## RESEARCH ARTICLE

# From Military to 'Security Interventions': An Alternative Approach to Contemporary Interventions

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In both academic and policy circles international interventions tend to mean 'military' interventions and debates tend to focus on whether such interventions are 'good' or 'bad' in general. This article aims to open up scholarly engagement on the topic of the thorny reality of interventions in different contexts by reconceptualising international interventions as 'security interventions.' The article draws attention to the ambiguous meaning of 'security' as both an objective (i.e. safety) as well as a practice (military forces, police, intelligence agencies and their tactics), something that is reflected in the different approaches to be gleaned from the security studies literature. From this ambiguity, it derives two interlinked concepts: 'security culture' and 'security gap,' as analytical tools to grasp the complexity of international interventions. The concept of 'security culture' captures specific combinations of objectives and practices. The concept of 'security gap' captures the particular relationship or the distinct kind of 'mismatch' between objectives and practices as it occurs in a 'security culture.' This reading of international interventions through the concept of 'security culture' and the interlinked analytical tool 'security gap' allows an analysis and understanding that goes beyond simplistic assumptions both about traditional military capabilities and the role of the 'international community' as a unitary actor.

## Introduction

The UK Ministry of Defence defines international intervention as 'the projection of military force (augmented by other agencies as required) outside the UK sovereign territory to achieve an effect in securing, protecting or promoting UK national interest through the use or threat of force' (House of Commons Defence Committee 2014: 13, paragraph 6). A report from the UK House of Commons Defence Committee suggests that this definition is too narrow and should be broadened to include intervention for humanitarian purposes. For both the Ministry of Defence and the Defence Committee, interventions are 'naturally' about the military.

The notion that interventions *are* 'military interventions' is also apparent in public and policy debates. Arguments about interventions presuppose specific ideas about the nature of the 'military.' For those in favour of intervention, 'the military' is assumed to be an instrument that can be used when other political or economic tools have failed to

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change regimes or defeat insurgencies or to protect people from large-scale human rights violations. For those against intervention, the use of 'the military' is assumed to lead to death and destruction and escalation. The consequence is an impasse, a polarisation of debate, in which preset assumptions about the 'military' determine the standpoint. More importantly, it obscures discussions about the complex reality of situations. Rather than investigating and addressing the difficult and heart rending problems on the ground in places like today's Iraq or Syria, debates are over laid by the general question about whether or not to use *military* force based on preset assumptions about what this means.

The narrowness in the public debate is similarly apparent in the scholarly literature, in which intervention is also commonly assumed to be about the use of military force. The academic debate about intervention tends to be couched in normative terms relating to issues of sovereignty, the authority to use force, and human rights (see, for example, Hehir 2010; Weiss 2007). Contributions to this literature are guided by distinct theoretical standpoints, such as a liberal, critical or realist understanding of the political world. The pre-analytical commitments, which are implied in these worldviews, in effect determine the individual scholar's normative position towards international interventions—again where the *military* aspect of interventions is taken for granted even where it is criticised. Thus realists tend to assume that military force should be used in the national interest while liberals are divided between those who favour intervention for humanitarian purposes and those critical thinkers who oppose all forms of intervention—naturally understood as *military* interventions.

A related stream of the scholarly literature is about the effects of intervention at local levels—having to do with state-building, peace-building, democracy promotion and so on. For some scholars, something called the 'international community' is treated as a given, a neutral outsider, to whom policy recommendations can be addressed. The literature is full of varied and valuable criticism of what 'the international community' does or does not and should do or should not do. Yet, there is a shared presumption that the failures have to do with inefficiencies, lack of coordination, and lack of knowledge (for an overview, see Newman, Paris and Richmond 2009). On the other hand, critical scholars tend to treat the international community as a Western neo-colonial enterprise. What is missing in both sets of literature is an understanding of (potential) different types of intervention and the degree to which local societies are enmeshed in wider global social relations.

There is, therefore, a shortcoming in the existing scholarship about international interventions. Among those concerned with *military* intervention, there is very little discussion about what the word 'military' implies. Are we talking about air strikes or war-fighting? Or can we mean peacekeeping and policing? Are all of these types of intervention lumped together? At the same time, those concerned with local impact rarely delve into the nuances of what is meant by 'international.' Especially in the aftermath of the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan, the exchange of positions has reached a *cul de sac*. Those who argue that humanitarianism is a cover for geo-political ambition have pointed to the experience of those wars as vindication of their position. At the same time, those who favour humanitarian intervention have pointed to the tragedies of Srebrenica, Rwanda and now Syria to decry the perils of doing nothing.

The aim of this article is to contribute to an opening of the scholarly engagement with the issue of international interventions in a way that takes into account the reality of contemporary interventions as complex political actions. In order to do this, the article proposes an alternative way of understanding and, consequently, assessing international ('military') interventions. Given the observation

that interventions these days have come to be closely linked to the notion of 'security,' the article proposes to conceptualise them as 'security interventions' and apply an alternative set of conceptual tools in their analysis.

Grounded in an engagement with the loaded notion of 'security' and how it is treated in Security Studies, the article conceptualises 'security' as being about both an objective and a practice. This take on 'security' leads to the development of two interlinked concepts. The first concept is called 'security culture.' Through the concept of 'security culture' it is recognised that 'security,' i.e. objectives and practices, differs in each context that it is applied. The concept of 'security culture' then captures specific combinations of objectives and practices. The second concept that the article develops out of the understanding of 'security' as being about objectives and practices is called 'security gap.' It captures the particular relationship (or one could say, a specific kind of 'mismatch') between objectives and practices as it occurs in a particular context, i.e. in a particular 'security culture.'

Thus the article puts forward an understanding of interventions as political action, which is the product of a distinct (interplay of) 'security culture(s)' in and through which, inevitably, a specific 'security gap' plays out on the ground. The article suggests that an approach to international ('military') interventions through this lens, i.e. understood as 'security interventions,' helps to open scholarly pathways into critical studies and assessments of contemporary interventions beyond the entrenched structures of the existing scholarship.

## The loaded nature of 'security'
Assuming that political discourses play into and come out of political practices, it is apparent that the notion of 'security' plays an important role in the context of contemporary international interventions. For instance, US President Obama makes it clear that a potential US intervention into the conflict in Syria builds on the understanding that 'the actions of the Government of Syria in supporting terrorism, maintaining its then-existing occupation of Lebanon, pursuing weapons of mass destruction and missile programs, and undermining U.S. and international efforts with respect to the stabilization and reconstruction of Iraq' constitute an 'unusual and extraordinary threat to the *national security*, foreign policy, and economy of the United States' (White House 2013; emphasis added). The former German Defence Minister Peter Struck (2002) argued that it was the security of Germany that German soldiers are defending at the Hindu Kush. The EU explains in its *Report on the Implementation of the European Security Strategy* (Council of the European Union 2009: 18) 'that Europe has security interests beyond its immediate neighbourhood. In this respect, Afghanistan is a particular concern'; justifying its engagement with its 'Eastern neighbours,' it further stresses, 'the goal is to strengthen the prosperity and stability of these countries, and thus the security of the EU' (Council of the European Union 2009: 23). 'British troops are fighting in Afghanistan, alongside our US and other allies, to protect our *national security*,' explain David Cameron and Nick Clegg (Cabinet Office 2010: 13; emphasis added). And President Putin said on signing the treaty to annex Crimea to Russia that Crimea is 'vital to Russian security' (Wall Street Journal 2014).

While there has been much discussion about the increased relevance of 'security' and its spread into all kinds of discourses, such as the discourse about the environment, food, climate, and so on, the relevance of 'security' in the specific context of international interventions has not yet been explicitly noted, let alone discussed. This is problematic in two respects.

First, by overlooking the relevance of the notion of 'security,' impact assessments of international interventions run the danger of not taking into account the criteria that in effect guide a respective intervention. For

example, the assessment of an international intervention from within the context of 'peace building' is misguided if it overlooks the fact that the aim of interventions these days is to secure the (national) security of those who intervene. Hence, acknowledging the significance of 'security' means acknowledging an integral empirical aspect of such interventions, the way they are framed and, consequently, speaking the 'same language' that guides interventions.

Second, by overlooking the relevance of the notion of 'security' in and for international interventions, a highly loaded discourse is overlooked. Putting it the other way around, acknowledging international interventions as security interventions means taking seriously their profoundly *political* character, which comes with the loaded notion of 'security.'

The increasing relevance of 'security' in and for contemporary international military interventions is part of a broader trend, in which the notion of 'security' is used to shape an expanding range of policies and political practices. As Christopher Daase (2010) puts it, since the middle of the last century 'security' has become the 'gold standard' of national and international politics, having outplayed the concept of 'peace' in strategy debates and political programmes (see also Bonss 2009; Buzan and Hansen 2009). An ever growing number of issues, increasingly broadly defined, are treated as 'security' issues; concepts such as 'environmental security,' 'energy security' and 'food security' have become commonplace. At the same time, the idea of the object of 'security' has widened, from a narrow focus on the (nation)state to the individual human, to society, or to the planet (see especially Buzan and Hansen 2009).

The loaded nature of 'security' has been widely acknowledged and discussed in comprehensive and sophisticated ways (e.g. Buzan, Waever and de Wilde 1998; Dillon 1996; Zedner 2009; Buzan and Hansen 2009). The literature draws attention to three aspects of this 'loadedness.'

First and most obviously, 'security' shares with all other concepts that it is not ahistorical; it is a social product and, as such, inherently political. As a referent, 'security' is not a fixed, a priori existing object or fact but—as Michel Foucault (e.g. 1990) explains is the case for all referents—constitutes the discursively produced and reproduced laws/orders/rules that permit and restrict the ways in which objects and facts are related to each other. As a signifier, security is inextricably enmeshed in and the product of the endless 'play of signifying references that constitutes language' (Derrida 1976: 7), as well as, the outcome of the 'discursive policing' (Foucault 1981: 61) that restricts what is sayable.

Second, beyond this general aspect that is valid for all concepts and all signifiers, 'security' is distinctly enmeshed with the idea of the state and/or political authority and, in fact, with the very thinking that constitutes modern politics and its practices. It is this enmeshment that makes 'security' peculiar and implies the imperative to take it seriously. 'Security' is constitutive of (the idea of) the state—in fact, it is 'security' that legitimises the state. This means that providing 'security' is not only a fundamental role of the state but something that *constitutes* it. Hence, policies and practices under the label of 'security,' such as contemporary international interventions, are in one way or other and for better or worse also always part of the 'securing' of the state or, potentially, other forms of political authority (e.g. Dillon 1996). Implied in this is the idea that the means to provide 'security' inevitably produces 'insecurity'; otherwise there would be no need for political authority.

Third, there is a particular 'power' inherent in the idea of 'security' that is linked to and comes out of a notion of the 'state of emergency.' As the Copenhagen School (Buzan, Waever and de Wilde 1998: 23) shows, the invocation of 'security' can be seen as an 'extreme form of politicization' as it lifts issues beyond the sphere of 'normal politics' into the sphere of 'security.' In other words, through the invocation of 'security,' an 'emergency condition' is declared and the right

is claimed 'to use whatever means are necessary to block a threatening development' (Buzan, Waever and de Wilde 1998: 21). This makes the notion of 'security' and its invocation particularly powerful. As Lucia Zedner (2009: 12) puts it, 'security has all the qualities of a fire engine, replete with clanging bells and flashing lights, whose dash to avert imminent catastrophe brooks no challenge, even if it risks running people down on the way to the fire.'

## 'Security' as objective and practice

It is because of the loaded nature of the notion of 'security' that security's explicit role in the context of international interventions needs to be taken seriously. This is not a straightforward task, though. How is one to deal with the complex notion of 'security' for this purpose? How is one to operationalise it in an attempt to reconceptualise international interventions? The existing Security Studies literature offers two basic approaches to 'security,' 'security' as an objective to be achieved and 'security' as a practice. Both approaches to 'security' are valuable in their own terms. However, for the purposes of grasping the reality of international interventions, understood as 'security interventions,' an idea of 'security' as a combination of both is needed.

The first approach takes 'security' as an *objective* to be achieved. Assessing international interventions as 'security interventions' would then mean taking them as a practice designed to achieve the *objective* 'security,' however that is defined. Such an understanding of intervention could be assessed in three possible ways. First, an intervention could be assessed in terms of whether it achieves 'security' as the objective the intervention sets out to achieve, say US or Russian national security. Second, an intervention could be assessed with a critical view on the concept of 'security' it is following, i.e. it could be assessed in terms of the notions of 'security' that is held by the US or Russia. Third, it could be assessed through a 'security' concept, for example human security

that the researcher chooses independently from the one that informs the intervention.

Undoubtedly, all three forms have the potential of bringing out valuable insights. Yet, the trouble with the application of this kind of understanding of 'security' is that assessments remain *within* the discourse of 'security.' As such, they do not take into account the complexity and political loadedness that is so intrinsic to the concept. In the first case, 'security,' and indeed the specific idea of 'security' that informs the respective intervention, is *accepted* as an objective that could actually be achieved. In the second case, the assessment would be (but only) about the *concept* of 'security.' And in the third case, the assessment would be about one distinct (preset) idea of 'security' against another, e.g. 'state security' against 'human security.'

Re-conceptualising international military interventions as 'security interventions' based on an understanding of 'security' as an objective to be achieved then means, for better or worse, to be caught by, play into and somewhat reinforce the fundamental enmeshment of 'security,' the state and (modern) politics. Referring to Eriksson (1999), assessments based on this basis are always 'advocations,' because whatever (critical) form they may take, they inevitably (discursively) support a thinking of (global) politics through 'security.' Going another step further by taking up Dalby's point, even every critical extension of the concept (beyond its state-centric historical focus) takes us away from exploring 'the possibilities of organizing global action around pressing issues such as poverty, development, and environmental degradation without formulating them in terms of a security framework where technocratic and managerial modes of governmentality are invoked in the absence of a more flexible political imagination' (Dalby 1997: 25).

The second approach to be found in the existing literature takes 'security' as a *practice.* Arguments along these lines usually build on the work of the scholars that have come to be identified with the Copenhagen

School label (notably Buzan, Wæver and de Wilde 1998). According to this approach, 'security' as a practice, is here seen as a speech act through which an issue is lifted into the realm of 'security' and out of the realm of 'normal politics.' 'Security' becomes visible then as a 'self-referential practice, because it is in this practice that the issue becomes a security issue—not necessarily because a real existential threat exists but because the issue is presented as such a threat' (Buzan, Wæver and de Wilde 1998: 24).

The advantage of this approach is that it avoids the trap of being caught up within and reinforcing the 'security' discourse, the way the first approach does. Yet, the trouble is that assessments of international interventions along these lines would be about a very specific speech act and its social acceptance. Leaving aside the empirical challenges that empirical investigations face that try to be true to the theory of 'securitization,' such assessment would focus on a relatively specific and narrow kind of proclamation. In other words, it does almost the opposite of the 'security as objective'-approach. By focussing on the success of a speech act, the complex socio-political processes, through which ideas of, in fact, the reality of 'security' are constructed, are left aside.

This article proposes that for the purposes of approaching international interventions as 'security interventions' a conceptualisation of 'security' as both objective, i.e. about a specific idea of 'security' (whose 'security,' from what), and practice is useful, where the practice of 'security' is more than a speech act. The practice of 'security' is understood as being constituted by the interplay of a) a security apparatus, which consists of the military, police, and intelligence institutions, as well as concrete existing equipment and tools, and b) strategies and specific tactics that are the expression of political authority. Objectives and practices can never be perfectly aligned because inevitably practices produce 'insecurity.'

The value of this proposed take on 'security' is that it allows for the development of two interlinked conceptual tools that can serve a critical take on international interventions: the concept 'security culture' and the concept 'security gap.'

## The concepts 'security culture' and 'security gap'

The first concept that can be developed out of the understanding of 'security' as being about objectives and practices is called 'security culture.' Through the concept of 'security culture,' it is recognised that 'security,' i.e. objectives and practices, potentially differ in each context it is applied. The concept of 'security culture' then captures specific combinations of objectives and practices, which allows us to grasp the complex reality of international interventions. The concept 'security culture' captures the set of actions taken to secure whatever is taken to be secured, together with the set of institutions that are designed to authorise, imagine, plan, and implement these actions. Or, to put it another way, if we understand security both as an objective, a specific idea of 'security' (whose 'security,' from what), and as a practice undertaken by states or other political authorities, a 'security culture' refers to a particular combination of objectives and practices. A 'security culture' is characterised by a set of social relationships that have their own specific logics.

The idea of a 'security culture' has some similarities to the concept of 'strategic culture' developed in the 1970's and 1980's to explain why the rational assumptions of nuclear planners did not necessarily explain actual strategic behaviour. For Colin Gray (1999: 131) strategic culture was defined as the 'the persisting socially transmitted ideas, attitudes, traditions, habits of mind and preferred methods of operation that are more or less specific to a particular geographically based security community that has a unique historical experience.'

The concept of 'security culture' differs from the concept of 'strategic culture' in three respects. First the term 'strategic' specifically refers to the use of military; hence

the shift from strategic to security is in line with the shift from military to 'security interventions.' This is a point that Christopher Daase highlights who also uses the term 'security culture' (Daase 2010). Secondly, in contrast to the concept of 'strategic culture' the notion of 'security culture' does not necessarily imply that cultures are national. The concept captures types of cultures that might spread beyond national borders, they are not geographically (pre)defined. Moreover, the concept of 'security culture' does not only capture state security policies and settings but the security policies and settings of international institutions like the European Union or the United Nations or to the security approaches of non-state or hybrid actors. Any one national security policy might be characterised by one or more security cultures. And thirdly, the concept of 'security culture' is not a static or essentialist concept. This is in contrast to the concept of 'strategic culture,' which was developed from within a conservative discourse and was explained in terms of tradition, geography, and history, e.g. applying it to explain why Britain has such an attachment to maritime strategy. The concept of 'security culture,' in turn, recognises that cultures are constantly reproduced and it is by analysing the ways in which they are reproduced that it is, for instance, possible to discover whether specific cultures tend to be rigid and impervious to change or whether there are opening points, new pathways built into the logic of a security culture. Thus, 'security culture' is more about the categorisation of specific forms and logics rather than anchoring the concept to place and time. The latter appears to be anachronistic anyway given the blurring of the boundaries of what might be called security communities in the context of globalisation.

The idea of 'security culture' proposed here has a closer parallel with Michel Foucault's concept of *dispositif,* understood as 'a thoroughly heterogeneous ensemble consisting of discourses, institutions, architectural forms, regulatory decisions, laws, administrative measures, scientific statements, philosophical, moral and philanthropic propositions–in short, the said as much as the unsaid. [It is] the system of relations that can be established between these elements' (Foucault 1980: 194–228). A 'security culture' is a distinct way of exercising power. It constitutes a unity but not a totality, and it is an important empirical question how 'security cultures' take their form, are reinforced and are naturalised.

The second concept that can be developed out of the understanding of 'security' as being about objectives and practices is called the 'security gap.' It is closely interlinked with the concept of 'security culture,' in fact, it helps us to comprehend a 'security culture.' The concept of 'security gap' captures the particular relationship, or 'mismatch,' between objectives and practices within a specific 'security culture' as it plays out in a distinct context. The concept of 'security gap' is based on the premise that there is inevitably a gap between the objective of 'security' and the practices to achieve the objective. As suggested above, this is because 'security' in the dual sense that we have outlined, inevitably produces 'insecurity'—of course, more or less 'insecurity' depending on the context. The scale of the 'security gap' in the actualisation of specific security cultures, i.e. a specific security intervention, is an empirical question.

The 'security gap' can also be described in terms of the inherent gap between collective and individual security since practices are always collective and objectives can be both collective (e.g. national security) and individual (e.g. human security). Following political theorists and historians, such as Emma Rothschild (1995), what is at the heart of the concept of 'security,' no matter how it is defined and (strategically) used, is a particular idea of the relationship between collective and individual 'security,' including what is meant by 'collective' and 'individual.' What this relationship looks like is historical. It differs from one concept and application of 'security' to another. It is the result

of normative premises, a manifestation of worldviews and of strategic goals coming out of them, e.g. it depends on what is understood to be the main objective of 'security,' what is understood to be the 'collective' (e.g. the state, a community, a society, the world) and how the individual is perceived and positioned.

Practices of security are, by their nature, collective since any combination of practices is the expression of specific forms of political authority; for example, regular military forces are the external expression of nation-states or blocs (like NATO and the former Warsaw Pact); policing is usually considered a domestic security practice accountable to states, municipalities, or regions; peacekeeping is linked to international institutions like the United Nations and the African Union while private security actors are often but not always associated with informal or hybrid forms of authority.

Objectives can be defined both in terms of individual and collective security. Thus American national security could be defined in terms of the sum of the individual security of Americans or to a collective notion—'the United States of America'—or to the sum of the security of individual Americans. While this needs further elaboration it can be argued that any specific security gap is intrinsic to the nature of political authority. A collectively defined objective lends itself to friend-enemy distinctions that are more in keeping with conservative and hierarchical conceptions of political order, while individualistic definitions of security are more likely to be linked to rights based forms of political authority.

The argument has implications for the very meaning of intervention. The bounded nature of political authority linked to practices implies a distinction between inside and outside; intervention is thus the outside intervening inside. The security cultures approach allows for a blurring of inside/outside since cultures are, of their nature transnational and give rise to global/local enmeshment.

## Three ideal type 'security cultures'

The understanding of 'security' and the two concepts presented above offer a toolbox for analysing international interventions as 'security interventions.' This involves identifying different interventions as part of a specific 'security culture' or a combination of 'security cultures' that captures, frames, shapes and is shaped by the various components it comprises. Thus it involves a shift in analysis from actors to cultures, from outsiders to inside/outside, from specific national, international or sub-national interventions to different types of intervention. Each of these 'security cultures' has its own logics, the logics of escalation and persistence, for example, that can be understood in terms of the relationships between the various components. In particular, the extent to which practices are aligned with objectives underpins political authority and determines the degree of path dependence or the persistence of a culture and the difficulty of identifying alternative pathways. In order to further facilitate such an analytical empirical endeavour, a grid of three ideal or stylised type 'security cultures' can be applied in and to the empirical field. These three ideal type 'security cultures' were generated from an empirical analysis of recent interventions through the concept of 'security culture':

### Ideal type 1: Geopolitics

The first ideal type 'security culture' can be called 'geopolitics.' This is the legacy of the Cold War. The dominant narrative is about great power contestation and the dominant tools are deployment and use of regular military forces, economic sanctions and state-to state diplomacy. The objective is national security and the practices include the deployment of military forces so as to deter a future war against a 'peer competitor'—Russia, China, or NATO depending on the perspective. A geo-political intervention could be justified in terms of 'self-defence' (Iraq and Afghanistan) or the defence of nationals abroad (Ossetia and Eastern Ukraine) or 'counter-proliferation' (preventing the

acquisition of weapons of mass destruction (WMD) by 'rogue' states) and would consist of classic war-fighting including air strikes. It might also include protecting spheres of influence or preserving the security of the Global Commons, including the Arctic or energy transportation routes from intrusions by a peer competitor. Geo-politics remains the dominant way of thinking and way of structuring capabilities among the major states and accounts for most defence spending as can be seen from a study of defence reviews. A sub type might be what has been described as 'guerrilla geo-politics' (Galeotti 2014)—the sort of indirect intervention characteristics of the Russian behaviour in current eastern Ukraine or Iranian behaviour in Syria and Iraq.

### Ideal type 2: War on Terror

The second stylised 'security culture' can be called 'War on Terror.' Even though President Obama has abandoned the term, it is useful because it emphasises the use of military means and the idea of war-based security where the focus is the defeat of enemies but, unlike the geo-political model, the enemies are non-state actors. The events of September 11, 2001 (9/11) play a foundational role in the concept, often compared to the role played by Pearl Harbour in the geo-political model. The 'War on Terror' has arisen in response to what has been constructed as 'asymmetric threats' (terrorism, insurgencies, and various types of contemporary largely non-state violence). These are not necessarily new; they were obscured during the Cold war period by the primacy of the Cold War. The 'War on Terror' is statist rather than multilateralist. Like geo-politics, the objective of the 'War on Terror' is national (and sometimes global or regional) security but vis-à-vis the risk of terrorism rather than the threat of an armed attack by a foreign state. It is possible to distinguish two broad types of intervention within the framework of the 'War on Terror.' One is the counter-insurgency model epitomised in Iraq and Afghanistan, which is about defeating insurgents and/or terrorists with military forces. There are, of course variants of counter-insurgency. Heavy-handed tactics as used by Russia, the Assad regime, the Americans in Vietnam or Israel in Gaza involve attacks on population centres where combatants are supposed to be hiding. The population security approach of the British in Malaya or of US General Petraeus in Baghdad in 2007 aims to separate the insurgents from the population and protect the population while attacking the insurgents. By contrast what might be called counter-terror interventions focus on defeating the terrorists through intelligence and targeted killings usually from the air (the drone campaign). This emerging version of the 'War on Terror' 'security culture' involves a new set of practices; a shift from the military to a combination of intelligence agencies and private security contractors and the widespread use of new technologies for mass surveillance, cyber warfare and robotics.

### Ideal type 3: Liberal Peace

The third stylised type of security culture can be termed 'Liberal peace,' which is associated with the dramatic increase in multilateral interventions since the end of the Cold War. The difference between the Liberal Peace-culture and the previous two cultures is the preoccupation with stability as opposed to (the defeat of) enemies. In principle, security is achieved through stability rather than by defeating an enemy. The objective in this case can be national, regional or global security. As in the other cultures types, there are of course various subtypes. They range from the more muscular Responsibility to Protect or humanitarian intervention, which involves using military forces to protect civilians from massive human rights abuses, often from the air (the classic examples are Kosovo and Libya, though interventions in Northern Iraq (1991), Somalia (1992), Sierra Leone (2001), Mali (2012) could count as well) through the deployment of peacekeeping troops usually under a United Nations mandate to uphold ceasefires and stabilise conflicts (probably the most extensive and numerous form of

intervention) to human security, focused on human rights and justice. The liberal peace culture also involves a new set of practices; a range of international agencies, private contractors, NGOs, or what Duffield calls a 'strategic complex' (Duffield 2006) and a variety of actions including reconstruction and state-building efforts.

### Analysing Logics

Every ideal 'security culture' type is shaped by a specific 'security gap,' i.e. distinct mismatch between the objectives and the practices. It is the nature of the gap that explains the logic or pathway of any specific culture. Take for example, the evolution of the 'War on Terror.' The initial response to the events of 9/11 was to frame the response in an almost geopolitical way. The terrorist attacks were treated as an attack on the United States and the wars in Afghanistan and Iraq were framed as self-defence. In both countries, the United States undertook conventional military invasions, albeit incorporating new technologies and, in the case of Afghanistan, relying on local proxies. It was difficult, however, to claim that the practices (conventional military force) achieved the objective (American national security) since resistance developed in both countries. The conventional approach, thereby, evolved into the counter-insurgency approach described above. At least in Iraq, this approach was (temporarily) rather successful in dampening down violence; however it was extremely costly in terms of money and the lives of American soldiers. In other words, it produced a gap that was unsustainable and represented, if you like, a *cul de sac* in the evolution of the War on Terror. It was the Obama Administration that introduced a focus on what it called counter-terror (to distinguish it from counter-insurgency)—the current version of the War on Terror. Air strikes and drone attacks are used to kill individual terrorists at long distance. This does not eliminate the terrorist threat; on the contrary, it may be the cause of new mobilisations. But any renewed mobilisation justifies further

attacks. As long as there are rather few attacks on the American mainland, it does not matter if the terrorists multiply; what matters is that an American President is seen to be responding to terrorist attacks and thereby believed to be acting in the interest of American national security. It is a belief that is embedded and reproduced within the framework of the 'War on Terror.' Thus, in this latest version of the 'War on Terror,' the practices and the objective are rather well aligned and this allows for escalation (as the terrorists multiply) and persistence as the terrorists justify the budgets of those carrying out the air strikes and drone attacks.

## Conclusion: Conceptualising international interventions as 'security interventions'

This article set out to open up the scholarly engagement with the issue of international interventions by acknowledging international interventions as 'security interventions,' as opposed to naturalising them as '*military* interventions.' This starting point meant to engage with the concept of security. Based on a brief discussion of different approaches to 'security,' the article suggests taking 'security' as both an objective as well as a practice. This take on 'security' led to the development of two interlinked concepts: 'security culture' and 'security gap,' as analytical tools to grasp the complexity of international interventions. The concept of 'security culture' captures specific combinations of objectives and practices. The concept of 'security gap' captures the particular relationship, or one could say, the distinct kind of 'mismatch' between objectives and practices as it occurs in a 'security culture.'

Reconceptualising and approaching international military interventions as 'security interventions' and applying these two concepts enables a scholarship that takes the complex reality of these interventions into account, takes seriously the recent relevance of 'security,' while avoiding being caught in the dilemma of dealing with 'security' as

'advocacy.' The reading of international interventions through the concept of 'security culture' and the interlinked analytical tool 'security gap' makes it possible that the analysis and understanding goes beyond the idea of traditional military capabilities. It also enables a more differentiated understanding of the international community; and avoids the simplification of treating the international community as a unitary actor. More importantly, perhaps it opens up the possibility of analysing the logic that underlies and brings out distinct kinds of interventions, as well as the methods of reproduction and/or change within 'security cultures.'

In particular, the application of the concept of 'security gap' provides a solid empirical ground, which enables researchers to point out mismatches between objectives and practices, which could then serve as the ground for normative arguments about what kind of 'security gaps' are desirable (e.g. from a human security perspective) and about what kind of 'security' intervention comes closest to the proposed ideal without having these normative premises already built into the object of analysis. 'Objectives' are deeply embedded in practices, which shape the way of thinking of security actors, as well as powerful assumptions about political authority. This approach allows us to explain why, for example, air strikes are actually believed to be an appropriate response to a range of different problems, and continue to be the natural resort of politicians, despite the fact they may be rather ineffective when judged by criteria such as human security that are outside the framework of a specific security culture.

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