TWELVE

Conclusion: Pitfalls and Potentials of Exit Studies and Practices

Georg Frerks

Abstract
This chapter presents the main conclusions of this book, organised around three questions: 1) "What is exit?" 2) "How can we understand exit?" and 3) "What can we do about exit?"

The first question deals with the definitional ambiguity of exit and the increasing complexity of the underlying state-building missions. It is observed that exit is in fact often a transition or a continuation of the mission in another form. Another element is the need to properly contextualise missions and their exit, while that same context is difficult to grasp for outsiders. Moreover, it was found that domestic and international political factors determine nature and timing of exit often more than do real developments or achievements on the ground. Attention is also paid to the question whether exit should be determined by achieving end states or should be done at a previously set end date. Reality shows that combinations of dates and states can be used and exit may take place in phases or differently per sector of activity. Similarly, establishing whether a mission was a success or failure is a multiplex issues, for which often no aggregate answer can be given, as results vary along the different dimensions of modern integrated missions.

Understanding exit can benefit from a multi-disciplinary approach that includes, next to more measurable components, attention to the construction of narratives, discourses and frames. Explicit attention to ethics and morality is also called for. Though there are examples of a political and military divide in some of the cases described, a recent case study also found growing convergence.

Prof. dr. ir. Georg Frerks is Professor of International Security Studies at the Faculty of Military Sciences of the Netherlands Defence Academy.

G. Frerks ✉
Netherlands Defence Academy, Breda, The Netherlands
Email: GE.Frerks@mindef.nl

J. Noll et al. (eds.), *Netherlands Annual Review of Military Studies 2015*,
NL ARMS, DOI 10.1007/978-94-6265-078-7_12

Exit can be improved by refining doctrines, strategies and assessment frameworks to better include exit, and through learning from past mistakes by systematically carried out operations assessments and evaluations. It was also suggested to continue studying exits and derive typologies and categorisation from such multiple studies, and to look into institutional measures and military culture as a pertinent explanatory factor of exit's success.

Keywords
exit strategy, military transition, end dates, end states, political-military relations

Contents

12.1 Introduction

This chapter presents the main conclusions of this volume. The aim is – be it modestly – to contribute to the new field of 'exit studies' that seems to emerge over the last twenty years with the growing recognition that the exit from different types of peace operations proved more problematic than originally thought. Consequently, exit is widely problematised and has become subject of political debates, academic studies, operations assessments and policy evaluations. This volume is part of that trend and subscribes to the perceived need to more fundamentally reflect on exit, its

determinants and ramifications, both academically, militarily, politically and policy-wise. In doing so, it sees exit as inseparable from entry and all steps and happenings between entry and exit, and even post-exit developments.

In an attempt to order the overarching conclusions from the individual chapters, we pay attention to the ontologies, epistemologies and methods of exit. Ideally these three components should be linked or integrated into a systematic well-developed body of knowledge (a theory on exit) or a well-tested practical political orientation (the 'golden road to exit'), but that is still a bridge too far considering what we know about exit and how to do it well. Digesting the rich, but also diverse material presented in this volume can be a useful step in the burgeoning field of exit studies. In this way progress can be made beyond the current stage of 'disjointed incrementalism' or muddling through that we seem to encounter today, towards a research agenda and the formulation of recommendations at the practitioners' level, especially for the military and politicians who have to cope with exit in practice.

In more mundane parlance the following three questions are addressed below: 1) "What is exit?" (ontologies) 2) "How can we understand exit?" (epistemologies); and 3) "What can we do about exit?" (methods). The first question relates to the way of defining exit, the second is about the way of knowing it and representing it, and the third about how to apply this knowledge to improve the realities of exit in real life.

12.2 Exit Ontologies: What is Exit?

12.2.1 *The Problem of Defining Exit*

Nearly all authors in this volume grapple with the question of defining exit. Defining exit remains a clear challenge and, hence, a source of confusion. Complications arise not only from the usage of a variety of different definitions, conceptualisations and terminologies by different constituencies and stakeholders, but also, and first of all, from the rich and diverse reality out there, that appears difficult to capture in one single logical sentence. Official publications may offer little help. Frerks quotes Schroden, for example, who notes that the joint doctrinal publications supposed to guide military operations are notably vague when it comes to operations assessments of peace operations, while Olsthoorn et al. remind us that the Dutch assessment framework (Toetsingskader) is totally silent on the issue of exit.

Most authors in this volume depart from the much-quoted definition of Caplan "… an exit strategy is a plan for disengaging and ultimately withdrawing from a state or territory, *ideally* having attained the goals that inspired internationally involvement originally".[1] This formulation has a teleological or normative element by the use of the word 'ideally'. Often reality does not evolve 'ideally' and may even go in the opposite direction by engendering unintended negative consequences, as highlighted in several cases discussed in this volume, among which the Dutch cases of leaving Indonesia and New Guinea presented by Amersfoort et al. Verweij asks pertinently: "What should be done when the preconditions Caplan defines with regard to a successful exit strategy cannot be met, or cannot be met within a fair amount of time?" As observed by Noll et al. in the Introduction and by Frerks in Ch. 5, Caplan 's definition hides the fact – as Caplan noted himself – that such a plan for disengaging may not have existed in the first place, that it was taken over or outdated by later developments, that the original goals may not have been spelled out precisely enough, and that exit may have occurred without having reached any of such goals, because other, for example political events or military, developments propelled the exit. Hence this definition may be a less helpful and conclusive guidance then hoped for.

However, the lack of a full-fletched definition does not yet amount to a disaster. It reflects that exit is still young as an academic subject. One way to approach this lack of clarity is in effect to unravel whether different definitions apply to the different levels of strategic, operational and tactical military practices and differentiate accordingly. Another useful step to deal with a lack of clear definitions are attempts to inventory and analyse the different existing cases of exit and propose typologies and categorisations that help to get a better grip on them.

Apart from exit itself, the peace operations and especially peace- and state-building missions one exits from, are also difficult to catch in a few clear lines. These missions have increasingly become multi-faceted and complex and thereby more difficult to describe and understand. Peace operations have moved from relatively simple first-generation peacekeeping to comprehensive third-generation missions. The end states given to some of them read like a bewildering Santa Claus wish-list. Many authors on peace and state-building have expressed serious doubts whether such a catalogue of goals can be realistically achieved, e.g. in Iraq or Afghanistan. Others have formulated biting criticisms that the global north is trying to

[1] Caplan 2012, p 5.

simply copy-paste its own model on countries with a completely different history and culture, and is thereby bound to fail.

12.2.2 *Continuities and Discontinuities: Leaving, Staying or Something In Between?*

A fundamental question in relation to the definition is whether exit *is* really exit? Or put it otherwise: does the very notion of exit not suggest a discontinuity, while there is in fact a continuity of engagement, though perhaps in a different shape? The cases described by Amersfoort et al (Ch. 2) "[aimed] at an orderly withdrawal of the committed forces while at the same time seeking to continue some modified presence. Exit strategies therefore handle the problem of leaving in order to stay, albeit in a different guise".

Several authors dealing with the current context have also pinpointed the fact that exit may comprise a form of transition as illustrated by Noll et al in the Introduction to this volume, where they describe four different forms of transition from alliance to other forces or missions. Also others use the notion of a transition, suggesting movement between different types of engagement, or between different groups of actors rather than simply moving out. These types may be security versus developmental engagements or conflict versus post-conflict activities, and these groups of actors may comprise civilians versus military actors, local versus international and non-governmental versus governmental to carry out transitions.

In this connection, Olsthoorn et al. (Ch. 10) observe that effective cooperation in coalition operations has proven to be a massive challenge, as most military contingents are deployed for only limited periods to be replaced by contingents of other nations. An early exit poses the problem of how to arrange a handover in such a way that results achieved will not be lost and progress can be made by a successor. This proved quite a task for the Dutch forces exiting from Uruzgan, which had to transfer all knowledge, insights, projects and Afghan relations to their successors. The handover of responsibilities to the United Sates (US) and Australian partners proved initially complex, but ultimately halted a further slowdown, and helped to secure a sustained international effort. Handing over all information available, leaving Dutch civilian Provincial Reconstruction Team (PRT) members in the province for a prolonged period and informing the US-PRT as soon as possible after the exit, helped reach this positive outcome. Olsthoorn et al. highlight that technically speaking this exit was only an exit from a Dutch perspective and not from the perspective of, for instance,

the North Atlantic Treaty Organisation (NATO) and non-governmental organisations (NGOs). For them it was not an exit but a regular transition.

The word exit should not be taken too literally. It often implies a continued presence in a different shape, a transition to a different type of follow-on mission, a transition from one set of actors to another, etc. This implies that a conceptual focus on continuities may be more rewarding than an emphasis on discontinuities for understanding what happens.

12.2.3 *Societies, Cultures and Conflicts: The Role of Context*

What nearly all authors seem to accept, but rarely specify is that the societies and cultures where missions take place are important determinants of the nature and success of peace operations and the way of exit. Authors in this volume often refer to the particular characteristics of Afghan society that affected the possibility of making rapid progress. Foreign societies and cultures are difficult to grasp and understand for outsiders. Olsthoorn et al. (Ch. 10) refer to the long period needed to build local trust and achieve satisfactory levels of embeddedness and connectedness. In Uruzgan the handing over of the Afghan relationships and sharing the accumulated insights on the complex community with the Australian follow-on mission, proved nearly impossible.

As already mentioned, Amersfoort et al (Ch. 2) describe exits that aimed at retaining a level of influence in the ex-colonies after departure. They found that "such exits are shaped by the complex and often contradictory dynamics of the interaction of civilian and military actors of the sides involved and the domestic and international environments, rather than by a preconceived end state. Adaptation and constant reconsideration are a prerequisite for success or avoiding failure. …The road to a viable exit strategy … [was] long and winding if not outright frustrating."

The problem of 'context' is generally one that little can be done about. One way of working in foreign environments is to promote local ownership to help deal with challenges of a different culture. Likewise, intervening parties could try and work more with the grain than against it. This requires perhaps also a different vision, strategy and attitude than currently available. Frerks (Ch. 5) has argued for a move away from traditional military and diplomatic reflexes and aligning more with 'people' on the ground, thereby calling for a qualitative and ethnographic turn and he also suggested, following Mac Ginty, to use bottom-up everyday indicators when evaluating missions' success. The feasibility of this idea may vary per situation depending on security considerations, but certainly offers a promis-

ing and interesting avenue that seems to be more contingent on local realities, views, interests and perceptions.

This overview of context means that exit can hardly be looked at on its own, but will have to be 'contextualised' in what can be in reality very different situations. Making exit contingent on context confounds the use and utility of generalised approaches and necessitates tailor-made solutions. This puts extra demands on capacity and intelligence.

12.2.4 *Political Nature of Exit Process*

Notwithstanding the above, there is a stark reality that not (only) the situation on the ground in the respective 'recipient' country is important in determining peace operations and their exit, but even more so domestic politics in the troop-contributing country itself. Not the grand strategy or an effective strategic narrative calls the shots in the end, but a political, democratic debate on the basis of positions and interests of political parties and their alliances is what matters ultimately.

Brinkel, Ch. 3 in this volume describes this process for the Dutch participation in and exit from the Uruzgan mission. He celebrates it as the legitimate primacy of democratic politics over military affairs and rejects the criticism that the Netherlands should have developed a more coherent and effective strategic narrative as this misses and overrides the fundamental point of democratic deliberation and decision-making. Van den Wollenberg (Ch. 6) discusses how politicians or leaders reach their exit decisions. Based on Putnam's two-level game between diplomacy and domestic politics and resembling playing chess on two boards simultaneously, outcomes on one board influence, limit or create possibilities on the other. Leaders are seldom fully in control with upsets and changes threatening at both fronts nearly all the time, although their position provides them at the same time with some leeway while navigating between both boards. In this sense, the outcome of the game depends also on the leaders' personal traits and capabilities.

This creates different types of challenges. One is the obvious need of staying-in-power, another is the 'constituency paradox': how to reconcile a strong discourse to follow the leader into a peace operation initially with a later decision to leave? Due to the continuing shifting political dynamism, "war termination is a rough sea for leadership to navigate as perilous waters can emerge on all sides". Like Brinkel, van den Wollenberg emphasises the preponderance of politics, but less so by direct democratic deliberation by political parties in Parliament or among themselves, rather than by how

politics influence the two-board-game political leadership is engaged in, and how that directs and limits political leaders' decision-making space.

A third level of political influence emanates from beyond the domestic, national level, and is the influence of third (super)powers in the international realm. The reluctant Dutch departures from their colonies described by Amersfoort et al. were pushed, if not forced on them by international, mainly American pressure. Nowadays, decisions to take part in or leave missions are prepared if not co-created by deliberations and exchanges of view (with partners) within the alliance and domestically. It is sometimes difficult to disentangle in practice who influences whom, even if the formal decision-making powers are clearly defined.

A more down-to-earth reason to consider exit or at least a form of transition for the United Nation Assistance Mission in Afghanistan (UNAMA) was the lack of funds as noted by Dalenberg and Jansen, next to political pressure.

Beeres and Bollen (Ch. 11) wonder why the US do not exit from NATO paying relatively the highest burden of all members. In final analysis they conclude that the reasons not to exit have less to do with their skewed contribution than with other allegedly more political considerations, such as enabling the US to govern transatlantic security and defence to a very large extent. They conclude that the exact benefits derived by the US, as a result of being NATO's most prominent member, are probably manifold and cannot be measured by conducting defence economic research only.

12.2.5 *Dates or States? The Art of Ending*

In this volume much has been said about the perceived dichotomy or contradiction between end dates and end states. Some authors quoted in this volume suggest that setting end dates is impossible, dangerous and counterproductive, while others claim that open-ended exercises are risky and may 'never' end, as many factors determining the attainment of benchmarks remain out the intervenors' span of control. It seems that having an end state is the most logical way of approaching and judging a mission, as that is what the mission was started for to begin with. However, missions have developed a startling complexity with a proliferation of goals, targets and end states in a variety of sectors. Even then, such end states may further evolve, increase or change in the meantime, while in other circumstances their feasibility or attainability may vary due to military or political setbacks or unanticipated quick successes, reason why certain missions scale back of leave prematurely.

Set end dates are allegedly popular among the military, as they are in principle clear and unambiguous, while enabling focused planning. In practice, however, both positions are less rigid as sometimes is pretended and compromises are conceivable and have been made in effect, as Obama's exit approach in Afghanistan mentioned by Noll et al. in the Introduction, illustrates. Exit strategies that try to combine end dates and end states may overcome the disadvantages of each one separately and may benefit from their respective strong points. The way of attaining a good date/state combination would be an interesting topic for future study.

One promising course is to differentiate between political, strategic, operational and tactical levels, where end dates and end states may have a different relevance and application or may have been operationalised differently, hence the use of different definitions by the actors involved. Similarly, there may be a difference from the perspective of the international mission as a whole and that of an individual troop contributing country. Olsthoorn et al. (Ch. 10) state that the Dutch departure from Uruzgan was only an exit from a Dutch perspective and not from the perspective of NATO, since coalition forces took over.

The exit from Uruzgan described by Olsthoorn et al. further showed that the withdrawal of national assets was at best loosely connected to the results achieved in theatre; in fact, whether all the goals of the Dutch Task Force had been realised hardly influenced the moment or manner of exit. Neither did the sustainability of that what had been achieved in Uruzgan over the years. They conclude that the short period of cooperation with the successors was enough to ensure a relatively smooth handover, with the Australians working along more or less similar lines as the Dutch, although somewhat more heavy-handed and less sensitive to local power balances. It is worth considering for future exit research to delve into the nature and dynamics of handovers-takeovers or transitions by spelling out how those mark an exit for one, an entry for the other, but foremost contribute to the sustainability of international forces trying to reach a mission's end state.

12.2.6 *Time and Timing: 'The Obsolescence of Welcome'*

What is the best time of leaving? The time and timing of exit may depend on many different factors as this volume has listed: reaching predetermined goals, benchmarks or end states, reaching a predetermined end date, lack of progress, adverse political and military developments, a lack of domestic support or changing political fortunes of the parties or alliances at home in favour of a peace mission.

What also needs to be looked into and seems to be missing in many accounts, is the relation of the mission with the local public in the recipient country and whether they are still welcomed and received well. In their analysis of dilemmas and contradictions Paris and Sisk state that the longer a mission lasts, the more irritated or hostile the local population grows against the continued presence of powerful outside actors.[2] This has been called once most appropriately the "obsolescence of welcome". Baudet (Ch. 8) describes how this has happened in Bosnia-Herzegovina, where neither sticks nor carrots, once an effective tool, can motivate or enthuse the local population anymore. This, in turn leads again to growing indifference on the part of the international community. This constellation has to do partly with a lack of local buy-in and ownership and the top-down imposition of measures and partly with a divided, ethno-nationalist, oppositional local elite. The country has seen a wide range of different follow-on missions and programs. According to Baudet, "the Bosnian experience has provided invaluable insights but little lasting results. Twenty years after Dayton, amidst growing indifference, the face of Bosnia has changed, but very few of its problems have been solved".

12.2.7 *Success, Failure or a Mixed Record?*

One salient aspect discussed in this volume was the million-dollar question whether peace operations and in their wake exit can ultimately be considered successes or failures? This also raised a debate whether at all it is possible to conclude in such terms? Authors in this volume have noted the problem that definitions, standards, indicators and criteria for success were lacking, vague, implicit, multiplex and sometimes contradictory or shifting over time. Olsthoorn et al. (Ch. 10) observe, for example, that in 2005 no agreed criteria existed to assess whether PRT goals had been achieved. As different lead-nations employed their own measures of success, there was no basis to assess the feasibility of an exit. Six years later, with 28 very different PRTs operational, there was still little agreement on criteria for PRT success, making an informed decision on provincial exit, or transformation to a less military approach, difficult.

This also had to do with the dynamics of the missions themselves that necessitated what Flavin called "end state development", or moving the sign posts during the game.[3]

[2] Paris and Sisk 2008, p 307.
[3] Flavin 2003, pp 99-100.

Success and failure have also been addressed by Frerks in Ch. 5 on evaluating exit from state-building missions. He discusses several problems with defining and measuring success, ranging from the lack of clearly defined goals and strategies, data collection problems, to lack of standards and indicators to weigh the results achieved. There are also institutional and organisational factors, either in politics or the military that hamper the execution of proper evaluations or operations assessments in the armed forces. Moreover, the context of armed violence is an extra complicating factor in this respect.

Whether or not clear criteria or standards exist, the multidimensionality of most modern peace operations with various political, security and developmental end states and goals, result usually in successes along one dimension and failures along another, making aggregate judgments impossible or less adequate

12.3 Exit Epistemologies: How Can We Understand Exit?

As already observed in the introduction there is no extensive research on exit yet, despite a number of good publications and edited volumes. It was also observed that it is difficult to speak of a clear epistemic community as different contributions are made emanating from different disciplines, perspectives, viewpoints and interests. In fact it was noted that there exist several epistemic communities: politicians in national parliaments, militaries in the field, academics behind their desks, recipients in the countries concerned, and the public at large in support or opposition of peace operations. All this affects the way exit is understood and represented discursively. Several factors related to exit epistemologies are discussed below.

12.3.1 *Multi-disciplinary Understandings: Help or Hindrance?*

The authors in this volume all work or worked at the Netherlands Defence Academy, but have different academic and professional backgrounds. Some are military and others civilian, yet all contributors have an academic background. Their disciplines include, among others, history, sociology, war studies, international relations, political science, economics, organisational studies and ethics. To choose a multi-disciplinary approach results from the nature of exit, that is by itself a very multi-dimensional phenomenon, as was demonstrated in this volume. It is therefore quite logical that a multi-disciplinary approach enhances the understanding and practice of exit.

12.3.2 *To Construct or to Deconstruct?*

Amersfoort et al (Ch. 2) warn against a static view of defining and reaching end states on the road to exit. They say that the definition of strategy as a subordinate and instrumental activity in the hands of the political leadership alone represents a one-dimensional, linear and unimaginative view negating the true nature of both war and the military instrument. "When strategy-making is conceived of as an iterative and dynamic process aimed at the realisation of one's interests and objectives in direct confrontation with an enemy in which every stroke will be met by a counterstroke, we begin to understand why at some point the political objectives may have to be adapted to the vicissitudes and possibilities of the battlefield and not the other way around. … Exit strategies, for their paradoxical nature, are an intriguing case in point".

The Indonesian case also highlights the role of individual agency of the main actors involved and showed sharp internal divisions between the political and military leadership. Moreover, the course taken changed and shifted over time informed by different appreciations of the political and military realities. The political and military actions followed their own routes and were less coordinated than required.

This underlines the need not to mix the exit realities on the ground with the blueprints and schematic or technocratic representations that sometimes guide policies. Not taking reality at face value but deconstructing it into its constituent life-worlds, interests, positions, manoeuvres and manipulations, may help grasp its dynamism and agentic nature better. This does not only apply to the historic cases described by Amersfoort et al, but is still a reality of peace operations today despite the flurry of doctrines, policies and frameworks that suggest an overarching logic and control. After all, peace operations are in essence political enterprises, with all this implies. The chapters by Brinkel (Ch. 3), van den Wollenberg (Ch. 6), and Bouwmeester (Ch. 7) clearly elucidate that.

12.3.3 *Naming and Framing: Juggling Words and Shifting Discourses*

The role of discourse in conflict and peace studies has been on the ascent since about twenty years when Jabri put the "discursive structuration and legitimation of war" firmly on the agenda of conflict studies,[4] followed by Apter's edited volume on the legitimisation of violence.[5] Later, Bhatia

[4] Jabri 1996.
[5] Apter 1997.

showed how the 'politics of naming' worked, and 'how words were seen to be of equal power to bombs' by movements and governments.[6]

Not surprisingly, much attention is paid by the different authors in this volume to the names, frames and discourses employed to deal with peace operation and their exit. Words can hide and expose, create illusions or destroy them, make and break. The juggling of words and shifting of discourses is part of the political game needed to claim legitimacy for both entry and exit. Brinkel's chapter (Ch. 3) illustrates this political game for the democratic deliberations in Parliament on the Dutch involvement in Uruzgan and Bouwmeester's chapter (Ch. 7) on the British operation in Iraq how it miserably failed in that instance.

In his chapter on strategic communication, Bouwmeester states that "exit strategy has always been a sensitive issue with potentially significant political costs. It can be framed as 'mission accomplished' but can also be perceived as a withdrawal or even a retreat which suggests mission failure. To avoid this misconception and 'to get away with exit', effective strategic communication … is required by political and military leaders. It is the foremost way of informing the public of the motives and the purpose of the mission, and ensuring public support; not through spinning the message but by providing an honest and consistent narrative,… in which a plan for an operation is shared with the target audience, including its intentions for a transition or an exit strategy". Bouwmeester finds this was completely wanting in the British operation in Iraq due to a series of lapses elaborated in his chapter.

The case shows that a convincing, honest narrative on the mission and its exit is of the essence to gain and maintain public support in a time of rapid communications and critical scrutiny by a variety of media. This also means that 'spin' has to be avoided as it is bound to be exposed and only works counterproductively. This view is not necessarily contradictory to the de-constructivist approach also referred to above, but it shows there are limits as to what actors can credibly say and convey.

12.3.4 *Different Flavours or Pragmatic Fusion? Exit by Military or Political Actors*

It has been often suggested, sometimes based on rather stereotypical images, that there are major differences between military and political actors. In the historical cases studied by Amersfoort et al. a certain divide could be observed between the political and military leadership of those days.

[6] Bhatia 2005, p 6.

Dalenberg and Jansen (Ch. 9) provide an ideal-typical overview of such alleged differences and apply those to the current situation in Afghanistan. They question whether this has impacted on the exit by UNAMA and the NTM-A respectively. On paper, UNAMA and NTM-A worked for the same cause: a self-supporting, secure and developing Afghanistan. Both were UN-mandated and adopted a comprehensive approach. However, while UNAMA stressed the need for a sustainable (long-term) transition and transformation, NATO made a case for a completed transition and thus for a quick exit. Dalenberg and Jansen analyse this on the basis of a different 'mandated goal' and 'organisational culture'.

Military organisations are characterised by a 'can do' and 'make it happen' attitude and consequently with a firm preference for clearly defined 'projects' with a clearly defined military end state, to be accomplished at a set end date. They do not mind to force down decisions if required to end the project within time, and tend to act on the basis of functional relationships. On the other hand, political missions aim to support host countries in becoming independent in a process-oriented fashion with a commitment to sustainable solutions requiring time and leeway. Work is longer-term and often based on personal relationships. Dalenberg and Jansen conclude that these differences between political and military actors apply to exit strategies as well. The diverging exit approaches of UNAMA and the NTM-A were largely based on differences in organisational DNA. However, at the same time they shared the same overall objective in the field and acted in the same environment, necessitating pragmatic adaptations. Though the expected differences were partly confirmed, throughout the years UN and the International Security Assistance Force (ISAF) grew closer towards each other and cooperation improved.

12.3.5 *The Morality of Exit: Bringing in Ethics*

Verweij (Ch. 4) asks attention for a largely overlooked theme in exit studies, namely the morality of entry and exit. She asserts that when the entry is highly questioned from a moral perspective, by politicians, the domestic audience and international NGOs, there are bound to be moral problems with regard to exit as well. Based on an analysis of the Dutch Davids Commission's report on the Dutch political support to the invasion in Iraq, Verweij argues that entry and exit need to be contemplated from the same disposition of right intent, which implies acknowledging the responsibilities and obligations and thus the moral dimension that connects entry and exit. From a moral perspective Verweij rejects making 'calculations with regard to human rights violations and human security'. She maintains that

wordings as 'partial gains' and 'minimised losses' imply a severe loss of credibility from a moral perspective. This also forbids leaving when 'exit' makes things worse with regard to human rights violations and human security. In order to provide adequate human security ultimately, we might have to 'enter' in a different way (diplomatic), on a different level (a bottom line approach), and in cooperation with different people (NGOs). In doing so, Verweij posits, the envisaged exit might propel a different entry and as such break open an opposition that proves hard to maintain from a moral perspective.

Verweij's plea highlights a lacking dimension in most discussions on state-building missions and their exit. There is a clear need to focus on this dimension more explicitly in ongoing debates and do more empirical research on how this aspect is incorporated in decision-making and implementation of peace missions. This also determines whether missions are deemed legitimate and exits can be justified.

12.3.6 *Turning the World Upside Down?*

Is there finally a need to turn the world upside down? Does one miss reality by looking from the top-down? Can western mental frames even see the world through the supposed beneficiaries' eyes, accommodate their interests and reason bottom-up? Or is there a need, as suggested in this volume, to develop a more ethnographic, everyday life perspective seeing missions and their exit more through local eyes than hitherto? An inclusive approach based on local ownership could engage disenfranchised groups and employ a gender-specific lens as well.

12.4 Exit Methods: What Can We Do about Exit?

There is no golden bullet that can make exit or its preceding peace operation an instantaneous success. Success is remarkably difficult to achieve in modern peacekeeping, peace-building and state-building missions. This affects exit as well. This makes it relevant to look for recommendations to improve policy practice. Below we make only a few observations, as the authors in this volume did not in the first place focus on making policy recommendations, rather than providing an empirical analysis. Yet, it is believed that a number of recommendations can be derived from those analyses.

The first is that attention to exit is limited and to get it on the radar a first requirement seems to be refining doctrines, strategies and assessment frameworks to better include and operationalise exit.

Another way to improve exit is through learning from past mistakes by systematically carried out operations assessments and evaluations. Frerks (Ch. 5) has indicated that still much can be improved in this realm. Evaluability asessments are one way forward to better evaluation studies, like the different suggestions reported in Chapter 5 to improve military operations assessments.

Above it was already suggested to produce categorisations and typologies of exits to get a better grasp of what they entail and how they vary. One relevant variable suggested by van den Wollenberg is the size of the troop-contributing nation. These typologies could also include missions that have not been dealt with in this volume, such as those by the European Union, the Organisation for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE) and regional organisations in the developing world.

Institutional measures are needed to support reflection on and analysis of exit by the concerned stakeholders. Exit could be better signalled at the level of planning sections, and also could be more prominent in military training, as among others observed in critical studies of the US naval college.

The debate by Dalenberg and Jansen (Ch. 9) on the role of military culture in missions and exit could be supported by further research and analysis. Van den Wollenberg also questions the relevance and effect of a nation's military culture on exit decisions, comparing e.g. the US with Europe.

Overlooking the evidence presented in this volume, it is clear that the study of exit is just starting. All contributors have raised pertinent issues but also stated or implied that many questions are left to be studied further. Therefore, the editors of and contributors to this volume welcome discussion, corroboration or otherwise, of their findings and suggestions, and look forward to collaborate in further – comparative – research.

References

Apter D (ed) (1997) The Legitimization of Violence. New York University Press, New York

Bhatia MV (2005) Fighting words: naming terrorists, bandits, rebels and other violent actors. Third World Quarterly, 26, 1: 5-22

Caplan R (2012) Policy Implications. In: Caplan R (ed) Exit Strategies and State Building, Oxford University Press, New York, pp 311-319

Flavin W (2003) Planning for Conflict termination and Post-Conflict Success, Parameters: 95-112

Jabri V (1996) Discourses on violence: conflict analysis reconsidered. Manchester University Press, Manchester and New York

Paris R, Sisk T (2009) Conclusion: confronting the contradictions. In: Paris R and Sisk T (eds) The Dilemmas of Statebuilding, Routledge, London and New York, pp 304-315