



DisTerrMem
Disputed territories & memory

Literature Review

The role of regional organisations in managing memories of disputed territories

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Abstract

In the paper the activities of three international organizations concerning inter-state conflicts are analyzed. Taking into consideration countries included in the framework of DisTerrMem project (Great Britain, Poland, Armenia and Pakistan), the authors focused on the South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation (SAARC), the Council of Europe (CoE) and the European Union (EU). These organizations differ in the extent of their activities and in the intensity of these activities in resolving territorial conflicts. They also use different methods based on the values shared by member states. However, these methods have a common feature - they are based primarily on diplomatic, social and cultural activities that make these organisations primarily 'soft power', which is particularly evident in the case of organizations based in Europe. The authors of books and articles discussed in this literature review focus primarily on the analysis of the moral, social and political background of the activities undertaken by these organizations, on assessing their effectiveness and on the possible ways of resolving conflicts between states.

The South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation (SAARC), Memory and Mechanisms of Dispute Resolution

Through the case of Kashmir, this section explores the tensions surrounding the Indian/Pakistani border and the limited success of SAARC as a regional actor in attempting to resolve this dispute. The legacy of partition in 1947 and the memory of this in state-building narratives brings the border to the centre of politics, not only in India and Pakistan, but for the region.

The South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation (SAARC) came into being on 8 December 1985 in Dhaka, Bangladesh. Its current members include India, Pakistan, Sri Lanka, the Maldives, Nepal, Bhutan, Afghanistan and Bangladesh. It was founded for the following reasons (Dash 2012: 89):

- to promote the welfare of the peoples of South Asia and to improve their quality of life;
- to accelerate economic growth, social progress and cultural development in the region and to provide all individuals with the opportunity to live in dignity and realize their full potential;
- to promote and strengthen collective self-reliance among the countries of South Asia;
- to contribute to mutual trust, understanding and appreciation of one another's problems;
- to promote active collaboration and mutual assistance in the economic, social, cultural, technical and scientific fields;
- to strengthen cooperation with other developing countries;
- to strengthen cooperation among themselves in international forums on matters of common interest;
- to cooperate with international and regional organizations with similar aims and purposes.

SAARC's two strongest military powers are India and Pakistan, which are also nuclear capable states. They have been at daggers drawn over the Kashmir dispute since the time of

their creation in 1947. Apart from these countries fighting three wars over Kashmir, in 1948, 1965 and 1999, respectively, there have been innumerable border clashes over the issue. The territory of Kashmir is currently controlled by three parties: India, Pakistan and China. The last three decades have witnessed an ongoing indigenous freedom struggle in which Kashmiris have insisted on being granted the right to self-determination. However, they have not been able to achieve much through this struggle. Kashmir has traditionally held a special status within the Indian Union granting it autonomy over its domestic affairs under Article 370 of the Indian Constitution. However, India revoked that article in August 2019, which led to widespread suppression in Kashmir in response to the indigenous population's anger at their freedom struggle having ultimately led to the loss of their special status instead of the achievement of the right to self-determination (Gettleman 2019).

Indian-occupied Kashmir is the only Muslim-majority part of India. Since Pakistan was specifically created for the region's Muslims, it believes that Kashmir should have joined it at the time of partition. Pakistan is unwilling to compromise over Kashmir because that would mean compromising over the reasons for its own creation (Cohen 2003). On the other hand, Kashmir is also a living symbol for the validity of India's own motto: 'unity in diversity' (Kaul 2010). India is composed of a diverse set of people who speak a variety of languages. Some of these people have very little in common with other Indians. This means that India would never be willing to compromise over Kashmir because doing so would mean compromising over the rationale for its existence. If India were to acknowledge that people from a religion different to Hinduism cannot be part of the Indian union, that would mean that India would be in danger of becoming a state like Pakistan, which has a majority of people from one religion: Islam. That background makes it very hard for India to compromise over Kashmir as well.

As far as the resolution of this dispute is concerned, Pakistan has often insisted on the idea that the great powers should help mediate between itself and India (St. John 1997: 6). On the other hand, India is not willing to consider that option. It considers the unrest within Kashmir

as an internal matter and, at best, it is willing to discuss Kashmir with Pakistan as a purely bilateral issue (Vaish 2011).

Both sides have negotiated over Kashmir at different times. The former President of Pakistan, Pervez Musharraf, came relatively close to reaching some kind of compromise with India regarding Kashmir in 2001. The compromise entailed demilitarization on both sides of the border; agreeing to the status quo regarding the border between the two Kashmirs; self-governance on both sides without independence and a joint supervision mechanism in Kashmir involving India, Pakistan and the leaders of Kashmir (Singh Rana 2018). However, that compromise stalled at the last-minute and no successive government has picked it up since.

SAARC has been able to do very little when it comes to the resolution of the Kashmir dispute. As discussed, India is unwilling to let an international organization mediate over matters concerning Kashmir. If SAARC is allowed a role over Kashmir, then other multilateral bodies, such as the UN, would also have room for playing a role concerning Kashmir. Keeping that in mind, the Charter of SAARC was framed with a clear warning that ‘contentious issues are excluded from the deliberation of the Association.’¹

Regional cooperation in South Asia remains a distant dream for a number of reasons. The region is home to relatively new states that have been created without regard for national identities and ethnic solidarities (Sharma, Oommen 2001). For example, the border between the Indian and Pakistani sides of the Punjab has divided two people from the same ethnic group into two. The states on both sides of the border know that cooperating to limit the border checks would mean greater linkages between the people, calling into question the *raison d’etre* of both states.

Whereas tensions between India and Pakistan have frozen SAARC’s ability to do much to resolve the Kashmir dispute, other nations in South Asia are also suspicious of India’s motives and designs. Kishore Dash argues that one would think that given India’s hegemonic presence, smaller states in the region would prefer a bandwagoning approach when it comes to dealing

¹ See South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation website: <http://saarc-sec.org/about-saarc>

with India. In practice, that would mean 'seeking accommodation with the local hegemon in order to receive economic and military benefits' (Dash 2012: 117). Doing so would make SAARC a relatively effective organization for the other states, not including Pakistan. However, that has not happened either and only Bhutan and the Maldives have taken that route (Dash 2012: 117). Nepal, Sri Lanka and Bangladesh have refrained from adopting that course of action for fear of provoking domestic opposition and ethnic tensions. Domestically, elements from the military, bureaucracy, businesses and religious leaders fear India's dominance and the fact that India is capable of creating domestic turmoil in these countries without much effort.

China's rise is another factor forcing the region's states to reconsider their desire to reach too close an accommodation with India (Pant, Passi 2017). China is eyeing South Asia for its Belt and Road Initiative (BRI) and countries like Sri Lanka do not want to lose out on that front by appearing too close to India. As far as the future of geopolitical alliances are concerned, China would not like South Asia to be dominated by an Indian-led group of states. It is also a fact that the relatively poor living standards prevailing in South Asia mean that China making inroads into the Indian subcontinent seems inevitable.

South Asian states are also very fearful of ethnic unrest within their borders receiving support and sustenance from across these borders (Dash 2012: 121). If SAARC was more successful at encouraging further cross-border trade and population movement, this would also encourage different ethnic groups to seek support from their brethren in the neighbouring states. South Asian states typify Cooper's idea of 'modern states' that are unwilling to compromise on their sovereignty (Cooper 2002). Whereas some postmodern states might be looking to transcend borders and pool sovereignties, SAARC member states are moving in the opposite direction and want to consolidate their borders further in order to be fully autonomous in their affairs (Ganguly 2013).

Kalegama argue that SAARC has achieved very little due to disagreements between its nations over political and security matters (Kelegama 2002). These disagreements have proven to be intractable and have even led to the postponement of a number of SAARC meetings (such

as the SAARC summit planned for 2016, which was boycotted by India, Bangladesh, Afghanistan, Bhutan, Sri Lanka and the Maldives over Pakistan's sponsorship of terrorism in Kashmir).² Kalegama continues to argue that when the member states are faced with such a scenario, it is an economic route that perhaps has the greatest chance of fostering greater cooperation among them. The member states are discussing the possibility of 'bilateral free trade agreements and growth triangles' as a way forward to enable the countries of the region to benefit from economies of scale and lift the living standards of their people (Kelegama 2002).

Rao believes that when central governments prove to be uncooperative, civil society groups can play a role in opening dialogues among the SAARC nations. Such dialogues would involve people exchanging their views via social media and informal gatherings in order to send messages to their governments that they need to do more to keep pace with the demands of the day. It is not possible to keep people blocked off from one another in an age of modern technology designed to work without concern for borders and boundaries (Rao 2012). Bhalla believes that the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) could help SAARC learn more about cooperation (Bhalla 1999). According to this view, following the model of the European Union would be too far-fetched, if not impossible, for South Asian states. The best they could do would be to follow the example of ASEAN. ASEAN is over two decades older than SAARC and has been more successful than the latter on almost every front. However, the Southeast Asian nations decided after the Vietnam War not to allow their territories to be used for creating problems within their neighbours' borders. The SAARC states also need to reach such an understanding, but that seems unlikely given the states' mutual suspicion of one another. In such an environment of mutual distrust, any state unwilling to follow a policy of non-interference stands to lose out to any other state that is not willing to follow that route.

Jetly also looks to ASEAN for inspiration when suggesting how the conflict-resolution mechanisms within SAARC could be made more effective (Jetly 2003). He argues that any such attempt should first seek to understand the unique features of both regions and the unique

² 'SAARC: Maldives joins India, 4 others in boycott; Pak's isolation complete,' *India Today*, 13 October 2016.

challenges each of these regions faces. SAARC has an interesting problem in that its foremost military power (India) is also seen by its neighbours as the biggest threat facing them. That is not the case with Indonesia (which is the foremost military power in Southeast Asia) (Jetly 2003: 72). The dispute between India and Pakistan is a festering sore between the two countries whereas no such problem exists between any two states in Southeast Asia. Finally, Southeast Asian residents have developed a distinct regional identity that helps ASEAN to function effectively. However, there is no equivalent South Asian identity in South Asia, which precludes potential cooperation between the states in the region.

To conclude, SAARC has not been very successful so far in building mechanisms for conflict resolution among its members. DisTerrMem provides an opportunity to research what SAARC and its members states could learn from other organizations in how to transcend power politics that dominate the region. Only then will it be able to assist its members, NGOs and civil societies to assist with the management of competing memories of disputed territories.

The Council of Europe and the Remembrance of Genocides

The discussion concerning regional organisations now turns to the Council of Europe and its foundation on the principles of human rights and ‘European values’. This section moves on to explore the role of World War II and the Holocaust in shaping, and promoting, European culture and heritage, and how the CoE attempts to connect remembrance of the past with a future based on common human rights through non-formal educational programmes.

The Council of Europe (CoE) is an association of European countries founded in London on 5 May 1949 that currently has 47 member states. Since its inauguration, the CoE has committed itself to defending human rights, individual freedom and the rule of law, as well as protecting Europe’s cultural heritage. The CoE primarily defines itself as an organization based on ‘European values’, which implies a need to protect human rights (Babes 2018, Schwimmer 2014). The issue of European values arose with particular intensity when new members from Eastern Europe were admitted. As Anders Nordström noted, ‘The eastward expansion also meant a redefinition of Europe such that it was first and foremost a community of values. The invitation and acceptance of the three South Caucasus states of Armenia, Georgia, and Azerbaijan as members meant that the border of the pan-European legal sphere was extended to cover these three newly independent states with poor records of democracy, human rights, and the rule of law’ (2014: 60).

The CoE fulfils its tasks through such organs as the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe in Strasbourg, the European Court of Human Rights and the European Commission on Human Rights. The judgments of the European Court in Strasbourg are not binding for CoE member states but in practice, many of these states choose to incorporate them into their national legislation. Due to the European Court, the CoE’s work to promote respect for human rights has been quite effective over most of the European continent (Schwimmer 2014). Although the CoE does not have legislative powers, agreements between its member states are usually accepted by most of them and introduced into their national legislation. This applies,

inter alia, to the European Charter for Regional or Minority Languages and the Framework Convention for the Protection of National Minorities (adopted in 1992, entered into force in 1998). The instrumentalization of the protection system for national minorities both before and during the Second World War, when it was used to violate certain states' territorial integrity, contributed to the post-1945 re-evaluation of the principles of protection of national minorities. Minority rights began to be regarded as a component of fundamental human rights. At the same time, there was a departure from the collective recognition of such rights towards the guaranteeing of the rights of individual members of a given minority. However, to date it has not been possible within the CoE to establish one general definition for national minorities. Although the Framework Convention for the Protection of National Minorities is often criticized, its potential for protecting the heritage of minority groups is also appreciated (Kalnina 2014).

One component of the policy for cultivating common European values are activities promoting 'European culture and heritage'. Such activities are served, inter alia, by the European Cultural Convention, whose purpose is to appreciate cultural diversity and promote national contributions to Europe's common cultural heritage³. The common, though diverse, European cultural heritage is also presented in the framework of the CoE project known as European Cultural Routes, which was introduced in 1987. This aims to increase knowledge of European heritage by promoting European historical and cultural relics. As of 2019, there were 38 European Cultural Routes⁴. Actions for the protection of heritage are intended to make a contribution to increasing the scope of cooperation between individual European countries and regions, while also highlighting the possibility of reconciliation based on common values. However, the project has encountered problems when it has attempted to define what 'European heritage' actually entails while taking full account of the continent's cultural diversity and complex history. As Claske Vos noted on the basis of her research in Serbia:

³ <https://www.coe.int/en/web/culture-and-heritage/european-cultural-convention>

⁴ <https://www.coe.int/en/web/cultural-routes>

The resulting pragmatic stance can be seen as related to the problems faced by the European institutions in their attempt to relate heritage to reconciliation and regional cooperation. Even though the CoE and the European Commission hoped to craft a particular kind of political entity through heritage, and while doing so emphasize reconciliation and regional cooperation, they did this by approaching heritage in a non-ideological way. (...) 'European heritage' was not defined on the basis of cultural historical characteristics in order to hold on to the values underlying the programme: to build bridges between people and make heritage into something that was shared within Europe. Form was chosen over content in that the cultural historical specificities that marked a certain heritage site were not decisive for the programme. It mattered how these sites were presented and whether these sites were suitable to motivate regional development and cooperation. (Vos 2011: 236-237).

Cooperation and development issues have indeed dominated the previously mentioned attempts to define a 'European heritage' that often exhibits signs of a difficult past and continues to present problems today arising from Europe's ethnic and cultural diversity. This problem is yet to be resolved. The values that the Council of Europe stands for – democracy, human rights and the rule of law – form part of a preventive post-war initiative guaranteeing the construction of a European society that is striving to learn to respect the equal dignity of all through the promotion of such practices as intercultural dialogue. Since 1954, the European Cultural Convention has highlighted the importance of teaching the European dimension of the history of all the member states, in order to foster mutual understanding and to prevent crimes against humanity happening again (Barthélémy 1999, Vos 2011).

The Council of Europe acknowledges the great role played by remembrance practices. There is a sphere of the past that, although difficult and dramatic, is closely related to the 'European values' that CoE wants to promote, including, above all, human rights. This sphere is devoted to the commemoration and condemnation of genocides. Gross human rights violations and atrocities such as the Holocaust, the slave trade, genocide, wars and ethnic cleansing are not easily forgotten or forgiven by those who were affected. One common European experience that constantly stirs emotions and evokes discussions about the European heritage (as well as the responsibility for the past events) and European identity is the Holocaust. Its commemoration has become an important political, cultural and educational issue in both the CoE and the EU.

Tony Judt (2010) even stated that the commemoration of the Holocaust was one of the most important process in the post-war period in Europe, but this was not the only genocide that CoE condemned in its declarations or which formed the basis for this organization's educational activities.

However, remembrance is more than merely just remembering: remembrance is about ensuring that we keep memories alive, or at least not allowing ourselves to overlook horrors that have occurred in the past. Official recognition of such events can also be important for society as a whole. Societies need to 'remember' their own history – not excluding those events which have disrupted the lives of many – in order to learn from the past and not repeat the mistakes for which they may have been responsible. Remembrance, when carried out properly, can serve as a warning signal to society: it can show us how human action or inaction, bigotry, racism, intolerance and other relatively common attitudes can lead, under certain circumstances, to events that are truly terrible⁵.

The year 2000, in which the Stockholm Declaration⁶ establishing the Holocaust Remembrance Day was signed by many European countries, is particularly important in commemorating genocides. From now on, each country had to adopt a clear position on the commemoration of the Holocaust to join the EU (see Olick 2007, Pakier, Stråth 2010), which was particularly important for the process of the organization's expansion to the east (in 2004, 8 countries of Central Europe joined the EU). A year after the Stockholm Declaration, in 2001, the Council of Europe introduced a Day of Remembrance of the Holocaust and for the Prevention of Crimes against Humanity, with the aim of developing and firmly establishing the teaching of this subject throughout Europe. There is not one specific date for the European Day of Remembrance. Each member state is encouraged to choose a date that corresponds with its national history, thus ensuring that pupils are aware that it is their own cultural heritage which is being referred to.

⁵ For the CoE definition of 'remembrance' and more detail on Convention on the Prevention and Punishment of the Crime of Genocide, see; <https://www.coe.int/en/web/compass/remembrance>

⁶ <https://www.holocaustremembrance.com/stockholm-declaration>

The memory of the Holocaust also became a starting point for commemorating other genocides that took place in Europe. The CoE became the platform on which one could speak of commemorating genocides in European countries where the Holocaust did not occur and which are still struggling to recognize the suffering of their nations on the international stage. An example of such a country is Armenia, because the Armenian genocide - the largest European genocide of the twentieth century before the Holocaust - still had not been commemorated in the international sphere. Armenia became a full member of the Council of Europe on 25 January 2001, though its accession process had already started by 1995. The National Assembly of Armenia was granted special guest status on 26 January 1996. On 9 November 2000, according to the Committee of Ministers Resolution 2000/13, Armenia was invited to join the Council of Europe.

The Armenian Genocide committed by the Ottoman government has been documented, recognized and affirmed by the media, eyewitness reports, laws, resolutions, and statements by many states and international organizations⁷. The complete catalogue of all documents categorizing the 1915 massacre of the Armenian population in Ottoman Empire as a premeditated and thoroughly executed act of genocide is extensive⁸. The Council of Europe recognized the Armenian Genocide on 14th May 2001 (Doc. 9056 2nd edition, written declaration No. 320)⁹:

Commemorating today the anniversary of the first genocide of the 20th century – the Armenian genocide – and paying tribute to the memory of its victims;

Condemning all manifestations of the crime of genocide as crimes perpetrated against humanity;

⁷ For the list of International organizations that recognised the Armenian Genocide visit http://www.genocide-museum.am/eng/international_organisations.php

⁸ http://www.genocide-museum.am/eng/international_organisations.php

⁹ This declaration commits only the members who have signed it. It was totally signed by 85 different groups and parties. For the details of 85 groups and parties <http://assembly.coe.int/nw/xml/XRef/X2H-Xref-ViewHTML.asp?FileID=9280&lang=en>

Considering that the unequivocal repudiation of the acts of genocide is a necessary means to help prevent its recurrence;

Taking note of the fact that various European institutions, parliaments of a number of member countries of the Council of Europe have adopted resolutions and statements recognising the Armenian genocide, in the case of the National Assembly of France a law;

Considering that the recognition by the international community of the Armenian genocide will eventually allow the Turkish authorities a similar admission, and as a result will lead to improved relations between Armenia-Turkey, and thus, contribute to regional peace, security and stability,

The undersigned, members of the Assembly, appeal to all the members of the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe to take the necessary steps for the recognition of the genocide perpetrated by the Ottoman Empire against the Armenians at the beginning of the 20th century.¹⁰

The Council of Europe sees the passing on of remembrance of the Holocaust and the prevention of crimes against humanity as going hand in hand with promoting its fundamental values and intercultural dialogue. Proposals for actions include the organization of special events, the training of executives of youth movements, youth associations and specialized NGOs and the granting of particular attention to combating Holocaust denial and revisionism. This takes place through ad hoc training for educators working with young people and teaching the history of the Holocaust.

The Parliamentary Assembly has regularly called for multi-perceptivity in history teaching. In its recommendation no. 1880 (2009), the assembly reaffirmed that ‘history also has a key political role to play in today’s Europe. It can contribute to greater understanding, tolerance and confidence between individuals and between the peoples of Europe or it can become a force for division, violence and intolerance’. History teaching can serve as a tool for supporting peace and reconciliation in conflict and post-conflict areas.

While working with young people and educating them using non-formal education methods, the Council of Europe has created several tools and manuals, one of them being *Compass: Manual*

¹⁰ <http://assembly.coe.int/nw/xml/XRef/X2H-Xref-ViewHTML.asp?FileID=9280&lang=en>

*for Human Rights Education with Young People.*¹¹ This was first published in 2002 within the framework of the Human Rights Education Youth Programme of the Directorate of Youth and Sport of the Council of Europe. The programme was created because human rights education – i.e. educational programmes and activities that focus on promoting equality in human dignity – was seen by the CoE to have incalculable value when shaping all young people’s awareness of the benefits of democratic citizenship while promoting a common culture of universal human rights.¹² As historian Howard Zinn (1999) stated, ‘All who have taken seriously the admonition ‘Never Again’ must ask ourselves – as we observe the horrors around us in the world – if we have used that phrase as a beginning or as an end to our moral concern’. The connection between remembrance and human rights ought to extend both backwards and forwards in time. Terrible events that have been brought about through human action or inaction deserve to be partly remembered as a sign of respect for the victims who perished or otherwise suffered in the past. Yet the forward-looking aspect of remembrance is equally important, and much more often neglected, particularly when it involves the need to recognize the role we played ourselves in causing terrible events. In the DisTerrMem project we are going to develop the issue of how culturally diverse ideas about what ‘human rights’ mean are related to conflict resolution activities and looking for reconciliation in the post-conflict situations.

¹¹ See <https://www.coe.int/en/web/compass>

¹² <https://www.coe.int/en/web/compass>

The European Union – Resolving Internal and Managing External Conflicts

Staying within Europe, this discussion explores how culture and heritage have been used as a form of ‘soft power’ for the European Union in managing both internal and external conflicts. Through a literature which describes the ‘Europeanization’ of existing narratives of the past, this section questions what happens to other complex, often conflicting, pasts of individual ethnic, regional or national groups.

The European Union (EU) is a regional organization that faces the problems of disputed territories on two dimensions: internal and external. The internal dimension is associated with the past of the countries that form part of the EU and the difficult history of their relations (incorporating such problems as changing borders, the replacement of populations, minorities and stateless nations). The external dimension is associated with the role that the EU wishes to play in the solving of conflicts in the parts of the world it is engaged with (such as territories close to the EU borders, like the South Caucasus, Ukraine, Moldova, Kosovo or Cyprus and territories outside Europe like Palestine or Kashmir).

According to Michael O. Slobodchikoff from the School of Government and Public Policy at the University of Arizona: ‘International organizations have been shown to be effective at mediating conflicts, yet little work has been done to examine how effective international organizations are at resolving conflicts among their own member states or future member states.’¹³ His study examines territorial disputes in the EU and determines that the EU is very effective at managing territorial disputes among its member states and very effective at resolving territorial disputes among candidate states that wish to become members of the EU (Slobodchikoff 2010). He found that the pre-Copenhagen Criteria conflicts of the ‘old’ member states tended to be both less intense and non-contiguous than the disputes among those states whose accession came after the Copenhagen Criteria.

¹³https://www.researchgate.net/publication/259972398_How_Effective_are_International_Organizations_at_Resolving_Territorial_Disputes_among_Member_States_A_Look_at_the_European_Union

When returning to the history of the EU as a regional organization, we should not forget that the EU is an organization that was established after World War II, with its primary goal being to never allow wars to happen again. European integration has therefore been commonly viewed as an extremely important factor leading to the peace and stability of Europe (Diez 2008; Diez, Stetter, Albert 2008; Higashino 2004; Wallensteen 2007). Prior studies of European integration have determined that one of the original goals of the European Community was to achieve lasting peace in Western Europe after World War II, and more specifically to develop a lasting resolution to the Franco-German conflict (Wallensteen, 2007). In fact, one of the early architects of European integration, Jean Monnet understood that one of the only ways to avoid war in the future was to integrate. The first stage of this integration process was French steel workers using German coal within a common market, but Monnet saw that integration would begin at an economic level evolve in to the political arena (Niemann, Schmitter 2009).

The European Community did help to lessen the tensions between France and Germany through economic interdependence and the spill-over effects of that, and this success helped to bolster the idea that further integration was necessary to achieve peace and stability in Europe. Following the breakup of the Soviet Union and the end of the Cold War, the former communist countries in Europe became independent, but were unstable. Thus, scholars argued that Europe would achieve lasting peace and stability by further integration to the east (Higashino 2004; Tocci 2008).

Once the EU became fully established, norm diffusion emerged as one of the most effective ways in which integration could bring about peace and stability. This is due to the fact that as states adopt European norms, in particular those of peace and territorial integrity, freedom of movement, non-corrupt governance, the single market and robust human rights, those states become more democratic, which in turn leads to peace and stability (Hensel, Goertz, Diehl 2000; Maoz, Russett 1993). Thus, the EU uses integration as a means of norm diffusion (Noutcheva 2007; Coppieters et al.,2004; Slobodchikoff 2010; Tocci 2008). The use of norm diffusion was especially prevalent in the post-Cold War period, as the EU began to focus on

creating not just a stable and peaceful Europe, but a stable and peaceful Europe with a shared identity comprised of similar norms. Although territorial integrity and the absence of territorial conflict were always important to the EU, it was not until after the end of the Cold War that the European norms relating to territorial integrity, democracy and human rights could be spread to Eastern Europe as a way of achieving peace and stability throughout Europe (Diez 2008; Diez, Stetter, Albert 2008).

Memory Politics in the European Union

Any state wishing to enter the EU had to adapt to the policies dictated by the memory being preserved by European institutions and to the moral narratives of the past (including the Holocaust narrative) that were functioning within the EU at that time (Himka, Michlic 2013). This process of adaption is closely interlinked with the adoption of certain values that have been defined as 'European', namely democratization, multiculturalism, tolerance, mobility and the abolition of state borders, human rights protection and recognizing the rights of the victims of war, intolerance and racism (see also Huyssen 2011 on the relationship between the notions of human rights and memory). The Europeanization of memory is a process that involves adapting national memory to a pan-European common value model.

Krzysztof Kowalski and Barbara Törnquist-Plewa (2016) distinguish two stages in this process. The first took place in the 1980s, and at the beginning of the 1990s, when narratives of Europe's magnificent and idyllic past and the grand heritage of ancient Greece and Rome dominated. These narratives began to change in the 1990s, when the postcolonial critique intensified, and the countries of Central and Eastern Europe that had experienced communist life began to strive for integration with the EU. This focused attention on the 'dark side' of European history, while, at the same time, setting European institutions a new and difficult task: finding a common denominator for European memory that would be common to so many different countries with different histories. At the end of the 1990s, a new European memory politics emerged: though there are many different pasts in Europe, Europeans should have a

common way of interpreting them – through the prism of values historically embedded in Europe. However, as Zdzisław Mach has stated: ‘Everything which we might wish to call ‘European heritage’ and use as the basis of a common European identity would be immediately claimed by some Europeans in the name of their nation or region’ (2016: 269). This means that it is not possible to create a common European identity. However, it is possible to create a common European platform for supporting pluralism and the democratic exchange of memory narratives (see Hilmar 2016, Rigney 2012).

As for the internal dimension of the question of disputed territories, European politics of memory (together with the process of ‘Europeanization of memory’) has turned out to be crucial. Every study of social memory needs to take into account the context within which narratives of the past and their transmission takes place. In the case of the EU, it is the Second World War that is perceived as a key event in the history of Europe, because it shaped Europe’s contemporary internal borders and international relations and influenced the European nations’ mutual perception of one another. Memories of the violence that individuals and societies in Europe experienced also include recollections of displacement on a massive scale. As a result of World War II, millions of people were forced to leave their local homelands. The loss of a place of origin and need to move to a completely different place with no possibility of returning to the former world has been an experience shared by millions of Europeans, but also a sphere of collective oblivion for millions of other people (see Törnquist-Plewa 2016). The memory of resettlement includes two aspects of human experience: the loss of a homeland and the process of adapting to a new place. This is in fact a ‘double resettlement’ – firstly, the departure (or death) of the pre-war inhabitants of a given place, and secondly, the arrival of new people who have experienced such a resettlement themselves. This means that people lived in a kind of ‘memory vacuum’ because the process of transmitting memory about their place of origin was interrupted, as were memories of the place where they came to live. Each forced migration was slightly different, but all of them, as noted by Andrei Demshuk (2012), that were linked in some way to the memory of displaced Germans shared some common components. Individual human

experiences were also very similar because after each forced migration, the victims had to come to terms with the fact of their own loss. In addition, forced migrations often provoke the establishment of a political restitution movement. The narrative of mass resettlements as an important element of European memory is often accompanied by a parallel demand to recognize resettlements as a crime against humanity. This demand is raised by the European Union of Exiled and Expelled People, which was founded in 2007 in Trieste, which gathers together organizations of displaced persons from various countries¹⁴. It is not a widely known organization and its narrative barely penetrates the European public sphere at all. This does not mean, however, that resettlement is not present in European memory narratives. Displacement has affected millions of Europeans, and the memory of lost homelands is still being cultivated (although it is weakening from generation to generation).

The International Policy of the European Union and Peace Building Initiatives

As Michelle Pace (2008) from the University of Birmingham mentions, there are several views regarding the EU's role in border conflicts. Underlying all these perspectives is the belief that the EU, through membership or association, helps to transform the nature of border conflicts from lines of conflict to lines of cooperation. Some analysts highlight the EU's discursive framework, which offers political leaders opportunities to legitimize policies aimed at reducing conflicts. Others argue that, as an economic giant but a political dwarf, any influence the EU as a regional organization may have is limited to financial aid and trade programmes. Applying the model of EU paths in border conflict transformation developed by Albert, Diez, Stetter (2004), Pace (2008) investigated the EU perspective on border conflicts, which includes an analysis of

¹⁴ *European Union of Exiled and Expelled People* (<https://www.facebook.com/European-Union-of-Exiled-and-Expelled-People-EUEEP-180809545287651/>) consists of 13 associations from 9 states: Austria (*Gottscheer Landsmannschaft Klagenfurt, Sudetendeutsche Landsmannschaft in Österreich*), Cyprus (*Kyrenia Refugees Association Adouloti Kerinia*), Finland (*Pro Karelia ry*), Germany (*Landsmannschaft Ostpreussen e.V., Landsmannschaft Schlesien Nieder und Oberschlesien e.V., Sudetendeutsche Landsmannschaft – Landesgruppe Baden-Württemberg e.V.*), Great Britain (*Famagusta Association of Great Britain, Lobby for Cyprus*), Hungary (*Magyarok Vilagszovetsege – World Federation of Hungarians*), Italy (*Unione degli Istriani – Libera Provincia dell'Istria in Esilio*), Poland (*Związek Wypędzonych z Kresów Wschodnich R.P.*) and Ukraine (*'Kholmschyna' Kyiv Veteran's Human Rights Society of Deported Ukrainians*).

the conceptualizations of five conflict cases among core actors in EU institutions, namely the Commission, the Council, the European Parliament (EP) and Member States Representative offices.

Works by both Higashino (2004) and Albert, Diez, Stetter (2004) ultimately indicate a need to spread the norm of territorial integrity to new states through the accession process. Doing so can ensure that Europe can remain peaceful and stable despite political changes in the rest of the world. However, it is logical to question whether the EU is able to genuinely diffuse the norm of territorial integrity to Eastern Europe to ensure peace and stability or whether states wanting to join the EU are merely trying to temporarily resolve territorial disputes to become members of the EU. I shall now address this question by referring to two discussions, one on the EU as a 'normative power' and the other, on norm diffusion.

Taking the conceptual framework adopted in Albert, Diez, Stetter (2004) as a reference point, the methodology selected for inquiring into EU decision-making processes relating to border conflicts (including conceptualizations of the five conflicts among core actors in EU institutions) aims to investigate and establish the conditions under which and the processes through which the EU as a regional organization can, through membership or association, help to transform the nature of border conflicts from lines of conflict to lines of cooperation.

According to the Oxford research group,¹⁵ the EU has expanded the role it plays in preventing conflicts and building peace, but its institutional practices remain insufficiently conceptualized. Drawing from a neo-functionalist interpretation of its own history grounded in its strong self-perception, the EU has started to use its own internal model of governance as an approach for resolving protracted disputes, through deconstructing highly political issues into technical meanings in order to achieve mutually acceptable agreements. This can be illustrated by examining the EU's approach to normalizing relations between Kosovo and Serbia, which was based on facilitating dialogue. However, the EU's role as regional peacebuilder can suffer

¹⁵ <https://www.oxfordresearchgroup.org.uk/blog/the-european-union-and-conflict-resolution>

drawbacks as a result of internal turbulence caused by Brexit and other lingering disintegrationalist forces.

The EU's peacebuilding approach is different to that of other international actors, mainly due to contextual factors relating to how it has transformed internally, how its complex institutional and multi-layered governance works and what capacities, norms and practices it invokes in dealing with external situations. In the past ten years, the EU has expanded its conflict resolution and peacebuilding roles to incorporate neighbouring regions and beyond. However, analysis of the EU's peacebuilding work has found the EU's practices to be entirely reliant on traditional instruments of security governance, such as conflict prevention and mediation, crisis management and post-conflict stabilization and also normative frameworks such as those grounded in human rights, human security and civilian protection. This is largely because scholars have argued that the EU's peacebuilding framework cannot yet be regarded as a coherent intellectual project since it relies on existing liberal peacebuilding frameworks associated with restoring security, strengthening the rule of law, supporting democratic processes, delivering humanitarian assistance and supporting economic recovery.

The EU also conducts an active international policy with a global reach and is often described by theoreticians of international relations as a 'non-military power' (Nye 2004, Piskorska 2017, van Ham 2010) that is attempting to influence other countries through the use of 'soft power'. The source of this 'soft power' is culture and ideology (including political values) that are attractive to outsiders. When a given country or organization promotes its own culture effectively, this allows it to take the role of a creator of the desires of others, as well as enjoy the respect due from being able to act, for example, as a conciliator (see Turczyński 2013, Wojnicz 2019). European culture and heritage are important components of soft power and play an important role in shaping the EU's position in the international arena (Piskorska 2017: 215-219). This is primarily due to that position's historical expansiveness, but also to a policy that makes 'European values' and historical experience (together with the contemporary memory politics within EU's member states) the basis for legitimizing the EU's position as an actor seeking to

resolve global conflicts. As far back as 2003, when the first European Security Strategy was adopted, we are already dealing, as Beata Piskorska describes it, with the 'Self-identification of the EU as a normative power, and even 'force for good'' (2017: 223). When trying to mediate in conflicts between countries, the EU uses political, diplomatic and stabilization instruments, as well as cultural and educational ones (this especially applies to the Eastern Partnership, which covers six countries formerly part of the Soviet Union). As Piskorska (2017: 369) states 'Cultural diplomacy understood as the exchange of ideas, information, art and other aspects of culture among nations has long been an important element of the external activity of the European Union in Eastern Europe'. At the same time, she notes that 'cultural diplomacy was often included in the structures of ministries of foreign affairs, which led to the politicization of this sphere of state activities, and could even lead to cultural imperialism' (Piskorska 2017: 369). The discourse stating that the EU countries' past provides a basis for giving advice on conflict resolution and reconciliation is widely recognized. We can see cases in which this is being used by non-EU actors to encourage European institutions to get involved in resolving particular conflicts. One example of this is Fatima Agha Shah's position on the need for the EU to become involved in finding a solution to the Kashmir issue. She writes that the EU countries 'also have first-hand experience of conflict-resolution, having successfully resolved their own disputes after the end of the Second World War, leading to the formation of the European Communities, now known as the European Union' (Agha Shah 2009: 142). However, other researchers, including EU citizens, are more critical of this type of discourse: 'the emphasis on development and human rights thus underpins a neo-imperialist 'civilizing mission' attitude: as Europe managed to overcome its 'bitter past', it views itself uniquely situated to 'teach' or lecture others (...)' (Pasture 2018: 564). The question of whether European countries possess the right to propose conflict resolution is particularly ambiguous when such assistance is offered to former European colonies. Nevertheless, this has not prevented the EU from trying, for many years, to incorporate the promotion of a peaceful way of resolving conflicts in disputed territories into its foreign policy.

The idea of pursuing a common foreign policy was first introduced in 1991 by the Maastricht Treaty. This new form of activity was defined as the Common Foreign and Security Policy and appeared in every one of the subsequent treaties regulating the functioning of the EU, including the latest, the Lisbon Treaty of 2007. The basic principles that guide the EU in international relations are set out in Article 21 as, *inter alia*, strengthening and supporting democracy, the rule of law, human rights and the principles of international law, as well as maintaining peace, preventing conflicts and strengthening international security (see Turczyński 2013: 99-100). Analyses of sessions of the European Council have shown that the most frequently discussed issues were related to the Muslim states in the Middle East and North Africa, and the second key area was the Israeli-Palestinian conflict (see Gordon, Pardo 2015; Bouris, Kyris 2017). Great importance is also attached to the situation in the Balkans (see Skara 2014) and in the Eastern European countries covered by the Eastern Partnership (see Turczyński 2013: 139-141). The interrelated issues of protecting individual states' territorial integrity and preventing border changes are of particular importance, so the question of the methods used for establishing new borders are crucial (see Carter, Goemans 2011). This approach defined the EU position during Russia's conflicts with Georgia (over South Ossetia and Abkhazia) and with Ukraine (over Crimea, Donbass and the Lugansk Region). The activities of the EU are closely analysed by international conflict researchers. Such experts have described the organization as a 'moral power' in the conflict between the South Caucasus States (see Vasilyan 2014) or as a 'normative power' in the Ukrainian-Russian conflict (see Veebel, Markus 2018).

The EU's normative and moral influence were also visible during the organization's expansion at the beginning of the twenty-first century. EU integration was conducive to the establishment of cooperation between individual countries, but also created the need to establish a dialogue and seek agreement on a common difficult past. In the days of communism, when the Eastern European countries who later joined the EU were in the same political bloc, conflicts over the past lay dormant. In fact, the authorities did everything in their power to remove them from collective memory. However, after the fall of communism, social recollection

processes uncovered old conflicts and created a strong desire to compensate any victims and commemorate them. Moreover, the incorporation of the new member states into the European discourse, which resulted in the 'Europeanization' of existing narratives of the past, not only achieved the EU's objective of closer integration with Western Europe but also thrust memory of regional conflicts to the margins of public discourse. Focusing on narratives leading from the World War II through the communist period to unification with Western Europe fosters a sense of Europeanness but, at the same time, eliminates the complex, often conflicting, past of individual ethnic, regional and national groups within East-Central Europe (Lebow, Kansteiner, Fogu 2006). During communism, it was not only the memory of both ethnic and national conflicts that were relegated to the realm of social oblivion but also other elements of the past, such as the question of large-scale population resettlement and the memory of territories lost after the war. However, after the countries of East-Central Europe joined the EU, national trauma slowly began to change into nostalgia, as in the case of memory of the Hungarian territories lost after the First World War (Gerner 2007) or the German territories of Silesia, Pomerania and Prussia that were lost to Poland or memory of the Polish eastern borderlands lost after the World War II (Demshuk 2012, Traba 2007). Gradually, the issue of national and ethnic minorities has also been addressed in individual countries in East-Central Europe, although the approach to this varies widely across Europe. However, although tensions between minority and majority group (some of which relate to ethnic territories) may continue to exist in European countries, a detailed analysis of the situation shows that these tensions 'no longer seem to threaten pan-European stability and security' (Dembinska, Maracz, Tonk 2014: 371).

Cooperation between the countries of the former communist bloc proved to be crucial not only to the internal EU dimension of their geopolitical security, but also to the dimension of this security relating to external countries. This has also raised the issue of cooperation on the borderlands within the EU and on the borderlands between the EU and external countries. The policy of establishing close relations between border communities (based not only on economic but also cultural cooperation) has resulted in the creation of a specific border culture both within

the EU and on either side of the external borders of the EU, for example, between Russia and Finland, or Poland and Ukraine (Kiiskinen 2012). The memory of the common past shared by the inhabitants of the borderlands, which are currently divided between different countries, has become the basis for cooperation in such areas as the protection of monuments and relics, places of worship and cemeteries, educational and cultural exchanges, and support for cultural activities (e.g. for museums).

In the academic literature, the EU is primarily described as an organization that requires the promotion of values associated with concepts such as democracy, human rights, respect for cultural diversity and reaching agreement through dialogue. The legal and political recognition of these values means that all countries either belonging to or aspiring to join the EU or aspiring must seek cooperation and reconciliation with the rest of Europe's countries, even if they share a very difficult past. The EU also recognizes the inviolability of the inter-state borders drawn on the modern map of Europe, which means that any changes of belonging of the disputed territories to the particular state are unacceptable. The EU is also trying to promote its internal approach to solve territorial and memory-related conflicts outside the EU and outside Europe, but its primary tools are 'soft power' and, to a lesser extent, political pressure.

This is the key starting point for researchers on regional organizations activities within the framework of DisTerrMem project. The activities of European and non-European regional organizations are based, on the one hand, on values defined as specific for a given region (or cultural areas), and on the other hand on global models of peaceful international actions. We intend to examine what hidden assumptions and ideologies are behind the actions taken and how conflict and post-conflict situations are defined in various political, social and cultural conditions. We would also like to consider how the heritage of European colonialism influences the legitimacy of European organizations' activities outside the continent and how they are perceived in different parts of the world. We also plan to investigate whether models of deliberation and peaceful conflict resolution developed in Europe are cultural relevant in other

parts of the world and if the European organizations think about cultural appropriation of the means they propose.

Looking for Solutions: The application of deliberation in disputes on territories and memory management

This final section considers the possibilities for meaningful deliberation within different political systems and the importance of facilitating opportunities for dialogue and engagement. This discussion also argues for regional organisations, nation states and NGOs, to foster a culture of deliberation in their peace building efforts to encourage spaces for meaningful, diverse and open dialogue.

The models of deliberation and deliberative democracy have had a prominent position in the past twenty to thirty years, respectively, in communication studies and political sciences, inspiring democratic innovations (Goodin, 2008; Held, 2006). Both models have developed in response to problems diagnosed in democratic communication at micro and macro levels. At first, they were discussed in reference to liberal democracies of Western states and cultures. However, it seems that the discussion on the applicability of these two concepts in politics, including peace processes, has broadened the scope and scale, including, for example, peace processes in various parts of the world.

Deliberation can be defined as ‘mutual communication that involves weighing and reflecting on preferences, values, and interests regarding matters of common concern’ (Bächtiger, Dryzek, Mansbridge, & Warren 2018: vi). Deliberative democracy institutionalizes deliberation through the legal means and procedures. It creates opportunities and framework for communicative actions which demand equal recognition, respect, reciprocity, and an equal power to influence opinions based on the force of arguments (Bächtiger, Dryzek, Mansbridge, & Warren 2018).

An attempt to implement the norms of deliberation in decision-making in complex societies and multi-level governance as well as within various communicative contexts leads to consideration of a deliberative system. According to Parkinson and Mansbridge, a deliberative

system means ‘one that encompasses a talk-based approach to political conflict and problem-solving through arguing, demonstrating, expressing, and persuading’ (2012: 4-5). Depending on the focus on a particular problem, the system may involve various sets of institutions, organizations and formal or informal networks of citizens. It may concern local communities as well as international or global relations (Dryzek, 2006).

Those who conceptualize introducing deliberation into global politics, cannot ignore the local conditions for its harnessing for at least two reasons. Firstly, it is in communities where citizens have most opportunities of getting involved in the public what may contribute to the culture of deliberation. Secondly, ethnic and other divisions within state borders are sometimes politically used to disable collaboration and strengthen conflicts. In the literature on divided societies, one can find an observation that as politicians might not be keen on supporting peace processes, there is a need for encouraging deliberation in communities, or more generally, ‘from the bottom-up’ (Levy et al., 2018; Steiner, & Jaramillo, 2019).

Institutions of formal education, and in particular schools in societies divided by conflict, can assist the youth with learning norms of deliberation and embed them in practice. In group discussions, young people can experience how deliberation differs from communicative situation defined by antagonism. Even if these bottom-up initiatives do not easily translate into the state policies in countries in conflict, the applied studies in various cultural settings demonstrate positive effects of interventions (Steiner et al., 2017).

In the scholarship on deliberation, there are subtle differences regarding core norms and their meaning. Also, the concept has evolved along the lines of discussions where deliberation has become associated not only with the model of representative, but also participatory democracy. The merger of both models, and the focus on communicative aspects of governance, have given the rise to the model of deliberative democracy. The change has stirred discussions on elitist versus egalitarian forms and forums of deliberation, and necessarily, the conditions to attain deliberation, especially among non-experts. Certainly, the concept of deliberation has also been modified in result of the dialogue between its supporters and critics.

To give an illustration of the evolution in the outlook on deliberation in academia, one can refer to the norm of reflexivity and its operationalization. The requirement of the use of arguments and their justification in the communicative exchange still holds, however, the reason-giving can be understood broadly as providing relevant considerations with the use of various narrative formats. Further, as for now, consensus is not the ultimate and only aim of deliberation as clarifying conflicts or coming to conclusions with the use of voting following deliberation has been legitimized by some scholars. Finally, it is worth stating that while previously it was expected that the discussion would be oriented towards the common good, now it is oriented rather towards the self-interest constrained by fairness. (Bächtiger, Dryzek, Mansbridge, & Warren 2018).

The last shift in the standpoint is of particular relevance to the situation of conflicts over territories and conflicting memories of the past. In our view, it is reasonable as people cannot ignore their own interest, but under good conditions, they may look beyond it and shift their initial positions. By good conditions we understand the situation where they listen to justified arguments of other members of the community, and reflect on needs of various groups in the context of common values (Fishkin 2018). One might expect that the solution to the problem resulting from the careful reflection on needs and situations of different group can bring in a more sustainable solution as compared to the situation when deliberation does not take place

The application of deliberation in politics in general, and in the situation of conflict, in particular, depends on the development of the culture of deliberation which is supported by the institutional framework. Jürg Steiner and Maria Clara Jaramillo (2019) demonstrate this through the example of Switzerland and how the gradual change of the institutional setting, as well as the approach to communication into the one of listening to 'the other side', have strengthened each other. Within 100 years it has led to building power sharing institutions and a culture integrating deliberation.

Putting forward an argument about the need of deliberation for a sustainable peace, they write 'if members of the deeply divided groups are beginning to listen to each other with respect

and to take seriously the arguments of the other sides, mutual trust will increase, which in turn, may increase the willingness to engage in common projects' (Steiner, & Jaramillo 2019). Without trust, and the culture of dialogue that contributes to it, upholding democratic institutions in the post-conflict territories is difficult. In result, it is challenging to sustain peace.

However, trust-building depends on procedural context in which deliberation takes place. Here comes the requirement of transparency in decision-making which is particularly essential in societies deeply divided by conflicts. Procedural transparency is important to legitimize the process and create the ambiance for the sincere exchange of arguments among participants joining deliberation in their various roles and bringing forward different interests. It refers to rights and responsibilities of involved parties as well as their impact on the results of decision-making processes. Evoking shared values while presenting procedures of participations is possible even in the situation of conflict, and it is especially valuable in such instances.

It is worth mentioning that poorly designed participatory processes can turn against their initial goal, and, subsequently, against democracy. They may facilitate defining the common good or further divide people and exacerbate conflicts. As regards participatory mechanisms, deliberation is most commonly discussed in reference to consultations over policy issues or legal acts (Gastil 2008). However, deliberation may also intervene in the situation where post-conflict consent is unreliable, brought about by external pressure, or open-ended (Johnston, 2011: 140).

In the context of agreement-seeking over disputed territories, the role of deliberation in improving the quality of peace referenda has been highlighted. Ron Leavy writes that although referenda have a relatively high legitimacy, the popular discourse leading to the vote should be improved, not the least to resist disinformation. He argues that 'the objective of deliberative democracy here is to increase the likelihood that decisions will be based on a free and open exchange of reasons rather than on mere numerical superiority or the threat of force' (Levy et al., 2018: 8). In turn, Ian Johnston while describing the relation between voting and deliberation writes that 'The quality of deliberations — the exchange of good arguments — that precede and follow votes is a measure of legitimacy' (Johnston, 2011: 200).

Deliberation is the communication process which is legitimate only if it includes all concerned parties on an equal platform. Ron Levy proposes that the information directed to the general public who are going to vote to support one out of two or more usually mutually exclusive proposals, should be formulated in the language of shared values. He argues that 'Reasons cast in terms of private values are likely to exacerbate conflict rather than reduce it. By contrast, reasons cast in terms of public values proceed from common ground' (Levy et al., 2018: 9). Thus, defining values which could connect otherwise divided groups, and make them listen to 'the other side' before voting, is an investment into the peace process by those who supervise it.

Ian Johnston writes that the relevance of deliberation to activities undertaken by the European Union goes beyond its internal policy. The European Union and the United Nations as international organizations are 'conducive to principled, impartial deliberation' and 'serve as *public spheres* where states and, increasingly, non-state actors discuss, debate, and generate shared understandings about the terms of international life' (Johnston, 2011: 5). These 'nascent forms of deliberative democracy' serve as 'interpretative communities', which are 'open, inclusive, and penetrable by perspectives other than those of the hegemon or technocrats'. They provide space for the consideration of claims justifying interventions including humanitarian actions, observation missions or military actions as well as impact the interpretation and application of law. Johnson explains that 'to the extent that political struggle takes place discursively, through the exchange of arguments, it reduces inequalities in power (Johnston, 2011: 9).

Alongside research on the role of regional actors in the management of disputed territories, DisTerrMem provides an opportunity to explore how institutions and organizations may support deliberation. The network of (international) governmental or non-governmental organizations might substantially contribute to culture of deliberation and peace by connecting law and decision-making with norms of deliberation. Jürg Steiner and Maria Clara Jarmillo (2019) argue that the norms of deliberation laying the ground for particular procedures of communication are not Western-culture-specific, and as such can resonate in different cultures.

Deliberation is an educational project, one which enhances learning about the views of ‘the other side’, and rationales behind them. By relying on meaningful, conclusive and influential exchange of information and opinions it is intrinsic to public trust. In turn, trust is the resource which enhances collaboration within and across borders and prevents conflicts.

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