The (Post-)Coloniality of the Sudan – South Sudan border

An African lens for a Eurocentric concept

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Cover photo by Tim McKulka Photography, as part of the series 'Abyei: Caught Between Two Sudans'.

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"Our thinking is always, always relationally inspired, never in isolation..."

These were Olivier's words after reading the final course paper I had submitted to him in 2013. I believe that this shows the foundation on which this thesis is based, and what this thesis is supposed to be based on. Throughout the process of writing this piece, I have been able to draw on elements from every single course I have taken during my master studies at Radboud University in Nijmegen.

Taking this even further, this thesis is really a product of my academic career thus far. My interest in Africa became clear after participating in the University College Utrecht conference on the Clash of Civilisations in 2008. Participation in the UCU in Africa programme in 2010 is one of those ever-lasting memories, that apart from the experience, also shaped me to become who I am and where I am now.

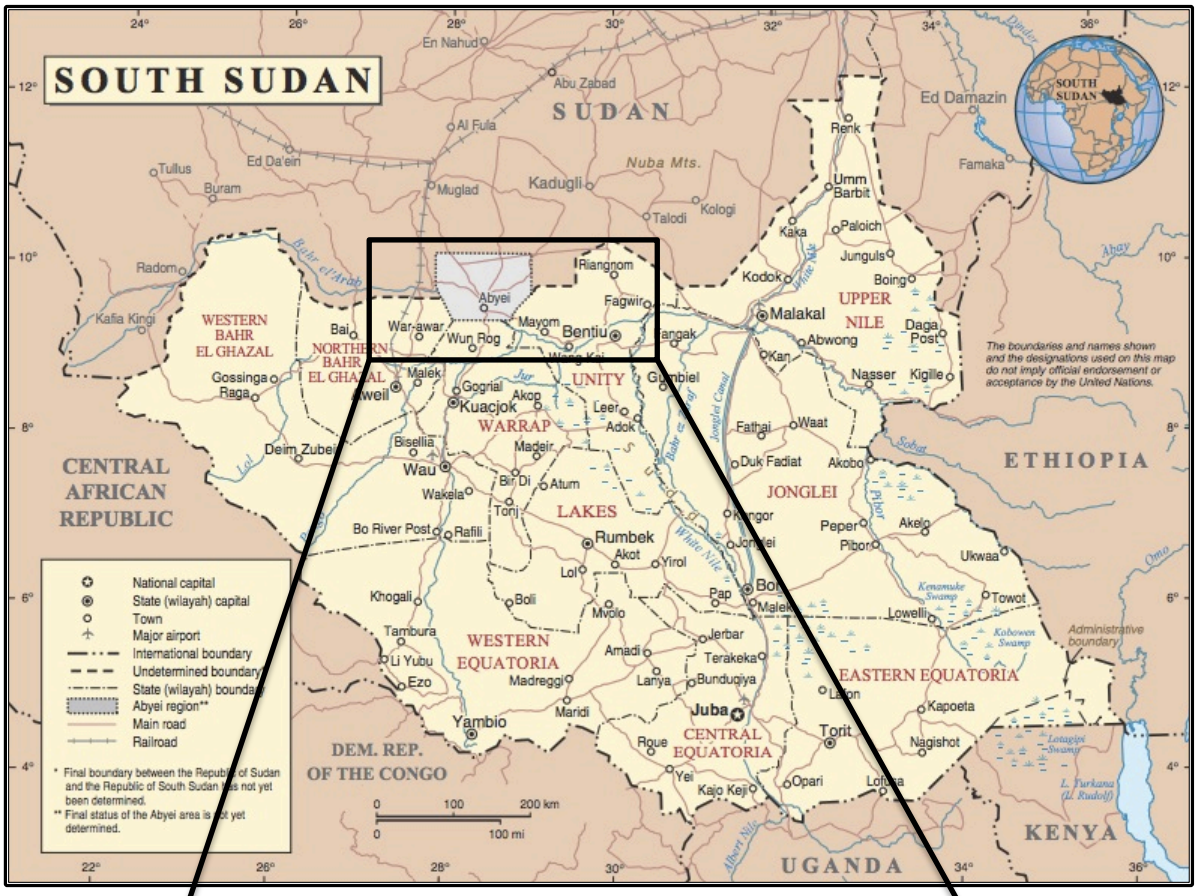
Already when applying for the Masters Programme in Human Geography, I knew that the topic of this thesis had to be the African Union. The how was still to be determined. After having written another thesis already, I knew what I had to do, but I did not imagine the process to become as it was. In fact, the final touch to molding it into this process was speeded up though logistics and administrative issues.

I would like to thank my supervisor Olivier Kramsch for his support and flexibility in the process, but mainly I would like to thank him for the inspiration I got from our conversations.

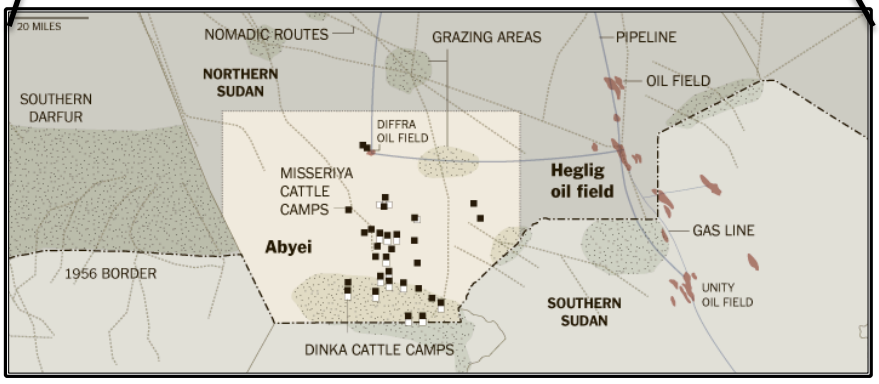
Abstract In this thesis I explore the extent to which the coloniality of power in the Sudan – South Sudan borderland, and in the Abyei region more specifically, is reinforced through the policy of the African Union and its Border Programme. Firstly, I look at how the AUBP is influenced by its perception of the EU. I find that the coloniality of power is in place, fostering the subaltern relationship the two partners find themselves in. Secondly, I take the Cairo Declaration that is often taken as the main historical document presenting the foundation of border policy in Africa. I conclude that South Sudan's secession presents an exception to the dominant perspective that takes the borders as they were at the time of independence as a *tangible reality*. Thirdly, I look at how the Abyei border is lived and experienced, both from a borderland perspective as well as from a Sudanese and South Sudanese perspective. I find a discrepancy in the motivations for independence, that conflict between an economic rationale based on access to resources and an identity discourse. Lastly, I examine the possibilities for regional integration in the borderland, concluding that a different lens to the border and thereby to regional integration could open ways to stability in the borderland. In answering my research question I argue that our modern/colonial world system is saturated with the coloniality of power and that a Eurocentric lens dominates our perspective of the world.

I. Table of content

II. Maps



Map 1 South Sudan (Source: United Nations)



Map 2 Abyei (Source: nytimes.com January 15, 2011)

III. Abbreviations

ACP	African – Caribbean – Pacific Countries
AEBR	Association of European Border Regions
APF	African Peace Facility
APSA	African Peace and Security Architecture
AU	African Union
AUBP	African Union Border Programme
CPA	Comprehensive Peace Agreement
EDF	European Development Fund
EEAS	European External Action Service
EU	European Union
GoS	Government of Sudan
GoSS	Government of South Sudan
MERCOSUR	Mercado Común del Sur
OAU	Organisation of African Unity
REC	Regional Economic Community
RIP	Regional Indicative Programme
SPLM/A	Sudan Peoples Liberation Movement/Army
UN	United Nations

1. Introduction

In our contemporary world, borders are too often taken for granted. Borders are understood as a fixed reality, despite their fluid character. Borders may change in our understanding of what the border is, but, in rare cases, also the location of the border may change. The creation of the state of South Sudan shows how a new border was created. The Comprehensive Peace Agreement (CPA) opened the possibilities for a referendum, that in 2011 led to the creation of South Sudan. But what does it mean 'to become a new state'?

Regional organisation, in contrast, shows how borders are recreated. With the European Union (EU), the EU's internal borders have faded away. European regional integration is regarded as relatively successful, and as a result, the EU is often taken as a model of best practices for projects of regional integration across the world. This can also be concluded studying literature on the African Union (AU). However, drawing parallels between the AU and the EU can be dangerous, as it takes up a Eurocentric lens on regionalisation drawing upon the assumption that the AU aspires to become the EU of Africa, with the same goals and even the same *raison d'être*. Taking the parallels between the AU and the EU in literature as a starting point, this research is placed within the challenges of applying existing theories of border studies and regional integration to an unknown context that seems similar to what we know but might not be at all.

With South Sudan as the worlds' youngest country, the title of this thesis ('The (Post-)Coloniality of the Sudan – South Sudan border'), shows the conception on which this study relies. While at first instance this may be a paradox as South Sudan was not a creation of imperialism, I will show that the legacy of colonialism is much deeper than what is perceived at first instance.

1.1 The Research Problem

The African Union Border Program (AUBP) is based on the principle of tangibility of African borders. In the First Session of the Organisation of African Unity (OAU), the African Union's (AU) predecessor, in Cairo in 1964, the member states recognized that "border problems constitute a grave and permanent factor of dissention" and therefore accepted "that the borders of African States, on the day of their independence, constitute a tangible reality" that has to be respected by the member states (AUBP, 2013, p. 17). More generally, the AUBP advances the

idea that "the achievement of greater unity and solidarity among modern African states and peoples requires the reduction of the burden of the borders separating them" (Asiwaju, 2012, p. 76). The argument of the changing paradigm of borders as barriers to borders as bridges is all-around: It is the title of the file with a collection of all declarations on borders published by the AUBP and it is the title of the AUBP's YouTube documentary, to name only two examples.

Nevertheless, the idea of borders as a tangible reality could clash with the emerging paradigm within critical border studies in which borders are represented as more than simple lines and are regarded as geographical processes in constant development. "Rather than treating the concept of the border as a territorially fixed, static, line, [the border can be thought of] in terms of practices" (Parker, Vaughan-Williams, & al., 2009, p. 586). The reality of the border depends on the meaning we attach to it and on how the border is experienced. With borders as a changing reality, the question arises to what extent the tangibility of borders allows for changing borders and bordering on the African continent, as we have seen with South Sudan's secession.

It is this idea of perception of the border that can make working with the underlying principles of the AUBP difficult. Even though the AUBP shows awareness of the borders as a souvenir from the colonial period, it does not take into account Mignolo's perspective on coloniality. The African border can be seen as a clear legacy from the colonial period, while at the same time reflecting the colonial difference. The colonial difference is the difference between "those who participated in building the modern/colonial world and those who have been left out of the discussion" (Mignolo, 2002, p. 63). Quijano's coloniality of power is a concept that helps explain the colonial difference. The coloniality of power refers to the way in which colonialism influenced the way in which 'race' "affected the distribution of power among the world population", leading to the "emergence of a Euro-centred capitalist colonial/modern world power that is still with us" (Quijano, 2000, p. 218). I will further explore this concept in the theoretical chapter on postcolonialism.

The AUBP has, in accordance with the objective of African solutions to African problems, the aspiration to mitigate tensions in borderlands through delimitation, delineation and demarcation of borders. Only a third of the 80,000 km of African borders have been properly demarcated, even though demarcation provides for a factor of stability for both countries, which in turn is a key factor for any investment decision that can promote development (AU- PSD, 2014). This may oftentimes be the case, but demarcation does not always mean the end of the problems. Cases where the border has been the source of violence tend to have higher risk for continuing conflict. The Ethiopian – Eritrean borderland is an example where after delimitation and demarcation of the border by the International Court of Arbitration, the town of Badme is still in

dispute, with a ruling that is not accepted by both parties. Also, the mere delimitation and demarcation of the Sudan – South Sudan border, and the actual creation of a country, has proven not to mean the end of the conflict.

But, how do two probably opposing ideas of the border as a bridge and the border as a source of identity and Othering (Newman, 2006; Van Houtum, 2010; Van Houtum & van Naerssen, 2002) rhyme? Does this prove Newman & Paasi's (1998) argument that "boundaries both create identities and are created through identity" (p. 194)?

Delanty (1996) states that the creation of a European identity is based on differentiating between the Self and the Other (p. 96). Identity can be constructed from a shared perspective on the border. Shabe residents along the Benin-Nigeria border claim to *be* the border, irrespective of which side they are on. In this case, the border proves to be a border of linkage (Flynn, 1997). Brambilla (2007) shows how the socio-territorial organization of the Kwanyama people of the Angola-Namibia border has adapted to the existence of the border and how the population lives with the 'onaululi', the artificial division. At the same time, however, this division has created a "sense of sharing a common experience that binds [the Kwanyama people] together" (p. 31). However, this is not portrayed in the Sudan – South Sudan borderland, where the border remains a place of contestation.

This dual interpretation of perspectives on the border has inspired the research problem I seek to investigate. The problem statement from which I depart is the following:

> *Despite promoting the border as a bridge, for example by encouraging regional integration, the AUBP reinscribes the Sudan – South Sudan border as a barrier in the view of the borderland people, through its focus on delimitation and demarcation.*

The research problem is based on a bottom-up lens on the border, through which the border becomes something alive and lived. This follows Brambilla (2014) in her exploration of the borderscapes concept. She argues that we need an epistemological perspective on the border, with a focus not only on how the border is used, represented and imagined but also interpreting how 'borderscaping' takes place. Thereby, "the borderscape allows to move beyond the often-criticized gap between practices and representations, by bringing performativity into the foreground" (p. 15). This also changes the research agenda to "a participatory approach [that entails] researching not on different actors involved in the borderscape but with them, opening up new possible pathways towards novel forms of political participation understood as existence (becoming) rather than essence (fixed realistic/territorialist ontology)" (p. 16).

1.2 The Research Context

Since independence, South Sudan struggled with continuous violence in a fragile state. Before introducing the research context, I find it important to explain that I will focus merely on the border conflict in the Abyei region. Apart from Abyei, South Sudan is facing (yet another) civil war, fuelled by political tensions, and played out in a violent conflict between the government and rebel groups. According to the UN/OCHA Situation Report of December 12, 2014, at the time of writing there are 1.91 million internally displaced people and there are an estimated 6.4 million people at risk of food insecurity (OCHA South Sudan, 2014).

Apart from the focus on resources, border demarcation has been a central issue in the conflict between Sudan and South Sudan. The British colonial administration in the area already faced the border problematic. "The concept of borders and legal boundaries was not a reality that could effectively be imposed on the local people who had kin and ancestors over a large area and were used to shifting cultivation across the new borders in what they considered their homeland" (de Vries, 2012, pp. 54-55). Apart from an imposition of borders, Sudan had faced problems with unity since (before) independence. The British had introduced 'differential modernisation' in Sudan, applying unequal development systems to the North and South (Wakengela & Koko, 2010, p. 24). The rationale behind the British 'Southern Policy' for the three Southern provinces reinforced already existing divisions and was based on the belief "that the future of the Southern territories ultimately lay with the British East African countries" (de Vries, 2012, p. 56). After independence, the differentiation in development policy became the foundation of the internal domination of the South by the North, which "helps explain partly why the South Sudan first civil war was a secession war" (Wakengela & Koko, 2010, p. 24). The war started with a mutiny in 1956, a year before independence (de Vries, 2012, p. 50) and was formally organised in 1963 under the Anya Nya, the predecessor of South Sudan Liberation Movement (SSLM). When the objective of secession was no longer realistic, the rebels "they settled for autonomy within the framework of the 1972 Addis Ababa Agreement" (Wakengela & Koko, 2010, p. 24). The second civil war has roots in the Islamist radicalisation of the Nimeiri regime. The 1983 decree imposing Sharia law in entire Sudan "coincided with the creation of the SPLM/A in the South" (ibid.). But the war was also "caused by grievances towards the North regarding unresolved issues in the peace agreement and developments in the late 1970s and early 1980s, but was also rooted in internal Southern divisions and controversy". The war ended by the signing of the Comprehensive Peace Agreement (CPA) in 2005 (de Vries, 2012, p. 51).

The CPA paved the way for the referendum on the fate of South Sudan. In 2011, South Sudan became Africa's youngest country. After the end of the interim period in July 2011, the newly sovereign government of South Sudan was responsible for governing a country, whose borders were still undetermined (Madut Jok & Ryle, 2012, p. 307). The unclarity arises from the CPA, establishing the borders as they were at the time of Sudan's independence in 1956. However, "because the date of Sudan's independence was fixed by parliament only a few days prior to 1 January 1956, and no survey was made of the internal provincial boundaries in anticipation of independence, there is no single authoritative source stating precisely what those boundaries were on that date" (Johnson, 2010, p. 15). The Border Technical Committee was established to demarcate the border, but "by May 2010, the committee had reached agreement on only 80 per cent of the border" (Sudan Tribune, 2010a).

Agreement on the borders at the Committee level thus proved difficult and "demarcation – and local acceptance of demarcation – will be even harder" (Johnson, 2010, p. 18). The South-Sudanese Vice President, on the other hand, would stress that despite the tensions between North and South, both "will need to share resources across the borders. [...] When you lock yourself into a situation discussing borders as if it is the only issue, you are not putting into consideration the economic cooperation; the movement of people; the sharing of resources; the Nile; the reality that today oil is in the South, but the infrastructure is in the North; like the pipeline, the refineries; the export terminal, etc." (Sudan Tribune, 2010b). Yet, as Madut Jok and Ryle (2012) stress, regard of local interests of borderland peoples is essential in the peace process (p. 311).

"The border is one of the longest in Eastern Africa. Here, local rivalries, intimacies and enmities have been progressively militarized as a result of conflict at the wider, national level" (Madut Jok & Ryle, 2012, p. 310). And rather than mitigating tensions, "anticipation of a boundary settlement has exacerbated existing tensions among Sudan's borderland peoples and created new ones" (Johnson, 2010, p. 19). The region of Abyei that I will focus on is not the only disputed area along the border. There are many "other communities in long-standing relationships of cooperation and confrontation, each with a particular sense of their claims over local resources and with a particular, historically-defined relation to the government and other powers in the land" (Madut Jok & Ryle, 2012, p. 311).

If tensions on ill-defined borders remain, and conflict persists in the borderland, how does demarcation of the border creating two separate nations with their own identities, can come to view the border as a bridge in the short-term?

1.2.1 Understanding the borderland

The Sudan – South Sudan border is a complicated border. Even before South Sudanese independence, the South was "treated as a state-like entity, as if it was already independent" governed by its own government, the Government of South Sudan (de Vries, 2012, p. 9). Yet with political governance in place, the location of the border, and thus the territoriality of the state, is disputed. Whereas the border illustrates a colonial heritage, "much of the [Sudan – South Sudan] border was unsurveyed [at the time of independence]. Even the most detailed maps do not record significant topographical features along the boundary lines" (Johnson, 2010, p. 15). Craze (2013) raises four questions that are at stake in the border negotiations: "where the border is, and what type of border it is", which are interrelated, and "what type of temporary border [...] Sudan and South Sudan [should] have while deciding the above, and where [...] this temporary border [should] be located" (Craze, 2013, p. 21).

The border area "marks a transition between ecological zones", with a dry area with sand dunes to the north, and rainier savannah plains and open grasslands to the south (Johnson, 2010, p. 17). The border area "contains some of the two countries' most fertile land" (Craze, 2013, p. 15). While oil is an often-heard problem, it is not the main problem in many of the contested areas. Except Diffra in Abyei, and Hejlij on the Unity–South Kordofan border, "none of the contested areas contain oil" (Craze, 2013, p. 15). To understand the issues at stake, it is important to realize that "it is in every sense a pastoralist border" and thus far "the border crisis has had serious implications for pastoralist livelihoods" (Young & Cormack, 2013). Pastoralist communities from both North and South have seasonally crossed the border in search for fertile grazing land (Johnson, 2010, p. 17), "[depending] on local relationships to negotiate access to pastures in the South" (Young & Cormack, 2013). Security concerns have, however, limited the seasonal movements in recent years, resulting in humanitarian challenges. Moreover, "poor relations between northern pastoralists and Sudan People's Liberation Army (SPLM/A) troops on the border are another serious concern. During the long civil war, the Sudanese government recruited pastoralists as pro-government militia, and bitterness persists" (Young & Cormack, 2013). The war led to tensions, and Craze (2013) asserts that any decision and agreement on the location of the border will lead to adaptation of local people, "forcing people to reorganize themselves in the present to fit along a line from the past" (p. 16).

According to Craze (2014), "both countries have a vested interest in not agreeing on a final border. To date, the parties have used the negotiations over the border as weapons in other negotiations" (p. 9). For now, the border is "highly militarized by a plethora of armed actors"

(Craze, 2013, p. 13). The security situation is tense, and despite grazing agreements between Southern hosts and Northern pastoralists, "pastoralists generally remain in possession of small arms when in South Sudan" (ibid.). Even the mere agreements between the peoples show how local actors are acting as states, as there is a national political framework guaranteeing grazing rights, without opening ways to territorial claims (Craze, 2013, p. 19). What is certain, if a border is agreed on, it needs to take into account "the pastoralist groups that travel between the two countries along flexible grazing routes that bear little relationship to national borders" (Craze, 2014, p. 7).

1.2.2 The Abyei region

In this research, I focus specifically on the Abyei region. A mere glance at a map shows that the region is a dispute in its own right: The area is marked by a dotted box in the centre of the Sudan – South Sudan borderland. Abyei caught my interest precisely because it is one of a few examples of regions where the border conflict is apparent on the map. Moreover, it has both ethnic and colonial roots, which fit my research interests.

Map 3 Abyei (Source: BBC World, Khartoum)

Abyei is inhabited by the Southern Ngok Dinka and Northern Arab Misseriya pastoralists, both claiming the area as their own. The current struggle has its roots in a British decision in 1905. The British decided to transfer the region from Bahr El-Gazal province in the current South to Kordofan in the North, as the Misseriya and the Ngok Dinka chiefs had, in that same year, had agreed on cooperation and improved relations between the communities. While the sons of these chiefs were able to continue peaceful coexistence and used traditional mechanisms for conflict resolution, the situation became more precarious by the time their sons succeeded with a complex social and political situation leading to increased tensions in the region. With the first civil war raging in the South, 1965 also "marked the deterioration of the historical relationship between the Misseriya and Dinka Ngok". It became the bloodiest conflict in the region, with hundreds of casualties on both sides (VSF-G, 2013, pp. 16-17).

While previously the issue seemed to be about oil, the Permanent Court of Arbitration ruled in 2009 that most of the oil fields lie outside the Abyei region. The issue, therefore, is more of an ethnic nature. Claims for Abyei's territory are strengthened from the national. "There are several

prominent Dinka Ngok in both the Sudan People's Liberation Army, which fought for the south's independence, and in the SPLM, its political wing", while "armed groups of Misseriya were often used as a proxy army by Khartoum during the civil war" (Copnall, 2011). Both the GoSS and the GoS thus have strong interest in Abyei.

1.3 The Research Question

Despite the promising mission statement from the AUBP to prevent and resolve border-related disputes, these types of conflict seem to persist. The example of the conflict between Sudan and South Sudan shows that it remains difficult to impose top-down peace after the creation of a nation state. Keeping the challenges in mind, this thesis will explore the following topics:

A. Colonial legacy and the impact of the principle tangible borders.

This includes the dilemma to what extent the principles from the Cairo Declaration are still relevant today and its impact, but also the colonial legacy that is reflected in the AU.

B. The power of the border.

Hereby, I refer to both the idea of the border as a prerequisite for peace and stability, but also the border as a marker of territoriality and a creator of identity, with the latter especially significant in newly independent states.

The need for an explanation of the underlying factors upholding border disputes and my personal more general mission to try to prevent 'unnecessary' violence have led me to the following research question:

How does the AUBP in its pursuit of demarcating the border and subsequent regional integration as a strategy for conflict transformation reinforce the coloniality of power of the border in the Sudan – South Sudan borderland?

The factors that I need to explore will guide me through the following sub-questions:

1. How is AU border policy influenced by their perception of the EU?
2. In what ways is intangibility as used in the Cairo Declaration relevant in the Sudan – South Sudan borderland?
3. How is the Sudan – South Sudan border(land) in Abyei perceived and experienced?
4. To what extent can regional integration take place under the tensions in the Sudan – South Sudan borderland?

Through examining the sub-questions above, this research also touches upon the paradigm of 'African solutions to African problems'. With borders as a colonial heritage, the theoretical framework is based on critical border studies, post-colonial theory and on the transformative power of regional integration, with regional integration as one of the main goals of the AU(BP). I will discuss my theoretical framework in detail in chapter 4.

1.4 The Research Objectives

The conclusion of this research is twofold: The first conclusion will provide for insight in the Sudan – South Sudan border dispute and the issues at stake. The second conclusion will be a policy advice to the AUBP on how to deal with the discrepancy between the intentions and the effects of border demarcation. While it is intended to bring stability, tensions remain – How should we understand these tensions? Keeping these outcomes in mind, the research objective of this master thesis is threefold:

Firstly, I hope to increase the understanding of developments in bordering in Africa. Up until now, most literature on African bordering practices touches only little upon the colonial past, despite this being perhaps the single most influential factor determining the context of African borders today. This research essentially links literature on post-colonialism generally with practices of African bordering more specifically. Apart from the theoretical approach, I hope that this research contributes to the awareness of border issues in Africa and to the existence of the work of the AUBP.

Secondly, next to contributing to our understanding of bordering in Africa and the work of the AUBP, this paper shows more generally how we need to be careful in assuming that theories of 'the West' can be copied to a non-Western context. Therefore, in my opinion, the paradigm of 'African solutions to African problems' is very relevant. While the AU might indeed be framed after and inspired by the EU, it is a very unique organisation that is in many aspects very different from the EU. Apart from the underlying ideas of political integration, the AU also needs to handle the very complex continental security context.

Thirdly, this research contributes to a deeper understanding of the AU as an ambitious project of regional integration. A research project like this could effectively help in building a new perspective of regional integration, its assets and challenges to the practice of post-conflict reconstruction and the creation of stability. I believe that the AU is largely understudied, and if it is, it is too much looked at with a Eurocentric lens. I believe that a new narrative is needed to grasp the AU in its entirety. I hope to be able to contribute to developing such a perspective.

Through this research, I will increase my understanding of the border by a view from the border, rather than a view on the border. By understanding the dynamics of the borderland people, I will be able to understand the experience rather than the representation of the border. This understanding is crucial in stepping away from a Eurocentric analysis of the border. This research will not resolve the tensions in the Sudan – South Sudan borderland. Overall, I intend to step away from the prevailing understanding and possible solutions for this conflict, and possible other conflicts around the world.

1.5 The Research Relevance

With a changing world order, the self-perception of regional organizations may be changing too. The AU represents a body that was created to improve regional integration and cooperation. The EU borderscape has been subject of numerous research projects so far; the combination of borders and the AU has been less. Of course, this can be traced back to their 'progress', their 'success-factor' and the perhaps immature character of the African Union. A research project linking geopolitics of the border with regional integration in Africa is therefore an interesting perspective on the broadening body of research on African integration, and is a step towards filling a gap in literature.

The starting point of this thesis is the meaning of the (changing) border. With my background in political science, where oftentimes borders are taken for granted, geopolitics of borders provided me with a new angle on the same issues. It is able to provide for the how of the border: How does it affect current affairs, locally, regionally and globally? Even though the logical focus is on state borders, I believe that critical geopolitics is a valuable asset to the genealogy and future of regional integration, and what this means for nation-states and the logic of the border. As the border is too often perceived from a top-down perspective, I believe that a study on the perception and experience of the border from the borderland can be a valuable addition to the existing body of knowledge.

My research interests in the geopolitics of the border and my experience as an intern at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs in the Netherlands allow me to formulate the dual relevance of this research project. Firstly, the scientific relevance lies in effectively applying border concepts to a changing perspective on the meaning of borders, as well as relating the field of border studies with post- colonialism and regional integration in Africa. Secondly, a more thorough exploration of the AU in a new perspective may lead to a new understanding that is relevant for policy makers. In my conclusion, I will therefore also add a practical perspective.

1.6 Thesis Outline

The structure of this thesis follows the questions I raised previously, connecting the theoretical and the empirical. Following this introduction, the second chapter of this thesis elaborates on the theoretical framework underlying my argument. The theoretical framework has four sections: (1) Regional integration and its relation to conflict transformation; (2) critical geopolitics and the border; (3) post-colonialism and how it applies to the AU; (4) a theoretical approach to empire. This chapter further elaborates on the concepts at the core of this study. The third chapter elaborates on the methodology. In chapter four, I explore the background of regionalism and bordering in Africa and the African Union Border Programme (AUBP). The analysis in chapter five provides for the answers to the sub-questions I raised earlier. First I study the influence of the EU in the AU(BP), after which I continue with the application of the Cairo Declaration to the Sudan – South Sudan border. Next, I explore the borderland from a people's perspective and I include by questioning the prospects for regional integration in the Sudan – South Sudan borderland. The final chapter presents the conclusions to each of the sub-questions and the main research question, in which I will also refer to the practical relevance.

2. Theoretical Framework

In this chapter, I will lay out the theoretical framework supporting my research. This research links four themes that I further explore in this chapter. Firstly, the topic of the AU, demands for further examination of the theory behind regional integration. Here, I also dive into the relation between regional integration and conflict transformation and the position and perspective of the EU. The second theme in this research is borders and bordering. Therefore, the second part of this chapter is devoted to the current state of critical border studies and an exploration of borders and the borderland. With the specific colonial legacy of African borders, the third part of this chapter focuses on postcolonial theory introducing the coloniality of power and an *other thinking*. Connecting post-colonial theorizing with border studies and the border puts the idea of the border into a historical perspective. This other thinking on regionalisation, on the other hand, can lead to a representation of a regional organisation as Empire. I believe that this is also relevant in analysing the AU and the AUBP in the context of bordering.

2.1 Regional Integration

As we see projects of regional integration emerging across the world, we might ask about the rationale behind their establishment and their outcome. Theorizing regional integration has, at least in the beginning, been dominated by neofunctionalism, arguing that there is no ground to assume that the state is a single unified actor, or that states are the only actors on the global stage (Bache & George, 2006, p. 9). Neofunctionalism assumes supranationality as "the only method available to states to secure maximum welfare" (Mattli, 1999, p. 5). As a response, the realist notion of intergovernmentalism, with a focus on the state, was put forward. In this state-centric approach, the balance of power was an important explanation for regional integration (p. 6).

From this debate, social constructivism developed, which has become more influential over the past decades (Checkel, 1998). Social constructivism emphasizes "a process of interaction between agents and structures; the ontology is one of mutual constitution" (Checkel, 1998, p. 326). This implies that interest and identity, which frame behavior, emerge from the environmental structure, or interaction, as Alexander Wendt puts it (Wendt, 1992, p. 403). As social constructivism puts mutual constituency at its core, and it gives attention to the process, it fits particularly well to explain how "European integration has a transformative impact on the European state system and its constituent units" (Slocum & van Langenhover, 2004, p. 228). This

contextual multidimensional approach also shows postmodernist features of human geographic theory.

Mills (2004) suggests that there are certain prerequisites under which regional integration 'works best'. These are related to 'mutual threats to leadership's security' and the "presence of shared, positive variables: hegemon, common threat, common advantage, administration and 'hard' infrastructure" (p. 26). But these are not sufficient, and neither is the mere signing of a treaty: "True integration is achieved through the implementation of this promise, which entails a lengthy process of establishing common rules, regulations, and policies" (Mattli, 1999, p. 5). This explains the lengthy process of the EU, in establishing "an array of institutions and policies, as well as a broad and clearly defined set of rules, which are hierarchically superior to domestic law and directly applicable in the member states of the Union" with a successful outcome as far as integration goes. On the other hand, there are many examples of organisations whose goals and ambitions far from meet the achievements, such as Latin American Free Trade Association, the Andean Pact or, as discussed in the introduction, the Organisation of African Unity (p. 2).

2.1.1 The promises of regional integration

The liberal idea of regional integration and association as a means for conflict transformation has been explored decades ago by Senghaas-Knobloch (1969). Senghaas-Knobloch concluded that until then, regional organisations have not been able to act as conflict mediators, despite the possibilities in theory. She illustrates her argument through the OAU, which has not been able to peacefully resolve conflicts on the continent, and NATO, remaining too focused on security for true regionalism (p. 54).

The theoretical foundation of the argument underlying the promises of regional integration for conflict transformation lie in "the practice of integration [binding] actors to institutions and codes of conduct shaping their behaviour, ultimately transforming the identities underlying a conflict", which would lead to a violent-free situation (Diez, Scherwitz, Tocci, & Faleg, 2013, p. 2). Still, the field of conflict studies has not addressed the theoretical underpinnings of "regional integration as a conflict transformation strategy" (p. 6). Conflict transformation may refer to both conflict resolution and conflict settlement. Conflict resolution refers to a situation in which the underlying factors causing tensions are addressed, while conflict settlement merely refers to a situation in which the negative consequences of violent conflict are addressed (Kleiboer, 1996, p. 382).

So far, theories have mostly been seeing regional integration as a means to manage and institutionalize the relations between conflicting parties. Most literature, however, has focused on

the impact EU conflict resolution in the neighbourhood or on intervention strategies abroad. Yet the "precise impact [of regional integration] on tackling the persistence of regional conflicts remains underexplored", Diez et al. (2013) assert (pp. 7-8).

2.1.2 Regional integration and conflict transformation in Europe

From its inception, the idea behind European integration was reconciliation of great European powers and the prevention of conflict. Further on, EU enlargement was widely legitimised through the idea that "integration will help to overcome conflicts and maintain peace and stability" (Diez, Stetter, & Albert, 2006, p. 563). Diez, Stetter and Albert (2006) set up a large research study to investigate whether and how integration "[helps] to bring about the peaceful transformation of border conflicts, and under which conditions" (p. 564). "Integration or association are always only one among several factors that influence the development of a border conflict" (Diez, Stetter, & Albert, 2006, p. 570), but it nevertheless constitutes an important aspect. Conflict, in this study, does not refer to violent conflict only. Rather, the term is also used to identify conflicts of interests and interpretation: "We observe the existence of a conflict when an actor constructs his or her identity or interests in such a way that these cannot be made compatible with the identity or interests of another actor" (p. 565).

Diez, Stetter and Albert (2006) propose 4 different pathways, distinguished by the approach and the target. Measures can be either driven by the EU or they can be a side-effect of integration that was not triggered by EU policy *per se*. Moreover, measures can be targeted at policies or on society. Table 1 below presents the four possible options schematically.

TABLE 1. *Pathways of EU impact*

		Approach by EU	
		Actor-driven	*Integration process*
Target of impact	*Policy*	(1) Compulsory impact	(2) Enabling impact
	Society	(3) Connective impact	(4) Constructive impact

(Diez, Stetter, & Albert, 2006, p. 572)

In the **compulsory impact (path 1)**, the idea is that closer integration or, in the case of the EU, membership is offered as an incentive to change policies and to mitigate tensions. The carrots-and-sticks-approach would induce reconciliation rather than deeper securitisation (Diez, Stetter, & Albert, 2006, p. 572).

The **enabling impact (path 2)** relies on actors within the conflicting parties that see the benefits of integration and thereby promote desecuritisation through a grassroots movement to change policy (Diez, Stetter, & Albert, 2006, p. 573).

Through a **connective impact (path 3)** societal change may come around through a identity change. The connective impact takes place through EU financing of societal actors in support of common activities. The aim is "a broader societal effect in the form of social networks across conflict parties, which in turn should facilitate identity change as foreseen within the constructive impact below" (Diez, Stetter, & Albert, 2006, p. 573).

Lastly, the **constructive impact (path 4)** is depicted as "the most indirect but – if successful – also the most persuasive mode of transformation". The idea is that the prospect of a shared EU identity can put in plays a new (shared) identity, through which the 'underlying identity-scripts of conflicts' change (Diez, Stetter, & Albert, 2006, p. 574). It is a societal transformation that promotes the desecuritisation agenda, rather than the actual resolution of a conflict. In Greece for example, "it was the acceptance of the country as member of the Euro-Zone in 1999, which paved the way for a positive identification with the EU, which manifested itself in increased willingness to use the EU as a foundation for the resolution of its disputes with Turkey according to EU norms" (Diez, Stetter, & Albert, 2006, p. 585).

Relating this framework back to the AU, I would wonder if this is a generalisable framework in the sense that it is independent of further cultural en ideological aspects. If "conventional wisdom holds that regional integration will provide one of the cures to the myriad social, economic and political problems facing Africa, and will assist in offering a path away from its trajectory of increasing global economic marginalisation" (Mills, 2004, p. 21), does the framework by Diez, Stetter and Albert (2006) provide for a starting point? In the following parts of this chapter I will look at the EU promoting regional integration across the world and global experiences of regional integration as a way of conflict transformation.

2.1.3 The EU promoting regional integration

> *"Our European model of integration is the most developed in the world. Imperfect though it still is, it nevertheless works on a continental scale. Given the necessary institutional reforms, it should continue to work well after enlargement, and I believe we can make a convincing case that it would also work globally"* (Prodi, 31 March 2000)

2.1.3.1 Explaining EU promotion of regional integration

The promotion of regional integration has been a EU foreign policy goal since the 1970s, when the EU promoted integration in interregional agreements across the world (Diez, Scherwitz, Tocci, & Faleg, 2013, p. 2). The question remains, however, what motivates the advancement of this European vision on international cooperation.

Smith (2008) refers to regional integration being motivated by a "mixture of far-sighted strategy and ad hoc [...] external demands" (p. 79) and both "self-interested [...] and more altruistic reasons". Firstly, it may strengthen the EU position and its identity as a global actor (p. 80). Secondly, the belief is too that regional integration is a strategy for "managing social and political conflict, fostering the economic wealth of a society and ensuring peace and stability" (Börzel & Risse, 2009, p. 22). This goal is also stated in official documentation: "This regional cooperation model is essentially an extension of the EU's own philosophy that deeper cooperation with neighbouring countries is a route to national as well as regional stability and growth and that such cooperation serves the mutual interests of all countries concerned" (European Commission, 2001, p. 5). From an altruistic foreign policy perspective, regional integration is thus promoted as a strategy for conflict transformation (Diez, Scherwitz, Tocci, & Faleg, 2013, p. 7) that "stems directly from its own internal identity" (Smith, 2008, p. 109).

2.1.3.2 How does the EU promote regional integration?

So if the EU feels responsible for regional integration across the world, I will now explore how the EU goes about this promotion of regional integration.

As Börzel and Risse (2009) explain, regional integration has become part of the package deal that countries and regions get with their EU relationship. In its relations "with almost every single country and most regions in the world", political dialogue and partnership have been the foundations of foreign policy (p. 10). Regional cooperation is encouraged through economic assistance, cooperation agreements, political dialogue and conditionality (Smith, 2008), of which dialogue and "to a lesser extent conditionality" seem to be most important in promotion integration (Börzel & Risse, 2009, p. 9).

The target of this foreign policy are the actors that support region-building, who are strengthened in their capacity "to adopt and implement the necessary policy changes" (Börzel & Risse, 2009, p. 9). The rationale behind this approach is that if the EU succeeds in establishing ownership of the European ideas of regional integration, and gives them the (financial and institutional) means to adopt the changes, this will lead to the mitigation of tensions in the long term, through conflict-adverse identity and behaviour (Diez, Scherwitz, Tocci, & Faleg, 2013, p. 3).

This relates back to the framework established by Diez, Stetter and Albert (2006) introduced before. In its external relations the EU's options become limited as soon as offering membership becomes irrelevant. In those cases, the EU is limited to the 'enabling impact' and the 'connective impact'. The former relies on a grassroots movement changing policy, while the latter promotes activities to bring societal actors closer together aiming at weakening 'Othering' between conflicting parties.

All in all, also in the promotion of regional integration, the EU remains a normative actor, through the promotion of norms (and values, such as democracy and human rights). Next, I will explore experiences with the EU strategy, and in what ways the EU established a one-size-fits-all approach as indicated by Börzel and Risse (2009).

2.1.3.3 Experiences with the EU as a normative power

As mentioned above, the EU maintains relations with almost every country in the world. What is most striking is that "the EU sometimes constructs "new" regions, for example in Sub-Sahara Africa, which share few regional characteristics (e.g. economic interdependence) and have hardly developed a collective identity" (Börzel & Risse, 2009, p. 5). Smith (2008) lists the regional cooperation agreements that the EU has signed, which adds to 6 agreements with regional groupings[1] and 19 regional political dialogues (pp. 101-104).

With MERCOSUR for example, the EU signed the Interregional Framework Cooperation Agreement in 1995, "[foreseeing] EU financial support and technical know-how for the creation of a common legal framework necessary to make regional market integration work" (Börzel & Risse, 2009, p. 11). The EU became MERCOSUR's first trading partner and with the Regional Indicative Program (RIP), it committed to support MERCOSUR institutionalisation, support for deepening MERCOSUR and preparation for a future EU-MERCOSUR Association Agreement

[1] The cooperation agreements with regional groupings are thus far: ACP, Andean Community, ASEAN, Central American community, Gulf Cooperation Council and MERCOSUR.

and, lastly, support to strengthen and enhance civil society participation and understanding (European Commission, 2007).

In its relations with the African Caribbean and Pacific Countries (ACP), EU foreign policy has been much clearer that "developing countries should first integrate among themselves before they integrate into the world market". To underline and promote these ideas, "the EU has encouraged the ACP to enter Economic Partnership agreements in regional groupings rather than bilaterally" (Börzel & Risse, 2009, p. 16). Apart from aid through the RIP, contributions for security policy are provided through for example the African Peace Facility (APF). What undermines the EU encouragement for regionalism at times, is the direct involvement in addressing conflict by EU member states, which relates back the colonial ties between individual countries (Piccolino & Minou, 2014, p. 15).

Overall, regional arrangements with the EU are overshadowed with a slight 'one-size-fits-all'-approach, in which the EU pursues normativity through institutionalization and the underlying rationale that integration leads to conflict prevention. The EU really plays an enabling role, as Diez, Stetter and Albert (2006) would value it. The nature of these relationships excludes possibilities for offering membership. What is remarkable in this regard, however, is that the EU pursues political dialogue rather than conditionality, as is prominent in its trade relations (Börzel & Risse, 2009, p. 11).

2.1.4 Global experiences with the transformative power of integration

Considering regional integration as a means for peace and stability, the EU would be "the most advanced and institutionalized example" (Diez, Scherwitz, Tocci, & Faleg, 2013, p. 1). It is often stated that EU integration has fostered regional peace and stability and helped to "overcome an historical record of deep-rooted conflict, and thus to enjoy an unprecedented period of peace" (ibid.) On the other hand, the transferability of regional integration as a strategy for conflict transformation is disputed, because there are no examples that parallel the peaceful integration of the EU (p. 3).

In this regard, the Americas provide for an interesting example, as, "after Europe, the region [...] has most experimented with regionalism in the world. [...] The vast majority of Latin American countries belongs to more than one such organization and [...] promoting regionalism has been common amongst political leaders for some time." (Lehmann, Forti Neto, & Pestana Haddad, 2014, p. 7). Yet regionalism in the Americas is clearly different than regionalism in Europe for

two reasons: Firstly, regionalism takes place on a sub-regional level, and secondly, regionalism can be rather seen as cooperation rather than integration, which is partly explained by the less political but rather economic incentives (ibid.). This does not mean that security plays no role at all, which the example of the Organisation of American States (OAS) and its role in solving regional tensions during the 'soccer war' between Honduras and El Salvador illustrates (p. 10).

In their interviews, Lehmann et al. (2014) found that while South American policy-makers value the EU and regionalism more generally, they "[absolutely insist] that South America is different and therefore cannot and should not be compared to the European experience" (pp. 24-25). This relates to the colonial difference, which I will discuss later, and the "different history, different political processes, different economic structures, different world-views, different objectives and, crucially [...], a different way of thinking about - and dealing with – problems and challenges and, therefore, of doing politics" (pp. 24-25). These differences do not only relate to the differences with Europe, but also the differences between the sub-regions (p. 28). Still, from these interviews it also became clear how the EU is not ready to accept and understand these differences.

Understanding the broader context, however, is necessary to understand how the continent copes with the many organisations that might make little sense to an outsider. On the one hand, these competing regionalisms may be cultural traits, as "it is a perfectly logical thing to do, trying to exercise political influence on the one hand whilst dealing pragmatically with economic necessities on the other. It is a societal trait to 'keep one's options open', and the seemingly random creation of regional organizations reflects this, as well as the tendency to live in the 'here and now' rather than think ahead long-term" (Lehmann, Forti Neto, & Pestana Haddad, 2014, p. 25). Arias (2011) shows that the Latin American culture of keeping a 'status quo' explains the course of development, through which for example South Korea, Singapore or even the United States, have been able to catch up and outpace Latin American countries in terms of development. Then, on the other hand, local tensions and mutual rivalries persist despite cooperation in other fields. "The Andean countries include several continuing conflicts, with Chile (originally a member) in border conflict with Peru and Bolivia, Peru in dispute with Ecuador, and Colombia's internal unrest being a potential threat to all its neighbours", while regional arrangement show no intentions to mitigate tensions or neutralise them (Page, 2001, p. 11).

2.1.4.1 The experience with integration on to the African continent

Where regional integration is happening through multiple initiatives in West Africa, it is interesting to see that, in contrast to the EU, "conflict management was initially not a focus of regional cooperation" (Piccolino & Minou, 2014, p. 10). ECOWAS, however, which can be regarded as a successful example, in hindsight developed towards becoming a 'conflict transformation agent' (p. 16). Piccolino & Minou (2014) found that ECOWAS' "pattern of day-to-day interaction among state authorities, [...] eased inter-state tensions" (p. 16). It might show a cultural difference, that in Europe the belief holds that regional integration promotes conflict transformation through mutual (economic) dependency and an open market, while this seems to have less effect in West Africa (pp. 17-18). An interesting observation by Piccolino & Minou (2014) is also that while Roland Paris' (2004) argument that democracies do not go to war with each other is highly debated in academics, it might hold on the ground: In West Africa, the governance and security role that ECOWAS has taken up, has led to mitigation of mutual tensions and conflict transformation (p. 17).

While it is sometimes argued that the European model of integration was not always successfully transported to the African context, or that the EU exports its norms through its relationship, Piccolino & Minou are less conclusive stating that not only the EU, but also the other donors or international organisations have inspired developments of regionalism (pp. 20-21). However, their conclusion is based on interviews that showed that the security document promoted by ECOWAS was established internally. In my view, this does not mean a lesser extent of European influence. I believe that this is supported by stating that "it is likely that similarities between the EU and ECOWAS understandings of conflict prevention stem from the existence of a shared normative and epistemic culture among peacebuilding practitioners, rather than from any direct EU influence on ECOWAS" (Piccolino & Minou, 2014, p. 21). This, however, is the same problem that Kramsch and Brambilla (2007) touch upon in their analysis of the WABI initiative. Kramsch and Brambilla (2007) found that the author of a working paper written for WABI "[outlining] the necessity for West African governments to establish a 'Euro-African Dialogue' with the EU on transfrontier co-operation", is blind to the 'colonial difference' and the legacy of the historical-colonial relationship between Africa and Europe. The actual problem remains that even policy that is presented as an 'African solution', in fact is a mere reflection of how accustomed we are today in accepting the Eurocentric view as a global perspective. In a later chapter, I will further explore the colonial legacy through Mignolo's lense by applying the coloniality of power to the African context.

While Piccolino & Minou do see the effects of regional integration on regional tensions, Theron and Cizero Ntasano (2014) on the other hand, found that "regionalism [in the Great Lakes region] has been unable to generate meaningful conflict transformation" (p. 3). The explanation for this argument is that regional integration initiatives targets formal institutions, which clashes with the reality of a lacking formal institutional structure (p. 3). The EU, for example, urges state actors to be brought to the table and take part in peace talks (p. 15). However, the strategy does not always comply with the nature of the conflicts in the region. For conflict transformation to be more successful, "processes that need to be targeted by regionalism are varied and overlapping, including the state, non-state armed forces, economic actors (both illicit and informal) and communal groups" (2014, pp. 3-4).

Bøås (2001), in thinking about regionalisation in Africa, questions "the common wisdom that [African] states, already some of the most marginalized in the world trading system, cannot afford to be half-hearted in their pursuit of economic co-operation. The argument is that if Africa is not regionalised it will be further marginalized: African states will not survive on their own in a highly competitive global economy". He asks what the role of formal institutions can be on a continent where the informal economy accounts for the more important share of the economy and trade (p. 27). The failure of many regional projects can therefore be accounted for by their lack of attention to the informal economy. "African regional organisation therefore seems to be more or less completely de-attached from African reality" (p. 35). Bah (2005) supports this view, advising ECOWAS to "develop and strengthen its links with civil society across the sub-region. Developing such links would elicit contributions from ordinary citizens in the integration process, thereby making its policies and projects more representative" (p. 83).

The intention of this chapter was to introduce different aspects of regional integration theory relevant to this research. Overall, regional integration theorists seem to, still, be highly influenced by Eurocentric ideas. While with regional integration the influence is traceable through analysis of relations and through comparing institutions, it might not be in other fields. In the next chapter, I will turn to critical geopolitics and the border.

2.2 Critical Geopolitics, the Border and Regional Integration

Critical geopolitics provides for an understanding of the meaning of borders, which is crucial for understanding projects of regional integration around the world. Firstly, borders can be seen, from a postmodern perspective, as a multidimensional constructed representation of the world: The meaning attached to it determines its reality (van Houtum, 2011, p. 50). Secondly, the border can create a sense of belonging and of Othering, on each of its levels of interpretation, the local, regional, national or global (Newman, 2006). Therefore, "boundaries both create identities and are created through identity" (Newman & Paasi, 1998, p. 194). Thirdly, as mentioned above, the environment determines the meaning we attach to a border. This again is closely related to the notion of Othering and the creation of identity: New EU member states for example, become part of an exclusive group, yet it simultaneously conveys distance with non-member states. And finally, the border is reproduced through our practices, for example national institutions that strengthen the boundaries between Us and Them (Paasi, 1998, p. 76), or may reduce it, as in some ways is the case in the EU. Summarizing these points, you can conclude that how the border is viewed, is how the border is used.

In this chapter, I will relate ideas of the border and the borderland with regional integration, but I start with sketching the current state of border studies.

2.2.1 An agenda for border studies

In drafting a new agenda for border studies, Parker and Vaughan-Williams (2009) state that, with the emergence of borders beyond the territorially definable, "the relation between borders and territory is becoming ever more complex" (p. 583). This means that the study of borders needs to include an approach to open ways to study new border concepts. An example of an new border epistemology is, as suggested, "theorising borders as experiences" (p. 584). This ultimately leads to the question: 'What does it mean to be a border?' rather than 'What is a border?' (Kramsch & Brambilla, 2007, pp. 114-115). Brambilla (2014) further explores the border beyond, presenting the borderscapes concept. She argues that we need an epistemological perspective on the border, with a focus not only on how the border is used, represented and imagined but also interpreting through which 'borderscaping' takes place. Thereby, "the borderscape allows to move beyond the often-criticized gap between practices and representations, by bringing performativity into the foreground" (p. 15). This also changes the research agenda to "a participatory approach [that entails] researching not on different actors involved in the borderscape *but with* them, opening up

new possible pathways towards novel forms of political participation understood as *existence* (becoming) *rather than essence* (fixed realistic/territorialist ontology)" (p. 16). Next, I will introduce the concept of the borderland, illustrating where these ideas come from.

2.2.2 The border and the borderland

As Wilson & Donnan (1998) describe, borders have three elements: (i) "the legal borderline which simultaneously separates and joins states", (ii) "the physical structures of the state which exist to demarcate and protect the borderline", and (iii) "frontiers, territorial zones of varying width which stretch across and away from borders, within which people negotiate a variety of behaviours and meanings associated with their membership in nations and states" (p. 9). The frontier is what I refer to as borderland, the "political spaces with distinct spatialities of rule and sovereign power" (Korf & Raeymaekers, 2013, p. 10). The borderland therefore lies at the edges of the state, and is an interesting place of investigation.

2.2.2.1 State strength in the borderland

The borderland is a complex area of investigation, not the least because of its political ambiguity, especially where the state is not able to exercise its powers. At the state's edges the power of the state may weaken and be taken over by non-state actors. State strength can be defined as the "state's ability to maintain control over its population and territory" and uphold its monopoly of violence (Borchgrevink, 2010, p. 200). The challenge is formulated by Korf & Raeymaekers (2013) being that "the cultural study of borderland communities teaches us that political borders and social boundaries often do not correspond". The challenge then is to balance political and social borders and ensure the legitimacy of this overlap (p. 19).

For the state, the borderland is important to exercise and establish its territoriality. "Border zones are not just reflective of power relations at the 'centre', but they are also constitutive of them" (Korf & Raeymaekers, 2013, p. 5). Borders have become sites of "contestation and negotiation" and therefore constitutive of state power (ibid.), a process complicated by the "people of a border's frontier [who] are often members of political institutions and informal networks which compete with the state" (Wilson & Donnan, 1998, p. 10). The relationship between the state and the borderland is complicated, as "the state cannot always control the political structures which it establishes at its extremities" (ibid.). State territoriality and the reality of the borderland therefore seem to be two parallel but separate entities. Korf & Raeymaekers (2013) "regard border zones as sites where the state's presence has somehow been limited and its monopoly of violence and political authority is finite, unravelling, or subjected to severe contestation" (p. 7).

State strength in the borderland has, at least, two dimensions. While the presence of the state in border areas constitutes strength, "the way the state's security apparatus relates to the local population in the borderlands" (Borchgrevink, 2010, p. 219) is a no less important feature of state strength. This may also vary along the border and between various border communities. According to de Vries (2012) "the role of the state in the enforcement of the border and the position of state agents in performing their powers have been understudied" (p. 6).

2.2.2.2 The border and identity

As touched upon before, the borderland at the margins of the state is an area that is of strategic importance to the state and a place where the state can prove its identity. Yet "although the state may be particularly interested in exerting its dominance and asserting national identity in the borderlands, that may be the place where such activity is most difficult" (Borchgrevink, 2010, p. 198).

Stuart Hall (1996) explores the idea of identity of the post-modern subject. He takes a conceptualisation in which the post-modern subject has "no fixed, essential, or permanent identity" (p. 598). According to Hall, the national identity is part of the larger concept of cultural identity. "Cultural identity [...] is a matter of 'becoming' as well as of 'being'" (Hall, 1994, p. 225). Identity, therefore, can be seen as a changing concept, that alters according to the context. Globalisation can be one of the driving forces behind identity changes, as "a movement away from the classical sociological idea of a 'society' as a well-bounded system, and its replacement by a perspective which concentrates on 'how social life is ordered across time and space'" (Hall, 1996, p. 619). As a consequence, Hall sees a decline of national identities and a rise of "new identities of hybridity" instead (ibid.).

Hall's depiction of identity fits the idea of a 'borderland identity'. Whereas the border might be seen as a creator of identity as a division between states, borderland people might establish a distinct, own identity through their use of the border, which is not taken into account in the representations of the border. Brambilla (2007) shows this in the double effect the border has: While "the border is an important instrument in imposing a form of legality" from the state, it also "contributes to deny the legitimate principles, which the socio-territorial organization of the Kwanyama's was based on, showing, at the same time, how local people think, live, and after all use the border" (p. 22). The dynamics in the borderland, therefore, may be depicted "as actual political units that generate their own actions and outcomes" (Korf & Raeymaekers, 2013, p. 6). While from the perspective of the state, the borderland may be a periphery, "borders are often

the 'real' centres", as Korf & Raeymaekers (2013) illustrate. "Daily life at the border makes it clear that 'states' and 'citizens' somehow continue to depend on and reproduce each other, as the regulations emerging in border spaces often mirror or at least pay allegiance to state frameworks at both sides of the territorial boundary" (p. 9).

Social identities in the borderland can thus be depicted as a "result of, or in response to, the state's attempts to define or redefine its outer limits" (Wilson & Donnan, 1998, pp. 12-13). Wilson & Donnan (1998) identify three main types of borderland peoples: "(i) those who share ethnic ties across the border as well as with those residing at their own nation state's geographical core; (ii) those who are differentiated by cross-border ethnic bonds from other residents of their state; and (iii) those who are members of the national majority in their state, and have no ethnic ties across the state's borders" (Wilson & Donnan, 1998, p. 14). These three factors may play a role in depicting the strength of a 'borderland identity'.

2.2.3 Regional integration and border(s)/ing in Africa

Understanding the complexity of the borderland brings us back to the AU. The Organization of African Unity, the predecessor of the AU, has in the first ordinary session referred back to borders as a "tangible reality", showing that the 'Balkanization of the continent' was a way to create order. Borders in Africa have, from its inception, been imposed from outside, and extend from the social sphere in the borderland. On the other hand, despite the supposed arbitrariness of borders in Africa, most borders have remained as drawn in the decolonization period (Herbst 1989), which can be traced back to the multiple geneses of their creation and refers back to the paradox of arbitrariness and stability (Mbembe, 2000, p. 265). Conflicts in Africa are only occasionally the result of a dispute over a boundary (Mbembe, 2000, p. 271), and when they do, it is rather a conflict over resources than over ethnocultural spaces (p. 272). Still, tensions in the Abyei region are an exception, as the resources are situated outside the area and the dispute has focused on territoriality among the Ngok Dinka and the Misseriya.

This leads me back to the research problem: If bordering is a problem, how does the AUBP reinforce the coloniality of power in the Abyei borderland. Critical geopolitics shows that the border is socially constructed. Taking these ideas to the concept of regional integration, it can be extrapolated to the idea of how we regard a union of states determines the meaning we attach to it. Do we regard the European Union as a threat to our national sovereignty or as enhancing our national security? In the case of the African Union (AU), this becomes even more interesting. Will the AU enhance peace on the continent, or does it take away state sovereignty and is it just a new colonialism? The question is how we make sense of regional integration and what this means

to the borders that were only recently created and are largely, by now, humanized and put to practice. Yet as border identities can also be considered as a root cause for the complexity of identity politics, which then again are one of the causes of the new kinds of conflict (Kaldor, 2006), this again would argue in favour of greater economic and political integration to create stability.

The understand the AU as 'modern colonisation' and a modern empire, I will introduce postcolonial theory in the next part.

2.3 The inescable coloniality of the AU – Insights from postcolonialism

"Postcoloniality [...] brings to the foreground the colonial side of the modern world system"' (Mignolo, 2000, p. 93). In *Local Histories*, Mignolo (2000) raises the notion of colonial and imperial difference and the coloniality of power and expands these further than the 'usual' Eurocentric discourse, "in order to make us think with, against and beyond the legacy of Western epistemology" (Delgado, Romero, & Mignolo, 2000, p. 7). Mignolo (2000) takes the modern world system as a starting point (p. 51). As a hidden aspect, he refers to Quijano's coloniality of power[2], which inevitably "underlines the geo-economic organization of the planet which articulates the modern/colonial world system and manages the colonial difference" (p. 53). It is because of the historical and structural dependency that Eurocentrism is the dominant perspective.

Mignolo recognises that the so-called Eurocentric discourse cannot be fully neglected, which explains why it comes back in the colonial difference. The colonial difference works in two directions: Both as "rearticulating the interior borders linked to imperial conflicts and rearticulating the exterior borders by giving new meanings to the colonial difference" (Mignolo, 2000, p. 50). Mignolo argues that modernity and coloniality are two sides of the same coin: For the colonized, modernity comes after, whereas in the perspective of the colonizer, "modernity implied the colonization of time" (Delgado, Romero, & Mignolo, 2000, p. 29), it is the difference between "those who participated in building the modern/colonial world and those who have been left out of the discussion" (Mignolo, 2002, p. 63).

The two-way interpretation of developments is a key feature of Mignolo's argument. Decolonisation did not only imply a new position in the coloniality of power for the decolonised country, also "countries that had colonial possessions until the 1960s are becoming subject to the transformation of their own local histories in relation to their previous location in the coloniality of power" (Mignolo, 2000, p. 65). Quijano introduces the image of a Eurocentric mirror, through which we see a one-sided and distorted picture, but do not realise that the picture shows European traits across the world. Instead, the image is presented as a reality (Quijano, 2000, p. 222).

[2] I introduced the coloniality of power previously as a legacy of colonialism that is persistent in our modern world system as seen in the hierarchical power relations/distribution of power, coming forward in designations such as 'First vs. Third World'.

The coloniality of power is a continuous phenomenon. "Colonialism, as Quijano observes, did not end with independence because coloniality of power and knowledge changed hands, so to speak, and became subordinated to the new and emerging epistemological hegemony" (Mignolo, 2000, pp. 87-88). The coloniality of power changed hands from the European colonisers to the new administrators of the states that internalise the European traits without realizing how the Eurocentric lens dominates.

Speaking in these terms, even though colonial rule may have ended, coloniality of power only changes hands and continues in different forms. This is where the modern, post-colonial empire comes in. "Postcoloniality would designate the transformation of coloniality into global coloniality in the same way that postmodernity designates the transformation of modernity into new forms of globalization" (Mignolo, 2002, p. 82). According to Hindess (2001), the "paternalistic perspective remains influential both in the programs of economic and political development promoted by international agencies and the governmental practices adopted by independent, postcolonial states" (p. 95). Coloniality in the form of empire can be defined as "a polity that binds together different and formerly independent states or creates such states where none had previously existed" (Böröcz, 2001, p. 16).

2.3.1 The African Union and Coloniality

The African continent and the African Union are saturated with colonial legacies, even though not necessarily recognized as such by its member states. *Coloniality of power* is no longer a European affair, but it has become internalised to the contemporary actors on the continent. The most obvious legacy of colonialism in Africa is the borders. Bordering as an art of government was spread wider than just in Europe by imperial competitors that created the borders in Africa. Bordering in Africa represented not simply the "construction of a European state system", but also the "division and allocation of territory on a global basis" (Walters, 2002, p. 564). It is in the adaption of the European state division of territory that the legacy returns at first. "The tragedy", as Quijano refers to it, "is that we all have been led, knowingly or not, willingly or not, to see and to accept that image as our own reality and ours only" (Quijano, 2000, p. 222). This is how the coloniality of power is internalised in the AU, which also comes forward in the dogma of 'African solutions to African problems'. Taking into account the coloniality of power, how can an African solution then be really seen as African?

An interesting perspective that Mignolo (2002) addresses is that a "decolonized country […] takes a leading role in a new process of colonization" (p. 88). His example is the United States that is now dominant in our modern/colonial world-system. After decolonization, the borders

drawn by Europe were embraced, as they would provide order on the continent, so the OAU argued. Despite their clinching to the borders, the decolonized member states have agreed to adhere to the principles of the AU. The extent to which this is put into practice is not at stake here, I merely want to draw attention to its existence.

The coloniality of power reinforced by the AU, and the easy comparison with the EU, however, lead to a contradiction analogous to the valuation of African philosophy. Mignolo quotes Bernasconi arguing that "Western philosophy traps African philosophy in a double bind. Either African philosophy is so similar to Western philosophy that it makes no distinctive contribution and effectively disappears; or it is so different that its credentials to be genuine philosophy will always be in doubt" (Mignolo, 2002, p. 70).

The 'failure' of the AU, taking account of its membership body and fields of policy it concerns, can therefore be put into perspective: Despite the similarities, the AU does not have the aspiration to become another EU. This is why Mignolo (2002) argues that "a double critique, 'an other thinking' would lead to the openness of the 'unforeseeable diversity of the world' and of 'unheard and unexpected' forms of knowledge" (p. 81). It refers to the demand for another lens, which I will argue too: What we need is an alternative lens to study the African Union, as the one-sided Eurocentric vision and Western foundation of our knowledge might limit our understanding. The complete picture includes 'an other thinking', in this case, a view from the border and its people.

2.4 Governmentalité of the Empire

This *other thinking* about coloniality, coloniality a step away from colonialism, brings us back to our understanding of regional integration. It is in this context that also the European Union can be regarded as an empire. Rather than the aspects of a modern empire[3], it is "the creation of new institutions, more powerful than ever, that effect this peculiar combination of control [of the EU as an empire]" (Böröcz, 2001, p. 19). With an empire at hand, the colonial difference can also be reinvented by its meaning for the EU member states and for the EU as an entity. Here, the analysis of the border returns. As touched upon before, the borders of Europe become redrawn: The borders of the member state become vague(r) and the Empire of Europe developed a border of itself. Even though the Schengen Treaty was not about political power nor did it inscribe to draw new lines (Walters, 2002, p. 564), it was the "incorporation of Schengen under the Amsterdam Treaty […that meant] that the EU now officially has an external border" (p. 566). With the downgrading of the existing internal borders that Schengen implied (p. 566), the EU can be seen as "accommodating political borders to a political spatiality" (p. 546)

What constitutes this Empire? Foucauldian governmentalité draws attention to the social within the dimensions of governance, rather than to the economy. Usually, Foucauldian debates thus fall in the category of answering the question of what it means to be governed or what it means to be governable. "One governs things. [This is not] a matter of opposing things to men, but rather of showing at what government has to do with is not territory but rather a sort of complex composed of men and things" (Foucault, 1991, p. 93). Following from this, the effect of border is not to be understood as a simple line, but rather as informing and determining practice, conduct and governance (Walters, 2002, p. 563) – and of course the people, since "population comes to appear above all else as the ultimate end of government (Foucault, 1991, p. 100).

Governmentalité as 'the art of government' refers to the how you govern and the management of the state (Foucault, 1991, p. 92). Government, in turn, "is the right disposition of things, arranged as to lead to a convenient end" (La Perriere, quoted by Foucault 1991, 94). Through the creation of objects to be governed as a self-fulfilling prophecy, constant replenishment of objects to be governed is created. It should be noted here, that for Foucault government is not only done by the state and in the political sphere, but for example the household also plays a part. Turning to the sense of state, however, also the act of bordering and ordering of the political borders is an

[3] Böröcz (2001) defines "the substance of imperial order […] as a combination of the following four mechanisms of control: (1) unequal exchange; (2) coloniality; (3) export of governmentality; and (4) geopolitics" (18).

art of government, as it seems to "extend and reinforce the legal statutes, territorial imperatives, and values stemming from the exercise of political power" (Harley, 1989, p. 12).

As Foucauldian theory has only been limitedly applied to IR or EU studies, I will take as a basis Agnew's (1999) premise that "a state is not ontologically prior to a set of interstate relations, [a] state is defined and recognized as such only within a set of relationships that establish rules for what is and what is not a 'state'" (p. 510). Combined with the insight from governmentalité, this would be referred to as the relationship with those being governed. Applying both the insight of governmentalité and Agnew's premise to a regional organization such as the EU, you may conclude that its 'legitimacy' and its actorness derives from its position within the modern/colonial world system, as it does not presuppose that only a state can be the governing body. The eternal question of the EU as supranational versus intergovernmental comes in here. In order to properly answer the question of who the governed is, you need to establish whether the EU intends to govern the people of Europe, or act as an 'oversight body' for its member states. To really establish the EU in terms of its governmentalité, you need to dive into the "particular arts of government" (Walters, 2002, p. 569).

2.4.1 The AU as Empire

The next step would be the governmentalité and its way of managing and 'arranging' its members in a convenient way. Within the AU, the governmentalité is focused on peace and stability on the continent, of which the Peace and Security Committee (PSC) is executing policy to achieve its goals. However, the Africa Union (AU) is challenged by congestion in the road from policy proposals to implementation. This can partly be explained from the different aspirations of member states. African leaders from, among others, Senegal and Cote d'Ivoire did not feel the time was right to share the national political autonomy, "even though they believed in African cooperation, unity and development" (Babarinde, 2007, p. 6). It shows how the modern empire both works to reinforce the interior borders as well as it constitutes a new outside border and the different interests may clash. For the AU this means to find an art of government to satisfy its population in the best way possible.

The image of the AU as a modern, post-colonial empire on the African continent becomes even more complex when looking at the internal power geometries. Even though "empire is a polity that binds together different and formerly independent states or creates such states where none had previously existed" (Böröcz, 2001, p. 16), this does not mean that these member states are at the same level. With over 50 members, internal power geometries come to play, next to the already manifold "potential pitfalls that could stall and even reverse the progress of the AU"

(Babarinde, 2007, p. 9). And not only the sheer membership size, also the grand variety of policy areas that the AU intends to address will activate the power geometries, as countries simply are not willing to give up autonomy.

2.5 Point of departure: Positioning the AU within a coherent framework

The speed with which the African Union was established reflects the supposed willingness to establish peace, unity and security across the African continent. The intention of the establishment of the AU, however, still remain uncertain and the question remains: "what is the basic institutional premise of the African Union: is it a supranational institution or merely an intergovernmental organization, as was the OAU which it has replaced? […] Some leaders regard it as the panacea for all of Africa's economic and political problems, while yet others still view it as the thin end of the wedge in a move towards the creation of a 'United States of Africa" (Maluwa, 2003, pp. 159, 163). As the meaning of this African institution remains uncertain – is it a remedy or a United States of Africa – its raison d'être yet needs to be proven. The Constitutive Act captures a shared vision on the objectives and principles for the AU, now its member states need to show commitment and will to put these into practice (Maluwa, 2003, p. 167).

Ultimately, the African Union with all of is facets remain an intriguing research subject. In this research I will apply the theoretical foundations of both the coloniality of power and of governmentalité to better understand the AUBP and its continental border policy. I hope to exhibit an understanding of organizations of regional integration in *Other* parts of the world, one of which is the African Union. As of now, the European Union is evolving into an ever more dominant modern-day empire, of which the scope is new and the consequences are unknown, next to the observation that our borders are becoming less and less important. Seeing the African Union as a successor of the EU in Africa, this will lead to an entirely new world system with key actors on different scales, when assuming that the state will not disappear. As such, I can certainly agree with Böröcz (2001) that the "European Union as an '*in vivo'* experiment has lasting implications for the globe" (p. 36), not only for Europe itself, but also for the emergence of other initiatives of regional integration across the world. The EU as the 'best practice' today influences our expectations of similar initiatives and eventually fuels research like this.

The message I would like to spread is that Jean Monnet understood the governmentalité of regional integration: A Union of States is more than just a coalition. It is an art, exhibiting the art of government through uniting people. That experiments of regionalization are a bumpy path is inevitable. In the history of European integration you have seen periods of smoother and less smooth relations. Whether the African Union will be a panacea for African economic and political problems – Nobody knows. But that should not withhold us, as researchers, to understand the project and its implications, its challenges and the possible outcomes.

3. Methodology

In this chapter, I will illustrate the methodology used in this research project. I will first introduce my choice for the case study approach and the subsequent case study, after which I present the research methods in more detail.

3.1 Case study approach

In my research I chose a case study approach to explore my research questions. This approach allows me to focus on a deeper understanding of the dynamics of the Sudan – South Sudan borderland, and the Abyei region more specifically. This then provides me with insights to contribute to theory. According to Yin (1994), the case study approach is applicable to explore questions of 'what', 'why' and 'how'. Kyburz-Graber (2004) summarizes case studies as "complex social situations with a large number of variables which cannot be controlled and cannot even be perceived and recognized in all their dimensions" (p. 54). The case study approach thus "enables the researcher to answer "how" and "why" type questions, while taking into consideration how a phenomenon is influenced by the context within which it is situated" (Baxter & Jack, 2008, p. 556).

There are different types of case studies. Baxter and Jack (2008) review explanatory, exploratory, descriptive, intrinsic, instrumental and collective case study approaches. In my research, the Sudan – South Sudan borderland plays an instrumental role, as I do not intend to explore this particular situation per se, but it rather "plays a supportive role, facilitating our understanding of something else" (p. 549). I chose one case to develop a deeper understanding. In my research, I believe this is more useful than a comparative research with more than one case study, as the latter approach will hinder the profoundness within the scope of this research.

3.1.1 Selection of the case

In my research, I chose to focus on the Sudan-South Sudan borderland for a few reasons. First of all, for the angle of my research, I was interested in a case where bordering is happening at this very moment. This, however, still left several options. My attention was drawn to South Sudan, as it is the latest country that was created in Africa, the previous country being Eritrea in 1993. And last but not least, while South Sudan is a new country, the conflict is one of the longest running on the African continent. This not only means that the situation is pressing and the peace process is a challenge, but also that the scholarly world has focused on the conflict for a long time. Thus,

there is a strong base in academic literature on which I can build, which regarding my time frame, is also important to keep in mind.

3.2 Research methods

Despite the challenges of qualitative research, such as objectivity, interpretation of the researcher and the lack of generalizability of the results (Devine, 2002), I believe that qualitative research is best suited to explore my research questions. As Baxter and Eyles (1997) state, "elaboration is needed to clarify the ways in which the methodology and methods are carried out to achieve things like 'overcoming distance' and obtaining 'in-depth knowledge'" (p. 508). In the next section, I will therefore elaborate on which 'qualitative method' I will use for each sub-question.

3.2.1 Analysis

In my analysis, I will use a combination of different methods to arrive at my conclusions, which is typical within a case study approach (Eisenhardt, 1989, p. 534).

The first sub-question on 'how AU border policy is influenced by their perception on the EU', I will analyse through a discourse analysis. It allows me to explore "the discursive aspects of policy, including how problems are represented in policy and how policy subjects are constituted through problem representations" (Goodwin, 2011, p. 167). A discourse analysis will therefore allow me to analyse how AU border policy is shaped. In the analysis of texts, I will look beyond the normative to evaluate values and principles. I will find the data online and in the AU Handbook 'From Barriers to Bridges', in which I will find a collection of official texts on African borders from 1963 – 2012.

In my second sub-question on the relevance of the concept of intangibility as used in the Cairo Declaration in the Sudan-South Sudan borderland, I will rely on a policy analysis as well. The policy analysis is used for the concept of intangibility and how this needs to be understood, especially in the context of the 'new' border between Sudan and South Sudan.

For the third and the fourth sub-questions ('How is the Sudan – South Sudan border lived and experienced in terms of the disputed areas?' and 'To what extent can regional integration take place under the tensions in the Sudan – South Sudan borderland?'), I will rely on field research reports from other researchers. My personal circumstances and time frame do not allow me to conduct interviews in the field myself. I therefore decided to rely on secondary sources that will still allow me to find an answer to my questions.

The sources I found brought participants together in focus groups. That way, "participants interact in a discussion on a particular topic, agree with other interviewees in some respects and disagree in others and raise new issues and concerns" (Devine, 2002, p. 199). I believe that a focus group discussion also establishes rigour, as topics are discussed among 'equals' and interpretations are checked amongst participants. Misinterpretation of meanings is one of the challenges that Baxter and Eyles (1997) bring up in their research on qualitative methods in human geography (p. 509).

4. The background

The presence of boundaries is a sign that the political community has reached a relative degree of maturity and orderliness, the stage of law-abidance" (Kristof, 1959, p. 281). However, border scholars today do not deny an understanding of borders as "a mobile and relational space" (Brambilla, 2014, p. 9). With the emergence of organisations of regional integration across the world, borders are shifting, re-emerging, disappearing and their meaning is changing. On the African continent the shift of boundaries from barriers to bridges is widely promoted. In this chapter, I will introduce regionalism in Africa, the problem with border conflicts on the continent and the AUBP.

4.1 Regionalism in Africa

My focus will be on the 'idea of lines in a shifting medium' (Parker, Vaughan-Williams, et al, 2009, p. 585) and lines as a shifting medium, with a focus on regional integration in Africa. In Europe we have seen that the lines have shifted through the process of regional integration. It led to Fortress Europe: A fading away of internal borders and a strengthening of the outside borders. Mignolo (2002) states that a "decolonized country […] takes a leading role in a new process of colonization" (p. 88). Does this give a new meaning to regional integration in Africa?

4.1.1 History of African regionalism: The OAU

Ever since decolonization, organisations of regional cooperation and integration have emerged on the African continent. This was seen as "a strategic tool for survival, revival and transformation" after the continents Balkanisation and "the emergence of a large number of minuscule states, many of which are also landlocked" (Adedeji, 2012, p. 98). But more importantly, the establishment of smaller scale regional organisations fit the "ideological framework of Pan-Africanism which, ever since the first Pan-African Congress in 1900, advocated African integration and unity as the only means of bringing about true self-rule and self-determination on the continent" (Franke, 2007, p. 33).

While some leaders[4] envisioned a United States of Africa, far-reaching political integration was not intended continent-wide. The OAU therefore became a "compromise among the different opinions" and visions on the future of such an organisation (Gebe, 2008, p. 42). At its inception in 1963, the OAU could "[support] collective struggles for national liberation from colonialism [and it found itself responsible to] act as the guardian of Africa's hard-won yet fragile independence from colonial rule" (Engel & Porto, 2010, p. 1). The goal of the OAU was to improve security amongst African nations, but also within, especially with regard to domestic opposition groups. Moreover, the OAU put forward its goal "to increase the global influence of Africa and its states" (van Walraven, 2010, p. 35).

4.1.2 From OAU to AU

Despite the promising visions of this first generation of African leaders, the OAU would never become the strong regional organisation that was envisioned. The Organisation was coping with three challenges that eventually led to its demise. Firstly, it lacked a strong mandate to deal with the nature of the problems on the continent, amongst which "high intensity civil wars, genocide and gross violations of human rights perpetrated by regimes" (Engel & Porto, 2010, pp. 1-2). Secondly, the OAU failed to set up a hierarchical or oversight system that could organise the competition between (sub-)regional organisations to strengthen its own position as the only 'all-African', continental organisation. As a result, tensions between the OAU and the numerous sub-regional organisations increased (Franke, 2007, pp. 36 - 37). Thirdly, the aim for continental unity proved to be clashing with the promotion of national independence and nationalism of the new states (p. 34) and their leadership. The leadership culture is illustrated by, for example, the culture of corruption that led to structural budget deficits as contributions delayed. The provisions in the Charter did not allow coping with these nations accurately, which further weakened the Organisation (van Walraven, 2010, p. 39).

While searching for a solution to the persisting problems and weaknesses of the OAU, "members began to move towards an entirely new international institution – the African Union" (van

[4] "On the continent itself, individuals who shared the dream and vision of African unity consisted of the first generation of African political elites and leaders with differing political persuasions and philosophies, including former Heads of State and Government such as Kwame Nkrumah [Ghana], Nnamdi Azikwe [Nigeria], Julius Nyerere [Tanzania], Kenneth Kaunda [Zambia], Sékou Touré [Guinea], Léopold Sédar Senghor [Senegal] among others". The most radical proponents dreaming of a united Africa were found in the so-called Casablanca Group, consisting of Ghana, Guinea, Mali, Libya, Egypt, Morocco and the Front de Liberation Nationale (FLN) of Algeria)" (Gebe 2008, 42).

Walraven, 2010, p. 53). The AU was launched in 2002 at the First Assembly of the Heads of States of the African Union in Durban (African Union, 2013). While the principles of the AU are similar to those that were found in the OAU, the new organisation "adopted a much more interventionist stance in the organisation's legal frameworks and institutions" (Kasija, 2013, p. 117) to become the 'African solution to African problems' that the continent is looking for (p. 118).

4.1.3 The African Union

The African Union (AU) is not merely a continuation of the OAU. It can be seen as a fresh start to pan-Africanism and as a chance to implement the paradigm of 'African solutions to African problems'. Söderbaum and Hettner (2010) highlight three important differences with its predecessor: "(1) the institutional structure; (2) the change in development thinking; (3) the new peace and security architecture" (p. 21).

Firstly, "the AU created more robust institutions and organs aimed at achieving a range of economic, social and political objectives" (Kasija, 2013, p. 121). It is commonly viewed that the OAU's principle of non-interference was replaced to non-indifference under the AU (eg. Kasija 2013, Vines 2013). This also means that the AU introduced policies concerning good governance, and since its existence it has suspended members temporarily after violations.

Secondly, when it comes to the change in development thinking, rather than the dominant paradigm of dependence, programmes such as NEPAD promote "Africa as a partner rather than a patron" (Murithi, 2012, p. 665) in the global economy. "Africa's marginalization and underdevelopment should be overcome by closer integration into the world economy" through outward oriented economic policy (Söderbaum & Hettner, 2010, p. 21). Also, the Regional Economic Communities (RECs) are used as building blocks (ibid.), rather than as competitors. As such the role of RECs "has become very prominent in the recent political and economic arrangements on the continent" (Gebe, 2008, p. 46).

Thirdly, in contrast to the OAU's failure to properly address peace and security issues, the AU introduced the Peace and Security Council (PSC), primarily aimed at the design and implementation of its peace and security policy. Through the PSC, the AU is able to implement its right to intervene in conflict situations (Söderbaum & Hettner, 2010, p. 22). Yet maybe more importantly, a more prominent role for peace and security also makes the AU a leading actor of peace and security norms (Murithi, 2012, p. 664).

4.1.3.1 Challenges facing the AU

Despite the promising difference with its predecessor, the AU still finds itself challenged to become the effective organisation it would like to see in itself. Or, as van Walraven (2010) puts it, "the old problems have not immediately withered away" (p. 55).

As an organisation, the AU is operationally and bureaucratically constrained. First, the AU simply lacks the resources, from financial to human resources, to act as mandated in (post-)conflict situations (Söderbaum & Hettner, 2010, p. 29). Second, the AU is criticized for being too slow to respond to crises, mainly caused by "administrative bottlenecks" (Murithi, 2012, p. 668). Finally, there still are tensions between the RECs and the AU, where the regions find the AU sometimes too dominant and "at the AU there is a feeling that the RECs are not always fully committed to AU leadership" (Vines, 2013, p. 101).

Next to these functional challenges, the AU struggles with internal functioning that are familiar to the EU. There is a lack of consensus among African states that, still, find it hard to combine national interests with ideas of Pan-Africanism (Murithi, 2012, p. 666). Also, the AU faces a democratic deficit. While at its establishment it committed itself to engagement with civil society, it "remains predominantly a top-down affair with elites from across Africa crafting and moulding the institutions to govern the continent, often without sufficiently consulting their publics" (pp. 663 - 668).

Yet despite the challenges, the AU is surely an improvement compared to the OAU and a step closer to attaining African solutions to African problems.

4.2 Bordering in Africa

Borders are, inherently, part of a discussion on regional integration in Africa. African boundaries largely represented the imperial interests of colonial powers (Okumu, 2010, p. 282). The Berlin Conference of 1885, for example, was set up to "mitigate imperial competition between England, France, and Germany" by discussing the Fate of the Congo and issues on navigation on African rivers (Herbst, 1989, p. 683). Mirroring the tensions between the European colonial competitors, "border relations in Africa have continued to feature the same kinds of mutual jealousies, conflicts and tensions that characterized such relations in the Europe of the nation-state" (Asiwaju, 2012, p. 68).

Despite the supposed arbitrariness of African boundaries that led to Balkanisation of the continent "into a maze of microstates that were not economically viable and were linked more to Europe than to their regional environment" (Mbembe, 2000, p. 261), African boundaries have

kept a 'sacrosanct character'. Unfortunately, this did not lead to the disappearing of border conflicts on the continent. Boundary commissions have been established throughout the continent to ensure proper delimitation and demarcation of the borders. "In addition to the potential for armed conflict, undemarcated, indefinite, porous, and unmanaged boundaries are being used for illegal cross-border activities that threaten national sovereignties and destabilise regional politics" (Okumu, 2010, p. 280).

4.3 The African Union Border Programme

Borders in Africa have proven to become an obstacle to cooperation and integration between neighbouring states. With the colonial history in mind, border issues were already on top of the OAU's policy agenda. The policy was motivated by "considerations of continental peace and jealous defence of newly won sovereignties" to promote the "maintenance of the inherited boundaries in preference to the alternative boundary redrawing that was and is still being advocated by some" (Asiwaju, 2012, p. 74). Others would argue that this policy was motivated by a "[fear] to open a Pandora's Box of territorial claims, merely [taking] the easy way out by adopting the legal finality of colonial boundaries" (Okumu, 2010, p. 287). The Charter of the OAU "contained the provision to defend [...] territorial integrity [...] which came to be translated into the norm of non-intervention" (Kasija, 2013, p. 117), also when it comes to border demarcation. However, the OAU Charter of 1963 and the 1964 Cairo resolution on Border Disputes among African States have not prevented border disputes (Asiwaju, 2012, p. 74).

The African Union Border Program (AUBP) was established in 2007 as a logical result of the Resolution on Border Disputes between African States that reached its 50th year in 2014. With the establishment of the AUBP, the African Union Commission hopes to create "a united and integrated Africa with peaceful, open and prosperous borders" (AUBP 2013a), "mirroring the more desirable developments in the European Union" (Asiwaju 2012, 67). Its basis is that "well delimitated, demarcated and managed boundaries provide an environment of security and facilitate trade, which forms the basis of peoples' and States' prosperity" (AUBP, 2013, p. 6).

The AUBP focuses on delimitation, delineation and demarcation[5] of borders, thereby responding to the lack of clear bordering causing tensions between neighbouring countries. Eastern Africa, for example, is divided up by more than 30 boundaries each country has been involved with at least one border dispute with a neighbour. Okumu (2010) argues "that among the sources of

[5] Delimitation is the definition of borders by treaty, delineation is the cartographic representation of borders and demarcation refers to the actual marking of borders on the ground (Shaw 2007, 783).

current border disputes in Eastern Africa are the improperly delimited and poorly demarcated colonially inherited borders, the procrastination of post-independent governments to correct the colonial errors, poor border administration and management, increasing populations, and discoveries of mineral wealth in the borderlands and frontiers" (p. 280). Asiwaju (2012) refers to the AUBP as "the most comprehensive policy instrument ever designed at continental level on the issue of Africa's borders" (p. 67) and as the "climax of the long process of the evolution of comprehensive border problem-solving policy-making at continental level" (p. 75).

5. Analysis

5.1 Tracing Europe in the AUBP

In this chapter, I will seek an answer to the first sub-question: 'How is AU border policy influenced by the perception on the EU?'. I will give insight into the relations between the EU and Africa first, after which I discuss the AUBP and the traces of Europe. The coloniality of power will be a returning concept in the discussion of my findings, supporting the interpretation of the relationship.

5.1.1 EU relations with Africa

In this analysis on EU relations with Africa, I decided to focus on the results of the 4th EU-Africa Summit solely, as this is a recent imagery of the relationship. The relationship itself, however, goes way back. The Yaoundé Conventions of 1963 and 1968 provided a basis for the post-independence African countries, but were criticised for being neo-colonial by for example Ghana's Kwame Nkrumah. The subsequent Lomé Convention of 1975 was saturated with the links to the former colonial powers, and was marked by "the idea of an African priority for Europe" (Whiteman, 2012, p. 3). And also in the Cotonou Agreement of 2000, the Eurafrique-aspect of the relationship remains present. Cotonou also introduced the political dimension with a focus on human rights, democracy and rule of law-provisions. Since 2000, the EU-Africa Summit takes place every couple of years. The EU-Africa Strategy that was presented after the 2nd Summit in Lisbon in 2007 was received sceptically and the EU was criticised for unilaterally defining the EU-Africa relationship (Whiteman, 2012, p. 2). This leaves me wondering if in composing the Roadmap presented in 2014 the process has changed.

In the theoretical chapter on regional integration, I introduced the EU as a normative actor. In its relations with the African continent, this is once again affirmed. At the EU-Africa Summit in Brussels in April 2014, 80 European and African heads of State and Government developed a roadmap for 2014 – 2017 on Africa-EU cooperation. The priority areas were formulated as follows:

"For the 2014-2017 period, the summit agreed that the implementation of the Joint Strategy shall focus on the following priority areas:

1. *Peace and Security*
2. *Democracy, Good Governance and Human Rights*
3. *Human development*
4. *Sustainable and inclusive development and growth and continental integration*
5. *Global and emerging issues"*

(4th EU-Africa Summit, 2014, p. 2)

These priority areas immediately relate to other EU foreign policy documents, not only those in relation to Africa. Peace and security, as well as norms and values on democracy, good governance and human rights are recurring topic that the EU seeks to promote though dialogue and establishing relationships abroad, be it with Latin America, Asia, Africa or even Eastern European countries. The image of a template, or a blue-print for EU foreign policy, therefore, is striking.

Moreover, this roadmap seems to be comparable with the EU's New Strategy for Africa of December 2005, which was "almost completely prepared by the European Commission in Brussels without any substantial input from African governments" (de Vos, 2012, p. 105). In this unequal relationship the colonial burden prevails and the EU remains Africa's big brother, without truly taking into account the African context and African perspective. Here, the coloniality of power becomes visible in the EU-Africa relationship. Continental integration, for instance, is a recurring topic in the roadmap. But where Africa and the AU tend to regard integration as a strategy for loosening tensions in the peace and security area, the roadmap does not relate continental integration to peace and security issues. Peace and security are promoted through dialogue and strengthening of programmes such as the African Peace and Security Architecture (APSA). Integration on the other hand, is seen as a means for stimulating economic growth through investments, trade and infrastructure (4th EU-Africa Summit, 2014), which it has been in the European integration experience and is a European priority today. It shows how the Eurocentric perspective is dominant even in a joint initiative. The question is whether both the parties are aware of the Eurocentric mirror that is presented in this case, or whether integration with economic incentives is seen as reality.

Even though the EU-Africa Summit Roadmap is presented as a joint African and European strategy, the African position seems overshadowed. Contrastingly, European priorities are highlighted while its policy strategy for Africa's problems, which are not even addressed appropriately, are part of a blueprint of the EU's toolbox from the European External Action Service (EEAS). It is in this sense that I regard the EU as a post-colonial empire. "Colonialism

needed first and foremost to protect 'native' interest and its cultural and social way of life in order to be morally defensible" (Hewitt, 2009, p. 31). The EU's foreign policy thereby shows similar traits of protecting its own values as a justification for establishing relations with, in this case, Africa.

5.1.2 European influences in the AUBP

The idea of Europe travels, sometimes encouraged from within the EU, sometimes attracted by the AU. I will now analyse in what ways the EU, both as an actor and as an idea, plays a role in the establishment of the AUBP. This chapter is built on the idea of Hartmut Mayer (2012), proclaiming how "African perceptions of Europe [...] are still often shaped by the colonial past, with notions of dependency, resistance, and requests for compensation for past wrongdoings" (p. 443). In similar terms, the European perception of Africa framing its relationship is still that of a 'continent of crises' rather than a 'continent of opportunities' (ECDPM, 2013, p. 12). How does this relate to the AUBP?

In the First Declaration on the African Union Border Programme and its implementation modalities drafted in June 2007, the Ministers in charge of border issues of the AU member states agreed "to coordinate and implement the Border Programme" not only with member states, RECs, civil society and local representatives, but also with "the European border movement, particularly the Association of European Border Regions (AEBR), the United Nations and other African Union partners having experience in cross-border cooperation" (AUBP, 2013, p. 69). This urge to coordinate and discuss the European experience with the AEBR seems to have become a recurring topic. In the decision on the implementation of the AUBP drafted in January 2009, the Council "requests the Commission to continue to work actively towards the establishment of partnerships with organisations that have experience in the management of border issues, in particular the United Nations, the European Union and the Organization of American States" (AUBP, 2013, p. 72). And also the Second Declaration on the AUBP of March 2010 asks for an "intensification of exchanges with the various inter- national actors, particularly the EU, the United Nations, the Association of European Border Regions and other partners who have experience in the area of cross-border cooperation" (AUBP, 2013, p. 81).

In the Third Declaration on the AUBP of May 2012, the member states "[requested] international partners, particularly the German Government through the GIZ, the European Union (EU), the United Nations (UN) and other bilateral and multilateral partners, to provide the necessary support" (AUBP, 2013, p. 87). Moreover, member states agreed on "the

continuation and intensification of interaction with the international partners concerned, in particular the GIZ, the EU, the UN, the Association of European Border Regions (AEBR) and other partners, to facilitate the ex- change of experiences and mobilise their support" (AUBP, 2013, p. 88).

Border management in other continents thus seems highly esteemed by the AU, at least as an opportunity for exchanging experiences. However, this is only the formulation in official documents. A report of a meeting with experts on the AUBP in March 2007 provides further explanation on the partnership with Europe. Europe is regarded as experienced "in terms of cross-border cooperation [and therefore] could be a source of inspiration for Africa" (AUBP, 2013, p. 106). Moreover, and maybe more importantly, the meeting concludes with a proposal for requesting a component on cross-border cooperation in the 10th European Development Fund (EDF) (AUBP, 2013, p. 106), the main fund for European development aid.

The final question raised is to what extent this regard for Europe and Eurocentric notion of cross-border cooperation is a result of the coloniality of power and thereby can be regarded as a colonial legacy and a post-colonial phenomenon. Apart from being one of the few examples *par excellence* for 'successful' cross-border management, the EU continuously ascribes to its paternalistic role guiding development on the African continent, thereby reinforcing the coloniality of power. The relationship is marked by the burden of colonial history. How the colonial is embedded in our modern world system is put to practice through the EU's 'advisory role' on the one hand, and by the African dependency on European funds for promoting its programmes on the other. The EU's advisory role reinscribes the coloniality of power in this relationship through the EU's standardised programming and promotion of EU's soft power issues on the agenda. The EU's agenda dominates the relationship, spreading EU traits without acknowledging the Europeanness of the lens through which the relationship is perceived and framed. The African dependency on European funds and the perception of dependence that goes along with it reinforces the image of a subaltern Africa. Rather than a relationship between equals with responsibilities and ownership for both parties, the relationship is still dominated by forms of conditionality. This emphasises a relationship of donor and recipient based on the coloniality of power in the modern/colonial world system.

5.1.3 Conclusion: Eurocentrism within the AUBP

While being promoted as an 'African solution to African problems', the AU and the AUBP remain deeply attached to the EU and the European experience of cross-border management. With a background in postcolonialism in mind, this cooperation can be described as a subaltern

relationship based on African dependency reinscribing the coloniality of power. The coloniality of this relationship becomes visible when analysing the roles both parties take up and the Eurocentric lens through which the agenda is set. On the other hand, I am aware that the AUBP and African regional integration may be trapped in a double bind. While on the one hand, the EU provides for an understandable partner for the AU (Bachmann & Sidaway, 2010, p. 2), ownership is stressed all along. In the earlier chapter on the African Union and coloniality, I referred to Mignolo quoting Bernasconi on African philosophy: "Western philosophy traps African philosophy in a double bind. Either African philosophy is so similar to Western philosophy that it makes no distinctive contribution and effectively disappears; or it is so different that its credentials to be genuine philosophy will always be in doubt" (Mignolo, 2002, p. 70). Bernasconi's idea on African philosophy can refer analogously to the AUBP. Either the AUBP is too similar to the EU and its border policy that they are too similar and the AU(BP) is said to be 'copying' the EU. Or it is so different that it is no longer regarded as a border policy, since it does not fit the prevailing image and perception of the border and integration.

Apart from this trap, however, there are the unmistakable differences between the continents too, that are not always respected as such. From its inception, African regionalism was based on grand ideas, but these ideas swiftly faced reality. While the European grandfathers of integration Jean Monnet and Jacques Delors were "able to fulfil their visions contributing to a 'more united Europe'" as the financial resources were supplied for by the Marshall Plan of 1947 and "Europe already possessed highly trained citizens in countries with established education systems who could take advantage of this 'aid'", their African equivalents "Salim Ahmed Salim and Alpha Konaré were in contrast unable to match their words with deeds and realised that the stuff of which dreams are made was in short supply in Africa" (Adebajo, 2012, p. 77). The troubled history of the OAU led to the AU's new start. And preventing the same mistakes has become important. With this rationale, taking the EU as a role model can be justified. Is this a bad thing? Not necessarily. However, awareness of the differences and regard for the local, African experience is extremely important. Lack of awareness has resulted in a double blindness. On the one hand, in its relationship the EU tends to neglect the African/colonial difference and promotes and forwards its own Eurocentric agenda. On the other, there is the African blindness to both the coloniality of power and the EUrocentric traits that become visible in their policy, as well as to the disregard for regional differences on the continent. Thereby, the idea of *EUrafrique*, with its very present colonial connotation still remains dominant. By taking into account the African experiences and the African visions, the AU(BP) will eventually be able to develop the

African lens that is needed to overcome the coloniality of power and the legacy of the colonial power struggles and truly get closer to a relationship in which Afro-Europa becomes dominant.

In the following chapter, I turn to a related struggle. I take into question the prominence of the colonial legacy in the Cairo Declaration by questioning the extent to which it applies to the case study of the Sudan – South Sudan borderland.

5.2 Applying the Cairo Declaration to the Sudan – South Sudan border

In this chapter, I will explore the extent to which South Sudan's secession from Sudan is an exception to the provisions in the Cairo Declaration on the reality of African borders on the day of independence from their respective colonial administrations. The question I seek to answer is: 'In what ways is intangibility as foreseen under the Cairo Declaration relevant in the Sudan – South Sudan borderland?'. In discussing this question, I first assess the Cairo Declaration. Subsequently, I assess the colonial heritage that lies in the Sudan – South Sudan border, after which I continue to the applicability of the Cairo Declaration. In my conclusion, I will also shed a light on the question why the international community accepted South Sudan's secession.

South Sudan is one of the few cases in which an African country was established after decolonisation. The most prominent other example is Eritrea's independence from Ethiopia in 1991, which was recognised by the international community in 1993. Another example is Somaliland, which declared independence in 1991, but until today is not recognised by the international community. Until Eritrea's independence, the Organisation of African Unity (OAU) was relatively successful in maintaining the borders from colonial times. Already then, Salim Salim, secretary general of the OAU in 1993, stated: "Today [...] we acknowledge the independence of Eritrea. Earlier or later we shall endorse the independence of the Southern provinces of Sudan. Then the game will be over: no more separations in the established independent African states" (Calchi Novati, 2012, p. 1). Already in the 1990s, when Sudan's civil war was raging, the question did not seem to be if South Sudan's independence was an option, but when. The referendum in 2011 eventually provided clarity with an overwhelming majority favouring secession. According to Wakengela & Koko (2010), "the case of Sudan may be regarded as unique in that a sitting African government agrees – notwithstanding the war predicament under which the agreement was reached – to grant secession rights to one of the country's regions" (p. 21), despite the provisions in the Cairo Declaration of 1964.

5.2.1 The Cairo Declaration

The Cairo Declaration stems from the first session of the OAU in 1964. The Assembly considered "that the borders of African States, on the day of their independence, constitute a tangible reality" and thereby declared "that all Member States pledge themselves to respect the borders existing on their achievement of national independence" (OAU, 2013). "The intangibility of borders of African countries [...] is a sacrosanct principle that legitimates the respect of

geographical borders of African countries as inherited from the former colonial powers". The principle stems from the fear of border disputes throughout the continent after independence (Banza Mwengula, 2011) and has sustained ever since.

5.2.2 Colonial heritage in the Sudan – South Sudan border

European colonial powers have been "decisive in shaping states and nations" in Africa (Calchi Novati, 2012, p. 2) and they have left their legacies. Notably, colonial administrators had their own agenda's. This resulted in 'differential modernisation', "giving preference to some communities and geographical areas of the same colonial entity as opposed to others", based on those local allies that could strengthen and protect colonial rule. This resulted in divisions among the colonised, "[preventing] the emergence of a unified anti-colonisation front among Africans" (Wakengela & Koko, 2010, p. 22).

Sudan became independent in 1956 from its double colonisation by the British and the Egyptians[6]. In Sudan, the British had been emphasising 'differential development'. The Southern Policy aimed at preventing the spread of nationalism in the North that could undermine British rule in Sudan, and by separating the Southern provinces, "encouraging their assimilation by the governments of the neighbouring British East African federation" (Wakengela & Koko, 2010, p. 23). The differential treatment also mirrored in its toleration of "the forced removal of women and children from the South to Khartoum and the Arab regions [...] because after all they could find there better conditions of education", even though this was only disguised slavery (Calchi Novati, 2012, p. 2). The differences between the North and the South as introduced by the British were reinforced by the post-independence administration. Unequal development "simply gave place to the internal domination of the South by the North" (Wakengela & Koko, 2010, p. 23). And more importantly, it explains the roots of the decade-long struggle for independence.

5.2.3 Applicability of the Cairo Declaration

In exploring the applicability of the Cairo Declaration on the Sudan – South Sudan border, there are two interesting, primary observations. Firstly, there is little published on the relationship between South Sudan's independence and the Cairo Declaration with its sacrosanct principle of adherence to the African border. And secondly, there seems to be no agreement on whether or not the Cairo Declaration applies.

[6] While Sudan was initially colonised by Egypt, with British rule over Egyptian territories, it became part of the British colonial empire.

Before studying the two opposing positions, it is important to clarify the differences between South Sudan's secession and Eritrea's independence. South Sudan is a new country that was created in the post-independence period, whereas the Eritrean case is different. While Ethiopia was not subject to colonial rule, Eritrea used to be an Italian colony that became a British protectorate during World War II. After the war, it became an "autonomous unit federated with Ethiopia under the Ethiopian Crown" (UN Res. 390(V), 2 December 1950). Principally, at times of independence, it was an independent state already.

Marcel Banza Mwengula (2011) presents the argument that the Cairo Declaration does not apply to the Sudan – South Sudan border. His argument is based on the premise that the international borders of Sudan have not changed, but that South Sudan's secession is a matter of Sudan's own borders. As the Cairo Declaration applies to international borders only, he argues, the case does not present an exception to the Cairo Declaration. To me, however, it is not possible to see the Cairo Declaration and South Sudanese secession independent from each other. It is true that Sudan's borders with its neighbors did not change, but South Sudan's independence created a new international border and changed Sudan's territory. The Cairo Declaration demands for the borders to remain as they were at the time of independence. In this respect, Sudan's international border changed, as did its territory. Wakengela & Koko (2010) argued that if South Sudan would become independent, "it defies the 'sacrosanct' principle of the intangibility of borders", as South Sudan would "become the first post-colonial African state to allow its own 'reconfiguration', breaking away from the long-entrenched myth of the permanence of the post-colonial African state" (p. 25).

In its essence, the Cairo Declaration stays true to the colonial state as established by the European colonial powers. I therefore understand respecting South Sudan's independence as a matter of self-determination and a step towards overcoming the colonial legacy. It shows that the borders of the European colonisers have not always taken into account the local context, or are based on a European interpretation of the local context that affects the borderland until today.

5.2.4 Conclusion: Partition as a strategy for conflict transformation

In my opinion, South Sudan's independence is an interesting case of secession, as partition is usually not seen as a useful strategy for conflict transformation. Apparently, in the South Sudan case, the problematic legacy of colonialism proved more important than the theoretical reluctance to partitioning, which is also reflected in the Cairo Declaration. Lemarchand (2007), for example, shows that Burundi "exemplifies a highly promising effort to share power among a large number of parties" (p. 7), with a consociational system in which elite cooperation,

proportionality and minority veto are secured. As a promising example, it shows how power-sharing can be an intelligent alternative for partitioning. However, while for Lemarchand (2007) only full consociationalism is an option, Chapman and Roeder (2007) argue that only full partition can lead to peace and stability (p. 678). In the end, what we learn from the academic debate is that there are no definitive answers to whether partition should be an option.

The dedication to the colonial borders that is hinted at in the Cairo Declaration is yet another interesting aspect of the modern/colonial world system. In its essence, the content of the Cairo Declaration is presented as a solution to the infinite number of conflicts that could arise when not regarding borders as a 'tangible reality'. On the other hand, it presumes that national identity, that is inherently part of the Westphalian state system that was imposed on the African continent, emerges from the border, rather than from the people, as I have illustrated with the idea of a 'borderland identity' earlier. While Brambilla (2007) shows how the border actually denies "how local people think, live, and after all use the border" (p. 22), South Sudan's struggle for independence also shows that where humans live together, borders arise. And people identify themselves regardless of political borders. Importantly, the aspect of the people is disregarded in the Cairo Declaration and the perspective that borders once established present a definite reality prevails.

In the following chapter, I turn to the experience of the people in the Sudan – South Sudan borderland. In the end, independence was imposed from above, but the question remains how the borderland people, in this case the Abyei people, experience secession.

5.3 Understanding the Sudan – South Sudan borderland dynamics

This chapter is devoted to the third sub-question: How is the Sudan – South Sudan border(land) in Abyei perceived and experienced? The relevance of this question lies in exploring the perspective on the border from the people that live the border on a daily basis. By discovering the every-day experiences of individuals with the border, I will be able to come closer to a lens of the borderland that takes into account experiences rather than representation of the border. I will first investigate the perspective on the border, both from a South Sudanese and Sudanese perspective. I will continue with both perspectives on the Abyei borderland, followed by an exploration of the Abyei borderland by the Abyei borderland peoples *themselves*. I will discuss the perspectives before drawing my conclusions.

5.3.1 Perspectives on the border

The Abyei borderland has become highly politicised. According to Concordis International (2012), "tense relations due to outstanding issues between the two countries represented the greatest barrier to building cooperative relations along the Sudan-South Sudan border at state and local levels" (p. 7). I am especially interested in how national interests play out for the people on the ground, indicating the dualistic nature of experience/representation of the border.

The relationship between the local and the national in the borderland is complex and "politicisation of the conflict by national elites" remains a major challenge to stability in the borderland (CI, 2010a). During Sudan's civil wars, the conflicting parties exploited local historical disagreements over land and water by arming the border communities to play out the national conflict on the ground, even though the local grievances were based on completely different grounds (CI, 2010b, p. 9). Until today, "national disagreement over the control of land, oil and natural resources unresolved by the CPA" fuel tensions in the borderland (p. 16).

While on the one hand national disagreements have fuelled tensions and mistrust on the local level (CI, 2010b, p. 14), the discrepancy between local and national interests has led to deeper "feelings marginalisation in the border communities" (CI, 2010b, p. 9). Communities feel excluded from the process of defining Abyei's territorial boundary and "they ultimately perceive that insecurity and uncertainty at the border is driven by national interests" (ibid.). According to the communities, stability can only be ensured when the interests of border communities are taken into account through for example popular consultations (ibid.). This also means, that "agreement between one set of actors does not imply acceptance by another" (CI, 2010b, p. 17).

5.3.1.1 Perspectives from South Sudan

Various international organisations have conducted focus group interviews with South Sudanese in the period before and after the referendum on issues such as separation and the issue of Abyei. In these interviews, it shows the emotional experience associated with secession and the creation of a nation with a national identity. The referendum resulted in overwhelming support for an independent South Sudan. The motivation for secession seems to lie in economic/developmental arguments mostly, as a Madi Woman in Magwi states: "I will vote for separation. The CPA was signed to see what would happen between the Northern Arabs and Southerners, but no cooperation is visible. Development is in full gear in Khartoum while in the South, what do we have? Dirty tin roofs and mud walls." (Levy, 2010, p. 14). The majority of the participants in these focus group discussions agree that resource revenues, such as oil, should not be shared with the North. As a man in Wau asserts: "If the South separates, everything will now be divided between North and South, so what reason will there be for the South to ... again share our resources? Are we still under colonization? No, that is not acceptable". Or a Dinka Twic man in Pager, stating that "the reason why we voted [in the group] for separation of South from North is because we do not want to share our resources with the North" (Levy, 2010, p. 30)[7].

The idea of marginalisation seems deeply rooted and the belief that independence will lead to the resources that allow for development, is often-heard. A Lopit man in Lopa votes "for separation because Arabs took all our resources to develop the North", and a Kuku man in Kajo Keji argues that separation will allow South Sudan "to utilize our oil resources properly" (Levy, 2010, p. 14). Southern Sudanese had seen a very promising future for an independent South Sudan, which would "develop faster because most of the resources will be under the control of the Southerners. Things will be much better", according to a man in Wau. A Dinka Twic Woman in Khir expects that "if things remain like this, in the next 10 years, our country will be like Kenya and Uganda" (Levy, 2010, p. 17).

A commonly shared belief is too that tribal relations would improve after independence. A Dinka Gok Chief from Cueibet emphasises that "it is Arabs that are using Southerners against their own people. The relationship will be very [good] if we are separated" (Levy, 2010, p. 36), pointing at the North as a cause for the conflict, while a Dinka Rek Woman believes that relations improve because of a shared identity: "[The Southern Sudan tribes] will unite and cooperate after

[7] What is important to realize here is that the communities seemed to be unaware of the fact that South Sudan would be dependent on the North for exporting its oil, as the pipe line runs through Northern regions (Levy 2010).

separation because of the independence of their country". The improved livelihoods are stated as a reason for tension relief by a Lou Nuer Woman in Waat, arguing that "now, people fight because of hunger. After a while, [hunger] will end, and we will have the spirit of one people" (Levy, 2010, p. 36).

5.3.1.2 Perspectives from Sudan

The prospect of South Sudanese independence had great effects on the perspectives of participants in the Sudanese provinces of Southern Kordofan and Blue Nile. Most participants were in favour of a united Sudan. "Sudan should remain as one country", an Arab woman from Blue Nile said, "because [if not] there will be war between the South and the North" (Cook, 2009, p. 37). A younger Nuba woman from Julud in Southern Kordofan supports this view too: "[Sudan should be] united, so that there will be no problems" (p. 37). An older Nuba woman from Dilling in Southern Kordofan illustrates the issue further: "We want it [Sudan] to be one because if it divides, we will not know who to join" (p. 37).

The referendum proved to raise much unclarity about the status of the people in the Sudanese borderland. As an older woman from Koalib in Southern Kordofan states, "it is we who determine whether to join North or South not only that or also to become independent as a country" (Cook, 2009, p. 38), whereas the people in contemporary Sudan were not inquired. A Funj younger man from Blue Nile believes that "Southern Blue Nile will vote in the same referendum [as the South]", while a Nuba younger man fom Southern Kordofan too believes that "the popular consultation will give us the opportunity to join the South" (p. 38). When explaining that Southern Kordofan and Blue Nile will not have the opportunity to determine their own fate, participants see a hopeless future. "[If there is no referendum] it will mean the people of Blue Nile got lost in the middle of Sudan. They were not given their rights in the peace agreement", a younger Funj man from Blue Nile states (Cook, 2009, p. 39). "If Southerners will inform us, we will join them. If they will not, we can also separate from the North and rule our own affairs", a Funj middle-aged woman from Blue Nile states (p. 39). A younger Nuba man from Southern Kordofan asserts that "[if the South separates] we will claim for an independent country for the Nuba" (p. 39). Given these strong positions, the belief that "[if there is no referendum] we will be lost... we will suffer more" as a Nuba middle-aged man from Southern Kordofan puts it (p. 39), seems valid.

5.3.1.3 The border and Abyei

There is a wide understanding that separation will not resolve the tensions around the border. While some Southerners feel that this lies in the hands of the North solely, others claim that both governments could play part, or, as a Jurbele Woman from Gadiem states, "if one of the governments wanted to take or cross to the other territory by force, that is what will bring problems or a border war" (Levy, 2010, p. 35).

Moreover, there is a division between those that argue that tensions are fuelled from above, such as the previously quoted woman, and those that believe that the situation could deteriorate because of "nomadic Arabs [who] will be grazing their cattle in the South, and this will cause problems" as a Nuer Bul woman from Mayom argues (Levy, 2010, p. 35). In Sudan, there is an understanding of the Abyei crisis too. A Nuba older woman from Southern Kordofan says "it [the Abyei crisis] is a fight for land ownership. The Arabs are trying to take it from the original owners". "I think people are fighting in Abyei because of the land because Arabs say Abyei is their land and Dinkas say that also", an Arab older woman from Southern Kordofan explains (Cook, 2009, p. 28).

After the referendum, some focus group participants valued the efforts of the Government of Southern Sudan (GoSS) in the negotiations, that, as a chief from Kapoeta Town in Eastern Equatoria states, could "stand firm with the Abyei people" (Cook, 2011, p. 87). A Mundaria Woman from Terekeka Town in Central Equatoria states that "the government is actually trying very hard, but the problem is with the Khartoum government" (Cook, 2011, p. 88). Others argue that "our government is not doing enough on Abyei because Abyei referendum was not conducted", as a Nuer Lek woman from Pulkuai in Unity state argues, or a Dinka Ngok man from Lakes region, blaming the GoSS as "people are getting killed in Abyei every day. Do you think they will not finish? Our government needs to speed up the negotiation of Abyei with the North" (Cook, 2011, p. 88). Among participants, there is strong support for Abyei to become part of the South. While "most Central Equatoria participants and some, mostly female, participants in other locations [...] support negotiation as the only viable option to resolve Abyei", others "are supportive of using any means necessary, including a return to war" (Cook, 2011, p. 88). As a Lotukho man from Torit Town in Eastern Equatoria states: "If it means going back to war with the north to have Abyei join South Sudan, that is fine with me. If we leave Abyei like that, the Arabs will take it" (Cook, 2011, p. 88).

5.3.2 The Abyei borderland perspective

Until now, we have seen different perspectives from Sudan and South Sudan, but we have not yet investigated the views from the Ngok Dinka and Misseriya communities in the borderland. In December 2012, the Enough Project interviewed Ngok Dinka politicians, traditional leaders and civilians in various towns and villages, as well as Misseriya men in Goli. "From these discussions, it becomes clear that there are fears in both communities that the other side will initiate violence this dry season. Both communities view the other as backed by their allied government, with the Misseriya emphasizing the view that the international community backs the Ngok Dinka" (Rendón & Hsiao, 2013, p. 9). As a Ngok Dinka Chief states, "nowadays the Misseriya have the back-up of the Sudan government by aerial bombardment, by tanks, by heavy artillery...to take over the resources of Abyei." (p. 9). A Misseriya chief on the other hand, argues that "The Dinka will start the conflict because they are backed by the international community. They have strength" (p. 9).

With the backing of both governments, distrust increased. The situation became precarious, and during field research before South Sudan's seccession, Ngok Dinka showed that they are "adamantly opposed to a mixed Ngok-Misseriya Abyei Administration and predict conflict if a Misseriya Deputy Administrator is chosen", a Ngok Dinka elder from Agok illustrates that " hyenas cannot be in charge of goats" (Cook, 2009, p. 53). A Ngok Dinka chief from Agok asserts that they "have never claimed any leadership from Muglad, which is Misseriya headquarters, and I think there is no point for them to claim leadership in Abyei if it is not for the intention of destroying us" (p. 53).

Land (ownership) has been a crucial aspect of the wars over the past decades. One Misseriya man argues that "we will not give up Abyei if a single Misseriya is alive. We have the documents that show that Abyei belongs to the Misseriya" (Rendón & Hsiao, 2013, p. 12). The problem is a deeper clash between the colonial past and the (colonial) present. A Misseriya man explains that "the CPA created the problem. It decided that Abyei was Ngok Dinka land", he continues, "before the CPA, the Ngok Dinka were part of the North; after the CPA, they hardened and went against the government" (p. 11). Here, identity comes into play as well. Ngok Dinka participants from Abyei are clear in their affiliation with the South. "I will join Bahr el Ghazal because we are all Dinka", an older man from Wau says, "we speak one language, our culture is one, our colour is black, so I better join them rather than joining those who have their own language and culture and different beliefs" (Cook, 2009, p. 63).

Experiences of the past have resulted in reluctance to reconcile. A Ngok Dinka chief from Marial Achak village asserts that "every year [the Misseriya] violate agreements. We try to rebuild and every year they come and destroy and loot. That kind of person. . . [who is] killing us, insulting us, calling us slaves, you would no longer be interested in having dialogue with him" (Rendón & Hsiao, 2013, p. 10). Reconciliation, however, is a two-way process. It is what an older Ngok Dinka woman from Agok states: "[in order to reconcile with the Ngok] I will tell the Misseriya to respect the Ngok and their rights because the land belongs to them. Disarm all those who have guns, and then they will be allowed to graze freely. They should allow intermarriage to strengthen the relationship" (Cook, 2009, p. 59). Both Ngok Dinka and Misseriya participants indicated "that peaceful co-existence could only take place when their ownership of Abyei was recognized by the other side" (Rendón & Hsiao, 2013, p. 12).

While in 2009, a Ngok Dinka woman from Wau said: "I think we can compromise with Misseriya on grazing rights through negotiations and agreement...that way we will live in peace" (Cook, 2009, p. 59), this seems no longer a viable option. On part of the Misseriya, "the new emphasis on ownership [...] is particularly noteworthy. Historically, the community emphasized its interest in securing migratory or pastoralist rights through the territory, while, as of late, the community has shifted their rhetoric to emphasize "ownership." (Rendón & Hsiao, 2013, pp. 12-13).

5.3.3 Discussion

The issue of Abyei has become increasingly politicised, and all (South) Sudanese seem to have an opinion on the fate of the region. This also plays out on the ground. Tensions between the borderland communities have increased, as both governments support 'their' respective populations. However, it is interesting to see how the borderland perspective differs from the 'national' perspectives. While South Sudanese view independence as a route towards development as independence means self-determination about resources, Sudanese respondents state that unity is the only way toward stability. In contrast, the Ngok Dinka and Misseriya respondents' statements from the borderland are driven by questions of identity and land ownership. Also, the CPA and the backing of the respective governments created distrust. This, however, is not so much driven by an economic rationale.

The added complexity fuelled by national interests becomes particularly visible in the position of the Misseriya. Induced by claims from the Government of Sudan, Misseriya representatives have shifted their claims from grazing rights to land ownership. While at an earlier stage, the issue could probably have been settled with a clause guaranteeing Misseriya grazing rights, the conflict has gotten more nationalistic through territorial claims.

As becomes clear from discussions with local representatives, the border will only be sustainable if both sides accept it. In order for the border and the division of territory to be acceptable, it is crucial to involve the local perspectives in the negotiations. As Craze (2013) asserts, "political negotiations and international arbitration have systematically excluded the two communities—the Ngok Dinka and the Misseriya—whose lives and territory are at stake, leading to tension on the ground when the communities failed to agree to what was decided for them" (pp. 100-101). In the end, the Ngok Dinka and the Misseriya are supposed to live peacefully alongside each other.

What remains an interesting aspect is that of Sudan's populations in Southern Kordofan and Blue Nile, who presumed that a referendum in the Southern provinces meant a right to self-determination for the borderland populations. The question is where the problem lies. Is this a result of a failure in communication or is this a failure in understanding and interpreting the borderland context. While both seem equally unpleasant, the latter would be significant in a broader context. As decisions are taken at a national or international level, the people that are most affected by the result, the local communities, are not or only limited consulted.

5.3.4 Conclusion: The colonial embedded

The Sudan – South Sudan borderland tensions are a clear legacy of colonial times as the British decision to incorporate the Ngok Dinka from Abyei into the northern provinces lies at the roots of the problems today. In fact, it presents how postcoloniality is embedded in the local, and presents a crucial aspect in understanding the modern world system. While South Sudan's secession presented an initial step in decolonisation and self-determination, the coloniality of power is internalised in the local communities. Still, it is important to realise that there is a move away from the post-colonial trap. That is the alternative perspective on identity formation from the border. A Ngok Dinka man identifies with Southerners because of language and culture, which could be a sign of rearticulation of the border. On the other hand, the borderlanders may embrace their shared history through enhancing their identity as borderlanders, which would look beyond the distrust that was fuelled by national governments. The identity discourse, however, is not recognised on the national level yet, which seems mainly focused on access to and claiming of resources and the path of (economic) development, internalising the Eurocentric perspective of the border.

Border demarcation is seen as a first step in acceptation and thus for reconciliation. Yet as a border remains fixed, people are not. People move, especially Abyei's pastoralist. With an eye on the idea of the soft border, the next chapter is devoted to the opportunities for regional integration in the Sudan – South Sudan borderland.

5.4 Prospects for regional integration in the Sudan – South Sudan borderland

In this section, I will explore the final sub-question linking theories on regional integration with the Sudan – South Sudan borderland. Could regional integration be an exit to the persisting and seemingly endless tensions in the borderland?

5.4.1 Economic versus political integration in the Sudan – South Sudan borderland

The conflict in the borderland has a dual character. One aspect is the political played out in the territorial struggle about land ownership. The second aspect is economic, with a dispute about resources, mainly oil.

Economic integration does not have a fixed outcome. While it would be a big step forward if the governments could agree on this issue, the idea of sharing resources does not seem viable on the ground. As a man from Wau stated: "If the South separates, everything will now be divided between North and South, so what reason will there be for the South to ... again share our resources? Are we still under colonization? No, that is not acceptable" (Levy, 2010, p. 30). Economic integration in the sense of sharing revenues from natural resources thus has two possible outcomes. It could economically bind the two countries together by creating an interdependency, or it could invigorate and deepen the associated emotions, which in turn reinforces the, already existent, tensions on the ground.

The Latin-American perspective that I described earlier, offers a new perspective. While from the Eurocentric perspective economic and political relations are connected to each other, this is not necessarily the case in Latin America, where the two are seen separately from each other. Whereas this offers a possible solution on the one hand, it complicates the tensions between Sudan and South Sudan in the borderland on the other: It means that one solution does not unravel tensions in another aspect. For the scope of this research, however, this approach means that it allows me to respond to the political aspect primarily.

Political integration may offer solutions on the characteristics of the border in the Abyei region. The tensions between the Dinka and the Misseriya in the borderland are a result of a focus on border demarcation and delineation. However, with a changing perspective on the meaning of the border, and of this border in particular, tensions could be calmed. One possibility would be that of a soft border that actually allows the border to become a bridge. In acknowledging that

the *borderland* exists and that the borderland might have different interests than the national governments, both the Government of the Republic of Sudan and the Government of South Sudan could come to terms to allow the region to become a transition zone between the two countries.

5.4.2 Influencing the local through the national?

As we have seen in the theoretical chapter, the results of regional integration as a strategy for conflict transformation are mixed. While regional integration may have been one of the origins of the European peace in the past decades, this does not mean that the model can be succesfully transported globally. Theron and Cizero Ntasano (2014) make a valid point illustrating that the current model for regionalism targets formal structures, while, as Bøås (2001) stresses, the formal structures as we are used to in the European context may not be the targets that can lead to successful conflict transformation.

There are two options to solve this problem: Transform regional integration in such a way that it targets the local directly, or target the local through the national. In the previous section we have seen the divisions in the Sudan – South Sudan borderland. Yet we also discovered that the tensions have been fuelled from above. The question I would like to raise thus seems valid: Will regional integration be able to trickle down to the Sudan – South Sudan borderland?

Before analysing what could work in the Sudan – South Sudan, I shortly summarise the relevant approach from theory. The model on pathways of EU impact by Diez, Stetter & Albert (2006) introduced in the theoretical chapter is useful in this respect. The Sudan – South Sudan borderland needs an approach that targets society rather than policy, leaving the connecting and the constructive impact. Conflict transformation can, according to this model, be achieved through supporting social networks across conflict parties that could facilitate a changing identity (**connective impact**) or through the prospect of a new identity that brings conflicting parties closer together and leads to desecuritisation (**constructive impact**).

The idea of a 'borderland identity' that I introduced in chapter 2.2.2.2 is central to this approach. By allowing the Abyei borderland to become a transition zone between Sudan and South Sudan, about which both governments make fixed agreements, it allows the Ngok Dinka and the Misseriya in Abyei to attain a new identity, an identity of shared land ownership as they have seen before colonisation. Diez, Stetter & Albert (2006) see this constructive impact as "the most indirect but – if successful – also the most persuasive mode of transformation" (p. 574). Whereas this certainly seems like a Eurocentric idea that is transported to a different context, I will counter this. While Diez, Stetter & Albert (2006) refer to an existing identity, namely a European

identity, I see the borderland identity similar to the one Brambilla (2007) refers to in the Angola-Namibian borderland. The Kwanyama in the Angola-Namibian borderland also "[...] reinvented their identity as borderlanders" (p. 26). The Kwanyama had to deal with a hybrid complexity of identities, as the border divided the territory they used to share with those they had always identified with (ibid). In the case of the Kwanyama, the international boundary has not become a barrier, with "daily movements across the boundary to go to school, pasture the livestock, attend the church, doing business across and over the boundary without crossing any border post but only by knocking down the fine double wire netting of demarcation" (p. 35).

The case of the Kwanyama shows the extent to which our interpretation affects the use of the border. If regional integration were to take place in the Sudan – South Sudan borderland creating a borderland identity, it would help the borderland people to understand the border not as a barrier between enemies but as a bridge between friends. It is a similar identity of shared interests that Brambilla (2007) refers to (p. 35). Therefore, I take the idea of a 'borderland identity' as central to a pathway of stability in the Abyei borderland.

5.4.3 Conclusion: Regional integration as a strategy for conflict transformation

What I hoped to have shown in this chapter is that our thinking is dominated by Eurocentric interpretations of the border and of regional integration. We are trapped studying the world with a European lens. First of all because in the study of regional integration the EU is the prime example and it serves as a model for comparison. And secondly, the pitfall that Piccolino & Minou (2014) encountered by concluding ownership, because a document was drafted 'internally', is easily made. However, a postcolonial perspective may eventually open ways to an alternative lens. This alternative lens should have the mission to dismiss the traps that we encounter too often. By studying the Sudan – South Sudan borderland from a people's perspective, I hope to have opened ways for a different lens.

The purpose of this chapter is not to propose a way in which the Abyei conflict can be solved, but rather to show that there are other ways of interpreting regional integration and the border. By engaging with the local communities that are affected by the current interpretations, I strongly believe that solutions exist. A prerequisite, however, is to adapt a different lens.

6. Conclusion

In this concluding chapter, I will first discuss and answer each of the sub-questions after which I continue to the answer of the research question. These answers guide me to the conclusion in which I explore the broader goal of this research. The goal of this research is not solve the tensions in the Sudan – South Sudan borderland. Rather, I aimed at criticising the prevailing understanding of possible solutions for this conflict, and possible other conflicts around the world.

6.1 Discussion of the sub-questions

The analysis of this thesis followed the structure of the four pre-defined sub-questions that have guided me towards the main research question. In this chapter, I will answer these questions and relate the sub-questions to the main research question.

1. How is AU border policy influenced by their *perception* of the EU?

In the first part of the analysis, I traced the influence of the EU in the AUBP, regarding the EU both as an actor and as an idea. The relationship between the AUBP and the EU reflects the coloniality of power and it is in this subaltern way that the AUBP is influenced by its perception of the EU.

The influence of the EU is twofold. First, the EU is reflected as an example for policy. This means that the process of EU integration is seen as a model of best-practice that is possibly copied to the African context. In this regard, Europe is perceived "a source of inspiration" (AUBP, 2013, p. 106) at an expert meeting. Yet the way in which this vision of the EU spreads Eurocentrism is largely neglected. It is an example of how the coloniality of power changed hands, as Mignolo put it. The post-colonial state has internalised the coloniality of power through its relationship with the EU and the way in which the Eurocentric lens remains the dominant perspective.

Secondly, the EU is seen as an actor that is needed as (financial) support for the AU Border Programme. This is an aspect that may come forward very concretely, as for example in the Third Declaration of May 2012, where the international partners are asked for their support. Or when experts see the European Development Fund as a source of funding for their programmes. It is the way in which the subaltern position and the relationship of dependency is reinforced.

And it is an evident example of how the coloniality of power is present in the modern/colonial world system.

2. In what ways is *tangibility* as used in the Cairo Declaration relevant in the Sudan – South Sudan borderland?

The Cairo Declaration reinforces the colonial border by demanding the AU member states "to respect the borders existing on their achievement of national independence" (AUBP, 2013, p. 17). South Sudan's secession, in my view presents an exception to the rule. Even though some might argue that Sudan's international border did not change, I believe the creation of a new international border between Sudan and South Sudan is a transformation of the colonial border. The referendum for South Sudanese secession creates a new, independent country, with a border that is as tangible as other borders on the continent, provided that the border is agreed upon.

Despite the long expected secession of South Sudan's secession, it remains an interesting decision, as partioning is not unanimously supported as a strategy for conflict transformation and stability in the academic community. Sudan's problematic colonial legacy and the decades of civil war might have been factors in support of secession. However, South Sudan remains a struggling state. The tensions in the borderland can in some areas be attributed to the unclarity of the colonial boundaries. While the secession *an sich* represents a step away from its colonial history, the legacy remains: The Sudan – South Sudan boundary is informed by the decisions of administrative units of the British colonial administration, as becomes clear in the case of Abyei.

3. How is the Sudan – South Sudan border(land) in Abyei perceived and experienced?

The borderland has become a tense place. Even though the communities have been able to live alongside each other for ages, South Sudan's secession and its implications for Abyei have fuelled the conflict. The fate of Abyei is disputed, and a referendum was supposed to clarify. Yet as long as the Abyei territory remains undefined, the struggle continues.

The territorial claims by the national governments have trickled down to the local populations that are very aware of the struggle around the border. Respondents from South Sudan (not Abyei) are claiming the area as their own. The rationale for this territorial claim seems to stem from an economic basis ensuring access to resources. A similar tendency is seen in the 'Northern' Sudan, where unity is seen as a way to keep the peoples together.

The demands from Ngok Dinka and Misseriya in Abyei are the same, but with a different motivation. Rather than claiming territory because of resources, Ngok Dinka are motivated by reasons of identity and Misseriya shifted their demand from grazing rights to land ownership,

also establishing their own livelihoods. What becomes especially striking is how securitisation of both governments have led to distrust among the borderland communities. Distrust and suspicion complicate the issue, especially since trust is crucial in settling for a solution that is accepted by both sides. Even if the communities would trust each other, they are still aware of the national interests and the power of the respective governments to influence (and exploit?) the remaining distrust and tensions. On the other hand, the attempts for settlement have until now largely excluded the local people. Even if the governments were to settle, or accept for example the demarcation of the Abyei Boundary Commission, the people who live and experience the border on a daily basis need to be consulted for a national agreement to be sustainable.

For the Abyei Boundary Commission it is important to show awareness of the coloniality of power by not solely adhere to the colonial borders and decisions and thereby internalise the colonial legacy. Rather, rearticulation of the border and the borderland, as I will show in the final subquestion, can be taken as an opportunity to not internalise the Eurocentric divisions of the modern/colonial world that dominate today.

4. To what extent can regional integration take place under the tensions in the Sudan – South Sudan borderland?

In essence, the tensions stem from the understanding of the meaning of the border. The border is seen as a marker of territory and as barrier between Sudan and South Sudan. Rearticulation of the borderland by means of regional integration can be used as a way to satisfy and stabilise the Abyei region. Ideas of regional integration can shed light on an alternative interpretation that may better fit the reality on the ground. By stepping away from our western understanding of the borderland as the zone along a boundary, regional integration in the true sense of its terminology can contribute to the transformation of conflict.

Key in this approach is the idea of a 'borderland identity' through which the communities can get acceptance of each other as shared residents of the borderland, without ideas of territoriality and claims that overshadow stability. Central for this solution is that the identity as a 'borderlander' dominates for both Ngok Dinka and Misseriya, rather than their identity as a Northern- or Southerner. Until today, the divisions and Othering have sharpened tensions. I strongly believe that this approach to the border allows to regard the border as a bridge between two neighboring communities with a shared history, rather than as a barrier between 'North' and South Sudan and its people.

Despite the tensions, I argue, there are options to be found within the concept of regional integration. Even though this might not be the only exit to the vicious circle of violence that the

Sudan – South Sudan borderland finds itself in, an alternative approach to the border by taking the people at the centre opens ways for alternative lenses that the Eurocentrism of our modern/colonial world system.

6.2 The Research Question

Throughout the past chapters, I pursued a mission to find the building blocks that could help me in answering the research question introduced in the introductory chapter:

How does the AUBP in its pursuit of demarcating the border and subsequent regional integration as a strategy for conflict transformation reinforce the coloniality of power of the border in the Sudan – South Sudan borderland?

The AUBP was established in response to one of the most pervasive challenges on the African continent: The border. The AUBP, however, from its foundational background, tends to neglect to show awareness of the coloniality of power in the border, thereby reinforcing it. The coloniality of power in the border is exposed in two ways. Firstly, our actual understanding of the border is saturated with an understanding that might not fit 'a different reality': A Eurocentric interpretation of the border prevails. The case of Abyei shows that demarcation alone does not lead to mitigating the tensions in the borderland. In establishing the border, the population views the border as a division between 'Us' and 'Them', not only in terms of people, but also with regard to territory and resources. While South Sudanese have a tendency to claim the resources as 'ours', the Ngok Dinka in the borderland follow the identity discourse regarding 'reunification with the South' as salvation as they tend to identify with Southerners more than with Sudanese.

Secondly, the border is imposed as a top-down strategy, without taking account of the borderland people. This becomes visible for example through the Abyei Boundary Decision, whose decision was eventually accepted by both national elites, but was rejected by the borderlanders. Moreover, finding that national interests have continuously fuelled tensions on the ground also shows that the solution is not sought among those who have to live with it. This is striking, especially when taking into account the effects on the pastoral livelihoods in the borderland.

The AUBP aspires, as a long-term goal, to stimulate regional integration on the continent. However, with an understanding of the border that is saturated with a coloniality of power, regional integration can thus only be understood in a similar way that reinforces the dominant Eurocentric lens. It is thus the dominant lens that determines our modern/colonial world system

and that is internalised in our institutional frameworks. In this way, it reinforces the existing power structures.

Therefore, the AUBP =reinforces the coloniality of power of the border in the Sudan –South Sudan borderland through its understanding of the border that internalises the Eurocentric lens as their own. By stepping through the Eurocentric mirror, this could become visible and alternatives for the current approach to demarcation and integration can be considered.

6.3 Conclusion

In my opinion, this research asks for a dual conclusion. Firstly, I found that the Sudan – South Sudan border dispute in Abyei is based on a Eurocentric understanding of the border. The Eurocentric lens, based on the Westphalian nation state as created on the European continent and in the rest of the world, only limitedly reflects the African reality on the ground. Taking into account the continuous, seasonal movement of the Misseriya and the long history of Dinka-Misseriya relations, I believe that the conflict needs a solution that lies outside of the comfort zone of the international community. A fixed, static border seems to fuel tensions and might lead to more conflict. Even though the tense relationship today was fuelled by the national interests of the respective governments, that of claiming territorial rights, a border that is imposed from above has not met the agreement of the borderland people. And it is doubtful that it will in the short-term. It is therefore necessary to adapt an alternative lens that offers an opportunity for a peaceful coexistence in a troubled region. Politicising the idea of the borderland as a zone of transition is only one of the possibilities that is on offer, one that is based on an *other* thinking, alternative understanding of both the border and of regional integration. It is this 'border gnosis', thinking from the border rather than thinking on the border, that allows us, scholars, to overcome the coloniality of power that dominates the modern/colonial world system.

I am aware of the practical challenges that an alternative approach to the border brings along. Talking about governing public space for example, or the issuance of passports. While these could be solved through an integrated approach of shared governance with both Sudanese and South Sudanese influences together with an Abyei authority, and de-attaching nationality from territory, I do not belief that this is the place to solve the dispute. After all, the solution lies within the Abyei borderland people. That means that the people need to be consulted in the future of their own fate.

Secondly, I would like to raise the consequences for policy-making. Institutions, both national and international, need to step away from the idea that there is only one way to delineate,

demarcate and thereby establish boundaries, and try on different lenses. Apparently, the intentions of the AUBP to demarcate the Sudan and South Sudan territory conflict with its motivation: That of peace and stability that thereby form the basis for integration. Would it be possible to turn these processes around? Establish a transition phase, without a fixed end date, in which the borderland is seen as the frontier between two nations' territories. The practicalities can be managed through a form of integration. And if there is demand in the future to establish a 'regular' border after all, there is no holding back.

I therefore call upon the AUBP, and the AU in its entirety, to regard the existing concepts from various perspectives. While the Eurocentric lens could be a saviour, there are alternatives that are closer to reality on the ground. It includes the demands of the people that experience the effects of decisions on a daily basis, and it includes awareness of the identity discourse.

Furthermore, the coloniality of power remains dominant in the AU-EU relationship. For both parties, establishing a relationship with the EU and other international actors based on equality, not on dependency could be helpful in improving the prevailing understanding of our modern/colonial world system. This does not exclude any advisory roles, but it would rather prevent to use a toolbox with blueprints to create an institutional environment that does not fit the reality (anymore).

This thesis has shown that the lens we use determines the way we see and interpret the modern/colonial world. Acknowledging these limitations is a first step, but looking beyond our comfort zone is what advances our understanding.

6.4 Final Remarks

The process that led to this thesis has taught me two lessons. Firstly, it is always a good idea to pursue my personal interests. In the end, this thesis is the product of my own academic interests. My interest in the AU was established long before starting the Human Geography masters programme at Radboud University. The border, that I only truly got acquainted with during the first weeks of the programme, and post-colonialism, that I was introduced to in my final course. I strongly believe that connecting ideas creates interesting results, as I hoped to have shown with this thesis.

Secondly, do not hold back because of perceived paradoxes. Despite the paradox of promoting a bottom-up perspective on a border conflict while researching from a library in the Netherlands, and on top of that being a Dutch girl educated in the Netherlands promoting to adopt an alternative lens, an 'other thinking' is not limited in time or space. Even though I might have not been geographically present in the borderland, I have made the case that the border can only be properly analysed when the people are taken into account, and are consulted.

These lessons, too, leads me to the limitations of this research. Firstly, the circumstances did not allow me to do field research. While field research and interview reports by other researchers enabled me to take the approach that I had intended, I have been dependent on others throughout. Also, I believe that by being present at the research site as a researcher, it allows you to also see the things that are not being said. Experiencing the livelihoods and the conclusions drawn from there would definitely be a major addition to this research.

Moreover, the scope of this thesis limits my understanding and analysis. The border(land) remains a complex area of investigation. The Sudan – South Sudan relationship is multifaceted and very difficult and throughout, I have sometimes struggled with the theoretical approaches and insights. I have asked myself many times whether my interpretation is the intended interpretation of the author. Despite my attempts, this thesis thus remains coloured by who and how I am. As a follow-up research, focus group discussions with borderland communities and state representatives can shed light on aspects that I, unintentionally, ignored. Moreover, new focus group discussions allow for a better exploration of the current situation.

Nevertheless, I hope to have presented my thoughts and the thoughts of those who inspired me in a clear manner, and I am thankful for following and being encouraged to follow my instincts in this approach to the border.

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Pictures, maps and tables:

Cover photo: Tim McKulka Photography, Abyei: Caught Between Two Sudans: http://timmckulka.com/#/abyei--caught-between-two-sudans/ABYEI_03.

Map 1: United Nations, South Sudan: Map No. 445 Rev. 1, October 2011

Map 2: The New York Times, Abyei: http://www.nytimes.com/interactive/2011/01/16/world/africa/sudan-graphic.html?ref=africa

Map 3: BBC World (Khartoum), Abyei: http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/world-africa-13502845

Table 1: Pathways of EU Impact, from: Diez, T., Stetter, S., & Albert, M. (2006). The European Union and Border Conflicts: The Transformative Power of Integration. International Organization , 60 (3), p. 572.