



## *From Civilising Mission to Civilian Power, Rethinking EU Peacebuilding from a Postcolonial Perspective*

*This thesis aims at reconstructing the link between Europe and its colonial past in order to address to what extent such historical heritage is manifested in the discourses and practices of EU peacebuilding in the Democratic Republic of Congo. Thus, the thesis tries to answer to the following research question: "To what degree the European colonial legacy impacts on the construction of EU peacebuilding policies in the Democratic Republic of Congo?". To do so, the research position itself in a critical conversation with EU Studies and Postcolonial Studies and mobilises Historical Discourse Analysis (DHA) influenced by Colonial Discourse Analysis as a methodological tool. After having gathered interviews with EU Officials working on peacebuilding policies in DRC, having conducted archival research in the Historical Archives of the European Union and having undertaken participant observation at the European External Action Service, the results of this research are mainly threefold. Firstly, this study shows that the colonial heritage is mostly denied at the EU policy making level. Secondly, on a discursive level, the investigation witnesses a certain endurance of quasi-colonial narratives in current EU discourses about bringing peace in DRC. Finally, on a practice level, the thesis shows that these discourses are also reflected in the peacebuilding policy making processes, and that -on the long run- such persistence of asymmetries tend to perpetuate dependency instead of reaffirming an independent peace process which is supposed to be the objective of the EU peacebuilding framework.*

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