

RESEARCH REPORT

#014

The background of the cover is a photograph of a cracked pavement surface. The main color is a vibrant red, with black asphalt visible in the cracks and at the edges. There are white and yellow markings on the pavement, including a white arrow pointing downwards and several yellow rectangular patches. The overall image has a textured, slightly grainy appearance.

European Security in Times of Crisis: Perspectives from Peace Research

HOLGER NIEMANN/URSULA SCHRÖDER (EDS.) | 10/2024

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Abstract

Russia's war against Ukraine has plunged Europe's peace and security order into a deep crisis. While the ongoing war has been crucial in focusing our collective attention on the crisis of peace and security in Europe, this crisis took hold long before the current war and goes far beyond it. The central aim of this research report is to assess how we need to recalibrate the directions of research on peace and security in Europe at a time of confrontation and controversy, but also of global and planetary ruptures. Starting from our own research interests and from how they have been affected by the rapidly changing constellation of crises, this report examines what perspectives from peace research can bring to the study of increasingly confrontational and conflictual security dynamics in Europe and beyond. The report first discusses how we arrive at our understanding of peace research as a multi-perspectival approach that is characterised by normativity and problem-orientation, a focus on practice and knowledge transfer, and an emphasis on ethics and reflexivity. The report then identifies a series of research fields that we consider relevant for an era in which long-established order-creating and order-maintaining institutions in Europe and beyond are faltering – and in which new solutions must be found. These fields include Russia's role and cooperative security in Europe, Europe's role in peacebuilding and conflict management, the internal dimension of the European peace project, societal peace formation, and European peace and security in the Anthropocene. While these themes represent only a selection of the issues at stake, this report demonstrates how peace research can animate current debates about the European peace and security order.

Keywords: Climate crisis, European security, European peace and security order, peace research, polycrisis, war against Ukraine

1 Introduction

Ursula Schröder

Russia's war against Ukraine has plunged Europe's peace and security order into a deep crisis. Its complex and interlocking web of wider European and transatlantic security alliances and cooperative institutions is in disarray. While the ongoing war has been crucial in focusing our collective attention on the crisis of peace and security in Europe, the crisis began long before the current war and goes far beyond it. The present combination of profound rivalries among a number of powerful states over the shape of the future international order, major challenges to the UN system, and a crisis of democracy in many European states – exemplified by the rise of right-wing parties in Germany – points to longer-lasting and profound transformations of the European and international peace and security order. Add to this the lingering effects of the recent pandemic and the not-yet-fully-predictable future impact of the escalating climate crisis on peace and security, and you have a perfect storm.

This configuration of peace and security challenges facing Europe and the world can be understood as part of the current unfolding of a 'polycrisis' (Morin and Kern 1999): Here, separate crises occur in parallel and interact to such an extent that their combined impact is greater than the sum of the individual crises. Current thinking on this configuration of crises converges on the idea that we have entered a period in which multiple, parallel crises are interlinked and have common – and in some cases cascading or compounding – effects, with their causes and effects inextricably linked. In the policy world, this understanding is reflected in countless public lectures and discussion rounds and can be found, for instance, in the World Economic Forum's Global Risk Report (2023). In this debate, it is important to understand that the current crisis configuration is not exogenous to Europe – crises do not 'invade' from outside. Instead, our current situation is deeply rooted in our own societies: crises also come from within our ways of life, be it our carbon-intensive lifestyles or our home-grown crisis of democracy. Taking this broader argument of a world of multiple crises as its broader horizon, the research report foregrounds the centrality of the Russian attack on Ukraine in triggering the current crisis of European peace and security but casts its analytical net wider.

Our central aim in producing this report has been to assess how we need to recalibrate the directions of research on peace and security in Europe at a time of confrontation and controversy, but also of global and planetary ruptures. Starting from our own research interests and from how they have been affected by the rapidly changing constellation of crises, this report examines what perspectives from peace research can bring to the study of increasingly confrontational and conflictual security dynamics in Europe and beyond. In our view, the Russian war of aggression against Ukraine is a key phenomenon in this regard that current and future research on European peace and security must address. We cannot go back to ‘business as usual’ but have to integrate the resulting fundamental changes in European security dynamics into our research agendas. At the same time, it is clear to us that research must take better account of the global and planetary ruptures we have witnessed in recent years. The climate crisis is a key concern for us here.

The report presents the key findings of our internal discussion process since spring 2022. It summarises our explorations of what perspectives from peace and conflict studies can bring to the study of increasingly confrontational and conflictual security dynamics in Europe and beyond. In doing so, it does not seek to present a single, exhaustive future research agenda for the study of European peace and security orders. Indeed, in our view, the turbulent times we live through do not lend themselves easily to the development of multi-year research strategies in the field of peace and security research. What we hope to achieve with this report, therefore, is to develop a better understanding of how our research interests are affected by the rapidly evolving constellation of crises, and where our research might usefully take account of the profound changes around us. The fact that we start from our own research interests and from the knowledge generated in our ongoing research projects also means that we are not able to comprehensively cover every relevant research angle in this report. Instead, we have chosen to identify five larger research fields that are crucial to our own research interests. Within this framework, we have discussed the themes and issues that we consider most relevant. In each of these avenues, our analysis follows a similar pattern: we first frame the specific challenges facing each research field, then map the research debates most relevant for our undertaking, and finally propose a set of research directions that we believe would generate new and interesting insights into questions of European peace and security.

Our efforts are guided by three key premises that we draw from our engagement with the legacy of peace and conflict research. While we develop this legacy in more detail in Chapter 3, our key takeaways for research in a peace research tradition are as follows: (1) *Doing research outside the box*: Contemporary peace and security issues are always situated within and need to be contextualised by broader and longer-term social, economic and political developments. (2) *Doing research with an interest in practical, positive change*: Peace as a value and public good is something meaningful and positive for us. From this premise we derive both a normative orientation of our research and an orientation towards working to solve ‘real world’ problems. (3) *Doing research with a broader concern for the future*: Research on European peace and security must go beyond short-term analysis to include a concern with the unfolding planetary crisis.

To deliver the results of this research report, the authors of this report have taken part in a longer process of deliberations and debates within and across IFSH research areas in the past two years. In 2022, we started out with a first collective scenario exercise that allowed us to trace a number of plausible scenarios for Europe in 2032 back to today’s security environment (see Chapter 2 of this report). We then debated how core tenets of peace and conflict research can be used to shape research on the ongoing crisis constellation (see Chapter 3 of this report). And we finally organised our research interests into five distinct research avenues, covering a wide variety of relevant empirical phenomena as well as different ontologies and epistemologies of doing research on them (see Chapter 4 of this report).

2 Scenario Thinking as a Way to Imagine Future European Peace and Security Orders

Holger Niemann and Ursula Schröder

In 2022, like many other research institutions, we asked ourselves how our own research would need to adapt to the profound transformation of the established security order caused by Russia's war of aggression against Ukraine, but also to the broader context of complex crises, military confrontations and conflicts in and around Europe. What distinctive contribution can perspectives from peace and conflict studies make to current debates on these issues? In order to address this question and to arrive at a common assessment of the new security situation, IFSH organised a scenario thinking process in cooperation with the Berlin-based agency Foresight Intelligence. The aim of this process was to use a scenario exercise as a starting point to better understand how our own research interests are affected by the rapidly evolving constellation of crises and where our research might contribute to identifying pathways for a prospective research agenda on European peace and security at IFSH. Our process of thinking and reflecting on these issues began with the scenario exercise documented in this chapter, but subsequently moved from a more narrow focus on scenarios and futures to broader questions of core principles of peace research and relevant fields of further research on European peace and security.

Frequently used by strategists and policy planners, scenario thinking can be seen as a creative method for capturing the multiple and diverse paths that European peace and security might take over the next decade. The existing literature, for example on anticipatory governance (Guston 2014) and on the role of forecasting and preparedness (Aradau and Blanke 2017), emphasises an increasing complexity of the links between security policy, uncertainty and the future. This resonates well with a growing interest in future-oriented research methods and research that deliberately looks at future trajectories rather than deriving conclusions from searching for patterns in the past. A range of methods, for example strategic foresights, scenario thinking, simulation games, the Delphi method and various other forecasting techniques show that a structured approach to

thinking about future developments is both feasible and useful for facilitating strategic policy planning. However, predictive methods such as forecasting or prognoses are primarily interested in the particular implications of future developments, often centring on one particular effect but rarely focusing on the trajectories of these developments themselves (Bressan, Nybard and Seefeldt 2019: 13). Anticipatory approaches are especially interested in foreseeing changes to and adaptation of planned processes or developments, and in developing responses for preventing the expected outcome from further damage (Bali, Capano and Ramesh 2019: 4). Scenario thinking processes, on the other hand, explicitly seek to address complexity and uncertainty by focusing on the trajectories themselves and their multiple effects on future events through emphasizing plausible alternative futures (Gabriel 2014: 31).

Previous research has demonstrated the benefits of scenario thinking as an analytical tool to foster theory building and for generating policy-relevant research programmes (Barma et al. 2016; Junio and Mahnken 2013). Our scenario thinking process was based on the premise that thinking about the future is neither unscientific nor unrealistic (Gabriel 2014). It is important to note, however, that these methods do not provide specific and probable predictions of the future, but rather plausible scenarios of possible yet uncertain futures. The aim of such approaches is not to provide an accurate view of the future, but to provide consistent and plausible trajectories of possible future developments to inform strategic planning and decision making. The ability to construct plausible scenarios depends on the ability to avoid determinism and to emphasise complexity. This makes it possible to justify which scenarios are coherent and plausible, and why (Gabriel 2014).

IFSH'S SCENARIO EXERCISE

The scenario thinking process at IFSH was structured around three in-house workshops, preceded by an online survey and followed by working group activities. The group consisted of 14 IFSH researchers from all research areas. The group was diverse in terms of gender and career level as well as disciplinary background and expertise in developing policy-relevant research. It was found that previous experience with forecasting methods varied considerably.

The methodology used was designed with the aim of developing plausible and coherent scenarios. The scenarios were developed by identifying issues

pertinent to European peace and security, establishing links between these topics, and prioritising those considered most relevant by the group. The group then narrowed down the list of issues, resulting in the formulation of a limited number of projections of the future. These projections were developed in accordance with the principles that they be mutually exclusive but collectively exhaustive. These projections were then used to develop scenarios based on:

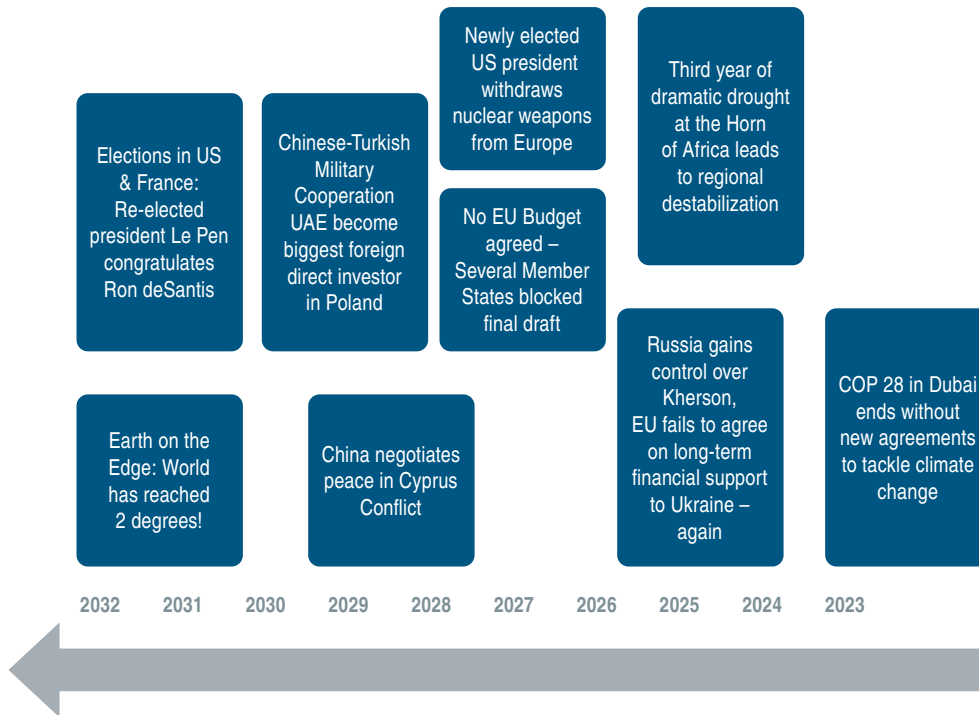
- Backcasting plausible trajectories of a history of the future from 2032 to today
- Identifying drivers and dynamics that shape these scenarios by explaining the root causes of the chain of events that led to his scenario
- Evaluating the opportunities and threats of each scenario for developing a research agenda

This process produced a number of scenarios, three of which the group decided to examine in more detail in order to identify different perspectives on the future of peace and security in Europe:

NEGATIVELY STABLE:
A EUROPEAN DECLINE

This scenario described a Europe that would be somewhat stable, but without any bright prospects. Drivers of this development include a growth of populism and of socio-economic inequalities, a US-American withdrawal from Europe, and increasing inefficiencies of the EU, for example. Politically, the scenario would be more or less driven by the continuation of today's conflicts, in particular an unresolved but frozen war against Ukraine and the rise of multipolar world orders. The European Union would continue to exist but be largely confined to its role as a free trade area rather than a project to promote and deepen transnational integration. Europe would also be unable to provide effective solutions to the climate crisis and economic inequalities. Our history of the future of this scenario therefore included events such as growing instability due to a prolonged draught at the Horn of Africa or the erosion of today's global climate governance regime (see figure 1, page 11). While this scenario most closely resembles today's Europe, it would be characterized by instability, rising authoritarianism, and an 'Orbanization' of EU politics. Violent conflict in and with Europe is largely abandoned in this scenario, but so are hopes for a revival of the European peace project.

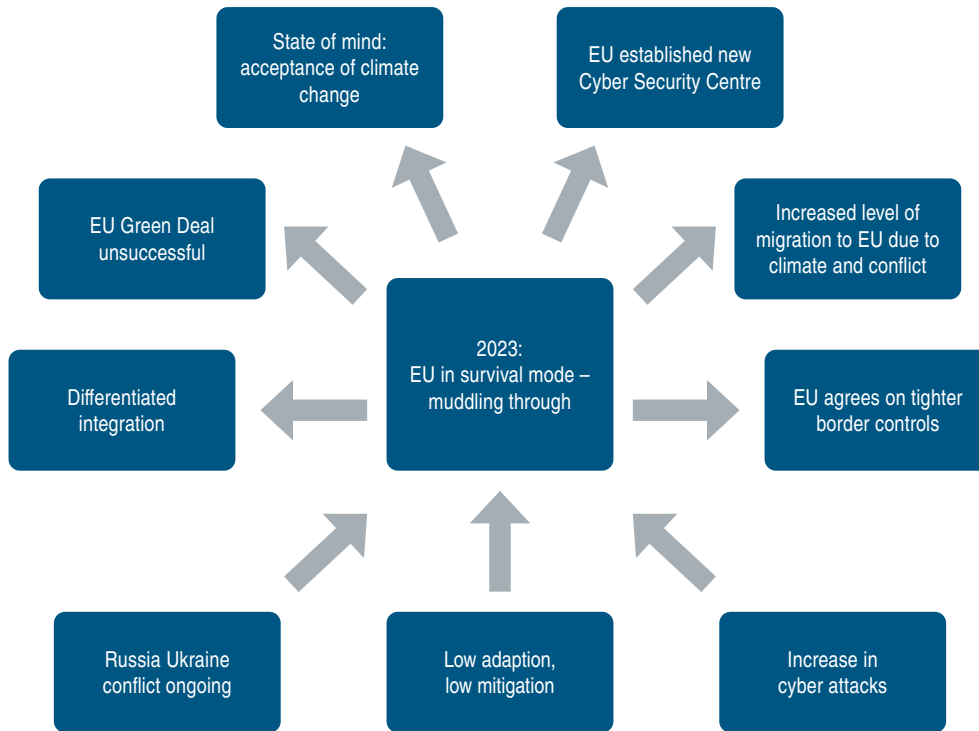
Figure 1: A History of the Future of a Negatively Stable Europe



**EUROPE IN SURVIVAL MODE:
MUDDLING THROUGH**

A more prosperous but also more challenged Europe was the second scenario we developed in more detail. Key drivers in this scenario included an increase of cyber attacks against critical European infrastructure, weak climate mitigation strategies, and a protracted yet still-violent Russian war against Ukraine (see figure 2, page 12). This future would be characterized by a furthering of internal integration among EU member states and a discontinued enlargement process due to an increased focus on strengthening EU-internal response mechanisms, essentially keeping potential member states on hold. Europe’s inability to develop effective responses to climate change and increasing societal polarization would further rifts between North and South with very limited capacities for finding joint solutions to global economic, environmental or political challenges. Overall, Europe’s ability in this scenario to address pressing peace and security challenges differs heavily both internally and externally. While integration is furthered internally, Europe becomes an even more closed fortress externally.

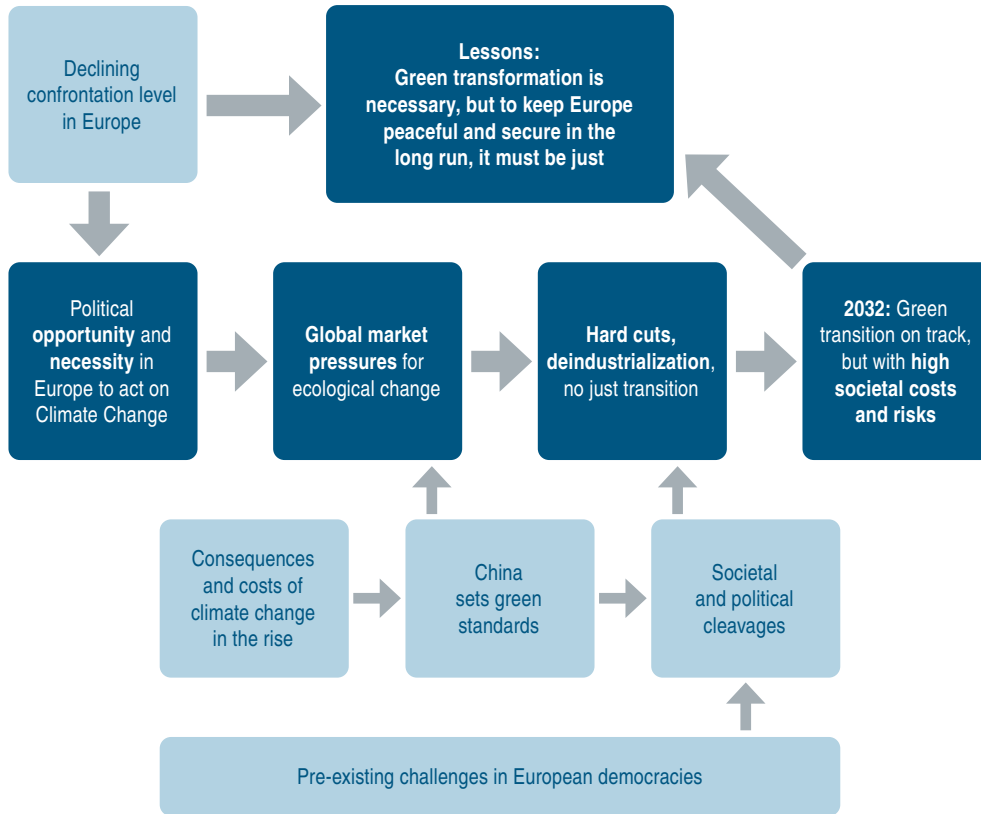
Figure 2: Drivers and Dynamics for a Europe in Survival Mode



GREEN TRANSITION OF EUROPE

Our final scenario focused on the political and societal implications of a green transformation of Europe. This scenario started from the premise that technological innovation, but also strategic resilience building, would be key drivers for Europe’s peace and security landscape. A largely technocratic and rather conventional approach to the green transformation hinders its full transformative potential. Instead, integration is limited and resilience to climate-related risks is largely restricted to financial resources for short-term responses. Responses to climate change thus create new social cleavages and a continued ‘fortressing’ of Europe to deal with the political grievances of countries in the Global South. As a result, for example, China would become a standard-setter in environmental technologies (see figure 3, page 13). This scenario is characterised by missed opportunities to harness the full potential of the green transformation for a future European peace and security order due to an emphasis on technology and technocratic regulation.

Figure 3: Drivers and Dynamics for a Green Transformation of Europe



FROM SCENARIOS TO
PEACE RESEARCH PERSPECTIVES ON EUROPEAN
PEACE AND SECURITY ORDERS

As we developed plausible trajectories for the future of European peace and security, our scenario-building process resulted in a rather sceptical view of the prospects for further EU integration and normalisation of relations with Russia. To varying degrees, all scenarios were driven by a rather pessimistic outlook on both issues. None of our scenarios appeared to be utopian, showcasing that the type of scenario thinking we followed is a structured way of thinking about plausible developments, not necessarily about desirable futures. But it also shows that the often-normative impulse of peace research to provide new perspectives on a given situation requires a sound analysis of the implications of such scenarios.

Overall, the scenario exercise proved to be an insightful and creative way of thinking about the future of European peace and security. It helped to identify relevant issues and generated ideas on the direction in which discussions of future research avenues could be taken. Scenarios are neither representative nor exhaustive, as they are always selected from a larger number of possible scenarios. However, thinking in scenarios raises awareness for key aspects of an issue and provides a systematic way of thinking through their implications for future developments.

Based on the experiences and conclusions drawn from this scenario exercise, we then turned to a discussion of the core tenets of our understanding of peace research and what it can offer for an analysis of the current security constellations. We also set up working groups to discuss the core themes of IFSH's research in the field of European peace and security. While the scenarios presented in this chapter are not directly related to any of these core themes, they were crucial to our understanding of how to cluster and structure our thinking on the topic. In this sense, scenario thinking initiated the process that led to this research report, even though the report itself does not present specific scenarios or result directly from our scenario exercise. Instead, our scenario thinking process was the starting point for a longer process of reflection and debate on what perspectives from peace and conflict studies can bring to the study of increasingly confrontational and conflictual security dynamics in Europe and beyond.

3 Peace Research: Key Principles and Perspectives

Holger Niemann and Ursula Schröder

What can perspectives from peace and conflict research and critical security studies bring to the analysis of European peace and security? The following chapter presents the results of a process of discussion and reflection on the legacy of peace and conflict research and its links to critical security studies. And it outlines what premises from these research fields we believe can be used productively to better understand how to analyse European security in times of crisis. Peace research is a diverse academic field, and in this chapter, we have tried to clarify our own perspective on it.

By ‘peace research’, we refer to the broader and interdisciplinary field of peace and conflict studies. In the public domain, this research field has sometimes been equated with research that exclusively deals with ‘peaceful’ topics and themes, such as peace negotiations or peacebuilding strategies for countries emerging from war. Contrary to this external perception of the field, however, peace and conflict research has long been primarily concerned with conflict and war, i.e., the causes, forms, dynamics and consequences of conflict and violence as well as their prevention, containment and management. Within the research community itself, we therefore find nearly the opposite debate (and critique): that peace and conflict research as a field has focused too much on violent conflict and war – to the detriment of a more sustained focus on the conditions of peace. According to this view, peace remains understudied (Diehl 2016; Regan 2014; de Wilde 2023), not least because for most of its existence, peace research was heavily focused on negative peace (Gleditsch, Nordkvelle, and Strand 2014: 145) and studied the absence of war and violence. Even concepts such as ‘liberal peace’ or ‘democratic peace’ have often been defined primarily by how they explain the absence of violence, rather than the establishment of positive peace – i.e., a progression towards justice and away from structural and open violence. The call for a greater focus on peace and its conceptualisation has therefore gained prominence in order to ‘facilitate more nuanced, yet rigorous, analyses of peace’ (Söderström and Olivius 2022: 411). Concepts such as ‘emancipatory peace’ (Richmond 2022), ‘mundane peace’

(Väyrynen 2019), ‘relational peace’ (Jarstad, Söderström, and Akebo 2023) or ‘agonistic peace’ (Strömbom 2020) underline the current interest in the conditions of peace and how peace formation can be fostered. At the same time, this conceptual fragmentation has been criticized for its lack of common ground (Boulanger Martel et al. 2024).¹ Nevertheless, this recent scholarship underlines the overlaps in research interests between peace research and critical security (see, for example, Fierke 2015; Peoples and Vaughan-Williams 2021) because both fields are seemingly interested in de-essentializing their core concepts and in emphasize their relationality in time and space.

Our understanding of peace research builds on this resurgence in concepts and research about peace. It also follows calls to acknowledge that the commonalities and overlapping research agendas of critical security studies and peace research provide opportunities for innovative theorizing about peace and security (C.A.S.E. Collective 2006; Jutila, Pehkonen, and Väyrynen 2008: 630). This chapter discusses the empirical, methodological and normative foundations and assumptions our specific perspective of peace research builds on. We emphasize four features that we deem crucial for doing and developing research on peace and security in Europe in the coming years: (1) a multi-perspectival focus, (2) a focus on normativity and problem-orientation, (3) a focus on practice and knowledge transfer, and (4) a focus on ethics and reflexivity.

3.1 SITUATING THE INSTITUTIONAL AND SUBSTANTIVE CORE OF PEACE RESEARCH

Although peace research has focused heavily on studying war and violent conflict, the field has long been characterised by a fragmentation of research communities and a lack of shared ontology, epistemology, and methodology (Boulanger Martel et al. 2024: 3; Bright and Gledhill 2018: 129; Söderström and Olivius 2022: 412). At the same time, peace research has undergone a remark-

¹ A recent study by Boulanger Martel et al. (2024) identifies 61 different concepts of peace in the literature.

able process of community formation. While maintaining its status as an interdisciplinary field of research, it has seen the establishment of specific institutes, journals and study programmes in the past decades (Mac Ginty 2019: 270).

Since its emergence as a research field in the United States and Scandinavia in the 1950s, peace research has moved through different phases and paradigms, addressing a wide range of issues and topics – from nuclear disarmament to post-liberal peacebuilding. The plurality of research topics and the diversity of methodologies have been key features of the field ever since. Initially focused primarily on armed conflict and nuclear risks, peace research has since become much more diverse and pluralistic. This includes an early focus on the pacifying effects of international institutions and multilateral negotiation (Wright 1955), but also topics such as the interconnections between environmental conservation and peace (Brock 1991) and between economic development and peace (Barnett 2008).

In the context of establishing peace research in Germany, discussions have long been shaped by differences between those who advocate for the development of a dedicated empirical-analytical focus and those who emphasize the ties between peace research and peace activism. In their analysis of the evolution of peace research as an academic field in Germany, Schlotter and Wisotzki (2011: 12–18) identify three distinct phases. The first, which they call the ‘formation phase’, occurred during the 1960s and 1970s. This period was characterized by the aforementioned divergence. The second phase, the ‘consolidation phase’, occurred during the 1980s. This period witnessed a growing recognition of peace research as an established academic field and a marginalization of critical perspectives. Finally, the third phase, the ‘professionalisation phase’, began in the 1990s. This period capitalized on the momentum of the post-bipolar era to further the field’s professionalization.

The changing global security environment since the end of the Cold War, in particular the rise of intra-state violent conflict and the legitimation of the use of military force for humanitarian purposes during the 1990s, has led to a focus on international intervention, moral justifications of the legitimate use of force, and the role of multilateral actors in peacekeeping, peace enforcement and peacebuilding processes (Paris 2011; Weiss 2016). Scholars working on post-liberal peacebuilding in particular have criticized a lack of local and non-Western perspectives, top-down approaches and neoliberal concepts of international

intervention in these debates (Richmond and Mac Ginty 2014). Due to frustration with their mixed record, but also because of growing interest in local and non-Western perspectives on peace and conflict (Kreikemeyer 2020), we are currently witnessing fatigue related to such activities (see also Chapter 4.2).

The sub-differentiation of peace research is still in full swing, and the field has more recently incorporated feminist (Feron and Väyrynen 2024), post- and decolonial (Jabri 2013) and relational (Brigg 2020) perspectives. These debates emphasize not only the need to broaden the empirical scope of peace research, but also to bring a different set of methodologies and epistemologies into debates about the field's direction. Research in this tradition examines how the production and use of knowledge, the development and application of analytical categories, and issues of positionality, intersectionality or privilege affect research processes (Brunner 2020; Feron and Väyrynen 2024; Hönke and Müller 2012; Wibben and Donahoe 2020). In doing so, feminist and postcolonial approaches in peace research and critical security studies have contributed to debates about the marginalization of non-Western or feminist voices (Owen et al. 2018), the interconnectedness of root causes of conflict (Elbe and Buckland-Merrett 2019), and non-traditional perspectives on peace, violence and war as well (Ahall 2016; Aradau 2010).

As a result of the increasing plurality of peace and conflict research, its core concept of 'peace' also remains essentially contested (Boulanger Martel et al. 2024: 6; Jutila, Pehkonen, and Väyrynen 2008: 625). Although the meaning of peace has been under constant discussion for decades (Gleditsch, Nordkvelle, and Strand 2014: 155), scholars observe a certain weariness about this debate (Chojnacki and Namberger 2011: 334).

Our way of cutting across the plurality of concepts of peace is to understand peace broadly as a 'process of decreasing violence and increasing distributive justice' (Czempiel 1998: 11). Peace research, for us, is thus a field that generally emphasizes an orientation towards peace, with a preference for going beyond negative peace – a concept which refers to the absence of war or physical violence. It seeks to provide perspectives that move beyond purely military or strategic views of violent conflict. Any emphasis on peace as more than the absence of war therefore implies the embedding of security issues in process-oriented and relational views of political, societal, economic or environmental conditions and developments.

3.2 KEY FEATURES OF OUR UNDERSTANDING OF PEACE RESEARCH

While peace and critical security scholarship is diverse in terms of perspectives and methods, we identify several key features that we consider central to our own perspective of peace research: a multi-perspectival focus, a focus on normativity and problem-orientation, a focus on practice and knowledge transfer, and a reflexive and ethical manner of doing research as well. To varying degrees, these features are also relevant to other fields of research in International Relations, especially given the emphasis that many critical approaches and methodologies place on context, reflexivity and research ethics. We do not view this as an issue, however, as the purpose of this chapter is to present the core features that we consider most relevant to our understanding of ‘peace research’, irrespective of the relevance of some of its aspects in other fields of study.

A MULTI-PERSPECTIVAL APPROACH

We see peace research as a multi-perspectival endeavour because researchers in the field often approach questions of peace ‘from different perspectives and vantage points’ and with ‘multiple tools, perspectives and theories’ (Söderström and Olivius 2022: 412, 425). While peace research has many features of an academic discipline (study programmes, professorships, journals, academic associations), the field essentially integrates different research perspectives from disciplines within the social sciences, humanities and natural sciences. Researchers have also drawn inspiration from both quantitative and qualitative research methods. This understanding of peace research also enables us to emphasize the various connections between peace research and critical security studies, as both fields are shaped by a joint interest in explicating the ambiguous meaning and political power of concepts such as peace and security (Jutila, Pehkonen, and Väyrynen 2008: 632). We therefore argue that questions of peace and security, such as the issue of European security at stake in this research report, need to be contextualized in broader trends and developments. We pursue this broader contextualization in a multi-perspectival approach.

First, we contextualize the sometimes more simplistic understandings of territoriality underlying debates about ‘European’ security. We draw on debates about scale and scalarity (Fagioli and Malito 2024; Lambach 2022; Millar 2020a; Sjöberg 2008) to go beyond understandings of European peace and security

as bound to a specific and geographically unambiguous ‘European territory’ (see also Chapter 4.1). We also stress the need to integrate planetary perspectives on peace and security into debates about European security, as entanglements between ‘European’ and planetary questions have become all too visible in the Anthropocene era (Burke et al. 2016; see also Chapter 4.5).

Second, our perspective takes note of the temporalities that shape peace and security. Following an understanding of peace as a process (Czempiel 1998: 1), we conceptualize peace as a relational phenomenon that is in constant need of reification. Existing research indicates that the temporalities of peace processes such as diplomatic negotiations or local peacebuilding are neither universal nor linear (Christie and Algar-Faria 2020; Nishikawa-Pacher 2024). We therefore consider scales to be affected by spatiotemporal settings, interconnections between the past, present, and future, and by the temporal configurations of social spaces. This understanding of time and temporality is especially relevant for the field of security research that is heavily engaged in policy work and therefore frequently required to adapt to the hectic day-to-day demands of politics or the media. We consider it imperative to complement the prevalent short-term thinking with deliberate long-term perspectives on peace and security and the conditions and contexts that shape them. Our multi-perspectival approach demonstrates that political stability is not synonymous with stable peace, and that peace research is particularly suited to studying the trajectories of peace over time (Söderström and Olivius 2022: 417).

Third, recent research has started to investigate the inclusion of diverse ways of knowing and multiple forms of knowledge in debates about peace and security (Salter 2013: 6). A particular focus has been placed on local knowledges in conflict-affected states. Starting from the observation that ‘only one type of knowledge is insufficient for peace research, [making] multiple knowledges and multi-perspectival research necessary’ (Juttila, Pehkonen, and Väyrynen 2008: 634), recent debates have started to call for the more systematic incorporation ‘of the multiplicities of knowledges and subjectivities that are not rooted in Western modernity’ (Azarmandi 2023: 11). We deal with such issues in Chapter 4.4.

Fourth, the field of critical security studies in particular has a long tradition of moving security research away from its previous focus on the security of states. Drawing on the established line of thinking about a diversity of security referent objects, the manifestation of security objects and materialities, and securitizing

practices (Aradau et al. 2015; Fierke 2015) as well, our investigation of European security goes beyond the current primacy of defence-focused debates by also highlighting the relevance of society-focused peacebuilding strategies (see also Chapter 4.4).

Fifth, the challenges confronting European security today cannot be usefully divided into distinctly internal and external dimensions. Here, we build on research that, on the one hand, brings together the often-separate research fields of internal and external security (Alcaro and Dijkstra 2024; Hoeffler, Hoffman, and Mérand 2024; Shepherd 2021) and, on the other hand, focuses more prominently on the internal dimension of European security (Bartenstein, Hegemann, and Merschel 2022; Bossong and Rhinard 2016). We actively integrate the debate about the EU's internal dimension of the European peace project into debates about European security that, more often than not, focus exclusively on the external dimension.

Our multi-perspectival approach to the challenges facing European peace and security today brings together relevant debates in the fields of peace and conflict research with research in (critical) security studies in order to come to a more comprehensive analysis. Bringing debates from these fields together, however, comes with the need to highlight a number of characteristics in such a multi-perspectival approach: normativity and problem-orientation, and an engagement with practice and knowledge transfer,

A FOCUS ON NORMATIVITY AND PROBLEM-ORIENTATION

Our multi-perspectival approach is informed by a well-established understanding of peace research as a field that values peace as meaningful and 'good': in essence, 'much of peace studies has a normative dimension, believing peace to be a preferred public good' (Mac Ginty 2019: 269). This normative focus is rooted in the historical origins of the field, which observed that 'war is a problem for the whole of humanity and there was a need for rigorous and systematic scientific study of the phenomenon of war in order to find the road to peace' (Juttila, Pehkonen, and Väyrynen 2008: 626). Although its historical background suggests a commitment to fostering peace, debates about what is needed to make peace more than just the absence of war have driven the field. A general orientation towards 'positive peace' provides a normative orientation for much

of the research community, albeit to varying degrees. As positive peace is a long-term aspiration, rather than an objective state or quality that exists or can be expected to exist in the here and now, we find de Wilde's (2023: 464) claim about peace as a 'horizon' useful. Rather than essentializing peace as something that either exists or not, our concept emphasizes that peace, because of its ideational and inspirational character, provides a normative orientation first and foremost. Peace is an imaginary that remains unreachable, but it offers normative direction for research and action precisely because of that.

One of the key elements of our focus on normativity is understanding peace research as a problem-oriented field (Rogers and Ramsbotham 1999: 750). Due to its normative commitment, peace research seeks to identify and discuss real-world problems as well as their possible solutions. In light of the complexity of today's security challenges, however, problem-orientation cannot be reduced to offering concrete 'solutions'. Rather, it entails that peace research provide the necessary expertise, knowledge, and assessment as much as concepts or policy proposals for political or societal actors (Schröder 2019: 3). While focusing less on 'solutions' and more on 'expertise' avoids an overly simplistic understanding of problem-orientation as social engineering, it nevertheless raises questions regarding the role of knowledge, the power of expertise, and the interface between science, politics, and society. Consequently, problem-orientation is primarily concerned with elucidating the complexity of peace and security issues and sensitizing actors to these complexities (Niemann and Schröder 2020: 137).

The normative orientation that we foreground here builds on a critical perspective. Any engagement with 'real-world' problems necessitates a reflexive approach to the social and political context within which the research is conducted. It also requires critically examining which concepts and categories are used for analysis and whence they emanate (Jutila, Pehkonen, and Väyrynen 2008: 630). Attempts by scholars to 'balance their commitments to avoiding harm with doing good at the same time' (Brewer 2016: 3) has led to controversies between more critical and more traditional strands of peace research, with the former arguing for more radical approaches to critique and emancipation (Krause 2019) – sometimes in the tradition of the Frankfurt School – and the latter more oriented towards less 'politically' engaged basic research (Gleditsch, Nordkevelle, and Strand 2014). Representatives of the critical tradition in peace research have highlighted the perceived flaws in 'de-normatising' peace research (Jaberg

2009: 39). This process, they argue, does not professionalize the field. Instead, it undermines its capacity to address issues of justice, power, and oppression, which are inextricably linked to the concept of 'positive peace'. In the past few years, however, this debate has become less polarized, and observers agree that the dispute over the normative positions of peace research has lost its sharpness (Bonacker 2011: 69; Wissenschaftsrat 2019: 22).

Scholars in the field of critical security studies have made similar arguments regarding the interconnections between normativity and problem-orientation, albeit from a different epistemological position (Nyman 2016). By emphasizing the necessity of critically examining the essentially contested meaning of security and the politics related to fixing particular understandings of security, critical security studies introduced a focus on power and knowledge, the marginalization of certain actors, and questions of justice and injustice to the study of international security. It follows that 'the meaning and study of security is inherently political, that is, always defined within a political context and subject to normative debate and change' (Fierke 2015: 16). Recent debates about the role and relevance of critique in this field emphasize the need to avoid 'totalities' and 'totalization' (Huysmans and Nogueira 2021) as well as the risks of normalizing the violent and containment effects of politics (Montesinos Coleman and Rosenow 2016) when adopting critical positions. Hence, in a post-modern world of complex and intertwined insecurities that constantly require resilience and experimentation, critique inevitably becomes a matter of affirmation of (Bargués-Pedreny 2019), companionship (Austin, Bellanova, and Kaufmann 2019) in, or engagement (de Goede 2020) with the human condition.

Understanding objects of security or insecurity not as natural givens but as being socially constructed (Aradau et al. 2015: 1) has led critical security studies to become more aware of inherent normativities. Furthermore, it emphasizes the necessity of re-examining the role of practice as not only an object of analysis, but more crucially as a key aspect of critical research that must be engaged with and that relates to researchers' normative orientations (Austin, Bellanova, and Kaufmann 2019; de Goede 2020). We see close connections here to certain areas of peace research which examine power relations, structural injustices, and knowledge regimes from a critical and emancipatory perspective (Krause 2019: 295). Thus, normativity is closely related to an orientation towards practice, both in certain areas of peace research and in critical security studies.

A FOCUS ON PRACTICE, KNOWLEDGE TRANSFER, AND PARTICIPATORY RESEARCH

The previous section has demonstrated that a focus on normativity and problem-orientation points to the nexus between science and practice.² We argue that an engaged scholarship driven by such normative aspirations also seeks to initiate social change. As a field that emerged in the context of preventing future war and that was closely involved in peace activism early on (see e.g. Gleditsch, Nordkvelle, and Strand 2014: 146), peace research has a long tradition of actively contributing to developing strategies to cope with ‘real-world problems’ (Bramsen and Hagemann 2023: 1954). Indeed, the field has often emphasized emancipation and transformation as inherent parts of its identity. It therefore ‘has always been defined as an applied and multidisciplinary science’ (Jutila, Pehkonen, and Väyrynen 2008: 631). The applied character of peace research is most evident in the prioritization of policy advice and knowledge transfer to both political and societal actors as strategies for addressing ‘real-world’ problems. In the German context, the proximity of peace research to political decision-makers is regarded as a defining characteristic of the field (Wissenschaftsrat 2019: 19).

There are different ways of facilitating this engagement with practice. Peace and security studies uses a variety of formats for policy advice and knowledge transfer (Bramsen and Hagemann 2023). Longstanding forms of advising and consulting decision-makers have been at the core of its practical engagement, alongside the publication of policy papers and written recommendations or proposals. Today, these activities also include advising civil society organizations or simply engaging with the public through media appearances, public lectures, or other forms of direct interaction with interested members of the public.

² In this section, the term ‘practice’ is used to refer to the political and societal activities related to peace and security research. This section therefore does not explicitly refer to the notion of practices as socially meaningful patterns of activity as emphasized by the practice turn in IR (Adler and Pouliot 2011; Bueger and Gadinger 2018) and critical security studies (Austin, Bellanova, and Kaufmann 2019; Bellanova, Jacobsen, and Monsees 2020; de Goede 2018). Nevertheless, there are several points of intersection between the practice turn and critical and reflexive approaches to peace and security research, as discussed in this chapter.

All of these activities fall under the broader umbrella of engagement with politics and society. In this, peace and security research reflects a broader trend within the academy to critically reflect on its societal role and relevance, as evidenced by discussions of the ‘third mission’ or ‘public engagement’ of science (Gibbons et al. 1994; Lawrence et al. 2022).

Different audiences not only require targeted formats of engagement, but also confront researchers with different expectations. Given the complexity of the field of peace and security politics, expectation management is considered especially challenging (Wulf 2011: 496). Furthermore, there is no consensus regarding appropriate standards for providing high-quality knowledge transfer and policy advice (Hellmüller, Goetschel, and Lidén 2023; Paris 2011). The relevance of peace research for policy and practice has been debated for many decades (Hellmann 2006: 15). One of the most important areas of debate is whether there is a perceived gap between academics and practitioners. This debate is driven by the concern that a lack of mutual understanding of life-worlds, working methods, and spheres of knowledge may impede the impact of knowledge transfer activities. However, existing research also demonstrates that interactions between scholars and practitioners can contribute to the framing of policy problems such as ‘fragile states’ (Paris 2011), or to promote powerful concepts such as ‘democratic peace’ (Bueger and Villumsen 2007). Focusing on the actual challenges of interaction, rather than on perceived gaps, would therefore be beneficial for further research. Ideally, peace research should be able to contribute to addressing real-world problems by providing orientation, categorisation, or evaluation through scientific knowledge. This also has the potential to be emancipatory, as providing orientation challenges the hierarchical and authoritative role of expert knowledge, empowering agents to use that knowledge in their own ways (Hegemann and Niemann 2022: 240). However, in addition to the previously discussed practical challenges and dilemmas of engaging with practice, this engagement also entails a certain understanding of knowledge as well as the production and dissemination of that knowledge. A crucial function of knowledge transfer is to depolarize or objectify controversial policy issues by providing ‘hard scientific’ facts. In theory, therefore, expertise on peace and security has a legitimizing capacity (Rungius and Weller 2019: 320). In practice, however, it might be more often employed for claiming authority or for highlighting the struggles over power and authority that are inextricably linked to knowledge and expertise (Sending 2015).

The role of knowledge is therefore pivotal in understanding how claiming expertise becomes not only a matter of contestation, but also a crucial factor in the establishment and definition of power relations. The complexity of current crises serves to illustrate that established categories of knowledge are becoming increasingly blurred as problems become wicked and knowledge itself becomes more uncertain (Hellmüller, Goetschel, and Lidén 2023). The field of peace and security policy is particularly susceptible to knowledge asymmetries (Hellmann 2006: 30), making this issue even more relevant. According to critical security studies, knowledge is a social practice that is embedded in a political context and therefore cannot be neutral (Booth 2005: 262). This concept of knowledge thus points to pertinent questions about what type of knowledge provided by whom and for which purpose gains relevance in politics and society. For example, gendered or racialized hierarchies have been identified as important factors influencing both the production of knowledge and how this knowledge informs political or societal actors (Hellmüller, Goetschel, and Lidén 2023: 1840). Recently, as argued in science and technology studies, the role of knowledge practices has also been discussed as one important way of enhancing awareness of power relations in the process of knowledge production (Bellanova, Jacobsen, and Monsees 2020). For instance, in the field of post-conflict peacebuilding (Julian, Bliesemann de Guevara, and Redhead 2019; Randazzo 2021), research on local, everyday, and indigenous knowledge has demonstrated how alternative avenues of knowing provide scope for different types of expertise, including that of non-academics, lay people, or ordinary citizens.

Intensifying interactions between research and practice has been identified as an important obstacle to making peace research more relevant for politics and society (Bramsen and Hagemann 2023: 1972). Therefore, identifying alternative pathways for generating knowledge and acknowledging the expertise of non-experts marks an important part of the current debates about knowledge transfer and policy advice in the fields of peace and security. One field that we consider especially interesting is the turn towards participatory and transdisciplinary methods in the social sciences and humanities (Owen, Macnaghten, and Stilgoe 2012). These methods present opportunities for accessing alternative forms of knowledge by overcoming established dichotomies between experts and lay people. They challenge conventional notions of knowledge transfer as a unidirectional process by emphasizing the methods' mutual nature. For the field of peace and security, which frequently encounters complex or intractable policy issues, such a reciprocal exchange of knowledge, which takes seriously

various forms of knowledge and expertise, appears well-suited to provide non-linear pathways for the transfer of knowledge. One of the ways in which participatory methods facilitate access to alternative forms of knowledge is through the diversity of their formats. Depending on the context, this may entail including stakeholders or lay people in the collection and analysis of data in order to develop research questions together. The level of collaboration determines the research formats employed. These may include science cafés, real-world laboratories, or citizen science (Defila and Di Giulio 2018). Furthermore, participatory research methods frequently employ a diverse array of data collection techniques that diverge from conventional formats, including arts and crafts-based methods such as photography, stitching, and textile-making (Andrä 2022); communal conflict management (Zöhrer and Lustig 2023); and curating memorials (Cole 2022). Participatory research methods, in particular those developed within the tradition of participatory action research, frequently have a deliberate motivation to initiate societal transformations. Consequently, they often explicitly aim to contribute to societal transformation in an emancipatory manner. Despite their growing popularity in the social sciences, they remain relatively uncommon in the field of peace and security research (Allen and Friedman 2021; Andrä et al. 2023; Dijkema 2022).

An engagement with practice does not follow ‘linear paths’ (Hellmüller, Goetschel, and Lidén 2023: 1845). Participatory methods offer intriguing and innovative avenues for reconsidering the transfer of knowledge and an engagement with practice. Furthermore, they respond to the observation of a growing interest in ‘new kinds of engagement that foreground uncertainty and that seek to engage stakeholders in partnerships where they can help navigate policy decision-making in a world where even robust decisions might cause harm’ (Avant et al. 2024: 180). Nevertheless, critics argue that they inadvertently reinforce the dichotomy between science and society by emphasising co-production or cooperation. In contrast, critical security studies highlight the need to take seriously the inextricable entanglement and embeddedness of science in society (Elbe and Buckland-Merrett 2019: 127). The relative lack of attention given to the role of power, asymmetry, and inequality in such formats therefore emphasises the necessity of also focusing on ethics and reflexivity as part of our multi-perspectival approach to peace and security.

A FOCUS ON ETHICS AND REFLEXIVITY

Consequently, our approach also places a strong emphasis on ethics and reflexivity. As a field with a well-established orientation towards practice, questions of reflexivity and positionality have always been of particular importance in peace research. With regard to the methods and approaches employed, the field's normative orientation has also led researchers to advance debates on research ethics. This is due to the fact that many researchers are committed to 'making a difference to the lives of people affected by conflict' (Brewer 2016: 2). Nevertheless, this commitment is not readily translated into research practices. Peace research frequently entails greater risks, given that it is conducted in sensitive or even dangerous locations. Furthermore, it presents ethical challenges as it may involve working with traumatized individuals or creating situations of emotional overload, stress, or fear. It is therefore crucial to be aware of the ethical dimension of peace research in order to ensure its proper conduct (Brewer 2016: 9). Moreover, many locations show unique and, thus, hardly or only partly generalizable conflict settings. Researchers must therefore engage in critical reflection regarding the potential unintended consequences of their research. These may include the securitizing potential of their work (Villumssen Berling 2011) or the extent to which their work may contribute to the escalation of conflicts (Weller 2017).

Ways of conducting research in conflict zones have been extensively discussed (Höglund and Oberg 2011; Mazurana, Jacobsen, and Gale 2013). There are two issues that are of imminent importance for the practical conduct of research in this regard. First, given that such research frequently involves interactions with individuals and communities that have suffered as a result of violent conflict, it is of the utmost importance to avoid causing harm in order to prevent exploitation, trauma, and abuse during the research process. The implementation of the 'do no harm' principle represents a key strategy for conducting empirical peace research, as highlighted by ethnographic peace research (Millar 2020b) and research in the tradition of participatory action research (Difjema 2022). Both of these fields engage directly with the field of peace research. The following issues are discussed in this context: avoiding the exposure of interview partners, assuring that topics are addressed in an appropriate manner, and frankness in addressing unrealistic expectations of participants regarding the impact of research on the community (Brewer 2016: 6). While acknowledging the significance of these concerns, scholars have also highlighted the intri-

cacies of power dynamics and interdependence in fieldwork, suggesting that participants may not always be vulnerable subjects in need of protection. Local knowledge brokers, for instance, frequently act as powerful gatekeepers, underscoring their agency and influence within the research process (Bliesemann de Guevara, Furnari, and Julian 2020). Second, researcher safety in conflict zones is an important topic given that the physical safety and wellbeing of researchers is easily compromised in such settings. Research has demonstrated that female researchers may be subject to gender dynamics that put scholars at risk (Sharp and Kremer 2006). One potential solution is to enhance the role of ethical oversight by institutional review boards. Despite criticism regarding their emphasis on the protection of research participants, these boards could serve as an important safeguard due to their institutional power within the research system (Mills, Massoumi, and Miller 2020). Another crucial strategy is to identify coping mechanisms that facilitate self-care. One such mechanism is the occasional distancing of oneself from stressful situations in the field or during the process of analysing difficult empirical material (Krause 2021: 334).

In addition to considerations of practicality, questions of ethics and reflexivity in the research process also have an important conceptual dimension, particularly in relation to questions of situatedness, positionality, and knowledge production within the research process. Research on the ‘local turn’ in peacebuilding (Leonardsson and Rudd 2015) has greatly contributed to creating awareness of such issues. In becoming more reflexive, this research points to alternative forms and sites of knowledge production, taking seriously the role of indigenous knowledge (Brigg, George, and Higgins 2022), traditional forms of peace formation (Kreikemeyer 2020), and, most notably, the local everyday (Mac Ginty and Richmond 2013). In the context of these debates, it has become evident that researchers’ own knowledge and positionality are not without limitations in the research process (Mac Ginty 2019: 271). A reflexive approach also considers the manner in which the field is influenced by power relations, intersectionality, or gender imbalances.

Decolonial and postcolonial perspectives (Brunner 2020; Dittmer 2018) further this sensitivity by emphasizing positionality and reflexivity as fundamental parts of the epistemological foundation of peace research. This implies a need to be aware of the historical trajectories of European colonialism as well as its ties to the present. It should also include reflection on the privileges of scholars from the ‘Global North’ and the often-marginalized positions or intersectional

vulnerabilities of their research subjects (Sabaratnam 2013). Buckley-Zistel and Koloma Beck (2022) posit that de- and postcolonial perspectives, in particular, encourage reflexivity and positionality. They facilitate an understanding of the processes of knowledge production, enable criticism of the logic of liberal peacebuilding, elucidate the Western or Eurocentric nature of numerous key concepts in peace research, and identify path dependencies between colonial pasts and contemporary security challenges. Consequently, the concept of the 'field' itself becomes a questionable colonial legacy, given its romanticization and instrumentalization as being something 'out there' (Richmond, Kappler, and Björkdahl 2015).

The inherent normative and practice conflicts that arise from the reflection of positionality constitute a further aspect of critical perspectives in peace research. These conflicts include biased views about the research object and indirect forms of violence through one's research. In light of this, there is a clear need to contextualize the research process (Weller 2017:177). This understanding is consistent with arguments put forth by scholars in the field of critical security studies regarding the relationship between method and practice. Aradau et al. (2015: 3) posit that a reflexive approach enables the understanding of method not as a mere 'bridge between theory and a technical instrument of analysis,' but rather as a process driven by power relations, values, identities, or interests. Furthermore, it challenges conventional understandings of the objectivity of research processes, given the 'embedded and embodied character' of the processes themselves (Leander 2015: 464).

This emphasis on ethics and reflexivity again raises questions of normativity and of an engagement with practice. It prompts us to reconsider the established boundaries of peace and security research by questioning, for instance, an understanding of the 'field' as a violent space situated far away. Instead, we should acknowledge the merits of studying how peace and security can be achieved and maintained in everyday instances (Juttila, Pehkonen, and Väyrynen 2008: 636). Furthermore, we should engage in critical research through 'companionship' rather than distance, asymmetry, and privilege (Austin, Bellanova, and Kaufmann 2019: 455).

3.3 IMPLICATIONS FOR RESEARCH ON EUROPEAN PEACE AND SECURITY

How can we use our particular understanding of ‘peace research’ for analyses of European peace and security in the face of increasingly complex crisis constellations? In this chapter, we have discussed the premises of peace and conflict research as well as of critical security studies in order to identify a number of core premises that we consider crucial when doing ‘peace research’. As previously stated, our understanding of peace research emphasises four features: (1) a multi-perspectival focus that acknowledges the diversity of approaches and methodologies and contextualises perspectives by examining peace and security dynamics across different scales, their spatiotemporal settings and linkages between the past, present, and future. This also encompasses the relevance of localised and contextualised knowledge, societal perspectives on peace and security, and the blurring of lines between internal and external security. (2) A focus on normativity and problem-orientation, based on critical perspectives on how peace research can contribute to addressing ‘real-world problems’ allows us to be aware of implicit power relations and knowledge regimes. (3) A focus on practice and knowledge transfer renders peace research particularly well to the use of participatory and adjacent research methods that actively seek to contribute to changing existing ‘real-world’ conditions and engage with practice. Finally, (4) a focus on ethics and reflexivity seems necessary given the importance of issues of positionality and situatedness for academic endeavours that have a normative orientation and seek to contribute to social change and knowledge transfer to practice, as we have discussed in this chapter.

These four core tenets are not meant to be exhaustive, nor do they constitute a coherent research framework. Rather, they present our understanding of how peace research can contribute to current debates on European security. The following chapter summarises our discussions of five research areas that form the core of our own current research interests and practices in the field of European peace and security. While the four core tenets of our understanding of peace research have guided these discussions, the five research fields differ in how explicitly they rely on these premises. Instead, they highlight the variety of ways in which a particular perspective on ‘peace research’ informs our work on European security.

At the level of more abstract and general conclusions, these core principles also point to three conclusions from our peace research perspective, which are discussed in more detail in Chapter 5: (1) *Doing research outside the box*: Contemporary peace and security issues are always situated within and need to be contextualised by broader and longer-term social, economic and political developments. (2) *Doing research with an interest in practical, positive change*: Peace as a value and public good is for us something meaningful and positive. From this premise we derive both a normative orientation of our research and an orientation towards working to solve ‘real world’ problems. (3) *Doing research with a broader concern for the future*: Research on European peace and security must go beyond short-term analysis to include a concern with the unfolding planetary crisis. These premises show what peace research can bring to the analysis of European peace and security in times of crisis. However, they also represent a particular perspective on the broad and diverse field of peace and security research, which above all underlines the need to continue the conversation about the meaning of peace research and its analytical implications beyond this report.

4 Directions for Research on European Peace and Security

This chapter discusses future directions for research on European peace and security. It focuses on five distinct fields of research that form the core of our own current research interests and practices in the field. Based on a mapping of current research in these research fields, the sub-chapters each cover a wide and sometimes heterogeneous range of empirical phenomena, ontologies and epistemologies. While the sub-chapters do not aim to provide a coherent and comprehensive overview of current research on European peace and security, they do provide an overview of the results of our collective discussions on these five themes. In each of these tracks, the analysis follows a similar pattern: first, we outline the specific challenges facing each research field. Then, in each sub-chapter, we map the research debates that are most relevant to our undertaking, and present the issues, perspectives and approaches that dominate current debates. Finally, we suggest a number of research directions that we believe will provide new and interesting insights into European peace and security issues.

The chapter begins with a core concern that is at the heart of discussions on European security today: Chapter 4.1 discusses how Russia's war against Ukraine affects the institutional architecture of European security. Going beyond a narrower focus on the evolution of the EU and NATO security architectures, this sub-chapter highlights the issues of Russian revisionism and its impact on institutions such as the OSCE, but also broader futures of the European security order. The next two research areas highlight first outward-looking and then inward-looking research trajectories on European peace and security. Chapter 4.2 examines Europe's role in maintaining peace and security abroad, focusing on the EU's conflict management and peacebuilding capacities. Chapter 4.3 discusses the future of the internal dimension of the EU peace project. Finally, from very local, societal conceptions and practices of peace in Chapter 4.4 to the future of human habitability on a climate-changed planet in Chapter 4.5, we place the study of European security within a much broader research horizon than usual.

Taken together, these research fields cover a lot of ground, but there are multiple issues outside the scope of this research report. From the impact of the war

in Ukraine on European defence industries and the decline of the arms control architecture to more detailed discussions of transatlantic relations, these issues are covered elsewhere in our research environment here at IFSH.

4.1 RUSSIA'S WAR AGAINST UKRAINE AND THE END OF COOPERATIVE SECURITY IN EUROPE

Frank Evers, Cornelius Friesendorf, Regina Heller, and Argyro Kartsonaki

Russia's war of aggression against Ukraine has created a European security order dominated by mutual deterrence and defence. As during the Cold War, Europe is divided – but now between Ukraine's supporters and Russia and its allies. The Kremlin's revisionism and its war against Ukraine are the main causes of the end of cooperative security in Europe. Russia's conduct violates core international rules such as the inviolability of borders, territorial integrity, and the prohibition of the use of force as enshrined in the UN Charter and the 1975 CSCE Helsinki Final Act, among other agreements. But European security has changed due to other dynamics as well. Thus, any analyses of European security and global power transitions must now include China and other actors who challenge the Western-dominated liberal world order.

Given the condition of Russian revisionism, a return to cooperative security with Russia is unlikely. The resurgence of deterrence and defence has major implications for policy and for the institutional structure of European security. Thus, NATO is the key institutional beneficiary of Russian aggression. The EU, while struggling to cope with internal divisions, has delivered significant political, military, and economic support to Ukraine and, in doing so, reactivated its Eastern neighbourhood and enlargement policy. By contrast, the OSCE, as an inclusive security organization and a promoter of cooperative security, has been relegated to the margins of European security architecture. Indeed, the OSCE has struggled to remain vital as the conflict between Russia and Belarus on the one hand and Ukraine and its supporters on the other hand plays out inside the organization, spurring decision-making blockades.

The following begins by presenting three main drivers of the current divides in European security and their consequences that are debated in existing research on the issue. In the second part of this chapter, we show five main areas where peace research can contribute to future research on European security, ranging from Russia's hegemonic ambitions and domestic dynamics within Russia, to Western narratives about European peace and security and understanding the risks of European alliance management, to inroads for peace research in times of confrontation.

4.1.1 RELEVANT RESEARCH

While political divisions in Europe are nothing new per se, the Russian war against Ukraine has dramatically revealed the increasing normative and political fragmentation of the European security order. We identify three crucial drivers in current debates that have contributed and continue to contribute to this negative development: (1) Russia's revisionism, (2) the decline of interest in/adherence to principles of cooperative security, and (3) the rise of authoritarian regionalism.

RUSSIA'S REVISIONISM

While fundamental and longstanding transformations in global politics have put the system of European security under profound pressure, it was Russia's revisionist turn in Ukraine that dealt the death blow to the system of cooperative security in Europe. Although Putin's decision to invade Ukraine militarily on the 24 February 2022 was rather unexpected to experts and politicians alike, it marked the tragic endpoint of an increasing hostility and assertiveness towards the West as well as an increasing aggressiveness toward its neighbourhood. The alienation from Western institutions and norms associated with this started many years ago, beginning with allegations of Western disrespect towards Russian security interests, continuing with the development of more assertive and autonomous positions and politics on issues of global and regional politics as well as with militarized power politics, and culminating in open revisionism in Ukraine. Here, Russia violated the rules of European security under the pretence of protecting its legitimate interests and defending its security.

Academic literature provides some explanation on the causes of this development. The neorealist school of International Relations theory interprets the growing hostility – with the war in Ukraine as its endpoint – from a system perspective and views it as the result of a great-power conflict between Russia and the West. Its main line of reasoning is that the expansion of NATO towards Europe's East and the prospect of Ukraine joining NATO in the near future triggered and accelerated a security dilemma in Russia and moved Moscow to gradually adopt a revisionist agenda (Mearsheimer 2014; 2022). While Mearsheimer's position is the most prominent, it is also the most disputed in both academic and public debates. Indeed, it is even criticized from within the realist camp itself. One major critique is that Mearsheimer's argument unintentionally supports anti-Western Russian propaganda – according to which Russia is not the aggressor but rather

a victim of Western power expansion and dominance – (Morozov 2023) and that it falls prey to the narrative of domination and subjugation that the Kremlin uses to legitimise the collective use of violence (Edinger 2022; Hughes 2023).

Moreover, Mearsheimer's offensive realism is criticized for its lack of differentiation and contextualization, for neglecting variables that lie either below the systemic level or outside a purely rationalist calculation. For Edinger (2022), for instance, Mearsheimer's approach lacks consideration of the 'human nature' of foreign policy choices. Dunford (2023) argues that the war is a result of 'overbalancing', while Ito (2023) speaks of Russian 'hubris' as a reason for the war. Scepanovic (2023b) underlines that, as the war drags on, Russia's chances of achieving any of its instrumental goals – pushing back NATO and assimilating Ukraine – recede into the distance. NATO has grown, the Alliance is more present on Russia's eastern border than ever before, and NATO states have begun to substantially upgrade their military defence. Attempts at territorial annexation and cultural assimilation appear unproductive as it has become clear that the Ukrainian population is prepared to bear the high costs of its resistance. In a narrower analytical perspective, these effects might point to miscalculations on the part of decision-makers in the Kremlin and an unintended escalation of the conflict, but it could also be the result of 'unrational' intention (Kendall-Taylor and Kofman 2022; Lebow 2022: 123).

Experts on Russia and from the Regional Studies discipline hold that the causes for Russia's revisionist turn lie mainly in the country's illiberal regime structure, which pushes it to uncivilized and aggressive behaviour in international relations. The domestic explanation and regime-type argument maintains that Russia is an underdeveloped autocracy, and that Russian actions are essentially shaped by the power and regime-survival aims of the ruling elite (Meister 2019; McFaul 2020). Framing regime survival as a central driver, scholars have traced the trajectories of Russia's authoritarianization, which is viewed as a consequence of these regime interests. Key factors include the progressive personalization of the political system over the years (Fish 2017), the rollback of liberal rights and repression of civil society, and an ideological radicalization. This radicalization promotes 'conservative European' values – primarily orthodox and anti-liberal, civilizational ideals (Laruelle 2016) – as well as nationalistic and imperialistic ideas, which gradually spurred revanchism and an anti-Western foreign policy (Sasse 2022; Fałkowski 2022; Dauce 2023). An image of Russia as a resurrected great power in a multipolar world and a vision of it as a 'strong', 'influential' and

‘respected’ country in world politics became the driving principle of Russia’s foreign policy.

This last point aligns with the position of other researchers who examine the role of identity in foreign policy and suggest broadening the often positivist-inspired discussion about drivers of foreign policy (in Russia and elsewhere) to include the role and influence of constructed and subjective realities in the making of foreign policy (Honneth 1996; Abdelal et al. 2006; Lindemann 2010; Volgy et al. 2011; Wolf 2011). A group of Russian scholars has highlighted the relevance of identity in Russian foreign policy – in particular, Russia’s desire to be recognized as a great power in international relations and treated accordingly (Larson and Shevchenko 2010; Heller 2012; Clunan 2014; Forsberg, Heller, and Wolf 2014; Forsberg 2014; Tsygankov 2014). They acknowledge that recognition as a great power was and is of utmost importance in Russia’s international relations. The concept of being a great power and being treated accordingly has always been prevalent in Moscow policymakers’ perceptions of Russia’s role in the post-Cold War international order.

Perspectives on what constitutes Russia’s status as a great power, however – and what constitutes ‘appropriate’ treatment of Russia – have changed over time. This is due in particular to changes in the composition of ruling elites and their moral expectations about what constitutes a rightful domestic and external political order and rule over the last 20 years. The Russian ruling elite has become more conservative and chauvinistic over time, with security elites taking control of political institutions and the national economy while marginalizing more liberally-oriented forces, and a nostalgia of virility and expressions of strength and absolute sovereignty have taken root in the authoritarian regime’s self-construction (Fischer 2023; Heller 2023). These moral expectations trickled into and legitimized a more assertive and aggressive foreign policy vis-à-vis the West and the foundations of its political order. As the latter increasingly contradicted the agentic desire of Russian leadership, it triggered a feeling of unjust treatment, spurring and gradually increasing conflict between Russia and the West over their respective roles, authority, and status in the international order (Heller 2013; Forsberg 2014; Baunov 2018; Roren 2023).

It therefore seems clear that Russia’s revisionism is rooted not only in rational interests or identity. As Lebow (2022: 112) has rightly pointed out, leaders ‘rarely behave with the substantive and instrumental rationality assumed by realist

and rationalist approaches'. Several empirical studies have shown that even before the war in Ukraine, security issues, ideas, and regime interests interacted in Russian foreign policy in a way that was dynamic, contingent, and often unproductive for both global and European security (Freire and Heller 2018; Freire 2019; Scepanovic 2023a). The ongoing war in Ukraine 'appears to be a civilisational crisis and a rhetorical mirage which has suddenly emerged from the bowels of a demobilised and mercantile Russian society and its corrupt elites' (Re: Russia 2023).

INTEREST IN DEFENCE AND DETERRENCE RATHER THAN IN COOPERATIVE SECURITY

Russia's war against Ukraine has resulted in a European security order marked by (unstable) mutual deterrence, defence, and war. Deterrence and defence dominate European security to such an extent that there is no longer any political space for cooperative security between Russia and Ukraine's Western allies.

In the economic sphere, these trends are reinforced by what some call a 'new phase of securitized globalization, [where] states are prioritizing resilience and security over efficiency' (Bunde, Eisentraut, and Schütte 2024). There has been a 'shift from a rules-based order to a more power-based international system, where economic and trade relations are increasingly used to pursue geopolitical goals' and 'policies of "decoupling" (i.e. the weakening interdependence between nations or economic blocs)' (Gaál et al. 2023). We can also observe 'a global trend toward re-nationalising the world economy' (Mallard, Eggel, and Galvin 2022).

These political changes have impacted research. Russia's aggression against Ukraine, its nuclear threats, and NATO responses have spurred renewed interest in deterrence and in NATO as the main international organization providing deterrence for its members (Magula, Rouland, and Zwack 2022; Larsen 2022). As part of this discussion, researchers have looked at aspects including Ukraine's potential membership in the organization (Menon and Ruger 2023; Thomson et al. 2023). The challenges of the EU in securing EU-Europe against Russia has also attracted much interest among researchers (Engelbrekt 2022; Fiott 2023). Researchers have studied, furthermore, how Russia's war has changed the security policies of countries including Germany (Bunde 2022), Sweden, and Finland.

As interest in deterrence and defence has grown, less attention has been paid to cooperative security and the pan-European security organization, the core of which is cooperative security in the form of the OSCE. The OSCE's crisis did not begin with Russia's full-scale invasion of Ukraine in February 2022. Having always been more of a thermometer for Russian-Western relations instead of a thermostat for improving relations, the deterioration of these relations since the 1990s has weakened the organization (Hill 2018). Moreover, Russian revisionism is not the OSCE's only problem: authoritarian pushback in the OSCE area has challenged the organization's ability to support the implementation of liberal norms and monitor states' compliance with OSCE commitments. Nevertheless, Russia's invasion of February 2022 contributed considerably to the further weakening of the organization. Russia's decision to invade and its conduct during the war meant that Russia violated core principles going back to the 1975 Helsinki Final Act. Moreover, Russia has often used its veto (the OSCE decides by consensus) to block decisions that are not in Moscow's interests, such as the continuation of OSCE field operations in Ukraine.

These travails of the OSCE are reflected in research. In comparison to the 1990s and early 2000s, academic interest in the OSCE is now scarce. Moreover, those academics still writing about the OSCE tend to draw bleak conclusions from institutional theory and/or a comparison to other international organizations. Thus, since Russia's invasion in February 2022, longtime observers of the OSCE have concluded that the OSCE is in need of thorough structural changes, as its current institutional structure is based on a normative consensus from the early 1990s that has since been thoroughly destroyed. One option that has been suggested is to return to a CSCE-style conference format (Boonstra 2022; Dembinski and Spanger 2022). Schuette and Dijkstra (2023) explain the OSCE's decline by pointing to the increasingly divergent preferences of participating States as undermining the legitimacy of the organization.

However, the OSCE is also evidence of organizational stickiness. The crisis of the organization has spurred creative problem-solving, such as dealing with decision-making blockades through Chairperson activities or providing voluntary funding. Moreover, there have been many calls to maintain the OSCE as, so scholars argue, the OSCE still fulfils important roles and because new opportunities are likely to arise once the war in Ukraine ends. Cupač (2023) shows the OSCE's value as a forum that Western states can use to signal to Russia that they are not prepared to negotiate zones of influence and that they will not com-

promise on core OSCE principles. Szpak and Kolodziejska (2023) examine the application of the 1991 OSCE Moscow mechanism and international humanitarian law (IHL) in the context of Russia's war against Ukraine. They show that despite Russia's lack of cooperation and the dissemination of propaganda and fake news, the Moscow Mechanism mission managed to produce comprehensive and detailed reports of violations of IHL in Ukraine. These may be used in potential future court trials of the perpetrators, and they already serve as evidence that disproves the Russian narrative.

Researchers have also discussed how to cope with Russia in the OSCE, including the pros and cons of suspending Russia. Zellner (2023), for instance, argues that Russia's suspension would be formally justifiable as 'Russian aggression against Ukraine represents a "clear, gross and uncorrected" violation of OSCE commitments'. He refers to the suspension of Yugoslavia from 1992 to 2000 as precedent. Practically, however, securing support from other participating States for suspending Russia is not feasible, as Belarus and other members of the CSTO would be unlikely to vote Russia out. He proposes, therefore, an interim strategy relying on informal arrangements in the event of Russian vetoes, including the use of extrabudgetary contributions to fund OSCE institutions and stronger engagement in areas where Russian influence is waning (see also Friesendorf and Wolff 2022). Authors have also discussed lessons the OSCE could learn from the crises of other IOs and from its predecessor, the CSCE (Eilstrup-Sangiovanni 2023; Zagorski 2023).

Yet, while such literature suggests ways in which the OSCE can survive and remain vital in some niche areas, it does not suggest that a return to cooperative security is likely in the short to medium term, given Russian revisionism and autocratic regime types in many other OSCE participating States.

AUTHORITARIAN REGIONALISM IN EUROPE'S EAST

While the crisis of institutionalized cooperation in Europe was accelerated by the war in Ukraine, it had already been ongoing for some time. This relates in particular to the emergence of a number of multilateral regional organizations and forms of inter-state cooperation between countries in the European East, or Eurasia. These include most importantly the Collective Security Treaty Organization (CSTO, founded 2002), the Eurasian Economic Union (EAEU, founded

2014), and, to an extent, the Conference on Interaction and Confidence Building Measures in Asia (CICA, founded 1999). Along with the Shanghai Cooperation Organization (SCO, created in 2001), such cooperative economic and security structures reach well beyond Eastern Europe and the post-Soviet space and into the Asia-Pacific region. Globally, the BRICS plays an increasingly important role for Russia and its senior partner, China.

The creation of these Eurasian organizations echoes a more global dynamic of ‘non-Western’ institutional region-building, which had gathered momentum in different regions of the world by the turn of the millennium (Dakhlallah 2012; Freistein 2005; Herbst 2009; Pasha 2012; Parthenay 2019). More recently, this trend also increasingly echoes global economic regionalization processes that aim to ‘compensate declining global linkages’ and show a ‘trend towards deepening connections between politically aligned countries’ (Börsch 2024).

In Europe’s East, the aforementioned new regional organizations deepened the loss of influence and legitimacy on the part of more Western-liberal organizations like the OSCE and the CoE. Both had gained a foothold in and penetrated Europe’s East in the 1990s at a moment of political opening and change, introducing a normative – primarily Western-liberal – framework that was alien to the region. In contrast, the new international regional organizations are rooted in the region itself.

Scholars attributed little relevance to these new regional organizations for some time, arguing that they were ‘inefficient’ (Allison 2008) and only reflected Russian great power ambitions (Cooley 2019). It was assumed that they were primarily created (in the case of the CSTO) or supported (as with the SCO) to secure Russia’s geopolitical interests (Sergi 2018; Shendrikova 2015) and ‘to consolidate [Russia’s] political influence over weaker counterparts’ (Kim, Mansfield and Milner 2016: 328; Cameron 2012). Research on Comparative Authoritarianism then found strong domestic drivers of regional cooperation. It was argued that a major function of the organizations was to secure the largely authoritarian regimes’ power and to stabilize their rule (Aris 2014; Laruelle 2012; Libman and Obydenkova 2017). Such regime-survival approaches presume that authoritarian regimes use cooperation with likeminded regimes as a source of regime stability (Kneuer and Demmelhuber 2016; Cooley 2015) and as a means to create non-Western counter-norms and rules in order to decouple the authoritarian regimes from liberal rights and obligations (Allison 2018; Ambrosio 2011;

Cooley and Schaaf 2017; Lewis 2012). In fact, the creation and establishment of the new regional organizations in the European East coincided with an authoritarian and normative ‘backlash’ in the region (Ambrosio 2009; Carothers 2006; Cooley 2015). Scholars have argued, therefore, that they are part of and play an important role in this negative trend, as they provide both mutual material support and political legitimacy for authoritarian rulers and their domestic politics (Allison 2018; Libman and Obydenkova 2017). Thus, the new regional organizations not only negotiate and adjust the collective authoritarian interests and identities of the cooperating states – they also promote them at the global level (Acharya 2001), forming the nucleus of a constitutionalized ‘Political East’ which ‘offers an alternative model to modernity’ (Sakwa 2022: 15).

There are many examples of where this logic has been filtered through regional inter-state cooperation. While the initial aim of the SCO was to enhance coordinated endeavours in the regional fight against terrorism, in practice, this fight was broadened to include a harder stance on regime-critical groups or groups with an allegedly separatist or ‘religiously extremist’ agenda (Aris 2009) – including local and regional human rights activists (Richter 2018). Internationally, this policy has been justified on the grounds that state stability is a greater good than individual rights (Cooley 2019). The effects of ‘norm downsizing’ (Moe and Geis 2020a) have, moreover, been found in the cooperation between the OSCE and the CSTO on counterterrorism. Joint statements appear to place more emphasis on concerns for stability than on human rights (Williams 2017), or on the fact that the UN, IOM, and OSCE have obtained observer status at CICA. Scholars have therefore raised concerns that Western partners are starting to accept ‘a more hybrid set of security-related norms’ for the sake of cooperation (Lewis 2012: 1219).

4.1.2 AVENUES FOR FURTHER RESEARCH

As the first section demonstrated, Russia’s war against Ukraine has exacerbated the division in Europe and made cooperative security through institutions impossible currently – and improbable in the future. At the same time, policies aimed at defending against and deterring Russia have brought members of the political West closer together. What are some plausible research inroads for studying these fundamental and still-ongoing transformations of the European security order? We propose the following topics as fruitful avenues for future research.

TRACE RUSSIA'S HEGEMONIC
AMBITIONS AND REPERCUSSIONS ON POLITICAL
REGION-BUILDING IN EURASIA

By waging war in Ukraine, making military threats to its neighbours and severing ties with the West, Russia aims to reorder global politics to the detriment of the West and Western Europe. Peace research should examine these reordering efforts and assess their implications for European peace and security. Several key dimensions warrant attention: first, peace research will need to follow Russia's efforts to build and strengthen alliances with China and countries in the Global South as well as their respective institutions such as BRICS. This involves both material dynamics – such as Russia's ability over the past two years to withstand economic hardship in response to Western sanctions, not least through cooperation with countries of the Global South – and the narrative Russia has constructed to portray itself as a leading nation in an 'anti-colonial' struggle against the West (Kirillova 2022).

Secondly, peace research should investigate Russia's 'geopolitics of scale', meaning Russia's efforts to reconfigure its own geographical boundaries by force in line with its constructed identity. It has been shown how the 'cognitive maps' of empire continue to influence the contemporary political thinking of decision-makers in Moscow (Makarychev 2011), and how these 'maps' have enabled both Moscow's 'centred geopolitics' (Makarychev 2013) of the last 15 to 20 years as well as Russia's recent attempts to reshape the current regional order by force. Moscow's unprovoked war against Ukraine is the most apt example of the Kremlin's attempts at geographical reordering of Europe through force, but attention should also be directed at military threats to other neighbours and countries beyond Russia's neighbourhood.

Thirdly, it will be fascinating to track how Russia's radical anti-Western stance and hegemonic attitude, accelerated by its war in Ukraine, continue to be met and answered by its direct Eurasian neighbours and cooperation partners (Laruelle 2015; Anceschi 2020). Russia's war in Ukraine has reinforced existing conflicts of interest as well as political tensions. Evidently, and despite the authoritarian regime structures that bind the Eurasian countries together, ideas and understandings about Eurasian political geography diverge with regard to sovereignty or international economic cooperation, for instance (Heller 2022). The war in Ukraine had led Russia to lose significant authority as an ordering power

in its neighbourhood, and this will presumably have significant repercussions for the future makeup of the 'Political East'. At the same time, Russia is successfully transforming its economy into a war economy, has expanded its military capabilities, and poses a serious military threat to neighbouring countries and the West. It has proven capable of adapting to sanctions and influencing global energy, commodity, and food markets. It is also in the process of regaining influence in the South Caucasus and Central Asia. Peace research should more thoroughly consider this complexity as well as the socio-spatial contestedness, constructedness, and multifaceted nature of political region-building in Europe's East.

FOCUS ON DOMESTIC DYNAMICS AND VARIANCES IN IDENTITY CONSTRUCTIONS IN RUSSIA

Russia's future is uncertain and domestic developments are difficult to predict. The regime still appears capable of maintaining stability in public affairs and mitigating – if not even temporarily turning them to its own advantage – the economic problems caused by its disentanglement from Europe. Politically, the system has taken on dictatorial features. Yet analysts disagree in their assessment of whether Russia is heading towards a totalitarian regime (Snyder 2022b) or whether its transformation is complete and the regime is only playing up totalitarian features in order to obscure the actual lack of substantial ideology (Snegovaya, Kimmage, and McGlynn 2023; Rogov 2023).

However, it seems very probable that aggression against Ukraine and hostility towards the West will continue as long as the current regime remains in power (Fischer 2023). It is therefore highly unlikely that Russia will return to cooperative security, even if Ukraine and the West were to offer negotiations and re-engagement with Moscow now. While Putin's future in particular is tied inseparably to the war in Ukraine, Western politicians and societies must not succumb to the misconception that political transformation will take place automatically in a Russia without or after Putin. Russian leaders will most likely continue to pursue their special interests and what they see as the country's legitimate place in the world. Letting go of Ukraine completely or re-establishing cooperative relations with the West would require a more fundamental change within the regime: its actors, its interests, and, with that, the regime's identity in Russia (Tsygankov 2023).

That being said, further peace research should move forward in different directions. First, it should investigate more deeply the facets of Russia's identity as a great power. It is true that Russia's historical identity as a great power has strong mobilization power within Russian society, as it is part of the country's cultural and ideological heritage. However, the imperialist variation promoted by the Kremlin is in fact controversial in both Russia and Russian society itself (Rogov 2023). What other visions and variations of Russia and its role in international relations exist? Peace research should identify them, as well as the actors and agents who claim these alternative or variant identities (Tsygankov 2023). This might lead us to a better understanding of what to expect from a Russia without or after Putin.

Second, given that identity is a powerful force in shaping interests and policies – and not only in Russia – research should engage more systematically with the question of what conditions result in illiberal actors reacting to status denial with violence in international relations. As we see power struggles between liberally-oriented states and authoritarian ones evolving and contestations of the Western-liberal normative order increasing all over the globe as well as across political systems, including those in Europe, such research would potentially help reduce the risk of future clashes, insecurities, and undesirable divides. If power struggles and contestations are also a matter of identity and social relations, we should not only investigate the expectations of authoritarian actors but also ask where and when the international system – and the system of European security in particular – creates 'insiders' and 'outsiders' (Zarakol 2011), and how this affects actors' identities and foreign policy choices.

INTERROGATE WESTERN NARRATIVES ABOUT EUROPEAN PEACE AND SECURITY

In the international system, 'insiders' and 'outsiders' not only emerge out of structure, but are a result of discourses as well. In current Western public discourses about Russia and European security, there is a tendency to use antagonistic and particularly essentializing narratives about Russia and Europe. Whereas democratic (Western) Europe is frequently characterized as 'good' and as the centre and guardian of the 'civilized world', autocratic Russia is depicted as backward and a haven of 'evil'. Hence, the war in Ukraine is one between 'democracy' and 'nihilism' (Snyder 2022a).

To be clear, it is of utmost importance to name Russian aggression for what it is and to draw lines in the sand against it, both discursively and in international political practice. However, such catchwords create and solidify supposedly objective yet overly simplistic understandings and interpretations of the shape of Europe and the nature of European security. Labelling Russia as not being part of the 'West', as lagging 'behind the West', or as 'not modern', 'not developed', or 'not modernized enough' functions as a stigma and is understood as 'a label of difference' and discredibility (Zarakol 2011: 4). With this comes the idea that Russia is incapable of change. Moreover, dividing Europe into 'good' and 'bad' ignores the forces and (currently barely visible) parts of Russian society both within and outside the country that are critical of the Kremlin's policy and are against the war. Rhetorically disconnecting these forces from a 'civilized' world not only deprives them of their identity and weakens their position within Russia further, it might also lead to a situation where reform-oriented forces turn away from the West in disillusionment, making reconciliation even more difficult in the future.

Therefore, peace research should engage more with the question of where actors and societies in Europe are in danger of creating or reinforcing narratives that cause more damage to European security in the long term rather than keeping the door open for the re-emergence of peaceful relations. Such a critical and self-reflexive interrogation of one's own narratives also requires deconstructing fundamental ideas of Europe, investigating what meaning(s) they entail, how they are embedded historically and culturally, and understanding what role they play in political conflicts. Schmidtke (2023: 1), for instance, detects cultural differences in how the promise of freedom and democracy is narrated in Poland and Germany. In Germany, 'a stronger rights-based approach to democracy in the liberal tradition' dominates, while in Poland, freedom is 'narrated as the liberation from foreign rule'. Another example is the current discourse on the 'defence of European values' or the 'European way of life' against Russia's imperialism. While this debate is necessary, it also runs the risk of reproducing ideas of nation-statehood and exclusivity in Europe instead of dissolving them, as was the original aim of the European peace project.

BETTER UNDERSTAND THE RISKS (AND RISK MANAGEMENT) OF WESTERN ALLIANCE POLICIES AND STRATEGIES

Ukraine's supporters have taken a series of far-reaching policy decisions – from imposing an unprecedented package of sanctions on Russia to providing Ukraine with comprehensive political, economic, and military assistance – aimed at helping Ukraine defend itself against Russian aggression. More broadly, international support for Ukraine also aims to strengthen NATO, European defence capabilities, and international norms.

At the same time, the efforts of Ukraine's supporters, though necessary, carry risks for European and potentially global peace and security. To date, little research has assessed these risks or discussed prevention and mitigation strategies. The following issues and questions would be worth studying.

First, research could focus on the risks associated with the economic sanctions imposed on Russia with regard to their impact on Russia, Western economies, and the global economy. In terms of the impact on Russia, the ongoing (policy) debate about whether or not the imposed sanctions have been or will be effective merits further research. So far, the Russian regime has survived by exploiting loopholes in the Western sanctions regime, and by producing and trading more gas than before and at temporarily higher prices. Russia has also been able to shift economic resources towards the war economy, domestic production, and consumption, and it has increased trade with China and India. Research could examine the lessons learned, both for the future of sanctions against Russia and for other cases. Moreover, the question arises of how ongoing Western sanctions and Russian countersanctions affect the global economy as a whole.

Second, the EU's promise of enlargement to Ukraine, Moldova, and Georgia bears risks. These three countries are located between competing political orbits and are affected considerably by their clash. Thus, there is the risk that the EU's enlargement promise will remain symbolic or will at least lose momentum when confronted with the reality of accession requirements. The example of the Western Balkans show that EU enlargement has been at a standstill for a long time, and the question that remains is whether the confrontation with Russia would change this inertia. If the EU is serious about becoming a geopolitical actor (European Parliament 2020), it will need to put significantly more effort and resources into its enlargement policy.

Third, research should examine how Ukraine's supporters deal and should deal with Russia's presence in European security institutions, in particular the OSCE – the only remaining inclusive security structure in Europe. Going beyond discussions of whether or not to suspend Russia from the OSCE in response to Russian violations of the organization's core commitments, peace research should discuss whether and how inclusive organizations or more informal inclusive forums can contribute to European security despite the presence of opposing state blocs within such organizations. This could mean not only managing urgent security issues via existing communication channels, but also locating more informal forums and formats for negotiating interests and longer-term ideas about the future shape of European and global security (Legvold 2024).

Fourth, research should examine past peace processes of both inter-state and intra-state wars in order to inform mediation, conflict management, and conflict resolution strategies that might be applicable in ending the war in Ukraine. Wallensteen (2015), for instance, analyses peacebuilding processes of inter-state and intra-state conflicts in the post-Cold War era. He finds that in order for peace to last, the losing party must retain its dignity and security, the rule of law must be ensured, and the timeline for the settlement must be long enough to ensure a sense of normalcy. Examining past peace processes in Ukraine, Malyarenko and Wolff (2023) examine the many formal and informal as well as institutionalized and non-institutionalized mediation attempts between 2014 and the 2022 Russian intervention, in addition to the roles and fields of engagement of various actors. Research on mediation would also be of value here by exploring who could successfully mediate or facilitate a peace process in this and other wars, and how this could be accomplished. The OSCE, for instance, with its inclusive mandate and long-term experience with conflicts in the post-Soviet sphere, could potentially be a useful platform for dialogue in order to lay the groundwork for more formal peace talks (Hopmann 2024). Then again, the OSCE lost much of its reputation in Ukraine following the Russian occupation of Crimea and during the war in eastern Ukraine after 2014, while Russia perceives the OSCE as a Western-dominated organization.

Finally, research should analyse and assess the applicability of existing academic research on the war against Ukraine, investigate whether previous academic findings could be translated into policymaking, and conduct novel research to explore further parameters of peace-making. Malyarenko and Wolff (2024) look into these parameters against the background of a multitude of

international peace proposals that have been made over time, and under the ‘persistence of a military stalemate on the ground’. Further research in this area would be both timely and valuable for exploring strategies to bring an end to the war in Ukraine.

INROADS FOR PEACE RESEARCH IN A TIME OF CONFRONTATION

Russia’s war against Ukraine has strengthened unity within NATO and the EU. However, it is unclear how sustainable support for Ukraine will be, given conditions such as the electoral success of right-wing political parties that are both a cause and a consequence of political and societal fragmentation. Moreover, even if support for Ukraine is maintained, supporters will face difficult decisions about how to cope with Russia. Peace research can help shed light on dilemmas and on ways forward by examining the following issues and questions.

First, we find it relevant to discuss how to reconcile efforts to deter, defend against, and isolate Russia with the need for limited engagement in certain areas. Such engagement is needed, for instance, to reduce the risk of inadvertent military escalation, which has been significant according to reports (Bryan, Cozad, and Stark 2023). Risk reduction is, in some ways, more difficult now than during the Cold War because Russia is revisionist (in contrast to the Soviet Union, which sought Western recognition of the territorial status quo in Europe). Nevertheless, future research should discuss how to adapt arms control as well as confidence and security building measures to a situation marked by revisionism, the ongoing war in Ukraine, and increasing hybrid attacks by Russia on NATO and EU member states. Whereas moving towards positive peace with Russia is not feasible for the time being, moving towards more stable negative peace is consistent with the normative orientation of peace research, as well as with a *longue durée* perspective that distinguishes peace research from much of policy research.

Another aspect that merits further research is to consider limited engagement in other areas. For example, how can supporters of Ukraine maintain a balance between isolating and criticizing Russia within the OSCE, while still taking joint decisions with Russia – and preparing these decisions through consultations with Russian diplomats – that are needed to maintain the OSCE? Similarly, how can supporters of Ukraine maintain societal contacts with Russia, such as in the

field of research, without cooperating with or supporting Russian institutions? Peace research should discuss such questions because of its commitment to different perspectives and normativity – such as determining which options are desirable, and for whom. Peace research should also explore how policy-makers can deal with dilemmas in practice.

Second, future research should address fundamental changes in the global economic order as well as the role of actors, such as China, that influence European security dynamics. It should look into the implications of mutual dependencies on global energy, trade, technology, and food markets, and into threats to European stability that derive from increasingly securitized globalization (Bunde, Eisentraut, and Schütte 2024). Another important question is the possible repercussions of the ongoing trend towards decoupling economic and trade relations and ‘regional integration [...] amidst global reorientation’ (Börsch 2024).

Third, it also seems relevant to analyse whether and how international organizations built on liberal norms – in particular the EU, the Council of Europe, and the OSCE – could cooperate with regional organizations in Europe’s East. Such cooperation is complicated considerably by the conflict with Russia (and by Belarus). This is also – though not only – about analysing ways to maintain relations with countries in the Global South, for many of whom the ‘Russia-Ukraine war has opened up new opportunities [...] to assert more agency’ (Stent 2024). While some of these organizations (such as the CSTO or the EAEU) are purely Russian vehicles and are unlikely to provide any avenues for cooperation, other organizations (such as CICA or the SCO) are certainly of increasing importance for regional security issues and, thus, for stability in Europe as a whole. At the global level, the BRICS group is of course relevant as well.

Fourth, further research should investigate the consequences of political expediency for democracy and human rights, and for efforts to support democracy and human rights. The need to isolate Russia diplomatically, and the cutting of economic ties with Russia, has contributed to deeper cooperation between democracies supporting Ukraine and hybrid or authoritarian states. Such cooperation risks legitimizing repression or even exacerbating it – as in the case of cooperation between Western and Central Asian security forces. Drawing hybrid and authoritarian states away from Russia may also work against any remaining efforts to support democracy and human rights in such states. The commitment of peace research to multiple perspectives, as mentioned in the previous chap-

ter of this report, places societal and individual security on at least equal footing with state and international security. Its normative perspective obliges peace research to point out instances where supporters of Ukraine prioritize their own interests and the interests of partner state ruling elites over those of vulnerable local groups and individuals.

4.2 EUROPEAN PEACEBUILDING AND CONFLICT MANAGEMENT IN A CHANGING WORLD

Philipp Neubauer, Holger Niemann, Jessica Noll, and Ursula Schröder

The full-scale Russian invasion of Ukraine in February 2022 has prompted Europe to recognize that conflict and instability are – yet again – no longer phenomena that largely happen in faraway places, or which are relatively small in scale and can thus be easily contained. With this realization comes a growing insight that global security dynamics have started to shift and will most likely continue to do so in the years to come (see Chapter 1). This also means that we need to re-examine Europe’s role for the maintenance of international peace and security. This section especially focuses on the role of Europe in what has become known – and criticized – as ‘liberal peacebuilding’. This term refers to international engagement aimed at (re)building institutions in countries emerging from violent conflict and war in line with liberal democratic values and institutions. Furthermore, we consider European approaches to crisis management, stabilization, and internal security building in Europe’s immediate and wider neighbourhood, while we largely leave out discussions of European foreign and defence policy more broadly (see for example Hoeffler, Hofmann, and Mérand 2024). This allows us to highlight the entanglement of European peacebuilding and conflict management in a context of shifting global peace, conflict, and security dynamics. It emphasizes complex interdependencies and their repercussions on a diverse set of activities, including classical peacekeeping and peacebuilding operations, as well as stabilization, security assistance, and counter-terrorism activities. Research on Europe’s global role has traditionally been distinguished by its emphasis on knowledge transfer and a strong problem-orientation. Future research should seek to further this exchange and contribute to a more comprehensive understanding of Europe’s role in maintaining international peace and security at the intersection of academic and policy-oriented research, but also by critically evaluating processes of knowledge production and professional development in the field.

A set of fundamentally changing global security dynamics and shifting global power constellations confronts European actors, requiring them to rethink their policy responses in a manner similar to that of other international actors (Burke and Parker 2017; Mahmoudi, Allen, and Seaman 2022). Concurrent with the resurgence of interstate conflict in Europe, there has been a surge in global

violent conflicts and wars. These wars and violent conflicts, characterized by complex and enduring causes and the involvement of multiple actors in settings that often cut across established policy areas and state borders, have proven difficult to pacify. In addition, the institutions of the post-war international order, which have long served as a framework for multilateral conflict management and peacebuilding, have been increasingly challenged by alternative visions of world order as well as by growing polarization and contestation from within.

When engaged in the maintenance of international peace and security, European actors have long had to navigate a complex assemblage of European and international arenas and institutions engaged in peacebuilding and conflict management. These include, but are not limited to, UN peace operations, EU and OSCE missions and projects, NATO operations, and ad hoc bilateral and multilateral formats. This landscape is changing, presenting an opportunity to examine the strategies and practices that European actors draw on to formulate their responses.

A shared assessment among scholars is that the established multilateral architectures for peace and security, and with it the practice of deploying multilateral peace operations, is currently in a phase of decline or even outright crisis (Kenkel and Foley 2021). Since 2014, the UN has not authorized any new major peace operation. In contrast, large-scale international operations such as those in Mali, the Central African Republic, or South Sudan have either concluded or been significantly scaled back. Notwithstanding the continued provision of a significant proportion of the financial resources for these UN peacekeeping operations by the European UN member states, there has been a notable absence of substantial commitment in terms of personnel for some time. As of September 2024, no European countries have been among the top 15 countries contributing personnel to UN peace operations (United Nations 2024). The termination of contested missions such as of MINUSMA in Mali and MONUSCO in the DRC as well as associated European withdrawals confirm previous scepticism about a possible 'European Return to United Nations Peacekeeping' (Koops and Tercovich 2016).

Furthermore, the divergence of interests between countries of the global North and South has become more pronounced, as evidenced by the demands from governments in crisis regions to cease multilateral peace operations, as was the case in Mali and the DRC. The system of multilateral peace operations also

faces challenges from China's growing ambitions to move beyond its role as a troop-contributing country. China is seeking to deliberately instrumentalize its role in the authorization and conduct of multilateral peace operations as a tool to advance its foreign policy, which includes seeking influence in conflict zones (Fung 2016). The United Nations Security Council, the primary forum for authorizing and establishing peace operations, has been increasingly deadlocked ever since the war in Syria escalated in 2011. In parallel, regional security organizations or ad-hoc arrangements and coalitions have become more prominent in the conduct of peace operations, whether with a UN mandate or regional authorization. However, these operations are usually of limited scope and size in comparison to large-scale UN operations (SIPRI 2023).

Accordingly, there are currently big question marks over the future of international conflict management and the existing multilateral peacebuilding architecture (Kenkel and Foley 2021). One of the most pressing questions that arises from these discussions is whether Europe will continue to play a meaningful role in multilateral peace operations or whether it will continue to withdraw and focus on its immediate neighbourhood. Notwithstanding the substantial support provided to Ukraine, Europe and the EU are confronted with critical strategic choices regarding the role they wish to play in maintaining international peace and security. Such decisions will determine how Europe's own role in the global order might change. Furthermore, it also affects the extent to which European states can uphold the norms and rules they deem important, and how Europe can maintain its influence and authority in a world where European actors are facing intensifying rivalry and competition (Egan et al. 2023).

Present times are an apt moment to engage with these matters. European and international actors alike have acknowledged the need to debate the future of peacekeeping and, more broadly, to identify pathways for a new kind of multilateralism in a post-liberal world that is confronted with geopolitical changes and increasing uncertainties. Programmatic developments such as the New Agenda for Peace and the 2024 Summit for the Future provide an impetus for critically evaluating the existing repertoire of peacebuilding practices. These developments have also highlighted the urgency of formulating a new consensus on how to maintain international peace and security in a changing world. It is therefore unsurprising that the fields of peace and security research are currently engaged in extensive debates about the future of peace operations, multilateralism, and Europe's role in global security dynamics. While existing research often

employs empirical-analytical perspectives, these debates are also characterized by a high level of normativity among researchers.

The next section of this chapter will address several relevant research debates that can help us to unpack the current position of Europe with regard to the multilateral architecture for peacebuilding and conflict management as well as its engagement within it. On this basis, we discuss four areas of future research related to these debates that we consider promising avenues for bringing a peace research perspective into debates about Europe's role in international peace and security. These range from the implications of a multi-order world and the prospects of a European approach to peace operations to the role of learning and knowledge and an understanding of peace operations as complex assemblages that connect different scales, temporalities, and actors.

4.2.1 RELEVANT RESEARCH

There is a great deal of academic and policy-oriented debate about the implications of the changing global security dynamics and their repercussions for Europe, often with a strong normative impetus. The 75th anniversary of UN peacekeeping in 2023 provided an opportunity for reflection and critical evaluation of both past developments and future challenges of multilateral peace operations (Duursma et al. 2023; Lyon et al. 2023). Some research has begun to highlight the practical challenges that a shift towards a more pragmatic approach, namely greater operational flexibility in mandate interpretation, presents for the conduct of peace operations. Research has also acknowledged the role of complexity in peacebuilding (see e.g. de Coning 2018, 2020; Day and Hunt 2023). Nevertheless, the majority of current research centres on the micro-level of individual operations rather than addressing questions of the strategic 'big picture' (Dunton, Laurence, and Vlavourou 2023). The following debates are crucial to the development of the research field at present.

CHANGING NORMATIVE FRAMEWORKS OF MULTILATERAL PEACE OPERATIONS

At the heart of a first debate is the relationship between two competing concepts of international order: what has become known as the Liberal International Order (LIO), which is based on liberal-democratic principles of world order, and an

emerging multipolar order where ‘polarity’ is understood to refer to the distribution of power in the international system, measured primarily in terms of the distribution of capabilities and resources among states. The concept of ‘liberal interventionism’ or ‘liberal peace-building’ is frequently regarded as the underlying normative framework informing how international actors respond to situations of war, violent conflict, or gross human rights violations abroad (Chandler 2010; Selby 2013). Given the often-selective application of liberal values (Binder 2017), the tendency of international engagement to fall short of its stated goals (Hirschmann 2012), and its origins in Western domination built on a colonial past (Duncombe and Dunne 2018; Reus-Smit and Zarakol 2023), this normative framework is increasingly being challenged. In contrast, critical authors have emphasized the necessity of incorporating local perspectives in peacebuilding (Hameiri, Hughes, and Scarpello 2017; Kreikemeyer 2020; Mac Ginty and Richmond 2013) and of considering alternative visions such as a ‘Multiplex World Order,’ which would supersede the concepts of multipolarity and liberalism in the current order (Acharya 2017).

Recent work demonstrates that peace operations conducted by ad hoc coalitions or regional organizations have become less focused on liberal values and norms due to those values’ increasing contestation and erosion. It also discusses what geopolitical alternatives to liberal peace operations look like today (Karlsrud 2023). As a direct consequence of the fragmentation of international crisis management and peacebuilding engagement, coherence among the multiplicity of actors as well as the missions and operations carried out is becoming both increasingly important and difficult to achieve (de Coning 2019). Research in this area also indicates that the shift towards robust peacekeeping and stabilization missions has transformed the conduct of peace operations, making them both riskier and more partisan. Furthermore, it demonstrates how changing types of violent conflict no longer fit into established response categories of international actors (Clausen and Albrecht 2021; Karlsrud 2019).

Some scholars working on these issues also focus on the normative shift towards protection and human security that has characterized peace operations for almost 25 years. This shift, initiated in the broader context of the Responsibility to Protect (Hunt 2019), has led to the creation of a set of tasks that go far beyond the original mandate of UN peacekeeping to monitor peace agreements. Consequently, the mandates of peace operations have been expanded to encompass, for example, climate change issues or the protection of civilians

and children. While research indicates that the willingness of the UN Security Council to adopt such a people-centred understanding of security is more than mere lip service (Hultman 2013), the parallel occurrence of various protection agendas as well as the selectivity of their scope has been criticized as a risk for compartmentalizing protection approaches (Kullenberg 2021; Niemann 2022).

THE REGIONALIZATION OF MULTILATERAL PEACE OPERATIONS

Another key debate focuses on the growing relevance of regional security arrangements. Deficiencies of the global architecture such as an outdated bureaucratic culture, a lack of sufficient funding, increasing polarization, and the instrumentalization of UN bureaucracy by member states such as China hamper the effectiveness and legitimacy of the UN. The inability to devise alternatives to a deadlocked and paralyzed Security Council are seen as a significant challenge. Efforts to revitalize global governance and multilateralism beyond the UN do exist (the Alliance for Multilateralism is one example), yet they are largely regarded as mere paper tigers that fail to effect any significant change to the institutional framework (Gowan 2023).

In light of the UN's increasing inability to fulfil its role, regional organizations like the AU and ECOWAS have emerged as potentially significant facilitators of multilateral peace operations. In accordance with Chapter VIII of the UN Charter, regional security organizations are vested with considerable authority for the maintenance of peace and security within their regions. This has been the case since the establishment of the UN in 1945, but in recent years regional organizations have become more active and more visible in this regard in several world regions (Aris and Wenger 2014; Kirchner and Dominguez 2011).

At the same time, the relevant European security organizations – the EU, NATO, and the OSCE – all have a history of engaging in crisis management and peace-building. They differ significantly in type, purpose, and design, however – both amongst themselves and compared to UN operations (Debuysere and Blockmanns 2019). The issue of complementarity and cooperation among their operations has therefore been the subject of much debate (Dijkstra et al. 2018; Moe and Geis 2020b). In this context, the EU and UN operations are of particular relevance. The relationship between them is characterized by a mixture of competition and suspicion. However, the EU remains one of the UN's most important

strategic partners in its global efforts to maintain peace and security (Thardy 2019). This scholarship also considers the impact of inequality in power and resources on inter-organizational relations and partnerships between the EU, AU, and UN (Brosig 2020; Staeger 2023).

In recent years, regional organizations and newer, often informal bodies of global cooperation outside the UN framework have increasingly received scholarly attention. While the number of peace operations conducted by regional organizations has increased (SIPRI 2023), the extent to which they are more effective remains a subject of debate (Bara and Hultman 2020; Wallensteen and Bjurner 2015). One key element of these analyses is the role of inter-organizational relations and their impact on the emergence of regional security architectures. Scholars have emphasized that these inter-organizational relations are often based on inequality and power (Staeger 2023) and may be used for norm diffusion across regions (Dembinski and Schott 2014), or that they point to the hybridity and fragility of regional security architectures (Moe and Geis 2020b). In addition, ad hoc coalitions, clubs, and other informal bodies of global cooperation as well as traditional bilateral assistance have been used by states in recent years to circumvent deadlocked bodies such as the UN (Reykens et al. 2023). For some, these ad hoc coalitions represent a serious threat to the already faltering international institutional architecture for maintaining global peace and security (Brosig and Karlsrud 2024).

EUROPEAN PEACE OPERATIONS

While the crisis facing the UN and its peace operations has been widely debated, the EU's own civilian and military missions deployed under its Common Security and Defence Policy (CSDP) have also attracted sustained criticism, and questions have been raised about their contribution to long-term impact on the ground in regions like the Sahel (Lopez Lucia 2017). More generally, commentators have repeatedly questioned the extent of European ambition for substantial engagement abroad (Benkler et al. 2023) and have observed a persistent discrepancy between stated policy and actual capabilities for implementation (see Rieker and Blockmans 2019). In the past, Europe set ambitious policy goals for (re)building states and fostering peace abroad. These goals included significant numbers of personnel deployed to military or civilian EU missions such as EUFOR RD Congo, EUFOR Tchad/RCA, or EULEX Kosovo. Yet despite the EU's recent mandate for new missions, these have largely been smaller in scale

and with a predominant focus on the provision of technical advice and training. Furthermore, new missions have been assigned less-ambitious mandates than those of earlier ones, such as EULEX Kosovo (Juncos 2017). And while scholars acknowledge that the EU has made progress in addressing deficiencies in its crisis responses abroad, they highlight persistent shortcomings in European attempts to foster peace through its own multilateral peace operations (Juncos and Blockmans 2018; Bergmann and Müller 2021; Dijkstra et al. 2019; Reykers and Adriaensen 2022; Friesendorf, Neubauer, and Schröder 2023).

More fundamentally, researchers have repeatedly called into question whether recent European engagement abroad should be regarded as a sincere attempt to foster peace and stability in countries and regions of crisis, and to what extent the chosen approaches are likely to be successful. Some have characterized the EU's military training missions (EUTMs) in Mali and Somalia as a form of 'counterinsurgency by proxy' rather than as vehicles for more substantial or meaningful change on the ground (Skeppström, Hull Wiklund, and Jonsson 2015). Others have pointed to European engagement with countries in its neighbourhood as an 'outsourcing' or 'externalising' of European (security) interests (Raineri and Strazzari 2019; Müller and Slominski 2021). European multilateral and bilateral security engagement in Niger has long been the subject of considerable criticism. The focus on border control and migration has been seen as overemphasizing European interests, while insufficient attention is paid to the grievances of the local population (Boas 2021). Some have even drawn a connection between former colonial practices and contemporary European security assistance in the Mediterranean (Tholens and Ruffa 2023).

Although EU missions are arguably less vulnerable to disruptions caused by fundamental disagreements among member states with diametrically opposing views, research nonetheless shows that the EU's Common Foreign and Security Policy (CFSP) is not immune to internal challenges and contestation from within (Maurer and Wright 2021). Differences among member states leading up to the launch of the EU's recent Red Sea naval mission *Aspides* in February 2024 are just the latest addition to a long list of illustrative examples. What this means is that European engagement for peace abroad is ultimately contingent upon internal cohesion within the European Union (see also Chapter 4.3). This is by no means a novelty; conflict has been a consistent feature of European attempts to present a unified position on matters of global peace and security (Smith 2017). Nevertheless, the deterioration of relations within the European Union has led

to increased academic interest in the internal politicization of EU foreign policy (Biedenkopf et. al. 2021).

Finally, it should be noted that European security engagement abroad is not characterized solely by the participation in multilateral or European peace operations. It is also characterized by a plethora of bilateral or multilateral activities conducted outside of these institutionalized frameworks. Such activities may be conducted in conjunction with multilateral operations, as evidenced in Mali and Niger, or they may be pursued as standalone initiatives. The extent of scholarly attention devoted to these developments varies. While French engagement in the Sahel has been the subject of considerable academic debate in recent years (see, for example, Guichaoua 2020), German bilateral security assistance has thus far been the subject of relatively little scholarly scrutiny. The fragmentation and complexity of ‘liberal peacebuilding’ since the early 2000s thus calls for more holistic approaches to studying Europe’s role in the maintenance of peace and security in a changing world. While scholarly work has attempted to encompass the extensive range of activities involved, the current understanding remains incomplete at best.

4.2.2 AVENUES FOR FURTHER RESEARCH

The first section of this chapter emphasized the changing normative framework of peace operations more generally, as well as ongoing regionalization and a European fatigue related to the continuation of its international engagement. Building on those debates, this section outlines a number of fruitful avenues for future research on European peace engagement abroad.

EUROPEAN EXTERNAL ENGAGEMENT IN A MULTI-ORDER WORLD

One avenue for future research could be an investigation into the impact of growing multipolarity and the emergence of competing world orders on Europe’s external engagement and on dominant Western liberal internationalism (Acharya 2017; Flockhart 2016). Our multi-perspectival approach (see Chapter 3.2) would allow researchers to pay attention to how Europeans react to an international environment where multilateral frameworks of and approaches to peacebuilding are increasingly replaced by non-Western, bilateral approaches

or authoritarian conflict management (Owen et al. 2018; Peter and Rice 2022). How do these transformations affect the design and conduct of Europe's external engagement? And what are the implications of Europe's changing role for the multilateral peace architecture? Recent debates about 'counter-peace' (Richmond, Poggoda and Visoka 2023), pragmatic peacekeeping (Dunton, Laurence, and Vlavourou 2023), and the (rhetorical) misuse of peacekeeping language for military interventions by Russia in Central Eurasia, Syria, or Africa (Burai 2016) highlight the need to better understand the repercussions of the emergence of a multi-order world on peace operations. Our contention is that it will not only create greater variety in the types of peace operations carried out by different international actors, but, more importantly, that it will also intensify contestation about those operations' legitimacy and appropriateness. Furthermore, competing rationales will exacerbate existing rifts between liberal and non-liberal actors, thereby negatively affecting the existing multilateral architecture for peace. It would be beneficial for future research to consider not only the strategies and policies employed by various international actors such as the EU and UN, but also those of Russia, China, and India. Additionally, it would be advantageous to examine how the international community addresses controversies resulting from competing rationales and the integration of national interests in multilateral peace operations.

A EUROPEAN APPROACH TO PEACE OPERATIONS PRACTICES

Given the transitional phase of multilateral peace missions – and their uncertain future – it would be beneficial to consider Paris's suggestion (2023: 18) to widen the analytical lens. It would be advantageous for researchers to investigate European approaches to peace and conflict outside the traditional multilateral architecture for peace. This could be done by examining approaches such as collective conflict management (for further insight, see Brosig and Karlsrud 2024 on ad hoc coalitions). A considerable body of research has demonstrated the inapplicability of universal blueprints or textbook approaches to peacekeeping, given the uniqueness of conflict situations (Bargués-Pedreny 2020; Laurence 2019; Mac Ginty 2012). Recent research has shifted away from a focus on criticizing existing practices, emphasizing instead novel forms of peace operations which have been identified. These include 'adaptive peacebuilding' (de Coning 2018), which emphasizes the necessity of prioritizing learning, flexibility, and coping with uncertain conditions on the ground in peace operations. Adopting

an analytical perspective that is less centred on traditional understandings of peacebuilding may allow us to identify and ‘see’ emerging alternative forms of conflict management that would otherwise be ‘invisible’. With regard to the EU’s external engagement, this would entail moving beyond the scope of the CSDP and examining alternative and emerging avenues through which the European Union and its member states engage in international conflict management. This would involve analysing the instruments (e.g. FRONTEX or European Commission projects) and strategies employed as well as determining the extent to which these differ from previous forms of engagement. The examination of the creative, unanticipated, or genuinely innovative methods through which peace operations address the multifaceted challenges they encounter on the ground may prove insightful in the identification of action and practice repertoires. Doing so would demonstrate once again that an orientation towards policy and practice is an asset of peace research and would promote well-established connections between scholars and practitioners seeking best practices in the field of multilateral peace operations.

LEARNING AND KNOWING IN A CHANGING PROFESSIONAL FIELD

Future research could also investigate the effects of the current peace operations crisis on peacebuilding as a professional field of protection. Research on peacebuilding as profession (Goetze 2019) is interested in, for example, better understanding how the management of peace operations at the UN headquarters and other international organizations is driven by informal and hidden power structures within bureaucracy (Dijkstra 2015), how staff respond to non-compliance by host countries of peace operations (Oksamytna et al. 2023), or how the staffing international organizations is used to instrumentalize them for national interests (Fung and Lam 2021). Another area of interest is criminal behaviour of field personnel, especially sexual exploitation and abuse of those under their protection. Given the impact on not only the victims, but on the legitimacy of peace operations as well, much of this literature is especially interested in addressing root causes and identifying ways of preventing such abusive behaviour (Grady 2010; Karim and Beardsley 2016). A focus on learning and knowledge production that follows our ideas about science-policy interfaces discussed in Chapter 3.2 could stimulate research on changes in peacebuilding as a professional field of protection. How do new technologies, innovative knowledge production methods between international and local actors, various

approaches to evaluating lessons learned, or training for civilian and military personnel impact the professionalization of the field? Building on these questions, how are efforts to professionalize international police work (such as through the Strategic Guidance Framework of the UN) affected by shifting power dynamics within international organizations? How are current repertoires of knowledge within the field of peacebuilding shaped or changed by conflict management that occurs outside of more traditional frameworks? Are there fundamental differences between European professionals and those from other world regions? Furthermore, do new forms of conflict management (really) give rise to new repertoires of knowledge that differ from previously held convictions?

PEACE OPERATIONS AS COMPLEX ASSEMBLAGES

Finally, based on our multi-perspectival approach to peace research, it seems useful to study peace operations as complex assemblages of international and national actors, local and global sites, humans and objects, practices, norms, and technologies transcending established political and geographic scales. While much research has focused on the necessity of taking local perspectives and agencies seriously during peace processes (see also Chapter 4.4) as well as studying the dynamics of political processes at the headquarters level (Dijkstra 2015; Weinlich 2014), peace operations provide a rare opportunity to study engagement for peace beyond and across different scales (Hellmüller 2022). Future research could focus on the transscularity of these assemblages in order to develop new understandings of how global and local spheres of action coalesce; how processes of diffusion, translation, and contestation change global peacebuilding norms; and what we can learn from using micro-level approaches to study global-local interconnections. European external engagement with its nested institutions – the EU and the UN – and with other regional security organizations, as well as tensions between EU and national foreign policies, could become a case in point for such a transscalar perspective. This could also stimulate research on how specific sites, objects, and spaces facilitate agency, allowing actors to transcend established categories – such as international and national – or to understand how processes such as resistance and emancipation challenge international interventions, and to study the boundary work they employ to cope with the transscalar character of multilateral peace operations. Finally, a transscalar approach could be useful for revealing the enduring role of Europe’s colonial past in its external engagement and the benefits of turning to postcolonial approaches in the study of multilateral peace operations.

EXAMPLE: EUROPE'S SUPPORT TO SECURITY SECTOR REFORM (SSR) IN A CHANGING WORLD

A case in point for demonstrating the complexities and challenges of maintaining peace and security in a changing global security order is Europe's support for security sector reforms (SSR). SSR represents a crucial shift in the LIO intervention paradigm, offering more precise insights into how established European peacebuilding and crisis management tasks are changing alongside the transformation of the global security order. SSR provides a case through which we can examine the challenges and changes faced by European actors in implementing normative foreign and security policies based on the LIO, as well as the rise of alternative forms of conflict management in a specific empirical setting.

According to a liberal interpretation, SSR processes aim to strengthen democratic oversight of security organs and the judiciary, improve their governance, and increase their effectiveness in providing security to the population. In practice, it also involves helping security forces of other countries participate in international peace operations. As a concept, SSR is thus deeply embedded in a liberal (peacebuilding) agenda.

SSR has been explicitly included as an objective in many of the civilian as well as military EU missions deployed since 2003. In addition to EUAM Ukraine and EUAM Iraq, the Congo serves as another example of the EU advising and assisting the local police and defence forces in reforming the security sector. However, scientists and observers have long pointed to shortcomings in the EU's ability to implement ambitious SSR goals (Schröder 2014; Arnould and Vlassenroot 2016; Van der Lijn et al. 2024).

One challenge is that SSR, in its liberal interpretation, runs against interests of authoritarian elites. Consequently, peace builders may become enablers or stabilizers of authoritarian rule (e.g. von Billerbeck and Tansey 2019). Moreover, international supporters of SSR have generally viewed their support as a very technical process. In effect, international engagement involving SSR aims has often failed because it did not address political conflicts or the reconfigu-

ration of power. Against this backdrop, scholars drafted a new paradigm, called ‘the second generation of SSR’, which emphasized that an approach ‘based on process and politics rather than linear managerialism’ was needed (Jackson 2018: 2).

Yet despite commitments to support democratic SSR, European countries (as well as the USA) tend to bilaterally provide security sector assistance (SSA), which ‘typically aim[s] to strengthen the recipient forces’ ability to carry out ongoing combat operations and to deal with large-scale security challenges’ (Rolandsen et al. 2021: 567). And with regard to the European Peace Facility – established by the EU in 2021 to fund defence and military assistance to partner countries – experts have pointed to the risk of both diversion and misuse (Maletta and Héau 2022). As for Europe’s neighbourhood, Tholens and Al-Jabassini consider SSA in the Mediterranean an ‘ordering practice’ (2024: 433–434). While the effectiveness of security sector assistance has generally been seen as limited (Biddle, Macdonald, and Baker 2017; Karlin 2018), SSR has continued to be part of international missions despite mixed results. Stabilization became the focus, however, leaving interventions in ‘ideological limbo’ (Clausen and Albrecht 2021).

Recent failures in Afghanistan, Mali, and Niger, and in alternative approaches to security cooperation, call the future of SSR into question. Russia has used mercenaries formerly known as the Wagner Group in countries such as the Central African Republic, Libya, and Mali to advance its interests (e.g. Al-Jabassini and Badi 2024). Meanwhile, China has steadily expanded both its economic and security footprint on the African continent through its ‘Belt and Road’ initiative. China has also increased its participation in UN peacekeeping as well as training and the export of equipment to the African continent, relying on private companies to protect its investments abroad (e.g. Carrozza and Marsh 2022).

Future research could study in more detail the counter-peace and anti-democratic support of countries like Russia, as well as their cooperation and competition with each other (see, for instance, Al-Jabassini and Badi 2024, who studied the roles and security assistance of Russia and Turkey in Syria and Libya). Research could examine the European response to this competition. Scholarship on SSR could also study how those states have contributed to

dysfunctional governance structures in relations between security actors and civil and political groups in countries that receive assistance. Moreover, trans-scalar peace research, which considers the global and local complexities involved in support for security sector changes, is still in its infancy. Future research using this approach could build on Almohamad (2019), who argued – in an examination of Iraq and Sierra Leone – that scholarship on SSR neglected to integrate regional politics into the formulation of concepts and policies.

4.3 THE INTERNAL DIMENSION OF THE EUROPEAN PEACE PROJECT

Aline Bartenstein, Hendrik Hegemann, and Oliver Merschel³

From its outset, the European integration process has been framed as, among other things, a peace project enabling and sustaining peaceful relations among former adversaries through interaction, institutions, and interdependence (Deutsch 1957; Mitrany 1966). This shared project, however, also aims at guaranteeing a specific set of liberal-democratic values and structures that ‘civilize’ conflict within European societies. At the same time, domestic political and societal factors form an essential condition for the European peace project and the European integration process. In this view, the European peace project has, on the one hand, provided a framework that furthered a set of largely liberal values in member states and helped sustain a certain impression of economic and political stability in the view of many; on the other hand, European integration benefitted from and depended on favourable societal and political conditions within member states. In this sense, the European peace project can therefore be seen as the quintessential attempt to actively further and build the internal conditions for a more ‘positive’ version of inter- and inner-societal peace beyond the mere prevention of war (Senghaas 1992). These conditions have always been fragile, and actual behaviour has not necessarily matched idealized self-images. More fundamentally, the European integration process reflects specific narratives of what ‘Europe’ means, how it has developed, and where it should be heading. These narratives are not without alternatives and are often entangled with hegemonic projects and (neo-)colonial legacies that a self-reflexive approach needs to address (Manners and Whitman 2016; Boatcă 2021; de Vries 2023).

Integration among European countries and societies is a multifaceted phenomenon whose geographical boundaries can vary and which unfolds in diverse institutional fora in different ways and to different degrees. However, the Euro-

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pean Union (EU) is of special importance in this context. This is not only due to its sheer size, impact and competences. With its historical origins, deep societal and economic underpinnings as well as special model of progressing functional integration it may be seen as the archetype of a transnational peace project, which is also mirrored by its own language and normative ambition (Birchfield, Kriege, and Young 2017). This chapter, hence, focuses on the EU as the institutional and ideational core of the European peace project.

In recent times, the often-diagnosed ‘polycrisis’ plaguing European societies has posed challenges not only to the broader European peace and security order among states and the role of international institutions within this context (see Chapter 4.2 in this report) – it has also given new prominence to fundamental questions about the internal foundations of the European peace project. Indeed, the recent popularity of the term ‘polycrisis’ within European policy debates can be traced back to Jean-Claude Juncker during his tenure as president of the European Commission. Juncker used the term to describe the state of the EU, which was faced not only with various policy problems but was also being fundamentally challenged from within – most notably by the Brexit referendum. In this context, the experience of recent crises was seen as fuelling political and societal tensions in member states. These tensions included the rise of authoritarian populism and nationalism, which were regarded as threats to the functioning of the EU, to some of its core values, and potentially to its very existence (Zeitlin, Nicoli, and Laffan 2019: 965). At the same, EU leaders and institutions reemphasized their goal of providing comprehensive security for its citizens across various dimensions, as illustrated by concepts such as the protection of a ‘European way of life’ and ‘a Europe that protects’. This was also an attempt to counter the apparent appeal of populist calls to ‘take back control’ in crisis-ridden times. The broad promise of protection and stability as a guiding narrative, however, might alter the future orientation of the European integration project and eventually replace more progressive concepts, such as the ‘peace project’ (Bartenstein, Hegemann, and Merschel 2022; Bora and Lequesne 2023; von Lucke and Diez 2023).

Europe and the EU have experienced various critical episodes in the past, and one should be sceptical of often-ahistoric narratives of unprecedented crisis. Moreover, the EU has proven itself pragmatic and resilient in recent crisis responses (Chopin and Lequesne 2021; Jones, Kelemen, and Meunier 2021) although it has responded in various ways – and with various effects – to different

crises (Ferrara and Kriesi 2022; Anghel and Jones 2023). These experiences did, however, make disintegration appear plausible, illustrating that the acceptance and spread of the liberal-democratic values on which European integration has long rested cannot be taken for granted (Jones 2018; Webber 2019). As a consequence, critical integration research has stressed the need for ‘larger and genuinely pluralistic debates over why the EU and EU studies is in such trouble’ that regard such crises as opportunities for serious disruption and self-reflection (Manners and Whitman 2016: 5). In this context, the study of European security and the European peace project needs to (re-)engage more deeply with fundamental questions of European integration as well as political dynamics within European societies. Research should view peace and security not only as specific policy fields (however broadly they might be understood), but also critically examine European integration as a question of peace and security among and within European societies that depends on fragile political and social conditions. Following the multi-perspectival approach advanced by this report, we therefore propose linking peace research with insights from European integration studies as well as conflict and democracy research. These dynamics need to be studied as part of a broader and longer historical development beyond the war in Ukraine or the COVID-19 pandemic. This can provide policymakers and civil society with practical knowledge and relevant recommendations that go beyond symbolic action or situational responses to specific events, such as national or European election results. It is important to take full account of the challenges to and conditions for more positive versions of peace within and among European societies and to move beyond a focus on the prevention of war and armed conflict in the European periphery or other parts of the world.

The first part of this chapter highlights three perspectives on the internal dimension of the European peace project in times of crisis that have been prominently discussed in recent research, and it provides different analytical lenses for investigating related phenomena. The second part of this chapter then presents and examines emerging research avenues and research needs in two main areas that also affect aspects identified by the three above-mentioned perspectives.

4.3.1 RELEVANT RESEARCH

POLITICIZATION AND SHIFTING CLEAVAGES

The first relevant perspective underlines how the European integration project and the European peace project are intertwined with political and societal dynamics within (and partially across) member states. In recent years, a number of trends and phenomena that have been interpreted as a challenge to liberal democratic systems in member states as well as a threat to the progress of European integration have been debated extensively within academic and public discourses. These trends include the success of populist and nationalist parties (Kriesi 2020), democratic backsliding (Gora and de Wilde 2022), the rise of authoritarianism (Kelemen 2020), political polarisation (Reiljan 2020), and societal disintegration (Grunow et al. 2023). These complex issues partially overlap while remaining distinct. Moreover, there are different views on the exact form, degree, drivers, and consequences of these issues, and empirical research reveals variation across member states, time, and policy fields. In addition, each comes with its own conceptual and normative challenges as well as underlying assumptions – about their respective conceptions of democratic politics, for example – that are highly contentious. These vast and fundamental debates cannot be covered in detail here. However, research needs to take them into account as an important background condition for the internal dimension of the European peace project.

The link between domestic political contestation and European integration becomes especially apparent in the debate on politicization, which has served as a central reference point for research over the last decade. The basic argument is that the transfer of authority to the European level and the EU's growing interference in citizens' everyday lives, together with the rise of populist, authoritarian, and/or nationalist movements in many countries, put the legitimacy of EU institutions up for debate, challenged the 'permissive consensus' of pro-European elites, and made European integration as well as specific EU policies salient and contentious issues in public politics. While some scholars view politicization as a necessary product of the integration process that can enhance the EU's responsiveness and serve as a source of reflexivity, others regard it as a threat to effective decision-making or fuel for destructive political sentiments (Hooghe and Marks 2009; de Wilde, Leupold and Schmidtke 2016; Grande and Hutter 2016).

Research regards crisis experiences as a key driver of politicization in the EU. Initially, the Eurozone crises, as well as debates about migration in particular, made the EU a reference object of political contestation that resonates with both national parties and publics. Moving beyond specific crisis episodes, Hooghe and Marks (2018) defined the broader, cross-cutting polycrisis and related experiences as a ‘critical juncture’, following which European integration might result in a new societal cleavage that (re-)structures political dynamics and party alignments. Zeitlin, Nicoli, and Laffan (2019: 966) add that this might lead to a ‘polycleavage’ in which general questions about the EU intertwine with more specific policy debates about climate change, migration, and other issues in a way that transcends traditional left-right distinctions. This again underlines how European integration and EU policies might increasingly interrelate with processes of polarization and shifting cleavages that also shape domestic politics in many member states. In this politicized context, European governance becomes increasingly difficult. The EU is not only haunted by a ‘policy trap’ that makes essential compromise-building increasingly difficult due to political constraints and public pressures (Zeitlin, Nicoli, and Laffan 2019), but also by an ‘autocracy trap’ where some member states – Hungary most notably – fundamentally question shared democratic values (Kelemen 2020). However, research also suggests that politicization varies widely across policy fields, does not originate only from authoritarian populists, and does not necessarily stop the EU from taking joint action (Grande and Kriesi 2016: 295–298).

Politicization in times of the polycrisis can thus be connected to European peace and security in two ways. First, a growing field of research has shown that even the purportedly exceptional field of EU security policy is increasingly subject to politicization. As a consequence, security policy ‘is now more in line with the broader way in which political conflict is being re-structured in Europe’ (Biedenkopf, Oriol Costa, and Gorá 2021: 325) and is increasingly shaped by patterns of ‘contentious politics’ (Hegemann and Schneckener 2019). Most notably, debates on migration and refugee policy have fuelled such processes. Research shows that right-wing parties have driven and benefitted from especially intense episodes of contention in this area, but that related slogans and framings also spilled over to other parties which then partially adopted them (Hutter and Kriesi 2022). Second, politicization in the face of cross-cutting crises might be seen as a broader challenge – or an opportunity, depending on one’s perspective – for the internal dimensions of the European peace project by undermining (or furthering) constructive democratic politics within and across member states.

This is another area to which peace research could contribute significantly, given its longstanding experience with research on constructive societal conflict management in contentious and crisis-affected settings – research which has largely been gathered in contexts outside EU member states (see Chapter 4.4 in this report).

ONTOLOGICAL (IN)SECURITY AND EXISTENTIAL ANXIETY

A second perspective on the internal dimension of the European peace project also starts from the assumption that the EU and European societies experience their current situation as being fundamentally shaped by crisis. The growing body of literature on ‘ontological (in)security’ and ‘existential anxiety’, however, focuses on how this contributes to doubts about the EU’s liberal self-identity as well as the extent to which established models and self-images still offer a viable path to a better future. Security, in this sense, is understood not only as something physical, but as a fundamental, existential feeling of being or becoming ‘ontologically (in)secure’ as well (Mitzen 2006; Steele 2008; Rumelili 2020). In the context of the EU, scholars are currently debating whether the European integration project might be facing more than concrete, temporary problems. If so, the polycrisis might result in an existential challenge to the EU and its core values. The focus would then no longer be on how well or fast the EU might (not) respond to specific crises; rather, the *raison d’être* and continued existence of the Union itself would be called into question – or at least no longer considered self-evident. In this scenario, the very idea of a common project based on a liberal conception of progress which strives to create a better future and overcome a problematic past is not only challenged, but might appear to be part of the problem as much as the solution (Kinnvall, Manners, and Mitzen 2018; della Sala 2023). Ontological (in)security and anxiety cannot be definitively abolished – only managed in a more or less productive manner. Providing simplistic solutions and answers to restore an imagined state of certainty and security are, hence, not only problematic but unrealistic as well. In an alternative reading, ontological (in)security and anxiety might also represent an opportunity to consider necessary reforms and propose new narratives that could aid in coping with crises in ways other than a defence of the status quo or a return to an idealized past (Kinnvall and Mitzen 2020: 247–248).

Currently, at least two relevant debates in the field of ontological security relate to the EU. First, the EU has played a prominent role in the discussion of ‘existen-

tial anxiety' in international politics. Here, the EU has been considered a prime empirical example of certain trends. In the relevant literature, existential anxiety has been described as 'a sense or mood of unease, nervousness, or discomfort, associated with uncertainty and oriented toward the future' (Kinnvall and Mitzen 2020: 242). In a debate that began to flourish with the Brexit referendum and grew even more intense following the COVID-19 pandemic and other crises, the EU itself has been described as an 'anxious community' which is 'stuck' and lacks a clear sense of self (Kinnvall, Manners, and Mitzen 2018; Mitzen 2018; see also Rumelili 2015; 2020; Krickel-Choi 2022). This literature has alerted researchers to the emotional and existential dimension of current crises for the EU and its founding values. Empirically, however, it remains difficult to determine exactly how anxious specific parts of the EU are, how this has developed over time, and which consequences this might have. More empirically substantiated research is also needed to address whether and under what conditions anxiety should be feared as a source of confusion and conflict or appreciated as an opportunity for change and reflexivity.

Second, debates on the EU's ontological (in)security in times of crisis intersect with debates on the possible need for a new guiding narrative of European integration. Since Brexit, if not before, disintegration has become not only an abstract concept, but a concrete alternative as well that is supported by groups with relevant political support. The foundational narrative of the EU as a peace project may have lost some of its steam, and possible new narratives have been discussed for several years (Manners and Murray 2018). In times of polycrisis, the need for a guiding narrative that could provide some sense of ontological security for the EU is described as even more pressing – and the search for it as notoriously difficult (Della Sala 2017, 2018; Koschorke 2019). Populist movements utilize perceived anxieties for their simplifying and exclusionary narratives, promising restored identities and ontological security amidst a changing world while neglecting the need for self-reflexive engagement with the deeper causes of anxiety (Browning 2018, 2019; Kinnvall and Svensson 2022). Research has also highlighted how deeper anxieties manifest themselves in differences among member states. This includes, for example, a narrative that portrays Eastern Europeans as 'troublemakers' in European integration, particularly due to the questioning of liberal principles by governments in Hungary or Poland, as well as a perceived lack of solidarity in migration and refugee policy (Mälksoo 2019). Partially in response to this, 'security' – understood in a very broad sense as a societal value across various policy fields – has emerged as a potential

new guiding narrative for the EU. It is one that also caters, in part, to a perceived need for stability and control, thereby following a very different outlook for the purpose and direction of European integration (Schneckener 2020; Bartenstein, Hegemann and Merschel 2022).

EUROPEAN SOVEREIGNTY AND SOLIDARITY

A third prominent perspective assesses how crises have reinforced calls for European sovereignty and solidarity in relation to societal infrastructures, political institutions, and economic wellbeing. Sovereignty has emerged as a central theme in both political discourse and academic inquiry in recent years, particularly within the context of European integration (Jabko and Luhman 2019; Jabko 2020; Brack, Coman, and Crespy 2019; Bickerton et al. 2022; Bora and Lequesne 2023). The original question of sovereignty revolved around the dilemma of how member states could relinquish certain national competencies in favour of a more integrated European framework. The solution came in the form of shared or pooled sovereignty, a concept in which member states collectively pool their sovereign powers to ‘rescue the nation state’ (Milward 2000). The most recent debates have shifted their focus towards ‘European sovereignty’, a term often used interchangeably with the notion of ‘strategic autonomy’. This is driven by the basic assumption that the fundamental challenges of the polycrisis prove established concepts to be inadequate. Sovereignty is mostly employed in regard to the ‘capacity to act’ (Bickerton et al. 2022: 258). The use of European sovereignty also implies the question of authority, i.e., who is (the) sovereign – the people, Parliament, the nation-state or the European Union (Brack, Coman, and Crespy 2019). In this context, discussions about the discursive purpose of sovereignty have arisen against the background of a purported geopolitical revival and of treaty reforms that transcend more established debates on the EU’s ability to act independently in the international system (Bora and Lequesne 2023). This drive towards greater sovereignty extends beyond defence and security, encompassing energy security (including the promotion of renewable energy sources), securing critical supply chains (e.g. medical products), fostering technological innovation and infrastructure development (such as the 5G network), and enhancing capabilities in outer space-related endeavours (e.g. satellite technology). Increased sovereignty in these areas is expected to enhance political, economic, and societal resilience, as strong economic and trade dependencies are now being evaluated more critically (Helwig 2023).

Discussions on bolstering EU sovereignty are intrinsically tied to debates on how to implement this goal within the institutional framework. Two opposing camps exist within the current discussions on EU reform. One faction advocates for increased majority voting in various policy areas, while the other contends that a French-German hegemony, characterized by majority voting, could jeopardize the European project itself. These quarrels on the functioning of the EU point to the more conventional meaning of sovereignty, i.e., the question of authority (Beetz 2021; Coman and Leconte 2019; Koenig 2020).

In addition, sovereignty is closely intertwined with discourse around the pivotal concept of solidarity. In literature on European solidarity, we find a range of different research approaches focusing on transnational solidarity between individuals (Bremer et al. 2023; Katsanidou, Reinl and Eder 2022), on legal perspectives (Calliess 2020), or on intergovernmental solidarity (Bartenstein 2021). Additionally, literature uses the concept of ‘togetherness’ to reframe the question of what keeps the EU together (Ferrera 2023). Similar to sovereignty, solidarity involves the redistribution of competencies and responsibilities, yet it introduces distinct factors that shape the political discourse. Solidarity, traditionally regarded as notoriously lacking, gained particular prominence during the Euro crisis and the refugee crisis. During these turbulent periods, the very essence of solidarity was put to the test as various actors questioned who warrants solidarity and the principles that underpin such support (Grande and Hutter 2016: 16–17). The EU struggled at times to effectively address these crises due to insufficient capabilities. However, the management of the COVID-19 pandemic involved significant efforts by EU political elites to achieve EU cohesion and solidarity (Ferrera, Miró and Ronchi 2021). On the one hand, solidarity catalyses discussions of ‘European public goods’, which aim to establish transnational projects with added value for the EU (Calliess 2020). On the other hand, solidarity is now recognized as a legal norm – akin to an organizing principle in federal states (Bartenstein 2021) – which compels member states to collaborate, seek common interests, and avoid harming one another. Furthermore, research underscores that solidarity among member states is not forged exclusively during crises. While crises may reveal weak institutions and political coordination deficits, the negotiation of solidarity is an ongoing process as member states must cultivate mutual trust by proving their self-responsibility to prevent free-riding.

4.3.2 AVENUES FOR FURTHER RESEARCH

This chapter's first section referenced three different perspectives that have been prominent in recent research and can shed light on various aspects of the European peace project's internal dimension: politicization, ontological security and existential anxiety, as well as sovereignty and solidarity. These perspectives all reflect the core argument of this chapter: to link the study of European security and the European peace project with fundamental questions of European integration as well as with political dynamics within European societies. A multi-perspectival peace research approach to European security, hence, needs to engage with these traditions in more depth and link them to its specific insights and perspectives on political and societal conflicts as well as their constructive management. Against this background, the current section identifies two future research avenues that identify broader fields and current developments where the perspectives illustrated above might be applied. These two research avenues deal with the politics of crises in the EU as well as the basic dynamics of European integration following the war in Ukraine.

THE POLITICS OF CRISIS IN THE EU

The first worthwhile research avenue focuses on the empirical study of the politics of crisis in the EU as well as the different forms and consequences of those politics. It pays more attention to the politics of crisis in the EU in a way that considers not only how certain problems and events come to be considered crises, but also the political effects this may have and the more nuanced, differentiated politics surrounding them. The resulting conceptions of crises directly affect and emerge from dynamics of politicization and contestation. They shape perceptions and feelings of insecurity and anxiety, and motivate and legitimate specific, potentially exceptional policy responses. A growing number of studies propose taking crises as the central point of departure for the study of European integration. They tend to focus on the EU response to these crises and the consequences this may have for the nature and evolution of European integration (Rhinard 2019; Zeitlin, Nicoli, and Laffan 2019; Boin and Rhinard 2023; Nugent, Paterson and Rhinard 2023). In line with reflexive approaches to crisis research (Bösch et al. 2020), however, studies should not buy into broader narratives of a new, comprehensive sense of crisis too easily, as this runs the risk of unduly reducing complexity and (re)producing somewhat diffuse public sentiments. It would, therefore, be helpful to study recent calls for more detailed and differen-

tiated empirical analysis. The goal should be to elucidate the ‘shades of grey’ in contemporary crisis constructions and experiences, and to ‘open the black box of crises’ (Speyer and Stockmann 2023: 2).

The politics of crisis should therefore be studied without presupposing the existence of specific crises from the outset. What is actually meant by ‘crisis’ – and which events are considered a certain kind of crisis – is highly contentious. At the same time, framing something as a crisis strongly affects how related issues are discussed and handled because it puts specific issues such as migration at the top of the political agenda, thereby allowing certain political actors to advance specific political proposals in response. Some researchers of European integration have therefore started to investigate the ‘epistemic dimension of crisis construction’ in more detail because ‘[a] political community becomes politicised (or not) around and in terms of the contested frames in and through which the crisis comes to be viewed, and ultimately lived’ (Voltolini, Natorski, and Hay 2020: 610). The goal of research should be to carefully and critically analyse the discursive construction of crises and as well as the impact of crisis perceptions on specific institutions and practices. Research should further examine the contestation of crises by a broad array of political actors, who may attempt to use the politics of crisis to their advantage and can produce far-reaching consequences by politicizing specific events or problems. This research should bring together analyses at the European and national levels in order to study the politics of crisis across scales, as our multi-perspectival approach suggests (see Chapter 3.2).

Furthermore, studies might assess how specific experiences and understandings of crisis affect societal and institutional norms and understandings. Crisis politics serve as an arena for contentious and visible debates about actors’ self-identity and guiding narratives (Speyer and Stockmann 2023). A Eurobarometer poll from 2022, for instance, referred to an increasing ‘polycrisis mood’ among European citizens (Eurobarometer 2022). This is often interpreted as signifying a growing sense of ‘anxiety’ in the EU and European societies (see above). But is ‘the EU’ itself – or the political and bureaucratic actors that enable its daily functioning – actually more anxious in any meaningful way? How do public discourses about increasing anxiety and the everyday work of political institutions relate to each other (von Lucke and Diez 2023)? Thus far, there is a dearth of micro-level perspectives on the reality of anxiety (or the lack thereof) in political and administrative practice. Furthermore, whether anxiety is rising

or not, political attempts to address and counteract feelings of anxiety or crisis – real or perceived – can very much be observed on multiple levels and have real consequences. These attempts to address (or take advantage of) perceived anxieties should also be studied in further research that addresses the potential and pitfalls of proposing and reacting to the diagnoses of an anxious Europe. For instance, the narrative of ‘promoting our European way of life’ has been – rather unsuccessfully – coined by the Commission to counteract feelings of anxiety about the EU and enhance a sense of cohesion among Europeans (Foret and Trino 2022; de Wilde 2023). While such narratives attempt to offer support in coping with perceived anxieties, their normative implications may be far-reaching. Drawing a dividing line between a ‘European way of life’ – which is worthy of protection – and some ‘other’, however vaguely defined, can enhance tendencies of exclusion and eurocentrism. The world outside of Europe might even be constructed as the almost proverbial ‘jungle’ to which Josep Borrell infamously referred. Peace research should empirically carve out and confront those normative implications of narratives that aim to help deal with anxiety, while also being reflexive about its own situatedness and normative traditions. For example, ontological security is often portrayed as a necessary response to contemporary crisis because it maintains and fosters institutionalized habits and practices of managing societal conflicts. However, these forms of ontological security can also limit reflexivity and innovation. Hence, in some cases ontological insecurity might be necessary to enable forms of constructive conflict and peace beyond political consensus and societal stability (Rumelili 2015). While such perceptions and constructions are important, research also needs to study the concrete policies that EU institutions adopt in response to multiple crises, as well as their political consequences. Integration research highlights that crises are now ‘more the rule than the exception’, and single crises cannot be viewed in isolation because they are ‘part of historical processes that relate to one another’ (Nugent, Paterson, and Rhinard 2023: 2). In this context, the EU’s response to the growing number of refugees, the COVID-19 pandemic, or the war in Ukraine intersect with each other and make crisis and emergency management the normal state of affairs in a more fundamental way. Research points to a permanent ‘transnational politics of emergency’ in which supranational, multilateral, unilateral, and domestic policies and perceptions interact, overlap or even compete with each other (Kreuder-Sonnen and White 2022; see also White 2020). This is directly related to questions of politicization and polarization within and across European member states. A prominent argument posits that the EU’s frequent use of increasingly decisionist and technocratic – or even ‘authoritarian’

(Kreuder-Sonnen 2018) – approaches in dealing with far-reaching, contentious decisions at the boundaries of its own mandates was directly or indirectly related to democratic backsliding and the rise of authoritarianism and populism in some member states. According to this view, one side can point to the threat of populism and ‘democratatorship à la Orban’ to justify emergency decisions in response to acute crises, while the other side points to a perception of the EU as a ‘post-political juristocracy’ to legitimate its own increasingly authoritarian rule (Manow 2020: 18; see also Kreuder-Sonnen 2018; Auer 2022).

This link is empirically controversial. Democratic backsliding, populism, and authoritarianism are complex phenomena with many causes. Moreover, the EU has adopted a variety of different, ordinary, and extraordinary policy instruments and actively sought public debate in a range of cases – through the Conference on the Future of Europe, for example. We also know that depoliticization is never complete and often does not work as a political strategy (Hegemann and Kahl 2018). However, it would be worthwhile to further investigate the politics of crisis response – and how these responses seek to ensure security and protection in a comprehensive sense – in a more thorough and differentiated way. It is also important to examine the way this interacts with national political dynamics and portrayals of the EU, especially as many populist and authoritarian parties extensively incorporate promises of security into their narratives. This also leads to the more practical question of how constructive democratic politics and conflict management can actively address current concerns and crises while avoiding the ‘policy trap’ of stalled decision-making as well as the danger of technocratic or emergency politics, and yet also allowing for public, democratic deliberation at a time when populist parties that thrive on the image of a technocratic EU are increasingly part of national governments. This provides a classic inroad for a peace research perspective that puts conflict and its diverse, potentially integrative function at its centre (Deitelhoff and Schmelzle 2023).

DYNAMICS OF EUROPEAN INTEGRATION

Beyond the politics of crisis and (in)security in the EU, a second important research avenue deals with current and future dynamics of European integration. The war in Ukraine has given new momentum to the fundamental questions of European integration that are also driving and are being driven by processes of politicization and that raise crucial questions about European solidarity and

sovereignty. This especially relates to longstanding debates about enlargement and the finalité of European integration that have recently been reinvigorated under partially new circumstances.

Since 2022, the Russian invasion of Ukraine has revived more classic notions of security within the EU. Although the EU was established as a peace project for its members, the war revealed that the EU has failed to establish durable peace in its immediate neighbourhood and demonstrated the limits of the European peace and security order (see Chapter 4.1). Apart from questions about international actions or the perceived need to step up the EU's geopolitical ambitions, however, the war also pressured EU member states to rethink the more fundamental goals and aspirations of the European integration project. Political parties in various member states as well as some governments, most notably Victor Orban's government in Hungary, have sought to politicize the conflict and capitalize on polarizing debates. It remains to be seen how political and public attitudes and dynamics within member states will continue to evolve (Ádám 2023). So far, the EU has been able to react rather flexibly and to build on mechanisms and strategies developed during previous crises in its response to 'one of the great exogenous shocks in its history' (von Ondarza 2023: 213). Currently, however, there are two main debates about the fundamental direction of European integration related to the consequences of the war in Ukraine that research on the internal dimension of the European peace project needs to address in more detail.

First, the enlargement process has a new impetus. This debate also relates to the question of whether the war will provoke movement towards deeper and wider integration in the EU. In December 2023, the EU finally opened accession negotiations with Moldova and Ukraine and awarded candidate status to Georgia, alongside other ongoing accession processes. If the enlargement process is fast-tracked, however, the extent to which the functioning of the EU will be threatened is questionable. In a geopolitical reading, the EU will utilize the enlargement process as a 'stabilization and security-building mechanism' (Anghel and Džankić 2023). In view of the emerging paradox of fast-tracking and hard conditionality, however, it is unclear if the enlargement process will succeed. So far, EU integration – at least officially – has followed the assumption that the joint peace project presupposes a basic agreement on liberal-democratic values. As liberal democracy faces challenges in many EU member states, soft conditionality for new member states could eventually lead to an even more crisis-prone

EU. Old member states would also struggle to find a new equilibrium in terms of budget distribution. Member states which have long profited from EU funds would need to adapt to new roles in an enlarged EU. Also, the idea of a ‘core Europe’ drawn with concentric circles might lead to new dysfunctions in terms of economic and social inequalities, perceived status inequality between member states, and cherry-picking and/or insufficient solidarity relations. A revived integration process potentially encompassing new member states, therefore, also raises questions about the need for broader treaty and institutional reforms (von Oндarza 2023: 225–227). Some observers even suggest that while enlargement might seem plausible with the narrative of the EU as a ‘geopolitical power’, it would risk delegitimizing and complicating the already-struggling integration process and ultimately lead the EU to adopt a more gradual, pragmatic approach to enlargement (Lippert 2023). Research should therefore look at the emerging empirical reality of enlargement from a multitude of perspectives, ranging from the ‘geopolitical narrative’, to the EU-wide aim of ‘social cohesion’, to the question of what kind of polity the EU envisions to be.

Second, the war in Ukraine has reinforced longstanding debates about the (expected and/or desired) finalité of European integration. In an oft-cited and much-discussed article published shortly before the start of the war, Kelemen and McNamara (2022) argued that the EU as a state-building project still lacked coercive force in many areas because European integration had been mostly driven by market forces and economic crises as opposed to – apart from its initial impetus – by security concerns and the experience of existential security crises. Others have criticized this model of ‘bellicist integration’. They argue either that integration leaps can also be enabled by the experience of other ‘transboundary crises’ (Freudlsberger and Schimmelfennig 2022), or that the war in Ukraine did not further a European state-building project but rather strengthened traditional models of the nation state with the help of EU institutions (Genschel 2022). Indeed, the COVID-19 pandemic, the war in Ukraine, and the ongoing issue of irregular migration have spurred moments of integrative progress, such as the ‘Hamiltonian moment’ of joint borrowing during the pandemic (see also McNamara 2023). Ultimately, the EU as a political project is determined by its member states as the key providers of European sovereignty. Member states have demonstrated their ability to steer the EU in the ongoing polycrisis (Bartenstein and Wessels 2023). ‘Muddling through’ or ‘failing forward’ (Jones, Kelemen, and Meunier 2021) do not seem to grasp the whole picture of the EU as a functioning polity. As a consequence, research should not only focus on

the incomplete nature of the EU, as Kelemen and McNamara did. Instead, research might also analyse the EU's 'power to get things done' as 'collective power Europe' (Laffan 2023). However, to fully grasp the EU's handling of the polycrisis, research needs to look at the nature of the crisis and the 'policy heritage' – i.e., EU competences and policy traditions – as well (Ferrara and Kriesi 2022). In this context, our multi-perspectival approach to peace research with its emphasis on the role of temporalities and timing could be useful for further studying the related time horizons and policy learnings. Also, in view of the EU's increased use of the 'emergency article' 122 TFEU, which refers to the spirit of solidarity, it is also necessary to study the democratic legitimacy and political effects of such crisis-driven policy (see above). Studying the EU by using conventional European integration theories seems thus less relevant at the current time. Different concepts and theories are needed to provide more insights into the evolution of the EU. Alternatively, the 'horse race' between EU integration theories should be transformed into a 'domain of application' approach using a theoretical synthesis (Ferrara and Kriesi 2022: 1352–1354). Future research should adopt a more pragmatic, eclectic approach and also reach out to other fields and approaches, including the study of conflict as well as peace and security in crisis-affected and contentious contexts.

4.4 SOCIETAL PEACE FORMATION AND EUROPEAN SECURITY

Regina Heller, Argyro Kartsonaki, and Anna Kreikemeyer

Peace and conflict studies related to European security have focused all too often on efforts to contain and resolve violence and conflict through national and international institutions. The inconclusive debates about the causes and remedies of the war in Ukraine in particular, but also in the post-Soviet space, on the European continent and beyond, not only underline the ongoing crisis and limitations of European security institutions. They also force peace researchers to draw analytical attention to other access points to engaging in the question how lasting peace in the post-Soviet space and on the wider European continent can be upheld and produced. Such an access point can be societal peace formation.

European peace and security are predominantly imagined as being designed and guaranteed by international organizations within the institutional framework of the European Union, the OSCE, and NATO. However, early and prominent peace researchers such as Johann Galtung (1975), Ernst-Otto Czempiel (1998), or Dieter Senghaas (1982), all of whom conducted their work under the weight of the Cold War in Europe, have underlined the societal dimension as a highly relevant condition for peace. In times of multiple crises and conflicts in Europe and its immediate neighbourhood, including a crisis of institutional peace governance, we need broader and multi-perspectival approaches on how to create peace beyond systemic and political structures. It is necessary, therefore, to (1) revisit societal peace formation understood as micro-level peace views, practices, interactions, and institutions; (2) learn more about its capacities, scope, and varieties in general; and (3) investigate the role and agency of civil society and the broader population in particular.

This chapter deals with the question of what societies have to offer in terms of peace formation in and for Europe and beyond with a particular focus on the post-Soviet space. First, it demonstrates the variety of peace formations, identifies existing research gaps and points to the limitations of the debate on the 'local turn' in peacebuilding. The second part of the chapter then discusses four avenues through which new concepts and methodologies can unpack and further specify societal peace formation, make use of participatory research meth-

ods, and finally acknowledge the merits of looking at societal peace to identify new perspectives on Russia's war against Ukraine.

4.4.1 RELEVANT RESEARCH

Societal peace formation is significantly impacted by the cultural, historical, geographical, and political context. It is also closely connected to the corresponding diversity of society-state relations and the level of global integration. Relevant research in the field, therefore, discusses the need to focus more on the contextualization that shape the multiple understandings and forms of peace strategies, non-violence, and conflict-resolution in societies.

VARIETIES OF SOCIETAL PEACE FORMATION

In many places in the post-Soviet space and in non-European contexts, peace research emphasizes that ordinary people often perceive peace as a balance between top-down governance, social unity, and economic wellbeing (Lewis 2016). Societal peace formation is considerably influenced by traditional worldviews, practices, and informal institutions. Numerous communities adhere to harmony ideologies that reconcile hierarchical perceptions of community, such as kinship, gender, age, and wealth (Nader 1990; Beyer and Gierke 2015). Local institutions such as councils of elders, neighbourhood committees, or self-governing property regimes uphold these normative orientations and provide social control, self-organisation, and conflict resolution. Despite their informal structure, such institutions may be rigid and closely intertwined with the local state administration. These traditional worldviews, practices, and institutions are considered a given by most community members, and changing them from the outside is challenging (Steenberg 2019; Millar 2018; Bichsel 2009).

In European communities, we can observe traditional peace views, practices, and informal institutions as well – particularly among ordinary people in rural contexts. Examples include gift rituals in the extended family, common work for the church or in the neighbourhood, and respect towards elders in local associations. However, the predominant concept of peace focuses on an inclusive civil society that promotes human rights, liberal democracy, the rule of law, and conflict management. Civil society organisations (CSOs), the media, and global social movements are more or less connected to governmental structures – be

it through domestic community-based institutions, the state administration, or international organisations – as they need approval from official authorities both in order to operate and to receive funding. However, their activities are carried out by local individuals and their beneficiaries are local communities. There have been some successes in civil society contributions to bottom-up conflict transformation over time in the former Yugoslavia (Kostovicova, Sokolić, and Fridman 2020; Fridman 2013) and Northern Ireland (Stanton 2021), albeit with mixed results.

The issue of societal peace formation and of peace processes among societal actors in the post-Soviet space has not yet systematically entered the field of scientific research and academic knowledge production. Rather, this is a new research field in the making with different, but so far not interlocking, areas of investigation. For instance, scholars have more recently embarked on an investigation of the dynamics of cooperation and conflict in areas of the post-Soviet space, where violence still prevails (KonKoop 2024). At the very least, it is assumed that due to its multiple historical, geographical, cultural, religious, and political settings, this region holds a variety of different, but often overlapping, ideas and practices of conflict resolution and peace formation. This is confirmed in pioneering scholarly work on traditional methods of societal peace formation in Central Asia and the Caucasus. While we observe a ‘renaissance of tradition’ in these regions (Beyer and Finke 2019), the societies in the EU-Eastern Partnership region are situated somewhere between traditional communitarian and liberal approaches to peace formation. They constitute, therefore, an interesting case study on the liminal effects of societal peace formation in Europe. Thus, peace research should invest more effort in exploring the sources and sites of broader normative positions and societal discourses on peace and non-violence in the post-Soviet space – e.g., those produced by religious groups and societal movements, but also those produced through art and literature or within the digital/virtual space – and bring together the various perspectives.

PEACE RESEARCH GAPS IN SOCIETAL PEACE FORMATION

Contemporary peace and conflict literature has contributed greatly to researching the role of societal actors in the peaceful reshaping and transformation of social relations. It is undisputed that sustainable peace in complex conflicts requires more than simply dealing with them in an international context. ‘Conflict transformation efforts must involve many levels, groups and sectors: govern-

ments and non-state actors, diasporas, men and women, conflict parties and peace alliances' (Austin and Gießmann 2019: 453). Sustainable pacification in the sense of a change from 'latent and overt violence to structural and cultural peace' (Austin and Gießmann 2019: 453) can only succeed if relationships at and between all levels are changed constructively (Lederach 1997; Dudouet 2006; Kriesberg, Northrup, and Thorson 1989). Most of this research is done on non-European contexts in response to the numerous civil wars during the 20th century that broke out all over the globe and their lasting negative effects on sustainable peace in these regions. Since Western Europe remained relatively peaceful – excepting the conflicts in Northern Ireland, Cyprus, and the former Yugoslavia – there was no need to engage with this strand of research. However, future research on societal peace formation should integrate wider Europe and the post-Soviet space as well.

Furthermore, research on societal peace formation is dominated by broad debates on the 'local turn' in peacebuilding in non-Western contexts (Leonardsson and Rudd 2015; Debiel, Held and Schneckener 2016). Here many efforts to improve local ownership (Donais 2008; Ejodus 2017) appear mired in governance perspectives of institutional-local interaction (Paffenholz, Poppelreuter, and Ross 2023; Roesdahl, Peet-Martel, and Velpillay 2021). Critical peace scholars, however, focus on societal peace agency and emphasize that 'local people may achieve peace on their own' (Autesserre 2017: 123) and are not inherently deficient.

4.4.2 AVENUES FOR FURTHER RESEARCH

The first section of this chapter discussed relevant research related to societal peace formation and connects them to the question of European security. These include the variety of existing forms of peace formation, the importance of societal peace agency and its multiple intersections and micro-dynamics. Against this background, this section identifies four avenues of future research that allow to enhance our understanding of societal peace formation and its relation to European security by pointing to the need of avoiding essentialist concepts of societal peace, by demonstrating new concepts and methodologies and by identifying new perspectives on Russia's war against Ukraine.

UNPACKING SOCIETAL PEACE FORMATION

While societal peace formation is a vivid field in peace and conflict studies, research is all too often primarily oriented towards a ‘local turn’ in peacebuilding in non-Western contexts. Yet peace formation from the ground up is just as important to historically conflict-laden and under-studied European societies. Therefore, we argue that an in-depth understanding of societal worldviews and beliefs, everyday practices, (in)formal institutions, as well as issues of power and social change (Millar 2014, 2018), is needed in wider Europe. However, any study on societal peace formation must avoid the risks of romanticization, essentialization, and othering. Studies should move away from approaching local communities as sealed containers of tradition and unpack their diversity as well as intersections and dynamics across scales. In the face of multiple power issues and ‘counter-peace’ tendencies (Richmond, Poggoda, and Visoka 2023), societal peace formation can only have a limited reach, be it in certain places or in multiple socio-spatial configurations (Bargués, Almagro and Travouillon 2023). Studying and understanding societal peace will, in all likelihood, not solve a broader conflict or war, but it can identify the anchor places – the human loci – of rapprochement and direct peace agency in everyday life, beyond systemic and political structures or constraining power relations.

CONCEPTUAL AND METHODOLOGICAL CHALLENGES OF SOCIETAL PEACE FORMATION

Against this backdrop, future research in this field must fill conceptual, and methodological gaps. At the conceptual level, post-liberal, de-colonial, and feminist concepts reject the focus on governance and demand a re-politization of conflict resolution and peace formation from the ground up (Jabri 2013; Smith 2019; Randazzo 2021). Most of these concepts also emphasize the material pre-conditions for peace and demand a focus on problems rooted in neo-liberal extractivism as well as on new concepts for how to accompany societal actors by international peacebuilding interventions and beyond (Bargués, Almagro, and Travouillon 2023). Here de-colonial, feminist and transdisciplinary concepts contribute to a better understanding of local perspectives on peace, grounded in culture and tradition, everyday practices, relationalities, and multiple temporalities (Brigg 2013; Brigg, George and Higgins 2022; Christie and Algar-Faria 2020). Many feminists particularly emphasize the need for intersectional concepts, and demand to broaden methods and soften disciplinary boundaries

through inter- and transdisciplinary cooperation with disciplines such as social anthropology, arts, history, human geography, and social psychology (Crenshaw 1989; Smith 1999; Motlafi 2021).

At the methodological level questions arise on how existing peace ideas and practices can be accessed, and how they can be activated to give society a peace-enhancing role in (post-)conflict settings. Critical peace studies start from the assumption that societal actors are agents in their own rights. Without ignoring multiple issues of power, they underline the importance of traditional views and everyday practices as well as alternative ways of knowledge production in fostering peace (Richmond 2007, 2016; Julian, Bliesemann de Guevara, and Redhead 2019). This perspective on micro-dynamics of peace agency and interpersonal peaceful interaction in divided societies (Mac Ginty 2014, 2021) goes hand in hand with a ‘practice turn’ in the social sciences (Bueger 2014). Here society plays a greater role because it engages with the idea that peace is not an abstract state, but rather the embodiment of a social practice. This practice takes shape in various ways in different contexts and communities (Richmond 2016; Hunt 2017). It not only resembles Bourdieu’s practice-oriented understanding of social and political life (Bourdieu 1977), but offers an understanding inspired by ethnography as well, as can be seen in research on ‘everyday peace’ (Mac Ginty 2014), ‘everyday security’ (Lemanski 2012), ‘vernacular security’ (Jarvis and Lister 2013), and ‘bodies of knowledge’, for example (Richmond and Mac Ginty 2019). All these concepts and methods can be applied to many conflicts in greater Europe – for example, the refugee crisis and right-wing radicalization in Western Europe, the conflict between Armenia and Azerbaijan on Nagorno-Karabakh, and top-down authoritarian conflict management in Central Asia. These gaps are particularly challenging with respect to the Ukrainian society, as the potential for societal peace formation and reconciliation between the people of Ukraine and Russia after the war is unclear (see below).

PARTICIPATORY RESEARCH ON SOCIETAL PEACE FORMATION

Participatory research is an innovative approach that breaks with classical research paradigms. It places everyday knowledge at centre stage and aims for collaborative studies with non-academic co-researchers. This changes the way knowledge is produced in several ways. First, knowledge no longer emerges on

the basis of structured academic studies, but is instead the product of everyday experiences. Second, the precept of intersubjectivity and the separation of knowledge and person recedes in favour of subjective knowledge and a direct link between knowledge and person. Third, the transfer of knowledge no longer takes place (only) in the epistemic environment – scientific discourse – but via spoken everyday language, practices, routines of action, or publications with public appeal (Voss 2014: 34).

Participatory action research aims to not only explore social realities, but also to change them through transformative elements: processes of exchange and practice. Elements and goals are present in a dynamic relationship, i.e., science and the everyday world are recognized as complementary spheres of society, which, depending on the research design and the concrete objective, can result in different expressions and connections. At the core remains the idea that researchers and actors from the real-life world work together in the production of new, transformative knowledge (Bergold and Thomas 2012; Niewöhner 2015). In this context, the real world co-researchers are conceived as ‘cognisant subjects [...] who can themselves generate new knowledge in an empirical research process’ and ‘take on a decisive role as change agents in the practical implementation of the measures’ (Unger 2014: 56).

The added value of participation-oriented research in some social science disciplines has already been documented in various formats – from Citizen Science projects to Real Labs. This holds true for sustainability research in particular. In the context of peace and conflict research, and especially in research on questions of European peace and security, it has been applied little or hardly at all so far (Hegemann and Niemann 2022). This is mainly due to the fact that participatory research is challenging in terms of access, methods, and ethics, and that it does not follow standardized criteria of scientific work (Unger 2014: 85–86). Participatory research not only allows working with different degrees of participation, but also using a variety of critical and experimental methods such as theatre, role-playing, or Citizen Labs. Applying such methods requires both sufficient access and time to establish contact and to build trust with co-researchers, to manage dialogue through (cultural) translation, and to share knowledge through co-eval learning and co-creative practice (Kusić 2023). In all cases, participatory studies require ethical responsibility for research concepts and methods, a core feature of contemporary peace research. It is necessary for researchers to reflect on their positionalities and possible expectations, and

to follow ethical principles of partnership (e.g. ‘do no harm’ or ‘nothing about us without us’). Furthermore, they must strive for transparency and accessibility for all project partners and take care not to exploit their findings and expertise unilaterally (Lottholz 2022). While it is correct to acknowledge that the robustness of research results is reduced by a participatory orientation, this method opens up new areas of knowledge production for researching and understanding the micro-dynamics of non-violent interaction and peace formation in European contexts and beyond.

EXAMPLE: HORIZONTAL RESEARCH FOCUS DOING PEACE!

Holger Niemann and Delf Rothe

A case in point for the added value of participatory research methods is IFSH’s 2020–2024 horizontal research focus, Doing Peace!. Developed as a multi-year collaborative research project across IFSH’s three research areas, Doing Peace! demonstrates the promises and challenges of participatory methods in the field of peace and security research.

At the heart of Doing Peace! is the assumption that, to understand how peace is established and maintained in times of crisis, we need to focus on peace as practice as well as on peace processes located at the micro-level of everyday social relations ‘at home’. The peace and security implications of responses to climate change, the COVID-19 pandemic, or political polarization, for example, affect not only global security dynamics but also the daily lives of citizens. They show that an emphasis on the ‘everyday’ and the ‘local’ matters in established democracies beyond (post-)conflict settings as well.

As demonstrated in Chapter 4.4, peace research has provided a rich body of knowledge regarding the structural challenges for and conditions of societal peace formation in societies that have experienced violent conflict. Yet we know much less about the processes and practices employed by actors during everyday situations for the establishment or maintenance of peace in contexts that are ostensibly peaceful. Doing Peace! argues that to be able to analyse the

local effects of complex crisis constellations, as well as to develop strategies of coping with them, new forms of knowledge and practice are needed.

Doing Peace! engages critically with the recent wave of collaborative and participatory research strategies. While approaches such as participatory action research, real-world laboratories, citizen science, and knowledge co-creation often differ in their respective premise, they also have a number of shared features. Participatory methods are generally interested in fostering collaborative and mutual learning processes between researchers and stakeholders. They also have a normative impetus to initiate societal transformation, practical doings, and engagement with and for society, and they often expand our notion of research through processes of actively designing or constructing objects, or through concrete physical activities such as walking, drawing, etc. Our horizontal research focus Doing Peace! contributes to these debates by proposing an approach for participatory peace and security research that is based on the following key principles:

Peace as a local practice: Everyday peace practices are often-overlooked actions that enable peaceful social order(s). They can best be studied in local – i.e., concrete social and political – contexts by being considerably open to various actors on the ground, their knowledge, and traditions. Here, debates on the ‘the local’, ‘the everyday’, or the ‘the vernacular’, as well as the very ‘tangible’ manifestations of peace (Bachmann and Schouten 2018), provide inspiration. At the same time, we work at intersections and dynamics across scales and analyse the structural conditions necessary for the local constitution of peace.

Peace research as a community learning process: Doing Peace! emphasizes innovative research results through participatory knowledge production with non-academic partners. Ideally, research strategies are developed with all participants in critical and experimental cooperation.

Research as intervention into the world: Doing Peace! also points to the role of research and researchers in contributing to the doing of peace – but also to the possibility of increasing risks and insecurities through such research. We therefore practice reflexivity when considering the process of doing research

and how it relates to societal interventions crucial for highlighting how peace research can contribute to societal peace formation.

In summary, *Doing Peace!* not only holds the potential for broadening the empirical scope of participatory and collaborative research methods in a key area of politics and society, but also points to challenges and possible avenues for further debate about the conceptual potential of participatory and collaborative research strategies in the social sciences.

SOCIETAL PEACE FORMATION AND THE WAR IN UKRAINE

Turning an eye towards societal peace formation can also help to break new ground in dealing with Russia's war of aggression in Ukraine and the question what peace research's contribution could be – not only in transforming violence into peaceful relations in the long run, but also in advancing the discipline, its methods, and its tools.

Thinking about societal peace formation and the war in Ukraine links the study of societal peace to problems of inter-state war in Europe. To be clear, designing research on the societal levels of peace on the war in Ukraine will not resolve the major political conflicts or the war as such. However, such an approach can make visible the societal anchoring of peace, the human – individual – 'loci' of rapprochement, and the 'micro moves' (Solomon and Steele 2017) of direct peaceful interaction in everyday life. These exist outside formal programmes and institutions – and thus outside systemic and political frameworks, power asymmetries, or dependencies and nationalisms. In doing so, research can empirically explore and understand the possible micro-dynamics of interpersonal exchange in deeply divided societies and use them as examples of 'good practice' in a constructive and, ideally, model-building way for the establishment of spaces for peaceful encounters between Ukrainians and Russians.

However, it is currently not easy to speak directly with people affected by the war on the ground or to think about viable ways out of war and violence with representatives of the conflict parties. Other 'empirical access points' (Bueger

2014: 383) of local peace formation are needed. These could be found within Ukrainian and Russian diasporas and migrant communities in Europe. Members of these communities are often affected by the war in their very group identity, not least because Russia fights it on ethno-nationalistic grounds. This reinforces intra- or inter-group conflicts in the countries of residence (Mavroudi 2007; Féron and Baser 2023). While we know a lot about how conflicts are transported from one socio-geographical setting to another, and how these conflicts further ‘autonomize’ (Féron and Baser 2023), we know much less about what holds people together in their everyday lives in the face of war and conflict, especially in the post-Soviet space. How do Ukrainian and Russian diasporic groups cope with the war and what strategies do they develop to uphold peaceful relations and engage in peaceful coexistence among each other? Peace research should incorporate this everyday knowledge and the related practices of peaceful interaction among and within Russian and Ukrainian diasporas – their everyday theories of peace – more seriously into its research.

Methodologically, the turn towards everyday theories of peace leads us to consider participatory research methods (Allen and Friedmann 2021), involving migrant communities in particular, that can be helpful in developing alternative perspectives on peace and reflecting on the role of both Ukrainian and Russian societies in wartime – even more so in post-war contexts. Migrant communities actors have a ‘knowledge advantage’ as they find themselves in a threshold position due to their personal ties to their societies of origin, but also due to their confrontation with other societies and their experience of how to handle conflicts (Dizdaroğlu 2023). Participatory studies can experimentally generate secure, non-hierarchical, and power-free ‘sites of peace’ for constructive dialogue at the societal level. Historic examples of reconciliation processes and mechanisms applied after the Second World War between, for instance, Germany and France or Germany and Poland could also provide guidance in the search for ‘good practice’ experiences.

In summary, considering the limitations of European security institutions in contributing to sustainable peace, this chapter has demonstrated the relevance of improving peace and conflicts studies’ epistemic knowledge on societal peace formation. On the one hand, research on societal peace formation in Europe can profit from the fruitful orientation towards everyday practices, interactions, and institutions at the micro-level, and from the basic assumption that societal actors can be seen as agents in their own right. On the other hand, the

broad post-liberal debate on the non-Western 'local' in peacebuilding cannot truly help fill research gaps in (Eastern) European contexts. Here more specific inter- and transdisciplinary concepts as well as ethnographic and participatory methods for studying societal peace formation in wider Europe are needed. Researchers at IFSH have done this for different fields in the horizontal research focus Doing Peace! in Hamburg, for customary and patronal contexts in Georgia and in Kyrgyzstan, and are currently doing so with regard to everyday theories of peace among Russian and Ukrainian diasporas in Germany.

4.5 EUROPEAN PEACE AND SECURITY IN THE ANTHROPOCENE

Ann-Kathrin Benner, Sara Hadley, Delf Rothe, and Anselm Vogler

In this chapter, we discuss changes in the European peace and security landscape in relation to climate change and the unfolding planetary crisis. We start by briefly summarizing existing discourses and practices of climate security as well as emerging debates on environmental peace within the EU. In the next section, we propose to widen the analytical horizon through the prism of the Anthropocene, understanding climate change as only part of a broader planetary crisis characterized by entanglement and uncertainty. We describe how the EU has attempted to deal with the condition of uncertainty in the past. Following this, we conclude by outlining three avenues for further research on European peace and security in the Anthropocene: conflicts and violence, political economy, and digital technologies. Two empirical examples – European space policy and (the governance of) climate engineering – are used to illustrate our arguments.

Global environmental change has emerged as a major contemporary concern for human wellbeing (Ide et al. 2023; Daoudy, Sowers, and Weinthal 2022). The growing political focus on climate change-related security threats within the EU, the UN, and other international organizations has raised concerns about the potentially dangerous political implications of this securitization trend (Rothe 2017; Warner and Boas 2019). However, the urgency expressed in political debates on climate change is rarely reflected in policy measures. While the securitization approach assumes that threat discourses would facilitate the adoption of exceptional policy measures, such measures seem to be largely absent in the field of climate policy. Furthermore, not all securitizing approaches are equally conducive to sustainable solutions (Trombetta 2008; McDonald 2018). The effects of global environmental change extend far beyond conventional security concerns and endanger the safety and security of human populations (Adger et al. 2022) and ecosystems (McDonald 2021). While global environmental change also affects national security assets (Ide 2023), these cannot be protected by conventional security policies (Sears 2020). Furthermore, the activities of military forces are themselves entangled with global environmental change in often complicated and ambiguous ways (cf. Vogler 2024). For this reason, recent work suggests focusing on ‘environmental peace’ instead of security (Ide et al. 2023). While a security perspective asks how climate change exacerbates threats, this

perspective explores possibilities for peaceful conflict resolution and cooperation under conditions of growing scarcity and drastic environmental change.

At the European level, institutions have begun to gradually acknowledge the intersection of climate change and security, although actions remain fragmented and incoherent (Bremberg, Sonnsjö, and Mobjörk 2018). Following initial efforts in the 2000s, the EU launched the Climate Diplomacy Initiative in 2011, which culminated in the 2015 Climate Diplomacy Action Plan. The European Green Deal, proposed in 2019, further emphasized climate impacts as a threat multiplier and promoted international cooperation to enhance resilience and prevent conflict, hunger, and displacement. In 2021, the European External Action Service (EEAS) unveiled the Integrated Approach on Climate Change and Security as well as the Climate Change and Defence Roadmap (European External Action Service 2021; European External Action Service 2022). And in 2023, the European Commission and the High Representative adopted another roadmap towards addressing climate security (European Commission 2023a). Although major EU strategy programs tend to focus on climate security, there are increasing attempts to mainstream a perspective of environmental peace in European activities. One example is the adoption of guidelines for the integration of climate and environmental issues in all civilian missions of the CSDP and the deployment of environmental advisors to facilitate their implementation (European External Action Service 2022).

Criticisms have arisen regarding the slow implementation of climate security policy within the EU. Activities among EU delegations differ widely, and clear country-specific priorities are often lacking. The practical execution of ambitious plans is progressing slowly, with a lack of strategic coherence (Youngs 2020). Furthermore, there is a need to address the negative impacts that EU initiatives in other policy fields can have on climate security. For instance, trade policy incentives may contradict partner countries' climate policy ambitions. Moreover, a focus on climate insecurity as primarily arising in fragile global South countries overlooks the direct effects of climate change on individuals, communities, cities, infrastructures, and resources within Europe (IPCC 2023: 48–49), as well as the role of Europeans in exporting insecurity through greenhouse gas emissions (IPCC 2022: 9). While the EU's reduction targets are ambitious, its members still contribute significantly to global climate change, endangering global human security and increasing fragility risks in the European neighbourhood (Remling and Barnhoorn 2021).

Overall, the European approach to climate security appears rather piecemeal and fragmented. The level of political ambition does not seem to match the securitized language of EU climate discourse. However, we argue that a broader and more substantial transformation of European governance becomes visible when approached through the prism of the Anthropocene. We outline how the Anthropocene and related problems of planetary entanglement and uncertainty problematize both existing European security policies as well as Western attempts of peacebuilding. Building on these debates, the following section will then discuss a number of avenues for future research, namely a focus on war and peace in the Anthropocene, a stronger engagement with political economy, and a sensitivity towards digital and emerging technologies.

4.5.1 RELEVANT RESEARCH

Recent literature in International Relations and neighbouring disciplines has suggested widening the focus of security beyond climate change as a new set of threats to one that understands climate change as only part of a larger planetary crisis in the Anthropocene. The Anthropocene has been declared a new geologic epoch, so named because man – that is: ‘Anthropos’ – has transformed planet Earth to such an extent that our species has become a geologic force in its own right (Chakrabarty 2009). In International Relations, Chandler, et al. (2021) propose conceptualizing the Anthropocene as a new state that fundamentally changes the terms of international politics. In this sense, the Anthropocene is not just a list of new problems such as climate change, biodiversity loss, the spread of diseases, and the crossing of other planetary boundaries. Rather, it should be understood as a new condition of uncertainty and insecurity that ‘we’ are in – and that Europe continues to reproduce.

This observation has important implications for our understanding of European peace and security. First, the Anthropocene allows us to move beyond the traditional binaries of our disciplinary tradition (Burke et al. 2016), including the distinction between inside and outside – internal and external – which is so central to security policy. At the heart of this is the assumption that human and non-human systems are intertwined and interact in complex ways (European Environment Agency 2023). As a condition marked by entanglement, the Anthropocene problematizes easy assumptions about ‘us’ as the security ‘referent’ – Europe or the EU as objects to be secured against a range of external threats (Hamilton

2017). Second, this condition of global entanglement brings completely new and unprecedented security threats – from pandemics caused by viruses emerging from thawing permafrost to security risks of targeted climate interventions (for example European space policy) to the irreversible loss of entire ecosystems or even nation-states. Third, for political actors such as the EU, the advent of the Anthropocene comes with the realization that the consequences of their political actions are becoming increasingly uncertain and unpredictable. Any policy intervention in complex systems – be it the climate system itself, post-conflict societies, or communities threatened by climate change – can produce unpredictable feedback loops and unintended side effects.

As a new planetary condition marked by the entanglement of social and natural systems at a global level, the Anthropocene not only produces a range of novel security threats but also fundamentally alters the possibilities of peace. Lakitsch even goes so far as to consider ‘the condition of the Anthropocene as the *conditio sine qua non* of any intellectual and practical approach to peace’ (Lakitsch 2023a: 2). Thus, it is not surprising that IR’s first engagement with the Anthropocene took place in debates on liberal peace and peacebuilding. Over the past 20 years, Western peacebuilders have painfully learned that external interventions in complex systems have unintended consequences and that modernist approaches to knowledge and governance are of limited use in many post-conflict contexts (Chandler 2017; Pospisil 2019; Randazzo 2021). Various new approaches attempt to take this into account by understanding peace as relational, embedded, and dependent on local practices and forms of knowledge. Peacebuilding would then become a perpetual, adaptive endeavour that can react pragmatically to local conflicts and needs instead of following a normative *telos* imposed by the West (de Coning 2018; Paffenholz 2021; Torrent 2021). However, any attempt to put these approaches into practice faces a paradox: embracing emergence, uncertainty, and relationality in adaptive peace approaches clashes with the normativity that inherently underlies peace (Randazzo and Torrent 2021). In the words of Lakitsch, such approaches would need to ‘find a balance between the rejection of instrumental understandings of direction and control in the entangled world of the Anthropocene, on the one hand, and the need for some kind of reference and fixity in order to navigate peace, on the other’ (Lakitsch 2023b: 2).

The field of security, on the contrary, does not necessitate this normative foundation. Hence, works in critical security studies have been able to use the

Anthropocene as a prism through which to descriptively trace recent shifts in the governance of security risks. Such shifts in governance can also be observed at the EU level. Here, the assumption that we live in a complex, interconnected world has long been accepted and motivates reflection on possible policy adjustments and responses. This discourse is primarily conducted by transnational expert communities and has consequently been criticized for its technocratic nature. The resulting policy changes have been traced by existing works in fields as diverse as peacebuilding, climate adaptation, or humanitarian governance. In summarizing these works, one can distinguish between three forms of governance in the Anthropocene – each seeking answers to the challenge of increasingly uncertain and complex security landscapes. These are 1) resilience building, 2) attempts to regain control through extensive monitoring, and 3) experimentation and tinkering.

LETTING GO – BUILDING RESILIENCE

The EU's first response to the challenge of increasing complexity and uncertainty has been discussed under the label of resilience. For example, in the field of external peacebuilding, critical work has discussed how the EU's ambitious attempts to build state institutions and social structures through external intervention is increasingly giving way to a much more modest approach based on local agency and the capacity for self-help (Juncos 2017). Such an approach seeks to empower local actors through capacity building and knowledge transfer to take charge of transformation themselves (Korosteleva and Flockhart 2020). A similar shift in governance has been observed in the field of climate adaptation and disaster risk management. Here, European actors aim to make vulnerable communities adaptive and resilient to a range of future risks (Boas and Rothe 2016). In both areas, peacebuilding and climate adaptation, the EU is attempting to insulate itself against unintended side effects of its actions by transferring responsibility to local actors. The EU would then limit its own contribution to raising awareness and providing the required knowledge resources for local adaptation and resilience building (see the example of European approaches to climate engineering on p. 107). Critics see this development as a rejection of European actors' commitments to support and compensate threatened countries and regions.

REGAINING CONTROL – MONITORING THE PLANET

Whereas resilience teaches European actors to let go and hand over responsibility, there are simultaneous attempts to regain control through comprehensive monitoring and forecasting capabilities (Rothe 2017). Programs of strategic foresight and anticipatory governance have a long tradition in the EU (Burrows and Gnad 2018). To deal with the planetary crisis and resulting challenges for the EU, such programs increasingly rely on a range of emerging (digital) technologies, including satellite remote sensing, big data, machine learning, and AI. In this understanding, uncertainty is mainly seen as a methodological problem that can be overcome by developing the right tools. Good examples include the European Earth observation program Copernicus, which uses the aforementioned technologies to provide European actors with monitoring and forecasting services in fields such as disaster protection, humanitarian aid, international conflict, and migration (see the example of European space policy on p. 102); or climate security risk assessment tools that seek to forecast manifestations of direct and indirect climate change impacts (for an overview, see Šedová et al. 2024).

EXPERIMENTING WITH GOVERNANCE

Resilience and control occupy opposing poles in the governance of risks in the Anthropocene. In between these extreme poles, we locate a third form of coping with uncertainty that has been discussed in the relevant literature: experimentation (cf. Bargués-Pedreny and Schmidt 2021; Wakefield 2021). Rather than working bottom-up (as in resilience building) or top-down (as in planetary monitoring), experimental governance starts in the midst of things, seeking innovative solutions to emergent problems through iterative practices of probing and testing. Forms of experimentation and experimental governance have been observed in various policy fields (see the example of European space policy on p. 102). One of the best-researched examples is humanitarian governance (Jacobsen 2015; Sandvik et al. 2017). In humanitarian crises, the state of emergency makes it possible to test new forms of governance, such as biometric surveillance, which would not be accepted in other contexts. Other forms of experimentation have been observed in the field of climate adaptation, such as when cities threatened by rising sea levels and other climate impacts are reframed as ‘laboratories in which experimental practices and technologies of governance are being tested out’ (Wakefield 2021: 335; cf. Bulkeley et al. 2019). Other examples include participatory design or citizen sensing projects,

in which political goals and demands are developed in situ through the respective projects instead of being predefined by local authorities or decision-makers (Ritts and Bakker 2022). Furthermore, in the field of health security, Boin and Lodge (2021) describe how European decision-makers attempted to navigate the uncertainty of the COVID-19 pandemic through a logic of experimentation. This pragmatic trial-and-error strategy involved the experimental adoption of policy measures combined with prompt feedback to foster learning and minimize negative unintended consequences (Boin and Lodge 2021: 1132).

Experimentation turns the governance process on its head (Bornemann 2021; European Commission 2023b). Instead of starting from clearly delineated political goals or principles, the object of experimental governance takes shape during the process of governing itself. In this model, policymaking is a continuous, ongoing process of testing, questioning, recalibrating, and adapting governance measures. Under conditions of uncertainty, in which every action can have unintended consequences, ‘doing something’ becomes more important than ‘doing the right thing’ (Bargués-Pedreny and Schmidt 2019: 60). Even failed or ineffective governance measures can ultimately become a source of learning and optimization.

EXAMPLE: EUROPEAN SPACE POLICY

Nothing illustrates the challenges of the Anthropocene and the EU’s reactions to it as effectively as the domain of outer space. The use of space applications has become ubiquitous across practically all areas of life and is integral to our understanding of the related and entangled crises on Earth. Yet space and, in particular, important orbital regions like Low Earth Orbit (LEO) face their own crises, issues of sustainability, degradation of the environment, and depletion of resources. Due to its international legal status as the province of all humankind – intended for free exploration and use by all – outer space is seen as facing collective action problems. European states’ activities in outer space are primarily implemented through participation in European Space Agency programs as well as the European Union flagship programs – Copernicus (an

Earth observation program) and Galileo (a satellite navigation and positioning program). As we show in the following, various forms of governance also feature in European space policy.

Regaining control: Through the development of the Copernicus program, the European Union has set out to monitor its natural and social environment with the help of a constellation of Earth observation satellites. Its main users, public authorities and policymakers across the EU, use data generated by the Copernicus program in various domains such as urban planning, infrastructure, agriculture, environmental management, and conservation, but also in maritime and border surveillance. In particular, this program promises to enable decision-makers to ‘take critical decisions in the event of an emergency, such as a natural disaster or a humanitarian crisis’, highlighting the EU’s reliance on Earth observation to regain control over unforeseen crises. The EU aims to increase the number of this program’s Sentinel satellites to around 20 by the year 2030.

Letting go: The Copernicus program, however, also highlights an approach to providing resources for other users – for instance, to local actors for capacity and resilience building in the face of complex crises rather than solutions or interventions. The vast amount of data generated is also made available through a data policy of ‘full, open, and free-of-charge access’ (EU Copernicus 2023a). For example, this free-of-charge data can be used for precision agriculture by providing information on ‘crop condition and yield forecasts’ and ‘water management and drought monitoring’ (EU Copernicus 2023b), enabling users to combat issues such as water and food insecurity.

Experimentation: Of all of the orbital regions surrounding Earth, Low Earth Orbit (LEO) has seen the most significant growth of objects launched. This orbital region is considered to have the highest economic value and is used for activities such as earth observation, communication, and research on the International Space Station (ISS). At the same time, the concentration of space debris is growing, particularly in LEO, thus threatening the future use of and access to space applications. In the worst case, this could lead to the so-called Kessler Syndrome, a cascading effect of collisions that continuously create more space debris and thus increase the likelihood of subsequent collisions. In

response, the European Space Agency is experimenting with re-entry and active debris removal solutions in its newly introduced Zero Debris (ESA 2023a) approach. In July 2023, the ESA carried out an assisted re-entry for the first time by ensuring the safe atmospheric re-entry of the defunct 90s-era Aeolus satellite through a ‘series of complex maneuvers that lowered Aeolus’ orbit’ (ESA 2023b). In another experiment, the ESA has purchased the services of a Swiss start-up to run the active debris removal mission ClearSpace-1. This mission entails launching a new spacecraft into orbit that will ‘rendezvous with, capture and safely bring down a 112 kg defunct rocket part, launched in 2013 for safe atmospheric reentry’ (ESA 2023c).

4.5.2 AVENUES FOR FURTHER RESEARCH

As Rothe et al. (2021) note, research on the Anthropocene in International Relations is still in its infancy. While the governance of uncertain risks has been studied in detail (as shown in the previous section), other political implications of the Anthropocene have received less attention. Furthermore, the security and peace policy landscape has been changing rapidly over the past three years. The connections between the pandemic or the war in Ukraine and the changes in the Anthropocene are complex and defy simple causal assessments. In this section, we therefore identify three research avenues for further investigating European security and peace in the Anthropocene.

A SUSTAINED FOCUS ON WAR AND PEACE IN THE ANTHROPOCENE

First, as outlined in the previous section, literature on the Anthropocene has focused mainly on discourses and practices of security as well as post-conflict peacebuilding. At the same time, there has been little exchange between the conceptual Anthropocene debate and the empirical literature on political ecology, the environment, and conflict, which has undergone a profound change and become much more detailed and differentiated over the last decade (cf. Ide et al. 2023; Cusato 2021). With the Russian attack on Ukraine, however, questions of large-scale war and peace have returned to Europe’s centre of interest.

It is important not to read wars such as the Russian attack on Ukraine as a return to a bygone era that was thought to have long been overcome. Rather, the war illustrates how events create their own temporalities in which some developments accelerate, and others decelerate – the transition to the Anthropocene does not follow a linear trajectory. This becomes clear when one considers the manifold entanglements between the war in Ukraine and ecological problems. These interlinkages, which defy simple, causal models and descriptions, range from the role of fossil resources in the Russian war machine to ecological warfare, to the contributions of war and militarization to climate change, to questions about environmentally sustainable reconstruction efforts (Flamm and Kroll 2024). The repercussions of the war, such as the naval blockade of Ukrainian grain exports, can be felt in geographical regions far removed from the conflict region. Here, they interact with the effects of climate change, which exerts additional stress on already strained food markets. This situation may add additional stress to the relationship between the EU and countries in the global South, which are the main victims of climate change and other anthropogenic environmental changes. As an exporter of insecurities in the Anthropocene, the EU is increasingly coming under pressure for not living up to its standards and ambitions in the fields of climate mitigation, compensation, loss and damage, climate adaptation, and humanitarian assistance.

Further research is thus required to scrutinize the complex interaction between environmental change, conflict, and peace in the Anthropocene. This should involve theoretical works to conceptualize this relationship anew (see Lakitsch 2023a; Simangan 2022). What does peace mean at a time in which old boundaries – between the human and the non-human world, for example – are dissolving, while, at the same time, new boundaries are violently created?

A STRONGER AND MORE SYSTEMATIC ENGAGEMENT WITH (POLITICAL) ECONOMY

Second, to better understand European peace and security in the Anthropocene, a closer engagement with its underlying political economy is essential. The supply chain crisis resulting from the COVID-19 pandemic painfully demonstrated the risks of globalized capitalism to European decision-makers. However, the shared vulnerability of the global risk society does not translate into forced cosmopolitanism – as Ulrich Beck (2009) once anticipated – but rather into new geoeconomic tensions and antagonisms. The bitter experience of Eu-

rope's involuntary support of the Russian war of aggression in Ukraine through resource rents reinforces this insight. Viewed as a necessary bridging technology for the European energy transition, natural gas exports helped the Russian regime expand and stabilize its power and military apparatus. In the wake of the ongoing Russian war against Ukraine, concerns are growing about new dependencies on critical resources needed for the transition towards renewable energy. In addition, one can observe emerging conflicts between competing capitalist projects within the EU: the growing sector of green finance and green technologies on the one hand, and the fossil fuel sector on the other (see the example of European approaches to climate engineering on p. 107). At a societal level, these conflicts manifest in clashing discourses and ideologies such as petromasculinity (Daggett 2018) and ecological modernization. Additional research should thus engage more closely with International Political Economy (IPE) and the political economy which underlies the relationship between peace and conflict in the Anthropocene.

A NEW SENSITIVITY TO DIGITAL AND EMERGING TECHNOLOGIES

Third, we hold that a closer engagement with the role of emerging digital technologies in environmental peace and security is desirable. Digital technologies such as computer modelling, satellite remote sensing, cloud computing, big data, machine learning, and AI are currently shaping one of the most fundamental revolutions in human history. They also play a significant role in the European approach to environmental threats. The governance of climate engineering risks is a good case in point (see, for example, European approaches to climate engineering). However, despite isolated work on these approaches, no research exists to date that systematically explores and theoretically conceptualizes the relationship between digital technologies, climate security, and peace and security. There is a strong status quo bias in the literature, in which Anthropocene security – developments that will take place over decades and centuries – appears to be merely a projection of the security landscape of the 1990s. Our third research avenue is thus a call to acknowledge the crucial role of the digital in Anthropocene peace and security. This should involve research on the shifts in authority and power that accompany digitization in the environmental security field, such as the growing influence of large Information and Communications Technology (ICT) platforms like Google and Amazon. Further research should also address how digital technologies can contribute to the securitization of en-

vironmental problems. This concerns the field of environmental migration, for example, where digital technologies are utilized to increase control and surveillance of mobility patterns. At the same time, scholars should explore the peaceful and cooperative use of digital technology, such as the use of drone or satellite technologies to uncover environmental crimes or to monitor state compliance with international agreements. Finally, additional research should consider how digital approaches to environmental risks can themselves become a source of insecurity – for example, the high carbon footprint of resource- and energy-intensive AI applications and other digital technologies.

EXAMPLE: EUROPEAN APPROACHES TO CLIMATE ENGINEERING

Climate engineering – intentional, large-scale human interventions into the Earth system – can be considered a textbook case of governance in the Anthropocene (Reynolds 2021). Proposals for geoengineering include attempts to remove carbon dioxide from the atmosphere through so-called Carbon Dioxide Removal (CDR), and to influence radioactive forcing – the physical mechanism behind the greenhouse gas effect – through Solar Radiation Modification (SRM) (cf. Benner and Rothe 2023). Climate engineering proposals respond to the Anthropocene challenge with experimentation (cf. Wakefield 2017: 78), an endeavor that is both highly speculative and highly controversial but that also conforms to a pattern of action typical for EU crisis management in that it is technocratic and science-oriented (a so-called ‘technofix’) as well.

Although the past few years have seen a proliferation of literature in IR in International Relations on climate engineering, there remains much to be studied in the areas of peace and conflict, political economy, and digital technologies in the Anthropocene. First, with regard to peace and conflict, the most obvious question is how climate interventions will impact the nexus between climate change and conflict. One issue that is relevant for European security in this regard is the potential for an uneasy alliance between authoritarian regression and technocratic climate solutionism. Michaelowa (2021), for example, has argued that populist and authoritarian leaders could become increasingly interested in solar radiation modification (SRM) as a cheap yet extremely risky

way of addressing climate change in order to remain in power. But the potential deployment of SRM by authoritarian and populist regimes is not the only reason for concern. The war that Russia, as a large petro-fossil state, is currently waging against Ukraine creates serious financial constraints for governments that need to address the challenges of the Anthropocene by incentivizing European governments to research and deploy risk-intense climate change measures. Yet given the parallels between the development of SAI (Sulphur aerosol injection, one technique aimed at modifying solar radiation) and nuclear weapons (Young 2023), references to authoritarian regimes developing SRM should be both carefully observed and taken with a grain of salt. The idea that ‘others are doing it and so should we’ could set into motion dynamics similar to a nuclear arms race, enabling more research into solar radiation modification across regime type.

Second, concerning geoeconomic frictions, climate engineering measures could become a means of pacifying conflicts that arise from demands to change lifestyles that ‘aren’t up to negotiation’ (McLaren and Corry 2023). They could also serve as a means of alleviating conflicts between different fractions of capital – such as fossil capitalism, green tech and digital tech – while delaying current mitigation efforts and putting peace and security efforts at risk (cf. Ide 2023). In this context, the ‘actors involved in researching, promoting, or deploying negative emissions and solar geoengineering technologies’ are not sufficiently examined (Sovacool et al. 2023), although non-governmental organizations active in the field have repeatedly criticized the involvement of fossil-heavy industries in past research and development, especially that of carbon-reducing technologies (Foley 2023).

Finally, all proposals for engineering the climate are dependent upon digital infrastructures to envision, plan, and carry out these interventions. This includes the modelling and simulation of climate interventions and the collection and analysis of data via satellites, sensors, and other sources that provide insight into climate patterns and Earth system parameters and contribute to the monitoring of climate interventions. Furthermore, experimenting with the Earth system depends on collaboration among scientists, experts, and digital platform stakeholders to share research findings, discuss possible forms of governance and regulation, coordinate across geographical boundaries, and engage the public.

5 Synthesis and Conclusion

Ursula Schröder

This research report analysed the implications of the recent and ongoing fundamental changes in the international security environment for our own research on European peace and security. Its aim was to understand how our own research needs to adapt to a European security environment characterised by complex crises, military confrontation, and conflict. In our understanding, the Russian war of aggression against Ukraine is a pivotal phenomenon that our research needs to address. Our premise here was that research on peace and security cannot go back to ‘business as usual’, but that we need to integrate these recent and ongoing fundamental changes to European security dynamics into our research agendas.

In order to arrive at a common understanding of the current changes in the European peace and security order, we first conducted a forward-looking scenario exercise which allowed us to trace a number of scenarios for Europe in 2032 back to today’s security environment. In a second step, we explored how the broad legacy of peace and conflict research can be used to address the ongoing crisis of European peace and security. We distilled several tenets of peace research into a set of core criteria that characterise our research approach. These criteria are clearly not meant to be exhaustive, but are used to orient our own understanding of how perspectives from peace research can contribute to current debates about European security. In a third step, we organised research on European peace and security orders into five distinct research fields, covering a wide variety of relevant empirical phenomena as well as different ontologies and epistemologies of doing research on them. These themes broadly reflect our own previous engagement with the issues at stake here, and we do not attempt to cover every possible issue of relevance to the future of European peace and security.

The first research field focused on how Russia’s war against Ukraine – as well as broader changes within Russian foreign and security policy – affect the established institutional architecture of European security. A second research field examined Europe’s role in maintaining peace and security in a changing world, with a particular focus on the EU’s external peacebuilding conflict management

efforts. A third research field covered the internal dimension of the EU's peace project, ranging from how the EU deals with multiple crises to the future of European integration. A fourth field focused on the crucial role of local, societal ideas and practices in shaping European peace and security. And a final field broadened the scope of the research report by discussing changes in the European security landscape in the context of climate change and the unfolding planetary crisis. Across the five fields, our analysis followed a similar pattern. Each avenue first outlined the new challenges facing the specific field, then mapped the current research debates on the selected issues, and finally proposed several research directions for assessing the ongoing and persistent crisis of European security. In doing so, the research report provided a wide-ranging overview of current research on European peace and security from a variety of perspectives that have rarely been brought together in such a comprehensive way.

Taken together, the five broad research fields go beyond what has at times become a narrow debate on issues of territorial defence in Europe. A particular feature of this report, therefore, is to highlight how research perspectives grounded in the legacy of peace and conflict research can broaden our thinking and knowledge about European peace and security. This legacy has shaped our debates within each of the research streams in at least three ways:

Doing research outside the box: A general feature of our approach was the assumption that issues of peace and security must always be situated in, and therefore contextualised by, longer-term social, economic and political developments. We have pursued this broader contextualisation of questions of European security in several ways: by focusing not only on the current face of the Russian war against Ukraine, but also on longer-standing concerns with Russia's revisionism and the rise of authoritarian regionalism. By emphasising the crucial relevance of long-standing debates about enlargement and the finalité of European integration for questions of European peace and security, for example. Or by focusing on practices of societal peace formation that go beyond the pervasive focus on the role of national and international institutions in containing and resolving violence. While none of these individual perspectives are in themselves new to the field of European peace and security, taken together this multi-perspective approach allows us to think outside the box of European security being understood primarily as the military defence of a specific territory.

Doing research with an interest in practical, positive change: Our research approach is based on the general assumption that peace as a value and public good is something meaningful and positive. From this premise, we derive both a normative orientation to our research and an orientation towards working to solve ‘real world’ problems. Given our interest in researching multiple perspectives and longer-term developments, peace research can provide both broader and longer-term orientation beyond the ubiquitous short-term advice we often find in current policy consulting practices. And it can empower a wider range of societal actors by producing knowledge that is not only aimed at a wider societal audience, but in some cases co-produced with societal actors. This is reflected in our report, both in its engagement with a wide range of contemporary social and political challenges, and in our commitment to new practices of knowledge co-creation and knowledge transfer – whether through our involvement in research projects on societal peace formation in Europe, through our research-based advice on German security sector reform efforts, or through our institute-wide Doing Peace! initiative.

Doing research with a broader concern for the future: Our research extends current concerns about European security, narrowly understood, to include the unfolding planetary crisis. We argue that we need to broaden our analytical horizons through the prism of the Anthropocene. Since climate change is only part of a broader planetary crisis, research on European peace and security must take into account the fundamental challenges to life on this planet. In this way, situating issues of European peace and security within the condition of the Anthropocene allows research to move towards a forward-looking and long-term way of thinking. In this view, the Russian war against Ukraine does not signal a return to a bygone era of interstate war, but rather illustrates the multiple ways in which this war is entangled with issues arising in the Anthropocene. The fundamental changes we are witnessing in the Anthropocene lead us to call for research into both the role of emerging digital technologies – from computer modelling to artificial intelligence – and the underlying issues of the current global political economy in order to move towards a more comprehensive understanding of the future of European peace and security orders.

Finally, the selection of research themes and directions in our report is by no means set in stone. As we have seen time and again in recent years, we are not living in a time for five-year research plans. This report is a snapshot of the debates we have had over the past two years about conducting research on

European peace and security, and it reflects our diverse and heterogeneous interests in different empirical phenomena and conceptual approaches. In essence, what we have been looking for and focusing on is a sense of new directions and questions that will need to be addressed by future research. As the ground continues to change rapidly, this work is, by definition, not complete.

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