International Community and its Responsibility to rebuild war-torn societies: 
Towards a Cosmopolitan Approach to Peacebuilding.

Christos Baxevanis*

1. The evolution of peacebuilding and its political architecture.

Since the end of the Cold War, traditional peacekeeping has become more complex and multidimensional including not only military tasks but also, civilian, political and humanitarian ones.\(^1\) The concept of peacebuilding, although it dates back to the post-World War II reconstruction of Europe and Japan, entered the international lexicon in the early 1990s,\(^2\) when the then United Nations Secretary-General Boutros-Boutros Ghali in his 1992 *Agenda for Peace* defined it as an ‘action to identify and support structures which will tend to strengthen and solidify peace in order to avoid a relapse into conflict’.\(^3\) The follow-up documents, such as the *1995 Supplement to the Agenda for Peace* and the *Agenda for Development* as well as the *Report of the Panel on United Nations Peace Operations* (commonly called ‘the Brahimi Report’), further elaborated and expanded the concept of peacebuilding ‘to refer to integrated approaches to address violent conflict at different phases of the conflict cycle’.\(^4\)

UN peacebuilding operations taken place both at the macro, meso and micro levels, have been conducted by a significant variety of external and internal actors, including international, regional and sub-regional organisations and mechanisms, international financial institutions, international NGOs, national development and relief agencies, donors, national and sub-national actors as well as local communities.\(^5\) Furthermore, post-conflict peacebuilding includes a remarkable range of activities related to the security, political and socioeconomic reconstruction of war-torn societies. Hence, peacebuilding initiatives include, among others, security sector reform, rebuilding state institutions, democratization and socioeconomic development, judicial and legal reform.

Despite the fact that there is no a universally accepted definition of peacebuilding, practically it is a liberal project, as it is based on the assumption that the promotion of liberal market democracy constitutes a sufficient antidote to war-torn societies.\(^6\) Liberal market democracy is defined by Roland Paris as ‘a system of governance that emphasises periodic and genuine elections, constitutional limitations on the exercise of governmental power, respect for basic civil liberties (including

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\* Christos Baxevanis, Adjunct Lecturer at the Democritus University of Thrace/Greece, JUR.Dr in Public International Law, Faculty of Law, AUTH/Greece, MA Conflict Resolution. Department of Peace Studies/University of Bradford/ UK.


freedom of speech, assembly and conscience), and the principles and practices of market-oriented economics.\(^7\)

In more details, the notion of liberal peace and the concept of liberal state-building rooted in liberal internationalism constitute the two basic political and philosophical components of liberal peacebuilding.\(^8\) In other words, UN peacebuilding promotes a single form of peace inspired by a liberal interpretation of peace, according to which, liberal democracy and free markets lead to peace, security and prosperity, and therefore war-shattered societies should be transformed into liberal market democracies.\(^9\) Michael Mandelbaum calls these set of liberal principles ‘the liberal Wilsonian Triad – peace, democracy, free markets’.\(^10\)

According to Roland Paris, international peacebuilders based on a strategy ‘peace-through-liberalization’ promotes a liberal political and economic reform agenda by using four categories of transmission mechanisms. First of all, they implement peace agreements embraced liberal economic and political goals. Furthermore, international peacebuilders guide the whole process of the liberalization. Additionally, international financial institutions and international relief and development agencies impose ‘conditionalities’ requiring states to transform into liberal market democracies in exchange for financial assistance. The forth mechanism that international peacebuilders use in order to promote liberal norms is the international administration of countries emerging from conflicts. In practice, each special representative of the international community governs the war-torn society until becomes independent and manages the whole process of peacebuilding enjoying extensive powers to intervene in every sphere of internal affairs.\(^11\)

In this context, peacebuilding is not just a conflict management mechanism. It is most importantly a vehicle for the globalization of the Westphalian state model and the liberal market democracy.\(^12\) As Roland Paris observes, peacebuilding operations ‘are not merely exercises in conflict management, but instances of a much larger phenomenon: the globalisation of a particular model of domestic governance—liberal market democracy—from the core to the periphery of the international system’.\(^13\) To sum up, current peacebuilding is aimed at the diffusion of the western liberal zone of peace and security.\(^14\)

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In other words, UN peacebuilding operations as ‘transmission belts’ convey internationally accepted standards of domestic governance to the periphery. Furthermore, post-conflict peacebuilding, based on a widely accepted assumption that the Westphalian state is the ‘highest form of political organization in the international system’, reconstructs the host states in a liberal direction. Consequently, peacebuilding neither undermines the significance of state as a political unit nor does it erode the sovereignty of the state. By contrast, peacebuilding (re)establishes liberal political and economic institutions in countries emerging from conflicts. In effect, it promotes liberal norms and reinforces the Westphalian state.

In the light of the above, it is obvious that the current paradigm of peacebuilding is neither politically and ideologically neutral nor does it take place in a political, socioeconomic and institutional vacuum. On the contrary, it is ‘part and parcel of a globalized ‘liberal peace’.’ In other words, current peacebuilding is not value neutral but defences and reinforces a particular type of global order, - a liberal one. Mark Duffield describing peacebuilding as part of the global governance of liberal peace mentions that liberal peace ‘is part of the complex, mutating and stratified networks that make up global liberal governance. More specifically, liberal peace is embodied in a number of flows and nodes of authority that bring together different strategic complexes of state-non-state, military-civilian and public-private actors in pursuit of its aims. Such complexes now variously enmesh international NGOs, governments, military establishments, IFIs, private security companies, IGOs, the business sector, and so on. They are strategic in the sense of pursuing a radical agenda of social transformation in the interest of global stability’.

In his evaluation of the ontology of liberal peace Oliver Richmond argues that it constitutes an amalgam of realism and liberalism closely associated with the positivist views and mainstream International Relations theory. That means that the cornerstone of liberal peace agenda, that is based on the western victory in the Cold War and the liberal triumph, is the spread of liberal democracy and market economy, in a globalised setting, driven by liberal hegemonic actors, in favor of the Westphalian model of governance and western liberal hegemony. This is what Oliver Richmond calls ‘victor’s peace’. In his own words, liberal peace can be described as an ‘axis denoting liberal-realism in which force, controlled by states, underpins the democratic and political, social and economic institutions of a liberal polity. This axis explains

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both violence and order and how they are related in the maintenances of domestic and international order’.\textsuperscript{22} This is what Oliver Richmond calls as the liberal-realist hybrid foundation of liberal peace.\textsuperscript{23} In this sense, Michael Pugh argues that ‘liberal internationalist and realist/neo-realist orthodoxies legitimize the structure of the international system and the ideology of the states that benefit from it’.\textsuperscript{24}

Finally, it is worth noting that the political architecture of liberal peacebuilding is closely connected with the significant changes taken place in World Politics after the end of the Cold War.\textsuperscript{25} That is to say, the post-Cold War normative and political framework influenced the ideological and political character of UN peacebuilding. Therefore, in order to understand the political and ideological dimensions of current peacebuilding, it is necessary to estimate the post-Cold War environment into which the concept of post-conflict peacebuilding emerged. As Scott Burchill points out, ‘we cannot define a problem in world politics without presupposing a basic structure consisting of certain kinds of entities involved and the form of significant relationships between them’.\textsuperscript{26}

2. The context of the emergence of liberal peacebuilding.

The collapse of Soviet communism and the triumph of liberal internationalism created available ideological, political and normative space for the international community to play a more active role in promoting the liberal political and economic principles. To illustrate this point, let us see, for example, the declaration of the Organization for the Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE) in 1990, according to which, ‘the development of societies based on pluralistic democracy and the rule of law are prerequisites for progress in setting up the lasting order of peace, security, justice and cooperation that they seek to establish in Europe’.\textsuperscript{27}

Furthermore, in 1991, the UN General Assembly declared that ‘periodic and genuine elections’ constitute a ‘crucial factor in the effective enjoyment … of a wide range of other human rights’.\textsuperscript{28} In this sense, former UN Secretary-General linking liberal democracy to international peace stated that ‘democracy is one of the pillars on which a more peaceful, more equitable, and more secure world can be built’.\textsuperscript{29} Similarly, the former US President Clinton had said that ‘democracies don’t attach each other’ and concluded that ‘the best strategy to insure our security and to build a durable peace is to support the advance of democracy everywhere’.\textsuperscript{30}

\textsuperscript{22} Ibid., p.13.
\textsuperscript{23} Ibid., p. 91.
Last but not least, the World Bank linking its financial assistance to good/democratic governance states that the citizens of developing countries should have ‘a voice in government decisions and activities – not only through voting and representation but also through direct involvement in shaping and implementing programs that affect their lives and well-being’.  

Similar changes took place in the field of economics. Since the end of the Cold-War, the neo-liberal economic policy of the Washington Consensus, characterized by privatisation and deregulation has become the dominant paradigm in modern world economy. According to Jeffrey Sachs, professor at the University of Harvard, ‘by the mid-1990s almost the entire world had adopted the fundamental elements of a market economy, including private ownership at the core of the economy, a currency convertible for international trade, shared standards of commercial transactions[…], and market-based transactions for the bulk of the productive sectors of the economy’. In addition to this, Claude Ake observes that, since the end of the Cold-War marked-oriented economics have become ‘something close to global theology’.

In this light, international financial institutions, such as the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund, based on a ‘common vision of what development means which is rooted in Western notions’ and models of socioeconomic development quickly became the most vigorous promoters of the neo-liberal economic policies. In other words, after the end of the Cold-War international financial institutions as well as international relief and development agencies quickly embraced a neo-liberal economic agenda based on the goals of macroeconomic stabilization and conventional structural adjustments.

Furthermore, significant normative changes have occurred in the notion of ‘security’ and the concept of ‘sovereignty’. Since the end of the Cold-War the traditional, narrow and state-centric version of security has moved to a more human and universal approach. Moreover, former UN Secretary-General Kofi Annan in ‘Two Concepts of Sovereignty’ stated that ‘state sovereignty, in its most basic sense, is being redefined […] states are now widely understood to be instruments at the service of their peoples, and not vice versa.’ In this sense, the International

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Commission on Intervention and State Sovereignty distinguishing between ‘sovereignty as control’ and ‘sovereignty as responsibility’ stated that,

‘the defence of state sovereignty…does not include any claim of the unlimited power of a state to do what it wants to its own people…sovereignty implies a dual responsibility: externally – to respect the sovereignty of other states, and internally, to respect the dignity and basic rights of all the people within the state…sovereignty is now understood as embracing this dual responsibility. Sovereignty as responsibility has become the minimum content of good international citizenship.’

Furthermore, according to the ‘responsibility to protect’ doctrine, international community has a responsibility to protect people in need. This duty includes not only the ‘responsibility to react’ but the ‘responsibility to prevent’ but also the ‘responsibility to rebuild’. In this context, peacebuilding represents international community’s responsibility to rebuild war-shattered societies, and the Responsibility to Protect doctrine provides the framework of legitimacy for international peacebuilders’ intervention.

In the light of these normative developments, theorists, such as Mark Duffield, David Chandler and Neil Cooper, argue that human security norm and the ‘responsibility to protect’ doctrine by redefining the concept of security and reconceptualising the notion of sovereignty in a liberal direction, in effect, have legitimised deeper forms of external regulation in favour of the promotion of liberal political and economic values and the implementation of the Westphalian state in non-liberal and non-western countries.

According to Roland Paris, all of these developments in global politics illustrate that liberal democracy has been ‘a new standard of legitimate statehood in the post-Cold War period’. In this normative, ideological and political context, most of the international organisations, such as the UN, OAS, OSCE, NATO, the IMF and World Bank, national development agencies and international NGOs have become the basic providers of socioeconomic, political and security assistance to war-torn societies. They are also the most prominent supporters of liberal political and economic values and the most vigorous promoters of the institutions of liberal market democracy.

This normative, ideological and political shift has had a crucial impact on the political architecture of current peacebuilding. In particular, since the end of the Cold-war, peacebuilding has emerged as a political project based on a ‘consensus’ around the liberal political and economic values. Oliver Richmond argues that international

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39 Ibid., para. 2.29.
community acts upon a ‘peacebuilding consensus’ according to which, liberalisation and marketisation constitute the most sufficient solution to violent conflicts and therefore war-shattered societies should be transformed into liberal market democracies.\(^{43}\) Anne-Marie Slaughter evaluating the ideological and political shift that took place in the post-Cold War period clearly mentions that, in the immediate aftermath of the Cold War liberal market democracy quickly and ‘almost mystically endowed with an array of characteristics that are supposed to assure both domestic and international peace and prosperity’.\(^{44}\)


Fist of all, a serious problem that UN peacebuilding operations face is the lack of ‘conflict sensitivity’.\(^{45}\) To put it differently, the dominant paradigm of peacebuilding, based on ‘external governance and outside visions’ of peace,\(^{46}\) underestimates the historical and socio-cultural context of each conflict. It also ignores the real and daily life needs in welfare and wellbeing, traditions and culture of ordinary people.\(^{47}\) This is what Oliver Richmond describes as ‘virtual peace’ – a peace that ‘looks far more coherent from the outside than from inside, and effectively builds the empty shell of a state, but neglects any notion of a social contract between the shell and its constituencies’.\(^{48}\)

In practise, international actors based on ‘Northern economic and social philosophy’\(^{49}\) and ‘Western intellectual traditions – expectations, values and rationality’\(^{50}\) apply certain methodologies and internationally accepted norms, values and institutions into non-western, non-liberal societies. In other words, international peacebuilding bureaucracy ignores the historical variety that exists in non-western countries and overlooks the importance of local consent and ownership. In this framework, international peacebuilders treat locals as recipients rather than, equal partners, because, local actors are seen as unknowable and unable to take part in peacebuilding process.\(^{51}\) Consequently, local actors have neither space to promote their agenda nor the ability to play a constructive role in the process of post-conflict reconstruction.\(^{52}\)


\(^{48}\) Ibid., p. 112.


It is interesting to note that, Roland Paris describes peacebuilding as a modern version of ‘the mission civilisatrice’ as well as ‘an enormous experiment in social engineering’ that transfers liberal norms and western institutional models from the core to the periphery. In a similar vein, Mark Duffield argues that the UN peacebuilding is based on a dominant perspective that is ‘Newtonian and machine-like in conception’. Hannah F. Pitkin criticizing the idea of social engineering mentions that, ‘feeling that we know the real, objective courses of other’s actions and social condition, we no longer need to listen to their views; feeling that we can determine their needs scientifically, we become impatient with their wants. Both individually and socially, human relations are resolved into technical problems’.  

Tim Murithi, in his critical analysis of the elite-based and top-down approach to peacebuilding, successfully points out that ‘peacebuilding is not something that governments and inter-governmental organisations can do to their people. Rather, it is something that governments and their people have to do together’. 

Furthermore, serious questions are raised about the political underpins of peacebuilding and their role in global politics. As noted above, UN peacebuilding promotes liberal market democracy and reproduces the Westphalian state system. In a Gramsian sense, peacebuilding consolidates and reinforces an unjust world order that benefits liberal hegemonic actors more than the people in need. According to Michael Pugh, peace operations ‘contribute to an ideology of world order that reflects and legitimises neoliberal values, state-centrism and the economic structure of the international system’. 

In this context, serious questions are raised about the transformation of war economies and particularly about the impact of neoliberal economic policies on war-shattered societies. Namely, peacebuilding initiatives focus more on macroeconomic discipline, privatisation and global integration rather than on job creation and employment protection policies. Therefore, most of the post-conflict societies experience high levels of poverty, unemployment and ‘shadow’ economic activities.

In the light of the analysis above, it is obvious that UN peacebuilding, as a liberal project, is in crisis. Therefore, it is suggested the reconceptualisation of the dominant paradigm of peacebuilding towards a humane and more cosmopolitan approach that, according to Tom Woodhouse and Oliver Ramsbotham, ‘provides an opportunity to bridge the reform potential in peace support operations and the more radical transformative agendas favoured by critical theorist’. To conclude, it is worth mentioning that a more humane and cosmopolitan peacebuilding is totally connected with a broader reconstruction of global liberal governance. This means that there is a need to evaluate the structures and mechanisms of global governance.

4. The ontology of the contemporary system of Global Governance: in whose interest?

Evaluating its political architecture and ideological dimensions, it is worth noting that the contemporary system of global governance based on the widely accepted assumption that the Westphalian state is the ‘highest form of political organization in the international system’ reproduces and promotes a particular model of domestic governance which is the Westphalian state model. To illustrate this point, let us see, among others, the reconstruction of war-torn societies. In practise, international peacebuilders reconstruct the host states following a single form of domestic governance, that is the Westphalian state model, and in effect, they neither undermine the significance of state as a political unit nor do they erode statist sovereignty.

In more details, the Westphalia state-centric model of governance is characterised by a significant contradiction: from a point of view it is based on the equality of states: on the other hand it reinforces the inequality among states and the hegemonic position of the powerful states. As Richard Falk successfully points out, the Westphalian model ‘serves both as shorthand to designate a state-centric, sovereignty-oriented, territorially bounded global order, and to identify a hierarchically structured world order shaped and managed by dominant or hegemonic political actors. In effect, the term “Westphalia” contains an inevitable degree of incoherence by combining the territorial/juridical logic of equality with the geopolitical/hegemonic logic of inequality … [the Westphalian model accommodates] the realities of radical inequality among states in size, wealth, power, and international role. This inequality generated its own distinctive form of global governance, relying on the performance of special managerial roles by leading state actors, known as “the Great Powers”, and more recently discussed as “hegemonic geopolitics”.

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In order to understand the structure and mechanisms of international system that is characterized, among others, by hegemonic power and national interests, let us see, for example, the structure and function of UN Security Council and particularly the veto power in favour of the five Permanent Members of the Security Council. The power of veto conferred on the victors of the World War II represents the balance of power of that time and constitutes ‘a formal recognition of inequality as part and parcel of the Westphalia reality as of the early 21st century’. In this light, the powerful global governance structures serve the strategic, political and economic interests of super-powers.

Furthermore, the contemporary system of global governance is totally connected with the diffusion and institutionalisation of liberal market democracy which took place after the end of the Cold War. In other words, current global governance is based on ‘a deep-seated conviction that there is only one economic system, itself set in one political context. The system is the globalised free market and the context is liberal democracy… [t]here is, put simply, an implicit belief that there is no other way’.

In the light of the analysis above, it is argued that the contemporary system of global governance is not value neutral but defences and reinforces a particular type of global order, - a liberal one. To illustrate this point, let us see, among others, international financial organisations as well as international relief and development agencies that promote a particular model of development inspired by the liberal ideology. To sum up, the prevailing global governance constitutes a synthesis of realism and liberalism closely associate with the positivist views and mainstream International Relations theory. In other words, the cornerstone of the contemporary system of global governance is the diffusion of liberal market democracy, in a globalised environment driven by liberal hegemonic actors, in favour of the Westphalia state-centric model of governance and western liberal hegemony. In Michael Pugh’s words, ‘liberal internationalist and realist/neo-realist orthodoxies legitimize the structure of the international system and the ideology of the states that benefit from it’.71

According to David Held, the Washington policy packages, - i.e. the Washington economic consensus and the Washington security agenda, constitute a set of driving forces totally connected with the political character and ideological dimensions of the current system of global governance. The Washington economic

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consensus constitutes a narrow economic agenda that focuses solely on macroeconomic stabilization and conventional structural adjustments. Specifically, the Washington Consensus is characterized by privatization and deregulation and its aim is to enhance economic liberalization. In this light, powerful global governance structures constitutes means for the promotion of a single model of neo-liberal development without taking into account issues, such as the global poverty and social injustice, unemployment and environmental degradation. In David Held’s words,

‘the Washington Consensus has, in sum, weakened the ability to govern – locally, nationally and globally – and it has eroded the capacity to provide urgent public goods. Economic freedom is championed at the expense of social justice and environmental sustainability, with long-term damage to both.’

The Washington security doctrines introduced by the Bush administration are inextricably linked to the Washington economic consensus. In particular, the Washington security agenda, ignoring the deep roots of global threats and rejecting multilateralism and collective security, constitutes a narrow security agenda which is defined in military terms and characterised by unilateralism, military supremacy, and pre-emptive war. In David Held’s words, the new American security doctrine has many implications:

‘among these are a return to an old realist understanding of international relations as, in the last analysis, a ‘war of all against all’, in which states rightly pursue their national interests unencumbered by attempts to establish internationally recognized limits (self-defence, collective security) on their ambitions’.


First of all, the existing mechanisms of the contemporary system of global governance face a serious coherence and coordination gap. In particular, the current system of global governance is driven by a variety of overlapping and competing actors that share different goals, motivations and priorities without an effective mechanism to deal with the replication or duplication of activities and functions of the myriad of organizations and institutions, bodies and agencies. As David Held successfully points out, ‘there is no clear division of labour among the myriad of international governmental agencies; functions often overlap, mandates frequently conflict, and aims and objectives too often get blurred’.


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75 Ibid., p. 244.

76 Ibid., p. 247.
Furthermore, the accountability and legitimacy of the contemporary system of global governance has been called into question. In other words, the prevailing system of global governance is of limited legitimacy, due to its technocratic nature and the dominance of the powerful states. To illustrate this point, let us see, for example, the structure and function of UN Security Council and particularly the veto power in favour of the five Permanent Members of the Security Council. According to Richard Falk, the power of veto constitutes ‘a formal recognition of inequality as part and parcel of the Westphalia reality as of the early 21st century’. In this light, the powerful global governance structures serve the strategic, political and economic interests of super-powers. In addition to this, the G7/G8, despite the fact that its decisions impact almost on all countries and their peoples, is ‘intentionally designed as a club with exclusive membership rules’.

In relation to the international financial institutions, such as the IMF, the World Bank and the WTO, it is worth mentioning that developing countries and less rich and powerful states are underrepresented and frequently ill-served by these institutions. The voting power of each country member of the IMF depends on its financial contribution to the organization that means that the crucial factor is its economic strength. Additionally, the decisions in WTO are taken by consensus that means that the major economic powers impact on the decision-making process. Joseph Stiglitz evaluating the role and function of IMF points out that,

‘the IMF likes to go about its business without outsiders asking too many questions. In theory, the fund supports democratic institutions in the nations it assists. In practice, it undermines the democratic process by imposing policies. Officially, of course, the IMF doesn’t “impose” anything. It “negotiates” the conditions for receiving aid. But all the power in the negotiations is on one side- the IMF’s- and the fund rarely allows sufficient time for broad-consensus-building or even widespread consultations with either parliaments or civil society. Sometimes the IMF dispenses with the pretense of openness altogether and negotiates secret covenants’.

Closely related to the previous point, serious questions are raised about the democratic accountability of the policy-making process. That means that, since many world trade issues are technical in nature, most of them are negotiated by non-elected experts, bureaucrats and diplomats. Consequently, citizens, stakeholders, interest groups and observers do not have access to adequate information and political deliberation, and, in effect, they are marginalised. Furthermore, the globalisation of the economy has limited political legitimacy, due to the fact that the powerful actors of world markets are out of the democratic control of the elected governments of states or civil society. In the words of Susan Strange,

‘the impersonal forces of world markets are now more powerful than the states to whom ultimately political authority over society and economy is supposed to belong. Where states were once the masters of markets, now it is the markets which, on many crucial issues, are the masters over the governments of states.’

Moreover, serious questions are raised about the effects of the economic policies of the international financial institutions, and particularly the effectiveness and the legitimacy of the neoliberal model of development. According to Thomas Pogge, ‘an institutional order cannot be just of if it fails to meet the minimal human rights standards’; the world poverty and inequality, the global income gap and the remarkable gap between the world’s richest and poorest countries, highlight that ‘while economic development and globalization may well be working for many people in a significant range of countries, they are by no means yet working for all.’

To sum up, although there is a demand for global governance, the analysis above has highlighted that the contemporary system of global governance is distorted in the sense that ‘promotes the interest if the most powerful states and global social forces, and restricts the realization of greater global social justice and human security’. Therefore, it is suggested a cosmopolitan approach to global politics, because cosmopolitanism ‘ought to be embraced further in thinking about the proper form of globalization and global governance’.

90 Ibid., p. 18.
6. Cosmopolitanism: ideas, realities and principles.

After the end of the Cold War, there has been a growing interest in alternative approaches.91 According to Steve Smith and Patricia Owens, alternative approaches are ‘more critical of the mainstream and move beyond it in more far-reaching ways’.92 The marginalisation of ethics and the late coming of normative theories in international relations and in the sub-field of peace search and conflict resolution theory might be attributed to the predominance of political realism and positivist epistemology during the Cold War.93 As Michael Banks points out,

‘if we look back at those Cold War decades and examine the way international relations was studied then, especially in Britain and in the United States, three particular distressing features of it stand out; it was a period of realist dominance, without any liberal balance, and without the refreshment of radical thinking’.94

Cosmopolitanism as moral philosophy and a normative theory has a long and complex history and involves a variety of theories and approaches. In the words of Ulrich Beck and Natan Sznaider, ‘there is not just one language of cosmopolitanism, but many languages, tongues, grammars’.95 Cosmopolitanism dates back to the Stoics of Classical Greece and Roman philosophy; additionally, Cosmopolitan ideas can also be found in Kant’s writings. Chris Brown identifies three version of cosmopolitanism,96 utilitarianism,97 Kantianism,98 and Marxism.99 Nigel Dower additionally refers to other versions - such as human rights,100 contract theory,101

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92 Ibid., p. 271.
101 See, for example, Beitz, Charles, Political Theory and International Relations, with a new afterword by the author, (Princeton NJ: Princeton University Press, 1999); Barry, Brian, 'International Society
natural law, the capabilities approach, religious perspectives and environmental
theories of cosmopolitanism. Although a discussion of all these theories cannot be
be carried out here, it is worth mentioning that despite the fact that there are remarkable
differences among all these theories,

‘the natural tendency of these theories is to advocate some kind of world ethic
for individuals, as belonging to one global moral community – where
community is defined in terms of the claimed moral relations, not in terms of
established traditions, felt relations and shared values in practice’.

In this light, it can be argued that, although there is no a widely accepted definition,
cosmopolitanism refers to those universal values and basic standards that espouse the
idea that each person as a member of a single moral realm deserves equal worth,
respect and consideration. In other words, cosmopolitanism involves universal
values and global responsibilities applicable to all human beings due to the fact that
they are members of humanity as a whole. As John Charvet states, a cosmopolitan
ethical theory ‘holds that there is an ideal moral order that applies universally and in
which individual human beings are immediately members. As such they have rights
and duties in relation to all other human beings’.

David Held identifies three basic versions of cosmopolitanism: classic,
modern, and contemporary cosmopolitanism. Classic cosmopolitanism dates back
to the Stoics and Roman philosophy based on the idea that all human beings belong to
humanity as a whole irrespective of their class, ethnicity and nation. In the words of
Martha Nussbaum, each person ‘is a citizen of the world’ and has a duty ‘to the
worldwide community of human beings’. The modern version of cosmopolitanism
was explored by Kant who tried to link cosmopolitanism to ‘the public use of reason’.
In more details, modern cosmopolitanism refers to ‘the Kantian conception of
subjecting all beliefs, relations and practices to the test of whether or not they allow

from a Cosmopolitan Perspective’, in David Mapel and Terry Nardin (eds), International Society:
Diverse Ethical Perspectives. Princeton NJ: Princeton University Press, 1998), pp. 144–163; Richards,
275–299.

See, for example, John Finnis, Natural Law and Natural Rights, (Oxford: Oxford University Press,
1990); Midgley, Brian, The Natural Tradition and the Theory of International Relations, (London: Paul
Elek, 1975).

See, among others, Nussbaum, Martha, Women and Human Development: The Capabilities
Approach (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000); see, also, Sen, Amartya, Development as

Dower, Nigel, World Ethics – The New Agenda, 2nd ed., (Edinburgh: Edinburg University Press,
2007), Ch. 4.

Ibid, p. 25.

Beitz, Chris, ‘Cosmopolitan liberalism and the states system’, in Brown Chris (ed.), Political
Restructuring in Europe: Ethical Perspectives, (London: Routledge: 1994); Thomas W. Pogge,
‘Cosmopolitanism and sovereignty’, in Brown Chris (ed.), Political Restructuring in Europe: Ethical

Dower, Nigel, World Ethics – The New Agenda, 2nd ed., (Edinburgh: Edinburg University Press,

Held, David, ‘Cosmopolitanism: Ideas, Realities and Deficits’, in Held David & Anthony McGrew,
pp. 308-313.

open-ended interaction, uncoerced agreement and impartial judgment.\textsuperscript{110} The contemporary version of cosmopolitanism refers, among others, to the work of Charles Beitz, Thomas Pogge and Brian Barry. This notion of cosmopolitanism involves three basic principles: egalitarian universalism, reciprocal recognition and impartialist reasoning.\textsuperscript{111}

The first principle emphasises that every living person as a member of a single moral realm deserves equal worth, respect and consideration irrespective of the class, ethnicity and nation.\textsuperscript{112} According to the second principle, each person should acknowledge and respect all others human beings’ status of equal worth.\textsuperscript{113} The third principle stresses that the impartial treatment of each person’s claims should be acknowledged by everyone. A basis to test the validity and universality of claims and interests can be found in John Rawls’s original position,\textsuperscript{114} Jürgen Habermas’s discourse ethics,\textsuperscript{115} and Brian Barry’s impartialist reasoning.\textsuperscript{116} These principles can be seen as a guiding ethical basis for a more cosmopolitan, democratic and humane global governance, owing to the fact that they create ‘a framework for all person to enjoy, in principle, equal moral status, equal freedom and equal participative opportunities’.\textsuperscript{117}

Furthermore, it is worth mentioning that these three principles do not take place in a legal, political and institutional vacuum. The principles of egalitarian universalism, reciprocal recognition and impartialist reasoning can be found in post-Second World War multilateral order and ‘in some of the new regulatory forms of regional and global governance’.\textsuperscript{118} In particular, cosmopolitan values and principles find direct expression in the human rights regime. One can mention legal texts, such as the laws of war and weapons diffusion, the Nuremberg principles, the 1948 Universal Declaration of Human Rights and the 1966 Covenants on Rights, the 1984 Torture Convention, the 1950 European Convention for the Protection of Human Rights and Fundamental Freedoms, the 1978 American Convention on Human Rights, and the African (Banjul) Charter of Human and People’s Rights adopted by the Organization of African Unity (1981); all of them recognize individual persons ‘as subjects of international law and, in principle, the ultimate source of political


\textsuperscript{111} Ibid, pp. 310-313.


authority’. These texts also emphasise that all human beings belong to humanity as a whole and are equally worthy of respect and consideration.

Furthermore, a series of treaties, such as The Convention on the Moon and Other Celestial Bodies (1979) and the Convention on the Law of the Sea (1982), the concept of the ‘common heritage of mankind’ propounded in 1967, as well as a set of declarations and agendas, such as the Rio Declaration and Agenda 21, constitute the basis of ‘a cosmopolitan orientation to politics and human welfare’. The concept of the ‘common heritage of mankind’, as David Held mentions, can be seen as a vehicle for ‘thinking anew’ in terms of the legal basis of the appropriation and exploitation of resources, as well as a ‘turning point in international legal thinking’ that highlights ‘the possibility of a legal order based on equality and cooperation’. In this sense, David Held successfully points out that cosmopolitanism ‘is not made up of political ideals for another age’ but ‘defines a set of norms and legal frameworks in the here and now – and not in some remote future’.

In brief, cosmopolitanism refers to those universal values and basic standards that espouse the idea that each person, as a member of a single moral realm, deserves equal worth, respect and consideration. Cosmopolitanism, involves three basic principles: egalitarian universalism, reciprocal recognition and impartialist reasoning. Finally, it builds upon the strengths of the legal, political and institutional frameworks of the post-1945 multilateral order.

As noted above, there are various theories on Cosmopolitanism. Similarly, there are different types of approaches. Nigel Dower identifies three of them: the idealist-dogmatic, the libertarian-minimalist and the solidarist-pluralist approach. Specifically, the idealist-dogmatic approach defends and promotes a particular preconceived set of values, principles and ideals, without taking into consideration the variety of cultures and life-styles. This approach constitutes the basis of immoderate political ideologies and crusading religious, such as militant Islam or fundamentalist Christianity. The libertarian-minimalist approach to cosmopolitanism does not promote a specific set of values and ideals, but advocates a minimal moral framework for international relations and global politics. This paper argues in favour of the third approach, namely the solidarist-pluralist cosmopolitanism. This kind of cosmopolitanism neither promotes a pre-set body of values and ideals, nor does it advocates a minimal moral framework both for individuals and states. Contrary to that, the solidarist-pluralist approach strikes an ideal balance between diversity and universality, creating a context within which new relations between solidarity and pluralism can develop. This notion of cosmopolitanism also calls for a global responsibility in dealing with global problems, such as violent conflicts, global

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120 Ibid, p. 315.
poverty and social injustice, deadly infectious diseases and environmental degradation, and at the same time is sensitive and open to the remarkable variety of cultures, assumptions of good life, and life-style around the world. According to Nigel Dower, the solidarist-pluralist cosmopolitan ‘believes in solidarity throughout the world for promoting the essential conditions of well-being, but at the same time does not wish to promote any culturally specific ideals but rather to respect cultural diversity and a plurality of values’.125


The changing nature of war is totally connected with the globalisation process and particularly with the erosion of the autonomy of state and its monopoly of legitimate organised violence from above and from below.126 Nowadays, threats are less military and more socioeconomic, political and environmental. The changing nature of armed conflict challenges the political realist view of the state, as an autonomous and territorial entity,127 as these new wars although are localised, they have a serious impact on regional and global security. In new wars, the distinction between formal and informal, public and private, external and internal, global and local, state and non-state, is quite problematic.128 Despite these developments, international mechanisms for peacebuilding remain state-centric without having kept up ‘with these geopolitical transformations’.129

Alternatively, a new architecture for peacebuilding is suggested, that, according to Tom Woodhouse and Oliver Ramsbotham, should be projected both ‘upwards to the global level’ and ‘downwards to involve disempowered groups in conflicts-affected communities’.130 In this regard, cosmopolitanism, and particularly the solidarist-pluralist approach to cosmopolitanism, provides a ‘glo-cal’ approach to peacebuilding, as it calls for a global responsibility for dealing with global problems, such as violent conflicts, and at the same time stresses the need ‘to include groups which have previously been excluded’.131

In practical terms, it is suggested that a permanent UN force be developed – Peter Langille calls for the establishment of a UN Emergency Peace Service–132, which would include both military and civilian tasks. Its mission would be, among others, the defence of peacekeeping/peacebuilding operations and the protection of civilians in cases they are under risk.133 Mary Kaldor suggests the development of ‘a new kind of soldier-cum-policeman’ which requires ‘considerable rethinking about tactics, equipment […] command and training’.134 Above all, these new forces would be based on a new sense of responsibility; in the words of Mary Kaldor, ‘whereas the

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125 Ibid. p. 27.
126 Ibid., pp. 5-6.
soldier, as the legitimate bearer of arms, had to be prepared to die for his or her country, the international soldier/police officer risks his or her life for humanity’.135

In this context, it is expected that the UN Peacebuilding Commission will have a positive impact on developing a more coherent architecture and articulating a more transformative agenda for peacebuilding. Despite the fact that the Commission faces a number of constraints related to its nature as intergovernmental advisory body,136 the decision-making procedure based on consensus,137 and its limited role in preventing conflicts,138 it would be wrong to conclude that it is “superfluous”.139 By contrast, the UN Peacebuilding Commission it constitutes a positive development in global politics and particularly in the sub-field of peace research and conflict resolution theory.

More specifically, the Peacebuilding Commission is expected to improve coordination and coherence among different peacebuilding actors and across various strategies and policies.140 Furthermore, the Commission has the potential to enhance the involvement of local actors in peacebuilding process creating the necessary conditions for the locals to promote their peace agenda and own the peace process; according to Lambourne Wendy, ‘local ownership of peacebuilding is likely to result in more legitimate process and sustainable outcomes’.141 Finally, the Commission is expected to serve as ‘a knowledge base for information, lessons learned and best

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practices’. Consequently, the UN Peacebuilding Commission has the potential to be a forum where the stakeholders taking part in peacebuilding process could discuss a variety of models, policies and strategies, approaches and agendas; in this light, the Commission, by evaluating the existing experience of peacebuilding community in reconstructing war-torn societies and proposing new strategies and alternative approaches, has the potential to improve peacebuilding community’s learning capacity, since ‘learning from past mistakes, is learning from future circumstances’.

The current paradigm of peacebuilding is characterized by the promotion of the liberal market democracy and the reproduction of the Westphalian model. In this context, international peacebuilding bureaucracy ignores the historical variety of non-western traditions and overlooks the importance of local consent and local ownership. International peacebuilders treat locals as recipients, rather than equal partners. Furthermore, peacebuilding initiatives focus solely on macroeconomic discipline, privatisation and global integration.

Alternatively, this paper argues in favour of a more transformative peacebuilding agenda that could rest upon the following:

1. Peacebuilding process should be based on local consent and local ownership; hence, the peacebuilding community should enhance the involvement of local actors in peacebuilding process creating the necessary conditions for the locals to promote their peace agenda and own the peace process.

2. Peacebuilding needs to move ‘from an institutional agenda to an additional everyday agenda’. In other words, socioeconomic restoration should focus on the real and daily life needs in welfare and wellbeing of ordinary people. In practise, as most of the post-conflict societies experience high levels of poverty, unemployment and ‘shadow’ economic activities, peacebuilding efforts should involve policies for job creation and employment protection.

3. Peacebuilding community should support diversity of development models and political systems. International peacebuilders, contrary to the dominant and externally imposed neo-liberal model of development, should allow locals to adopt development models in accordance with their needs and socio-cultural context.

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Similarly, political reconstruction should involve democratisation, ‘but not necessarily along the lines of the standard transition formula’. In other words, claiming that all living persons as free and equal beings have the right to participate in the political affairs of their society does not mean that they should adopt a particular political system.

4. Peacebuilding actors need to begin exploring new forms of non-state political association and new types of post-Westphalian political structures, especially in parts of the worlds, such as Sub-Saharan Africa, where the state itself constitutes a source of threat to its citizens, and sub-national groups that are politically, socioeconomically and culturally marginalised, take action against the state that is ‘in effect de-legitimate’ in their eyes.

5. Dialog should be at the centre of peacebuilding process and discourse ethics should constitute the guiding ethical basis of Cosmopolitan Peacebuilding. Therefore, peacebuilding ‘being guided by discourse ethics’, should develop dialogic methods and techniques ‘engaging the systematically excluded in dialogue about the ways in which social practices and policies harm their interests’. A ‘dialogic peacebuilding’, articulated in the basis of discourse ethics, could be summarised as follows:

‘[firstly] actors should engage in constant free and open dialogue, and agreement about what constitutes ‘good practice’ should be arrived at through consensus openly arrived at…[secondly] the dialogue should include all parties that might be affected by the course of action under discussion, and different perspectives should be evaluated according to the weight of their content rather than the ideational or material power behind it…. [thirdly] theorists and practitioners of peace operations must recognize that even their most dearly held beliefs are fallible and therefore open for revision on the basis of the first two techniques’.


Contemporary system of global governance, as a synthesis of realism and liberalism, operates on the basis of the reproduction of the Westphalian state model and the promotion of liberal market democracy, being organized according to the Washington economic consensus and the Washington security agenda. On the other hand, as Chris Brown points out, ‘what is crucial to a cosmopolitan attitude is the


refusal to regard existing political structures as the source of ultimate value’. From a cosmopolitan perspective, individual autonomy ‘is prior to any value placed on the associations that compartmentalize humanity’, and therefore, individual autonomy, human dignity, and the basic rights of every living person should be respectful both domestically and globally. In this sense, cosmopolitanism constitutes a normative framework within which the existing global governance can be reconceptualised in order to meet the challenges of democratic legitimacy, social justice and cultural sensitivity. In the words of Janna Thompson, ‘cosmopolitan ideas do serve as a standard for judging the political status quo and a motivation for cosmopolitan programmes’.

A Cosmopolitan and more Humane Global Governance could rest upon the following:

1. A system of cosmopolitan governance requires the democratization of the existing international system in order to be more legitimate and accountable. In practical terms, such a system would be based on the enhancement of the transparency and the democratic accountability of international organisations, such as the WTO, IMF and World Bank; it would display a high level of participation of the global civil society in the decision-making process; it would also strengthen the decision-making capacity of developing countries. Moreover, it is suggested that the UN system and particularly the UN Security Council be reformed to give voice to less rich and powerful states voice and to improve the role of developing countries. Other suggestions would be: the foundation of a parallel Economic and Social Security Council and a new democratic UN secondary chamber; the creation of a World Environmental Organization; the establishment of regional parliaments and a network of democratic forums from local to global. In short, these proposals articulate a new, more cosmopolitan and democratic architecture of global governance that has the potential to give voice to unrepresentative countries and marginalised peoples.

2. It is suggested that new forms of non-state political association and new types of post-Westphalian political structures be developed in parallel with the reform of the existing international system and the national policies; in the words of David Held, ‘the aim is to forge an accountable and responsive politics at local and national levels alongside the establishment of representative and deliberative assemblies in the wider global order; that is, a political order of transparent

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and democratic cities and nations as well as of regions and global networks’.\textsuperscript{162}

3. A cosmopolitan approach to global politics does not call for the end of the state, nor does it argue for a world government. Rather, a system of cosmopolitan governance constitutes ‘a global and divided authority system- a system of diverse and overlapping powers’\textsuperscript{163} that is based on ‘a political order of democratic associations, cities and nations as well as of regions and global networks’.\textsuperscript{164}

4. At the heart of the Cosmopolitan Global Governance are the ideas of a cosmopolitan citizenship and a cosmopolitan democratic law. Cosmopolitan citizenship is based on general principles and rules applicable to all human beings, not on an ‘exclusive membership of a territorial community’;\textsuperscript{165} it challenges the ‘dichotomy between citizens and aliens’\textsuperscript{166} and calls for a global responsibility; it highlights the significance of autonomy and self-governance for every human being in order to enjoy, in principle, ‘equal moral status, equal freedom and equal participative opportunities’.\textsuperscript{167} Furthermore, cosmopolitan law based on universal values, basic standards and general principles, including the principles of democracy and human rights, ‘transcends the particular claims of nations and states and extends to all in the “universal community”’.\textsuperscript{168}

5. The Washington economic consensus should be replaced by a Social Democratic Agenda.\textsuperscript{169} In other words, it is suggested a move from the dominant model of neo-liberal development focusing solely to macroeconomic stabilisation and conventional structural adjustments- to a broader socioeconomic agenda that would deal with global poverty and social injustice, unemployment and environmental degradation.\textsuperscript{170}

6. The Washington Security Doctrine should be replaced by a Human Security Doctrine.\textsuperscript{171} In other words, it is suggested a move from a narrow security agenda defined in military terms, characterised by unilaterism and military supremacy, to a broader and more humane security agenda that would cope with global threats and would be based on multilateralism and collective security, dialogue and tolerance.\textsuperscript{172}

\textsuperscript{164} Ibid., p. 234.
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7. A system of cosmopolitan governance is open and more sensitive to diverse
development models and political systems. Contrary to ‘a particular set of political
solutions’ and ‘the vision of a unified, homogenous world’, a system of

cosmopolitan governance allows each country to choose its political system and
development model, taking into account, on the one hand its needs and the socio-
cultural context, and, on the other, universal values, basic standards and general
principles, including human rights, democracy, and environmental protection.

In the light of the analysis above, it can be argued that a system of
cosmopolitan governance might be a ‘convincing path to saving globalization from
itself: to making globalisation safe for humanity rather than […] making the world
safe for globalization’. 

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