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Peacebuilding After Civil War

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Peacebuilding After Civil War

Abstract

Book Summary: This comprehensive new Handbook explores the significance and nature of armed intrastate conflict and civil war in the modern world. Civil wars and intrastate conflict represent the principal form of organised violence since the end of World War II, and certainly in the contemporary era. These conflicts have a huge impact and drive major political change within the societies in which they occur, as well as on an international scale. The global importance of recent intrastate and regional conflicts in Afghanistan, Pakistan, Iraq, Somalia, Nepal, Cote d'Ivoire, Syria and Libya – amongst others – has served to refocus academic and policy interest upon civil war.

Chapter Summary: This chapter provides an assessment of current theories regarding peacebuilding efforts following civil war, evaluates UN peacebuilding efforts over the past 20 years, and offers suggestions regarding future research on the topic.

Keywords

Civil war, armed conflict, military, enemy, international relations, peacebuilding, reconstruction

Disciplines

International Relations | Military and Veterans Studies | Military History | Peace and Conflict Studies | Political Science | Social History

PEACEBUILDING AFTER CIVIL WAR

Caroline A. Hartzell

The term *peacebuilding* is generally agreed to have become part of diplomatic discourse in 1992 when it appeared in UN Secretary-General Boutros-Boutros Ghali's *Agenda for Peace*. Initially defined by Boutros Ghali as "action to identify and support structures which will tend to strengthen and solidify peace in order to avoid a relapse into conflict," post-conflict peacebuilding was conceived as a key conflict management tool, along with preventive diplomacy, peacemaking, and peacekeeping, for use by the UN in its efforts to promote peace (UN 1992, para 21). On the face of it, peacebuilding is but one component of a multidimensional approach to fostering peace. In practice, as part of the activist international agenda that was adopted in the post-Cold War era, post-conflict peacebuilding has entailed the "re-engineering" of societies emerging from civil war along liberal lines in an effort to prevent their return to conflict (Tschirgi 2004, 4).

This chapter seeks to provide an overview of what has transpired in the peacebuilding realm during the twenty years since the international community first formally took up the practice. The first three parts of the chapter consist of an effort to disaggregate peacebuilding. This focuses on the ambiguity of the concept; debates surrounding the liberal peace, the theory that underpins contemporary peacebuilding; and the lack of clarity associated with the goals peacebuilding seeks to achieve. I then turn to efforts that have been made to assess whether peacebuilding works before concluding with suggestions for future directions for research on the topic.

Disaggregating peacebuilding, part I: conceptual ambiguity

As first defined by Boutros Ghali in *An Agenda for Peace*, peacebuilding was the end point on a continuum of activities external actors could employ in an effort to sustain or foster peace. "Preventive diplomacy," according to this line of thinking

seeks to resolve disputes before violence breaks out; peacemaking and peacekeeping are required to halt conflicts and preserve peace once it is attained. If successful, they strengthen the opportunity for post-conflict peace-building, which can prevent the recurrence of violence among nations and peoples.

(UN 1992, para 21)

Efforts to help build a durable peace were envisioned by the Secretary-General as involving the rebuilding of institutions and infrastructure damaged by conflict as well as extending to security, humanitarian, development, and governance-related activities.

Although several practices associated with peacebuilding – such as monitoring the disarmament of warring groups, supervising elections, and repatriating refugees – had been made use of in previous UN peacekeeping operations (for example, the United Nations Transitional Assistance Group in Namibia and the United Nations Transitional Authority in Cambodia), the UN Operation in Somalia, in combination with US actions in that country, is generally regarded as constituting the first genuine peacebuilding operation. The operation in Somalia involved “more intrusive peacebuilding activities” than previous missions, in part because the country lacked a central government authority, as well as employing a mix of emergency relief, efforts to establish law and order, and local reconciliation efforts (Diehl 2006, 121).

In the ensuing decade UN peacebuilding operations grew in number as well as spreading geographically. Regional organizations, including the AU, the EU, ECOWAS (the Economic Community of West African States), NATO, and the OSCE (Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe), also came to play an increasing role in such operations (Chetail 2009). Within countries, development agencies created new units tasked with designing and implementing new programs focused on peacebuilding activities such as disarmament, demobilization, and reintegration (DDR) and election monitoring. And, although they became engaged in peacebuilding quite a bit later than other actors, by the mid-to-late 1990s the World Bank and International Monetary Fund (IMF) had become involved in financing post-conflict reconstruction efforts.

One interpretation of the willingness of such a disparate group of actors to join forces as part of the international commitment to peacebuilding is that it signals a real understanding of and commitment to the sectoral approach to peacebuilding espoused by Boutros Ghali – i.e. the notion that there are security, political, economic, legal, and social dimensions to peacekeeping, some of which might better be tended to by some types of actors rather than others. Another possibility, however, is that “the willingness of so many diverse constituencies with divergent and sometimes conflicting interests to rally around peacebuilding also suggests that one of the concept’s talents is to camouflage divisions over how to handle the post conflict challenge” (Barnett *et al.* 2007, 44). Although a model of peacebuilding that is malleable enough to allow for “buy in” by a diverse set of actors might have its benefits, one danger inherent in a conceptualization of peacebuilding that allows numerous entities to carve out their own areas of action and expertise is that peacebuilding “silos” can develop with actors either duplicating or, worse yet, undercutting one another’s efforts. This lack of coordination did, in fact, prove to be an issue that UN reviews of peacebuilding later highlighted as a problem.

Adding to the challenge that the growth in the numbers and types of actors involved in peacebuilding posed for understanding just what it was that peacebuilding entailed, the concept was broadened further in the 1995 *Supplement to An Agenda for Peace* (UN 1995) in order to emphasize the need for “integrated action” by various components of the UN system across the pre-conflict, conflict, and post-conflict periods. One result of this expansion in the peacebuilding concept was that it came to have little analytical or practical utility. As Call and Cousens (2008) emphasize, missing were any “consistently reliable mechanisms” to help practitioners “exercise judgment about priorities and the mobilization of resources behind them, nor clarity about ultimate goals or specific objectives or a shared understanding of the standards by which outcomes should be evaluated” (3). In particular, the lack of clarity regarding the goals peacebuilding was meant to achieve (a topic I turn to in the third part of this chapter) generated real divisions among policymakers, advocates, and scholars. Borrowing from the distinction

between “positive peace” and “negative peace” conceived by Johann Galtung (1975), whereas some practitioners and analysts deemed that securing an end to organized violent conflict among groups within the state (negative peace) could be considered a real achievement, the perspective adopted by others was that preventing the recurrence of conflict required reconciling differences, promoting social justice, and altering norms (positive peace).

Disaggregating peacebuilding, part II: contested theory

If, as a major study of the first decade of peacebuilding operations concluded, “key bilateral and multilateral actors approached post-conflict peacebuilding from multiple perspectives without a common definition or ‘doctrine’ of peacebuilding” (Tschirgi 2004, 7), this does not mean that there has not been a common theoretical perspective informing peacebuilding efforts. “All peacebuilding interventions,” as Menkhaus has observed, “are based on theories about the nature of conflict and the nature of sustained peace” (2004, 8). In the case of post-civil war peacebuilding as practiced in the post-Cold War era, the theory in question has been that of the liberal peace.

The liberal peace thesis reflects a long history of Western thinking about the political and economic models most likely to secure and promote the peace, both among and within states. Proponents of the liberal peace view liberal democracy, free-market economies, the rule of law, and institutions capable of providing for security and development as critical components of stable and functional states (Rotberg 2003; Doyle 2005). According to this perspective, countries that have experienced civil war can best ensure that conflict will not break out again by democratizing, adopting free-market economies, strengthening governance, and engaging in security sector reform. Once installed, market democracies and related institutions are thought to help support a durable peace by fostering restraint, tolerance for others, predictability, justice, a sense of security, and prosperity, on the one hand, and minimizing the potential for governmental abuse and arbitrary action on the other hand (Paris 2004; Stephenson 2005).

Liberalization of the type envisioned by liberal peace theory is thoroughgoing in nature. As described by Paris (2004, 5)

In the political realm, liberalization means democratization, or the promotion of periodic and genuine elections, constitutional limitations on the exercise of governmental power, and respect for basic civil liberties, including freedom of speech, assembly, and conscience. In the economic realm, liberalization means marketization, or movement toward a market-oriented economic model, including measures aimed at minimizing government intrusion in the economy, and maximizing the freedom for private investors, producers, and consumers to pursue their respective economic interests.

Peacebuilding missions that seek to implement liberalization of this nature are, as Paris (2004) concludes, “nothing less than an enormous experiment in social engineering” (4). Or, as one member of the UN peacebuilding mission in Sierra Leone acknowledged, peacebuilding of this nature and on this scale constitutes nothing less than “interference in national sovereignty” (Moore 2011).

Given the intrusive nature of liberal peacebuilding, it is little surprise that the enterprise has generated a number of critiques. Some critics have questioned the assumptions that undergird liberal interventions while others have focused on the manner in which these peacebuilding interventions are implemented. Other analysts, while acknowledging problems with current peacebuilding practices, argue that, on the one hand, liberal peacebuilding is not as monolithic as some critics make it out to be and, on the other hand, that most of the alternatives to the

liberal peace model of ensuring that states do not return to civil war are themselves based on liberal conceptions of the peace. I review these arguments below.

Scholars identified with what has come to be known as the “critical” approach to peacebuilding have raised questions regarding whether or not the values this perspective seeks to promote are universal in nature or, more narrowly, whether they are suitable in the context of post-civil war states (Chandler 2010). Newman *et al.* (2009) engage both of these issues in their work. Noting that a number of liberal ideas are historically and culturally specific, they ask whether the liberal peace is being promoted in contexts in which it may be “fundamentally inappropriate” for social or cultural reasons (12). In addition, they suggest that, in some cases

some of the values and approaches may be at odds with the attainment of sustainable peace, when, for example, they promote a neo-liberal economic agenda, which may exacerbate social or economic tensions or obstruct the reintegration of displaced people; or where democracy promotion exacerbates political conflict and sectarian divisions.

(ibid.)

Przeworski’s observation that democracy requires uncertainty in order to function provides some support for the argument presented above. Rivals, notes Przeworski, must believe that they have a chance of winning elections – while also understanding that there is a possibility they might lose such contests (1991). Such uncertainty, however, can be highly unsettling for groups in post-war states, particularly those whose recent experiences of conflict heighten concerns about whether an electoral loss might lead to threats to their survival.

In a related vein, a number of scholars have pointed out that processes of political and economic liberalization can be extremely destabilizing. As Paris remarks

the transition from civil conflict to a well-established market democracy is full of pitfalls: Promoting democratization and marketization has the potential to stimulate higher levels of societal competition at the very moment (immediately following the conflict) when states are least equipped to contain such tensions within peaceful bounds.

(2004, 6)

The holding of early elections in post-conflict countries is a case in point. Analyzing all countries that experienced civil conflict between 1960 and 2002, Flores and Nooruddin (2012) find that elections held in new democracies during the first two years following the conflict’s end increased the probability that fighting would reignite. They posit that elections have this destabilizing effect because, in the absence of long-established institutions like independent judiciaries and media, there are few means of checking the behavior of newly elected leaders and assuaging the concerns of opponents who fear retribution. Turning to the economic realm, recent empirical evidence indicating that countries that adopted IMF structural adjustment programs as a means of liberalizing their economies had a higher likelihood of experiencing the onset of civil war raises questions regarding the disruptive impact of neoliberal economic policies, an effect likely to be more pronounced in a fragile post-conflict environment (Hartzell *et al.* 2010; see also de Soto and del Castillo 1994).

Liberal peace theory has also been criticized for privileging “formal institutions over informal or traditional structures for the purpose of restoring the authority of the state” (Chetail 2009, 10). Although the “structures” that peacebuilding missions are supposed to work with to strengthen and solidify the peace could, in principle, be local in nature, peacebuilding often ignores authority structures with local legitimacy that operate outside the state (Cubitt 2013).

Perhaps more damning yet, peacebuilding interventions have been accused of employing “predetermined templates for reform” that deter local ownership in peacebuilding processes and thus limit the potential for building a lasting peace “because outsiders do not know how to correctly identify peace in complex war-torn environs” (Cubitt 2013, 92; see also Donais 2009).

Finally, liberal theory has been challenged on the basis of its assumptions regarding the malleability of society and the extent to which war creates a “tabula rasa where societies can be radically remade” (International Association for Humanitarian Policy and Conflict Research 2007–2008). The comprehensive nature of peacebuilding suggests that war has destroyed all social and political connections within society and that these therefore need to be replaced or rebuilt, preferably along liberal lines. This assumption is, however, questionable on two fronts. First, civil wars often take place in the periphery of the country, meaning the destruction they do wreak may be limited to certain areas (Aas Rustad *et al.* 2011). As a result, people living in other parts of the country who have not experienced the direct results of the conflict may be resistant to outsiders’ efforts to impose change in the name of stabilizing the peace (this is especially likely to be true of people living in the capital or other political and economic centers less affected by the war). On the other hand, this manner of conceiving of conflict fails to take into account that where conflict has been more thoroughgoing in nature, it can have transformational effects (see, for example, Faust 2008). Either way, societies at war’s end are not fresh clay that can easily be molded to accord with external actors’ models of the liberal peace.

Two particularly compelling rejoinders have been crafted in response to the foregoing critiques. The first, advanced by Mac Ginty (2010), argues that liberal peacebuilding has not been as powerful or autonomous as its critics portray it as being. This is because local actors have the ability “to resist, ignore or adapt liberal peace interventions” as well as, in conjunction with local networks and structures, “to present and maintain alternative forms of peacemaking” (392). Although international actors may design comprehensive peacebuilding plans, once these encounter local forces and realities on the ground, they become altered in significant ways. The result of this process is what Mac Ginty calls a “hybrid peace,” one in which “the liberal and indigenous contest, cooperate and coalesce” in a manner that suggests that actors and institutions are capable of change, albeit of a somewhat different nature than that which may have been envisioned by the international community (407).

Paris (2010) constructs a cogent response to what he calls the “hyper-critical” school of scholars and commentators who have condemned liberal peacebuilding as damaging or illegitimate. Paris, who readily admits the limitations of existing peacebuilding strategies, argues that the points advanced by critics of liberal peacebuilding fail to provide a persuasive rationale for abandoning that approach to building a durable peace and replacing it with some other alternative. Indeed, apart from abandoning the practice of peacebuilding altogether (a suggestion Paris dismisses rather quickly although he does note that it has been advocated by scholars like Herbst 2003, Weinstein 2005, and Englebert and Tull 2008), it is not altogether clear what alternatives of a markedly different nature the critics have to offer to liberal peacebuilding. Having reviewed a variety of suggestions advanced by these critics, Paris claims, “some of the strongest critics of liberal peacebuilding appear, on close examination, to be arguing from liberal principles themselves” (2010, 339). Based on these arguments, Paris concludes that rather than replacing or moving beyond liberal peacebuilding, what is needed is to reform current practices within a “broadly liberal framework” (2010, 362).

Disaggregating peacebuilding, part III: unclear goals/shifting goals

Although most analyses of peacebuilding seem to share an understanding of the goal of international peacebuilding efforts as being to help consolidate peace, a careful examination of

work on this topic suggests that a number of other goals have also been attributed to post-conflict peacebuilding. The lack of clarity this has produced in terms of understanding just what it is that peacebuilding seeks to achieve has become even more pronounced as new goals have emerged over time in response, in part, to events like 9/11, but also as a result of lessons learned.

Among the goals scholars and practitioners have associated with peacebuilding, the following figure most often in works on the topic: keeping or stabilizing the peace; fostering a sustainable peace; addressing the root causes of violence; resolving conflicts; protecting civilians; meeting basic needs; helping people recover from violence; and building fair and effective governance (see, for example, Alliance for Peacebuilding n.d.). Other, more amoral goals have also been attributed to peacebuilding. These include neocolonial or neo-imperial objectives of restructuring societies and economies in such a manner so as to facilitate their penetration and exploitation by the West (Robinson 1996; Duffield 2007).

As noted above, the goals of and purposes for which peacebuilding has been undertaken have become even more blurred in the wake of the events associated with 9/11. Following the attacks in New York and Washington, DC, and later bombings in London and Madrid, a number of Western powers began to evince growing concern regarding “failed” or “fragile” states. Arguing that weak, failing, or collapsed states had begun to pose challenges for neighboring states, regions, great power actors, and perhaps even the international system as a result of their governments’ inability to exercise control of insurgents, terrorists, narcotics traffic, and other social ills, a variety of actors began to call for policies ranging from capacity-building, to statebuilding, to preventive intervention as a means of contending with the hazard weak states were deemed to pose for international peace and security (Chandler 2004).

This “securitization of peacebuilding” poses a number of problems for efforts to build a just and durable peace following civil war (Newman 2010, 305). First, as Newman notes, the application of the failed state label “and the perception of threats inherent in conflict-prone societies are not a reflection of objective truth or reality but of a subjective interpretation of events” (2010, 313). Support for this view can be found in the fact that various “failed state” indices constructed by Western NGOs and other organizations rank anywhere from one-third to one-half of the world’s countries as failed or in danger of failing (e.g. the “Failed States Index” produced by *Foreign Policy* and the Fund for Peace). Additionally, while policies such as “statebuilding” that are frequently invoked by Western powers call for the (re)building of effective and legitimate institutions following a civil war, precisely what set of institutions should be prioritized in order to accomplish this goal differs depending on whom one consults. Finally, the fact that statebuilding or state-strengthening activities have begun to be implemented in states that have not had civil wars has further served to blur the line between peacebuilding and policies whose principal aim appear to be to promote a stable international order.

But, does it work? Assessing the peacebuilding enterprise

Although peacebuilding has been the subject of numerous critiques, some of those might have less import if it could be demonstrated that peacebuilding does, in fact, work. Evaluating the post-conflict peacebuilding record proves to be a very challenging task, however, given the concept’s ambiguity and the lack of agreement regarding the goals of peacebuilding. As a result, a number of different criteria exist for assessing how successful peacebuilding has been.

Perhaps one of the most widely cited schema for evaluating peacebuilding efforts is a three-fold set of standards Call and Cousens (2008) propose as a means of classifying peacebuilding efforts. A “maximalist standard,” as they conceive it, is one that expects peacebuilding to address the “root causes” of conflict including the eradication of poverty and inequalities, the promotion

of accountable governance and democracy, and respect for human rights (6). The “minimalist standard” described by Call and Cousens is akin to Galtung’s negative peace in that it consists of ensuring that warfare is not renewed. Finally, the “moderate standard” advocated by Call and Cousens calls for “no renewed warfare plus decent governance” (7).

Somewhat surprisingly, given the difficulties inherent in trying to identify the “root causes” of conflict as well as in constructing measures for the other components of the maximalist standard, many comparative studies of peacebuilding employ some version of this standard in their evaluations of peacebuilding outcomes.¹ Paris (2004), for example, employs the maximalist standard in his study of eleven peacebuilding operations deployed between 1989 and 1999 to countries that had recently experienced civil conflicts. He asks whether a mission produced a “stable and lasting peace,” one likely “to endure beyond the departure of the peacebuilders... and into the foreseeable future” (59). Per this definition of success, peacebuilding missions must also have helped to ameliorate societal conditions that had previously fueled violent conflict, fostered movement toward peaceful reconciliation among warring parties, and must not have exacerbated societal tensions in a manner that endangered the prospects for an enduring peace. Based on his analysis of the cases, Paris concludes that liberal peacebuilding could be judged a success in only two cases, Croatia and Namibia. In other instances, countries either experienced a return to war (e.g. Angola and Liberia) or the process of liberalization reinforced political and/or economic inequalities that Paris believes pose a risk to an already fragile peace.

The fact that Paris focuses only on instances in which peacebuilding missions have been deployed makes it difficult to judge whether peacebuilding does more harm than good. Mullenbach (2006) addresses this issue by examining thirty cases of intrastate conflict, some of which experienced peacebuilding interventions and others that did not. Mullenbach concludes that, on balance, multidimensional peacebuilding missions decreased the likelihood of renewed military hostilities, thereby meeting his minimalist standard for assessing peacekeeping success. He also found that peacebuilding missions increased the likelihood of peaceful settlement of a conflict, a concept he defines in maximalist terms in that the missions addressed “underlying grievances and injustices perceived by the parties” (59).

Although Mullenbach’s study provides some additional insight into the question of whether peacebuilding has been successful or not, the results are open to question regarding whether the cases on which he chose to focus were either particularly easy or challenging ones. In what is arguably the most extensive quantitative study of peacebuilding to date, Doyle and Sambanis (2006) contend with this possibility by focusing on *all* peace processes following civil war for the period 1945–1999. Their central explanatory variable is UN intervention and their dependent variable is peacebuilding success, which they define in a variety of ways. Their lenient definition of success, which they refer to as a “negative” or *sovereign* peace, is one in which a state experiences no large-scale violence for a period of two years following the end of the civil war.² *Participatory* peace, on the other hand, requires that in addition to meeting the standards for a sovereign peace a country also attains a minimum level of political openness. Interestingly, Doyle and Sambanis find that although UN missions did not have a significant effect on preventing war recurrence for the two-year period they examine (their lenient definition of success), UN operations did make a positive contribution to their higher order concept of participatory peace. And, when they extend their analysis beyond the two-year cutoff point they find that UN intervention was significant in reducing the risk of war renewal.

A number of increasingly sophisticated studies of peacekeeping have found that missions whose focus is to fulfill a mandate to assist with security concerns and implementation have been successful in extending the duration of the peace (see, for example, Fortna 2008). However, as the results of the studies cited above indicate, the record of peacebuilding operations has been a mixed one. Responding to this record, UN Secretary-General Kofi Annan commissioned a

report to assess the UN system's shortcomings and make recommendations for reforms. Known as the "Brahimi Report" after the chair, Lakhdar Brahimi, of the group of experts that undertook the study, the *Report of the Panel on United Nations Peace Operations* (UN 2000) identified specific shortcomings in the system, called for a more integrated UN peacebuilding strategy, and emphasized the need for a "doctrinal shift" in the institution's approach to the rule of law and support for peacebuilding. This was followed by a decision to create a Peacebuilding Commission (an intergovernmental advisory body to the General Assembly and the Security Council), backed by a support office and standing fund, at the 2005 World Summit. This UN Peacebuilding Architecture, as it has come to be known, was established in 2006.

The foregoing reports, reforms, and institutional innovations are seen as being indicative of "a new impetus for shaping the UN's strategy and conception of peacebuilding" (Chetail 2009, 4). As part of this new framing of peacebuilding, in May 2007 the UN Secretary-General's Policy Committee sought to characterize post-conflict peacebuilding in the following manner:

Peacebuilding involves a range of measures targeted to reduce the risk of lapsing or relapsing into conflict by strengthening national capacities at all levels for conflict management, and to lay the foundations for sustainable peace and development. Peacebuilding strategies must be coherent and tailored to the specific needs of the country concerned, based on national ownership, and should comprise a carefully prioritized, sequenced, and therefore relatively narrow set of activities aimed at achieving the above objectives.

(cited in Chetail 2009, 4)

Have these refinements, reforms, and the new peacebuilding architecture succeeded in improving peacebuilding outcomes? Realistically speaking, it is too early to tell. A number of the peacebuilding operations that have been established in the period since these reforms were made are still ongoing (e.g. those in Burundi). There are reasons to be less than optimistic, however, that current peacebuilding interventions will succeed in any consistent manner in meeting the maximalist and even the moderate standards of success outlined above. One reason is the extent to which the types of reforms and reorientation described above really amount to meaningful change in post-conflict peacebuilding paradigm. It is not clear, for example, that there is now any greater agreement on the goals peacebuilding should seek to advance than there was in the past.

An additional factor which serves to exacerbate the lack of agreement on the goals of and approaches to peacebuilding is the fact that since 9/11, as Tschirgi points out

peacebuilding has been conflated with a new discourse of "nation-building," "regime change," and "stabilization and reconstruction" which is predicated on the necessity of forcefully securing the stability of weak or failing states to avoid the negative fall-out from state failure.

(2004, 17)

This formulation, Tschirgi goes on to note, "is likely to undermine the basic agreement that peace, security, and stability cannot be imposed from outside but need to be nurtured internally through patient, flexible, responsive strategies that are in tune with domestic realities" (*ibid.*).

A third factor which needs to be considered is the willingness of the international community to continue to engage extensively in multidimensional peacebuilding interventions, particularly in the midst of a protracted economic recession in the Western countries. Recent public opinion surveys indicate that 38 percent of Americans believe that the US should stay out of world affairs, the highest percentage recorded in any survey since 1947 (Chicago Council on Global

Affairs 2012). Perhaps not surprisingly, this outcome has been attributed in part to views of the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan as not having been worth the cost in human and economic terms. And, although the US intervention in Iraq was by no means a peacebuilding mission, recent revelations of wasted funds and disenchantment on the part of Iraqi leaders regarding the results produced by \$60 billion in spending on stabilization and reconstruction operations in that country are unlikely to generate much support for those types of activities as part of traditional peacebuilding missions (Special Inspector General for Iraq Reconstruction 2013).

Conclusion

As is perhaps typical for a synthetic chapter of this nature, I conclude with a call for more research on post-conflict peacebuilding. Rather than efforts aimed at discovering whether peacebuilding attains some particular standard of “success,” however, research should be undertaken to determine whether such interventions promote (or deter) more discrete outcomes associated with stabilizing the peace. This would serve to provide more concrete guidance to peacebuilding missions regarding the goals they ought to be pursuing, and the most effective strategies for reaching them, than more abstract studies that attempt to determine whether or not there is a correlation between the presence or absence of peacebuilding missions and outcomes such as an absence of large-scale violence.

What kinds of discrete outcomes should this type of research focus on? Answering this question requires adding yet another type of research to the agenda I am proposing – surveys of post-conflict populations. More work needs to be done to determine what people on the ground in post-conflict countries understand to be the causes of violence and what issues they believe need to be addressed if conflict is not to recur. For example, when people in Guinea-Bissau were surveyed regarding what they thought the causes of violence had been in their country, “bad governance” was the top response, followed by poverty (Moore 2011). As the recent set of papers and publications associated with the project “Wartime and Postconflict Experiences in Burundi” indicate, fine-grained data collection at the level of individuals and communities can be successfully used to inform peacebuilding (Samii *et al.* n.d.).

Focusing research on the perceptions of individuals (elites and non-elites alike) and communities in post-conflict countries would be consistent with the growing use of micro-level data collected at the subnational level in the study of civil wars. In addition, such research would have the benefit of emphasizing the “internal needs” component of peacebuilding that external actors have so often paid lip service to and so frequently ignored (see, for example, Autesserre 2010). An approach of this nature also could be used to investigate what communities understand to be the nature of the peace or the type of peace to which they aspire. This would serve as a useful antidote to the current tendency for external actors to impose their vision of the peace. International actors may struggle to help build the peace in countries that have fought civil wars but if that peace is not commensurate with the experiences, understanding, and needs of the society in question, it is unlikely that it will prove to be enduring. ♦

Notes

- 1 Although there have been a number of single-country case studies that have sought to assess peacebuilding, I focus on multi-country studies in what follows as these provide a basis for generalizing about the utility of peacebuilding.
- 2 Doyle and Sambanis also focus on peacebuilding outcomes for a five-year period following the end of the conflict as well as employing survival analysis which allows them to measure peace duration without employing an arbitrary cutoff point.

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