The end of history and the last liberal peacebuilder: a reply to Roland Paris

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Abstract. In the April 2010 *Review of International Studies*, Roland Paris argued that liberal peacebuilding is the only viable solution for rebuilding war-torn societies, and supported this by assailing critics of the liberal peace. In this article we challenge four key claims made by Paris: imposed and consensual peacebuilding are different experiences; there are no echoes of imperialism in modern peacebuilding; there is no alternative to the capitalist free market; and critics of the liberal peace are 'closet liberals'. We argue that Paris ignores the extent to which all peacebuilding strategies have had a core of common prescriptions: neoliberal policies of open markets, privatisation and fiscal restraint, and governance policies focused on enhancing instruments of state coercion and 'capacity building' – policies that have proved remarkably resilient even while the democracy and human rights components of the liberal peace have been substantially downgraded. There is little space to (formally) dissent from these policy prescriptions – whether international peacebuilders were originally invited in or not. Furthermore, the deterministic assumption by Paris that 'there is no alternative' is unjustifiable. Rather than trying to imagine competing meta-alternatives to liberalism, it is more constructive to acknowledge and investigate the variety of political economies in post-conflict societies rather than measuring them against a liberal norm.

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I am deeply concerned about our campaign in Afghanistan. Many of the key trends seem to be heading in a bad direction, perhaps even signalling a mounting crisis.

Senator John McCain, 14 June 2010[1]

Liberty is the possibility of being and not the obligation to be.

René Magritte

Introduction

In 1992, Francis Fukuyama in *The End of History and the Last Man* announced there was no alternative to Western liberalism and that it represented the ultimate evolutionary direction for modern societies.[2] Roland Paris's article in the April 2010 edition of the *Review of International Studies* makes similar assertions in its attempt to 'save liberal peacebuilding' from its critics.[3] For Paris, liberal peacebuilding is the only viable solution for rebuilding war-torn societies: 'The challenge today is not to replace or move "beyond" liberal peacebuilding but to reform existing approaches within a broadly liberal framework' (p. 362). In order to support this conclusion, Paris attempts to critique the critics of liberal peacebuilding and thus rounds up (and on) David Chandler, Mark Duffield, Oliver Richmond, Roger Mac Ginty (badly misspelt in his article), Beate Jahn and ourselves.

The article represents a refreshing change given that radical criticism of post-Cold War peacebuilding, predominantly from European academics, has been largely ignored in mainstream academic and policy circles in the USA. Neverthe-less, there is much in the article that is tendentious, misleading and problematic, not the least of which is the way the many differences amongst critics of the liberal peace are largely ignored. Indeed, he manages to achieve the difficult feat of serving up both a highly selective and a homogenised version of a varied literature that encompasses work by poststructuralists, critical theorists, post-Marxists and social constructivists. This is arguably an inevitable problem with any work that attempts to engage with a particular literature, especially one that attempts to do so within the word limits of a journal article. Nevertheless, the failure to acknowledge the variety of perspectives is striking and ultimately weakens the quality of his critique. What follows, therefore, represents a response to Paris based on our own understanding of the liberal peace and rooted in our own work on the subject. Consequently, there are problems with the Paris article that we do not address here. This includes his claim that critics define the liberal peace too broadly and that critics oversimplify moral complexity. Others will no doubt wish to respond to these claims in their own ways.

Crisis therapy

Paris makes several claims that require interrogation. First, he objects to the suggestion that the liberal peace is in crisis, citing Cooper's review article, *On the*

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[1] Comments made at the US Senate Armed Services Committee Hearing on Afghanistan, cited in *The Guardian* (London) (16 June 2010).
[2] Francis Fukuyama, *The End of History and the Last Man* (London: Penguin, 1992).
[3] Roland Paris, 'Saving Liberal Peacebuilding', *Review of International Studies*, 36:2 (2010), pp. 337–65.

Crisis of the Liberal Peace, as an exemplar of such arguments.[4] Instead, he points to the liberal principles underpinning critical work such as that of Chandler's and argues this demonstrates that claims about the crisis of the liberal peace are simply wrong (p. 355). (We deal with the 'innate liberalism' of liberal peace critiques in more detail below.) However, the discussion of the crisis of the liberal peace provided by Paris is problematic – no less because it is dependent on a misreading of Cooper's article. Cooper argued that critiques such as Chandler's highlight *why* the liberal peace is in crisis, but also pointed out that the same literature demonstrates 'the continued power and pervasiveness of liberal models of peacebuilding'.[5] Indeed, Cooper emphasised the fact that any crisis was one of 'confidence and perceived effectiveness rather than one of empirical extensiveness'[6] and that whether it was a crisis of the liberal peace project *per se*, rather than just specific forms of liberal peace interventionism was far more debatable.[7] Clearly, any discussion of the claims made about the crisis of the liberal peace need to reflect the important qualifications attached to them. Paris fails to do this.

Moreover, in retrospect Cooper's 2007 article was, if anything, too cautious in only claiming that the crisis was one of confidence. The crisis of liberal military intervention in Afghanistan (supposedly 'the good war') is now nakedly transparent (as exemplified by Senator McCain's comments cited at the start of this article). Indeed, the traumatic experiences of both Iraq and Afghanistan are likely to produce exactly the same aversion to 'boots on the ground' military strategies that occurred in the aftermath of the débâcle in Somalia in 1993, and which contributed to US (and UN) reluctance to intervene even in response to a compelling humanitarian tragedy such as the Rwandan genocide.[8] There has been a similar rolling back of the commitment to implement specific elements of the liberal peace model. In particular, the democratisation and human rights agendas have been substantially downgraded as oil and security considerations in the Middle East, Central Asia and sub-Saharan Africa have led to serial accommodation with autocratic governments and rejection of uncomfortable democratic outcomes such as the election of Hamas in the occupied Palestinian territory.[9] At the same time, the global economic crisis has profoundly discredited liberal models of economy in the US and Europe, and the transfer of economic and political power to non-liberal states such as China has become more pronounced.[10]

This is not to suggest the crisis of the liberal peace is, as yet, terminal. Indeed, as Naomi Klein has noted, one of the ironies of the neoliberal economic model propagated by liberal interventionists is that every crisis is treated as an opportunity to impose or extend the model even further.[11] Thus, as we note below, donors and the international financial institutions have retained an evangelical

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[4] Neil Cooper, 'On the Crisis of the Liberal Peace', *Conflict, Security & Development*, 7:4 (2007), pp. 605–16.

[5] Ibid., p. 606.

[6] Ibid.

[7] Ibid., p. 614.

[8] Linda Melvern, *A People Betrayed: The Role of the West in Rwanda's Genocide* (London: Zed Books, 2000), pp. 77–80 and 229–30.

[9] Kyle Baxter and Shahram Akbarzadeh, *US Foreign Policy in the Middle East: The Roots of Anti-Americanism* (London: Routledge, 2008).

[10] Martin Jacques, *When China Rules the World: The Rise of the Middle Kingdom and the End of the Western World* (London: Allen Lane, 2009).

[11] Naomi Klein, *The Shock Doctrine: The Rise of Disaster Capitalism* (London: Penguin, 2007).

faith in the transformative powers of neoliberal economics, even as core precepts such as the commitment to deregulation were demonstrated to be at the root of the worst global recession since the 1930s. Consequently, the neoliberal component of the liberal peace project has proved remarkably resilient in the face of its own crisis and may even (in the short term at least) experience a brief renaissance as crisis produces more opportunities for shock therapy.[12] More generally, whilst the liberal peace model is certainly no longer as unquestioned as it was when Fukuyama produced *The End of History* it is still the dominant paradigm articulated by powerful donors, UN agencies and the international financial institutions (IFIs). Thus whilst the liberal peace model is certainly in crisis, it remains a powerful instrument of hegemony.

Imposed or consensual?

A key contention made in Paris's article is that liberal peace critics make the mistake of equating the invasion of Iraq and Afghanistan with most other peacebuilding missions since the end of the Cold War. As Paris notes: 'destroying a regime through external invasion is hardly equivalent, in degree, or kind, to deploying a mission at the request of local parties with the goal of helping these parties to implement a peace settlement' (p. 348). But critics have explicitly drawn out the distinctions between post-conquest and post-settlement peacebuilding[13] – as Paris recognises when criticising Oliver Richmond for including the 'victor's peace' in his typology of the liberal peace (p. 350). However, the distinction Paris wants to draw between the 'vast majority of missions' and Iraq, Afghanistan and what he concedes were the 'less-than-consensual conditions' in Kosovo is not as clear cut as he seems to imagine.

A key feature of the post-Cold War period has been the way in which the traditional concept of peacekeeping (with the consent of parties to a ceasefire or peace agreement for managing conflict peacefully) has given way to a much broader definition, one that embraces the idea of peace operations in the absence of either a ceasefire and/or consent by all parties. Surprisingly, Paris overlooks this truism of contemporary commentaries.[14] Leaving aside the Congo in the 1960s, an early example of 'non-consensual' operations was in Croatia and Bosnia where there was neither a peace to uphold nor universal consent for a UN presence and where the liberal peace eventually involved the use of NATO forces. Other examples include Somalia during the Black Hawk Down episode when UNOSOM II came to be seen as the 'sixteenth Somali faction',[15] and Sierra Leone where UK

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[12] Mark Weisbrot, D. Baker and D. Rosnick, 'The Scorecard on Development: 25 Years of Diminished Progress' (Washington, DC: Center for Economic and Policy Research, September 2005).

[13] Oliver P. Richmond, *Peace in International Relations* (London: Routledge, 2008).

[14] See Development, Concepts and Doctrine Centre, Ministry of Defence, 'Security and Stabilisation: the Military Contribution', Joint Doctrine Publication 3–40 (November 2009), p. 20, para. 0221; Gary Anderson, 'Preparing for the Worst: Military Requirements for Hazardous Missions', in Donald C. F. Daniel, Patricia Taft and Sharon Wiharta (eds), *Peace Operations: Trends Progress and Prospects* (Washington DC: Georgetown University Press, 2008), pp. 63–70; Paul F. Diehl, *Peace Operations* (London: Polity, 2008).

[15] Ameen Jan, 'Somalia: Building Sovereignty or Restoring Peace?', in Elizabeth M. Cousens and Chetan Kumar (eds), *Peacebuilding as Politics: Cultivating Peace in Fragile Societies* (Boulder, CO: Lynne Rienner, 2001), p. 72.

forces were involved in military action against the Revolutionary United Front (RUF). As Paris himself has noted with regard to the latter:

the national army was reinforced by a large contingent of UN troops, who effectively fought on behalf of the government, and – most importantly – by an elite British military task force [who] [. . .] routed RUF fighters [. . .] What peacebuilders did, in effect, was to focus on one vital institution of the Sierra Leone government – the army – and make it more effective in order to deter and suppress violent challenges.[16]

Even 'peacebuilding by consent' is usually understood as the consent of key elites and often rests on various degrees of coercion. For example, whilst the British and UN action against the rebel RUF noted above certainly received a high level of public support, the government of Sierra Leone only reluctantly agreed to the original Lomé peace agreement of 1999 under heavy pressure from the UK (a key aid donor and former colonial power) and, in particular, the US, whose officials reportedly drafted entire sections of the accord.[17] The agreement itself has been described as one that 'scandalised Sierra Leoneons' given the level of accommodation with the rebel RUF that external actors were willing to countenance.[18] Only the RUF's failure to uphold the peace agreement and its kidnapping of UN peacekeepers provoked a shift from 'peacebuilding by coerced settlement' to 'forcible peacebuilding by invitation'. In occupied Palestine, 'peacebuilding by consent' after the 1993 Oslo Peace Accords gave way to 'peacebuilding by coercion' after the election of Hamas in January 2006 which ushered in the Western and Israeli strategy of collective punishment of Palestinians.[19] In criticising others for failing to distinguish between different kinds of peacebuilding, Paris himself fails to acknowledge the far more extensive gradations that exist between the poles of 'pure' peacebuilding after conquest and 'pure' peacebuilding after ceasefire and consent, as well as the way in which peace operations can move backwards and forwards along a spectrum of consent and coercion over time.

Moreover, when critics of liberal peacebuilding draw comparisons between Iraq, Afghanistan and other peacebuilding operations, one of their aims is to highlight the fact that *all* peacebuilding operations involve the exercise of power and illustrate relations of power between actors at the global, regional and local levels. In particular, while specific operations may be conceived under very different conditions, they all reflect the exercise of hegemonic power, whether directly using cruise missiles or subcontracted to private security companies, UN peacekeepers drawn predominantly from the developing world, or various international organisations and non-governmental organisations (NGOs). As Vivienne Jabri has noted, in this context,

The liberal peace project is hence part and parcel of [. . .] the global 'matrix of war', a complex array of interconnected practices that include the use of military force, policing

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[16] Roland Paris, *At War's End: Building Peace after Civil Conflicts* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2004), p. 223.
[17] David Keen, *Conflict and Collusion in Sierra Leone* (New York: Palgrave, 2005), pp. 250–53.
[18] Lansana Gberie, *A Dirty War in West Africa: The RUF and the Destruction of Sierra Leone* (London: Hurst, 2005), p. 158. See also, Funmi Olonisakin, *Peacekeeping in Sierra Leone: The Story of UNAMSIL* (Boulder, CO: Lynne Rienner, 2008), p. 39.
[19] Mandy Turner, 'Building Democracy in Palestine: Liberal Peace Theory and the Election of Hamas', *Democratization*, 13:5 (2006), pp. 739–55.

operations, and statebuilding institutionalising measures geared at the control of populations.[20]

This is not a particularly novel observation, but critics of liberal peacebuilding keep on having to make it precisely because liberal peace advocates keep recycling the notion that because peacebuilding by invitation does not involve firing cruise missiles from warships, it is an essentially benign process.

We acknowledge that there have been war-torn societies queuing up to get aid and help with organising and observing elections. And the UN was an early actor in the realm of post-war de-mining, hardly an objectionable programme.[21] Large numbers of combatants have been demobilised, the UN High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) has made a difference to refugee returns and there have been accomplishments in property restoration in the Balkans, for example. These measures have all been critically interrogated.[22] But our key point is that the overall framing of peace by external agencies reinforces neoliberal prescriptions, particularly in the realm of political economy, that neither take sufficient account of local needs and agency, nor reflect on the role of global capitalism and structural adjustment policies as drivers of conflict. The damage inflicted by neoliberalism on peace was already evident to Paris in his critique of peacebuilding in El Salvador.[23] Indeed, as Ellen Moodie shows, the narrative of successful peacebuilding continued to be shaken in El Salvador by the persistence of actual and structural violence after the 1992 peace accords – and the neoliberal framing of crime and corruption as unexceptional, to be dealt with by self-protection.[24]

Furthermore, critics do not ignore the statist, fragmented and *ad hoc* composition of the UN, otherwise the UN would not have to make efforts to establish 'integrated missions'. But in that particular set of family relations, there are hierarchies of power. Compared to the UN Development Programme (UNDP), for example, the IFIs have considerable clout. The World Bank has a seat in the Peacebuilding Commission, uses Trust Funds to exercise leverage where it has no direct role, is widely considered as an 'ally in peacebuilding',[25] drives the donor conferences and, backed by the International Monetary Fund (IMF) conditionalities, places state institution building at the top of its agenda so that neoliberal

[20] Vivienne Jabri, 'War, Government, Politics: A Critical Response to the Hegemony of the Liberal Peace', in Oliver P. Richmond (ed.), *Palgrave Advances in Peacebuilding. Critical Developments and Approaches* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2010), p. 52.

[21] However, the emergence of the landmines agenda is also related to particular hegemonic constructions of security and military technology that emerged in the post-Cold War era and thus not unproblematic when understood in this broader sense. See Neil Cooper, 'Humanitarian Arms Control and Processes of Securitisation: Moving Weapons Along the Security Continuum', *Contemporary Security Policy*, forthcoming in 2011.

[22] The literature is extensive, but see, *inter alia*, Mats Berdal, *Building Peace after War* (London: Routledge and IISS, 2009); Richard Caplan, *International Governance of War-Torn Territories* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2005), Elizabeth Cousens and Chetan Kumar, *Peacebuilding as Politics*; Béatrice Pouligny, *Peace Operations Seen From Below: UN Missions and Local People* (London: Hurst, 2006).

[23] Roland Paris, 'International Peacebuilding and the "Mission civilisatrice"', *Review of International Studies*, 28:4 (2002), pp. 637–56.

[24] Ellen Moodie, *El Salvador in the Aftermath of Peace: Crime, Uncertainty, and the Transition to Democracy* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2010).

[25] International Peace Institute, *From New York to the Field: A Dialogue on Peace Operations*, report of a conference of UN members states and SRSGs, on 19 June 2009 (New York: IPI, January 2010), p. 5. Susan Woodward has made these points in a contribution to Dominik Zaum and Mats Berdal (eds), *Political Economy of Statebuilding: Power After Peace* (Routledge, forthcoming).

political economies can be institutionalised. The UNDP and donors have varied degrees of emphasis on what needs to be done, but the culture of structural adjustment and conditionality is all-pervasive. Local authorities then have to manage the tensions that arise. As the British politician Paddy Ashdown commented when comparing his time as an MP during Margaret Thatcher's tenure in power with his time as High Representative for Bosnia:

> Ironically, as a politician I campaigned against many of her [Thatcher's] reforms, arguing that they would lead to lost jobs and the selling off of the national wealth; only to find myself instituting very similar reforms in Bosnia and facing the same arguments and opposition. What makes matters worse in most post-conflict countries is that they are poor, not rich – so the pain can be far greater. There is not much the interveners can do about this, except understand it and recognise that by insisting on accelerated reforms we are often asking local politicians to take responsibility for a level of social disruption which our own politicians at home would reject without a second thought.[26]

Paris acknowledges the myriad problems of liberal peacebuilding including the limited knowledge of local conditions and 'insufficient "local ownership" over the strategic direction and daily activities of such operations' (p. 347). But for him these are merely technical problems of implementation rather than design faults hardwired into the model. Ultimately, therefore, Paris fails to appreciate the extent to which liberal peace intervention is predicated on ignoring the local and dismissing the everyday lived experiences of people as either irrelevant or as forms of deviance necessitating transformation.[27] He also ignores the extent to which peacebuilding strategies pursued after peace settlements *and* after conquest have had a core of common prescriptions: neoliberal policies of open markets, privatisation and fiscal restraint, and governance policies focused on institutions, enhancing instruments of state coercion and 'capacity building' based on the now near-universal conceit that 'development requires security'. There is little space to (formally) dissent from these policy prescriptions – whether international peace-builders were originally invited in or not. This is an imposed – not negotiated – peace. And this is one reason why such prescriptions often fail – because local 'buy-in' is limited and the incentives for obstruction, co-option or evasion of neoliberal governance mechanisms commensurately higher.

The *mission civilisatrice* and the end(s) of history

Paris admonishes the critics for equating liberal peacebuilding with imperialism or colonialism and asserts that 'observing there are *echoes* of colonialism in peacebuilding is quite different from asserting their *equivalence*' (p. 350 authors' emphases). For him, critics manipulate history and historical comparison in order to condemn contemporary liberal peacebuilding by dint of association with a largely discredited colonial past. However, we are not aware of any critical academic literature that suggests current peacebuilding operations are the mirror

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[26] Paddy Ashdown, *Swords and Ploughshares: Bringing Peace to the 21st Century* (London: Weidenfeld & Nicolson, 2007).
[27] See Oliver P. Richmond, 'The Romanticisation of the Local: Welfare, Culture and Peacebuilding', *International Spectator*, 44:1 (2009), pp. 149–69.

image of late 19th century colonialism in the manner implied by Paris. Indeed, the only reference provided by Paris to evidence his claim is to an article by Seumas Milne of *The Guardian* newspaper which refers to Kosovo as a 'Nato colony' and Western intervention as a 'system of imperial power enforcement'.[28] Even that article, however, is best read as one that deploys rhetorical allusions to Empire to highlight the similarities with contemporary interventionism (a project Paris approves of) rather than one that details the way in which 'old style colonialism and modern peacebuilding' (p. 346) are exactly the same.[29]

There has, of course, been a broad post-Cold War debate on the extent to which Western powers have rediscovered imperial tendencies. But one of the features of this debate is that it is not confined to the critical literature on peacebuilding – neoconservatives and liberal idealists have also weighed in, some arguing for an extension of imperial ambition,[30] others for retrenchment.[31] If critical scholars are deluded in seeing links between contemporary interventions and the practices of Empire they are certainly not alone. Moreover, Paris misses the point that critical discussions of empire and imperialism are far broader than the narrow association with the late 19th century colonialism he focuses on. For example, Hardt and Negri's discussion of *Empire* is explicit in declaring that the diffuse and non-territorial kind of empire they are describing is *not* comparable with the territorially-situated colonial models of earlier eras.[32] Similarly, the title of Chandler's *Empire in Denial* reflects his claim that modern practices and representations of empire manifest themselves in very different ways to those of traditional colonialism.[33]

Paris also rejects comparisons with imperialism on the grounds that old-fashioned colonialism was practised 'largely to benefit the imperial states themselves, including through the extraction of human and material resources from the colonised society' (p. 349). In contrast, he argues that modern UN missions 'have not principally been motivated by efforts to extract wealth from their host societies' (p. 349) and that critics have failed to provide evidence that 'post-settlement peacebuilding' has been motivated by the 'expectation or desire for economic gain' (p. 349). This last claim rests on the earlier distinction between post-settlement and post-conquest peacebuilding which, as we have already argued, is problematic. If this is set aside then it is clear that peacebuilding in Iraq was about imposing a neoliberal political economy particularly in the oil industry[34] and the US-run

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[28] Seumas Milne, 'A system to enforce imperial power will only be resisted', *The Guardian* (London) (28 February 2008).

[29] The same can be said of a critique of the OHR in Bosnia: Gerard Knaus and Felix Martin, 'Travails of the European Raj: Lessons from Bosnia and Herzegovina', *Journal of Democracy*, 14:3 (2003), pp. 60–73. For a useful discussion of 'imperialism' transformed into the global projection of capitalism by international institutions with the UN at the centre, see, Ian Taylor, 'Liberal Peace, Liberal Imperialism: A Gramscian Critique', in Richmond (ed.), *Palgrave Advances*, pp. 154–74.

[30] Michael Ignatieff, *Empire Lite: Nation-building in Bosnia, Kosovo and Afghanistan* (New York: Vintage, 2003); Niall Ferguson, *Colossus: The Rise and Fall of the American Empire* (London: Allen Lane), 2005.

[31] Chalmers A. Johnson, *Blowback, The Costs and Consequences of American Empire*, second edition (New York: Holt Paperbacks, 2004).

[32] Antonio Negri and Michael Hardt, *Empire* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2000).

[33] David Chandler, *Empire in Denial: The Politics of Statebuilding* (London: Pluto, 2006).

[34] Eric Herring, 'Neoliberalism versus Peacebuilding in Iraq', in Michael Pugh, Neil Cooper and Mandy Turner (eds), *Whose Peace? Critical Perspectives on the Political Economy of Peacebuilding* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2008), pp. 47–64; Naomi Klein, *The Shock Doctrine*; Rajiv

transitional administration, the Coalition Provisional Authority, presided over such blatant profiteering by a handful of (predominantly) US companies that it is difficult to dispute that Iraq was indeed 'for sale'.[35] We are not suggesting this was without huge costs to the US state,[36] but this was largely because pre-invasion assumptions about the mimetic attraction of the liberal being turned out to reflect the hubris of the interventionists rather than any assessment of local realities.

Moreover, in his distinctions between 'colonialism as self-interest' versus 'modern peacebuilding as altruism', Paris introduces qualifications that demonstrates why critical scholars are right to interrogate the altruistic claims of liberal peacebuilders. He agrees there are 'echoes of colonialism in peacebuilding' and agrees that modern UN missions 'still reflect the interests of the world's most powerful countries' (pp. 349–50). He also reasserts the claim made in his earlier work that today's post-conflict missions can be viewed as a modern version of the *mission civilisatrice*,[37] albeit translated into the contemporary parlance of capacity-building and good governance (p. 348), and acknowledges that old-fashioned colonialism was not wholly or purely about self-interest (p. 349). We agree with these points, but suggest that *any* critique of those exploring the links between imperialism and modern peacebuilding that starts by admitting the latter is a modern version of the *mission civilisatrice* is built on very shaky intellectual foundations. We would also add that the critical literature on liberal peacebuilding includes work that explores the way in which concern for the 'other' and projects of development, modernisation and civilisation have intertwined with the economic and strategic considerations of powerful actors in *both* contemporary peacebuilding operations and earlier imperial interventions.[38] Exploring how such similar themes are manifested in different eras is a useful way to interrogate claims that current techniques of liberal intervention are both novel and benevolent.

The 'free' market fairytale

Paris's final – and perhaps more revealing – criticism of the critics rests on a deterministic paradigm that deems there is no alternative to the capitalist market economy. Paris contends that while critics may be correct in pointing to the destabilising consequences of economic liberalisation strategies, there is no alternative to 'some version of market-orientated reform' in post-conflict states (p. 361). The second half of the 20th century, he notes, demonstrated that centrally planned and state-dominated development strategies such as 'Soviet-style' communism and the import substitution strategies pursued in many parts of Latin

Chandrasekaran, *Imperial Life inside the Emerald City: Inside Baghdad's Green Zone* (London: Bloomsbury, 2008); Toby Dodge, 'Iraqi Transitions: From regime change to state collapse', *Third World Quarterly*, 26:4 (2005), pp. 699–715.

[35] *Iraq for Sale: The War Profiteers*, Brave New Films, prod. & dir. Robert Greenwald (2006). See: {www.bravenewfilms.org}.

[36] Joseph E. Stiglitz and Linda J. Bilmes, *The Three Trillion Dollar War:The True Cost of the Iraq Conflict* (New York: W. W. Norton, 2008).

[37] Roland Paris, 'International Peacebuilding and the "Mission Civilisatrice"'.

[38] Mark Duffield, *Development, Security and Unending War: Governing the World of Peoples* (London: Polity, 2007); Beate Jahn, 'The Tragedy of Liberal Diplomacy', in David Chandler (ed.), *Statebuilding and Intervention: Policies, Practices and Paradigms* (London: Routledge, 2008), chap. 10.

America and Africa 'generally produced lower levels of economic growth than market-orientated development strategies' (p. 361). This unsubstantiated assertion is contradicted by the evidence analysed by the Cambridge economist, Ha-Joon Chang, who, among others, points out that developing countries experienced their best growth rates and rise in *per capita* income during the 1960s and 1970s under strategic *dirigisme*.[39]

For Paris, 'non-market-orientated economic policies (or those that do not give the market a priority in allocating scarce resources) are too inefficient to generate sustained economic growth' (p. 361). Four brief counter-points can be made. First, most modern economies combine state-direction of markets and development with some element of private market activity; differences lie in the balance between the two elements. There are, therefore, no 'non-market orientated economic policies' as even the most *dirigiste* states create markets, they just happen to be more subject to national control or direction. Second, so-called 'free' markets are highly managed as evidenced by the $100 billion worth of agricultural subsidies rich nations dispense each year, by state investment in R&D (research and development), industrial policies, and employment legislation.[40] Third, one of the reasons why the political economy of liberal peace is under pressure is because one of the recurrent crises of the liberal economic model has coincided with the perceived success of statist development models, particularly that of China. The claim that there is no alternative and that only private markets will generate sustained economic growth is being disproved by the Chinese economy which, despite private market reforms, is still dominated by state-owned enterprises and heavily directed by the state.[41] We are certainly not suggesting that the Chinese model represents the kind of emancipatory alternative to liberal peacebuilding advocated by critical scholars. It does not. The example does, however, refute Paris's contention that there is only one possible economic model for developing and post-conflict societies. Indeed, part of the explanation for China's growing influence in regions such as sub-Saharan Africa is not just that it is more willing to turn a blind eye to non-liberal forms of governance but that governments increasingly view it as both a successful and more amenable model of development compared to that preached by Western donors.[42] There is also evidence to suggest that intensified aid and trade links with China have produced higher growth rates, better terms of trade and higher public revenues for states in Africa.[43]

The fourth point relates to the 'organised hypocrisy' of Western donors who advocate a purist version of the neoliberal economic model that is not necessarily followed 'at home', as indicated in Ashdown's confession quoted earlier. Part of our critique of liberal peacebuilding, therefore, is that, notwithstanding the shift to a post-Washington Consensus, donors and IFIs advocate macroeconomic policies designed to lower both trade barriers and financing for welfare programmes in

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[39] Ha-Joon Chang, *Bad Samaritans: The Guilty Secrets of Rich Nations and the Threat to Global Prosperity* (London: Random House, 2008), pp. 26–8. See also, Weisbrot, Baker and Rosnick, 'The Scorecard on Development'.
[40] Chang, *Bad Samaritans*, p. 77.
[41] Jacques, *When China Rules the World*; Will Hutton, *The Writing on the Wall: China and the West in the 21st Century* (London: Little Brown & Co., 2007).
[42] Chris Alden, *China in Africa* (London: Zed, 2007).
[43] Ngaire Woods, 'Whose aid? Whose influence? China, Emerging Donors and the Silent Revolution in Development Assistance', *International Affairs*, 84:6 (2008), p. 1206.

ways that would not be accepted in Western capitals.[44] One striking illustration of this is the way in which the global economic crisis that erupted in 2007 prompted Western governments of all political shades to (temporarily) rediscover Keynes and the benefits of counter-cyclical financing – a discovery used to justify massive government intervention to prop up ailing banks and subsidies to the car industry at a cost that substantially exceeds global aid budgets.[45] At the same time, the IFIs have maintained their insistence that transition and post-conflict economies avoid similar measures themselves. For example, in Hungary, Latvia and Ukraine, the IMF prescribed pro-cyclical monetary and fiscal policies as part of the standby arrangements signed in the wake of the global recession – policies that have produced unemployment, cuts in social services and political instability.[46] Indeed, in a review of IMF agreements with 41 countries (including standby arrangements, poverty reduction and growth facilities and exogenous shocks facilities), the Center for Economic and Policy Research found that pro-cyclical economic policies were in place in 31 cases.[47]

Towards alternative approaches

Paris asks what an alternative approach to peacebuilding might look like. We have already begun to outline an answer to this question in earlier discussions of our concept of life welfare as an alternative to human security.[48] Underpinning our concept of life welfare is our concern to develop an alternative, unsecuritised language and paradigm that rejects the universalism of human security in favour of a dialogue between heterodoxies. As such, it is a paradigm that encompasses alternative notions of life (the individual, community, the biosphere, and the planetary environment). This is not to imply a resigned relativism about the ends of policy but rather to incorporate a concern for optimising the life potential of individuals and diverse forms of community into a politics that recognises that the means by which such goals are to be realised need to be the object of serial negotiation (as opposed to simulated negotiations masking serial impositions). In the context of this article it is worth briefly reflecting on what this might mean in terms of the political economy of peacebuilding.

In the sphere of political economy, neoliberalism exhibits a particular hubris in which 'the end of history' is valued for the triumph of capital, as if that is the code to a teleological convergence project. But it does not follow that because the liberal peace transmits a universalising and cosmopolitan vision of political economy that

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[44] Michael Pugh, 'Post-war Economies and the New York Dissensus', *Conflict, Security & Development*, 6:3 (2006), pp. 269–89.
[45] Pugh, Cooper and Turner, 'Conclusion: the Political Economy of Peacebuilding – Whose Peace? Where Next?', in Pugh, Cooper and Turner, *Whose Peace?*, pp. 390–97.
[46] Jose Antonio Cordero, 'The IMF's Standby Arrangements and the Economic Downturn in Eastern Europe: the cases of Hungary, Latvia and Ukraine', (Washington DC: Center for Economic and Policy Research: September 2009).
[47] Mark Weisbrot, Rebecca Ray, Jake Johnston, Jose Antonio Cordero and Juan Antonio Montecino, 'IMF-supported Macro-economic Policies and the World Recession: A Look at 41 Borrowing Countries' (Washington DC: Center for Economic and Policy Research, October 2009).
[48] Pugh, Cooper and Turner, *Whose Peace?*, pp. 394–97.

alternatives need to follow suit.[49] Contrary to trying to imagine competing meta-alternatives to liberalism, it is more constructive to acknowledge and investigate the variety of political economies in post-conflict societies – whether influenced by *dirigiste*, state welfarist, neoliberal, centralised, decentralised, protectionist, integrative, modernising or respecting tribal, religious and customary forms of production and exchange. And rather than measuring them against a liberalising norm, it is important to consider them in their own right as varied forms of peace. Of the many empirically-rich cases, from Sudan to the South Pacific, two can be mentioned here. In Lebanon, forms of Islamic peacebuilding are partly consonant with modernisation and neoliberalism, in support to entrepreneurialism for example, but also that Arab states have granted relief and development funds to entire co-religious communities to decide on reconstruction.[50] In Timor—Leste, the notion of a centralised state, and the social engineering it entails, is alien to a rural majority which follows traditional power structures of kinship and patrimonialism, and which value traditional forms of agricultural production and exchange.[51] In consequence, the 'post-post-conflict' period in Timor–Leste has been characterised by the adoption of hybrid forms of governance that combine elements of the liberal and the local. Whilst these are not without flaws, they illustrate the potential of peacebuilding strategies that investigate, articulate and respect heterodoxies as a means to building effective forms of governance and economy.

Another theme in our work and in that of others[52] is that liberal peacebuilding focuses primarily on configuring the political economies operating *inside* post-conflict states. In contrast, we have argued that such approaches ignore the gross inequalities and forms of exploitation in the global economy and the way developed world actors strive to maintain these at the same time as proffering limited forms of global poor relief to contain potential revolts of the poor while ensuring they do not migrate to western shores.[53] The effort to reform the inside of post-conflict economies is therefore akin to training goldfish in a desert – regardless of how good individual programmes are they are ultimately destined to fail.[54] Along with reforming global economic structures, another step would be to at least allow post-conflict societies to adopt the same policies on issues such as trade protection and social welfare as developed economies currently employ and on which they based their original development.[55] Paris notably fails to engage with these aspects of the critique of the liberal peace.

Conclusion

Contra-Paris we take issue with the claim there is 'no alternative' to liberal peacebuilding. We argue instead that there is a need to reject imposition in favour

[49] Oliver P. Richmond, *A Post-liberal Peace* (London: Routledge, in press for 2011).

[50] Christine Sylva Hamieh and Roger Mac Ginty, 'A Very Political Reconstruction: Governance and Reconstruction in Lebanon after the 2006 War', *Disasters*, 34:1 (2010), pp. 103–23.

[51] Tanja Hohe, 'The Clash of Paradigms: International Administration and Local Political Legitimacy in East Timor', *Contemporary Southeast Asia*, 24:3 (2002), pp. 569–89.

[52] Duffield, *Development, Security and Unending War*; Chris Cramer, *Civil War is Not a Stupid Thing: Accounting for Violence in Developing Societies* (London: Hurst, 2006).

[53] Pugh, Cooper and Turner, *Whose Peace?*, pp. 394–96.

[54] Neil Cooper, 'Training Goldfish (in a Desert): Transforming Political Economies of Conflict Using Voluntarism, Regulation and Supervision', in Richmond (ed.), *Palgrave Advances*, pp. 307–26.

[55] Chang, *Bad Samaritans*.

of negotiation over what type of 'peace' is being built and for whom. Stating that there is no alternative to liberal peacebuilding is tantamount to arguing that those who oppose it or criticise it are holding up the locomotive of history or forcing it off the main track into a siding. This is unjustifiably deterministic. Paris's critique is based on questionable logic in that he appears to subscribe to the view, criticised by Jahn, that there are 'legitimate' and 'illegitimate' forms of critique,[56] while also criticising 'the strongest critics' of being closet liberals (p. 42).[57] We argue that Paris misunderstands the nature of critique and ignores the fact that critical ideas and movements (including socialism, anarchism and Marxism) emerged because of the contradictions *within* liberalism (as did fascism, but that is a different story[58]) but they do not remain within its confines. Addressing the failure to implement liberalism's own ideals and arguing for the extension of rights and freedoms to the field of political economy is not a critique by 'closet liberals' – but by those that wish to move beyond the confines, restrictions and violence of the liberal peace. Finally, perhaps the greatest challenge to the liberal agenda arises precisely because uneven and divergent development exposes the myth of liberal tolerance of diversity, and in intellectual life of the role of critique. Future debates may do well to recognise the importance of understanding the diversities, hybridities and 'multi-bridities' that are produced when subaltern agencies interact with each other and with international power holders in the processes of uneven development.

[56] Beate Jahn, 'Critique in a time of liberal world order', paper at the Millennium Conference, 'After Liberalism', London School of Economics, London (17–18 October 2009).

[57] Paris is not the first or only one to use this type of criticism. See Endre Begby and J. Peter Burgess, 'Human Security and Liberal Peace', *Public Reason*, 1:1 (2009), pp. 91–104.

[58] Karl Polanyi, *The Great Transformation: The Political and Economic Origins of Our Times* (Boston, MA: Beacon Press, 1944).