Introduction:
Peace and Conflict on the Edge

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This book originates in the work publicly presented and later written up by doctoral students attending the Bilbao (2007) and Graz (2009) Intensive Programmes of the European network European Doctorate Enhancement in Peace and Conflict Studies (EDEN). Respectively entitled ‘Multidisciplinary Perspectives on Peace and Conflict: A View from Europe’ and ‘Human Security, Peace and Stability (with a focus on the Balkan Region)’, these intensive programmes —part of an annual series which started in 2004— are a basic ingredient of the EDEN curriculum (also incorporating tutored periods abroad in other training centres of the network), and are designed to foster a critical research culture amongst all members of the network, increasing the contact between graduate students and more senior researchers, and establishing the foundations for a critical mass of researchers interested in Peace and Conflict issues from a broad interdisciplinary perspective. The organization of the annual Intensive Programmes and the publication of the results are crucial instruments in fulfilling EDEN’s goals. Publications are a powerful training mechanism, as well as key in the public dissemination of the ongoing debates taking place within the network, increasing its visibility. Furthermore, we believe that advanced graduate students are in a privileged position too, starting out from the solid theoretical and methodological foundations obtained in their respective PhD Programmes across Europe, and producing the kind of innovative and critical work that is sorely needed for any field of knowledge to remain alive and crisp. Namely, to remain both on edge and on the edge, questioning its limits, expanding its horizons, enriching it theoretically.
and methodologically and constantly adjusting to the new kinds of problems arising. This book, the third in EDEN junior series (after Peace and Conflict: Europe and Beyond, 2006; and Different Approaches to Peace and Conflict, 2008), consolidates the network’s desire to continue the path of becoming a European referent in Peace and Conflict Research.

In order to extract some lessons for contemporary conflict analysis and peacebuilding, Alexei Fedorov’s case study focuses on the historical evolution of the bilateral relationships between the Soviet Union and Yugoslavia in the second half of the 20th century, by contrasting two periods in Soviet-Yugoslav relations (the 1950s and the late 1980s). The first period, 1948-1956, covers the cleavage in Soviet-Yugoslav relations that arose from the fall-out between Stalin and Tito and the rapprochement between Khrushchev and Tito whereby Khrushchev was trying to confirm his leadership against the hard-liners of the ‘conservative’ opposition within the politburo, by saving face and securing the Soviet Union’s position within the eastern bloc. By contrast Tito would benefit from the dangerous game of playing off East against West during the period the post-war, bi-polar cleavage that would continue until the period of perestroika and glasnost. This brings us to Fedorov’s second period of analysis and raises the following question. What would have happened if, in 1991, the Soviet Union had reverted to its traditional pro-Serb and pan-Slav interests? Certainly, the potential was there for such a development, and General Secretary Mikhail Gorbachev had consistently made references to his homologue Slobodan Milošević of a common Russo-Serb friendship based on the pan-Slav, pro-Serb, co-religionist relation between Serbia that predates the Serb migrations of 1691 and 1725. Yet he never extended the same hand of friendship to the Croatian and Slovenian leaders in meetings that took place against the backdrop of the final endgame towards the eventual break up of Yugoslavia. In the shuttle diplomacy of high-ranking officers of the JNA and the Soviet Ministry of Defence there was certainly the potential for a Soviet military intervention in the former Federative Socialist Republic of Yugoslavia; and, given Yugoslavia’s geo-strategic position on the Adriatic concomitant with the possibility of NATO intervention, how close did Europe come to the brink in 1991?

What Fedorov has done here is make a valuable contribution to future research in Russian and East European History, International Politics and Slavonic studies, which intriguingly makes us wonder what were the agreements and talks between the Serbian leadership and the Soviet leadership in the ember days of both states? Only future historians, political scientists and slavicists will be able to get to the heart of the matter when the Russian and Serbian archives for the period are finally fully opened to the public.

In her chapter on the role of violence on Mexico’s state formation and democratization, Paula Luz Parra departs from the mainstream studies of this topic by incorporating, beyond direct violence, other forms of violence that are also crucial in the process, such as cultural-symbolic and structural violence, following Galtung’s path. Drawing on different disciplines and feminist approaches, the author problematises what is meant by violence and explores the different ways in which it is both a destructive and constitutive force in state formation processes. By embracing Joas’ and Tiryaki’s vision that war and violence are integral features of advanced modernity, Parra also tries to point out the negative effects that the neglect of violence in predominant liberal theories of modernisation—the modernisation versus violence paradigm—and the limits classic Marxist theory has had in understanding some of its key components and even of its true nature. In the Mexican case, the focus on direct violence as a ‘natural’ feature of modernisation in the country—the kind of violence taking place in the public arena between liberals and conservatives and revolutionaries—has obscured the parallel tenacious and perversely workings of other forms of violence, glossing over crucial parts of the experience of the most precarious segments of the Mexican population. The impoverished majorities, the lower class actors, the indigenous populations, have been thus written out of history, their socio-political agency denied and their suffering unacknowledged. Only by shifting the focus and incorporating the neglected violence and invisible populations can modernisation as a historical process be reinterpreted and truly understood.

Hamadziripi Munyikwa’s study of Zimbabwean Civil Society provides another example of the complex relations between states and civil society when approaching issues of peacebuilding and democratisation. According to Munyikwa, Civil Society in Zimbabwe may be one of the most grounded in Africa and yet it is still in a state of chronic underdevelopment, in part due to continuous attempts by official political culture to “blur distinctions between the ruling party, public institutions and organised social life”, cutting off spaces for a truly democratic civil society to emerge and consolidate. To understand this, Munyikwa asserts, it is crucial to first clarify what we mean when using the term “civil society”—considering the difficulties of both establishing the limits, circumventing different ideological takes on it, and the difficulties posed by using a rather “murky” concept in different political contexts across the world—and then, he goes on to develop an historical overview of its inception and unfolding since the pre-independence
period in Zimbabwe. The author concludes that Zimbabwe’s civil society has had a critical function in the state’s democratic trajectory, as a permanent source of resistance to the State’s leanings towards totalitarianism and authoritarian rule. The many organisations operating in civil society have endured severe suppression yet they have managed to convey the voice of many citizens, denouncing human rights violations and abuses by the State. Oppositional political leaders have cut their teeth on these activities and, very importantly, a political culture valuing “democratic norms and practices” has taken deep root.

There has been growing concern in recent years in the United Nations and right across the international area, of the growing use of Private Military Companies (PMCs) which are increasingly being contracted to intervene in conflict and post-conflict contexts, in a process that has been described as the “privatization of peace”. In her chapter on PMCs, Carla Marcelino Gomes, assesses the activities of the PMCs and their personnel within the context of International Humanitarian Law and Human Rights Law. How do we account for the increase in the use of PMCs in conflict and post-conflict scenarios? Gomes points out that three main factors have paved the way for this new phenomenon, within the framework of the so-called “Revolution in Military Affairs”, they are: The end of the Cold War; the proliferation of neo-liberal concepts posited on the privatization of the public sector and the withdrawal of the state; along with the emergence of fragile states, since the era of decolonization. Of course, the big concern is the perceived threat of low levels of accountability with regard to the PMCs and concerns that their activities may easily impinge upon humanitarian rights. Gomes argues the case for greater responsibility and regulation, as well as codes of conduct; so that PMCs become much more accountable before International Humanitarian Law, Human Rights Law and International Criminal Law.

Continuing in a similar vein to Gomes’ chapter and drawing on ethnographic fieldwork conducted between July 2008 and May 2009 in Durban, South Africa, Tessa Diphoorn’s paper highlights a basic issue in the contemporary shape of different forms of violence and conflict: the increasing presence of private security companies on the ground — already a fully-fledged and diversified private security industry —, subcontracting ‘twilight’ areas of ‘safety’ where states, police force or armies fall short as the result of a “governance void”. This increasing presence has the potential to drastically redefine social, political and symbolic processes around the management of violence and the politics of fear, as well as short circuiting the implementation of state-centered international conventions. As Diphoorn herself asks about the all-perva-

sive armed response officers (AROs) in post-apartheid South Africa and the increasing privatization of public and private safety: “but who are these people? Who are these men that roam around in residential areas on bicycles or patrol the streets at night protected by bulletproof vests and with firearms at their disposal? What impact do their vast numbers have on security practices, discourses of violence, perceptions of crime, the wide-ranging maintenance of social order, the ‘legitimate’ use of force, and societal relations in general?” Tall order questions, for they underline a radical transformation of the ‘legitimate’ uses of violence. Her ethnography of AROs brilliantly highlights the novel kind of slippery terrains in which Peace and Conflict research needs to stretch its theoretical and methodological tools.

Julianne Funk Deckard stresses the continuing importance of incorporating the analysis of identity and identity politics within the framework of contemporary Peace and Conflict research, based in this case on the data gathered for her study of the conflict in Bosnia-Herzegovina. In her view, “ethno-national identity” — closely linked to religious institutional affiliation — has not been deactivated at all as a divisive force within the region and its critical analysis continues to be a key component in any process of willing ‘conflict transformation’ to succeed. But to properly understand the depth of the problems, the term ‘identity’ — utterly overused and at times devoid of an operative content —, has to be deeply researched, problematized, and over analysed within its context. To move beyond the conflict-driven and pervasive “primordialist” conceptions of identity, based on obscure yet socially, politically and symbolically efficacious rhetorics of “ancient hatreds”, Funk Deckard proposes that both researchers and policymakers consider the importance of emerging alternative perspectives on identity — such as cross-cutting identities or non-ethnic social movements — taking shape at the grassroots level which, as dynamic everyday “counter-discourses” and counterpractices, do actually work against or apart from the grain of the hegemonic primordialist conceptions and might pave the way to future forms of reconciliation or at least coexistence.

Continuing in a similar micro level of analysis, Miguel BarretoHenriques critically analyses the so-called “peace laboratories” in Colombia, an original set of civil-society locally based peacebuilding initiatives alternative to more official and global approaches to the Colombian conflict (such as peace negotiations, and so forth). A joint attempt has been made by the European Union, the Colombian government and a number of Colombian social organisations, with the intention of finding ways of detecting and dismantling the root causes of the conflict at local and regional levels. Following the case-study of the Peace Lab-
mission on Intervention and State Sovereignty and other relevant actors to describe their approach in dealing with different types of causes that underlie conflicts. Zwitter's systematization of these various approaches reveals that the term “root cause” is already used by different actors, and indeed is often mentioned and used in combination with the concept of Human Security. However, Zwitter also argues that in practice the combination of a root cause approach and the Human Security approach can only be applied in an unstructured manner. Therefore, with reference to the triangle of violence developed by Johan Galtung and the concept of relative deprivation advanced by Ted Robert Gurr, Zwitter aims to make the root causes approach more applicable for the resolution and prevention of conflicts and political violence, for which purpose he is developing a comprehensive root cause approach based on the concept of Human Security.

Markus Moestl takes a look at the European Security and Defence Policy (ESDP) using a Human Security perspective. He argues that the concept of Human Security could be a useful framework for the further development of this comparatively new policy area of the European Union, since such an approach would constitute a post-modern answer to the security challenges of the 21st century. In his analyses of the theory and practice of the ESDP Moestl argues that the concept of Human Security is already to some extent incorporated in the second pillar of the European Union. The prominent use of civilian instruments, well discernable efforts to mainstream human rights within the ESDP, as well as the adoption of guidelines for the protection of children in armed conflict gives credence to his argument. However, the author’s overall assessment of the ESDP is mixed. He alleges that a research-based evaluation of ESDP operations that takes into account a Human Security perspective that is still in its early stages and that various challenges to further integrate Human Security into the ESDP persist, especially when it comes to the implementation of this concept in practice. Therefore, he calls for an official statement declaring Human Security as the framework for the future development of the ESDP. According to Moestl this step would prepare the way for the EU towards a more value-driven agenda for the ESDP with the protection and promotion of human rights lying at its very core.

The contribution by Ricardo Pereira offers a more critical view of the concept of Human Security. As a result, the author makes an effort to underline the ambivalence and discrepancies of Human Security. More specifically, Pereira argues that the concept and application of Human Security tends to be adapted according to different geopolitical settings. Reviewing the development of Human Security, the author
analyses the content, purpose and use of this concept in two different geopolitical structures, namely during the post-Cold War period and after the terrorist attacks of September 11. While emphasising the example of the priorities of global health governance and policies aimed at the prevention and treatment of infectious diseases, he argues that there has been a shift in the way the concept has been implemented before and after the beginning of the 21st century. Pereira concludes that the "War on Terror" has also determined the meanings and practices of the concept of Human Security.

The perspectives on Human Security that have already been discussed become noticeably enriched by Georg Kerschischnig’s discussion of cyberwarfare. As cyberspace harbours potential threats to global security, understanding its formats and mechanisms becomes another new challenge for Peace and Conflict research, as cyberspace challenges the field to mobilize and innovative theoretical and methodological tools, as well as to creatively anticipate as yet unimaginable scenarios. Kerschischnig starts with the difficulty of knowing what exactly “cyberwarfare” is, as he sets in motion concepts such as: “cyber-attack”, “cyberexploitation”, “cybercrime”, “cyberterrorism”, “cyber-intrusions”, “cyberspionage”, “cyberdissidence” or even “hacktivism” and “patriotic hacking”, in order to pin down some potentially problematic uses of cyberspace and its “borderless architecture”. By doing so, he shows the serious limitations of traditional approaches to Peace and Conflict research in dealing with it in a sophisticated fashion. Issues of governance in cyberspace and its potential role regarding national security are for the author crucial entry points for the proper understanding of the vast, ever-changing and volatile universe contained in new technologies, within a human security approach.

All the chapters in this book reflect the challenges that confront early-career researchers in the fields of peace, conflict and identity, whose work is at the very cutting edge. This book is truly an international scholarly effort to make visible the analytical challenges, hesitations, and innovative approaches faced by promising young scholars who will be in charge of commanding the field not very long from now. For the directors of the IPs and all the EDEN faculty it is very encouraging that doctoral students from across the world find it important to meet with academic colleagues from the twelve European higher educational institutions that make up EDEN, to gather together to discuss and critique the different issues and challenges that confront the multidisciplinary perspectives of their chosen fields at two of the annual intensive Programmes that were held at the Universities of Deusto and Graz.

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