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SPECIAL ISSUE, PART II: TOWARDS SYSTEMS OF INTER-ORGANISATIONAL COOPERATION IN PEACE PROCESSES?

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INTRODUCTION

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One of the most striking features of international relations is the diverse practices undertaken under the general heading of "peace-making" and "peacebuilding" initiatives. Peace processes have become much more complex and involve numerous actors working in interrelated fields such as conflict resolution, economic development, rule of law, security sector reform, humanitarian assistance or institution building.

Hence, the idea that cooperation is necessary to achieve 'sustainable peace' is widespread in world politics. As an example, the United Nations General Assembly resolution entitled 'Strengthening the role of mediation in the peaceful settlement of disputes, conflict prevention and resolution' recognises "the *necessity* for cooperation and coordination among the actors involved in a specific mediation contexts […]."[1] Interestingly, a convergence can be noticed between official discourses and some academic works in which the positive value of cooperation is left unquestioned. For example, Lina M. Svedin takes as a premise of her argument that cooperation necessarily leads to a better-managed response to crisis both in terms of defusing immediate and long-term costs[2].

1 United Nations, 'Strengthening the role of mediation in the peaceful settlement of disputes, conflict prevention and resolution', A/RES/65/283, 28 July 2011, para.14. Our emphasis.
2 Lina M. Svedin, *Organizational Cooperation in Crises* (Farnham and Burlington: Ashgate, 2009) p.1.

But what exactly is at stake under the general heading of 'cooperation'? Our main argument is that questioning cooperation in a more systemic way is necessary in order to really go beyond the classical analysis of inter-organisationalism. The more recent theoretical view focuses on mere coordination or on institutional discourses and cannot explain denser and hybrid forms of cooperation. We want therefore to reflect on the existence – or absence – of systems of inter-organisational cooperation in peace processes and analyse their parameters.

Three fundamental issues will help us to make sense of the nature of cooperation during peace processes: the emergence of cooperation, the dynamics and relationships driving cooperation, and the institutionalisation of cooperative behaviour. As part of the presentation of our general theoretical framework, we will reflect on the existing literature as well as explain our own posture towards each of these analytical items. We will then end with a short summary of each contribution.

Emergence

First, it is worth recalling that research about international cooperation is not specific to studies dedicated to peace processes. Cooperation is implicitly or explicitly dealt with in the literature on multilateralism[3], international organisations and international regimes. More specifically, the study of international cooperation is important when thinking about the management of natural resources and the environment, in direct relation with the study of global commons or public goods[4]. International cooperation is also called upon by studies dealing with development aid or more generally in the economic domain[5].

In all these fields, the issue of the emergence of cooperation is crucial. In what has become a classical study on cooperation, Robert Axelrod specifically asks this question: "Under what conditions will cooperation emerge in a world of egoists without central authority?"[6]. The game theory the author develops leads to a highly formalised theory of cooperation. And his main findings are that cooperation is possible without central authority or altruism if the players are part of an iterative game and "if the future is sufficiently important relative to the present"[7].

The emergence of cooperation has not been questioned only through the game theory. In their study of international organisations, Guillaume Devin and Marie-Claude Smouts also raise a basic question similar to that of Robert Axelrod: "What makes actors of international relations cooperate with one another?"[8]. They point out that three main answers have been offered. First, according to a functionalist explanation, actors can cooperate in order to resolve conflicts of interests in the context of an iterative game. This rationalist explanation based on a utilitarian rationale is close to the argumentation of Axelrod and also echoes the official discourses

3 I. William Zartman and Saadia Touval (eds.), *International Cooperation: The Extents and Limits of Multilateralism*, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2010).

4 For an early study on the subject, see Oran R. Young, *International Cooperation: Building Regimes for Natural Resources and the Environment* (Ithaca, N.Y.: Cornell University Press, 1989).

5 Robert Keohane, *After Hegemony: Cooperation and Discord in the World Political Economy* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2005).

6 Robert Axelrod, *The Evolution of Cooperation* (New York: Basic Books, 1984) p. 3.

7 *Ibid*, p. 126.

8 Guillaume Devin and Marie-Claude Smouts, *Les organisations internationales* (Paris: Armand Colin, 2011) pp. 14–15.

favoured by international organisations talking about the necessity of cooperation. Second, and in a totally different stance, cooperation can be approached in relation to cognitive dispositions, therefore looking beyond pure rational reasoning. This view is shared by Richard Ned Lebow, who states for example that "affection and reason together make us seek cooperation, not only as a means of achieving specific ends, but of becoming ourselves"[9]. In that sense, cooperation is clearly related to an identity question. Third, both authors finally consider how cooperation emerges as a result of coercive dispositions, when powerful actors or sanctions regimes can prevent defection. All in all, these three explanations of cooperation are in accordance with the differentiation proposed by Helen Milner who understands cooperation either as negotiated, tacit or imposed[10].

This typology is helpful to define the nature a cooperation process. However, we would like to offer new ways of identifying the roots of cooperation, by trying to locate the emergence of cooperation. Does agenda setting take place in the headquarters of international organisations or with a bottom-up process coming from the field?[11] Is the emergence of cooperation leading to the creation of new polarities among actors? Cooperation can originate from previous networking and partnerships that can lead to overlaps and rivalries between different actors. Emulation, positioning and participation shaping new behaviour among supposedly cooperative agents need therefore to be carefully studied, bringing the question of the relationships between actors to the fore.

Dynamics

Thinking about the dynamic of cooperation entails asking at least two questions: what types of relationships are built between actors seeking cooperation? What do actors do in practice while cooperating?

According to Robert Keohane, cooperation requires that "the actions of separate individuals or organizations – which are not in pre-existent harmony – be brought into conformity with one another through a process of negotiation, which is often referred to as 'policy coordination'"[12]. The definition of Keohane is relevant for several reasons. First, by mentioning individuals and organisations, it sheds light on the fact that cooperation can emerge between various types of actors. Then, by opposing "harmony" to "cooperation", it highlights the fact that "cooperation […] is highly political"[13].

We share the view that cooperation is indeed a political endeavour both in itself and with regards to the consequences it can have on the conduct of international relations. Keohane's definition also allows us to draw some differences between

9 Richard Ned Lebow, 'Reason, Emotion and Cooperation', in Richard Ned Lebow, *Coercion, Cooperation, and Ethics in International Relations* (New York and London: Routledge, 2007) p. 314.

10 Helen Milner, 'International Theories of Cooperation among Nations: Strengths and Weaknesses', *World Politics*, Vol. 44, No. 3 (April 1992), p. 469.

11 On agenda setting, see some works done in the public policy field: James W. Dearing and Everett M. Rogers, *Agenda-Setting* (Thousand Oakes, California: Sage Publications, 1996); John W. Kingdon, *Agendas, Alternatives and Public Policies*, 2nd edition (New York: Longman, 2003); D. Jones Bryan and Frank R. Baumgartner, *The Politics of Attention: How Government Prioritizes Problems* (Chicago and London: University of Chicago Press, 2005).

12 Keohane, *op.cit.*, p. 51.

13 *Ibid.*

related concepts. Cooperation can embrace coordinating activities, negotiating strategies or partnerships, but is larger than any of these various policies. Reference to terms like "conformity" and "adjustments" also indicates that cooperation can aim at policy coherence by fostering complementarity and reciprocity between various actors.

But well beyond this issue of policy coherence, we want to assess if new denser and more articulated forms of cooperation are effectively in place during peace processes as a way of tapping new resources to forge peace. In theory, a system of inter-organisational cooperation is meant to go well beyond the simple delegation or coordination of activities to create a convergence of practices and relations of reciprocity among various actors. The concept of system also conveys the idea that interactions between its different parts have consequences on the whole structure. Systems are then thought as an ordered and comprehensive assemblage of actors relying on decisions, procedures and relationships that aim at forming a collective response to conflicts.

To consider the nature and structure of the relationships between actors in cooperation processes is therefore of primordial importance in order to assess if systems of inter-organisational cooperation were concretely put in place in some peace processes. The problem of interaction needs to be approached in a broader way by studying decision-making processes, the implementation of public policies, and by trying to decipher the multiple meanings attached to interaction: how the system makes sense (perception of the system) and what cooperation is striving to achieve (the direction of the system).

Institutionalisation

The last set of questions we ask in this Special Issue is related to the reasons for institutionalising cooperation. It will aim at making sense of the justification for fostering collective action. Cooperation entails questions of effectiveness, credibility and legitimacy. There has been a mounting endeavour towards more 'comprehensive cooperation', seen as a way to extend the legitimacy of other actors as well. However, the assessment of the effectiveness of international cooperation can be problematic and sometimes tautological. The emphasis on cooperation is seen as a way of measuring the capacity of international actors. Conversely cooperation is understood as a way of improving effectiveness.

The issue of institutionalisation is at the core of many studies on cooperation. International studies have often focused on the static deciphering of coordination between organisations, for instance between international and non-governmental organisations[14] or the United Nations and regional organisations[15]. This approach is particularly valued in studies dedicated to crisis management and peace operations.

14 Jen Steffek, 'Explaining Cooperation between IGOs and NGOs – Push Factors, Pull Factors and the Policy Cycle', *Review of International Studies* (January 2013), pp. 1–21.

15 Ernest R. Alexander, *How Organizations Act Together: Interorganizational Coordination in Theory and Practice* (Amsterdam: Gordon & Breach, 1995); S. Neil MacFarlane and Thomas G. Weiss, 'The UN, Regional Organizations and Human Security: Building Theory in Central America', *Third World Quarterly*, Vol. 15, No. 2 (1994), pp. 277–295; Björn Hettne and Fredrik Söderbaum, 'The UN and Regional Organizations in Global Security: Competing or Complementary Logics?', *Global Governance*, Vol. 12, No. 3 (2006), pp. 227–232.

Attention is paid to civil-military relations[16] and various forms of cooperation strategies are singled out, such as strategic frameworks – be they sequential (North Atlantic Treaty Organisation and European Union in Bosnia) or parallel (NATO and EU in Afghanistan) – and integrated missions[17]. Cooperation is also studied in the security and defence fields, with a frequent focus on cooperation between states through alliances[18], along with some theoretical frameworks based on game theory[19]. In the literature dealing with cooperation in peace negotiations, we can notice that cooperation is tackled through specific angles. For instance, strategies of cooperation are studied in relation with what are called different "tracks" of diplomacy, especially official and unofficial ones[20]. Drawing on the work of Louise Diamond, the concept of tracks has been expanded and cooperation strategies are studied more thoroughly in peace efforts[21]. Chester A. Crocker, Fen Osler Hampson, and Pamela All have offered the notion of multiparty mediation, defined as "situations involving multiple mediators, whether taking the form of sequential, simultaneous, or 'composite' mediatory actors"[22].

This traditional view of cooperation offers important milestones to understand cooperation, but, according to our view, it should be complemented with a more thorough investigation of what really takes place in peace processes beneath the generic label of cooperation. Indeed, even in dyadic configurations and beyond specific fields of cooperation, denser institutional spaces can emerge fuelling various networks and dynamics of inter-organisational cooperation. Boundary spanning has taken place at all levels and among innumerable actors, notably local actors whose role is said to be crucial to making peace embedded in local realities[23]. Conversely, public policies and inter-organisational relations have adapted themselves to the resulting changes and are nowadays much more diversified. We can observe a general opening of the 'gates' of participation – with international organisations often playing

16 Joachim A. Koops (ed.), 'Military Crisis Management: The Challenge of Inter-Organizationalism', *Studia Diplomatica*, Vol. LXII, No. 3 (2009); Cécile Wendling, 'The Comprehensive Approach to Civil-Military Crisis Management: A Critical Analysis and Perspective', *Cahier n°6*, IRSEM (November 2010); Antonia Handler Chayes and Abram Chayes, *Planning for Intervention: International Cooperation in Conflict Management* (The Hague: Kluwer Law International, 1999).

17 Bruce D. Jones, 'The Challenge of Strategic Coordination', in Stephen Stedman, Donald Rothchild and Elizabeth Cousens (eds.), *Ending Civil Wars: The Implementation of Peace Agreements* (Boulder and London: Lynne Rienner Publishers, 2002) pp. 105–111; Cedric De Coning, 'Coherence and Coordination in United Nations Peacebuilding and Integrated Missions: A Norwegian Perspective', Security in Practice, No 5, (Oslo: Norwegian Institute of International Affairs, December 2007).

18 For an example see Scott Jasper (ed.), *Conflict and Cooperation in the Global Commons: A Comprehensive Approach for International Security* (Washington: Georgetown University Press, 2012).

19 Robert Jervis, 'Cooperation under the Security Dilemma', *World Politics*, Vol. 30, No. 2 (January 1978), pp. 167–214.

20 Susan Allen Nan and Andrea Strimling, 'Track I – Track II Cooperation', *Beyond Intractability*, Guy Burgess and Heidi Burgess (eds.), Conflict Research Consortium (Boulder: University of Colorado, January 2004) http://www.beyondintractability.org/essay/track_1_2_cooperation [accessed the 23rd of August 2013]; Ronald J. Fisher, 'Coordination Between Track Two and Track One Diplomacy in Successful Cases of Prenegotiation', *International Negotiation*, Vol. 11, No. 1 (2006) pp. 65–89; Andrea Strimling, 'Stepping Out of the Tracks: Cooperation Between Official Diplomats and Private Facilitators', *International Negotiation*, Vol. 11, No 1, (2006), pp. 91–127.

21 Louise Diamond and John McDonald, *Multi-Track Diplomacy: A Systems Approach to Peace* (West Hartford, Connecticut: Kumarian Press, 1996) ; Louis Kriesberg, 'Coordinating Intermediary Peace Efforts', *Negotiation Journal*, Vol. 12, No. 4 (October 1996), pp. 341–352.

22 Chester A. Crocker, Fen Osler Hampson, and Pamela All, *Herding Cats: Multiparty Mediation in a Complex World* (Washington, D.C.: United States Institute of Peace Press, 1999), p. 9.

23 Oliver E. Richmond and Roger MacGinty, 'Editor's Introduction', *Peacebuilding,* Vol. 1, No. 1 (2013), pp. 1–2.

the role of 'gatekeepers'. The concrete features of cooperation therefore depend on the capabilities of various actors and their willingness to play a role in this new geography of cooperation, rendering the institutionalisation of cooperation much more challenging.

Contributions to the Special Issue

The three contributions to this Special Issue use various methods of analysis – that are well specified in each article – and introduce different case studies. Ivan Ivanov analyses cooperation between the United Nations (UN) and the North Atlantic Treaty Organisation (NATO) in Kosovo and in Afghanistan. Evgeniya Vasileva and Atanas Gotchev study cooperation between the European Union (EU) and the United Nations in conflict early warning systems. Finally, Gaëlle Pellon focuses on the system of inter-organisational cooperation during the conflict in South-Ossetia (Georgia). All of them describe how systems of inter-organisational cooperation emerge and the driving forces behind cooperative behaviour.

Ivan Ivanov deals with one of the most typical case of inter-organisational cooperation in international relations by looking at the cooperation between NATO and UN in two post-conflict situations: Kosovo and Afghanistan. The author invites us to shift our focus towards the ground level in order to observe cooperation in the making. He identifies several important mechanisms. First, greater coordination between organisations emerges as a result of enhanced autonomy in various missions. Secondly, centralised institutionalisation is less productive than informal relations that relate offices operating at the local level more loosely. In terms of the dynamics of cooperation, clashing organisational cultures and shortage of resources are deep constraints making more difficult, if not ineffective, the centralised efforts that come from headquarters. However, critical conjunctures such as, for example, the deterioration of security environment increase coordination between field officers. Ivanov does not evaluate the efficiency of NATO and UN operations. However, the study of these two dyads shows that informal agreements and practices can paradoxically be the main foundations of a stronger institutionalised inter-organisational cooperation.

Evgeniya Vasileva and Atanas Gotchev compare the early warning architecture adopted by the United Nations and the European Union, a straightforward example of a dyadic configuration. The authors demonstrate the difficulty of putting in place effective cooperation, while the two organisations share similar goals and both aim at reinforcing their presence on the ground. The limits of inter-organisational cooperation – not to say the non-existence of cooperation – are due to several factors such as the absence of a clear code of coordination and an overlap of competences. This lack of cooperation system entails a duplication of resources that increase material and human costs in conflict prevention. They finally conclude that there is no division of labour between the UN and the EU in this specific area of intervention. Despite these various limitations, the authors contend that a top-down set of rules is not required. A major transformation will on the contrary lie on more ductility based on the creation of "small, mobile and adaptive entities" on the ground.

To conclude the special section, Gaëlle Pellon offers a new set of tools in order to handle inter-organisational cooperation, seen as a set of relationships spotted well beyond traditional dyads. While not using explicitly the notion of inter-organisational system, she highlights precisely its mechanisms by using a social network analysis. Her research design relies on a Database on Inter-Organisational Cooperation in Conflicts that aims at coding interactions between international organisations, both in relation to actors and their activities. It entails a network visualisation illustrating 'the structure of multiple inter-organisational linkages'. This innovative mapping shows counter-intuitive phenomena, such as the limited interactions of societal actors in this cooperative structure or the huge implication of parliamentary assemblies in peacebuilding during the South-Ossetian conflict. She also underlines how what she called a *lead-clique* comes to 'control' this inter-organisational cooperation in the backstage of the European Commission and the Organisation for Security and Cooperation in Europe Mission in Georgia. This case displays an example of polarisation within a system.

Despite the various empirical cases and methods, some common results emerge. Contrary to the prevailing institutional discourse, the three papers single out the fundamental role of informality in the development of inter-organisational cooperation. This level of analysis is neglected, especially in studies looking at more traditional dyadic configurations between organisations. Moreover, even in such cases, informal patterns are decisive for the emergence but also often for sustaining cooperation. Therefore, inter-organisational cooperation systems in peace processes cannot be fully operationalised – and can thus not be properly studied – without taking this dimension into account.

In addition, the papers of Vasileva/Gotchev and of Pellon also argue that a less robust type of cooperation is at work in early warning mechanisms. There is no shared understanding and common agenda among actors dealing with conflict prevention. Therefore that makes a detailed cooperation between various actors involved in early warning particularly difficult. This example sheds light on the fact that cooperative configurations can also differ according to the specific domains in which they take place within peace initiatives. If international organisations involved in conflict management or peacekeeping operations can increase their dialogue and develop denser and more articulated forms of cooperation, this is not necessarily the case for all the range of activities that can be subsumed under the general heading of 'peace processes'.