Interveners and Intervened Upon: the missing link in determining external intervention impact

Linnea Gelot & Fredrik Söderbaum

School of Global Studies (SGS) & Gothenburg Centre of Globalization and Development (GCGD),

University of Gothenburg[1]

The Nordic Africa Institute, Uppsala

e-mail: linnea.bergholm@gu.se & fredrik.soderbaum@globalstudies.gu.se

Introduction

Although historically there are many examples of international intervention, the post-cold war era has seen a burgeoning of different forms of outside interference and intervention by a range of state and non-state actors and for many different purposes. These include practices known as humanitarian intervention, responsibility to protect, development intervention, governance intervention, as well as peace- and statebuilding. These interventions are controversial and many are judged as mixed, or even as complete failures (e.g. present-day Iraq, Afghanistan, and various interventions throughout Africa).

This article argues that 'the problem of intervention' cannot be divorced from its external political origins. A significant portion of empirical research in the field shows that interventions have all too often been based on an insufficient understanding of the surrounding context, and on an external definition of the problem/crisis they set out to solve. As many have noted, interventions are often not primarily designed for those described as its 'beneficiaries' (Rubinstein, 2005). We argue that assessments of intervention impact need to include what occurs in the relation between interveners and those intervened upon. Indeed, determinations of success and failure of interventions are partial unless they take seriously the

role of local dynamics and cultural meaning systems that inform social action as well as the power relations between intervener and 'intervened upon'. This article constitutes the first step in a research agenda that combines top-down *and* bottom up analysis, which sets it apart from the more common bottom up analyses in the literature.

Interventions in a globalizing world

Global political order during the 20th century was dominated by the idea of the Westphalian nation-state order, which was predicated on national sovereignty, non-recognition of supranational authority, demarcated borders and non-interference in the internal affairs of individual states. The 21st century, however, has already seen a burgeoning of different forms of outside interference and intervention by non-state actors. Indeed, interference by 'outsiders' in the affairs of 'insiders' is emerging as a structural characteristic of today's international system (Leurdijk 1996).

These new dynamics of intervention reflect a general transformation of world order. The world order established after World War II, the 'Liberalism of Restraint', may be contrasted with tendencies and developments following the end of the Cold War, the 'Liberalism of Imposition' (Sørensen 2006). While the former was based on the autonomy of the sovereign state and implied freedom from intervention by international institutions (in particular the UN), the latter awards international institutions responsibility for intervening when states are considered weak, failed or abusive to their citizens: the 'responsibility to protect'. Contemporary interventions by international actors in the affairs of individual countries are frequently justified in the name of the 'global good'. For instance, humanitarian intervention is presented not only as a way of ending lethal conflict but also as a means of 'getting politics right' in the aftermath of war (examples include Cambodia, Kosovo and Bosnia, East Timor, Afghanistan and Iraq). Other examples may include economic sanctions against certain regimes to address their financial crises (Southeast Asia, Latin America), or structural adjustment programmes designed to stabilize economies or 'get economics right' in large parts of the developing world.

'The global good' is often seen as synonymous with 'the liberal peace' by the prevailing policy-making consensus in the West, promulgated by global institutions (a 'thin' liberal world order), and sustained by a related scholarly body of work which makes up a significant portion of the intervention literature (Sørensen 2006). The supposed fruits of intervention: stable/constitutional rule, macroeconomic stability, law and order, etc, are intimately

connected with a normative and ideological project: a liberal project. Therefore, discussing world order and the liberal peace is essential to understanding the inherently political and normative assumptions that underpin and motivate contemporary interventions. This forms a necessary part of our perspective on intervention impact.

The liberal type of intervention, and the legitimation of such intervention by academics, is particularly problematic/intrusive precisely because of its predetermined purposes. Liberalizing the world implies indirect rule, thus down-playing or negating receiving areas of the possibility of open-ended political processes. Constitutional democracy and free market economy are seen as core elements of the normative goal (the 'good life' and basic human dignity is defined within a liberal frame of reference, yet showcased as if they were universal understandings). This sets the direction and frame for interpretation of the actual political, economic, and social process, thus conflating the normative course chosen with an objective or universal idea.

There is a vast amount of intervention research that analyses the way in which external interventions (especially externally driven peace operations and humanitarian interventions) are executed and implemented from a top-down perspective. This literature tends to focus on constraints on the strategy or the implementation, such as the lack of political will, the under-financing of missions, insufficient force, poor logistics, issues of coordination between actors, and interaction dilemmas between civil and military forces, which in turn lead to legitimacy and authority problems, and undesirable outcomes (Doyle & Sambanis 2006; Thakhur 2005; Weiss 1999). Good outcomes, it is assumed, follows from getting the technical or operational side of things right (usually starting on day one of the intervention and ending on the day of staff evacuation). In this way, much of the intervention literature favours political order and stability, and tacitly accepts and legitimizes liberal governance. In other words, it approaches intervention in a problem-solving, operational-technical manner. Often, it evaluates efficiency and legitimacy *within* specific missions (e.g. Diehl 1993; Durch 1993). By focusing on cases, typologies or mission specific operational and institutional constraints the analysis often seems disembedded from the context of the wider processes of world politics. The intent is to explain what went well or less well and to improve the instruments for intervention.

By adopting the distinction between problem-solving and critical purposes of knowledge and theorising developed by Robert Cox one may differentiate between an intervention account that looks at isolated technical flaws, 'outside-in', and one that instead contextualizes,

denaturalizes or problematises the practice, 'inside-out'. The problem-solving mode of intervention analysis takes the prevailing social and power relationships and the institutions into which they are organized as the given framework. The purpose of theorising is to make the order of the day work more smoothly, hence the starting point is to accept that intervention performs an essentially problem-solving task in world order (Bellamy & Williams, 2004: 6). The critical mode of intervention analysis, instead, calls into question world order by enquiring into the origins of existing institutions and social power relations, and by observing how and whether they might be undergoing change. The analyst bears in mind that agents and structures are always subject to change, created as they are by historically contingent interests of knowledge. Nonetheless, they are subjected to critical reflection because theories are born out of conditions and practices that have become set over time. As Cox famously noted, 'Theory is always for someone and for some purpose. All theories have a perspective.' (1981: 128-129) Keeping problem-solving and critical modes of knowledge production analytically distinct does not exclude the possibility of combining the two. Indeed, a combination is necessary if the aim is to capture the outside–inside relations and contingencies.

The problem-solving intervention literature tends to address insufficiently the tensions that arise because of how interventions are frequently guided by motives and assumptions unrelated to the original crisis. They are of a pragmatic nature, results and reflections of a complex mix of economic and political interests by a wide range of actors. These varied motives co-exist with moral and, supposedly, humanitarian/altruistic ones. This is because intervention implementation is assessed from the standpoint of the intervener, with less attention given to the national context and the intervened upon, or the 'recipients' of the intervention. One of the implications following from the very starting point of analysis is that the normative goodness of the practice overall is not usually challenged. This self-righteousness becomes more entrenched considering that problem-solving research pervades the top journals of the field of International Relations. These journals and their peer-review communities reinforce the purchase of problem-solving on collective thinking regarding interventions. Yet another implication is that engagement with fine-grained dynamics and constraints in the wider global, regional, or local politics is not encouraged, and even seems redundant. Conventional analyses focus more on output, outcome, as distinct from impact. 'Output' may be something measurable such as training of soldiers in human rights, and

'outcome' may be that soldiers are respecting human rights in their activities. Impact instead denotes effects on the society in a broader sense (Söderbaum & Schulz 2010).

Moreover, a particular problem in a portion of the literature is that while the intervener-intervened relationship is sometimes highlighted in the debate, the intervened upon are usually: narrowly defined as objects or as powerless (illiberal); not systematically discussed; or overlooked.[2] There are of course reasons for why the intervener-intervened relationship has been undervalued. Framing a local political issue into a 'concern', something 'dangerous' that requires an external intervention, implies an act of detachment. It demarcates who brings the rescue (rational political order) and who needs it (zones of irrationality/political chaos). Indeed, societies in need of intervention or international rescue can be seen as irrational, assumed to be prone to chaos and barbaric violence. This results in, in turn, that these societies are passified and objectified.

We argue that the problem-solving research fails to provide a satisfactory understanding of intervention impact – especially as this might be interpreted at the local level. Having noted that contemporary intervention practices are not politically neutral, guided as they are by assumptions tied to 'the liberal peace', our research focus is to use a combination of problem-solving and critical theory to reflect upon the implications that these practices and the knowledge created about them have had at global, regional and local levels.

Defining Intervention

The rapidly changing global landscape in which 'outsiders' intervene in the affairs of 'insiders' challenges the ways in which we can frame and respond to questions of intervention impact and efficiency. While interventions have historically been performed by 'the state', contemporary international interventions are carried out by an increasingly wide variety of actors. This tends to blur distinctions between 'insiders' and 'outsiders' in the arena of global political action, which now includes many state and non-state actors who are not only beyond the control of any state but who may in fact exert control over the intervened-in state. Therefore, interventions of different kinds may deliberately or unintentionally have the effect of modifying or, conversely, reinforcing political authority in the target society. Transnational

---

[2] Though it is true that assessment of development cooperation has placed more serious weight on the relationship with national counterparts, and national/local 'ownership' and participation, than that of military, or emergency/relief action.

communities, such as diaspora, religious, economic and other networks may wield considerable power that transcends national boundaries and thereby furthers such transformation. Today's external interventions also have less clear distinctions between military, humanitarian and development objectives.

We find the concept of external intervention useful for understanding interference in most areas of politics, despite the multidimensional nature of such practices. We approach it as one single but multidimensional phenomenon. We define it thus: organised and systematic activities across recognized boundaries/borders, by one actor or a group of actors, with the purpose to affect the political authority structures or an identifiable 'problem' in a target society (e.g. conflict, reconstruction, reconciliation, state-building, political or economic crisis) (cf. Rosenau 1971: 292; Young 1968: 178). This definition enables investigation into the similarities, differences and links between different types of intervention. It avoids academic compartmentalization and allows various sub-fields within intervention literature to speak to one another. It is general and abstract, avoiding the specificities of particular definitions of intervention as well as the unhelpful tendency to focus on interventions as based on coercion or non-consent. We focus on external interventions as intrusive though not always coercive forms of interference, with necessarily varying degrees of consent/dissent/acquiescence by the target state or other domestic actors, into domains that were traditionally considered within the domestic jurisdiction of a sovereign state. This moves beyond conventional analyses of intervention that give the state analytical precedence (as the prime agent and object of intervention), that focus only upon formal interventions, and that unquestioningly compartmentalize military, humanitarian, development or state-building activities.

An intervention is necessarily linked to the notion of 'intention' since the shared perspective behind all types of intervention is a desire to bring about change. The notion of intention presupposes that social entities can be steered, guided, managed and corrected. According to this view of the social world, it is possible to manage/correct a local problem with an externally initiated solution. Such a world view tends to assume that power functions through intentional domination (A dominates B), or more insidiously through persuasion (A shapes B's preferences, to the point where B accepts the given order including a relation of domination). Few policy-makers or analysts would suggest that interventionary power actually functions in a top-down, zero-sum, and instrumental way. Post-Cold War interventions actively seek the cooperation and consent of host agents, especially, but not

exclusively, host governments. There are thus multiple accounts of how power works in the intervener-intervened relations.[3]

Lastly, we view external intervention as analytically distinct from other kinds of outsider-insider interfaces. An intervention is a special kind of response to the diagnosis of an 'extraordinary' and assumedly time-limited set of circumstances (conflict, underdevelopment, lack of governance and so on) in which action is considered necessary for a delimited period of time. The action is not intended to be permanent although there are cases where this is not straightforward. Intervention differs from governance, government, or policy, which constitute more 'normal', long-term actions. However, the dividing line is not crystal clear since interventions may not be short-term but instead protracted and enduring, as would appear to be happening with the current military intervention by the US into Iraq. This example also illustrates the way in which governance and interventionism may overlap; governance becomes interventionistic, or interventions become governance.

We now proceed to discuss the existing work on global-local intervention relations, and our approach to intervention impact. We challenge specifically the dominance of top-down analysis which has framed the question of impact too narrowly. For more valid accounts of intervention implementation, the analyst cannot only represent the intervener's side of the story but ought to also take on board the perspectives of those intervened upon. The determinations of success/failure would be based on a broader set of parameters, combining top-down and bottom-up analysis.

The missing link: interveners and intervened upon

There is a rapidly growing literature on how interventions have had unintended and adverse effects in local societies (Regan 1996, 2002; Diehl, Reifschneider and Hensel 1996). In widely different settings, such as Liberia, Sierra Leone, the former Yugoslavia, Cambodia, Sudan, the DRC, Haiti, El Salvador, and Afghanistan, empirical research has shown that intervention can exacerbate or accommodate the inequalities in the target society that give rise to conflict (e.g. Duffield 2001; Keen 2005; Kostic 2007; Sörensen 2009). Interveners sometimes leave behind a society afflicted by a culture of impunity (Ayub & Kouvo 2008),

---

[3] For example, neo-imperialist accounts are challenged by Gramscian, Foucaldian/Governmentality approaches, and vice versa, see Abrahamsen 2004.

and sometimes the situation is more prone to the 'chaos' and criminality that the intervention was ostensibly meant to rectify (Bellamy 2004; Pouligny 2006:257-258). In specific cases, 'good governance' and neo-liberal aid interventions in African domestic economies have primarily benefitted the local elites and the donors themselves (Abrahamsen 2000). Interventions have also weakened state's domestic moral legitimacy. For instance, if the government acts as middle-man between international aid donors and rural recipients locally, it may with time become perceived as transferring loyalty from the local to the international arena. Governments (or national elites) thus become interveners in relation to their own people. To the extent that interventions alter the political economy of a poor nation, the state may lose domestic legitimacy (Hughes 2003). These studies underline the significance of research on perspectives of those intervened upon and the national context.

Research from critical theory and poststructuralist perspectives has opened up for bottom-up approaches. They have made important calls for questioning the primacy of interveners' interests, and to identify the manifest political consequences of certain kinds of interventions. Additionally, to turn local populations into subjects, as opposed to objects (Bellamy and Williams 2004:7). The forte of critical analysis to date has been its explicit normative discussion of tensions in world politics; laying bare the political and normative assumptions behind interventions, and the dangers and tensions that may follow. Critical research recognizes that interveners and recipients are bound together by complex relationships that extend beyond the temporal limits of any particular intervention. Additionally, it has discussed how and through what means we might move beyond, emancipate ourselves from, the structural and systemic forces or mechanisms that give rise to certain logics of action that, in turn, perpetuate the order. The promise of social change and emancipation, through the use of political philosophy, is promising and facilitates the imagination of, and the discursive constitution of, alternative politics. Nonetheless, while critical intervention research has called for studies that listen to the recipients of external intervention, it less often pursues this task empirically.

This research has discussed, for example, that peace operations are not politically neutral but that they advance a particular/liberal type of international order (Richmond 2001; Paris 2002; Duffield 2001). Critical literature has demonstrated how the dominance of neo-liberal economic theories and the current regulation of the global economy has helped produce particular types of contexts deemed needy of interventions, and therefore highlighted relationships between 'insiders' and 'outsiders' ('outsiders' are already implicated in the

settings they decide to intervene in). In more practical terms, a few studies have advanced a bottom-up perspective which emphasizes the role of non-state actors, civil society, and outsider-insider relations for actually ongoing conflict transformation or emancipatory politics (Bleiker 2004; Stamnes 2004). Evidently, emancipation as understood from inside is a particularly loaded value. It has been notoriously hard to demonstrate empirically, or to grasp in the academic's writing given the poststructuralist posture that speaking for a group is to help shift a discourse which in itself is performing one's power.

A two-pronged approach: combining the top-down with the bottom-up

A core constructivist insight is that all social relationships lead to changes in identities. Applied to interveners-intervened relationships, this insight suggests that the *encounter* leads to identity changes. Such identity changes, and what they might mean for intervention impact, has not been sufficiently or systematically addressed.[4] However, some empirical research has shown that the bottom-up perspective view on impact differs from, and matters for, the 'overall' impact (Pouligny 2006; Mehler 2008). Identity change through the intervener-intervened encounter might have implications for the self-image of both parties, and for their respective notions of truth and right. Relating this to understandings of efficiency, the intervener or intervened may as a result of their encounter react to, adapt to, work with, sabotage, or acquiesce in this social relationship. Against this backdrop, the complexity of the notion of consent becomes evident. The act of consent-giving to intervention will vary over time. It is not an absolute value; there will always be a spectrum of consenting, dissenting, and opposing actors.[5] The encounter enables new political possibilities that could not have been anticipated by either of the two. This renders the notion of intention, discussed above, an impossibility. Global-local relations infused by the value of imposing or cooperating for the liberal good, risks undermining already existing strategies for accommodation, resistance, co-existence, survival. Hence, critical or constructivist understandings of power are more useful for our proposed research agenda.

---

[4] Though a few analyses focus precisely on the reciprocal logics or the interaction between North-South; global and regional orders or trade regimes; partnerships; interventions, Acharya 2004; Tussie 2003; Hettne & Söderbaum; Abrahamsen 2004.

[5] We thank Jens Stilhoff Sörensen for the suggestion to clarify this point.

Intervention cannot be a neutral or impartial act because they bring new political opportunities and rewards to both intervener and intervened at various points in time. Outsiders and target populations become linked through new forms of interaction and political processes. Indeed, interventions become enfolded in local power struggles. Plural and contradictory meanings are given to the global-local encounter, and these to some degree affect impact. Further research is needed to show how this occurs. One example is Mannergren-Selimovic's study on how groups in Foca, Bosnia-Herzegovina, used local narratives of truth, justice and reconciliation, through their encounter with the International Criminal Tribunal for Former Yugoslavia (ICTY), producing processes that often differed from the outcomes intended by the outsiders (2010). Interveners take part in the construction of a social arena; the ensuing contentious exchange of plural meanings is not completely steered by one side, or one single actor. The intervened upon never simply respond (to an intervention that either succeeds or fails), without the intervener also becoming enfolded in local actions and constraints on actions (Mannergren-Selimovic 2010:219, see also Sörensen 2009). Therefore, interventionary power cannot be understood as top-down domination even in encounters characterized by power inequalities.

The role of culture in intervention literature importantly stresses local power struggles, plural meanings, political incentives and identity formation. Rubinstein observes that notions of peace, security, policy success are deeply embedded in cultural values and politico-economic interests. They are always ambiguous, meaning one thing for those loyal to the values of a global 'outsider' community, and another for those who identify themselves as 'insiders' (2005). "The intervener maintains a perspective on the issues at hand and, by taking action to try to change that situation, takes a position on the situation [..] At the same time, those who receive the intervention make it meaningful from within their own experience and cultural framework. Sometimes, this can lead to interveners having understandings of what they are doing that are very different from those of the people who are subject to the intervention" (Rubinstein 2005:529; Betts 1994). Again, power relations and power asymmetries are a crucial factor in shaping notions of right and truth: 'Whether or not the intervention is invited, there is always a delicate hierarchical relation between the intervener and the intervened.' (Ottoway 2003, Rubinstein 2005:529). Power relations between intervener and intervened affect the way interventions are constructed by different actors, even if they do not make up the full story of impacts.

Intervening in the domestic jurisdiction of a state would require proximity to local communities improve on their impact, because of the far-reaching and value-laden political projects and changes that this entails. Outsiders, there during a time-limited phase, nonetheless struggle to maintain proximity which impedes trust-building (Pouligny, 2006:251). Since outsiders connect themselves to 'universal' moral values, such as upholding the right to life through protection of civilians measures, or promoting the liberal peace, there will inevitably be tensions with insiders especially if these have not been consulted on what their needs might be (Pouligny 2006:181). Hence, an interventions' local legitimacy is best understood as a process-based value, dependent on local perceptions of impacts during the mission.

When interventions are strongly regime-biased, local legitimacy is quickly lost. The two peace operations deployed to Darfur to bring security and protection: the AU-led AMIS 2004-2007 and the AU-UN hybrid mission UNAMID 2007-onwards, have had a tremendously disappointing protection impact. Insufficient conflict analysis and consultations were carried out by the AU and the UN, setting the scene for quite poor intervener-intervened relations. In their considerations on when and how to implement the mission task to protect civilians, the AU and the UN prioritized the wishes of the host state – even though the host state's counter-insurgency strategy had caused most of the atrocities. Civilians and representatives of non-state armed groups were, in their encounters with interveners, observing how well the implementation matched the mandate formulations and public statements by AMIS/UNAMID mission leadership. In response they adopted pro- and anti-intervener strategies.[6] AMIS/UNAMID have had their freedom of movement and access to those most insecure in Darfur (anti-government civilians in rural areas) blocked by the government of Sudan (GoS). Observing these developments, local authority leaders, traditional leaders, rebels, and internally displaced people (IDPs), etc., especially those living in areas held by the most powerful rebel groups held that the AU and the UN were biased with the GoS. A common impression was that the peacekeepers they hoped had come to protect their lives could not even protect themselves. Many civilians had seen peacekeepers witness but not stop attacks, killings, and looting. Peacekeepers came after the attacks to write reports, with the permission of the military party controlling the area.

---

[6] The section draws on Bergholm's field research in the Darfur region in November-December 2006. Pro-intervener strategies include cooperation, negotiation. Anti-intervener strategies include demonstrations; rebels or traditional leaders refusal of patrols; attacks, kidnappings, and killings of international staff.

Pouligny's 'micro-sociology' of UN-led peace operations is a valuable example of how interventions can be studied from the bottom up. She highlights the importance of local agency, power relations, and perceptions regarding what interveners say and do. She demotes clinical and technical efficiency as valid parameters of intervention performance. The study carefully avoids homogenizing the local society into a monolithic constituency and demonstrates that agency and political preferences are dynamic and plural. However, the study is not theoretically informed. It is hard to discern what overall argument is advanced by the rich empirical material, and to whom it is addressed. Pouligny's argument is quite pragmatic, if interveners took the time to understand better the context into which they were entering, if they were prepared to negotiate interaction more frankly, and with more respect, interventions would have better impacts overall (2006:34-35).

We have identified what strand of intervention research that we engage with, and why. We make the case for moving from efficiency to impact, and this case has been supported with reference to empirical illustrations of unintended, disappointing outcomes. Nonetheless, we take Pouligny's point that once interventions begin, intervening capacity for action becomes both enabled and constrained by local social and political realities. The inclination of the overall corps of outsiders (mission heads as well as other levels of intervening staff) towards understanding these realities and towards interaction will influence their own capacity for action (Pouligny 2006:141).

Given the emphasis on local power struggles, future research focusing on the intervener-intervened relations will need to pay close attention to how to unpack terms such as host state, national elite, society, civilians, as well as consent, and other contested issues relating to who implements and for what/whom. The 'targets' of intervention are neither a homogenous group, nor objects deprived of agency. They do not speak for all of society, nor do they represent moral rightfulness any more than the interveners. Having argued that the exclusion of the targets of intervention has led to poor peace and security governance, we cannot simplistically assume that their inclusion will ensure the best outcome in all cases. There is a considerable lack of research on this aspect, and further theoretical development depends on more empirical research on the patterns and degree of inclusion/exclusion (Schultz & Söderbaum 2010).[7]

---

[7] Though recent developments are promising e.g. Blieseman 2011 (focus state formation processes); Mac Ginty 2010; Richmond 2011 (focus post-liberalism, or 'hybridity').

Our working hypothesis is that the relationship between intervener-intervened needs to be considered for a better explanation of impact in intervention research. Critical and problem-solving modes of analyses can be combined to broaden conventional accounts that favor *either* top-down understandings of interventions *or* challenges to the existing order. Our project shifts the right to define intervention success also downwards. This entails a broadening of the conventional parameters of intervention impact where we combine the top-down approach with a bottom-up perspective. It implies a call for more empirically grounded research to show how perceptions of impacts of intervention differ dramatically when you ask people on the ground. At the same time, we evaluate interventions that are part of the current world order with a view to consider impacts of these. This implies a 'pragmatist' choice; one that remains wedded to the idea that interventions can be made better.

Conclusion

Given the many millions that die in the large-scale emergencies that interventions are trying to manage or solve, and the enormous amount of resources invested in various types of interventions every year, it is difficult to imagine any research area within the social sciences that has higher policy relevance, or one which is more controversial. The academic significance of the problem is further enhanced by the difficulty to find solid arguments for how complex social problems can be solved from the 'outside', by external 'interveners'.

This article departs from the realization that in spite of a massive amount of literature in the field, there is no consensus regarding when and why interventions 'fail' or 'succeed'. Even if certain interventions are widely considered 'successful', the majority of interventions are controversial. Empirical evidence shows that many interventions—regardless of whether these are humanitarian interventions, peacekeeping operations, governance interventions or development interventions—tend to be poorly planned, guided by narrow ideological or strategic goals, and yield less than satisfactory results as well as unintended consequences. Our study emphasises the fact that the relationship between the intervener and those intervened upon is often neglected and above all poorly conceptualised and understood, with detrimental effects for both research and policy making.

The core of the problem is that most interventions are usually analysed or assessed from the standpoint of the 'intervener', with less attention given to national context and those being

intervened upon. Our article draws attention to the fact that the intervener needs to be problematised (and the underlying motives and goals of external interveners). Likewise, the so-called 'intervened' is not a homogenous group or objects deprived of agency. We suggest a focus on the link between intervener and intervened; both a top-down and a bottom-up approach.

There is thus a need for a two-pronged approach, combining critical and problem-solving modes of analyses. Through the top-down perspective one can analyse how intervention is implemented and legitimized by the interveners whereas the bottom-up perspective can provide evidence regarding how the intervention is perceived and reacted upon by those being the object or recipient of intervention, both on the national and the local level. In other words, in sharp contrast to the current tendency in the field to concentrate on interventions from the top-down, we draw attention to local dynamics and cultural meaning systems that inform social action as well as the power relations between intervener and intervened. Yet, in contrast to much explicitly critical research, we profess an 'empiricist', or pragmatic, driving motivation.

References

Abrahamsen, Rita (2004), 'The Power of Partnerships in Global Governance', *Third World Quarterly* 25(8) pp. 1453-1467.

Abrahamsen, Rita (2000), *Disciplining Democracy: Development Discourse and Good Governance in Africa*, London: Zed Books.

Acharya, Amitav (2004), 'How ideas spread: whose norms matter? Norms localization and institutional change in Asian regionalism.' *International Organization* 58(2) pp. 239-275.

Ayub, Fatima and Kouvo, Sari (2008), "Righting the Course? Humanitarian Intervention, the War on Terror and the Future of Afghanistan", *International Affairs*

Bellamy, Alex J. (2004), 'The 'Next Stage' in Peace Operations Theory?', *Journal of International Peacekeeping* 11(1).

Bellamy, Alex J. & Williams, Paul, (2004) 'Introduction: Thinking Anew about Peace Operations', *Journal of International Peacekeeping* 11(1) pp. 1-15.

Bellamy, Alex J. & Williams, Paul D., (2005) Who's Keeping the Peace? Regionalization and Contemporary Peace Operations, *International Security* Vol. 29 (4) pp. 157-195.

Betts, Richard (1994) 'The Delusion of Impartial Intervention' in *Foreign Affairs* 73(6) pp. 20-33.

Bleiker, Roland (2004), Alternatives to Peacekeeping in Korea: The Role of Non-State Actors and Face-to-Face Encounters, *Journal of International Peacekeeping* 11(1).

Bliesemann, Berit de Guevara (ed.) (2011), *State-Building and State-Formation: A new framework of analysis*. London/New York: Routledge.

Cox, Robert W., (1981), 'Social Forces, States and World Orders: Beyond International Relations Theory', *Millennium* 10, no.2

Diehl, Paul F., (1994) *International Peacekeeping*, Baltimore and London: Johns Hopkins University Press.

Diehl, Paul., Jennifer Reifschneider and Paul Hensel (1996). 'United Nations Interventions and Recurring Conflicts' in *International Organization* 50(4) pp.683-700.

Doyle, Michael and Sambanis, Nicholas (2006), *Making war and building peace: United Nations peace operations*, Princeton University Press.

Duffield, Mark (2001) *Global Governance and the New Wars: The Merging of Security and Development* London: Zed.

Duffield, M. 2007. Development, Security and Unending War: Governing the World of Peoples. Polity Press. Cambridge, UK.

Durch, William J. (1993) *The Evolution of UN Peacekeeping* Henry L. Stimson Center: St Martins Press.

Hettne, Björn & Söderbaum, Fredrik, (2006) 'The UN and Regional Organisations in Global Security: Competing or Complementary Logics?', *Global Governance* 12, 228-229.

Hughes, Caroline (2003) *The Political Economy of Cambodia's Transition*, 1991-2001, London: RoutledgeCurzon.

Keen, David (2005), *Conflict and collusion in Sierra Leone*, James Currey/Palgrave Macmillan, Oxford, UK.

Kostic, Roland (2007), *Ambivalent Peace: External Nation-building, Threatened Identity and Reconciliation in Bosnia-Herzegovina*, PhD dissertation, Department of Peace and Conflict Research, Uppsala University.

Leurdijk, D A. (1996), *The United Nations and NATO in former Yugoslavia, 1991-1996 : limits to diplomacy and force,* The Hague : Netherlands Atlantic Commission.

Mac Ginty, Roger, (2010), Hybrid Peace: The Interaction Between Top-Down and Bottom-Up Peace, *Security Dialogue* 41(4) pp. 391-412.

MacMillan, John (1998), *On Liberal Peace: Democracy, War and the International Order*, IB Taurus.

Mannergren-Selimovic, Johanna (2010), *Remembering and Forgetting after War. Narratives of truth, justice and reconciliation in a Bosnian town*, PhD Dissertation, School of Global Studies, Gothenburg University.

Mehler, Andreas (2008), 'Positive, ambiguous or negative? UN peacekeeping in the local security fabric', *Critical Currents* No 5 October, pp. 41-64.

Ottaway, Marina, 2003, 'Promoting Democracy After Conflict: The Difficult Choices', in *International Studies Perspectives*, Vol 4, No 3, 2003.

Paris, Roland (2002) 'International Peacebuilding and the 'Mission Civilisatrice'', *Review of International Studies*, Vol.28, No.4, pp.637–56.

Paris, Roland, 2004, *At war's end: Building Peace after civil conflict*, New York: Cambridge University Press.

Pouligny, Beatrice, (2006), *Peace Operations Seen from Below: UN Missions and Local People*, London: Hurst.

Regan, Patrick (1996). 'Conditions for Successful Third-party Interventions in Intrastate Conflicts' in *Journal of Conflict Resolution* 40 (2) p.336-359.

Richmond, Oliver (2001) 'A Genealogy of Peacemaking: The Creation and Re-Creation of Order', Alternatives, Vol.26, No.2.

Richmond, Oliver P. (2005), *The transformation of peace*, New York: Palgrave/Macmillan.

Richmond, Oliver P. (2011), De-romaniticising the local, de-mystifying the international: hybridity in Timor Leste and the Solomon Islands, *The Pacific Review*, 24(1) pp. 115-136.

Rosenau, James (1969). 'Intervention as a Scientific Concept' in James Rosenau, ed. *The Scientific Study of Foreign Policy*. NY: Nichols Publishing Company.

Rubinstein R A (2005), Intervention and Culture: an anthropological approach to peace operations. *Security Dialogue* 36:527-44.

Schultz, Michael & Söderbaum, Fredrik, (2010) 'Theorising the EU's role in regional conflict management, *European Security* Vol. 19, No. 3, 361-376.

Stamnes, Eli (2004), Critical Security Studies and the United Nations Preventive Deployment in Macedonia, *Journal of International Peacekeeping* 11, no. 1.

Sørensen, Georg (2006), Liberalism of Restraint and Liberalism of Imposition: Liberal Values and World Order in the New Millennium, *International Relations* 2006 20: 251-272.

Sörensen, J. S (2009), *State Collapse and Reconstruction in the Periphery: Political Economy, Ethnicity and Development in Yugoslavia, Serbia and Kosovo.* Oxford & New York: Berghahn Books.

Thakur, Ramesh, 2005, *The United Nations, Peace and Security,* Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.