

‘Training for Peace’ - a universal Practise? How micro Processes are impacting the Likelihood of an EU-India Cooperation in Peacekeeping

Why have the EU and India been unable to explore the common potential of their partnership in peacekeeping training? Drawing upon the literature of practice theories and the concept of community of practices, as well as semi-structured interviews with policy-makers and peacekeeping trainers from India and the EU, policy documents and participant observation, the article explores the complementarity of structures of the EU’s and India’s training communities and discusses the implicit knowledge which is guiding the practices of actors. Thereby, the article moves away from offering structural explanations, such as diverging strategic interests, which have dominated the literature on the EU’s external relations with Asia. Comparing the practice communities, the article finds substantial divergence in the material and ideational structure of training institutes. Moreover, the article illustrates that the disposition of actors in the Indian training community is characterized by the unspoken understanding that India’s training philosophy is more compatible with other countries from the Global South. While both structures, as well as dispositions of actors are unfavourable vis-à-vis an EU-India partnership in peacekeeping training, the article concludes that by addressing familiarity gaps among training communities, divergences in structures and dispositions can be overcome.

Keywords: European Union, India, community of practice, security cooperation, peacekeeping, pre-deployment training, Asia

Introduction

Security governance has been transforming, driven by the United States’ fading enthusiasm for supporting multilateral endeavours to address security dilemmas. This has also impacted the area of peacekeeping, where the Trump administration has indicated to reduce its financial contribution (Diehl, 2019). At the same time the number of global conflicts has been on the rise (Pettersson, Högladh & Öberg, 2019). For the remaining

supporters of a rules-based global order in security, this has meant to look beyond traditional security partners. Consequently, new partnerships have emerged – and have been eyed - to preserve peacekeeping’s central role in addressing global conflicts. The European Union, for instance, has increasingly pivoted towards Asia.¹ This interest is declared in a conclusion of the Council of the European Union, which recommends Asian participation in EU Common Security and Defence Policy (CSDP) missions and operations, offering European Security and Defence College (ESDC) training to countries interested in contributing to EU operations, and ‘to observe or participate in Asian partner-led exercises and to advance cooperation on UN peacekeeping training’ (Council of the European Union, 2018).² Given India’s important role as a troop contributor, it is one of the key partners singled out in this conclusion.

The EU’s keenness on India as a potential partner in peacekeeping also finds expression in the EU Strategy on India from November 2018. In this strategy, crisis management, peacekeeping and peacebuilding is identified as one of the areas of security, which is thought to offer a ‘vast potential’ for deepening the strategic partnership between the two actors (EEAS, 2018, p.12). Accompanying this synergistic relation there are very detailed proposals on implementation such as joint projects with India for training assistance to third countries, i.e. from Africa (EEAS, 2018, p. 13). The strategy further suggests to ‘encourage regular exchanges on EU CSDP operations with the view to promote participation of Indian security experts, police, justice officials, and military advisors’ and it envisions invitations to each other’s peacekeeping trainings. In theory, the proposed initiatives are thus very solid and re-iterated both in the EU Strategy on India and in the conclusion of the Council of the European Union (Council of the European Union, 2018; EEAS, 2018). Together with their successful performance and active contribution in the area of peacekeeping and training, one is tempted to share the EU’s optimism regarding

an intensified cooperation in training. Looking more closely at the trajectory of India and the EU's partnership in peacekeeping, the prospects for implementation, however, seem much more limited. In 2005, the EU and India had already proposed joint training of military and civilian components or exchange of trainees and instructors between training centres in a Joint Partnership document (Council of the European Union, 2005). More than a decade later, these proposals have not led to a change in practice. As both India and the EU have successfully cooperated with third countries in training peacekeepers and have shown a strong commitment and capacity in the area of training, this paper sets out to explore why the EU and India have been unable to explore the common potential for their partnership in peacekeeping training.

Literature on EU-India relations has highlighted a set of different obstacles hampering their strategic partnership. These include India's doubts about the EU's credibility as a security actor, Delhi's preference to approach member states bilaterally, the differences in foreign policy approaches, with the EU's normative power outlook and India's realist approach to international relations and the divergence in security challenges both actors face in the international system (Allen, 2013; Howorth, 2016; Jain & Pandey, 2019; Joshi, 2017; Kavalski, 2016; Lai, Holland, & Kelly, 2019; Lisbonne-de Vergeron, 2006; Sachdeva, 2014; Singh, 2019; Stumbaum, 2015; Wagner & Bendiek, 2008). Looking at these assessments, one could thus say that there has been a preference to focus on structural constraints over individual (agential) factors. Furthermore, the literature, has either highlighted the material obstacles of the partnership, or has put the focus on differences in perceptions and normative frameworks (Baroowa, 2007; Jain & Pandey, 2014; Jain & Pandey, 2019; Joshi, 2017; Lisbonne-de Vergeron, 2006). On a theoretical level, the article addresses this literature gap by applying a practice theoretical approach to explore the possibilities for a peacekeeping partnership between India and the EU

(Adler, 2008; Adler & Pouliot, 2011; Pouliot & Cornut, 2015). Considering practices as the ‘key entry point to study social and political life’, which are understood to be co-constituted by ideational and material factors and shaped both by agents as well structure, the article aims to overcome this limitation of the literature (Adler & Pouliot, 2011, p. 4; Bueger and Gadinger, 2018). Providing insights into the Indian peacekeeping training community, the paper offers an application of the practice theoretical approach outside the Global North, from where it emerged and has been applied to in the past.³ Moreover, as peacekeeping cooperation has remained an underexplored field in the literature on EU India relations, as well as more general in the literature dealing with European security cooperation, the article empirically contributes to closing this gap.

In order to understand ‘background knowledge’ of practioners which drives their action in conducting the peacekeeping trainings, three types of data have been collected (Bueger, 2014). Firstly, during a four months field work stay in Delhi between November 2018 and February 2019, as well as a four months field work stay in Brussels between March 2019 and July 2019, the author was able to conduct twenty-eight semi-structured in-depth interviews with peacekeeping trainers, peacekeepers and policy-makers from India and the European Union. Interviews were conducted in English. The names of interviewees are withheld by mutual agreement to assure confidentiality. Secondly, the paper uses material from a week-long participant observation in a military officer training at the Centre for UN Peacekeeping, New Delhi (CUNPK) in February 2019, including informal interaction with the participants and trainers. Thematically, the questions focused on the activities conducted in the peacekeeping training centres to get an understanding of the structure and practices in the training communities. These questions were complemented by asking the practioners for their interpretation of inhibiting factors for an EU-India

training cooperation, possible avenues for exchange and whether a training cooperation would impact the depths of the EU-India strategic partnership. Lastly, the article is based on the analysis of policy documents, training manuals, and official speech records to complement and validate the primary data collected during the field trips in Delhi and Brussels.

The article will proceed as follows: The first part of the paper provides the theoretical framework of the paper by referring to the literature on practice approaches and particularly the concept of ‘community of practice’ (Adler, 2008; Lave & Wenger, 1991; Wenger, 1998). The second part introduces the training contexts in India and the EU followed by an analysis of their complementarity in structure. Thereafter, I will outline the dispositions, which actors in the Indian community of peacekeeping training are guided by. Finally, the conclusion summarizes the findings and gives a preliminary assessment of the potential for an EU-India training cooperation.

Peacekeeping Training Centers as Communities of Practice

Rather than arguing that overlapping normative frameworks (Constructivism) or strategic interests (Realism) of India and the EU are influencing their chances for cooperation in peacekeeping training, the paper predicts that chances for cooperation are shaped by the complementarity of practices within the peacekeeping training centres. Practices in the analysis are thereby understood as ‘socially meaningful patterns of action, which, in being performed competently, simultaneously embody, act out, and possibly reify background knowledge and discourse in an on the material world’ (Adler & Pouliot, 2011, p. 4). In other words, practices are an expression for the everyday, habitual routine of

practitioners, the implicit or tacit knowledge that operates in the background (Bueger, 2014).

The CUNPK and the ESDC are conceptualised in this paper as practise communities (Lave & Wenger, 1991; Wenger, 1998). The idea of practise communities has been borrowed from the work of Jean Lave and Etienne Wenger (1991), Wenger (1998) and its later application in IR theory by Emanuel Adler (2008). A community of practise – here the peacekeeping training community - is characterized by a shared domain of interest, an ‘expertise’ which distinguishes the group from people outside the community (Wenger, 1998). The members of the community of practise engage in joint activities and discussions and share experiences, they form a community (Wenger, 1998). Lastly, these practitioners, not only have shared interests and form a community, additionally, they also share a common practise. Conceptualizing peacekeeping training centres as community of practices might seem counterintuitive, given that the concept has mostly been applied to less geographically determined places of learning, such as the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) (Adler, 2008), diplomatic communities in the EU (Bicchi, 2016; Hofius, 2016) or the community of practices involved in the decision-making for crisis management operations within the EU (Mérand & Rayroux, 2016). The article advocates nevertheless, for conceptualizing peacekeeping training centres as practise communities, as it is believed that each training centre differs in the design and delivery of peacekeeping training and is shaped by the multitude of actors acting within them, expressed by the idea of peacekeeping training centres as ‘hybrid spaces’ (Holmes, 2018 p. 13). This diversity is not significantly affected by the UN’s attempts to standardize pre-deployment trainings starting in the 90s, culminating in the Core Pre-Deployment Training Materials (CPTMS), which are recommended as a core resource for any UN pre-deployment course (Curran, 2013). While it is believed that the training centres are incorporating the CPTMs,

the article argues that these materials are considered and used as guidelines, and not regulations.⁴

Considering practices as the main entry point to the research, and conceptualizing training centres as community of practices, has the advantage that the structure-agency, as well as the ideational-material dichotomy can be addressed. This can be illustrated in the following. Firstly, institutes are established by actors with certain objectives and ideas in mind, which then provide the organisation with a direction to move forward. After this first step, the structure of the institute, as well as courses are designed according to these ideas, which establishes a material reality in the institute. Training manuals are produced, the institute creates facilities which can accommodate a certain number of participants, depending on the envisioned scope and so forth. Lastly, the actors involved in conducting and planning the trainings bring in their own understanding of what constitutes a good peacekeeping training. Trainers are thus important actors constituting the structure of the peacekeeping training communities (cf. Adler, 2019; Adler & Pouliot, 2011). They, for instance have a say in what kind of materials are used, how knowledge will be transferred, and what pedagogical approaches to follow. Vice versa the structure of the training community is impacting the actors within it, by setting the standards on who qualifies as a trainer within the community.

Following the logic of practise approaches to international relations and thinking through the concept of practise community, a training cooperation between the EU and India can only materialize if either the structure of the community of practices (ideational and material) or the dispositions of actors (ideas) within it, are favourable towards it (cf. Pouliot, 2008). In order to give justice to this complex system of co-constituting factors shaping peacekeeping training communities, the analysis is structured in the following.

The first part will outline the structure of the peacekeeping training communities in India and the EU. Questions guiding this part of the analysis are: what goals are driving the training centres (ideational); how the institutes and trainings are structured (material); and finally who conducts the trainings. Thereafter, the disposition of actors within India's training community is discussed, whereby the focus lies on their inclination towards entering a peacekeeping training partnership with the EU.

Training communities in India and the European Union – complementarity in structure?

The Centre for United Nations Peacekeeping was initiated in 2000 as a joint venture between the Ministry of Defence, the Ministry of External Affairs, as well as the Service Headquarter of the Indian Army (Permanent Mission of India to the UN; United Nations, 2019a). Prior to this, no institutionalized pre-deployment training existed for the Indian troops and commanding officers of contingents had the task of training their personnel after receiving advice from other force commanders who would have previously participated in peacekeeping missions.⁵ Being a brainchild of Lt. Gen. Satish Nambiar, Force Commander of the UN protection force in former Yugoslavia, in his words the underlying idea for the creation of the centre was to institutionalize the training philosophy and methodology acquired by India over the many years of its participation in UN peacekeeping so that eventually the CUNPK will emerge as a 'repository of our experiences in United Nations peacekeeping' (Nambiar, 2014). The collective understanding of what India's training practice community is all about, is thus to collect India's meaningful experience in peacekeeping and to advance its training capacities (cf. Wenger, 1998). At the same time – through offering international courses - the institute has also developed the external mission to act as a platform to share India's best practices

and ideas on peacekeeping with other troop contributing countries (Ministry of External Affairs, Government of India, 2003).

The small amount of permanent staff required for the CUNPK is made available by the Indian army, which also provides facilities for the centre to conduct its courses. Political guidance is offered by policy-makers within the Ministry of External Affairs and Ministry of Defence, who are responsible for the financing of the institute. While most peacekeeping trainings in India are run by the CUNPK, it must be understood that training centres are communities with fluid borders. The CUNPK has academic partner institutes, such as the Centre for Land And Warfare Studies (CLAWS) or the United Service Institute of India (USI). The CUNPK is further partnering with other entities, such as UN Women India (UNW), to develop specialized training capsules. India is also a participant in the annual conference of the International Association for Peacekeeping Training Centres (IAPTC), where the country representatives exchange best practices and training experiences.

CUNPK offers two types of courses: international and national courses. The national courses are conceptualized for the Indian contingents, which are usually pulled around six months before their first deployment to Delhi. These include for instance, field training exercises. CUNPK also runs seven international courses, which are directed to a more senior military and police audience, such as military contingent officers, military observers, and staff and logistic officers. These courses focus on building leadership capacities, such as the 'Senior Leaders Course', the 'Female Military Officers Course' or focus on a specific issue area, for example on logistics or conflict-related sexual violence. Each of the international courses offers fifteen vacancies for foreign participants, whose

travel expenditures, accommodation, meals and training are covered by the Ministry of External Affairs in case the participant is from a country of the Global South.⁶ The few permanent staff members of the CUNPK are involved in organizing the courses and act as lecturers. Additionally, senior members of the Indian army with prior experience in peacekeeping missions are performing the role of trainer. For specific training modules, such as conflict related and gender-based violence, external experts, i.e. from UN Women design the trainings.

The training scenario in the EU is more complex than in India, given that EU member states are contributing their troops not only through UN missions, but increasingly through other fora, such as NATO and since 2003 operate their own European Common Security and Defence Policy (CSDP) missions and operations (Koops & Tercovich, 2016). In comparison to India, the EU has thus alternative channels for mission deployments. CSDP missions share many similarities with UN missions. They are following the same core principles of - non-intervention, impartiality and minimum use of force, and many EU missions are in fact operating to support UN missions (Tardy, 2019). The close-knit partnership between the EU and the UN and their shared understanding of crisis management is also reflected in the field of training, where cooperation on training and capacity building is one of the eight priority areas of the UN-EU strategic partnership (UN, 2018). Moreover, the EU policy on training for CSDP clearly states that its 'role is to be compatible and complementary, where appropriate, with training activities carried out by the UN, OSCE, NATO, African Union and other international organizations or individual partner countries' (Council of the European Union, 2017).

Trainings for UN and CSDP missions and operations are primarily conducted by training centres within the member states (Koukhol, 2017). Since 2005, the ESDC has acted as a network college and the only provider of training at the European level (Dubois, 2017). The following discussion will focus on the ideas and the structure guiding the ESDC, as a training cooperation with India at a European level, would at least in its initial stage have to involve the ESDC. The institutes ideational structure is declared in its two-fold mission-statement. On the one hand, within the EU its aim is to support the development of a common European security culture and on the other hand, outside its borders, to ‘promote EU values and share best practices in security and defence’.⁷

The ESDC, similar to the CUNPK, has a small number of permanent staff members. Its activities are hosted by Ministries or Permanent Representations, others by EU Institutions or other EU entities including the European External Action Service (EEAS). Additionally, given its network character, the ESDC relies on more than 165 training institutes within EU member states for the conduct of its trainings (Katsagounos, 2020). These institutes include national defence academies, police colleges, peace universities and diplomatic training institutes, thus a whole range of military, police and civilian partners are involved. A steering committee in which the EU member states are represented provides political guidance to the ESDC. An Executive academic board plays the role of providing academic advice and ensures quality and coherence are maintained in these trainings (Katsagounos, 2020). Apart from the ESDCs efforts to coordinate the EU’s peacekeeping training, institutes can exchange best practises during the annual meeting of the European Association for Peace Operation Training Centres (EAPTC). The EU is also represented at the IAPTCs annual meetings by the ESDC and through the institutions of its member states (EEAS, 2017). As India is also part of these meetings,

the annual conference offers a space for informal exchanges between Indian and European counterparts.

Courses offered at the ESCD could be divided into those focusing on CSDP missions such as the CSDP orientation course or the pre-deployment training for CSDP missions and operations, and those focusing on specific issue areas, such as security sector reform, sexual and gender-based violence and the recently added course on cyber security.¹ The courses are inclusive and encourage a mix of participants from civilian, military and police backgrounds (Katsagounos, 2020). While most of the participants in these trainings of the ESDC come from EU member states, the training is open to third countries, particularly those which are interested in – or already contributing to CSDP operations. Training cooperation with third countries on a larger scale are however restricted to partnerships with the institutes of the EU's member states, as the ESDC lacks the capacity to conduct these trainings.⁸ Trainings in the ESDC are conducted by the internal staff of the ESDC with diplomatic, civilian, military and police backgrounds, as well as external instructors, such as for instance from the European Union Institute for Security Policy (EUISS) (Dubois, 2017).

Outlining the ideational and material structure of peacekeeping training communities in India and the EU unravels both complementarities, as well as inhibiting factors. In their external mission, thus, to share best practices in the area of peacekeeping, the ESDC and the CUNPK are largely aligned. In their internal missions, the CUNPK's motivation is to preserve the experiences previously collected by Indian peacekeeper in their participation

¹ <https://esdc.europa.eu/courses/>

in UN missions, while the ESDC is driven by the aim to develop a European security culture and to develop and promote ‘a common understanding of CSDP among civilian and military personnel’(ESDC, 2018). These different ideational structures are impacting the material structure of the institutes, i.e. the courses offered, in two different ways. Firstly, the ESDC is focusing on courses with the aim to create expertise on CSDP missions among European member states, as well as third countries. Contrary, the CUNPK prepares its peacekeeper exclusively for UN missions. Nevertheless, as outlined above, the common understanding of crisis management among the EU and UN means that courses can serve as preparation courses for both EU- and UN missions. The Comprehensive Generic Training Peace Operations course (CGTPO) at the Centre for International Peace Operations (ZiF) in Berlin, one of the ESDC’s partner institutes, is for instance conceptualized as preparation courses for peace operations of UN, OSCE and EU. Moreover, complementarity of structures between the ESDC and the CUNPK exists in regard to the content of specialized courses, such as for instance gender-based and conflict related sexual violence. Both the Indian and European policy-makers have expressed their commitment to integrate gender concerns in peacekeeping trainings at the UN level. Gender mainstreaming in peacekeeping is thus a shared priority area. Secondly, given that India’s peacekeeping contribution is primarily in form of military contingents, preserving India’s peacekeeping experiences means foremost to direct CUNPK trainings towards military and to some lesser extent police officers. This is also reflected in the military background of the trainers and staff at the CUNPK. To qualify as an expert or instructor in the CUNPK is largely influenced by a practitioners’ ‘on-the-ground’ experience within a UN missions. The ESDC on the contrary, aims to create a common understanding of CSDP missions and operations amongst all staff members, that is civilian, military and police, which is reflected in the composition of trainees, staff

members, as well as instructors. While some staff members do have previous experiences from mission deployments, others qualify based on their educational background. Among the many partners of the ESDC are however institutes with pre-dominantly military focused outlook, such as defence and military academies. Their material structure is more aligned with the Indian training institute.

Even though there is some complementarity in material and ideational structures, the interaction has been very restricted. Apart from EU member states financing a course for female military officers at the CUNPK, informal interaction during the annual conference of the IAPTC and the invitation of trainer based on personnel connections, the training cooperation is still at a nascent stage (Embassy of the Netherlands, 2018; Naik, 2015; Orchard, 2019).⁹

The lack of interaction of peacekeeping training communities is part of an overall familiarity gap of each other's working mechanisms and approaches in security among actors in the EU and India, which foregrounds and amplifies many of the obstacles which will be discussed in regard to the actors' dispositions in the second part of the paper.¹⁰ This missing understanding is partially caused by the 'severe shortage of Indian Foreign Service officers (IFS)', which forces India to focus its limited capacity on countries strategically more important to them than the EU (Bajpai & Chong, 2019, p. 18; Jain & Sachdeva, 2019). The Indian Embassy in Brussel is responsible for Belgium, Luxembourg, as well as the EU and India's military attaché is permanently based in Paris and not aggregated for EU-matters. This is also an expression of India's preference for bilateral defence ties with European member states, foremost France and the UK and to some lesser extent Germany (D'Ambrogio, 2017; Sachdeva, 2015). Similarly, the EU's

interest in India as a security partner has only recently made them to recognize the importance to delegate a security advisor to Delhi in order to facilitate a dialogue on defence and security matters (EEAS, 2017). Accordingly, it has been noted that neither are Indian diplomats able to grasp the working mechanisms of the EU, nor is the EU making the effort to understand the Indian side (Purusottam, 2012). While there are now some mechanisms in place to enhance a joint security cooperation, such as the EU-India Foreign Policy and Security Consultations, as well as rather recently established dialogues in the area of counter-terrorism, cyber-security, non-proliferation, disarmament and maritime security, these are still at a nascent stage and thus have not generated significant results (Allen, 2013). In the area of crisis management and peacekeeping, a security dialogue has not been initiated yet. Apart from a lack of interaction amongst policy-makers on both sides, it has been illustrated, that in the area of military-to-military interaction ‘uniformed personnel rarely meet at eye level’ (Mohan & Rotmann, 2017, p. 5). Since this assessment was conducted, some movement has taken place - such as a joint naval passing exercise in 2017, India’s escort of a World Food Program (WFP) vessel of the coast of Somalia in 2018 in support of Operation Atalanta and a visit of high-level EU military representatives to Mumbai and Delhi in 2019. These are only first steps to an increased engagement (EEAS, 2019; Roy Chaudhury, 2019).¹¹ Given, this lack of interaction the consensus among interviewees from the peacekeeping training communities has been, that the ‘EU India strategic partnership is in semantics rather than substance’ and further that peacekeeping and crisis management has remained one of the weakest link in the EU India strategic partnership.¹²

What drives the practitioners? Discussing the disposition of actors within India's training community

The absence of a more general interaction in the field of security, and particularly in the area of crisis management and peacekeeping has meant that mind sets about the EU among Indian policy making elites and practitioners have remained unchallenged. Three of these perceptions and ideas, which are characteristic for the disposition of actors in India's training community and which are affecting the chances for a training cooperation with the EU are: the Indian perception of the EU's actorness in peacekeeping; the understanding that the EU is ensuing a different approach to peacekeeping; and the sentiment that India's long-standing peacekeeping contribution means that its role is that of a knowledge transmitter. The EU's actorness in peacekeeping is a disposition which is shaped by shared implicit understandings on the diplomatic as well as instructor level, whereas the question of the differences in approaches in peacekeeping and training are derived from tacit knowledge among the military community. Since the CUNPK is understood as a practice community in which actors interact and develop their common practices, the expectation is that both diplomats, as well as instructors shape the dispositions of the community.

Firstly, one common assessment in the secondary literature is that in India's understanding the EU cannot be considered a credible actor in security and is particularly irrelevant in the Asian security context (Howorth, 2016; Lai et al., 2019; Mohan & Rotmann, 2017; Sachdeva, 2015; Singh, 2019). This also applies in the field of peacekeeping, where the credibility of the EU is questioned by Indian policy-makers at two levels. Speaking on behalf of the troop contributing countries, Delhi has criticized financial contributors such as the EU for failing to provide UN peacekeeper with the

required equipment and finances to fulfil their mission mandates. Furthermore, there is an impression among policy making elites in Delhi, that the EU – in line with other Western peacekeeping contributors – practises liberal interventionism. Policy-makers have, for instance, pointed out that some of the tasks performed by the EU's civilian missions, i.e. the enthusiasm for security sector reform, imposes in a top-down manner liberal templates on the host societies (Allen, 2013; Klossek, 2020). This contradicts, Delhi's advocacy to refrain from interventions which endanger the sovereignty of the host state (De Carvalho & De Coning, 2013).¹³ As a consequence of this implicit understanding, Indian policy-makers routinely place India with the group of troop contributing countries from the Global South as opposed to the group of financial contributors from the Global North, a category where the EU is placed under. This has created a tradition, whereby India enters into partnerships almost exclusively with countries from the Global South.¹⁴ Within the military training community, the majority of interviewees have expressed some scepticism about the 'on-the-ground' experience of European armies, arguing that they are missing the skills that Indian soldiers acquire during their deployment in India's internal conflicts zones, such as the North-East and Kashmir.¹⁵ They nevertheless consider the EU's actorness in peacekeeping, as that of an 'indispensable partner'.¹⁶ Among other things, they noted that the European armies are very well equipped, professional and can provide specialized assets, such as drones (Gowan, 2015).¹⁷ Even more so, it was expressed that the current European absence from UN peacekeeping in form of 'boots on the ground' is 'inexcusable'.¹⁸

A second disposition, which finds expression both in the Indian discourse at the UN, as well among the interviewees, is a perceived difference in the culture of operations. Thereby, it is expressed that the engagement of most of the EU member states in the

NATO security community, makes the posture of their armies by large more offensive and robust, as compared to an Indian approach.¹⁹ This is contrasted with the working mechanisms of the Indian army, which has been termed as a ‘developmental army’ or ‘developmental peacekeepers’, by security analysts within India (Nambiar, 2009, p. 398, cited in Choedon, 2014). The idea of developmental peacekeeper refers to India’s internal deployments of the army in many aspects of communal life, such as for instance in the area of disaster relief. It is also thought to depict the ability of the Indian army to build strong community ties (Beri, 2008).²⁰ The ‘winning hearts and minds’ approach and thus the capacity of Indian troops to reach out to the local population and gain their good-will, is cited as a case in point.²¹ Close cultural proximity and a deep understanding for local cultures, in which peacekeeper are deployed are often identified as the driver for this ability to foster ties with the local communities.²² The unspoken understanding is that because of India’s cultural proximity with other countries from the Global South it is better fit to reach out to the local population, whereas the EU because of its embeddedness in the NATO security community is as an outside actor with more robust and interventionist attitude. All interviewees from India’s training community share the understanding, that the difference in military culture is impacting the training philosophy of the EU and India, and subsequently that it creates obstacles for a training partnership.²³

Thirdly – both Indian and European training communities – understand their capacity in training as grounded in vast experiences and know-how. Consequently, there is an implicit expectation that their institutes will act as places of knowledge transfer, with their instructors in the clear positions as knowledge-providers rather than receivers.²⁴ Trainers at the CUNPK, as well as Indian senior UN officials, have taken pride in the trajectory of the institute, which has already enabled 1500 foreign participants to profit from India’s

knowledge in peacekeeping and which is offering courses certified by the UN.²⁵ The understanding among the training community of being able to transfer knowledge has shaped the external mission of the CUNPK. This has translated into the institute offering a number of training activities for third countries such as sending mobile training teams to Vietnam (2017) and Myanmar (2018), and training Kazakhstan's first ever peacekeeping contingent, which is currently deployed in an Indian battalion in Lebanon (Siddiqui, 2018). Furthermore, India has been conducting a training course for African Partners (UNPCAP) together with the United States since 2015 (Peri, 2016). Similarly, the EU has deployed its training missions in Somalia, Mali, Niger and the Central African Republic, and at the recent UN peacekeeping defence ministerial in 2019 has pledged to provide mobile training teams for pre-deployment training, as well as to provide support for African training centres (United Nations, 2019b; Tor, 2017).

Lastly, doubts about the complementarity of training structures have been expressed among Indian instructors. They pointed out that their training is directed primarily at the military contingents and would not overlap with the EU's comprehensive approach of including military, police and civilians in its trainings and that the EU's focus on CSDP missions is conflicting with India's support of UN missions.

Outlining the dispositions of actors in the Indian training community has revealed that they are motivated by practical imperatives more than abstract motives such as strategic interests (McCourt, 2016). A common denominator of this implicit knowledge is to project the EU as an actor from the Global North, with a liberal approach to peacekeeping, that is more interventionist and robust than what India is advocating. This knowledge among India's training community – both peacekeeping trainers and policy-makers –

means that in practise India has routinely aligned itself with countries of the Global South and has followed a pattern whereby it enters into training cooperation and partnerships with these troop contributors. In these partnerships, the implicit role allocation is that India is the knowledge transmitter offering training to countries with less experience in peacekeeping. This tacit understanding creates an obstacle for an EU-India training partnership, as the EU's training community has also been claiming for itself the role of knowledge transmitter.

Altering structures of the training communities or shifting the dispositions among actors?

Shifting the focus towards the concept of 'community of practices' and studying peacekeeping training centres through a practise theoretical lens, the paper has argued that a training cooperation between India and the EU can only materialize through complementarity in practice, i.e. if either the structure of the communities or the disposition of actors are favourable for a partnership or can be altered (Adler and Pouliot, 2011; Pouliot, 2008).

The analysis has demonstrated that ideational structures of the institutes are not compatible, exemplified in the diverging internal missions of the ESDC and the CUNPK. This internal orientation is shaped by the nature and history of both the parties' contribution to peacekeeping. Their position has thereby been consolidated over time and it is unlikely that underlying ideas and orientations of these institutes will shift. This applies particularly to the Indian case, where the institute was established as a repository of India's experiences collected over the many years of its contribution of 'boots on the ground' since UN peacekeeping's inception in 1948. The ESDC's internal orientation, to

create a common understanding of CSDP missions, is reflecting the change in the EU's contribution to peacekeeping, which has been consolidated in the recent years, and now leans towards favouring of CSDP over UN missions (Koops & Tercovich, 2016). While this difference in internal missions has created practise communities with different activities, the analysis has identified some overlaps. Firstly, because of the EU and UN's common understanding of crisis management, courses on CSDP missions cover many similar issue areas, like India's UN pre-deployment trainings (Tardy, 2019). Moreover, area specific courses, such as modules focusing on conflict related and gender- based sexual violence are prioritized by both the ESDC as well as the CUNPK.²⁶ Furthermore, amongst the partner institutions of the ESDC are military academies, which in their material structure resemble more closely to that of the CUNPK's set ups.

The disposition of actors within the Indian training community might be summarized as follows: the EU is considered a credible actor in the area of peacekeeping, but implicit knowledge among the training communities entails that as the EU's and India's peacekeeping approaches differ, training philosophies are diverging.²⁷ Nevertheless, unless in other areas of security, where the EU's actorness is questioned by the Indian side, in peacekeeping the EU is considered an 'indispensable' partner.²⁸ This provides some basis for a partnership, once implicit understanding of diverging training philosophies is overcome through increased interaction and exchange.²⁹ While habits – such as the Indian training community turning towards partners from the Global South create repetitive patterns of action, these practices can still be changed (cf. Cornut, 2017). The fact, that both the EU and India consider their institutes as places of knowledge transfer, could be channelled into a training cooperation for third countries.

The article has revealed, that practice communities engaging in a seemingly common practice, such as the one of peacekeeping training, can deviate in substantial ways, not evident to the eyes of policy-makers, who – when identifying possible areas for cooperation – focus on strategic interests and shared values. These macro-level assumptions fall short of assessing the actual chances for partnerships, which depend more often on factors located at the practitioners level. Furthermore, the risk with these macro-level assumptions, such as the widely quoted beliefs among the academic community that India questions the actorness of the EU in security, is that they overlook the differences between security fields. Letting the practitioners share their experience, understanding and perceptions during semi-structured interviews and participant observation has helped the author to identify the remaining obstacles for an EU-India peacekeeping training partnership, while at the same time pointing out areas where training communities are overlapping and where cooperation could materialize.³⁰

Conclusion

The EU has shown great interest in deepening its security partnership with India. Peacekeeping training has thereby long-been identified as a promising field for cooperation, but as of now the cooperation has failed to materialize. Setting out to understand this failure for cooperation, the paper has identified the divergence in practice communities (structure and dispositions of actors) in India and the EU as the major obstacle for exploring the common potential of their partnership. At the same time, the findings indicate that by addressing familiarity gaps among training communities, these divergences can be overcome. While the study has focused on the specific case of training communities in India and the EU, some general reflections can be drawn from the findings.

Overall, the article has shown the explanatory power of practices at the micro-level to point out inhibiting factors for joint partnerships, but also to find complementarities. Unlike earlier contributions which focused on a single practice community, the article has compared two communities engaged in the seemingly universal practice – that of training for peace - and looked for complementarities in its structure and disposition of actors. The focus on practices as the main entry point of research provides an interesting avenue for comparative studies. The type of research required from scholars following a practice approach depends however on a high degree of immersion in the field of study, given that traditional research methods will not be able to uncover the tacit background knowledge guiding practitioners, a process which becomes more time-intensive if the study is designed as a comparative analysis. Moreover, the findings suggest that complementary practice communities are the exception rather than the rule, as each training centre is made up of a unique composition of actors and training structures which are developed over time. This acknowledgement of practices as evolving entities means that for future research projects focusing on the likelihood of security cooperation that they would profit from a strong historical angle and a focus on micro-practices in order to grasp the complex setting of structures and actors co-constituting practices.

Ultimately, for Indian and European training communities to merge their efforts into a shared community of practice, a common interest and shared practices are required (Wenger, 1998). The common interest that is deploying well-trained military, police as well as civilian personnel to the mission areas is already given. Sharing practices, expertise and lesson learned among training communities should thus be the way forward.

Notes

- ¹ Some cooperation between the EU and its Asian partners has already materialized, such as for instance China and the Republic of Korea's contribution to the EU's mission anti-piracy operation Atalanta in the Gulf of Aden or a joint training between Dutch and Chinese troops in MINUSMA Mali
- ² The other key partners identified in the document are the EU's strategic partners Japan, the Republic of Korea and China.
- ³ See for instance Adler's (2008) study of the NATO security community, Bicchi's (2016) analysis of the EU's diplomatic community in Brussels or Græger's (2016; 2017) study of informal practise communities in the EU-NATO cooperation
- ⁴ Interview with former member of the Indian army, Delhi, December 28, 2018
- ⁵ Interview with former member of the Indian army, Delhi, December 7, 2018
- ⁶ Interview with former member of the Indian army, December 27, 2019
- ⁷ see website of the ESDC: <https://esdc.europa.eu/who-we-are/>
- ⁸ Interview with member of ESDC, Brussels, April 30, 2019
- ⁹ Interview with former member of the Indian army, Delhi, December 27, 2018
- ¹⁰ Interview with member of EEAS, Brussels, March 26, 2019
- ¹¹ Interview with member of EEAS, Brussels, 26 March, 2019
- ¹² Interview with member of EEAS, Brussels, 26 March, 2019; Interview with former member of the Indian army, Delhi, December 7, 2018
- ¹³ Interview with former member of the Indian army, Delhi, January 23, 2019
- ¹⁴ The only partnership with a country from the Global North is a cooperation with the United States for training African peacekeeper. The cooperation materialized because the United States approached India.

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- ¹⁵ Interview with former member of the Indian army, Delhi, December 7, 2018
- ¹⁶ Interview with former member of the Indian army, Delhi, December 7, 2018
- ¹⁷ Interview with former member of the Indian army, Delhi, December 27, 2018
- ¹⁸ Interview with former member of the Indian army, Delhi, December 7, 2018
- ¹⁹ Interview with former member of the Indian army, Delhi, December 27, 2018
- ²⁰ Interview (skype) with former member of the Indian army, April 2, 2019
- ²¹ Interview with former member of the Indian army, Delhi, December 7, 2018,
Interview with former member of the Indian army, Delhi, December 24, 2018
- ²² Interview with former member of the Indian army, Delhi, January 23, 2019
- ²³ Interview (written-form) with former member of the Indian army, September 10, 2019
- ²⁴ Interview with former member of the Indian army, Delhi, January 3, 2019, Interview
with Member of EEAS, Brussels, April 3rd, 2019, Interview with member of the
Indian army, 17 December, 2018
- ²⁵ Interview with member of the Indian army, December 17, 2018
- ²⁶ This has for instance been reiterated by India and the EU in recent statements at the
UN. See, i.e. EU Statement by Clara Ganslandt, Head of Division for Partnerships
and Agreements, CSDP EEEAS, UN Peacekeeping Defence Ministerial, March 29,
2019. Retrieved from https://eeas.europa.eu/delegations/un-new-york/60402/node/60402_fi [Accessed 14 December 2019] and statement by Ms
Paulomi Tripathi, Indian First Secretary, UN Peacebuilding Commission, October
21, 2019. Retrieved from
https://www.pminewyork.gov.in/pdf/uploadpdf/statements__231809450.pdf
[Accessed 12 December 2019]
- ²⁷ Interview with former member of the Indian army, Delhi, December 7, 2018
- ²⁸ Interview with former member of the Indian army, Delhi, December 7, 2018

²⁹ Interview (skype) with former member of the Indian army, October 24, 2019

³⁰ Interview with former member of the Indian army, Delhi, January 23, 2019; Interview (skype) with former member of the Indian army, October 24, 2019

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