

## **Beyond liberal peace: Critique of liberal Peacebuilding and Exploring a Post-liberal Hybrid Model of Peacebuilding for a More Humane World**

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### **Abstract**

Since the end of the Cold War, liberal peacebuilding that transfers Western ideals of democracy, human rights and market-oriented economy to post-conflict zones has assumed the core role in peacebuilding enterprise. However, it invited the criticism as the imposition of Western values and the means to maintain hierarchical global structures reflecting Western predominance. This paper makes a critical analysis of liberal peacebuilding and explores a post-liberal hybrid peacebuilding. The analysis claims for neither the categorical rejection of liberal peacebuilding nor the exclusive reliance on culturally-oriented peacebuilding. Rather, dualistic view of either liberal peacebuilding or culturally-oriented peacebuilding needs to be deconstructed to build a dialogical and mutual learning relationship between Western liberal actors and local actors to co-create contextually responsive and transformative peace. However, establishing such dialogical and joint learning process needs to overcome an asymmetric relation between liberal actors

and local actors that has been normal in liberal peacebuilding. Reflective self-awareness is offered as a method liberal actors should employ to enact self-critical and transformative attitude. By honing reflective self-awareness skills, Western liberals become more flexible and empathetic in post-liberal peacebuilding.

**Keywords:** Liberal Peacebuilding, Post-liberal Peacebuilding, Reflective self-awareness, Democracy

## **Introduction**

Peacebuilding has raised its profile in the global arena following the proposal of *An Agenda for Peace* (1992) and *The Supplement to the Agenda for Peace* (1995) by Boutros Boutros-Ghali. Based on his proposals, liberal peacebuilding has played the central role in international peacebuilding projects. However, it faced criticisms including the lack of engagement with local people and the imposition of the Western values upon post-conflict zones to discipline them to accord with liberal framework, which ends up maintaining center-peripheral relationships. This paper explores a post-liberal hybrid peacebuilding.

Starting with a brief introduction of how peacebuilding has been evolved as an international project, the paper will present the hallmarks of liberal peacebuilding. Then, a critique of liberal peacebuilding will be made. Liberal peacebuilding has been criticized for the lack of respect for local-cultural traditions and of communication with local people and the romanticization of local cultures and even people as obstacles to liberal peacebuilding. Following the critique, the paper examines a post-liberal hybrid peacebuilding. The upshot is the need for liberals and culturally-oriented locals to build a dialogical relationship to develop contextually responsive but also transformative peace for post-liberal hybrid peacebuilding.

However, building and consolidating dialogical and joint learning relationship requires addressing a hierarchical and

asymmetric relationship between Western liberal actors and local actors. The paper offers the practice of reflective self-awareness for liberal actors to overcome this asymmetric relationship. Sharpening the self-critical and transformative attitude through the practice of reflective self-awareness will help Western liberals to win local trust and empower them to become more flexible and creative in exploring how liberal frameworks can become reflective of the needs of culturally-oriented peace.

The paper concludes with the claim that peace in post-liberal hybrid peacebuilding means intercultural communication with an open and non-closure process. By rejecting the claim for absolutistic and universal status by any cultural and philosophical tradition, peace in post-liberal hybrid peacebuilding should be understood and enacted as a process wherein all participants emancipate themselves from any form of narrow centrism and engage a non-reductive, open-ended and creative dialogue to keep explicating new values.

## **I - Origin of Peacebuilding**

According to Ramsbotham et al, peacebuilding undergirds the work of peacemaking and peacekeeping by addressing structural issues and the long-term relationships between enemies in conflict.<sup>1</sup> Peacemaking refers to moving towards settlement of armed conflict whilst peacekeeping is the interposition of international armed forces to physically separate the armed forces of conflictants.<sup>2</sup> The rise and evolution of the term peacebuilding in the global arena is attributed to *An Agenda for Peace* in 1992 and *The Supplement to the Agenda for Peace* in 1995, both of which

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<sup>1</sup> See Ramsbotham, Woodhouse, T. and Miall, H. *Contemporary Conflict Resolution: The Prevention, Management and Transformation of Deadly Conflicts* (3rd edition). Cambridge: Polity, 2011.

<sup>2</sup> Ibid.

were proposed by Boutros Boutros-Ghali, the sixth Secretary-General of the United Nations.

In *Agenda for Peace*, Boutros-Ghali proposed the concept of “post-conflict peacebuilding” that aims to secure and consolidate peace agreements between conflicting parties by helping them be demobilized and assist post-conflict countries to hold multiparty election and build democratic system.<sup>3</sup> In *Supplement to An Agenda for Peace*, he extended the operations of post-conflict peacebuilding to more comprehensive scope, entailing humanitarian, economic and political areas besides demobilization of combatants and transition to participatory elections.<sup>4</sup> Further, it was also assumed that at the first stage of the post-conflict peacebuilding mission, external actors such as the UN, other international institutions, states, and NGOs take initiatives and then the responsibility would be transferred to local and civilian agents after the task has shown certain progress to stabilize the post-conflict nations.<sup>5</sup>

Reflecting on the complexity of conflict dynamics and the rising need for multi-faceted approach in the post-Cold War era, peacebuilding has come to be understood as a holistic enterprise seeking to transform the political, economic and social structures in a post-conflict nation in order to prevent a relapse into violent conflict and to build a peaceful society. Since structural and institutional inequalities are one of the main causes of overt violence among different groups, transforming the political and

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<sup>3</sup> See Boutros-Ghali, B. “An Agenda for Peace”, 1992, A/47/277-S2411 from: <http://www.un.org/Docs/SG/apeace.html>. (Accessed on December 20, 2016).

<sup>4</sup> See Boutros-Ghali, B. “Supplement to an Agenda for Peace”, 1995, A/50/60-S/1995/1 from: <http://www.un.org/Docs/SG/agsupp.html>. (Accessed on December 20, 2016).

<sup>5</sup> Bercovitch, J. and Jackson, R. *Conflict Resolution in the Twenty-first Century: Principles, Methods, and Approaches*, Ann Arbor: The University of Michigan Press, 2012.

economic systems of a society to overcome the structural asymmetries is the pillar of peacebuilding enterprise.<sup>6</sup>

## II - Liberal Peacebuilding

### The Core View of Liberal Peacebuilding

Contemporary mainstream peacebuilding is called liberal peacebuilding<sup>7</sup> and its theoretical foundation is the liberal peace. According to the theory, democracy guarantees the peace and stability in domestic politics of states.<sup>8</sup> Further, combined with economic interdependence framed by free trade, democratic states do not go to war with each other by complying with international law to resolve their disputes.<sup>9</sup> Liberal peace theory posits that democracy and free-trade economic interdependence consolidate both national, regional and international order and stability.

Facing the challenge to reconstruct the failed or failing states that emerged in the post-Cold War era, international community managed mainly by liberal states has learned to connect peace and security with market-oriented development, democracy, rule of law, human rights, and a vigorous civil society in a modern state framework.<sup>10</sup> And the basic approaches to liberal peacebuilding are the promotion of democracy, market-oriented economic reforms and a range of other institutions associated with modern states to

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<sup>6</sup> Fisher, R. "Methods of Third-Party Intervention Berghof Research Center for Constructive Conflict Management", from :[http://www.berghof-handbook.net/uploads/download/fisher\\_hb.pdf](http://www.berghof-handbook.net/uploads/download/fisher_hb.pdf), 2001, (Accessed on November 22, 2016).

<sup>7</sup> See Newman, E., Paris, R. and Richmond, P. O. "Introduction" in *New Perspectives on Liberal Peacebuilding*, Newman, E., Paris, R. and Richmond, P. O. (eds), 2009, pp. 3-25, Tokyo: United Nations University Press.

<sup>8</sup> See Richmond, P. O. *Peace: A Very Short Introduction*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, Richmond, 2014.

<sup>9</sup> Ibid.

<sup>10</sup> See Richmond, P. O. *The Transformation of Peace*. Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2005.

achieve a lasting peace.<sup>11</sup> The premise of these methods is the idea that democracy and free-market economy enable people to resolve their differences peacefully, to accomplish their aspirations and make governments accountable and responsive to people's basic needs.<sup>12</sup>

### **Philosophical Foundation of Liberal Peacebuilding**

What needs to be additionally understood is a philosophical foundation of liberal peacebuilding. Though peace research including the study of peacebuilding is a practice-oriented enterprise that seeks to contribute to achieving a more just and peaceful world,<sup>13</sup> any understanding of peace, conflict and violence is founded upon philosophical assumptions. Our philosophical frameworks shape and orient us towards particular views and strategies for conflict resolution and peacebuilding. Critical reflection on philosophical assumptions we normally employ in an unreflective use allows us to make an in-depth analysis of how those engaged in peacebuilding construct their approaches and their problems and broaden the purview of our understanding of peacebuilding.

According to Richmond, liberal peacebuilding is founded upon the Western Enlightenment philosophical framework.<sup>14</sup> Enlightenment philosophy emphasizes the power of reason, especially, the instrumental reason to reach the absolute forms of knowledge.<sup>15</sup> Instrumental reason is assumed as the source of progress in knowledge and society, as well as the privileged locus of truth and the underpinning of systematic

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<sup>11</sup> Newman, et al, 2009.

<sup>12</sup> Ibid.

<sup>13</sup> See Rogers, P. and Ramsbotham, O. "Then and Now: Peace Research – Past and Future" in *Political Studies*, vol. 47, 1999, pp. 740-754.

<sup>14</sup> See Richmond, P. O. *A Post-Liberal Peace*. London: Routledge, 2011.

<sup>15</sup> See Crotty, M. *The Foundations of Social Research: Meaning and Perspective in the Research Process*. London: SAGE, 1998.

knowledge.<sup>16</sup> It is presupposed that the aim of intellectual enterprise is to discover the objective truth that explains every phenomenon systematically<sup>17</sup> and the instrumental reason has been employed as the authentic tool.<sup>18</sup>

Enlightenment thought tries to uncover the intrinsic and universal structure of the physical and social worlds.<sup>19</sup> At the center of this endeavor lies the premise that there can be a universal and ahistorical matrix to which we can always appeal in judging the nature of truth and reality. It is assumed that a common denominator can be established for all beliefs and value systems and accordingly the world is a unified field and can be explained by a single system.<sup>20</sup> So-called metanarratives or grand theories allowing us to understand the whole world in terms of all-embracing principles are presupposed.<sup>21</sup> Since the world is considered highly systematic and well-organized entity characterized as regularities, constancies, uniformities and absolute principles, it is posited that the application of rationalistic thought leads us to unearth the universal rules or structures that underlay the surface features of the world, which enables us to produce certain overarching theories and methods to understand and address problems facing us.<sup>22</sup>

Based on this universalistic thought, those who advocate liberal peacebuilding believe its universal applicability to build a lasting peace. The general transference of the liberal peace to any post-conflict peacebuilding has been promoted as a universal framework.<sup>23</sup> Under the banner of 'peace-as-

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<sup>16</sup> See Best, S. and Kellner, D. *Postmodern Theory: Critical Interrogations*. London: Macmillan, 1991.

<sup>17</sup> See Gray, D. E. *Doing Research in the Real World*. London: SAGE, 2004.

<sup>18</sup> Crotty, 1998.

<sup>19</sup> See Baronov, D. *Conceptual Foundations of Social Research Methods Paradigm*. Boulder, Colorado: Paradigm Publishers, 2004.

<sup>20</sup> See Ermarth, E. "Postmodernism" in *Routledge Encyclopedia of Philosophy*, vol. 7, Craig, E. (ed), pp. 587-590. London: Routledge, 1998.

<sup>21</sup> See Burr, V. *Social Constructionism*. London: Routledge, 2003.

<sup>22</sup> Ibid.

<sup>23</sup> See Richmond, P. O. "Beyond liberal peace? Responses to "backsliding" in *New Perspectives on Liberal Peacebuilding*, Newman, E.,

governance,' that is, the mixture of institutional regulation and liberal freedoms, it is believed that the achievement of stable peace relies on the reform of comprehensive frameworks for social, economic, political and cultural regulation and governance by external and internal actors working toward the same universal framework envisaged by the liberal peace.<sup>24</sup> Stated otherwise, in liberal peacebuilding, peace means transplanting western models of social, political, and economic institutions as universal method into conflict-shattered states so that liberal-economic and political governance is established.<sup>25</sup>

### **Problems with Liberal Peacebuilding**

While enjoying the predominant position in peacebuilding enterprise, liberal peacebuilding has invited a growing criticism. Some have questioned the legitimacy and validity of liberal peacebuilding as it ignores local engagement and lacks consultation with local actors.<sup>26</sup> In liberal peacebuilding, it is assumed that lasting peace can be built by external actors such as the United Nations, other international organizations, nongovernmental organizations, and donor countries. This is due to the fact that the liberal democratic peace thesis has been firmly embedded in contemporary international framework of peace in many states' constitutions, international law, the UN, International Nongovernmental Organizations (INGOs) and International Financial Institutions (IFIs) like World Bank.<sup>27</sup>

Analysis of peace agreement, their negotiation, and the detailed mid- and long-term frameworks of peace have been made inseparable from discussions of international peace

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Paris, R. and Richmond, P. O. (eds), pp. 54-77, Tokyo: United Nations University Press, 2009.

<sup>24</sup> Richmond, 2005.

<sup>25</sup> See Heathershaw, J. "Unpacking the Liberal Peace: The Dividing and Merging of Peacebuilding Discourses" in *Millennium: Journal of International Studies*, vol. 36, no. 3, 2008, pp. 597-622.

<sup>26</sup> Newman et al, 2009.

<sup>27</sup> Richmond, 2014.



interventions since most peace negotiations are not merely local but receive extensive international input.<sup>28</sup> The strong emphasis on top-down approaches has raised concerns about the viability and sustainability of peacebuilding and invoked local critiques or even resistance to the failure to fulfill local needs.<sup>29</sup> The crisis of liberal peacebuilding is rooted in its standardizing, universalistic pretensions and its concomitant failure to engage with local cultural practices of peacemaking and conflict resolution and with the manifold insecurities of everyday life in societies recovering from conflict.<sup>30</sup>

Another critique of liberal peacebuilding along with the top-down approaches is the romanticisation of the local, that is, the idea that local actors, cultures and practices are inferior and an obstacle to the project of liberal and rational governance<sup>31</sup>, which has caused the charges of ethnocentrism by the Western powerful actors. Liberal peacebuilding itself has been criticized as global hegemonic project, whereby post-conflict societies are brought into conformity with the international system's prevailing standards of domestic governance or standards that frame how states should organize themselves internally despite the diversity and uniqueness of each post-conflict circumstance.<sup>32</sup> Rather than reflecting local preferences and needs, the process of liberal peacebuilding is seen as the promotion or imposition of an external, hegemonic agenda that integrates peripheral areas into global norms of politics and economics, which provides powerful international actors with self-righteousness of direct or subtle forms of interventions and colonialism.<sup>33</sup> Liberal peacebuilding is

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<sup>28</sup> See Selby, J. "The Myth of Liberal Peace-building" in *Conflict, Security & Development*, vol. 13 no. 1, 2013, pp. 57-86.

<sup>29</sup> Newman et al, 2009.

<sup>30</sup> Selby, 2013.

<sup>31</sup> Newman, E. "'Liberal' Peacebuilding Debates" in *New Perspectives on Liberal Peacebuilding*. Newman, E., Paris, R. and Richmond, P. O. (eds) pp. 26-54, Tokyo: United Nations University Press, 2009.

<sup>32</sup> Selby, 2013.

<sup>33</sup> Richmond, 2011.

perceived to represent the maintenance of existing political and economic hierarchies at the local, national and global levels.<sup>34</sup>

Liberal peacebuilding is a sort of linear model of peacebuilding approach. Founded upon the belief in liberal peace as the universal framework that underpins stable peace, liberal peacebuilding has been implemented as an approach to bring about a lasting peace across different contexts of post-conflict societies. Though conflict is a complex and non-linear phenomenon, any form of post-conflict society would converge into a sustainable and stable peace monolithically when democratic governance, human rights, market-economy, and centralized government system are imported.

### **III - Exploring a Post-liberal Hybrid Peacebuilding**

#### **Culture-oriented Peacebuilding**

Responding to the critiques of liberal peacebuilding framed by Western Enlightenment philosophy, the concept of post-liberal peacebuilding has raised its profile in peace research. The philosophical assumption of post-liberal peacebuilding proceeds from postmodernism. Though it is difficult to characterize postmodernism about which all would agree, it stresses the co-existence of multiple realities and varieties of situation-dependent ways of life.<sup>35</sup> Postmodernism claims that there are diverse worlds that are inhabited by different people, and that those different worlds construct diverse ways of knowing, distinct sets of meaning and various realities.<sup>36</sup> It is through the everyday social interactions that people construct their own knowledge and shared values and norms.

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<sup>34</sup> Ibid.

<sup>35</sup> Burr, 2003.

<sup>36</sup> Crotty, 1998.

Based on the belief in multiple and contextual realities and truths, culturally and locally oriented peacebuilding is proposed as one of main hallmarks of post-liberal peacebuilding. Through socialization within their culture, individuals receive an understanding of what world is like, employ a particular set of values and grasp the meaning of events and actions.<sup>37</sup> Accordingly, the meaning of peace and approaches to conflict resolution would be understood in different ways according to each culture. Peacebuilding is a cultural phenomenon since the ways in which conflict is perceived and dealt with reflect a culturally shared set of attitudes and beliefs<sup>38</sup>: local cultural processes need to be enacted as valuable methods to peacebuilding that shows a strong concern for social welfare and justice on local micro level. Achievement of durable and stable peace hinges on bottom-up community initiatives and commitment to local institutions, customs and norms to give free expression of local voices, needs and forms of politics.<sup>39</sup> It implies an engagement with the everyday to provide care and empathy.<sup>40</sup>

### **Need for Cautious Attitudes towards Exclusive Reliance on Culture-oriented Peacebuilding**

While culturally oriented peacebuilding needs to be practiced, there is one more dimension that must be considered for post-liberal hybrid peacebuilding. It is a critical attitude towards socially constructed discourses themselves.

Crossley insists that the key point of discourse is the assumption that those who participate in it are generally unconscious of the system of conventions to which they have

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<sup>37</sup> See Fry, D. P. and Fry, C. "Culture and Conflict-Resolution Models: Exploring Alternatives to Violence" in *Cultural Variation in Conflict Resolution: Alternatives to Violence*, Fry, D. and Bjorkqvist, K. (eds), pp. 9-23, New Jersey: Lawrence Erlbaum Associates, 1997.

<sup>38</sup> Ibid.

<sup>39</sup> Newman, 2009.

<sup>40</sup> Richmond, 2011.

got accustomed and are also most unaware of the specific consequences that their use of the discourse may bring about.<sup>41</sup> The discourse prevalent in the cultural world tends to be taken-for-granted. However, the constructions of the socio-cultural world are tied up with power relations since they have important implications for what it is acceptable for different people to do and for who they may treat others.<sup>42</sup> Consequently, description or construction of a particular view of the cultural world can be understood as maintaining some fixed patterns of social action as normative and excluding others.<sup>43</sup> And discourses prevalent in the cultural world are mediated by power relations in society: through socially constructed discourses, certain groups are privileged over others and exercise some oppressive force on subordinate groups.<sup>44</sup>

While peacebuilding should be locally oriented, critical eyes also need to be gazed upon local dynamics of certain construction of peace view since local culture is not immune from asymmetric relations among local peoples. The critique of cultural construction of knowledge or frames of references does not mean to deny the idea that at the center of peacebuilding enterprise should lie the consideration of daily needs and welfare of local people. Rather, it needs to be acknowledged that the local cultural dynamics is much more complex than critics of liberal peacebuilding who advocate the local approach to peacebuilding assume.<sup>45</sup>

The conceptualizations and views of peace within a local sphere are more complex, incoherent and fragmented

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<sup>41</sup> Crossley, N. *Key Concepts in Critical Social Theory*. London: SAGE, 2005.

<sup>42</sup> Burr, 2003.

<sup>43</sup> Ibid.

<sup>44</sup> Gray, 2004.

<sup>45</sup> See Simons, C. and Zanker, F. "Questioning the Local in Peacebuilding" from: [http://www.spp1448.de/fileadmin/media/galleries/SPP\\_Administration/Working\\_Paper\\_Series/SPP1448\\_WP10\\_Simons\\_Zanker.pdf](http://www.spp1448.de/fileadmin/media/galleries/SPP_Administration/Working_Paper_Series/SPP1448_WP10_Simons_Zanker.pdf), 2014 (Accessed on December 21, 2016).

according to distinct local individuals and groups.<sup>46</sup> Actors and discourses are highly contested, making it difficult to decide on which discourse and policies are to be trusted to contribute to a stable peace at the local level.<sup>47</sup> An exclusive emphasis on indigenous institutions and local ownership lead to wrong results since they are a contested arena wherein certain voices and interests of specific actors are reflected at the expense of others'.<sup>48</sup> While it should play the central role, locally and culturally oriented peacebuilding is not the panacea as the local is not free from exclusionary or oppressive power games.

### **Deconstructing the Binary Relationship between Liberal Peace and Culturally-oriented Peace for Post-liberal Hybrid Peace**

While cultural- or local-orientation needs to be respected in peacebuilding enterprise, at the core of post-liberal hybrid peacebuilding should lie the need for a double critique, that is, the critique of liberal peacebuilding that pretends to be universal and of cultural dynamics of peacebuilding in a local sphere since both approaches are not immune from asymmetric relations. Neither the liberal nor the culturally-based peace framework can achieve a lasting peace alone.

Based on the deconstruction of binary thinking of either liberal peace or locally-framed peace as absolute, the core of post-liberal hybrid peacebuilding is the recognition that both internal and external commitments are indispensable: international actors, local actors and constituencies cannot operate effectively without each other.<sup>49</sup> It is a reframing of peacebuilding as a dialogical and pedagogical process that reconstructs the everyday according to how its local subjects need and want to live in the broader liberal peace context,

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<sup>46</sup> Ibid.

<sup>47</sup> Ibid.

<sup>48</sup> Newman et al, 2009.

<sup>49</sup> Richmond, 2011.

but also in recognition of multiple everydays and mutual engagements.<sup>50</sup>

Post-liberal hybrid peacebuilding should be understood as an opportunity for the promotion of empathetic relations between the international arena wherein liberal peace frameworks have assumed the central role and the local everyday dimension of peace to co-construct peace that gratifies the needs of local people as well as empower them to develop new ideas and visions to address local problems. It is a dynamic process in which liberal international norms are reconsidered according to different cultural contexts so that liberal peace frameworks can be modified to help the grass-roots and the marginalized members in local political sphere to contribute to peace formation.<sup>51</sup>

In relation to this, global transformation needs to be taken into serious consideration. As a result of a dualistic logic of either liberal global approach to peace or local approach being deconstructed and contingent and fluid nature of liberal global structure and cultural sphere being revealed, it needs to be acknowledged that global structure is part of the cause of conflict and it should be a possible reality to transform it as it is not an immutable entity but a constructed structure with certain values. Truly, critiquing and transforming the liberally framed global political and economic structure is not easy. However, as long as the aim of peacebuilding enterprise in the context of interdependent and interpenetrating relation between the global and the local is to achieve a lasting peace, addressing global structural inequalities must be integrated into long-term peace process.<sup>52</sup>

At the center of post-liberal hybrid peacebuilding process should be joint learning placed. It is a joint conflict analysis to create a common view of the main challenges

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<sup>50</sup> Ibid.

<sup>51</sup> Richmond, 2014.

<sup>52</sup> Richmond, P. O. *Peace Formation and Political Order in Conflict Affected Societies*. New York: Oxford University Press, 2016.

toward peacebuilding.<sup>53</sup> It is a joint action between external actors, especially those with liberal peace frameworks and local actors, wherein both can have an opportunity to show their views and explore jointly context-sensitive but also transformative approaches. Further, the joint learning must be dialogical. Dialogue – for which the need emerges from the increasing acknowledgement that our changing reality demands a new global ethic and perspective of one another – has become one of the main methods to deepen intercultural or inter-civilizational understanding.<sup>54</sup> The main objective of dialogue is not just to share different information, but to uncover the processes that shape us and the struggle we are having, so that mutual respect and a sense of solidarity in the middle of diversity can be aroused.

Dialogue requires the openness to be challenged and transformed by encountering others' viewpoints and values, as well as the willingness and ability to engage in active listening and understanding of them.<sup>55</sup> Dialogue demands us to let ourselves be changed in our point of view, attitude and mode of thinking by freeing ourselves from any fixed frame of reference.<sup>56</sup> By learning to be less embedded or reified in a perspective or frame of reference, we can develop a different basis or relationship to our own mode of thinking process, which serves to empower us to be open to differences, diversity, and creativity.<sup>57</sup> Though dialogical joint learning between liberal external actors and local actors is not an easy

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<sup>53</sup> Ropers, N. and Anuvatudom, M. "A Joint Learning Process for Stakeholders and Insider Peacebuilders: A Case Study from Southern Thailand" in *Asian Journal of Peacebuilding*, vol. 2 no. 2, 2014, pp. 277-296.

<sup>54</sup> See Der-lan Yeh "The Way to Peace: A Buddhist perspective" in *International Journal of Peace Studies*, vol. 11 no. 1, 2006, pp. 91-112.

<sup>55</sup> See Ferrer, J. *Revisioning Transpersonal Theory: A Participatory Vision of Human Spirituality*. Albany, New York: State University of New York Press, 2002.

<sup>56</sup> Hadot, P. *Philosophy as a Way of Life: Spiritual Exercises from Socrates to Foucault*. Oxford: Blackwell, 1995.

<sup>57</sup> Claxton, G. "Nirvana and Neuroscience: The Self-liberating Brain." In *Buddhist Thought and Applied Psychological Research: Transcending the Boundaries*, Nauriyal, D. K., Drummond, M. S., and Lal, Y. B. (eds), London, Routledge, 2006.

process, the sequencing of dialogical joint conflict analysis and exploration of peacebuilding is an important aspect for promoting a process of trust-building interaction and shared knowledge construction.<sup>58</sup> Joint conflict analysis and learning helps participants change perspectives and move towards deeper levels of mutual understanding and respect,<sup>59</sup> which paves the way for culturally-sensitive but transformative and emancipatory peacebuilding.<sup>60</sup>

### **Reflective Self-awareness as a Method for Post-liberal Hybrid Peacebuilding**

While the deconstructive understanding of dualistic view of either liberal international peace or culturally-oriented peace is proposed, how an asymmetric relation between liberal external actors and local actors, which has shaped liberally-oriented peacebuilding, can be addressed is a crucial issue to make post-liberal hybrid peacebuilding authentic and sustainable. In order to overcome the asymmetric relationship, liberal external actors need to develop different skills and attitudes from those interventionary and instrumental ones that were predominant in liberal peacebuilding.<sup>61</sup> To win trust from culturally-oriented peace actors, a Western liberal actor of any kind needs to take effort to show and enact self-critical and transformative attitude in engaging peacebuilding enterprise so that they can be flexible and creative in exploring how knowledge of liberally-oriented peace can be reflective of the needs of culturally-oriented peace. And the practice of reflective self-awareness is proposed as one of the

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<sup>58</sup> Ropers and Anuvatudom, 2014.

<sup>59</sup> Ibid.

<sup>60</sup> Regarding the example of joint learning conflict analysis and resolution process, Ropers and Anuvatudom (2014) will be useful.

<sup>61</sup> Richmond, P. O. "Missing Links: Peace Infrastructure and Peace Formation" in *Peace Infrastructures – Assessing Concept and Practice*, Barbara, U., Stina, L., Katrin, P. and Beatrix, A. (eds), pp. 22-29, Berlin: Berghof Foundation, 2012.



skills liberal actors should develop in post-liberal hybrid peace.

Reflective self-awareness is the practice of stepping back from our frame of reference to critically examine our particular pattern of thought, values and logics shaping our experience.<sup>62</sup> Human beings need a solid philosophical framework to live a meaningful life, engage in intellectual enterprise and address social and global problems. However, when completeness or universality is claimed for certain frame of reference, it causes us to be dogmatic, excluding other views or thoughts. Even prima facie virtuous and noble acts such as peacebuilding and conflict resolution can turn into a site of conflict or violence when a particular philosophical framework predominates the enterprise, marginalizing or downplaying others. Dissemination of certain philosophical framework as complete in the life-world becomes a constitutional power of institutional violence in human social and global arena.<sup>63</sup>

Sharpening reflective self-critique of one's frame of reference generates pliability and flexibility with thoughts, which breaks through an attachment to any specific philosophical underpinning. Consequently, we can hone the capacity to simultaneously hold multiple perspectives and patterns of thought that depends on an awareness that embraces all perspectives without adhering to a position in any form as complete to approach reality.<sup>64</sup> By integrating reflective self-awareness into our intellectual and practical enterprise of peace research and raising the conscious awareness present in them to engage in constant critique of our assumptions, the possibility of transcending particular

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<sup>62</sup> See Park, J. Y. *Buddhism and Postmodernity: Zen, Huayan, and the Possibility of Buddhist Postmodern Ethics*. Plymouth, United Kingdom: Lexington Books, 2008.

<sup>63</sup> Park, 2008.

<sup>64</sup> See Hart, T., Nelson, P. and Puhakka, K. "Introduction" in *Transpersonal Knowing: Exploring the Horizon of Consciousness*, Hart, T., Nelson, P. and Puhakka, K. (eds), pp. 1-9, Albany, New York: State University of New York Press, 2000.

belief system and approaching phenomenal world from various perspectives becomes possible.

Self-critique of liberal international actors through reflective self-awareness does not mean that they should dismiss their liberal values and perspectives. Rather, by acknowledging that liberal peace and Enlightenment philosophy are only part of a variety of peace views and philosophical underpinnings, liberal actors learn to enact a critical attitude that goes beyond liberal philosophical boundary and construct complementary relations with other culturally framed philosophies in resolving conflict and building peace. When liberal actors realize and practice an all-embracing and integrative perspective free from an extreme attachment to self-centeredness of liberal frameworks, the authentic conditions for dialogical joint learning will be made, wherein new knowledge for peace that has not yet emerged can be co-created.

### **Meaning of Peace in Post-liberal Hybrid Peacebuilding: Peace as an Intercultural Communication**

In liberal peacebuilding, it has been believed that transference of liberal framework of democracy, human rights, and market-economy system would help post-conflict society achieve the same institutional and structural stability as Western liberal states. Put it another way, it was believed that peace is a linear process with clear end-point, that is, transference of liberal framework as universal 'one-size-fits-all' model. However, as a result of fluidity, unstable and undetermined nature of both liberal peace and culturally-oriented peace being revealed and dualistic view of either liberal peace or culturally-constructed peace being deconstructed, peace with linear and monolithic nature is no longer what we should achieve. Then, how should we understand and approach peace in a post-liberal hybrid peacebuilding enterprise?

It should be enacted as an intercultural communication with an open and non-closure process. Intercultural thinking

rejects any absolutistic and exclusive clam of cultural and philosophical tradition – whether it be Western or non-Western – to be in sole possession of the one truth.<sup>65</sup> Put different, it is the recognition that no culture – whether it be European, Indian, Chinese, or any other – is monolithic and essentialized: any attempt to approach cultures as closed systems is methodologically unsound and politically dangerous as it could cause cultural absolutism and lead to discrimination towards other cultures as inferior.<sup>66</sup> Intercultural communication is a process of emancipation from any form of narrow centrism and engagement in a non-reductive, open-ended and creative dialogue.

Every peacebuilding entails a variety of actors from both external and internal spheres with distinct views of peace, goals and interests to achieve, which is attributed to the different cultural backgrounds. Their engagement based on the spirit of intercultural communication would sharpen sensitivity to differences and reinforce our ability to tolerate and enjoy incompleteness of peace.<sup>67</sup> Peace is to be acknowledged and practiced as an infinite game wherein those participating in peacebuilding, rather than seeking to control the enterprise, contribute to enhancing the quality of peacebuilding by transforming their original visions of peace and interests according to changing contexts and circumstances and combining different ideas into new ones.<sup>68</sup> Peace is a continuous, relationally-expanding and interdependent-enriching process<sup>69</sup> wherein those having different visions and goals for peacebuilding can experience differences or even oppositions as an opportunity to mutual insight and inspiration to co-create context-responsive but also transformative ideas of peace.

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<sup>65</sup> See Mall, R. A. *Intercultural Philosophy*. London: Rowman & Littlefield Publishers, 2000.

<sup>66</sup> Ibid.

<sup>67</sup> Park, 2008.

<sup>68</sup> Hershock, P. D. *Valuing Diversity: Buddhist Reflection on Realizing a More Equitable Global Future*. Albany, New York: State University of New York Press, 2012.

<sup>69</sup> Ibid.

At the heart of peace as intercultural communication in post-liberal hybrid peacebuilding lies the promotion of human capacity for qualitative differentiation and transformation that broadens the meanings of peace. It is an exploratory ongoing and everlasting process that explicates new values to achieve and sustain interdependent and mutually transformative relational dynamics between liberal actors and non-liberal actors. Participating in mutually transformative peacebuilding activities is not easy. However, human beings and cultural frames of reference are complex structures that keep incorporating the histories of their constitutive dynamics into continuously ongoing process of their own environment and continuously responsive self-transformation and evolution.<sup>70</sup> As there is no closure of meaning-making for human beings, changing values, visions and actions to embody transformative relational dynamics is a possible reality.

## Conclusion

This paper has engaged in a critical analysis of liberal peacebuilding and explored post-liberal hybrid peacebuilding. As the need for Western liberal actors to hone reflective self-awareness skills and for both Western liberal and non-liberal actors to develop dialogical and mutually learning relationship indicates, we must make a critical and constructive transformation of our ways of thinking and knowing to build a post-liberal hybrid peace. A growing complexity and non-linear nature of post-liberal peacebuilding requires us to practice a deeper listening and a more open communication across cultures the fundamental norm for the study and practice of peacebuilding. A hierarchical and asymmetric relation between Western

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<sup>70</sup> Hershock, P. D. "Diversity Matters: Buddhist Reflections on the Meaning of Difference" in *A Companion to Buddhist Philosophy*, Emmanuel. S. (ed), pp. 1-31, New York: Wiley-Blackwell, 2013.

liberals and non-liberals is no longer appropriate to confront and address global challenges including peacebuilding.

Exploring new intercultural views of peace according to distinct post-conflict areas by deconstructing dualistic understanding of liberal and non-liberal versions of peace would be a painstaking task. Especially, it would not be easy for the UN, other international organizations, non-governmental organizations and donor states, in which liberal values have been deeply embedded, to challenge them. However, one of the critical challenges for peace research in present global interdependent and interpenetrating situation is to pursue an active politics of inter-civilizational dialogue to produce new perspectives, theories, and methods for peace. We must keep challenging the existing guiding assumptions and honing our formative capacity in relation to others and to the world.

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