CHAPTER 2

A Brief Sketch of Hybrid Peacebuilding

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INTRODUCTION

The aim of this chapter is to outline the existing literature on peacebuilding and identify the gaps in different peacebuilding theories. The central emphasis is placed on hybrid peacebuilding theory, which serves as an overarching theoretical underpinning of this study. With an aim of operationalising hybrid peacebuilding theory this chapter assesses various critique and offers ways to overcome these gaps.

While much has been written on the various ontological dimensions of peacebuilding, this study seeks to highlight elements of one specific strand of theory and practice: the notion of hybridity. Conventional

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approaches to peacebuilding have focused on the liberal practice of state-building, under which liberal institutions are constructed (de Leon and Tager 2016). In stark contrast, hybrid peacebuilding approaches focus on the dynamic mechanisms of interactions and relationships (Uesugi 2020). Mac Ginty and Sanghera (2012: 3) describe hybridity as “composite forms of practice, norms and thinking that emerge from the introduction of different groups, worldviews and activity”. They call for a two-fold understanding of post-conflict settings: one as a historical construction and the other as a living creature that is constantly shaped by dynamic interactions by different factors and actors.

Before outlining the key features of hybrid peacebuilding theory, conventional understandings of peacebuilding theory and practice are briefly discussed, which is followed by a digest of key approaches relevant to hybrid peacebuilding such as ‘local turn’, ‘hybridity’ and ‘feminist perspectives’. Subsequently, a brief outline of hybrid peacebuilding theory and practice is offered by introducing existing critiques and indicating ways to refute these criticisms.

THEORY AND PRACTICE OF PEACEBUILDING

Before diving into the discussion on hybrid peacebuilding, it is crucial to understand the general debates surrounding peacebuilding in order to fully grasp the characteristics and traits of hybrid approaches. Some attempted to summarise the essentials of peacebuilding including Chetail and Jütersonke (2015) who have conducted a comprehensive review of the existing literature on peacebuilding, and Keethaponcalan (2020) who has made a concise review of the literature focusing on the situation in Asia. Rigual (2018), on the other hand, has offered re-thinking of the ontologies of peacebuilding. The following does not aim to recapitulate these previous accounts and instead seeks to provide excerpts of some commonly discussed dimensions of peacebuilding to serve as a backgrounder for the later discussion on hybrid peacebuilding in this study.

The United Nations (UN) (2009: 1) describes peacebuilding as activity to set space for opportunities of creating “basic security, deliver peace dividends, shore up and build confidence in the political process, and strengthen core national capacity to lead peacebuilding efforts thereby beginning to lay the foundations for sustainable development”. The proclaimed focus lies in strengthening national ownership during or in the

immediate aftermath of a conflict. Another useful definition is provided by Interpeace (2015: 2), which defines peacebuilding as “local and national capacities for peace (values and attitudes; social processes and relationships; political and social institutions) necessary to incrementally and effectively overcome the dynamics of conflict that lead to polarisation, violence and destruction”.

Rigual (2018) presented a summary of trends in peacebuilding by categorising its theory and practice into various discourses, of which four are particularly prominent: (1) economic, (2) liberal, (3) critical, and (4) feminist peacebuilding. Among them, critical peacebuilding continues to attract the largest audience in academia and the main strand of discussion on hybrid peacebuilding falls into this classification. While this study follows the steps of critical peacebuilding, it also seeks to harness the other peacebuilding approaches, acknowledging their unique contribution to the academic field of peacebuilding (Wallis et al. 2018; Keethaponcalan 2020).

Economic peacebuilding prescribes the promotion of fiscal, labour and market reforms as a means to realise international peace. The assumption is that conflicts arise in economically stressed situations, meaning that outsiders should promote development through providing loans, donations and investments to address economic grievances. This approach is known as the Washington Consensus that advocates structural adjustment programmes (Marangos 2009). Both Chinese peacebuilding endeavours, introduced in Chapter 7, and Japanese peacebuilding endeavours, introduced in Chapter 8, have adopted this approach, focusing on providing development and investment to countries experiencing poverty or economic stagnation as these approaches operate on the premise that economic disparities and grievances cause conflict (Abb 2018).

Contrastingly, liberal peacebuilding assumes that political grievances and democratic immaturity constitute the greatest cause of conflict. This approach was widely adopted in early peacebuilding attempts made by the UN in Kosovo and Timor-Leste, among other post-conflict settings (Paris 1997). As liberal peacebuilding heavily depends on the creation and expansion of liberal institutions to bring sustainable peace, its main tool for peacebuilding revolved around various democratisation measures. Democratisation through the construction of state institutions and political decentralisation are considered key to both reacting to and preventing eruptions of violence. This approach, however, evidenced shortcomings in both appropriate planning and execution. It was criticised for

imprinting Western liberal norms in conflict-affected societies in a quasi-imperialist manner, which left behind rather unstable political structures and economic development (Nadarajah and Rampton 2015).

Because liberal peacebuilding achieved few sustained outcomes, a critical view on the utility of liberal peacebuilding emerged, leading to the rise of critical peacebuilding (Mac Ginty and Richmond 2009). Critical peacebuilding has mainstreamed the ‘local turn’, based on the assumption that “inclusion and participation can overcome the colonial/imperialistic shape of liberal peacebuilding and strengthen peacebuilding initiatives” (Rigual 2018: 159).

Likewise, feminist peacebuilding argues for the inclusion of various actors in peace processes, especially those previously hidden or silenced such as women or other marginalised groups (Hudson 2000). With an aim to shed light on structural causes of conflict, it engages critically with militarisation as well as masculinist conceptions and institutionalisations of states and societies to understand why violent rather than pacific behaviour is chosen as a means to deal with the situation (Rigual 2018: 159). Feminist activists have advocated for structural transformation, demilitarisation, gender equality, social justice, inclusive participation, and the reshaping of capitalism to be included in peacebuilding endeavours, through consultative and bottom-up designs, and through gender-sensitive budgeting (ibid. 2018; Coomaraswamy 2015).

FROM LOCAL TURN TO HYBRID PEACEBUILDING

Local Turn

With the mainstreaming of critical peacebuilding in academia a fundamental shift in what is addressed through peacebuilding had occurred. The trend is moving away from technocratic programmatic activities with a clear blueprint for goals and outcomes, and steers toward political undertakings in conflict-affected societies that have a direct impact on the everyday experience of actors on the ground (de Coning 2018). The framework of peacebuilding endeavours must in this light reflect the understanding of reality held by actors in the setting, which are rooted in the specific historic context of power relations, norms and expectations (ibid.). A narrow definition of peace and a skewed understanding of how peace can be built, which are based on Western images of ‘justice’ and ‘legitimacy’, would not work in a different social context, considering

that people may have varied expectations about peace and their interpretation of what constitutes the world may be quite different from those of Western donors (Richmond and Frank 2009).

Such a critical view against the conventional Western-centric approaches to peacebuilding has led to the emergence of the ‘local turn’, which seeks to avoid the pitfalls of an imposed peace. Critical scholars such as Donais (2008, 2018) and Mac Ginty and Richmond (2013) explored ways to place the ‘local’ at the centre of peacebuilding endeavours. Although locals have been marginalised in liberal peacebuilding, critical scholars shed light on locals who live in and experience the very context, and they themselves are the constituting elements (Richmond 2014).

Hybridity

Building on the local turn, Mac Ginty and Sanghera (2012) stressed the relevance of the local context in relation to the contribution that international actors can make in the field of peacebuilding. Hybridity as a social process of emergence can be witnessed in both fragile social settings and seemingly consolidated settings. Each social, cultural, and political structure is a result of prior hybridisation and thus a pure point of departure does not exist (Belloni 2012: 23). This assumption was revisited by Kent et al. (2018: 1), who pointed out that hybridity has been employed as a conceptual tool in a wide range of academic disciplines including the biological sciences, social sciences and even literature and literary criticism. In social science, hybridity is defined as the outcome of interactions amongst hegemonic practices, and as the attempt to decolonise peoples, territories and knowledge (Richmond 2014). Hybridity became prominent in the discourses of identity, culture, economic and power relations, and political systems (Kent et al. 2018).

Hybridity emerges from local resistance and frictions between ‘inside’ and ‘outside’ normative frameworks (Björkdahl and Höglund 2013). Neither local nor international actors are free from context, yet their experiences can benefit each other and create an opportunity for the emergence of new and more resilient social structures that can strengthen conflict-affected communities. This is why local resistance should not be seen as an obstacle, but rather as a potential as locals carry a more refined view of the context, which can better inform and improve the practice of peacebuilding assistance by outside interveners. Besides, in both theory

and practice, it is usually difficult to distinguish where the ‘local’ stops and the ‘international’ begins (Richmond 2014).

Hybridity is perceived as an opportunity for engagement between local and international knowledge, thereby utilising international capacities to appreciate the specific context found in the everydayness of individuals who live in the epicentre. Mac Ginty and Richmond (2013: 764) took a step to overcome the dichotomy of local versus international and analysed the concept of hybridity from a pluralist point of view and defined peace as hybrid, multiple and often agonistic.

The process of mixing, interpreting and adapting is where the core argument of hybridity lies. Communication among actors and institutions in a conflict-affected society is highly dynamic and diverse, and therefore, constant reconsideration and reassessment of the given circumstances and interactions amongst various factors and actors are necessary (Mac Ginty and Sanghera 2012). Consequently, it becomes vital to include as many stakeholders as possible to ensure an inclusive and comprehensive peacebuilding approach that benefits all spheres of society (*ibid.*).

Thus, hybrid peacebuilding seeks to address the lack of attention to the local context, and the failure of liberal peacebuilding in a situation where the aid-recipient state is strong enough to deny intrusive outside intervention for statebuilding. The proponents of hybrid peacebuilding are against the conventional approaches to peacebuilding through which liberal state institutions have been merely imposed upon without paying sufficient attention to the local context. Keethaponcalan (2020), for example, pointed out the mismatch between Western-liberal norms and the Asian context. Since the social structures of the West and those of Asia are not identical, each has been shaped through a unique mix of tradition, culture, religion, family structure and social behaviour. Caution must be exercised to avoid colonialist, racist and sexist legacies that may still linger in foreign politics when considering the role of international peacebuilding (Wallis 2012; Ismail 2008). Thus, hybrid approaches can help outsiders to recognise the strategies of locals who resist both overt and subtle forms of colonisation and domination (Richmond 2014).

The danger of divorcing liberal ideas from hybrid peacebuilding is that certain values can be left behind as they may be unnoticed or unconceived by local actors due to different cognitive frameworks and worldviews they hold. It would be beneficial to move away from labelling ‘democratic peace’ and ‘liberal peacebuilding’ as Western concepts, and adopt contextually diverse concepts of governance, democracy, market economy,

human rights and sovereignty that are decolonised from the restraints of Western domination. Keethaponcalan (2020) argues that democracy, human rights, and good governance should not be disregarded simply as Western values as they are considered ‘universal’. By introducing the hybrid lens, anthropological variations of these values are allowed to co-exist, which effectively make them truly ‘universal’. By eliminating Western-centric ‘colonial arrogance’ and allowing non-Western expectations to shape these values, hybrid peacebuilding can lead a formation of universal values, thereby transforming the approach of Western intervention to fruitful emancipatory peacebuilding interplay. Hybridisation, therefore, constitutes a way to incorporate the values that liberal peacebuilding proposes with locally grounded legitimacy (Clements and Uesugi 2020). While aiming to empower local actors to define and shape the values, hybrid peacebuilding creates room for improving the real-life implementation of structures and concepts that do not easily align with Western-liberal equivalents.

Feminist Perspectives

Feminist perspectives underscore the importance of including the voices of those who are traditionally marginalised in society (Hudson 2000). This approach resonates with core values of hybrid peacebuilding as it, too, gives primacy to mainstreaming equal participation in peacebuilding while guaranteeing the specific needs of women and girls are included in peace dialogues and subsequent political processes. In practice, feminist perspectives are often implemented through gender mainstreaming programmes, and its argument for equal participation of ‘women’ resembles hybrid peacebuilding’s calls for inclusion of ‘locals’.

While both feminist and hybrid peacebuilding approaches underline the significance of diversifying the actors incorporated in the peace process, one additional perspective that the feminist approach brings is its distinctive conceptualisation of violence. It seeks to improve the concepts developed by Galtung (1969, 1990) on the categorisations of violence and the prerequisites for positive peace. It argues that war and other forms of fighting are intertwined, as they constitute a network of expressions of violence. Cockburn (2004: 43) proposes that “gender links violence at different points on a scale reaching from the personal to the international”. This thinking is highlighted by the fact that women experience violence in different ways than men both during times of war and peace

(Rigual 2018). For example, men often make up the majority of homicide victims, while women tend to be the main victims of intimate partner homicide (Geneva Declaration 2015). Feminist perspectives that advocate for including a plethora of voices can expand the analytical horizons of hybrid peacebuilding. The consciousness for varying experiences can be extended to not only women but also other marginalised and indigenous groups as discussed in the case studies of insider perspectives of hybrid peacebuilding in Chapters 5 and 6 of this volume.

Thus, feminist perspectives can widen the scope of hybrid peacebuilding. They can make hybrid peacebuilding more empathetic to societal harm and responsive to the need for inclusion of neglected perspectives. Feminist peacebuilding insists on developing a critical understanding of how societal norms affect violent behaviour, especially by re-shaping militarised norms and stereotypes in society. For example, masculinity norms affect the roots of violence, such norms serve as a hotbed for forceful actions (Stiehm 2000). Revealing how norms and stereotypes contribute to violence makes it possible to examine critically how a particular form of deeply embedded violence has been constructed in a given society. While feminist scholarship is at the forefront of shedding light on structural violence, hybrid peacebuilding theory has incorporated feminist's perspectives into the major discourse of the supremacy of the ethnographic approach to peacebuilding (Millar 2014a).

Hybrid peacebuilding underlines the significance of mid-space actors who can bridge existing cleavages in a society. Likewise, from the standpoint of feminist peacebuilding, it becomes crucial to identify means of finding and interacting with these mid-space actors who act as intermediaries to bring perspectives of underrepresented groups of people at the grassroots to the peace process. This task encompasses a preferably full understanding of the time (past, present and future) and space that can be enhanced by considering a wide range of perspectives, which is the essence of hybrid peacebuilding.

CRITIQUE OF HYBRID PEACEBUILDING

Pitfalls of Binaries

Hybrid peacebuilding has gained academic prominence by criticising liberal peacebuilding and attempting to reconfigure the dichotomic

conceptualisation between ‘liberal’ and ‘illiberal’ or ‘Western’ and ‘non-Western’ as such binaries tend to oversimplify the given context and overlook its complexity (Peterson 2012). Ironically, hybrid peacebuilding theory has been criticised for falling into this very pitfall. The emphasis on the mixture of two components—traditional/modern, liberal/illiberal, local/international to name but a few—is the most distinctive feature of hybrid peacebuilding that separates it from liberal peacebuilding (*ibid.*). Although these binary frameworks aid researchers to shape their cognition of conflict situations, the reality is more than just a mere sum of two contesting concepts. Many advocates of hybrid peacebuilding theory attach importance to the multifaceted, fluid and dynamic nature of peacebuilding settings. This method, however, caused a misperception among heretics that proponents of hybrid peacebuilding theory were trapped in a pitfall of dichotomies.

As hybrid peacebuilding often receives criticisms on its flood of binary conceptions, feminist approaches could also fall into the trap of binary conceptions of gender, which has been constructed within the framework of Western norms and values. The concept of gender should avoid being seen as promoting a binary (Mohanty 1988). An idiosyncratic nature of the concept of gender should be embraced and a historical and cultural diversity of the concept be accepted. Conventional gender discourses have succeeded in mainstreaming the Western perspective of gender in the practice of the UN, but they have not succeeded in establishing the plurality and fluidity of gender. What postcolonial feminist criticism implies is that hybrid peacebuilding should expand its analytical horizons and incorporate perspectives of underrepresented groups in political, economic, social, religious, cultural, and gender hierarchies. To reflect on the perspectives of postcolonial feminism, the concept of identity is explored as an analytical lens to supplement the hybridity lens in Chapter 5.

Kent et al. (2018) provided a broad discussion on the problem of overemphasising binaries of certain concepts that need to be stirred just right to achieve the perfect blend of a normative framework that would savour everyone’s taste buds sufficiently. Jackson and Albrecht (2018: 41) point out the underlying assumption that there is a direct causal link between programming and results on the ground that can be planned and predicted. To avoid this pitfall, de Coning (2013, 2016, 2018) suggests looking at conflict-affected societies as complex systems that have the ability to self-organise and emerge to a manifold of outcomes, which

would constitute an institution-building approach that would make social engineering obsolete. This point is revisited in Chapter 3.

Challenges of Operationalisation

A desire to operationalise hybrid peacebuilding theory exists among reflective practitioners of peacebuilding. Attempts to transform the analytical lens to practical tools may entail the risk of merely imposing outsider's view on what is the optimal 'blend' of international and local norms (Millar 2014b). If one insists on operationalising the theory, he or she may end up with falling into the trap of the notorious cookie-cutter approach of liberal peacebuilding. Thus, reflective practitioners advocate for the utility of hybridity to create locally grounded, legitimate structures of values and institutions (Clements et al. 2007). Filling this gap in critical peacebuilding literature is the main focus of this study, which is revisited in Chapter 4.

Wallis et al. (2018) identified the risk of 'romanticising the local' and downplaying significant power differentials at the local level that are based on gender, age, ethnic or other similar divisions. Paffenholz (2015) echoes such concerns saying that hybridity is presented as a hegemonic and power-free space, and the power of local elites within hybrid structures is overlooked. This means that underlying power structures affect peacebuilding endeavours between the elite and the grassroots actors, as well as they impact on local settings and actors in key social positions who can control access to information, resources and perception about the needs of stakeholders involved in conflict. On the other hand, Millar (2014b) warns not to overestimate the influence that outside intervention might bring to the dynamic of hybridisation. Richmond (2014: 52) extends this point by saying that hybridity needs to be seen in the context of institutional and power-political struggles, adding different spheres of dynamics, as hybridity "represents the contingent and complex nature of the politics of peacemaking and the dynamics of power, agency and identity it involves".

The term 'hybridity' itself has also become the target of criticism. Millar (2014b), for example, maintained that excessive conceptualisation of what 'hybridity' encompasses could compromise the needed space for social emergence on the ground, and turn to an outcome-focused, rather than a process-oriented framework. It is important to look at not only the outcomes of hybrid emergence, but also at its process. Hybridity

should not be seen as a result of a linear process that can generate a predictable outcome, but should be regarded as a by-product of interactions among different spheres of a society that hold the capacity to create a mutual understanding of peace and peacebuilding (*ibid.*). This notion then actively engages with basic structures that are found on the ground rather than downgrading what already exists and establishing an entirely new scaffold. To question the assumption of a linear progression, this study introduces the complexity approach, which focuses on intersectionality and dynamic relationships of stakeholders in conflict as discussed in Chapter 3.

CONCLUSION

To set the scene for the following chapters, this chapter provided a brief review of some of the relevant literatures surrounding hybrid peacebuilding, and discussed its merits for a sustained, locally grounded and inclusive establishment of peace. Four discourses of peacebuilding—economic, liberal, critical and feminist—were presented to illuminate the main feature of hybrid peacebuilding and to serve as the foundation for the subsequent discussions in which a spectrum of theoretical and empirical studies is offered.

The above literature review stresses that hybrid peacebuilding does not see peacebuilding processes in binary terms. Instead, it assumes that these processes are complex, multifaceted, dynamic and interactive. While binary frameworks are fixed in static dichotomies, the hybridity lens provides open perspectives, which are flexible and adaptive. Operationalising hybrid peacebuilding means to consider and adapt such features of hybridity. This increases the potential of hybrid peacebuilding for moving beyond merely bringing economic development, political stability and functioning institutions. Based on such premises, the following chapters investigate how tools for peacebuilding can be applied in practice to produce an inclusive process in which experiences and needs of those who have been marginalised and neglected are reflected.

As illustrated in the above literature review, feminist perspectives can shed light on the role of mid-space actors who serve as insider-partial mediators representing the interests of silenced people in conflict-affected communities. To operationalise hybrid peacebuilding theory successfully, rigorous efforts must be made by outsiders to embrace the adaptive interplay of encounters with mid-space actors. The range of case studies

provided in this volume shows that hybrid peacebuilding may stem from the critical peacebuilding literature, but holds the potential to combine and learn from various perspectives of peacebuilding as the virtue of hybridity is to harness multiple elements. Hybridity is aiming to promote inclusion of different voices, views and realities rooted in all spheres of society. Thus, the operationalisation of hybrid peacebuilding should aim for the same: to promote inclusive thinking that can elicit fruitful contributions from various perspectives.

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