The Liberal Peace? A Brief Intellectual History of International Conflict Management, 1990-2010

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In this volume, the term 'the liberal peace' is understood as the dominant critical intellectual framework currently applied to post-Cold War policies and practices of post-conflict intervention.   However, as Heathershaw observes, its use within analysis has sometimes tended, misleadingly, to claim that the liberal peace has had only a singular logic or set of assumptions (2008a: 603), gradations of this logic notwithstanding. Both he and Call and Cousens (2008) note that different ideas are at work in the movements between peacebuilding and statebuilding as modes of conflict management. This chapter gives an alternative historical overview of these developments and locates the academic critiques in the context of these changes, giving a sense in which academic critique and political practice have co-evolved. These shifts and expansions reflect something rather more complex, and perhaps more opaque, than a hardening or deepening of a *liberal* logic in intervention – rather they reveal a reflexive anxiety about inadequacy of this logic to address seemingly intractable challenges of conflict, insecurity and underdevelopment. By tracking the recent evolution of these discourses and the critiques of the paradigm, this chapter sets the stage for the other contributions to the volume which interrogate and broaden empirically and conceptually the problem of 'the liberal peace'.

The chapter begins through exploring the intellectual and political climate of the early 1990s and the founding principles of 'peacebuilding' as articulated by the UN. It then shows how these were lost almost immediately in the mid-1990s, to both unfolding global events and new discourses about failing and collapsed states. This had important linkages

with changing discourses in other aspects of institutional intervention, including the policy turn within the international financial institutions towards the question of 'governance'. Connected to a resurgent interest in 'grassroots' and 'bottom-up' interventions, however, therapeutic discourses and practices dealing with trauma, healing and reconciliation became a central element of peacebuilding. At this time an increasingly broad set of actors, including humanitarian and transitional justice agencies, became involved. In the last ten years, however, renewed interest in the question of state fragility and the principles of state-building has become pervasive not just in responses to conflict but the governance of the global South more generally. In conclusion the chapter offers some reflections on the current historical juncture and how this might shape future understandings of conflict management.

UN Peacebuilding, the early years: from social justice to state collapse

In the early days of the practice, third-party post-war interventions were seen as the basic preserve of the UN. The end of the Cold War was a watershed moment for the organisation, and in particular for its Department of Peacekeeping Operations. Having been paralysed from all but minimal activity due to the exercise of Security Council vetoes, it found itself launching fourteen new operational missions between 1988 and 1992, compared to none in the previous ten years (DPKO, 2010). Whilst some of these operations followed the logic of traditional peacekeeping – mainly ceasefire monitoring, others began to foreshadow the more comprehensive, multidimensional and transformative operations that would become the hallmark of post-conflict peacebuilding. Early apparent successes in Nicaragua (1990) and Namibia (1990) - involving relatively light-touch and well-defined missions in already-post-conflict environments – emboldened the organisation to take a

more proactive stance in shaping the nature of the peace to come, through shepherding elections and demobilisation.

It was in this context that Boutros-Ghali's groundbreaking 1992 *Agenda for Peace* statement was delivered. Taken widely as the foundational text for the policy of 'post-conflict peacebuilding', it defined it as "action to identify and support structures which will tend to consolidate peace and advance a sense of confidence and well-being among people" (1992: 32). In this text could clearly be seen an understanding of conflict that was based on structural violence and social grievance as the generative causes, with economic development and political freedom intended as the appropriate remedies:

"Our aims must be…

- To stand ready to assist in peace-building in its differing contexts: rebuilding the institutions and infrastructures of nations torn by civil war and strife; and building bonds of peaceful mutual benefit among nations formerly at war;

- And in the largest sense, *to address the deepest causes of conflict: economic despair, social injustice and political oppression*." (Agenda for Peace, 1992, emphasis added)

Indeed, in defining the term 'peacebuilding,' the *Agenda for Peace* was about re-envisioning a role for the UN as a progressive, autonomous agent of peace, development and global justice after years of marginalisation. This theme is reinforced in the text itself through an explicit connection of the peace agenda to the contemporaneous Rio Summit and the proposed World Forum for Social Development. Establishing 'peacebuilding' as a defined and distinctive activity grounded in the apparently universal aspiration of solving conflict was intended, perhaps successfully in the short-term, to channel the growing

Western attention towards these issues into a blossoming multilateral progressive consensus for peacemaking, development and social justice.

However, this new mandate became almost immediately besieged by events which demonstrated the split between its transformative ambitions and the shape of political events. Even as Boutros-Ghali gave his speech in June 1992, the violence in Bosnia was accelerating, and five months later Savimbi would defect from the UN's carefully-chaperoned electoral process in Angola, prompting extensive caution and delay in the Mozambique mission. In 1993, UN troops and humanitarian workers would be ambushed in Somalia, leading to the re-deployment of US troops and the Black Hawk Down incidents, resulting in the US withdrawal and little appetite to involve itself in international peacemaking. The tragic and egregious failures of UNAMIR in Rwanda in early 1994 seemed to underscore the gulf between Boutros-Ghali's projections for building peace and the mood of the contributing states, whilst the massacre at Srebenica in 1995 seemed to call into question the point of UN peacekeeping altogether. In particular, cracks were beginning to show between the expanded mandate for peacekeeping forces and their attempts to deliver humanitarian and political projects, which were clearly limited.

These peacekeeping failures had a knock-on effect on the ideas governing the expansion of peacebuilding, as the implications of a more ambitious peace operations agenda became clearer. Strangely, however, this was not a pull-back from the extended agenda, but a ramping-up of activity, ambition and response. More actors were involved, and asked to undertake a wider range of tasks. As reflected in the rather less exuberant *Supplement to the Agenda for Peace* (Boutros-Ghali, 1995), failures were rationalised through the perception that the nature of conflict was changing, from interstate to intrastate, and into chaotic, unmanageable situations where state institutions had collapsed:

Another feature of such conflicts is the collapse of state institutions, especially the police and judiciary, with resulting paralysis of governance, a breakdown of law and order, and general banditry and chaos. Not only are the functions of government suspended, its assets are destroyed or looted and experienced officials are killed or flee the country. This is rarely the case in inter-state wars. *It means that international intervention must extend beyond military and humanitarian tasks and must include the promotion of national reconciliation and the re-establishment of effective government.* (1995: section 13, emphasis added)

Nonetheless, Boutros-Ghali attempted to maintain and protect a traditional UN discourse that these were necessary precursors to addressing the injustices that underlay conflict:

As I pointed out in "An Agenda for Development" (A/48/935), *only sustained efforts to resolve underlying socio-economic, cultural and humanitarian problems can place an achieved peace on a durable foundation*. (1995: section 22, emphasis added)

As such, the ideological and political foundations for an altogether more comprehensive, wide-ranging and co-ordinated effort at the transformation of state and society through multilateral multi-dimensional peace operations were being laid, even at this early stage, in the political arena. What we see in the *Supplement* is Boutros-Ghali trying to maintain the UN vision whilst accepting this more pessimistic account of conflict dynamics, which produces the idea that intervention has been insufficient rather than overambitious. This movement towards a comprehensive reform agenda in post-conflict societies was noted at an early stage by academic commentators, who pointed out its potentially radical implications (Bertram 1995).

Managing Global Chaos? **The emergence of a field**

Simultaneously with this new departure in UN thinking, the silos that that had been established in academia between 'peace studies' and 'security studies' through the 1970s and 1980s had begun to break down. In particular, peace studies was rescued from its political obscurity and engaged in the service of this new international agenda for peace. In particular, theories of human need (Burton 1987) and social grievances (Azar 1986) informed these early, Third World-friendly readings of conflict held by multilateral organisations. These readings of conflict held out the promise of peaceful resolution of conflict along politically emancipatory lines. Importantly, they corresponded with the Democracy and Development Agendas of the UN that underpinned the *Agenda for Peace,* and provided a scholarly rationale for how and why peace*building*, envisaged as progressive social transformation, was necessary.

New avenues of research were facilitated by this more expansive peacebuilding programme, which argued for broadening the intervention agenda for a more comprehensive peace programme. Academic debates about conflict prevention and early warning (Lund 1996), the management of spoilers (Stedman 1997), mediation processes (Touval and Zartman 1986), the involvement of humanitarian actors (Prendergast 1996) and the importance of human rights underpinned the much wider and deeper role peacebuilding practices were beginning to assume around conflict. Slowly, this set of concerns began to develop independent momentum as an industry, with various funding streams and research streams coalescing around this agenda. For example, large collaborations such as the UNRISD's *War-Torn Societies Project* (1994-1998) and the *Carnegie Commission on Preventing Deadly Conflict* (1994-1999) were tasked with developing and

bringing together work on conflict prevention and resolutions specifically to address what was seen as the worrying increasing prevalence of intrastate conflict.

The substance of the first United States Institute for Peace collected volume *Managing Global Chaos* (Crocker et al 1996) gives us an interesting snapshot of the moment and captures some of the core intellectual trends which supported this expansion of the notion of peacebuilding, as understood by the peace studies community. The volume itself is divided into sections on the sources of conflict, with prominence given both to 'structural' explanations and social-psychological explanations, a large second section on traditional means of diplomacy, collective security, peacekeeping and humanitarian intervention, a sizeable third section on conflict management via mediation, conflict prevention and problem-solving, and a final, briefer section on the consolidation of peace and the need for custodianship of the post-settlement phase. The drawing together of these questions in a single textbook volume announced assertively the presence of a coherent, professional and focused field of conflict analysis and peace-based interventions, and strongly echoed the political climate in which it was believed that improving knowledge of conflict and peace processes would enable a willing international community to resolve these problems. At the time, critique of the paradigm, such as it existed, was highly focused on the technical questions of sequencing and speed, albeit with some consciousness of its politics.

However, the optimism of these approaches in foreign policy circles was also tested by the events of the 1990s, even as the field began to cohere. The intellectual and policy climate in Washington on conflict and post-conflict situations grew darker, beginning to reflect a growing perception of global collapse and chaos. A parallel worldview began to emerge in this period, particularly from the security community during and after the problems of Somalia and Rwanda, in which it was argued that the UN apparatus was ill-

equipped to deal with conflict. Publications in this vein included ex-US Government advisers Helman and Ratner's influential and provocative (1992) *Foreign Policy* article on 'Saving Failed States', Robert Kaplan's 'The Coming Anarchy' (1994) and Zartman's (1995) edited *Collapsed States: the disintegration and restoration of legitimate authority*. Although arguing in different modes, they collectively signalled a belief in a world that was, outside the West, subject to deep disorder and spinning further adrift from the state authority and order of the Cold War era. These states were seen as no longer 'transitioning' but 'failed' or 'failing', presenting a threat to regional and global security.

Although ostensibly coming from different places, these different intellectual traditions – peace studies and security studies respectively – nonetheless pushed international multilateral policy on conflict in a more or less consistent direction,: based on superior knowledge, deeper involvement, more commitment and the use of force where necessary, the international community could and should undertake more comprehensive and extensive interventions to secure global peace. This broad consensus became a basic truism of what came to be understood in later years as 'the liberal peace' by its critics.

Institutionalisation: the turn to governance, responsibility and transitional administration

Whilst the new preoccupations with peacebuilding and state failure were beginning to animate the peace and security intellectual communities during the 1990s, the economic development community was also beginning to move in a similar direction. As Williams and Young (1994) note, in the early 1990s the international financial institutions, and particularly the World Bank, became quickly and deeply interested in questions of 'good governance', which it characterised as pertaining to the technical functional requirements of modern statehood, moving the institution towards a much more maximalist interpretation of its mandates for promoting 'efficiency'. This allowed it, in the framework of articles

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forbidding involvement in non-economic affairs, to become involved in legal reforms, reforms within the state, the promotion of civil society and so on. These were significant departures in terms of both the ideas and practices of the Bank that underscored the end of an uncontrolled market orthodoxy and a shift towards a more regulatory approach. This shift precipitated a rapid expansion of sectoral activities and a much deeper embedding in the governments of recipient states, such that they became part of the permanent state apparatus itself (Harrison 2005).

There were clear parallels between the expansion of this agenda and the expansion of the peace and security agendas, which connected the phenomena of conflict and underdevelopment to having their roots in a malfunctioning political society in need of detailed and externally-driven reform. Indeed, in practice these structures of external governance were deeply connected at the level of national missions, with powerful co-ordination mechanisms being established, such as the International Committee for the Reconstruction of Cambodia, which brought together the peacekeeping mission structures with the international financial institutions and other donor governments' agencies (UNDPKO 2010b). Although in theory these mechanisms were subordinate to national governments, in practice they were often the centre of political decision-making in the post-war periods (Harrison 2005).

Connected with this practical merger between conflict management and economic reform was also the growth of international political discourses about sovereignty as responsibility (see Deng 1996), which sought to provide a legal-political orientation for the increasingly interventionist climate. A symptom of this new discourse was the establishment of the International Commission on Intervention and State Sovereignty. Informed by the need for 'no more Rwandas' as well as the memory of Srebenica, this eminent group of

lawyers and experts represented the attempt to find a way to square the problem of the norm of non-intervention with the apparent moral need to intervene (ICISS, 2001). As such, the *Responsibility to Protect* aimed to provide a standing basis for humanitarian and other forms of intervention. These conceptual adjustments to the political status of sovereignty followed on from, amongst other events, the rapid growth of the *de facto* role of the Office of the High Representative in Bosnia from 1995, which took on a increasing number of binding governmental powers as part of the Bonn Agreement in 1997, and the establishment of the UN protectorates in Kosovo and East Timor in 1999. The mandates for the presence in Kosovo and East Timor were unprecedented in terms of powers being comprehensively and indefinitely devolved to the UN SRSG until such time as self-government could be established. Yet they were continuous with – and perhaps the logical conclusion of – the discourses that had been developing over the previous years, both in terms of the primacy of the 'governance' agenda within the peace, security and development institutions and the notion of sovereignty as responsibility.

Turbulent Peace? **Reconciliation and healing in the wake of conflict**

Whilst the lofty discourses of the duties of liberal internationalism and changing sovereignty norms took place on the stage of international politics (see Blair's Chicago Speech, 1999), other themes of trauma, illness and healing informed a parallel and more doveish academic and practitioner discourse towards conflict, which sought a more conciliatory and therapeutic approach to intervention. Indeed, this discourse was also present in the *Supplement* (UN 1995), which referred to the potential for peacebuilding for "healing the wounds after conflict has occurred" (ibid., section 49). This began to inflect the core peacebuilding literature. For example, Krishna Kumar, writing from within the United States Agency for International Development, framed peacebuilding essentially as the

political, economic and social 'rehabilitation' to address the needs of "countries shattered by war" (Kumar 1997: ch.1), reflecting very much how certain kinds of practitioners saw their role.

The notion of 'rehabilitation' was consistent with the medicalisation of 'war-torn societies' as patients or wards of the international community, essentially incapacitated and unable to manage (Hughes and Pupavac 2005). In these discourses, the international community's presence was also viewed as curative and restorative in the wake of conflict – a position which resonated with the way that NGOs in particular had come to see their expanded presence in the global South. This conceptualised peacebuilding as being essentially continuous with humanitarian assistance, administered to the needy out of an ethic of care and based on a Burtonian framework of human needs (Tschirgi 2004). This then became compatible with the tradition whereby peacebuilding, alongside humanitarian assistance and other forms of care work had roots in a sense of practical moral vocation as well as, or perhaps instead of, a political intervention. In many senses this was a substantive critique of the geopolitics that had determined Western assistance strategies in the past.

A cognate emphasis on reconciliation and healing also emerged from practitioners such as John Paul Lederach who had come from a Christian humanist background and worked at 'grassroots' levels in Central America. Lederach in particular advocated for a multi-modal and multi-level form of peacebuilding in which all levels of society, comprising the elites, mid-level and grassroots, would engage in different forms of peacebuilding and reconciliation (1997). This kind of rationale was applied by many practitioners to their interpretations of Rwanda's famous *gacaca* trials, which could be seen as a form of community-level healing process (Clark 2007). More generally, these kinds of discourses provided the basis for an increased role for transitional justice and human rights

mechanisms under the umbrella notion of 'sustainable peace', which emphasised a need to remake post-conflict social relations and deter future human rights abuses (see ICTJ 2003)..

For a brief time this approach was included more prominently in mainstream thinking about conflict management. The second edition of the USIP textbook *Turbulent Peace* (Crocker, Hampson and Aall 2001) amended its last section to reflect this new focus, calling it "Peacebuilding: From Settlement to Reconciliation", and included pieces from Lederach and others working on the reconciliation and rehabilitation paradigms. Although motivated by a distinctive view of conflict and the needs of post-conflict societies, ideas of peacebuilding these approaches fit with existing deliberations on conflict management insofar as they tended to validate in a different way a need for third party involvement in post-conflict societies, whilst simultaneously emphasising the need for this to be a 'grassroots' affair. In this vision, third parties play the roles of counsellors or therapists, facilitating a process of self-knowledge, or of advocates in the search for justice. Importantly, this was not received in practice as incompatible with the existing views that third parties should be seen as experts in conflict management, governance and political order. Rather, the emphasis on holism underpinned a diversification of third party approaches and the expansion of opportunities for intervention. In this sense, they worked as a complement to the Blairist interventionism in high politics. If *Managing Global Chaos* was a disciplinary intervention to reinforce the potential of conflict management strategies, *Turbulent Peace* seemed to demonstrate that approaches from different traditions might nonetheless be brought together under the same intellectual and practical umbrella.

Questioning the liberal peace: ideology, hegemony and (dys)functions

However, it was not long before more substantial academic critiques emerged of the peacebuilding paradigm from various quarters. One of the most prominent of these was

Roland Paris's critique of liberal peacebuilding as being excessively concerned with political and economic liberalisation (1997, 2004). Framed as a response to the 'liberal peace' debate within International Relations around Michael Doyle's work (1983), Paris argued that practices of early liberalisation in post-war environments could be destabilising for divided societies, who required institutionalisation before liberalisation (IBL). This approach seemed to confirm academically the orientation that had already been adopted in practice in Bosnia, Kosovo and East Timor. Paris however also argued that structurally liberal peacebuilding constituted an internationalisation of a particular form of government – free market liberal democracy, albeit one with which he was ultimately comfortable despite some similarities with colonialism (2002, also chapter 3 in this volume). Although the implications of Paris' critique could be seen in earlier discussions of conflict management, such as those of Ball and Halevy (1996), the emphasis on the problems posed by what were identified as its *liberal ideological* groundings also became a touchstone in a different kind of debate on the liberal peace amongst its critics, as we argue in the introduction to this book.

Duffield for example used the term the 'liberal peace' to describe international activity resulting from post-war interventions but did not limit this to a subset of UN missions in the 1990s, as Paris had done. Rather, the scope of the critique included the growing inter-relationship at the institutional and practical levels between international regimes of economic governance, increasingly intimate programmes of aid and development, modes of conflict-related intervention and global economic flows (2001). Duffield argued that the liberal peace was not ultimately emancipatory or transformative in ambition or practice: rather it was a regulatory network of governance, the aim of which was to control and stabilise disorder in the global South. The "liberal peace" as such was a radicalisation of development and in part flowed from the effects of globalisation which had

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eroded state control. As such, consideration of the 'liberal peace' needed to deal with the broader processes and networks of intervention in which overt interventions were embedded.

The intellectual background to Duffield's critique was the literature on complex emergencies that had become of interest to development, humanitarian and conflict analysis practitioners, the political economy of conflict and new wars (Berdal and Keen 1997, Cliffe and Luckham 1999, Kaldor 1999). This work, emerging from academics working closely in conflict environments, fundamentally challenged the paradigms of conflict that had informed peacebuilding to date, which had argued that continuing violent conflict was the result of socioeconomic grievances (Berdal and Malone 2000). Rather, work focusing on the political economy of war argued in a detailed and empirical way that war was its own alternative system of profit, power and protection (Berdal and Keen 1997, Keen 1998), in which the collapse of states provided the context for new forms of socioeconomic order linked to the global economy. In a related vein, Pugh argued that reconstruction continued to be informed by neoliberal economic models that systematically removed forms of social protection in post-war economies, causing people to engage in illicit economic activity as a means of survival (2002).

Whilst understanding 'the liberal peace' in ways that differed in both conceptual framing and scope, it is noteworthy that both Paris and Duffield located their work in the context of 'globalisation' debates which were highly topical and widespread at that juncture in the political and academic worlds (Held and McGrew et al 1999, Giddens 2000), . For Paris, globalisation entailed the internationalisation of a particular form of liberal democratic polity that should be more responsibly and strategically managed by the international community, whereas for Duffield it represented the ongoing dismantling of government and

politics as formerly understood, giving rise to new forms of regulation. In this sense we can see that this historical-intellectual juncture contributed substantially to the formulation of two influential conceptions of the 'liberal peace', which are understood as different facets of 'globalisation'. Thinking about the critiques in this way brings to the fore the contemporary preoccupations shaping the ideas, and sheds light on what future critiques might raise.

Leashing the Dogs of War! **9/11 and statebuilding reloaded**

9/11 and the subsequent official securitisation of "failed states" in the US's National Security Strategy had a definitive effect on the intellectual and political direction of intervention and the globalisation debate. Whereas in the immediate run-up to this period, the conflict management field had taken a turn towards the conciliatory and holistic, in its aftermath there was acomprehensive turn towards the ideas of 'statebuilding' as policy and practice. As shown earlier, concerns about 'failed states' had formed part of academic and institutional conflict management discourses since the mid 1990s and in this sense were not 'new'. What was different in this period was their rapid ascendance to prominence through a clear integration in the policies of the United States in its most interventionist period of recent years.[1] This was further compounded through an apparent expansion of expertise in questions of governance amongst the IFIs. As such, discussion of 'statebuilding' as an independent object of concern greatly expanded. Although this change initially corresponded with a depiction of the regimes in pre-invasion Baghdad and Kabul as 'failed', it was the experience of suddenly disbanding Iraqi state personnel and watching the ensuing chaos that renewed interest in how to 'fix' failed states.

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[1] See Mallaby (2002) for a widely circulated and clear exposition of the political rationale connecting state failure and US interventionism.

This new focus on statebuilding and governance was pronounced amongst the policy community, with governmental agencies such as USAID and the UK's Department for International Development both issuing new guidelines and frameworks about engaging with 'fragile states' (USAID 2005, DfID 2007), which came to dominate their political activity and funding streams for research. The World Bank adopted 'statebuilding' as one of the principal objectives for the organisation, and also began to fund initiatives that would extend its competence in the area (UNDP, 2010). In a move that symbolised the new hierarchy, the OECD began to define good governance and peacebuilding as activities which were to be understood as activities falling under the general umbrella of statebuilding (OECD 2007).

Quite suddenly, the field of conflict management became overwhelmed by rapidly proliferating literature on the question of statebuilding, state failure and its implications for potential interveners (see Rotberg 2003, Fukuyama 2004, Chesterman 2005, Call and Wyeth 2008, Ghani and Lockhart 2008). In this literature, there was a general consensus that 'statebuilding' meant constructing "effective, legitimate institutions of governance" (Paris and Sisk, 2009), though there were disagreements about the meaning of each of these terms, and what constructing them would entail. For example, Rotberg defined governance as "the effective provision of political goods to citizens" (2004). Such a reading seemed to be at odds with standing definitions used in organisations such as the World Bank, which defined it as "the traditions and institutions by which authority in a country is exercised" (World Bank 2007). As the statebuilding debate continued, there was also something of a sociological backlash to the co-optation of Weber's definition of the state into a more narrowly defined conception of legitimacy based on liberal democracy (e.g. Schlichte 2005).

This was perhaps unsurprising given the ongoing failures of the new regimes in Baghdad and Kabul to win popular support despite the widely-touted electoral processes.

Once more this change in intellectual direction in the field was reflected in USIP's compendium on conflict management (Crocker, Hampson and Aall 2007). In its content, this third volume, *Leashing the Dogs of War: Conflict Management in a Divided World*, strongly echoed the turn that had been occurring intellectually and political regarding the preoccupation with statebuilding as the appropriate response to crises. The last section, entitled 'The Uses and Limits of Governance in Conflict Management' focused on the compromises between democracy, stability and sovereignty in dealing with failed states, and tellingly jettisoned any reference to 'peace' or 'reconciliation'. Indeed, this turn away from 'peace' was a self-conscious one, according to the editors, based on the challenges of a new security environment characterised by "terrorism, weapons of mass destruction, rogue states and conflict" (2007: 4). In exploring these phenomena as primary drivers of conflict and pushing issues such as political grievances, resource scarcity and economic opportunities further down the list, the volume captured the mood of an intellectual climate that was altogether more focused on the perceived security threats to the West than the 'resolution' of conflict.

This new framing of conflict management techniques and concerns had a clear knock-on effect for understandings of peacebuilding, where they still existed, which sought to maintain the historic discourse that had framed past actions, whilst attempting to capture evolving understandings of conflict. This can be seen most clearly in the way in which the new UN Peacebuilding Commission (from 2005) framed its missions. Whilst on the one hand this body was the inheritor of the older doctrines of peacebuilding from Boutros-Ghali, its latest orientations show the changes in the intellectual environment. For example, in the

strategy document for Burundi, one of its few selected cases for sustained activity, 'good governance' is the first listed priority for peacebuilding, coming above even the maintenance of the ceasefire, and above concern for economic and social reform to address political grievances (UNPBC 2007). As Le Billon notes, concern to fight corruption in particular became mainstreamed in peacebuilding practices following high-profile arguments from the IFIs that linked governance, security and conflict (2008). This was a key move in the concretisation of the new governance agenda and became a hallmark not just of peacebuilding operations but the developmental agenda more broadly.

Since 2001, the overt re-configuration of mainstream academic and political discourses and practices of conflict management away from peace and reconciliation towards governance and statebuilding has been substantial and systematic, in no small part catalysed by a new security agenda, the substantive political problems faced by the coalition in Iraq and Afghanistan, and changing political discourses about the origins of conflict. In this sense, earlier critical discussions of the security-development merger (e.g. Duffield 2001) proved prescient of the trend which would come into fruition in statebuilding discourses, although they could not have anticipated the urgency with which this would accelerate. Historically speaking though, it is consistent with the trends in conflict management as a changing set of lenses through which international elite actors have sought to diagnose the sources of instability in the South.

The 'liberal peace' debate as meta-critique

More recent scholarly critiques of the 'liberal peace' have sought to analyses these discursive evolutions under one paradigm, which operate as a kind of meta-critique of contemporary projects of conflict management. As this has evolved, the debate has become increasingly distant from the concerns of the policy discourse. Richmond (2005) for example

argued that the 'liberal peace' was a composite of different Enlightenment discourses comprising the victor's peace, the institutional peace, the constitutional peace and the civil peace, which had been evolving over the centuries in the liberal European imagination, and found recent expression in the 'peacebuilding consensus' . Incorporated in this general problematic were the principles of the rule of law, constitutional democracy, human rights, neoliberal development and the civil peace, as implemented by an "alphabet soup" of organisations who delivered 'peace-as-governance'. Building on the critiques of Duffield as well as other forms of critical IR theory, this general formulation became an important touchstone in an increasingly polarised debate (see Paris, this volume), which began to challenge the nature of the 'liberal peace' in a number of different ways (see introduction, this volume). Nonetheless, there was a consensus that the liberal peace represented a single and coherent object of inquiry (Ginty and Richmond 2007) which acted as the point of departure for this discussion.

Yet this meta-critique, which has been stimulating and illuminating in its form and content, generally downplayed the ways in which the composition of conflict management discourses and practices rapidly shifted over time to incorporate a set of changing ontologies, values and methods in a reflexive manner.[2] This itself reflected different priorities and power shifts amongst would-be interveners which is a key underlying condition for these changes. In this sense there has been a growing disconnection between policy debates seeking to refine methods and academic debates centring around the politics

[2] An exception to this trend is Bendaña (2005), as well as Heathershaw (2008a) and Call and Cousens (2008).

of intervention. Whilst interesting debates have emerged about the extent to which practices are really 'liberal' (Chandler, this volume), relatively little attention has been paid to the disappearance of 'peace' from the dominant discourses. Yet this is in some senses the more striking question when thinking about the recent history of conflict management, and in particular when thinking about the substantive role that notions of 'peace' played in legitimating interventions in the past. Furthermore, although the framing of interveners is important, a critique which mainly looks at this can overstate the extent to which Western conflict management practices do in fact effect transformation (Heathershaw 2008b).

The contributions to this volume develop a number of sustained arguments about the limitations and new possible directions of this meta-critique. Calls to engage, re-discover or promote the 'hybrid' (Ginty, this volume), 'everyday' and 'post-liberal' (Richmond, this volume) aspects of these practices respond by turning towards a more distinctively humanist basis for critique, articulated in distinction to a more ideologically-driven liberal or neoliberal peace. It is clear that in some senses this shows continuities with the early concerns of the peace studies movement, which, as argued in this chapter, originally informed conceptions of peacebuilding. Yet others challenge in a more fundamental sense whether the 'liberal peace' has in fact deserved this title. This opens the possibilities for a much deeper problematisation of the ways in which world order over the last few years can be understood.

Conclusion: Looking back and thinking ahead

What we have seen over the last twenty years has been a series of changing ideas and discourses about international conflict management, which have been premised on the basis of the global North bringing peace to the South through modes of social and political transformation. Critiques of these approaches have identified them in large part as 'liberal'

in orientation and 'global' in scope. This chapter has shown that particular historical and intellectual junctures were influential in shaping both practices of conflict management and their critiques.

At the time of writing, we await the publication of a fourth USIP volume by Crocker, Hampson and Aall – *Rewiring Regional Security in a Fragmented World* (2011). Early material indicates a lateral step away from the themes of the first three volumes, which all imagine a global, Western-led form of conflict management and political transformation, towards a more minimalist and fragmented set of security regimes. This may be a strong indication that the ambitious and expansive 'peacebuilding' project has finally fallen out of public political favour as the international community feels increasingly unable to commit to its demands and objectives. Signs are that the US in particular feels itself in a mode of transition and is retrenching its prospects and priorities.

What is also clear is that the next iteration of the important debate will also have to speak to an increasingly confident global South, which shows scepticism towards traditional forms of assistance and the presumed better capabilities of the North. Many of the contributions in this volume demonstrate how, across various contexts and spaces, the 'liberal peace' has been more or less marginal to a number of outcomes, particularly where other aid partners play an important role. It will be interesting to see what a future role for the conflict management industry might be in disorderly environments, and whether the short history of peacebuilding might remain a unique episode in a changing global order.

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