can be defined as activity undertaken by external actors attempting to build, or re-build, the institutions of a weaker, post-conflict or failing state. See Francis Fukuyama, State-Building: Governance and World Order in the 21st Century (Ithaca, N.Y.: Cornell University Press, 2004); David Chandler, Empire in Denial. ‘Peace-making’ is often referred to in context of the role of the UN and Article 33 of the UN Charter which provides that The parties to any dispute, the continuance of which is likely to endanger the maintenance of international peace and security, shall, first of all, seek a solution by negotiation, enquiry, mediation, conciliation, arbitration, judicial settlement, resort to regional agencies or arrangements, or other peaceful means of their own choice.’ ‘The Charter envisages roles for the Secretary-General, the Security Council and the General Assembly, among others, in the peaceful settlement of disputes’. See http://peacemaker.un.org/peacemaking-mandate.

272 Duffield, Development, Security and Unending War.

273 Paris, At War’s End.
UN peacekeeping gradually evolved towards a more assertive role. The new era was accompanied by the seminal report *An Agenda for Peace*, released by UN Secretary-General Boutros Boutros-Ghali in 1992. The report called for new resources to meet the new tasks, but otherwise reflected the optimistic spirit of the times in terms of the potential the UN now possessed. Peacekeeping was no longer restricted to Chapter VI (Pacific Settlement of Disputes) of the UN Charter, but begun to invoke Chapter VII (Action with Respect to the Peace, Breaches of the Peace and Acts of Aggression), which provides a legal basis for more affirmative resolve on the part of the peacekeepers.

However, the setbacks came early. Failures in Angola, Somalia, Rwanda and Bosnia-Herzegovina from 1992–1995 dealt a blow to the optimistic tone represented by the *Agenda for Peace* report. Although Somalia was primarily a US failure, and the genocides in Rwanda and Srebrenica can be blamed only partly on the UN (the gap between mandate and available resources was a Security Council member-state responsibility), these catastrophic events led many states to lose their appetite for peacekeeping. Lack of political will to equip forces, inadequate funds and limited institutional capacity in the UN were among the reasons for the failures, making the Security Council more reluctant to authorize new missions. In 1993 there were 70 000 peacekeepers globally, while in 1996 the number was down to less than 20 000. Despite this setback, the main lesson learned for the UN was not to withdraw from

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276 Subsequent enquiries have severely criticized the whole UN system for failure to act in Rwanda, not primarily the peacekeepers. See the *Report of the Independent Inquiry into the Actions of the United Nations during the 1994 genocide in Rwanda*, available at http://www.securitycouncilreport.org/atf/cf/%7B65BFCF9B-6D27-4E9C-8CD3-CF6E4FF96FF9%7D/POC%20S19991257.pdf


peacekeeping or to go ‘back to basics’, but to engage more firmly in the protection of civilians and in forceful implementation of mandates.\textsuperscript{279}

UN peacekeeping in the 2000s was to be influenced by another seminal text, generally known as the \textit{Brahimi Report}.\textsuperscript{280} This report was the conclusion of a study conducted by a panel of experts tasked with identifying the main weaknesses of UN peace operations and providing concrete recommendations. Perhaps the most important contribution was the introduction of an explicit distinction between neutrality and impartiality. While the three core principles of peacekeeping were reaffirmed (impartiality, consent by the parties, use of force in self-defence only), the report also stated that impartiality meant ‘adherence to the principles of the [UN] Charter’. Neutrality on the other hand, was defined as ‘equal treatment of all parties in all cases for all time’.\textsuperscript{281} Hence, peacekeepers did not need to be neutral, only impartial – meaning they could ‘use force against those who act against their mandates and the “Charter principles” on which they are based’.\textsuperscript{282}

Furthermore, ‘In some cases, local parties consist not of moral equals but of obvious aggressors and victims, and peacekeepers may not only be operationally justified in using force but morally compelled to do so.’\textsuperscript{283} Hence, peacekeepers should no longer be passive bystanders when massive violations of human rights or crimes against humanity took place in their vicinity. In practice, though, this was far from straightforward. As Hikaru Yamashita puts it, this ‘new impartiality’ was an attempt to find ‘a principle for forcible action without undermining equidistance’.\textsuperscript{284} How can force be used against one of the parties, without simultaneously


\textsuperscript{281} Ibid., 9.


\textsuperscript{284} Yamashita, ‘“Impartial” Use of Force in United Nations Peacekeeping’, 618.
undermining the core principle of consent? As we shall see below, this dilemma is still far from resolved.

The Brahimi Report made several other recommendations, inter alia on UN reform, mandates and resourcing, and became the bedrock for all peace operations in the following decade. As a result of these changes and the perceived success of several missions (Balkans, Timor-Leste, Burundi...), the number of deployed personnel again increased steadily, reaching, as mentioned, a total of about 85,000 troops in 16 missions as of January 2017. Many of the new missions nonetheless remain within the traditional parameters of peacekeeping – ceasefire monitoring and similar – but the drift towards a more assertive and robust UN peacekeeping has been underway ever since the release of the Brahimi Report. In particular, peacekeepers have been mandated to use force for the protection of civilians as well as for implementing the mandate – both of which have been widely debated. I return to this below, but on a more general level it can be argued that the ‘new and assertive’ UN has been struggling partly with resource constraints, and partly with finding a strategic purpose for the use of force. The question of having sufficient and right resources has haunted the organization since the mid-1990s although the situation improved after the Brahimi Report. However, the absence of military strategy complicates mission command. When is ‘sufficient force’ applied? What shall it achieve in the longer run? When are civilians ‘adequately’ protected?

This is particularly challenging in those of today’s missions with the most forceful mandates, which represent a kind of crescendo in the use of force in the UN context. The current mandates of the UN operations MONUSCO in the Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC), MINUSMA in Mali, and MINUSCA in the Central African Republic (CAR), are all far removed from the original peacekeeping principles of consent, impartiality and self-protection. In the DRC, after a very troublesome decade, the UN mission was authorized to establish a Force Intervention Brigade in 2013, mandated to ‘take all necessary measures’ to ‘neutralize’

285 Bellamy and Williams, Understanding Peacekeeping, 146.
287 Durch, Twenty-First-Century Peace Operations.
and ‘disarm’ groups that were posing a threat to ‘state authority and civilian security’. Troops from South Africa, Tanzania and Malawi moved in and soon defeated one of the rebel groups.

Despite operational success, a whole range of other challenges and implication have emerged: for instance that the entire MONUSCO as a result changed status under International Humanitarian Law and became ‘a party to the conflict’, with all the political, legal and staff security-related aspects that implies. The mandates of MINUSMA and MINUSCA are not as offensive as MONUSCO, but nonetheless push UN peacekeeping away from the original three basic principles of peacekeeping. Currently the debate is whether this trend needs to be reversed or if the principles need to be revised.

3.1. The Capstone Doctrine

The Brahimi Report also paved the way for the ‘United Nations Peacekeeping Operations, Principles and Guidelines’, widely but unofficially called the ‘Capstone Doctrine’. It sums up 60 years of peacekeeping and attempts to bring the basic foundations, principles and approaches into a singular document. Although missions have evolved since the publication of the Capstone Doctrine, many of the seeds of a new and more assertive UN can be discerned in this document. It is in many ways comparable to the COIN doctrine discussed above.

In the spirit of the Brahimi Report, the doctrine defines peacekeeping as:

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293 DPKO, United Nations Peacekeeping Operations: Principles and Guidelines (New York: United Nations, 2008). The term ‘Capstone Doctrine’ was apparently removed in one of the last revisions of the document before it was released, but has remained as an unofficial name within the UN system. See Bellamy and Williams, Understanding Peacekeeping, 142.
…a technique designed to preserve the peace, however fragile, where fighting has been halted, and to assist in implementing agreements achieved by the peacemakers. Over the years, peacekeeping has evolved from a primarily military model of observing ceasefires and the separation of forces after inter-state wars, to incorporate a complex model of many elements – military, police and civilian – working together to help lay the foundations for sustainable peace.294

The doctrine focuses on peacekeeping, explicitly distinguishing this from other activities conducted by the UN, such as conflict prevention, peace-making, peace enforcement and peacebuilding.295 It also distinguishes between peace operations, which are what others may do, and peacekeeping, which is the distinct activity that the UN undertakes according to its stated principles and doctrine. However, it acknowledges that the lines between these categories are blurred:

While United Nations peacekeeping operations are, in principle, deployed to support the implementation of a cease-fire or peace agreement, they are often required to play an active role in peacemaking efforts and may also be involved in early peacebuilding activities. United Nations peacekeeping operations may also use force at the tactical level, with the authorization of the Security Council, to defend themselves and their mandate, particularly in situations where the State is unable to provide security and maintain public order.296

Separating peacekeeping from peacebuilding and peace-making, or the tactical level from the strategic level, is not easy in practice. The labels tend to overlap, as witnessed in most UN missions deployed in recent decades. The end of war and beginning of peace are often processes that last for years.

Let us now see what the Capstone Doctrine has to say on the same topics as discussed in connection with the COIN doctrine.


295 For definitions and discussions of these concepts, see DPKO, *United Nations Peacekeeping Operations*, p. 17-20.

296 Ibid., 19.
3.2. Civilian primacy

The Capstone Doctrine focuses on ‘multi-dimensional’ peacekeeping operations: ‘These operations are typically deployed in the dangerous aftermath of a violent internal conflict and may employ a mix of military, police and civilian capabilities to support the implementation of a comprehensive peace agreement.’ The doctrine thereby envisages a broad role for today’s peacekeepers:

   a) Create a secure and stable environment while strengthening the State’s ability to provide security, with full respect for the rule of law and human rights;

   b) Facilitate the political process by promoting dialogue and reconciliation and supporting the establishment of legitimate and effective institutions of governance;

   c) Provide a framework for ensuring that all United Nations and other international actors pursue their activities at the country level in a coherent and coordinated manner.

Thus, multi-dimensional peacekeeping operations do much more than merely fill a power vacuum. It is generally acknowledged that today’s conflicts require a long-term peacebuilding commitment, and that a political settlement and political stability are core issues. As a result, greater attention has also been paid to the related areas of institution building and state building.

Hence, the doctrine also addresses key peacebuilding aspects, like ‘restoring the State’s ability to provide security and maintain public order’, ‘supporting the emergence of legitimate political institutions and participatory processes’, and ‘promoting social and economic recovery and development’, to mention just a few. UN peacekeeping missions have explicit roles in this endeavour: as with disarmament, demobilization and reintegration (DDR) of combatants;

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297 Ibid., 22.

298 Ibid., 23.

299 Paris and Sisk, *The Dilemmas of Statebuilding*. 
security sector reform (SSR) and other rule of law-related activities; electoral assistance and support to the restoration and extension of state authority.\textsuperscript{300}

All this reflects an incorporation of non-military tasks into the doctrine. The basic premise is that sustainable peace requires stability and security, but also a political process and a wide range of peacebuilding activities. Figure 3 illustrates the tasks.

\begin{figure}
\centering
\includegraphics[width=\textwidth]{figure3.png}
\caption{The Core Business of Multi-dimensional UN Peacekeeping Operations.}
\end{figure}


Despite the different starting points, this illustration reveals significant similarities with the COIN illustration in Figure 1. Both envisage a whole range of ‘tools’ tuned for achieving the same goal, and both recognize that a safe and secure environment (i.e. security) is only a part of a wider solution. The security sector (peacekeeping) must be integrated with, and supportive of, the overall political and peacebuilding process.
3.3. Protection of Civilians

Protection of civilians is a key principle of the UN doctrine. It is based on UN Security Council Resolution 1674 ‘On the protection of civilians in armed conflict’, and the subsequent follow-up attention in the UN system. The background for Resolution 1674 itself may be traced back to the Rwanda and Srebrenica disasters, and how these experiences were interpreted in the Brahimi Report. Through its own painful experiences, the UN learnt that, despite the legality of the mandates issued to its missions by the UN Security Council, constraining its peacekeeping missions to act to protect civilians in these cases, the United Nations is held to a higher moral authority by the international community. It cannot retain international legitimacy while standing by when innocent civilians are being killed or harmed. These experiences, and the general ‘trend’ in contemporary conflicts whereby civilian populations are increasingly targeted, has resulted in a norm in UN peacekeeping, where ‘…most multi-dimensional United Nations peacekeeping operations are now mandated by the Security Council to protect civilians under imminent threat of physical violence’.

In the UN context, the protection of civilians is a moral imperative. It is a reaffirmation of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, stressing the responsibilities of states towards their own populations, as well as the responsibility of a peacekeeping mission to look after those rights in a post-war situation. The motives for protection of civilians in UN peacekeeping operations thus differ from the motives for protection civilians as expressed in the COIN doctrine, in that the latter seeks to protect civilians as a means to an end (to win over the population, so as to win the war), while in the UN doctrine the protection of civilians is an end in and of itself.

From the perspective of the population in a war-torn society, however, it does not matter much what the motivation for a specific action is, since legitimacy is established on the basis of how the international actors act on the ground. Viewed that way, the two doctrines may not differ that much for the population in question: improved security will normally be welcomed by the civilian population. Furthermore, the two doctrines share the understanding of the importance of the civilians in today’s conflicts. The protection of civilians is an integral part of the modern-


day security complex: it is not only a question of deeds or actions, but is seen by both doctrines as the cornerstone of sustainable peace and security.

3.4. Coherence – Integrated Approach

In peacekeeping, as in COIN, inter-agency coherence is a central task. As discussed in Chapter 1, this is not merely a question of resource management: it is recognized as a basic necessity. Without coordination, few if any actors are likely to achieve their objectives, it is held. For peacekeepers it is about laying the foundations for a sustainable peacebuilding process, through all the above-mentioned efforts. According to the UN Doctrine, ‘multi-dimensional United Nations peacekeeping operations also play a critical role in ensuring that the activities of the United Nations system and other international actors are guided by a common strategic vision’. 303 However, there is little specification of how this should be done in practice.

To find out about that, we must examine another UN-system initiative which emerged at more or less the same time: the ‘Integrated Approach’. 304 The ‘Integrated Approach’ is largely about getting DPKO-led peacekeeping missions and other UN agencies deployed in the same field (the UN Country Team) to act with greater coherence. According to the Guidelines of the Secretary-General, ‘an integrated mission is based on a common strategic plan and a shared understanding of the priorities and types of programme interventions that need to be undertaken at various stages of the recovery process’. 305 Organizationally, it has meant that the Humanitarian Coordinator (HC) and the Resident Coordinator (RC) of the development agencies also are part of the peacekeeping mission structure, with the Deputy Representative of the UN Secretary-General (DSRSG/RC/HC). However, they have otherwise remained fully independent and have retained their organizational structure. Implementation of this model has varied from mission to mission, but the Integrated Approach has become a key principle in all UN missions.

Nonetheless, whereas recent years have seen significant progress in this UN-internal coordination, the ambition that the UN should also take the lead in the coordination with other

303 Ibid.

304 Originally, this work was referred to as ‘Integrated Missions’; see United Nations, ‘Note of Guidance on Integrated Missions from the Secretary-General.

305 Ibid., 2.
actors in the field appears to have been implemented to a lesser degree. (The exception here is humanitarian coordination, where the UN coordination role has been established since 1991.) The tools and mechanism for doing so are less developed than the internal UN Integrated Approach process, and the doctrine is not very sophisticated as regards addressing the challenges related to such inter-agency coordination. Key questions like leadership, priorities, mediating conflicting mandates, level of ambition regarding coordination have remained unanswered.306

That being said, the recognition that UN peacekeeping cannot be carried out in a vacuum, and that a comprehensive, multi-dimensional and integrated approach is required, closely resembles the similar stress in the COIN doctrine on civilian efforts to achieve the objectives. In practice, the UN appears to have developed this further than the COIN doctrine, despite some shared shortcomings when it comes to cooperating with other actors in the field.

3.5. Host nation, local ownership

As mentioned under 2.3 above, the idea of local ownership as a precondition for sustainability in any external development programme, is widely acknowledged. As stated in a UN Handbook: ‘National and local ownership is not only considered essential to building sustainable peace but also critical for preserving consent, and reinforcing the legitimacy of a mission.’307 Also in post-conflict peace negotiations, it is considered crucial for the sustainability of the process that the partners ‘buy in’ on it and see their interests represented.308 It thus comes as no surprise that UN doctrine also stresses the need for local ownership as a way of securing legitimacy and sustainability of operations:

National and local ownership is critical to the successful implementation of a peace process. In planning and executing a United Nations peacekeeping operation’s core activities, every effort should be made to promote national and local ownership and to foster trust and cooperation between national actors. Effective approaches to national

306 I elaborate on this in Chapter 3.


and local ownership not only reinforce the perceived legitimacy of the operation and support mandate implementation, they also help to ensure the sustainability of any national capacity once the peacekeeping operation has been withdrawn.\textsuperscript{309}

However, besides elaborating on the more general principles of local ownership and mentioning some challenges, like resistance to change, the doctrine is not very specific as to more concrete tasks. In a brief discussion of Security Sector Reform (SSR), an activity often considered central to sustainable, locally owned peace, it says:

...United Nations peacekeeping operations may be called upon to assist in the restructuring, reform and training of the national police and/or armed forces. [They] also play a catalytic role in the strengthening of national judiciary and corrections systems, and have also been mandated [...] to promote legal and judicial reform or support the development of essential legislation.\textsuperscript{310}

Whereas the COIN doctrine dedicates an entire chapter to the training of host-nation security forces, the UN doctrine does not elaborate on this. Challenges related to securing both local ownership and a minimum judicial and democratic standard in the context of an SSR process are also ignored (but that is the case in the COIN doctrine as well). Nonetheless, since UN multi-dimensional peace operations are partly political, partly developmental, there is reason to expect that the ‘local ownership’ concept is intrinsic to the various programmes and activities of a multi-dimensional peacekeeping mission.

Despite this, many observers have noted that ‘local ownership’ sometimes is more of a catchword than a real commitment. There are numerous practical challenges entailed: who are the legitimate local stakeholders, what is being owned, to what extent shall they be empowered, at what stage, etc.\textsuperscript{311} This has led to reluctance on the part of the UN to give local actors a stake in the processes, in Bosnia-Herzegovina, Kosovo, East Timor and elsewhere.\textsuperscript{312} As a result, the


\textsuperscript{310} Ibid., 27.

\textsuperscript{311} Simon Chesterman, \textit{You, the People}.

UN has been more successful in handovers and building local capacity in some missions than in others.

Local ownership, even if sometimes an empty phrase, nonetheless remains a key concept in the language of peacebuilding and development. UN Peacekeeping and COIN operations are both external interventions, and both have a limited number of years to consolidate a peace process before their presence becomes increasingly resented. There can be no sustainable peace process if the local institutions do not develop the capacity to sustain the peace process on its own. Local ownership is therefore a moral as well as a pragmatic ideal. It is a prerequisite for any exit strategy, irrespective of whether it is a COIN or UN peacekeeping mission.

3.6. Intelligence-supported operations

The UN has also begun introducing intelligence to support its operations – unthinkable only a few years ago. Since ‘intelligence’ for some translates as ‘espionage’ and ‘covert operations’, it has long been too sensitive for the UN to engage in. Indeed, it was deemed ‘contrary to the open nature of the UN system and therefore absolutely forbidden’.313 Also, many (but not all) traditional peacekeeping operations did not need much intelligence, as force protection was of limited concern. However, lessons from Somalia, Bosnia-Herzegovina and Rwanda in the 1990s revealed the need for intelligence, on the tactical as well as the strategic level.314

As ‘robust’ mandates and threats from ‘spoilers’ have become more common and missions are increasingly integrated and multi-dimensional, there has developed greater acceptance that intelligence support is required to implement the mandate. Wider mandates require wider understanding. Today, all larger UN peacekeeping missions are expected to establish a Joint Mission Analysis Centre (JMAC) at HQ level.315 Their tasks are described as follows:

Multidimensional peacekeeping missions conduct a wide range of mandated activities in fluid and unpredictable environments. This demands an enhanced operational


capacity to monitor developments and to understand the operational environment on a continuous basis. Missions must be able to identify, prevent and/or respond to threats or emerging threats. Senior mission leaders must be informed of and understand developments on the ground, their likely consequences and the possible impacts of decision options for mandate implementation and for the security of UN personnel and facilities.  

The tasks thus go beyond basic tactical-level force protection. Intelligence analysis is aimed at advising the mission leadership on a broad range of issues related to threats to the peace process. To do so, information gathering and analysis need to focus beyond the risks associated with spoiler groups and include all risks that may be associated with the consolidation of the peace process. The responsibilities of the JMAC include the following:

- acquire and integrate information from all mission components and other sources, in order to develop analytical products that are timely, accurate, complete and usable;
- analyse and synthesize information, including intelligence-related material, to prepare integrated analyses and medium and long-term evaluations; and
- prepare and disseminate operational and mission-level assessments to support planning, decision making and implementation of mission mandates.

The resemblance to the description of intelligence in the COIN doctrine is obvious. The focus is socio-political: intelligence is an integral part of the planning and execution of operations and an important asset for understanding the operational environment. The ambition to reach out across to other agencies is also shared. Intelligence in multidimensional peacekeeping focuses on the entire theatre, not only the spoilers or violent threats, just as in COIN. It is a context or environment analysis. The complexity of the mission and the mandates requires an understanding of the wider operational environment, not just of the opposing force(s).

In practice it is the UN mission to Mali (MINUSMA) that has developed this the most, with the largest intelligence capability in UN peacekeeping to date. The All Sources Information Fusion

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317 Ibid., 4.
Unit (ASIFU) consists of hundreds of soldiers from predominantly Western countries, many with first-hand experience from Afghanistan. Newer technologies, such as mobile phones and drones, are also increasingly applied by UN missions to collect information.\(^ {318}\) The difference from COIN is thus more a matter of scale than principle.

### 3.7. Minimal use of force

It is on the questions of the use of force that the similarities with the COIN doctrine become perhaps most apparent. Recent experience in UN peacekeeping missions, as in the DRC, Haiti, Mali, CAR, Darfur and South Sudan, has shown that the UN is increasingly willing to use force to protect civilians and to implement its mandate.\(^ {319}\) Unofficially labelled ‘robust peacekeeping’, this reflects a trend away from traditional peacekeeping. Missions are now tasked with consolidating a peace process by engaging with all levels of the host-nation in order to support and build local capacity to sustain the peace process on their own. Very often, UN peacekeeping environments are ‘…characterized by the presence of militias, criminal gangs, and other spoilers who may actively seek to undermine the peace process or pose a threat to the civilian population’\(^ {320}\).

In such cases, the UN doctrine legitimizes the use of force on the tactical level, thereby preserving the distinction from peace *enforcement* operation, which can be deployed against the will of the host nation (strategic level).\(^ {321}\) The UN doctrine therefore focuses on missions which are deployed non-controversially, but which may encounter the above-mentioned

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\(^ {318}\) Karlsrud, ‘The UN at War’, 44–47.


\(^ {321}\) The struggle within the UN between those advocating the primacy of state sovereignty and those professing universal human rights has become increasingly evident over the past 20 years (see e.g. Bellamy and Williams, *Understanding Peacekeeping*). The latter principle has become significantly strengthened, from the ‘An Agenda for Peace’ report by UN Secretary-General Boutros Boutros-Ghali (United Nations, *An Agenda for Peace: Preventive Diplomacy, Peacemaking and Peace-Keeping: Report of the Secretary-General*, a/47/277 – S/24111, via the efforts of his successor Kofi Annan and the Brahimi Report (*Report of the Panel on United Nations Peace Operations, Brahimi Report*, a/55/305 – S/2000/809), to the ‘Responsibility to Protect’ Declaration (Paras 138–139 in *General Assembly, World Summit Outcome*, a/Res/60/1 (New York: United Nations, 2005)). The responsibility to protect civilians lies with the broader international community if host states fail in their obligations. This legitimizes humanitarian interventions against the will of the host nation, if needs be. However, the UN Capstone Doctrine does not refer to such cases: it focuses on ones where the deployment of the mission is welcomed by the host nation, but where resistance may be encountered at the tactical level.
categories of opponents. Most missions today are mandated by the Security Council according to Chapter VII of the UN Charter, ‘…authorizing them to “use all necessary means” to deter forceful attempts to disrupt the political process, protect civilians under imminent threat of physical attack, and/or assist the national authorities in maintaining law and order.’

To some extent, the UN rationale for this use of force resembles the COIN doctrine when it states: ‘The ultimate aim of the use of force is to influence and deter spoilers working against the peace process or seeking to harm civilians; and not to seek their military defeat’. Furthermore: ‘The use of force by a United Nations peacekeeping operation should always be calibrated in a precise, proportional and appropriate manner, within the principle of the minimum force necessary to achieve the desired effect.’

This approach is similar to the COIN doctrine, which does not seek a traditional military victory but is rather aimed at keeping the situation stable enough for a peace process to commence; and the use of minimum force is stressed. The difference is that the COIN doctrine places these principles in a political strategic framework (winning the war by strengthening the legitimacy of host-nation authorities), whereas this is more subtle in the UN doctrine. Its provisions are based more on ethics than on tactics – but in practice the difference may have little meaning.

As discussed above, the recent trend in the UN has been to increase the use of force, as seen particularly in the DRC, Mali and CAR. These operations may include the use of artillery, heavy weapons, air support and intelligence, making it apparent that the distinction between the use of force at the tactical and strategic levels, and the distinction between COIN and UN peacekeeping, can at times be more semantic than substantive. By definition, insurgents, spoilers and other violent non-compliant actors operate on the tactical level: they are non-state actors or proxy armies supported by neighbouring states. But the fact that they operate locally does not mean that the fighting may not have ramifications or effects at the strategic level. Typically, in areas like the African Great Lakes region they are regional actors, crossing borders between countries as they please. Their presence and activity are among the main strategic challenges in this region.

322 DPKO, United Nations Peacekeeping Operations: Principles and Guidelines, 34.

323 Ibid., 35.

The same could be said about the Taliban operating in the border regions of Pakistan and Afghanistan. The Taliban have been trying to disrupt the political process in Afghanistan, topple the elected government and state institutions, attack civilians and undermine law and order. The ISAF’s counter-insurgency struggle against the Taliban in Afghanistan could therefore very well have been defined as a ‘tactical-level’ fight against spoilers, thereby fitting the description of a UN ‘robust mandate’ as noted above. In this context there is no difference in principle.

Nonetheless, even if a COIN operation and a robust UN peacekeeping operation appear surprisingly similar in many respects, there is little doubt that actual practice remains very different. The US-led COIN operations in Iraq and Afghanistan were aimed at victory and far better equipped, more robust, and technologically more sophisticated than the new robust UN missions. The FIB in eastern Congo remains more of an exception than the rule compared to other UN missions.

The point here, however, is that the UN distinction between strategic and tactical level appears state-centric and not attuned to the conflicts taking place ‘among the people’ in many places today. The UN finds itself struggling to transform tactical victories into long-term strategic objectives.\textsuperscript{325} In short, the UN seems uncomfortable with some of the political implications of its increased use of force.

\textbf{4. Conclusions}

In his chapter I have argued that, despite their differing points of departure, the UN Capstone Doctrine and the COIN doctrine share some crucial features:

- focus on civilian – not military – solutions
- stress on need for protection of civilians
- need for international coherence (unity of effort, integrated approach)
- importance of host-nation ownership
- use of intelligence in support of operations

\textsuperscript{325} Berdal and Ucko, ‘The United Nations and the Use of Force: Between Promise and Peril’.
• acknowledgement of the limitations of the use of force.

The findings are summarized in Table 4.
Table 4. Overview and comparison of COIN and Peacekeeping along the six comparable dimensions

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>COIN</th>
<th>Peacekeeping</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Civilian Primacy</td>
<td>Relies on civilians to ‘build’ after ‘clear’ and ‘hold’ to succeed.</td>
<td>Multi-dimensional peacekeeping. Facilitate political processes and peace building, to achieve sustainable peace.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
| Protection of Civilians | A means to and end; to achieve political victory | UNSC Res 1674  
A moral imperative, as well as a key for the legitimacy of the UN |
| Coherence        | US Whole of Government.  
Unity of Effort, Logical Lines of Operation  
US-centric | Integrated Approach  
UN only |
| Local Ownership  | Focus on host-nation security forces and SSR.  
No reference to other aspects | Legitimacy of the UN  
Sustainability of peace process. |
| Intelligence support | Human Terrain Teams  
Cultural and contextual understanding crucial to prevail | JMAC  
Cultural understanding recognized as important in complex operations |
| Use of Force     | Restrained – avoid collateral damage, but be assertive when needed | Restrictive, only for Protection of Civilians, implementing mandate or self-protection.  
Increasingly assertive mandates |

These six dimensions are all important for success in both doctrines, even if the underlying rationales may differ. Interestingly, some of the shortcomings are also shared. Neither is very
sophisticated when it comes to dealing with other actors in the field, i.e. employing an inter-agency comprehensive approach. Also, both stress the need for host-nation ownership, but tend to ignore the real-world challenges this entails. As always in military doctrines, realities on the ground tend to differ from written prescriptions. Some principles in the texts may prove very challenging to uphold in the field, not least in non-permissive security environments. For the UN to restrict the use of force to the tactical level may prove impossible, for instance, facing rebels with support from a neighbouring country. Similarly, a COIN operation may wish to avoid casualties, but if the operation attacked in inhabited areas this is very hard to avoid.

It must also be stressed that the origins and foundations of these two doctrines differ significantly. The COIN Doctrine builds largely on Western experiences in colonial wars and the recent invasions in Iraq and Afghanistan, where military operations were explicitly political and linked to the objective of a state or a coalition of states. COIN is thereby closely intertwined with the strategic security interests of the engaged actors. The US and NATO operations in, e.g., Afghanistan were considered to be a central part of the global struggle against al-Qaeda.

In contrast, UN peacekeeping operations are generally considered of less strategic interest for the states that contribute troops. The UN engagement usually focuses more on peace as such, on a peace process or the preparation for such a process. Still, when multifunctional and robust peacekeeping missions are deployed, this tends to be in volatile, uncertain environments. With increasing ‘robustness’, the UN also becomes increasingly politicized. As a result, the UN is more of a political player now than in traditional peacekeeping, but it is usually less so than, for instance, the USA was in Iraq.

The point here is that these are sliding scales, not fixed positions. The nature of each mission will determine how political a UN or a COIN operation will be regarded by the host population. In the field, the difference between UN and COIN may not be as significant as one might expect when comparing the different starting points. When studying interventions and the relationship between the intervening actors, one therefore cannot assume that for instance relations are better in a UN context than in other interventions. As we shall see in the next chapter, politicization (or perceptions of politicization) can often an impediment to cooperation – and UN troops can be as politicized as other troops. Basically any intervention of forces into another country will

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326 The Intervention Brigade in the DRC may be an exception, as it is made up of troops from countries in the region.
impact on local balances of power and politics. The degree of politicization must be a case-by-case assessment, depending on the role, mandate, size and activity of the armed forces in question. This implies – just as we found in Chapter 2 – that challenges related to achieving coherence between military and civilian actors not can be understood without a recognition of the contextual political circumstances.

The next chapter will nonetheless focus in on the possible exception to this: the military-humanitarian relationship. The humanitarians’ insistence of being non-political – the principles neutrality, impartiality and independence – implies a reluctant attitude towards coherence and cooperation with other intervening actors, in particularly the military. They differ in other aspects as well: mandates and mission, resources available, the socio-cultural background of personnel. Although the ultimate humanitarian organization, the Red Cross Movement, was born out of war and has a legal role to play in warfare, today humanitarians and militaries tend to be regarded as diametrically opposed to one another. But must this always be the case? What exactly are the differences based upon? Together with the previous and the current Chapters, the analysis in Chapter 4 will provide a systematization and overview of the various civilian–military relations in an intervention, as well as preparing the ground for Chapter 5, on developing an analytical framework tailored to study these relations systematically.
Chapter 4

The Troubled Relationship between Military and Humanitarian Actors

1. Introduction

In the previous chapter I argued that the military part of interventions often shares common features, irrespective of the intervention mandate or military organization. Today’s robust UN peacekeeping is comparable to Western counter-insurgency operations along several dimensions. Both forms of military operations are political, but also the degree of politicization differ, depending on the role, mandate, size and activity of the armed forces in question. In this chapter I discuss how various kinds of military operations differ in their relations to the humanitarian actors. The focus is on military–humanitarian relations because these often are the most strained and tense of all military–civilian relationships in an intervention. Why is this so? And why is the relationship more challenging in some settings than others?

Some analysts have highlighted the internal cultural and national differences between these strange bedfellows – the military and the humanitarians may have little in common except being foreign interveners in the same territory. 327 Furthermore, both the military and the humanitarians have proliferated in numbers, missions and tasks over the last decades, perhaps

making overlap and clashes basically unavoidable.\textsuperscript{328} Indeed, in most interventions, the humanitarian and NGO communities represent the largest non-military dispatch of staff.\textsuperscript{329}

On the other hand, the two camps, military and humanitarian, have been operating side by side in wars and conflicts since the 19th century. In the words of Hugo Slim: ‘to a large degree modern humanitarianism may be said to have been born out of war’.\textsuperscript{330} The International Committee of the Red Cross was founded in 1863 following Henry Dunant’s descriptions of the 1859 Battle of Solferino, in which he called for better care for wounded soldiers in wartime.\textsuperscript{331} Similarly, both the First and the Second World Wars led to the emergence of many of today’s humanitarian organizations, like Save the Children, Oxfam and CARE.\textsuperscript{332} As we shall see, humanitarians are also mentioned in the Geneva Conventions.

The boom in humanitarian relief efforts as well as in international peace and stabilization operations in the 1990s marked the beginning of today’s military–humanitarian relationships. As discussed in Chapter 2, the 1990s witnessed a significant broadening of the security sector, where war and violence were regarded as being associated with poverty and weak states.\textsuperscript{333} In this period, humanitarian–military relations remained relatively positive, as both parts were seen as supporting the same ends. This was perhaps most clearly illustrated during the Kosovo crisis, when the humanitarians let NATO take charge of the refugee camps in the neighbouring countries without much protest.\textsuperscript{334} Humanitarians have also frequently called for international

\begin{footnotes}

\textsuperscript{329} The number of humanitarian field staff was estimated to 274 000 in 2013, working for more than 150 NGOs. Kai Koddenbrock, \textit{The Practice of Humanitarian Intervention. Aid Workers, Agencies and Institutions in the Democratic Republic of the Congo} (London: Routledge, 2016), 56.


\textsuperscript{331} See History of the ICRC, available at: https://www.icrc.org/eng/who-we-are/history/overview-section-history-icrc.htm

\textsuperscript{332} Slim, ‘The Stretcher and the Drum’.

\textsuperscript{333} Hugo Slim, ‘Military Humanitarianism and the New Peacekeeping: An Agenda for Peace?’, \textit{The Journal of Humanitarian Assistance} (22 September 1995); Duffield, \textit{Development, Security and Unending War}.

military intervention to help prevent bloodbaths, curb civil wars or avoid escalation. Again, Kosovo can serve as an example.335

This changed after the ‘9/11’ attacks on the United States in 2001, with the subsequent ‘war on terror’ and the interventions in Afghanistan and Iraq. Western military forces in these operations became more explicitly political in their approach, aiming at regime change and counter-terrorism. Furthermore, they utilized humanitarian aid as a ‘force multiplier’ to gain local sympathy and prevail in the conflict – as stipulated in the COIN doctrine discussed in the previous chapter.336 Unsurprisingly, this led to a more strained relationship with the humanitarians. Much of what has been written and said about the military–humanitarian relationship in recent year is flavoured by these wars. The heavy involvement of the USA and the West in terms of troops, money and diplomacy is quite unique, so we should perhaps be cautious about drawing firm conclusions about the state of affairs on the basis of these experiences. However, the exacerbated political climate did bring to the fore conflicts or challenges that are latent also in less extreme situations. Although these wars tended to entrench the military and humanitarian camps, they also demonstrated that political context matters. The military–humanitarian relationship may shift, depending on the situation and the nature of the military operation in question.

But that is arguably also the case with other civilian organizations, as discussed in the previous chapters. What makes the humanitarians unique is their perception of themselves as being above or outside politics: they consider themselves to be apolitical interveners.

Other civilian actors may at times underestimate or ignore their own political impact on a local economy or political system, but they are nonetheless mandated and established on a political vision or objective. Diplomats, UN police, peace- and state-builders, development agencies and international experts are all political actors of various shades and forms. Their political agenda may range from democratization, distribution of wealth, good governance and minority rights, to diplomacy, mediation and direct political interference. As discussed in Chapter 2, sometimes


335 Wheeler, Saving Strangers.

336 US Secretary of State Colin Powell in 2001 infamously labelled the NGO community as their ‘force multiplier’, and ‘important part of our combat team’. See http://avalon.law.yale.edu/sept11/powell_brief31.asp.
these mandates, values and principles makes coherence with others, including the military, deeply challenging. Perhaps they appear to be insurmountable. But they are nonetheless competing political agendas – and are therefore in principle negotiable.

The humanitarians on the other hand, seek to stay away from all this, and operate independently of the rest. This leads to another kind of conflict with the military which is more principled than political: the humanitarian actors seek to be above politics. Their core values of ‘independence, impartiality and neutrality’ are often referred to as the ‘humanitarian imperative’, and have been codified in the Red Cross Code of Conduct. Humanitarians see their access to victims of war and conflict as being predicated on this apolitical identity: they are to have no agenda besides saving lives. Any collaboration between military and humanitarian actors may politicize them, and such politicization, it is held, can deny them access to territories held by the adversaries, as well as putting their own security at risk.

Thus we must ask: are humanitarians really apolitical? If so, does this warrant a different analytical approach from that applied to other civilian (political) actors? Is the military–humanitarian relationship significantly different than other military–civilian relations? Can we single out certain principles or generic challenges between the military and humanitarian actors that always are present across various interventions?

I begin with a brief discussion of the international legal foundations – primarily the Geneva Conventions – that guide military and humanitarian interaction in interventions. Humanitarians sometimes mention them when they experience conflicts with the military. However, I argue that there are limits to what the international legal framework can offer in terms of clarification

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338 As I return to later, there are also humanitarians who seek to address the causes of suffering. See Barnett, Empire of Humanity: A History of Humanitarianism, 37–41; Conor Foley, The Thin Blue Line: How Humanitarianism Went to War (London: Verso, 2008).

of these relations. The law is deliberately vague, allowing for interpretations, pragmatism – and therefore also politics.

Throughout this chapter, I present and discuss various ideal-type constellations between militaries and humanitarians, based on a taxonomy of military operations. Taking different kinds of military missions as a starting point, I systematically compare military–humanitarian relationships from case to case, and discuss the challenges. From this, I argue that context and politics are always present, also in the military–humanitarian sphere. Thus, although in most studies of interventions the humanitarians will require special attention, there is no reason not to include them in the same analytical framework as other civilian actors.

2. Legal Foundations

Laws regulating warfare are nothing new. The *jus in bello* tradition (‘just [i.e. fair] conduct in war’) may be traced as far back as to the Old Testament, medieval philosophers and other now-classic writings. Today this tradition is usually associated with the first secular international legalists, such as the 17th-century lawyer Hugo Grotius. However, he focused primarily on *jus ad bellum* (‘just reasons for going to war’), not on conduct in war. The Geneva Convention of 1864 is therefore widely recognized as first major specification of the responsibilities of armed forces towards civilians and non-combatants in international law. Further clarification came with the Fourth Convention of 1949 (‘The Geneva Convention relative to the Protection of Civilian Persons in Time of War’), and the additional 1977 Protocols (‘Protection of Victims of International Armed Conflicts’ and ‘Protection of Victims of Non-International Armed Conflicts’). These, together with certain other international agreements, represent International Humanitarian Law (IHL), also referred to as ‘Law on War’ or ‘Law on Armed Conflict’.

The relationship between warring parties and humanitarian actors is addressed many places in the Geneva Conventions, as in Article 70 of the First Convention:

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341 According to the ICRC, IHL ‘protects persons who are not or are no longer participating in the hostilities and restrict the means and methods of warfare’. See *What is International Humanitarian Law?* ICRC Advisory Service on International Humanitarian Law, available at: [https://www.icrc.org/eng/assets/files/other/what_is_ihl.pdf](https://www.icrc.org/eng/assets/files/other/what_is_ihl.pdf)
If the civilian population of any territory under the control of a Party to the conflict, other than occupied territory, is not adequately provided with the supplies […], relief actions which are humanitarian and impartial in character and conducted without any adverse distinction shall be undertaken, subject to the agreement of the Parties concerned in such relief actions.

Similar formulations are found in the Fourth Protocol, Articles 10, 23, 55 and 59.342

The Geneva Conventions underline the responsibility of the warring parties to ensure that the basic needs of the civilian population are provided for; they also stipulate that humanitarian actors require the consent of the warring parties to engage. Certain provisions regulate the foundations for such consent, but it is not totally clear on what grounds humanitarian aid agencies may legitimately be granted or refused access. As Collinson and Elhawary point out, ‘authorities may refuse humanitarian action if it interferes with a military strategy or aids the other side of the conflict. This reflects the fundamental pragmatism of IHL, which is always concerned with balancing military and humanitarian necessities.’343

This need for consent has provoked contention between militaries and humanitarians, and the principle of consent is sometimes overlooked by humanitarian actors when they call for respect of the ‘humanitarian space’. There is, however, no reference to such a humanitarian space in the Geneva Conventions, nor in IHL more broadly.344 Various definitions and interpretations are in circulation, but the basic idea is that ‘humanitarian organisations should be allowed to assist populations in need in conflict situations if their relief action is impartial, humanitarian and neutral’.345 OCHA and the UN tend to emphasize their own operational freedom, by using the term ‘humanitarian operating environment’, but there is nothing in IHL that stipulates that this space is exclusively for humanitarian agencies. It is the civilian and military authorities in the given country that bear primary responsibility for the well-being of civilians, also during


344 Ibid; Sylvain Beauchamp, Defining the Humanitarian Space through Public International Law (Ottawa: Canadian Red Cross, 2008).

armed conflict. I return to this in Chapter 6; the point here is merely that IHL can provide only limited guidance on the relation between military and humanitarian actors, actually leaving the military with a significant say on humanitarian action.

Moreover, IHL and the Geneva Conventions apply only in cases of armed conflict. Many military operations today may be characterized by a volatile security situation, but not armed conflict as such. Defining something as an ‘armed conflict’ involves a subjective assessment, but the involvement of armed forces is one indicator, as is the level of organization of the belligerents and their political vs for instance criminal ambitions. Many of today’s civil wars or insurgencies would not qualify as ‘armed conflict’ in the legal sense.

In the absence of armed conflict, the alternative legal framework for regulating the behaviour of armed forces is International Human Rights Law (IHRL). In contrast to the IHL, IHRL applies to peacetime conditions. However, in applying IHRL, military operations would be guided according to the principles of international law enforcement – policing – which may not always be suited for military operations. For instance, in an armed conflict regulated by IHL, a certain level of collateral damage may be tolerated in offensive operations, but that is unacceptable in peacetime, when IHRL applies. Furthermore, IHRL does not deal with the military–humanitarian relationship. In practice, troops in interventions tend to refer to IHL as their guidance – even if not always strictly applicable – as that is what they are trained for and are familiar with.

In short, international law appears insufficient if we wish to understand all the various shapes and forms the relationship between military and humanitarians may take. It is a rather pragmatic set of regulations that provides certain guidelines for cases of armed conflict, but is silent on many other issues. What I do next, therefore, is to analyse the relationship according to the kind of intervention, presenting a taxonomy of various forms of military operations or tasks.

346 Ibid.


3. Taxonomy

The taxonomy of international military–humanitarian relationships presented below and in Table 5 simplifies complex relationships into ideal-type categories. It takes various forms of military operations or tasks as the starting point, showing how the challenges as regards humanitarians differ from case to case. Seven forms of military operations are singled out, ranging from non-combatting logistical support, to escort of humanitarian convoys, via traditional peacekeeping, to protection of civilians and robust peacekeeping, and to countering armed groups and conventional warfare. As military operations vary significantly in purpose, mandate and operational rules, relations with humanitarians differ accordingly, as we shall see. However, it should be borne in mind that these are ideal types: most military missions incorporate more than one of the categories below, or evolve through several of them. The purpose here is analytical: to shed light on the differences and variations among the categories, for a better understanding of exactly what underlies the challenges between militaries and humanitarians.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Type of Military Task</th>
<th>Military Role</th>
<th>Security Objective</th>
<th>Humanitarian Role</th>
<th>Guidelines and Doctrines</th>
<th>Challenges</th>
<th>Examples</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Logistical Support</td>
<td>Logistical support</td>
<td>Not security-related</td>
<td>Lead</td>
<td>Oslo Guidelines</td>
<td>• Recipient refuses aid from military • Political desire to use troops • Too many actors</td>
<td>Pakistan earthquakes 2005, 2010 Indian Ocean tsunami 2004</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Escort</td>
<td>Provide security for humanitarian relief</td>
<td>Protection of agencies</td>
<td>Lead</td>
<td>MCDA Guidelines Civil–Military Guidelines &amp; Reference for Complex Emergencies (CMGR)</td>
<td>• Escort may attract resistance • Dependency</td>
<td>UNITAF (Somalia); MONUSCO (DRC)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Traditional Peacekeeping</td>
<td>Overseer peace accords, demilitarized zone, ceasefires</td>
<td>Security within clearly defined parameters Purely defensive force – protection ops.</td>
<td>Co-exist, coordinate</td>
<td>MCDA Guidelines UN Capstone</td>
<td>Humanitarian CIMIC initiatives</td>
<td>UNIFIL (Lebanon) UNPROFOR (Bosnia-Herzegovina) UNFICYP (Cyprus)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Protection of Civilians</td>
<td>Protect national civilians against violence; guarding; patrolling</td>
<td>Secure targeted groups of civilians</td>
<td>Shared PoC mandate, cooperation necessary</td>
<td>MCDA Guidelines UN Capstone CMGR</td>
<td>Coordination • Difficult to operationalize militarily; • Risk of escalation • False expectations</td>
<td>MINURCAT (Chad) MONUSCO (DRC) UNMIS (Sudan) UNMISS (South Sudan)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Robust Peacekeeping (UN)/Stability operations (US)/Peace Support Operations (NATO)</td>
<td>Provide general security, assist civilian efforts, implement peace accords</td>
<td>Maintain security, suppress spoilers and criminals</td>
<td>Coordinate, cooperate if integrated UN mission</td>
<td>MCDA Guidelines UN Capstone FM 3-07 (US) AJP-3.4.1 (PSO NATO); AJP-3.4.9 (CIMIC NATO) IHL</td>
<td>Humanitarian resistance to comprehensive approach and integrated missions</td>
<td>Most UN, AU, EU and NATO operations</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Countering armed groups</td>
<td>Direct military engagement (enemy-centric) or indirect (population-centric)</td>
<td>Defeat insurgents, (re-) establish peace and security</td>
<td>Co-exist, compete, potential conflict</td>
<td>CMGR FM-3.24 (US) AJP-3.4.4 (NATO) IHL/Geneva Conventions Protocol II</td>
<td>Disproportionate use of force • Politicization of humanitarian efforts</td>
<td>Operation Enduring Freedom (OEF); MONUSCO ‘intervention brigade’ (DRC) ISAF (Afghanistan)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>International Armed Conflict</td>
<td>Defeat enemy forces</td>
<td>Pave way for political surrender and peace accords</td>
<td>Coexist</td>
<td>IHL</td>
<td>Denial of humanitarian access • Failure of occupying power to provide security</td>
<td>US invasion of Iraq 2003 Georgia–Russia war 2008</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
3.1. Logistical support

The military logistical apparatus has increasingly been called upon to assist humanitarian relief operations. Military organizations usually have special assets available, especially as regards transport. In such operations, the armed forces have no security role, and are fully at the disposal of the humanitarians. Further, according to the ‘Guidelines on the Use of Foreign Military and Civil Defence Assets in Disaster Relief – Oslo Guidelines’, foreign military and civil defence assets should be requested only where there is no comparable civilian alternative.\(^{349}\)

Even these operations have faced challenges. Firstly, the nation receiving aid may be reluctant to welcome foreign military units – as in Sri Lanka, where the government accused India of military support to the Tamil areas after an (according to India) humanitarian air-drop;\(^ {350}\) in Aceh, where foreign troops were accused of espionage;\(^ {351}\) and when Myanmar refused aid from US warships after Cyclone Nargis.\(^ {352}\) Military units are often viewed with greater suspicion and political bias than other actors. Secondly, the ‘last resort’ principle may be circumvented, because states may wish to use military assets to legitimize their military presence in the region. US efforts after the Indian Ocean tsunami have often been described in such terms, as have various contributions to Pakistan, Haiti and other instances.\(^ {353}\) Practical coordination represents a third challenge, as in cases where the UN cluster system is not fully functional or where many national military forces engage simultaneously: overlap, miscommunication and ineffectiveness may result.\(^ {354}\)

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3.2. Escort

Escort operations aim to offer protection to humanitarian agencies operating in insecure environments. In general, humanitarian convoys do not use armed escorts, but in exceptional circumstances this may be a necessary ‘last resort’ to enable humanitarian action. And here the military does have a security mandate: to protect the aid workers. However, that mandate is restricted to protection of the agencies; the troops are not to pursue attackers or seek to create general security in the area.

The most commonly mentioned standard for such operations are the ‘MCDA Guidelines’, which stress that the military is to be under civilian control and engage only on request from the UN humanitarian coordinator. It is the humanitarian agencies that decide where to go and what to do at destinations. During convoy, however, the military commander is usually in charge, and may halt an aid convoy if the situation is deemed too risky.

Such operations entail challenges. Firstly, nations offering military support tend to be selective as to where they offer it, usually in connection with a crisis in which they have political or security stakes. Secondly, the fact that escort is needed normally indicates that the intrusion may not be welcome, and that resistance is likely. The moment force is used, troops may become entangled in a protracted conflict. Hence, even if an armed escort is initially successful in providing aid, it may also draw the troops into continued clashes with armed groups, as the USA experienced in Somalia in 1993. As a result, also humanitarians may be affected. Thirdly, the use of armed escorts appears to be increasing. Pressure is coming from within the UN system, from those responsible for the safety of UN staff, like the Department for Safety & Security. However, humanitarian agencies outside the UN tend to be critical to this development, which they see as creating dependencies and causing unnecessary militarization of humanitarian aid – which also affects them.

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356 Interview with NGO worker, 2013.
### 3.3. Traditional peacekeeping

Traditional peacekeeping refers primarily to post-conflict ceasefire monitoring operations on an inter-state border, like UNIFIL in Lebanon, but also along demarcation lines, as with UNFICYP in Cyprus. While the mandates may differ, the roles and responsibilities of the military are relatively limited.

The armed forces have a narrow security mandate in terms of monitoring, for example, a demilitarized border zone. They may support and protect humanitarians operating in this zone, but not beyond this area of operation. This is a static and defensive mandate, where the military may respond only when fired upon, in self-defence.

In these cases, humanitarians and peacekeepers tend to operate side by side. They may communicate and exchange information but have few overlapping tasks and responsibilities. Problems have occurred when peacekeeper contingents have initiated Civil–Military Cooperation (CIMIC) activities of a humanitarian nature without coordinating with humanitarians operating in the same area. Peacekeepers have also sometimes been tasked by the Security Council to provide humanitarian assistance, as during the Israeli occupation of Lebanon 1982–85. Generally, though, there have been relatively few reports of friction between militaries and humanitarians in traditional peacekeeping.

### 3.4. Protection of Civilians (PoC)

As discussed in Chapter 3, after the UN failure to prevent the genocides in Srebrenica and in Rwanda in the 1990s, peacekeepers and other intervening troops in conflict zones have been increasingly mandated to protect civilians. Failure to protect civilians undermines not only the credibility of the peacekeeping operation, but also the UN itself. For the last decade or so, basically all UN peacekeeping operations have been had PoC tasks as part of their mandate, usually worded as ‘protect civilians under imminent threat of physical violence’. Sometimes a protection mandate may be the sole task of the troops, as with MINURCAT and EUFOR in

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357 Ruffa and Vennesson, ‘Fighting and Helping?’
Chad in 2008. Their responsibility was restricted to refugees from neighbouring Darfur in Sudan, not the population in Chad.\textsuperscript{358}

PoC is not conducted by peacekeepers alone, but is often described as a \textit{shared} task between military and humanitarian actors.\textsuperscript{359} The first set of challenges concerns coordination. There exists no authoritative definition of PoC in the UN or anywhere else, but the definition commonly referred to by civilian agencies reads: ‘all activities aimed at obtaining full respect for the rights of the individual in accordance with the letter and spirit of the relevant bodies of law (i.e. international human rights law, international humanitarian law, and refugee law)’.\textsuperscript{360} This broad definition is not limited to physical protection, but may include a range of humanitarian efforts. For humanitarians, PoC means looking beyond people’s immediate material needs to the wider questions of personal safety, dignity and integrity, in the short and the long term.\textsuperscript{361} The military has usually preferred the narrower approach of physical protection. As a result, PoC has tended to be a number of parallel processes rather than a coherent approach, and PoC has suffered in terms of sustainability and efficacy.\textsuperscript{362}

Seeking to remedy these shortcomings, the UN has recently begun work on expanding peacekeepers’ understanding of PoC, by, for instance, organizing it in three tiers: protection through political process; providing protection from physical violence; and establishing a protective environment.\textsuperscript{362} Despite such efforts, the UN is unlikely to achieve a unified coherent definition or approach to PoC. Differing mandates, organizational interests and agendas among


\textsuperscript{362} Holt, Taylor and Kelly, \textit{Protecting Civilians in the Context of UN Peacekeeping Operations}.


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UN organizations work against such coherence. The UN will probably continue to leave it largely to each mission to develop a coherent approach to PoC, and as a minimum expect troops to provide physical protection of civilians, as this concerns the legitimacy of the UN itself.

Even if PoC for the military should be limited to physical protection, the task remains challenging. Firstly, in the absence of a doctrine, the armed forces struggle to implement PoC into an operational concept. Military logic usually presupposes an end-state or a defined objective – but when is ‘protection’ achieved? What is ‘enough’ protection? Such uncertainties may cause tensions with humanitarians, for instance if the troops are regarded as withdrawing too early. Secondly, if physical force is applied to protect certain groups of civilians, troops may become a target, or be seen as a party to the conflict. Those subjected to the use of force may respond by attacking the troops or accusing them of bias – with potential repercussions for other actors in the field, including humanitarians. Thirdly, with limited resources it is challenging to prioritize varied protection efforts. Women and children may have top priority, but then? If specific categories are selected – minorities, tribes, ethnic groups, geographic areas – the troops may be seen as politically biased. The UN cannot ‘protect everyone from everything’. Protection mandates may fuel disproportionate expectations by civilians in need. Furthermore, troops may yield to mounting demands for protection, and end up thinly spread, offering unrealistic perceptions of protection. Failure to meet expectations may backfire on all actors in the field.

Even if these challenges are basically military, they affect humanitarian actors directly. This may encourage enhanced coordination between militaries and humanitarians, if nothing else to avoid doing more harm than good. However, given the diverging definitions and approaches


365 Outside the UN, one attempt is the ‘Protection of Civilians Military Reference Guide’, published by Peacekeeping and Stability Operations Institute (PKSOI) at the United States Army War College. However, this document is not incorporated in doctrine or official concepts. Available at https://www.pksoi.org/document_repository/doc_lib/PoC_Military_Reference_Guide_%28Jan-13%29.pdf (login required)


367 Holt, Taylor and Kelly, Protecting Civilians in the Context of UN Peacekeeping Operations, 12.
between the military, humanitarians and others, PoC is likely remain a series of parallel and partly overlapping activities.

3.5. Robust Peacekeeping/Stability Operations/Peace Support Operations

‘Robust peacekeeping’ is not an official UN term, but it is widely used to refer to modern-day peacekeeping, as noted in the previous chapter, with troops better equipped to protect themselves and to help implement the mandate or peace accords.\(^{368}\) The Security Council generally authorizes peacekeepers ‘to “use all necessary means” to deter forceful attempts to disrupt the political process, protect civilians under imminent threat of physical attack, and/or assist the national authorities in maintaining law and order’.\(^{369}\) Similarly, doctrines for such operations have been developed by regional security organizations like NATO and the AU, as well as by the USA.\(^{370}\)

In these operations, the military are responsible for providing security and stability in a defined area of responsibility. Usually this is a post-conflict environment where major combat operations are over and a peace agreement is in place, but where the situation remains volatile and the peace fragile. The main task of the military is to provide security and stability, and to prevent the recurrence of violence. This means that the military are primarily defensively oriented, but may take offensive initiatives to avert attacks, apprehend criminals or to counter ‘spoilers’ to the peace process.\(^{371}\) As noted, mandates usually include PoC tasks as well. As seen in Chapter 3, because security is defined broadly (encompassing human security, children, minorities, women, etc.), such missions are generally ‘multi-dimensional’ and political, and require close collaboration with civilian agencies, including humanitarians. Refugee-camp security, patrolling, demobilization of child soldiers, de-mining and removal of unexploded ordinances: these are examples of the tasks of a robust peacekeeping operation that touch on

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\(^{371}\) Stedman, ‘Spoiler Problems in Peace Processes’.
humanitarian tasks as well. The various models of ‘integrated missions’ and ‘comprehensive approach’ discussed in Chapter 1 have emerged in these contexts, where civilian and military agencies are expected to build cohesion of some sort, recognizing that there are no purely military solutions in these situations.

As mentioned, humanitarians have tended to distance themselves from both the UN integrated approach and the various comprehensive approaches. They fear becoming politicized by being forced to collaborate with troops and political UN staff. This restrictive attitude has frustrated the militaries, which often cannot implement their mandate or achieve their objectives without collaboration with the humanitarians.

3.6. Countering armed groups
This category incorporates military operations aimed at countering armed non-state actors – insurgents, terrorists, guerrillas, militias, criminal organizations, warlords, tribal factions, and similar. We can roughly subdivide this into two types: enemy-centric and population-centric operations. The first is generally associated with counter-terrorism and historical counter-insurgency (COIN) operations, the second with recent COIN operations, as discussed in the previous chapter.

The enemy-centric approach aims at weakening the adversary directly, by military engagement. It is based on the conventional military tenet that military victory paves the way for later political solutions and peace. The unconventional nature of the adversary will require unconventional responses, not least when the fighting takes place ‘amongst the people’, but the aim is nonetheless to engage the enemy and incapacitate him. With enemy-centric operations the Geneva Conventions usually applies, although the legal status of the insurgents is sometimes debated. For instance, the Bush administration in the USA invented the term ‘unlawful

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372 Metcalfe, Giffen and Elhawary, UN Integration and Humanitarian Space.; Glad, A Partnership at Risk?
combatants’ to cover al-Qaeda and their Taliban associates, so that they would be treated neither as legal combatants (and granted status as Prisoners of War), nor as regular criminals. The secret arrests globally of alleged terrorists and the opening of the Guantanamo Bay detention camp illustrate this. But most legal commentaries appear to argue that the USA and its allies were under Geneva Conventions jurisdiction also in these operations.377

Controversies with humanitarians have often arisen in cases involving disproportionate use of force and high levels of civilian casualties, something which is partly a condition of the nature of these conflicts. As noted, also the UN has begun conducting operations of this kind recently. The UN has described the ‘intervention brigade’ in the DRC as its ‘first-ever “offensive” combat force, intended to carry out targeted operations to “neutralize and disarm”’ rebels.378 Some commentators have warned of the high risk of violent retaliation against civilians in such operations.379 That would make it even more challenging for humanitarians to cooperate with the UN.

The population-centric COIN was discussed in Chapter 3. The current version was launched in Iraq when the enemy-centric approach did not seem to be working, and collateral damage and failure to protect civilians had fuelled local resentment towards the foreign troops. As noted, COIN is often summarized as ‘clear–hold–build’: clear an area of adversaries, then hold the territory, and build up its security and governance structures. The term ‘population-centric’ indicates that the real struggle concerns the allegiance of the population in the ‘build’ phase. There can be no isolated military solution: victory is achieved only when the government has won over the population by offering security and services.380 A consequence of this broad

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approach is that the entire area of operations is regarded as part of the political struggle that COIN represents, including humanitarian relief. According to the US COIN doctrine: ‘There is no such thing as impartial humanitarian assistance (…) in COIN. Whenever someone is helped, someone else is hurt, not least the insurgents.’

The doctrine thus defines the entire area of operation as politicized, ruling out possibilities for a humanitarian space. The problem is that most humanitarians would not consider themselves as being ‘in COIN’. They would refute the claim that the entire area of operations is politicized, and would argue that they may very well provide ‘impartial humanitarian assistance’ as long as the troops keep a distance to them. Humanitarians have protested when soldiers have conducted humanitarian or other civilian aid operations, seeing them as aimed at winning local ‘hearts and minds’, boosting troop legitimacy or collecting intelligence, rather than being impartial and needs-based. This, it is argued, has politicized aid and undermined the security of humanitarians by blurring the lines between the humanitarian and military actors. Furthermore, the military has often done this through ‘quick impact projects’ and other short-term efforts, which humanitarians criticize for being inefficient as well as unsustainable. In short, the humanitarian core values of neutrality, impartiality and independence are seen as threatened. These are serious concerns, with potentially huge repercussions for security in the field.

That being said, many humanitarians have contributed to this blurring of roles themselves, by engaging in projects that are closer to reconstruction and development work than humanitarian relief, and are thus political rather than humanitarian in nature. In Afghanistan for instance, humanitarians have been involved in educational programming, livelihoods, economic development and agriculture – thereby potentially undermining their own concept of impartiality and neutrality. Michael Barnett labels these attempts at addressing the root causes of suffering as ‘alchemical humanitarianism’ – as opposed to the emergency workers

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382 Cornish, ‘No Room for Humanitarianism in 3D Policies’.

383 Beauchamp, Defining the Humanitarian Space through Public International Law.

who limits themselves to saving lives. He is critical of the knowledge-base underlying such attempts at peace-building and of the inherent politics involved: ‘you have to advocate for redistribution of political power, the reallocation of resources and the enforcement of rights’. We return to this in Chapter 6; suffice it here to conclude that the most controversial recent clashes between humanitarians and the military have been in the context of these kinds of military operations.

3.7. **International armed conflict**

Most armed forces today are still based on the concept of conventional warfare, defined in IHL as International Armed Conflict. Basic doctrines, concepts, training and education are all primarily preparations for inter-state conventional war. All the categories of military operations discussed above are seen as exceptions, or at least assignments that are additional to the primary task of an army. In such wars the Geneva Conventions regulate the respective responsibilities of the belligerents and the humanitarians, as discussed in the introduction of this chapter. There have in fact been few such international state-to-state wars in recent decades. The Russia–Georgia war in 2008 is the most recent one, and before that the US-led invasion of Iraq in 2003. The 1990s also witnessed predominantly intra-state wars. We do not have many examples of recent challenges related to humanitarian issues in inter-state wars.

The primary challenge appears to be granting access for humanitarian actors to conflict zones. In both Georgia and Iraq, humanitarians called for better access to the civilian population. As noted above, although the Geneva Conventions grant access in principle, they do not specify on what grounds belligerents may deny humanitarian access. In the case of Iraq, US troops did

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386 Ibid., 40.

387 The 2014 Russian incursion and invasion into Crimea and eastern Ukraine should probably be added here, but Russia’s denial of own intrusion may complicate the definition of the war – at least legally.


not allow aid workers passage until the areas had been declared as safe. As a result, humanitarians were at times as far as 300 miles behind the frontline.390

Another challenge has been the humanitarian responsibilities resting on the occupying power, which, by according to IHL, is obliged to provide the necessary humanitarian aid and to secure the basic human rights of the civilian population. Again, the case of Iraq demonstrated that this may not always go smoothly, not least as the security vacuum in Iraq was filled by looters and violent gangs.391 Occupying forces are also responsible – as far as possible – for overall security in the territory they occupy.392 The devastating terrorist bombing of UN Headquarters in Baghdad in 2003 showed how complicated this is, legally and in practice. The attack led to a surge of resentment against the USA from the UN, the humanitarians and the broader NGO community. UN Secretary-General Kofi Annan went so far as to accuse the USA of failing to protect the UN. When it emerged that the UN Mission had in fact turned down an offer from the USA for a security detail at the site, the Secretary-General responded that the United States, ‘as occupying power, is obliged to protect people nonetheless.’393 Furthermore, he claimed that the UN Mission not should have been allowed to turn down the offer, indicating that he thought the USA should have imposed a security detail on the UN.394 Here we can imagine the uproar from the UN and the humanitarians if this had happened and no attack had taken place. As in other cases, IHL is far from crystal-clear, and the term ‘as far as possible’ in the law brings a caveat or war-zone realism into the discussion. Occupying forces cannot be held responsible for everything that insurgents do, and it is impossible to define a priori what ‘sufficient security’ would look like in a volatile security environment in an occupied territory. Occupying forces can be accused of imposing too much or too little security; what is the appropriate level one


392 The Hague Convention (IV) respecting the Laws and Customs of War on Land and its annex: Regulations concerning the Laws and Customs of War on Land, 18 October 1907. Art. 43 reads: ‘The authority of the legitimate power having in fact passed into the hands of the occupant, the latter shall take all the measures in his power to restore, and ensure, as far as possible, public order and safety, while respecting, unless absolutely prevented, the laws in force in the country’. Available at: https://www.icrc.org/ihr/WebART/195-200053?OpenDocument

393 Anderson, ‘Humanitarian Inviolability in Crisis’, 47.

394 Ibid.
day may be insufficient the next. Security is a dynamic process with measures and counter-measures: it is certainly no exact science.

In short, even in cases like this when IHL applies, it is not sufficient in and of itself to resolve all humanitarian questions. Practical challenges confront the military and the humanitarian actors also in conventional international armed conflicts.

4. Conclusions

The taxonomy of military operations and the associated challenges with humanitarian issues developed here offers a framework for differentiating various types of conflicts and challenges that militaries and humanitarians are likely to face in the field. Since the military and humanitarians often operate in rural areas, where other interveners are less present, this taxonomy also provides a mapping of the most common forms of military–civilian challenges encountered in the field.

Military mandates differ significantly from category to category, and conflicts may occur in all operations, not only in intense warfare. The challenges range from practical questions of coordination and communication, to dealing with shared and overlapping tasks, to potential escalation of the conflict. All the operations identified here are regulated by IHL, IHRL or specific guidelines or doctrines, but it appears that these not have been sufficient to resolve all the challenges. Politics have a pervasive presence.

The most serious difficulties emerge when humanitarian actors feel themselves politicized, as this is seen as threatening to undermine their own core values of independence, impartiality and neutrality. Such politicization is more likely to occur in offensive military operations – when troops are tasked with implementing a peace agreement or engaging an adversary. Furthermore, when the military task requires active engagement with civilian populations, as in PoC and in population-centric COIN, friction with humanitarians tends to increase. However, it should also be noted that humanitarians sometimes politicize themselves when they fail to recognize the political nature or implications of their chosen activities.

To resolve these tensions, some argue that the militaries should disengage the humanitarians altogether, and focus instead on building coherence with developmental actors less concerned
with impartiality and neutrality. But it is unlikely that the military and the humanitarians could ever escape each other, even if they wanted to. In almost all types of military operations discussed here, the humanitarians are present and conduct activities that may impact on the activities of the military, and vice versa. If nothing else, they need to communicate in order to de-conflict. Furthermore, the degree of politicization of an intervening actor cannot be directly deduced from the type of organization. In principle any intervention, civilian or military, is political – or may be locally regarded as such. The degree of politicization is therefore likely to be defined more by what the various actors do, than by who they are. In some circumstances, basic humanitarian aid may be viewed as political interference; elsewhere, local belligerents may welcome projects traditionally regarded as political. Separating the military from the humanitarians is not be feasible, nor could it resolve the challenges related to politicization.

Overlapping tasks and mandates, physical proximity and situational circumstances in the field will continue to keep these strange bedfellows together. The relationship will depend on the category of operations, as discussed here, but also on local circumstances. Each conflict and intervention is unique. But politics are always present, also in the military–humanitarian sphere. The role of humanitarian actors in interventions is therefore usually relevant and important. Humanitarians do have a political impact towards other intervening actors, even if they manage to remain apolitical in relations with the local body politic. IHL does not grant them an apolitical ‘humanitarian space’, even if their impartiality is recognized. In other words, there are no generic or context-independent elements that can be applied to develop an understanding of the military–humanitarian challenges. As regards analysis, humanitarians can be approached through the same analytical framework as other civilians.

In the next chapter I develop such an analytical framework. In this and the previous chapters I have identified numerous challenges facing the intervening actors, have organized them in taxonomies and discussed various military–civilian constellations. But these challenges as such have not been fully analysed. That requires an approach that looks at how these challenges are

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395 Egnell, ‘Civil–Military Coordination for Operational Effectiveness’.


397 This is an analytical conclusion, which by no means necessarily implies that the humanitarian imperative should be abandoned as an operational foundation for humanitarians. Striving for this may be efficient, safe, and wise, as long as it is coupled with political sensitivity and awareness on the part of the same actors.
developing, and not least why they are emerging. We need to discuss analytical tools and theoretical approaches in greater depth. As discussed in Chapter 1, a theory is more than a map: it is also an attempt at explaining or understanding social processes in a simplified way. In short, then, the next chapter aims to develop an analytical framework, a theoretical approach, that can be applied to understand the challenges across cases.
Chapter 5

Towards an Analytical Framework

1. Introduction

Chapters 2 to 4 have offered a discussion of the challenges related to coherence in interventions, and how these challenges differ depending on the actors and the type of operation involved. There are many forms of relationships in an intervention, and there are certain limits to what striving for coherence may achieve. I have also argued that there are significant overlaps between various forms of military operations, and that neither peacekeepers nor occupying forces or COIN troops are necessarily difficult partners for civilians – although they may all very well be so. Lastly, I have shown that military–humanitarian relations differ depending on the nature of the military operation in question, tending to be most strained in the context of offensive military operations.

However, the previous chapters do not offer a full exploration of the processes and mechanisms that create these challenges. For a deeper understanding of the drivers of and impediments to coherence in an intervention, there is a need to ask how the challenges that have been identified emerge and evolve. The dynamics underpinning these observations needs to be analysed. Such an analysis would have to be broad in scope, encompassing several of the most important intervening actors, the incentives and impediments for interaction, as well as the power-relations between them. To do so a theoretical analytical framework that can help to understand the challenges, is needed. That is the purpose of this chapter, which differs from the previous chapters in focusing on developing such an analytical framework.

I begin by exploring the work of one scholar who has made a thorough attempt at comprehensive theorizing of an entire intervention: Séverine Autesserre, with her study of the intervention in the Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC).398 Investigating her approach in

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398 Autesserre, ‘Hobbes and the Congo: Frames, Local Violence, and International Intervention’; also her The Trouble with the Congo.
detail to see if it is applicable to other cases as well, I assess her main analytical and theoretical tool, what she labels ‘the peacebuilding frame’, and discuss this concept of ‘frame’ and its supporting theoretical elements, ‘world polity’ and ‘organizational field’. I will argue that the concept of ‘frame’, as applied by Autesserre, has serious shortcomings. It cannot account for change, and the theorizing is primarily inductive, tailormade for one specific case and therefore not applicable beyond that. Therefore I will propose a deductive analytical framework which builds on certain of Autesserre’s elements, but is more generally applicable to other cases. This framework focuses on the identity formation processes of the intervening actors.

In a nutshell, what identification theory contributes is an analysis of how the Self and Other co-constitute each other. In this dissertation, I argue that the way the intervening actors (Self) represent those they engage (Other), and how this representation evolve over time, can shed light on changes in the policies of the Self. Importantly, although the focus of this dissertation is the relationship between intervening actors, the important Other for intervening actors are usually not other interveners, but the local populations they are deployed to engage. After all, the purpose of an intervention is to alter an Other in some way – for instance by killing, saving, or reforming. This is why the interveners are there, why they are deployed. By analysing the dynamics of identity formations of the interveners and the various associated power-struggles, we will also be better equipped to understand the challenges related to coherence between the intervening actors. If they view the Other very differently, coherence and cooperation is less likely to succeed. In Chapter 6 I then apply this analytical framework to the intervention in Afghanistan.

2. Autesserre’s Frames

Séverine Autesserre can be placed in the camp of the ‘liberal peacebuilding’ critique, as discussed in Chapter 1. But she develops a more comprehensive theoretical framework on one specific intervention than other scholars have done. She seeks to explain why the intervention into the DRC largely failed, by showing how the intervening actors came with several predisposed opinions and ignored local-level violence. Seeing it as irrelevant to their role or mandate, they focused solely on the national or central level. As she points out, the importance of local violence is well recognized among students of civil war – and yet, international actors
failed to address the local causes of violence in the DRC. As a result, peacebuilding efforts collapsed, and the conflict flared up again.

The explanation can be found in what Autesserre calls a ‘postconflict peacebuilding frame’ which is ‘shared by international actors belonging to many different organizations, such as diplomacies, international organizations, and nongovernmental agencies.’ This frame can ‘account for what shapes the international understanding of the causes of violence and of the interveners’ role, and how this understanding makes certain actions possible while precluding others.’ According to Autesserre, in the Congo this frame contained four key elements: 1) the international actors labelled the DRC as ‘postconflict’; 2) a certain level of violence was regarded as innate and therefore acceptable; 3) the interveners were concerned with the national and international realms, but not the local ones; and 4) they preferred holding elections to engaging in local conflict resolution. This shared approach among the interveners, says Autesserre, explains their behaviour. It led them to engage in peacebuilding on the basis of several assumptions while simultaneously ignoring worrying signals from the field.

Autesserre states that her term ‘frame’ builds on Erving Goffman’s 1974 work, Frame Analysis: An Essay on the Organization of Experience, and later refinements in political science. In Autesserre’s version, the concept of frames ‘focuses the analysis on how people organize knowledge and interpret it’. Frames are not independent of the actors embedded in them: they are in a dynamic relationship with them, and are thus mutually constitutive over time. Hence, in terms of Jackson’s philosophical ontological wagers discussed in Chapter 1, Autesserre can be said to be applying an analyticist methodology: mind-world monism combined with phenomenalism. She regards frames as embedded in the social, not outside it; and she does not rely on independent non-observables, such as ‘social structures’, to make her explanatory arguments. This could also be termed ‘constitutive theory’, as discussed in Chapter 1.

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400 Ibid., 252.


Autesserre highlights four characteristics of frames as she defines them: what frames are, where they come from, how they operate; and how they relate to strategic explanations. The last is directly related to her specific case and is less relevant for our discussion here, but the three others are generic, and can help us to understand her theoretical framework better.

2.1. What are Frames?
Autesserre describes frames as ‘social objects…. embedded in social routines, practices, discourses, technologies and institutions.’\(^\text{403}\) They may consist of, for example, ideologies and paradigms – perceptions about the world that not are questioned, and the practices that follow logically from such perceptions. In her *The Trouble with the Congo* (2010), Autesserre replaced the term ‘frame’ with ‘culture’, without changing the definition otherwise.\(^\text{404}\) ‘Culture’ is often regarded as a very loose analytical concept, dismissed altogether by some scholars. Rationalists like Jackman and Miller, for instance, reject the inherent conservatism and predetermination of behaviour and action which they claim is present in cultural explanations.\(^\text{405}\) Also the anthropologist Adam Kuper warns against cultural determinism and underlines the importance of other socio-political factors in explaining human thought and behaviour.\(^\text{406}\) Ned Lebow stresses that there is a major risk of tautology associated with unobservable and fluid concepts such as culture (as well as markets, polarity and many other concepts in social science).\(^\text{407}\) When using the term culture – as he does – it must have manifestations other than the behaviour it is expected to produce, he stipulates. Lebow tracks its evolution over time; he also operationalizes culture in three dimensions (fear, interest, honour), thereby making the term analytically manageable.

Unfortunately, culture or frame, as used by Autesserre, is not a rigorously defined analytical concept, but a relatively open-ended one. Frames are the ‘luggage’ the intervening actors carry

\(^\text{403}\) Ibid.

\(^\text{404}\) One may ask whether these terms are really interchangeable – but I refrain from that discussion here.


with them in their minds, procedures and practices when entering the field. The existence of such ‘luggage’ – in one form of the other – is well established within the social sciences, but the unique analytical value of ‘frames’ is unclear in Autesserre’s version.

The reason for this elusiveness might be that Autesserre concludes that there is one overarching frame that is shared by almost all interveners. This is analytically induced from empirical studies in the DRC: ‘different actors with distinct identities, internal cultures, and interests show puzzling behavioural similarities’ she notes.408 These similarities she then theorizes into a frame with all its characteristics. Given such broad application, the term must remain somewhat intangible by default. However, for frames to have any unique analytical value – in order to avoid the problems of predetermination and tautology – we need to have a better understanding of how the frame emerges and how it influences behaviour: the dynamics and mechanisms creating the ideologies and paradigms of the frame.

2.2. Where do they come from?

Autesserre’s discussion of where frames come from may help us along on the way. In the Congo, she holds, much of the peacebuilding frame existed prior to the intervention, although the pace of events during the intervention also contributed to building it. That a frame exists prior to an intervention follows logically from the definition, but it is crucial to understand how it emerges and evolves for it to have any analytical value. Frames are socially constructed, she holds, and do not exist a priori or independent of the intervening actors.409 They are somehow part of the intervening actors, but Autesserre holds that locating them within each and every intervening organization is too narrow an approach. If frames were a result of intra-organizational processes only, each organization could be expected to have its own frame and to behave in different ways. In the case of the DRC, Autesserre registered behavioural similarities across organizations. Therefore, she argues, a frame must encompass more than each single organization: it must be localized outside or between the individual intervening organizations.

2.2.1. World polity

Autesserre locates the sources of the frame at two levels: the world polity and the field. The former term is borrowed from Roland Paris, who in turn builds on the ‘world polity school’ of


409 Autesserre, The Trouble with the Congo, 24.
The argument here is that it is possible to identify a distinct global culture made up of rules of organization and behaviour for global actors. Drawing also on the institutional approach of March and Olsen, Paris holds that scholars have largely overlooked the importance of ‘logics of appropriateness’ in the formulation of peacekeeping policy. In other words, policies are not based on rational calculations only, but also on identity; and that, according to March and Olsen, is ‘in accordance with rules and practices that are socially constructed, publicly known, anticipated and accepted.’ Hence, writes Paris, ‘the design and conduct of peacekeeping missions reflect not only the interests of key parties and the perceived lessons of previous operations, but also the prevailing norms of global culture, which legitimize certain kinds of peacekeeping policies and delegitimize others.’

In short, Paris argues that peacekeeping has mirrored the evolution of the global culture from the Cold War until today. During the Cold War, the Westphalian principle of sovereignty remained dominant, and peacekeepers rarely engaged in issues of domestic governance. Since 1989, however, peacekeeping missions have ‘mirrored the second revolution in the meaning of sovereignty: the emergence of a new standard of legitimate statehood — one that treats liberal democratic institutions and practices as the most appropriate model of domestic governance.’ The mushrooming of new missions, concepts and actors such as ‘peacebuilders’ reflects this change. Paris continues: ‘peacekeeping agencies have been unwilling to consider strategies that appear to contravene global cultural norms’, such as ‘international trusteeship’.

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412 Ibid., 451.

413 Ibid., 443.

414 Ibid., 443.
In the case of the Congo, Autesserre claims that ‘veneration of elections’ and an ‘understanding of violence as intrinsic to the Congo’ were part of a similar global culture.\textsuperscript{415} The focus on elections was based on the evolution in the UN as described by Paris, where liberal democracy increasingly became the medicine prescribed for securing the peace in transitional and post-war societies. The belief in ‘intrinsic violence’ stemmed from a 19\textsuperscript{th}-century representation of the Congolese as “‘by nature” brutal, barbarous and savage’ – a view still evident at the time of the intervention.\textsuperscript{416} This left the interveners with a feeling of powerlessness, while also leading them to regard local violence as ‘normal’ in the Congo and not as part of the larger conflict. These two notions thus existed external to the intervening actors and prior to the actual intervention.

In her analysis of the Western reluctance to intervene in the Balkan wars in the 1990s, Lene Hansen identifies a similar representation of the local people as ‘barbaric’, carrying in them an ‘ancient hatred’ which outside forces could not alter.\textsuperscript{417} Such essentialist representations of the belligerents made intervention unattractive, indeed futile. Hence, it seems likely that (potential) intervening actors in conflicts do carry with them certain perceptions about the ‘nature’ of the conflict in question.

Nonetheless, neither Autesserre nor Paris is very clear on how these norms in the world polity emerge and evolve. Lene Hansen, in contrast, shows how a different representation of the war in Bosnia-Herzegovina gained international momentum in the West – one which held that what was happening was not some ‘ancient’ civil war between monolithic ethnic groups. Rather, the alternative representation held that what was happening was a deliberate attempt by certain leaders to eliminate, by violence, the multicultural nature of Bosnia-Herzegovina. This ‘genocide discourse’, says Hansen, turned intervention on the part of the West into a moral necessity.

Although such a change of perception did not take place among interveners in the Congo, it is analytically crucial that we should allow for it – otherwise, the world polity would be treated as a constant or as detached from the intervening actors. As Martha Finnemore puts it: ‘If the world culture they specify is so powerful and congruent, the institutionalists have no grounds

\textsuperscript{415} Autesserre, \textit{The Trouble with the Congo}, 26.

\textsuperscript{416} Autesserre, ‘Hobbes and the Congo’, 264.

for explaining value conflicts or normative contestation – in other words politics.’\textsuperscript{418} Any analysis incorporating such historical and macro-factors as ‘global cultures’ thus needs to consider the fluidity of these concepts and how groups of actors may change their perceptions of the situation. As was the case in Bosnia-Herzegovina, the historical representations, worldviews and established approaches to interventions may change in the midst of events. Competing representations will always exist: and it is essential to grasp the power struggles between these if we are to understand change.

\textbf{2.2.2. Organizational field}

The second source of the frame Autesserre identifies is the \textit{field}, an ‘intermediary level between that of the individual organization and that of the world polity.’\textsuperscript{419} By this she is referring to the term \textit{organizational field} as used by DiMaggio and Powell in 1983 to explain institutional isomorphism, or why organizations become increasingly similar.\textsuperscript{420} Inspired by Pierre Bourdieu,\textsuperscript{421} they wrote in opposition to the then-dominant Weberian theorizing based on market-driven rationalization, and proposed instead a model where ‘organizational change occur(s) as the result of processes that make organizations more similar without necessarily making them more efficient.’\textsuperscript{422} A field is defined as an ‘increasingly structured set of organizations that ‘in the aggregate constitute a recognized area of institutional life’.\textsuperscript{423} In the case of the Congo, Autesserre observes such an isomorphism – making ‘organizations as

\textsuperscript{418} Finemore, ‘Norms, Culture, and World Politics’, 333–34.

\textsuperscript{419} Autesserre, \textit{The Trouble with the Congo}, 26.


\textsuperscript{422} DiMaggio and Powell, ‘The Iron Cage Revisited’, 147.

\textsuperscript{423} Autesserre, \textit{The Trouble with the Congo}, 26.
different as the UN, the United States, South Africa, and many NGOs...adopt the same understanding of the situation and similar intervention strategies’. 424

DiMaggio and Powell’s analysis of isomorphism is based upon three mechanisms: coercive (pressures exerted by other organizations and by cultural expectations in society), mimetic (organizations model themselves on other organizations in case of ambiguity or uncertainty), and normative (legitimation and networks stemming from professionalization).425 However, none of these are included in Autesserre’s analysis of the international intervention in the DRC. Her analysis is primarily empirical – dealing with the various actors comprising this field. We therefore do not know precisely how the field contributed to the emergence of the widely shared peacebuilding frame. What processes and mechanisms were at play? It remains somewhat unclear what analytical value the term ‘organizational field’ has in Autesserre’s model, besides serving as an inductively established framework for presenting empirical findings.

Of course, the three mechanisms of isomorphism may have been present also in the case of the DRC. Still, a ‘field’ is usually associated with an ‘industry’, a ‘sector’ or similar. Although field boundaries must be empirically defined, on the basis of such things as membership, activities, relations, culture, or proximity, the organizations in a field need to share something, participate in a common meaning system, for it to be analytically relevant.426 It seems Autesserre is stretching the concept of a ‘field’ further than most other scholars applying this theory. I have no reason to doubt the empirical foundation on which she bases her approach. But if we are to apply her model to other interventions – or use it to help answer the research question of this dissertation – it may be less fruitful to operate with only one such overarching frame. It would be more natural to ask whether several fields (and thus several frames) could be singled out within an intervention – for instance a humanitarian and a military – operating side by side in the same intervention.

Furthermore, for the purposes of understanding coherence in interventions it would be better to examine the relations between these fields than relations between the organizations comprising them. A central question then, is: do DiMaggio and Powers’ mechanisms of coercive, mimetic and normative isomorphism say anything about how organizations relate to other fields – or


426 Scott, Institutions and Organizations, ch. 8; DiMaggio and Powell, ‘The Iron Cage Revisited’.

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other actors outside the fields, such as those who are being intervened upon? Unfortunately, few scholars in sociological organization theory have investigated the relationship between or outside organizational fields, tending instead to focus on inter-organizational relations within the same field. There is therefore not much to build on.

One could have expected students of IR, who usually operate on a higher level of analysis than sociologists, to have conducted such analyses. The common focus on inter-state and inter-organizational relations within IR should increase the probability of such studies. However, very few have applied organizational fields within IR. Michael Lipson combines organizational field with regime theory in studying interactions and sub-optimal convergence between international regimes, and finds that such things as legitimized standards matter more than effectiveness in the case of weapons-export control regimes. 427 However, his main interest is in explaining convergence within the field. Dingwerth and Pattberg, who study transnational rule-making organizations in the field of environmental politics, also address ‘the dynamics that promote similarity among organizations’. 428 Bremberg and Britz, on the other hand, identify an absence of coherence in the field of EU civil protection. 429 By noting how the institutional logics in the European national civil protection fields are conflicting, they show why no institutional logic has become dominant on the EU level. This could be a promising approach, since they are thereby operating with several fields. Nevertheless, these fields are rather similar and may be regarded as sub-fields (national/international), rather than distinct fields, as in an intervention. Ulrika Mörh’s study of the emergence of a European policy on armament is the most promising in this regard, as she focuses on how informal and formal organizations take part in two organizational fields (defence and market) and how these move closer to each other, thereby creating a new field. 430 Her analytical framework is original because it focuses on two fields and on processes and change, recognizing that organizations may form new fields and frames. It is nonetheless convergence of organizations that is the main focus. Therefore, the

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430 Mörh, Organizing European Cooperation: The Case of Armaments.
application of organizational field theory in IR, while operating on a higher level of analysis than in sociology, has remained within the basic parameters of its sociological ancestors. The focus is still largely on convergence within a field – or, as with Mörth, between two fields.

To summarize, organizational theory may well have much to offer in studies of interventions – but primarily if the research focus is on the various intervening organizations and their relations with similar organizations within the same field. What this body of literature seeks to explain is organizational behaviour – whether convergence, rational or irrational behaviour, institutionalization or other organizational features within a field. It would seem to have less to offer for those interested in the interaction between fields.

To return to our initial question about the emergence of frames: neither world polity nor organizational field seem to offer good theoretical explanations of the emergence of a frame, which could be applied to other cases. What we need is an analytical concept that can enable a dynamic analysis of how the frame emerges and functions – a theory-based understanding of the policies in the intervention. So far this has only been explained by factors that existed prior to, and independent of, the intervention itself. Let us see if this is addressed in Autesserre’s third characteristic of frames: ‘how they operate’.

2.3. How do they operate?
‘Frames shape how people understand the world and, based on this understanding, what they perceive to be appropriate action’, Autesserre writes. In other words, frames constitute specific identities, interests and assumptions that ‘justify specific practices and policies while precluding others.’ Since the interveners regarded violence as ‘normal’ in peacetime in the Congo, they did not consider the ongoing violent conflict in parts of the country as a significant problem to its overall stability. Similarly, diplomats considered their sphere of responsibility to be on the macro-level, and restricted their focus to that. In short, the frames made local conflict resolution an irrelevant, inappropriate and illegitimate task for international actors. Alternative approaches to peacebuilding were simply ignored.

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431 Scott, *Institutions and Organizations: Ideas, Interests and Identities*.


433 Ibid., 255.
According to Autesserre, the frames and the practices legitimize and constitute each other: ‘these actions in turn reproduce and reinforce both the dominant practices and the meanings upon which they are predicated (the frames).’ Frames ‘do not cause action; they make it possible.’ Autesserre uses frames to ‘document a dispersed process where social objects have multiple sources, and where ideas, actions and environmental constraints mutually constitute each other.’

However, if actions also legitimize the frame, the theory must be able to capture how this happens. How do the actions and practices reproduce the frame? Furthermore, the theory must account for actions that oppose the frame, or seek to alter the dominant view the frame represents. Otherwise, actions and practices end up as independent variables as a result of the frame, and not in a process of mutual reinforcement as Autesserre claims.

In the Congo there were very few opposing voices resisting the peacebuilding frame, according to Autesserre. Some local residents, some smaller NGOs working on the local level, and some UN staff challenged the dominant point of view, but these were too weak and insignificant to challenge the dominant narrative. As a result, changes in the frame were rare, occurring only when key actors saw ‘external change or shock as threatening to organizational survival’. In the Congo the dominant frame changed only in the wake of ‘unexpected, genocidal, or particularly horrific violence’ that threatened the survival of the UN mission.

If we were to generalize this into a generic theory, however, we would face two challenges. Firstly, the external shock, as described by Autesserre, again refers to organizational survival. That may be too narrow an approach in other cases, as there could be other shocks or challenges that may threaten or alter an intervention, or parts of an intervention, not limited to the intervening organizations as such. When, for instance, German forces conducted airstrikes against two Taliban-held fuel tankers in Kunduz, Afghanistan in 2009, causing some 90 civilian

434 Ibid.
435 Ibid.
437 Ibid., 187–215.
casualties, this had a shocking effect on German society. It was not a question of the organizational survival of the Bundeswehr: no, it marked a significant alteration of the role of the military and perceptions of the operation in Afghanistan. Der Spiegel described it as the ‘end of innocence’ that ‘changed everything’.\textsuperscript{440} Sudden events and shocks may lead to adaptations and shifts in interventions, also without threatening organizational survival as such.

Secondly, restricting the prospect of change of the frame to external shocks will be less fruitful in a general theory of intervention. This is because such an approach would a priori ignore or dismiss resistance and opposition within the frame. One would assume that there will always be internal power struggles in a frame, with competing factions and alternative approaches. It may have been the case in the Congo that internal resistance was too weak, but an analytical model needs to be able to incorporate change also from within. In other cases, internal resistance may prove stronger. This means that we must be able to capture resistance and opposition within the frame systematically, and analyse the evolution of the relative strength of the various voices within the frame. In that way we can understand better why and how the main actors keep reproducing a frame, and why change occurs if it does.

Autesserre’s account of how her frame operates is not a convincing basis upon which to build a general theory. It relies on her empirical findings from the DRC where opposition to the frame was minimal, making it robust and dominant. Change took place only in extreme cases, and only from external forces. However, a deductive theory will need to be able to capture cases where the frame is more contested and change is more likely. Events on the ground can alter the perceptions and policies of the actors involved. Moreover, challenge and change may come from within the frame, from actors who are part of the intervention.

2.4. Frames: Conclusions
Autesserre’s analysis of the intervention in the DRC represents the most ambitious attempt at theorizing interventions to date. It draws on numerous sources and theories, some of which are worth exploring further. But her theory is largely inductively tailormade for this specific case: it cannot be applied deductively in other cases without significant modifications.

The term ‘frame’ (like ‘culture’) itself is rather loose, and requires further operationalization. The core elements of the Autesserre’s frame theory are the *world polity* and the *organizational field*, which provide the frame with a set of normal and acceptable ways of behaviour among the intervening actors. However, world polity theory cannot help us to understand norm change, which was seen largely as a force exogenous to the intervening actors themselves, imposed upon them from ‘the world’, as it were.

While the organizational field appeared to offer an approach to study inter-organizational behaviour, Autesserre does not make clear how this field came about or which mechanisms were involved in creating the convergence observed in the Congo. As theories of organizational fields focus predominantly on organizational convergence or isomorphism, such studies do not fit in with what students of interventions are primarily interested in. This is unfortunate, because such convergence is an obvious precondition before any concept such as field – or frame – can be applied. In order to be treated as analytical units, organizations need to share features, but students of interventions may be interested mainly in what a given unit does to others, outside the unit. A primary focus on organizations and organizational behaviour in organizational field theory may limit the analytical scope in studying interventions.

Furthermore, the frames come across as surprisingly robust. In Autesserre’s version, they change only when exposed to external shocks that threaten organizational survival. If so, that can help in explaining lack of change and adaptability – but it is analytically risky to operate with such rigidity in a concept as vaguely defined as frames are. The tautology that Lebow warned of may be close, if the frame is there *because* it is upheld by the frame. Moreover, in other cases, resistance from within may be significantly stronger than it was in the Congo, so we need a theory that can take that into account.

Autesserre’s comprehensive theorizing has several positive some elements worth retaining in a deductive theory of interventions, as well as certain negative aspects that need to be dealt with. Her philosophical ontological approach – which I defined as being within the analyticist category – makes it possible to build on her main methodological orientation. Following this, her usage of constitutive theory also seems fruitful in this context, as events on the ground may impact the perceptions and assumptions (or frame, in Autesserre’s terminology). However, some of her theoretical building blocks, such as the term ‘frame’, and the underlying concepts of world polity and organizational field, have not proven flexible enough to account for change.
We therefore need to find a way to maintain Autesserre’s basic orientation and focus, while replacing some of her analytical tools. To this I now turn.

3. Analytical framework: Identification

An alternative theory and analytical framework, applicable to several cases in a deductive fashion, needs to be general enough to fit several groups of actors (such as ‘peacebuilders’ and ‘humanitarians’) in several different cases. The aim in the context of this dissertation is to understand challenges related to coherence between intervening actors, but that does not rule out that the framework might also be applied to investigate other questions related to interventions. As discussed above, the framework must be able to account for change and evolution of the policies and practices in various groups; it must avoid ending up with explanations that are based on factors outside the scope of the study (such as world polity), and avoid analytical concepts that do not necessarily bring new clarity or insights (such as frames).

What defines humanitarians, international police forces, diplomats or the armed forces as groups in an intervention? A basic answer would be identity. They define themselves vis-à-vis other groups by attributing a shared meaning to themselves – a reason for being there, a common vision or purpose – in other words, their identity. An analytical focus on identity directs us to fundamental questions such as: Who are they intervening upon? How do they represent and engage them? How do they perceive themselves and their task? And crucially: how does their perception of the intervention evolve over time? The answer to these questions will show how the various intervening actors, or groups of actors, differentiate themselves, from those they are deployed to engage, as well as from other intervening actors. To this process of defining who and what is Self and Other in this context I now turn, as this lays the foundation for perceptions, worldviews, policies and practices. As such, identity as an analytical tool has the same ambition as Autesserre’s frames, but offers a more dynamic and flexible analytical approach that can account for change.

In the following I sketch out an analytical framework that enquires into the processes of identity formations of the intervening actors. It will offer a systematic account of how the worldviews and perceptions of intervening actors emerge and evolve, and how these actors relate to and define themselves in contrast to others.
I define ‘identity’ as the meaning that various actors ascribe to themselves and the operation of which they are a part. This concerns how the presence in the intervention is legitimized and how one set of actors differentiates itself from other actors. Since the Self largely is constituted by differentiation from the Others, this can be investigated by analysing one group’s representations of the Other in contrast to themselves. In principle any group could function as such a differentiating Other, but in the case of intervention, the main Others tend to be those people who are on the receiving end of the intervention.

But first: is not ‘identity’ just as elusive a concept as discussed about ‘culture’ above? It may entail the same analytical challenges in terms of being vague and undefinable. Like many other concepts in the social sciences – such as ‘market’, ‘class’, ‘nations’ and ‘frames’ – it is hard to pin down. Identity is applied in various academic fields, from philosophy to psychology, ethnography, sociology, economy and IR, and may have different connotations in each. Moreover, ‘identity’ is a word used in everyday language, as well as being a political concept employed for political purposes like nationalism or demands for self-determination. What the term ‘identity’ means is not immediately clear – and it may be taken out of context and (mis)used for political purposes.

Many researchers seek to escape this dilemma of politicization by stressing the elusive and fluid nature of identity. The challenge is of course that an overly-loose concept loses its analytical vigour. Therefore, Brubaker and Cooper argue for dismissing identity altogether as an analytical concept: ‘… “identity” is too ambiguous, too torn between “hard” and “soft” meanings, essentialist connotations and constructivist qualifiers, to serve well the demands of social analysis.’\textsuperscript{441} Further: ‘…if one wants to argue that particularistic self-understandings shape social and political action in a non-instrumental manner, one can simply say so.’\textsuperscript{442} Nonetheless, they suggest some alternative analytical idioms which can do ‘the theoretical work “identity” is meant to do, without its confusing, contradictory connotations’\textsuperscript{443} These are: ‘identification’, ‘categorization’, ‘self-understanding’ and ‘commonality’. One particularly attractive feature of these alternatives is that most of them are derived from verbs, and describe


\textsuperscript{442} Ibid., 9.

\textsuperscript{443} Ibid., 14.
processes rather than conditions. This seems to fit well with the constantly evolving nature of identities, while simultaneously opening up for agency in the analysis.

Studying identification would therefore entail looking into the very basics of a social group, the glue that keeps them together, and the constant evolution of this glue. Such analysis can provide a platform for subsequent analyses of more narrow character. We can understand the very basic ideas shared by a group of interveners and how these are challenged, contested or upheld.

3.1. Self and Other
The first academic studies of collective identities, of groups of Selves and Others, and their mutual co-constitution, is often associated with the pioneering work of Fredrik Barth. The definition of Self and Other is about drawing boundaries in several dimensions. The struggles over such boundaries and the power-relations this entails are political. It is here that change is allowed or denied, and normalities are defined. Identities are made up of the set of traditions, ways of thinking, and representations that define and usually restrict the possible scope of political action. We may also study identity at different levels. The focus here are on collective identities, but these can be in smaller or larger groups, more or less explicitly codified in institutions, organizations, religion, nations or something else. Intervening actors will for instance in most cases be organizations: military units, NGOs, UN agencies and so forth. Each of these organizations probably have a certain identity, that give the staff some pride, uniqueness or collectiveness vis a vis other organizations. However, as discussed above, in the analytical framework here, I will pay attention to collective identities that are on a higher level. i.e. identities that are shared between similar organizations. In these cases the shared identities may be less explicit, compared to an organization with a logo, a budget and a history, but it is analytically approachable by looking at their shared representation of their Other.

Importantly, if we are to take Brubaker and Cooper’s criticism of identity as an analytical concept into account, we must pay attention to the processes of identification. We will need to study not instances of identity, but the processes (and thus struggles) of defining them – the

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identification. This can be done in several ways, depending also on the case. For instance, with his concept of ‘imagined communities’, Benedict Anderson conducted an historical study of how nations have been ‘imagined’ through history: people who had never met nonetheless shared a notion of the nation they were part of.\footnote{Benedict Anderson, \textit{Imagined Communities: Reflections on the Origin and Spread of Nationalism} (London: Verso, 1991).} He saw imagination as similar to identification, emphasizing process and change. Similarly, Charles Taylor demonstrated that we cannot understand our present modern identity without an historical grasp of the evolution of its sources.\footnote{Charles Taylor, \textit{Sources of the Self: The Making of the Modern Identity} (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1989).}

Identity formation is a dynamic process; it is relational and political, since it is about drawing borders between categories of Self and Others. Analysing how the key actors in an intervention represent their Others may thus help us to understand identity formation of the Self. Further, it can help us to identify resistance, alternative voices, and representations which at some stage might change the frame from within – a possibility less evident in Autesserre’s approach. The identification process is also linked to policies: various representations of Self and Other may legitimize or preclude certain actions.

The Self, the intervening actors, always involves a contrast to someone else. In William Connolly’s words: ‘Identity requires difference in order to be, and it converts differences into otherness in order to secure its own self-certainty.’\footnote{Connolly, \textit{Identity/Difference}, 64.} The very purpose of intervening actors is to engage Others: without the existence of an Other to fight (for the military) or save (for humanitarians), there would be no need for them. The exact nature and location of these Others keeps changing – but without the prospect of their emerging from time to time, the very existence of the interveners would be called into question. If there were no more humanitarian disasters, there would be no humanitarian actors. If there were no post-conflict peace processes, there would be no need for peacebuilders. If organized political violence were somehow eradicated from the globe, armed forces would lose their meaning. None of these scenarios are likely – but representations of the nature of the Other impact on how these actors define themselves.
A theatre of intervention constitutes something ‘outside’ of them – a place where one intervenes or enters, doing something that legitimizes the activity: it serves as the Other to the intervening Self. Each identity represents the theatre and its perceived needs, and defines a policy in response. Herein also lies power. Some actors are stronger than others; some views are more dominant than others among intervening actors. Any representation of an Other implies the power of definition and knowledge. In this case, the representation of the Other (as those intervened upon) and its needs also carries an element of dominance.449 Those intervened upon tend to be the weaker part, often overwhelmed by the interveners, as discussed in Chapter 2. On the other hand, resistance from the Other is also often significant, as seen in numerous political and military interventions. It may play out in various forms; as violence, political resistance, undermining, corruption, or simply foot-dragging.

The Self–Other relationship is at the core of any intervention. It is in this relation the intervening actors define the purpose of intervention, and thus the purpose of themselves. The Self–Other relationship should therefore be at the heart of analyses of interventions and the relations between the intervening actors as well. How, then, we should go about making analyses of such identification processes?

3.2. How to study identification: Representing the Other in three dimensions

In IR, David Campbell’s Writing Security (1992) was a pioneering work that showed the importance of identity in the formulation of US foreign policy. However, he focused primarily on the perceived dangers: Others that were represented as radically different from the American Self. He paid less attention to alternative representations of Self and Other in American foreign policy.450 However, most Self/Other relations in international relations are neither violent nor

449 The term ‘imperial’ is still used by some writers to describe the power of domination in current interventions, such as Doty’s ‘Imperial Encounters’ or Chandler’s ‘Empire in Denial’ – Roxanne Lynn Doty, Imperial Encounters: The Politics of Representation in North–South Relations (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1996); David Chandler, Empire in Denial. For analytical discussions of the conduct of empires, see e.g. Daniel H. Nexon and Thomas Wright, ‘What’s at Stake in the American Empire Debate’, American Political Science Review 101, no. 02 (2007), 253–71; Helge Jordheim and Iver B. Neumann, ‘Empire, Imperialism and Conceptual History’, Journal of International Relations and Development 14, no. 2 (2011), 153–85.

450 David Campbell, Writing Security: United States Foreign Policy and the Politics of Identity (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1992); see also Iver B. Neumann, The Uses of the Other (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1999), 24ff.
odious: the Other need not be so radically different from the Self. There are rather degrees of difference, as evident in Western representations of Russia or ‘the East’, ‘the Balkans,’ or ‘the Orient’. Such differentiations may be just as important in defining the Self as the existence of a radically different Other. The question of the status of the Other has therefore been widely discussed among students of identity.

It is the spatial dimension, such as geopolitics, states and empires, that has traditionally attracted most attention in IR. That is not very surprising, as states and territory are central elements in world politics. However, identity may also be formed along other dimensions. For instance, as Ole Waever has argued that, even if Europe is a spatial unit which has defined itself in contrast to other regions, such as Russia or the Middle East, it defines itself in historical terms as well: today’s Europe is often represented as different from its own violent past. The drive for European integration has been largely fuelled by a fear of a repetition of European history. Integration is meant to prevent war. This contrasting of the present Self from the past would constitute an Other in the temporal dimension.

A further example of such identification in temporal terms could be ‘developing states’ as opposed to ‘developed states’, where ‘we’ consider ourselves to be more advanced than ‘them’. Such views of history as linear and trajectory were perhaps best expressed in the ‘modernization’ theories of the 1950s, but traces may still be present in today’s interventions, as often claimed by the critics of ‘liberal peacebuilding’.

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452 Iver B. Neumann differentiates between dialectical and dialogical readings of the relationship between Self and Others in Western philosophy and social science, arguing that the former was long dominant: ‘self and other were seen to merge into some kind of new entity as part and parcel of the progressive flow of reason.’ Nationalism, Marxism and essentialist readings of, for instance, ethnic identity all tend to carry with them such dialectical understandings of Self and Other. More recently the dialogical understanding has gained momentum: it recognizes that several collective identities will be present simultaneously in social communities. There will therefore always be competing and parallel representations of Selves and Others in various constellations. As a result, identity must be analysed along several dimensions. See his The Uses of the Other: 36.


Another dimension of identification can be found in Tzvetan Todorov’s modern classic *The Conquest of America: The Question of the Other*.\(^{455}\) He discusses several levels of value judgements in 16\(^{th}\)-century Spanish debates about how to define ‘the Indians’ of the New World. Where they to be regarded as unalterable outcastes (which could be eliminated) – or as ‘potential Christians’ and thereby a group that could be engaged and reformed, in essence assimilated?\(^{456}\) Different ethical perceptions of the Other can legitimize radically different courses of action. Charles Taylor also focuses on morality in his quest for the sources of the modern self. ‘Selfhood and morality’ he argues, ‘turn out to be inextricably intertwined themes.’\(^{457}\) Our view of ourselves and others along such moral-ethical lines may be referred to as the *ethical dimension* of identity formation.

One scholar who has attempted to combine these three dimensions of identity is Lene Hansen in the above-mentioned work on the Western response to the Bosnian war.\(^{458}\) Hansen refers to spatial, temporal, and ethical dimensions as the core elements of foreign-policy identity formations: ‘Space, time and responsibility are the big concepts through which political communities – their boundaries, internal constitution, and relationship with the outside world – are thought and argued.’\(^{459}\) As noted, she uses this approach to show, *inter alia*, how the dominant discourse changed from a ‘Balkan discourse’ (intervention is futile) to a ‘genocide discourse’ (intervention is necessary). This parallel analysis of the representations of the Other in three dimensions is fruitful and worth building on, as it makes for a broader and more robust analysis than some of the other studies discussed above.

However, Hansen’s approach has certain limitations when it comes to applying it on a theory of interventions. Firstly, her epistemological focus is explicitly poststructuralist, and she develops a discourse analysis within this tradition. As we have seen, identity formations can be analysed in many ways beside poststructuralist discourse analysis, and there is no reason why

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\(^{456}\) The three are axiological (the other is good or bad), praxeological (how I regard my values versus his values) and epistemic (I am aware of the other). See Neumann, *The Uses of the Other*, 21.

\(^{457}\) Taylor, *Sources of the Self*, 3.

\(^{458}\) Hansen, *Security as Practice*.

\(^{459}\) Ibid., 46.
the analytical framework of interventions should limit itself to one methodology. Secondly, Hansen’s empirical basis is limited to written and oral texts: official documents, newspaper articles, speeches etc. She does not consider practices or policies (such as military operations), which in the case of interventions may prove highly relevant for identification processes. Thirdly, she studies the foreign policy of states – not other global entities or actors, such as international organizations or groups of organizations. The dynamics of identity formation and policy formulation in states may for instance be more confined and constant compared to those in and among international organizations.

Therefore, I seek to offer a more open analytical framework: one that focuses on identification processes through representations of the Other in the three dimensions, but which includes more than texts, and which can focus on groups of actors in an intervention, and not only the foreign policy of states.

The spatial dimension refers to how the physical boundaries of an identity are drawn – where the Others – and thus the Self – are located in space. In the context of interventions this will be where the Other is located in contrast to the Self. For the military, it could be ‘enemy territory’, a certain part of the country, mountains, etc. For diplomats, it could be the country in which the intervention takes place, generally limited to the capital and the local interlocutors present there.

The temporal dimension refers to how the boundaries of development or progress are drawn. Is the Other regarded as, for instance, ‘backward’, ‘primitive’ or ‘underdeveloped’? Are the institutions in a country considered to be in need of reform in order to meet ‘international standards’ in management, efficiency, gender balance, etc.? Many intervening actors are engaged in capacity building, training and institutional reform in everything from the military sector to police, judicial, correctional services, to ministerial and municipal bureaucracies. The Selves thus legitimate their presence in the services they are offering by referring to the need for reform and ‘modernize’ the Other.

The ethical dimension refers to how the boundaries are drawn between values and ethical principles. The military may, for instance, regard the Other as a ‘barbarian’ or ‘non-legitimate’

warrior. Humanitarians see their mission to do relief work as deeply ethical, saving people’s lives irrespective of politics. They see victim Others, which legitimizes the engagement of humanitarian Selves. Peacebuilders seek democracy and liberal institutions as a means to provide freedom and liberty for the people with whom they engage.

A study of an identification process therefore needs to look for policies, practices, texts, doctrines, debates where the lines are drawn between Self and Other in all three dimensions. By representing the Other in certain ways along the three dimensions, the Self is shaping its own identity. This will also legitimize certain policies and practices, while precluding others. As a constitutive theory, this framework is aimed not at explaining certain concrete actions, but at exploring and understanding the circumstances that made them rational, natural, or necessary in the eyes of the Self. These practices and policies will also contribute in maintaining or altering these identities. However, alternative practices or specific events may challenge the dominant identity. Identity and associated practices are co-constitutive: the identities are not just ‘out there’ as de facto ‘independent variables’ (as Autesserre’s world polity and bureaucratic fields proved to be), but are in a fluid relation to the associated practices. Both may change or alter the other. By focussing on the debates, conflicts and struggles associated with each identity dimension, as well as the practical implications, this analytical framework can account for change.

3.3. Delimitations

Like any other analytical categorization, an identification process is an approach that one chooses in an attempt to analyse societies in a specific way. As discussed in Chapter 1, seen from an analyticist perspective, a study of identification is a way of helping us to connect with the world and conduct our analysis. The analytical framework therefore needs to be delimited in three directions.

Firstly, the borderlines of each identity must be defined. Where the analyst chooses to draw the borderline between the analytical categories will impact upon the analysis, as there is a risk of ignoring relevant factors or actors. It is not a priori given that one categorization is better than another. As discussed above, each identity will comprise various intervening organizations, that themselves are likely to have an organizational identity of their own. The focus of the analytical framework, however, is on shared identities across organizations.
If we are to analyse the shared identity of for example the humanitarian actors in an intervention, we need to analytically define who is part of the group ‘humanitarian actor’ and who is not. This will largely be an empirical question, as the actors themselves draw their lines between Other and Self. However, since there are degrees of otherness and three dimensions, it may not always be clear-cut where the researcher should draw the demarcation line. On the other hand, a study of identification processes will generally include precisely these debates and power-struggles over where to draw these borders. For instance, many NGOs are involved in humanitarian relief as well as in development projects of a more political nature. The internal debates among humanitarians over such combinations will in itself shed light on where they draw the demarcation line. As these may well be fluid processes, the analysis might fruitfully focus on the struggles and debates, rather than on defining exactly which actors should be placed in each category.

Furthermore, certain groups are more readily categorized analytically than others. ‘Humanitarians’ may be a more homogeneous group than, for instance, ‘peacebuilders’. The latter may include UN staff, democratization officers, gender advisers, diplomats, and police officers, and they may not refer to themselves as ‘peacebuilders’ in the way humanitarians do. This is therefore an analytical categorization which the researcher will need to legitimize as valid or relevant by demonstrating that they share certain features in terms of their identity – for instance, they may all see themselves as important and relevant to the process of helping the Other to achieve sustainable peace through reform and democratization.

In short, if a researcher believes or suspects the existence of one, two, or three dominant identities in an intervention, the research design may be constructed accordingly. However, since the empirical study will look in particular for conflicting representations of the Other, the researcher should be prepared to revise her analytical categories (number of Selves) if this proves more feasible for the analysis.

Secondly, an analysis of identification processes must be delimited in time. Besides the basic delimitation of the period under empirical scrutiny, it could for instance include historical comparisons. As in most social science methodology, the relevance of the historical pretext needs to be assessed. The humanitarian identity can probably be traced back to the establishment of the International Red Cross in the 19th century. An analysis of an identification process among intervening actors will therefore usually need to incorporate also processes that took place prior to the intervention itself. As discussed in the context of Autesserre above,
‘world polity’, ‘global cultures’, or traditional and essentialist perception of a country or a people may very well be present in the awareness of interveners, prior to the actual intervention. However, in contrast to Autesserre’s model, a study of identity formations may account for changes in such pre-positions. The intervening actors may alter their perceptions in the course of an intervention. The researcher needs to draw a line in time, but again it is the actual empirical findings related to the usage of the past that matter the most. If the actors themselves make reference to historical background or principles in their debates and representations of the current situation, that is relevant for the analysis as well.

Thirdly, an analytical framework that examines identification processes among groups of intervening actors faces the same challenges in terms of case-study research design and validity of sources as other social science methodologies. This applies in particular to validity in source and data selection. Sources may be documents, such as official texts, mandates, legal documents, international humanitarian law, military doctrines public debates and speeches. But it could also be actions, policies, or ‘socially meaningful patterns of action’, often referred to as practices. 461 Methodologically, the data may be collected through field-work, interviews, or secondary sources, depending on the research design.

The analytical framework is applicable to any intervention and any group of actors, along the three dimensions. The concrete research design in each case will need to be delimited in these three directions.

3.4. Understanding the challenges to coherence

This analytical framework offers a flexible approach which can be applied to the study of any intervention and any set of actors. It will reveal the dynamics of the identification processes – how some representations of the Other are more dominant than others, but that these representations also may be challenged both from within the group and outside of it. The dominant identity legitimizes certain policies and practices and preclude others. If, for example,

the humanitarians consider engagement with the military as a threat to their own identity, they are unlikely to cooperate or even communicate. However, as discussed here, for most humanitarians, the most prominent Others are not the other interveners, but the people they intervene on – the resident population, the insurgency adversary, or the local authorities. For that reason, what makes coherence challenging is rarely the tensions, competition or conflicts between the intervening actors as such. No, we need to examine how the Selves consider their Others, and how the objectives of the Self require, or make possible, cooperation with other interveners. Two conditions need to be met:

Firstly, do the Selves consider military–civilian coherence to be of any relevance? A conventional military force, fighting a similar enemy, may, for instance, consider military–civilian coherence irrelevant. However, as we saw in Chapter 1 and 2, NATO, the EU, the UN and many states see coherence as a precondition for success in interventions. That is the very basis of this dissertation. As we have seen, concepts such as ‘the security–development nexus’ and ‘integrated approach’ are widely recognized among intervening actors. Civilian actors may, for instance, consider the Other as somebody who should be introduced to democratic standards and practices: someone who can be reformed. They may also consider it necessary to engage the military to achieve this goal, for example by creating a secure environment in which elections can be held. Similarly, if the military interveners consider their Other to be the local security forces, and if they are seen as being ready to take upon themselves more security tasks, the intervening military may reach out to international police units and other civilians to help in achieving this goal. This was part of the COIN doctrine, as we saw in Chapter 3. In short, successful military–civilian coherence requires that the Selves reach out to other Selves: but it also requires that these other Selves share a similar representation of the Other.

This, then, is the second condition: a similar view of the Other. If for instance, in the first case above, the military give priority to searching for enemy strongholds and adversaries to fight (an enemy-centric approach: see Chapter 4), rather than securing the conditions for holding elections, it indicates that they are engaging very different Others. Similarly, if the civilian actors regard the local security services as criminals or illegitimate warlords, or show no interest in them whatsoever because they focus on different Others, coherence and comprehensive approach will be difficult to achieve.

For the second condition to be met and fruitful coherence achieved, there needs to be a certain degree of shared perception of the Other along all three dimensions discussed above. There
must, firstly, be a degree of shared opinion of which Others to engage and where: which groups, organizations and locations are most important? (This involves the spatial dimension.) Secondly, there must be a shared view of how to engage them: should, for instance, they be reformed, or suppressed? (This concerns the temporal dimension.) Lastly, some commonality on the ethical value of the Other is required: are they criminals or nascent democrats? (Here the ethical dimension enters in). The relative importance of these dimensions will differ from case to case, depending on the nature of the conflict, the intervening actors, relative resources etc. What the proposed analytical framework offers is exactly that: a framework which can be applied to make sense of and understand these relationships in a systematic way. There are no universal answers or generic explanations of the challenges to coherence in today’s interventions. Nonetheless, if a researcher conducts several empirical case studies with this analytical framework, certain commonalities across interventions may be revealed, as discussed above (external validity). The framework may even be adapted to study other topics and research questions than coherence, as will be briefly discussed in Chapter 7.

4. Conclusions

In this chapter I have argued that Séverine Autesserre’s study of the DRC stands out as an attempt at comprehensive theorizing of an intervention. Her usage of the theory concept of frames, with the supporting concepts of world polity and organizational field, has many positive features for studying interventions. However, the theoretical framework she develops is one inductively tailormade for her specific case and is not readily transferrable to other cases. Furthermore, Autesserre’s frames are on the one hand vague and elusive, on the other hand robust and static. They do not account very well for opposition to the dominant frame or for change. Lastly, her theories are not very helpful for studying several groups of intervening actors. To do so we would need to introduce several parallel frames within the same intervention. But since Autesserre’s theorizing focuses solely on how the frame constitutes similar mindsets across the whole range of actors, it offers little help in understanding how the intervening actors relate to the other frames or to other actors in the field, like local ones.

I have therefore proposed an alternative analytical framework that can account for several groups of intervening actors, as well as being able to account for change from within. Instead of using the term ‘frame’, I focus on the collective identity of the various groups of interveners.
Identity is studied on the level above the specific organizational identities that may exist, on the shared identity shared by similar intervening actors, such as military actors or humanitarian NGOs. By examine\ning how they represent those whom they are deployed to engage (their Other), we can get a grasp of some very basic features of an intervention. This approach will explicitly look for opposition and change – both from within the identity (or frame, in Autesserre’s terminology) and from outside it.

The framework I propose should be applicable to studies of interventions where political tensions are high and where many international actors are operating in parallel. These interventions may be studied from various angles, depending on the research question. But in all cases, an analysis of the processes representing the Other by main sets of actors will provide insights into the deeper questions of how they ascribe meaning to themselves their mission: how they regard their role, and how they regard the other actors, international as well as local, in the field of intervention. These are the basic issues underlying many practical, day-to-day issues, such as cooperation and conflict between the actors involved. This analytical framework will need to be adapted to each specific case. In the next chapter I demonstrate the relevance of this approach by sketching out an analysis of the identification processes of the main sets of intervening actors in Afghanistan.
Chapter 6

Military, Humanitarian and State-building Identities in the Afghan Theatre

1. Introduction

The time has come to assess the analytical framework outlined in the previous chapter, to see if it is applicable to empirical cases – specifically, to the international intervention in Afghanistan 2001–2012. Here I have singled out three sets of intervening actors – the military, humanitarian and state-builders – for analysis. The aim of this chapter is to demonstrate the utility of the analytical approach developed in Chapter 5.

Afghanistan attracted considerable Western attention and engagement. The military operation was the largest ever deployed by NATO, and the various civilian efforts were manifold and many-layered. Operations in Afghanistan included everything from counter-narcotics efforts and police training, to refugee return and school construction, finances and human resource management in the government – conducted by various agencies and donors in different places in the country simultaneously. Recent policy debates about coherence and comprehensive approach have emerged largely as a result of these experiences, as have the heated debates about the humanitarian space. The intervention has also been widely analysed and scrutinized, providing considerable amounts of material for this analysis.

However, comprehensive and theoretically informed analyses of the intervention in Afghanistan have been few. Many studies have been commissioned by donors to evaluate specific programmes: they focus on the activities and day-to-day challenges of specific actors, rather than the country as such.462 There have been some comprehensive analyses conducted by journalists; however, these studies tend to lack deeper analysis of the underlying rationale.

and the assumptions of change and progress on the part of the international community. Numerous studies have attempted to explain why the intervention went wrong, despite all the resources invested. In the years leading up to the military drawdown, the international interveners witnessed surging violence, limited developmental and economic progress, inept domestic political leadership, and widespread corruption. There were those who held that Afghanistan was a ‘graveyard of empires’ or like a ‘walk in the Old Testament’: almost beyond redemption, reform, or modernization. Yet others noted the centuries-old internal cultural and religious conflicts and modes of government. Some have pointed to conflicts between leaders of various international agencies, and between these and the Afghan authorities. Despite these difficult circumstances, there have been numerous suggestions as to the right recipe. Some have argued for greater UN engagement, others for more ‘local ownership’. Some have maintained that far too few resources were applied, or that they were mismanaged and wasted. Many therefore called for a military and civilian ‘surge’. Related to this, as discussed in previous chapters, there were many, particularly from the military, who held that

463 Ignatieff, Empire Lite: Nation-Building in Bosnia, Kosovo, and Afghanistan; Rashid, Descent into Chaos; Bob Woodward, Obama’s Wars (New York: Simon & Schuster, 2010).


469 In the first two years of the intervention, Afghanistan received only USD 57 annually per capita, whereas Iraq had received USD 206, East Timor USD 233, Kosovo USD 526, and Bosnia-Herzegovina USD 679 per capita, respectively, according to Dobbins et al., The UN’s Role in Nation-Building – from the Congo to Iraq, 238ff. See also ‘Report Warns Billions in U.S. Aid May Be Wasted in Iraq, Afghanistan’, CNN, 3 June 2011, http://edition.cnn.com/2011/POLITICS/06/03/iraq.afghan.waste/.

what was needed was better coordination among the international donors and actors. These myriads of explanations and associated remedies probably all offer important insights — but they do not offer a comprehensive understanding of the intervention per se. Some good academic efforts have been made to explain the international failures, but they have been relatively few, and are case-specific with limited theoretical ambitions. In short, there is plenty of research material to draw on, but few studies that have aimed at theoretically analysing a broad set of intervening actors. Furthermore, there are no theoretically informed studies of the challenges related to coherence or to the comprehensive approach in the Afghanistan intervention.

This chapter will show that an analysis of identity processes can help us to understand how the various intervening actors acted the way they did, and why coherence between them was so difficult to achieve. To this end a similar set of analytical lenses will be applied to analyse the identity formations of three sets of actors — the military, the humanitarians, and the state-builders — so that we can compare them, note their differences and similarities, and better understand their policies and practices. That will also demonstrate the utility of this analytical framework for other cases.

By studying the identification processes of the three groups in question, I delve into the foundations of each group. By studying how they represent their Others, we simultaneously learn about their Self identities, and about their policy choices.

The research design will be delimitations in three directions as, discussed in Chapter 5. Firstly, the number of identities or Selves. I have chosen to analyse three sets identities in Afghanistan: the military, humanitarian and state-building identities. But could more have been added, or would less have sufficed? The following analysis could surely be expanded; the UN and EU civilian police, the international counter-narcotics efforts are some actors I have chosen not to

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include. Including them would probably have provided a richer analysis, but without necessarily altering the overall conclusions as they most likely would fit under the state-building identity.

Furthermore, each Self could be broken down into several selves. For example, there are arguably several military identities operating simultaneously in Afghanistan. Each national contingent would for instance most likely represent an analytically identifiable Self. Reducing them to one is therefore a simplification. But, as I will show below, one identity has been dominant, while other representations may be regarded as challengers. Conversely, having fewer selves in the analysis would have weakened it, as all three represent significant elements of the overall international engagement in the Afghan theatre.

The second is delimitation in time. The focus here is on the years 2001 to 2012, which was up to 2018 the period with greatest international engagement in Afghanistan. However, the identities of the intervening actors existed prior to the intervention, and most brought with them certain perceptions about the Other (such as the above-mentioned ‘a walk in the Old Testament’) prior to their deployment. This ‘luggage’ will form part of the analysis, to the extent it has been used by the actors themselves.

An alternative design could have been to compare moments or make historical comparisons. With Afghanistan, comparison could be made with other similar contemporary invasions, such as Iraq, or historical ones, such as the experiences of the British Empire, or the Soviet Union in Afghanistan. My choice of concentrating on one (extended) moment in time – the situation in 2012 and the decade preceding it – follows somewhat logically from the research question and the number of selves. Adding more dimensions might not improve the analysis substantially.

The third delimitation is source selection, which is crucial in any analysis, as it usually impacts directly on the findings and conclusions. Should, for example, the study of the military identification process include academic journals, blogs, and newspaper articles, in addition to military doctrines and official documents? I will argue yes, as the military identity is formed by much more than official doctrine alone. Where to draw the line will be a choice for each research design, and in the analysis below – due to space limitations – the selection will be far from exhaustive. This analysis is also based upon secondary sources. I have not conducted field-work, nor done interviews with relevant stakeholders. The aim of the chapter is to demonstrate the utility of the analytical framework, not to offer a thorough analysis of the intervention in Afghanistan.
The three identities identified here (military, humanitarian and state-building) share one feature: the actors saw the need for them to be in Afghanistan, and with a role for themselves. Thus, ‘Afghanistan’ constitutes something outside of them – a place where one intervenes or enters, doing something that legitimizes the activity: it serves as the Other for the intervening Self. Each representation of the Other is formed along three dimensions: spatial, ethical and temporal. Through this identification process, the respective ‘Afghans’ are defined within each group, which in turn normalize the ‘appropriate’ policy response.

As we shall see, these three Selves appeared largely ignorant of each other, operating in parallel but not coherently. In contrast to Autesserre’s argument of there being a shared ‘peacebuilding frame’ in the DRC, I find no similar ‘Western approach’ to Afghanistan. There were at least three, with numerous conflicting representations of the Afghans. If we can understand how the three sets of actors had such fundamentally different reasons for being in Afghanistan, we may also grasp why a comprehensive approach never was achieved.

2. The Military Identification Process

2.1. The spatial dimension

The military in Afghanistan was by far the most dominant group of interveners. It involved the greatest number of people and was the most powerful in terms of force on the ground. In Afghanistan as elsewhere, the identity of the military was based on a binary relationship with an adversary or enemy: by definition, this entailed a spatial relationship with an Other, physically located outside the military itself. This entity was usually labelled the Taliban, al-Qaeda or ‘the insurgents.’ After the 9/11 terrorist attacks, the United States declared itself at war on terror, thereby defining terrorism as a military matter, not a police one.473 Spatially, the terrorist is harder to pin down than the traditional state-enemy, but Afghanistan was quickly singled out as the location where terrorists had their base. This gave the War on Terror a locus.474


Initially the aim of intervention, named Operation Enduring Freedom (OEF), was to take control of Afghanistan and oust the Taliban government. After the coalition forces had removed the Taliban’s military and governing structures, the focus switched to rooting out the remaining elements and the al-Qaeda leadership, held to be hiding primarily in pockets in the mountainous border areas with Pakistan. In spatial terms, it was about gaining full control of the territory, by removing any remaining resistance.\footnote{See ‘President Bush Announces Military Strikes in Afghanistan’, 7 October 2001, \url{http://www.globalsecurity.org/military/library/news/2001/10/mil-011007-usia01.htm}.} The enemy Other was harder to see, but was still discernible as a distinct entity that could be eliminated through conventional means.\footnote{There are some nuances here between conventional warfare for territorial control, and counterterrorism or irregular warfare, where the aim is to kill or capture individuals in the leadership of the terrorist group. The ‘Afghan Model’ employed in, for example, the battle of the Tora Bora mountains, was of the latter kind, and required somewhat different means than in regular warfare. However, in this context I will consider both approaches as ‘conventional’ as they are enemy-focused, aimed at ridding the territory of enemy combatants altogether. See also Peter John Paul Krause, ‘The Last Good Chance: A Reassessment of U.S. Operations at Tora Bora’, \textit{Security Studies} 17, no. 4 (2008), 664–84; Stephen Biddle, ‘Afghanistan and the Future of Warfare’ \textit{Foreign Affairs} 82, no. 2 (2003): 31–46.}

Around 2008, this conventional approach to the enemy was challenged by the launch of the counter-insurgency (COIN) doctrine discussed in Chapter 3.\footnote{U.S.Amy/MarineCorps, \textit{Counterinsurgency Field Manual}.} It emerged as a result of the failures of the conventional approach, as the killing of Taliban soldiers failed to produce victory. Heavy reliance on airpower led to collateral damage and civilian deaths that served to alienate the local population.\footnote{There are no data on civilian casualties from air strikes prior to 2005, but several sources claim civilian casualties were high in the most combat-affected areas in southwestern Afghanistan. See also ‘Troops in Contact: Airstrikes and Civilian Deaths in Afghanistan’, \textit{Human Rights Watch}, 8 September 2008, \url{http://www.hrw.org/en/reports/2008/09/08/troops-contact-0}.} The Other responded with unconventional force: Improvised Explosive Devices (IEDs), road mines, ambushes and acts of terror. In return, the COIN approach shifted focus from eliminating the enemy to alienating the enemy from the wider population. The centre of gravity then became the civilian population, not the enemy forces. This shift came as a result of internal developments in the US armed forces, represented by General David Petraeus’ success with a similar approach in Iraq and his subsequent drafting of the new US COIN doctrine.\footnote{U.S.Amy/MarineCorps, \textit{Counterinsurgency Field Manual}.}
Spatially COIN remained a contest for territorial control, but the focus was on building legitimacy in the already-captured territories. As discussed in Chapter 3, the COIN tactic was often described as ‘clear–hold–build’: clear out the insurgents, hold the territory, and build sustainable domestic political and security presence. The enemy was thus clearly defined spatially as outside the areas controlled by the COIN soldiers and their local allies. The main objective was no longer to engage the enemy wherever he was located: it was to consolidate the areas already captured, and build local trust there.\(^{480}\)

As the focus changed from the enemy to the wider operational context, better knowledge about the environment, the culture and local customs became crucial. The ‘battle-space’ developed into several layers or ‘lines of operation’ that included economics, agriculture and infrastructure.\(^{481}\) The spatial dimension involved not only physical space but also non-military sectors of relevance for the political struggle. The introduction of Provincial Reconstruction Teams (PRTs) consisting of both civilian and military personnel was the most concrete example of this focus. The idea behind the PRTs was to support ‘reconstruction and development (R&D) in Afghanistan’ and to secure ‘areas in which reconstruction work is conducted by other national and international actors.’\(^{482}\) The PRT model represented a significant deepening of the battle-space compared to conventional warfare.

Another challenger to the conventional military identity was the ‘stabilization approach’ of several European countries that considered Afghanistan to be a limited threat to their own national security.\(^{483}\) They saw ISAF as a matter of NATO solidarity, and they were there in support of their most important ally, the United States. They tended to regard Afghanistan primarily as a weak state, where the role of ISAF was to support the UN and the Afghan


\(^{481}\) U.S.ArmY/MarineCorps, Counterinsurgency Field Manual, 156.


\(^{483}\) Germany and other northern European countries that had significant national provisos that restricted their combat readiness and applicability outside their areas in northern Afghanistan may be examples of this approach. See Timo Noetzel and Benjamin Scheer, ‘All the Way? The Evolution of German Military Power’, International Affairs 84, no. 2 (2008), 211–21. See also Konstantin von Hammerstein, Hans Hoyng, Hans-Jürgen Schlamp and Alexander Szandar, ‘NATO Chaos Deepens in Afghanistan: “The Germans Have to Learn How to Kill”’, Der Spiegel Online, 20 November 2006, http://www.spiegel.de/international/spiegel/0,1518,449479,00.html.
government until the latter could stand on its own.\footnote{This excerpt from the ISAF mandate differs from the terrorist focus of the OEF mandate: ‘NATO’s main role in Afghanistan is to assist the Afghan Government in exercising and extending its authority and influence across the country, paving the way for reconstruction and effective governance’. See http://www.nato.int/isaf/topics/mandate/} Spatially, the aim was to assist the implementation of authority of the central government through the PRTs, so that the government would one day control the entire territory.\footnote{See ‘NATO and Afghanistan’, http://www.nato.int/cps/en/natolive/topics_8189.htm.} The enemy was defined not as terrorists, but as all those who resisted this expansion of the authority of the government in Kabul, the governance and the security forces. This approach tended to focus on creating general stability within the ‘Area of Responsibility’, but was less interested in what happened outside of this area.

2.2. The ethical dimension

The ethical dimension was important for the military identification process. The very legitimacy of the war in Afghanistan was based on the fact of the 9/11 attacks in the USA, denounced as ‘barbaric’ and ‘evil’ by President George W. Bush and numerous commentators. The ensuing war in Afghanistan became a war in defence of US national security and dignity. It was seen as just and necessary, a moral response from the free world against the ‘enemies of freedom’, to quote Bush.\footnote{Bush, speech to Joint Session of Congress, 20 September 2001.}

Here, the enemy was branded as morally and ethically inferior, employing terrorism against innocent civilians as well as their own people. This ascribed backwardness was also reflected in the images of religious fanatics, depicted as devoid of compassion or other human traits. In warfare, such persons ignored Western rules of engagement, indiscriminately employing suicide bombers and roadside bombs. As a result, the Bush administration refused to recognize the Taliban as ‘enemy combatants’ (which would entitled them to prisoner-of-war status according to the Geneva Conventions), or as civilians: they became ‘unlawful combatants’.\footnote{Jane Mayer, ‘Outsourcing Torture: The Secret History of America’s “Extraordinary Rendition” Program’, New Yorker, 14 February 2005, http://www.newyorker.com/archive/2005/02/14/050214fa_fact6.} This new categorization of the enemy made clear the extraordinarily low moral standing of the Taliban in the eyes of the US administration. The Taliban was indeed a radical Other.
In this way the conventional military identity was reinforced: it was boosted nationally and politically, but also morally. The stark contrast to the enemy made the US military self-superior also in moral/ethical terms. The operational result of this identity was the view that the enemy could be overcome by conventional means. The military now had a mission that was achievable, and one that reinforced its status as an efficient, necessary, and morally justifiable force.

Gradually, however, this position eroded. Lack of progress in the war and heightened criticism of civilian casualties made it difficult to maintain an identity of ethical superiority. When the COIN doctrine was launched, it focused less on an ‘evil’ and ‘barbarian’ enemy as contrasted to the ‘morally superior’ US forces. Instead, assisting the local forces now became more central – so, to a greater extent, the defining Other became the Afghan soldier who could be trained and brought up to a certain modern standard. Success in COIN was measured largely in terms of success in training and equipping local forces, and of enabling them to hold territory and keep the Taliban at bay.488 The ethical dimension of the military identity remained a morally righteous one, but it was more nuanced, less black-and-white: also one’s own troops could make mistakes. There were degrees of difference among the Others, and the ethical dimension in the COIN focused on those that who be transformed into something ethically similar to the Self.

The conventional approach was also challenged along the ethical dimension by the stabilization approach. Many European ISAF countries, among them Germany and the Nordic countries,489 have had a domestic ‘peace identity’ that made explicit references to ‘warfare’ in Afghanistan difficult for their governments. ‘Assistance’ or ‘stabilization’ had a better ethical feel. Furthermore, in ISAF the legal definition of the adversaries was ‘criminals’, not ‘enemies’. These adversaries violated domestic, not international, law by using violence,490 and were therefore not legal combatants according to international law. An enemy combatant may be captured or pacified, becoming a prisoner of war, but will retain his military rank and identity.


490 From the perspective of international law, the fighting in Afghanistan was defined as a non-international or internal war from the moment the Karzai government was inaugurated in June 2002 (before then it was an ‘international war’). See for example, Peace Operations Monitor, http://pom.peacebuild.ca/AfghanistanPeaceOperation.shtml#MissionMandates.
until the war ends. He is not expected to switch sides or change his basic identity. As noted, the Bush administration’s term ‘unlawful combatants’ implied that the enemy was beyond redemption. Criminals, by contrast, can and shall be reformed, according to Western legal and philosophical traditions. They are expected to serve their time of punishment and then in principle be reintegrated into society, thereby switching sides. The ethical consequence of applying the term ‘criminal’ to the adversary is the expectation that that, if given the chance, he can change for the better.

For the identity of stability-approach soldiers this can be confusing, because it calls into question what soldiering is all about. While the Self-identity of the soldier remains ethically superior to that of a criminal, troops cannot engage in war with criminals: force is to be applied only in self-defence. How then to draw the line between policing and soldiering?491 The military have no training in law enforcement, but end up as a quasi-police. Such questions may have been discussed primarily by military lawyers and less by the troops themselves, but these dilemmas did create real-world challenges, not least as regards the rules of engagement.

2.3. The temporal dimension

The definition of the quality of the Other was also the issue in the temporal dimension, where the conventional approach typically portrayed the enemy Other as ‘backward’, ‘tribal’ or ‘exotic’.492 Stories of Taliban rule focusing on the oppression of women, banning of music and pictures, extremely conservative dress codes, etc., were familiar in the West also prior to the invasion.493 The Western military was therefore fighting an enemy who was considered primitive and undeveloped, entrenched in its own medieval interpretation of Islam. Importantly, this reading of the Taliban saw them as unchangeable – they were not seen as enemies who might surrender or negotiate a peace agreement: they could not become less radical Others.

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through rational dialogue. No progress was possible. As a result, conventional warfare became
the response of the Self: engage the enemy, kill or capture him, and destroy his infrastructure.

By contrast, the COIN approach focused on developing a sustainable security situation through
institutions- or state-building.\textsuperscript{494} There, the Others could also be regarded as evolving toward an
‘almost-Self’ as they modernized and developed Western military standards. The radical enemy
Other, the Taliban, loomed in the background and threatened to interfere, but the very logic of
COIN entailed degrading them to a secondary position. There was no need to fight them all:
instead, they were to be marginalized.\textsuperscript{495} As Afghanistan made progress, they were expected to
become less and less attractive or relevant for the local population. Over time, formerly hostile
tribes and groups were expected to seek to come to terms with the new, stable, prosperous
Afghanistan, and would either succumb, negotiate, or gradually integrate into the wider society.
COIN was premised on the assumption of change and progress, to which the military were to
contribute.

Similarly, the stabilization approach referred to reform and achievements compared to the
Taliban when assessing success. For example, when asked if the deployment was ‘worth it’, the
head of Norway’s Afghanistan contingent said:

\begin{quote}
Last year 400 000 girls were enrolled in the schools for the first time (…) this year 500
000 girls (…) by the end 2009 2.5 million girls will be attending school. The child
mortality rate has been reduced by 25\% since 2002…90\% of the population today have
access to healthcare, while only 10\% did in 2001…I would like to hear someone tell me
that 2.5 million girls in school is ‘hopeless’.\textsuperscript{496}
\end{quote}

Interestingly, the justification for the military operations is here based on civilian progress, not
military progress or even general security. This was not uncommon among European ISAF

\textsuperscript{494} U.S.Army/MarineCorps, \textit{Counterinsurgency Field Manual}, 199ff.

\textsuperscript{495} According to Bob Woodward, the Obama administration was playing with several words to depict something
less ambitions than ‘defeating’ and ‘destroying’, such as ‘reverse’, ‘deny’, ‘disrupt’, and ‘degrade’. As I see it,
they all amount to a version of \textit{marginalizing} of the Taliban as an alternative to full confrontation. See
Woodward, \textit{Obama’s Wars}.

\textsuperscript{496} Oppdraget er riktig, bra og verdt stor risiko’ [‘The mission was right, good and worth great risks’],
\textit{Dagbladet}, 6 August 2009, available at
forces, and indicates how some senior soldiers saw their own role and identity. In this representation, ISAF has been contributing to a liberalizing development process, aimed at helping Afghanistan modernize and move away from the times of the harsh Taliban regime.

2.4. **Conclusions: The military identification process**

To summarize, in the conventional approach, the Other was regarded as a fixed entity – evil and unchangeable, beyond political or ethical redemption. This legitimized and normalized military operations aimed at eliminating as many enemies as possible. Side-effects of this warfare, such as civilian casualties, were not considered relevant for victory. What COIN did was to recognize the relationship between Self and Other: how the Self could actually strengthen the Other by following such a conventional mind-set in waging the war. COIN prescribed a more careful and sensitive approach, seeking to win over the people instead of alienating them. The more marginal stabilization approach went even further in hinting at an identity resembling police or even development workers.

Since COIN was launched from the top, from the US military leadership in the Pentagon, we might have expected the changes to be introduced and implemented swiftly. But the COIN approach apparently encountered substantial resistance when it came to operationalization on the ground. According to many soldiers, it focused too much on the transformation of local forces and civilian confidence-building, at the expense of fighting the war and direct engagement with the enemy. Marginalizing the Taliban may have appeared less appealing for soldiers in the field than killing and capture. For a military identity, the enemy Other naturally becomes the focus of attention, particularly during deployment in the theatre. When the concept of the enemy Other becomes blurred, so does the military Self-identity. As a result, there were signs of a return to the conventional military approach in the last years of ISAF. It seems that even General Petraeus himself lost faith in COIN when he assumed command of ISAF in 2010 and returned to more conventional operations such as night raids and

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497 Despite such statements, we should be cautious about drawing conclusions as to the identity of the broader contingencies of European troops. National variations are huge, and private soldiers in the field may have had a more conventional military identity than their senior officers based in headquarters.

bombings. The military ‘surge’ resulted largely in conventional military operations (rooting out the Taliban): any attempts at ‘building’ were flawed.

These variations in the military identity formations, how they have ascribed different meanings to the Others and themselves, can help us to understand shifts in the behaviour and operational approaches of the military. They also show how the definition of success and victory and the purpose of the operations changed in time and space. Was the purpose to defeat the enemy through combat, to marginalize him and make him irrelevant – or, as indicated in the stabilization approach, to transform him? The military identity in Afghanistan seemed to be a combination of all these, with a highly mixed-up representation of the Other. The prescribed outreach to civilian ‘Lines of Operations’ in COIN and the inclusion of civilians in the PRTs represented something relatively new for most military organizations and for the military identity – and their limited success may indicate that the conventional enemy-centric identity prevailed after all.

Thus far, the enemy Other had been only part of the identity through his violent responses to the intervention, and Western readings of these. If the aim of the intervention was indeed to change the Other in some way, one might perhaps expect a more interactive presence of the Other in the identification process. There was, for example, no political/diplomatic dimension in the war operating in parallel to the military dimension and offering alternative solutions. Perhaps the definition of the Other as ‘unlawful combatants’ or as criminals made it impossible for the military identity to envisage a political leadership of the enemy that was worth engaging with. Such exclusion of the Other from a more prominent or direct presence in the identity is evident in the two other identities as well.

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500 As discussed in Chapter 2, attempts at ‘government in a box’ did not succeed. Neither did much of the work of the PRTs. See Jackson, ‘Government in a Box? Counter-Insurgency, State Building, and the Technocratic Conceit’.

501 There were occasional reports of talks between the Afghan government and the Taliban, but the latter remained excluded from Western circles.
3. The Humanitarian Identification Process

The differences between the military and the humanitarian identities are striking. Humanitarian actors typically operate in small NGOs; they have a strong humanitarian ideology and personal engagement in relieving civilian suffering, live close to the people they help, and have limited resources. Traditionally they have also operated very independently of the military and political actors. However, as discussed in Chapters 1 and 4, this begun to change from the 1990s onwards. More and more humanitarian actors became engaged in human rights advocacy in addition to humanitarian relief; some even advocated military ‘humanitarian interventions’ in crisis areas such as Kosovo and Darfur. Thus began the era of ‘political humanitarianism’, where the same actors could be engaged in promoting universal values and human rights, advocating the ‘responsibility to act’, initiating development projects, and in addition doing traditional humanitarian work. The conflation and proliferation of these roles coincided with the rapid expansion of UN peacekeeping missions under Chapter VII of the UN Charter, the establishment of international criminal tribunals, and the general trend in international crisis management which emphasized human rights at the expense of state sovereignty.

The humanitarian identification process in Afghanistan – as defined here – therefore came to involve a whole range of actors, from traditional humanitarians to development agencies, human rights activists, and policy advocates. In practice, most actors did some of all of these activities. The group included nongovernmental organizations (NGOs), governmental agencies (GOs), and intergovernmental agencies (IGOs). There were obvious tensions within this group and among NGOs, GOs, and IGOs about the identity and meaning of civilian engagement in Afghanistan. Classical (or orthodox) humanitarians continued to resist politicization, but found themselves challenged from many sides.

As discussed above, the analytical categorization of all these actors into one group, is largely empirical. Actors that have a similar representation of the Other, and a similar Self-identity, can be analytically grouped together. Furthermore, by observing the internal differences between

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them, we can get a feel for the power struggles over who the Other is or should be, what policies that are acceptable, and ultimately what the humanitarian identity ought to be.

3.1. The spatial dimension
The spatial dimension of the humanitarian identification process is not about the control of territory, but concerns a conceptual space: the humanitarian space. This is based on the idea that humanitarian values transcend sovereignty. In this way, ‘humanitarian action seeks to reconfigure space to accommodate a new human rights-based borderless global vision.’ 504 The ‘borderlessness’ (clearly expressed in the name Médecins Sans Frontières, MSF) is defined as a sphere devoid of politics, where humanitarian actors have a duty to intervene and where they define themselves as the sole legitimate actors.

The entry of security actors into the humanitarian and development sector in Afghanistan disturbed many humanitarian actors, who feared that humanitarian assistance and development could become a subset of a security strategy rather than a humanitarian needs-driven effort. 505 Tensions rose when military forces also begun distributing humanitarian aid to win ‘hearts and minds’ and to obtain intelligence, as discussed in Chapter 4. 506

The PRTs were a particular target of this criticism, as they had a range of civilian development personnel embedded in a predominantly military unit. As noted in Chapter 4, it was argued that the PRTs blurred the distinction between the humanitarian actors and the military, and that this represented a politicization of aid. As a result, neutrality was severely undermined, it was claimed, and thereby also the security of civilian aid agencies which relied on the trust of the population to be able to work in volatile areas. 507 The humanitarians were demanding that this ‘humanitarian space’ be left un politicized, for ethical reasons and for the security of aid workers.


505 Cornish, ‘No Room for Humanitarianism in 3D Policies’


Certain humanitarian actors went quite far in accusing the military of being the main challenge encountered in the theatres where they operated. They accused the military of creating more problems than they resolved, due to collateral damage and insensitive behaviour, while simultaneously endangering others (the humanitarians). In this respect the military became not only an Other, but indeed a dangerous or threatening Other for the humanitarian Self.

Humanitarian actors also resisted being seen as part of the UN integrated mission concept. They fought to keep the UN Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA) physically separate from United Nations Assistance Mission to Afghanistan (UNAMA), arguing that OCHA and thereby the humanitarian community would be politicized by being co-located with the more political UNAMA mission. While the military represented a threat because of its military activities, the UN did so by politicizing aid. In this view, UNAMA and other non-humanitarian UN organizations were also Others – actors to be literally kept at (at least) arm’s length to affirm the humanitarian identity. In this sense, the humanitarian space was also physical: simply being observed in the vicinity of troops or other political actors (Others) could undermine the humanitarian Self, as the borderlines became blurred.

But the humanitarian space was also threatened from within the humanitarian identity. It was not uncommon for actors to seek to stretch this space to include development projects or human rights advocacy as well. Some, like MSF, deliberately reported on human rights violations, arguing that neutrality cannot be equated with silence. Others engaged in development, such as construction, reconstruction, capacity-building and education projects. In this way humanitarian work became conflated partly with development aid, partly with human rights advocacy. Both these approaches were attempts at addressing the root causes of the humanitarian suffering, or even the root causes of war. In both cases this represented a politicization of their work and their identity, as discussed above. However, this politicization was not always recognized among the humanitarian/development actors, who


509 DeChaine, ‘Humanitarian Space and Social Imaginary’, 358.

510 Foley, The Thin Blue Line: How Humanitarianism Went to War.

continued to demand respect for their humanitarian space. What then in effect became an ‘NGO space’ has no foundation in international law or the ‘humanitarian imperative’, but was nonetheless defended in certain NGO circles.\footnote{Beauchamp, \textit{Defining the Humanitarian Space through Public International Law}.}

\textbf{3.2. The ethical dimension}

The ethical dimension is very significant for the humanitarian identity formation. A basic reference point in this identity is International Humanitarian Law (IHL), primarily the Geneva and Hague Conventions on warfare. A further foundation, as discussed in Chapter 4, is the ‘humanitarian imperative’ (independence, impartiality, neutrality), codified in the Red Cross Code of Conduct.\footnote{International Federation of the Red Cross (IFRC), ‘Code of Conduct for the International Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement and NGOs in Disaster Relief’, 1995, \url{http://www.ifrc.org/en/publications-and-reports/code-of-conduct/}.} These are the four first Principle Commitments:

1. The humanitarian imperative comes first.

2. Aid is given regardless of the race, creed or nationality of the recipients and without adverse distinction of any kind. Aid priorities are calculated on the basis of need alone.

3. Aid will not be used to further a particular political or religious standpoint.

4. We shall endeavour not to act as instruments of government foreign policy.

The identity of the humanitarian worker is deeply embedded in these principles. Independence, impartiality, neutrality – this triad stands as the common denominator for a whole range of humanitarian actors from which they define a common Self.

Obviously, the existence of people in need – victims – is a precondition for the existence of such humanitarian actors, and thus their Self-identity. The suffering population was therefore the Other of the humanitarian identity in Afghanistan. However, the humanitarian identity typically sees itself as closely connected to these Others, particularly if they are victims of war or of atrocities. The closeness with the victims and the voluntary and altruistic element of the work supported this ethical dimension of the self-identity for humanitarians.
The ethics of independence, impartiality and neutrality also drew a line of demarcation between the humanitarian actors and those engaged in development, reconstruction, political institution-building, or security activity. ‘Politics’ in general was typically treated as an Other by orthodox humanitarians, as an ‘ideological marker against which the constituents of true humanitarian action are to be measured’. 514 In this sense, most other actors, local and international, were Others as well – and the more explicitly political they were (i.e. not independent, impartial, or neutral), the firmer was the line drawn between the humanitarian Self and these Others.

However, the ethical identity is premised on respect for and recognition of neutrality from the warring parties. The ethics of neutrality and impartiality presupposes that the belligerents recognize this: that they share some basic ethical-political positions which respect neutrality. What became more evident in Afghanistan (and in Iraq) than in more benign security environments was the ‘diminishing consensus on the political value of humanitarian independence.’ 515 The increase in the targeting and killing of humanitarian workers by the Taliban showed that also humanitarianism was seen as a political ideology – aimed at redistribution of resources and empowering the weakest in society. The claim of universalism in IHL was not always recognized.

3.3. The temporal dimension
This is illustrated even more clearly in the temporal dimension. Traditional humanitarian relief focuses on alleviating suffering, not addressing its original causes. Humanitarians can therefore be said to work in a conflict, but not on it. 516 They are not meant to engage in resolving the political reasons for a conflict. Their Others – the recipients of aid – will therefore be so only as long as there is a need to fill. When there is no longer a humanitarian need, these will cease to be the Other, and the humanitarians will go elsewhere. Seen in that way, classical


humanitarianism can be said to victimize the recipients of aid and deprive them agency. It is precisely the lack of agency, the lack of capacity to escape the social and physical situation in which they found themselves, that made the recipients the Other of the humanitarian identity in Afghanistan. Here the humanitarian identity shared the static view of the Other with the conventional military identity: the Other was seen as unable to reform itself, remaining fixed in the temporal dimension.

In practice, however, most humanitarian actors did see the potential for human progress and agency, and were seeking to engage in development assistance as well. In Afghanistan they were deeply embedded in a temporal dimension of human progress, ‘focusing on health, education, food security, school reconstruction and educational programming, livelihoods and economic development, agriculture and capacity building and the government’s community development effort, the National Solidarity Programme.’ The National Solidarity Programme (NSP) and the Afghan National Development Strategy (ANDS) were key reference documents for many humanitarians – but they were also official documents of the Afghan government. Engaging in these meant, in effect, supporting the Kabul government.

Many NGOs carried out activities defined and funded by international donors – some aimed at traditional development, others as a part of an overarching security agenda. By being engaged in these programmes, they were part of the foreign-supported political reform process aimed at strengthening the government of Afghanistan. This Other was no longer victimized but was seen as a rather passive recipient, dependent on outside assistance in order to progress and ‘mature.’ Some government-funded development agencies like the United States Agency for International Aid (USAID) went one step further, explicitly stating that they were working together with the armed forces to promote stability and human security to curb insurgencies: ‘Long-term development thrives best in stable conditions and USAID works as a partner to the

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These and other government aid agencies saw themselves as part of the overarching political process in Afghanistan, and were more likely to view the military as partners and the Taliban as the Other. Their engagement was meant to contribute to the political struggle for a stable Afghanistan – and the main challenger to the order represented by the elected government in Kabul was the Taliban. Being explicitly political also indicates a self-awareness of one’s own power, influence and role, which may be lacking among humanitarian NGOs. Development and neutrality have never been compatible, especially not in the politically strained environment in Afghanistan. This made the temporal dimension highly problematic for the humanitarian identity, which extended beyond its initial platform. In principle, concepts of development and progress should be relatively irrelevant for the humanitarian identity, but in practice they were very much present – and could undermine the other dimensions as well.

3.4. **Conclusions: the humanitarian identification process**

Despite some developments toward politicization, the humanitarian identity was very much present and was fiercely defended in Afghanistan. NGOs in particular were active in protecting the core principles of independence, impartiality and neutrality when the humanitarian space came under pressure from the military and political actors; and the temporal dimension was challenged by those who were seeking to work on the conflict, not merely in it. The humanitarian identity attempted to keep politics as an Other – but this was difficult, as the Afghan theatre exposed the underlying political/ideological nature of this identity.

To some extent, the tensions in the humanitarian identity were a result of the extremely politicized Afghan theatre, but they also reveal how Western principles may not necessarily be universally transferrable. Remaining a non-political intervener in a foreign country while simultaneously denying any agency to the Afghan Other became particularly unattainable in practice. The humanitarian principles assume that the intervention not will change the Other,

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only save him – but this represented a denial of humanitarian Self’s own political power and influence, and also ignored the potential resistance or opinion of the Afghan Other.

That being said, if politics were allowed to flow into the humanitarian space, the humanitarian identity would collapse, and the differentiation between Self and Other would vanish. The humanitarian actors’ political campaign in the West and in the UN to remain apolitical may have been flawed, but it was nonetheless a question of survival of the humanitarian identity as its practitioners saw it.

4. The State-building Identification Process

The state-building identity in Afghanistan was made up of the group of actors engaged in establishing a political system and institutions after the fall of the Taliban in 2001. With the UN and its mission in Afghanistan (UNAMA) in front, a range of international organizations and states engaged in the state-building process. Through international diplomatic conferences, new institutions for Afghanistan and the political direction were designed and formulated. An underlying assumption was that weak states are more prone to civil war or to harbour terrorists (as experienced in Afghanistan), whereas having stable state institutions is a precondition for avoiding economic and political collapse once the fighting is over. The state-building identity was based upon a set of ‘best practices’ or principles of good governance held to be applicable worldwide: this ‘liberal peacebuilding’ principle was the very core of the state-building identity. This identification was driven primarily by Western governments, with support from several UN agencies embedded in a similar identity. There was an important distinction, however. State-building, as it has become known and institutionalized in the UN, is a post-conflict contribution to peace-building. In Afghanistan, however, at least for the USA and many other Western governments, state-building was an attempt to win the war by strengthening the legitimate (in the eyes of these international actors) government. Despite these differences, the state-building identity in Afghanistan appeared to operate largely as if the situation were indeed a post-conflict one. Progress was measured not in terms of a weakened

522 Paris and Sisk, The Dilemmas of Statebuilding; Chesterman, You, the People; Suhrke, ‘Reconstruction as Modernisation’.

Taliban, but more in terms of technical criteria – the passage of laws, the establishment of institutions, and the like. UNAMA, which was a key state-builder, distanced itself from US war terminology and foreign policy, and defined itself as ‘established at the request of the [Afghan] Government to assist it and the people of Afghanistan in laying the foundations for sustainable peace and development.’ The state-building identity in Afghanistan thus bore several similarities to state-building identities in UN-led operations.

4.1. The spatial dimension
The spatial dimension of the state-building identity formation can be described as the process of first providing Afghanistan with an international identity, and then transforming the Afghan state into a proper one, with all the formal institutions and trappings (president, parliament, etc.). The establishment of formal external sovereignty – a demarcation toward other states – has in Western political thinking traditionally been regarded as a precondition for internal sovereignty – the government’s monopoly of power and social contract with the citizenry. Hence, establishing a physical and formal presence of the state institutions of a certain kind was a basic starting point for the foreign state-builders in Afghanistan, as this would provide the international community with official partners with whom to engage. The focus was to return the Other, the former Afghan pariah-state, back into the international family of nations. Less concern was directed to the quality of this state: it was the formal/physical presence that mattered the most.

The state-building identification process was initiated by the Bonn Conference in December 2001, shortly after the fall of the Taliban. Ambitions were high: ‘to end the tragic conflict in Afghanistan and promote national reconciliation, lasting peace, stability and respect for human rights.’ In practice the aim of the Bonn process was to establish or re-establish the basic state institutions and get a legitimate central government in place. The Bonn document itself makes

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for sober reading, with clear and achievable objectives. It created a road map for establishing an Emergency Loya Jirga, Interim Authority, Transitional Authority, Constitutional Loya Jirga, and later on, the presidential and parliamentary elections in 2004 and 2005.

The initial instinct on the part of the UN and the West was not to set up massive international state-building missions in Afghanistan similar to those of the 1990s in Bosnia, Kosovo, and East Timor. Criticism had emerged that these missions had succeeded in building neither peace nor local commitment and ownership. This time the recipe for the UN was a ‘light footprint’, a relatively limited physical presence. The international community should engage mainly through ‘facilitation, advice and subtle interventions’, while most reconstruction tasks were to be taken care of by the Afghans themselves. In this identity, the Others were the Afghans, located in Afghanistan, whereas the Self was the wider international community who meet them in international conferences, and through the limited institutional presence in Kabul, but who otherwise maintained physical distance.

However, the Western actors also wanted to make sure that Afghanistan got off on the right track. As a result, the ‘entire government functions were … being assumed by international actors during the Bonn Process, including the arrangement of presidential and parliamentary elections.’ Whereas international actors stressed the importance of the ‘light footprint’, they also had deep interests in how Afghanistan should develop politically, and they made sure to have at least one hand on the steering wheel. Nevertheless, at this stage, progress had clearly been made: the constitution was adopted, elections held, and many institutions had been formally established. A new Afghan state (a potential Self, resembling the Western one) was legally established, and the institutional presence of Afghanistan in international politics was achieved. The fact remained, however, that all this had been done with limited involvement of the Other in question, and the government institutions remained very weak.

This spatial dimension was hardly challenged: nobody was proposing a different constitutional setup, different institutions, tribal rule, new borders, or federalization of the country. The state-


530 Ibid.
building identity remained largely an imposed, outside–in, external identity within international UN and diplomatic circles. It was largely absent among the Afghan populace, and would collapse if the international community ceased to support it. The Afghan space was thus quasi-sovereign, or ‘simulated’, to borrow a term from Cynthia Weber, where a façade of external sovereignty provides the international community with a platform from which to ‘help build’ internal sovereignty. We find this further borne out in the ethical and temporal dimensions.

4.2. The ethical dimension
The ethical dimension of the humanitarian identity formation can be seen through how the state-building was based on what were assumed to be universal values, as represented by the UN and other international state-building actors. Beginning with the second step in the state-building process, which was initiated by Berlin Conference in 2004, prior to the first elections, the plan of the state-builders was for Afghanistan was to develop toward a liberal democracy. The Berlin document included a ‘Workplan of the Afghan Government’ which focussed on holding ‘free and fair elections’, and institution-building based upon values such as ‘good governance’, ‘the rule of law and human rights’, and ‘gender’, to mention some.

In this process the ethical Other of the state-builders was not only the non-liberal former Taliban rule, but also the old Afghan institutions, legislation, and value system, all of which were expected to become liberated and liberalized into a new ethical Self. The language in all the declarations put huge emphasis on the importance of liberal values such as human rights, gender issues and women’s rights, anti-corruption, and good governance – with hardly any reference to Afghan traditions, culture, religion, or values. Furthermore, if the Afghans passed laws that happened to run counter to the liberal values of the state-building identity, Western political actors were quick to interfere.

531 Tadjbakhsh and Schoiswohl, ‘Playing with Fire?’
532 Weber, Simulating Sovereignty.
For many Europeans, the entire engagement in Afghanistan was legitimized on moral-ethical grounds. With distrust of the Bush-era War on Terror, the European focus was more on helping the victims of Taliban rule: children, women, the uneducated. ‘Success’ in Afghanistan was typically referred to in terms of all the children – girls in particular – who had begun to attend school, or who now had access to healthcare.535

Individual political and economic freedoms were the ethical foundations of the state-building identification process. However, as Shahrbanou Tadjbakhsh has shown, the liberal model ignored the fact that any social contract between the state and the people must stem from the latter.536 State-building without legitimacy was bound to fail. Many Afghans considered the individualism and personal freedoms that underpinned the Western-sponsored economic and political institutions (free market, freedom of speech, elections, etc.) to be in conflict with local Muslim value systems. While they could support the rule of law, participation, social justice and morality, they also gave priority to collectivism over unlimited individual freedom, for the sake of societal harmony and well-being. Many preferred ‘Islamic peace’ to the individualism of the liberal peace. When the state-building identity promoted a set of values not immediately recognized or appreciated, the social contract between the people and the state institutions was bound to be fragile. Arguably, the people of Afghanistan were treated as recipients of democracy, not the driving force behind it.537

The ethical dimension of the state-building identification process was perhaps the most problematic one, and also the most sensitive. It entailed deep dilemmas about universalism versus relativism and the role of the external promoter and the internal recipient of a value system, which on paper is universalized through various UN declarations. The ethical dimension of the state-building identity was about transforming (or liberating) a non-liberal Other into a liberal Self – but without any deeper analysis of the potential conflicts, how it


536 Tadjbakhsh, ‘Conflicted Outcomes and Values’.

537 Tadjbakhsh and Schoiswohl, ‘Playing with Fire?’. 
might negatively affect the larger conflict resolution process, or backfire into resistance against democracy and the free-market as the foundation of the future Afghan identity.\footnote{Certain critical voices are emerging, primarily from academic circles. For instance, concepts such as ‘hybridity’ have been launched to describe the compromise between local customs and values and the liberal standards in the state-building identity. See Paris and Sisk, \textit{The Dilemmas of Statebuilding}; Richmond and Franks, \textit{Liberal Peace Transitions}. However, this has yet to be reflected in actual UN or European approaches to state-building in Afghanistan and beyond.}

4.3. The temporal dimension

The temporal dimension of the Afghan state-building identity was clearly evident in the Berlin Conference in 2004. Until then, while there were clear international developmental ambitions in the process, it had also been largely about building basic institutions with at least a flavour of Afghan identity and culture (Loya Jirga, etc.). After this, the state-building ambitions were accelerated: Afghanistan was to develop much further toward a liberal democracy, and the identity of the Western state-builders was reaffirmed. It was thus a matter of building a ‘liberal’ state – but in line with international templates, not local needs. The Other – through which the identity of the Self is contrasted – became defined as the past, with its traditional (and partly communist) forms of governance.

Where the 2001 Bonn document was narrow in scope, the 2004 Berlin document extended into several other areas, as mentioned: ‘good governance and public administration’ (including reform of the ministries, retraining of staff, civil service law, etc), ‘fiscal management’, ‘private sector development’, ‘economic and social development’, ‘rule of law and human rights’, ‘gender’, disarmament and security’, and ‘drugs’.\footnote{See \textit{Afghanistan: 2004 Berlin Conference Declaration}, available at: \url{https://reliefweb.int/report/afghanistan/afghanistan-2004-berlin-conference-declaration}} Under each of these headlines several concrete steps were listed, some of which represented major reform and development efforts.

This trend was continued in the 2006 Afghanistan Compact,\footnote{See \textit{Afghanistan Compact}, London Conference on Afghanistan, 31 January–1 February 2006, \url{http://www.nato.int/isaf/docu/epub/pdf/afghanistan_compact.pdf} and \textit{Afghanistan National Development Strategy, 2008–2013}, \url{http://mfa.gov.af/en/page/6547/afghanistan-national-development-strategy/afghanistan-national-development-strategy-ands}.} which covered almost all aspects of comprehensive state-building: security forces, counter-narcotics, public administration, statistics, gender, rule of law, and more. It also set benchmarks and timetables for all these sectors – but they appeared to be based on a generic list of things to do to achieve good
governance and human rights, with scant reference to the specific needs and challenges of Afghanistan. This was also the case with the 2004 document *Securing Afghanistan’s Future*, which laid the basis for the subsequent strategies, even if it was written under the auspices of Ashraf Ghani, an Afghan politician. Historical, contextual, and cultural challenges received scant mention.  

Due to the ‘light footprint’ approach, the discrepancies between these ambitions and delivery in the field were considerable. Neither UNAMA nor the Afghan government was ever provided with enough resources to implement the plans, nor were these resources delivered through third parties. In the words of a former UNAMA SRSG: ‘Much of it has been said and written – and even agreed solemnly at international conferences over and over again. But it has not been implemented.’

It is generally acknowledged that international assistance constituted around 90% of the public expenditure in Afghanistan during the intervention. And yet, some two-thirds of the foreign aid bypassed the Afghan government, thus undermining efforts to build strong state institutions. This applied particularly to regional government institutions outside Kabul. There was also minimal transparency in procurement and tendering; moreover, none of the benchmarks in the Afghan Compact applied to donors, only to the Afghan government.

A study of the local perceptions of the economic liberalization enforced by the 2006 Compact, the ANDS and IMF/WB (deregulation and liberalization of markets and trade, cuts in public spending, etc.), found that the experiences were largely negative. The process had not only

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545 Tadjbakhsh, ‘Conflicted Outcomes and Values.’
exacerbated differences between rich and poor, but also led to the emergence of mafia, corruption and rising prices. Again, the identification process launched a generic model of a liberal progressive economy and imposed it to replace the old dysfunctional and centralized economy (the Other), but failed to take local conditions and side-effects into account. The result was local scepticism to the liberal economic agenda, and hence less impact. The economic Other was not transformed to a Self as prescribed in the state-building identity.

Ironically, this failure of the Afghans to meet the high expectations, to transform the country from an underdeveloped to a modern/liberal state, served to reinforce and confirm the Western Self and its perceptions of the need to continue to assist Afghanistan. The temporal dimension was constantly present, as a vicious circle where outsiders define certain artificially high targets, fail to provide the Afghans with resources to deliver them, and thereby legitimize their own presence and the continued need for development programmes.

As with the spatial dimension, the temporal dimension of the identity was hardly challenged from within the group of involved actors. There was no alternative approach, or even any questioning of the distinction between ‘progress’ as defined by the state-building identity (Western-like institutions) and what it would mean for Afghans. The temporal dimension of the state-building identity was thus primarily challenged from outside, from forces like the Taliban, representing less progressive values according to the identity. These were defined as Others and hence threats to the temporal dimension of the state-building identity.

4.4. Conclusions: the state-building identification process

The state-building identity implied that, by developing liberal state institutions, the Afghan Other could gradually become more like the Western Self. For some countries, such as the USA, this may have been a deliberate attempt to win the war through state-building, but that was not the case for the UN and other voices dominant in the identification process. The role of the Self was to assist the Afghan government in modernizing and democratizing the country. The state-building identity appeared to be one of an outsider with limited own interests – a well-intentioned assistant seeking to modernize and develop Afghanistan. It was, to borrow a term from David Chandler, an ‘empire in denial’, a self-perception of a depoliticized helper, negating
its own power and influence and with no accountability toward the Afghan population. In practice, what the state-building identity seems to have delivered was a façade without much content. The social contract between the people and the state remained elusive, and a sustainable political and economic model was far from being implemented. It was an inside–out attempt at liberalization, with few voices questioning whether state-building was possible if it was not anchored in Afghan culture and tradition. Indeed, did that make sense at all in the midst of war, before a political peace agreement had been established?

Some of these findings resemble the arguments of the ‘post-development’ literature, which holds that Western development discourses have produced post-colonial subjects and ordered knowledge and truths about the poor in developing countries in ways that have served to facilitate intervention. Furthermore, it is argued that development projects are typically depoliticized and made into technical projects that the developer can deliver. The developer ‘Self’ is seen as a ‘facilitator’, not a political actor. There are obvious similarities between the identities of the Western development agent and the state-builder in Afghanistan. They share the same patterns of organizing facts, truths, and categories of the Other in a way that can enable the Self to operate. This is a Self with limited contextual understanding, often ignorant of indigenous counterparts and reluctant to acknowledge its own political power. These identities serve to keep the Self relevant, as technical facilitators of development or state-building. Maintaining this identity is crucial – it allows the professions to continue to exist, future interventions to take place, and universal standards and best practices to be promoted.

On the other hand, post-development research has been criticized for ignoring the power, agency, and influence of the recipients of development activities. Recent studies – often based on anthropological fieldwork – have revealed significant influence from local elites in influencing the scope and design of development aid. The identity that development actors ascribe to Other and Self, to their own role as developers, can become altered and negotiated in

546 Chandler, Empire in Denial.

547 See for example, Escobar, Encountering Development; Ferguson, The Anti-Politics Machine. A related argument in IR can be found in Doty, Imperial Encounters.

the meeting with the Other. This is highly relevant in the case of Afghanistan. As we have seen, the Other had significant power to resist and block the Self from realizing its liberal state-building project. I return to this in the concluding chapter.

Lastly, the state-building identity formation did not relate much with other intervening actors. In contrast to the humanitarian identity, it saw no need to delimit its space from other interveners. While sharing the perception of the ‘Progressive Afghan’ Other with the COIN-influenced part of the military identity, it seemed to operate relatively separate from the military. Relations between ISAF and UNAMA were sometimes strained, often due to poor communications and information exchange.\(^5\) The state-builders certainly represented the military as an Other – but hardly as a radical Other or as a significant contrast to their own identity.

5. Conclusions

This chapter has analysed the identity formations of the three main groups of international interveners in Afghanistan, how they regarded themselves and those intervened upon. We have seen how the very purpose of the intervention has differed significantly between the groups – and in some cases within these groups. In focus has been the ongoing constitution of identity, with the differentiation between the Other and the Self by the latter. This identity formation in turn provided the basis for certain practices and policies, while precluding others. The analysis has also revealed power-relations associated with identity formation, and how identities change and evolve, impacting on what policies are regarded the best or most appropriate. Although this can by no means be regarded as a fully developed analysis, it offers insights for better understanding how these policies are formed, altered, and challenged.

The findings are summarized in Table 6.

The analysis has showed that the conventional military identity regarded the Other as evil and unchangeable, beyond political or ethical redemption. This was used to legitimate and naturalize military operations aimed at eradicating the Taliban from the Afghanistan: taking territorial control and eliminating or pacifying as many as possible. The problem was that this approach did not succeed in removing the Taliban, and civilian sufferings created animosity


among the wider Afghan population. A challenge came with the COIN approach and its recognition of how conventional warfare had served to strengthen the Other. A more cautious approach was then adopted, with the focus shifting from the enemy Other to the allied Other (the local security forces) and the civilian Other (the local population). In temporal and ethical terms, this meant that priority was now given to building Afghan civilian legitimacy and security forces. Despite various COIN setbacks, this element remained a priority and an exit strategy for the military. The stabilization approach never fully challenged the dominant military identity, but it represented Afghanistan as a weak state in need of stabilization and assistance. It defined the Taliban Other as ‘criminals’ and therefore in theory redeemable – in contrast to the conventional representation of the ‘totally evil Other’. These various military identities co-existed in Afghanistan, but their relative strength also evolved over time. As a result, policies and approaches evolved as well.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Methodological Approach</th>
<th>Spatial representations of the Other</th>
<th>Spatial representations of the Self</th>
<th>Policy of the Self</th>
<th>Ethical representations of the Other</th>
<th>Ethical representations of the Self</th>
<th>Policy of the Self</th>
<th>Temporal representations of the Other</th>
<th>Temporal representations of the Self</th>
<th>Policy of the Self</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Military</td>
<td>Conventional approach</td>
<td>Terrorists controlling Afghanistan ‘radical Other’</td>
<td>Taking over territory</td>
<td>Eradicate al-Qaeda and Taliban from Afghanistan</td>
<td>Evil, barbaric, unlawful combatants unchangeable</td>
<td>Just warriors, morally superior</td>
<td>Kill or capture</td>
<td>Locked in the past, progress impossible</td>
<td>Advanced and sophisticated</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>COIN</td>
<td>The Other can reform. Focus on population + some radicals</td>
<td>Combined reformer and soldier</td>
<td>Clear–hold–build Civilian LOOs PRTs</td>
<td>Future Afghan security forces + some radicals</td>
<td>Legitimate, but can make mistakes</td>
<td>Build local legitimacy, train local forces</td>
<td>Potentially ‘almost self’, + still remaining radicals</td>
<td>Assistant, reformer</td>
<td>Modernize ASF, marginalize Taliban</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Stabilization approach</td>
<td>A weak state</td>
<td>Stabilizing force</td>
<td>Assisting HN gaining territorial control</td>
<td>Taliban as criminals</td>
<td>Soldier/Quasi-police</td>
<td>Arrest, use of force in self-defence</td>
<td>The poor and uneducated civilians, girls</td>
<td>Do-gooders for civilians</td>
<td>Help Afghanistan to modernize</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Humanitarian</td>
<td>Traditional</td>
<td>Universal saviour</td>
<td>Call for response, demand access, claim humanitarian space</td>
<td>Victims + Political actors</td>
<td>Life-saver, Independent, impartial, neutral</td>
<td>Save lives, help the victims, defend humanitarian space</td>
<td>Victims without agency</td>
<td>Life saviour</td>
<td>Emergency relief, then pull-out. Work in conflict.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Expanded</td>
<td>Universal saviour</td>
<td>Call for military intervention, claim humanitarian space</td>
<td>Victims</td>
<td>Life-saver with a long-term perspective</td>
<td>Address injustice, human rights violations</td>
<td>Victims with potential</td>
<td>Assistant in capacitating victims</td>
<td>Work on conflict, address ‘root causes’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>State-Building</td>
<td>Initial Phase</td>
<td>Former pariah-state</td>
<td>Diplomatic assistant</td>
<td>International recognition of Afghanistan</td>
<td>The Afghan past, traditional structures</td>
<td>Ethically just assistant</td>
<td>Help women and children, education, health</td>
<td>Non-liberal, pre-modern state</td>
<td>Supporter of authorities</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Second Phase</td>
<td>Weak state</td>
<td>Assisting internal reform</td>
<td>The Afghan past, traditional structures</td>
<td>Ethically just assistant</td>
<td>Building a just society based on HR</td>
<td>Pre-modern state with liberal potential</td>
<td>Technical state-builder</td>
<td>Building liberal state</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
The traditional humanitarian identity claimed absolute neutrality and thus regarded all political actors as its Other. This identity – summarized in the keywords ‘independence, impartiality and neutrality’ – differentiated the humanitarians from literally everyone else. The idea of a humanitarian space exclusively for humanitarian actors followed the same logic. The aid recipient (in principle, the main Other for this Self), was represented as without agency or capacity for self-help, and reliant on external interveners for its survival. However, our analysis has also showed that many humanitarian actors expanded their portfolio beyond emergency relief. Seeking to address the ‘root causes’ of the conflict, they became engaged in development aid, human rights advocacy and human capacity-building. This approach legitimized a far broader range of programmes and activities, but also served to undermine the foundations of the traditional non-political humanitarian identity.

Lastly, the state-building identity sought to transform the Afghan state in its own image, so it focused on establishing formal institutions based on predominantly Western best practices. In spatial terms it re-established Afghanistan in the international system of states, according it formal external sovereignty. Internal sovereignty was formally established, but never achieved in practice. The ‘light footprint’ approach, combined with high ambitions, created a huge gap between expectations and resources, reinforced by massive bypassing of the Afghan authorities by foreign donors. In ethical and temporal terms Afghanistan was regarded as extremely weak and backward, in need of massive assistance – and of firm foreign involvement in governance. Since the Afghan Other remained basically excluded from the identification processes, it was denied the chance to define the parameters of this liberalization. The on-going war certainly made state-building difficult as well.

In the previous chapter I outlined two conditions to be met if coherence could be expected. The first was that the intervening Selves consider military–civilian coherence to be of some relevance; the second, the existence of a certain amount of shared or overlapping representation of the Other among the Selves. As we have seen, these conditions were not met, or at best only partly, in Afghanistan.

On the first condition, the military said that it relied on civilians to achieve its objectives, but the latter had their own reasons for being in Afghanistan. There was no force strong enough to enforce coherence against the will of the intervening actors themselves. The military outreach to the civilian side was also typically interpreted as an invitation to support the military in
achieving its own objectives, not civilian ones. The three identities came to evolve in parallel, independent of each other, with no overarching strategy or prioritization among them.

As to the second condition, there was not one unified ‘Western approach’ to Afghanistan, but at least three, each associated with numerous conflicting representations of the Afghans along all three dimensions. If we can recognize how these three sets of actors had such fundamentally different reasons for existing and for being in Afghanistan, we can also understand why a comprehensive approach never was achieved.

However, there were also some shared features. Specifically, all three identities shared some forms of modernization and state-building approaches towards their respective Others. There were forces in each identification process pushing for this. But they appeared to have very different ideas about what kind of state they were attempting to build. Was it a secure state, capable of fighting insurgents and protecting vital infrastructure without outside help? Was it a developed state, with the focus on relieving poverty, building up education and health? Or was it a liberal state, with formal government institutions established to secure the political freedoms and human rights of the populace? The absence of any overarching shared vision made even state-building challenging. All in all, the intervening actors hardly developed coherence – not in their purpose for being in Afghanistan, nor in terms of coordinating activities towards a shared goal.

Given the space limitations of this dissertation, some aspects and nuances to the picture have probably been overlooked here. There might, for instance, have been more power-struggles and competing representations of Other and Self within the state-building identity than identified in this study. But my intention was not to offer an exhaustive analysis of Afghanistan: it was to look specifically at the challenges related to coherence and the comprehensive approach. This chapter has shed light on the foundations of these challenges.

That being said, the absence of coherence among the intervening parties in Afghanistan can at best be a part-answer to why the overall intervention was unsuccessful. As mentioned in the introduction to this chapter, others have analysed this thoroughly, and the full answers are likely to involve factors and actors not included in the analysis here – such as internal US politics, Afghan politics and culture, and the total amount of resources spent.

The main objective of this chapter was to demonstrate the utility of the analytical framework developed in Chapter 5. I sought to develop an analytical framework that could be applied
deductively to various different cases. Furthermore, the aim was to be able to analyse all the main actors in an intervention – to theorize an intervention comprehensively, not only bits and pieces of it. This has – to my knowledge – never been done before.

Two questions then arise. Firstly, has this analysis offered any value added compared to other studies of the Afghanistan intervention? Secondly, is the model applicable also to other cases, other interventions? I turn to this second question in the next chapter, and will remain in the Afghanistan context here.

Given the fact that all empirical materials used in this chapter are secondary sources, nothing new as such has been revealed. But that was not to be expected either. The question is whether the comprehensive analytical approach has offered us new perspectives on the known facts about the intervention in Afghanistan. I will argue it has.

Firstly, the comprehensiveness is unique. The application of the same three dimensions in all three identities has allowed for comparison and a more systematic understanding of the intervention as a whole. This chapter has shown that such an analysis is indeed possible, offering new comparative perspectives on the groups of intervening actors.

Secondly, the focus on the core of identity processes, the Self/Other representations, has allowed glimpses into some basic pillars of the intervening actors. While many studies have noted how mandates, resources and politics impacted on the intervention, this focus on Self/Other relations offers insights into how practices and policies were affected also by the identity representations of Other and Self.

Thirdly, the analysis has revealed competing representations within each identification process, as well as between and among them. It has demonstrated evolution and change, while avoiding deterministic explanations referring to, e.g., the prejudices of the interveners. This approach has made it possible to see the evolution of identities over time, and how the dominant identity representation could be challenged from within.

Fourthly, the analysis has offered a systematic understanding as to why civilian and military intervening actors never managed to work together smoothly in Afghanistan. It has pointed to something more fundamental than mandates, personalities or organizational cultures. Although coherence in and of itself would probably not have been the golden key to a successful intervention, coherence still attracted considerable political attention. This analysis has shown
that a comprehensive approach had limited chances of success, due to the significant differences between civilian and military actors regarding their basic visions for transformation of the Other.

In the next and final chapter, I build on these points, asking how this analytical model could be further developed and applied to other cases. What are its strengths and weaknesses? What kinds of research questions is the model best suited for answering?
Chapter 7

Conclusions – and Possible Ways Ahead

1. Introduction

This dissertation opened with an empirical observation: in today’s interventions, the military and civilian actors are expected to develop coherence and coordination while in the field. This, I argued, is a relatively new feature of post-Cold War interventions, compared to interventions further back in history. The call for coherence among the actors in an intervention may be driven by what many see as new characteristics of conflicts today (with the blurring of distinctions such as warrior–civilian, war–peace, military–police), and the subsequent need for new approaches to dealing with these kinds of conflicts. Also, the end of the Cold War paved the way for higher international ambitions as regards UN interventions and peacebuilding; and the 9/11 terrorist attacks against the USA brought greater Western deployment of troops. Humanitarian relief work has also expanded in these decades.

However, despite fairly broad recognition of the interdependencies between security and development, efforts at building coherence among and between the various types of intervening actors still face significant difficulties. Interventions continue to be complex and messy. Coherence and coordination are far from optimal: power struggles, competition, disagreements, turf battles and conflicting mandates are but some of the difficulties observed.

In order to understand these challenges beyond a case-by-case basis, I have argued, we must develop an analytical framework for interventions. We need to find a way to approach interventions that can be applied to various sets of actors across contemporary interventions. This led me to formulate the following research question:

- *How can we theorize and analyse the challenges facing intervening actors to achieve military–civilian coherence in post-Cold War interventions?*
The ‘how’ question hints at the constitutive theoretical approach of this dissertation. My aim has not been to single out the most common impediments to coherence in interventions. If that had been the case, I could have analysed a broad range of interventions and looked for commonalities likely to be applicable also to other cases. The problem with such an inductive approach, however, is that if circumstances change in future interventions, the relevance of findings about earlier interventions may be reduced correspondingly. Conclusions based on empirical findings of the past will sooner or later become outdated, or at least lose some of their analytical value. Therefore, I opted to develop an analytical framework that could be applicable across cases and intervening actors.

Before reaching this conclusion in Chapter 5, it was necessary to offer a broader assessment of military–civilian coherence in interventions. I did this in Chapters 2 to 4. This served partly to develop a deeper understanding of the challenges and how they tend to play out, partly to determine that the obstacles were of social and political by nature and therefore could evolve. All this prepared the way for the deductive approach proposed in Chapter 5.

Chapter 2 discussed how governments and international organizations have attempted to operationalize coherence into a comprehensive approach (or similar concepts). For a better understanding of these comprehensive approaches, I then developed a taxonomy of various relationships. This showed that interventions may vary significantly in terms of the actors engaged and how they relate to each other. From this, I chose to focus on inter-agency coherence. The chapter also discussed some of the obstacles that tend to impede the prospects of coherence: output vs. impact; conflicting mandates and values; and internal/external imbalance. Coherence emerged as highly context-specific: the level of coherence achievable in one situation will not necessarily be achievable in the next one. This in turn implies that our approach to studying and understanding the challenges related to coherence must be able to account for contextual variation. In other words, we need an approach that can be applied to all interventions, but which may yield different answers in each case, depending on the circumstances. Furthermore, the discussion demonstrated the highly political nature of relationships in an intervention, showing that coherence needs to be assessed with this in mind, with attention to resistance and conflict as well as cooperation.

Chapter 3 then looked more closely at the intervening actor which often is the most dominant, powerful and intrusive: the military. Comparison of the UN Peacekeeping Doctrine and the US COIN Doctrine showed that, despite their differences, peacekeeping and counter-insurgency
share important features along six dimensions: civilian primacy, protection of civilians, coherence, local ownership, intelligence support, and the use of force. They also share some shortcomings, especially as regards relations with civilian actors. Both concepts rely on civilians to succeed, but have been vague on how to go about achieving this in practice. Importantly though, both the kinds of operations are deeply political. The degree of politicization depends on context, but these are sliding scales, not fixed positions. UN peacekeepers may be as political as the US Marines. The nature of each mission will determine how political a UN or a COIN operation will appear to the host population and other interveners. That in turn implies that challenges related to achieving coherence between military and civilian actors cannot be understood without a taking the political circumstances of the intervention into account.

Chapter 4 focused on the most heated type of military–civilian conflict in interventions: between military and humanitarian actors. The humanitarians represent a special case because of their insistence on being apolitical. If this were in fact the case, it would probably warrant a different analytical approach from that applied to other civilian actors. In other words, we found certain constant differences between humanitarians and military actors, differences that are always present across interventions, we could develop generic explanations of the challenges to coherence. To assess this, I first discussed if and how international humanitarian law gave the humanitarians a special status in interventions. Finding the law to be deliberately vague, allowing for interpretations, pragmatism and therefore also politics, I developed a taxonomy of various military operations and the associated challenges with humanitarians. The core of the challenge lies in the humanitarians’ fear of becoming politicized: that their basic values of independence, impartiality and neutrality may be undermined. This is particularly likely in the context of offensive military operations or when troops are tasked with engaging the civilian population, as with PoC or COIN. However, we also noted that humanitarians frequently cooperate with the military in less heated situations, and that they often politicize themselves by expanding beyond their humanitarian core-tasks. Hence, politicization depends on context and what the actors do – not who they are. That implies that humanitarians can be studied through the same analytical framework as other civilians.

Chapters 2 through 4 offered analytical categorizations of crucial aspects of interventions today-
Coherence was shown to be more than a technical approximation of actors: it is a deeply political endeavour, faced with both resistance and ignorance. In this regard, context and
operational practice matter more than formal mandates. The next step was to find out, more concretely, how all this can be theorized.

Chapter 5 focused on developing an appropriate theoretical framework for analysing coherence in interventions. I began with an assessment of the most ambitious attempt at theorizing an intervention to date, Séverine Autesserre’s study of the intervention into the DRC. Her theorizing was found to be largely inductive: tailor-made for her specific study-case, and not very applicable elsewhere. I then proposed a deductive approach concentrated on collective identity: how the intervening actors ascribe meaning to themselves and Others. After all, the very existence of these actors is built largely on interventions. Much of their legitimacy and reason for being there is based on their role or expertise in engaging other people, usually in expeditionary operations. If we want to get to the heart of an intervention, we need to understand how the intervening actors regard their tasks and the reason for their presence. I developed a framework for studying the identification processes along three dimensions (spatial, temporal and ethical), emphasizing that the Other need not be radically different from the Self. What the researcher needs to capture is the ongoing process of defining the Other, and in particular conflicting representations within the Self group. Here, I argued that the proposed analytical framework can grasp these representations, how they differ among various groups of interveners, and also how they evolve and change. This approach can be applied on any intervention, on any group of actors. And finally, this analysis of how the various intervening actors perceive their own role and identity can help us understand the challenges they face in seeking to achieve coherence. If the representations of themselves and those they intervene upon differ significantly among interveners, coherence becomes more challenging. If for instance, the military consider their Other to be an enemy insurgency group or a terrorist that must be neutralized, whereas the civilian peacebuilders consider the central government to be their Other, there is little common ground on which to build coherence.

In Chapter 6 this analytical framework was applied to the case of Afghanistan. I singled out three groups of intervening actors: the military, humanitarians and the state-builders, and analysed the identities within these groups. There emerged significantly different representations of Self and Other – between the groups of interveners, but also internally, within the various camps. In turn, these various representations of the Other and the Self led to different and often conflicting policy priorities – while precluding alternative approaches. We saw, for instance, that although all three identities involved elements of state-building, they differed
significantly as to the kind of ‘state’ envisaged. This was one reason why coherence was not achieved in Afghanistan. The intervening Selves need a certain degree of shared perception of the Other along the three dimensions, if coherence is to be expected. However, the three Selves in Afghanistan appear to have been largely ignorant of one another, operating in parallel but not in conjunction. The chapter also identified certain commonalities with insights from other academic fields, such as the ‘post-development’ literature.

What, then, is the potential for further refinement of the analytical framework? Drawing on insights from other bodies of literature, in the following I discuss to what extent the analytical framework is applicable to other cases. Arguing that it is indeed applicable, I then examine how it could be expanded upon, specifically as regards interrelationships between certain groups of intervening actors. Here I briefly discuss the utility of borrowing from theories of ontological security, before moving on to the crucial relationship between the intervener and those intervened upon. Here I highlight the power relations involved in these relations, not least the resistance of those on the receiving end of the intervention. Drawing on insights from social anthropology and theories of relational power, I then turn to potential applications to interventions, not least for analysing power interactions at the micro-level.

2. Identification Theory and Interventions: Further Explorations

2.1. The utility of the analytical framework

What of the utility of applying the analytical framework, the identification theory, to other cases? Can the approach proposed in this dissertation be applied fruitfully to other interventions? Even if Afghanistan is a unique case – as in fact all cases are – there is reason to believe that the identities and representations of the Other as described here will resemble identities and representations in other theatres as well, not least since many of the international actors are the same. The representation of the Other is obviously context-dependent. Intervening actors will generally try to get at least a basic knowledge of the history, culture, politics and economy of the place where they are deployed. Nevertheless, as the critical literature of the ‘liberal peacebuilding’ paradigm has shown, we can note the remarkable similarity in approaches. Professional interveners, such as UN field staff, naturally bring with them experience and what they consider to be best practices from previous missions. Much of this has also been
institutionalized in UN documents and lessons learned for peacebuilding. Similarly, international financial institutions like the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund have constructed their reform packages around several relatively specific economic policy prescriptions. Hence, even if the interveners conduct a thorough contextual analysis of each specific place of intervention, they are also likely to bring with them certain similar approaches (called ‘luggage’ in Chapter 1), on the individual, organizational and higher levels.

The representation of the Other in an intervention will usually begin with a representation of the Self based on previous interventions. This representation of the Other will be coloured by what the intervening actors already consider to be their own role: the military will tend to look for adversaries, the humanitarians for victims, etc. A study of identities of the intervening actors in another intervention – in the three dimensions as applied here to the Afghanistan intervention – is thus likely to reveal some similarities with those found here. But, in contrast to a theoretical model that relies solely on this kind of ‘luggage’ (such as ‘frames’), the approach I propose can account for change and development also during the period of intervention. Representations of the Other are likely to change or be challenged, and thereby also the Self-identity of the interveners and what they see as appropriate or legitimate policies. The ability to capture change is – as argued in Chapter 1 – crucial to any analytical approach that seeks to avoid the pitfalls of historical determination or tautology.

Although the analytical categories chosen always will impact on the final analysis (e.g., one frame, or three identities), the approach I have offered looks specifically at how these boundaries are constituted and challenged. A more thorough analysis along the lines sketched here might make it logical, for instance, to single out yet another identity (say, international police). Similarly, in other cases, different identities than the three discussed here might be identified – perhaps the private sector, such as foreign investors, could be of importance.

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2.2. **Interrelationship between intervening actors: ontological security**

If we conclude that the approach presented in this dissertation is suited for application to other cases – with some case-specific adjustments – the next question is whether studies of identity formation could be utilized for closer examination of cases of dynamic interrelationship between certain groups of actors. In Afghanistan the main actors seemed to operate in relative isolation from each other – with a few exceptions – but that might not be the case in other interventions. We might then expect more frequent contact, interaction or conflict between them. Capturing this analytically will require an approach that focuses more specifically on this interrelationship *between* the intervening actors than the one indicated here.

As we saw in Chapter 6, when the military violated the humanitarian space, the humanitarians felt threatened, feeling that their identity of neutrality and impartiality was undermined. For them, all *political* actors became their Others, not only the Afghan civilians whom they were assisting. These relationships among humanitarians, military, peacebuilders, police, diplomats and others could certainly be explored further. Such studies could be used for better understanding conflicts among and between intervening actors – for instance, between a multinational Force Commander and a Special Representative of the UN Secretary-General. How do they interact, where are the meeting points, and what policies and practices have impacts on the others? That would entail a more dynamic intersubjective process than what often has been associated with identity studies, which sometimes cover decades or whole centuries. In any specific intervention, however, the time-span is shorter, and the interaction between Self and Others more frequent. We therefore need an analytical approach of identification that can capture these dynamics better.

One strand of IR theorizing that might be relevant here could be the concept of *ontological security*.\(^551\) It explicitly combines identity formation with agency and a routinized relationship with others. Here I will simply indicate certain features which might be utilized to study interventions – as well as noting some shortcomings of this approach.

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Ontological security, writes Jennifer Mitzen, ‘is security not of the body but of the self, the subjective sense of who one is, which enables and motivates action and choice’.\(^{552}\) It is, in other words, about identity: ‘Individuals need to feel secure in who they are, as identities or selves.’\(^{553}\) Furthermore, she writes, ‘armed with ontological security, the individual will know how to act and therefore how to be herself’.\(^{554}\) Action is thus directly linked to identity: ‘The consequences of action will always either reproduce or contradict identities, and since identity motivates action its stability over time depends on it being supported in practice.’\(^{555}\) In short, this line of theorizing focuses more on action than on representation, more on active relationships than on distant observation. As such, it seems well-suited for our purposes here.

Mitzen elevates these theoretical insights from individuals to the state level. In principle, there should be no reason for not applying them to other higher-level or collective identities, such as groups of intervening actors.\(^{556}\) The actions themselves create a dynamic where ‘actors achieve ontological security especially by routinizing their relations with significant others’.\(^{557}\) These routinized actions create the desired predictability which again secures the desired ontological security. Mitzen applies this to the ‘security dilemma’ in IR theory, and holds that ‘irrational’ or ‘dysfunctional’ state behaviour may be a result of such ‘in-between’ state routinized action – rather than stemming from internal affairs in states: ‘conflict can be caused not by uncertainty but by the certainty such relationships offer their participants’, she notes.\(^{558}\) Applied to groups


\(^{553}\) Ibid., 342.

\(^{554}\) Ibid., 345.

\(^{555}\) Ibid., 344.

\(^{556}\) Drawing on social psychological theories on the individual level to theorize the international level is common in IR theory, but has also been contested. The challenges related to moving between different levels of analysis have been discussed at least since the 1960s. I will refrain from entering the debate about the sustainability of such an ‘as if’-approach here, except for noting that this is a rather common move in IR theory, irrespective of methodological approaches. This includes IR theorists who build on identity theory. See e.g. David J. Singer, ‘The Level-of-Analysis Problem in International Relations’, *World Politics* 14, no. 1 (1961), 77–92; A. Nuri Yurdusev, “‘Level of Analysis” and “Unit of Analysis”: A Case for Distinction’, *Millennium: Journal of International Studies* 22, no. 1 (1993), 77–88; Alexander Wendt, ‘The State as Person in International Theory’, *Review of International Studies* 30, no. 2 (2004), 289–316.


\(^{558}\) Ibid., 343.
of organizations this could mean that observations of certain (‘irrational’ or ‘sub-optimal’) behaviours observed were a result of routines established when relating to other groups of actors. Could it be, for instance, that humanitarian actors maintain a strained relationship to military actors even when this is not particularly necessary (e.g. a less dangerous environment), because this is has become a routinized framework that offers stability and predictability?

In a similar argument, Brent Steele emphasizes the shame and anxiety that states (or their representatives) can feel if they fail to live up to the expectations of their own identities (as e.g. protectors of humanitarian principles). This can compel states to conduct certain policies (such as humanitarian interventions) to protect their ontological security. As for groups of intervening actors, these may feel compelled to act in certain ways in order to maintain their identity – as failure to do so would undermine that identity and cause ontological insecurity. Perhaps this approach could be applied to examine more closely how armed forces act in an intervention, how they may engage in exchanges of fire with limited strategic impact – for the purpose of upholding their own identity and self-narrative as professional and capable soldiers. For instance, it has been argued that, in Afghanistan, German and some Nordic troops were trying to compensate for the political caveats emplaced on them by their political masters, by being more offensive in their operations than e.g. the British troops – possibly in order to defend their own identity as professional soldiers.

These are theoretical pathways that could be explored further in seeking to explain and understand actor behaviour in interventions. However, ontological security may also prove to be of limited utility, as most of the literature on ontological security has focused on the identity of states. How applicable is this theory to the case of interventions, where there are clusters of like-minded organizations with a more-or-less shared identity?

For one thing, states are legal units, and arguably represent a more coherent unit of analysis than a group of organizations like, say, humanitarians, consisting of numerous actors with their own internal identities, organizational structures and hierarchies. Although states are neither

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560 Eric Sangar, Historical Experience. Burden or Bonus in Today’s Wars?: The British Army and the Bundeswehr in Afghanistan (Freiburg: Rombach, 2014); Gjørv, Understanding Civil–Military Interaction: Lessons Learned from the Norwegian Model.
billiard balls nor unitary rational actors, they are nonetheless arguably closer to those descriptions than would be a group of humanitarian NGOs, or the multinational deployment of armed forces in an intervention. This could make it challenging to apply the theory of ontological security to empirical studies of interventions. Which interactions, by which organizations, and involving which other actors, should be regarded as worth studying? The answer could be empirical: those that seem to uphold an ontological security and a coherent identity of the Self in question. But it would probably be more difficult to define or single out these patterns than it would be when dealing with states.

Secondly, ontological security is limited to the study of security relations, and that may be a challenge. With the occasional exception of humanitarian actors, intervening actors rarely feel threatened by other intervening actors. Strange bedfellows they may be, but bedfellows nonetheless.\textsuperscript{561} The theorizing on ontological security is intended to complement traditional territorial state security and is therefore less interested in aspects of international relations that are less affiliated with security concerns. However, as noted in Chapters 5 and 6, the Other need not be hostile or dangerous for them to function as a constituting contrast to the Self: there are degrees of Other-ness. Ontological security may be applied also to cooperative security relations, as with security communities, but it is still security that binds them together. However, ‘security community’ is hardly a relevant descriptor of the conglomerate of actors in an intervention. They may have routinized interaction with each other, but the absence of such interaction will not necessarily threaten their ontological security. Changes in the routinized interaction will not necessarily threaten the identity of the Self in question.

It is wise to be cautious about placing too much analytical emphasis on the interrelationship between the various groups of intervening actors. That may not be the most relevant relation in an intervention. In some instances it may be crucial, and then ontological security can provide tools for scrutinizing these relations – but in other cases it will not be. Interveners may have little to do with each other besides their physical proximity. Nonetheless, this discussion has indicated one possible path of theoretical explorations for cases where these interrelationships are indeed of importance to the research inquiry. This fits with and builds on the analytical framework as explored in previous chapters, and can add the dimension of routinized actions.

\textsuperscript{561} Donna Winslow, ‘Strange Bedfellows in Humanitarian Crisis: NGOs and the Military’.  

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2.3. **Power and Resistance: Interveners and Internal Actors**

As argued in Chapters 5 and 6, in the majority of cases the most important Self–Other relationship is that between interveners and those intervened upon. The purpose of intervention – and indeed the *raison d’être* of many of the intervening actors – is to engage with and impact on the people, organizations, structures, culture or economy in the area of intervention. The intervening Self is doing this so as to alter the Other somehow (whether this means surrender, survival, reform, or whatever), but the Self also needs the Other in order to constitute its own identity. In this dissertation I have examined the various representations of the Other in three dimensions – but the power-relationships and interactions between the Self and Other could be explored further.

Much of the ‘liberal peacebuilding’ literature has focused on the subtle dominance of the intervenor over the internal actors. There are tendencies towards exploitation, domination and ignorance, as the intervening Self is usually the stronger party, without really recognizing this hierarchy. However, we saw in Chapter 6 how the Other may also resist and significantly impact on the policies of the Self. Insurgents as well as less-hostile or non-hostile Others may generally be weaker than the intervening Self, but they may well have enough power to obstruct successful completion of the mission of the Self. It is therefore overly simplistic to restrict an analysis to the more or less overt dominance of the Self over the Other.

In Chapter 6 I also briefly indicated the existence of an ethnographic literature which puts emphasis on local resistance towards dominating actors or hegemons. An early classic on local resistance is James C. Scott’s *Weapons of the Weak: Everyday Forms of Peasant Resistance*, from 1985.562 His point is that peasants may employ many forms for resisting a hegemon – through everyday practices of foot-dragging and false compliance, to sabotage and more. In the long run, such techniques are more effective than rebellions, Scott argues, and are well suited to the social structure of the peasantry. Furthermore, he criticizes his contemporary neo-Marxist and Gramscian scholars who emphasized the idea of ideological dominance by the ruling class over the weaker classes. The peasant class, Scott argues, is in fact capable of penetrating and resisting this attempted ideological hegemony. In his more recent work, he has shown how local

communities have resisted attempts at incorporating them into state structures. They have developed ‘shutter zones’ and cultures of refuge from the state: from taxation, slavery, war and epidemics: ‘Virtually everything about these people’s livelihoods, social organization, ideologies and […] oral cultures, can be read as strategic positionings designed to keep the state at arm’s length.’ In other words, they are not mere remnants of some pre-civilizational past: they have deliberately chosen to stay away from the state. Although these studies are not about interventions, they do show the resolve that local communities can exhibit in resisting a force that is presumably stronger in terms of material and ideological resources. Several of these insights are therefore likely to be relevant also for students of interventions.

Other writers have focused on *development* – as practice, discourse and ideology. Development aid may be described as a kind of intervention, but the circumstances of the entry into another country differ from what we have defined as an ‘intervention’ here, which includes a military dimension. Developmental organizations usually engage in more permissive security environments than the intervening actors discussed in this dissertation – but that does not mean that there are no relevant parallels. As we have seen, the post-conflict state-builders are often development agencies, and their underlying logic is the idea of a mutually reinforcing security–development nexus. The rich academic (primarily anthropological) body of research on development has much to offer the study of interventions. As noted in Chapter 6, the ‘post-development’ literature has criticized the inherent power in the development discourse. The knowledge, techniques and truths contained in the Western development discourse have served as instruments of dominance over the ‘Third World’, it was argued. Later work has criticized these studies for, among other things, failure to recognize agency on the part of the aid recipients. These recent studies have focused on, for instance, powerful ‘aid brokers’ operating between local populations and external donors, or on the forms of power inherent in

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566 Lie, ‘Postdevelopment Theory and the Discourse–Agency Conundrum’.

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‘development’s routines, practices, and subjectivities’. One such argument is that, instead of regarding ‘aid givers’ and ‘aid recipients’ as separate groups with separate logics, one should recognize the interaction between aid rationales and recipient strategies. Aid workers may reflect critically on their own efforts, and recipients may actively engage to bend the development rationale to their own ends. Such an approach to power relations does not see this as a matter of black-and-white, of power and resistance, but as an interaction where both sides adjust and adapt.

These insights seem highly relevant for studies of interventions as well. The external interveners need the internal actors to govern themselves in a way that can satisfy the needs of the interveners – but the internal actors may also resist, for instance by rejecting the gender balance that the intervening actors promote in a parliament. Further study of the power relations between external interveners and internal recipients could prove fruitful – and applicable to all groups of intervening actors and their recipients.

However, our discussion has moved away from identification theory. If we wish to maintain the focus on how identity evolves and creates the bandwidth or conditions of possible action, could the above-mentioned power modes be utilized? Yes, but that would probably entail shifting the focus away from representations and towards practices and techniques. It would require focusing less on how the Self reads, interprets and re-presents the Other in the three dimensions, and more on how the Self and Other encounter each other. That might be the mode of battle and violence, the mode of communication, propaganda, political debate, or the mode of exchange of values, religion and ethics. Researchers could establish in greater detail how power and resistance lead both Self and Other to adapt, adjust and change over time, by studying their action, behaviour, or policies towards one another. Such an approach might also illuminate policy changes on the micro-level.

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Identification theory as I have applied it here is dynamic: it is about identification as a process, not as a description of a condition. However, identification theory is arguably less suited for explaining sudden or minor policy changes. Studies of how Self and Other interact in day-to-day encounters in an intervention may be better positioned to account for such changes than the approach chosen in this dissertation. Understanding the power relations at play in these situations may also shed light on lesser conflicts, say between an external and an internal force commander, between a UN SRSCG and a president, or an NGO representative and a village leader. A focus on identity and power in these situations may reveal more than an analysis that examines the embedded mandates, cultures and traditions of the various actors. It is precisely the dynamics and fluidity of these actors’ ‘luggage’ that can provide for interesting analyses.

A word of caution: it is important to bear in mind what distinguishes a military intervention from much of the theorizing discussed here. When armed force is used, this is often in non-permissive security environments characterized by violence, or the risk of violence, and with people on the move, uprooted and frustrated, frightened and terrified. Warlords, bandits and traffickers may flourish, forcing other actors or voices to the margins. Foreign interveners may further complicate the picture. Power is likely to be predominantly in the hands of the strong and dominant. We should take care when applying theoretical concepts from, for instance, post-development theorizing or anthropology. They may provide valuable analytical tools, but will need to be adjusted to an environment quite different from that of most anthropological studies. Nonetheless, identification theorizing could be explored further – in studying relations between intervening actors, as well as between these actors and those intervened upon. The latter aspect may appear most promising, and is arguably also the most important in an intervention. Studies of the various forms of power and resistance seem particularly fruitful. Ultimately, of course, such choices will depend on the research question in each case.

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In the first chapter I pointed out that interventions have become an important arena for the conduct of global politics, and should be studied as a phenomenon in international relations. However, I also noted that most theoretical attention has been concerned with the prelude to interventions; the legal and moral legitimacy of interventions, the political likelihood of
interventions, and similar. Studies of the actual interventions have tended to be empirical, with a case-by-case focus. Except for the work of some critics of the ‘liberal peace’ paradigm, there have been surprisingly few theoretically informed studies of actual interventions in today’s world. This is surprising, not only because the high number of interventions makes it a relevant topic to study, but also because what goes on in interventions may have repercussions far beyond the theatre of operations itself. Developments and events in interventions may have global political effects, or hugely impact a state’s foreign policy. The current reluctance on the part of the United States – after Iraq and Afghanistan – to deploy significant numbers of ground troops anywhere in the world, or at times even engage politically, bears witness to this.

This dissertation has looked at one aspect of interventions: the expectation that coherence between military and civilian intervening actors is necessary and desirable. I developed an analytical framework to study the impediments facing this policy in the field. The framework was developed for this, but, as discussed in this chapter, it could be revised and refined to address other research questions as well. Furthermore, there are numerous other aspects of interventions that could and should be studied, understood and explained in a comprehensive and theoretically informed fashion: the violence, the day-to-day politics, the political economy, the modality of the regional implications, to mention some. Perhaps entirely different analytical approaches would be more suitable, but the important thing is to free such studies from the current narrow and empirical emphasis, to enable a more general and theoretical understanding. Only then can we get a grasp of the meaning of interventions in today’s global politics.

My hope is that this dissertation can represent a modest contribution to this end.


Summary

This dissertation focuses on the military–civilian relationship in today’s international interventions. It is frequently claimed that success in interventions hinges largely on military–civilian coherence. Concepts such as ‘comprehensive approach’ and ‘integrated missions’ have been launched by NATO, the EU and the UN to implement these ambitions. Nevertheless, despite high ambitions among politicians and organizations, coherence among intervening actors has proven challenging to achieve in practice. Why is this so? More precisely, this dissertation asks:

- *How can we theorize and analyse the challenges facing intervening actors to achieve military–civilian coherence in post-Cold War interventions?*

To answer this, this thesis approaches these challenges from a range of angles. **Chapter 1** offers background and context, discusses extant theorizing of interventions, and theory and methodology more generally. **Chapter 2** develops a holistic understanding of the various actors present in an intervention and their inter-relationships, asking why international actors seem to find it necessary to assign such high importance to coherence, and why coherence has become a key ingredient for success. It offers a taxonomy of various forms of relationships between intervening actors, and of various degrees of coherence. It is argued that the level of coherence achievable in one situation will not necessarily be achievable in the next one. As a result, our approach to studying and understanding the challenges related to coherence needs to be able to account for contextual and political variation.

**Chapter 3** focuses on the military actors. Their role in an intervention is generally a dominant one. They often have significant resources at their disposal, in terms of personnel and equipment. However, they differ significantly in terms of mandates, resources and doctrines: from conventional peacekeeping to robust counter-insurgencies. The chapter compares the peacekeeping and counter-insurgency (COIN) doctrines, noting their striking similarities. However, the nature of each mission will determine how political a UN or a COIN operation will be regarded as being, in the eyes of the host population. As a result, an understanding of the challenges related to achieving coherence between military and civilian actors cannot be based on the type of actor or mission, but must be embedded in the political context of the intervention.
In Chapter 4 the focus is narrowed down to the relations between military and humanitarian actors. Are there certain constant differences between humanitarians and the military actors that always are present across interventions? The chapter offers a taxonomy of military operations and the associated challenges with humanitarian issues which reveals it is not merely the intensity of warfare that impacts on the relationship – there appear to be fewer conflicts in heated combat such as conventional warfare and other enemy-centric approaches. Hence, politicization depends on context and what the actors do, not who they are. This implies that humanitarians can be approached through the same analytical framework as other civilians.

Together, Chapter 2-4 offer a nuanced picture and taxonomies of the nature of military–civilian relations in interventions but do not explain how these came about, how they are articulated or how they play out in practice. To explore the challenges facing military and civilian actors beyond a case-by-case basis, Chapter 5 develops an analytical framework for analysing the tensions between intervening actors. It starts with a thorough discussion of Séverine Autesserre’s theoretical model, applied on the intervention in the DRC, but finds that her theoretical approach is primarily inductive and therefore not directly transferrable to other cases. Instead, an analytical framework that takes the identity of the intervening actors as its starting point, is developed. It is argued that analysis of the identity formation (or identification) of the main sets of actors can provide insights into deeper questions of how they ascribe meaning to their mission: how they regard their role and how they regard the other actors, international as well as local, in the field of intervention.

In Chapter 6 this analytical framework is applied to the case of Afghanistan, using it to help in understanding the limited military–civilian coherence there. A similar set of analytical frames are applied to analyse the identities of three sets of actors – the military, the humanitarians and the state-builders – so that we can compare them, noting their differences and similarities. It finds that the three entities appeared largely ignorant of each other, operating in parallel but not in conjunction. If the three sets of actors had such fundamentally different reasons for being in Afghanistan, that may help us understand why a comprehensive approach was never achieved. The concluding Chapter 7 indicates some avenues for further expanding the theoretical approach developed in this dissertation. It examines how we can better theorize the interrelationships among groups of intervening actors. Drawing on theories of ontological security, it indicates how micro-level interactions could be scrutinized in more detail than in this dissertation.
Biography

Karsten Friis is Senior Adviser and Head of the Security and Defence Research Group at the Norwegian Institute of International Affairs (NUPI). He has previously worked as Political Adviser for the OSCE in Serbia and in Montenegro, Adviser at the Norwegian Armed Forces in Oslo, and as Analyst at NATO/KFOR in Kosovo. He holds a Cand. Polit. in Political Science from the University in Oslo, and a MSc in International Relations from the London School of Economics. Friis’ main area of expertise is security and defence policies, international military operations, civilian-military relations, cyber security, as well as the Western Balkans. His latest publications include: *NATO and Collective Defence in the 21st Century: An Assessment of the Warsaw Summit* (editor) Routledge 2017; and *Conflict in Cyber Space: Theoretical, strategic and legal perspectives* (co-editor), Routledge 2016.