Peacebuilding: A Review of the Academic Literature

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The notion of building peace in conflict-affected states and societies is not new, and certainly not one invented by the United Nations (UN). Contemporary discussions, nonetheless, might very well give this impression, not least since the inauguration of the UN's 'peacebuilding architecture' in the wake of the 2005 World Summit, encompassing a UN Peacebuilding Commission (PBC) of 31 member states, a UN Peacebuilding Support Office (PBSO) based in New York, and a UN Peacebuilding Fund (PBF) to help finance its mandates. But the endeavour to build peace is, of course, much more than the activities of a particular (legal and political) institutional set-up. Indeed, peacebuilding has gained in prominence – not just in specialised academic and practitioner circles, but also in the public discourse at large.

Peacebuilding: Concepts, Actors and Institutions

Ever since the work of the peace researcher Johan Galtung, it has become common parlance to distinguish between so-called 'negative' and 'positive' peace. The logic here is that peace is not just the absence of armed conflict and violence, but is indeed about the pursuit of social justice through equal opportunity, a fair distribution of power and material resources, and an equal protection by and in the face of the rule of law. Peace, then, means long-term peace. It means creating the conditions under which individuals in society can benefit from coherent legal frameworks, public order, political stability, and economic opportunities. And peacebuilding thus refers to all efforts to foster a sustainable peace through the establishment of institutions that promote and enable the non-violent resolution of tensions and disputes. Following Galtung

The Geneva Peacebuilding Platform is a joint project of four institutions:

(1976), peacebuilding is therefore differentiated from peacekeeping (maintaining a balance of power and keeping the warring parties apart) as well as peacemaking (solving the conflict by removing the source of the tension), a distinction that was also echoed in the 1992 report of the UN Secretary-General Boutros Boutros-Ghali, entitled 'An Agenda for Peace'.[2]

Building peace nevertheless remains a rather ambiguous affair, and it is not at all the case that stakeholders and analysts agree on what the concept of peacebuilding entails. On the one hand is the very practical perspective taken by the likes of Paul Lederach, for whom peacebuilding involves concrete conciliation efforts in situations of conflict.[3] On the other is peacebuilding conceived as a specific operational mandate, and Michael Barnett et al. (2007) identify a plethora of working definitions employed by various multilateral agencies and government donors in their attempts to institutionalise peacebuilding. As Ronald J. Fischer (1993) highlighted, according to Galtung's conceptualisation peacebuilding is somehow at the interface between peacekeeping and peacemaking, between a robust third-party response to on-going violent conflict, and the establishment of conditions to be able to tackle the causes of the dispute. But this bridge-building function also throws up a whole host of questions related to which actors and institutions should be involved in the undertaking, what kind of mandate and resources ought to be involved, and what the timeframe for such an operation might be.

Yet repeated attempts to get all multilateral, governmental and non-governmental actors to agree on a precise definition of peacebuilding have not borne fruit – and in some respects, conceptual ambiguity might well be the lesser of two evils, as it allows international decision-makers the room to manoeuvre their way through potentially tricky negotiations. For most purposes, a functional differentiation of the specific sectors that make up the building blocks of something called 'post-conflict peacebuilding' might well be sufficient – along the lines of security, socio-economic welfare, and justice and the rule of law. What this might entail has been elaborated by Vincent Chetail's peacebuilding lexicon (2009). But questions remain as to the compatibility of such an ambitious agenda with some of the UN's guiding principles of sovereignty and neutrality, for instance (Bertram, 1995), and as has been argued in the case of Somalia, the very act of labelling a particular context as 'post-conflict' and the required intervention as 'peacebuilding' may be pernicious (Menkhaus, 2009). As Oliver Ramsbotham (2007: 170) points out, there is an inherent danger in applying a standard operating procedure to a wide range of disparate conflict settings, 'rather like Wittgenstein's locomotive cabin in which a uniform-looking set of handles in fact fulfil a number of diverse functions'.

The field of peacebuilding is thus potentially vast, and academia has not failed to join the conversation with a rapidly growing body of literature whose works are often written by research analysts straddling the practitioner-scholar divide. There is also a striking predominance of political science and the field of International Relations (see Doyle and Sambianis, 2000; and Zaum, 2013, for an overview), with contributions from the perspectives of international law, development studies, or anthropology, for instance, playing a more minor role. Thankfully, this is beginning to change, as there would otherwise be the risk of perpetuating a rather one-sided debate on the institutional dynamics of peacebuilding – one that, moreover, is decidedly Anglophone, with stakeholders and scholars at pains to find suitable equivalents in their respective languages for the very notion of 'peacebuilding' itself. More critical reflections on this

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[2] B. Boutros-Ghali, *An Agenda for Peace: Preventive Diplomacy, Peacemaking and Peacekeeping*, Report of the General-Secretary pursuant to the statement adopted by the Summit Meeting of the Security Council on 31 January 1992 (New York NY: United Nations, 1992).

[3] See J.P. Lederach, *Building Peace: Sustainable Reconciliation in Divided Societies* (Washington DC: United States Institute of Peace Press, 1997), as well as the more recent monograph, *The Moral Imagination: The Art of Building Peace* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2005).

hegemonic discourse, as well as on the transformative and emancipatory potential of peacebuilding activities (e.g. Fetherston, 2000) are therefore a welcome addition.

The ambiguity of peacebuilding also raises debates about the intervening actors who are (or should be) involved. Conflict mediators are certainly part of these discussions (Papagianni, 2010), which again demonstrates the practical and analytical grey zone between peacebuilding and peacemaking. The development community – and not least the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) – has also been busy reflecting on what peacebuilding might mean to them, and how the term is part of contemporary concerns to rethink, both conceptually and programmatically, the complex linkages between security and development (see Uvin, 2002). What is more, even humanitarians have been spotted scratching their heads over whether or not the rise of the peacebuilding label is of relevance to their work. Do the UN guidelines and principles for civil-military coordination that were developed at the humanitarian-military interface apply for peacebuilding operations involving a variety of civilian actors (De Coning, 2007)? As Jennifer M. Hazen (2007) has convincingly argued based on evidence from Sierra Leone, it is highly questionable whether peacekeepers are equipped to handle peacebuilding tasks. So what, fundamentally, is the role of the armed forces in peacebuilding (Ankersen, 2004)?

As mentioned at the outset, current peacebuilding discussions, particular in practitioner and donor circles, are preoccupied with the merits of the current institutional set-up at the multilateral level. From the inventory of 69 UN missions since the end of the Cold War provided by Volker C. Franke and Andrea Warnecke (2009), the range and variability of interventions is brought starkly to light. And if the notion of peacebuilding is indeed leading to a transformation of peace operations (Diehl, 2006), what are the institutional ramifications of this trend? As Mats Berdal already argued in 2008, the UN's peacebuilding architecture may already have seen its heyday, fallen victim early on to the many compromises that shaped its design (Stahn, 2005). Is the UN's turn to peacebuilding, then, nothing else but a form of 'organised hypocrisy' that has replaced an election-based approach to determining when it is time to leave a post-conflict setting (Hirschmann, 2012)?

Peacebuilding and Development: The Challenges of Security, Welfare, Justice and the Rule of Law

In order to get to grips with such questions, it is worthwhile elaborating on some of the sectoral activities that make up the peacebuilding portfolio. As Rolf Schwarz (2005) outlines, these activities can be categorised along the three core functions of the Weberian state, namely to provide security, socio-economic opportunities and well-being (welfare), and a robust framework of justice and the rule of law (representation). Such a holistic (and by no means apolitical) peacebuilding approach that privileges a stable domestic order reflects recent debates in donor circles to link security and development concerns, which for decades were treated in separate institutional silos (Krause and Jütersonke, 2005). Until very recently, development cooperation agencies had very little interaction with their counterparts in foreign and defence ministries, and to this day the gap in institutional cultures remains prominent. But the aid effectiveness discourse has increasingly sought to transcend this mentality, and the World Bank's *World Development Report 2011*, entitled 'Conflict, Security and Development',

exemplifies this significant change in mindset.[4] Security and development concerns cannot be uncoupled and treated separately, and the concept of peacebuilding is in many ways the heuristic device through which to make sense of, and put into practice, such a joint approach.

As Astri Suhrke (2012) points out, however, linking a security agenda with peace and development concerns is not without its difficulties – particularly in situation where, as in Afghanistan, the military intervention dragged on, resulting in a contradictory situation of 'waging war while building peace'. Yet even if combat does not continue to rage, the risk of a post-conflict situation slipping back into violence is omnipresent, leading to calls for peace support operations to privilege 'security promotion' efforts – in particularly security sector reform (SSR) and the disarmament, demobilisation and reintegration (DDR) of ex-combatants. Increasingly, these activities run under the label of (interim) 'stabilisation' missions, as Nat J. Colletta and Robert Muggah (2009) outline. Again, the logic is to balance security concerns with development needs, and to harness the presence of military resources to reinforce post-conflict institutional structures that reduce levels of violence, improve (real and perceived) security, and instil a sense of trust in legal frameworks and law enforcement agencies. Results continue to be mixed, however, and questions remains as to how DDR, for instance, can be embedded into peacebuilding efforts and aligned more closely with broader development strategies (Hazen, 2011).

Indeed, the complexities of achieving the 'R' in DDR highlight the fact that security concerns need to be coupled with the socio-economic realities of the post-conflict situation. Many people will have profited from the 'war economy', not least from the uncontrolled extraction of natural resources, a practice that has the potential to significantly jeopardise well-meant peacebuilding initiatives (Brown, 2006). As Neil Cooper (2006) argues, however, it is necessary to look beyond a mere 'control agenda' that focuses primarily on the conflict trade in typical goods such as drugs and diamonds. 'Conflict entrepreneurs' are an intrinsic part of the post-conflict economy, and Cooper emphasises the need for peacebuilding practitioners to recognise and acknowledge the complicity of the developed world in creating the conditions for conflict, not least by providing the market for goods stemming from conflict zones. The economic legacy of conflict is thus a highly problematic reality faced by peacemakers and peacebuilders, and Heiko Nitzschke and Kaysie Studdard (2005) stress the need for governments, international organisations and societal actors to privilege a political economy perspective capturing the dynamics of the post-conflict setting.

Yet even if adequate provisions have been made in peace agreements to give combatants and violence entrepreneurs sufficient incentive structures to buy into the negotiated settlement (Wennmann, 2009), the socio-economic reality is going to be stark. Employment opportunities may be scarce, and a labour force with the necessary skill sets unavailable. A host of programming elements and policies thus need to be aligned in order to create the economic conditions for a viable post-conflict recovery – these go beyond fiscal strategies to include the repatriation of flight capital, accountable governance of extractive industries, and the effective management of infrastructural projects and construction booms (Collier, 2009). It will also require a broader definition of corruption that captures not just 'the abuse of public office for private gain', but the profiteering from peacebuilding and reconstruction efforts themselves – corrupt practices that span 'lucrative subcontracting networks, the tax-free salaries of overpaid consultants, donor agencies' aggressive promotion of FDI [foreign direct investment] ventures over domestic entrepreneurship, the fire-sale privatisation of public assets, and the liberalisation

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[4] World Bank, *World Development Report 2011: Conflict, Security and Development* (Washington DC: World Bank, 2011).

of trade and tax policies' (Le Billon, 2008: 355). Indeed, the role of the business sector in peacebuilding is an issue that is only beginning to be discussed, and where a literature is set to emerge in the coming years.

Establishing the rule of law and generating the conditions for a degree of social justice is the third central pillar of peacebuilding efforts. As claimed by some authors, respect for the rule of law and confidence in state institutions is the central prerequisite for security and socio-economic considerations to bear fruit (Chesterman, 2005). Others, by contrast, have argued that the prioritisation of the rule of law entails banking on 'legal or administrative solutions as a short cut to addressing political problems, fetishising the legal framework at the same time as marginalising the political sphere' (Chandler, 2004: 312). In any event, the debate over the role of law – and constitution-making (Samuels, 2006) – in peacebuilding is set to continue. This debate is exemplified by what Vincent Chetail (2009) refers to as the *jus post bellum* for the purpose of encapsulating in one common frame of understanding the myriad of (fragmentary and potentially conflicting) norms of international law that are applicable in a post-conflict environment.

That environment is all about transitioning from a situation regulated by the *jus in bello* and *jus ad bellum* to one of long-term constitutional stability. Peacebuilding literature and practice thus spends considerable time elaborating a plethora of 'transitional' justice concepts for how societies can deal with past human rights abuses and emerge from violent conflict. These range from narrower truth and reconciliation mechanisms to more elaborate institutional arrangements encompassing international trials and legal institutions, based on the recognition that domestic and international criminal justice are not opposing, but mutually interdependent and overlapping systems (Stahn, 2005). But the jury is still out on whether 'truth-telling' or 'truth-seeking' initiatives are actually as conducive to peacebuilding as they are often made out to be, or whether, in the extreme, they may even lead to an exacerbation of tensions in society (Mendeloff, 2004). Similar concerns have been raised that the very notion of 'transitional justice', often externally imposed and culturally insensitive, is potentially harmful to the overall peacebuilding strategy (Lekha Sriram, 2007). Christine Bell (2009) thus questions the pertinence of conceiving transitional justice as a new, 'inter-disciplinary' field of study that may well obscure, rather than shed light on, the tensions between the range of practices and goals it claims to incorporate. What is clear, in any event, is that justice discourses continue to be in transition themselves (Bell, Campbell and Ni Aolain, 2004), and the role of law and legal institutions in peacebuilding remains one of its most challenging and under-studied aspects.

Building a Liberal Peace? Democratisation, the State and Civil Society

As the sectoral approach outlined above demonstrates, there is of course a teleological vision involved in much of this (externally driven) peacebuilding practice – one that Roland Paris described as 'liberal internationalism'. Peacebuilding, according to Paris (1997: 56), 'is in effect an enormous experiment in social engineering – an experiment that involves transplanting Western models of social, political, and economic organisation into war-shattered states in order to control civil conflict: in other words, pacification through political and economic liberalisation'. Paris' assertions sparked an on-going debate over the so-called 'liberal peace'.

Needless to say, the subject matter of the debate is in itself in flux, and as Oliver P. Richmond (2006) examines in detail, the superficial 'peacebuilding consensus', whereby 'like-minded liberal states coexist in a western-oriented international society and states are characterised by democracy, human rights, free markets, development, a vibrant civil society and multilateralism' (Richmond, 2006: 298), is in itself contested, both academically and in practice. John Heathershaw (2008) argues that liberal peacebuilding entails a fragmented discursive environment centred around the notions of democratic peacebuilding, statebuilding and civil society, which merge into an amorphous 'meta-narrative' of what he calls 'pragmatic peacebuilding', a discourse that idealises and attempts to 'self-legitimate' the international community and its practices. In a similar vein, Michael Pugh (2005) questions the core assumptions of the economic dimension of the liberal peace project, namely the required convergence towards market liberalisation. Who is peacebuilding for, he asks, and what purpose does it serve? 'The means for achieving the good life are constructions that emerge from the discourse and policy frameworks dominated by specific capitalist interests – when they correspond to the prevailing mode of ownership. Economic wisdom resides with the powerful' (Pugh, 2005: 13).

As the case of Afghanistan illustrates (Ponzio, 2007), democratisation has, in any event, become the keyword for debates around post-conflict governance – and this was not the case two or three decades ago. Indeed this 'democratic entitlement' is also increasingly supported by an emerging body of international law (Fox, 2003). Liberal democracy is the underlying model, informed by the belief, as Michael Barnett (2006: 88) reminds us, that states organised along liberal-democratic principles are respectful of their societies and peaceful to their neighbours. Additionally, they are seen as more reliable partners than autocracies, as Christoph Zürcher (2011: 81) points out. But peacebuilding and democratisation specialists do not appear to be feeding off one another's expertise sufficiently in order to generate the type of long-term outcome that is supposedly aimed for (Call and Cook, 2003). Instead, for peacebuilding initiatives, democratisation often seems to be equated with speedily working towards the first post-conflict elections, a strategy that has misfired on many occasions and has even led to a recurrence of armed conflict. As Timothy D. Sisk (2008: 241) thus concludes, confronting 'the deep dilemma between conflict management and democratisation involves designing ways in which the conflict-inducing nature of transitional processes can be mitigated such that the initial constraints upon democratisation that arise from peace imperatives can, over time, fall away as trust and legitimacy ostensibly build in the post-war period'.

This emphasis on the institutions of democratic governance has led some commentators to insist that peacebuilding is, essentially, statebuilding (Barnett and Zürcher, 2009) – a view that is also echoed in some of the contemporary donor debates.[5] It is about strategic negotiations with local elites, who may see the liberal peacebuilding intervention as a threat to their power and authority, while at the same time recognising that the resources that come with it may also help consolidate their position within the emerging structures of government. But many, if not most practical peacebuilding activities occur at the sub-national or even local community level, and there is thus an inherent tension – if not even a fundamental contradiction (Chopra, 2009) – between the concrete objectives of the peacebuilder and the overall goals of democratising the state apparatus. As Susanna Campbell and Jenny H. Peterson (2013: 343) write, international statebuilding 'threatens to eclipse efforts to build peace. In practice, statebuilding and peacebuilding have been merged into a technocratic set of projects that tend to strengthen

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[5] Notably the 'Peacebuilding and Statebuilding Goals (PSGs)' of the New Deal for Engagement in Fragile States, developed through the forum of the International Dialogue for Peacebuilding and Statebuilding at the occasion of the 4th High Level Forum on Aid Effectiveness (November 2011).

the capacity of central government, not state-society relations, responsiveness or accountability', thus often failing 'to build either an effective state or sustainable peace'.

The focus on democratisation has led much of the liberal peacebuilding discourse to also embrace the notion of civil society (Paffenholz, 2011) – understood either as a set of societal actors and institutions that need to be strengthened in order to generate a sort of '*contre-pouvoir*' to the (excessively intrusive) state apparatus, or as a vehicle through which to reach the local target communities in 'bottom-up' peacebuilding interventions. Yet the offices of local and international NGOs and other 'grassroots' organisations are themselves populated with members of the local elites, who may well see their involvement in an internationally-support 'civil society' as a convenient and effective means through which to pursue their own political agendas (Pouligny, 2005). Projects aimed at empowering local people may thus inadvertently foster social exclusion and help entrench local rivalries, thereby fraying the fragile social fabric even further. More ominously, David Chandler (2010: 371) has argued that the vocabulary of civil society, as employed in peacebuilding discourse, reproduces previous hierarchical views of race and cultural difference, but in a way that focuses on the autonomy and rationality of the post-conflict subject, rather than on the lack of such autonomy and rationality. As a result, peacebuilding interventions targeting civil society are justified as acts of empowerment and capacity-building, while actually 'reinforcing and reinstitutionalising international hierarchies of power and evading responsibility for policy outcomes' (Chandler, 2010: 387).

Nevertheless, Roland Paris (2010) is probably right when he claims that the scholarly debate about 'liberal peacebuilding' may have been overly zealous in its critical enthusiasm. In any event, the literature has so far failed to formulate a coherent alternative that is also of practical utility to decision-makers. And one constructive avenue may indeed lie in offering a more nuanced appraisal of what we mean by 'liberalism' (and 'liberalisation') in this context. Michael Barnett (2006), for instance, has argued that it may be more appropriate to speak of a 'republican peacebuilding' that privileges the central tenets of deliberation, constitutionalism and representation – rather than being fixed on opening up the market overnight and rolling in the proverbial ballot box. Similarly, Michael Pugh (2009) encourages us to rethink the political economy of welfare in the liberal peace framework in such a way as to capture the 'whole of life' potential of individuals and communities – including informal or even criminal elements that may play a significant role in welfare provision. Such reflections are also on-going in the security realm, where the acknowledgement of the community roles played by a variety of non-state 'armed actors' (from benign neighbourhood watch initiatives to more sinister vigilante groups, from street-corner gangs to drug cartels) constitutes one of the new frontiers of the peacebuilding debate.[6]

Ownership and Engagement: International Standards and Local Dynamics

How have peacebuilding scholars and practitioners sought to conceptualise, both theoretically and operationally, the 'impact' and 'success' of such interventions? How, as Charles T. Call (2008) asks, do you know peace when you see it, and how can you assess the long-term contribution of peacebuilding, as opposed to the mere short-term effect of (UN) peace

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[6] This debate on security provision is particularly pertinent within the context of the world's (largely uncontrolled) urbanisation. For an overview, see Oliver Jütersonke with Keith Krause, 'Peacebuilding in the City: Setting the Scene', *Platform Brief* No. 9 (Geneva: Geneva Peacebuilding Platform, 2013).

operation (Sambianis, 2008)? In an institutional arena in which the local and the intervener, the donor and the recipient are enmeshed in a complex web of legal and political interactions ranging from foreign occupation and international territorial administration (Ratner, 2005) to neo-trusteeship and notions of shared sovereignty (Caplan, 2007), how can we move beyond the cynicism that peacebuilding initiatives are simply the old 'mission civilisatrice' in a new guise (Paris, 2002)?

As Kenneth Bush, widely known for his development of the Peace and Conflict Impact Assessment (PCIA) tool, has repeatedly pointed out, a self-critical examination of peacebuilding practices and experiences must be a central feature of all efforts to design and implement programmes and practices in this area – for often the well-meant peacebuilding project can itself have negative peacebuilding outcomes and consequences. Bush warns of what he calls the 'commodification of peacebuilding', entailing initiatives that are 'mass-produced according to blueprints that meet Northern specifications and (short-term) interests, but that appear to be only marginally relevant to or appropriate for the political, social and economic realities of war-prone societies' (Bush, 2004: 24).

One of the reasons for this trend, as Susan L. Woodward (2013: 328) argues, is that debates about international aid to peacebuilding 'focus almost entirely on current outcomes and proposals', but with little knowledge about the effects of aid on peace. Indeed, there continues to be 'insufficient evidence about the impact of international peacebuilding efforts on war-to-peace outcomes' (Call and Cousens, 2008: 19). And in the absence of what Woodward calls a 'political economy analysis of peacebuilding assistance', the transformation agenda of the major donors and international financial institutions (IFIs) may well be at loggerheads with the aim of promoting peace. Such an analysis might also highlight the ways in which, as Jonathan Goodhand and Mark Sedra (2010: S78) highlight, 'aid policies and programmes have become part of a complex bargaining game involving international actors, domestic elites, and societal groups'. In the context of the 'contentious politics' of ownership, how can coherent peacebuilding priorities be formulated?

One way to think about this dilemma is, of course, to advocate a more participatory approach to peacebuilding. This would involve, as Jarat Chopra and Tanja Hohe (2004) outline, providing space for local voices to be heard and for communities to be actively involved in the shaping of their political and societal institutions. But how can such a 'bottom-up' approach be reconciled with the institutional mindsets, constraints and decision-making repertoires of the international community, with what Roger Mac Ginty (2012) has identified as constituting a 'technocratic turn' in peacebuilding? The norms of peacebuilding, Mac Ginty claims, are 'bolstered by a mutually reinforcing set of institutions to create an increasingly hegemonic system of peace-building that is intolerant of alternatives and creativity' (Mac Ginty, 2012: 288). A focus on the 'bureaucratic imperative' underlying contemporary peace interventions can, according to Mac Ginty, go a long way towards helping us think about how certain actors rise to prominence in the peacebuilding field, and how certain activities are privileged over others.

Yet such an understanding of the routine technocracy of the international community may still leave us short of providing suggestions of how peacebuilding interventions can indeed be 'context-sensitive' and 'inclusive' processes. How can, as Timothy Donais (2009) asks, the under-conceptualised notion of 'local ownership' be applied in such a way that it is not perceived as yet another externally imposed idea? And how can we act upon the insight that the international community may itself be undermining local ownership, in the face of what Cedric de Coning (2013) has rightly diagnosed as a classic case of the tragedy of the commons? 'There

is a persistent lack of recognition', he writes, 'that the amount of time and energy that the new government in Somalia, and all such governments, spends on servicing the needs of their international partners contributes to instability and fragility. No doubt the government of Somalia, like every other of these so-called fragile governments, believe it can come out on top of this game, but the reality is that *he who pays the piper calls the tune*' (de Coning, 2013:1; emphasis in the original).

According to David Chandler (2013), we may need to shift our reflection away from a linear understanding of peacebuilding 'blueprints' towards non-linear approaches that stress the importance of 'hidden agency' and 'resistance'. Armed with the recognition that peacebuilding 'is caught in a web of constituencies that have different and partly competing interests and concerns' (Sending, 2011: 66), and in light of the fact that peacebuilding is essentially about finding ways for these conflicting views and interests to be mitigated in a non-violent and sustainable manner, perhaps the ways in which local and international stakeholders are involved in a complex system of 'patronage and power', to quote Ole Jacob Sending (2009) again, must be seen in a more constructive light. What such a more constructive perspective on local 'realities' could look like, however, continues to be the subject of much debate – and while it may indeed be true that we are not only witnessing a technocratic but also a 'local turn' in peacebuilding (Mac Ginty and Richmond, 2013), a plethora of initiatives and workshops of the 'peacebuilding community' bear testimony to its bepuzzlement in trying to find ways of thinking about how to relate the 'international' and the 'local' in a meaningful way.

One way of doing so that has caught the attention of the peacebuilding community is via the notion of 'hybridity'. Popularised by Volker Boege et al. (2009), the notions of 'hybrid political orders', 'hybrid peace governance' (Belloni, 2012) and even 'hybrid violence' (Krause, 2012) have sought to make sense of a complex reality in which international and local, state and non-state, formal and informal, public and private actors, practices and institutions not only co-exist, but may well be in a variety of symbiotic relationships with one another. As Keith Krause (2012: 40) writes, it constitutes the way in which 'peacebuilding efforts construct and reconstruct new networks of power and governance […] in which the border between external and internal is unclear and intertwined and in which top-down institution-building projects intersect with the micropolitics of local or bottom-up actors'. But like with all such fashionable phrases – 'resilience' is arguably another one that is currently *en vogue*[7] – the 'ideational and institutional bureaucratisation of liberal peace' (Goetschel and Hagmann, 2009) ends up making the heuristic device into the very goal of peacebuilding. Confronting the ambition of using the vocabulary of hybridity to generate a 'post-liberal form of peace' centred around critical agency, resistance and liberation (Richmond, 2012) is hence the international peacebuilding machinery itself, which is already busy making the promotion of hybrid political orders and resilient communities into key features of its programming. There, the supposed emancipatory potential of many of such concepts rings hollow. Concepts freely move between the academic and practitioner communities, but the gaping chasm between scholarly peacebuilding debates and concrete field realities leaves much to be desired.

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[7] See Oliver Jütersonke and Moncef Kartas, "Resilience: Conceptual Reflections", *Platform Brief* No. 6 (Geneva: Geneva Peacebuilding Platform, 2012).

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About the White Paper on Peacebuilding: The White Paper on Peacebuilding is a collaborative, multi-stakeholder process initiated by the Geneva Peacebuilding Platform and supported by the Swiss Federal Department of Foreign Affairs. It has the objective to situate UN peacebuilding within the broader peacebuilding universe and to articulate visions for the future for building peace in violent and fragile contexts. The White Paper places peacebuilding within the changing characteristics of armed violence and security, and within the practical evidence of engagements in peacebuilding contexts emanating from a diversity of fields. Ensuring a better relationship between UN peacebuilding and the broader peacebuilding field is a complementary effort to the existing work surrounding the 10-year review of the UN peacebuilding architecture and an effort to take stock of the nature and evolution of the broader peacebuilding universe.