The European Union and Border Conflicts: The Transformative Power of Integration

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Paper to be presented at the ECPR Joint Session Workshops,
Uppsala 2004, 13-18 April 2004.
Workshop 19: The European Union and Conflict Resolution

Abstract: Our article analyses the impact of the European Union (EU) on border conflicts, in particular how integration and association are related to conflict development. We approache this issue from a theoretically as well as empirically grounded constructivist perspective. On this basis we propose a stage model of conflict development, based on the degree of securitisation and societal reach of conflict communication. We argue that the EU can act as a "perturbator" to such conflict structures and propose a four pathway-model of EU impact. We then apply this model to the study of concrete conflicts, the Northern Irish and the Greek-Turkish conflict. We finish with a specification of the conditions of successful EU involvement.

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Acknowledgements:
We are grateful to Olga Demetriou, Katy Hayward, Pertti Joenniemi, Kemal Kirisci, David Newman, Michelle Pace, Bahar Rumelili, Myria Vassiliadou, Tobias Werron, Antje Wiener and Haim Yacobi for their stimulating inputs, criticism and support in the preparation of this article, as well as to audiences at the University of Bielefeld, Bilkent University (Ankara), University of Osnabrück, the Viessmann Centre at Wilfrid Laurier University (Waterloo, Canada) and the co-panelists at the BISA conference 2002 and the ISA/CEEISA conference 2003, where we have presented previous versions. This article builds upon a research project on "The EU and Border Conflicts: The Impact of Integration and Association" (EUBorderConf), funded by a grant from the European Union's Fifth Framework Programme (SERD-2002-00144), with additional funding by the British Academy. See also http://www.euborderconf.bham.ac.uk for further information.

Introduction: The puzzle of integration and peace

There has always been the assumption of 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 has provided the European Union (EU) and its predecessors with a form of identity.[1] It is against this background that the EU is often regarded as a successful example of (border) conflict transformation.[2] 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, for example, been proliferating in the context of the Interreg-programme, not only in the EU, but also around its external borders.[3] Eastern enlargement, too, has been legitimised and driven forward by the promise that integration would ensure peace.[4]

How can we theoretically account for this link between integration and peace? As the European Union faces an increasing number of border conflicts, answers to this question are not only of academic, but also of a highly practical interest.[5] The traditional, neo-functionalist 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 spill-over, spinning a web of interdependencies that make war a costly undertaking, too costly to be contemplated. The account offered by neo-functionalism is basically an interest-based one; it hinges on subjective preference structures privileging economic welfare over

[1] See Zielonka 2001; see also Wæver 1998b: 90; Wallace 1999; and Diez 2004.
[2] Wallensteen thus argues that integration studies are (or have been) conflict analysis. They are triggered by an interest in "the simultaneous and surprising experience of the integration of two former enemies, Germany and France, [which] illustrated the potential of reversing dynamics". See Wallensteen 2002, 33.
[3] See for a discussion on the construction of such regions and identity Pace 2001. See also the discussion in Albert and Brock 2000; Diez 1997; Ribhegge 1996. The transformation of border identities is the subject of an EU-funded research project, see Meinhof 2003, and http://www.euborder.soton.ac.uk.
[4] Higashino 2003.
[5] See Zielonka 2001.

geopolitical considerations. Yet continuing border conflicts even within member states of the EU (the Northern Irish conflict is but one example) are reminders that such a rationality can be contested. Similarly, questions must also be raised about the effect of integration on conflicts at the EU's external borders and outside of its boundaries. For example, the unresolved border disputes between Greece and Turkey serve as another example in which the fruits of integration and association did not let entrenched antagonism disappear, at least not to the extent and as quickly as one would have hoped for, following Greece's EC membership in 1981.

More recently, Emanuel Adler reintroduced Karl Deutsch's concept of security communities into the debate.[6] Deutsch originally stressed the density of transactions as an indicator of an integration process leading to identity transformation in what he calls an "amalgamated security community".[7] Although neither Deutsch (focusing on NATO) nor Adler (OSCE) apply this argument specifically to the EU,[8] 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 formal 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.[9] 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.

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[6] Adler 1997.
[7] Deutsch 1957.
[8] But see Wæver 1998b.
[9] See, for example, Tannam 1995 and Meehan 2000.

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 with countries beyond its borders. We suggest that, when compared with previous accounts with their restrictive and often overtly optimistic focus,[10] our model provides a sounder basis on which to investigate empirically the impact of integration and association on border conflicts, In contrast to such an optimistic 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 external borders. However, our interest here is the deduction of a set of general hypotheses about how the successful link between integration and peace might work in concrete cases, which can then be subjected to empirical investigation in concrete 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 de-securitisation, 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 a successful perturbator. The third section then looks at two concrete empirical examples which test the usefulness of our model. We have chosen the conflict in Northern Ireland as a border conflict within the EU, and the border disputes between Greece and Turkey as an example of a conflict at the EU's external borders involving, however, two countries which through integration (Greece) and association (Turkey) are for decades closely linked to the EU.[11]

The discursive nature of border conflicts

Conflicts as the articulation of incompatibilities

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

[11] The third section draws closely on the work of Hayward 2004 for Northern Ireland and Rumelili 2004 for the Greek-Turkish conflict.

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. Of course, not all conflicts involve physical violence, nor does conflict resolution - while it contributes to a conflict's regulation through non-violent means - always lead to the disappearance of a conflict. A more appropriate definition of conflict is, therefore, the emphasis on the incompatibility of subject positions.[12] 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 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.[13] In latent conflicts, actors show no conflict behaviour although their "objective" situation (for example ethnicity or 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.[14] 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, where ethnic conflicts were "kept under the lid" during the Communist era, is conventionally told within such a framework.

Yet the example of ex-Yugoslavia also exposes the limits of such a narrative, since it relies on the assumption of an ontological antagonism of identities, which led to the break-up of the Yugoslav republic. It hence assumes either implicitly or explicitly the primordial existence

[12] See Efinger et al. 1988; Galtung 1975: 78
[13] Dahrendorf 1957 and 1961; Galtung 1975; see also Efinger et al. 1988: 46-47.
[14] See Buzan and Wæver 2003.

of ethnic groups, and that the peaceful coexistence of these groups within the same territorial space is impossible.[15] Similar narratives can be found in many other so-called ethnic conflicts, including those in Northern Ireland and Greece/Turkey.[16] 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 and contingent.[17] Furthermore, a standard practice of their reproduction is the representation of an "Other" as a threat to an in-group, and while the existence of this inimical "Other" as a given is assumed, it is often only constructed through such a rhetorical move.[18] 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, the distinction between latent and manifest conflicts is, therefore, limited as an analytical concept.[19]

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, a conflict comes into being when

[15] See Campbell 1998a.
[16] See Hayward 2004; Rumelili 2004.
[17] See Anderson 1991; Hobsbawm 1991.
[18] Ashley 1988; Campbell 1998b; Connolly 1991; Walker 1993; Wilmer 2002.
[19] 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.

"communication is contradicted, or when a contradiction is communicated ".[20] Social processes are usually based on the expectation that the continuation of communication is ensured by the acceptance of prior communication, i.e. 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 has suggested a process model of social conflicts, in which he proposes four different stages of a conflict.[21] Drawing on Messmer's work, although with modifications, we distinguish between conflict episodes, issue conflicts, identity conflicts, and subordination conflicts. 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 conflict episodes to subordination conflicts, 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.[22] In tandem with this, the articulation of such incompatibilities increasingly tend to be linked to all forms of societal interaction. This capturing of societal communication renders even seemingly innocent daily practices part of the discursive framework of the conflict.

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[20] Luhmann 1995: 388.
[21] See Messmer 2003. 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.
[22] On securitisation see Wæver 1995; Wæver, Buzan and de Wilde 1998.

Conflict episodes are isolated instances of the articulation of the incompatibility related to a particular issue. They do not necessarily lead to a stabilisation of conflicts. Often, conflict parties regard the mere voicing of mutual disaccord and a subsequent drawing of a distinction between their respective claims as sufficient, and there is no follow-up. Such (border) conflict episodes have also occurred in seemingly "perpetual" rivalries such as those between Greece and Turkey or between Nationalists and Unionists in Northern Ireland. In the case of the former, Rumelili points to a period of sustained reconciliation between Greece and Turkey in the years prior to both countries' application for membership in the then European Economic Community in 1959s. Thus, from the 1930s to the late 1950s, a gradual normalisation of Greco-Turkish relations following the population exchange between both countries in 1922 has replaced the prior antagonism. Issues of conflict were present but remained isolated in their occurrence and did not lead to the establishment of stable oppositional patterns in bilateral communication. Quite on the contrary, "in this time period, it became commonplace for leaders of the two countries to talk about a common shared identity".[23] The situation in Northern Ireland reveals interesting similarities, for today's perception of an entrenched opposition between Catholic nationalists and Protestant unionists has only gradually evolved when looking at identity constructions of both communities. Thus, Hayward points out that prior to the border delineation between the Republic of Ireland and the British dominion of Northern Ireland in 1920, the narratives about the north-south divide on the island of Ireland have been much more fluctuating and occasional.[24] While different identity constructions already existed prior to the border delineation, they culminated only after 1920 in a structurally stable consolidation of conflict communication between the two sides.

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. Yet, issue conflicts are limited to argumentation about a specific issue. Identities themselves are not yet

[23] Rumelili 2004, 4.
[24] Hayward 2004.

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 at the stage of an issue conflict are Greco-Turkish relations following the devastating earthquake in Turkey in 1999. An analysis of communication both at the elite and the wider societal level in both countries shows that both in Greece and in Turkey conflict communication shifted from previously quite entrenched oppositional features to an approach of treating conflict issues between both parties no longer as expressions of hostile claims but rather as contested, single issues which can be dealt with and solved through arguing and compromise seeking.[25]A similar attempt of handling a conflict through devolution of all-encompassing conflict structures into separate and single issue areas characterises the attempt of the British and Irish governments as well as moderate political parties in Northern Ireland following the 1998 Good Friday Agreement (GFA). While entrenched nationalist and unionist identity construction did not cease to loose relevance after the agreement, the GFA attempted to "rationalise" the conflict and to translate encompassing adversary identities into concrete issues which could then be solved through co-operation and dialogue between the two main communities in Northern Ireland. The GFA was, thus, framed around the approach to "cease to talk about accommodating diversity and face up to duality", thus no longer addressing the "Other's" seemingly inimical identity, but to identify common interests in jointly rendering Northern Ireland into "a shared region".[26] Differences between the two sides could, according to this approach, be dealt with by approaching contested issues as issues and not as signifiers of deeply-rooted opposition. This process is meant to be sustained by a period of trust-building between both communities and a learning process in which both parties realise that arguing and not accusation or threat are the appropriate tool for solving the conflict.

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[25] See Vathakou 2003; on arguing Risse 2000.
[26] Longley 1990.

In *identity conflicts*, disaccord becomes explicitly personalised and moves of the other side are increasingly interpreted on the assumption 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, i.e. 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 fears, perceptions and motives of the other side. Many periods of the border conflict between Greece and Turkey are a telling example for such an identity conflict. Both sides observe each other with great suspicion and attribute inimical motives exclusively to the claims of the other side. For example, as a result of growing tensions between both countries evolving around the Cyprus-issue during the 1950s an increasing reference in both countries to exclusionary nationalist discourses and the construction of inimical perception of the "Other" can be observed. The attempt in the early 1960s by political elites in Greece and Turkey to keep the conflict at the stage of an issue conflict was gradually undermined by antagonistic identity constructions which originated from public discourse and which permeated deeply into policy communities in both countries.[27] Entrenched perceptions about the other side's responsibility for the conflict and the construction of the other as an enemy also characterises key periods in the Northern Irish conflict. Thus, the stage of identity conflict is particularly interesting when viewed against the attempt by the GFA to "institutionalise" the conflict at the stage of a mere issue conflict. While on paper the GFA shows that the Northern Irish conflict can be resolved by seeking compromise and cooperation with regard to specified contested issues, the situation on the ground cannot yet be described as an issue conflict. Due to historical legacy, entrenched suspicion about the motives of the other side endure and, ironically, the GFA has in the short run consolidated exclusionary identity-constructions. Hence, the period following the GFA can predominantly be described as an identity conflict, i.e. there has, firstly, been a decrease in violence and attempts of domination and, secondly, an establishment of institutional channels which guarantee continuous

[27] Rumelili 2003a.

communication between both sides. Notwithstanding these conflict diminishing developments triggered by the GFA, a continuity of entrenched and self-referential identity constructions as well as on-going suspicion vis-à-vis the motives of the other side endure.

In a final stage, conflicts can turn into *subordination conflicts.* The primary function of the communication of disaccord now is no longer a 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, often 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 subordination conflicts.[28] However, patterns of subordination conflicts can also be traced with regard to our two case studies. Thus, although Greece and Turkey did not engage in military action against each other after they had applied for membership in the European Community, they nevertheless reached the brink of war on several occasions, such as during the Cyprus campaign in 1974 and several crises on issues such as the Aegean continental shelf in 1976, flight control in 1987 and the territorial status of disputed islands in 1996. In all these instances, conflict communication in both countries revealed a recourse to exclusionary claims as well as the systematic use of threat communication, thereby showing the other side that the use of force was considered as a means to achieve the respective objectives. In Northern Ireland, the invoking of exclusive claims on territory and threats of subordination can be detected on both sides of the border divide, in particular following the "extreme securitisation and polarisation of communication between the

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[28] 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) subordination conflicts. 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 (Bendiek 2004). The only exception was Slovenia which managed already in the early 1990s to "escape" from the dynamics of a subordination conflict.

conflicting parties" as a result of the intensification of the conflict since the late 1960s.[29] The rise of para-military groups in both communities in this period and a subsequent stationing of British troops in Northern Ireland as well as the wide-scale outbreak of violence between both communities in the early 1970s are examples of this shift to a subordination conflict. Exclusionary claims on Northern Ireland between the two sides can also be detected in communication from political leaders in Ireland and the UK. To cite but one example, British Prime Minister Margaret Thatcher rejected Irish claims on Northern Ireland by stating in the House of Commons in 1980 that the status of the British dominion was to be decided "by the people of Northern Ireland, this [*sic!*] government, this [*sic!*] parliament, and no one else".[30] While the GFA has succeeded in shifting the conflict away from the stage of a subordination conflict, threat and violence have not ceased entirely and point to fragility of the current situation, with the Omagh bombing of 1998 only being the most visible of such events.

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 conflict intensification and violence. Empirical research is required to carefully specify the interrelationship between different conflict stages in order to identify, at specific historical moments, the dominant forms of conflict communication. It is only when conflicts turn into subordination conflicts, 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 on other conflict stages, 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.

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

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[29] Hayward 2004, 6.
[30] Quoted in Hayward 2004, 7.

towards the regulation of conflict through peaceful means would have to move a conflict from being about subordination at least to being about identity, and ideally then about issues.[31] As long as identity conflicts prevail, the danger of sliding back into subordination is too big to guarantee permanency, as the conflict in Northern Ireland amply illustrates. 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 re-articulation of subject positions so that they are no longer seen as incompatible, and eventual conflicts do 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.

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, most of the time subordination conflicts, in which 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. In these contexts, borders provide specific mechanisms for inclusion and

[31] See also Pearson 2001.

exclusion into different social realms, with citizenship as "membership" in the political community of a nation-state being the most visible one.[32]

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.[33] 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.[34] 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.[35] 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.[36] They are hence a means of both territorial *and* functional inclusion and exclusion.[37] 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 specific ethnic groups is an interesting example in that respect.[38] 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, for instance, observe processes of "de-bordering" pointing to possible changes not only in the drawing of specific borders, but also to

[32] Nassehi 2003.
[33] See Newman 2003.
[34] Anderson has consequently termed borders and the construction of border identities as the prime "mythomoteur of a whole society". See Anderson 1996, 4. See also Wilson and Donnan 1998.
[35] Forsberg 1996; Houtum and Naerssen 2002.
[36] Albert et al. 2001.
[37] Flint 2003.
[38] The situation of Greek and Turkish minorities in Turkey and Greece respectively is a telling example of the complexities of border conflicts. Thus, in official Greek discourse there exists no Turkish minority, pointing to the fear of territorial claims of Turks in Western Thrace. In official and media discourse the Turks in this Greek province are usually referred to as the "Muslim minority". Similarly, the Turkish official discourse distinguishes between those Greeks living in Greece (they are referred to as "Yuvan") from ethnic Greeks living in Turkey (who are referred to as "Rum").

the very function(s) borders serve, most radically from lines of conflict to lines of identification at which the utterance of non-conflictual discourses replaces the prior utterance of disaccords.[39] 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.[40] If the subjects are no longer what 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 this is happening in the context of the abolition of internal border controls in the Schengen framework, or at least to radically transform their nature and function.

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.[41] 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

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[39] Albert and Brock 2000; 2001.
[40] See also the discussion on generic conflict transformation in Miall, Ramsbotham and Woodhouse 1999.
[41] Wæver 2003, 10.

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 through socialisation, or even to a convergence of national identities with an emerging European identity, in which the very subject positions are re-defined.[42]

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 conflict lines, which sometimes even take the form of an identity conflict, as the reconstruction of national identities versus "Europe" in several European countries illustrates. Yet, the EU has the capacity to unsettle conflicts as a "perturbator", understood as 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 which may or may not agree, as well as 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 perturbation 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.[43] Most obviously, it affects membership candidates, although these can be conceptualised as being part of the integration process or countries, such as Turkey, which are at

[42] The empirical evidence regarding such a change of national identities is mixed. On the one hand, national identities seem to be particularly 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).
[43] See also Diez and Whitman 2002; Manners and Whitman 2002.

the brink of membership negotiations. 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 de-securitisation of conflicts outlined above will 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.[44] We will return to these questions on the conditions under which conflict perturbation by the EU can be successful in the following section.

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

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.

[44] Ferguson 1990, 19-20; Foucault 1990, 95.

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 perturbation takes on a structural quality. This structural impact is usually less powerful in cases of mere association of two conflict parties or cases in which only one party is an EU-member 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. 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 is the interplay between these two approaches that is of particular importance.

Secondly, the perturbation can be primarily directed at the political elite (which follows a traditional understanding of peacemaking), and therefore follow a top-down approach, or operate principally at a wider societal level (what is commonly referred to as peacebuilding), and therefore follow a bottom-up approach.[45] These two categories need not necessarily be exclusive. Thus, 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.

The four paths deducted from these two dimensions are shown in table 1.

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[45] See on peace-making and peace-building Richmond 2001.

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

TABLE 1: *Pathways of EU impact*

These pathways are close to the specific types of power developed by Michael Barnett and Raymond Duvall.[46] 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 primarily 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" ("positive incentive") and the "stick" ("negative incentive") at the disposal of a wealthy and powerful third party.[47] 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 of 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 de-securitising moves. For example, in its relations with Turkey the EU has, on the one hand, repeatedly used the "carrot" of a future membership in order to "convince" the Turkish government not only to pursue conflict transformation vis-à-vis the conflict with the PKK, the Cyprus conflict or the contested border issues with Greece, but also to engage in far-reaching constitutional and economic reforms. On the other hand, the "stick" of threatening with a suspension of financial assistance has in the past been used by the EU to exert political pressure on Turkey. This pathway is closest to traditional conceptions of power in

[46] Barnett and Duvall 2003.
[47] Dorussen 2001.

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, their success is at the same time dependent on the wider societal discursive context, which may not necessarily be conducive to de-securitisation.[48] The institutional and discursive framework offered by the EU, especially through the *acquis communautaire*, can increase the chances of successful de-securitisation by providing a reference point primarily 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 current Turkish government. 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, as the case of Northern Ireland demonstrates. 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 not directly related to conflict transformation.

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[48] Wæver et al. 1998, 41-42.

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 Ireland figures as a prominent example of this indirect, societal 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, 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/-ies in each of the EU's member states.[49]

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.[50] A first distinction is whether the perturbation takes an affirmative or negative form, which is discussed in the literature as positive and negative

[49] Wæver 1996.
[50] Miall, Ramsbotham and Woodhouse 1999; Wallensteen 2002.

incentives. This concerns mostly actor-driven approaches, as can be seen from the aforementioned "carrot and stick" examples, in which the EU can either stress the benefits of integration and association or threaten with their withdrawal, but also to 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 neo-functionalism 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.[51] 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. While the indirect approach of actors therefore relies on the structural impact of the EU framework, the latter can both be direct and indirect.

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 perturbation. Two bundles of

[51] Stone Sweet and Sandholtz 1998.

factors are of particular importance: the relationship between the EU and other perturbators, as well as structural changes in the environment of the conflict; and the relationship between the EU and actors within the conflict setting.

Firstly, the EU is hardly ever 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, 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.[52]

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 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.[53] 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

[52] See also Richmond 2001, 337-338.
[53] See Stetter 2004.

relations of the conflict parties with the EU as well. Therefore, the focus on the constellations of perturbation requires the assessment of how these complex mutual constellations relate to each other and, thereby, shape the way in which the EU can impact a conflict.

Assessing EU impact: the cases of Northern Ireland and Greece/Turkey

Both the Northern Irish and the Greek-Turkish conflicts have moved in the late 1990s from the stage of subordination conflicts to less intense and securitised stages. Following the GFA of 1998 in the case of Northern Ireland and the Greco-Turkish rapprochement in the wake of the earthquake of 1999, the conflicts today oscillate between the stages of identity conflicts, in which entrenched inimical suspicions and self-referential perspectives on the conflicts only gradually diminish and – in particular on the official level - issue conflicts in which groups on both sides attempt to solve contested issues through arguing and compromise-seeking.

A comprehensive picture on the conditions of successful EU involvement can be gained by relating our pathway-model to these two conflicts. Such an analysis not only reveals an increasing relevance of the EU as a perturbator to these conflicts but also the mix of different approaches by the EU in changing conflict structures. Hence, in both conflicts it is the mix of pathways which characterises the role of the EU vis-à-vis the conflicts. While occasionally EU impact has been conflict enhancing, the impact of integration and association has largely been conflict diminishing thus supporting our initial argument that through its institutional and discursive framework the EU can indeed perturbate entrenched conflicts and contribute, alongside other factors, to a de-securitisation of conflicts. EU impact must, furthermore, be put in perspective to distinct periods of conflict development. Thus, until the late 1990s both conflicts oscillated between the stages of identity conflicts and subordination conflicts, whereas since then discourses mainly move between the stages of issue conflicts and identity conflicts, with only isolated occurrence of violence and threat communication.

The EU's compulsory impact (pathway 1) can be observed in the case of the Greek-Turkish conflict, where it has been forced by EU actors in particular in periods of pending

membership application of both countries in which "policymakers [in Greece and Turkey] were careful to restrain themselves from further escalating crises, and worked towards improving bilateral relations" in order not to jeopardise the membership perspective.[54] In such periods, EU bodies communicated to both parties that applications for closer association or even membership would depend on improved bilateral relations between them, including a refraining from violence. Bahar Rumelili has shown how this linkage between integration and conflict resolution was communicated by various EU institutions with regard to Greece throughout the 1970s and towards Turkey in the 1980s and 1990s. Thus, compulsory impact was primarily used in order to prevent the conflict from shifting to the stage of a subordination conflict. As empirical analysis shows, the use of compulsory impact, however, depended upon the credibility of these "carrots". Thus, during the 1970s the EC was able to constrain Greek policy-makers by credibly communicating that conflict-enhancing steps would put at risk Greece's membership application. In a similar way, the EU has been able to exert compulsory impact on the Turkish political leadership following the offering to Turkey of candidacy status at the Helsinki summit of 1999. However, on other occasions, most notably in the 1980s and early 1990s the use of compulsory impact on both parties has been less successful. This has been attributed in the case of Greece to the lack of compulsory instruments at the disposal of the EU after the country joined the Community in 1981. In the case of Turkey, the use of sticks in the 1980s and 1990s did not lead to a change in conflict structures, due to the lack of an attractive carrot which went beyond the associated status of Turkey. In this period, "Turkey did not refrain from securitizing moves, threatening to annex Northern Cyprus if Cyprus becomes a member of the EU prior to any solution on the island, threatening to go to war against Greece if it extends its territorial waters to 12 nms, and escalating the Imia crisis in 1996".[55] This points to the importance of credibility as a condition of successful compulsory impact. Due to a lack of overall military and diplomatic influence in the conflict, the sticks at the disposal of the EU

[54] Rumelili 2004, 7.
[55] Rumelili 2004, 9.

were limited from the outset, notwithstanding the gradual development of such capacities since the Maastricht Treaty. This left the carrot of offering association and membership the EU's strongest means of using compulsory impact. However, this approach has only had significant impact in those instances in which the offer of integration – much more than mere association - into the EU has been credibly communicated to both parties, such as towards Greece in the 1970s and towards Turkey since 1999.

As in the case of Greece, membership of the Republic of Ireland and the United Kingdom robbed the then EC of its main carrot to force the compulsive impact in the Northern Irish case. At a time when the scope of integration was still narrowly circumscribed, the national governments rejected any involvement of European institutions as interference in internal affairs. It is therefore not surprising that it was the European Parliament as the one institution least constrained in its remit by the *acquis* that, through the Haagerup report in 1984, became the first European actor to get directly involved in Northern Ireland, although by that time, the effect of other pathways was already visible.

The enabling impact (pathway 2) of integration and association has left its mark on both conflicts, although with somewhat ambivalent results. In the Greek-Turkish conflict, policy-makers have only recently used references to the EU to justify conflict-diminishing moves. The impact of Europeanisation on the political leadership and conflict discourses in Greece has been remarkably slow and European discourses have for a long time not been able to challenge self-referential, nationalistic perspectives on the conflict in the Greek policy community. Instead, Greece's membership in the EU was perceived as an additional bargaining tool vis-à-vis Turkey rather than as a way out of the conflict. This situation however changed in the mid-1990s when a new "discursive environment" emerged in Greece after the Simitis government had declared membership in the Economic and Monetary Union (EMU) Greece's primary foreign policy objective.[56] This decision not only led to more cautious fiscal policies, including cuts in the huge defence budget, but also triggered an active policy of rapprochement with Turkey. In

[56] Rumelili 2004, 13.

contrast to Greece, Europeanisation has borne less fruits in Turkey, in which prior to the Helsinki summit, the political leadership often considered EU policies as being captured by Greece. However, the decision of the 1999 Helsinki summit changed these parameters and provided new legitimacy for de-securitising moves by Turkish politicians which could now more credibly make reference to requirements for membership in the EU. Such an enabling impact can, for example, be observed in the way in which the Erdoğan government justified Turkey's policy shift on the Cyprus issue, prior to Cyprus's integration into the EU in May 2004.

A similar picture emerges when looking at the role of the EU in the Northern Irish conflict. Thus, the lack of a direct diplomatic role of the EU in the Northern Irish conflict has been counter-balanced by the significance of the "practice of European integration" on political leaderships on both sides of the conflict divide.[57] Brigitte Laffan has identified four contexts through which such enabling impact of the EU on the political leadership can be traced in Northern Ireland. Reference to the EU has been used by policy-makers to legitimise de-securitising moves in the conflict, in particular through advocating key principles of EU policies in general and their usefulness in an application to Northern Irish issues in specific. These principles are the "adequacy of partial agreement", "the importance of institutional innovation", "problem-solving pragmatic politics" and "the sharing of sovereignty".[58] Taken together, recourse to these principles by Northern Irish policy-makers facilitated moves to less intense conflict stages and allowed politicians to frame the conflict as a mere issue conflict.

Often lacking direct influence on policy-makers in conflict regions, the EU has frequently had a connective impact (pathway 3) in relation to both conflicts, thereby directly strengthening those wider societal actors that were perceived by the EU as possible agents of change for conflict-diminishing moves. However, the capacities of the EU to change the overall course of conflict development through connective impact must be put in perspective. Thus, in

[57] Hayward 2004, 17.
[58] Laffan 2001.

both conflicts, societal changes have indeed been important for a shift to less intense conflict stages in the late 1990s, yet these wider societal changes have not been triggered by the EU. However, through supporting peace-oriented societal actors, the EU has contributed to the consolidation of such conflict-diminishing activities.

Traditionally, the impact of the wider societal level on the conflict in Greece and Turkey has been rather conflict enhancing. Thus, politicians both in Greece and in Turkey have on several occasions been accused by a nationalist press and opposition groups of abandoning national interest, thereby limiting the space of manoeuvring of governments. Lenkova, for example, argues with a view to the 1996 Imia crisis that "it took a few days of media activity for the two governments to find themselves in a position from which they could hardly back away from as the two publics were expecting their governments to 'save the nation's pride' by keeping their flag on the islet".[59] Moreover, as far as Turkey is concerned, restrictive policies with regard to rights of non-governmental organisations have limited the EU's ability to directly support societal actors in Turkey. However, the mushrooming of conflict-diminishing activities from the societal level both in Greece and Turkey since the late 1990s has then been strongly supported by the EU which set up several programmes "promoting democratization and civil society activity" in both countries.[60] A case in point is the Civil Society Development Programme of the Delegation of the European Commission in Turkey. This project not only funds selected NGOs in Turkey which engage in local activities but also includes "a special Turkish-Greek civic Dialogue component, where the aim is to strengthen dialogue, networking and partnerships specifically within civil society initiatives in Greece and Turkey".[61]

A similar approach of supporting societal peace initiatives can also be seen in the case of Northern Ireland. In this context, the EU can make particular use of the joint membership of Ireland and the United Kingdom in the EU since this allows to apply mainstream EU policies, which often include cross-border activities, to the island of Ireland, thus treating it as a "normal"

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[59] Lenkova 1997.
[60] Rumelili 2004, 18.
[61] Rumelili 2004, 19.

border area within the Union. For example, Northern Ireland and adjacent regions in Ireland have profited from EU structural funds which are distributed to the region and to societal actors, irrespective of their territorial location in the conflict. In addition several other funds, which are primarily managed by the European Commission, have been established and directly relate to conflict-diminishing, cross-border activities in Northern Irish society. The most prominent example of such a programme is the Special Support Programme for Peace and Reconciliation which has been set up following the ceasefire of 1994 in an attempt to encourage cross-border cooperation and economic development in the region. Moreover, general EU-projects such as the Internal Market and the Interreg Programmes had a more indirect impact on the situation in Northern Ireland since they led to the removal of various obstacles to cross-border cooperation and significantly increased cooperation between societal actors on both sides of the border on the island of Ireland, resulting *inter alia* in positive economic consequences.[62]

The case of Northern Ireland also provides an example of a connective impact leading to discursive change amongst the political elite. Membership of both conflict parties allowed the EU to provide an institutional and discursive framework for permanent consultation of political leaders from Ireland and the United Kingdom in EU institutions, most notably the European Council and the Council of Ministers. Thus, during the 1980s the membership of both countries in the EC forced leaders from both countries to meet in European fora. The significance of this approach can be exemplified by contrasting Ireland's prior formal exclusion from official negotiations with the later acceptance by the United Kingdom that any solution to the Northern Irish conflict must include the Republic of Ireland. As Katy Hayward notes, "the location for the turnaround in British-Irish relations at this time was an EEC summit of the European Council in Brussels in 1983, where Taoiseach FitzGerald and [Prime Minister] Thatcher held their first meeting in fifteen months. From this point onwards, regular summits and the first meetings of the Anglo-Irish Intergovernmental Council […] created a context for a bilateral approach".[63]

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[62] See Hayward 2004.
[63] Hayward 2004, 7.

With the GFA the EU then also became directly involved in conflict settlement on a political level. The GFA calls for a joint approach by nationalist and unionist groups in the Northern Irish civil service and executive offices in their dealings with EU-related matters and institutions. Moreover, the GFA sets out a vast variety of cross-border cooperation projects, including issues such as policing and security, with many of these issues of cross-border planning and cooperation having to be coordinated with the EU.

The constructive impact (pathway 4) of integration and association in both conflicts reveals quite divergent patterns in our two cases. Whereas in the Greek-Turkish conflict, the constructive impact of the EU has for most periods been conflict-sustaining and has only recently become conflict diminishing, European integration – due to the membership of both Ireland and the United Kingdom in the EU – has had a more profound effect on identity constructions in Northern Ireland. Rumelili has shown how claims to European identity in Greece and Turkey have supported rather than undermined antagonistic identity constructions between both sides.[64] Thus, national discourses in Greece have tended to frame Greece's European identity by contrasting Greece's identity with the allegedly non-European identity of neighbouring Turkey. In a similar way, in Turkish national discourses, the EU and Greece were often accused of attempting to construct Turkey as "Europe's Other" despite the country's developing European identity.[65] However, it appears that the rapprochement between Greek and Turkish political elites and societal actors since 1999 has also initiated a process of more inclusive and encompassing identity constructions in both countries. Thus, following its acceptance to the EMU, European identity constructions in Greece became more embedded and altered a previously mainly strategic recourse to "Europe" as a means to de-legitimise Turkish claims. In a similar way, the decision of the Helsinki Summit in 1999 to grant Turkey candidacy status, led to a re-consideration in Turkey of its relations with Europe, thereby accelerating "the

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[64] Rumelili 2003b.
[65] Neumann and Welsh, 1991.

process of internalisation of EU norms in Turkey" and a weakening of the perception that the EU has been captured by inimical Greek governments.[66]

In Northern Ireland, it was the integration of the entire conflict region into the European Community in the early 1970s that rendered the constructive impact highly relevant for conflict diminishing moves. This impact of the EU has been summarised by one of the fathers of the GFA, peace-noble prize laureate David Hume who argued that "the EU commits all its members to an 'ever-closer union' among the peoples of Europe. That includes an ever-closer union between the people of Ireland, North and South, and between Ireland and Britain. Borders are gone all over Europe, including in fact the Irish border".[67] In this context it is interesting to note that one of the prime results from constructive impact is not so much the replacing of national (Irish / British) identities in Northern Ireland with a homogenous European identity but rather the transformation of these entrenched identities to a situation in which the EU contexts allows to express these identities in a less self-referential and exclusive way. Thus, "toleration, rather than transformation, of the identities in the conflict is the goal that the EU sets in relation to Northern Ireland".[68]

The shift to less securitisation and less societal capturing of conflict communication in the late 1990s both in Northern Ireland and Greece / Turkey cannot, of course, solely be explained by successful EU impact. In fact, conflict-diminishing steps are the result of a multitude of interrelated events, such as changes in conflict societies, a conflict-diminishing role of several outside actors (such as the USA or the Council of Europe in Northern Ireland or NATO and the USA in the Greek-Turkish context) and more general developments in world politics such as globalisation or a changing security agenda in world politics. In the case of the Greek-Turkish conflict, the 1999 earthquakes played the role of an important trigger for subsequent events, which enables the EU's impact. However, as our study of perturbation of

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[66] Rumelili 2004, 21. See also Rumelili 2003b.
[67] Hume 1996, 46-47.
[68] Hayward 2003.

these two conflicts through the EU has shown, the EU has had its share in influencing conflict development, sometimes conflict-enhancing, more often conflict-diminishing.

However, EU influence can neither be attributed to nor properly analysed if understood as the involvement of a unitary actor using "direct" ways of influence only. Rather, conditions of successful EU involvement are illustrated by the rapprochement between conflict parties in both cases since the late 1990s. It seems that the chances for successful EU impact increase, the more conflict societies become embedded and socialised with the institutional and discursive frameworks of the EU. Thus, membership of Ireland and the United Kingdom in the EC since 1973 has fostered permanent political dialogue between political leaders of these two countries, whereas the Internal Market Programme of 1992 and accompanying structural and cross-border projects, such as Interreg, have over time fostered cooperation between both sides.[69] In Greece and Turkey, this embedding and socialising effect of the EU can be related to an increasing qualitative integration of both countries into EU structures, exemplified by Greece's participation in the EMU and the acceptance of Turkey as a candidate for future EU accession at the Helsinki Summit. Our discussion of the four pathways of EU impact has shown that one must avoid treating the EU as a homogenous actor. In fact, EU impact can be related not only to a variety of pathways but also to a variety of European institutions involved in such processes.

We argue that the increasing integration of conflict societies in Northern Ireland, Greece and Turkey into EU structures has not only enabled and sustained increased continuous dialogue between conflict parties on the political and wider societal level but does also go hand in hand with a cautious reconstruction of national identities from previously opposing identity constructions to more permeable and shared identities. This does not mean that setbacks are unlikely, as the recent elections in Northern Ireland remind us. But nowhere have we argued that the EU has made the conflicts disappear. As long as "pockets of resistance" to permanent conflict settlement endure, oscillation between conflict stages and setbacks cannot be excluded. Conflict societies are not monoliths but are characterised by a set of different and diverse actors

[69] Meehan 2000, 91-94.

and social processes, some conducive for peace, some not. However, we have shown that the EU indeed has been able to impact conflict development, for better or for worse, and have identified hypotheses on the conditions of successful conflict transformation.

Conclusions

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 attracting 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.[70]

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 article, we have attempted to develop a more 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 de-securisation 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.

[70] Kagan 2003.

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 pursuing one or a combination of the compulsory, enabling, connective or constructive impact pathways is successful or not.

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 examples for the different forms of perturbation in relation to conflicts in Northern Ireland and Greece/Turkey, and it is down to further empirical research on individual conflicts to see how our model plays out in detail in other cases. However, we argue that our model provides a sound basis for studying EU involvement in such conflicts. By combining a conflict theory drawn from a wider constructivist social science background with an analysis of specific cases of EU involvement in border conflicts we also hope to have identified promising new routes of collaboration across disciplinary boundaries which go beyond more classical forms of conflict analysis..

It needs to be emphasised that we have bracketed the feedback of conflicts 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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