

International Actors' Roles towards Belligerent Parties: An Insight on the 'Transformative Paradigm'

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This abstract intends to deepen one aspect of a comparative study (to be published in 2011) that intended to assess international action's outcomes in the light of some specific *social roles* international actors assume towards the parties in three (Sub-Sahara) African armed conflicts since the 1990s: Sierra Leone, DRC and Burundi. Three different roles were discussed in this study: armed protection, third party mediation/facilitation and institutional transformation. In this panel, we propose to focus on the latter, which we might call the "transformative paradigm".

This transformative impulse leans on specific relations of security tied between international actors and belligerents, particularly governments fighting against rebellions. It aims at transforming sectors that are deemed crucial for successful peacebuilding operations: reforming the security sector, transforming rebel groups into political parties and 'civilianizing' ex-military governments, etc.

In order to question this transformative relation, we elaborate on the notions of *social role* and *practical norms*, in order to accord a major importance on regular, repeated practices and collective expectations between deployed international agents and local political and military actors on the field.

The multidimensional aspects and the plurality of international actors and configurations involved in our three study cases provided with valuable tests to identify such regularities and lessons. This comparative work leans on three doctoral theses supported by interviews realized during field missions in Bujumbura, Freetown, Bo, Ottawa, and New York, from 2002 to 2008, with local political and rebel leaders, international officers, national diplomats and military*.

* These three doctoral theses have been achieved at the *Institut d'études politiques* of Bordeaux, *Centre d'étude d'Afrique noire*: Mélanie Cathelin, *Le rôle international d'un État: construction, institutionnalisation et changement. Le cas de la politique canadienne de maintien de la paix en Afrique*, 2008 ; David Ambrosetti's one (2005) has been published in his 2009 book: *Normes et Rivalités diplomatiques à l'ONU. Le Conseil de sécurité en audience*, Bruxelles, Peter Lang, 2009; Pierre Anouilh, *Sant'Egidio et les métamorphoses de la fabrique de la paix: une étude comparée Mozambique-Burundi*, 2010.

