

AFTER SECURITISATION: DIPLOMATS AS DE-SECURITISERS

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ABSTRACT

After securitisation, there comes the further intensification of a conflict, or violisation, or de-securitization. De-securitisation has many forms, one being diplomatisation. The article discusses peace and reconciliation work by states that are third parties to a conflict, and fastens on the pioneering state in terms of institutionalization, which is Norway. Following the Cold War, the Norwegian Ministry of Foreign Affairs engaged in this field broadly. Institutionalisation hit during the 2000s. Norwegian diplomacy facilitators think of de-securitisation in four steps: mapping the parties to a conflict, clearing their path to the table, assisting in their deliberations going across that table, being indirectly involved in the monitoring of agreements. The article concludes with a suggestion to the Copenhagen School. By adapting Austin and Searle's speech act perspective, Wittgenstein's general understanding of linguistic and other practices have been left behind. It is time to leave the cold analytics of speech act theory behind and reclaim the full thrust of Wittgenstein's work, which was geared towards the constitutive role of practices for everything social. We need more empirical studies of violising practices, as well as of de-securitising legal and diplomatic practices.

The extant studies of securitization are heavily tilted not only towards the process, but also towards the part of the political process which spawns the security problem. The focus has been on preconditions for one specific kind of action, namely speech acts that securitise. Given the shape of security studies in the mid-1990s when the theory was introduced, this was an important corrective to the extant scholarship. After almost two decades, however, and given the mark securitization studies have made on security studies overall, it is time to broaden the focus. Linguistic acts should be studied in conjunction with other acts (comp. Neumann 2002a). It is in this spirit that I ask the question of what happens after securitization. First, the article specifies what comes after securitisation. One possibility is the further intensification of a conflict, or violisation (Neumann 1998). Another is de-securitisation, which may take a number of forms. Lene Hansen (2012) has recently identified four such forms, the basic type being what she refers to as stabilisation. A securitised situation goes back to being merely politicised – it is no longer treated as a question of the survival of the political community in question, but as one amongst many questions of who we are and how we do things.¹ Diplomatisation, which

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¹ I am talking in capital letters here. Most, if not all, global stuff has a diplomatic aspect. War and diplomacy are not separate fields, but two complementary ways of dealing with other polities (see Neumann 2011, also note

is the focus of this article, is a form of stabilisation. Diplomatisation may take many forms, one of them being peace and reconciliation work by states that are third parties. The second part of the article discusses how the Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MFA) of one state, Norway, has organised work along these lines. It also discusses how Norway's diplomats think of such de-securing work. I conclude with a call on the Copenhagen School to engage in the further study of violisers, legalisers, diplomatisers and other groups who partake in the practices that come after securitisation.

AFTER SECURITISATION: VIOLISATION OR DE-SECURITISATION

The extant work emanating from within and without the school lumps what comes after securitisation together under the rubric of de-securitisation (see esp. Balzacq 2010). Securitisation and de-securitisation are both conceptualised as changes in the level of political intensity:

[I]ssues become securitised when leaders (whether political, societal, or intellectual) begin to talk about them – and to gain the ear of the public and the state – in terms of existential threats against some valued referent object. Securitisation can thus be seen as a more extreme version of politicisation. It is the inter-subjective establishment of an existential threat with a saliency sufficient to have substantial political effects. In theory, a public issue can be located on the spectrum ranging from non-politicised (meaning that the state doesn't deal with it, and it is not in any other way made an issue of public debate and decision): through politicised (meaning that the issue is part of public policy, requiring government decision and resource allocation or more rarely some other form of communal governance), to securitised (meaning that the issue is presented as an existential threat requiring emergency measures, and justifying actions outside the normal bounds of political procedure). In principle, the placement of issues on this spectrum is open; depending on circumstances, any issue can end up on any part of the spectrum (Buzan 1997: 14).

One may easily include the outbreak of war in such a scheme by introducing a category of 'violisation'. By attaching the importance of speech to the process of securitisation, the Copenhagen School highlights the constructed, intra-subjective character of the concept of security and hence also of the *modus operandi* of security politics (Wæver 1995). The concept of discourse is used to de-differentiate words and action and analyse them separately. The outbreak of war may, of course, also be conceptualised as a speech act. The words 'I hereby declare war' indeed can mean going to war (provided one's illocutionary situation – one's institutional station and preparations therefore – are appropriate; comp. Balzacq 2005). Actually, waging war, however, needs more than a declarative speech. It requires the use of force, which can be characterised as a violisation of politics. Thus, waging war is, by definition, not only the question of speech acts, but also of other actions.

20 below). When I write 'diplomatise', it follows that I am talking about a question of degree, where a certain case of conflict goes from being primarily treated as an issue of security, with the institutionalised consequences that have in terms of military deployments the possible Ministry of Defence involvement, etc., towards being treated primarily as an issue of diplomacy.

A crucial role in the war belongs to the action of killing. More generally, the acts of violence literally inscribe the will of one collective onto the body politic of another human collective. For a good reason, the number of people killed almost always becomes the defining trait of what war is – whether it be ‘317’ suggested in Richardson’s research or ‘1000’ used for the Correlates of War Project (Wiberg 1976).

There is nothing adverse to the Copenhagen School here. For example, Wæver quotes Clausewitz to the effect that ‘War is an act of violence pushed to its utmost bounds’ (Wæver, 1995: 53). When war-like activities do not include large-scale acts of violence, they are referred to by modifiers as, for example, ‘wars of position’, ‘cold wars’ or ‘war on terror’. If the issue under consideration is the outbreak of war, we can best apply the Copenhagen School’s framework to this question by defining the threshold between securitisation and violisation at the point of the outbreak of war itself (violence on a certain scale) rather than at the point where an individual dies. This is not to deny that a certain identity is already violised in situations such as an asylum centre being arsonised, resulting in death, but simply to acknowledge that the question of scale must be addressed. It is not societal security and the identity/society nexus, but identity and war, which implicate the state very directly. Societal violence is not intended to impinge on the question of whether state borders may be bracketed. Attention is focused on cases when the issue is the re-presentation of states. In this context, Clausewitz’s formulation of war as a continuation of politics by other means can be classified, both directly and indirectly, within the Copenhagen School framework of politicisation and securitisation. We can add the category of ‘violised’ to the two existing concepts ‘politicised’ and ‘securitised’. The two corresponding processes of ‘violisation’ and ‘de-violisation’ can be examined in the following extended continuum:

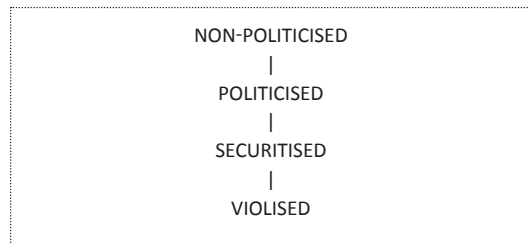


FIGURE 1. Schematised trajectory for outbreak of war.

The main argument against differentiating the concept of securitisation, as it currently stands, may be that this would detract attention from security speech by pointing to the material factors in cases of large-scale violence. The work of the Copenhagen School has opened up the question of the referent of security by highlighting how identity pertains to states – and not exclusively to society. Problematically, this proposed shift would take some attention away from societal questions. For a number of reasons, this may indeed be a loss. The mirror image of such a critique would be that reserving violence for actions with a material character actually downplays the violence wrought by structural factors and by speech acts. As already

noted, the Copenhagen School argues against the view that the core of Security Studies is war and force. Adding the category of ‘violisation’ at the extreme end of the continuum does, of course, have the effect of once again highlighting war and force. I still think this would be worth the candle, since security studies must necessarily tackle the issue of outbreaks of war. One way in which the Copenhagen School could take on this challenge would be to pair up the extant work with the work of those who study what we may call violisers – groups with a vested interest in intensifying the conflict, when possible, by violent means (one exemplary study of such practices is Reno 1998).

DE-SECURITISING ALTERNATIVES

Violisation is obviously not the only way in which a securitised situation may be changed. Alternatively, a series of events may ensue, by means of which the situation may defuse. Some of these will involve a large-scale use of force. For example, the great powers that are third parties to a conflict may enforce a solution. Most will, nonetheless, be peaceful. A number of peaceful de-securitising practices are to do primarily with the endogenous changes that are the traditional haunt of peace and conflict studies. Examples include social peace movements. Others have to do with economic or legal intervention by third parties. The use of legal practices stands out in this regard. This paper will not discuss these de-securitising practices and agents further, however. I am particularly interested in the sub-set of events where third parties come in to broker and/or facilitate the deals that somehow dampen the level of securitization, without the use of force.² More specifically, I will concentrate on state diplomacy as de-securitising. As highlighted perhaps most clearly by Jönsson and Hall (2005: 21 *et passim*), diplomacy, too, is a process. We are therefore warranted in talking about how a process may be diplomatised. An alternative chain of events to the one presented in Figure 1 may therefore look like this:

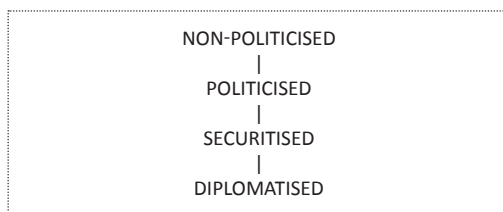


FIGURE 2. Possible trajectory for outbreak of peace

Contrary to what is often argued, diplomacy is not inherently peaceful. It cannot be understood in isolation from other practices, such as coercion and warmaking, and it is often to be found in tandem with such violent practices. It is, nonetheless, also the case that diplomacy is by definition a discourse that is analytically distinct from violent practices. It is also the case

² As discussed below, legal practices are of course relevant to diplomacy as a sub-set of practices to be evoked when peace and reconciliation processes have advanced to the point where the possibility of accords, treaties and the like come up for discussion.

that, since diplomats specialise in non-violent practices, they will have a doxic penchant for employing such practices. It is the key point of the sociology of professions that any profession will try to frame new issues and new issue areas in such a way that the relevance of their own profession is at the maximum. Hence, we are warranted in speaking about a structural diplomatic penchant for the use of peaceful practices. A structural penchant will not necessarily determine the course of action taken. Empirically, we have plenty of examples of how MFAs and diplomats have recommended and partaken in the use of force (the phrase 'gunboat diplomacy' comes to mind). Still, the thrust of diplomacy is to seek de-securitising courses of action. A parallel may be drawn between diplomacy and securitisation theory in this regard; they are both beginning with observation and keeping options for applied recommendations open, and yet there is a clear bias in favour of de-securitisation.

By definition, all known diplomatic systems offer examples of third party activity towards conflicts.³ Within the European tradition, one of the defining traits of being a great power pre-1815, when the category of great power was formalized at the Congress of Vienna, was the ability to guarantee treaties (Hamilton & Langhorne 1995). This is a typical third party role, which sometimes went together with brokerage – active participation in crisis management and/or long-term trust-building. To repeat the point, note that diplomatic third-party roles are not necessarily readily disentangleable from armed interventions. For example, the state with the highest number of armed interventions into other states during the Cold War was France, the key reason being that France needed very little encouragement before it kept up its colonial habit of sending forces to previous colonies like Chad. In terms of what happens after securitization, historically, the usual thing is for violisation and diplomatisation to alternate, sometimes in an imbricated fashion.

The weakest form of third party diplomatisation is facilitation when a state offers its services not as an active broker, but as a discreet presence with certain human and material resources to offer. Facilitation and brokerage are not readily disentangleable, either. Suffice it to say that, as is the case with the distinction between military operations and peace operations, the difference hangs on structural factors such as the military capability of the polity in question, with centrally placed polities being more associated with brokerage than with facilitation. It is also path-dependent, in the sense that a previous history of conflict, conquest, colonisation etc. with one or more of the parties would suggest that the role in question is that of a broker rather than of a facilitator.

There is a sizable community of organizations in Geneva and elsewhere which specialise in facilitation, the central one being the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC). States were late to the institutionalisation ball, with one interesting feature of post-cold war politics being how a number of polities have increased the resources allocated to facilitation. The first state to do so was Norway, where there was a distinct move in this direction in the

³ See Neumann 2011 for references. This may be the place to note that facilitating a conflict is only one third party practice amongst many. For examples of another, also de-securitising, practices, consider taking over representation after a break-off of relations. Specifically, at the time of writing, Switzerland remains the representative of the US in Havana; Newsom 1990.

early 1990s, with the Norwegian MFA establishing a separate section to deal with Peace and Reconciliation in 2000. Other states now regularly seek out Norway to discuss doing something similar, but to date, Ireland is the only other state that has actually institutionalised facilitation as part of its diplomacy.⁴ A number of other MFAs are now stepping up their efforts on peace and reconciliation, though. Recent examples include Finland's and Sweden's joint proposal to establish the European Union Institute for Peace and the joint Finnish–Turkish announcement that they will work to strengthen the UNs work in this area.⁵ In the following section, the data for which were culled during my four years of working in the MFA in the early 2000s as well as through seven interviews with key participants, conducted during the spring and summer of 2010, including all three former heads of the Section for Peace and Reconciliation, I will give a sketch of how diplomatisation was first institutionalised by a state and how that state goes about conducting it. Jef Huysmans (1998) has critiqued approaches to de-securitization that focus on technical and managerial sides of the process, and by focussing on institutionalisation, I lay myself open to this critique.⁶ My answer to such critique is straightforward: any political process that is not institutionalized will be swept away by other processes. What Antonio Gramsci called the long march through the institutions, that is, the everyday work of changing the defaults of political action, are as important as the ethical and political impulses that propel new and unique initiatives for the actual state of society. There is, as I see it, no contradiction between studying these two aspects of politics, for they complement one another, and must complement another.

INSTITUTIONALISING DIPLOMATISATION OF CONFLICT

Norway became a state in 1814. The central milieu of Norwegian state builders at the end of the 19th century was also involved in the international (or, more correctly, Anglo-American) peace movement, and the Norwegian nation building had what was referred to in the Norwegian discourse at the time as 'European warrior states' as one of its central others (Leira 2004). There was also a strong missionary tradition as well as a strong internationalist workers' movement. To this day, two of the five key NGOs in this field are directly rooted in these traditions (Norwegian Church Aid and Norwegian People's Aid, respectively). Norway was a key player in the humanitarian work of the League of Nations, a founder member of the UN and also one of the very few states to answer the call by the United Nations' General Assembly in the 1970s to allocate one per cent of the gross national product (later gross national income) to the international development work. These were all important preconditions for the Norwegian peace and reconciliation discourse. In particular, the earmarking of money was important. The money available for development in 2005 was about 30 billion dollars, and it has risen steadily

⁴ Interview with head of the Section for Peace and Reconciliation, 23 April 2010.

⁵ <http://formin-origin.finland.fi/public/default.aspx?culture=en-US&contentlan=2>, accessed 15 September 2010. I thank Pertti Joennemi for this information.

⁶ Hansen (2012: 540) similarly notes how 'The most pressing political-normative issues that arise from change through stabilization [of which diplomatisation is one form], concern this desecuritisation's conservative, system-stabilising character'.

since then. We are talking about a separate post on the state budget here, earmarked for cooperation with the countries listed by the Development Assistance Committee (DAC) of the OECD. In practice, it takes hard work to spend all this money in any given year, which means that any worthy project which comes the MFA's way and can be filed under 'development' is fairly easy to fund.

Although Norway was involved in a small way in third party reconciliation during the Cold War, it was only in the late 1980s that possibilities opened up for extending work on development and humanitarian aid into the area of peace and reconciliation. From day one, the main fount for all this work was the Geneva/Oslo interface, with the ICRC playing a focal role. In 1989, the former foreign minister Thorvald Stoltenberg was appointed the UN High Commissioner for Refugees, and he contacted the key Norwegian presence at the ICRC in Geneva, Jan Egeland, to work with him. Here is Egeland's version of how and why he was recruited:

“Stoltenberg contacted me during his stint as High Commissioner for Refugees in 1989-1990. I think he had seen me on TV, I was the head of international relief and media face of the Red Cross at the time. I did not know him personally, and he did not know me. Later I found out that he had had me in mind already when he became Foreign Minister before that, he had discussed it with [his junior minister] Helga Hernes, and she had been positive. I quit my job at the Red Cross and started to pack my bags, but before I had a chance to go, Thorvald was called back to Oslo to become Norwegian Foreign Minister once again. So he turned to me and said, there has been a change of plans, would you like to be my personal advisor at the Foreign Ministry instead? In the beginning, junior ministers were recruited from the ranks of the diplomats. Then it was a woman, and then it was an activist – me. From the very beginning he gave me wide reins, and I more or less continued to do what I had been doing before [*jeg fortsatte omtrent med å gjøre det jeg gjorde i Røde kors, jeg*], and that was to work with what I see as the greatest challenges of our time – conflicts, humanitarian aid, societal crises – and of course, at the Foreign Ministry there was money for this, around a billion [approximately 125 million Euro], much of it being non-earmarked cash”.⁷

One notes from this account that the media crop up here as an aid for new diplomacy in a rather unexpected way – as a show case for politicians not only from which to learn about what is being presented as going concerns, who is authorised by the media to say what about what, but also as a presenter and whether of prospective aids. Aids are being picked not only for their telegenic potential, but actually also because they are active in the areas which the incoming foreign minister deems to be politically salient. Looking back on this recruitment from his position as the president of Red Cross Norway, Stoltenberg himself told the story a bit differently:

“I had met him [Egeland] a couple of times, and wanted him because he was capable, and because he came from the voluntary sector. The very day he came to Geneva, I had to tell him that I was to become foreign minister for the second time. So he came back with me,

⁷ This quote and the succeeding one from Stoltenberg are taken from interviews I did in the year 2000 and “were previously published in Neumann 2002b.

first as my personal advisor, because I wanted to retain [...] my secretary of state, then, when I had established the second post, he too became secretary of state”.

Drawing mainly on his ICRC contacts and the information that flowed from it, Egeland proceeded to involve Norway in a number of peace and reconciliation initiatives, the Oslo Process being the most conspicuous one. A diplomat who has been a key to this work since its inception (having been recruited to do work on the Sudan in the early 1990s and staying with peace and reconciliation work in this region of the world ever since, comp. note 6 below) summed it up as follows:

“A key actor at the DPA [the UN’s Department of Political Affairs] once observed that the Norwegian MFA and the DPA seem to cooperate so well because they are both dysfunctional organizations, which need informal networks of doers to crank into action. When these doers meet, things tend to happen. The main doer, the one who kicked off what is now Norway’s peace and reconciliation portfolio, was Jan Egeland. [...]. Egeland’s strengths were broad expertise in the area of humanitarian assistance, a strong network from his time with the Red Cross nationally and in Geneva and an opportunistic approach to conflict, in the sense that he worked with what seemed pliable and left other business alone. Time and again, he delivered results that served to adorn the administration’s cap with new feathers, so received more money, which translated into even broader networks, which made for more successes and new feathers for the administration’s cap, which meant yet more money. A positive feedback loop was created, which began to feed adjacent issue areas as well”.⁸

Egeland preferred to work with ad hoc set-ups, drawing in Norwegians who had networks in the relevant areas and fearing that the codification of the peace efforts he had initiated would hamper their development within the MFA. Egeland’s name for this was ‘the Norwegian model’. To him, institutionalization within the MFA would not be worth the candle. Another concern was that formalization on the part of the MFA would signal an investment of prestige on the part of Norway that could be used against it; parties to a conflict could threaten to withdraw if Norway did not concur in doing this or that, and the threat would be credible because Norway had been seen by all the world to have invested heavily in the process. As a result, during his stint in the MFA, there was little or no institutionalisation of this portfolio. The focus was on de-securitising on the ground, and not on institutionalising the process of desecuritisation. (This came later.) When the Labour government, of which Egeland was part, lost the election in 1997, a professional diplomat who was also a member of the Christian Peoples’ Party took over as Foreign Minister. The Christian People’s Party was traditionally one of the mainstays of the Norwegian policy on peace and reconciliation. The years 1997–2000 turned out to be caretaker years. The processes that were already initiated continued more or less by dint of their own momentum, but there was little by way of new initiatives.⁹ A short Labour hiatus

⁸ Interview with Hans Jacob Frydenlund, 22 June 2010.

⁹ As a curiosity, it may be noted that the Foreign Minister from the Christian Peoples Party invested people from the charismatic Christian movement with introductory letters to leading politicians in other states (see Brekke 2002).

in 2000 created a new momentum, as the state secretary Raymond Johansen took steps to formalize the work on peace and reconciliation. Four people – three career diplomats and one former politician recruited from outside of the MFA – were placed one in each regional section of the Bilateral Department of the MFA with a mandate to work specifically on peace and reconciliation and report directly to the Foreign Minister (in practice, to Johansen himself, in his role as State Secretary).¹⁰

These four MFA employees, who were lodged within different desk sections of the Bilateral Department, initially tried to have meetings among themselves, but quickly found out that their conversations amounted to little more than a swap of ‘strangely named people we had talked to in strangely named places’.¹¹ While this lack of further institutionalisation did little to hamper work, a more serious challenge came from two of the senior diplomats within the Bilateral Department within which these four worked. Not surprisingly, given the importance of the line principle of organization within the MFA, they disliked having underlings who had direct access to the political leadership, and so not only could, but were actually meant to bypass them.

Given the anchoring of peace and reconciliation work with the politicians, bureaucratic procrastination made little difference at first. This all changed later in the year 2000 when a Foreign Minister from the Conservative Party took over the MFA. A sworn Atlanticist, he was overtly skeptical to Norway’s playing a global role in the area of peace and reconciliation. One of his first acts was to close down those peace and reconciliation efforts which he could close down. The Middle East effort had gained a momentum of its own, and the Sri Lankan portfolio was in the personal care of an important politician, so the processes to be discontinued would be those located in Latin America and Africa. The people in charge of those processes were told to report to their heads of section in order to receive new tasks.¹² This was certainly the moment of truth for the institutionalisation of peace and reconciliation work at the Norwegian MFA.

However, a few weeks into his job, the new Foreign Minister embarked on his first official visit abroad. It immediately became clear that his all his opposite number wanted to talk about was Norway’s peace and reconciliation efforts.¹³ As a direct consequence, upon his return

¹⁰ These were Arne Aasheim, the former Latin America advisor who had facilitated swimmingly during his stint as Norway’s ambassador to Guatemala, Hans Jacob Frydenlund, who as a press spokesman had accompanied then Minister for Development and Human Rights Hilde Frafjord Johnsen to the Sudan on her first trip and had kept up his work on Africa ever since, Jon Bech, the former Norwegian Representative to South Africa during the apartheid regime, and finally Erik Solheim, a former head of the Socialist left Party with a workable Tamil network.

¹¹ The formulation was that of the second head of the section, reported by Frydenlund in the interview of 22 June 2010 and since confirmed by the horse’s mouth in an interview with himself.

¹² Frydenlund, who was in charge of the African portfolio, recounts how ‘I was called in by Head of Personnel some days after the new Minister’s arrival and told that I should report to my section as a regular desk officer first thing in the morning’; interview 22 June 2010. The Foreign Minister’s cabinet colleague, the Minister of Development, who was from the Christian People’s Party and also physically placed within the MFA, had, in her previous stay in the post, personally instigated and overseen the Norwegian efforts in Africa, so this was a rash move also in terms of coalition politics.

¹³ Background interview with senior diplomat, 3 March 2010, interview with Hans Jacob Frydenlund, 22 June 2010, interview with former heads of section on 23 April and 9 July 2010, respectively. This article is not the place

home, he rescinded his previous orders. He also left the peace and reconciliation portfolio to his state secretary, Vidar Helgesen. Helgesen proceeded to establish a new unit for peace and reconciliation, with the explicit aim of desecuritising conflict and of institutionalising Norwegian MFA work to this effect. The new unit had an easy coming of it, as the need was felt throughout the MFA for a lesson's learnt unit that could serve as an organizational memory of Norway's work with the Oslo process and also coordinate knowledge production in this policy area. Predictably, however, the already existing divisions, which were geographically defined, resisted the transfer of operative responsibility to the elements that were functionally defined. Helgesen, a politician, kept his course, and the civil servants fell into line. A tug-of-war between the geographical and the functional principles of organization is a defining mark of any Ministry of Foreign Affairs; however, the working out of the details of what should be where goes on to this day. In the early years, due to tensions between the new peace and reconciliation unit and the Asia section, Norway's bilateral relationship with Sri Lanka ended up within the unit almost in its entirety, and this came to dominate its image within the MFA to such a degree that the 'Sri Lanka team' is sometimes mentioned as the historical nucleus of the section.¹⁴ To this day, the peace and reconciliation efforts regarding the Sudan is lodged in the Second Africa Section of the Bilateral Department, and the work in the Balkans whose relevant states are not listed by DAC, which means that it is considerably harder to find Norwegian funding to execute this work, is lodged within the West Balkan section.¹⁵ Since it has a bearing on the general question of how to go about diplomatisation, I will return to the debate between proponents of the geographical and the functional principles of organization for this work. This debate will be more easily grasped if it follows a discussion of the practices involved, however.

PEACE AND RECONCILIATION AS SEEN BY DIPLOMATS: FOUR STEPS

The Sri Lanka experience was definitely formative for the work of the section in one specific regard, namely the need to separate the state-to-state work done by embassies abroad and desks at home from peace and reconciliation work. As one former head of section has pointed out, if the job is to find out where different parties to a conflict stand and bring those two parties to the table, then a neutral approach is called for. Since one of those parties would be the state, such an approach is diametrically opposite of the state-focused approach of bilateral diplomacy, which has as its main job to work with the host government.¹⁶ The practices involved – and

to discuss the cost and benefits Norway incurs from the peace and reconciliation portfolio. Suffice it to say that the main benefits concern access to the nodes of global political networks and recognition of Norway's identity as a peace nation (Tvedt 2009), whereas the costs concern exposure to sanctionary activity from dissatisfied parties, be that within the realm of diplomatic relations (as when Kenya broke off diplomatic relations in the early 1990s or when Ethiopia expelled six of the nine diplomats from Addis Abeba in 2007, Borchgrevink 2009: 452) or societal relations (e.g., increased exposure to terrorist activities).

¹⁴ Interview with the former head of section, 23 April 2010.

¹⁵ 'The history of the conflict plays a role, as do finances'; interview with the former head of section, 23 April 2010.

¹⁶ Interview with the former head of section, 9 July 2010.

by practices I simply mean ‘socially recognized forms of activity, done on the basis of what members learn from others, and capable of being done well or badly, correctly or incorrectly’ (Barnes 2001: 19) – are very different, and cluster around four logically consecutive (but not easily disentangleable) situations or steps. These are mapping the parties to a conflict, clearing their path to the table, assisting in their deliberations going across that table and, finally, being indirectly involved in the monitoring of any agreement being struck.

Step one of peace and reconciliation work is to develop contacts with all parties involved, indeed with as wide a group of societal agents as possible. In the early 1990s, the MFA would draw on the contacts of Norwegian NGOs. In the Oslo Process, they came through a trade union think tank doing humanitarian work in the region (FAFO). In Guatemala and Ethiopia, and also in Mali, they came through the Norwegian Church Aid. In the Sudan, a number of Norwegian NGOs which were involved in development furnished the contacts, whereas in Sri Lanka it was basically one former politician’s network that got the ball rolling.¹⁷

These projects, which, as we have seen, gave the impulse to institutionalization within the Norwegian MFA, also had a certain path dependence on the international level. As already noted, besides the UN in New York, the main focal point for peace and reconciliation work internationally is Geneva, and the most important actor based in Geneva is the ICRC. It was therefore anything but surprising that when Norwegian Foreign Minister Stoltenberg recruited a Norwegian to develop the peace and reconciliation portfolio at the MFA, he handpicked a person who was working at the ICRC headquarters in Geneva. As Marilyn Strathern (2004: 23) has pointed out regarding knowledge workers in general,

“the knowledge that is attached to them goes with individuals when they leave one job for another, moving locations; insofar as their knowledge was originally created in the company of others, then it is the community from which they take. It is visible in being left behind. But in what sense can a person ever leave a previous community (so to speak) completely behind? To the extent that knowledge is embedded in what they do, it will in turn show traces of their training, occupation and the contexts in which they have used it.”

The institutionalisation of peace and conflict work at the international level means that, once a certain agent is involved, it becomes privy to information on the whole plethora of different conflicts that is more or less freely shared. The symbiotic relations that ensue between a state like Norway and the ISRC and other agents in Geneva mean not only that information on new conflicts and overtures to Norway about playing a facilitating role in them will ensue, but also that Norway becomes involved in a gift economy where certain services will at some time have to be set against certain others. Note also that this kind of symbiosis means that the diplomacy pursued by Norway must necessarily involve non-state agents, and so be transformative of diplomacy itself. In the succinct analysis of one former head of section:

¹⁷ Since the Oslo Accords were signed in 1993, Norway has been officially facilitating in Guatemala, Sri Lanka, the Sudan, the Middle East, Colombia, the Philippines, Timor-Leste, Haiti, Burundi, Eritrea, Mali, Nepal, Cyprus and the West Balkans, and unofficially in Spain (the Basque country).

“Our [i.e. Norway’s] contacts with the ICRC and the cooperation we have developed with the Centre for International Dialogue in Geneva are parts of a greater whole [...] Operating together with a private actor makes so many things so much easier. They have easier access to all parties involved. Once states are seen to enter the fray, it all becomes more serious; stakes increase and deniability decreases. As the process matures, however, there usually comes a time when you (i.e. the parties to the process) need services that only a state can provide in order to clinch the process. For example, a state is a much more credible witness, it offers much better security services and it can bring stuff to the table that others often can not, such as territory. I think we have a school for a new diplomacy here, in the sense that this is a new way of working. When we talk to states, we often cannot penetrate beyond their presentations of the general line. We get more of the static (*vi får mye mer av støyen*). By working with a plethora of actors and not only states, we come closer to the political gist. It is interesting to see how the private actors we work with used to be Norwegians only, but now we use whoever is handy.¹⁸

When a conflict is diplomatised, it changes the conflict, but also the diplomacy, in two principal ways. The object of state diplomacy goes from being another state to being all the agents that are relevant to a certain conflict, state or otherwise. Furthermore, instead of drawing only on the society which an MFA ostensibly represents, the MFA draws on a whole plethora of different agents in its work. This amounts to no less than a decentering of diplomacy, where traditional bilateral and multilateral state-oriented diplomacy gives way to networking (cf. Neumann 2011a). It turned out that the subject matter – desecuritisation – changed the face of diplomacy by changing the way it had to be conducted: less state-to-state, more networked.

If step one of a facilitator’s work is mapping the parties in terms of political structure and political views, step two is to nudge the parties in the direction of dialogue. This may be done by indirect means, by initiating or bending the existing frameworks in the margins of which the parties may meet. One example of such a framework would be a religious dialogue. Such efforts will have to be preceded by direct contacts, however. Whereas the state side to a conflict usually controls the territory and has the accompanying freedom of manoeuvre that comes with such control, for other parties the physical security aspects of surfacing may loom large. The non-state parties take a risk by surfacing. Even if a number of intermediaries are used, they incur a substantial risk simply by talking to facilitators, meaning that facilitators have to be utterly discreet. One former head of a section made a comment in this regard, which strikes to the heart of diplomats’ self-understanding. Highlighting the covert aspect of operations, the following point was made:

“This is why the peace and reconciliation work is found at the interstice of diplomacy and intelligence. It is imperative, however, that diplomats take care of this, since the intelligence people always have a double agenda. They also want to know who they might have to kill.¹⁹

¹⁸ Interview with the former head of section, 9 July 2010.

¹⁹ Interview with the former head of section, 9 July 2010. See also note 2 above in this regard.

In terms of Figures 1 or 2 above, it is the understanding of this diplomat, and, I would add, of diplomats in general, that they have a firm commitment to the diplomatisation of a conflict. The other third parties involved, and particularly the military, are seen by diplomats as having a double agenda, always asking themselves the question of whether diplomatisation or violatisation of the conflict may bring about what they at any one given time hold to be the optimal course of action. It must also be said, however, that the diplomatic self-understanding differs from what one learns from the historical record on this point, for, as discussed in the introduction to this article, diplomats themselves were, and still are, also prone to consider moves other than de-securing ones (Neumann 2011b).

Once the parties have agreed to talk, the third facilitating step would be to bring them physically to the table. This involves finding, and often paying for, spaces where the parties may meet in a secure and relaxed atmosphere conducive to work and trust-building. This is a delicate stuff, for if the setting is too reclusive, the ties between negotiators and their constituencies become weaker, and a lot of time-consuming shuttling between negotiators and (the rest of) the leadership will tend to ensue. The facilitator needs a light touch at this point: on the one hand, there will always be incentives to speed up the process, whereas, on the other hand, too much rush may bring the dialogue tumbling down.

The facilitator's work may end at this stage, but it may also involve a fourth step, namely the monitoring of the agreements reached. Again, this is a risky business for, as pointed out by a former head of the section, '[f]acilitators of a certain deal should not become the umpires of that deal. Facilitation and monitoring should be treated as two discreet functions'.²⁰

CONCLUSION

Securitisation understood as a series of speech acts, begs the question of what happens next. The extant literature congeals around the concept of desecuritization, understood simply as the negation of securitisation. Amongst the many possibilities of what may happen after securitisation, I have fastened on two specific possibilities, namely violatisation and diplomatisation. I proceeded to sketch one specific de-securing practice, peace and reconciliation by third-party agents, as instantiated by one specific agent, namely the Norwegian Ministry of Foreign Affairs. That state meddled in peace and reconciliation as a third-party from the 1960s onwards. Practices fastened in the wake of the Cold War. Formal institutionalisation dates from the year 2000 when a unit was formed within the MFA. The unit was upgraded to a section in 2004. At the moment of writing, it has 11 employees and a budget of almost 600 Euros.²¹ Some of the employees have been working as special envoys to specific conflicts (in 2010, there was one to Nepal and one to the Philippines). From the very beginning, the work evolved in close cooperation with non-governmental organisations, and the MFA would draw on and even hire non-diplomats to perform this work (a 2010 example of this would be a special envoy to Timor

²⁰ Interview with the former head of section, 9 July 2010.

²¹ Note that this is only a fraction of the resources spent by other sections within the Department for the UN, peace and Humanitarian Questions. By comparison, the Section for Humanitarian Questions had 16 employees and a budget almost five times as many.

Leste). The centre-piece of work is facilitation. Diplomats understand facilitation in terms of practices that add up to four fuzzy sets. These are mapping the parties to a conflict, clearing their path to the table, assisting in their deliberations going across that table and, finally, being indirectly involved in the monitoring of any agreement being struck.

The importance of such practices to security should be obvious, but so far they have not been problematised by securitisation theory. This is hardly a devastating critique. Theorising the social items means to evolve a certain perspective which may highlight a certain aspect of social life. One inevitable cost of illuminating something is that it twilights or even occludes everything else. Securitisation theory has been very successful in theorising the speech act of security. We need to look no further than the emergence of speech act theory itself, however, seeing the cost incurred by doing so. Austin and Searle appropriated Wittgenstein's idea of the language game and left Wittgenstein's general understanding of linguistic and other practices in the dark thereby (comp. Schatzki 1996). Their move towards analytics and first principles meant that the constitutive role of practices for everything social was bracketed. As Thierry Balzacq has pointed out, however, it is also possible to understand securitisation as 'a strategic (or a pragmatic) practice, as opposed to one of universal pragmatics (speech act), the aim of which is to determine the universal principles of an effective communicative action of security (Balzacq 2005: 192). Asking the question of what happens after securitisation, as I have done in this article, brings this problematique into full view. It is, of course, possible to perform the illocutionary act of violising or of diplomatising a securitised situation, but the drama lies elsewhere, in what new practices are added to the securitized situation that may bring about a change. One way for securitisation theory to inspire the new empirical work that can follow up on what has already been accomplished is to engage further with the burgeoning literature inspired by practice theory.

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