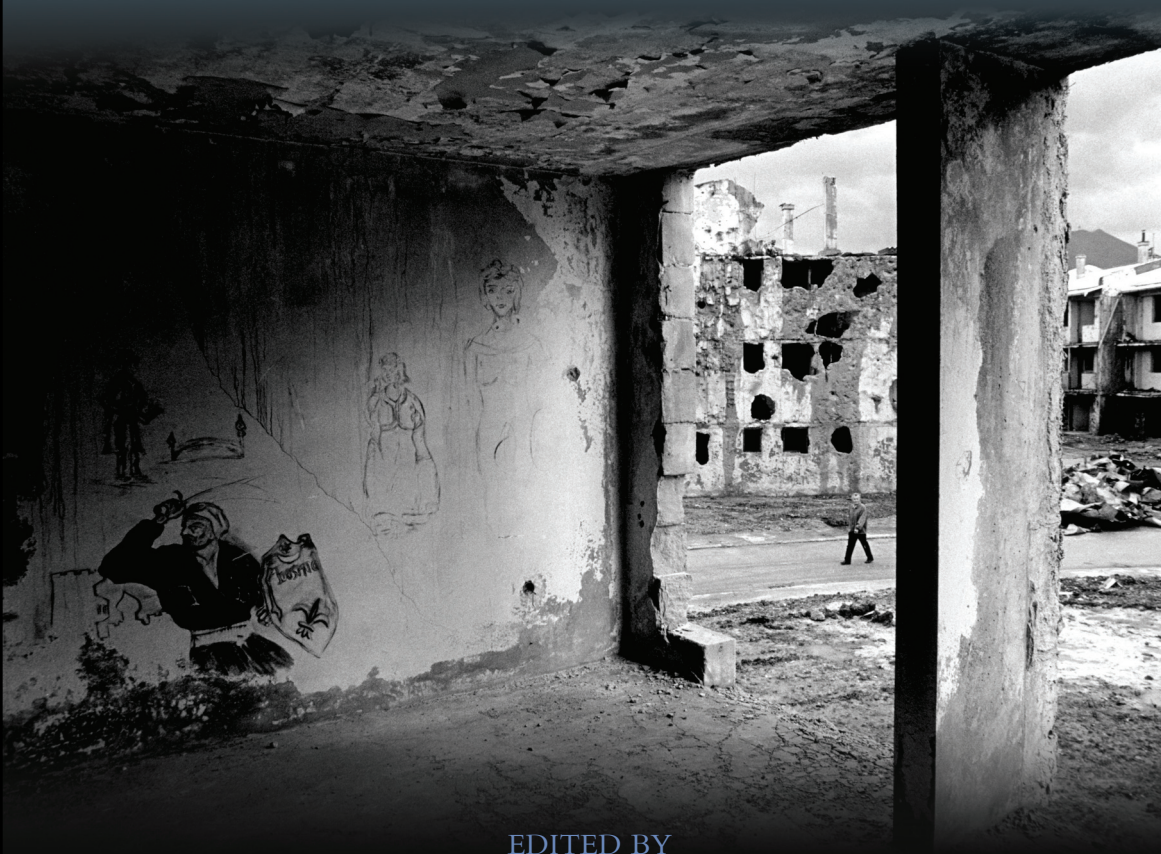# NEW PERSPECTIVES ON
LIBERAL PEACEBUILDING

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New perspectives on liberal peacebuilding

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Introduction

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Peacebuilding in conflict-prone and post-conflict countries – aimed at preventing the resumption or escalation of violent conflict and establishing a durable and self-sustaining peace – has generated debates and controversies of great significance to scholarship and policy. The significance of these debates extends far beyond the realms of "peace operations". The extent and scope of contemporary peacebuilding, the motivations of powerful actors that sponsor and implement these activities, and the impact of these activities upon the societies in which they operate all raise fundamental implications for international politics. A key element of these debates relates to the nature and impact of *liberal* peacebuilding: the promotion of democracy, market-based economic reforms and a range of other institutions associated with "modern" states as a driving force for building "peace". This volume explores the nature, effectiveness and legitimacy of liberal peacebuilding and relates contemporary peacebuilding activities to broader debates in international politics.

Absolute numbers of major civil wars (as well as wars between states) are generally in decline in historical perspective; and the magnitude of wars, in terms of all kinds of destruction, also appears to be in decline.[1] However, civil wars, failing or weak states and various forms of low-level violent conflict remain a pressing global challenge, for two principal reasons. First, and most importantly, violent conflict is a direct and indirect source of human misery and human rights violations. Secondly, there is wide agreement that unstable and conflict-prone societies also pose a threat to international security and stability. Indeed, many analysts –

especially after 9/11 – now consider these situations to be *the* primary security challenge of the contemporary era. Whether this view truly reflects "reality" or is a political construction, significant international effort and resources have been applied to peacekeeping, peacebuilding and post-conflict (re)construction, and the rationale for these activities is both strategic and humanitarian.

The outcomes of these efforts have been judged positively by many analysts, especially in terms of promoting stability and ending violent conflict.[2] However, the contributors to this volume suggest that the modalities and implications of international peacebuilding should be more critically questioned. Approaches to peacebuilding are often controversial. In particular, the effectiveness and appropriateness of promoting liberal democracy and market economics in volatile conflict-prone societies are contested. The perceived absence of "local ownership" and insufficient consultation with local stakeholders have led some observers to question the legitimacy of peacebuilding operations. The apparent emphasis in international peacebuilding on top-down mediation amongst power brokers and building state institutions – in contrast to more bottom-up, community-driven peacebuilding – has raised concerns about the sustainability of peacebuilding projects. The attention to reconstruction and stability and the neglect of the underlying sources of conflict suggest, to some, that the nature of the "peace" that is being built is not entirely inclusive or context sensitive. The seeming paradox of combining reconstruction with coercion – most obviously in Afghanistan and Iraq, but also more subtly in Bosnia and elsewhere – and the manner in which other components of the peacebuilding agenda also appear to be in tension with each other suggest that there are deep and unresolved internal contradictions in the peacebuilding project.

These controversies lead to a number of core questions, which are addressed in this volume: Is there a coherent international peacebuilding doctrine? What realistic expectations can we have in terms of peacebuilding in the most challenging cases such as Bosnia, Timor-Leste, Afghanistan and the Democratic Republic of Congo? What are the benchmarks for success? Does international peacebuilding as we see it in the world today represent a viable project in *liberal* peacebuilding? If a liberal peace is viable, is it also legitimate? Or is it, as some claim, a new form of hegemonic control or neo-imperialism? What is the relationship between state-building, liberal peacebuilding and the more emancipatory agendas of peacebuilding? Insofar as peacebuilding resembles – or perhaps constitutes – state-building, what or whose vision of the state is being promoted? Is peacebuilding a "realist" strategic enterprise meant to *contain* conflict and its international repercussions, or are there prospects for resolving the underlying sources of conflict? Should it

address objectives such as emancipation and social justice, and if so how? Do peacebuilding practices suggest that state sovereignty, human rights and the norms relating to international peace and security are changing? Is the liberal peace more broadly "in crisis" and, if it is, what are the implications for liberal peacebuilding?[3] Can "critical" approaches to scholarship deepen our understanding of these issues?

This volume provides fresh insights into these debates, focusing on the activities of peacebuilding operations but also engaging broader themes. It offers new perspectives in a number of ways. First, although focusing mainly on cases of major UN peacebuilding, it also considers the implications and record of liberal peacebuilding in a wider range of experiences. Secondly, it goes beyond the narrow focus on democracy and market economics by interrogating a wider area of peacebuilding activities, including the (re)construction of state institutions. Thirdly, it applies "critical" analysis to the study of peacebuilding, exploring the implications of peacebuilding activities for broader debates about power, legitimacy and international order. Finally, it takes the debate beyond the realms of liberal Western academia by involving scholars and analysts with direct experience in conflict-prone and post-conflict societies.

Peacekeeping, peacebuilding and international peace and security

International peacebuilding in conflict-prone and post-conflict societies – covering security, development, humanitarian assistance, governance and the rule of law – has developed rapidly in recent years in terms of the range of activities conducted, the number of operations deployed, and the number and variety of international actors involved in these missions. Indeed, one explanation for the decline in major civil war is that international organizations – in particular the United Nations – are more active and more successful in preventing, managing and terminating conflict and consolidating peace after conflict. A key aspect of this renewed activism is a post–Cold War transformation of peacekeeping and peacebuilding activities, reflecting an evolution of norms, in particular the weakening of inviolable territorial integrity and a growing acceptance of certain forms of intervention. Some have drawn a qualitative distinction between classical "Westphalian" peacekeeping and post-Westphalian peacebuilding activities.[4] A sketch of the evolution of UN peace operations will illustrate this.

First-generation peacekeeping generally involved the interposition of UN military forces to monitor ceasefires, to facilitate the withdrawal of troops and to act as a buffer between countries in volatile situations.

This was a mechanism of great power management: it aimed to contain conflicts and prevent them from escalating, and to maintain stability so that a political solution could be achieved between states. In line with the Westphalian norm, first-generation peacekeeping – based upon impartiality, the consent of the local parties to the conflict, and the non-use of force except in self-defence – is based upon the primacy of international security between states, the principal challenges being aggression and war between states (not civil war). Peacekeeping aimed to assist states to peacefully resolve disputes in their external relations between each other in the interests of international order and stability. Classical peacekeeping in some ways also reflected a pluralist view of international society, emphasizing the sanctity of sovereign states and rules of cooperation that sustain international order and peace amongst states, such as mutual recognition and non-interference.

Almost all the major operations of the Cold War represented the classic model of inter-state conflict management and few deployed in civil war situations. These operations were aimed at containing – and not resolving – the sources of international instability, and even less at preventing or resolving civil war. The UN Truce Supervision Organization (established in 1948) was set up to monitor ceasefires, supervise armistice agreements, prevent isolated incidents from escalating and assist other UN peacekeeping operations in the Middle East region. The UN Military Observer Group in India and Pakistan (established in 1949) was deployed to supervise the ceasefire agreed between India and Pakistan in the State of Jammu and Kashmir. The first UN Emergency Force (1956–1967) was established to secure and supervise the cessation of hostilities after the Suez War, including the withdrawal of the armed forces of France, Israel and the United Kingdom from Egyptian territory. After the withdrawal, it served as a buffer between the Egyptian and Israeli forces. The UN Peacekeeping Force in Cyprus (established in 1964) was set up to prevent further fighting between the Greek Cypriot and Turkish Cypriot communities. After the hostilities of 1974, the mission's responsibilities were expanded to supervise ceasefire lines, maintain a buffer zone and undertake humanitarian activities. The second UN Emergency Force (1973–1979) was created to supervise the ceasefire between Egyptian and Israeli forces, to supervise the redeployment of Egyptian and Israeli forces and to control the buffer zones established under those agreements. The UN Disengagement Observer Force was established in 1974 following the disengagement of the Israeli and Syrian forces on the Golan Heights. The UN Interim Force in Lebanon was created by the Security Council in 1978 to confirm Israeli withdrawal from Lebanon, restore international peace and security and assist the Lebanese government in

restoring its effective authority in the area. The UN Yemen Observation Mission (UNYOM, 1963–1964) was established to observe and certify the implementation of the disengagement agreement between Saudi Arabia and the United Arab Republic. The UN India–Pakistan Observation Mission (UNIPOM, 1965–1966) was set up to supervise the ceasefire along the India–Pakistan border. The UN Observation Group in Lebanon (UNOGIL, 1958) was established to ensure that there was no illegal infiltration of personnel or supply of arms or other materiel across the Lebanese borders. The operation in the Congo (ONUC, 1960–1964) was the major exception in that it was deployed in a situation of civil war, but ultimately it was aimed at maintaining the territorial integrity of Congo rather than resolving conflict in that country.

In contrast, post–Cold War peacebuilding operations reflect a different – perhaps post-Westphalian – approach to conflict management and international security. Contemporary peacebuilding approaches reflect the idea that maintaining peace in post-conflict societies requires a multifaceted approach, with attention to a wide range of social, economic and institutional needs. They reflect a liberal project: not just managing instability between states but seeking to build peace within and between states on the basis of liberal democracy and market economics. In line with this, the types of activities in peace operations have been transformed and entail engagement with a wider range of actors, including non-governmental organizations, humanitarian organizations and commercial entities.

Most post–Cold War peacekeeping and peacebuilding operations have been deployed into domestic situations – after or sometimes during civil conflict – and have involved some combination of tasks related to promoting domestic security, development and humanitarian assistance and strengthening governance and the rule of law. Such activities have included supporting ceasefires and peace processes; demobilization and disarmament of former combatants and reintegrating them into society; stabilizing the economy; employment creation and economic development; repatriation (or resettlement) of refugees and internally displaced persons; responding to food insecurity; responding to acute health concerns; strengthening law and order; promoting and facilitating democratic practices; strengthening institutions of justice and legislation; resuming and strengthening public service delivery; promoting human rights and reconciliation; addressing land reform claims; and constitutional drafting or amendments (see Box 1.1). The key examples are the UN operations in Cambodia, Angola, Burundi, Central African Republic, Liberia, Mozambique, Rwanda, Sierra Leone, Chad, Sudan, Côte d'Ivoire, Democratic Republic of Congo, Somalia, Kosovo, El Salvador, Guatemala, Haiti, Timor-Leste, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Eastern Slavonia and Croatia.

Box 1.1 Components and goals of peacebuilding

The components and objectives of peacebuilding cannot be easily described because this is subject to debate and disagreement. However, a broad definition is the following:

- preventing the resumption or escalation of violent conflict in conflict-prone societies and establishing a durable and self-sustaining peace;
- addressing the underlying sources of conflict;
- building or rebuilding peaceful social institutions and values, including respect for human rights;
- building or rebuilding institutions of governance and the rule of law.

Such a broad approach to peacebuilding entails a wide range of activities. The criterion for inclusion as an activity related to peacebuilding is those policy challenges that, in their most acute form, can potentially threaten to undermine overall peacebuilding objectives if not adequately addressed.

Security

- supporting a ceasefire and peace process, as appropriate;
- demobilization and disarmament of former combatants, and their reintegration into society;
- collecting and destroying weapons and de-mining;
- withdrawal of foreign forces (if any);
- addressing regional sources of instability and conflict;
- achieving security (security sector reform, police enforcement capacity-building).

Development

- addressing property and land ownership disputes and reaching settlements;
- stabilizing the economy (controlling hyperinflation, addressing exchange rate crises, establishing currency stability);
- securing natural resources against illegal predation;
- addressing inequality among ethnic (or other identity) groups in society;
- employment creation, economic development, securing livelihoods;
- attracting skilled ex-patriots back to the country to contribute to the recovery;
- basic welfare provision.

Box 1.1 (cont.)

Humanitarian assistance

- repatriation (or resettlement) of refugees and internally displaced persons; finding durable solutions to "protracted refugee situations";
- responding to food insecurity;
- responding to acute health concerns.

Governance and the rule of law

- strengthening law and order;
- democracy assistance (electoral assistance and observation, party regulation, developing civil society and media);
- governance assistance (strengthening governance at both national and local levels, strengthening institutions of justice and legislation, addressing corruption);
- resuming and strengthening public service delivery (health service, education, infrastructure, transportation, energy);
- human rights, reconciliation, truth, "transitional justice";
- addressing land reform claims;
- constitutional drafting or amendments.

This transformation of peace operations also reflects an evolving security environment. In the post–Cold War era, and certainly after 9/11, situations of civil war and state failure are seen – or at least constructed – as a threat. According to the conventional "Westphalian" model of international politics, threats to international security come primarily from powerful aggressive states. In the twenty-first century, by contrast, there is wide belief that threats are equally likely to come from failing or conflict-prone states, or even from non-state actors.[5] Theories of conflict and instability increasingly point to the weakness of the state as a key factor in the onset of violent conflict – the "declining state"[6] or "the problem of the modern state",[7] which is the source of "never-ending wars".[8] Amongst foreign policy elites, this is a paradigm shift in security thinking: challenges to security "come not from rival global powers, but from weak states".[9] As a result, greater efforts and resources have been forthcoming from powerful states to contain, resolve and to some extent prevent civil war.

Although analysts may disagree about the sources of civil war and state failure, there is greater agreement that they are associated with a range of problems. Forced migration, a challenge in itself, also can lead to the

spread of insurgents, threatening regional stability on an ongoing basis and sometimes causing conflicts in neighbouring states.[10] Conflicted and failed states are conducive to trafficking in small arms and light weapons through porous borders. These states are also more likely to host war economies: the illegal commercial networks and activities that thrive in environments where there is no effective rule of law.[11] There has also been speculation that such states – as a point of either transit or origin – may be a site for the transfer of chemical, biological and nuclear weapons materials. Such states typically have very poor health services and standards, which results in proportionally high levels of contagious disease such as HIV/AIDS. This, combined with migration flows, constitutes a direct threat to regional neighbours. These situations can directly or indirectly have negative regional environmental impacts, since government regulation of environmentally hazardous industrial activities does not function. They also provide an environment in which – owing to the absence of orderly institutions and accountable governance – recalcitrant or aggressive governments can come to power, abuse the privileges of sovereign statehood or pose a threat to regional security. Finally, many studies have argued that weak or failed states may provide an environment that enables the emergence or operation of terrorist organizations, which may attack local or international targets.[12]

The securitization of conflict-prone and weak states in the developing world is not uncontroversial. Nevertheless, it is within this context that current thinking about peacebuilding must be seen. A great deal of effort and resources have been applied to peacebuilding and post-conflict (re)-construction and these activities clearly have a strategic as well as a humanitarian rationale in the context of evolving threat perceptions. The recent interest – and funding – directed towards peacebuilding can only be explained by the post-9/11 merging of underdevelopment, state failure and insecurity. Mainstream thinking is illustrative of this new thinking. Fukuyama suggested that "weak and failing states have arguably become the single most important problem for international order".[13] As a corollary, according to some, state-building has "become one of the critical all-consuming strategic and moral imperatives of our terrorized time".[14] Peacebuilding – as far as it involves (re)building state institutions in failed or conflicted states – is viewed by powerful developed states as a strategic imperative for international action.

Liberal peacebuilding

Because of the scope and breadth of peacebuilding activities – and the emphasis on building institutions based upon market economics and de-

mocracy – contemporary peacebuilding is often described as "liberal peacebuilding". The theoretical underpinning of liberal peacebuilding is the liberal peace: the idea that certain kinds of (liberally constituted) societies will tend to be more peaceful, both in their domestic affairs and in their international relations, than illiberal states are. The international variant of this theory is the "democratic peace". According to this, consolidated democracies do not go to war with each other because democracies have institutional constraints upon leaders that make initiating conflict with other countries more difficult; in addition, because such countries are interdependent economically, going to war may disrupt economic/trade relations. There has been a great deal of debate about – and challenges to – the democratic peace theory, focusing on the definition of "war" and "democracy" and the manner in which democratic countries have been aggressive to non-democratic countries. Nevertheless, the theory enjoys strong support. Moreover, in recent years there has been resurgent interest in the domestic variant of liberal peace theory. That is the notion that liberally constituted states are more internally peaceful, prosperous and humane and even better environmental managers than non-democracies. Indeed, the international and domestic versions of liberal peace theory have recently blended into far-reaching claims about the manifold peace-producing benefits of democratization and marketization:

> Countries that govern themselves in a truly democratic fashion do not go to war with one another. They do not aggress against their neighbors to aggrandize themselves or glorify their leaders. Democratic governments do not ethnically "cleanse" their own populations, and they are much less likely to face ethnic insurgency. Democracies do not sponsor terrorism against one another. They do not build weapons of mass destruction to use on or to threaten one another. Democratic countries form more reliable, open, and enduring trading partnerships. In the long run they offer better and more stable climates for investment. They are more environmentally responsible because they must answer to their own citizens, who organize to protest the destruction of their environments. They are better bets to honor international treaties since they value legal obligations and because their openness makes it much more difficult to breach agreements in secret. Precisely because, within their own borders, they respect competition, civil liberties, property rights, and the rule of law, democracies are the only reliable foundation on which a new world order of international security and prosperity can be built.[15]

All major peacebuilding operations have involved elections or broader democracy-assistance activities. This has given rise to a lively debate exploring the modalities, effectiveness and legitimacy of international efforts to stabilize conflict-prone societies and build peace. Beyond

democracy and market economics, liberal peacebuilding also embraces a broader range of practices and values, including secular authority, capacity-building, centralized governance and institutions of justice.

As many of the chapters in this volume argue, the concept of liberal peacebuilding and the manner in which it is promoted in fragile and divided societies are problematic. The tenets of liberal peacebuilding – liberal democracy, liberal human rights, market values, the integration of societies into globalization and the centralized secular state – are not necessarily universal (or universally applicable) values. Moreover, the liberal peace and its neo-liberal economic dimensions, which have displaced older liberal ideas about welfare, are not necessarily appropriate for conflicted or divided societies. Indeed, democracy and the market are arguably adversarial or even conflictual forces – taken for granted in stable Western democracies but not necessarily suitable for volatile societies that do not enjoy stable institutions.

Peacebuilding activities are not neutral in their normative orientation or impact, and this raises important questions concerning the role of international organizations in attempting to end civil conflict through the promotion of certain political and economic models. In some circumstances, some of the values and approaches may be at odds with the attainment of sustainable peace, when, for example, they promote a neo-liberal economic agenda, which may exacerbate social or economic tensions or obstruct the reintegration of displaced people; or where democracy promotion exacerbates political conflict and sectarian divisions. As Paris has observed, "the process of political and economic liberalization is inherently tumultuous: It can exacerbate social tensions and undermine the prospects for stable peace in the fragile conditions that typically exist in countries just emerging from civil war."[16] Some aspects of the liberal peace model are also potentially in tension with each other. Democratization has had questionable results in Afghanistan, Kosovo, Bosnia, Burundi and Iraq. This is not to question democracy but to highlight the observation that democratic politics can still be a vehicle for, and indeed exacerbate, sectarianism. Sometimes, the linkage of peacebuilding with state-building and the assumption that it will produce a sovereign state with territorial integrity and inviolable boundaries are also problematic in that they touch upon key causal factors in some conflicts, such as in Kosovo or indirectly in Bosnia.

More fundamentally troubling questions are emerging regarding the value system underpinning the approach of the international community – and imbuing international organizations. Is the liberal peace being promoted in societies in which it may be, for social or cultural reasons, fundamentally inappropriate? Or is it more a matter of sequencing: ensuring that stable foundations and national institutions are installed before

liberalization? Either way, there is real concern that "post-conflict" peacebuilding programmes may sow the seeds of their own failure by exacerbating the social tensions that resulted in violent conflict in the first place, or by failing to create the domestic foundations for democratizing and marketizing reforms. As a result, different components of the liberal reform agenda may be clashing with each other in ways that cast doubt on the viability of the larger liberal peacebuilding project.

This also points to a secondary issue of whether international peacebuilding really is "liberal" when (in terms of conflict resolution) it tends to mediate – from the top down – between local power brokers, who are often politically extremist or exclusionary, and ignores grassroots community actors, who are potentially more inclusive and moderate. Thus, the essential mechanism of a liberal social contract is generally absent in post-conflict states, which instead are held together by external actors. This also obstructs more progressive bottom-up forms of peacebuilding that cultivate cosmopolitan peaceful forces and address underlying sources of conflict. The longer-range issue of whether a "better" liberalism is transferable and adequate for a higher quality of peace is still very contentious.

The legitimacy of liberal peacebuilding has come under growing criticism, although there are major differences in terms of whether this is a result of the values and assumptions that underpin it or of its "performance". Thus, some analysts focus on improving sequencing (for example, establishing institutions before liberalization) or increasing "local ownership", participation and consultation, whereas others focus on more fundamental questions about the suitability of liberal political and economic values in different contexts.

In practice, in local contexts there has tended to be a general acceptance of the institutions and norms as well as the material resources of liberal peacebuilding, while at the same time strong criticism of these. This is a clear paradox, which needs unpacking. As Bhikhu Parekh has written, for example: "the liberal principle of individuation and other liberal ideas are culturally and historically specific. As such a political system based on them cannot claim universal validity."[17] This resonates strongly on the ground, yet at the same time those who want peace see liberal peacebuilding as a plausible beginning. The legitimacy of international peacebuilding (or key components of it) has also been challenged by the perception of a lack of "local ownership" and local consultation in international peacebuilding, by its elements of coercion (either overt or subtle), and by the apparent lack of accountability that has accompanied some forms of peacebuilding. Yet the overall project continues for want of an alternative that does not involve a reversion to violence and lawlessness on a grander scale than currently exists. Nevertheless,

legitimacy is crucial for peace and for liberalism, and so this raises the issue of how legitimacy might be restored, especially in the wake of the flaws in the US-sponsored state-building operations in Afghanistan and Iraq, as well as inefficiencies and local rejection in many other more traditional peace operations.

This points to a need for a more concerted examination of the political, social and economic resources that individuals and communities need in order to fulfil their role in the social contract within the liberal state in transitional phases when they are dependent upon external support. This would require a readjustment of the role of international financial institutions in particular and of development and donor praxis in order to provide the material resources urgently required to make democracy, human rights, the rule of law and development meaningful for ordinary people in their everyday lives.

From this analysis some related issues emerge. International peacebuilding currently revolves around a distinction between the "internationals" and "locals". In this framework lies a danger of "romanticizing" the "local" and validating the "international" without much connection or communication between the two. This raises the issue of how the "international" engages the "local" without accepting certain practices not commensurate with international norms, or performing experiments on the powerless that might have problematic unintended consequences. It may well be that this points to the need for a non-liberal type of peacebuilding, or at least a far greater consideration and respect for alternative modes of politics or polities, if this can be done without creating even greater problems for the population of the host countries. We might even wish to explore more hybridized forms of peacebuilding that involve a mixture of conventionally liberal and local practices and models. The chapters all contribute to these debates.

Summary of the chapters

The first five chapters engage the broad liberal peacebuilding debate. Building upon this introduction, Edward Newman's chapter ("'Liberal' peacebuilding debates") explores the challenges, controversies and debates related to peacebuilding and presents a typology of different forms of peacebuilding: transformatory, realist and liberal. The chapter challenges some of the theoretically "critical" approaches to peacebuilding and in particular the generalized – and exaggerated – claims that are often made. In conclusion, he argues that although peacebuilding is often presented – and debated – as a "liberal" exercise aimed at resolving the

underlying sources of conflict, in reality it tends to be aimed at containing or repressing conflict in the interests of international stability in general or particular hegemonic strategic interests, in line with the "new" security agenda. Therefore, international peacebuilding appears to reflect the legacy of Hobbes rather than – as is generally claimed – Wilson or Kant.

Oliver P. Richmond's chapter ("Beyond liberal peace? Responses to 'backsliding'") is written from a "critical" perspective, arguing that the contemporary liberal peacebuilding project is in many ways flawed. He contends that this project essentially involves transplanting and exporting conditionality and dependency, creating a mix of institutional regulation and liberal freedoms that constitutes liberal peace as "peace-as-governance". According to this, peace is viewed by policymakers and analysts as resulting from the establishment of the institutions necessary for the liberal governance of society, the economy and politics. However, what often emerges is a hybrid form of the liberal peace subject to powerful local critiques, sometimes even resistance, and a perceived failure to live up to local and international expectations. This is partly a consequence of neo-liberal strategies inserted into the liberalization process, which undermine the idea of a social contract institutionalized via state–society consent and replace it with a reiterated class system. It also results from the liberal tendency to avoid engaging with local culture and its essentialization of identity in the political institutions it tries to create. The chapter suggests that this effectively reiterates Polyani's fear that elites tend to counter democratic moves towards welfarism and to a social contract. Richmond argues that, if peacebuilding is to move beyond the modernist claims and failings of the neo-liberal peace (by which it appears to have been co-opted) towards the goal of building a stable polity that provides for everyday life, the rationalizing and reductionist machinery of peacebuilding itself must reform its engagement with its "subjects" and recognize the inter-subjective nature of the relationship between the sponsors and recipients of the rapidly hybridizing liberal-local peace.

Michael Pugh's chapter ("Towards life welfare") provides a critical assessment of "liberal developmentalism" and the formulaic "progressive benchmarks" encompassing security sector reform, rule of law, democratization, capacity-building, institution-building and so-called "free market" liberalization. Within this broader critique, Pugh focuses on the impact on and implications for welfare in post-conflict societies. The role of welfare – as well-being with roots in local societies – is considered in his chapter to be a crucial element in achieving positive peace: it is essential for securing identity, fostering social cohesion and forging viable and legitimate social contracts with governing polities, whether states or

sub-state communities. In this sense, Pugh argues that attention to welfare is seriously lacking in – or even undermined by – contemporary peacebuilding activities, forcing people into the precarious and sometimes criminalized informal economy sector. Moreover, he suggests that this can be understood only with reference to broader neo-liberal forces in the global economy, which increasingly – and deleteriously – condition social life.

Pugh maintains that the fragilities, limitations and technologies of the liberal peace suggest that a paradigm shift in thinking about the welfare of peacebuilding is essential to foster local conceptions of peace. A paradigm shift would require attention to two other analytical spheres that tend to be either neglected or divorced from each other in the literature: the welfare of everyday life and the conditionalities of global capitalism. A shift would thus operate at two levels: better engagement with the diverse local cultural and welfare dynamics on the one hand, and restructuring or disempowerment of the existing financial hegemony at a global level.

Roland Paris's chapter (''Does liberal peacebuilding have a future?'') scrutinizes the main challenges that have been directed against liberal peacebuilding in recent years. Some commentators have argued that the international agencies engaged in these operations have paid inadequate attention to domestic institutional conditions for successful democratization and marketization, and indeed that liberalization can exacerbate conflict. Others maintain that peacebuilders have not appreciated or addressed tensions and contradictions between the various goals of peacebuilding. Some contend that international interventions are counterproductive because they in effect ''freeze'' conflicts in place rather than allowing these conflicts to burn themselves out. It has also been suggested that the contemporary practice of peacebuilding is fundamentally flawed because it is overly intrusive. Some take the criticism of peacebuilding's intrusiveness much further, arguing that these missions represent a new form of imperialism or colonialism. The occupation of Iraq – involving elections, constitutional processes, economic adjustment and institution-building – has further challenged the legitimacy of the broader peacebuilding project. Some critics, therefore, question the very foundations of peacebuilding, including its feasibility and its legitimacy.

Paris challenges a number of these critical approaches to peacebuilding, and especially what he calls the sweeping and undifferentiated quality of this backlash against liberal peacebuilding. He argues that, despite the shortcomings of liberal peacebuilding, most host countries would probably be much worse off if not for the assistance they received. The collapse of the peacebuilding project would be tantamount to abandoning tens of millions of people to lawlessness, predation, disease and fear.

The record of peacebuilding is mixed and full of disappointments, but it also indicates that such missions have, on the whole, done considerably more good than harm. For these reasons, the most sweeping critiques of liberal peacebuilding – and especially those suggesting that the entire enterprise is either futile or illegitimate – are themselves highly problematic.

Chandra Lekha Sriram's chapter (''Transitional justice and the liberal peace'') explores liberal peacebuilding in an issue area often neglected in this debate. She argues that transitional justice strategies share with the broader liberal peacebuilding project key assumptions about preferable institutional arrangements, and this subjects transitional justice to some of the same criticisms that may be directed at the liberal peacebuilding consensus. From a critical perspective, her chapter argues that transitional justice processes and mechanisms may, like liberal peacebuilding, represent an externally imposed agenda, inappropriate for the political and legal cultures in which they are set up, and even destabilize post-conflict and post-atrocity societies. After offering an analysis of transitional justice, the chapter considers a number of empirical examples to illustrate the challenges inherent in addressing a history of atrocity. Sriram argues that transitional justice, like democratization, is inherently destabilizing. In particular, the focus of transitional justice strategies on legal accountability and public reckoning may be destabilizing rather than peacebuilding. She concludes that simply presuming that justice generates or equates to peace is potentially problematic.

The second section of the volume focuses more closely on case studies and experiences. M. A. Mohamed Salih's chapter (''A critique of the political economy of the liberal peace: Elements of an African experience'') offers a critical assessment of the liberal peace from a broad African perspective. He acknowledges that the liberal peace has generally brought stability and has nurtured the politics of democracy and respect for human and civil rights, but argues that it has largely failed to deliver tangible developmental or economic benefits to the majority of the African poor. In common with many chapters in this volume, therefore, Salih argues that welfare issues must be seen as a peacebuilding issue, underscoring the relationship between peace, democracy and development. Superficial ''democratic'' institutions are often a poor substitute for welfare gains. Salih contends that the dominant political economy of the liberal peace has failed to address major developmental problems such as poverty, exclusion, the social justice deficit and inadequate access to basic human needs. Indeed, there is a tension between neo-liberalism and democracy that informs the contradictions within the political economy of neo-liberalism or the discrepancy between political and economic liberalization. These tensions tend to increase rather than decrease the

likelihood of social conflicts. In exploring this critique, Salih organizes his argument around three ''blind spots'', which inform the theory and practice of the liberal peace in Africa: the entrenched tensions between liberalism and democracy in transition countries; the privileging of the liberal over the social; and the manner in which politics has been rendered subservient to the market.

Ian Taylor's chapter (''Earth calling the liberals: Locating the political culture of Sierra Leone as the terrain for 'reform''') offers a rigorous critique of liberal peacebuilding in Sierra Leone that provides lessons for a broader range of cases. He argues that peacebuilding in that country is based upon fundamentally misguided assumptions about the nature of politics and culture there, and is therefore unlikely to help generate sustainable institutions of governance that are accepted by local stakeholders. In particular, Taylor contends that the empirical state in Sierra Leone does not conform to the Western liberal Weberian model. The rational bureaucratic state, which is taken as the framework for what should be constructed in Sierra Leone as part of the liberal peace project, is hugely problematic. Many of the accepted features of a democratic state are simply not present in Sierra Leone, even though the country's elites have long been adept at appropriating external guarantees for their ''state''. At the same time, ''alternative'' formulations of the state in Africa, which may emphasize informal structures and activities outside of the ''normal'' functions of the state, are also somewhat problematic. In sum, Taylor concludes that an examination of the political culture of Sierra Leone suggests that the liberal peace has little chance of success in that country and perhaps elsewhere.

Astri Suhrke and Kaja Borchgrevink (''Afghanistan: Justice sector reform'') examine liberal peacebuilding in another country that has proved to be very challenging. Focusing on the justice sector in Afghanistan, they consider why reform has been so problematic and explore the manner in which this has involved negotiating multiple legal traditions. Their chapter observes that the period since the 2001 intervention has exposed the conflictual aspects of justice sector reform. Western donors were the principal architects of the design for the new order in matters of law as well as other public policy areas, and the emphasis was on reform rather than reconstruction. To support this agenda, the donors assigned numerous advisers to Afghan government institutions and provided practically all the required funding even after the Afghans were formally in charge of the process.

Previous legal reforms in the country were characterized by negotiation among diverse legal traditions. In contrast, Western assistance has made little effort to engage with Islamic law and has undertaken only

limited consultation with Afghans. This process has emphasized the division between Islamic law and Western statutory law rather than the potential for accommodation and integration. This suggests that peacebuilding efforts in this area have been insufficiently sensitive to local traditions and needs (and that Muslim countries would have been a more appropriate source of aid). In addition, Suhrke and Borchgrevink's conclusions point to the importance of the informal justice system. The attempt of the Western coalition to win hearts and minds with military force, development and the provision of justice in the Western legal tradition is on shaky foundations.

Vesna Bojicic-Dzelilovic's contribution ("Peacebuilding in Bosnia-Herzegovina: Reflections on the development–democracy link") explores the nature and prospects of peacebuilding in that country. Bojicic-Dzelilovic observes that Bosnia is peaceful, its economy is growing and there is regular, orderly change of government. However, she identifies problems in the "democracy–development–peace" nexus. The development of the market economy and democracy, the two main components of the liberal peace concept, has been pursued through a set of reforms centred around economic and political liberalization. The implication is that economic liberalization is essential for the development of a successful market economy, which, by improving general welfare and the economic well-being of the public, will encourage political moderation and contribute to democratic politics, thereby fostering peace. However, Bojicic-Dzelilovic argues that the narrow understanding of development within the liberal peace concept, which puts a premium on economic growth, is fundamentally ill suited to a post-conflict economic, political and institutional context. It produces socially polarizing growth, feeds insecurity and stymies political participation around interest-based politics, making its expected positive impact on democracy and peacebuilding questionable. This, she argues, is the reason for the mixed record of peacebuilding in Bosnia-Herzegovina, and in particular its political stagnation. Poverty and social exclusion have been a strong deterrent to citizen participation and this has obstructed progress in the development of democratic politics as a guarantee of sustained peace. The problematic nature of "peace" in Bosnia is also illustrated by the apparent need for an ongoing international presence to guarantee security in the country.

The case of Bosnia-Herzegovina shows how the interplay between neo-liberal economic reforms and the shortcomings of formal democracy creates a "perpetual transition" characterized by unstable, socially divisive developmental patterns and low-level democracy that are damaging to peace. Amongst her conclusions, Bojicic-Dzelilovic argues that

policies aimed at poverty alleviation and employment could boost interest and involvement in democratic deliberation, as well as strengthen the legitimacy of the state and the economy, both of which have been undermined by the policies of liberalization and deregulation.

Caroline Hughes' study of Timor-Leste ("'We just take what they offer': Community empowerment in post-war Timor-Leste") illustrates how peacebuilding there has met with resistance locally and with demands for "Timorization". The foreign presence was seen as overbearing and heavy handed; its expense and competence as well as its actual policies were questioned locally. However, when large-scale rioting broke out in the capital city of Dili in 2006, causing breakdown within the security forces, large-scale displacement of the urban population and the resignation of the prime minister, many commentators suggested that the United Nations had departed the scene too early – that Timorization should have been resisted in favour of a longer period of socialization to liberal norms, in the context of a continued international presence. Hughes' chapter suggests that this criticism of "Timorization" and early departure is based upon a flawed understanding of the causes of the 2006 violence and a tendency by peacebuilding circles to assume that post-conflict societies are dysfunctional. This assumption of local dysfunctionality allows problems in post-conflict development to be routinely ascribed to local frailties and failures, exculpating international policy or action from any share of the blame.

Rajesh Venugopal's chapter ("The making of Sri Lanka's post-conflict economic package and the failure of the 2001–2004 peace process") focuses upon a country that is rarely explored within the liberal peacebuilding debate because it has not hosted major international peace operations. Nevertheless, this chapter demonstrates that the debate can and should be applied to a wider range of cases and that countries that have not experienced conventional international peacebuilding operations still offer vital lessons. Venugopal explores the role of domestic actors and the international donor community in the evolution of Sri Lanka's post-conflict economic package of 2001–2004 and argues that the inappropriateness of this economic package was a crucial element in the overall failure of the peace process. The influence of powerful domestic lobby groups combined with the policy advice of international donors helped to tether the peace agenda to an aggressive programme of market reforms. The government felt that the market reform agenda would spur rapid economic growth and buy support for the peace process, but it ended up doing the opposite. Consequently, the relatively narrow constituency of opposition to the peace process swelled in size and benefited from the support gained from those who opposed the government's eco-

nomic policies. As Venugopal observes, many elements of the case discussed in this chapter have a clear resonance with the growing critique of the liberal peacebuilding agenda, and particularly the argument that has identified an inherent contradiction between its political and economic dimensions.

Jason Franks also explores a case not commonly discussed within the liberal peacebuilding debate (''Beware of liberal peacebuilders bearing gifts: The deviancy of liberal peace in Palestine and Israel''). In this context, a critical reading of liberal state-building processes suggests that a virtual liberal state is the most likely outcome (at best), held together in the precarious circumstances of negative peace through the tradition of realist power politics and conflict management techniques that consist of sociopolitical inclusion and exclusion, divisions, walls and security. Franks claims that, despite the lofty ambitions of liberal peacebuilding to create an emancipated Kantian liberal state and population, the liberal peacebuilding process (unwittingly or otherwise) often results in illiberal division, separation and the paradoxical contravention of the actual principles that liberal peacebuilding attempts to introduce – namely, democracy, human rights, the rule of law and liberal economics. The reasons for this lie not just with the peace process per se, but with the liberal model employed to achieve sustainable peace. Franks argues that liberal peace is not necessarily failing in Palestine but that the current problems with the ongoing peace process are the natural effects of the progress and implementation of the liberal peace framework, which is a flawed process. In other words, the liberal peacebuilding process *is* on track to achieve the aim of the liberal peace model, but it is the model itself that is problematic in this context.

Marie-Joëlle Zahar also explores the liberal peace debate with reference to a case that is not generally included in discussions about peace operations (''Liberal interventions, illiberal outcomes: The United Nations, Western powers and Lebanon''). She situates liberal interventions – notably French and US foreign policy and UN Security Council Resolutions on Lebanon – in the broader context of Western involvement in the post-conflict reconstruction of the country. Her chapter, written in the context of a crisis in Lebanon's modern history, argues that liberal interventions are to blame in part for a number of illiberal outcomes in Lebanon. Indeed, she suggests that, on the whole, they have resulted in a reversal of the limited liberal progress witnessed around the turn of the century. Sectarian divisions and regional interference – reflecting broader regional conflict dynamics – have created a volatile political mix that only the most sensitive intervention can have a positive impact upon. Unfortunately, the nature of external involvement has not produced the

desired results because of the lack of understanding and sensitivity that characterizes it.

Sorpong Peou's contribution (''Re-examining liberal peacebuilding in light of realism and pragmatism: The Cambodian experience'') argues that the international community has pursued a liberal agenda with the aim of transforming Cambodia into a liberal democracy, building and strengthening the rule of law and establishing a market-based economy. This liberal agenda has its limits. Cambodia has failed to consolidate the democratic gains it made after the 1993 national elections organized by the United Nations. The pursuit of criminal justice has encountered numerous challenges and may not achieve its intended results. Economic growth rates have been quite high, but the growth engine remains shaky and has contributed dangerously to a growing gap between the rich and poor. However, Peou argues that peacebuilding in Cambodia has been more positive than negative, especially when measured in the context of negative peace (the absence of violent conflict or war). But there are significant limitations, which he demonstrates through a number of contradictions. First, liberals assume that political elites competing for power in post-conflict societies share an interest in turning their battlefield into a ballot-box and are unconcerned about their security, regardless of whether they lose or win. Second, they assume that peace and democracy can be strengthened if criminal justice can be implemented. Third, they assume that market forces offer solutions to political problems. The recent Cambodian experience shows that peacebuilding can be better achieved if the international community can do more to help consolidate democratic, legal and socioeconomic gains.

Carlo Nasi (''Revisiting the 'liberal peace' thesis applied to Central America: New insights for and against the Wilsonian approach'') reflects on the legacy of liberal peacebuilding in Central America and considers the extent to which the liberal idea is at the heart of the problems encountered in the region in the post-conflict period. In turn, he discusses whether an alternative approach – ''institutions before liberalization'' – might offer a better path to the consolidation of peace. Contrary to the many critical voices in the liberal peacebuilding debate – including those in this volume – this chapter argues that liberal peacebuilding has a fairly positive record in the region. Indeed, according to Nasi, liberal peacebuilding in El Salvador led to better results than the ''institutions before liberalization'' formula in Guatemala. This does not necessarily mean that the formula of institutions before liberalization is wrong, but rather that institution-building endeavours succeed only under specific conditions. Nasi's chapter reminds us of the importance of individual case analysis in a debate all too often characterized by sweeping arguments and a lack of fieldwork.

Theorizing peacebuilding

Very loosely, there are two main schools of thought in the liberal peacebuilding debate, both of which are represented in this volume. One offers a conventional critique revolving around its effectiveness. According to this, subjects relating to peacebuilding can be approached in what might be called a ''problem-solving'' manner – an approach that takes prevailing social relationships, and the institutions into which they are organized, as the given and inevitable framework for action. This policy-oriented approach attempts to improve the performance of certain actors within political, legal or practical parameters that are taken as a given in the ''real world''. The generation of new policy-relevant insights is the aim of research through this approach; for example, how to improve coordination amongst actors, how to get peacekeeping troops on the ground faster, how to improve early warning of conflict, how to encourage donors to support peacebuilding projects, how to make reconstruction in the field more effective, how to reform the security sector, or how to achieve greater local ''ownership'' of the liberal agenda.

The second, more ''critical'' approach casts doubt on the assumptions of liberalism and state-building as they are applied across different contexts. This approach raises questions about existing institutions, policy assumptions and the interests they serve, and is ready to challenge these assumptions.[18] This approach debates whether peacebuilding really is liberal, whether it should be liberal and whether liberal peacebuilding can be a coherent concept or policy programme in diverse contexts. Underlying this critical approach is the concern that liberal peacebuilding might have adverse (though perhaps unintended) consequences for politics and for everyday life, or worse that it is a mechanism of hegemony. This approach questions the assumption, all too often found in the international liberal peacebuilding agenda, that a universal vision of conflicted or post-conflict situations is possible. It questions the assumption that these conflicted societies are uniform ''virgin territories'' onto which liberal ideas can be promoted (or even imposed), despite local differences. Many of the chapters in this volume revolve around one or other of these positions, while several defend the underlying orthodoxy of the liberal peace.

Notes

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New Perspectives on Liberal Peacebuilding

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Peacebuilding in conflict-prone or post-conflict countries – such as East Timor, Bosnia, Afghanistan and Sierra Leone – aims to prevent the re-emergence or escalation of violent conflict and establish a durable peace. This volume explores and critiques the 'liberal' premise of contemporary peacebuilding: the promotion of democracy, market-based economic reforms and a range of other institutions associated with 'modern' states as a driving force for building peace. If a liberal peace is viable, is it also legitimate? Or is it, as some claim, a new form of hegemonic control or neo-imperialism? What is the relationship between statebuilding, liberal peacebuilding and the more emancipatory agendas of peacebuilding? Insofar as peacebuilding resembles statebuilding, what or whose vision of the state is being promoted? Is peacebuilding a realist strategic enterprise meant to contain conflict and its international repercussions, or can it resolve the underlying sources of conflict and engage with grassroots actors and issues? Should it address objectives such as emancipation and social justice, and if so how?

New Perspectives on Liberal Peacebuilding provides fresh insights into these debates. Whilst focussing mainly upon cases of major UN peacebuilding, it also considers the implications and record of liberal peacebuilding through a wider range of experiences.

"A timely and extremely valuable book by a distinguished group of authors that critically examines the liberal premises of contemporary peacebuilding efforts through a combination of incisive thematic analysis and well-chosen case studies. A 'must read' for scholars and practitioners alike."
—*Richard Caplan, Professor of International Relations, Oxford University*

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