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Europeanisation, Actorness and State-building

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The EU and Contested Statehood in its Near Abroad: Europeanisation, Actorness and State-building

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The main purpose of this Special Issue is to interrogate the role of the European Union (EU) as a state-builder in its Near Abroad.[1] It aims to make a three-fold contribution to the existing literature. *Firstly*, it provides working definitions on contested statehood and state-building, paying particular attention to how their properties map onto the EU's own policy tools and the (diverse) nature of the conflicts with which it seeks to engage. *Secondly*, it engages with three sets of distinct conceptual literatures that are not often cross-fertilised: (i) the international relations scholarship on contested statehood and state-building; (ii) conceptualisations of EU 'actorness' in international affairs; and (iii) the literature on the external dimension of Europeanisation and the use of conditionality as a tool of projecting EU power to partner countries. *Thirdly*, it borrows from the literature on political geography in order to build an interdisciplinary perspective on EU geopolitical imaginations and the geographical dimensions of the EU's border expansion and crisis management. In this context, we aim to open a dialogue with political geographers whose valuable insights in this field are often overlooked by political scientists (Agnew 2013; Murphy et al. 2004; O'Loughlin 2000; Clark and Jones 2011). Thus, the central aim of this collection is to explore how the hybrid setup and the unique set of institutional, ideational and policy attributes of the EU affect processes of state-building in its near abroad.

This introductory article acts as a scene setter for the key theoretical and empirical themes addressed in this Special Issue. It maps the range of EU state-building instruments, the factors that constrain/facilitate the role of the EU as state-builder as well as issues that affect the temporality and spatiality of EU action. In addition, we seek to delineate the analytical boundaries of contested statehood, peace-and state-building before moving into the debate on EU actorness, and Europeanisation. We conclude with an overview of the contributing articles and their intellectual complementarity in addressing the key themes set out in this issue.

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Empirically, we focus on an extensive set of case studies spanning across different EU policy frameworks, including EU member states (Cyprus, Croatia), (potential) candidate countries (Kosovo, North Macedonia), countries from the EU's Eastern neighbourhood (Ukraine and Georgia) and countries/contested states form the Southern neighbourhood (Palestine and Western Sahara). Central to our case study selection is our preoccupation to delve into the temporal and spatial dimensions of EU state-building efforts. Chronologically our cases stretch from early stages of the Common Foreign and Security Policy (CFSP) and the disintegration of the Soviet Union and Yugoslavia to the more recent events in Ukraine, North Africa and the Middle East. The geographical spread of our coverage enables us to engage with the geopolitical diversity of EU state-building on the ground and draw comparative insights with regards to the ontology and political geography of EU external action.

In doing so we address a relative void in the intersection between political science and political geography. Political scientists have long tried to conceptualize the EU's external action by reference to its *civilian* (Bull 1982), *normative* (Manners 2002), *ethical* (Aggestam 2008), *market* (Damro 2012), *ideal* (Cebeci 2012) or *liberal* (Wagner 2017) power, but the empirical application of these terms over time and across cases has been rather uneven. On the other hand, with some notable exceptions (e.g. Bialasiewicz 2011; Bialasiewicz et al. 2009), the impact of the EU's policies on its near abroad has largely been overlooked by political geographers whose preoccupation has been primarily directed on the internal, rather than external, dimensions of Europeanization (on this see Mamadouh 2015; Clark and Jones 2008). Whilst not claiming to have the final word in this field, the present Special Issue offers a platform for a cross-disciplinary re-evaluation of the EU's policy towards its near abroad.

The compilation of articles in this Special Issue addresses a set of common themes in a comparative perspective, but does not put forward a single conceptual framework that is applied across all case studies. Neither is our aim to offer a conclusive 'global' assessment on the EU's effectiveness as a state-builder. Such an undertaking faces inherent difficulties given the different levels of 'maturity' of the conflicts under examination as well as the diverse patterns of international 'agency' behind the process of state-building they entail. In this context, the EU's own state-building engagement has varied widely from highly charged gestures of (non) recognition of Unilateral Declarations of Independence (UDI) (e.g Cyprus, Croatia, Kosovo, Ukraine), to the facilitation of more consensual processes of state preservation/separation (e.g. North-Macedonia, Serbia/Montenegro, Kosovo) and from the supply of highly sectorial assistance on state/institutional building (e.g. Palestine, Moldova, Georgia and Ukraine) to the exercise of direct executive powers over vital aspects of state sovereignty (e.g. Bosnia and Herzegovina, Kosovo).

Issues of causality and normativity further complicate the assessment of the impact of the EU's state-building engagement on the ground. The EU's involvement in international conflicts is rarely 'exclusive' or immune from the behaviour of 'significant others'. The United Nations (UN), the North Atlantic Treaty Organisation (NATO), the Organisation for Security and Co-operation in Europe (OSCE), the United States (US) and Russia (to mention a few) have all been significant stakeholders in the cases under examination and whose own state-building agendas were only partially compatible to that of the EU – and, in some cases, were diametrically opposed to it. In this context, the attribution of success and failure to a single player is not always apparent. In addition, the EU's state-building strategy often combines 'hard' policy instruments with 'softer' mechanisms of norm diffusion aimed at altering the discursive paradigm of conflicts. The effects of the latter, however, tend to be less clearly identifiable and longer term.

By their own nature, cases of state formation (and associated state-building) involve a high degree of normative contestation (Tholens and Gross 2015). External interference in this process can never be 'neutral' and/or neatly separated from wider discussions over the limits of state sovereignty in international politics (Weber 1995) and the boundaries of legitimate intervention by the international community. Similar ambiguity exists over the 'yardsticks' with which the quality of domestic institutions in post conflict polities is judged. We recognise that the answers to these questions are often inextricably linked with the specifics of each conflict and, as such, provide infertile ground upon which to build generalised conclusions over the success/failure of externally-mediated state-building processes.

Against this backdrop, we restrict the analytical focus of our collective endeavour to what we term as the EU's state-building 'posture' (that is the 'supply-side' of state-building) as opposed to its 'impact' (or effectiveness/success) on the ground. Although closely connected, the two terms should be understood as analytically distinct dependent variables with the latter ('impact') involving a wider field of investigation and affected by a larger set of intervening variables than the former (Bouris 2014, 82).

In this sense our prime objective is to unpack the factors that shape the ontology of the EU's state-building strategy, rather than assessing its application and effects on the ground. The empirical richness of the case studies that follow serves the purpose of identifying key intervening variables that affect the EU's posture in this field. These can be clustered around three main themes:

1. The Range of Available EU State-Building Instruments

There is an important interplay between the policy arsenal available to the EU and the nature of state contestation on the ground (see discussion on

contested statehood and EU actorness below). Often this is closely linked to the role assigned to the EU, 'not only a model to be mimed, or a ready-made blueprint to be applied locally, EUrope is also simultaneously the beginning, end and reason for region-building' (Bialasiewicz 2011). The tools at the disposal of the EU may include 'high politics' diplomatic activity in the context of the Common Foreign and Security Policy (CFSP) i.e. declarations of independence, states' recognition, mediation in peace accords, negotiated secessions (see Wydra 2018); the deployment of Common Security and Defence Policy (CSDP) missions (i.e. Kosovo, North Macedonia, Palestine, Serbia, Ukraine) (see Noutcheva 2018, Maass 2019, Dobrescu and Schumacher 2018, Baracani 2019, and Bouris and İşleyen 2018); the enlargement policy/accession process where the EU can use conditionality-related mechanisms (i.e. Cyprus and Kosovo which are considered potential candidates) (see Wydra 2018, Noutcheva 2018, Kyris 2018 and Baracani 2019) as well as the European Neighbourhood Policy (ENP) framework which induces tailor made conditionalities for the 16 countries in the EU's eastern and southern neighborhood (see Cebeci 2018, Wydra 2018, Noutcheva 2018, Maass 2019, Dobrescu and Schumacher 2018, Baracani 2019, and Bouris and İşleyen 2018) (see also Bouris and Schumacher 2017). In addition to such established frameworks for the projection of EU external influence, in recent years the proliferation of appointments of EU Special Representatives for flashpoints in its near abroad has widened the scope for policy entrepreneurship and/or the exercise of significant agency by senior EU officials (Adebahr 2009; Grevi 2007; Tolksdorf 2012, 2013, 2015).

2. International (e. g. Russia, US, NATO, UN), Internal (to the EU) and Domestic (to the EU's Partners) Factors that Constrain/Facilitate the Role of the EU as State-Builder

Drawing on the international relations literature on peace and state-building another important aspect of state-building is the so-called 'co-ordination problem' (Paris and Sisk 2009). The existence of 'significant others' operating alongside the EU in state-building processes is critical in this respect. As a result, the policy preferences of key international players with important stakes over the same conflicts (e.g. Russia in Kosovo, US in Palestine) as well as potential parallel UN processes of peace and/or state-building can either facilitate or constrain the EU's role as a state-builder (Moisio et al. 2012). So does the presence of NATO which is often called upon as a supplier of 'hard' security capabilities in some of these conflicts. To this end, the presence (and place) of other external actors remains crucial in understanding the geographies of EU power. While the EU may seek to define its distinctive role in opposition to significant 'others', it is often the case that such 'others'could determine the (im) possibility of EU action (Bialasiewicz et al. 2009). The

case of Kosovo, here, is illustrative as the EU's involvement in the conflict was significantly constrained by broader security antagonisms between the US and Russia (International Crisis Group 2007). Thus, the way in which spheres of influence are constructed and contested in the context of state building offers a fertile ground for investigation by political scientists and political geographers alike.

The co-ordination problem is also linked to internal EU politics and policies involving both EU institutions and member states whose disagreements often constrain EU actorness (see below) and result in a fragmented posture and/or inertia (Schumacher, Bouris, and Olszewska 2016). Discord among EU member states is usually the rule, rather than the exception, when it comes to state-building and the EU has long been criticised for not being able to 'speak with one voice'. One of the most recent examples includes the case of Kosovo where five EU member states namely Spain, Slovakia, Cyprus, Romania and Greece have not recognized its independence (see Wydra 2018, Baracani 2019, and Noutcheva 2018).

The agendas and expectations of the EU's local interlocutors in areas of contested statehood also shape the boundaries of its state-building initiatives. For example, strong support for EU membership by the ruling elites and the local population facilitates the adoption of the relevant EU *acquis* and the fulfilment of the so-called Copenhagen criteria; both an important source of empowerment for the EU's state-building agenda through processes of 'passive enforcement' (Tocci 2010, 70) or 'passive aggression' (Bialasiewicz et al. 2009). In these cases, the key is the EU's ability to entice states to make all necessary governance changes without coercion (via the "invisible hand" of Europeanization) (Bialasiewicz et al. 2009, 87). On a similar vein, Barnett and Zücher (2009) speak of 'compromised state-building', where local elites buy into conditionality criteria presented by external state-building agencies in return for international support (see also Goodhand and Sedra 2006). But what happens when local agents attempt to alter the content of these conditionalities or frustrate their implementation? In cases where local veto points prevail the literature makes reference to 'captured state-building'. On the other end of the spectrum, when relations between foreign state-builders and local elites rapture as a result of non-implementation the prevailing scenario is one of 'confrontational state-building' (Barnett and Zücher 2009). The literature on EU actorness has sought to conceptualise some of the factors that shape the outlook of the EU's engagement on the ground by reference its *opportunities, capabilities* and *presence* (see below).

3. The Temporality and Spatiality of EU Action

Our preoccupation with issues of temporality and spatiality in the EU's state-building efforts, allows us to better contextualise its engagement in various

conflicts as well as highlight processes of policy learning and EU institutional capacity (and *capabilities*, more generally) development. The timing of the EU's involvement during the lifespan of security crises is an important determinant of its own state-building posture, but also in terms of its *presence* amongst international interlocutors (see also section on actorness). Three key stages are identified in this respect: *conflict prevention* (the EU is involved before the conflict erupts), *conflict management* (the EU gets involved during the unfolding of the conflict) and *conflict resolution* (the EU gets involved after the cessation of hostilities). The strategic and discursive imperatives associated with each of these stages provide an important insight into the EU's state-building posture (Heathershaw 2008; Richmond 2007). The temporality of the EU's own security identity – by reference to its past, present and future selves – is also highlighted by Cebeci (2018).

The temporal and spatial dimension of the EU's state-building efforts is also linked to processes of policy learning. Since the inception of the CFSP in the early 1990s, the EU's capabilities (in terms of institutional capacity, resources and policy remit) have developed considerably, whereas some commentators have argued that member states' interests have converged over time, along 'normative institutionalist' lines (Schimmelfennig and Thomas 2009). It is, therefore, important to 'historicise' each instance of state contestation within the context of the EU's foreign policy learning curve. The case studies examined in this Special Issue offer a great deal of empirical diversity ranging from early stages of the CFSP and the disintegration of Yugoslavia (see Wydra 2018, Noutcheva 2018, and Baracani 2019) to the more recent events in Ukraine (see Maass 2019), North Africa (see Noutcheva 2018) and the Middle East (see Bouris and İşleyen 2018).

The variation in our case study selection also enables us to engage with the geographical and cultural context of state-building. Assuming that geographical distance weakens the potential for the instrumentalisation of the 'EU membership' card, how does this affect the EU's leverage over processes of state building? On a similar vein, how do culturally loaded perceptions on the rule of law, affect local ownership of externally induced state-building initiatives (but also the EU's own image on the ground)? Indeed, the issue of local ownership has long been regarded as a key determinant of processes of state-building in the literature (Barnett and Zücher 2009; Donais 2012; Narten 2008; Paris 2010; Richmond 2012).

The insights of political geography on the debate about temporality and spatiality of EU action in this issue are also significant. Bialasiewicz et al. (2009) explored the new 'geographical imaginations' by which countries (and regions) are brought into the EU's 'orbit'. Central to their debate was the creation of new spaces and regions in the EU's 'neighbourhood' as well as the

new spheres of influence all resulting to distinctive spatial rhetorics 'through which belonging to Europe is delimited' (Bialasiewicz et al. 2009). The spatialities of Europeanisation have attracted political geographers' attention and critique (Bialasiewicz 2008; Bialasiewicz, Elden, and Painter 2005; Clark and Jones 2009; Jones and Clark 2009). Most of this literature, however, has mainly focused on scrutinizing internal aspects of Europeanisation rather than external ones. A key theme in these discussions has been the changing spatialities of the process of European integration as well as the processes of state reconfiguration in order for (aspiring) member states to become better 'suited' to the implementation of the EU's spatial planning ideas (Börzel 2002; De Jong, Lalenis, and Mamadouh 2002; Gualini 2004; Pasquier 2005).

Critical political geographers have also focused on processes of 'othering' and the emergence of identity politics (Moisio et al. 2012). Kuus (2011), for example, has explored how representatives of post-2004 member states have tried to project regional expertise about the EU's 'new' eastern neighborhood within EU institutions, while Clark and Jones (2011) have identified the spatialising politics of transacting 'eastness' in the EU. Political geography has also explored how the EU (and Europe) is understood, defined, redefined and legitimized; a process guided by different national traditions, discourses and political practices by local elites (Moisio et al. 2012). The question of 'identity' has been central to the work of Kuus (2004, 2005, 2007)), but also Dittmer (2005) who have explored how the prospect of EU membership has served specific ideational needs in Central and Eastern Europe.

Yet, although 'the bounding effect that a specific territory has upon political process' has been familiar to political geographers, the same has not been the case with political scientists who have tended to approach space as 'essentially isotrophic and planar – an abstract, uniform, featureless medium, upon which human political action is played out' (Clark and Jones 2013, 306). Previously, Clark and Jones (2009, 196) also argued that 'territory is often depicted as a passive backdrop over which Europeanisation politics and political actions are played out, a setting rather than a dynamic quantity in its own right'. Indeed, (changing) local perceptions on the EU's state building agenda has been a recurring theme in a number of contributions in this issue, emphasising its importance as a conditioning factor for the projection of EU power in its near abroad. We shall return to this issue later on in this introduction in the context of our review of the Europeanisation literature.

Delineating the Analytical Boundaries of Contested Statehood, State-building and Peacebuilding

Conceptions of territory and space are critical to the discussion on contested statehood and state-building. Insights from political geography and, more broadly, human geography are very important in this regard. Drawing on the

EU as a political 'laboratory for experiments in government and governance' Jessop (2016, 8–9) argues that 'spaces of governance are not exclusively territorial and reference to hierarchy indicates the key role of state power in meta-governance, that is, the governance of the governance'. In this context space can be a site, object as well as a means of governance and one form of organising it is territorialisation. In trying to explain when a space becomes a territory, Raffestin points to the significance of social interaction and the locus of organised human activity (cited in Murphy 2012, 163). Hence, the territorial organisation of political authority is a central characteristic of modern statehood. Similarly, Jessop (2016, 11) argues that statehood 'has different forms, rests on specific political and calculative technologies that support territorialisation and can be combined with other forms of political authority and broader patterns of spatial organization, resulting in different kinds of state and polity'. To this end, he breaks down the very notion of the state into three key components: 1) An apparatus which is politically organised, coercive, administrative with general and specific powers; 2) A clearly defined territory under the continuous (and uncontested) control of a state apparatus; and 3) a permanent population, upon which the state's political authority and decisions are binding (Jessop 2016, 11). As such, the territorialisation of political power is one of the main features of modern statehood.

The contestation of territorially-defined political authority underpins the 'demand' for state-building. This is a fundamental point of departure for our analytical and conceptual investigation. The manifestations of contested statehood vary. They may take the form of secession from the parent state, military occupation by a foreign power or the loss of effective control over a territory because of insurgency and/or exceptional weakness of the state apparatus. The current literature offers a diverse range of terms to describe entities that have achieved some level of independence but lack all the attributes of a fully-fledged state. The issue of international recognition is generally foregrounded in these conceptualizations. The most commonly used terms to describe these entities that, despite their self-rule in the territories they control (and their expressed goal of securing *de jure* independence), they are not fully recognized by the majority of UN member states, have been 'de facto states' (Bahceli, Bartman, and Srebrnik 2004; Berg and Toomla 2009; Caspersen 2009; Pegg 1998) or 'unrecognized states' (Caspersen and Stansfield 2011). Diplomatic contestation over the formal recognition of statehood is also a key feature in the works of Kolossov and O'Loughlin (1998) and Kolstø (2006) who speak of 'pseudo-states' and 'unrecognized quasi-states' respectively.

Such categorisations though are not without critics. The term 'quasi-states', for example, has mainly been used to describe states that have received international recognition, but have subsequently lost their ability to function effectively. Hence, the emphasis is more on the

'operational aspects' of statehood rather than its recognition by the international system (Jackson 1993). Conversely, the term 'unrecognized states' focuses predominantly on the issue of international recognition, overlooking the fact state contestation may persevere even in the face of widespread international recognition (i.e. Kosovo). It is for these reasons that that we opt for the use of the broader (and normatively less loaded) term 'contested states', as initially coined by Geldenhuys (2009) and subsequently adopted by several other scholars (Papadimitriou and Petrov 2012; Kyris 2013, 2014, 2015; Ker-Lindsay 2015; Bouris and Kyris 2017; Bouris and Fernandez-Molina 2018; Bouris and İşleyen 2018).

Beyond questions of labelling, Krasner offers useful insights into the nature of state contestation by pointing to both internal and external aspects of sovereignty and statehood. His concept of 'problematic sovereignty' is articulated by reference to four distinct attributes (Krasner 2001: 2 and 6–12): the presence of a governing authority able to exercise effective control over the territory (*domestic sovereignty*); the ability of the government to control trans-border activities (*interdependence sovereignty*); international legal recognition (*international legal sovereignty*); and autonomy of domestic governing structures, from any authoritative external influence (*Westphalian sovereignty*). All these attributes are very closely linked to issues of territoriality which becomes critical when discussing sovereignty and statehood. Parker and Adler-Nissen (2012, 787) argue that 'for a state to be sovereign, it is necessary to specify a territorial border: to inscribe a border on the topographic plane'. Similarly, El Ouali (2010, 82) maintains that the capacity of a state to survive 'resides in the effectiveness of its territoriality, i.e. its ability to display effective and continuous authority on its territory'. Others urge greater caution on the connection between sovereignty and territoriality with Agnew claiming that 'effective sovereignty is not necessarily predicated on and defined by the strict and fixed territorial boundaries of individual states' (Agnew 2005, 438) but it can be exercised non-territorially or in 'scattered pockets connected by flows across space-spanning networks' (Agnew 2005, 441; See also Agnew 1994).

Notwithstanding ongoing debates over the ontology of sovereignty, for the purposes of this Special Issue, we borrow Papadimitriou and Petrov's (2012) definition of 'contested statehood' as a state of affairs where one or more of the following characteristics hold true:

- An internationally-recognised state authority (as expressed by full membership of the UN) cannot maintain effective control over its respective territory (or parts of), either because of an ongoing conflict or its profound disconnection with the local population (in this Special

Issue: Cyprus, Palestine, Kosovo, Georgia, Ukraine and SFR of Yugoslavia (before Croatia's accession to the UN in May 1992) Bosnia;
- The *de facto* governing authority of a contested territory has declared independence, but it does not command full diplomatic recognition by the international community as expressed by full membership of the UN. (In this Special Issue: Palestine, Turkish Republic of Northern Cyprus, Abkhazia and South Ossetia, Luhansk People's Republic, Donetsk People's Republic, Republic of Crimea and Western Sahara, Croatia before it became a member of the UN in May 1992)
- The capacity of an internationally-recognised or a *de facto* government to exercise authority is severely compromised due to the weakness of its state apparatus; either because of poor resources or complications in the constitutional arrangement underpinning its operation. (in this Special Issue: Kosovo)

Table 1 summarises the key features of state contestation in the EU's 'near abroad' as a means of contextualising the conditions under which the EU's state-building efforts were deployed. Many of these cases are discussed in detail in this issue, although our coverage is evidently not complete. Neither do we engage with cases of state contestation in other parts of the world where the EU might also have had an input (albeit less significant). We have also excluded Outermost Regions of the EU and its Overseas Territories where statehood is sometimes contested by independence movements. Our objective in this Special Issue is not the comparative examination of all cases against a single theoretical framework. Instead, contributing authors draw on different aspects of this scene setter, but each article uses its own distinct analytical and theoretical tools to problematise the EU's state building posture.

Although we recognise the profound inter-connection between state-building and peacebuilding, we maintain that the two terms should be kept analytically distinct. Processes of peacebuilding involve a wider set of factors that extent beyond formal international recognition and state capabilities. In this sense state-building may be considered a necessary, but not sufficient condition for sustainable peace.

On the one hand, the notion of peacebuilding can be traced back to UN Secretary General Boutros Boutros-Ghali's (1992) *Agenda for Peace* involving a series of short, medium and longer term targets at securing and enforcing ceasefires, peacekeeping and reconstruction, demobilisation, disarmament and reintegration, the promotion of good governance, transitional justice and the protection of human rights as well as democratic empowerment and sustainable development. On the other hand, the notion of state-building points to conflict as a breakdown of governance and has primarily focused on the (re) construction of the Weberian state as the basis of the Westphalian

Table 1. Contested statehood in the EU's near abroad: an empirical map*.

	Azerbaijan	Bosnia and Herzegovina	Cyprus	Georgia	Kosovo	Libya	Moldova	Morocco	North Macedonia	Palestine	Serbia	SFR Yugoslavia	Ukraine
Recognised** state authorities suffering ineffective control over (parts of) their territory	Yes (Nagorno-Karabakh)	Yes (Republika Srpska)	Yes (North Cyprus)	Yes (Abkhazia & S. Ossetia)	Yes[a] (North Kosovo)	Yes	Yes (Trans nistria)	Yes	Yes (Tetovo)	Yes[b] (Entire territory)[d]	Yes (Kosovo)	Yes[c] (Croatia, Slovenia, Bosnia, FYROM)	Yes (Donetsk, Luhansk, Crimea)
Contested territory declared independence (but not full UN member)	Yes (Nagorno-Karabakh Republic)	No	Yes (Turkish Republic of Northern Cyprus)	Yes (Republics of South Ossetia & Abkhazia)	No	No	Yes (Pridne strovian Moldavian Republic)	Yes (Sahrawi Arab Democratic Republic)	No	Yes (State of Palestine)	Yes (Republic of Kosovo)	Yes (Croatia, Slovenia, Bosnia, FYROM) [e]	Yes (Donetsk People's Republic, Luhansk People's Republic, Republic of Crimea)
Exceptionally weak state apparatus in non-contested areas	No	Yes	No	No	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	No	n/a	No	No	No

* Table adapted from Papadimitriou and Petrov (2012): 750

** As expressed by full membership of the UN.

[a] Under UNSC Resolution 1244/99. The Republic of Kosovo is not a full member of the UN.

[b] The Occupied Palestinian Territories is not a full member of the UN. In 2012, the UNGA decided to upgrade 'Palestine' from 'non-member observer entity' to 'non-member observer state'.

[c] Proclaimed as Federal People's Republic of Yugoslavia on 29 November 1945. Dissolved on 27 April 1992. Succeeded by the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia (1992–2003).

[d] The powers of the Palestinian National Authority are severely compromised as a result of the Oslo Accords.

[e] Croatia, Slovenia and Bosnia were granted full membership of the UN on 22 May 1992. The FYR of Macedonia (now North Macedonia) admitted to the UN on 8 April 1993. The empirical focus of this SI is restricted to the early state contestation of the SFR of Yugoslavia. Subsequent incidents of state contestation in Croatia (e.g. Krajina), Slovenia, Bosnia (pre-1995) and the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia are not listed in this table.

system. As Tocci puts it: 'State-building reflects an unwavering faith in the Westphalian state as the guardian of peace, enabling authorities to collect revenues, govern expenditures and regain the monopoly of the use of force' (Tocci 2014: xix).

Our own analytical distinction between peace and state-building, borrows from Paris and Sisk (2009, 1) who argue that state-building is "a particular approach to peacebuilding, premised on the recognition that achieving security and development in societies emerging from civil war partly depends on the existence of capable, autonomous and legitimate governmental institutions". Yet, our approach urges a broader temporal investigation of state-building which is not simply confined to the post-conflict period (Bryden and Hänggi 2005; Call and Wyeth 2008; Paris 2004). We argue that processes of state-building are not always temporally sequential to conflict resolution, but, in reality, they become inextricably linked to the evolution of the conflict itself. Indeed, in certain cases, the very act of recognition of independent statehood, as the most embryonic form of state-building, can become the trigger of international conflict or domestic confrontation. A number of contributions in this Special Issue return to this issue (see Wydra 2018, Baracani 2019, and Noutcheva 2018).

EU State-Building Actorness and Europeanisation

The 'quality' of the EU's agency in processes of state-building is a cross-cutting theme across many contributions in this issue. The question of EU 'actorness', in this respect, is critical. Bretherton and Vogler (1999, 2006) have defined the term as the intersection of three key themes: *opportunities, presence* and *capabilities. Opportunities* signify the structural context in which EU actions unfold where mostly external factors are instrumental in constraining or enabling EU actorness. The notion of *presence* points to the importance attached to the EU by third actors, thus shaping their expectations of what the EU should and could do. The issue of *capabilities* relates to the EU's capacity to formulate effective policies, employ adequate policy instruments and maintain a good level of coherence between institutions in a number of overlapping policy areas (a problem already identified for its predecessor in Sjöstedt 1977).

Bretherton and Vogler's framework of analysis offers a useful resource for the study of the EU's response to flashpoints in its 'near abroad' driven by competing claims to statehood. By virtue of their proximity to the EU and their potential to produce significant negative externalities (e.g. threats to regional security, immigration etc), the cases under examination in this Special Issue each opened windows of opportunity for EU action, albeit such activism often had to be shared with other major international actors (e,g, NATO, the UN, the US, Russia). In this context, issues surrounding the

delineation of responsibilities, the coordination of multiple stakeholders and, crucially, the compatibility of national and international agendas on the future of contested states form a key part of our analytical puzzle.

At a different level, however, such conflicts underline harshly competing visions of EU *presence*. These can be explored at three different levels. At the grand stage, perceptions of the EU as a foreign policy actor and security provider by 'significant others' in the international community have profound effects on the question of *opportunities* for EU activism. At the level of local (to the conflict) stakeholders, expectations over and receptiveness to EU engagement is temporally, geographically and culturally contingent. This raises important strategic dilemmas for the EU and brings centre stage the normative imperatives under which its state building posture is constructed.

Presence also involves an important internal (to the EU) dimension: that is how the EU itself sets the limits of its own actorness and understands its role in conflicts around it. This is often a process involving delicate inter-institutional and inter-governmental dynamics within the EU. The cases covered in this Special Issue span the entire spectrum of the EU's ambition in this regard: from the exercise of direct executive powers in Kosovo to the non (EU)-action in Western Sahara. Self-ascribed *presence* is also crucial for how the EU decides to deploy its *capabilities* on the ground. Depending on the nature of the conflict involved, such decisions may result in the mobilisation of EU resources across a diverse range of policy terrains (CFSP, ESDP, ENP, enlargement) and the coordination of a large number of EU-related policy stakeholders (both at the national and supranational level).

What emerges for the contributions that follow is a mosaic of factors that ultimately shape the mobilisation of EU *capabilities* in its near abroad: entrenched national agendas combined with a remarkable ability for 'constructive ambiguity'; persistent gaps in institutional capacity development, but also overlapping competences and bureaucratic turf wars; conflict over resource allocation, but also evidence of 'mission creep'; and persistent path dependencies, combined with significant innovation and policy entrepreneurship.

Issues of EU actorness (presence, opportunities, capabilities) and the very nature of state contestation both condition the way in which EU power/leverage is projected in a specific conflict. The increasing breadth (in terms of policy instruments) and reach (in terms of the number of countries affected) of the EU's engagement with its 'near abroad' has fuelled a bourgeoning literature on the projection of EU power and impact. A number of concepts have been deployed in order to frame the essence of this process (see Clark and Jones 2008). Some have sought to conceptualise it as 'exporting' Europeanisation beyond the territorial confines of the EU (Bauer, Knill, and Pitschel 2007; Fischer, Nicolet, and Sciarini 2002; Grabbe 2001; Papadimitriou and Phinnemore 2004; Schimmelfennig and Sedelmeier

2005). Others have argued of a process of external governance, that is the ability of the EU to project certain aspects of its own governance regime to its neighbours (Dimitrova and Dragneva 2009; Lavenex 2004; Lavenex and Schimmelfennig 2009; Schimmelfennig and Sedelmeier 2004).

Underlying both perspectives is the centrality of the EU's conditionality strategy (as a system of rewards and threats) in the various frameworks of its external relations as a means of exerting pressure on third countries to internalise EU norms/rules (Sasse 2008; Schimmelfennig 2005; Smith 2001; Warkotsch 2006; Youngs 2001). In the field of conflict resolution Coppieters et al. (2004) have explored whether and how the EU's integration policies could support closure of ethno-secessionist crises in its periphery. Noutcheva et al. (2004) define Europeanisation in the field of secessionist conflict settlement and resolution 'as a process which is activated and encouraged by European institutions, primarily the European Union, by linking the final outcome of the conflict to a certain degree of integration of the parties involved in it into European structures'. Similar conclusions have also been drawn by Tocci (2007) and Diez, Albert, and Stetter (2008).

Despite this flourishing literature, however, the issue of contested statehood and its implications for the EU's actorness (*opportunities, presence* and *capabilities*) have remained under-researched. More specifically, a key missing link from this literature is how rule transfer (a key mechanism of conditionality) is affected by the weakness of the state apparatus in contested states and/or by the lack of their recognition in the diplomatic arena. The addressing of this gap, in both empirical and conceptual grounds, is a one of the fundamental objectives of this collection.

Individual Contributions and Structure of the Special Issue

This Special Issue is composed of two parts. The first part (Cebeci 2018 and Wydra 2018) looks at broader issues relating to our theoretical and legal understanding of the EU as a peace and state-builder. In the second part, our attention shifts to individual cases of state contestation, seeking to unpack the EU's role in them.

The opening article by Cebeci provides a poststructuralist analysis of the interplay between the EU's three temporal selves. Her main argument is that the discourse of "successful peaceful European integration" (employed to construct the EU's past self) and the discourse on the EU's "normative aspirations about peace and state-building" (employed to construct the EU's future self) constitutes an 'ideal' present identity of the EU "as representing peace" (Cebeci 2018). In a second article, Wydra (2018), brings in the legal perspective on state recognition and links it to debates of political science and political geography. She argues that state recognition is as much a matter of politics as it is of law and that the geopolitical

imaginary of EUrope shapes to a great extent the way in which the EU articulates claims of statehood, before deciding which of them should be recognised as legitimate. Wydra looks at the cases of Slovenia, Croatia, Bosnia and Herzegovina, North Macedonia as well as Kosovo and contrasts them with the non-recognition of Crimea's secession from Ukraine in 2014.

The Special Issue then procceds with a series of case studies. Kyris (2018) focuses on the case of the Turkish Republic of Northern Cyprus and offers a conceptualisation of 'avoidance' of contested statehood, by reference to external and internal sovereignty as conditioning factors of the EU's state building posture. Following this, Baracani (2019) traces the evolution of the EU's strategy towards Kosovo during 2008–2018, interrogating the interconnection between state contestation on the ground and the EU's projected actorness. She argues that the lack of recognition of Kosovo by five EU member states has forced the EU to devise innovative institutional and legal solutions on order to overcome internal divisions. The argument, is closely linked to Kyris' (2018) argument that the level of international recognition influences EU engagement with contested states.

Other case studies bring us to the so-called European Neighbourhood. In the Eastern neighbourhood, Maass (2019) analyses the EU's involvement in Ukraine between November 2013 and July 2015. She explores the way in which the EU's capacities in state-building were largely shaped by the deterioration of the Ukrainian conflict, the annexation of Crimea and Russia's rivalling actorness in Ukraine. Dobrescu and Schumacher (2018) focus on the EU's engagement in Georgia with regards to three policy areas, namely conflict management, migration and mobility and trade. Through their analysis the authors argue that the EU has adopted a flexible approach to address the realities of contested statehood: EU conflict management policies explicitly include Abkhazia and South Ossetia, migration and mobility instruments omit any reference to Georgia's contested statehood, while trade policies explicitly exclude the two breakaway regions. Moving to the Southern Neighbourhood, Bouris and İşleyen (2018) zoom into the EU Police Mission in the Palestinian territories and the effects of its everyday police work on the ground. The main argument put forward is that the mission, through its training and advisory activities, works to foster particular logics and practices that feed into and reproduce the borders that have, over the years, been imposed, primarily through Israeli security practices.

Finally Noutcheva (2018), offers a comparative analysis of the EU's policies vis-à-vis three conclicts in three different geographical regions (Western Balkans, Eastern Neighbourhood, Southern Neighbourhood): Kosovo, Abkhazia and Western Sahara. She argues that external determinants have

a significant influence on EU's policies which result to different levels of EU commitment to managing these conflicts.

The Special Issue ends with a commentary entitled 'Political Geography and Political Science: Common Territory?' by Alun Jones and Julian Clark (2019) who argue that there is a tendency among geographers and political scientists to overlook each other's disciplines, particularly in the fields of statehood and state-building. They also reflect on the potential for greater cross fertilization between the two disciplines in the study of contested statehood in the European Union's near abroad.

Note

1. For the purposes of this Special Issue we have opted for the term 'near abroad' instead of 'neighbourhood' so as to avoid confusion with the EU's European Neighbourhood Policy (ENP), which provides a framework for its relations with 16 countries near its eastern and southern boarders. The term 'near abroad' allows us to include cases which are neither yet part of the EU or the ENP (i.e. Kosovo and Bosnia).

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