Section introduction

building peace beyond the state: politics, governance and security

Cedric Barnes

Experience of conventional peacebuilding in cross-border or transnational conflicts shows that efforts focused on the state and its political borders need to be complemented by a better understanding of 1) the regional dimensions of state diplomacy; and 2) the poorly understood structural drivers of cross-border governance.

This requires peacebuilding efforts to look 'beyond' the state to explore the potential of regional integration and organisations, but also 'below' the state and recognition of the agency of informal trans-boundary communities. Attention to both may bring greater opportunities to attenuate or even resolve complex cross-border conflicts. Borders are the epitome of modern state sovereignty and borderlands are neighbourhoods where state authority may be easily undermined and where the state is most neuralgic about its authority. Despite the national importance of borders, borderland communities are often marginalised.

While borderland populations suffer neglect, the land they occupy might have national 'emotional' significance that far exceeds its material value, for instance because of past military sacrifice. Equally, when borderlands hold important and valuable resources, local communities may feel distanced and alienated from the centre. Borderland societies are often oriented towards larger socio-economic trans-border community interests that can resist the intrusions of centralised state power. Borderlands are symbolic to actors enforcing or contesting political authority and borderland governance can be complex and congested.

Cross-border conflict dynamics are entwined with the modalities of borderland governance that can vary according to the nature of the state and the regional context. Securitisation is a common default solution to insecurity in borderlands by state or regional apparatuses.

Conflicts are messy and do not keep to sharp territorial or ideological lines. Intra-state conflicts almost always spill over political boundaries. Rebels find convenient bases in neighbouring countries, often among ethnic cousins for whom borders are a source of grievance. State neighbours can even act as patrons for cross-border conflict actors to further inter-state tactical ends. However, priorities shift and peace – or at least stability – can break out in unconventional conditions and without underlying resolution.

In spite of the entanglements of inter-state rivalry, wider regional diplomacy through mature regional institutions has an important role in de-escalating state sensitivity over sovereignty in cross-border conflict. The involvement of a regional organisation can reduce perceptions of unequal power between neighbours and help build confidence in peace processes. Regional engagement can bring extra momentum to state-level peace processes already underway, and practical assistance in delivering peace dividends to all parties. This is most striking in institutionally strong and materially rich regional organisations such as the European Union (EU). Other regional bodies, with less capacity and especially where member states have not divested any significant part of their national sovereignty, struggle to fulfil their diplomatic potential.

Contextual variables and conceptual challenges

The five case studies in this section encompass very different traditions of state, and very different cross-border and regional contexts: the Northern Ireland peace process; Basque nationalism in France and Spain; the Central American 'Esquipulas' process; the 'resolution' of conflict in eastern Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC); and EU peacekeeping in eastern Chad.

The examples range from 'historic' European nation states; to well established post-imperial Latin American republics

with shared heritage but complex social bases; to recent post-colonial African states with shallow institutional roots, strong trans-national identities and territorial sovereignty often mediated by ties of personal loyalty. Understanding formative histories, to better to understand the particular viewpoint of individual states and communities within regional systems, should be integral to peacebuilding approaches.

Each case study shows that the historical construction of the state in the region influences conflict dynamics and interactions at regional level. Actors, including cross-border communities, may have a very different understanding of their history within or between states. The two European examples show conflicts that are rooted in historical state-based issues of 'nationalism and self-determination' within strong unitary states, although they are no more amenable to resolution because of that heritage. The cross-border dimensions to the Irish and Basque cases are symptomatic of the political problem that underpins the respective conflicts, not necessarily a cause of the conflicts themselves.

The Central American and African examples are more immediately rooted in strong regional dynamics. The Central American 'Esquipulas' case reveals how an appreciation of the larger neighbourhood of a state and its historical context is imperative to understanding the dynamics of cross-border conflict and possible peacebuilding approaches.

The case studies also give contrasting examples of peacemaking, peacekeeping and peacebuilding in cross-border conflict: comparatively conventional models through well-established regional institutions or looser, *ad hoc* regional coalitions in Ireland and Central America, respectively; and two studies in eastern DRC and Darfur where expensive international peacekeeping deployments have had little noticeable impact, but conflict has instead been mitigated – if not transformed – due to shifting patterns of good and bad relations between regional states and their respective elites. The Basque example, as well as the case of the Intergovernmental Authority on Development (IGAD) presented below, suggest that regional institutions are only as useful as the commitment of member states to cross-border peacebuilding.

Intergovernmental Authority on Development

The history of IGAD and its member states in (North) East Africa illustrates starkly some of the challenges of cross-border peacebuilding and the strengths and weaknesses of regional responses.

The complex web of historical, ethnic, religious, trade, geographical and resource ties make the Horn of Africa and the constituent national components of IGAD a model of a 'regional security complex', and even the most cursory glance at the political history of IGAD's member states (Ethiopia, Eritrea, Sudan, Somalia, Djibouti, Kenya and Uganda) confirms the changing patterns of 'amity and enmity' that characterise it.

IGAD – and its earlier manifestation as the Intergovernmental Authority on Drought and Desertification (IGADD) – evolved in a region that had become a proxy theatre for Cold War rivalries. IGADD was originally a regional response to common environmental problems, although its political potential was recognised early on. Even in the ten years between IGADD's establishment in 1986, when it managed conflict between Somalia and Ethiopia, and its restructuring into IGAD in 1996, the region saw revolutionary change of state leadership in Ethiopia and Sudan, the collapse of Somalia into civil war and the emergence of the new state of Eritrea after a 30-year armed struggle. None of the internal upheavals of IGAD's member states happened in isolation from one another.

One of the results of the restructured IGAD in 1996 was an aspiration towards prevention, management and resolution of inter- and intra-state conflict in the sub-region. Furthermore the transformation of Africa's continental regional institution, the Organisation for African Unity (OAU), into the African Union (AU) at the turn of the 21st century, and the establishment of the AU Peace and Security Council, recognised the importance of sub-regional mechanisms and so IGAD acquired both continental and regional mandates for greater intervention in support of regional peace and security. The next decade saw IGAD trying to step up to the challenge of addressing conflicts in which its member states were embroiled, with decidedly mixed results. IGAD provided an institutional home for negotiations over the Comprehensive Peace Agreement between north and south Sudan, signed in 2005. IGAD has developed some explicit conflict response structures, such as the Conflict Early Warning and Response Mechanism (CEWARN) [*see Box 2*].

As a regional institution IGAD was in the contradictory position of being mandated to intervene in the interests of peace and security on the one hand, while on the other, having member states that were actively involved in hostile military action, either directly or through proxies, against one or more of their neighbours.

In spite of IGAD's regional security mechanism, member states have also chosen to take bilateral or unilateral action outside IGAD in many instances of cross-border conflict. Meanwhile in eastern Sudan, Asmara and Khartoum ended a cross-border conflict when the regional security interests of the two states converged with no involvement from IGAD. And since 2001

Box 2
CEWARN

Ibrahim Farah

The Conflict Early Warning and Response Mechanism (CEWARN) was established by IGAD in January 2002 as part of the IGAD Protocol. It is a collaborative effort of IGAD's seven member states – Djibouti, Eritrea, Ethiopia, Kenya, Somalia, Sudan and Uganda.

CEWARN aims to mitigate and prevent violent conflicts within the Horn of Africa sub-region. Its mission is to establish itself as an effective and sustainable sub-regional mechanism for conflict early warning and response, fostering cooperation to respond to potential and actual violent conflicts and contributing to the peaceful settlement of disputes.

IGAD's intricate and often conflicting regional politics have precluded CEWARN from regional diplomatic engagement to tackle inter-state conflicts or significant civil wars among its membership. Instead it has focused on low-level, local cross-border and related conflicts and responses, including pastoral conflicts, cattle-rustling, small arms and light weapons proliferation and communal insecurity. CEWARN is mandated to receive and share information, to provide analysis and develop case scenarios, and to formulate options for response. It has established networks of governmental and non-governmental stakeholders, including national-level Conflict Early Warning and Response Units (CEWERUs), National Research Institutes and Field Monitors.

In addition to information-sharing and networking among these various stakeholders, there is also the CEWARN Rapid Response Fund which manages a regional basket endowment that supports national and cross-border peacebuilding projects in CEWARN's areas of reporting. The regional basket has so far received funding from the governments of Austria, Belgium, Denmark, Italy and the UK, as well as the German Agency for Technical Cooperation and the Swedish International Development Agency.

Through these mechanisms CEWARN carries out its conflict early warning and response function in three clusters or pilot cross-border areas:

1. the Karamoja Cluster: Ethiopia, Kenya, the Sudan and Uganda
2. the Somali Cluster: Ethiopia, Kenya and Somalia
3. the Dikhil Cluster: Djibouti and Ethiopia

Impact

Most of CEWARN's monitoring and responses occur at the local level and from within each various cluster area. Local field monitors collect information and feed it into a data-based monitoring system using CEWARN-reporter-software. This is based on 52 indicators, including structural as well as climatic and environmental data.

Such micro-level preventive action has provided an important platform for coordinated interventions nationally – and in some case cross-nationally. CEWARN has been able to provide valuable information and analysis based on local insight from IGAD member states and other actors active in the Horn of Africa sub-region, including NGOs and donor governments.

In April 2010 CEWARN helped to resolve cross-district conflict in Uganda, when 40 animals were raided from Rupa parish in Moroto District by a group of Jie raiders from Kotido District. The Moroto District Field Monitor used an HF radio to contact the Secretary of Moroto District Peace Committee, who then alerted the Ugandan People's Defence Forces (UPDF). The UPDF was able to follow the raiders and recover all 40 animals, with no injury or death registered in the process.

Data provided on the 52 early warning indicators mentioned above include violent incidents, human deaths, and net livestock losses. However, there are a number of important issues that limit the relevance of CEWARN's methodology, in particular the indicative data that CEWARN analysis is based on as the indicators do not keep pace with important emerging trends such as the industrialisation of pastoralist conflicts – particularly large-scale commercial and highly violent cattle-rustling.

Diplomatic sensitivities within IGAD have further precluded CEWARN from engaging in significant conflict issues in the Horn of Africa sub-region, such as political extremism and in particular the impact of violence related to terrorist- and counter-terrorist activities. Particularly prevalent in the cross-border areas of Ethiopia, Kenya and Somalia, such violence involves both state and non-state actors, and threatens regional stability. CEWARN's continuing aversion to tackling conflict at the higher end of the political scale nine years after it was established

belie its stated ambitions to operate at a regional political level.

CEWARN can claim some successes in both conflict early warning and response across a range of low-level conflict issues in the Horn of Africa. But while these responses are both laudable and valuable, the entity remains largely reactive and has not engaged in structural prevention to address the root causes of pastoralist conflict. CEWARN's absence from the regional political sphere remains a significant gap and a wasted opportunity for CEWARN to act as an institutional link between local cross-border peacebuilding and regional diplomacy.

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IGAD and its member states have demonstrated a similarly schizophrenic approach to conflict in Somalia: attempting to provide a collective regional mechanism for negotiation and reconciliation, while member states simultaneously and often counteractively pursued unilateral interests, or occasional bilateral cooperative interventions.

IGAD has struggled to manage conflicting national interests of member states. Not only has it made little impression on the frozen border disputes between Ethiopia and Eritrea, and Ethiopia and Somalia, it has also been unable to contain Ethio-Eritrean rivalry in the rest of the region, and especially southern Somalia. Common IGAD membership has done little to reduce cross-border tensions between Sudan and Uganda over Southern Sudan. IGAD's regional security agenda is now driven by three powerful players – Ethiopia, Uganda and Kenya – whose unilateral ambitions only periodically coincide, but whose collective agency was enough that Eritrea felt it had little to lose by suspending its membership.

That member states actively pursue unilateral agendas is not unique to IGAD. In common with any regional organisation IGAD is dominated by its larger and more powerful constituent states who enjoy different levels of security capacity. Member states also owe allegiance to other regional transnational institutions, notionally the Common Market for Eastern and Southern Africa (COMESA), but more importantly, for Uganda and Kenya at least, the East African Community.

Despite its weaknesses, IGAD has developed into a significant regional body and has helped to push forward regional initiatives on conflict early warning and counter-terrorism cooperation. IGAD's imperfections should not preclude further institutional growth or active engagement on regional peace and security issues.

The case studies

Although the Irish conflict might be traced back to the early 20th century division of Ireland, the border issue was ultimately totemic rather than integral to the conflict; the border itself and surrounding borderlands were increasingly marginalised and securitised. Irish and UK membership of the European Community and later Union gradually helped neutralise the political significance of the border between member states. Furthermore, common membership of the EC/EU built confidence between Dublin and London as the EU was (at least on paper) a 'forum of equals', allowing institutional distance from the lopsided power relations of the past.

Yet it took a full twenty years of common membership in the European club before the breakthrough of the 1993 Anglo-Irish Agreement. Since then, and through the additional impetus of the 1998 Good Friday Agreement (or Belfast Agreement), the EU has played a strong role in the 'normalisation' of the cross-border tensions and conflict, rehabilitating marginalised areas and facilitating cross-border cooperation at national levels. Despite the relatively deep and direct involvement of the EU down to community level through the PEACE initiatives, there is still a question of how embedded cross-border peacebuilding has become at a local level.

The Basque case study is written at a time of a potential peacebuilding breakthrough following ETA's ceasefire declaration of September 2010. So far the response from the regional Basque administration in Spain, and the Spanish and French governments, has been circumspect. While most of the conflict has been internal to Spain, the division of the Basque nation remains a potent grievance. The EU has not been used as a regional forum for peacebuilding so far and its cross-border regional integration policies have had relatively little impact on the Basque conflict, although the EU has indicated some interest in resolving the Basque problem through the March 2010 Brussels Declaration. Common EU membership may have encouraged greater security cooperation between Spain and France, which has ultimately weakened ETA as an armed non-state actor and pushed it towards ending armed struggle.

The example of the Esquipulas process in the Central American isthmus in the 1980s and 1990s demonstrates the potential of regional diplomacy to help build peace in response to civil wars

that over the course of thirty years had multiplied into a classic regional security complex. Previous regional initiatives had struggled in the context of destabilising proxy conflicts tied to the global Cold War and externally underwritten dictatorships. Esquipulas gained traction due to the spread of democratisation and the expansion of sub-regional autonomous peacebuilding initiatives into the wider Latin American region at the same time as the gradual de-escalation of the Cold War. Nevertheless, like the Irish case the Esquipulas processes took many years and came at a distinct historical juncture.

Eastern DRC is a compelling example of a regional system of war involving the rebel group of Laurent Nkunda's National Congress for the Defence of the People (CNDP) and the states of DRC and Rwanda. Conflict in eastern DRC had been immune to both peacemaking and peacekeeping, which had treated the conflict as primarily a Congolese concern. The eventual acknowledgement of Rwanda's role in buttressing the CNDP and the regional nature of the conflict shifted the debates dramatically and provided impetus for international pressure on Rwanda to withdraw support from Nkunda, and for direct Rwanda-DRC talks and agreement. This eliminated a key cross-border driver for conflict almost at a stroke. But although large-scale violence was reduced, as a state-based security agreement it has done little to resolve the structural drivers of violence, including underlying problems in governance and borderland grievance.

Conflict in eastern Chad can also be seen as part of a regional system of war that has engulfed parts of Sudan (Darfur) and the Central African Republic, although it has misleadingly been characterised as the 'Darfurisation' of the Chadian conflict. International recognition of the cross-border dimensions of all three conflicts came late, and although the mandate for the subsequent deployment of EU peacekeepers sought to address the cross-border insecurity between Chad and CAR, this objective was never effectively operationalised. As in eastern DRC, while international peacekeepers and mediation efforts recognised the cross-border dynamic and mitigated some fall-out from conflict, they did not prevent or end it. Rather it was rapprochement between the presidents of Chad and Sudan that has more recently helped to de-escalate some aspects of cross-border conflict.

Hard lessons learnt

The case studies in this section show that cross-border conflicts involve both complex regional dynamics and intricate local contexts. These need to be addressed by regional peacebuilding initiatives that go 'beyond and below' state-centric approaches. But while this conceptual recognition is useful, applying it in practice throws up many policy challenges.

- Conventional international relations and 'track two' informal diplomacy and dialogue need to find compatible policies and response architecture – ie strategies and capacity – to address conflict dynamics that transcend boundaries. Non-state parties to conflict are often ahead of external peacebuilders and many are already adept at using a range of repertoires that are not necessarily bound within state borders.

- Regional organisations bring much potential for cross-border peacebuilding. But they do not ordinarily look beyond inter-state relations or security cooperation to include grassroots or community perspectives, input and buy-in. As a result, even the most effective regional peace initiatives tend to get stuck in conflict management and fail to progress to sustainable resolution or transformation. Peacebuilders need to find ways to link supra- and sub-state regional conflict response initiatives.

- Timing and endurance are key to peacebuilding in complex cross-border conflict systems. Peace processes can start decades before any decisive progress is evident. Sustained engagement in peacebuilding initiatives, even where progress may be stalled or reversed, is critical for timely interventions to take advantage of unexpected opportunities. The multiplicity of dynamics in regional conflict systems and the breadth of national and local contexts in which they operate implies corresponding complexity to policy and peacebuilding response strategies, which need to align and coordinate with each other to make progress towards peace. Peacebuilders should be alert to sudden shifts and backfill gaps in reconciliation and neglected structural causes of conflict.

- Securitisation of cross-border policies must be accompanied by softer peacebuilding efforts. The case studies below show that the efficacy of regional organisations and international peace missions is greatly improved when the bilateral interests of state-based protagonists converge, especially in greater security cooperation. But although the concentration of harder security interests can sometimes open peacebuilding opportunities, as in eastern DRC, securitisation in isolation from a broader peacebuilding approach can offer at best only temporary and likely reversible conflict reduction. Securitisation can become an end in itself to the cost of concerted and sustained peacebuilding initiatives.

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