Possibilities of Conflict Sensitivity through

Everyday Peace:

The Case of Humanitarian Assistance in Lebanon

By

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Submitted to

Central European University

Department of International Relations

In partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Master of Arts in

International Relations

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Vienna, Austria

2023

Abstract

Two decades ago, conflict sensitivity was offered as an "extreme push" (Anderson 2022), for humanitarian and development agencies to consider possible negative effects of their work and changing those practices and mechanisms leading them to contribute conflict. Literature shows that conflict sensitivity failed to accomplish its propositions and turned into just another mainstream tool that reproduces the existing conflict sensitivity concerns. In this regard, this paper provides a nuanced analysis on reasons of this failure and ways to achieve more substantial conflict sensitivity practices. A deep engagement with the conflict sensitivity literature shows similar reasons for this failure. In the contribution, these failing practices are categorized as "thin conflict sensitivity" whereas possible practices that are in congruent with concept's initial propositions are called "thick conflict sensitivity". Using this categorization as a lens to analyze the failure of conflict sensitivity in Lebanon, I offer new and innovative ways to realize thick conflict sensitivity understanding and practices. For this purpose, I engage with the everyday peace literature as it provides accounts for going beyond liberal, top-down peacebuilding practices which highly resonate with reasons for failures of conflict sensitivity. Through this engagement, I show ways to change certain thin conflict sensitivity approaches and practices into thick ones.

Acknowledgments

Last fall, in New York, I attended a thanksgiving dinner for the first time in my life. Before starting eating, everyone in the table talked about what they are thankful for. I loved that tradition. Therefore, I want to dedicate this acknowledgment for the people I am thankful for.

First, I am thankful for my supervisor, Professor Xymena Kurowska, I went her office with an uneducated curiosity and rather limited knowledge on this topic. Her patience, academic discipline, and guidance allowed me to come up with a master's thesis.

Second, I am thankful for the diverse community in Central European University and specifically for my friends. Their presence turned an academic inquiry into a life-changing experience.

Lastly, I am sincerely thankful for having two people in my life. My dad, whose sincere curiosity in what I learn and thought-provoking questions have always been a motivation for me to learn and grow. For my mom, whose unconditional love kept me sane in hardest times and felt home wherever I go in the world.

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1   Introduction

The 1994 Rwanda genocide was a turning point in understanding humanitarian aid, peacebuilding, and their implications for conflict. Until then, humanitarian organizations often portrayed themselves and how they handled the aid machine as neutral and indifferent (Anderson 1999). Therefore, they may have been oblivious their role in situations of conflict and the possible unintended consequences of their work. After the Rwanda disaster, scholars and practitioners began to question this depoliticized understanding of humanitarian work, and humanitarian organizations started to recognize that their work may exacerbate the same situation they seek to improve. Conflict sensitivity emerged as an umbrella term for this recognition and ways of minimizing harm and maximizing positive impacts. Conflict sensitivity was a very progressive and promising concept as it pushed humanitarian agencies to acknowledge their responsibility, which in turns allows for a greater degree of accountability. In principle, such an acknowledgement and the related requirement to integrate conflict sensitivity in humanitarian practice might have transformed how humanitarian work is performed.

After more than two decades, conflict sensitivity has not accomplished such a transformation; worse still, it turned into "another box to tick," according to the literature. This paper's central aim is, first, to better understand the conditions of this failure, and, second, to offer a framework how conflict sensitivity could still be realized in a way that accomplishes its initial potential in practice. For the former, in the upcoming section, I discuss the recent literature on the definition and practice of conflict sensitivity and draw out how they often point out the same failure through different concepts. I summarize the reasons and implications of the failure as "thin conflict sensitivity" in my contribution. Further, I provide an account of "thick conflict sensitivity," that is, the understanding and practice of conflict sensitivity that are congruent with the concept's initial

transformative propositions. For the latter, I integrate everyday peace literature and practice into thick conflict sensitivity. To that end, first, I engage with everyday peace literature more deeply. Later, I make use of this engagement in my case analysis.

There are three main reasons which make everyday peace relevant to conflict sensitivity. First, everyday peace offers new perspectives and solutions to the mainstream, top-down, mostly liberal understandings of peacebuilding. Conflict sensitivity, as discussed in depth in the upcoming section, is thought to fail because of the same understanding, embedded in the humanitarian sector. Therefore, the transformation that everyday peace offers for understanding peace and conflict might be an answer to conflict sensitivity's dilemmas. Further, contrary to many other peace theories, everyday peace literature has practical propositions, and albeit limited, there are projects planned and implemented through the everyday peace lens. Lastly, as conflict sensitivity is primarily informed through practice, it has much to learn from theory. I hope this engagement to inspire other forms of theoretical engagements into conflict sensitivity for a more systemic and better-grounded practice.

As an application of how everyday peace can inform conflict sensitivity, I will use my lens to examine the case of humanitarian assistance in Lebanon. Lebanon is chosen for two reasons. First, Lebanon has been a hub for humanitarian aid since the Syrian Civil War, which led 1.5 million refugees to move there. In recent years, the economic crisis has deepened with Covid-19 and the Beirut port explosion, leaving 91% of Syrian living on less than $3.8 per day and 23% of Lebanese living in extreme poverty (UN ESCWA 2020). Second, different reports and studies show practices and projects contributing to conflict rather than peace in Lebanon. Further, recent data and studies show worsening conflict situations in areas where humanitarian projects take

place, raising conflict sensitivity concerns (Al-Masri and Abla 2017; UNDP and ARK 2022; Tschunkert and Vogel 2022).

Another report commissioned by the UNDP after the Beirut port explosion confirms these concerns. In the report, respondents often expressed how needs assessments wasted their time in times of emergency and turned out to be useless (UNDP Lebanon 2021, 13-15). Some of them also felt offended by the type of questions they were asked, exacerbating the trauma they had been going through. Further, some Syrian people felt discriminated in relation to Lebanese people during the distribution of aid (20-21), exacerbating the already tense relationship between communities. Therefore, the case of Lebanon is, unfortunately a good example of the failure of conflict sensitivity.

As one of the biggest partners of the Lebanon Crisis Response Plan (LCRP), UNDP Lebanon must have noticed this failure as suggested by the organization publishing guidance notes and toolboxes on conflict sensitivity in 2022. However, a critical inquiry shows that these documents repeat the same mistakes – what I offer to call thin conflict sensitivity practices— that were widely discussed in the literature on conflict sensitivity. In my case analysis, through my classification of no, thin, and thick conflict sensitivities, I will show examples of thin conflict sensitivity in those guidance notes. Further, I will offer ways to turn them into thick conflict sensitivity practices by incorporating everyday peace literature.

Lastly, in the conclusion, I will summarize my findings for conditions of failure of conflict sensitivity and ways to turn these failure into substantial conflict sensitivity practices. Then, I will discuss some limitations of this inquiry and provide some further possibilities of research for advancing the understanding and practice of both conflict sensitivity and everyday peace.

2   Conflict Sensitivity

2.1   State of Art Definitions of and Approaches to Conflict Sensitivity

Critical accounts on how humanitarian interventions might contribute to conflict instead of peace have been put forward aftermath of the 1994 Rwanda genocide (Ulvin 1998; Bush 1998; Anderson 1999). The Rwanda genocide was one of the milestones for the acknowledgment that aid can have unintended consequences, which put humanitarian actors under scrutiny. Building on these accounts, the literature on conflict sensitivity has grown and humanitarian organizations started mainstreaming different understandings of conflict sensitivity in their programming and application. While analytical understandings of conflict sensitivity vary, most recent literature agrees on how "not" to conceptualize conflict sensitivity.

Recent literature developed a strong opposition to analytical understanding and common practice of conflict sensitivity as a technical practice. Ware and Laoutides (2021) argues practicing conflict analysis as a technical expertise gives the privilege of producing and framing knowledge to foreign specialists or local elites. Further research shows that since conflict sensitivity is conceptualized as a technical practice, failures in mainstreaming it are perceived as a failure of knowledge or capacity, preventing humanitarian agents to realize wider systemic failures (Ernstorfer et al. 2022). Similarly, it is also argued that this type of understanding carries risk of making conflict sensitivity "another box to tick" (Gulette and Rosenberg 2015), unloading its emphasis on accountability of humanitarian work (Handschin et al. 2016; Midgley et al. 2022).

Recent studies provide similar accounts on what conflict sensitivity is not, but the discussion on "what it is" is a wider area of debate. Before unpacking these differentiating definitions, the literature widely agrees on well-known definition of "minimizing harm and maximizing positive

impacts", sometimes with minor adjustments adding "peace" or "local" dimensions to this umbrella definition (Conflict Sensitivity Consortium 2012).

There are different approaches and applications of this generic definition of conflict sensitivity. First and most known approach is "do no harm" (DNH) which is sometimes used interchangeably with conflict sensitivity. However, Anderson, who used the term DNH for the first time in the humanitarian aid context, makes a clear distinction between two. For her, DNH is a highly demanding concept which "sets out perfection as the aim of action in conflict contexts: do NO harm" (2022, 2). Whereas she conceptualizes conflict sensitivity as a wider, undemanding concept as a call for "awareness and care". The DNH approach to conflict sensitivity is criticized from different perspectives. First, even though Anderson defines it as "minimizing harm and maximizing positive impacts" (1999), its "perfectionist" nature inevitably priorities "minimizing harm" over "maximizing positive impact". This makes DNH a "minimalist application" of conflict sensitivity, weakening the concept to be used as a tool in peacebuilding (Garred and Castro 2016; Ware and Laoutides 2021). Ernstorfer et al. (2022) criticize "minimalistic" practice of conflict sensitivity for being "peace-blind", and overlooking capacities for peace.

Another approach to conflict sensitivity is Do No Harm for Faith Groups (DNH4FG) which is a variation within DNH definitions and tools. One of its premises is putting the individuals into their focus as the main point of analysis. Therefore, it is a highly individualistic understanding of the concept. Second, DNH4FG practices integrate parts from sacred texts that emphasize peace and conflict-sensitive principles (Silalahi et al. 2016). McCants-Turner and Garred (2022) argue that conflict sensitivity can also contribute to individual change which is overlooked in the literature. They maintain DNH and particularly DNH4FG as useful for raising awareness on conflict sensitivity on individual level.

In line with the common opposition against the "technical expertise", McCants-Turner and Garred (2022) also brings the distinction of "logical frameworkers" and "complex circlers" (Neufeldt 2007) into the discussion. According to this distinction, from a frameworkers lens, humanitarian activity is a linear, casual, analytical practice. For McCants-Turner and Garred, much of the literature conceptualizes the conflict sensitivity and/ or DNH[1] with this frameworker's mind and they argue for more of a "circler" conceptualization of the concept that emphasizes "the relational, multi-dimensional, dynamic nature of causality and the need for flexibility and adaptation" (2022, 2). They also find circler approach useful for its emphasis on individual-level change which makes it similar to the "peace responsive" understanding of conflict sensitivity (Ernstorfer et al. 2022). Similarly, Enstorfer et al.'s (2022) peace responsiveness approach argue a system-wide change is needed for conflict sensitivity but it can start with the change in individuals and their willingness to overcome organizational barriers. On the other hand, what they offer differently is understanding conflict sensitivity as a holistic practice, consisting of four blocks –programmatic, organizational, systems-wide, and individual.

While all literature mentioned so far oppose the "technical expertise" or "tool-kit" understandings of conflict sensitivity, Ware defines what is meant by this opposition and what these accounts offer instead of conventional understandings very clearly: "Conflict sensitivity is more a perspective by which to plan, monitor, and evaluate development-humanitarian programs than a specific methodology or toolkit, although there are numerous toolkits available" (2023, 6). He further offers ways to implement such a perspective by making use of everyday peace lens which will be benefited in the case analysis.

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[1] McCants-Turner and Garred (2022) use the terms "conflict sensitivity" and "do no harm" almost interchangeably. While many studies conceptualize "conflict sensitivity" as an umbrella term and "do no harm" as a specific tool and/ or comprehension of conflict sensitivity (Ware and Laoutides 2021; Anderson 2022; Ernstorfer et al. 2022).

Midgley et al. (2022) offer an account on how conflict sensitivity has been embedded into the aid system whereas it was originally a disruptive idea to the very same system. They argue fundamental obstacles such as colonial roots, norms, ideologies putting efficiency first within the sector turned this innovative and disruptive concept into another "box to tick". Therefore, they show the need for adding up politics to the discussion and definition. Conflict sensitivity should be discussed in a context where it is not free from global inequalities, power struggles, and political economy. Midgley et al. (2022, 5) argue if there is going to be a change in ways we understand and implement conflict sensitivity, we should also understand that it is "as much about what the problem is 'in here' as it is 'out there'". In this regard, they conceptualize conflict sensitivity as a chance to support a systemic reform in the aid sector. Therefore their analysis speak to other pieces which focus on what is "in here" such as Ernstrofer et al.'s peace responsiveness (2022) and Ware's everyday peace practice which are initially offering a critical look into the ways humanitarian actors operate in the field.

2.2 Conditions of Conflict Sensitivity: How to Realize It

Arguably, resulting from the lack of dialogue and discussion within recent literature, it is hard to categorize certain conditions and practices which are seen as necessary for conflict sensitivity to be realized. Coming from the field or practice, conflict sensitivity scholars put forth a lot in terms of new ways of "making" conflict sensitivity. However, their suggestions stay limited as these suggestions do not turn into bigger concepts, tools, methods which some others could discuss and take further. In this section, I will summarize suggestions and conditions offered to realize conflict sensitivity and try to make them talk to each other.

One of the key practices for being conflict sensitive is conflict analysis. As conflict analysis is done in the early stages of planning, the way humanitarian actors do it has significant effect on

conflict implications of the humanitarian-development projects. There are different studies touching upon pitfalls of existing conflict analysis practices and how to make it more conflict sensitive. One, and arguably the most comprehensive one is Ware and Laoutides' (2021) participatory conflict analysis. For them, one of the conditions for being conflict sensitive is being inclusive in the planning and conflict analysis. For them, despite the recent "local turn" in the sector, aid programs and projects still struggle with integrating the local to their conflict analyses and end up contributing conflicts. One of the main reasons for this failure is considering narratives, analyses, remarks of the local as an input or data that needs to be framed and processed by experts. Considering "the ability to frame and generate knowledge is a form of power" (2021, 690), these types of "localization" attempts end up diminishing local agency and capacities while reproducing existing inequalities. Heider (2017), emphasizes the same perspective and puts forward the importance of identifying interveners' relative weight in the conflict analysis. The more the intervener is involved in the conflict analysis, the less locals get what they actually need. The second condition for Ware and Laoutides (2021) to realize conflict-sensitive conflict analysis is not aiming for "single uniform or cohesive local consensus analysis" (687). On the contrary, they suggest being skeptical of single analyses seemingly emerging from the local voices. Single and coherent analyses might mean dominant voices overcame narratives and analyses of unprivileged within the local.

Tschunkert and Vogel's (2022) operationalization of research for assessing conflict sensitivity of humanitarian cash assistance might enrich participatory conflict analysis as well. While most conflict analyses (and conflict sensitivity practices) focus on inter-group tensions and hostilities between conflicting parts, they take into account intra-group tensions as well. Therefore, they offer a three-level analysis –inter-group analysis, first intra-group analysis, and second intra-

group analysis. Such a model offers to get into micro-conflict dynamics and closely monitor another dimension of conflict which is the intra-group conflicts. By making use of this model for their case –cash and voucher assistance (CVA) in Lebanon—, they show sometimes even though the aid itself is not contributing to the conflict, the perception of aid can lead unintended consequences. Therefore, their work also offers another way to assess whether conflict sensitivity was present, that is, assessing perceptions of aid and their implications for the conflict situation.

Ware (2023), on the other hand, draw attention to apply conflict sensitivity with an everyday peace lens. For him, "local capacities for peace" (LCP) tool which is widely employed in conflict sensitivity practice directly overlaps with everyday peace. LCPs are basically defined as already existing opportunities of peace based on practices, engagement, norms. Integrating LCP to project planning means making use of these existing opportunities and working just as a facilitator of these practices which have already been contributing peace before the conflict. However, without a sound understanding of everyday peace, LCP analyses might fall short to understand what is exactly contributing peace or conflict. In this regard, Ware (2023) criticizes the common DNH approach to conflict elements as "connectors" and "dividers". Drawing on a peacebuilding program in Myanmar, he shows some social practices which would be seen as a "divider" by DNH that actually contribute to peace. Therefore, for him, one of the conditions for realizing conflict sensitivity is having a deeper understanding of everyday peace practices that DNH approach fails to provide alone. In a similar vein, Tschunkert and Vogel (2022) emphasizes the importance what kind of peace supported and promoted. For example, conflict sensitivity programs, by prioritizing the "minimizing harm" side, might be upholding "negative peace" which would prevent direct violence but also lead to protect or reproduce existing inequalities that could

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turn into other conflicts if not addressed. In this regard, everyday peace lens for conflict sensitivity could also be useful to realize capacities of positive peace.

Lastly, another area of discussion is on where to start change to create conditions for conflict-sensitive aid. The recent literature tend to conceptualize aid sector as three layers: individual, organizational, and system-wide (McCants-Turner and Garred 2022; Midgley et al. 2022; Ernstorfer et al. 2022). However, they offer different accounts on where to start being conflict-sensitive. For McCants-Turner and Garred (2022), for any organizational or systemic change, individuals working in the sector should internalize and behave in a conflict sensitive manner. For that reason, they assess the success of DNH4FG program by analyzing practitioners' personal engagements with the concept.

Midgley et al. (2022), on the contrary, argue that failures in applications do not stem from individual inabilities, but from the wider aid system which produces counter-incentives to employ conflict sensitivity in a meaningful way. Therefore, a systemic change is needed first. Ernstorfer et al. (2022), on the other hand, provide a combination of these two contradicting approaches. As they conceptualize conflict sensitivity as a holistic practice which has implications for all these three layers, they look for ways of more holistic change instead of prioritizing the change in one layer to another.

McCants-Turner and Garred (2022) conceptualizes humanitarian work as three layers: individual, organizational, and system-wide as Midgley et al. (2022) and Ernstorfer et al. (2022) do. Main difference between these approach lies in where to start the change to mainstream conflict sensitivity. Midgley et al. (2022) argues the focus should be on the aid system and the incentives it produces at large. On the contrary, referring to a project of CDA Colloboration (CDA 2008), McCants-Turner and Garred (2022) argue that faith agencies understand conflict sensitivity as

primarily an individual (trans)formation which in turn can lead to a wider institutional mainstreaming later. Ernstorfer et al. (2022), drawing on peace responsiveness model of Interpeace (2021), hold a more of an holistic approach where conflict sensitivity mainstreaming can be gradually realized through a set of changes in all these layers at the same time.

2.3   Critique of the Recent Literature:

Many recent approaches of conflict sensitivity try to fill gaps in or modify analytical and practical implications of DNH. However, they do not speak to each other. For example peace responsiveness has a lot to offer to everyday peace lens (Ware 2023) or participatory conflict analysis (Ware and Laoutides 2021) from a conflict sensitivity point of view and vice versa and these potentials are not recognized yet. On the contrary, they arguably compete to fill the vacuum created by gaps in DNH or insufficiency of "technical expertise" models.

Further, while recent literature almost altogether refute "expertization", they fall short to relate it with DNH which is "the most well-known and widely adopted" (Ware 2023, 1) approach of conflict sensitivity. If the "expertization" is one of the most common mistakes in building conflict sensitivity into the humanitarian practice, DNH, as the most well-known application, should have a certain role in it. To what extent existing problems arise from DNH or from the concept of conflict sensitivity itself or systemic, organizational, individual inabilities that are not addressed. As Anderson draws attention, this is partly a result of intertwinement of conflict sensitivity and DNH – "Conflict sensitivity and DNH are not equivalents nor interchangeable terms" (2022, 2).

One other reason for gaps and inconsistencies in the literature can be because of a lack of purely theoretical debate. The theory and normative standpoints of conflict sensitivity seem to be absorbed by the practice as it is almost always discussed within the scope of its implications for the practice and humanitarian agents. Midgley et al. (2022), in this regard, accuse the structures

embedded in the aid sector for producing incentives to turn any critical approach into another box to tick. Thus, it is important to understand, conflict sensitivity and do no harm, in their early days, were invented not only as guidelines and tools but also as a philosophical and/ or normative understanding. Two of these main normative standpoints were 1- Acknowledgement or confession of what we do under the names of aid, help, development, peace can in fact make it worse. 2- Humanitarian actors are not only accountable to their donors and stakeholders but also to the persons, communities, settings they are supposed to help. Although the first standpoint seems to be well discussed and internalized on different levels, the second one seems to be ignored. For example, the possibility of unintended consequences are widely mentioned in the literature. However, there is not much research on how these actors who caused "unintended consequences" can be held accountable or what we should understand from this accountability. Is it an ethical, practical, or legal responsibility? These questions are not well discussed. Therefore, among other gaps, there is a need for revisiting the accountability that conflict sensitivity put on humanitarian agencies as Anderson draws attention defining the concept as "an extreme push for accountability" (2022, 1) after more than two decades.

3   Everyday Peace

Conflict and violence have long been more interesting for social scientists, specifically for IR scholars, than peace (Williams 2015, 4). This led peace and conflict research to dominantly inquire into conflict rather than peace (Williams 2015, 9) and take the conflict for granted (Kurlansky 2008). However, as Autesserre's work showed (2014), communities find ways to establish a form and feeling of peace to turn back to their "normal" life during or after the conflict. Yet, this kind of peace goes largely unnoticed (Ring 2006) for two main reasons. First, top-down peace is often seen as primary, providing a ground for other forms of peace to flourish by facilitating a form of negative peace, preventing direct violence. Second, top-down peace is much easier to observe. It can be found in the news, government documents, and symbolic gestures of political leaders. Everyday peace, on the other hand, is hard to observe. "It often occurs in the shadows and on the margins" (Mac Ginty 2021, 212). It is subtly exercised through "mundane" practices of "ordinary" people.

3.1   Defining Everyday Peace: What is it Critical or Subversive of?

In an area dominated by inquiries almost only into the conflict or "big peace," the "everyday" can be seen as critical or even "subversive" (Mac Ginty 2014; Ware and Ware 2022). Therefore, it is important to understand what everyday peace is subversive of to define the concept.

Everyday peace literature argues daily practices of peace are forms of peace and need to be inquired on their own terms and context. It offers to look into "lower" levels which are often overlooked, such as friendship networks, family, and neighbors, in line with its premise that "a top-down peace can only reach its potential if it is given life through bottom-up enactments and embodiment" (Mac Ginty 2021, 3). In this regard, firstly, it is subversive of the level of analysis

of peace. Since Mac Ginty's influential piece on bottom-up and local agency in peacebuilding (2014), recent everyday peace studies increasingly focus on "ordinary" people and their practices that establish peace in daily life. Not only do they change the level of analysis, but they also make use of different sociological, anthropological, and psychological concepts and methodological tools, which is quite unorthodox in conflict studies. Recent research on everyday peace include studies using ethnographic techniques (Charalambous et al. 2020; Ware et al. 2022), research into space and silence (Kang 2022), and analyses of peace and conflict narratives of less empowered groups (O'Driscoll 2021; Dizdaroglu 2023) showing a wide range of methods and concepts employed from other disciplines. Thus, the "everyday" part of everyday peace is subversive in and of itself, implying that the everyday level is worth explaining. This innovative approach can be and is seen as part or result of the "local turn" as many same scholars write about "local turn" (Ware and Ware 2022, 226) and as it has overlapping promises such as the bottom-up perspective. However, I will argue for differentiating everyday peace from the local turn in the upcoming subsection.

Second, the definition of peace in everyday peace literature is subversive of the liberal peace paradigm and liberal peacebuilding practice, which has been the dominant logic behind peace studies and peacebuilding practices for over the last 20 years (Paris 1994). It has been fundamentally characterized by a "problem-solving" approach – taking existing structures, hierarchies, and common practices as given – lacking the analytical ability to put what is 'given' under scrutiny and to contextualize and politicize the failures of liberal peace efforts (Mac Ginty 2008; Pugh 2013; Randazzo 2016). This failure of contextualizing goes hand in hand with a top-down definition of peace, focusing on state-level actors, overwhelmingly prioritizing the "negative peace," ignoring the everyday needs and concerns of local communities as often criticized by

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everyday scholars (Richmond 2009; Richmond and Mitchell 2012; Mac Ginty 2013). In this regard, everyday peace literature is a critical, subversive research agenda that puts human agency and local existence at the center of the definition of peace.

3.2 Locating the Everyday Peace in Relation to the "Local Turn"

The research about the "local turn" in peace and conflict studies shares a common ground with everyday peace literature, which is fundamental to both. They both focus on "lowering" the level of analysis and practice. Considering many everyday scholars wrote pieces on the "local turn" as well, it is fair to say that the everyday mirrors a lot from the "local turn" research. In this section, I will try to briefly summarize how everyday peace talks to the "local turn." However, it is important to differentiate everyday peace from the "local turn" for two reasons. This differentiation is also important for the purpose of this thesis as it will use the everyday peace definition of the local and integrate it into practice to realize "thick" conflict sensitivity.

First, it might be misleading to define everyday peace as a result or an extension of the local turn literature. Instead, everyday peace can be seen as a theory that analytically grounds the local turn. As the local turn is initially put forward to explain a recent trend in the humanitarian sector, it is led and informed by "real-world events" and practice (Mac Ginty and Richmond 2013). Therefore, the local turn in peacebuilding is argued to be far from a coherent school of thought (Mac Ginty 2015) and subjected to incoherent change through different generations (Paffenholz 2015). In this regard, the local turn research lacks the capacity to inform the practice theoretically. In contrast, everyday peace is much better grounded as a theory and supported by different analytical tools and concepts from social sciences. Thus, everyday peace can be conceptualized as an analytical attempt to build a new theory of peace and peacebuilding, including a theoretical ground for the "practice of the local" as well.

Second, the turn' in the 'local turn' is not about the local but about interveners. A considerable share of the literature is dedicated to understanding a change (the turn) in humanitarian actors' practices that takes place on different but higher levels than the everyday – from local NGOs to the biggest international organizations. Thus, its level of analysis is still not the local. Everyday literature and everyday peace studies fill this gap by shifting this focus to the "lowest" level. Further, everyday peace's dedication to focus on the most "mundane," "ordinary," and "hidden" spaces and practices of power – which is sometimes defined as hyper-local (Mac Ginty 2014; 2019; Ware et al. 2022) – offers better ways of constructing the local.

3.3 A Brief Discussion and Potential Obstacles of Everyday Peace Literature

Literature on everyday peace can be divided into two. First is the theoretical discussion of everyday, focusing on definitions and concepts that help us to ground a newly emerged concept. These studies mainly provide a philosophical and theoretical inquiry such as if everyday peace is really a form of "peace", if so, what kind of peace it is, how it differentiates from other peace approaches, what kind of tools and concepts we can use to observe such peace and so forth. The second strand of literature approaches everyday peace as a methodological tool for observing different and hidden forms of practicing peace, especially in highly local settings. These studies make use of everyday peace in two ways. First, they make use of theoretical definitions of everyday peace to operationalize their research into everyday peace. Second, they employ concepts, types of social practices, and methods offered by the everyday peace literature to observe and explain highly local peace practices.

This dichotomy of the literature carries the risk of turning everyday peace into a purely analytical tool. However, everyday peace has more to offer. It can be better analyzed and understood as an offer to change existing peacebuilding practices. It can be a tool to inform

different stages of humanitarian practice, such as project and program design and implementation, monitoring, and evaluation. The "subversive" change everyday peace offers should not be understood only as a change for scholarly approaches to peace. It can also offer subversive change for practitioners of peace at different levels. In this regard, this paper aims to offer ways and examples of incorporating it into humanitarian practice. This is somewhat paradoxical, considering the same humanitarian actors and practices I aim to integrate everyday peace into are the products of what it is subversive of. However, whether employed as a transformative approach or as a part of problem-solving strategies, it has much to offer for the humanitarian and development practices of different agents.

Secondly, even though everyday literature has a relatively long history in IR and conflict and peace studies, everyday peace recently became a center of attention. Even though it is not finished and still laying its foundations, the above-mentioned practical potential of everyday peace grabs the attention of humanitarian agents. The way these agents perceive and make use of everyday peace might have a significant impact on the evolution of the theory. Above, I mentioned briefly how conflict sensitivity, initially a subversive concept putting humanitarian actors under scrutiny, turned into a "new bottle" for the "old wine." Everyday peace carries the same risk of becoming a buzzword or a "box-to-tick," reproducing the same practices it initially sought to change. Therefore, although this paper focuses on what conflict sensitivity can learn from everyday peace, everyday peace has a lot to learn from the widespread failure of conflict sensitivity as well. This might be a fruitful inquiry for further research.

4 Contribution

One of the central aims of this paper is to better understand the conditions of failure and success of conflict sensitivity. To that end, in chapter 2, I engaged with the literature and showed shared ideas on why conflict sensitivity practices fail. As I also argued there, this literature fail to speak to each other even though they often find similar reasons for the failure and offer similar conditions to practice the concept better. This contribution is an attempt to distill these shared ideas under three main categories. It will help with naming different forms of conflict sensitivity, making the discussion on failure and success of conflict sensitivity easier. Further, this categorization will be a tool to engage with my case study and explain different practices of conflict sensitivity.

In this regard, I will offer two umbrella terms to clarify and consolidate analytical distinctions, as well as provide an analytical framework for the presentation of my case: "thin conflict sensitivity" and "thick conflict sensitivity". First, I will call conflict sensitivity approaches and practices failing for several similar reasons "thin conflict sensitivity". Thin conflict sensitivity in a general sense denotes a technocratic and thus superficial engagement with the conflict despite commitments to the contrary, and is likely to result in policy failure. It includes practices such "box-ticking exercise," "(decontextualized) technical expertise," "(colloquially) old wine in new bottles," "frameworker approach," and the like. They will be described as "thin" because their common characteristic is turning conflict sensitivity into another common mainstream humanitarian practice, template, tool, or buzzword. Consequently, such "thin" practices effectively preclude achieving the transformative potential of conflict sensitivity and reproduce failing practices. Thick conflict sensitivity, in contrast, indicates developments in line with the original proposition of the concept and its transformative potential. They are "thick" also in the sense that

they resist being flattened and/or coopted by common individual practices, organizational praxis, and structural inertia, which tend to transform conflict sensitivity into its "thin" version.

I will elaborate on these brief definitions by identifying what effects thin and thick conflict sensitivity may exert on different aspects of peace and humanitarian practices. Then, I will specify their differences in relation to theory and practice of peace and humanitarian work. As a summary, at the end of this section, I will provide a chart that distils these three categories that will help me to examine my case study.

4.1   No, Thin, and Thick Conflict Sensitivities

Arguably one of the most significant contributions of conflict sensitivity is holding humanitarian agencies accountable for their possible negative contribution to the conflict or post-conflict contexts. I take Anderson's (1999) book "Do no harm: how aid can support peace –or war" as the milestone for such a contribution. Even though there are studies putting these actors under scrutiny before Anderson's, her work constitutes the turning point for systematically approaching the issue of accountability and offering a concept through which scholars and practitioners can question humanitarian work. Therefore, common practices of and common scholarly approaches to humanitarian intervention before her work will be called "no conflict sensitivity." It is important to mention that this is admittedly a generalization. There will be cases and studies that practice conflict sensitivity rather well without even mentioning the concept. However, as literature shows, practitioners and scholarship did not sufficiently articulate how aid could contribute to the conflict before the 1994 Rwanda genocide (Bush 1998; Ulvin 1998; Paffenholz 2015).

"Thin conflict sensitivity" will be understood as a middle point in the spectrum going from "no" to "thick" conflict sensitivity. This does not necessarily mean that practicing thick conflict

sensitivity is a process that agencies need to go through from "no" to "thin" and then achieve "thick" conflict sensitivity. That is, it is not necessarily a developmental and linear approach. It is in the middle in the analytical sense, as it is different from "no" conflict sensitivity in many regards. Even though it is highly criticized in the literature and seems to fail in practice, what I call thin conflict sensitivity is a crucial ideational shift in acknowledging the fact that humanitarian work can exacerbate the very same conflict situation it seeks to improve. In this regard, thin conflict sensitivity will refer to the failing practices of conflict sensitivity because of deficiencies in contextual understanding, due to structural limits to organization change, and also simply given complexities of practice.

"Thick conflict sensitivity," in contrast, is offered as an umbrella term for all approaches and practices which are coherent with and have the potential to deliver on conflict sensitivity's transformative potential. Conflict sensitivity is indeed a subversive idea in its core calling all humanitarian actors to question and transform their ways of handling the aid machine. This "extreme push" (Anderson 2022, 1), however, seemed to turn into another common tool that lost its ability to transform, that is, it became a "thin conflict sensitivity." I will call the possibilities of turning conflict sensitivity into its "extreme" version as thick conflict sensitivity. I argue that incorporating everyday peace perspectives and practices are some of the ways of realizing a thick conflict sensitivity. Therefore, the thick conflict sensitivity in this paper should be read as "thick conflict sensitivity through everyday peace." By no means is this to say that everyday peace is the only way to achieve a sound and transformative conflict sensitivity. Instead, by engaging everyday peace in conflict sensitivity, I aim to stimulate a discussion on other ways of reaching a thick conflict sensitivity. In upcoming sub-sections, definitions and propositions of thick conflict sensitivity is not necessarily description of everyday conflict sensitivity. Rather, they are common

characteristics that must be achieved to realize a thick conflict sensitivity. In my case study, I will specifically discuss how such a thick conflict sensitivity can be realized through everyday peace lens. In the below, I explain how each category – no conflict sensitivity, thin conflict sensitivity, thick conflict sensitivity, may look like in each practice.

4.1.1   Approach to Humanitarian Practice

The common approach before conflict sensitivity (or "no conflict sensitivity") is inclined to see humanitarian action as neutral, free from power relations, and de-politicized. Thin conflict sensitivity, although it includes a progressive approach accepting the premise that no intervention is neutral, has a narrower sense of how politicized the aid is. It is not critical of itself and fails to see the colonial roots of intervention and dominance of a West-centric mindset. In contrast, thick conflict sensitivity should be able to see ideologies, global inequalities, and power struggles within the humanitarian sector and their implication for practice.

4.1.2   Contributing to the Conflict:

When there is no conflict sensitivity, contribution to conflict is unnoticed or ignored. This goes hand in hand with the idea that humanitarian action can be neutral, whereas it is always an actor involved in power relations in the context and has its own weight. In thin conflict sensitivity, contributing to the conflict as the humanitarian actor is often seen as a problem out there. It might be about problems in case-specific challenges, such as the unwillingness of receivers, obstacles resulting from cultural differences, and so on. In cases where there are some internal evaluations, it is mostly because of a failure of technical capacity or lack of resources. In thick conflict sensitivity, the problem is "in here." Existing systemic and organizational structures might be inadvertently causing humanitarian work to contribute to the conflict. In addition, interveners might not be able to understand, frame, and analyze the conflict situation for different reasons.

Therefore, a holistic approach is needed to be conflict-sensitive that does not diminish it into a failure of expertise or lack of resources.

4.1.3 **Conflict Analysis**

Conflict analysis is a must for every intervention in any conflict-prone area, even if there are no ongoing conflicts. Conflict analyses without any integration of conflict sensitivity are mostly shallow, focusing on "big peace" and being informed through media and powerful actors. Thin conflict analysis is better informed by local actors thanks to conflict sensitivity tools' emphasis on the local and specific contexts. However, it seeks for a single, cohesive, consensual conflict analysis to build its work on it. In such contexts, this leads privileged voices and dominant narratives to outcompete marginalized narratives and weak voices. Thick conflict analysis, on the other hand, should open up the space for incoherent, polyphonic, diverse analyses of conflict reflecting the differentiating needs and interests within the local. For thick conflict analysis, a coherent analysis should be put under scrutiny as it might show analyses of less empowered groups (such as women, minorities, youth, lower classes) might be shadowed.

4.1.4 **The Local Agency**

Conflict sensitivity is also very much about the influence that the aid has on individual and communal agencies. Without it, the local agency is often ignored, unnoticed, or overlooked. Thin conflict sensitivity practices, although they seem to put emphasis on integrating the local into the programming, planning, and implementation, end up deepening the division between the local and intervener. For such practices, narratives, analyses of the local are understood as an input or data to be analyzed by experts. The local is "used" to inform the "expert" or even the "technician". Thus, the intervener still has the power to frame and generate knowledge, contributing to existing global and local inequalities and diminishing the local agency. In thick conflict sensitivity, the

narratives and capacities of locals are taken as the output itself. The intervener is just the facilitator for such analyses and capacities to emerge. Therefore, the line between the intervener and intervened upon is blurry, and intervener's agency is minimized, advancing local agency and involvement.

Table 1: Summary of Different Conflict Sensitivity Practices

	No Conflict Sensitivity	*Thin Conflict Sensitivity*	*Thick Conflict Sensitivity*
Approach to Peacebuilding and Humanitarian Practice	Neutral, free from power relations, de-politicized	Acknowledgement of no intervention is neutral. Accepting aid's possible negative role in contributing to conflict. Yet, a lacking understanding of world politics inherent to the aid.	In addition to acknowledgement that aid can contribute to the conflict, it is aware of power politics, ideologies, and colonial roots behind the aid system. Able to see interplay of global and local inequalities that are often reproduced by the aid machine.
Conflict Analysis	Shallow, focused almost only on big peace. Informed through media and powerful actors.	Searches for more locally-informed conflict analysis. Yet, seeks for single, cohesive, consensual analyses which lead ignoring marginilized narratives and analyses.	Condcuts locally-informed conflict analyses by which local analyses are taken as given, instead of filtering them through "systems of framing".
Local Agency	Ignored, unnoticed, overlooked	Taken into consideration and working to integrate the local into project cycle. Yet, diminishes local agencies by understanding the local as "data" to inform practitioners.	The local is given opportunities to build its own analyses on its perspectives on conflict, needs, and solutions. The project is a product of the local where the intervener plays a faciliator role.
Ability to Frame and Produce Knowledge	Given to the intervener and elite-level actors.	Given to the "technicians" who will frame and produce knowledge for the local.	Given to the locals, target groups, marginilized groups, minorities. Given to the groups who are going through the conflict.

5 Case Study: Failure of Humanitarian Assistance in Lebanon and Thickening the Conflict Sensitivity

Lebanon hosts 1.5 million Syrians who have fled the conflict in Syria since 2011 and has the world's highest per capita refugee population (UN Lebanon 2022). The country has been going through a combination of economic and social crises and disasters. The economic crisis that started in 2019 caused a huge unpredictability, and the Lebanese Pound has devalued more than 90% in two years (World Bank 2021). In 2021, 75% of the Lebanese population is estimated to live below the poverty line (EBRD 2021), and 90% of Syrian refugees live in extreme poverty (UNHCR 2021). The outbreak of the Covid-19 pandemic and the 2020 Beirut port exposition complicated the existing social and economic crises. As a result, social unrest has been increasing, exacerbating already-fragile peace in the country (International Crisis Group 2020).

These compounding crises have made Lebanon a priority for different forms of humanitarian assistance (Tschunkert and Vogel 2022). Despite increasing attention from humanitarian and development agencies, existing conflicts have escalated and humanitarian conditions have gotten worse in recent years that international actors are advised to be prepared for worst-case scenarios (International Crisis Group 2020). As the crises in Lebanon are multifaceted, interventions include a wide range of humanitarian responses such as relief operations, development assistance, peacebuilding practices all maintained by the UN agencies, the Lebanese government, international NGOs (which are estimated to be more than a hundred), and local NGOs (Dinger 2022). Since 2015, these humanitarian efforts have been organized and coordinated under the Lebanon Crisis Response Plan (LCRP). Between 2015 and 2021, Lebanon received over 8.2 billion USD under LCRP (UN Lebanon 2022, 5).

The international community seems to put a lot of effort and resources into Lebanon, but recent studies and data show they have failed to improve the conditions. Some research and data show (lack of) conflict sensitivity is one of the reasons behind this failure. UNDP and ARK's perception surveys, conducted regularly since 2017, show deteriorating social cohesion in many different places. In places like Beqaa, where humanitarian projects intensify, the situation worsens in terms of inter-group relationships and social cohesion between Syrian refugees and local populations. A survey shows that while 19% of respondents indicated "negative" or "very negative" relationships in Beqaa in 2017, this number rose to 80% in 2021 (UNDP and ARK 2022). The same research shows similar deterioration of relationships for intra-group and government-citizen relationships.

While this might be seen as the additional burden of the Covid-19 pandemic and the Beirut port explosion, Tschunkert and Vogel (2022) draw attention to humanitarian organizations' negative role in it. Based on UNDP and ARK data, they trace effects of cash and voucher assistance (CVA) programs in different localities and show some CVA programs inadvertently contribute to conflicts by triggering micro-conflict dynamics. In this regard, they call for new ways of CVA programming which put conflict sensitivity at its focus. Further, They also argue for "shifting the focus from the macro to the local level" (2022, 8) to better monitor components of tensions as I will argue by incorporating everyday literature into conflict sensitivity in upcoming sections. Another report which is commissioned by UNDP Lebanon based on surveys conducted six months after the port explosion reveals clear concerns regarding (lack of) conflict sensitivity mainstreaming in response to the catastrophe (UNDP Lebanon 2021). The report's name is "We Felt Like Beggars", referring to a survey of an old woman in the explosion area. She indicated that during the needs assessment of humanitarian actors, they felt like they were begging for their help

because of the types of questions and the way the assessments were conducted (UNDP Lebanon 2021, 13). Some other respondents indicated they wasted their time as their voice was not heard, and the aid was distributed as organizations please (UNDP Lebanon 2021, 13).

Research and surveys show how aid efforts in Lebanon contribute to existing problems, unrest, and conflicts. This conflict "insensitivity" must be noticed by UNDP Lebanon as the organization that three guidance notes are published starting from February 2022 after releasing the report "We Felt Like Beggars" in July 2021. In February 2022, other three conflict sensitivity toolboxes are developed and published as well. One of them is particularly about mainstreaming conflict sensitivity in cash assistance, which was discussed more in-depth than other forms of aid in Lebanon and discussed for their implications for existing conflicts (Lehmann and Masterson 2014; Tapsis and Doocy 2017; Tschunkert and Vogel 2022). This shows organization's awareness on concerns raised in the literature about cash assistance programs. However, before these recently published guidance notes and toolboxes, it is not found any other document on conflict sensitivity published and shared by UNDP Lebanon.

These publications show organization's increasing awareness on conflict sensitivity and its commitment to improve conflict implications of its practices. Yet, having first conflict sensitivity-focused documents two decades after the invention of the concept despite long-raised conflict sensitivity concerns also shows an institutional unawareness if not blindness. Further, a closer look into these documents shows a greater unawareness of existing discussions on conflict sensitivity. While recent literature widely criticizes existing conflict sensitivity practices for being "another box-to-tick" or "thin," these documents seem to repeat the same mistake. In this regard, the efforts to be conflict-sensitive seem to follow the pattern mentioned before –going to "thin" conflict sensitivity from "no" conflict sensitivity. Therefore, it is likely that these efforts will not

significantly improve the failing response of humanitarian actors in Lebanon unless a more substantial (thick) understanding of conflict sensitivity is employed. In this regard, in my case analysis, I will do two things by making use of the report "We Felt Like Beggars," guidance notes on conflict sensitivity, and the conflict sensitivity toolbox series. In specific sub-sections, first, I will show concerns of "no" or "thin" conflict sensitivity. Second, showing how these recent publications repeat the long-criticized practices of "thin conflict sensitivity," I will offer ways of turning it into a "thick" conflict sensitivity by integrating everyday peace literature and practices into the case of Lebanon.

5.1 Thickening the Context and Conflict Analyses:

Context and conflict analyses are at the heart of being conflict sensitive. UNDP Lebanon's Guidance Note 1's (UNDP Lebanon 2022a) second chapter is "Understand the Context". First of all, in any of conflict sensitivity documents (guidance notes and toolboxes) mentioned above, there is no emphasis on conflict-sensitive conflict or context analysis. However, it is mentioned in the literature review that context or conflict analyses can contribute to the conflict as they set the ground on how and what to intervene (Ware & Laoutides 2021; Tschunkert and Vogel 2022). Therefore, contrary to the significant emphasis on understanding the context, the way it is approached to the context and conflict is far from being conflict sensitive.

The way UNDP Lebanon understands the context and conflict is based on "the Tensions Monitoring System" (UNDP Lebanon 2022a, 4-5). This monitoring system collects data, analyses, and provides feedback. The data is collected from regular perception surveys, different UN agencies, family outreach research, ministry data, and WhatsApp surveys (Global Compact on Refugees 2021). The analyses of these data are later incorporated into conflict sensitivity guidance notes as "connectors" and "dividers". These observations (analyses) are categorized as "Selected

Dividers" and "Selected Connectors" between Lebanese and Syrian refugees (UNDP Lebanon 2022a, 4-5). Interveners are advised to be aware of these in every step of any implementation not to contribute to the conflict and promote peace. This way of analyzing the context leads to many conflict sensitivity concerns and informing the conflict sensitivity through such "monitoring" is an example of practice of thin conflict sensitivity.

First, as discussed in the literature review, this form of context analysis is an example of "expertization" or turning conflict sensitivity into a technical practice. Scholars criticized such practices as it leads to ignore deeper, more systemic reasons behind the failure of conflict sensitivity (Ernstorfer et al. 2022). Through this technocratic perspective, failures in being conflict sensitive might be easily understood as a result of lack of capacity or resources. However, such a perspective contradicts with conflict sensitivity's one of main contributions –holding the aid system and humanitarian agencies accountable for contributing to the conflict. Therefore, it strips this critical perspective away, making it a thin understanding of conflict sensitivity.

Second, as discussed in the contribution, this form of context analysis takes the local as the "data" that needs to be processed. Local provides the necessary information for the expert and the expert analyzes the context, problems, conflicts for interveners to behave accordingly. Such a process inevitably involves a top-down practice which creates a "system of framing" and "epistemic closure". By epistemic closure, Mac Ginty and Firshow mean a system of framing of knowledge where "alternative explanations of conflict and dysfunction are often overlooked" (2016, 311).

Third, in a similar vein with Mac Ginty and Firshow, such technical analyses give the power of producing and framing of knowledge to already-privileged persons, if not groups. The people who are actually going through the conflict are not given the chance to build their own

narratives, create their own analyses and inform humanitarian actors on their own terms. In addition, in such a technocratic process, marginal voices can be easily neglected, contributing to existing inequalities within the local.

There are two different, innovative ways of conducting context and conflict analyses offered in everyday literature that might be useful to build conflict-sensitive conflict and context analyses. These approaches have their own advantages over mainstream, single and coherent top-down analyses. First one is Millar's Ethnographic Peace Research (EPR). He argues that "our analyses of and solutions for conflict are fundamentally limited by our failure to understand how it is experienced by those who live through it." (2018, 1). In order to overcome such a problem, he shows opportunities of participatory ethnographic research which requires researcher to engage with the local for a considerable amount of time and go through similar hardships as locals do. Taking this approach further, Collins and Watsons (2018) advocate this long-term engagement of the researcher with the context and conflict. In this method, the researcher tries to enable the local communities to provide him or her with their own analyses and solutions. However, such a method has its own handicaps as it requires a long-term engagement and counts on the researcher's ability to interact with the context and local people. Still, it might be useful considering many international organizations already hire or contact with "ordinary" people as "key informants." This method might be helpful for organizations to change the way they interact and absorb the knowledge from informants. Instead of giving certain directions for informants to build their narratives on, humanitarian actors might allow themselves to be informed by key informants like ethnography researchers and take what is given as it is. Rather than framing that knowledge through their premises and predetermined tick-boxes.

Second way of conducting thick context and conflict analyses might be informed by Everyday Peace Indicators (EPI) developed by Mac Ginty (2013) and Mac Ginty and Firshow (2016). Main aim of EPI is "to elicit crowd-sourced and bottom-up perspectives" (Mac Ginty and Firshow 2016, 315) for conflict and context analyses. The major innovation EPI brings is changing the way to define indicators for conflict and peace and consequently informing monitoring process through everyday perspectives. That is to facilitate the participation from communities and local people in decision-making processes of indicators. These indicators of peace or conflict might be very simple as they directly about people's daily experiences and this "mundanity" is aimed for. Such as "people can approach the chief or headman to resolve their differences" and "being able to walk freely at any time, even at night" as it was expressed during an EPI project by a rural community in Zimbabwe (Mac Ginty and Firshow 2016, 314-315). They can also be very specific to the locality, specifically defined indicators of peace such as "the health and adoption of stray dogs" or "a decline in sectarian graffiti" (Mac Ginty 2013, 56). Such indicators of peace are very hard to notice for humanitarian actors when they already have certain frames and top-down understandings of peace, leading them to monitor what they and their organizations found relevant to the context without even being present in the context. However, as these indicators are very much in the flow of everyday life, they are easy to express for people who are actually living it. Such simpleness and degree of locality also allow disadvantageous groups within the community to raise their narratives of peace and conflict. Informing conflict and context analyses procedures and practices through EPI and EPR in conflict sensitivity guidance notes might allow organization to build a thick conflict analysis and help to turn the thin conflict sensitivity into a thick one.

5.2   Thickening the Connectors and Dividers:

Connectors and Dividers (C&Ds) are one of the main tools within the DNH approach to conflict sensitivity. Its primary purpose is to deconstruct the conflict dynamics into smaller pieces so humanitarian actors can monitor and regulate the conflict implications of their practices easier. C&Ds are repeatedly mentioned in all documents of UNDP Lebanon concerning conflict sensitivity (three guidance notes and three toolboxes). Also, detailed explanations of how to analyze C&Ds and adopt programs and projects accordingly exist.

There are conflict sensitivity concerns regarding C&Ds raised in the literature. Some of them also relate to UNDP Lebanon's conflict sensitivity approach. These are initially the results of the "technocratic turn" (Mac Ginty and Firchow 2016) in context and conflict analysis which was discussed in depth in the previous subsection. The problems resulting from such "thin conflict analysis" have a direct effect on defining C&Ds as a tool that is essentially about defining the conflict situation. However, there can be improvements from everyday peace literature, specifically for C&Ds which are not necessarily directly related to conflict and context analysis.

One of the most significant concerns regarding the application of C&Ds is raised by Ware (2023). Drawing his analysis from a community-level local NGO program in Myanmar, Ware shows some problems regarding a common understanding of C&Ds, which are not necessarily inherent to C&D tools. He shows different forms of everyday peace practices which often goes unnoticed in C&Ds, such as "avoidance." Further, some very thin C&Ds analyses might even consider avoidance as a divider, as it might be thought to undermine opportunities for dialogue, understanding, and empathy. However, it is shown in the literature "avoidance" from certain confrontations and topics might be a powerful tool for disadvantaged groups in conflict-prone settings (Mac Ginty 2014; Mac Ginty 2021; Ware 2022). Unless it is informed bottom-up and

through everyday forms of peace, a C&Ds approach aiming to improve dialogue and understanding in divided settings might ignore that function of "avoidance" and contribute to subsequent conflicts.

For a conflict-sensitive C&Ds analysis, it is important that C&Ds change over time. The founder of the DNH approach, Mary Anderson, emphasizes the importance of regularly tracking changes in C&Ds (2022, 2). On the other hand, Ware (2023, 7) shows a thin C&Ds analysis might lead confusion as "what may appear to be quite negative actions at first may turn out to be bridges or connectors, not dividers." Regarding these points, UNDP Lebanon's understanding of C&Ds is promising. The guidance notes emphasize that C&Ds can vary in different localities and at different times (UNDP Lebanon 2022a, 5). With the incorporation of bottom-up perspectives and everyday lenses, organizations' approach to C&Ds might be thickened, which could be the first step for realizing thick conflict sensitivity.

5.3 Integrating the Local in A Thick Conflict-Sensitive Way

The local takes up a significant space both in conflict sensitivity and everyday peace literature. In terms of conflict sensitivity concerns, one of the main issue is the question of agency. Conflict sensitive conflict analysis that I offered solves some concerns regarding the agency of local. The everyday peace indicators approach to conflict analysis opens up the room for local communities to create and express their own analysis for the conflict they have been going or went through. As such a method gives the local its voice back and consequently ability to produce its own narratives of conflict and indicators of peace, it is an important first step for being conflict-sensitive of the local agency. Further, it is an efficient method for humanitarian actors as it allows them to be informed in a more accurate way and bottom-up fashion.

The locally informed conflict analysis is a useful way to not to reproduce global inequalities and inequalities between the intervener and the communities. However, it does not necessarily help with inequalities within the local. Considering the local is not one big single entity, failures in realizing the inequalities within the local can contribute to these inequalities. Therefore, integration of the local into the different phases of a project should also be conflict sensitive.

In guidance notes of conflict sensitivity of UNDP Lebanon, the local is repeatedly mentioned. The staff is advised to go through an orientation to understand the local culture and concerns better (UNDP Lebanon 2022c, 13). Also, they are advised prioritize local hiring whenever possible (UNDP Lebanon 2022c, 10). However, the "inequalities within local" perspective is lacking. For example, in assessment phase of a project design, the staff is advised to consult important figures in localities: "in addition to consulting formal authorities, do not overlook the potential importance of alternative leaders such as mukhtars, Shawish, elder leaders, religious authorities and/ or civil society influencers who are trusted by their constituencies." (UNDP Lebanon 2022b, 13).

Although such a suggestion might be seen as a good way of integrating the local into the project design, it raises some conflict sensitivity concerns. First, it prioritizes certain people within the local without examining why these people's insights into assessment of the project are more important than others. This kind of a prioritization might create another dimension of inequality in the context. Further, in conflict-prone areas, local leaders, authority figures, local influencers might easily part of the conflict. An extra weight put in their assessments could mean contributing certain parts of the conflict and leaves the aid open to be hijacked for personal or communal interests of these people. An everyday peace research carried in Kirkuk, Iraq confirms such a risk showing that people with the highest symbolic capital are the most likely actors of everyday level conflicts

(O'Driscoll 2021). Second, providing an extra opportunity for already-privileged persons to voice their needs and concerns can deepen existing inequalities.

Everyday peace lens' focus on the "ordinary" people can provide opportunities to overcome this conflict sensitivity concern. Dizdaroglu's research to inform peacebuilding efforts in Cyprus specifically focuses on understanding the perspectives of marginalized Cypriot youth. His findings show Cypriot youth's perspectives on peace and expectations from a peacebuilding project significantly diverge from elite-level or top-down views (Dizdaroglu 2023). Following this methodology, instead of informing the project design through locally-empowered people, particularly choosing the marginalized, disadvantaged local persons to integrate into a project can offer a way to realize thick conflict sensitive practice in project design. However, in contexts that could draw reactions from privileged groups, best way might be to inform the project design through a group of people who are representative of the local.

6 Conclusion

Since Anderson's work on how aid can contribute to conflict in 1999, conflict sensitivity has grabbed the attention of scholars and practitioners. Recently, more and more humanitarian and development aid organizations acknowledge the fact that aid can contribute to conflict instead of peace. Yet, it is hard to say the concept fulfilled its transformative propositions. There is still much to improve in realizing more substantial conflict sensitivity, as many aid practices seem to contribute to conflict.

Recent literature on conflict sensitivity offers different ways to understand the reasons for this failure. Many explanations revolve around the same explanation—top-down, liberal, mainstream ideas and practices embedded in the aid machine overcome conflict sensitivity's transformative propositions. Consequently, conflict sensitivity becomes a mainstream practice of the same aid machine it initially sought to change. Although the literature agrees with this explanation of the failure, it lacks the dialogue and falls short of creating a discussion through which they could offer how to realize more conflict-sensitive practices. This paper was an attempt to do both.

In my contribution, I named and categorized different conflict sensitivity practices criticized or praised for similar reasons. Critiques of failing conflict sensitivity practices name them differently, referring to some specific reasons for the failure, such as "box-ticking exercise," "(decontextualized) technocratic practice," "(colloquially) old wine in new bottles." I called these different but similar explanations thin conflict sensitivity. Further, I categorized different ways and possibilities of realizing a conflict sensitivity, that is congruent with the concept's initial aim, as "thick conflict sensitivity." Lastly, I also offered a categorization of "no conflict sensitivity," referring to practices and approaches antecedent to the 1994 Rwanda Genocide. Such a

categorization allowed me to underline the contribution of thin conflict sensitivity practices, even though they need many improvements.

Everyday peace literature helped me to fill the gap regarding how to better practice conflict sensitivity. As everyday peace literature is critical of the same top-down, liberal peacebuilding approaches, it provided possibilities to answer conflict sensitivity's dilemmas. In my case analysis, I offered ways to turn different, thin conflict sensitivity practices into thick ones through engagement with this literature.

Taking Lebanon as a suitable case study, my initial findings showed that UNDP Lebanon started to mainstream conflict sensitivity only in 2022, two decades after its conceptualization. Using my contribution of thin conflict sensitivity as an analytical tool, I showed how these guidance notes repeat mistakes widely criticized in the literature. To turn these efforts into thick conflict sensitivity practices, I offered different engagements with everyday peace literature and practices.

My propositions covered three main issues. First, in terms conflict and context analysis, I showed UNDP Lebanon's approach repeat the same mistakes criticized in the literature as the "technocratic turn", showing a top-down approach to conflict analysis. Through engagements with Ethnographic Peace Research (EPR) and Everyday Peace Indicators (EPI), I showed possibilities of conflict sensitive conflict analysis. Second, I examined how connectors and dividers (C&Ds) are determined by the organization and its implications for conflict. Findings showed the way C&Ds are followed and monitored shows similar concerns as conflict analysis. I provided different approaches from everyday peace literature for C&Ds and argued these approaches should be integrated into the practice. Lastly, I examined how guidance notes direct practitioners in their relationship with the local and their efforts to integrate the local into their projects. My findings

suggested considerable conflict sensitivity concerns showing some of the ways UNDP Lebanon involve the local in their project design can deepen existing inequalities within the local population. Through an engagement with an everyday peace project implemented in Cyprus, I offered a more conflict-sensitive way of integrating the local into the humanitarian practice. All these three propositions would be significant changes toward realizing a thick conflict sensitivity practice in Lebanon. Further, these propositions also aimed to provide an account for conflict sensitivity to be informed through different theoretical propositions that could open up space for other scholars working on conflict sensitivity.

This thesis eventually aimed to improve a specific practice of a specific organization. It involved a case analysis that is informed by different research that show conflict sensitivity concerns. It could be further advanced through a first-hand data collection and field research. In a similar vein, propositions were informed through the documents UNDP Lebanon published on conflict sensitivity. Therefore, they were contributions to change approaches in documents that are leading the organization and practitioners in their efforts to be conflict sensitive. A further research that has the capacity to observe and involve in the application of these conflict sensitivity practices could provide further insights into the practice. Lastly this thesis only discussed the everyday peace approach to offer ways of practicing thick conflict sensitivity. More comprehensive research could incorporate other theories and tools that could provide practitioners with more possibilities. With first-hand knowledge of practice and context, practitioners could choose the most suitable way to realize thick conflict sensitivity for their specific project.

Considering the gap in the literature on how to realize substantial conflict sensitivity, scholars can look for ways to inform the practice through different theories. Peace and conflict studies can have more to offer as their inquiry is very much about what brings peace and conflict.

Further, broader international intervention literature can provide some approaches that could be employed to achieve thick conflict sensitivity. Also, some practices of international military interventions, state-building approaches, and practices have different approaches to conflict and ways to minimize their harm. Some of these tools and approaches might be put into use for conflict sensitivity through academic engagement.

Lastly, this thesis focused on how everyday peace can inform conflict sensitivity. Yet, how conflict sensitivity can inform everyday peace could be an inquiry considering many overlapping aspects of the two concepts. Williams (2015) shows that everyday piece is not a panacea; some seemingly everyday practices of peace might be contributing to the conflict. Accordingly, everyday peace practices that were not scrutinized may carry the risk of romanticizing everyday practices as if they are purely peaceful. Therefore, a thick conflict sensitivity lens can also help everyday peace practitioners to realize their possible contributions to the conflict. In this regard, how conflict sensitivity can improve everyday peace practices is also waiting to be explored.

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