



THE ROLE OF REGIONAL ORGANIZATIONS IN CONFLICT SETTINGS: A  
COMPARATIVE PERSPECTIVE ON THE ROLE OF OAS, ASEAN, SAARC, AU, EU, PIF  
AND ECOWAS

MASTERS THESIS

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FACULTY OF LAW AND SOCIAL SCIENCES  
POLITICAL SCIENCE AND INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS

TIRANA, ALBANIA

July, 2023

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AND ECOWAS

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Thesis Submitted in Fulfillment of Requirement for the Degree of  
Master of Science in Political Science and International Relations

EPOKA UNIVERSITY

2023

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A Comparative Perspective on the role of OAS, ASEAN,  
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**Date of Defense** : 16 June 2023

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**ABSTRACT**

After the process of de-colonization and the end of the Cold War there was a shift in the international arena as the states were provided with more autonomy. Such changes were followed by the increased role of regional organizations as important actors in international relations, and more specifically in peace and security spectrum. This has brought the importance of evaluating the role these organizations have had in conflict handling processes such as prevention, management, settlement and peacebuilding. Therefore, this study will compare the involvement of seven regional organizations, OAS, ASEAN, SAARC, AU, EU, PIF and ECOWAS in conflict settings within their respective regions. The study will conduct a comparative analysis using qualitative research methods from existing books, handbooks, research papers etc. A large N study will be conducted by taking the cases of two conflicts within each region studied. The purpose of the study will be to find out which of the conflict handling processes, tools or mechanisms were used by the regional organizations in handling those conflicts, and whether the final outcome has been successful.

**Key words:** regional organization, conflict prevention, conflict management, conflict settlement, peacebuilding,

**ROLI I ORGANIZATAVE RAJONALE NE OFRIMIN E NJE PROCESI TE  
MIREMBAJTES TE KONFLIKTEVE. NJE STUDIM KOMPARATIV I OAS, ASEAN,  
SAARC, AU, EU, PIF DHE ECOWAS.**

**ABSTRAKT**

Pas procesit të dekolonizimit dhe përfundimit të Luftës së Ftohtë pati një ndryshim në arenën ndërkombëtare pasi shteteve iu dha më shumë autonomi. Ndryshime të tilla u pasuan nga rritja e rolit të organizatave rajonale si aktorë të rëndësishëm në marrëdhëniet ndërkombëtare, dhe më konkretisht në spektrin e paqes dhe sigurisë. Kjo ka sjellë rëndësinë e vlerësimit të rolit që këto organizata kanë pasur në proceset e trajtimit të konflikteve si parandalimi, menaxhimi, zgjidhja dhe ndërtimi i paqes. Prandaj, ky studim do të krahasojë përfshirjen e shtatë organizatave rajonale, OAS, ASEAN, SAARC, AU, BE, PIF dhe ECOWAS në mjediset e konfliktit brenda rajoneve të tyre përkatëse. Studimi do të kryejë një analizë krahasuese duke përdorur metoda kërkimore cilësore nga librat ekzistues, punime kërkimore etj. Një studim large N do të kryhet duke marrë rastet e dy konflikteve brenda çdo rajoni të studiuar. Qëllimi i studimit do të jetë të zbulojë se cilat nga proceset, mjetet apo mekanizmat e trajtimit të konfliktit janë përdorur nga organizatat rajonale në trajtimin e këtyre konflikteve dhe nëse rezultati përfundimtar ka qenë i suksesshëm.

**Fjalë kyçe:** organizata rajonale, parandalim konflikti, menaxhim konflikti, zgjidhje konflikt dhe ndërtim i paqes.

## **ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS**

Writing my master thesis would have been way more difficult without the understanding and motivation of my supervisor Dr. Jubjana Vila whom I have to thank for putting my well-being and mental health first. I would also like to thank my family who although had no idea of what my thesis was about, never doubted my abilities; my closest friends who have been my source of entertainment after frustrating sleepless nights; my masters' colleague Enxhi for her undoubted support; my cat for always following me with her confused staring; and lastly my boyfriend for all the unconditional love he never fails to give.

## **DECLARATION**

I hereby declare that this Master Thesis, titled” The Role of Regional Organizations in Conflict Settings: A Comparative Perspective on the role of OAS, ASEAN, SAARC, AU, EU, PIF and ECOWAS” is based on my original work except quotations and citations which have been duly acknowledged. I also declare that this thesis has not been previously or concurrently submitted for the award of any degree, at Epoka University, any other university or institution.

Erida Metaj

July 2023

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## **CURRICULUM VITAE**

Erida Metaj was born on 10 September 1998, in Tirana. She began her undergraduate studies at Epoka University in 2017. In her undergraduate studies she has attained several forums and conferences held by the Center of European Studies at Epoka University. She has been certified as member of World Youth Alliance, organization that promotes human rights of the youth. During her graduate studies she has been working as teaching assistant at Epoka University and has participated in an Erasmus Exchange at the university of Flensburg, Germany. Her research interests include human rights, peace and conflict studies.

## **ABBREVIATIONS**

AAFC-	Allied Forces of the Community
AICHR-	ASEAN Intergovernmental Commission on Human Rights
AIPMC-	ASEAN InterParliamentary Myanmar Caucus
AMISOM-	African Union Transition Mission in Somalia
ASEAN-	Association of Southeast Asian Nations
ASF-	African Standby Force
AU-	African Union
BTG-	Bougainville Transitional Government
CAFTA-	China Treaty of Amity and Cooperation
CEWS-	The Continental Early Warning System
CIFP-	Country Indicators for Foreign Policy
CSDP-	Common Security Defence Policy
EASBRG-	East African Standby Brigade
EC-	European Community
ECPF-	ECOWAS Conflict Prevention Framework
ECOWAS-	Economic Community of West African States
EU-	European Union

FSI-	Foreign States Index
IATRA-	Inter-American Treaty of Reciprocal Assistance
ICG-	International Crisis Group
ICJ-	International Court of Justice
IcSP-	International contribution to Stability and Peace
OAS-	Organization of American States
OAU-	Organization of African Unity
PI-	Partnership Instrument
PIF-	Pacific Islands Forum
SAARC-	South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation
RSC-	Regional Security Complex
TAC-	Treaty of Amity and Cooperation
UN-	United Nations
UNCLOS-	United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea
UNDP-	United Nations Development Programme
USC-	The United Somali Congress

## 1. INTRODUCTION

Regional and regionalism have been at the forefront of the interest of international politics over the last years. The significant reduction in great power involvement from most of the developing world that occurred at the end of the Cold War, offered regions the possibility to enjoy greater autonomy after centuries of incursions and interference during colonialism, followed by the Cold War period.

In the 1960s and early 1970s, a wave of regional studies came into existence. An interest was raised on the role of the regions on conflict handling for two main reasons (Kelly, 2007). The first one is related to the aftermath of the de-colonization process, which was accompanied by a shift from the original approach of the IR theory, that now failed to include the complexity of the tensions that the enlargement of the state systems brought (Thompson 1973:90). While the second came as a result of the role that the European Community, (now European Union) had in creating a model for the integration of other regions (Kelly, 2007). The new regionalism, different from the old one which used the European Community as a reproduction (Hurrell 2005:39), was focused more on the integration through schemes which served to bring order. After the Cold War ended, regional organizations were able to manage local conflicts rather than serving as merely agents of influence for superpowers (Kelly,2007; Fawcett 2003:16).

Another important factor that brought the need for a shift of focus to the regional organizations was the International Organizations, more specifically the United Nation's failed attempts to assure peace and stability in these post-colonial states (Nguyen, 2002). Even though its

involvement in peacekeeping operations increased by 1992 to twenty-six (Dhanoa, 2003), only thirty-eight percent of the operations launched in the years of intervention dealt with interstate conflicts, while sixty-two percent tried to handle the intricate problems of intrastate conflict (Dhanoa, 2003; Ghali, 1995). Apart from the fact that international organizations can be significantly more capable than their national counterparts of managing post-conflict peacekeeping, there are numerous obstacles that prevent international organizations from being efficient and effective in leading both peacebuilding and conflict mitigating efforts (Kelly, 2007). These obstacles include international laws and norms, the scope and purpose of international organizations, and a lack of adjustment for the nuances of various political, cultural, and economic areas (Kelly, 2007).

Regional space is now challenged by globalization and unipolarity, although not to the same extent as by prior encroachment and overlay (Sjullie,2023). Over the past 20 years, regional organizations have become more important, especially in terms of peace, security, prosperity, and the averting or lessening of war (Kelly, 2007). Regional organizations are ideally positioned to take on the challenge of establishing and preserving a regional peace, in contrast to the multinational organizations that often take the lead in contemporary international politics (Sjullie, 2023). Boutros Boutros-Ghali, a former Secretary General of the United Nations, considered regional organizations as having the potential to relieve pressure on the UN Security Council in peacekeeping operations. In order to remove the pressure from international organizations' efforts to encourage intervention and facilitate regional organizations play the role of a together-bringing that simultaneously acknowledges the needs and or values particular to the countries in its region (Sjullie, 2007; Kacowicz, 1999).

The rationale behind creating regional organizations is straightforward: good relations and the avoidance of hostilities benefit neighbors (Nguyen, 2002). All of its members may see the benefits of establishing a zone where peace and prosperity flourish, often known as the security community (Deutsch et al. 1957). The second, more modern viewpoint is the ECOWAS model, which views regionalization of conflict as a justification for region formation (Kelly, 2007). Due to the catastrophic repercussions on development and humanitarian issues, not to mention the

spillover effects throughout the region, regional entities have an interest in preventing, containing, or resolving violent conflicts in their region.

As Kelly (2007) mentions, it seems that regional organizations by possessing factors such as geographical proximity, shared values and norms and a more organic number of members, can be more successful in preventing or managing conflicts, as well as facilitating the reconciliation process. However, there is very few evidence and studies whose aim is to prove the efficiency of regional organizations in practice, when it comes to the handling of conflict processes such as prevention, management, settlement and peacebuilding and reconciliation. Therefore, the research question of this study will be on the role regional organizations have had in conflict settings by studying the tools and mechanisms used by them. The study will also try to find out over their involvement in conflict handling considering four processes such as prevention, management, settlement and peacebuilding.

To answer this question, the study will be conducting a comparative analysis using qualitative research methods. The study will be comparative as it will try to analyze seven main multi-purpose, sufficiently institutionalized regional organizations representing different regions, which consist of more than two contiguous states and have homogeneous membership. This will serve the study to have clearer results on the involvement of the regional organizations in conflict settings in different regions, so it can result in a final outcome. The regional organizations considered for the study are the Organization of American States (OAS), Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN), South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation (SAARC), African Union (AU), European Union (EU), Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) and Pacific Islands Forum (PIF). Each organization will be analyzed in terms of their role in two different conflicts in their region including: Guatemala and Belize conflict; Haiti conflict; Myanmar conflict; South China Sea Dispute; India and Pakistan's conflict; the conflict in Sri Lanka; the Cyprus conflict; Kosovo and Serbia's conflict; Libya's crisis; Somalian conflict; the Bougainville conflict; the Fiji political conflict; the conflict in Sierra Leone; and the Liberian Civil War.



Firstly, the study will focus on explaining the increased role that regional organizations have had in the international arena and the theoretical framework of the four conflict handling process beginning with prevention, as the first step when met with a crisis or threat, for which early warning and risk assessment systems will be analyzed. In the second process conflict management, the study will analyze how these regional organizations have managed the conflicts from a political objective (promote trust and confidence, implement peace, security, and stability) and an operational objective (preventive diplomacy, sanctions, military operations, and peacekeeping). In order to find weather, the regional organizations have been successful in settling disputes the study will focus on three diplomatic elements, such as negotiation, mediation or conciliation by a third party as well as, two legal means such as arbitration and adjudication. The effectiveness of the peacebuilding and reconciliation process will be evaluated by addressing the process reconciliation and conflict transformation, that regional organizations have or not undertaken. Secondly, the study will present a case overview of the seven regional organizations technical details, approach on conflict and peace, instruments and mechanisms, its participation in conflicts in the regions as well as tools & mechanisms used, as well as an historical overview of the conflicts. Thirdly, the study will analyze the participation of the seven regional organizations in the conflicts mentioned, the handling processes and mechanisms used, compare the involvement of regional organizations in the two conflicts studied in each region, and show whether they have been successful in their mission. Lastly, the study will present the results on the role regional organizations have had on conflict settings and also, mention limitations to the research study.

## **2. LITERATURE REVIEW**

### **2.1. The Emergence of The “New Regionalism”: Security Theory.**

The 1960s saw the emergence of the first wave of regional studies, which persisted into the early 1970s. Two factors were highlighted by the traditional regionalists as the cause of the resurging interest in regions; these factors connect traditional and contemporary regionalism, which reemerged in the 1990s (Wulf & Debiel, 2009). Firstly, the original systemic approach of the International Relation’s theory seemed to be unable to enfold the tensions and proliferation of problems that accompanied the expansion of the state system, because it seemed to be too homogenizing and broad (Kaplan, 1957; Wulf & Debiel, 2009). The Third Worldism of the New International Economic Order contributed to further system fragmentation in the 1970s. A "Southern" movement known as regionalism was created to defend recent independence, nonalignment, and reject overlay (Vayrynen 1986; Acharya 1992b:9, 15; Fawcett 2005:28; Wulf & Debiel, 2009). Secondly, the European Community (EC), now known as European Union, according to Haas, Lindberg, and Scheingold in 1971, Falk, and Mendlovitz in 1973, started to greatly increase interest in regional integration. This regional theorizing in IR was inspired by the European Community, which has acted as a model for various regional integration initiatives (Wallace, 1995; Wulf & Debiel, 2009). The EC’s efforts to unite were imitated also by other regional groups such as the Arab League or the Organization for African Unity in the 1950s and 1960s. These two factors brought the emergence of the notion of regions as subsystems (Kaplan, 1957), which allow for stronger local "common socio-historical traits" specification to explain behavior, while maintaining the larger international level's systemic limitations (Boals 1973:403, Wulf & Debiel, 2009).

Regionalists offer justifications for analyzing at the regional level, and most agree that they (Buzan and Waever 2003:18; Fawcett 2003:24–25; Hoogensen 2005:269–270; Wulf & Debiel, 2009) must be refuted in order to disprove conventional IR theory. First, as one of the main regionalists Buzan (1993) believes that among the levels, domestic, regional, inter-regional, and global, regions are really the most crucial. According to his Regional Security Complex (RSC) states tend to be more cautious and worried about neighbors rather than distant states (Buzan and Waever 2003; Miller 2005: 241). Geographical disparities in the security challenge provide rich local histories. Through repeated interactions with one another over time, the same group of states will develop patterns of amity and hostility. As Lemke (2002) also states, the systemic theory fails to mention the restrictions on threat extension that the vast majority of governments must contend with. Second, there is strong evidence that local partners use outside sponsors to go after local rivals when major powers do act in areas (Acharya 1992a, 1992b; Hemmer and Katzenstein 2002; Lemke 2002; Wulf & Debiel, 2009). Overlay is process of two ways, since customers may be systematically manipulated by clients through extortion, flip-flopping, hedging, and other means. Systemic theories that assume a one-way, uncomplicated transmission of preferences from major powers to the remainder, fail to account for the game-playing, wriggling, and other autonomy-creating strategies used by tiny nations. More autonomy than we realize already exists amongst regions (Wulf & Debiel, 2009). It is worth to mention examples such as Arab and African nations sparring and playing games with their powerful benefactors during the Cold War; or Kim Il Sung inducing the Soviet Union and China to compete for his expansionist goals. Third, regionalism indicates the imperialist and colonialism-related structural overlay's growing normative discomfort. Small governments and areas demand space despite the fact that strong powers may have overwhelming power resources (Buzan and Waever, 2003). Fourth, maintaining effective overlay has become harder. As the United States found out in Vietnam and Iraq and Afghanistan, respectively, the density of the socially mobilized Third World prevents semi-imperial operations (Falk 1999:230, 245; Buzan 2000:6ff; Fawcett 2003:14; Vayrynen 2003:28; Wulf & Debiel, 2009). Additionally, the populations of the great powers are not particularly interested in or ready to support such initiatives. Lemke (2002:52) points out that his regional theory needs the indifference of big powers to function, and the fact that it works shows significant great power withdrawal from the areas. As readiness to interfere has decreased, so too have resistance capabilities, at least inside

home territory. Regionalists (Buzan and Waever 2003:18; Fawcett 2003:24–25; Hoogensen 2005:269–270; Wulf & Debiel, 2009) will agree that overlay is a persistent danger and that subsystems are officially open. Fifth, Shambaugh (2004 / 2005) well expresses regionalism's broader worry that systemic IR is too abstract and remote to adequately represent regional dynamics (Wulf & Debiel, 2009). Regionalist models aim to improve the match between regional behaviors and IR theory at the expense of parsimony. Between the state and the excessively abstract system, the region serves as a useful intermediary level. When done thoroughly, it may produce fresh theoretical insights and captures the richness of non-European experience.

The incorporation of these new theories on regionalism and the inabilities of United Nations to maintain peace and security (Nguyen, 2002), opened a new path for regional organizations influence in resolving conflicts as well as promoting peace within their regions. Their impact on security issues began to increase after the ex-colonized countries gained their independence as well as, in the aftermath of the Cold War and were followed by the development of new structures, institutions, tools and mechanisms (Alexis, 2022) that would aim to serve the process of peacekeeping and peacebuilding.

## **2.2. The Increasing Role of Regional Organizations in Conflict Handling Processes**

Using the European Community as a model, the old regionalism folded normative concerns of third party conflict resolution into neofunctional integration theory (Wulf & Debiel, 2009). Regional organizations can be defined as United Nations-recognized groups of countries that have joined forces through official alliances for military and/or economic purposes (Nguyen, 2002). By shifting the theoretical framework from variations on neorealism toward liberal institutionalism and constructivism, the critical theorists offer a normative component that has been absent. After the Cold War ended, regional organizations were free to manage local conflicts rather than serving as just agents of influence for superpowers (Wulf & Debiel, 2009).

For the international community, the ending of Cold War brought many opportunities and challenges: challenges in that many economic and ethnic conflicts that had been suppressed by communism and the Cold War were now re-ignited; opportunities in that the United Nations found the possibility to act freer, more than at any other time in its history (Dhanoa, 1995). In response, the UN launched a flurry of fresh peacekeeping missions. There were only five UN peacekeeping missions active on January 31, 1988, and all but one involved interstate disputes. The number of UN peace operations, which are intentionally referred to as peace operations due to their multifaceted nature, had grown to twenty-six by 16 December 1994. The UN's intervention in these intrastate conflicts were characterized by messy affairs, whose main protagonists were bands of militias and armed civilians as well as, regular armies with very ill-defined chains of command (Alexis, 2022). The complexity of non-clearly delineated frontlines; exposure of religious and ethnic fault lines; a total foundering of order and collapse of institutions, found the UN unprepared and with an outdated template that called for more expertise and resources regarding planning, executing and coordination of these operations (Alexis, 2022). Some examples can be the failure to prevent the massacre in Srebrenica (1995) or the genocide in Rwanda (1994).

According to Idrees and Naazeer (2017), there are about thirty-eight Regional, International, and Global Organizations (RIGOs) which poses a mandate that is clear, to support international peace and security. This peace can be achieved through conflict prevention, management, settlement and resolution as well as peacebuilding. In addition to the UN's participation, thirty-one RIGOs are taking a more active role in this area (Wallenstein & Bjurner, 2015; Idrees & Naazer, 2017). In accordance with the principles of the UN Charter, Article 52 of the UN Charter permits "regional arrangements or agencies," to engage in "appropriate action" and activities to address "matters relating to the maintenance of international peace and security." It clearly states that UN members and regional organizations "shall make every effort to achieve pacific settlement of local disputes". As regional organization's significance became more widely recognized, they began to play a more persistent role in resolving conflicts between and within states of all kinds throughout the globe (Idrees & Naazer, 2017). As a matter of fact, regional organizations were urged to take on this position in order to cope with the frailty of the UN, which lacked "the capacity, resources, and expertise" to address today's issues. As a result, the UN stated that regional organization's assistance and participation were "both necessary and

desirable" (Travares, 2010; Idrees & Naazar, 2017). The bulk of today's conflicts are regional in nature, and even domestic political issues can have regional implications. This emphasizes the importance of regional organizations.

In order to maintain peace after the 1990s, the UN has to rely increasingly on regional and sub-regional institutions (Wulf & Debiel, 2009). Regional organizations came to understand that it is in their best interests to prevent wars that would have catastrophic impacts on the area (Dhanoa, 1995). In addition to addressing security issues, regional organizations may also monitor peace accords and offer early warnings, as mentioned by Wulf (2009). In order to achieve its purpose of promoting world peace, the UN views the regional organizations as complementing players (Idrees & Naazar, 2017). On the other hand, the staff of regional organizations are not likely to be met with language and cultural barriers, as the organizations themselves bring more intimate knowledge to the operation (Dhanoa, 1995). On the other hand, the proximity of such institutions and actors to the region may prevent them from acting really impartially in settling a conflict, and national interests may obfuscate their analysis of the best course for achieving peace and tranquility (Wulf & Debiel, 2009).

Regional organizations can be seen as ideally positioned to take on the challenge of establishing and preserving a regional peace, in contrast to the multinational organizations that often take the lead in contemporary international politics (Idrees & Naazar, 2017). Boutros Boutros Ghali, saw regional organizations for having the potential to relieve pressure on the UN Security Council in peacekeeping operations (Dhanoa, 1995). In order to remove the pressure from international organizations' efforts to facilitate peace and to encourage them to intervene in the region in a new, more appealing way, regional organizations can play the role of a bridge that simultaneously acknowledges the needs and values particular to the countries in its region (Alexis, 2022). To guarantee a fair and just system, regional groups can serve as a check on the authority of newly elected governments. On the other hand, regional organizations may assume the principal function of facilitating peacekeeping and third-party involvement (Alexis, 2022). This relieves pressure on taxed international organizations, who have a dubious track record, to act, as well as encouraging their participation in the region in a fresh, encouraging way.

In order to achieve the purpose of maintaining peace within the region, regional organizations have had to adopt several measures and mechanisms (Alexis, 2022). Conflict handling processes such as prevention, management, settlement and peacebuilding can be considered as mechanisms which can offer the environment for parties in conflict to discuss and settle the issues between them, and prevent the conflict from becoming violent (Idrees & Naazer, 2017). Given that the majority of regional organizations are encouraged to use diplomatic measures when resolving conflicts (Vinokurov & Libman, 2017), the implementation of these processes has become a practice for regional organizations (Alexis, 2022).

### **2.3. Explaining Conflict Handling Processes**

#### **a) Conflict Prevention**

The United Nations (Chapter VI; 33-38) defines conflict prevention as diplomatic actions to prevent tensions and disagreements between or within states from turning violent. Information gathering and analysis are two of any conflict maintenance system's most important tasks, and they are essential for crisis prevention, because they give decision-makers the information they need to act quickly before the conflict worsens and forces population movements. Building trust, forming coalitions, and negotiating solutions are considered to be the main goals of conflict prevention policy, in order to prevent conflict completely or at least to defuse it before it escalates (Wulf & Debiel, 2009). Any effective conflict prevention strategy must include crisis early warning and risk assessment, and preventative diplomacy and deployment are its most crucial functional elements (Levitt, 2001).

In comparison to their use in other domains, early warning systems for the prevention of violent conflict are considered to be "latecomers" (Bächler et al. 1998: 34, Wulf & Debiel, 2009). Such systems have their roots in intelligence and military reconnaissance, dating back to the 1950s.

A second phase saw the creation of early warning systems for severe weather, humanitarian catastrophes, flagrant human rights violations, financial crises and the spread of disease. As Austin (2004) mentions, early response aims the resolution, reduction or transformation of a conflict by taking an initiative in an early stage of a perceived potential conflict. Early warning can be comprised of three distinct parts such as: assessing the amount and timing of relative risks of emerging threats; understanding the nature of these threats and presenting feasible scenarios; and disseminating warning assessments to decision makers (Wulf & Debiel, 2009). Effective EWR systems can deal with a variety of risks to human security, including: wars, armed conflict, the failure of state, politicized genocide, as well as humanitarian catastrophes brought on by natural disasters (Levitt, 2001). In the case of an acute or upcoming conflict or crisis, operational prevention can be an adequate early warning method (Wulf & Debiel). Operational prevention, being a short-term effort to prevent a forestall escalating violence or a conflict by using military or political means, can be more effective in conflict prevention as it uses the instruments of preventative diplomacy, economic sanctions and/or incentives, and/or military action to try to control or reverse the escalation of violent conflict (Wulf & Debiel, 2009).

There are several Early Warning models, mechanisms and tools when discussing conflict prevention. Firstly, the World Bank's greed model of rebellion states that low GDP per capita is closely connected with civil conflict (Collier and Hoeffler, 2002; Wulf & Debiel, 2009). Nevertheless, the model contends that the possibility of organizing a military uprising weighs more heavily than feelings of "grief" in determining when violence will break out. According to this view, a state's inability to effectively manage its area may also be indicated by a low per-capita income (Fearon and Laitin, 2003). In addition, the lack of formal education and viable economic options facilitates the recruitment of young males. As Azam (2002) states external aid, the theft of natural resources like diamonds or copper, and control over raw material exports, are all potential sources of rebel revenue. Another model can be the Fragile States Index (FSI) which using twelve indicators which are focused on changes that can bring the escalation of a situation, ranks one hundred seventy-seven countries according to their level of fragility (Fund For Peace). These indicators can be: social (large-scale migrations of refugees or internally



displaced people causing complicated humanitarian crises, persistent and ongoing human flight, a history of retaliatory group grievances or group paranoia, and increasing demographic pressures); economic (severe economic decline or uneven economic development); and political (the progressive degradation of public services, the criminalization and/or delegitimization of the state, violations of human rights and the interruption of the process of application of the rule of law arbitrarily (Wulf & Debiel, 2009). Its main goal is to assess the vulnerability of the state and does so by being based on evaluations of media reports from more than one-hundred-fifty international and domestic sources. Carleton University's Country Indicators for Foreign Policy (CIFP), is a project who stands by the assumption that if a repressive regime controls the state, state failure and violence are most probable. It is based on six indicators such as: human rights, rule of law, political stability, government and market efficiency, democratic participation and government accountability and transparency. (CIFP 2008; Carleton University). Lastly, one of the most successful in the field of EWR, is the International Crisis Group's (ICG) Crisis Watch, which is based on investigative research. The target audience of Crisis Watch are researchers, practitioners and policy makers, and it works mostly on briefings and reports, more precisely publishing annually on sixty-five conflicts, making about 90 reports (Wulf & Debiel, 2009).

Given that international initiatives tend to inform on the issues and possible solutions policy makers on a top-level, a need for the inclusivity of local level capacities and the developing of their coping capacities, has opened the path for regional organizations to play a role in conflict prevention (Levitt, 2001). Therefore, several regional organizations, party with the assistance of international organizations, have engaged in establishing Early Warning Mechanisms in order to help in the prevention of conflicts from escalating (Wulf & Debiel, 2009). Nevertheless, it is worth to mention that quite often these organizations tend to not be successful in such measure (Wulf & Debiel, 2009), because of several reasons such as: reluctance to choose another path from that of intervening in a state's internal affair; lack of its capacity to act; political differences and missing shared norms and values among the member states; and an unclear mission and geographic reach (Levitt, 2001).

#### b) Conflict Management

Conflict management functions to avoid the aggravation of refugee flows and IDPs, which makes it an important conflict handling process, since it is the one most essential to the physical and legal protection of displaced persons (Thorton, 1991). Conflict management can have two main objectives when it comes to conflict handling, those being operational and political objectives. The operational objectives include the establishment of order through intense coercive sanctions, peace-enforcement, humanitarian intervention, preventive diplomacy and peacekeeping (Uchegara, 2008). On the other hand, the political objective includes the promotion of confidence and trust as well as ensure security, stability, peace, and allow for internal replacement and voluntary repatriation (Levitt, 2001).

Once a conflict arises, there are numerous methods to handle it, including using force, bilateral negotiations, or having a regional body act as an arbiter or mediator between the parties. Non-violent conflict management is intended to assist the parties to the conflict in realizing their own interests, when multiple issues threaten to upend or degrade their negotiating relationship (Uchegara, 2008). These can be made possible by utilizing an agenda, keeping the parties focused on a termination agreement, and/or adjusting the timetable of the negotiating process (Levitt, 2001).

Interventions are considered to be a function of conflict managements, which can be considered as a concrete military, economic or political action, taken by intergovernmental or governmental actors (Thorton, 1991). The purpose of this conflict management measure is to principally affect the duration, direction or outcome of an international conflict. Intervention as a measure can be considered extraordinary, as it has a convention breaking character as a response to an ongoing conflict (Uchegara, 2008). The process of conflict management can be more successful and quicker to resolve when as Betts (1994) states, the intervener tilts the local balance of power, takes sides and helps one of the rivals in conflict to win. However, in order for that to happen the intervention should not be partial. Suppression is another technique in conflict management, that is used when a conflict scenario is recognized, but it is difficult to engage in conflict in

pursuit of objectives, due to the coercive power of prospective adversaries (Levitt, 2001). The appearance of everything is calm. But underneath the seeming tranquility, there lies danger. In this occasion the process of conflict suppression is not precipitated by resolution or settlement, but considers peace as the lack of violence that is generated by apathy, coercive sanctions or police efficiency (Askandar, 1994).

Another conflict management strategy in conflict containment is self-restraint. It uses the "principles of compensation" or "self-imposed restraint on action in pursuit of goals" to stop conflict situations from turning into disruptive conflict behavior (Uchehara, 2008). Conflicting parties or groups may decide against acting disruptively in order to forward their objectives, because they consider the cost of upsetting cherished cooperative relationships to be too high. Such a scenario typically begins with the gradual emergence of forms of interdependence in politics or the economy. Any group or party that considers using disruptive behavior (Uchehara, 2008) to further its goals must consider the "cost" of severing such ties.

Institutionalization by political systems or institutions is another important conflict management strategy, which uses approaches like political bargaining or voting systems between political groups (Askandar, 1994). This strategy is comprised of several elements such as: a coalition of shared goals and ideas that is balanced; a set of rules of informal nature whose goal is to keep sensitive issues out of discussions; setting principles for the administration of the coalition; and a system where the right to veto on decisions that might be harmful is given to each party (Askandar, 1994).

Conflict regulation, the last conflict management tactic to be proposed, entails all steps to keep conflict behavior within the bounds of recognized and accepted standards of action. These steps include defining appropriate dispute resolution methods, the conditions under which and the parties who may use conflict behavior against one another, who is automatically exempt, and, finally, the circumstances under which one party may use conflict behavior (Thorton, 1991). Conflict behavior is confined to minor or manageable harm and social disturbance in this

circumstance. The socialization of people towards the desirability of violent behavior is another aspect of conflict regulation (Askandar, 1994).

The intervention of regional organizations to manage a conflict can be defined (Thorton, 1991) as a concrete economic, political or military action. Its purpose is to affect the outcome or duration of an intra-state or inter-state conflict. Given that interventions have a convention breaking character, they can be considered as extraordinary measures (Levitt, 2001). However, interventions from regional organizations have often been jeopardized (Chuka, 2016) by the lack of resources, legal provisions that allow for the possibility of such intervention, lack of shared norms between member states, and lack of internal stability and accountable organs (Idrees & Naazer, 2017).

### c) Conflict Settlement

The principle of peaceful settlement's conceptual emphasis can be found in the UN Charter, in some of the UN General Assembly's declarations and resolutions some principles who were stated in the founding treaties of regional organizations, such as the Pact of the League of Arab States (Cairo, 1945), American Treaty on Pacific Settlement (also known as the "Pact of Bogota"), and European Convention for the Peaceful Use of Nuclear Weapons (Păunesu & Pisiță, 2019).

The most persuasive justification for adhering to the principle of peacefully settling international disputes is presented in Article 1 of the United Nations Charter, which was adopted on June 26th, 1945. This Article states that one of the purposes of the organization is to remove threats by taking decisions collectively. Other purposes are also the settlement or adjustment of situations that might lead to breach of peace or international disputes. Chapter VI presents the possibilities of peaceful settlement which can be: negotiation, mediation, arbitration, enquiry, conciliation etc. (Păunesu & Pisiță, 2019). Therefore, to avoid actions that endanger peace,

international security, or the rule of law, states and other parties need to fully implement the principle of peaceful resolution of disputes. Furthermore, a significant number of UN General Assembly resolutions, including Resolutions 2627 (XXV) of October 24, 1970, in the Twenty-fifth Anniversary of the United Nations, Resolution 2734 (XXV) of December 16, 1970, on the Strengthening of International Security, and Resolution 40/9 of November 8, 1985, on the Solemn Appeal to States in Conflict to Cease Armed Conflict, have reaffirmed the principle of peaceful settlement of international disputes.

When settling a dispute parties have different options which can be classified as political or diplomatic (negotiation, mediation or conciliation) (Alter & Hooghe, 2016). Mediation is a settlement process that includes the encouragement of parties to resume negotiations. Only that the mediators formally suggest solutions after conducting independent investigations distinguishes mediation from negotiation (Merrills, 2005). As Merrills clarifies, the parties must freely want mediation or that it may be suggested by third parties in order to assist to comprehend the mediation process (Merrills, 2005). Parties may now have hope of settling the disagreement that they had at the beginning of it. The parties to the disagreement are always receptive to the mediator's proposals during the mediation process, but they are under no obligation to accept them in the long term. This aids in ensuring that, should the process fail, the parties continue to have the upper hand in the dispute and can protect their interests to some extent (Alter & Hooghe, 2016). The mediation procedure won't be made public if the level of sensitivity of the issue is high. Due to a lack of a willing mediator, despite mediation being a voluntary conflict resolution procedure, its goal may not always be to satisfy both parties (Merrills, 2005). As a result, not all disputes can be resolved through mediation because there may not be a willing mediator or, worse yet, the parties may decide not to use the services of a mediator because they believe they are ranked highly among the states (Merrills, 2005).

Furthermore, arbitration as the legal option, requires for the parties to either choose, or set up, the right machinery to handle the dispute. There are several possibilities for pre-made arbitration. Contracts and business agreements frequently provide that conflicts will be addressed by arbitration, and if necessary, may even name the location of the hearing in advance

(Alter & Hooghe, 2016). In addition to the International Chambers of Commerce and regional arbitration centers in Asia, Europe, North America, and Africa, states and private entities have access to the Permanent Court of Arbitration. A court or permanent tribunal is referred to in judicial settlement. Even in regions with regional courts, disputes are frequently resolved through diplomatic channels, such as mediation by a regional secretariat (Merrills, 2016). But the disagreement may, at least theoretically, go before a regional court. This can contribute to the judicialization of politics (Alter & Hooghe, 2016). Quite often arbitration can be hard to observe, given that the parties have to look over a lot of bilateral and multilateral agreements that can be hard to locate, in order to see a choice in action. Ad hoc procedures may be used for adjudication even when regional courts are an option.

One of the ways for dispute settlement between states is submitting disputes to the “the principal judicial organ of the United Nations’ (United Nations Charter 1945: art 92; Amer & Keyuan), the International Court of Justice (ICJ). Members of the United Nations can declare that they accept the Court’s jurisdiction in all legal disputes (ICJ Statute 1945: art. 36; Amer & Keyuan). When it comes to maritime disputes, apart from ICJ, The International Tribunal of the Law and Sea (ITLOS) can adjudicate cases submitted by parties to other treaties if the treaties allow it to do so as well as, it has the jurisdiction over any dispute submitted concerning the application of the Agreement related to the implementation of the Convention’s Part XI as well as LOS Convention (Alter & Hooghe, 2016).

Besides international bodies, the settlement of conflicts is also associated with regional bodies, whose role continues to increase. The founders' more modest goals have since been surpassed by the most effective regional adjudicatory processes (Păunesu & Pisiică, 2019). The Andean Tribunal of Justice has become heavily involved in the development of intellectual property and consumer protection law. The European Court of Justice has evolved into a constitutional court for Europe. The European Court of Human Rights has increased its reach substantively and geographically of Europe's human rights charter (Păunesu & Pisiică, 2019).

#### d) Peacebuilding

In governments that are only now emerging from civil or ethnic wars, the objective of post-conflict peacebuilding activities is to prevent a repeat of bloodshed (Paris, 1999). The idea of peacebuilding is rather recent. It wasn't until the late 1900s, when intrastate conflicts started to replace interstate wars as the norm in the imagined post-Cold War peace, that it began to be conceptualized (Alexis, 2022). Additionally, opportunities for global management emerged after the Cold War, and multilateral collaboration expanded. Although multilateral cooperation has undoubtedly contributed to the reduction of international violence, the administration of liberal international peace interventions is infamous for having failed in Somalia, Sierra Leone, the former Yugoslavia, and Rwanda (Pugh, 2020; Alexis, 2022).

Peacebuilding is a complicated process to construct peace, and it may involve supporting democratic government, human rights, the rule of law, and sustainable development (Alexis, 2022). Peacebuilding intends to take actions that could prevent conflict escalation or reescalation, as well as provide the groundwork for lasting peace and development. In order to be effective, peacebuilding strategies must be cohesive, customized to the needs of the country in question, and based on national ownership (Alexis, 2022). They should also include a carefully prioritized, sequential, and therefore relatively small collection of actions meant to accomplish the aforementioned goals (Durand, 2013). Building and rebuilding state institutions to enable openness and accountability, should be the political goal of conflict resolution in order to preserve and sustain peace (Alexis, 2022). The goal of displacement should be to negotiate deals for relocating displaced people back to their home countries and/or regular residences (Durand, 2013). Thus, maintaining peace and security to enable demobilization, repatriation, and the growth of civil society and governmental structures, including the development of political and judicial processes to achieve justice and reconciliation, should also be one of the operational objectives (Alexis, 2022). However, it is highly difficult to address the wants, interests, and complaints of two parties. Resolution doesn't seem to be suitable to handle disputes of a highly complicated character, such ethnic struggles (Durand, 2013). It appears to be a theory more suited for studying zero sum battles that have a winner and a loser, than it is for studying

multidimensional social conflicts. This is emphasized even more by the peacebuilding failures in Bosnia and Rwanda during 1990s. Therefore, many scholars (Lederach; Durand, 2013; etc.) note that given that conflict resolution implies that a conflict can be either intractable or solvable, it makes it a contested framework to address modern conflicts.

John Paul Lederach first used the phrase “conflict transformation” in the late 1980s. It refers to a technique for resolving disputes that, in the particular context of interethnic conflicts, focuses on the change from violent to constructive conduct and on mending bridges between enemies (Durand, 2013). By addressing the roots of the war's origins and empowering the populace to bring about a just peace, the method seeks to establish a lasting peace. It is more probable that violence will break out again if conflict is just stopped by intervention without transformation (Durand, 2013). Conflict transformation tries to transform conflict gradually in order to prevent violence, even if it does not view conflicts as essentially negative, because they are in reality agents of social development. It also seeks positive peace, the cessation of structural violence, in order to achieve permanent peace, in addition to negative peace. Lederach has proposed some important areas that should be taken into consideration in the process of conflict transformation (Durand, 2013) such as personal, structural, cultural and relational change. The first one relates to the conflict's emotional and perceptual facets and it refers to adjustments performers must make on a personal level. The second, has as components restructuring of social norms and decision-making which it might need adjustments to institutions, election procedures, or governance. The third, implies that to comprehend and resolve a dispute, cultural transformation entails changing cultural norms. The last, is a shift in how the persons involved interact, perceive, and behave around one another.

Peacebuilding at a regional level can promote the establishment of security and safety as well as, ensuring public order within the area (Durand, 2013). It can do so by trying to conduct constitutional reforms on constitutional governance, ensure the observation of elections, protect freedoms of the media, protect human rights etc. (Alexis, 2022). Furthermore, studies (Jaye, 2011; Alexis, 2022) have shown that regional organizations can use peacebuilding efforts such as the promotion of economic growth and aid recovery, the possibility for dialogue between



parties in conflict, the creation of local initiatives, can help the strengthening of reconciliation and national justice.

Nevertheless, the complexity of the conflict needs to be taken into account when discussing the regional organization's usage of mechanisms in handling conflicts. Studies (Vinokurov & Libman, 2017) have shown that whether a conflict is internal or external, can affect the action of regional organizations in handling such conflicts. Inter-state and Intra-state conflicts, characterized by different elements and factors, can indicate successfulness of conflict handling processes taken by regional organizations (Bereketeab, 2013).

#### **2.4. Defining Inter-State and Intra-State Conflicts**

Conflict is regarded (Bereketeab, 2013) as a societal phenomenon that occurs on a regular basis. But how it manifests itself varies depending on a variety of variables, including the degree of contestation, the people engaged, the length of the conflict, the availability of conflict-sustaining technology, etc. (Bereketeab, 2013). Two perspectives are offered about the causes of conflicts: the subjective and the objective. Contrary to the subjective approach, which links conflicts' origins to the perceived incompatibility of aims and differences, the objective approach links conflicts to the sociopolitical structure and fabric of society (Deutsch 1991; Bereketeab, 2013).

Conflicts can be divided into violent and non-violent. They are categorized in five distinct conflict types such as, latent conflict, evident conflict, crisis, extreme crisis, and war (Bereketeab, 2013), whereas the first three are presumptively non-violent. Wars are bloody conflicts. Another categorization of conflicts can be the distinction between inter-state and intra-state conflicts. A persistent political struggle that involves armed organizations within a state and one or more non-state parties is known as an intrastate conflict (World 101, 2021). This type of violence is often contained inside the boundaries of a single state, but it frequently has an international component and poses a risk of spreading to neighboring nations (Bereketeab, 2013). Less than

twenty-five percent of the one hundred ninety-six conflicts that occurred between 1945 and 2001 were traditional or inter-state hostilities between nations since the end of World War II (World 101, 2021). Since 1945, these conflicts have involved the former colonial powers, including the US, the erstwhile USSR, Great Britain, and France. Instead of launching battles, they typically participated in ones that were already in progress on behalf of one side or as UN personnel. These interventions took place as a result of rivalry between the two superpowers during the Cold War and as a support for a particular regime in power. Globalization and the "war on global terrorism" are also considered as contributing to conflict in the 21st century. According to Bereketeab (2013) globalization, which has otherwise sparked global developmental processes and created a number of opportunities for South Asian countries, has widened the inequality gap, increased consumerism, furthered poverty, and has enhanced the cultural alienation. Furthermore, unnaturally open borders, together with the continuous ethnic and socioeconomic expansion, have made it simple for the internal disputes of one nation to flow to the other, resulting in bilateral wars. Examples of internal conflicts include India's involvement in the ethnic strife in Sri Lanka, Pakistan's cross-border terrorism against India and Afghanistan, and Nepal's resentment of the flow of Nepali refugees from Bhutan.

Intra-state conflicts on the other hand, can be comprised of different types of conflicts. The most dominant can be civil wars, which can be categorized in two forms, wars of secession and wars of succession (Council on Foreign Relations, 1921). When individuals battle to establish a distinct nation, it's when wars of secession occur. One of the cases is that of the American Civil War. The second kind of civil war is a war of succession, in which participants fight to depose the government. Anti-government protestors battled to remove repressive political leaders during the Arab upheavals in Libya, Syria, and Yemen. These protests eventually turned into protracted and bloody battles of succession. However, civil wars are not the only type of intrastate conflict. Besides for seeking a new government or independence, groups fight for other reasons as well such as the case of criminal organizations (terrorist groups or drug cartels) impose violence to control the people and territory. Another type of intra-state conflict can be considered the governments persecuting minority groups to preserve social hierarchies or to crush dissents (Bereketeab, 2013). Fighting can also occur over issues between the government

and its citizens including lack of economic opportunity, competing claims to natural resources and territory as well as, corruption. Furthermore, in weak or failing nations if the government fails to provide security, healthcare, and education, conflict is more likely to happen (World 101,2021). In those nations governments are unable to regulate what occurs within their borders (Council on Foreign Relations, 1921).

Conflicts are rooted in a society's socioeconomic, politico-cultural, historical, and identity constructions and experiences; the relationship of the society with intra-regional and international actors; as well as local, national, and regional configurations. Therefore, it is difficult to explain disputes by a single factor. Conflict causalities are divided into root, proximal, and tertiary causes to further complicate issues (Bereketeab, 2013). As a result, in order to give an answer to the effectiveness of regional organizations in conflict handling, such factors need to be taken into consideration, as they can affect the path the conflict can take when trying to resolve, settle as well as reconcile or transform it.

### **3. METHODOLOGY**

This study will be conducted using a comparative analysis approach and will try to answer on the involvement of regional organizations in handling conflicts by studying the type of conflict, the conflict handling processes and tools and mechanisms they have used. The study will follow a comparative approach as it will involve comparing cases. It will be able to identify the similarities and differences, as well as, understand contributing factors. Seven regional organizations are going to be compared by studying their involvement in fourteen conflicts in total, in order to find out whether they have been successful or not in such involvements. To accomplish such purpose this research will rely on qualitative research methods, and entirely on second hand sources. The literature review and theoretical framework rely on books, handbooks, reports and academic articles. The study will focus on qualitative research methods only, as when comparing the role of seven of the most important world regional organizations, empirical work can be quite costly and time consuming. On the other hand, given that the operations of regional organizations are reported by them, researchers and scholar are obliged to rely on such forms. In order to evaluate and contrast the efficacy of the regional organizations taken into study, the research will analyze the form of involvement, mechanism and tools and conflict handling processes used, the outcomes of their involvement and accomplishments or not of such measures.

The study will compare seven regional organizations by using large N data. The regional organizations taken into study will be: The Organization of American States (OAS), Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN), South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation (SAARC), African Union (AU), European Union (EU), Pacific Islands Forum (PIF) and the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS). There have been selected seven regional organizations as they include seven different regions on each continent. The reason for

that is to consider geographical and historical conditions when comparing their involvement in conflict handling in respective regions. The selection has been based on the nature of these regional organizations, which can all be considered multi-purpose; consist of at least two contiguous states; have homogeneous membership; and are considered to be sufficiently institutionalized. Another reason is the geographical distribution which for the purpose of the research, is considered to be wide in order to have a clearer perspective on the role that the region can play in firstly, recurrence of conflicts, and then on the prevention, management, settlement or the process of building peace post-conflict.

Two conflicts will be studied in each region, on which the regional organizations, taken into study are expected to have a role. In order to study the involvement of regional organizations in conflict maintenance the conflicts taken into study are: for OAS, the Guatemala and Belize's territorial dispute as well as, the Haitian conflict; for ASEAN, are the Myanmar's civil unrest and the South China sea dispute; for SAARC are the India and Pakistan's conflict and the conflict in Sri Lanka; for AU the conflict in Libya and in Somalia; for the EU the Cyprus conflict as well as, the conflict between Kosova and Serbia; for PIF the Bougainville conflict and the Fiji crises; and for ECOWAS the Liberian and the Sierra Leone conflict. The technique used to analyze the data is process tracing, therefore, analyzing sequences of events and causal mechanisms. The purpose for choosing these conflicts has been to include both cases of intra and inter-state conflicts within one region. It also aims to include different types of conflicts (territorial disputes and political conflicts), in order to find out whether the type of conflict matters when studying the regional organization's successful involvement in conflict handling. The study will try to analyze similarities and differences between the regional organization's involvement in conflict settings by comparing findings.

Finally, this study will provide a matrix that will show whether the regional organizations have been successfully involved in handling conflicts in the cases taken into study, by considering the type of conflict; conflict handling; and tools and mechanisms used. The study hopes to draw lessons on how a regional organization handles a conflict within the region, and to leave space for future studies to be conducted in this field.

## **4. ANALYSIS**

### **4.1. The Organization of American States**

The Pan-American Union and the first Pan American conference, which took place in 1889–1890, are credited with establishing the OAS as the oldest regional organization. The Organization of American States (OAS) Charter was ratified by twenty-one nations on April 30, 1948, in Bogotá, Colombia and later on by the other states as well. OAS consists of thirty-five members, twenty-one of which are considered as original members (1948): Argentina, Bolivia, Brazil, Chile, Colombia, Costa Rica, Cuba, Dominican Republic, Ecuador, El Salvador, Guatemala, Haiti, Honduras, Mexico, Nicaragua, Panama, Paraguay, Peru, United States, Uruguay, and Venezuela; and 14 other subsequent members: Antigua and Barbuda, The Bahamas, Barbados, Belize, Canada, Dominica, Grenada, Guyana, Jamaica, Saint Lucia, Saint Vincent and the Grenadines, St. Kitts and Nevis, Suriname and Trinidad and Tobago. The OAS's principal goal is to preserve security and peace in the Western Hemisphere. Also it facilitates the negotiations which can be achieved by the member state's governments by providing political and technical assistance in accordance with its instruments (Jeifets, 2015). Another significant goal is the defense and strengthening of democracy in the hemisphere (Villagrán de León, 1993).

The peaceful resolution of conflicts is notably addressed in Chapter V (Articles 24-27) of the OAS Charter. According to Article 25, direct negotiation, good offices, mediation, investigation and conciliation, judicial settlement, arbitration, are the peaceful procedures that international

disputes between American states shall be subjected to (Jeifets, 2015). The OAS Charter grants the Permanent Council authority over matters pertaining to peaceful conflict resolution. The Charter includes the Council's support in dispute resolution through good offices, suggestions, inquiries, or the creation of ad hoc committees.

In 1947, the organization adopted the Inter-American Treaty of Reciprocal Assistance (IATRA), ("Rio Treaty"): to react with armed assaults and threats of aggression against member nations in an efficient manner, and to guarantee regional peace through enhanced Pacific resolution mechanisms (Munoz-Pogossian, 2005). When it comes to security matters there are several institutions in charge such as: General Assembly as the main organ; Permanent Council as an organ that acts in case of threat to security and peace, and gathers parties involved in the dispute; Committee of Hemispheric Security which provides civilian control; Secretary General; Department of Sustainable Democracy and Special Missions which handles political and institutional conflicts in the region; Secretariat for Multidimensional Security which is more focused in security matters; and Inter-American Defense Board which is responsible for defense and military cooperation.

The OAS has implemented a large number of peace and political missions. They include ad hoc assignments which are short-term and demobilization (OAS Peace Fund, Peace Missions). Peace missions implemented are: The International Commission for Support and Verification (CIAV) – Nicaragua (1990 – 1997); The International Civilian Mission in Haiti (MICIVIH) (1993 – 2000); The Special Program to Support Guatemala (1996-2003); Nicaragua and Honduras conflict (1999-2007); the Belize and Guatemala conflict (2000-present); the conflict between El Salvador and Honduras (2003-2004); MAPP/OAS (2004-present); Mediation in Guatemala of the Chixoy Hydroelectric Dam case (2006-present); the International Forensic Commission Colombia (2008-2010); the Mission of Good Offices in Colombia and Ecuador (2008-2010); the Good Offices Mission to Costa Rica and Nicaragua (2010); the OAS Special Mission to the border between Venezuela and Colombia (2015); and the Special Mission to the Dominican Republic and Haiti Border (2015) (OAS Peace Fund; Department for the promotion of peace). However, the study will focus on the territorial dispute between Guatemala and

Belize, in order to explore weather elements that characterize this inter-state conflict have been able to affect the organizations effectivity in conflict handling. The other case the study will analyze within the region will be that of the Haiti's internal conflict, as an intra-state conflict that can be seen as present even nowadays.

#### 4.1.1. Guatemala- Belize territorial dispute

The conflict with Guatemala erupted in 1839 (Perez et al., 2009) on the later claimed sovereignty over the territory of Belize. This claim was turned down by the British. In 1859 they made possible for the signage of a treaty between them and Guatemala. The aim was to define the boundaries between Guatemala and Belize. However, the treaty lasted until 1940, when Guatemala decided it was not serving any purpose. After several increases in independence movements, Belize was able to gain its independence in 1981, an event which was not able to stop Guatemala's claims. Several initiations were taken in order to achieve negotiations between Guatemala and Belize, until they decided on an agreement. The agreement was contested massively causing riots in Belize. The agreement would have granted rights over adjacent sea bed and territorial waters; free port facilities to Guatemala in Belize, which in case of damage of ports would increase financial costs for the later; and it would potentially increase deforestation, illegal trade and crime (Perez et al., 2009).

The conflict between Guatemala and Belize includes both land and sea disputes. It has produced a lot of illegal activities on the sides of the borders that include farming, fishing, robberies, settlements, harvesting of forest products, wildlife poaching, murders and ambush attacks (Shamsie, 2007). Guatemalans have invaded Belizean territory to hunt for both subsistence and commercial purposes, which has led to the extinction of some wildlife species (Shamsie, 2007). Their nationals also claim to sell Belizean territory for cash, given that they claim it as their own (Shamsie,2007). Guatemalans have also established illegal settlements in Belizean forest areas, which have been cleared. Slash and burn farming has significantly destroyed Belize's tropical forests and threatened the habitat of numerous wildlife species (Perez et al., 2009). Belize's laws



have not resulted successful enough to impose penalties on Guatemala. This has deteriorated the situation. Due to the continuous conflict they find it hard to punish Guatemalans who are involved in illegal activities in order not to escalate the conflict (Shamsie, 2007). It is worth to mention that the role corruption has played has been a considerable obstacle. Those who are found committing illegal activities are usually set free or not even punished, because the cost of providing the ones jailed with food is considered as higher than their offense would justify (Perez et al., 2009).

#### *4.1.1.1 The involvement of the OAS in the Guatemala-Belize conflict*

The OAS Charter and other regional documents place a strong emphasis on crisis management and preventative diplomacy. In accordance with the OAS Charter, member states are obligated to "prevent potential sources of conflict," "ensure a peaceful resolution of any disputes" Representative democracy is referred to as an indispensable condition for the peace, development and the stability of the region in the OAS Charter's preamble, and it is also stated in the Santiago Declaration of 1991. The Foreign Ministers of the Hemisphere who met at the OAS's General Assembly in Canada June 2000, decided to establish through the Resolution AG/RES. 1756, the Fund for Peace, in order to provide a mechanism for the Organization to make financial resources available to its members upon request, so it could help them pay for processes already agreed upon by the Parties for the peaceful settlement of territorial disputes.

The OAS was asked to participate in the bilateral discussions between the two nations as a Witness of Honor. At the OAS headquarters, a number of technical and ministerial discussions were held, and on July 20, 2000, the nations adopted a framework for negotiations. In August 2000, a panel of facilitators was put in place to aid in directing the negotiating process. In order to foster positive relations between the local populations, Belize and Guatemala also formed a Mixed Commission and what is known as an Adjacency Zone along the border (Muñoz-Pogossian, 2015). The Panel of Facilitators delivered a statement to the Governments in September 2002 that contained a number of ideas for a fair, just, and long-lasting resolution to

their territorial dispute, with the understanding that the proposals would either be accepted or rejected by both nations in a vote. The foreign ministers of Belize and Guatemala, as well as the OAS secretary general and assistant secretary general, came to an agreement on February 7, 2003 to set up a transition process and a number of confidence-building measures between the two nations. This agreement established a framework for managing ties between Belize and Guatemala, after the Facilitation Process is complete, and after the national referendums on whether to accept or reject the Mixed Commission's recommendations have been postponed.

The National Peace Accords, which were signed by the government and the rebel Unidad Revolucionaria Nacional Guatemalteca (URNG) during the 1980s, put a stop to the most recent spate of bloodshed between Guatemala and Belize. These accords covered human rights, historical clarification of human rights abuses, democratization, socioeconomic and armed forces reforms, as refugee settlement. The biggest achievement of the accords was it was able to address the root causes of the conflict (Shamsie, 2007). However, the process of the implementation of the accords was not expected to be easy because the Guatemalan civil society was involved in this process through the establishment of two different types of commissions for formulating policy proposals: parity commissions, which were tasked with addressing issues relating to the historical discrimination of the Maya people, and another type of commission that included a broad cross-section of the societal groups with an interest in a given issue.

In order to facilitate the peace process in Guatemala OAS established a program in 1995 called PROPAZ, with the main purpose to help both civil society and government to pursue dialogue. The program divided its work into three areas: intersectoral work that supported government and civil society actors involved in the commissions; a zonal component intended to strengthen local community actors' capacity to manage and resolve conflicts at the municipal level; and a training component to make sure that PROPAZ staff were themselves properly trained and to develop a national capacity in conflict prevention (Shamsie, 2007). In order to determine the sources of conflict, PROPAZ conducted a survey, which would help it shape a program and its goals. According to the poll, there are a number of structural and social factors that contribute to conflict in Guatemala, such as: unfair land distribution, a lack of a land register, inadequate

legal and tax systems, marginalization of the indigenous community, and a tendency to resort to violence when things don't go well. The OAS staff's poll revealed that the conflict had left Guatemalan society deeply divided, which would make working together in the new commissions challenging. In addition, many of the members of the new commissions had misgivings about their coworkers. It was difficult to develop consensus stances in the face of skepticism, long-standing complaints, and a history of exclusion. Additionally, there had been very little contact among some civil society sectors as well as between the state and its players. It did come as no surprise that state institutions lacked expertise in consultative procedures and collaborative decision-making, due to the lack of discussion throughout the conflict. Finally, many social groups in Guatemala exhibited low respect for their government because a sizable portion of the country had never benefited from state services. They were, at best, unclear and, at worst, doubtful about the condition. The true importance of conversation and participatory procedures needed to be established for many people, as PROPAZ acknowledged.

PROPAZ also drew on the approach of conflict transformation in a number of ways: its approach to culture; theoretical influences; the actors it worked with; its understanding of conflict; as well as, the strategies it employed (Shamsie, 2007). This program did not view conflict from a status quo-oriented approach. Instead it viewed it as a catalyst for social change and it assumed the transformative capability conflict has at structural, group and personal levels. As a result, the program identifies the sources of conflict in Guatemala to be issues of identity, participation in political life and redistributive justice. PROPAZ also resulted to commit in supporting indigenous groups, an example of which was the creating of a project called Mesa de Cobán, which examined the potential for bringing together local players to handle unsolved land disputes in Cobán, which had destabilized the area. Through a fifty-hour training session for the Mesa's volunteers and interested Cobán residents, the OAS initiative offered institutional support and training. In essence, it added tools and techniques for conflict analysis, mediation, and negotiation to the collected and innate knowledge of these local players. Additionally, PROPAZ encouraged a procedure to develop and solidify ties between the Mesa and the government departments in charge of handling land-related matters. Nevertheless, the Mesa lacked coercive enforcement power. Another conflict transformation work was that in three

municipalities, Rabinal, Sayaxché, and Ixcan in which, PROPAZ identified community leaders and provided them with mediation training to develop a local capacity for conflict prevention, mediation, and resolution. However, this initiative did not go on as it lacked a national scope, it did not seem to be keeping up with the peacebuilding style and content of the OAS, and its member states seemed to be uncomfortable with initiatives that focused intensely on civil society.

The program dealt more with actors such as mid-level government bureaucrats, academics or local NGO's, and not with key players such as the landed elite and the military, firstly because the PROPAZ staff did not prefer to include military staff in dialogue sessions, as the latter had not expressed the desire for such action. Secondly, these actors had not seem to accept the basic principle of the program which was, to recognize the parties involved of their interdependence. Excluding these actors, however, raised questions about the ability of the program to help in the achievement of a lasting peace between the two countries, as it lacked to bring the aim actors into the table.

In December 2008, both Guatemala and Belize signed a deal to decide with vote weather their territorial claim had to be decided by ICJ. The International Court of Justice (ICJ) in The Hague was chosen by around 55.4% of voters in a referendum held in Belize, according to preliminary data released by the elections and borders department. The motion to ask the court was rejected by the remaining 44.6% of voters in the once British territory in Central America (Reynolds, 2012). The results were welcomed by the OAS, as it increased the possibility on the settlement of the dispute.

#### 4.1.2. The Haitian conflict

Haiti, an ex- French colony, gained its independence from France in 1804. Since then given that the new nation was born in violence, it has been followed by a legacy of political instability and violent regime. It became a country of black French-speaking people which were surrounded by

slave owners and colonists, followed by a lot of revolts, such as the one in 1804 (Shamsie, 2004). This eventually brought a lot of economic struggles and political instability (Torgman, 2012). Due to the interest of U.S corporations which were already based on the island, and profiting from the unstable state of the country, in 1915 Haiti was occupied by the United States, which lasted about 19 years (Shamsie, 2004). Haiti gained sovereignty again in 1934 however, the country was already left with a high level of poverty, corruption and political unrest. For this reason, a lot of leaders were forced out of their offices until the emergence of Francois Duvalier, known as “Papa Doc”, who became president in 1957. Papa Doc declared himself president of Haiti for life and amended the constitution to consolidate his personal power. After his passing, his son, Jean Claude Duvalier, took over as president for life. Haiti had its first democratic election in 1990 which was won by Jean-Bertrand Aristide. Aristide refused to acknowledge the National Front for Change and Democracy. Six months after taking office, Aristide was removed from power and forced into exile in Venezuela. A de facto military administration that ruled Haiti from 1991 to 1994 thoroughly destroyed any pretense of democracy by torturing thousands of people and killing almost 5,000 more (Shamsie, 2004). After Aristide, Rene Preval was the second president of Haiti to be elected democratically. Preval was effective in privatizing governmental businesses, lowering unemployment rates, and establishing a national police force during his five years in office without interruption (NTI.org). Aristide was re-elected president in 2000. Critics assert that allegations of fraud, intimidation, and violence marred the election and rendered it invalid however, no alleged vote anomalies were found (Torgman, 2012).

Apart from the political unrest Haiti has been affected by a number of natural disasters. The public sector was further weakened as twenty percent of civil service workers were killed and twenty-seven national governmental buildings were destroyed, as a result of the 2010 earthquake. Nearly all of the leading contenders in the 2010 election showed disinterest in Haiti's election and demanded that it be thrown out. "Deadly outbursts" between opposing political forces broke out on the streets in the weeks before the elections. The integrity of election was harmed by accusations of fraud (Shamsie, 2004). Haitian government did not make

an attempt to regain voter faith in upcoming free and fair elections, despite international assistance agencies managing and overseeing the polls (Shamsie, 2004).

#### *4.1.2.1 The OAS is the Haitian Conflict*

The Organization of American States has played a central role in Haiti's democratization process, since the fall of the Duvalier dictatorship. The organization kept tabs on the 1990 presidential elections, that brought President Jean-Bertrand Aristide to office, and it was the first to act vehemently when he was overthrown by the military a few months later, by passing Resolution 1080 in defense of democracy. Additionally, the OAS was involved in the negotiations that led to Aristide's return to Haiti in 1994 and the disbanding of the Haitian army (Shamsie, 2004). A joint civilian mission (MICIVIH) was established by the OAS and the UN to keep an eye on the country's human rights situation, while it was under military administration. After the restoration of constitutional government, the objective was changed into an endeavor to construct institutions that concentrated on judicial and police reform. The OAS kept an eye on the shoddy municipal and parliamentary elections in May 2000 as well. Then, over the period of three years, it worked to mediate a resolution to the political impasse that those elections resulted in between the government and the opposition. The organization also looked into the armed assault on the National Palace on December 17, 2001. In order to assist the nation in moving toward fresh elections, the OAS finally formed a new Special Mission to Strengthen Democracy in March 2002.

The plan for economic recovery developed by multilateral and bilateral donors (IDB, the World Bank, USAID, OAS, and UNDP) was a financial and economic framework, built to create a stable macroeconomic environment and a framework for private sector investment incentives, committed to US\$1.2 billion over five years. The framework focused on the sector of manufacturing and export and it gave little attention to the rural sector, in which financing was aimed mainly at promoting crops for export (mangoes and coffee) as well as, the irrigation and road system repair. Given that in Haiti close to 65% of the population engaged in agricultural

production, the direction of less than 1% in loans and aids to peasant agriculture from international donors, can be considered as insignificant (Shamsie, 2004). During the development of the economic framework the demands of the IMF, the World Bank, and other international organizations, on which they relied for aid and investment, came to be prioritized by the authorities of Haiti. Politicians in Haiti were compelled to ignore public requests for social services and redistributive changes during this period. This was reflected on the shockingly low turnout for the senate and local elections of April 1997, which was estimated by international observers to be around five percent.

In 1991 at the request of the deposed in a coup Haitian President Aristide, the OAS together with the United Nations established the International Civilian Mission in Haiti (MICIVIH). This mission was integrated administratively as well as, operationally and it was mandated to contribute to the strengthening of the police, prison and judicial institutions. It was focused on the integrity and security of the person, freedom of expression and the right to life. In order to carry out its duties, MICIVIH was granted the following rights: the ability to receive communications regarding alleged human rights violations; total freedom of movement within Haitian territory; the ability to privately and freely interview anyone; the ability to make recommendations to Haitian authorities; and the ability to launch public awareness and human rights education campaigns (Archives and Records Management Section, UN).

An aspect that needed to be considered in the settlement of the conflict in Haiti was the reform of the justice system. Coming from a regime in which the law was used as a weapon to terrify and oppress, and the judicial system was subordinate to security and armed forces and at the service of the oligarchy, the reform of state institutions became a priority. For its part, the OAS/MICIVIH provided assistance with the conflict-resolution process, the updating of laws and regulations, and the training of judges (Shamsie, 2004). These initiatives undoubtedly helped to ensure the smooth operation of a system based on the rule of law, making OAS work a vital and substantial contribution to the advancement of democracy. However, the OAS did not see the need to go deeper into the meaning and purpose of judicial reform, unlike other donors, which was condemned by Haitian NGOS. The MICIVIH, in contrast to other

international actors, it provided the National Commission for Truth and Justice (CNVJ) in Haiti with technical assistance and advice, and it also transmitted documented evidence of the violation of human rights committed during the period of military rule (1991-1994). Nevertheless, the citizens proved to be very skeptical and found difficulties in believing in justice, given that the law was not respected from those in power, which eventually damages the process of carrying out meaningful judicial reforms.

The change of the regime provided the OAS with the opportunity to support civil society in Haiti especially the commercial bourgeoisie, along with political and religious elites; and a third group consisting of the vast majority of Haitians hoping for a thorough and complete break with the past. It took the OAS and UN three years to overthrow the nation's military and install Aristide as president. Lavalas members and supporters were eliminated, assassinated, or forced to leave due to constant waves of repression throughout that protracted negotiating process, depriving Aristide of a powerful and organized movement when he came to power in 1994. The EERP and its structural adjustment programs were backed by the OAS, despite the fact that the OAS did not engage in the direct building of civil society. This resulted in a considerable weakening of popular forces and a commensurate favoring of specific dominant class groups.

On January 2010, Haiti was hit by an earthquake that killed about twenty percent of the civil workers and destroyed twenty-seven government buildings. Following the earthquake, the Electoral Observation Mission (EOM) helped by OAS member states, promised to assist in the oversight of Haiti's general elections, during which the country was scheduled to elect a president, 10 senators, and 89 members of Congress. Unfortunately, the EOM's goal of assisting in ensuring election openness was not successfully accomplished (Torgman, 2012). Nearly all of the leading contenders in the 2010 election showed disinterest in Haiti's election and demanded that it be thrown out. "Deadly outbursts" between opposing political forces broke out on the streets in the weeks before the elections. Election integrity was harmed by accusations of fraud and indications that a sizable number of voters were turned away from the polls. In this case the OAS, did not issue a comment after the voting. Voter turnout was relatively low and the candidate selection procedure was dubious and a little opaque. Less than twenty-three



percent of Haiti's registered voters got their ballots counted. The OAS sent a team to examine the first-round results, and they found that fraud and anomalies had a big impact on the election's outcome. Haitian government did not make an attempt to regain voter faith in upcoming free and fair elections, despite international assistance agencies managing and overseeing the polls. Voters refrained from participating in elections, even though that the OAS was involved in the voting process (Torgman, 2012), as they appeared to be apathetic towards possible future leaders in the country as well as afraid of violence that might occur.

#### **4.2. Association of Southeast Asian Nations**

The Association of Southeast Asian Nations was created in 1967. It is comprised of 10 members including Brunei, Myanmar, Cambodia, Indonesia, Lao PDR, Malaysia, the Philippines, Thailand, Singapore and Vietnam. Jakarta, Indonesia is home to its Secretariat. The main reason it was created was to foster the economic development of its South East Asian countries (Sridharan, 2008). It was also meant to counterbalance the overbearing influence of superpowers, initially the USA and subsequently also China (Sridharan, 2008). Although initially not a "security-oriented structure," ASEAN aided and safeguarded the security of the government (Wulf & Debiel, 2009). The later inclusion of Cambodia, Laos, Myanmar, and Vietnam made ASEAN a more inclusive organization from a geographic standpoint (Wulf & Debiel, 2009). At the same time, it widened the organization's spectrum of security concerns and political norm divergences.

The Summit, which meets once a year, is the highest decision-making body. Every year, the foreign ministers of ASEAN gather for the ASEAN Ministerial Meeting (European Parliament). The Secretary-General is mandated to implement ASEAN activities as we all advise and coordinate and has a five-year mandate (ASEAN.org). It has also established committees in different capitals which are composed of heads of diplomatic missions (European Parliament). It is comprised of different bodies who are specialized in promoting regional cooperation in many fields such as: agriculture, tourism, technology etc. (ASEAN. org).

ASEAN has transformed into a regional organization that is rule-based and is recognized as very dynamic regional grouping (Sridharan, 2008). A number of declarations and treaties addressing security issues were ratified by ASEAN members, including the ASEAN Concord, the Treaty of Amity and Cooperation in Southeast Asia (1976), the Declaration on the Zone of Peace, Freedom (1971), and the Treaty on the Southeast Asia Nuclear Weapons Free Zone (1995). ASEAN began to adopt its Charter on 15 December 2008 (ASEAN.org). All 10 ASEAN Member States have ratified the ASEAN Charter in full and have effectively turned the ASEAN Charter into a binding contract. In compliance with Article 102, Paragraph 1 of the United Nations Charter, it will also be registered with the Secretariat of the Organization. ASEAN has also contributed in closer economic cooperation by creating the ASEAN Free Trade Area (AFTA) by increasing regional competitiveness (Royal Thai Embassy). Other functional cooperation measures have been taken in the areas of health, disaster management or rural development. In order to improve external relations ASEAN has built different frameworks whose role is to increase dialogue between actors such as, ASEAN+1, ASEAN+3 and the East Asia Summit (EAS) (Royal Thai Embassy).

#### 4.2.1. Myanmar's Ethnic Conflict and Civil Unrest

Since 1948, Myanmar has spent a significant amount of time under the control of a military junta. Following a military takeover in 1962, General U Ne Win ruled for the following 26 years. In 1974, Ne Win implemented a new constitution based on an economic socialist plan that nationalized Burma's largest companies and an isolationist foreign policy. At least three thousand demonstrators were killed and many more were displaced in 1988 when the army repressed them. Beginning in 2011, President Thein Sein oversaw a number of changes, including as releasing political prisoners from jail, easing media restrictions, and putting in place economic measures to attract international investment. Suu Kyi's opposition NLD party achieved a resounding win in the first countrywide, multiparty elections held in Myanmar since the end of military rule in 2015. The NLD party overwhelmingly won Myanmar's second round

of national elections in 2020, which were held under civilian government. After the country's election commission dismissed the military's charges of voting fraud and the USDP won just 33 of the 476 seats up for grabs in the 2020 elections, the NLD won 396. In 2021, the military staged a coup, charging electoral fraud, and detained several political figures and activists. Suu Kyi was imprisoned and charged, NLD and other party MPs were placed under house arrest, and Senior General Min Aung Hlaing was appointed to lead Myanmar under a one-year period of emergency.

The stratification of Burmese society persists despite President Thein Sein's political reforms. Elites, mostly former military leaders, continue to hold power, and prejudice, brutality, and persecution are still widespread practices (Maizland, 2021). Identity politics are dividing society and making it difficult to develop peace and resolve conflicts. In the case of Myanmar, all sides are engaged in war with one another at this point. The violence in Myanmar is structured as a cycle of retaliatory conflict. According to this concept, the conflict escalates according to a spiral model in which one side reacts to the current or previous behavior of the other. Due to the internal character of the war, ethnic armed groups are primarily the key participants. Despite the fact that there are several of these armed, the most recent conflicts include the Tatmadaw, a government force, and the Kachin Independence Army (KIA), a rebel organization that represents the KIO and is mostly present in the Kachin state. Additionally, since 2011, the persecution of the Rohingya minority living in the northern state of Rakhine has been worse. The Rohingyas are at odds with both the Tatmadaw and the Buddhist populace of Rakhine state, creating a two-front conflict (Maizland, 2021).

#### *4.2.1.1 ASEAN in the Myanmar conflict*

The ASEAN Way is a way whereby the ASEAN member countries communicate with one another, to reduce tensions and strengthen internal security. It involves the use of techniques like consensus building, informal dialogue and extensive consultation. The ASEAN Way promotes its member states' adherence to three principles: moderation, respect, and

accountability. The concept of flexible consensus, is another approach to the organization, that as long as it does not damage the member state's interests, it does not require unanimity between the ASEAN states.

Myanmar was admitted into ASEAN in 1997. With respect to Myanmar, the organization has followed a constructive engagement policy characterized by economical investment in the country and the socialization of its elite towards gradual liberal reform and good governance. There have been several actions from the Association to ease down the internal crisis that Myanmar has and continues to experience.

In order to promote policies of a liberal-interventionist character, in 2004-2005 ASEAN created the InterParliamentary Myanmar Caucus (AIPMC), which would be a driver behind Myanmar's chairmanship into the organization in 2005. Furthermore, by demanding that the country be subject to UNSC involvement, AIMPC has significantly contributed to the nation's democracy (Mahaseth & Tulsyan). ASEAN played an important role even in the release of Suu Kyi. Aung San Suu Kyi was released by ASEAN in 1995. When she was placed under house arrest, Malaysian leader Mahathir Mohammed issued a warning that Myanmar might be expelled from the organization if Suu Kyi wasn't released, but this was impractical because the ASEAN Way forbids the use of sanctions to achieve results. A low-income country like Myanmar has benefited from favorable tariff treatment because to the ASEAN Economic Community (AEC), whose member states have opened up their markets to it and connected it to a global supply chain. By voting against the resolution voted at the International Labour Organization that condemned Myanmar's history of forced labor, the ASEAN countries have also shown their support for Myanmar.

The practice of ASEAN in Myanmar has not faced a lot of challenges as well. When considering the ASEAN's flexible engagement technique, the country of Myanmar has been a major critic. Since 1991, ASEAN has pursued a policy of "constructive engagement" with Myanmar in an effort to 'ASEANize' the country without resorting to force. The practice of closed-door

negotiations among ASEAN States has become challenging in the case of Myanmar, which has drawn international attention and necessitates action by the ASEAN. According to Aung San Suu Kyi, the "constructive engagement" was flawed because it focused on economic prospects at the expense of political change. Additionally, it might be claimed that the ASEAN broke this rule of non-intervention in Myanmar in 1997, when it demanded that the junta initiate talks with Aung San Suu Kyi in order to gain entry into the organization. The demonstrations in Malaysia and Indonesia over Myanmar's deportation of Rohingya Muslims to Bangladesh, are another illustration of how its member nations violated the ASEAN Way in Myanmar. When the Rohingya problem came up during the 2014 ASEAN Foreign Ministers conference, the Myanmar administration requested that ASEAN refrain from discussing "Myanmar's ethnic issues."

ASEAN's response to managing the conflict including the Rohingyas, has had room for criticism. In order to monitor their repatriation, ASEAN drafted a report named 'Preliminary Needs Assessment for Repatriation in Rakhine State, Myanmar' as well as, created an ad hoc task force. The report was followed by several concerns, the main one being its failure to consult the Rohingya refugees. The 'destructive non-interference credo' of the ASEAN is to blame for the task force and report's emphasis on repatriation, rather than the protection of the refugees. Because conflict avoidance typically requires evolutionary peaceful change, the ASEAN Way has not been successful in Myanmar (Mahaseth & Tulsyan). As a result of the absence of enforcement measures, informal consultations in the instance of Myanmar act against cumulative gains.

Only two significant meetings amongst ASEAN member nations took place from 2012 to 2015, at the height of the Rohingya issue. The first was the Putra Jaya-based three-party summit involving Indonesia, Malaysia, and Thailand. This summit was held in response to demands from other nations, that these nations accept the Rohingya onto their soil rather than leave them stranded at sea. Thailand, Indonesia, and Malaysia all agreed to allow the Rohingya into their countries for a year at the summit. During this time, these nations appealed to the international

community to help put a stop to the Rohingya crisis. Sadly, the gathering didn't manage to censure the main perpetrator of the crisis which was the Myanmar government (Jati, 2017).

The second meeting held by members of ASEAN to address the Rohingya crisis, was considered to be the Special Meeting on Irregular Migration in the Indian Ocean. It was attended by twenty-five representatives from seventeen countries as well as, by the UNHCR, IOM and UNODC. It was also attended by observers representing Switzerland, US and Japan. By demonstrating a more concerted effort by interested parties in Southeast Asia, international organizations and its neighbors, this gathering demonstrated improvement. Nevertheless, even though the crisis started in 2012, no ASEAN meetings have specifically addressed it, and none of the ASEAN countries are willing to push Myanmar. Any effort to talk about the Rohingya problem with Myanmar must not include any reference of the group on the meeting's agenda.

Regarding the protection of human rights in 2009, ASEAN established the ASEAN Intergovernmental Commission on Human Rights (AICHR). Its goal was to coordinate, actively take part in, and contribute to the promotion and protection of human rights (Jati, 2017). However, AICHR was considered to be problematic in different aspects from the International Commission of Jurists. This includes the limited application of the non-interference principle, criticism of the ASEAN Human Rights Declaration, the lack of focus on human rights in dialogue and consultation forums among civil society and non-governmental organizations, the ineffectiveness of the AICHR's mandate and functions, ambiguous representative qualifications and selection procedures, and a lack of transparency in the processes. AICHR has been unable to take effective action, as it hasn't taken the steps necessary to compel ASEAN to take the initiative in addressing the Rohingya situation.

#### 4.2.2. The South China Sea Dispute

There are six countries with competing claims to the South China Sea islands like Brunei, China, Malaysia, the Philippines, Taiwan, and Vietnam. The sea lanes that cross the South China Sea serve as a vital conduit between the Indian and Pacific Oceans, making them essential for regional, international, and energy security trade. This is especially true for the main East Asian economies, which are heavily and steadily becoming dependent on energy supplies transported by sea and passing via the South China Sea (Schofield & Storey, 2009).

In the early 1970s, there was a struggle for dominance when China and Taiwan established permanent presences on several significant islands in 1955 and 1956. The occupation of the Paracel Islands by China and the Spratly Islands by Vietnam caused tension between claimants in the region to first rise in the 1970s (Guan, 2019). This resulted in a series of violent incidents, including a battle between China and Vietnam in 1974 and another between China and Vietnam in 1988. A confrontation erupted in 2012 when China took control of the Philippines' Scarborough Shoal. In 2013 the Philippines brought a UNCLOS arbitration claim against China. Chinese state-owned oil firm moved one of its rigs into Vietnamese-claimed seas in May 2014, resulting in clashes between Vietnamese and Chinese warships around the rig (Schofield & Storey, 2009).

Presently, there seems to be a general perception that China poses a danger to the status quo, peace, and stability of the South China Sea region. Firstly, China asserts sovereignty over all the islands in the South China Sea, claiming ownership of all of them and the freedom to do as they like there. Secondly, China's decision-making procedures continue to be obscure (Mirski, 2015). On the other hand, state submissions to the UN Commission on the Limits of the Continental Shelf (CLCS) in recent months have heightened tensions between the different claimants. Importantly, the CLCS lacks the authority to deal with the delineation of maritime boundaries or to assess the respective merits of competing claims to sovereignty and jurisdiction (Schofield & Storey, 2009).

#### *4.2.2.1 ASEAN in the South China Sea dispute*

ASEAN's rapprochement on soft power and constructive engagement taking place since 1990s has been very important in the process of the peaceful relations of the parties of the South China Sea, which led to the signing of a declaration in 2002 by the later. This ASEAN Way approach that includes constructive engagement policy has resulted to be successful in deepening collaborations and expanding relations between ASEAN and China (Weissmann, 2010).

The ASEAN Way has pushed China to build more trust towards the organizations members, and has brought a transformation of perceptions and interpretations of their interests. Particularly significant is the fact that China-ASEAN ties have been formalized as a result of the Chinese people's growing confidence in their capacity to engage in multilateralism over time. This push for socialization in multilateral engagements that ASEAN has offered China, has served as a helpful conflict prevention method, as it has helped the members to increase their understanding of each other, and build further personal relations. China's accession to ASEAN's Treaty of Amity and Cooperation in 2003, furthered multilateralism to become institutionalized. Another example of institutionalization of multilateralism, can be found in the ATP process, which is a set of ASEAN consultations, and complex dialogue or meeting mechanisms of cooperation. The importance of this process remains on the creation of a regional dialogue mechanism in which ASEAN maintains its political leverage (Weissmann, 2010).

Another strategy that has helped with short-term conflict prevention and long-term peacebuilding capabilities in South Asian Sea is the economic integration and interdependence. To serve this goal, in 1992 the ASEAN Free Trade Area (AFTA) was founded. Furthermore, the bilateral agreements between China and ASEAN increased when the arrangement of the China-ASEAN Free Trade Area (CAFTA) occurred. Besides it being a further step into the process of the regionalization of the East Asia, and beyond its economic benefits, this initiative also forms part of the China's "duo yu shao qu" diplomatic policy, or else known as the notion of taking less and giving more.



As a result of the growing depth of integration and the active efforts to create an East Asian community, there have also been emerging trends toward a common regional identity. This process has been implemented through the China's signing on the declaration on the South China Sea (2002) as well as, of the TAC. Interdependence and regional integration in the economic and other domains have made avoiding conflict more desirable. As a result of substantial financial costs, liberal peace theory does actually anticipate conflict avoidance.

On the other hand, when discussing the South China Sea dispute it is worth to note that ASEAN's efforts have proven to be limited. In order to initially help with tensions ASEAN and China signed in 2002 a DoC, which was a political statement that refrained from binding commitments. The DoC was created as a temporary solution while ASEAN and China sought to create a more extensive and legally enforceable regional Code of Conduct in the SCS. However, years after the issuing of the Declaration, China and ASEAN have failed to draw guidelines on its implementation (Schofield & Storey, 2009). ASEAN has clearly neglected to bring up the matter at any of the several meetings the organization hosts while tensions in the South China Sea have increased. Foreign ministers from ASEAN, ASEAN Plus Three, and the ARF met in July 2009 to discuss a wide range of urgent concerns, including the global financial crisis and the political climate in Myanmar. However, ASEAN failed to further discuss its implementation, but only reaffirmed its support for the DoC. The dispute failed to be discussed even in 2009 on the twelfth ASEAN-China Summit. Furthermore, the voice of increasing instability in the region has been left to the hands of individual members, such as Singapore.

Finally, there are three factors which have led ASEAN to a slow process of the conflict maintenance in the South Asian Sea dispute (Schofield & Storey, 2009) such as: inability to provide consensus among member states over how to deal with China regarding the issue; a growing tendency of ASEAN member states to grow economic interaction with China by focusing more on the positive aspects of the relationship, downplaying as a result, the negative ones. As a result, the third factor has been China's prevention of meaningful discussion, taking advantage of the first two factors.

### **4.3. South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation**

The SAARC Charter was ratified in Dhaka on December 8, 1985. Afghanistan, Bangladesh, Bhutan, India, Maldives, Nepal, Pakistan, and Sri Lanka are the eight members of SAARC (SAARC.org). According to the SAARC Charter, the Association's goals are to advance the welfare of South Asians and improve their quality of life, to speed up regional economic growth, social advancement, and cultural development, and to give everyone the chance to live in dignity and reach their full potential. It also seeks to strengthen the region's collective self-reliance among its member nations (Idrees & Naazer, 2017).

The Charter as the main document the organization adheres to is comprised of several articles which include the regional organization's objectives, principles, institutions and economic arrangements (Idrees & Naazer, 2017). Respectively, Article III of the Charter states that the heads of government and state should meet at least once a year, and consequently as many times as the member states themselves render it important. Article IV states that the Foreign Ministers of the Member States shall form a Council of Ministers, which shall have the following responsibilities: formulation of the Association's policies; evaluation of the Association's progress in fostering cooperation; decision-making on new areas of cooperation; establishment of additional Association mechanisms as deemed necessary; and other matters of general interest to the Association. Another important institution as stated in Article V is the Standing Committee which is comprised of the Foreign Secretaries, whose duty is to send reports to the Council of Ministers and meet as many times as they see fit. Overall the Committee should approve projects and programmes as well as, monitor them; mobilize external and regional resources; determine inter-sectoral priorities, and identify new areas of cooperation (SAARC.org). Article VII and VIII include two other institutions such as Action Committees, which is set by Standing Committees to help with the implementation of projects; and the Secretariat of the Association.

SAARC has taken a number of measures in order to ensure security and cooperation among its members. In order to promote security in 1995 it launched the SAARC Terrorist Offences Monitoring Desk (STOMD); it established the SAARC Police (SAARCPOL); established the SAARC Arbitration Council whose goal is to expand conflict resolution operations. Other initiatives taken by the organization are the enabling opportunities for the members in the region to develop (through SAFTA, SAARC Development Fund, South Asian Identity, The SAARC Food Bank etc.) (Ariyawardana, 2022).

#### 4.3.1. India-Pakistani Conflict

The origins of the India and Pakistan's dispute can be traced back in 1947. Jammu and Kashmir posed a problem because it shared borders with both India and Pakistan, had a Muslim-majority population, and had a Hindu monarch. Pakistani elites wanted to maintain their control over Kashmir (Ganguly, 2019). Pakistan launched a military operation to forcefully seize the state of Jammu and Kashmir in October 1947. The United Nations Security Council imposed a cease-fire that went into effect on 1 January 1949 (Ganguly, 2019). The violent episode involved sustained combat, organized armed forces, and an estimated number of 1,500 casualties on the Indian and 6,000 on the Pakistani sides. In 1965, India and Pakistan engaged in an unsuccessful conflict for Kashmir. India helped East Pakistani insurgents secede from Pakistan in 1971, dividing it to become the independent nation of Bangladesh (Cohen, 2003). As a result of the Siachen crisis (1984), Brasstacks (1987), and Zarb-e-Momin (1989), bilateral ties continued to deteriorate (Hussain, 2019). Normalization efforts resulted to be unsuccessful, as seen by the hyped-up but unsuccessful Agra Summit in July 2001.

The struggle for control of Kashmir; India/Pakistan importance to the national identities of both states; the failure of the British to manage a peaceful and politically acceptable Partition; the deeply ingrained political rivalries between the Subcontinent's major religious communities, Hindus, Sikhs, and Muslims; and the greed or personal shortsightedness of leaders on both sides are just a few of the causes of the conflict between India and Pakistan (Cohen, 2003). Despite

their competition and hostility, both nations nevertheless confront a number of problems in common (Hussain, 2019), including territory disputes (Kashmir and Sir Creek), security issues (terrorism), resource constraints (water), energy shortfalls, and geopolitical disputes (such as the proxy war in Afghanistan).

#### *4.3.1.1 SAARC in the India-Pakistani conflict*

During the 1980s after the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan, the backdrop of the nuclear test of India (1974) and the ensuing of Siachin dispute, the relation between India and Pakistan hit a new low. In such conditions, SAARC held a summit in 1985 in Dhaka in order to give both parties the opportunity to have a behind the scenes informal talk. This summit resulted to be successful as both heads of state Prime Minister Rajiv Gandhi and President Zia ul Haq, agreed to not undergo with the strike of each other's arsenals and facilities, despite their considerable issues. Another summit that followed and resulted successful was the one held in Bangalore in 1986, which permitted both Gandhi and Junejo to share their views on the aftermath of exercise Brasstacks which was conveyed in the border between India and Pakistan.

As Ghani states the bilateral agreements between the two countries continued to increase and improve, followed by the signage of a pact that would serve as a building measure (Harvard Asia Quarterly, 2003) called "Agreement on the Prohibition of the Attack against Nuclear Installations and Facilities". Furthermore, India and Pakistan decided to agree on providing each other with notifications before conducting any troop movements or exercises.

The Pakistani Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif and his Indian counterpart Chandra Shekhar, joined forces at the 5th SAARC summit held in 1990 in Male, and pledged to resolve all disputes through bilateral means, despite the blame game of proxy wars and accusations of Pakistan's support towards the Kashmiri insurgents. They also decided to conduct frequent gatherings of

foreign secretaries and high-ranking officials to talk about controversial topics affecting both countries (Ghani). The Summit held in 1997 helped in the start of the dialogue between the two states, that is why it could be considered as meeting of crucial importance. While this was going on, the nuclear tests carried out by Pakistan and India on May 11 and May 28 of that year, respectively, proved to be a turning point in the hopes for regional collaboration and cooperation. The subsequent 10th SAARC summit, held in Colombo in July 1998, was clouded by questions about the organization's functioning since the newly nuclear-armed powers of Pakistan and India had significantly upset the balance of power in the region. Nevertheless, the Lahore Declaration signed by Atal Bihari Vajpayi and Premier Nawaz Sharif in February 1999, aimed at avoiding accidental or intentional nuclear wars. This governance treaty between India and Pakistan allowed functioned as a breath of fresh air after the tensions of 1997. This euphoria however, was destroyed by the disastrous conflict in 1998 with the Kargil Debacle.

The beginning of the new millennium found the SAARC member countries suffering intractable disputes and terrorism, which brought the member state's need and desire to collaborate to improve the organization's cohesion, productivity, and forward thinking via the successful execution and implementation of objectives and goals. Even though the 10 summit was delayed due to India's intervention, the 12 SAARC summit would be crucial to the improvement of Indo-Pakistani relations. The member countries signed the South Asian Free Trade Agreement (SAFTA) aimed the facilitation of cross border movement of goods (Delinić, 2011; Ghani). Four-fold strategies were presented by President Musharraf, as a diplomatic tool in negotiation with India that included: economic cooperation, peace and security, denuclearization of South Asia and the Kashmir denuclearization of South Asia. Later summits took place in Kathmandu (2014), Addu City of the Maldives (2011), Thimpu (2010), Colombo (2008), Dhaka (2005), New Delhi (2007), and Colombo. To reduce tensions, they encouraged back channel diplomacy between Pakistan and India. Even though these SAARC 18 summits were able to gather the contesting parties and reach for agreements, only a small number of successes can be credited to SAARC; otherwise, its record is emphasized by failures and disappointments in efforts to build friendly ties among the member nations.

SAARC has also taken measures to build trust among people of India and Pakistan. Such measure can be considered the establishment of SDC in 1993 in New Delhi, participated by the Council of Ministers, which emphasized the importance of information exchange. Since 1994, the SDC has been operating formally. India and Pakistan actively participated in the creation of the Center. SDC was established with the goals of meeting the information access needs of scholars, establishing libraries and e-journals based on digital databases to inform SAARC nations about the organization's developments and activities, and improving relevant access to information on the socioeconomic development of SAARC Member States (Qamar, 2022). Additionally, SDC offered information technology courses, training sessions, and services for document management. All of this was done to make it easier for researchers in the SAARC area to acquire information. The SDC website offers information about the SAARC Summits.

India's increasing power has been one of the main obstacles for the efficacy of SAARC in managing the conflict between India and Pakistan. Due to its political, economic weight, size and military India tends to overshadow all other members of the organization. This has created the feelings of insecurity among its neighbors (Idrees & Naazer, 2017). SAARC is somehow depended on India not only considering the abovementioned factors, but also because the possibility of its members for trade is made possible through the Indian corridor, as the later borders all is neighbors, with the exception of Afghanistan.

SAARC continues to be challenged in conflict prevention, management, settlement and peace building because the region is one where its member states took a while to accommodate each other's suspensions, and their actions reveal animosity rather than comradery and friendliness. The whole South Asian region is enveloped in a cloud of animosity, and this cloud has no beneficial characteristics (Idrees & Naazer, 2017). The organization has a number of difficulties, but the most important are the serious interstate tensions that keep its member nations apart and reticent to collaborate.

#### 4.3.2 Conflict in Sri Lanka

Sri Lanka gained independence in 1948. The Janatha Vimukthi Peramuna (JVP), a leftist group made up primarily of Sinhalese youth, led two insurgencies in the country's southern region, first in 1971 and then between 1987 and 1990, resulting in approximately 60,000 casualties. From 1983 to 2009, the Sri Lankan government fought a protracted conflict with the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam (LTTE), a militant group which was seeking to create an independent Tamil state (Ropers, 2008). This conflict is estimated to have cost 100,000 lives and left hundreds of thousands of people injured (Siriwardhana & Wickramage, 2014). Many Sri Lankans were internally and externally displaced as a result of the conflict between the government and the LTTE. At the height of the conflict in 2001, an estimated 800,000 people were internally displaced. At present, estimates show that about 90,000 people are still internally displaced in Sri Lanka (Siriwardhana & Wickramage, 2014). An estimated 73,000 Sri Lankan refugees were residing in 112 camps in the southern Indian state of Tamil Nadu.

Some of the processes that brought the escalation of the conflict are developmental failures, poverty of marginalized communities in the Northeast and South, majoritarian politics and structures of governance, exclusion of non-Sinhalese communities from participation in and receiving services from state institutions, appeals to ethnicity and religion for the purpose of electoral mobilization, mob violence, state-sanctioned violence, and the rise of anti-state movements (Ropers, 2008). The main points of contention, include the acceptance of the Tamils as ethnonational community with distinct rights and their access to state authority and territory (Ropers, 2008). Due to the protracted conflict, there are now a number of additional concerns, including security, humanitarian standards, human rights, social and retributive justice, development, and the recognition of actors as "legitimate representatives" of their constituencies (such as the LTTE). On each of these issues, the parties take different stands and have distinct interests. It is possible to separate two dominating, conflicting discourses (Siriwardhana & Wickramage, 2014).

#### *4.3.2.1 SAARC in the conflict in Sri Lanka*

When considering SAARC's measures to prevent, manage, settle or reconcile and transform conflict, the ones taken in reality are mostly general ones taken in the regional rather than individual level. One of the successful strategies has been the approach of developing regional integration in SAR, which was then put to practice with the signing in 2008 of the SAARC Convention on Mutual Assistance in Criminal Matters (Nisayuru, 2022). This treaty, whose approach was to root out terrorism, was sustained by SAARC Terrorist Offences Monitoring Desk (STOMD) in Colombo, Sri Lanka. The aim of STOMD, which launched its operations in 1995, has been to disseminate on terrorist tactics, offenses, strategies and methods as well as, to collate analysis to the member states of the organization.

Another positive approach to build a stronger cooperation and to help with the process of curbing transborder crimes among SAARC member states, has been the decision to establish an initiative similar to INTERPOL, that of SAARC Police (SAARCPOL). This initiative could manage, control and resolve socio-cultural and economic conflicts in the future, aimed the prevention of organized crime, drug abuse, money laundering, drug trafficking and combating corruption, and it offers networking among police authorities and training for police officers (Nisayuru, 2022).

One helpful initiative embraced by the country of Sri Lanka has been the Open Government Partnership, a multilateral initiative whose aim is empower citizens, bridge new innovations to fortify administration, battle defilement, secure positive fidelities from governments and foster transparency (Biswaws, 2022). In order to join and become a participant of OGP countries must: deliver a developed with public consultation concrete action plan; accomplish the independent communication on their progress; and adopt a respected Open Government declaration. Every member country is required to submit an action plan every two years that was created in collaboration with civil society and lays out significant responsibilities for enhancing accountability, transparency, and public involvement in government. Sri Lanka as a participant on the initiative, has been successful in openness and coverage of data (Biswaws, 2022),



following India who holds the leading position. Nevertheless, the role of SAARC in such results is not clearly provided with sources.

#### **4.4. The African Union**

The African Union (AU) was established in 1999 and pledged itself to advancing democracy and good governance, the rule of law, and human rights (Wulf & Debiel, 2009). The African Union is comprised of fifty-five member states, which are divided into five geographic regions: Central Africa (Burundi, Cameroon, Central African Republic, Chad, Congo Republic, DR Congo, Equatorial Guinea, Gabon and São Tomé and Príncipe); Eastern Africa (Comoros, Djibouti, Eritrea, Ethiopia, Kenya, Madagascar, Mauritius, Rwanda, Seychelles, Somalia, South Sudan, Sudan, Tanzania and Uganda); Northern Africa (Algeria, Egypt, Libya, Mauritania, Morocco, Sahrawi Republic and Tunisia); Southern Africa (Angola, Botswana, Eswatini, Lesotho, Malawi, Mozambique, Namibia, South Africa, Zambia and Zimbabwe); Western Africa (Benin, Burkina Faso, Cabo Verde, Côte d'Ivoire, Gambia, Ghana, Guinea, Guinea-Bissau, Liberia, Mali, Niger, Nigeria, Senegal, Sierra Leone and Togo). The African Union also pledged to engaging in effective intervention in dire situations. At the same time, the AU's vision supports protecting national sovereignty and the members' territorial integrity (Wulf & Debiel, 2009).

The political decision-making organ at AU is the Peace and Security Council (PSC), comprised of fifteen members. Its main intention is to serve as an arrangement of early-warning and collective security as well as, be efficient in response to crisis in Africa (Wulf & Debiel, 2009). Under this organ there are formed four other pillars such as: The Continental Early Warning System (CEWS), which is an analysis and intelligence gathering center; The Military Staff Committee which is comprised of five brigades that it guides of the African Standby Force (ASF), (Central African Brigade, North African Brigade, SADCBRIG, ECOBRIG and EASBRIG). Other initiatives are the African Peace Facility fund which is financed both by AU and the EU; The Panel of the Wise, which has five members for each region, and serves as an

advisory and external mediation body (AU.int). The Assembly of the African Union determines whether to intervene under Article 4(h) of the Constitutive Act (Kabau, 2012). Regional bodies have the authority to conduct enforcement action under Chapter VIII of the UN Charter.

The African Union bases its use of peaceful intervention and peacekeeping on Article 4(j) of the Constitutive Act. The territorial State controls the parameters and means of intervention if it is done with permission (Kabau, 2012). The African Union has established the Peace Support Operations Division and so far has been mandated several missions such as: AMIB (2003-2004); AMIS I (2004); AMIS II (2004-2007); AMISEC (2006); AMISOM (2007); AFISMA (2013); MISCA (2013-2014); and UN-AMID. Four of these missions have been authorize including UNAMID (2007-present); Democracy in Comoros (2008); RCI-LRA (2011-present); and MNJTF (2015- present) (Peaceau).

#### 4.4.1. Conflict in Libya

The conflicts that have taken place in Africa throughout the 20th century, according to Drs. Richard Bowd and Annie Barbara Chikwanha, have three distinct causes: the new barbarism, underdevelopment as a cause of war, and the political economy of war (Jacobs, 2015). In its history Libya has experienced a number of leadership changes. After Mohammed Idris was deposed in 1969, Muammar al-Gaddafi assumed control of the military and served as the head of the Revolutionary Command Council. Relationships with surrounding governments were strained by Gaddafi's political ideologies, as he supported terrorist organizations and death squads (Jacobs, 2015). In reaction to Gaddafi's actions in 1986, President Ronald Reagan launched an airstrike over Benghazi and Tripoli. Following the downing of two aircraft and the bombing of a disco, the UN imposed sanctions on Libya in 1992.

When the Libyan people began to demand fundamental human rights and democratic changes in December 2010, they were motivated by uprisings in their neighbors' nations. As part of a

bigger wave of protests in the Middle East and North Africa, unrest in Libya started in 2011. Due to Gaddafi's harsh suppression of demonstrators, there was a civil war and international involvement. Concerns over the flagrant and persistent breach of human rights and the persecution of nonviolent protesters prompted the international community, particularly the AU, the Arab League, and the UN, to take action (Twinomugisha, 2013). The UN Security Council implemented Resolution 1970, which urged an early cessation of the hostilities and asked for action to meet the population's justifiable requests. The Security Council encouraged the Libyan government to exercise moderation, uphold humanitarian law, and ensure the security of all visitors. Midway through 2011, the Gaddafi dictatorship was overthrown after months of conflict, and a transitional administration took its place (Jacobs, 2015).

#### *4.4.1.1 The AU in the conflict in Libya*

The AU replied with a roadmap in line with its long-standing policy of how to handle intra-state conflicts, when the Libyan popular movement devolved into a de facto civil war. For its two hundred sixty fifth session, the AU PSC, set up a High- Level Ad Hoc Committee, in March 2011. The participants were the AU Commission's Chairperson, Jean Ping as well as, the countries of Congo-Brazzaville, South Africa, Mali, Mauritania and Uganda (ACORD, 2021). The Committee set up different aims such as: dialogue between the Libyan parties; the protection of foreign nationals while including African migrants working and living in Libya; the establishment of a transition period that can be inclusive considering the legitimate demands of the Libyan people for peace and security, democracy, political reform, and justice, as well as socioeconomic development, with a view to adopting and enacting the political reforms required for the eradication of the causes of the current crises; the cessation of all hostilities; and the concerned Libyan authorities' support in facilitating the prompt distribution of humanitarian aid to communities in need.

There can be no doubt that, as far as the AU is concerned, the toppling of Gaddafi by the NTC was a case of an unconstitutional change of government, given how the militarization of the

crisis and the military involvement of NATO powers contributed to turning the Libyan conflict into a civil war (ACCORD, 2021). The OAU's 'Declaration on the Framework for a response to unconstitutional changes' was adopted by the organization in 2000 in Togo, and defined these government's unconstitutional changes to be: a military coup d'état against a democratically elected government; a mercenary intervention to overthrow a democratically elected government; an armed dissident groups and rebel movements replacing democratically elected governments; and an incumbent government refusing to cede power to the winning party following free, fair, and regular elections. The AU has operationalized the OAU's Declaration by suspending its members who have violated it, at different periods (Togo, 2005; Mauritania, 2005 and 2008; Guinea, 2008; Madagascar,2009; Niger, 2010; and Côte d'Ivoire ,2011). Even while none of these incidents entailed a civil war, not all of the regimes that were overthrown by the implicated coups could be considered democratic. However, in terms of the AU's responses to instances of unlawful transfers of government on the African continent, all of these cases collectively comprise what might be referred to as the jurisprudence of the AU.

Regarding Libya, despite its propensity for adopting popular democratic models, Gaddafi's political system was authoritarian and repressive against the people of the nation. However, this did not result in the AU endorsing the NTC's early choice to turn what had first been a nonviolent popular revolt of the Libyan people against the Gaddafi government into a full-fledged civil war. (ACCORD, 2021). Instead, the AU put up a plan for resolving the Libyan conflict, emphasizing that all parties involved must give up violence and develop into an inclusive transitional system in order to open the door for the formation of a new, "democratic" Libya. The AU's opposition to the NTC using violence as a method of overthrowing the Gaddafi dictatorship got even greater when the NATO countries used the UN Security Council Resolution 1973 of March 17 to further what was obviously meant to be a Libyan regime change agenda. Furthermore, The African Court on Human and Peoples' Rights (ACHPR) commendably issued orders against the Libyan Government on March 25, demanding that it cease any actions that could result in the loss of life or constitute violations of the protections afforded to Libyans (Twinomugisha, 2013). The verdict of the Court had to be delivered to by the African Union, in accordance with Article 29 of the Protocol establishing the ACHPR. In

accordance with Rule 64 (2) of the ACHPR Rules, the African Union Executive Council is responsible for overseeing the execution of the court's ruling on behalf of the Union's Assembly.

It is worth to mention that the AU's roadmap to peacemaking has not been able to materialize for three main reasons. Firstly, the intentional choice made by Western nations participating in the NATO effort, specifically France, the US, and the UK, to disregard, undercut, and marginalize the AU. The complexity of African politics itself is the second factor in the roadmap's failure. Despite his well-publicized generosity towards African states, as well as continental initiatives and institutions, such as Libya's regular fifteen percent contributions to the AU's operational budget, Gaddafi made very few genuine friends among African leaders as a result of his repeated meddling in their internal affairs. Lastly, the third reason the AU's plan failed was due to the impression it gave the two main actors in Libya, the Gaddafi dictatorship and the NTC, who did not trust the organization.

#### 4.4.2. The Somali Conflict

The people of Somalia were separated into five distinct colonial units: French Somaliland, British Somaliland, Italian Somaliland, Northern Frontier District, and the Ogaden area (Dersso, 2009). In 1960, it became the Republic of Somalia after British Somaliland and Italian Somaliland merged. These effects brought in a crisis in Somalia and helped other nations become involved in the fight (Dersso, 2009). The 'Somali Salvation Democratic Front', a guerrilla group centered in Majerteen, was founded as a result of the failed coup. The 'Somali National Movement' (SNM), founded in 1981 by Issaq refugees in England, is another dissident group. There were several additional clan-based armed organizations that supported SNM, The United Somali Congress (USC) being one of them (Elmi & Barise, 2006). As a result, SNM soldiers operating out of Ethiopia launched an attack against Barre's government. By the end of 1990, multiple clan-based insurgent factions controlled different regions of Somalia Somaliland proclaimed itself to be an independent nation ruled by the SNM. Warlords, militias, and Islamist fighters engaged in combat, causing Somalia to devolve into chaos (Dersso, 2009).

Competition for resources and power, a repressive government, and the colonial legacy were the main reasons of the Somali conflict (Elmi & Barise, 2006). Traditional social structures, became political tools in this struggle as different groups fought for control. Divergent colonial traditions of the British and Italian peoples, as well as clan differences, created tension and reinforced inequality (Dersso, 2009). Unequal distribution of contemporary goods and access to political power among different groups, politicized clan identities, the accessibility of firearms, the high rates of youth unemployment, and certain elements of Somali culture that condone the use of violence, can be considered as contributory factors (Elmi & Barise, 2006).

#### *4.4.2.1 The AU in the Somali conflict*

The African Union's efforts to play its role on the Somali peace process began with the Alliance for the Re-Liberation of Somalia and the old TFG signing of the Djibouti peace accord in 2008 (Demeke, 2014). The parties to the peace agreement insisted that an African Union peacekeeping force be sent in its place and that Ethiopian troops leave right now. Following the Djibouti peace deal, there was a significant security gap that allowed Al-Shabab to resurge and regain control of its lost territory in South Central Somalia, including Mogadishu.

African Union opted to send AMISOM, a peacekeeping force, in response to Ethiopia's evacuation in order to provide security protection for TFGII and to delegitimize Al-Shabab (Williams, 2018). AMISOM was created to support reconciliation and dialogue in Somalia, protect the infrastructure of Transitional Federal Institutions, enable the latter to go on with carrying out their functions, as well as, to provide support for the stabilization and disarmament efforts. The peacekeeping force was mandated in the sixty-ninth meeting on the African Union Peace and Security Council in 2007.

To forwardly construct peace in Somalia, the organization's member states agreed to mandate the establishment of the East Africa Standby Brigade (EASBRIG). EASBRIG had the right to intervene in cases of serious human rights violations (Demeke, 2014). After the TFGII was moved to Mogadishu, the AU offered technical assistance in the creation of the National Security Stabilization Plan and played a crucial role in getting the UN arms embargo lifted so that the TFGII could continue to provide peace. Additionally, the African Union took steps through IGAD to impose sanctions against Somali warlords, including travel restrictions and account freezing (IGAD, 2006; Demeke, 2014). Additionally, it sought that the UNSC ease the arms embargo on TFGII so that it could set up institutions for law enforcement, which were supposed to prevent the civil conflict from escalating. As a result of the AU and IGAD's request, the UNSC adopted resolution 1907 on December 23, 2009, which placed an arms embargo on Eritrea, barred its political and military officials from traveling, and frozen their assets as retaliation for supporting anti-government rebels in Somalia. Eritrea has been providing Al-Shababa with logistical and moral support. This has been acknowledged as one of the major accomplishments of the AU in diminishing Al-Shabab's political and diplomatic clout. The nucleus of a resurrected Somali National Army has been trained and mentored by AMISOM in cooperation with the international community. To increase the government's capability for security, AMISOM has placed a high priority on the training and mentoring of the Somalia Police Force (SPF) through the AMISOM Police Component. AMISOM's assistance, according to some regional observers, is what allowed the TFGII to remain in power in Mogadishu (Demeke, 2014; Williams, 2018).

Even though the African Union has been able to play a constructive role in managing and peacebuilding efforts of the conflict on Somalia, it has also been faced with several challenges regarding its mission in the region (Demeke, 2014). First, the Somali troops seem to lack communication systems, equipment and weapons. Second, the almost absence of staff and resources, budgetary and logistical restrictions, as well as a lack of commitment and active participation from governments contributing soldiers, can be considered as other main obstacles for the organization. It is clear that the combined effects these difficulties reduce the mission's efficiency.

#### **4.5. The European Union**

The EU was first envisioned as a peace initiative (Tocci 2008; Richmond et al., 2011). The Lisbon Treaty's wording makes clear the relationship between the EU and peace as well as the EU's responsibilities in promoting peace, preventing conflicts, and maintaining security. Following this Treaty, the European External Action Service (EEAS), was made the responsible Diplomatic Service of the EU, to run the office's delegations in the world in December 2010 (Richmond et al., 2011). Another important structure that was established to enable the EU to deal with crisis management was the Common Security and Defence Policy (CSDP).

Another important structure that works alongside EEAS is the Foreign Policy Instruments (FPI), which acts as prime responder to foreign policy opportunity and needs in certain areas such as: European Peace Facility, an instrument that supports global security and peace using defence and military implications (EEAS Europa). The Instrument contributing to Stability and Peace (IcSP), provides funds to respond to crisis and conflicts by ensuring conflict prevention and peacebuilding. From 2021 the IcSP has been integrated in the response pillar of the Neighborhood Development, International Cooperation Instrument (NDICI). Furthermore, the Partnership Instrument (PI) serves EU to cooperate with global partners in order to advance its interests and values. A crucial EU activity aimed at advancing democracy, human rights, and the rule of law across the world is election monitoring is the election observation. It helps prevent fraud, intimidation, and violence while strengthening democratic institutions and fostering voter trust in voting procedures (EU.org). Finally, since 2008 the EU cooperates with World Bank and the United Nations in defining reconstruction and recovery activities, in order to assist countries that are recovering from natural or conflict-related crises (EU.org).

The EU has carried out 36 foreign operations employing civilian and military missions and operations in a number of nations around Europe, Africa, and Asia since the first CSDP missions and operations were initiated back in 2003. There are now 17 active CSDP missions and



operations, including 6 military and 11 civilian ones which include: EUFOR ALTHEA in Bosnia Herzegovina (since 2004); EUBAM in Moldova and Ukraine (since 2005); EUBAM RAFAH in Palestinian Territories (2005); EUPOL COPPS in Palestinian Territories Operation (since 2006); EULEX in Kosovo (since 2008); EU NAVFOR in Atalanta (since 2008); EUAM in Georgia (since 2008); EUTM in Somalia ( since 2010); EUCAP SAHEL Niger (since 2012); EUCAP in Somalia ( since 2012); EUTM in Mali ( since 2013); EUBAM in Libya (since 2013); EUAM in Ukraine ( since 2014); EUCAP SAHEL in Mali (since 2014); EUTM RCA in Central African Republic (since 2016); EUAM in Iraq (since 2017); EUNAVFOR MED IRINI (since 2020); EUAM RCA in Central African Republic (since 2020); and EUM in Mozambique (since 2021) (EU Missions and Operations). Another EU peace promoting framework can be considered the Stabilization Association Processes in the Western Balkans including Annual Country Reports (EU.org).

#### 4.5.1. The Cyprus Conflict

Cyprus was governed by the Ottoman Empire from 1571 until 1878, which had a huge impact on population dynamics (Lopes, 2021). Following the outbreak of the Greek Cypriot-led guerrilla movement's war of independence in 1955, Turkey established TMT, a paramilitary organization tasked with policing the Turkish Cypriot population. On August 16, 1960, Cyprus, a unified state of Greek and Turkish Cypriots, attained independence. However, it continued to see intercommunal conflicts between 1963 and 1974. At the same year, Turkey invaded Cyprus, using security concerns as justification, and established the Turkish Republic of Northern Cyprus (Lopes, 2021). This was followed by a coup which led the prime minister of Turkey to dispatch 40.000 troops in order to defend the rights of the Turkish Cypriot minority and prevent Cyprus from joining Greece. A significant amount of people was displaced as a result, including 200,000 Greeks and 37% of the Cyprus territory in the hands of Turkey, which was highly condemned by the internationals.

The United Nations created the United Nations Peacekeeping Force in Cyprus, which created the “Green Line”, known as a buffer zone that divides the island in two parts; the population of the southern two-thirds being entirely comprised of Greek Cypriots and; the population of the northern third of Turkish Cypriots. Other initiatives taken by UN such as the Annan Plan have not resulted successful (Demetriou, 2005). The European Union on the other hand recognized the Republic of Cyprus’s government as the only legitimate one to exercise jurisdiction over the island. In 1998 Cyprus began negotiations with the EU, later on to join it on May first, 2004. The UN Secretary-General declared in April 2021 that official discussions on the Cyprus problem cannot continue until there is common ground. On the other hand, there are no overt indications that Turkey has a political intention to change its stance on the Cyprus problem (Demetriou, 2005).

#### *4.5.1.1 The EU in the Cyprus conflict*

The relationship between Cyprus and the EU appears to have been largely exclusive of Turkish Cypriots from the beginning. And yet, it appears that both the Republic's application for membership, and the EU's acceptance of this application and entry into discussions were motivated by this concern to include both groups in the operations of a future common state that, would function inside the EU (Demetriou, 2005). The EU considers the enlargement process as an opportunity to unite Europe after generations of conflict. Enlargement, by consolidating the political and economic transitions that have taken place in the region, aims to contribute to stability and prosperity and enhance the security of all countries (Lopes, 2021). Hence, for the EU, the enlargement project by definition is a peace and conflict-resolution project.

The EU’s effort to resolve the conflict between Cyprus and Turkey, is related to its efforts for the accession of negotiations in relation to Cyprus. The latter’s accession process can be separated into seven phases (Eralp & Beriker, 2005). The first phase covers the years 1990 to 1994, or from the moment the Greek Cypriots applied in 1990 to the European Council and to

the EU summit in Corfu. The EU said in July 1994 that Cyprus will be a part of its upcoming phase of expansion (Lopes, 2021). The European Union's neutral third-party stance during this period was the product of a strategy that saw a peace agreement and Cyprus' potential EU membership, as being closely intertwined. As a result, the EU maintained an equal distance from all parties at this time and served as an impartial third party to the war (Eralp & Beriker, 2005). The second phase covers the time between the end of 1994 and the summit in July 1997 that established Agenda 2000. The European Union during 1994 showed its pure determination for the involvement of Cyprus in the process of enlargement, with the Corfu decision. In order to do that the EU had to avoid making the settlement of the conflict in Cyprus a precondition, shifting the position of the organization to an interested second party, instead of that of a disinterested third party one (Demetriou, 2005). The third phase beginning in 1997 and culminating with the Helsinki Summit in 1999 had an important role on the conflict in Cyprus. During this period Cyprus's conflict settlement process had not furthered. As a result, in order for that to be achieved the European Union promised to give the country incentive such as an annual financial aid (Demetriou, 2005). During this period the Annan plan was also drafted, which was said to have a crucial impact on the resolution of the conflict (AHC). The idea of the UN Secretary General Kofi Annan, to create the United Cyprus Republic formed of two states (the Turkish and Greek Cypriot State), would ensure the grant of the EU membership to both Cyprus and Turkey if they followed up with it (Marinos, European Parliament). However, the plan did not deem successful as from the referendum the majority of Greek Cypriots were not in favor, even though sixty-five percent of Turkish Cypriots supported the plan (Yilmaz).

The EU's role from that of the Helsinki Summit to the bicomunal discussions in December 2001 is covered in the fourth phase. The EU continued to act as an interested secondary party throughout this time. Some rewards and penalties were used as structural preventative methods, but overall they had little positive influence on the persons involved (Lopes, 2021). The fifth phase during 2001 and 2003, culminated with the Cyprus's signage of Accession Treaty. Even during this phase, the EU persisted to its carrot-and-stick policies and continued to act as a secondary party to the conflict. The sixth phase that lasted one year, from 2003 to 2004, was important as the EU brought the Cyprus conflict within its jurisdiction, becoming a primary

party in the conflict, and Cyprus was able to finally start its membership to the EU (Demetriou, 2005). This primary party stance of the EU regarding the conflict between Cyprus and Turkey, continues also in the sixth phase, which is present until today (Eralp & Beriker, 2005). General Yasar Buyukanit, commander of the Turkish army, declared on January 25, 2005, that Turkey will not withdraw any of its soldiers from Cyprus, and it wouldn't provide any long-term solution.

To conclude, the incentive structures of the parties involved in the dispute in Cyprus, did not alter as anticipated as a result of the EU's expansion as a peace strategy. The difficulties outlined above may have contributed to this failure in some way. The nature of the debate necessitated a more sophisticated and complicated approach to foreign policy, which is another explanation for why structural preventative mechanisms correlate to a relatively rigid and constrained set of foreign policy measures (Eralp & Beriker, 2005). A smart integration of conflict-transformation tactics into EU foreign policy might be a significant step in achieving this objective. This would enable the EU to develop innovative and foreign policies of a flexible nature, especially in situations of ongoing conflict, and liberate it from its reliance on strict carrot-and-stick approaches (Demetriou, 2005).

#### 4.5.2. The Kosova-Serbia Conflict

During the medieval times in 1455 Serbia was occupied by the Turkish Empire, while Kosova fell under its rule for five hundred years until 1912. During this Turkish rule the Serbian population in Kosova was replaced in waves by Albanians who by the end of the 19<sup>th</sup> century predominated Kosova (Ilulian, 2017). When Kosova was a part of the Kingdom of Yugoslavia from 1918 to 1941, there were not given collective cultural rights for Albanians, and Serbian was the official language of instruction. Kosova has three historical eras: The First Tito period (1945–1965), the Second Tito period (1966–1980), and the Post-Tito period (1980–1991) (Gulyas, 2012). During the first Tito Period the Yugoslav constitution created the autonomous region of Kosovo-Metohija. The Serbian dominance in Kosova's internal affairs remained as it

had strict control over almost all significant positions. During the second Tito Period Albanians in Kosova were granted rights in the areas of education and culture; Albanian became the official language; Metohija was removed from the name of the back then province; and more Albanians gained state positions (Ilulian, 2017). After Tito's death Albanians became the majority while Serbs drastically fell in number. Due to the perception that Kosova was a "de facto" Albanian state within Serbia as a result of these events, there was a fresh surge of Serbian nationalism. In 1991, four of the six member republics including Kosova declared independence; Albania was the only country to recognize Kosova's independence. In February 1998, the Serbian army assaulted the Kosova Liberation Army, which sparked armed activity throughout the region. Around 1 million Albanians fled Kosova as a result, seeking asylum in Albania and Macedonia. On October 12, 1998, an armistice was signed. From March 24 to June 9, 1999, NATO aircraft bombed their targets every day (Ilulian, 2017). On June 10, 1999, the UN Security Council issued Resolution 1244. The UN built expanded the local administration system known as the standards before status policy and formed independent organizations under the supervision of UNMIK. Despite international action pushing for agreements between the two countries and opening dialogue, the first democratic elections in Kosova were held without the Serbian participation (Gulyas, 2012).

Several riots, attacks and boycotts happened until Kosova declared its independence in 17 February 2008. Despite this fact, and several attempts from the international and regional organizations Kosova continues to not be recognized as the Republic of Kosova by Serbia and a number of other countries. Tension continues to persist in the northern border with Serbia in North Mitrovice, Leposavic, Zvecan and Zubin Potok as Serb minorities seek for more rights and positions within the Republic of Kosova (Ilulian, 2017).

#### *4.5.2.1 The EU in the Kosova-Serbia conflict*

The European Union planned on deploying three main entities after Kosova was declared independent in 2007 (Greïçevci, 2011). The first one was the International Civilian

Office/European Union Special Representative (ICO/EUSR). It aimed to oversee the settlement of the conflict. The second was the European Security and Defense Policy (ESDP), an operational entity aiming to support implementation of Rule of Law in Kosovo's authorities. Lastly, an organization at the European Commission office, that is responsible for driving change and will support Kosovo in its efforts long-term, economic growth, and efforts to promote regional integration and achieve its EU perspective. Additionally, KFOR as international military presence would continue to remain in Kosovo (Greiçevci, 2011).

In February 2008, the European Union launched the European Union Rule of Law Mission in Kosovo (EULEX). The aim of EULEX was to assist Kosovo's institutions, improve the judicial system and law enforcement agencies, and make them more accountable (Greiçevci, 2011). This would be applicable if it is made possible that these institutions follow international standards, are not affected by political interferences and apply Europe's best practices (Zupančič et al., 2018). Furthermore, EULEX amended the Initial Council Joint Action, which increased the mission's finances in order for it to be more efficient. As stated in Council of European Union (2008), the operational period of the mission would start after one hundred twenty days after the decision for it to launch. The legal acts of these European Union institutions included the whole foreign presence's legal framework, as had been demonstrated earlier, in strict adherence to Ahtisaari's suggestion.

The EULEX's politico-strategic goals include building a sustainable peace through reform of rule of law and further contribute on conflict prevention. Over the years, EULEX has experienced both significant successes and failures in terms of its operational objectives to increase. When necessary it has also been able to implement rule of law, particularly in the northern part of Kosovo (Zupančič et al., 2018). Even though the customs and police have performed adequately, the judiciary still faces struggles with cases of organized crime and corruption, which has been present even within EULEX's staff, which was denounced by a local prosecutor from the Special Prosecution Office of Kosovo (EULEX, 2012). The EULEX deployment was timely, in accordance with the internal appropriateness criteria. The EU member states besides the disagreement on the legal status of Kosovo, still agreed on the

necessity of intervening (Greiçevci, 2011). This in turn had an impact on the mission's efficacy and cost-effectiveness, which are now classified as partially successful and have decreased over the last several years, creating crucial concerns about the mission's withdrawal's timing.

The ability of a mission to meaningfully and sustainably contribute to ending additional violent conflict is taken into account by the external goal achievement criteria. These criteria include the ability to avoid the start of a long-lasting violent conflict, and its escalation by including more and more participants in it (Zupančič et al., 2018). Although that the stabilization and prevention of further violent in Kosova, can't be given as an attribution only to EULEX, the mission has managed to stop inter-ethnic violence from occurring since its first deployment. Staff members of EULEX have made achievements such as: promoting discussions between the Serbian and Kosovar police; ongoing collaboration on in their day-to-day work; integration of Serb forces into Kosovo's police; as well as, the EU's involvement in instances involving ethnicity (Greiçevci, 2011).

Overall it can be said that the EULEX mission has significantly aided in the peacekeeping and conflict resolution processes in Kosovo. However, it has also been accompanied by serious flaws and disappointments (Ilulian, 2017). There have been several allegations on a corrupted staff as well as, criticism on EULEX's willingness to prosecute political elites. Currently, the major part of Kosovo's citizens and local institutions favor ending the operation. Given that Serbia has failed to this day to recognize the Republic of Kosova as an independent state, neither the act of genocide on the Kosova's population, tension remains between the two countries, asking for further steps to be taken especially in the process of reconciliation and conflict transformation.

In April 2016 entered in force the Stabilisation and Association Process (SAA) between the EU and Kosovo, whose aim is to monitor the progress on the enlargement process. The EU holds plenary meetings once a year through this process discussing policy issues and meet conclusions. It gives out an Annual Country Report each year which is used to make clear the

readiness of the country in its road to become a member (European Union Office in Kosovo). The role of the European Union Office to Kosovo is to organize regular dialogues with civil society organizations, which also provide their input in the drafting of Progress reports (European Union Office in Kosovo). The Special Representative of the European Union (EUSR) provides guidance and assistance to the Government of Kosovo in the political process, coordinates all EU activities in Kosovo, and works to advance and solidify respect for fundamental freedoms and human rights in Kosovo. Furthermore, the EU is the main donor when it comes to providing assistance to Kosovo on rule of law, public administration reform, education, civil society, agriculture, through frameworks like IPA I and IPA II and EU instruments (EU.org). The EU Office in Kosovo together with thirteen EU member states embassies, works to manage programmes of substantial financial assistance (European Union Special Representative in Kosovo). Kosovo is assisted also by other instruments such as European Instrument for Democracy and Human Rights, FPI, TAIEX, the Instrument contributing to Stability and Peace (IcSP) and other EU programmes such as Europe for Citizens, Erasmus+ etc (European Union Office in Kosovo).

#### **4.6. The Pacific Islands Forum**

Formerly known as the South Pacific Forum founded in 1971. The Pacific Islands Forum (PIF) consists of 18 self-governing independent states in the Pacific: Australia, Cook Islands, Federated States of Micronesia, Fiji, French Polynesia, Kiribati, Nauru, New Caledonia, New Zealand, Niue, Palau, Papua New Guinea, Republic of Marshall Islands, Samoa, Solomon Islands, Tonga, Tuvalu, and Vanuatu. The Forum is the leading organization for political and economic policies in the area (Wulf & Debiel, 2009).

Along with initiatives for sustainable development, good governance, and economic growth, the PIF has launched a program on security in 2004. This idea primarily addresses problems with domestic and international crime. The forum offers its members policy guidance and technical help on international relations, law enforcement cooperation, political, legal, and security



concerns (Wulf & Debiel, 2009). This programme includes: monitoring of regional political developments in member countries; building capacity in conflict response and prevention; implementation of the legislative priorities and legal sector cooperation; building the capacity of law-enforcement agencies to combat transnational crime; and conducting election observer missions to member countries (Wainwright, 2003). The PIF is interested in developing "a human security framework" and is concerned with more general security challenges (PIF 2008a). The regional organization heavily relies on the support of local communities, however, due to PIF's restricted capabilities, the majority of resources, both monetary and in terms of military intervention capabilities, come from Australia and New Zealand (Wulf & Debiel, 2009).

The Framework for Pacific Regionalism established in 2014, guides PIF's work. PIF holds annual forum meetings which are led by Forum Chairs (head of the government of the host country). Its Secretariat coordinates regional initiatives and policies, which are later on implemented by the Council of Regional Organisations of the Pacific (CROP) (PIF.org). The region's security on the other hand is guided by four important Forum Leader's Declarations: the 1992 Honiara Declaration on Law Enforcement Cooperation; the 1997 Aitutaki Declaration on Regional Security Cooperation; the 2000 Biketawa Declaration; and the 2002 Nasonini Declaration on Regional Security (Wainwright, 2003).

#### 4.6.1. The Bougainville Conflict

The Panguna mining ownership and environmental effect conflicts are what led to the beginning of the Bougainville conflict in the late 1980s. The operating firm, Bougainville Copper Limited (BCL) 1988: Landowners wanted compensation and stronger environmental restrictions, which were not satisfied by the operating business. On May 17, 1989, landowners stopped the mining route and staged a sit-in after their requests were not satisfied. As a result, from 1989 to 1994 there was an increase in conflicts (Rosanowski, 2001). Early in 1989, militant support rose quickly, and anti-company violence gave birth to a significant separatist uprising. Ethnic conflict between Bougainvilleans and other Papua New Guineans rekindled separatist feelings among

Bougainvilleans. After continuous sabotage in May, the mine was forced to close, and on June 26, 1989, the government proclaimed a state of emergency. Parts of the north and southwest of Bougainville Island were once again under the authority of the PNG Defence Force (PNGDF) between 1991 and 1992 (Wainwright, 2003). The conflict was unresolved since no side was able to win or be soundly defeated. Despite being signed in 1990, the Endeavour Accord did not result in peace.

Ten years of peace have been experienced on Bougainville, but the issue of self-determination has not yet been settled (Rosanowski, 2001). The delayed pace of the PNG Government's financing and authority transfers to the ABG might postpone the ABG's complete autonomy and preparedness for independence. (Walls, 2012). However, in Bougainville, weapons are still in circulation and might be used to prevent or delay the referendum. Because some PNG government officials oppose Bougainville's independence, it's unclear if the referendum's results will be respected (Rosanowski, 2001).

#### *4.6.1.1 PIF in the Bougainville conflict*

The mission on the Bougainville Conflict, endorsed by the Pacific Island Forum in 2000, was build focusing on the Biketawa Declaration. This Declaration resembles the PIF's political manifesto on democracy, democratic principles, individual liberties, equal rights for all people, the rule of law, and democratic political procedures (Wainwright, 2003). The Biketawa Declaration's guiding principles require the PIF to provide assistance, at the request of its member states, through a consultative procedure, if one of those situations might have a substantial impact on these fundamental ideals.

The Biketawa Declaration's main tenets, which require the PIF to use Election Operation Missions are as follows: dedication to what can be a good governance, which is the use of power and relationships in a way that is fair and equitable but also open, transparent, accountable,

consultative, and decisive; and belief in the freedom of the individual in equal rights for all citizens regardless of race, gender, political belief, color or creed, and in the unalienable right of the individual to participate in the formation of the society in which he or she lives through a free and democratic political process.

The Pacific Islands Forum has deployed Election Observation Mission twice in the region of Bougainville, respectively in 2005 and 2010. The general election was a huge political victory for the people of the island and a symbolic symbol of self-determination after a protracted period of internal struggle and bloodshed (IDEA, 2012). The first general elections and election of a President in the region of Bougainville, were held in 2005. Ratu Epeli Nailatikau, Speaker of the Fijian House of Representatives at the time, presided over the high-level delegation known as the EOM in 2005. He was joined by three officials, five observers, and five observers. It was a collaborative EOM with the Commonwealth that included a team of foreign observers from various nations. The mission was comprised of observers from different countries such as, Fiji, Australia, Vanuatu, Trinidad and Tobago, Japan and the East-West Centre; led by the Principal Electoral Officer of Vanuatu; and coordinated by the United Nations. Invitations to witness the election were sent out in both instances by the governments of Papua New Guinea and Bougainville after deliberation. EOMs are intended to make sure that the political system of choosing political leaders is also ingrained despite of being enhanced, through time as a crucial democratic institution, in this instance of a newly constituted autonomous territory. The three tenets of the Biketawa Declaration aim to protect this, the most important part of the electoral process (IDEA, 2012).

Experiencing long periods of conflicts, followed by the lack of democratic institutions and governance structures, reinforces the importance that PIF's Electoral Observation Missions on the Autonomous Region of Bougainville, can be a successful step in the process of democratization, creation of a good governance, and enforcing the rule of law.

#### 4.6.2. The Fiji Crisis

Fiji has had a continuous problem with land administration dating even before its post-colonial era. Following the coups of 1987, which prominently emphasized Fijian worries of losing control of their land, a large portion of government land was restored to indigenous ownership in the 1990s (Jones, 2009). After the present 30-year leases to Indo-Fijian farmers end, many Fijian landowners do not wish to lease their property again, and since 1997, some Indo-Fijian farmers have been evicted from their farms. This condition exacerbates already present racial tensions and may have detrimental effects on economic growth (Jones, 2009).

Fiji has also been characterized by an internal political unrest. On April 10, 2009, Fiji's President Ratu Josefa Iloilovatu Uluivuda said that he had annulled the 1997 constitution, declared himself to be the nation's head of state, stopped appointing any judges, and would order an interim administration to organize legislative elections by September 2014 (Mishra, 2000). President Iloilo reappointed Bainimarama as interim prime minister on April 11. He then tightened media restrictions, deported Australian journalist Sean Dorney, detained a number of critics, and fired the Reserve Bank Governor (Jones, 2009). A military dictatorship in Australia's backyard has been established in Fiji as a result of the President's decision and Bainimarama's actions. The dominant leadership of the interim government of Commodore Voreqe Bainimarama's can accelerate economic decline in Fiji and cause hardship to Fiji's population. The whole Pacific Islands region and Australia's capacity to demonstrate leadership in the region, are threatened by these economic implications (Mishra, 2000).

#### *4.6.2.1 PIF in the Fiji crisis*

To overcome the crisis in Fiji, and to increase the Pacific Islands Forum's role in such matter, in 2007 the Forum made possible the meeting of President Iloilo, Prime Minister Qarase and the military government led by Bainimarama, by sending the Eminent Persons Group. Apart from that in March of the same year Fiji attended the extraordinary Forum Foreign Affairs Ministers Meeting (FFAMM), which was finalized with the decision to evaluate the coup illegal and call

on the Fiji's military regime in the course of maximum two years, to conduct elections (Holtz et al. 2016). To prepare a binding timetable for the upcoming elections, Fiji deployed the Fiji Joint Working Group.

Fiji agreed to hold elections in 2009, at the 38th Forum in October 2007 (PIFS 2007b:15), but in June 2008 it expressed doubts about the timing of the election and abruptly ended the negotiations. The military regime also stayed away from the 39th Forum in August 2008 as a result. However, the Forum's top officials stuck to the pledge made by Fiji the year before and reiterated their hope that the parliamentary elections that were announced would indeed occur in the first three months of 2009. At the time that the Joint Working Group picked up where it left off, keeping a "bridge" open with Fiji (Holtz et al. 2016) the military administration postponed elections in December 2008 instead. As a result, the Forum called the Special Leaders' Meeting that had been originally planned in Port Moresby in January 2009. The majority of the leaders of the Forum requested of Fiji that an election date be chosen by 1 May 2009. They also requested that the elections be held at the end of the same year, and that it prove its adherence to several constitutional norms before 1 May 2009. If Fiji were not to respond to their demands under the Biketawa Declaration (PIF 2009) several provisions would be taken such as: the inability of the Fiji's government to benefit from PIF's initiatives and its economic and technical assistance; and suspension of Fiji from all meetings from the Forum in future events.

Fiji's constitutional crisis led the Forum's member states to propose the reconsideration of the decisions taken in January 2009 (Holtz et al 2016). Fiji brought up the claim New Zealand and Australia had improperly used their economic might to persuade the other Forum members to support the suspension, as soon as this announcement was made, but the Forum vehemently rejected this. Fiji was given the opportunity to return to specialized regional economic discussions at the 42nd Forum in 2011 in order to take into consideration its major economic significance in the area. The 44th Forum was held in 2013 and brought important changes in relations to Fiji's crisis, as it set the Fiji's new constitution. It also decided on the Fiji's complete return to the Forum. Nevertheless, the political environment remained problematic as another

coup was organized in September 2014. The coup was followed by parliamentary elections in which the military government's leader Bainimarama was confirmed as Prime Minister.

#### **4.7. The Economic Community of West African States**

The Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) was created with the signing of the Treaty of Lagos in 1975. The organization is comprised of 15 member states: Benin, Liberia, Burkina Faso, Cabo Verde, Côte d'Ivoire, Ghana, Gambia, Guinea, Guinea Bissau, Mali, Niger, Togo, Senegal, Sierra Leone and Nigeria. Originally ECOWAS was created with the focus on an economic agenda. However, in 1990s it had to undergo through a transformation concentrating on a security-related agenda, which has resulted to be more successful than the economic one (Libman, 2017).

ECOWAS developed a series of organizations inside the MAD framework that had to provide an adequate and prompt reaction to military threats. 'Allied Forces of the Community' (AAFC), a Defense Council, and a Defense Committee were among them. The ECOWAS Standby Force (ESF), which is one of the components of the African Standby Force, following its deployment, come under the operational supervision of the African Union and an early warning system (Sjullie, 2022). Serving as a basis for numerous missions that were deployed by ECOWAS, this institutional framework made possible a number of missions in: Sierra Leone (1997), Liberia (1990-1991), in Liberia (2003), in Mali (2012-2013) etc. The Economic Community of West African States developed a new structure in 2008 which was called the ECOWAS Conflict Prevention Framework (ECPF). Its main goals were to: integrate ECOWAS measures mechanisms in this area; and to serve as a conceptual foundation for the conflict prevention and peacekeeping initiatives. The ECPF has only been partially deployed thus far (Libman, 2017).

##### **4.7.1. The Liberian Conflict**

For more than a century, Liberia was a one-party state, with all the political and socioeconomic inconsistencies that come with a monopoly of power (Ebo, 2005). Its leader William Tubman ruled for 27 years (1944–1971) before William Tolbert took over. During his ruling the indigenous people was economically and politically disempowered and 97% of Liberians were denied the right to vote until 1963. Later on, Tolbert's weak democratic rule was overthrown in 1980 by a bloody military coup orchestrated by Samuel Doe, which finally led to an armed uprising and intensified warfare. This civil conflict led to the absence of elections until 1997. In this year Charles Taylor won the elections, however a number of groups opposed his election. Elites and politicians were exiled, and there was a rise in instability and bloodshed throughout the nation (Ebo, 2005).

Security in Liberia is either provided by or threatened by a number of internal state and non-state entities (Jörgel & Utas, 2007; Herbert, 2014). Liberia is characterized by a centralized power focused on the hands of the executive and the president, and also includes their possibility to overrule decisions taken by other parts that comprise the government (Herbert, 2014). The same set of elites from the "Americo-Liberian sphere", remain in power despite the country's political tensions and dynamics having changed (Herbert, 2014). President Sirleaf's Unity Party (UP) and the Coalition for Democratic Change (CDC), which is led by the primary opposition figure George Weah, are the two parties that make up Liberian politics. The continuous civil unrest has left the Liberian social, political and economic state in a serious crisis. The post-conflict period is characterized by lack of opportunities and deprivation due to the lack of a decent governance. During the civil wars 250,000 people died, half being civilians; approximately 500,000 were internally displaced; Literacy is at thirty-seven percent; seventy-five percent of the population lives on less than a dollar per day; and more than 8 in 10 people are left unemployed (Herbert, 2014).

#### *4.7.1.1 ECOWAS in the Liberian conflict*

The ECOWAS in collaboration with the Organization of African Unity was not successful on the mediation of the peaceful end of the Liberian conflict. As a result, the organization's Standing Mediation Committee created the ECOWAS Cease-fire Monitoring Group on August 1990. Overall it was a successful initiative. It marked a rare occasion, that of the entire international community supporting the action of regional actors on a conflict that had a domestic nature (Levitt, 1998). The purpose of the mission was to stop the huge damage including destruction of property and violation of human rights, which was caused by the Liberian armed conflict (NPLF). Furthermore, its goal was to create the right conditions for fair and free elections. It also aimed at restoring law and order (Adibe, 2010).

A regional player must be granted the authority to do so by its organizational instrument, any ensuing protocol, or treaty in order to launch armed enforcement action. There was no regional security framework for "purely" domestic disputes under the ECOWAS Treaty of 1975. Furthermore, neither the ECOWAS Protocol on Mutual Assistance in Defense nor the ECOWAS Protocol on Non-Aggression provide ECOWAS the authority to intervene in strictly domestic disputes (Levitt, 1998). Therefore, the action must be regarded as illegitimate unless it can be demonstrated that ECOWAS legitimately asserted a right to humanitarian intervention.

On August 24, 1990, the moment ECOMOG soldiers touched down in Liberia, NPLF fighters launched a ferocious assault. ECOMOG soldiers responded with "mortars, artillery, and automatic weapons" in self-defense. By September 17, 1990, almost one week after Doe's murder, hostilities between the NPLF, the IPLF, and ECOMOG had gotten worse. Taylor was about to take Monrovia, therefore ECOMOG commenced offensive missile assaults against the NPLF from the air and ground (Adibe, 2010). ECOMOG launched offensive missile assaults against the NPLF from the air and ground in an effort to stop Taylor from capturing Monrovia. Furthermore, the ECOWAS Cease-fire Monitoring Group use of force, which appeared to be the contrary of what EXOWAS's authority on interventions allows, were bypassed from the United Nations, which in a way or another provided ECOMOG's actions with legitimization. The Security Council passed Resolution 788 on November 19, 1992, requesting a total arms embargo on Liberia. ECOWAS was not subject to the embargo. On September, 1993, the



Security Council approved Resolution 866. This Resolution directed the establishment of the United Nations Observer Mission in Liberia (UNOMIL) and noted that this would be of UN's first peacekeeping mission that collaborated with a mission established already by another organization (ECOWAS) (Levitt, 1998). In the conflict prevention, management and reconciliation of the Liberian conflict it looks like ECOWAS did not operate based on a diplomatic stance. The creation of ECOMOG in such a short period of time and the open-ended character it was left with made the mission's intervention not successful (Adibe, 2010) .

#### 4.7.2. The Conflict in Sierra Leone

The conflict in Sierra Leone erupted in March 1991. This was a result of members of the 37 Revolutionary United Front (RUF). Led by a former army corporal named Foday Sankoh, RUF staged an uprising from the east of the nation close to the Liberian border. They were quickly successful on their goal was to destroy the government. The major source of hard money for the government were the diamond mining holdings (Dhanoa, 1995).

The RUF maintained its operations, and solidified its control over substantial portions of eastern Sierra Leone. However, the army itself ousted the government the following year. Mr. Berhanu Dinka (Ethiopia) was sent to the area as a special envoy by the UN Secretary General in 1995. The RUF refused to take part in the elections and did not recognize President Ahmed Tejan Kabbah, (candidate for the Sierra Leone Peoples Party (SLPP). This prolonged the civil war. After a failed peace agreement in November 1996, there was a coup d'état in May 1997. During this coup d'état the army sided with the RUF and a new junta came into power (Nowrat & Schbaker, 1998). As a result of a failure to persuade the junta to step down, an arms and oil embargo had to be imposed in 1997 by the UN Security Council. Even though precautions were taken by the international organizations and communities to call for ceasefire and dialogue, and President Kabbah seemed to be support this plan, the junta did not allow the implementation due to the disagreements they had on key elements of the plan (Dhanoa, 1995).

#### *4.7.2.1 ECOWAS in the conflict in Sierra Leone.*

The Sierra Leonean crisis could be an exception to the Security Council's ban on using force. Contrary to the ECOWAS involvement in Liberia seven years' prior, the Security Council responded to the coup in Sierra Leone in a variety of ways. On October 8, 1997, the Security Council approved Resolution 1132. This happened after the President of the Security Council repeatedly denounced the removal of Sierra Leone's democratically elected government and demanded President Kabbah's quick restoration. According to the Resolution, Sierra Leone's position posed a threat to world security and peace (Nowrat & Schbaker, 1998) under Article 39 of the UN Charter, which allowed for the implementation of binding economic and military sanctions. The resolution also did not fail to express the SC's concern on the military coup of May 1997, which was followed by a number of losses in life as well as, continued violence.

Even if ECOWAS's military operation in Sierra Leone is covered by Article 2(4) of the UN Charter, it may still be justified under generally accepted principles of international law. ECOWAS provided many justifications for the involvement (Nowrat & Schbaker, 1998). ECOWAS justified its intervention in Sierra Leone by stating a number of reasons such as: the atrocities conducted against citizens by junta troops; the prevention of junta from committing genocide; the right to self-defense; the threat to international security and peace; to stop refugee flows from Sierra Leone, and to appeal by President Kabbah who was in need of the ECOWAS's assistance.

Even though the intervention in Sierra Leone can be justified by the Security Council and other international legal provisions, there are reasons that condemn it as an operation. Although a broad interest in the region's political security and stability is comprehensible from a political perspective, it cannot provide as justification for a military intervention under international law. Firstly, there does not seem to exist sufficient proof that the junta was going to execute democide on the citizens of Sierra Leone, therefore it is left only as a politically affiliated assumption and

accusation by President Kabbah. Secondly, even though other similar conflicts in the region have produced a large number of refugees, this cannot be considered as enough of a reason for a military intervention (Nowrat & Schbaker, 1998). The other justification, that of the need for self-defense on an attack of the ECOMOG's military camp by the junta, can also be considered. When assaulted by troops of the territorial state, military units of that regional organization or state may act in self-defense, as long as their presence does not in and of itself amount to an armed attack that would give rise to the territorial state's right to retaliation under Article 5. Finally, the justification on the increased humanitarian crisis and absence of food, can also be questioned. Firstly, because such situation had come as a result of imposed sanctions in Sierra Leone by the United Nations and ECOWAS itself and secondly because this would open the path for other similar events to happen, in which a country would invade another in order to help ease the humanitarian crisis, which it's worth to mention was created by intervening state.

#### 4.8 RIGOs Involvement in Conflict Settings Matrix

In order to analyze the involvement of regional organizations in conflict settings, this Matrix shows the conflicts; type of conflict; the phase of the intervention from regional organizations; the processes implemented when handling conflict (conflict prevention, management, settlement and peacebuilding); tools and mechanisms used in order to handle the conflict; the outcome of their involvement; and whether their involvement has been done unilaterally or in cooperation with other organizations.

RIGO	CONFLICT	TYPE	INTERVEN-TION PHASE	Process (conflict prevention, management, settlement, peacebuilding)	TOOLS/MECHANISM	OUTCOME	UNILATERAL/NON-UNILATERAL
OAS	Guatemala-Belize	Inter-state	First negotiating meeting	Settlement	-Mixed Commissions -Mediation /negotiation	-Roots of conflict discovered -Increased dialogue	non-unilateral

		Territorial dispute	(2000)	peacebuilding	-Adjacency Zone -The National Peace Accords -PROPAZ	-case sent to ICJ -No full inclusivity (military omitted)	
	Haiti	-Intra state Internal political crisis	Return of Aristide (1994)	settlement peacebuilding	- Provided CNVJ with technical assistance -MICIVIH -EON	- citizens low trust in judiciary -voting turnout low -violent election process	non-unilateral
ASEAN	Myanmar	Intra-state Internal political crisis Ethnic conflict	Conflict between juntas and Aung San Suu Kyi (1997)	management settlement peacebuilding	2 Summits -Closed door negotiations -AICHR	-unjustified intervention -lack of dialogue between parties -omission of the case of Rohingya from agenda	non-unilateral
	South China Sea	Inter-state Territorial dispute	Signage of the Declaration of South China (1990)	settlement peacebuilding	-CAFTA -Declaration of South China Sea -DoC	- lack of dialogue with China - no conformity between members	non-unilateral
SAARC	India-Pakistan	Inter-state Territorial dispute	During Siachin dispute (1985)	settlement peacebuilding	- 12 Summits - Lahore Declaration -SAFTA -SDC	-lack of dialogue -feelings of insecurity among member states -India domination	non-unilateral
	Sri Lanka	Intra-state Internal Crisis (terrorism)	Signage of Convention -on Mutual Assistance in Criminal Matters	-prevention -management	-Open Government Partnership -SAARCPOL -STOMD	-success in openness and coverage of the data	non-unilateral

AU	Libya	Intra-state Internal political crisis	post-conflict	peacebuilding	-High Level Ad Hoc Committee -Support in political reform -ACHPR	-conflict parties lacked trust in AU -military coups	non-unilateral
	Somalia	Intra-state Civil war	Signage of Djibouti Peace Accord (2008)	management settlement peacebuilding	-AMISOM -EASBRIG -National Security Stabilities Plan -sanctions & arms embargo	-lack of trust in institutions -violence erupted -lack of dialogue -inability to hold rightful and peaceful elections	non-unilateral
EU	Cyprus	Inter-state Territorial dispute Ethnic conflict	The beginning of Accession negotiations (1990)	settlement peacebuilding	-Accession negotiation process -financial aid	-lack of dialogue -Turkey decision on non-withdrawing soldiers & to not provide long-term solutions	non-unilateral
	Kosova-Serbia	Inter-state Ethnic conflict	Kosova's Independence (2007)	management settlement peacebuilding	-ICO/EUSR -ESDP -EULEX -KFOR	-EULEX staff not accountable -tensions rising from time to time -difficulties in dialogue -Kosova not recognized by Serbia -human rights violations	non-unilateral
PIF	Bougainville	Inter-state Internal crisis	Biketawa Declaration (2000)	management settlement	-Biketawa Declaration -2 Election Operation Missions	-General elections held peacefully	non-unilateral
	Fiji	Intra-state	2007 Forum Meeting	management settlement	-FFAMM -Joint Working Group	-several military coups -military-led	non-unilateral

		Internal crisis				governments	
ECOWAS	Liberia	Intra-state Internal political crisis	Aggravation of election process after military coup (1990)	management settlement	-ECOWAS Cease-Fire Monitoring Group -ECOMOG -military intervention	-human rights violations -creating hostile environment -non-successful election processes	non-unilateral
	Sierra Leone	Intra-state Internal crisis	1997 General elections	management	-economic and military sanctions	-political instability -military coups	non-unilateral

Findings on the analysis give an overview of the seven regional organizations taken into study (OAS, ASEAN, SAARC, AU, EU, PIF and ECOWAS) considering the time of establishment, their membership, goals, institutions and missions taken to handle conflicts. Furthermore, a historical overview of the conflicts is given by focusing on the cause and main events that have escalated the conflict. An analysis of the measures, tools and mechanisms used by the regional organizations to handle the conflicts is done to give a clearer view on the involvement they have had in conflict settings within their region. Furthermore, the study will discuss the similarities and differences between the regional organizations by comparing the abovementioned findings.

## 5. DISCUSSION

Findings in this study on the role and effectiveness of regional organizations, respectively the Organization of American States, Association of Southeast Asian Nations, the South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation, the African Union, the European Union, the Pacific Islands Forum and the Economic Community of West African States, suggest that the involvement of regional organizations in conflict settings has been indicated by several aspects such as type of conflict, intervention phase, conflict handling processes and other tools and mechanisms.

### 5.1 Similarities between regional organizations on their involvement in conflict settings.

The study finds that type of conflict can affect the involvement of the regional organizations taken into study in handling conflicts. In countries where conflict has had an intra-state conflict, which is the majority of the cases taken into study, such as Haiti, Myanmar, Sri Lanka, Libya, Somalia, Fiji, Liberia and Sierra Leone, the regional organizations have resulted to be unsuccessful. An exception can be made in the case the conflict in Bougainville, where the process of general elections has continued to be successful after the first one held in 2005. Same results have been found in relations to inter-state conflicts. Of the cases analyzed in the study such as Guatemala, South China Sea, India and Pakistan, Cyprus and Turkey, and Kosova and Serbia, only in the first have regional organizations resulted to be successful in handling the conflict. Such result, leads to the assumption that other factors besides the type of conflict can affect the success rate of a regional organization in handling conflicts.

When discussing the process of conflict prevention findings in this research show that the regional organizations compared in the study, lack Early Warning Risk Assessment Tools, which as stated in the literature (Wulf & Debiel, 2009) are essential in easing down tensions and preventing crises from taking a violent end result. Even though some initiatives have been taken, such as the African Union's Mechanism for Conflict Prevention Management and Resolution (MCOMR), they lack necessary resources, training, technological assistance as well as the intelligence information gathering. Such tools are attributed mostly to International or Supranational Organizations, which are comprised of bigger agencies and allocate a considerable amount of funds mainly from superpowers. Furthermore, even organization like the case of EU, have resulted to be unsuccessful, as both conflicts studied in this research the Cyprus and Turkey conflict and the one between Kosovo, have resulted to be unsuccessful cases of EU's conflict prevention policies, as to this date tension between the respective parties arise contentiously. Furthermore, when addressing the process of conflict prevention, it is worth to mention the difference between conflicts with a political character and those who face territorial disputes. In countries that face internal political crisis such as Haiti, Myanmar, Sri Lanka, Libya, Fiji, Bougainville, Sierra Leone, regional organizations face difficulties is building efficient prevention mechanisms because the governments and the countries administrations and elites tend to be corrupt, which often results in the corruption of the regional organization's staff as well. Furthermore, this study finds that the membership of these regional organizations also play an important role on their mission to prevent conflict and create a peaceful environment. Countries like the case of India within SAARC, which possess more resources and power within the region, can have a personal agenda to dominate the region, and instead of collaboration in creating more efficient ERW systems, cause trouble and create several disagreements between member states.

The process of peacebuilding as the study implies has the possibility to have more success stories given that in the process of reconciliation and transformation, local initiatives are crucial. African Union has taken several confidence building and resource mobilization, measures on the Sierra Leone's civil unrest. One of the most successful cases in the process of reconciliation, peacebuilding and conflict transformation has been the OAS, with its establishment of



PROPAZ, whose main goal has been to promote dialogue between parties in conflict by aiming to institutionalize it; organize several meetings and local initiatives; and promote nonviolent advocacy which is a crucial element in conflict transformation. In the cases of internal conflicts, the main initiatives taken by the regional organizations taken into study have been those of organizing election monitoring, especially in countries experiencing several coups like Haiti, Myanmar or Sierra Leone. The study discusses that there have also been cases where the process of peacebuilding has been characterized by several failures. This can be the case of Myanmar, which is also characterized by a number of complex characters of conflict dominated by the ethnic one. The conflict has escalated with the displacement of Rohingyas, and it does not provide positive premises in being resolved. The EU's approach on the conflict between Kosova and Serbia has failed to help facilitate the process of reconciliation and conflict transformation, as Kosova continues to not be recognized as an independent country. The same results have followed the dispute between Cyprus and Turkey over the island, who do not even consider the discussion on the matter. The role of the OAS in the conflict between Guatemala and Belize, seems to have had a partial success as its missions using tools of conflict settlement and peacebuilding processes, such as the creation of National Peace Accords or the implementation of PROPAZ have been able to discover the roots of the conflict between the two parties. Other successful outcomes have also been the local initiatives and workshops in order to increase the dialogue and try to transform the conflict. Nevertheless, the noninvolvement in the settlement and peacebuilding processes of the military actors, has limited the success of the organization in handling conflict, as they can be considered important actors, without the presence of which the process of peacebuilding cannot be whole. Another successful intervention has been that of the Bougainville conflict in which the adaptation of mechanisms such as the signage of the Biketawa Declaration (2000) or the implementation of General Elections Operations, brought the result of peacefully held general elections in the country in both cases the operation was held.

The study also shows that all the regional organizations taken into analysis have been involved in handling conflict settings by having to cooperate with other International Organizations and NGOs, and having to implement their treaties. The role of the United Nations and its agencies

has been crucial mainly in territorial disputes and ethnic conflicts, and when in need of military intervention. Meanwhile the cooperation with NGO's has been more evident in internal disputes and in the process of democratization, where local initiatives have been more influential in handling conflict.

## 5.2 Differences between regional organizations on their involvement in conflict settings.

Findings present that the phase of interventions within a conflict from the regional organizations, do not seem to play a key role in their involvement in conflict handling. The most evident case is that of the territorial dispute between Guatemala and Belize, which has resulted to be a successful intervention of the OAS, even though the intervention happened at the phase of the first negotiation meeting (2000) between the two parties. Findings show that the intervention phase does not seem to be crucial in comparison of other conflicts in which the phase was on the signage of mutual agreements, or negotiation processes, which resulted to be unsuccessful in handling conflicts. Here it is worth to mention the South China Sea dispute in which the intervention phase was conducted starting with the process of negotiations with the signage of the South China Declaration. Other examples are: Sri Lanka (signage of the Convention on Mutual Assistance); Somalia (signage of the Djibouti Peace Accord 2008); Cyprus (beginning of Accession Negotiation Processes 1990); Kosova and Serbia (Kosova's Independence 2007); Fiji (2007 Forum Meeting); Liberia (1990). The study finds that the in conflicts in which the intervention has been done during disputes (Indi-Pakistani conflict, 1985; Haiti 1994; Myanmar 1997; and Sierra Leone, 1997) the involvement of regional organizations in handling conflicts has also resulted to be unsuccessful.

The process of conflict management can be considered as one that is limited in achieving success within regional organizations, from its definition. Regional organizations are based on grounds that condemn military interventions or any other violent form of conflict management. Such operations still remain under the provision of the United Nations. Cases where military interventions have been taken, like ECOWAS's case in Sierra Leone to attack the junta, even

though were justified by the Security Council, were followed by human rights violations. Even though the geographical proximity can be helpful in conflict management, the interventions, especially those of military nature raise a lot of questions. The ECOWAS interventions in Sierra Leone and Libya for example, have proven that the justifications for undertaking such operational actions, have not always been sufficient. Another question the study's findings raise is the possibility of conflicts escalating when left in the management of regional organization's solely. Nevertheless, the diplomatic initiatives such as the impose of sanctions or embargo, canceling of trade and flights, can bring satisfactory result. One case can be the OAS management of the Haitian conflict with the Dominican Republic, which by imposing sanctions, was able to avoid the escalation of the conflict.

The study discusses that the process of conflict settlement provides the space for regional organizations to have a more efficient role, given that local initiatives in conflict settlement that take into consideration the historical, socio-cultural and political aspects of the region. The countries that have faced political unrest such as Myanmar, or the African region in general, the study considers to be more challenging in conflict settlement, as are characterized by lack of accountability, corruption, a failed institutionalization process as well as several coups. This has been characterized by impunity, the lack of trust in judiciary and institutions that are supposed to provide the application of the rule of law. The process of implementation of treaties and agreements has mainly been characterized by very long procedures, which have also come as a result of the regional organization's lack of proper technology and intelligence, which could become useful in trials and meetings between parties in the dispute.

## 6. CONCLUSION

The global structural changes that occurred after the decolonization process followed by the Cold War, provided for a system in which states had more autonomy to take their own decision, which eventually opened the path for the establishment of regional organizations. This study's aim has been to find out over the role regional organizations have in conflict settlings, and their involvement in conflict handling. In order to answer to the research, question a comparative analysis has been conducted between seven multi-purpose organizations: OAS, ASEAN, SAARC, AU, EU, PIF and ECOWAS. The study has focused its findings on qualitative research methods, by focusing on existing books, handbooks, research papers, journal articles etc. Two conflicts with different natures like territorial disputes, internal or ethnic conflicts have been taken as a case for the analysis. The involvement of regional organizations has been evaluated by taking into account several elements in conflict handling, such as type of conflict, conflict handling processes (prevention, management, settlement and peacebuilding), tools and mechanisms. By analyzing the outcome, the study has come to conclusions on the success or failure of regional organizations in handling conflict within the respective regions.

This study draws on conclusions by focusing its findings in mainly four important points.

Firstly, from studying two conflicts per each of the seven organizations, the study finds that the process of conflict prevention in regard to the role of regional organizations, has been insufficient for both political conflicts and territorial disputes. The first has been compromised by the continuous civil unrest that has resulted in economic issues, and lack of accountability. The second, has resulted negative in such measure due to the lack of EWR systems and proper intelligence and technical assistance.

Secondly, the political conflicts have been more challenging in conflict management as the regional organizations taken into study base their actions on non-violent actions and diplomatic measures, which in the case of civil unrest followed by several coups, has not been very successful. Therefore, the role of regional organizations is put to question as, it is limited by other international organizations, mainly UN, to take measure that would conclude to interventions or military actions.

Thirdly, the process of settlement has been as successful as to achieve the meeting of parties in conflict and through the process of mediation to achieve the signage of several agreements which have resulted in the de-escalation of conflicts that could turn violent. This process has been more challenging when dealing with internal conflicts as the high number of coups, destabilization of institutions and corrupted governments has often brought to the interruption of many mediation processes.

Lastly, the process of peacebuilding including conflict resolution, reconciliation and transformation, can be more effective when led by regional organizations as by having a geographical proximity and having more information on the socio-cultural factors of the member states, the process of reconciliation and conflict transformation can be facilitated. However, conflicts characterized by civil unrest and or by ethnic issues can be more challenging as the first does not allow for a peaceful environment in which dialogue can be conducted between the parties in conflict; and the later due to its complexity in nature.

To conclude, findings in the study present that regional organizations have shown to be mainly somewhat involved in conflict handling in the conflicts studied. This has come as a result of complex conflict types; lack of resources and technical assistance measures; lack of legal provision for prevention and immediate prevention; and misunderstandings among member states as a result of different shared norms and values and power allocation. This is also enforced by the fact that all the regional organizations taken into study have had the need for cooperation

with other International and Non-Governmental Organizations. Some of the limitations on the study consider the insufficient availability of written materials about the conflicts, as most of them are considered to be kept secret to protect the confidentiality of the parties involved. Another, limitation has been the availability of peace operation studies, given the fact that since 1992 they have been attributed to the United Nations. It is also worth to mention that in the case of countries who have faced internal conflict, it has been difficult to find adequate qualitative and empirical studies, due to the continuous civil unrest. Internal disputes have also affected the availability and or efficiency of empirical data due to the corruption that characterizes the countries facing civil wars and internal disputes. There also exists few studies that suggest further solutions to the interdependence that regional organizations have in IRO's and other organizations and agencies. As a result further studies need to be done regarding measures that RIGO's have to take to gain more independence in their involvement in conflict settings within the region.

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