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The European Union and the Transformation of Border Conflicts

Theorising the Impact of Integration and Association

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1. Introduction: The puzzle of integration and peace

There has always been a close link between European integration and peace. When the European Movement met in The Hague in 1946, it was united in its call for the national divisions in Europe to be overcome, in order to prevent a return to the havoc of war. Ever since, reference to the war-torn Europe of the past has become the most consistent, most frequently cited legitimisation of integration. It provided the EU and its predecessors with a form of identity (Wæver 1998b: 90; see also Wallace 1999 and Diez 2004). The European Union (EU) is, therefore, often regarded as a successful example of (border) conflict transformation.[1] The very process of integration is seen as having led to the evolution of a 'security community' among former long-time foes. Cross-border co-operation has been proliferating in the context of the Interreg-programme, not only in the EU, but also at its outer borders.[2] Eastern enlargement has been legitimised and driven forward by the promise that integration would ensure peace (Higashino 2003).

How can we theoretically account for this link between integration and peace? As the European Union faces an increasing number of border conflicts (see Zielonka 2001), answers to this question are not only of academic, but also of a highly practical interest.[3] The traditional, neofunctionalist account of integration and peace is firmly located in the liberal tradition of International Relations. According to this account, actors see the benefits of integration and re-orient their daily practices towards a new centre. Technical linkages between policy areas lead to integration spillover, spinning a web of interdependencies that make war a costly undertaking, too costly to be contemplated. The account offered by neofunctionalism is basically

an interest-based one; it hinges on subjective preference structures privileging economic welfare over geopolitical considerations. Yet continuing ethnic conflicts even within member states of the EU (the Basque and Corsican disputes are but two examples) are reminders that such a rationality is contested. Similarly, questions must also be raised about the effect of integration on conflicts at the EU's outside borders and outside of its boundaries. Cyprus is one case where EU actors anticipated the interest in integration to prevail over the struggles over particular state configurations, and have at least been disappointed about the slow pace of change (see Brewin 2000; Diez 2002).

More recently, Emanuel Adler (1997) reintroduced Karl Deutsch's concept of security communities into the debate. Deutsch (1957) stresses the density of transactions as an indicator of an integration process leading to identity transformation in what he calls an "amalgamated security community". Although neither Deutsch (focusing on NATO) nor Adler (OSCE) apply this specifically to the EU, one can read European integration from this perspective as the ever-increasing density of communication and transactions, which slowly transform the identities of the actors involved. The jury remains out on whether this constitutes an inevitable outcome, and in particular, whether security between states in an amalgamated security community also necessarily includes or requires the absence of considerable conflict intensity between non- or sub-state actors within the area demarcated by such a community. While there is virtually no border between the two parts of Ireland anymore, and transactions have multiplied, this has not meant an end to the conflict, and the border is now found between different parts of towns and cities. Whether or not integration has played a role in at least ending the violence is contested.[4] But to the extent that it did, it seems that there were more or other things involved than daily transactions and mere communication among the people on the island.

In this article, we develop a theoretical model involving four pathways through which the EU can have an impact on border conflicts, not only through integration within its territory, but also, through association agreements, beyond its borders. We suggest that our model provides a sounder basis on which to investigate empirically the impact of integration, as well as association, on border conflicts, when

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[4] See, for example, Tannam (1995) and Meehan (2000).

compared with previous accounts with their restrictive and often overtly optimistic focus.[5] In contrast to such a focus, the EU's impact can, and sometimes does, also lead to the intensification of existing conflicts, or to the creation of new ones, especially at the EU's own external borders. However, our interest in this paper is the deduction of a set of general hypotheses about how the successful link between integration (and association) and peace might work in concrete cases, which can then be subjected to empirical investigation in case studies. In the next section, we develop a discursive understanding of border conflicts, as well as the idea of the EU as a "perturbator" to such conflicts. We then suggest four paths through which the EU can contribute to the desecuritisation, and eventually the successful transformation of a border conflict, and elaborate two additional clusters of factors that influence the potential of the EU to become, through integration and association, a successful perturbator.

2. The discursive nature of border conflicts

2.1 Conflicts as the articulation of incompatibilities

In the public debate, conflict is often associated with violence. The European Union would, therefore, be seen as having influenced a conflict successfully if it helped to stem the violence. Not all conflicts, however, involve physical violence. International regimes, for instance, are set up in order to deal with conflicts in a peaceful way. Consequently, conflict resolution very often does not lead to the disappearance of a conflict, but at least as a first step, to its regulation through non-violent means. A more appropriate definition of conflict is, therefore, the emphasis on the incompatibility of subject positions (see Efinger et al. 1988; Galtung 1975: 78). These "subject positions" include the specific interests and identity of a subject (possibly, but not necessarily a state). According to this definition, a conflict only disappears if the subject positions involved are altered to such an extent that they are no longer incompatible. The European Union would therefore be seen as having successfully influenced the conflict only if it helped to fundamentally change these subject positions, as is generally claimed for the impact of European integration on the

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[5] See for a similar critique in the field of conflict studies also Kleiboer 1996.

transformation of previously antagonistic interest and identities of Germany and France.

One possible way to understand the notion of an incompatibility of subject positions is as a material underpinning of conflicts. In this view, conflicts can be manifest as well as latent (Dahrendorf 1957 and 1961; Galtung 1975; see Efinger et al. 1988: 46-47). In latent conflicts, actors show no conflictual behaviour although their "objective" situation (e.g. ethnicity, geography) should lead them to do so. Often this can be said to be the case in situations of conflict overlay, for instance during the Cold War (see Buzan and Wæver 2003). With the end of the overlaying conflict, the incompatibility of subject positions is expected to come to the fore again, and therefore the latent conflict would turn into a manifest one. The unravelling of former Yugoslavia is conventionally told within such a framework, where ethnic conflicts were "kept under the lid" during the Communist era.

Yet the example of ex-Yugoslavia also exposes the limits of such a narrative. It relies on an 'ontological' Balkanisation of the break-up of the republic: it assumes the primordial existence of ethnic groups, and that the peaceful coexistence of these groups within the same territorial space is impossible (see Campbell 1998a). Similar narratives can be found in many other so-called ethnic conflicts, including some of those the EU is now confronted with, such as Cyprus (see Polat 2002). These assumptions are untenable from a constructivist point of view, and are highly contested in the literature on nationalism. Instead of being given, group identities – ethnic, national or otherwise – rely on their continuous discursive reproduction and are historically contextual (see Anderson 1991; Hobsbawm 1991). Furthermore, a standard practice of their reproduction is the representation of an Other as a threat to an in-group, whose existence is assumed but really only asserted through such a rhetorical move (Ashley 1988; Campbell 1998b; Connolly 1991; Walker 1993; Wilmer 2002). Conflicts are therefore not the natural outcome of incompatible subject positions; they are part of the (re-) production of subject positions, the articulation of which in turn reproduces the conflict.

Conflicts are, therefore, brought into being through discourse. The distinction between objectively latent and manifest conflicts recognises in a sense that it requires communicative interaction to turn a latent into a manifest conflict. The problem with

the very notion of a latent conflict, however, is that we cannot know about the existence of the conflict unless an incompatibility is uttered. Whatever its ontological status, it is therefore useless as an analytical concept.[6]

2.2 Stages of conflict

This discursive definition of conflict as the articulation of an incompatibility of subject positions bears striking similarity to the one provided by Niklas Luhmann in his conceptualisation of society as a communicative system. According to Luhmann (1984: 530), a conflict comes into being in 'all those cases in which there is a disaccord to a communication. One could also say: if a disaccord is communicated'.[7] Social processes are usually based on the expectation that the continuation of communication is ensured by the acceptance of prior communication (accord). This is not the case with conflicts. Being based on the communication of disaccord, conflicts not only point to the constant possibility of a 'no' inherent in all communication, but through their specific discursive framework they facilitate the actual, repeated communication of the 'no'. Hence, the stabilisation of conflict dynamics and the repeated non-acceptance of communication become expected, much more than the termination of the conflict.

Moreover, conflicts have a tendency to escalate. The more a conflict develops, all communication between conflicting parties tends to relate all action to the incompatibility. Hence, conflicts not only exist in parallel to other societal communication but also have the tendency to dominate and overarch previously unrelated societal communications. In this context, Heinz Messmer (2003) has suggested a process model of social conflicts, in which he proposes four different stages of a conflict.[8] Drawing on Messmer's work, we distinguish between conflict episodes, issue conflicts, identity conflicts, and conflicts of subordination. These different stages are characterised by different kinds of subject incompatibilities, and by different ways in which these incompatibilities are articulated. As we move from

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[6] A weaker, more subjective notion of latent conflicts does not refer to objective characteristics but to subjective preferences the incompatibility of which is not apparent to the actors involved (Efinger et al. 1988: 52). Such a concept of latency offers a more fruitful conceptualisation and characterises a state that we will later call 'conflict episode', where incompatibilities surface only as isolated incidences.

[7] Our translation.

[8] Messmer is not alone in suggesting such a process model, although he does so from a constructivist position, which provides sufficient connection points to our theoretical framework. Other process models of conflict can be found in Dahrendorf 1957, Azar 1990, Giegel 1998 and Thiel 2003.

conflict episodes to conflicts of subordination, conflicts become both more securitised and wider in their societal reach: the Other of the conflict is increasingly constructed as an existential threat against which measures outside normal, regulated political interaction, and ultimately physical violence, become legitimate (on securitisation, see Wæver 1995; Buzan, Wæver and de Wilde 1998). In tandem with this, particular incompatibilities increasingly tend to be linked to all forms of societal interaction so that seemingly innocent daily practices cannot be performed outside the discursive framework of the conflict.

Conflict episodes are isolated instances of the articulation of the incompatibility related to a particular issue. They do not necessarily result in stable conflicts. Often, conflict parties regard the mere voicing of mutual disaccord as sufficient, and there is no follow-up. In the European context, such (border) conflict episodes occurred during the early 1990s when, for example, the government of Hungary repeatedly claimed that the treatment of Hungarian minorities in neighbouring states such as Slovakia or Romania was discriminatory. However, unlike in former Yugoslavia, these conflicts remained rather isolated events, and were quickly settled by the conclusion of Basic Treaties between Hungary, on the one hand, and Slovakia and Romania, on the other. It can be argued that the perspective of integration and association in the framework of the enlargement process contained these conflicts at an early stage from further intensification, not least because the EU required from all applicant countries to sign and live-up to international convention on the protection of national minorities (Commission 2003).

This contained status of conflicts, however, changes at the stage of *issue conflicts*, when both parties attempt to convince the other of the truth of their respective position. Issue-conflicts are limited to argumentation about the issue as such. Identities themselves are not yet thematised, although identities are re-inscribed into discourse by the very opposition between self and other articulated in relation to the issue incompatibility. In issue conflicts, the conflict starts to develop structurally more stable notions of 'opposition', which facilitates collective groups to relate communications to the other party. A prominent example of a border conflict that got 'stuck' at the stage of an issue conflict, is the struggle between the governments of Spain and the United Kingdom on the territorial status of Gibraltar in the context of

the negotiations on the External Frontiers Convention (EFC) of the EU. Both parties base their contradictory claims on legal arguments and – rather unsuccessfully – attempt to convince the other side of the validity of their respective claims. In spite of continuous disagreement – the conflict dates back to the Treaty of Utrecht of 1517 – current conflict communication between the two governments reveals no signs of change to more intense forms of conflict, for example a spill-over to other issues or a move towards accusation or threat. Although the conflict has not yet been resolved, and the adoption at the EU level of the EFC is blocked until today, it can nevertheless be argued that the context of integration within the EU framework has at least provided a framework for the stabilisation of the Gibraltar-struggle on the level of an issue conflict (see Stetter 2003).

In *identity conflicts*, disaccord becomes explicitly personalised and moves of the other side are increasingly interpreted on the basis of hostile motives. One party now rejects an utterance by the Other because it comes from the Other. Such conflicts are characterised by diametrically opposed ways in which both sides experience the conflict in the context of an increasingly self-referential perception of the conflict. Responsibility for the conflict is seen to rest with the other side, and both Alter and Ego become 'blind' for the perceptions and motives of the other side. The border conflict between Greece and Macedonia is a telling example for such an identity conflict. Both sides observe each other with great suspicion and attribute inimical motives to the claims of the other side. In this example, Greece even objected the name of its new neighbour, insisting that 'Macedonia' implied a Macedonian territorial claim on the Greek province of Makedonia. Of course, it can only be speculated to what extent the integration of Greece into the EU framework prevented this identity conflict from further intensification, but there is some indication that the EU framework allowed Greece to channel its opposition into Europeanised fora. Notwithstanding this stabilisation of the conflict, the ongoing suspicion and attribution of hostile motives by Greece is exemplified by its successful attempt to convince other EU countries to formally refer to Macedonia as FYROM (Iokimidis 2000).[9] The aforementioned Gibraltar-conflict appears in a different light, when we move from an issue conflict between the two national governments, to the conflict

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[9] Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia.

communication predominant in British and Spanish mass media, but in particular amongst the population of Gibraltar. In this context, the conflict reveals characteristic features of an identity conflict. This example points to the need in empirical research to carefully specify the interrelationship between different conflict stages in order to identify, at specific historical moments, the dominant forms of conflict communication.

In a final stage, conflicts can turn into *conflicts of subordination.* The primary function of the communication of disaccord now is no longer the demarcation from the Other, but the subordination, and possibly the extinction of the Other. Systematic physical force becomes an acceptable means of dealing with and 'convincing' the other side. This projection of 'superiority', enforced through the use of physical means, radically interferes into a previously accepted autonomy of identities and *inter alia* legitimises this systematic use of violence. In the European context, the Yugoslav Wars serve as the prime example of recent border conflicts, which took the form of such conflicts of subordination.[10] The impact of the EU on these conflicts remained small and integration and association were not an option until the conflicts ceased to be (violent) conflicts of subordination. It was only after this change, that the Stability Pact put integration on the (long-term) horizon of relations between the EU and the states of former Yugoslavia, thereby providing a framework for durable conflict transformation (Bendieck 2004).

The distinction of these four stages of conflicts identifies an increase in the frequency, intensity and acceptance of both securitisation and the overall societal reach of such securitised discourses as the prime early warning signal for the occurrence of violence. It is only when conflicts turn into conflicts of subordination, and the securitisation of the Other pervades most spheres of societal discourse, that physical violence against the Other is seen as legitimate. Physical violence can occur during the stage of identity conflicts, but the lack of general legitimacy will ensure that these remain isolated cases. In any case, the distinctions between the different stages should be seen as fluid and highly dynamic; more like a *slippery slope* than clearly separated steps.

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[10] The only exception was Slovenia which managed already in the early 1990s to 'escape' from the dynamics of a conflict of subordination.

Conversely, any attempt to resolve the conflict is an attempt to transform discursive behaviour into less securitised stages within fewer social domains. Conflict resolution as a step towards the regulation of conflict through peaceful means will have to move a conflict from being about subordination at least to being about identity, and ideally then about issues (see also Pearson 2001). As long as identity conflicts prevail, the danger of sliding back into subordination is too big to guarantee permanency, as Northern Ireland, but in particular the Israel/Palestine conflict have demonstrated. In contrast to conflict devolution according to this model, *conflict resolution* as a step towards the disappearance of the conflict has a much grander agenda: it is about the rearticulation of subject positions so that they are no longer seen as incompatible in most respects, and conflict does not move beyond conflict episodes. Indeed, the former foes might no longer be recognisable as completely distinct subjects. This is, ultimately, what the vision of European integration as a motor for peace has been about.

2.3 Conflicts, borders and identities

Since conflicts are about subject positions, and in their last two stages explicitly about identities, they involve the (re-)drawing of borders. Traditionally, borders have been seen as physical lines and border conflicts were, therefore, conflicts of subordination where rules were to be extended beyond the existing geographical borderline. This characterises a good deal of border conflicts, but it is nonetheless an impoverished understanding. It focuses on states as actors in international politics, and neglects both the impact of borders for the daily life of those living in border regions and beyond, and the very construction of borders through day-to-day social practices. It does not pay sufficient attention to the border as a symbol of and means toward demarcation, and to the multiplication of borders in towns and cities beyond the contested border, such as in the Northern Irish case. Moreover, such a perspective neglects the poly-contextual nature of different kinds of social borders, such as religious, economic, ethnic or legal borders, which do not necessarily correlate with geographically represented ethnic or national borderlines. Borders provide specific mechanisms for inclusion and exclusion into different social realms, with citizenship as 'membership' in the political community of a nation-state being the most visible one (Nassehi 2003).

Borders are hence more than just physical lines. New approaches in Political Geography and International Relations have instead proposed to study borders as socially constructed institutions (see Newman 2003). A significant body of literature has since the early 1990s emphasised that borders need to be seen as social structures that are constantly communicatively reproduced.[11] Yet geographically represented border conflicts are a particularly stable form of conflict because they provide a clear-cut physical distinction between two easily identifiable sides (Forsberg 1996; Houtum and Naerssen 2002). In such conflicts, borders have a 'double function' in that they provide a means of both territorial inclusion and exclusion, but in parallel also for 'functional' inclusion or exclusion. There are reinforcing tendencies between borders, identities and particular social orders (Albert et al. 2001). They are hence a means of both territorial *and* functional inclusion and exclusion (Flint 2003). Being 'excluded' by a border frequently implies not only being locked out in a physical-geographical sense, but also in an economic or legal sense. The exclusion of ethnic minorities from participation in certain national organisations is an interesting example in that respect. For example, for security reason, Israeli citizens with Palestinians ethnicity are not allowed to serve in the Israeli army. While it should be mentioned that most Israeli Palestinians would themselves oppose being conscriped to serve in the Israeli army, the problem with this form of exclusion is that it stretches beyond the question of who participates in a military organisation. As empirical studies have shown, not only does military exclusion 'reproduce' the very identity-assumptions which originally constituted this specific form of exclusion, but also fosters exclusion within other social domains, such as spatial exclusion, exclusion from equal access to the labour market and, ultimately, the emergence of 'qualified rights to citizenship' (Smooha and Hanf 1992). Identity and subordination conflicts are, therefore, never about identity alone, but also about access to social goods and in that sense incorporate issue conflicts, and they constitute vested interests in their prolongation.

At the same time, however, the discursive nature of borders as well as conflicts makes change an always existing possibility. Albert and Brock (1996, 2001), for instance, observe processes of 'de-bordering' pointing to possible changes not only in the drawing of specific borders, but also to the very function(s) borders serve, most

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[11] Anderson (1996: 4) has eloquently termed borders and the construction of border identities as the prime 'mythomoteur of a whole society'. See also Wilson and Donnan 1998.

radically from lines of conflict to lines of identification at which the utterance of non-conflictual discourses replaces the prior utterance of disaccords. Conflict resolution in the sense of peaceful regulation will often leave the physical borders intact, but change their discursive construction and their symbolic place in the public debate, as well as the very appearance and symbolism of the border itself. Conflict resolution as the transformation of subject positions however will have to change the very nature of the border.[12] If the subjects are no longer who they used to be, the borders between them will no longer be the same either. Again, this is the promise that European integration as a motor for peace holds out: to do away with the former physical borders separating the member states, as happening in the context of the abolishment of internal border controls in the Schengen framework, or at least to radically transform their nature and function.

2.4 The EU as a perturbator of conflicts

Despite their tendency to become locked-in, conflicts are not structurally given, and there is no historical determinacy. Conflicts are reliant on the continuous communication of incompatibilities, which are themselves no ontological givens but dependent on discursive 'processes of constructing a shared understanding of what is to be considered and collectively responded to' as a social phenomenon (Wæver 2003: 10). Hence, conflicts remain highly contingent, and there is always the potential of conflict transformation, through moving into a less belligerent mode of communicating the incompatibility (and therefore regulating conflict management), or through a transformation of the construction of subject positions.

We have already referred to both of these options in the context of European integration at the end of each of the two preceding subsections. Establishing organisations dealing with specific functional tasks such as the internal market does not make conflict among EU member states disappear, but it civilises the way in which comparative advantages are pursued by putting in place a new institutional and discursive framework, and thereby ensuring a predisposition towards accepting communication. Over time, this may also lead to a change of national identities

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[12] See also the discussion on generic conflict transformation in Miall, Ramsbotham and Woodhouse (1999).

through socialisation,[13] or even to a convergence of national identities with an emerging European identity, in which the very subject positions are re-defined.

The central function that the EU performs in these cases is that it unsettles conflicts by confronting the reiterated communication of disaccord. Although for member states, the EU is not really a 'third party', the very discourse of integration is external to previously existing discourses of conflict. This should not lead to the conclusion that the new frameworks offered by the EU are immune against conflict. Indeed, they very often introduce new conflicts, which sometimes even take the form of an identity conflict, as in the reconstruction of national identities versus 'Europe' for instance during the Danish referendum on the Euro. Integration, therefore, has the capacity to unsettle conflicts as a 'perturbator', a worrying disturbance for the conflict. The crucial task, therefore, becomes to identify the mechanisms through which the EU has acted and can act as a perturbator of conflicts. Three things are important to note in this respect.

Firstly, the EU is in itself of course no single, unified actor. It is at the same time a set of actors who may or may not agree, and an institutional and discursive frame, although even here the plural would be more appropriate as there are many constructions of this frame. The impact of integration and association can, therefore, be seen as the effect of a perturbance of a conflict by either EU actors individually or collectively, or by the provision of a particular institutional and discursive frame.

Secondly, the EU's capacity as a perturbator of conflict extends beyond the limits of integration (see also Diez and Whitman 2002; Manners and Whitman 2002). Most obviously, it affects membership candidates, although these can be conceptualised as being part of integration. Beyond that, it may affect conflicts at the external borders of the EU itself (or of any future members). Furthermore, the EU has a number of association agreements, and not only is there a theoretical possibility that these will strengthen the perturbation, but has been underlying concrete policy-making as the example of the Stability Pact for the Balkans illustrates.

Thirdly, the degree of perturbation and its success in bringing about conflict transformation in the sense of the desecuritisation of conflicts outlined above will

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[13] The empirical evidence regarding such a change of national identities is mixed. On the one hand, national identities seem to be particular sticky, and are reflected in particular constructions of European governance (Jachtenfuchs, Diez and Jung 1998; Marcussen et al. 1999; Wæver 1998a). On the other hand, Europe has now become an integral part to the construction of national identity in its member states (Wæver 1996).

differ from case to case. Some of this variation will depend on the concrete form the perturbation takes, and the next section will outline both the main pathways and the main contextual factors through which the EU can act as a pertubator. But the effectiveness of any sort of influence on the conflict will also depend on the way in which the perturbation is reacted to. Communication can never be fully controlled, because it is always interpreted, used and therefore transformed in other discursive contexts, which are powerful in their own right (Ferguson 1990: 19-20; Foucault 1990: 95). We will return to these questions on the conditions under which conflict perturbation by the EU can be successful in the following section.

3. The impact of integration and association: forms of perturbation by the EU

3.1 Four paths of EU perturbation

Following the argument developed above, perturbation means that the EU destabilises the conflict by provoking a 'conflict with the conflict', i.e. the utterance of communications that are either challenging existing conflict discourses or opening windows for non-conflict related discourses. The actual forms of perturbation, however, vary. We suggest that there are four paths through which the EU, in the context of integration and association, can perturbate a conflict. These paths can be categorised alongside two dimensions.

Firstly, the perturbation can be driven by concrete interventions of EU actors, such as in membership negotiations, Commission reports or Council Presidency conclusions; or it takes place through the discursive, legal and institutional framework of the EU, into which conflicts are brought through integration and association, in which case it is of a more structural quality. This structural impact is usually less powerful in cases of association (such as Israel/Palestine) than in cases where both conflict parties are EU members, and are therefore directly subject to the *acquis communautaire*. Structure and agency are not independent from each other, and actor-driven approaches reproduce or reconstruct the EU framework, in which they are situated. Indeed, some EU activities, such as the Euro-Mediterranean Partnership, which is linked to association, can be seen as attempts to facilitate the perturbation through the EU framework. Furthermore, the structure of this framework is by no means fixed. It is internally contested, and it relies on the reproduction of EU actors.

Yet, actor-driven and structural influences nonetheless follow two different logics. Actor-driven approaches are direct, and often inter-personal and short-term. Structural approaches may or may not be intended, are indirect and often long-term. They should therefore be kept analytically separate, although at the same time it the interplay between these two approaches that is of particular importance.

Secondly, the perturbation can be directed at the political elite (in the same way as peacemaking is), and therefore follow a top-down approach, or operate at a wider societal level (in the same way as peacebuilding is), and therefore follow a bottom-up approach. These need not be exclusive. In the case of Cyprus, for instance, EU actors offered the benefits of EU membership as an incentive for conflict resolution in different forums both to political leaders and to the Turkish Cypriots as a whole. Furthermore, direct negotiations with the political elite will, through mass media reporting, often have an impact on the public at large. Again, however, it is important to keep these two categories analytically separate and observe their interplay.

Table 1: Paths of EU impact

		Approach by EU	
		Actor-driven	**Structural**
Direction of incentive vis-à-vis conflict parties	**political leadership**	(1) *compulsory impact*	(2) *enabling impact*
	wider societal level	(3) *connective impact*	(4) *constructive impact*

The four paths deducted from these two dimensions are shown in table 1. They relate to specific types of power as developed by Michael Barnett and Raymond Duvall (2003). Barnett and Duval categorise power alongside two dimensions, which are similar to the two dimensions in table 1 above, namely direct and diffuse power, on the one hand, and power through the actions of specific actors or through social relations, on the other hand. Their four power categories are termed compulsory

(direct, actors), institutional (diffuse, actors), structural (direct, social relations) and productive (diffuse, social relations). For reasons explained below, we have changed institutional into "enabling", structural into "connective" and productive into "constructive" impact. The main features of these four paths of EU impact can be summarised as follows.

Path 1 (compulsory impact) relates to those policies through which the EU directly addresses the political leadership of the conflict parties. This is probably the most obvious way through which the EU attempts to exert influence on conflict parties. Such compulsory forms of perturbation are often summarised in the literature on conflict studies as the 'carrot' or 'positive incentive' and the 'stick' at the disposal of a wealthy and powerful third party (Dorussen 2001). This direct political approach by EU actors can be overt or covert, ranging from official meetings or policy statements to negotiations behind closed doors. In particular, the offer of membership or association (or a withdrawal or sanctions to this status) can be used in negotiations at the political level as either a 'carrot' or a 'stick' to force politicians directly to engage in desecuritising moves.[14] For example, in its relations with Turkey the EU has repeatedly used the 'carrot' of future membership in order to 'convince' the Turkish government to pursue conflict transformation vis-à-vis the conflict with the PKK but also to engage in far-reaching constitutional and economic reforms. On the other hand, the 'stick' of a suspension of an Association Agreement has, against the background of the Palestinian-Israeli conflict, repeatedly been brought up in relations with Israel. This pathway is closest to traditional conceptions of power in international politics, namely power through which one actor, through direct interaction, tries to force or entice another actor to change its position.

Path 2 (enabling impact) pertains to more indirect consequences of EU involvement. While political leaders are in an institutionally privileged position to utter successful securitising moves at least in the more traditional sectors of security (Buzan et al. 1998: 41-42), their success is at the same time dependent on the wider societal discursive context, which may not necessarily be conducive to desecuritisation. The institutional and discursive framework offered by the EU,

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[14] Although not related to border conflicts, the sanctions against Austria when the right-wing FPÖ became part of the coalition government in 1999 are an example of sanctions other than the withdrawal of the membership carrot.

especially through the *acquis communautaire*, can increase the chances of successful desecuritisation by providing a reference point for politicians in conflict societies to legitimise conflict-diminishing policies, for example if EU membership or association becomes a primary objective of societal discourses, such as in the aforementioned examples of contained border conflicts in Central and Eastern Europe during the early 1990s. In addition, the participation of policy-makers, through integration and association, in supranational, EU-wide policy arenas, which transcend a previously primarily national, ethnic or religious context of political discourse, could increase the likelihood of mere issue conflicts between a variety of actors. Finally, enabling impact also relates to the socialisation of policy-makers in conflict regions into a 'European' discourse that, as noted above, builds upon the frame of 'integration and peace' and, therefore, potentially supports desecuritisation moves by policy-makers. Such identity-changes at the elite level, however, do not in themselves constitute successful conflict transformation as long as the public at large remains outside of these Europeanised institutional and perceptional frames.

Path 3 (connective impact) relates to those policies through which the EU directly approaches societal actors and activities in a conflict region, in particular those actors which are regarded as possible agents of successful conflict transformation, thereby connecting conflict societies with the institutional and discursive framework of the EU. Connective impact often takes the form of financial or organisational support for peace-oriented non-governmental organisations but also relates to support measures, which are not directly related to conflict transformation. Seen from that perspective, financial or organisational support for economic or scientific actors in conflict regions has the potential to provide a counterweight to the societal reach of securitisation pertaining to a specific border conflict. Through this linkage with wider societal actors, the EU can attempt to pursue its own political objectives, which might lead to the transformation of a border conflict, by way of bypassing often unwilling political leaderships, and the case of Northern Cyprus figures as a recent example of this approach.

Path 4 (constructive impact) is – if successful – the most indirect but also most persuasive mode of transformation, since it 'aims' at changing the underlying identity-scripts of conflicts, thus supporting a (re-)construction of identities that is conducive to peaceful relations between conflict parties. This pathway is based on the

assumption that EU impact can put in place completely new discursive frameworks in which novel ways of constructing and expressing identities are created within conflict regions, such as the peaceful transformation of Western Europe since the end of the Second World War amply illustrates. These new identity-scripts will *inter alia* foster both the uttering of discourses on a peaceful transformation of the conflict as well as the pervasiveness of non-conflict related discourses in different societal realms. Ultimately, this may lead to the eventual resolution of the conflict, i.e. the disappearance of communications which address the incompatibility of subject positions. This is clearly a long-term process, but its applicability is corroborated by the claim that while there may not (yet) be a single European identity, "Europe" has become an integral part of the identity of each of the EU's member states (Wæver 1996).

The four paths can be differentiated further. Two distinctions are of particular importance, not least because they have been demonstrated to be relevant for the success of conflict resolution in other contexts (Miall, Ramsbotham and Woodhouse 1999; Wallensteen 2002). A first distinction is whether the perturbation takes an affirmative or negative form, which is discussed in the literature as positive and negative incentives. This concerns mostly actor-driven approaches, as can be seen from the aforementioned 'carrot and stick' examples, which can either stress the benefits of integration and association or threaten with their withdrawal, or they can support opposition groups or deny a group their representation. In both cases, the communication takes a different form. However, whether it actually is seen as affirmative or negative by those addressed is dependent on their particular construction of the approach. The same applies to whether the EU framework is seen as an opportunity or a threat. This perception is independent of the actual path, and is therefore dealt with in the following section, when we discuss contexts of perturbation.

A second distinction is whether the perturbation addresses the conflict directly or indirectly. Both functionalism and neofunctionalism rely on the perturbating effect of integration on conflicts by avoiding to address the discursively prevailing incompatibilities of subject positions directly. Instead, they rely on the long-term impact of supranational institutions, and to that extent on the structural effect. The

direct or indirect addressing of the conflict is therefore closely related to the distinction between an actor-driven or structural approach, but it is not the same. This has largely to do with the nature of the EU framework, and how it has grown over the decades. It is no longer a framework that relies entirely on functional spillover, but addresses many conflict issues head-on. In fact, new member states are required to settle all border disputes with their neighbours before they can join.[15] While the indirect approach of actors therefore relies on the structural impact of the EU framework, the latter can both be direct and indirect.

3.2 Contexts of perturbation

The perturbation of border conflicts does not happen in a vacuum. A number of factors need to be considered that influence both the form and the success of the perturbation. Two bundles of factors are of particular importance: the relationship between the EU and other perturbators, as well structural changes in the environment of the conflict; and the relationship between the EU and actors within the conflict setting.

Firstly, the EU is not the only perturbator to border conflicts. Other international actors, such as states, international organisations, NGOs or international networks might attempt to impact conflicts in parallel to the EU. Furthermore, there may be changes within the discourse of the conflict parties independent of international involvement, and such 'internal' perturbation will change the way integration and association are perceived, and which access points for change there are. Finally, long-term structural developments in world society, and in particular the effects of globalisation on a political, economic or cultural level but also specific events, such as the 11 September attacks, must be weighted in how they relate to the impact of the EU in conflict transformation (see also Richmond 2001: 337-338).

While every conflict is thus embedded in a wider international setting, the specification of EU impact also requires a focus on *constellations of perturbation* between the EU, on the one hand, and the conflict parties, on the other. As has been mentioned above, the EU is not a homogenous actor but rather a complex political organisation which includes a diverse set of collective actors, which in turn often have

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[15] The case of Cyprus seems to contradict this requirement, but this is because the conflict according to the prevailing international construction is a domestic rather than an international border conflict.

diverse perceptions both on specific border conflicts and on the conflict parties. These actors are, just to mention a few, the Council and individual member states, the Commission, the European Parliament or the High Representative (Stetter 2003; Gehring 2002). Against this background of intra-organisational fragmentation, perturbation by the EU must, therefore, be put in relation to how key institutional mechanisms and perceptions shape both the EU's relation with the conflict parties and its policies vis-à-vis the conflict. Having emphasised the relevance of EU internal characteristics, the significance of institutional and perceptional characteristics of the conflict parties in their relations with the EU should not be underestimated. Institutional fragmentation and perceptional diversity are not unique to the EU but shape the relations of the conflict parties with the EU as well. Therefore, the focus on the constellations of perturbation requires the assessment of how these mutual constellations relate to each other and, thereby, shape the way in which the EU can impact a conflict.

4. Conclusion

European integration was designed to bring peace to a continent of war. It has been more successful in this project than the fathers of integration could have wished for. Today, whatever the problems of European governance, the European Union has become a model for regional integration in other areas of conflict, and since 1973, the Union has itself been continuously attracted new members by the prosperity and peace that it promises. In popular parlance, the EU might not have a lot of military power, but in relative terms at least, it looks like paradise (Kagan 2003).

While there is considerable evidence that the European Union can make use of its institutional and discursive structures in order to project notions of peaceful co-existence into previously conflict-ridden territories within and beyond its borders, traditional accounts of the link between integration and peace are restricted in their conceptualisation of the changes they predict, and in their application to new conflicts within, at the borders, and in the near abroad of the EU. In this paper, we have developed a comprehensive and coherent model of how the EU, through integration and association, can make a difference to border conflicts. We have understood such conflicts discursively, and the EU's role as a perturbator to the prevailing conflict communication. If successful, this perturbation leads to a desecurisation of conflict

communication, and a transformation of identity and subordination conflicts into issue conflicts, and ultimately to a change in the way identities are constructed vis-à-vis each other, removing the discursively constructed incompatibilities of subject positions, and changing the way in which borders are constructed, and their function for the constitution of identities. Eventually, the story of integration is a story about the partial domestication of politics, and the question at hand is how such a partial domestication is brought about in a variety of contexts.

We have suggested that there are four paths that may contribute to such a transformation, and have identified contexts that have an impact on how, and how successful, these paths operate. These arguments can be summarised as follows:

1. Perturbation is both an effect of communications by EU actors and of structural qualities of the EU framework.
2. Perturbation can follow a bottom-up or top-down logic.
3. Perturbation can relate to actors within the conflict setting both affirmatively and negatively.
4. Perturbation sometimes addresses the incompatibility directly, sometimes only indirectly.
5. The impact of perturbation is dependent on the existing relationships between various EU actors internally and relations with the conflict parties, which are themselves no homogenous actors. Moreover, the impact of perturbation also depends on the constructions by the EU of the conflict and the conflict parties as well as the constructions by the conflict parties of the EU.
6. The EU's impact must be located within a broader framework, involving other state and non-state actors, as well as the general constellation of international society, all of which may also act as perturbators, and may enhance or constrain the EU's impact.

Each of these arguments presents factors that influence the way in which perturbation takes place, and whether it is successful or not. Consequently, the success of integration after the Second World War was not only an effect of the neofunctionalist logic, but also of the perspectives on integration in the aftermath of the war and the international context of the Cold War. A different context as well as the following of

different paths of perturbation has different effects, and sometimes they may well take the opposite effect than what we have described here as a successful conflict transformation. We cannot, in the abstract, generalise about the impact of each of the factors identified. Instead, we have provided plenty of examples for the different forms of perturbation throughout this paper, and it is down to further empirical research on individual conflicts to see how our model plays out in detail. However, we argue that our model provides a much better basis on which to conduct such further research than what had previously been available.

Finally, we have bracketed the feedback of the conflicts, which are perturbed by integration and association, on the European Union itself. Failure or success of perturbations, changing conceptions of the EU's own borders, and the way in which, as we have suggested in our discussion of contexts of perturbation, the EU is framed, and on that basis may be instrumentalised, by conflict parties, all have an effect on the EU's own system of governance, its identity and future practices of EU actors towards border conflicts. The impact of integration and association on such conflicts is therefore much more complex than a one-way street of reorienting people's interests towards a new centre. The EU as a perturbator of conflict is a mix of actors and structures, always operating in a historical context, and may in the end itself be perturbed by the conflict. Yet if successful, as it has been in the past, integration can change the way in which actors see themselves and their relations with other actors, and association, while weaker in its structural impact, at least holds out the possibility of such a conflict transformation.

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