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Critical Issues in Peace and Conflict Studies

Theory, Practice, and Pedagogy

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Chapter 7

Emancipatory Peacebuilding

Critical Responses to (Neo)Liberal Trends

Charles Thiessen

Post-Cold War civil warfare and, more recently, the elevated fear of terrorist activity have motivated the burgeoning support for foreign intervention into war-affected contexts. Supported by international permissions, a reduction in the scope of Westphalian national sovereignty, and an emboldened UN system, the world community has responded to civil violence across the globe with complex peacebuilding projects incorporating a diverse troupe of UN, military, and other governmental and nongovernmental actors. Recent peacebuilding projects, such as those in Afghanistan, Kosovo, East Timor, and Sierra Leone have been large scale multi-dimensional ventures, incorporating approaches aimed at rapid liberalization and the establishment of the “liberal peace” through (neo)liberal peacebuilding strategies.

This chapter will briefly survey the (neo)liberal peacebuilding project and the emerging critique of its methodology and values. Initial efforts at identifying and elaborating upon an alternative, viable, and localized peacebuilding paradigm have highlighted the centrality of local participation and “emancipation” for local war-affected populations. This emerging paradigm, labelled here as “emancipatory peacebuilding,” has been primarily defined in the literature by what it is not. Thus, this chapter ventures beyond the critique of the (neo)liberal peacebuilding project and investigates some philosophical underpinnings to the emerging emancipatory peacebuilding alternative, and explores its implications for peacebuilding practice and coordination.

(NEO)LIBERAL PEACEBUILDING

Two prominent features of current peacebuilding interventions are exposed by labelling them as “(neo)liberal”—the integration of neoliberal economic

policy and liberal political structures in the creation of a market democracy in war-torn contexts. Neoliberal economic policy has required rapid Adam Smith-style marketization and the adoption of market economics complete with limited government intrusion in the economy and expanded freedoms for individual economic actors.¹ Liberal political policy aims to institutionalize the “highest” liberal principles of individualism, universalism, egalitarianism, meliorism, human rights, and democracy within democratic state structures and processes.² This has necessitated aggressive democratization schemes, hurried democratic elections, and intensive state-building projects. Securing these unsettling economic and political transformations has warranted a highly interventional program of confidence building, combat against insurgent groups, DDR (demobilization, disarmament, and reintegration), and security sector reform. Methodologically, the (neo)liberal peacebuilding project has maintained a focus on upper-level reconciliation strategies, “outside-in” official processes, prescriptions by international “experts,” and has thus resembled more a system of governance as opposed to a reconciliatory process.³

The legitimacy of (neo)liberal peacebuilding has increasingly come under scrutiny. In his book *At War's End*, Roland Paris systematically critiques all fourteen major peacebuilding operations between 1989 and 1999. Paris points out major peacebuilding “missteps”—for example, the failure of post-war elections to secure sustainable peace in Angola (1992), Rwanda (1994), and Cambodia (1993), and the manner in which economic liberalization in El Salvador and Nicaragua exacerbated the very socio-economic inequalities that served to initiate conflict in the first place. Paris’s conclusion asserts, “The case studies do suggest that the liberalization process either contributed to a rekindling of violence or helped to recreate the historic sources of violence in many of the countries that have hosted these missions—a conclusion that casts doubt on the reliability of the peace-through-liberalization strategy as it has been practiced to date.”⁴ In response to its failures, the UN revised its statebuilding practice in Sierra Leone (1999), Kosovo (1999), and East Timor (1999) and subsequently met with moderate success. However, efforts to replicate these strategies in Afghanistan (2001) and Iraq (2003) have suffered from insufficient international and local legitimacy and continued local resistance and violence.⁵

The changing global political and economic climate has also served to de-legitimize (neo)liberal peacebuilding processes. The rise in power of China, Russia, Iran, and India, as well as regional organizations, such as the Organization of American States (OAS), the African Union (AU), and the Arab League, has certainly impacted the Western-dominated (neo)liberal consensus—particularly within the UN Security Council.⁶

A body of deeper, more philosophical critiques has also emerged that assesses the underlying values of the (neo)liberal peacebuilding project. The reaction of the United States to 9/11, and in particular its declared "war on terror," has "given liberalism an aggressive face in global politics" and has called into question its appeal as the purported carrier of human rights and democracy.⁷ Furthermore, the "war on terror" has failed to address human security concerns, and has rather given way to traditional heavy-handed security operations and, consequently, provoked local distrust and resistance.

The "war on terror" has also served to strengthen another critique—that Western peacebuilding is simply a form of neo-colonialism or liberal imperialism. Jabri and Williams analyze peacebuilding discourse and believe that the liberal peace project is centrally projected as a "rescue" mission, primarily using the tools of security to manipulate developing populations to secure the security of the West.⁸ In this way, the (neo)liberal project has become a project of war and inherently concerned about the propagation of the Western liberal self into the social realms of the "other." Williams tends to agree, and notes how indigenous forms of social and political organization are written off as "tribal," "clan-based" and lacking in modern functionality, thus justifying the embedding of Western versions of organization into non-Western contexts.⁹

Jacoby takes a sharply critical stance toward U.S. hegemony and its motivations in leading the charge in many post-war reconstruction projects—particularly in Iraq. He perceives the U.S. role in Iraq as clearly defending and propagating U.S./Western hegemony.¹⁰ The "shock and awe" destruction and consequent rebuilding of the country is intended to warn potential adversaries from aspiring to power in the current world system. Furthermore, Jacoby accuses post-war reconstruction as being a technology for ensuring Western prosperity by limiting state sovereignty in order that the country can be taken advantage of by Western corporations and the world market.

Other critiques question whether (neo)liberal peacebuilding methods are socially and culturally appropriate in many contexts.¹¹ For example, in communally based social structures, democracy and competitive economic structures may be viewed with suspicion. This may be partly because of the neoliberal-motivated omission of much needed welfare schemes in devastated war zones. In the Cambodian context, Richmond and Franks note that the peacebuilding effort has established only a "virtual peace"—one having limited impact on citizens and recognized mainly by internationals.¹² This could be partly due to the liberal propensity for "top-down" peace processes, all the while giving inadequate attention to grassroots actors. Other

commentators are concerned with the extensive control international actors exert over local populations. Duffield (borrowing from Foucault) labels liberal methods as “biopolitics”—“a form of politics that entails the administration of the processes of life at the aggregate level of population”—in this case by foreign intervening powers.¹³

Emancipatory Peacebuilding

As evidenced in the above critique, a growing body of literature is arguing that the (neo)liberal peacebuilding project is in crisis and uncertain how it will proceed.¹⁴ Despite reports on the steady reduction in war-related deaths over the last decade (e.g., see the *Human Security Report Project*),¹⁵ there appears to be significant dissatisfaction with, and increasing resistance to, the liberal peace as experienced by local populations around the world.¹⁶ It is seen as “ethically bankrupt, subject to double standards, coercive and conditional, acultural, unconcerned with social welfare, and unfeeling and insensitive towards its subject.”¹⁷

These inherent contradictions have spurred on a growing body of peacebuilding theory that proposes major revisions to (neo)liberal theory and practice and suggest the need for the construction of a new peacebuilding agenda.¹⁸ Being situated much more in the critical tradition, emerging peacebuilding theory works toward emancipation and the pursuit of justice for all actors—state and non-state.¹⁹ It is much more concerned with peace as experienced at the local and the “everyday” level, as well as at upper levels.²⁰ It is aware that the liberal peace “looks far more coherent from the outside than from the inside,” and has tended to focus on the shell of the state while ignoring the relationship of the state to its constituents.²¹ It insists that (neo)liberal peacebuilding processes become attentive to, supportive of, and emancipatory in regard to the local culture and its inherent social processes, traditions, and conceptions of peace. Thus, the liberalized peace is to be situated in a “localized, contextual, and hybridised form.”²²

Furthermore, emerging theory proposes that peacebuilding actors not work from universal blueprints, but engage in caring and empathetic multilevel consultation in order to provide the grassroots with a voice, operate on the norms they are trying to instill (e.g., democracy, equality, social justice), and place local community concerns before liberal/neoliberal goals.²³ Thus, peacebuilding actors are required to conduct continual critique of their activities, be well aware of their “baggage” they bring to peace activities, and work as “enablers for localized dynamics of peace” at the grassroots level of society.²⁴

The critique of (neo)liberal methodology points to the urgently needed reformation of the (neo)liberal peacebuilding project, or perhaps its aban-

donment. Peacebuilding theorists are divided on this point. A minority of scholars call for the termination of the (neo)liberal peacebuilding project, but for various reasons. For authors such as Duffield and Jacoby, the imperialist nature of (neo)liberal peacebuilding justifies its replacement by a fundamentally different strategy.²⁵ Others point out that the “victor’s peace”—that is, allowing a clear and dominant victor to gain power—has historically shown itself to be more sustainable, and thus civil conflicts should be allowed to “work themselves out” without foreign interference. Realist scholars invoke different reasons for abandoning the project. They are fundamentally critical of intervening for the sake of humanitarianism as opposed to national interests.

Most current critical scholarship, however, calls for reformation of the (neo)liberal peacebuilding project as opposed to its abandonment. For example, Paris believes that even though the critical analysis of the project has laid bare important challenges, there is nothing in the current critique that justifies the jettisoning of (neo)liberal peacebuilding and its replacement with an entirely “post-liberal” alternative.²⁶ However, he proposes that the (neo)liberal critique does point to a much-needed reformation of approaches and methodology, but not of the underlying liberal orientation of the project.

Even though Richmond, in places, labels the emerging emancipatory peacebuilding paradigm as “post-liberal,” he does not call for the abandonment of the project but rather describes a liberal-hybridized alternative which places more weight on “bottom up” policies, peace at the “everyday” level, and the participation of local actors.²⁷ Donais, also, believes that sole reliance on either grassroots or upper-level peacemaking resources will lead to failure—thus forcing the necessity of a “negotiated hybridity.”²⁸ Tadjbakhsh too, calls for reform.²⁹ She proposes that central to any peacebuilding alternative should be an expansion of the prevailing, but constricted conceptions of human security that simply allow the maintenance of the status quo in the international system of power. Current conceptions of human security have lost sight of their original purpose as an international movement to emancipate populations and ensure global justice and equity.

PHILOSOPHICAL AND ETHICAL BASES FOR EMANCIPATORY PEACEBUILDING

The emancipatory peacebuilding project is undergirded by at least two philosophical and ethical themes—local ownership and agency, and embracing the guidance of critical theory.

LOCAL OWNERSHIP AND AGENCY

The first theme concerns the voice and ownership of the “local” (and often “indigenous”) in peacebuilding processes. On the surface, the theme of local ownership may seem like nothing new since “local ownership” discourse is present in the orthodox (neo)liberal project. However, in practice, (neo)liberal goals have by necessity restricted local ownership to domestic elites and their cooperation with the overall peacebuilding scheme. Thus, the liberal project has been unable to transcend its top-down bias.³⁰

Emancipatory peacebuilding has as a central dilemma the elusive objective of reconciling “its ‘global’ objectives and the local conditions for their realization.”³¹ Because some form of external intervention is necessary in many conflict-affected contexts to secure the space for meaningful local ownership and the adoption of indigenous peacemaking practices, it becomes vital to consider the feasibility of a complimentary relationship between external and local actors. In order to unpack this insecure relationship, this section first investigates the philosophical and ethical imperatives allowing this tedious relationship to flourish and, second, surveys four revisionist proposals that claim to re-conceptualize the role of the “local” in the mission of the “international.”

Emancipatory Discourse

Central to the international-local dilemma is the prevailing discourse of peacebuilding. In similar fashion to a parallel and more matured discussion in development studies,³² the manner in which war-affected contexts are written about, conceived of, and narrated in mainstream peacebuilding text and discourse serves to frame these contexts as dysfunctional, failed, weak, irrational, and immature.³³ This mainstream discourse props up the West as the peacebuilding authority and savior, and situates expertise solely in the laps of experts from Western countries. The discourse also serves to legitimize therapeutic action whereby the international community assumes responsibility for a population no longer able to care for themselves and in need of rescue.³⁴ Paternalistic attitudes abound as locals are viewed with pity and as incapable of meaningful agency—certainly not without careful and overbearing supervision.

Emancipatory peacebuilding calls for a fundamental change in voice and tone. Scholars such as Cockell and Lederach eschew international-centered language and insist on viewing the “local” as both a vital source of peacebuilding resources and instrumental in shaping peacebuilding methodology.³⁵ Cockell is quite exclusive: “Sustainable peace can only be founded

on the indigenous, societal resources for intergroup dialogue, cooperation and consensus."³⁶ Emancipatory peacebuilding requires an elicitive stance whereby resources are not imported and imposed by outsiders, but draws upon local knowledge and processes.³⁷ Such a stance will prove dissonant with the disempowering nature of "failed state" discourse and the manner in which it silences alternative voices and visions. Rather, it will be receptive to locally-legitimated social and political structuring leading to peace.³⁸

"Everyday" Welfare and Bottom-Up Agency

Driving down the discussion of peacebuilding to the level of the local will invariably raise important but difficult questions—not least of which is what the local population envisions as crucial peacebuilding work, and who will best fulfil these visions. Richmond insists that the liberal peacebuilding project has "failed to deliver on their promise of a liberal peace for all," but has created only shells of institutions and benefited predatory domestic elites.³⁹ Conversely, benefits have not had significant or adequate impact on the everyday life of populations. Emancipatory peacebuilding, however, is comprehensive and relational,⁴⁰ and focuses on individual and communal perceptions of needs, aspirations, and opportunities, while rejecting the central status of models, states, and institutions as the objects and subjects of peace. Thus, the politics of peacebuilding should "spring organically from the agency of the people involved."⁴¹ For example, Pugh points out that neoliberal, economic intervention policies have ignored socially and historically embedded welfare arrangements, and have assaulted welfare as a social contract in many conflict-affected contexts.⁴² In response, the emancipatory peacebuilding project must engage in elicitive negotiations with local communities where local voices are taken seriously, and reconceptualize "atomised societies as collectives."

What role for the "local"? Hemmer, et al., and Van Tongeren, et al., investigate how grassroots citizen peacebuilders are able to influence upper level peacebuilding processes.⁴³ In order to achieve this difficult stance with the upper level, Hemmer, et al., integrate theories of Track II diplomacy, citizen peacebuilding, civic democratization, and social movements to present a case for the agency of a grassroots "peacebuilding organism." This organism would consist of a broad network of peacebuilding organizations and would be able to influence diplomatic negotiations by transforming the local political landscape. Pugh, however, is more skeptical of locally inspired transformation, unless it is accompanied by massive global economic restructuring.⁴⁴ This change would seem extremely unlikely, however, in the short-term. However, opportunities may arise from within the current global economic turmoil.

Communitarian Basis

The emancipatory peacebuilding project is being identified as communitarian in character.⁴⁵ As a reaction against liberalism and, in particular, its universalist pretensions and its devaluation of community, communitarianism argues that both tradition and social context prove essential to moral and political decision-making and action.⁴⁶ Whereas the (neo)liberal peacebuilding project argues for the universal nature of its central tenants, communitarianism suggests that any peacebuilding solutions must be derived from the potentially non-liberal local populations affected by the conflict who should, consequently, be granted the power to make their own choices regardless of their dissonance with (Western) international norms.⁴⁷

Four Revisionist Proposals

A growing body of literature documents the inadequacies of the “liberal peace” and its rapid push for liberal market democracies in countries emerging from civil war. However, the criticisms of the vast majority of peacebuilding scholars do not call for an outright termination of interventional action, but rather point to potential revisions to current theory and practice to make international intervention more efficient and increasingly sustainable. To this end, this section presents four revisionist proposals that are largely liberal in their stance, but do not all adopt the universalist assumptions of the currently fashionable (neo)liberal model. The proposals are presented and arranged in an order that reflects the magnitude of control granted to local populations by international interveners—starting with the lowest.

First, Roland Paris’s *At War’s End* concludes that, while the end goals of liberalization need not be dropped, the rapid liberalization processes in countries recently emerging from civil war have tended to endanger the fragile peace that liberalization was intended to consolidate.⁴⁸ What he proposes is an *institutionalization before liberalization* (IBL) strategy. IBL mandates a strong-handed foreign intervention along with the strategic minimizing of the destabilizing effects of liberalization by delaying the introduction of democratic and market-oriented reforms until local institutions have been established and strengthened. Institutions must first be strengthened because strong and coercive institutions are better able to absorb the destabilizing competition resulting from democratic elections and economic reforms.

Second, Michael Barnett proposes a coercive *republican peacebuilding* methodology similar to Roland Paris’s IBL, but with slightly different means and ends in mind—that is, the use of the republican principles of

deliberation, constitutionalism, and representation to help states recovering from violence garner stability and legitimacy.⁴⁹ Innovative in the republican approach is its focus on limiting and distributing political power in order to restrain the exertion of arbitrary power and "spoiling" faction groups. The modest pace and deliberative processes inherent to republicanism do not force elections too quickly, and it is willing to utilize nonelected but locally-led government structures in precarious transitional periods. Most importantly, republicanism "views the essence of legitimacy as the state's use of proper means to achieve collectively accepted goals"⁵⁰—even non-liberal goals, although unlikely given the broadly liberal means used to incorporate the interests of citizens.

Third, Richmond and Lidén describe an emancipatory (Lidén labels it "social") peacebuilding methodology.⁵¹ Unlike IBL and republican revisionist forms, emancipatory peacebuilding diverges significantly from the (neo) liberal project. It is much less coercive (particularly in regard to international actors), is not evangelistic in regard to universal liberal conceptions of politics, economics, and human rights, and may not birth liberal market democracies (although this is certainly a possibility). Emancipatory peacebuilding, in short, broadens the narrow top-down state-building focus of liberal peacebuilding, and holistically redirects the project as a grassroots, bottom-up activity—engaging with the local and the marginalized. Local decision-making processes are allowed to determine basic political, economic, and social developments in the post-violence period.⁵² As such, emancipatory peacebuilding is intimately interested in the "everyday" needs of a conflict-affected population (similar to Burton's "basic needs"),⁵³ and the culturally adapted provision of vital resources, political agency, and economic opportunity.⁵⁴ Political organization and any state-building activities are negotiated between local and international actors—a process void of pre-determined political models and outcomes. Furthermore, versions of human rights and rule-of-law should be included in the "local peace" that reflect the consensus of local groupings as well as broader international expectations.⁵⁵ In this way, emancipatory peacebuilding allows local conditions and capacities to determine what type of peace will emerge in a particular context.⁵⁶

The above emancipatory agenda requires that international peacebuilding actors subject themselves to requirements that prevent them from treating every peacebuilding context in the same way. Richmond states that emancipatory peacebuilding actors are inherently concerned about care and welfare, are empathetic, eschew standardized blueprints, seek open and free communication with local groups, and operate on the basis of the norms and systems they are trying to instill in the local context.⁵⁷

Fourth, Mac Ginty describes a system of indigenous peacebuilding that rests solidly on traditional peacemaking processes.⁵⁸ Locally inspired peacebuilding processes such as consensus decision-making, restoring human-environmental systems and balance, traditional rituals, and reciprocal compensation and gifts are propped up and viewed as far removed from, and dissonant with, foreign ideologies of peace. Any international role, if any, is wary of imposing a foreign culture onto the local culture. Indigenous peacemaking, though, despite its current popularity in emerging policy, is starting to come under serious criticism as being unable to deal with post-war vacuums of domestic authority, unable to stand its ground in the face of any foreign influence, unable to prevent the empowering of local spoilers, and preventing local cultural identities from flourishing in locally legitimated and desired modernizing contexts.⁵⁹

THE VOICE OF CRITICAL THEORY

A second philosophical theme emerging from the emancipatory peacebuilding literature is the project's grounding in critical theory. This theme is certainly related to the previous "local" theme in that critical theory accuses (neo)liberal peacebuilding of not addressing local interests. However, critical theory broadens the scope of the critique of (neo)liberal peacebuilding through its focus on the global dimensions of peacebuilding.⁶⁰

Critical theory responses to international peacebuilding and peacekeeping have arisen in response to recent revisions to official UN peacebuilding and peacekeeping policy—most notably in the Brahimi Report that focused on how to better manage peacekeeping personnel to produce more effective peacekeeping results; the focus on "human security"; the UN's *Millennium Development Goals*; and the *Responsibility to Protect* doctrine that attempted to reconcile conceptions of national sovereignty with human rights protection. While seeing positive movement in these revisions toward care of the "local," some peacebuilding scholars believe that this rethinking of theory and practice is not going nearly far enough; it is failing to interrogate the role of (neo)liberal peacekeeping and peacebuilding in the wider processes of global politics. These scholars have initiated a more radical discourse in the challenge of rethinking peacebuilding/peacekeeping practice, and utilize critical perspectives to both deconstruct orthodox practice and construct a more critical agenda for peace operations.

Pugh proposes that (neo)liberal peacebuilding serves as a "management device" to maintain the current version of global politics and economics "that privileges the rich and powerful states in their efforts to control or isolate unruly parts of the world."⁶¹ As such, peacebuilding is viewed as serving a

narrow purpose—"to doctor the dysfunctions of the global political economy within a framework of liberal imperialism."⁶² Thus, while (neo)liberal structures are inherently interested in maintaining the status quo of the world system with its embedded instabilities and inequalities, critical theory is able to expose injustices that stem from (neo)liberalism and provides a philosophical and ethical basis for the construction of structural transformations to emancipate conflict-affected societies. Pugh contends that many conflict resolution and peacekeeping efforts simply "smooth the functioning of the system" and serve the purposes of existing world system powers.⁶³ More radical critical work is needed that spotlights larger issues such as globalization-induced inequality and global economic structural violence.

For Bellamy and Williams, a critical response starts with a new peacekeeping agenda intensely focused on hearing the voices of locals in the planning and execution of peace operations.⁶⁴ They point out, however, that this agenda must be situated within a program focused on local democratization, the creation of local nonviolent conflict resolution structures, and structured cooperation across political borders. Beyond this, a critical agenda needs to move its eyes outward and upward. The hegemonic position of the United States in the global system must be addressed, in particular its willingness to act unilaterally without international support, and its ambivalence to international law and the International Criminal Court (ICC).⁶⁵

A critical agenda must come to terms with the predominant "failed state" discourse. This discourse does not make evident the fact that in most cases conflict-affected states are not void of state power; however, it may be obscured because of the state's illiberal methodology. Thus, peacebuilding strategies may need to be directed at civil society and the opening up of space for dialogue.⁶⁶

Pugh proposes UN Security Council reform such as its replacement by a revamped population-weighted UN General Assembly—thus making intervention decisions democratic at the global level.⁶⁷ He also proposes the outright replacement of international financial institutions (IMF, World Bank, and the WTO) with more democratic structures that are more relevant to the poor. In terms of peacekeeping forces, Woodhouse and Ramsbotham suggest the creation of a permanent UN force that would align, not with the interests of the world powers, but rather with the powerless inside conflict zones.⁶⁸

EMANCIPATORY PEACEBUILDING PRIORITIES

In order to flesh out the above formulations of emerging conceptions of emancipatory peacebuilding, this section investigates revisionist proposals in the four priority areas of orthodox (neo)liberal peacebuilding—security,

political transition, economic and social development, and reconciliation and justice.⁶⁹ Furthermore, it explores the implications of the emancipatory project on peacebuilding coordination.

Security and Emancipation

Booth, shortly after the end of the Cold War, stated, "Emancipation, theoretically, is security."⁷⁰ Booth identified a post-Cold War transformation in security thought, a movement past realism and neorealism and the adoption of a more critical stance to security—primarily expressed through the human security doctrine. The human security narrative has served to awaken some traditional security actors to the plight of oppressed populations, highlighting the manner in which poverty and underdevelopment leads to insecurity for all. However, human security is coming under increased scrutiny. Duffield views human security as simply another "technology of governance," enacted by the North over the South for ultimately self-serving ends.⁷¹ Christie argues that human security has lost its critical edge, has become a new orthodoxy, is unable to amplify the voice of peoples in the South, and is thus unfit as a basis for necessary systemic change.⁷²

Not so with emancipatory conceptions of security. Emancipation, as a chief aim of security, requires bottom-up approaches where individuals are empowered to voice, negotiate, and develop forms of human security tailored to their particular situation. Local agency becomes central to security work, resulting in increased legitimacy and effectiveness. For example, Jabri believes that the "enemy" of the people in Afghanistan (the Taliban) is being defined by the liberal intervenors, thus providing the Taliban with an inflated political and social agency, all the while precluding any form of localized resistance to the Taliban, which inadvertently denies the population political agency.⁷³ A more appropriate and progressive emancipatory response would be to support local nonviolent resistance and extend "solidarity to progressive forces of emancipation in that society."⁷⁴

Political Transition and Local Participation

Emancipatory transitional political structures allow local voices expression and participatory power in the transformation of cultural and political foundations as part of any state-building process—even if the processes do not result in Western-style democracy or integration into the capitalist world system. Chopra and Hohe propose a democratic system of participatory intervention where indigenous paradigm(s) are allowed to coexist with, or evolve during,

the establishment of modern institutions.⁷⁵ Central to this process is the active local participation of local administrative structures, which should ensure representation upward throughout the government structure, thus increasing the likelihood of its social viability, as well as local identification and ownership.

While Chopra and Hohe's system is inherently democratic, Brown, et al., resist mandating a "democratic" requirement and put forward the concept of "hybrid political orders"—the coexistence of different models of governance and government.⁷⁶ Stemming from both Western models and local indigenous traditions, hybrid political orders are shaped by both globalization and societal fragmentation (ethnic, tribal, religious). As opposed to the usual and dominant discourse of statebuilding, which is derived from modernization and the ideal "stages of growth," the authors believe that hybrid political orders may be better able to allow for the establishment of viable, participatory, and democratic political community in the aftermath of violent conflict. By labelling these hybrid political orders as "fragile states" or "weak," Western governments and peacebuilding actors may miss crucial opportunities for constructive peacebuilding, as established and locally legitimated local political forms underpinning the fragile peace in post-war contexts are ignored.⁷⁷

Rethinking Economic and Social Development

Emancipatory economic and social development refocuses the means and broadens the narrowed ends of (neo)liberal economic and social development. In regard to economic development, scholars are increasingly arguing for a break-up of the marriage between economic development policy and neoliberal economic policy. Galtung argues for an eclectic development that would broaden its American capitalist roots and incorporate socialist and "African local" structures.⁷⁸ Others argue that Western development actors should eschew "historical templates for new and evolving situations" and allow for locally generated reconstruction programs even if they fall short of the high, and perhaps ethno-cultural-centric, standards set by the "liberal peace."⁷⁹ Other authors, such as Duffield, offer a harsher critique.⁸⁰ Duffield believes that development has been reinvented as a strategic tool in managing conflict-affected contexts and their populations and hence development aid has become "securitized." Thus, aid and development actors ultimately serve the purposes of the dominating North—leading to the conclusion that the entire enterprise should be revamped or perhaps dropped.

Pierce and Stubbs use a case study of UNDP project work in the town of Travnik in central Bosnia to illustrate the linked concepts of social

development and hegemony.⁸¹ They envision peacebuilding processes moving past an “inventory approach” with the usual mix of peacebuilding activities, and propose that social development’s central role is challenging hegemony in the local social context. They propose that conflict/post-conflict zones need to be viewed as “highly complex structures, rather than simply as places where warmongering ‘hard-liners’ have ensured the acquiescence of the population.”⁸² Peacebuilding processes are thus conceived of as a counter-hegemonic project inside this complex social structure.

Reconciliation and Justice

Peacebuilding theorists such as Lederach, Mani, Philpott, and Sriram propose that the liberal restriction of “reconciliation” to rule-of-law and human rights work is inadequate.⁸³ While the rule-of-law and human rights are certainly crucial in ensuring justice in a post-war context, the liberal peace will struggle to attend to the deep wounds inflicted by war and political violence. Further, rule-of-law and human rights work will fall short in the empowerment and healing of victims, prove inadequate in reforming and reintegrating perpetrators, and avoid the powerful legacy of emotions that can lead to revenge and renewed violence.⁸⁴

Emancipatory peacebuilding pushes for the centrality of reconciliation in the politics of peacebuilding theory and practice, and for deeper healing than possible through trials, Truth and Reconciliation Commissions, and human rights work. Reconciliation activities should be located at the community level and be aimed at reasserting established social codes and processes, healing communal trauma, and regaining trust, unity, and peaceful coexistence. To this end, scholars such as Kelman, Fisher, and Rothman have been developing the conflict resolution methodology of dialogue groups and problem-solving workshops.⁸⁵ Dialogue-based strategies aim to build bridges by creating a safe space for antagonists to engage with each other in a constructive and controlled manner. Other conflict resolution practitioners interested in initiating community reconciliation processes are increasingly recognizing the power of storytelling, narrative, and proverbs.⁸⁶

Another strand of important reconciliation theory is emerging from the field of restorative justice. Restorative justice theorists and practitioners propose revisions to criminal justice processes—eschewing the dominant conceptions of criminal justice as being primarily retributive in nature and rather adopting the vindication of victims as a central priority.⁸⁷

CHALLENGES AND PROGRESS IN EMANCIPATORY PEACEBUILDING COORDINATION

Strategic coordination of the (neo)liberal peacebuilding project is heavily invested in hierarchy, Western outlooks, expressions of Western power, upper-level control, and ignorance of local wisdom. This structure proves to be dissonant with the emancipatory project. The emancipatory project will resist direct transfer of (neo)liberal coordination methodology because of its fundamental epistemological and ontological differences. As opposed to being primarily concerned with the horizontal integration of activities among international actors, emancipatory coordination concerns will be largely vertical in nature—between the “international” and the “local.” It is interested in how internationally assisted peacebuilding can be controlled, directed, or guided by the “local.” Thus, a discussion of emancipatory coordination will tackle “multi-level” challenges, and be interested in projections of power and conceptions of culture at each level.

There does not, at this point, exist any literature dealing directly and systematically with the coordination of the emancipatory project, which certainly reflects the ambiguity regarding the role of international actors in the paradigm, and because the paradigm has not been adopted in practice to a large extent. However, at an even more fundamental level, there may be widespread hesitancy to explore practicalities such as peacebuilding coordination because the theoretical requirements of an emancipatory stance have not been fully explored. There remain significant challenges within the model that may prove unbearable for the model—stemming not from inherent contradictions, but from a shortage of political willingness to make the tough choices necessitated by the model. Pugh is one of the few peacebuilding theorists venturing into this contentious territory. He believes that Northern peacebuilding powers have shown themselves unwilling to “consider fundamental questions about the extent to which the statist structure and neoliberal value system fosters the kinds of political and social instability that require policing, protection or exclusion.”⁸⁸ Thus, peacebuilding operations have become “vehicles of system management” for oppressive global politico-economic structures, with peacebuilding actors serving as managers within a system that is primarily interested in the security of the North and the maintenance of its way of life.

The interface between the international and the local is situated within a dominant (neo)liberal politico-economic-cultural milieu, where Western-based “universals” are embedded in localized developing contexts. Thus, emancipatory peacebuilding coordination is dependent on retooled global liberal political and neoliberal capitalist economic structures, and an end to

the exploitative relationship between the North and the South—no small task indeed. Without such changes, the emancipatory project will consistently be ground down and burdened with insupportable amounts of (neo)liberal baggage.

However, many scholars are more hopeful, and believe that humanitarians cannot be paralyzed by daunting and necessary global economic and political structural transformations, and concentrate on reformist steps (even if small and inadequate) that make a better world more likely for war-affected populations. Booth describes this slow reformation as “process utopian” (a phrase coined by Joseph Nye)—“At each political crossroad, there is always one route that seems more rather than less progressive in terms of global community-building.”⁸⁹ Many of the authors surveyed in this chapter hint at inherent coordination necessities in the emancipatory project that can be achieved or pushed for despite the disempowering politico-economic systems within which we live. The essential item they struggle with is the manner in which the international community can work alongside the local community, all the while granting the local community power over and voice in peace-building decisions.

John Paul Lederach has constructed a theory of “multi-level” action that is much more reliant on grassroots forces for change than (neo)liberal peacebuilding theories.⁹⁰ Central to his theory is the elite-grassroots nexus—strategies at the upper national level must feed on the energy of processes at the grassroots level and, concurrently, national level policies can ameliorate tensions at the community level. In negative terms, transformative progress at the grassroots level will be significantly impeded with insecurity at the national elite level, while a failure to address basic needs at the grassroots level will create societal instability and threats of violence which handicap macro-level transformative activities. Lederach’s “multi-level” theory is important for the coordination of emancipatory peacebuilding processes. International actors must serve as facilitators for elite-grassroots interaction. International actors must not dictate the outcome of this interaction, however, but use their resources and power to ensure its occurrence—perhaps justifying the use of coercion in some cases. Further, his theory highlights the necessity of coordination structures engaging all levels of society.

Fast, Neufeldt, and Schirch deal more directly with the ethics of international-local interactions undergirding the emancipatory peacebuilding coordination project.⁹¹ They construct a theory of international-local interactions based on: (1) the individualist human rights of inherent worth and dignity and the right to make decisions that affect their lives; and (2) the communally relativist principles of the ability of communities to define their own common good, and the value of authentic relationships. Purposeful international-local interactions

guided by these principles should, according to the authors, result in decision-making structures that are open to communal expertise, guided by local leadership, and inclusive of all parties, even extremists.

Other authors are starting to address another thorn in the side for any attempts at coordination in the emancipatory project—the tension between international standards/norms (e.g., human rights, environmental, accountability, justice, etc.) and competing local conceptions and systems.⁹² The central tension is the extent to which international rights/norms are considered “universal” as opposed to being “relative.” It seems that scholars are increasingly resisting either extreme in the debate and are emphasizing a healthy tension between the two. Theory in the debate is starting to converge, however. Attempts at reconciling local ownership with international norms require the eschewal of conceptions of culture as static and unchangeable, and rather culture is viewed as changing and socially constructed, and as holding transformative power.⁹³ Emancipatory coordination efforts, therefore, need to avoid romanticizing the “traditional,” not blindly equate everything traditional with “good,” and not label everything stemming from the West as harmful and culturally inappropriate.⁹⁴

CONCLUSION

International (neo)liberal peacebuilding has begun to expose its inherent contradictions and struggles. As a technology of the global liberal politico-economic system, it is certainly creating conflict and dependency.⁹⁵ Thus, it appears necessary to critically transcend current peacebuilding practice and strive for more emancipatory and culturally empowering methodologies. To this end, a couple of imperatives in regards to international interventionist practice seem instructive.

First, the international community cannot become paralyzed by the “emancipatory” critique—it is imperative that we not abandon conflict-affected citizens. Inaction has serious consequences as evident in the Rwandan and Darfurian cases—it is clearly inhumane to leave whole societies vulnerable to suffering. Second, international actors must increasingly adopt a critical(ly) self-reflective stance—being honest with local populations in regard to their interests (they will always hold some), being particularly sensitive to any attachments to current versions of global capitalism, democracy, and our Western mindset and way of living, being empathetic and compassionate in their practice, and intensely dedicated to the improvement of life-chances for war-affected individuals and communities. Third, and perhaps related to the previous point, international actors

must be “thinking” and “judging” actors—deeply aware of becoming simply a “cog in the administrative machinery.”⁹⁶ The emancipatory paradigm requires actors embedded within the peacebuilding system to avoid abdicating their individual responsibility to think and judge in order to maintain their transformative potential. In a similar vein, Galtung calls for the rejection of the traditional division of labor between those who establish the values (ideologists), those who establish the trends (scientists), and those who form the means to the ends (politicians), and the implementation of a more unified approach.⁹⁷ Those who act must also be the ones who think about and judge the action.

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