

# Resistance and the Post-liberal Peace

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This article discusses what an IR and peacebuilding praxis derived from the ‘everyday’ might entail. It examines the insights of a number of literatures which contribute to a discussion of the dynamics of the everyday. The enervation of agency and the repoliticisation of peacebuilding is its objective. It charts how local agency has led to resistance and hybrid forms of peace despite the overwhelming weight of the liberal peace project. In some aspects this may be complementary to the latter and commensurate with the liberal state, but in other aspects the everyday points beyond the liberal peace.

Keywords: agency, infrapolitics, peacebuilding, post-liberal, resistance

‘The will of the people shall be the basis of authority in government.’<sup>1</sup>

‘The colonised refuse to accept membership in the civil society of subjects.’<sup>2</sup>

‘the intellectual is complicit in the persistent constitution of Other as the Self’s shadow.’<sup>3</sup>

## Introduction

It has recently become clear that a fourth generation<sup>4</sup> of peacebuilding has not been achieved by liberal peacebuilding approaches. They have

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1. Article 21 (3), Declaration of Human Rights, 1948.

2. Homi Bhabha, *The Location of Culture* (London: Routledge, 1994), 330.

3. Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak, ‘Can the Subaltern Speak?’, in *Marxism and the Interpretation of Culture*, eds C. Nelson and L. Grossberg (Basingstoke: Macmillan, 1988), 75.

4. This framework draws on Oliver P. Richmond, *Maintaining Order, Making Peace* (London: Palgrave, 2002). First-generation approaches might be termed

instead reaffirmed territorial sovereignty, hierarchical epistemologies and the sovereign limits of modernisation.<sup>5</sup> Recent experiences of state-building and liberal peacebuilding indicate the need to begin to look beyond liberalism. Liberal forms of peacebuilding have become subservient to statebuilding and romanticise the non-liberal self. They operate at many levels of denial: cultural, structural, economic and physical.<sup>6</sup> This is an unintended consequence of the third-generation approach to peacebuilding, which represents much of today's liberal peacebuilding and statebuilding agenda.

Critical research agendas for peace<sup>7</sup> have shown that the liberal peace has, in the relatively new testing grounds of post-conflict environments, been troublingly diverted. This has been towards states, elites, international actors, security issues and liberal institutions and norms. Worse, internationals have blamed local actors and communities for this diversion in a classical move, reminiscent of an essentialising and romanticising 'colonial gaze'. This erases their own apparently ineffective hegemony and their responsibility to others.<sup>8</sup> It is notable how documents such as 'Responsibility to Protect' or doctrines such as 'do no harm' are internationalised rather than localised and fail to engage with everyday life other than in basic emergency and narrow security terms.<sup>9</sup>

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'conflict management' in which a conflict was merely held in limbo (as with peace-keeping) in order to maintain the existing state. Second-generation approaches aimed at dealing with human needs or peacebuilding from the grassroots up and argued that conflicts could be resolved. Third-generation approaches attempted to achieve the latter through the construction of a liberal state. Fourth-generation approaches are concerned with emancipation and social justice beyond the state.

5. In conversation, Bristol, 30 July 2009.

6. For a fascinating discussion of such themes, see Phillip Darby, 'The Alternative Horizons of Ashis Nandy', unpublished paper, 2009.

7. For more on these approaches see Oliver P. Richmond, 'Critical Research Agendas for Peace: The Missing Link in the Study of International Relations', *Alternatives* 32, no. 2 (2007); and 'Eireanism and a Post-Liberal Peace', *Review of International Studies* 35, no. 3 (2009).

8. Ilan Kapoor, *The Post-Colonial Politics of Development* (London: Routledge, 2008), xiv, 26–7. See also his analysis of the dominance of Western actors in the OECD/DAC donor profile, which emphasises such biases. *Ibid.*, 88.

9. 'The Responsibility to Protect', International Commission on Intervention and State Sovereignty, December 2001. See, for example, Point (1) which moves responsibility from the state to international actors: Mary B. Anderson, *Do No Harm: How Aid Can Support Peace – or War* (Boulder, CO: Lynne Rienner, 1999).

Attention has been diverted away from local contexts, communities and agencies.<sup>10</sup> Much academic and policy work has become complicit with this tendency. This is also true of the older projects of internationalism, peacebuilding and conflict resolution. These have been diverted away from individual and community conditions of peace in the context of the international and the local, to sovereign peaces organised around states and their territories. This follows on from a hegemonic liberal peace directed by a Western core of states and international organisations.<sup>11</sup> Peacebuilding's focus and derivation from social advocacy and action, from the citizen, the informal sector and on the most marginalised, has been deferred in favour of the state, elite bureaucratic, political and business classes. Statebuilding has become the aim even as contemporary IR has problematised the state, sovereignty, embedded liberalism and the international system itself. The most marginalised, the individual, community, kinship, agency and context have been subsumed. At best they are only recognised rhetorically.

Complex responses and reactions have emerged. Economic individualism has been undermined by communalism, convictions of society and customary norms and traditions. State and democratic institutions have been hijacked and captured. Liberal bubbles have been formed around capitals housing liberal institutions with little reach beyond them. Human rights have displaced needs and welfare (though subsistence and custom have rescued many post-conflict populations). Key liberal sites have been captured, ideologically and materially, by those who have more direct access to such institutions or to the liberal international edifice. This has

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10. Henceforth, I use the term 'the local' to denote what international actors normally perceive as a range of actors and terrains spanning their non-Western and non-liberal partners for liberal peacebuilding and statebuilding at the elite level (while also acknowledging that many local actors may have extensive transnational and transversal experience of liberal politics), and civil society. I use the term 'local-local' to indicate the existence and diversity of communities and individuals that constitute political society beyond this often liberally projected artifice, who may also have transnational and transversal exposure. The latter is where the everyday is at its most powerful as a critical tool. I do not equate the everyday/local with either non-liberalism, illiberalism or liberalism necessarily. On the local and its interconnections see Doreen Massey, 'A Global Sense of Place', in *Space, Place and Gender* (Minneapolis, MN: University of Minnesota Press, 1994); see also B. de Sousa Santos, 'Human Rights as an Emancipatory Script', in *Another Knowledge is Possible: Beyond Northern Epistemologies* (London: Verso, 2007).

11. The same might also be said of cosmopolitan forms of liberalism, such as that of David Held; Marxist-flavoured forms, such as that of Andrew Linklater; and postmodern versions of liberalism, as in Richard Rorty's work. See in particular, Richard Rorty, 'On Ethnocentrism', in *Objectivity, Relativism, and Truth* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1991), 209.

been used unreflexively as a technology of power and legitimacy for the territorial state, not as a technology of the self.<sup>12</sup> The liberal peace has also failed to negotiate with far more entrenched practices, commonly thought of in terms of custom and communalism, and everyday life. This is a classically colonial intellectual move designed to distance the everyday lives of post-conflict individuals (and those in 'development' settings) so that inequality can be effectively justified by non-liberal alterity. However, the liberal framework is deeply entrenched in IR and its related disciplines, and with some good reason in that individual freedom, social prosperity and peace are commonly shared political objectives. Yet, IR is now interdisciplinary and transnational, not disciplinary and national.

Unsurprisingly, the age-old dynamics of colonial anxiety and local resistance have re-emerged in liberal modernity. This is present in the relationship between mainstream IR and the work of international institutions in liberal peacebuilding and statebuilding, and more critical versions and praxis of both. In response, it is often claimed that the common requisition of post-structural insights to understand emerging resistance to liberal modernity and its emancipatory claims actually undermines the latter's stable, rational agencies, and so 'reduce[s] politics to critique and "resistance"'.<sup>13</sup>

In these struggles, a possibility of a post-liberal peace emerges, in which everyday local agencies,<sup>14</sup> rights, needs, custom and kinship are recognised as discursive 'webs of meaning'. This might herald a more realistic recognition of the possibilities of, and dynamics of, contextual and local peacebuilding agencies within international peacebuilding, development and institutional architecture and policies. This move away from 'imperious IR'<sup>15</sup> and a willingness to emphasise local context

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12. L.H. Martin, H. Gutman and P.H. Hutton, *Technologies of the Self: A Seminar with Michel Foucault* (London: Tavistock, 1988), 16–49.

13. Ilan Kapoor, 'Acting in a Tight Spot: Homi Bhabha's Postcolonial Politics', *New Political Science* 25, no. 4 (2003): 568.

14. Thanks to Necati Polat for pointing out that agency is an Enlightenment concept, and my claim to facilitate it locally situates my work in this tradition. However, though I agree with his point, I am also interested in self-determination, the autonomy of the subject and individual and community epistemes and so am not bound to the notion of universal agency. I intend to address the issue of the technology of the self and autonomy in peacebuilding in a later article. For key thinkers on everyday life see, Maurice Blanchot, *The Infinite Conversation* (Minneapolis, MN: University of Minnesota Press, 1993); Henri Lefebvre, *Critique of Everyday Life* (London: Verso, 1991); Guy Debord, *Society of the Spectacle* (London: Aldgate Press); Michel de Certeau, *The Practice of Everyday Life* (Berkeley, CA: California University Press, 1984).

15. This follows on from Agathangelou and Ling, who argue that IR is a 'colonial household'. Anna M. Agathangelou and L.H.M. Ling, 'The House of IR', *International Studies Review* 6 (2004): 21.

and contingency<sup>16</sup> lays bare those paradoxes and tensions derived from territorial sovereignty, the overbearing state, cold institutionalism, a focus on rights over needs, distant trustee-style governance and a hierarchical international system in which material power matters more than everyday life.

The post-liberal form of peace, and its politics, denote a hybrid local-liberal peace. Agencies are expressed that contaminate, transgress and modify both the international and the local. They enable political mobilisation to deal with everyday issues, to build representative institutions and locally resonant forms of statehood. Of course, the difficulties of saying 'no' to the hegemonic discourse must be borne in mind.<sup>17</sup> Moving beyond liberal peacebuilding does not mean the end of the liberal peace but enabling its reconnection with its subjects in widely divergent contexts. This is why foregrounding the 'everyday' is so significant, especially as it is often connected with hidden agency and with resistance. Nor should it romanticise the capacity, resistance and agency of the local.<sup>18</sup> At the same time, it should be recognised that 'metropolitan time' (meaning Western modernity) – or the liberal peace – may not set suitable standards for the evaluation of non-Western time<sup>19</sup> (meaning context, custom, tradition and difference in its everyday setting).

This is a partial response to the recent claims about a 'critical impasse' between orthodox liberal debates and the critics of statebuilding or liberal interventionism. Indeed, these claims are premature: the mainstream has not moved to address many of the issues that have been raised by its own 'incomplete modernity'<sup>20</sup> in any concrete way (other than via rhetoric about 'local participation' or 'ownership' or ideological defences of liberal universalism and its brethren). Local agencies, whether resisting aspects of statebuilding or co-opting it, have begun to find ways of claiming ownership of a politics that responds to needs and identity issues, appropriating liberal peacebuilding, ignoring it or modifying it.

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16. This follows the well-known French tradition from Durkheim to Foucault, as well as the approaches of Geertz and Skinner among others. Cited in *Ibid.*, 157 and 169.

17. Spivak, *op. cit.*, 75.

18. For more on these matters, see Oliver P. Richmond, 'Eirenicism and a Post-Liberal Peace', *op.cit.*; 'Becoming Liberal, Unbecoming Liberalism: The Everyday, Empathy, and Post-Liberal Peacebuilding', *Journal of Intervention and Statebuilding* 3, no. 3 (2009); 'The Romanticisation of the Local: Welfare, Culture and Peacebuilding', *International Spectator* 44, no. 1 (2009); 'Reclaiming Peace in International Relations', *Millennium: Journal of International Studies* 36, no. 3 (2008).

19. Homi Bhabha, 'Freedom's Basis in the Indeterminate', in *The Identity in Question*, ed. J. Rajchman (New York: Routledge, 1995), 47–61.

20. Partha Chatterjee, 'Beyond the Nation? Or Within', *Social Text* 56 (1998): 67.

This article discusses what an IR and peacebuilding praxis located around the everyday might look like in terms of the hidden agencies that might emerge. It does so while trying to avoid the trap, inherent in critique, of removing local agency in favour of general claims of cosmopolitan or critical virtue. First, it outlines the general contours of any discussion of the everyday and the local, and the hybridity that ensues. Focusing on the everyday escapes the essentialisation or romanticisation of the now very diverse and often translocal local, the marginal, the sub-altern, the customary and hybridity, not to mention northern epistemologies. It then examines in more detail the varying uses of the everyday in areas relevant to contemporary IR. This can be seen as an inevitable post-colonial response to the failings of political liberalism and its use as a universal template.<sup>21</sup> This clarifies the ongoing renegotiation of the liberal peace via local agency and its resistances.<sup>22</sup> In the final section, I examine what this means for the production of post-liberal forms of peace in IR.

### Sites of Knowledge for Peace in IR

The rejection of the state – the de-centring of power – is not enough to justify the now well-known critique of the liberal peace, without the development of alternative or modified understandings of political agency, which do not dilute the capacity of the political subject. It must also respond to the paradox that the state, sovereignty and territory, and their associations with the grand project of international order, have generally displaced the subject through war and securitisation, institutions and the market, and often counteracted the gains made through peace, human rights, enfranchisement and welfare.<sup>23</sup>

The everyday is a space in which local individuals and communities live and develop political strategies in their local environment, towards the state and towards international models of order. It is not civil society, often a Western-induced artifice, but it is representative of the deeper local-local. It is often transversal and transnational, engaging with needs, rights, custom, individual, community, agency and mobilisation in political terms. Yet, these are often hidden or deemed marginal by mainstream approaches. The everyday entails a recognition of just how crucial such dynamics are even at higher levels of politics, but of course it does not confirm the state in its formal positivist, territorial form. Clearly some form of the state and of institutions which represent the interests

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21. I am indebted to Kristoffer Liden for this link with post-colonial theory.

22. 'Learning to learn' is how Kapoor puts it (*The Post-Colonial Politics of Development*, 56).

23. David Chandler, 'Critiquing Liberal Cosmopolitanism? The Limits of the Biopolitical Approach', *International Political Sociology* 3 (2009): 56; Kapoor, 'Acting in a Tight Spot', 568.

of political subjects are necessary but these should include rather than exclude the everyday.

The everyday is often seen in a range of literatures as a site of dynamics including resistance and politicisation, solidarity, local agency, hybridity, and also of passivity and depoliticisation. The latter occur through the effects of positivist, problem-solving technologies of power at the everyday level. Resistance indicates the potential of the everyday for repoliticisation, as well as the potential of institutions and a state shaped around the everyday. It has similar potential for the repoliticisation of IR.

What would the purpose of the state and institutions be in a non-sovereign, non-territorial, non-institutionalised, non-securitized mode? As a provider of human security, starting from the most marginalised, without resorting to any universal, paternalistic patterns of power, status or inequalities? This would require issues of peace and order to be addressed from the local, the everyday and from below. This process should be wary of any problem-solving meta-narratives relating to power, security, sovereignty, status or territory, or even emancipation. This is especially important where they involve the claim to know on behalf of others, to govern on behalf of others, to secure others or to defer agency and self-determination, without an acknowledgement of the acute sensitivities of such claims. If there is to be a universal, it may only be that the contextual everyday delineates the various sites of knowledge, institutions and states in IR. Thus, the everyday indicates that the post-liberal peace is not only to be constructed at the global level (the ambition of liberal internationalism and its cosmopolitan progeny) but at the local level in contextual forms. This is where citizenship, rights and duties have an everyday meaning returned from the cold, hollow, liberal state and its virtual peace, and politics transcends the emphasis on institutional or elite capacity or power.<sup>24</sup>

The move towards the 'local', defined as an alternative space, has been developing in many areas of study. This modifies or opposes the focus on the international, the state or governments, or indeed on 'locals' as ill-trained liberals or non-liberals. It also has methodological implications that require researchers to consider the implications of 'taking part' (even if they do not actually do so) in the everyday lives of the societies, regions, states and systems they study, not merely contributing to policy (which has often been determined beforehand). What is more, there is also the issue of whether and what the local and everyday should gain from research, and which and how local voices are selected.<sup>25</sup> In this context the latter's relations with the everyday, local, custom and culture need

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24. Chandler, 'Critiquing Liberal Cosmopolitanism?', 62.

25. See Eckl's review of ethnographic approaches, and reference to Malinowski in particular. Julian Eckl, 'Responsible Scholarship after Leaving the Veranda', *International Political Sociology* 2 (2008): 187-90.

to be understood in the context of material inequalities and imbalances. Gatekeepers need to be uncovered, and assumptions and stereotypes need to be interrogated.<sup>26</sup> The dynamics of 'studying down' from privileged positions towards those of the marginalised, poor, oppressed and conflict ridden (as opposed to the normal habits of 'studying up' [towards states and institutions]) need to be more widely understood, falling as they may somewhere between 'going native' or co-option, and the tendency to move towards ethical or universalising responses.<sup>27</sup> Ultimately, the privileges of research 'in the field' need to be understood more clearly in the context of the more common 'rewards' of research in the corridors of power or on the pages of 'great' texts.

This process should not establish another set of binary oppositions, this time between the everyday and local and the international/state, the non-liberal other and the liberal. Instead the everyday is a site where these meet and are negotiated, leading variously to repulsion, modification or acceptance, and hybridity. Here hidden everyday agencies renegotiate the liberal peace. It should be noted that the concept of hybridity is taken by Bhabha (one of its leading exponents) to include the way in which even in domination the coloniser invokes hybridity, reproducing a colonial relationship.<sup>28</sup> To see through this what Butler has called the 'labour of translation' needs to be undertaken.<sup>29</sup> Otherwise any engagement with the everyday will be skewed towards the currently predominant 'liberal' mode. It would be limited by the 'grid of the nation state system'<sup>30</sup> vis-à-vis the authoritarian production of liberal spaces, as well as the Millian improvement of peoples for the benefit of supposedly autonomous others. Ultimately, rather than providing for everyday agency, this sort of hybridity enables institutional agency.

Rather than reproducing Foucaultian patterns of liberal contradiction leading to resistance towards institutional agency, incorporating the everyday may enable an understanding of how local agency is also producing hybridity.<sup>31</sup> A contextual, empathetic and everyday form of peacebuilding and commensurate theory and methodology for IR would prevent an 'unbecoming liberalism', whereby subjects engage in almost inevitable resistance (even though it may offer them more sophisticated rights).<sup>32</sup> As a result liberal agents resort to coercion which effectively

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26. *Ibid.*, 196.

27. *Ibid.*, 197.

28. Bhabha, *The Location of Culture*, 33.

29. Judith Butler, 'Universality in Culture', in *Martha Nussbaum, For Love of Country?*, ed. J. Cohen (Boston, MA: Beacon Press, 2002), 52.

30. Chatterjee, *op. cit.*, 59.

31. Richmond, 'Becoming Liberal, Unbecoming Liberalism'.

32. See, for a discussion of similar accusations aimed at Habermasian discourse theory, Andrew Linklater, 'Dialogic Politics and the Civilising Process', *Review of International Studies* 31 (2005): 141–54.

undermines liberalism's offerings. As with previous and more directly colonial experiences, this is also unsettling for its agents, who were in the past colonial administrators, and today may well be officials or employees of the UN, UNDP, World Bank, EU, OSCE, donor agency, NGO or the state.<sup>33</sup> Often, they may be concerned that the policies and approaches they follow do not live up to liberal standards – a kind of 'colonial anxiety'.<sup>34</sup>

The hybridity that emerges between the liberal and the local may avoid such anxieties and engage in a mutual remediation of political space, both overcoming and maintaining boundaries between them. Indeed, in the context of a *longue durée* perspective of debates on peace, in its positive and ambitious forms, the everyday has always been a crucial part of IR for precisely this reason. It has been common for critical post-colonial and post-structuralist thought to invoke the everyday in their relationship with a broad range of areas and disciplines. Indeed, most of the major developments in peace praxis have connected closely with everyday issues. Certainly, democracy, the rule of law and human rights connect the everyday to an institutional setting, and human security was a way of reconnecting security to the everyday and the local while maintaining liberal institutions after the state-centricity of Cold War politics.<sup>35</sup> Concepts aimed at 'hearts and minds' operations, local ownership, civil society or capacity-building approaches have emerged, implying intimate conversations between the local and the international in full acknowledgement of implicated power relations.<sup>36</sup>

Yet these have failed to represent the everyday. In particular, they have failed to recognise local capacity, agency and resistance, as well as local elite co-option of the shallow, neoliberal states that emerged from current international statebuilding practice. It is in this resistance that an older Marxist critique of liberalism can be seen, though this is not in the context of limiting the solidarity of the working classes over their claims to the means of production, but in liberal terms of a political contract with

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33. See Barry Hindess, 'Not at Home in the Empire', *Social Identities* 7, no. 3 (2001): 353.

34. Hindess cites Guha in his discussion of 'colonial anxiety' and liberalism's failure to live up to its claims of offering freedom, but instead reverting to colonialism, despite its effects on the colonised and colonisers. *Ibid.*, 363.

35. Amity Acharya, 'How Ideas Spread: Whose Norms Matter? Norm Localization and Institutional Change in Asian Regionalism', *International Organization* 58, no. 2 (2004): 239–75.

36. Among others, Jean Paul Lederach is well known for making such arguments, and Jarat Chopra has made similar suggestions. J. Lederach, *Building Peace: Sustainable Reconciliation in Divided Societies* (Tokyo: United Nations University Press, 1997); Jarat Chopra and Tanja Hohe, 'Participatory Intervention', *Global Governance*, 10 (2004). Such participatory approaches have been the subject of well-placed criticism, however, that they simply advocate international approaches at the local level rather than engaging with local agency. Kapoor, *The Post-Colonial Conflicts of Development*, 75.

government and state that provides both rights and resources to citizens. Most liberal philosophers associated with developing concepts such as liberal-internationalism, democracy, the social contract, human rights and the rule of law saw this in the context of liberal peoples who used land 'productively'.<sup>37</sup> The indigenous, local, nature and 'other' has been excluded and masked by a discussion of interests, norms and rights. This has laid the theoretical basis of a very powerful Foucaultian critique<sup>38</sup> and a discussion of identity, culture, representation and the 'local'. This is a more suitable site for an emancipatory or ethical form of peace or order in response.<sup>39</sup> More importantly, a range of supposedly weak or powerless local actors have shown themselves to be capable of modifying the liberal peace model which underlies much of mainstream IR and Western policy.

### The Implications of the Everyday

A brief glance around the contemporary inter-discipline surrounding IR and peacebuilding is helpful in understanding this process. There are many examples one might find: Boege et al.'s 'everyday social reality';<sup>40</sup> Pouligny's tricky everyday in the context of peacebuilding;<sup>41</sup> Smirl's everyday practices of aid workers;<sup>42</sup> Luckham's deployment of human security as an engagement with insecure people's lived experiences;<sup>43</sup> Spencer's everyday struggles in the context of politics in Sri Lanka;<sup>44</sup> Scott's 'everyday peasant resistance';<sup>45</sup> Mark Mazower's historical work on the

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37. See Harvey among others for a discussion of this. David Harvey, *A Brief History of Neoliberalism* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2005).

38. Michel Foucault, 'Governmentality', in *The Foucault Effect: Studies in Governmentality*, eds Graham Burchell, Colin Gordon and Peter Miller (Hemel Hempstead: Harvester Wheatsheaf, 1991), 87–104.

39. Such analyses often draw on Geertz's understanding of culture as a historically transmitted system of symbols, conceptions, knowledge and attitudes. This is, of course, fluid, and also plays out within and through politics. C. Geertz, 'Religion as a Cultural System', in *The Interpretation of Cultures*, ed. C. Geertz (New York: Basic Books, 1973), 89.

40. Volker Boege, M. Anne Brown, Kevin P. Clements, and Anna Nolan, 'States Emerging from Hybrid Political Orders: Pacific Experiences', *The Australian Centre for Peace and Conflict Studies (ACPACS) Occasional Papers Series* (2008): 4.

41. Beatrice Pouligny, *Peace Operations Seen from Below* (London: Hurst, 2006).

42. Lisa Smirl, 'Building the Other, Constructing Ourselves: Spatial Dimensions of International Humanitarian Response', *International Political Sociology* 2 (2008): 236–53.

43. Robin Luckham, 'Introduction: Transforming Security and Development in an Unequal World', *IDS Bulletin* 40, no. 2 (March 2009): 3.

44. Jonathan Spencer, *Anthropology, Politics, and the State* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2008).

45. James C. Scott, *Weapons of the Weak: Everyday Peasant Resistance* (New Haven, NY: Yale University Press, 1985).

everyday in and after World War II in Greece;<sup>46</sup> Melucci's 'democracy of everyday life' and converse colonisation of the everyday;<sup>47</sup> Escobar's encounters with development, particularly in South America;<sup>48</sup> De Certeau's approach to the everyday;<sup>49</sup> Foucault's work on self-care and self-government in the everyday;<sup>50</sup> feminist theory on the everyday and on care via Gilligan and others;<sup>51</sup> Habermas's work on rational, 'everyday practices of communication';<sup>52</sup> Linklater's anthropological understanding of the dynamics of everyday life for universal communication communities;<sup>53</sup> Bhabha's work on culture – and in particular on everyday encounters where agency emerges that challenges and shapes that of the elites;<sup>54</sup> Spivak on the subaltern;<sup>55</sup> the range of post-colonial theory and work on the subaltern or alterity; Bleiker's work on emotion and aesthetics;<sup>56</sup> work on identity and on indigeneity, such as that of MacGinty;<sup>57</sup> Jabri's references to 'everyday security';<sup>58</sup> Sylvester's everyday realm of international relations where 'empathetic cooperation' has potential;<sup>59</sup> and many more.<sup>60</sup>

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46. Mark Mazower, *Inside Hitler's Greece, 1941–1945* (New Haven, NY: Yale University Press, 2001).

47. Alberto Melucci, 'Social Movements and the Democratisation of Everyday Life', in *Civil Society and the State*, ed. John Keane (London: Verso, 1988), 245–60.

48. Arturo Escobar, *Encountering Development: The Making and Unmaking of the Third World* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1995).

49. De Certeau, *op. cit.*, xi.

50. Michel Foucault, *History of Sexuality. III. The Care of the Self* (New York: Pantheon Books, 1986).

51. See Carol Gilligan, *In a Different Voice* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1993).

52. J. Habermas, 'Questions and Counter Questions', in *Habermas and Modernity*, ed. R.J. Bernstein (Cambridge: MIT Press, 1985), 196–7.

53. Andrew Linklater, *The Transformation of Political Community* (Columbia, SC: University of South Carolina Press, 1998), p. 31.

54. Bhabha, *The Location of Culture*, 232.

55. Spivak, 'Can the Subaltern Speak?'

56. Roland Bleiker, *Aesthetics and World Politics* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2009).

57. Roger MacGinty, 'Indigenous Peace-Making versus the Liberal Peace', *Cooperation and Conflict* 43, no. 2 (2008): 139–63.

58. Vivienne Jabri, 'Michel Foucault's Analytics of War', *International Political Sociology* 1 (2007): 68.

59. Christine Sylvester, 'Empathetic Cooperation: A Feminist Method for IR', *Millennium* 23, no. 2 (1994): 315–34.

60. Andreas Antoniadou shows how many of its proponents see the everyday entering history, modernity and opposed by biopolitics. Andreas Antoniadou, 'Cave! Hic Everyday Life: Repetition, Hegemony and the Social', *British Journal of Politics and International Relations* 10 (2008): 416.

Despite such attention the everyday is often seen as banal, taken for granted, repetitive and constrained by biopolitics.<sup>61</sup> However, this perspective is not one which chimes with peacebuilding's local context, where life, well-being, human security, politics, culture, identity and community are at stake. Whether there is disagreement on the mundanity and banality of everyday life, it is clear that in both Western and non-Western contexts it is a site of perceived subaltern agency, of resistance to depoliticisation, of activism, agonism and alterity – of both radical passivity and activity as well as passive and active radicality.<sup>62</sup>

Much liberal, cosmopolitan and constructivist theory, recently actualised through documents such as 'Agenda for Peace' or 'Responsibility to Protect' or the 'High Level Panel Report', reaches implicitly for both the legitimacy of the everyday, but also to emancipate and facilitate the everyday.<sup>63</sup> Such work differs not on whether the everyday is significant at all but whether it is uniform across the world in its most basic sense of needs and rights, and whether it should and can be facilitated, guided and protected from above, via an a priori rights-based approach, or should emerge as a result of individual and local agency and self-government. Couched in this way, problem-solving versus relativist debates inscribe their progenitors' attitudes on IR about whether local actors have any significant agency.

The politics of the everyday have generally been seen in juxtaposition to the conservative politics that preserve existing power relations between classes, social economic groups, identity groups or the liberal politics which focuses on the institutional structures of governance that preserve state frameworks (large or small) for the benefit of communities and individuals. In this sense, they are associated with solidarity. Such positions are also often consistent with attempts to oppose meta-narratives which essentialise the everyday, politics and identity.<sup>64</sup> The everyday is often perceived in the context of resistance to institutionalism and elitism where they have in the eyes of a society lost touch with a social contract.

Even De Certeau, perhaps one of the most famous thinkers to develop this concept, argued that the practices of everyday life are distinctive, repetitive and unconscious. For De Certeau, individuals unconsciously navigate their way around and try to create space for their own activities

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61. *Ibid.*, 416.

62. *Ibid.*, 424.

63. 'Report of the Secretary-General's High Level Panel on Threats, Challenges, and Change', United Nations, 2004; Boutros Boutros Ghali, *An Agenda for Peace: Preventative Diplomacy, Peacemaking and Peacekeeping* (New York: United Nations, 1992); 'The Responsibility to Protect', *op. cit.*

64. De Certeau, *op. cit.*, xi; Sadie Plant, *The Most Radical Gesture* (London: Routledge, 1992), 157–8.

while taking into consideration institutions of power.<sup>65</sup> People are able to adapt and take ownership over structures and institutions so that they begin to reflect their own everyday lives rather than structural attempts at assimilation. This reappropriation through the everyday then becomes a crucial part of politics and represents a move from subjects to active citizens. Institutions operate in a strategic manner to which people respond with tactical responses.<sup>66</sup> A strategy offers a relatively inflexible dominant order which is physically manifest and controls significant material resources. However, because the goal of a strategy is to maintain itself, this creates the need for individuals to find ways of ‘domesticating’ them. Institutions need individuals to become predictable, homogeneous and malleable. De Certeau also illustrates how strategy and tactic (i.e. institution and individual) only have very indirect contact with each other. Effectively, the individual becomes marginalised and engages in resistance against biopolitics, unconsciously at first. Individual tactics in the everyday are unencumbered by hegemonic institutions and indeed are too transient to even acquire labels. They represent a methodology which is ultimately more flexible and able to adapt more quickly than centralised methodologies. De Certeau argues that they are makeshift, resourceful and can bide their time. Thus, they are more personal and invisible to eyes that are attuned to orthodoxies of state and power. The tactical in the everyday is a diffuse form of politics that is not yet institutionalised but is able to shape, resist and choose institutions and strategies – an everyday, hidden agency in the process of becoming. What is most significant about this approach is that agency is expressed in opposition to institutions which fail to represent the everyday, denoting resistance, and gradually conscious political mobilisation.

Following a similar line, post-colonial uses of the everyday have become common.<sup>67</sup> Everyday life is both commensurate with, in opposition to and modifies colonial practices of government. In this terrain, a hybridity emerges which reflects cultural and social patterns, material inequalities and patterns of colonial power, disguise, timelag and blind-spots – as Bhabha has so eloquently illustrated.<sup>68</sup> It is a site of resistance, assimilation, adaption and of hidden agencies. It is also the site where power is often experienced in its most negative forms.

This approach captures a ‘place of hybridity’ resting on such critiques and translations, leading through dissensus, alterity and otherness, to an agonistic process of negotiation.<sup>69</sup> Hybridity is produced by colonialism but is also a sign of resistance rather than a mere mimicry (though

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65. *Ibid.*, Chapter II.

66. *Ibid.*, Chapter II.

67. Again, I am indebted to Kristoffer Liden.

68. Bhabha, *The Location of Culture*.

69. *Ibid.*, 35–7.

it may be more mimicry than resistance).<sup>70</sup> It is not aimed at reproducing 'civility' in its liberal and heterogeneous sense. Neither does it reproduce an indigenous golden era. Its locality is complex and multifaceted, focused on the 'contest for political and social authority within the modern world order' – read, over liberal standards for political culture.<sup>71</sup> This move rests partly on the reconstruction of IR using the discursive critique of post-colonialism, and the material critique of dependency theory.<sup>72</sup> If a sovereignty is to be found that reconstructs the state, it is one emerging through deterritorialised democracy, cognisant of culture and custom, of alterity, liminality and of time lag vis-a-vis modernisation-based theories.<sup>73</sup> The agonistic politics of representation, of needs and rights, and of identities, opens up a bridge between difference, based upon empathy, in an everyday context in spite of its agonism. Indeed, it is agonism itself that presents the possibility of empathy, and requires an engagement with the everyday.<sup>74</sup> What Bhabha refers to as the 'in-between space' represents the emergence of cultural hybridity, and translation from and to an interface between the everyday and the international even despite the latter's liberal tendency towards claims of the universal, timeless, hegemonic fixity of a dominant Western, customary praxis. In the latter lie the telltale signs of governmentality<sup>75</sup> as opposed to the *vox populi* of an everyday context.

Post-colonial approaches reveal the subtleties of hegemony (or the liberal peace) in subverting alterity, the everyday, and making them appear abnormal or insignificant. Its response is sometimes ambivalent about local agency.<sup>76</sup> From this perspective, local agency is best recognised as limited and ambivalent about its derivation in colonial or hegemonic power as opposed to the local.<sup>77</sup> Even post-colonial approaches see the local as often to be found in the 'language of the master', which also itself becomes hybrid via the local.<sup>78</sup> These agencies may be more than mimicry, but they offer a politics less than local self-determination, and may reconfirm hegemonic power.

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70. Ibid., 159 and 163.

71. Ibid., 245.

72. See, for example, Ilan Kapoor, 'Capitalism, Culture, Agency: Dependency versus Postcolonial Theory', *Third World Quarterly* 23, no. 4 (2002): 647–64.

73. Bhabha, *The Location of Culture*, 274.

74. William Connolly, *Identity/Difference* (Minneapolis, MN: University of Minnesota Press, 1991), esp. conclusion.

75. As argued by Homi Bhabha, *The Location of Culture*, 56. Bhabha refers to ideological 'fixity' as a sign of colonialism. Ibid., 94 and 101.

76. Kapoor, 'Capitalism, Culture, Agency', 661.

77. Kapoor, 'Acting in a Tight Spot', 563.

78. Bhabha, *The Location of Culture*, 33. This ambivalence has been widely criticised. Some have argued that material issues have been neglected by post-colonial scholars, and others have argued that their own transnational lifestyles are reflected in their work, rather than the subaltern.

Ethnographic approaches have also been widely seen in IR and related disciplines as enabling a clearer engagement with the local, with alterity and with the everyday in the name of emancipation.<sup>79</sup> The ethnographic turn has the everyday at its heart, if only in comparison to the failure of IR to enable the very qualities it often assumes in its liberal guise – that is, democracy, human rights and development. As Eckl has noted, applied anthropology has focused on uncovering the subaltern while critical anthropology has been more wary of such claims to emancipation and more concerned with the dilemmas that arise from the uncovering of the subaltern.<sup>80</sup> Thus, anthropological work aimed at the everyday<sup>81</sup> is limited by its incapacity to understand their own effects on their subjects (or ‘cultural contamination’). This is a valid point, but this problem is of a significantly lesser scale compared to those of IR which acknowledges no space or relevance for the everyday at all. Engaging with the everyday requires the relinquishing of absolute sovereignties and of the myth of the territorial state which channels all agency.

The concept of human security, which developed at the end of the Cold War in part as a way of allowing such a move, exemplifies this difficulty.<sup>82</sup> Broadening security to include a range of political, social and economic factors allowed for the consideration of security in the context of everyday life in order to facilitate local agencies. This was soon attacked and labelled as implausible and unable to be operationalised.<sup>83</sup> As it was adopted by various states and international organisations it developed into a liberal institutionalist form, rather than the emancipatory form that was envisaged.<sup>84</sup> Everyday forms of peacebuilding may in contrast draw the concept of human security towards an emancipatory focus.<sup>85</sup>

Democracy is crucial in this respect, but not necessarily in the institutional form that is encapsulated by a state (and often has been regarded

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79. Wanda Vradi, ‘The Strange Case of Ethnography and International Relations’, *Millennium: Journal of International Studies* 37, no. 2 (2008): 280.

80. *Ibid.*, 283.

81. Pierre Bourdieu, *Outline of a Theory of Practice* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1977); Scott, *op. cit.*

82. Edward Newman and Oliver P. Richmond, *The United Nations and Human Security* (London: Palgrave, 2001).

83. For conflicting views, see Roland Paris, ‘Human Security: Paradigm Shift or Hot Air?’, *International Security* 26, no. 2 (Fall 2001): 87–102; Sharbanou Tadjbaksh, ‘Human Security: Concepts and Implications’, *Les Etudes du CERI*, nos 117–118 (September 2005).

84. Oliver P. Richmond, ‘Emancipatory Forms of Human Security and Liberal Peacebuilding’, *International Journal* (Summer 2007).

85. For a similar argument, see Endre Begby and J. Peter Burgess, ‘Human Security and Liberal Peace’, *Public Reason* 1, no. 1 (2009): 91–104.

procedurally as drained of substance)<sup>86</sup> or in cosmopolitan form.<sup>87</sup> To enable everyday agency it requires a 'broader attitude towards governance, political community, and life in general'.<sup>88</sup> This might be of the communicative turn that Aradau and Huysmans have recently outlined,<sup>89</sup> or might be in terms of the 'democracy to come' outlined by Derrida, Newman and Connolly.<sup>90</sup> In other words, the aspiration to democracy and self-determination cannot be satisfied purely by state institutions. It must also incorporate the everyday so it may operate transnationally, informed by independent and radical agencies beyond mere rationalism and sovereignty.<sup>91</sup> Democracy reaches for self-government on everyday, contingent terms, rather than institutionalism and a 'tyranny of the majority'.<sup>92</sup> This is reminiscent of the deterritorialised democracy, agonistic respect and critical responsiveness, especially for the most marginalised that Connolly has proposed, or the agonistic democracy of Mouffe, or to a lesser degree the deliberative version of Habermas.<sup>93</sup>

It also requires a conception of human rights, a framework for wealth, redistribution or social welfare, and a rule of law in a constitutional setting in order to guarantee the political agency of the individual in its everyday and community setting, not just in terms of formal state institutions. In these terms, this would both represent a post-liberal development for both democracy and human security, through its connection with the everyday, as well as its connections with the liberal peace model. Implicitly, democracy is also about agency and resistance in a variety of forms, implying a tension with the liberal peace, technocratic, institutional and bureaucratic tendencies, and the state.<sup>94</sup> This emphasises the tension within the liberal peace and also within the liberal-local hybrid now emerging in many locations, in which resistance and radical political agencies, or perhaps more appropriately, non-Western, non-

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86. Phillip Cerny, 'Some Pitfalls of Democratisation in a Globalising World', *Millennium* 37, no. 3 (2009): 780.

87. David Held, 'Democracy and Globalisation', *Global Governance* 3, no. 3 (1997).

88. Mark Chou and Roland Bleiker, 'The Symbiosis of Democracy and Tragedy: Lost Lessons from Ancient Greece', *Millennium* 37, no. 3 (2009): 674.

89. Claudia Aradau and Jef Huysmans, 'Mobilising (Global) Democracy', *Millennium* 37, no. 3 (2009): 587.

90. Cited in Saul Newman, 'Connolly's Democratic Pluralism and the Question of State Sovereignty', *British Journal of Politics and International Relations* 10 (2007): 227–40.

91. Chou and Bleiker, op. cit., 662.

92. Alexis De Tocqueville, *Democracy in America* (New York: Vintage Books, 1954).

93. Connolly, op. cit., 123–7; C. Mouffe, *The Democratic Paradox* (London: Verso, 2000); J. Habermas, *The Inclusion of the Other* (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 1998).

94. Newman, 'Connolly's Democratic Pluralism', 228.

developmental, subaltern agencies, are emerging. As Melucci argues, social movements and agency arise not just because of opposition to ideological hegemony or state power, but also as an expression of the cognitive, affective and creative relationships between people, which then translates into social action, and may also take the form of resistance.<sup>95</sup>

*The Issue of Agency in the Everyday*

This raises the question of agency, autonomy and passivity of the subject, one which has dogged all attempts to emancipate, critique and reconstruct new forms of politics contra the liberal-realist anti-politics that seem to emerge from various dominant strands of Enlightenment thought. It is assumed that agency exists a priori and implies autonomy.<sup>96</sup> These issues are particularly problematic when it is remembered that the concept of agency is connected to Western notions of civil society, rights, property and the market, as well as to political mobilisation and institution building. Those without either in liberal thought (and liberal imperialism) were considered primitive and part of a *res nullius*.

As Foucault said, the autonomous subject is something of a myth.<sup>97</sup> Agency is, of course, an Enlightenment concept depending on mutually agreed regulatory frameworks, within which it will be exercised autonomously for the good life, circumscribed and facilitated by institutions. Generally speaking, IR, peacebuilding and conflict resolution debates all assume that international actors have some agency, even if constrained significantly by structures or lack of access to rights, institutions, property and markets. Local actors have nascent agency, not yet fully formed. These agencies enable policy and institutions to follow interests or norms. It forms the basis for emancipation, and enables mediation or peacekeeping, or local ownership of peacebuilding. The assumption of agency underpins all statebuilding approaches, though these are normally couched as 'good' international agency versus problematic 'local' agencies or the passive local.

What is interesting about the question of autonomous agency is how it relates to self-determination. Thus, calls to engage with local ownership or the everyday are indicative of an attempt to relocate politics away from international actors, be they states, donors or the United Nations, to local actors exercising their own agency, realising their freedom and exercising their basic right of self-determination. The aspiration is for

95. *Ibid.*, 197.

96. Thanks to Necati Polat for pointing out this issue to me. See Hubert Dreyfus, 'Heidegger and Foucault on the Subject, Agency and Practices', [http://ist-socrates.berkeley.edu/~hdreyfus/html/paper\\_heidandfoucault.html](http://ist-socrates.berkeley.edu/~hdreyfus/html/paper_heidandfoucault.html)

97. Michel Foucault, 'What Is an Author?', in *Language, Counter-Memory, Practice*, trans. Donald F. Bouchard and Sherry Simon (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1977), 124–7.

agency to emerge at the local level and in liberal form. Yet, here IR and peacebuilding encounter a significant problem. What if local agencies do not concur with their liberal agendas? What if, in their search for freedom and self-determination, localised forms of peacebuilding, conflict resolution or understandings of IR then become expressions of resistance? Both Heidegger and Foucault in their later work had concluded that agency meant freedom, and the capacity to change oneself and one's own society or milieu even if agency could not be autonomous.<sup>98</sup> In other words, agency is related to self-determination, and self-government in everyday contexts, not necessarily channelled through the liberal model. Everyday practices give meaning to life and community, and thus form the basis of peace,<sup>99</sup> before institutions, though it would be useful if subsequent institutions reflected this. Thus, the everyday terrain for IR and everyday forms of peacebuilding indicate that resistance, explicit or hidden and marginal, may be agencies' most significant form of impetus, whether resisting dominant state narratives, local cultural or elite practices, international blue-prints, economic, social or political inconsistencies, or deficiencies in rights or needs. Peacebuilding should therefore be led by local rather than international agencies if emancipation is to occur in a way that is resonant. Otherwise, everyday agencies, whether elite or customary, liberal or not, will tend to resist rather than comply with the liberal peace and its perceived biopolitical qualities, as seen from below.

Calls to describe an alternative paradigm of 'peace', or to enable its operationalisation, miss the point completely. This is not to essentialise and categorise the everyday, or to offer a new international model for IR or peace. Contextually reconstructing IR and its related peacebuilding or statebuilding enterprise cannot be achieved in general theory. This indicates that local agents easily perceive problem-solving theory as neo-colonialism *redux*. To engage with the everyday and recognise local agency contextual theory is required, which needs to be written obliquely, cognisant of timelag, of aporias, of catechisms, of alterity, sensitive to the many subalterns, without whom legitimacy cannot be achieved. The grand claims of Western politics and of IR towards security, peace, order, emancipation and so forth, have been made without this sensitivity. As a result, reconstructing these narratives should start from the problem of contextual legitimacy. Here the task of politics is to uncover local, everyday agencies, and to make each capable of translating, engaging, recognising, assisting and negotiating, without reverting to older colonial and racist patterns of understanding.

This also means problematising the 'modernisation' of politics that has undermined the sphere of the everyday in favour of territorial sovereignty and institutionalism. As a consequence, the space of the local,

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98. Dreyfus, *op. cit.*, 1.

99. *Ibid.*, 23.

everyday and its attendant actors are often seen as sites of violence, poverty, illiberalism and resistance, sometimes along Fanonian lines, rather than varied and dynamic sites of politics in their own right from which institutions may emerge. The everyday is where formal explanatory capacity loses its abilities, and where inductive and critical approaches gain traction; it is also where the 'vague' and 'fuzzy' concepts associated with everyday life by rational thought are most apparent. Yet, for the critical thinker, the everyday is real, clear, sharp and precise, and is where IR often begins. To think in such terms offers the possibility of de-romanticising the local, and demystifying the international, and enabling the very 'critical agency' at stake in all political intervention.<sup>100</sup>

Thus, the everyday represents the rebalancing and re-occupation of IR by real and lived experiences rather than merely as the empty and virtual residual space specific to powerful states and elites. It offers an opportunity for empathetic relations to emerge between the international and the everyday. It offers a balancing framework for, say, Habermasian discourse ethics, where its impulse might be to valorise liberal values, a field site for post-structuralist scholars, and, of course, uncovers a conveniently forgotten level of analysis for more orthodox approaches ranging from realism to constructivism. A sociology and ethnography of IR is required to balance the securitised and institutionalised responses of realist and liberal approaches. But, this would not, as with constructivism or critical theory, begin with the core assumptions of realism and liberalism, but instead with those conceptual, theoretical, methodological and ontological puzzles offered by the everyday in its international and regional contexts. In particular, this would enable a better understanding of how local actors fulfil their needs, maintain their institutions and identities, while appearing to conform to the strategic institutions of biopolitical governance.<sup>101</sup> One of the key liberal responses to this phenomenon has been to incorporate local actors and dimensions more closely into international attempts to deal with security, to establish liberal institutions, to promote development, human rights, human security, civil society and the rule of law. This was partly in response to local movements for more self-determination in the peace processes in Kosovo and Timor Leste, among many others. It has become customary for local partners, politicians, officials, local employees of agencies and NGOs, or local NGOs, social movements, cultural movements or religious groups, to maintain their connection with international donors while also trying to maintain their autonomy and identity, as well as their priorities. While the donors have moved further into the terrain of donor-driven project development, local actors have often played along while also maintaining their own agendas.

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100. Chandler, 'Critiquing Liberal Cosmopolitanism?', op. cit., 53–70.

101. Michel Foucault, *The Birth of Biopolitics: Lectures at the College de France, 1978–79* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2008).

In Afghanistan, for example, the Tribal Liaison Office aimed at bridging the local and international has seen both agreement and confrontation. In Iraq, tribal politics were soon understood to be both the cause of and solution to the violence during US and UK attempts at liberal statebuilding. In sub-Saharan Africa, there has been a serious attempt to incorporate customary forms of law and governance even though donor positions on corruption, decentralisation, democracy and liberal institutions are often in tension with these attempts.<sup>102</sup> These reactions – spanning an incorporation of custom and traditional structures and the elevation of local voices and agencies – can be read both as examples of the reinsertion of local agency into IR, as well as a liberal realisation of its own failings. Here the interface between the liberal and the local is producing hybridity often in ways which represent the international more than the local. Yet, the ambitions of the liberal peace and the legitimacy of liberalism itself have been significantly moderated by such dynamics, illustrating the hidden agencies of the everyday and their unexpected capacities.

Even so, the tendency to focus on the state in its Westphalian context as the main ‘singularity’ of IR<sup>103</sup> – a moment of exclusion – undermines the capacity to understand the local in its everyday context. Yet the everyday is one of the main realities of IR. The local, empathy, the everyday, society and the needs and agency of communities and individuals become to a large extent exempt from the interests of orthodox IR theory (as well as the issue of well-being, welfare and ‘class’, among other everyday issues). The everyday has reappeared in post-colonial, sociological and anthropological derived literatures for precisely these reasons.<sup>104</sup> This arises from the legitimacy of ritualistic popular participation in democratic processes, which provide it with the sorts of legitimacy that the institutions of democracy cannot obtain if they are ‘empty’ (i.e. hijacked or manipulated by elite interests and distant from, and unable to assist, local populations).<sup>105</sup> It raises the question of what is necessary to achieve an *everyday state* (of peace) rather than merely a liberal state.<sup>106</sup> The broader politics of the everyday thus engender agency, and

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102. See, among others, J. Comaroff and J. Comaroff, *Civil Society and Political Imagination in Africa* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1999); David Ucko, ‘Militias, Tribes, and Insurgents: The Challenge of Political Reintegration in Iraq’, *Conflict, Security and Development* 8, no. 3 (2008); Susanne Schmeidl (with Masood Karokhail), ‘Prêt-à-Porter States’: How the McDonaldisation of State-Building Misses the Mark in Afghanistan’, in *Peace in the Absence of States: Challenging the Discourse on State Failure*, eds Martina Fischer and Beatrix Schmelzle (Berghof Handbook for Conflict Transformation Dialogue Series Issue No. 8, 2009); Boege et al., ‘States Emerging from Hybrid Political Orders’.

103. R.B.J. Walker, in discussion, Victoria, Canada, 14 July 2008.

104. Spencer, *Anthropology, Politics, and the State*, 44 and 75.

105. *Ibid.*, 78.

106. *Ibid.*, 118.

sometimes resistance, from which a local–liberal interface arises. This produces hybridity and ultimately a post-liberal peace in which liberal institutions and norms are modified in each different context.

## Resistance and Post-liberal Peace

Beyond the confines of mainstream IR, peacebuilding may now be seen as partially a site of international assistance, via social, political and economic engineering. It is also partially a site of local acquiescence, local co-option and of multiple and often hidden forms of resistance. There are international and local public and hidden transcripts at play here, which expose the tension between the international and the local in terms of acquiescence, domination and resistance.<sup>107</sup> Both local and international offer a public transcript framed in mutually understandable language about how each may help each other, but there is a hidden transcript which betrays a lack of understanding, care or agreement, and antagonistic relations of domination and resistance.<sup>108</sup> Both reject each other as a natural order of things but also attempt to naturalise themselves, which also has the effect of spurring internal and external critiques of international and local practices, where they are deemed to interfere with autonomy and agency.<sup>109</sup>

Peacebuilding as resistance appears, at least from the local level, to offer the main avenue through which to shape the emerging political environment, though this is predicated on the ability to resist overwhelming technical superiority, and to modify it marginally, or to mimic it. This occurs through a range of ‘minute, individual, autonomous tactics and strategies’,<sup>110</sup> the constant everyday forms of resistance through which local agency may be expressed despite overwhelming authority. This is a resistance to the central claims of liberal peacebuilding and statebuilding, its celebrations of pluralism-as-liberalism, its claimed rights to adjudicate and manipulate material resources, its universal legitimacy, its underlying celebration of individualism and deference to the market, its underlying claims that agency (in this instance meaning self-help) is always present even for the most marginalised, and its validation of national identities, sovereignty, rights and justice in prior forms. It may involve becoming ‘modern’ or becoming ‘liberal’ but in heavily or subtly modified ways, rather than merely rejecting fully the liberal peace model and romanticising either local resistance or international authority. Local

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107. See James C. Scott, *Domination and the Arts of Resistance* (New Haven, NY: Yale University Press, 1990), xxii.

108. *Ibid.*, 41.

109. *Ibid.*, 72 and 103.

110. Michel Foucault, cited in Scott, *Domination and the Arts of Resistance*, x. and *ibid.*, 29.

forms of peacebuilding are reconstituting themselves as resistance to the relatively empty signification of doctrines such as R2P or 'do no harm' as well as liberal peacebuilding itself, and its assumption of liberal state creation. Resistance at the local level provides a site from which a new peace begins to be imagined in contextual and everyday terms, perhaps reconstituting a social contract and a state, or even moving beyond Westphalia.

Peacebuilding as resistance represents a form of agonism between the liberal and the local, experienced mainly at the level of the everyday, rather than via revolutionary alterity.<sup>111</sup> It is often through resistance to peacebuilding, statebuilding, development, the market or to modern or normative praxes that a civil society and a social contract comes into being in agonistic terms, overcoming the distancing that liberal peacebuilding tends to bring about. Thus, peacebuilding as resistance may lead to emancipation, as well as to more dubious forms of politics, for which a balance must be found. This can be seen in two ways: either peacebuilding as resistance revitalises the liberal social contract and gives these externally constructed states substance, or it enables a more proactive encounter between the liberal peace and its others, in which the hegemonic weight of the liberal peace project is finally countermanded.

This process is only now becoming clear. In many post-conflict or conflict environments, the everyday is ignored mainly because it is seen as a site of alterity and of resistance, or worse, of apathy. Perhaps as problematic, as Scott argued in another context, local actors, intentions and processes silence themselves in the interests of maintaining their remaining space,<sup>112</sup> or, as Spivak said, are simply muted by international dominance and a liberal aversion to non-liberal symbolic productions. Yet, engaging the local with peacebuilding requires engaging with local understandings which may well entail resistance to modernity, to modernisation, to centralised state power, sovereignties outside of limited communities, liberal norms and institutions, the market, and conceptions of rights over needs. Peacebuilding as resistance may prioritise self-determination, community, agency, autonomy, sometimes democracy and a sense of nation, and sometimes the materiality of liberal states.

Thus, there are parallels between liberal peace frameworks and cosmopolitan or internationalist aspirations, but there are also acute tensions, some of which play out agonistically, and others which lead to blockages in the negotiating process between the two. Until recently, the tendency has been for the international to take priority because of the older bias of IR, but this has disenfranchised the very populations it sought to govern.

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111. Rosemary E. Shinko, 'Agonistic Peace: A Postmodern Reading', *Millennium: Journal of International Studies* 36, no. 3 (2008): 473–91.

112. Scott, *Domination and the Arts of Resistance*, 301.

Peacebuilding needs to incorporate local discourse founders,<sup>113</sup> as well as received international wisdom. Even without overt cooperation, together they produce new political subjects in post-conflict environments via a complex mixture of agency, autonomy, resistance and acceptance.<sup>114</sup> This requires the recognition of the transversal, transnational and translocal agencies expressed in the everyday, and an assessment of their capacity to move between such situations, as they create autonomy for themselves and their politics and avoid technologies of power, reductionism and totalising praxes that endanger freedom and self-determination.

IR and the modern liberal peace/statebuilding project has already become a hybrid through such processes; it has been modified by its contact with various local spaces (even if it has not recognised this). Yet this hybridity may prove to be liberalism's greatest strength, and have the most impact on the liberal peace/statebuilding model which has recently emerged.

Liberal peace is in an agonistic relationship with its others, probably until this hybridity allows both to change while maintaining their differences and localities. Thus hybridity represents a coexistence of difference, rather than assimilation and internationalisation. Liberalism tolerates or co-opts while contextualism resists, modifies and adopts. Liberalism territorialises whereas hybridity deterritorialises. Peacebuilding has to negotiate these terrains, recognise difference, support agency, enable autonomy and stay clear of state or social engineering. Of course, state-builders will argue that the state is needed to house these dynamics and promote regional order. But what if this type of post-liberal peacebuilding implies a polity that does not conform with the modern liberal state?

Peacebuilding cannot just be reduced to localised resistance of course, but the latter's relationship with liberal statebuilding needs to be problematised (indeed, it is notable how today many members of the 'international civil service' of peacebuilders privately resist aspects of liberal peacebuilding themselves).<sup>115</sup> Of course the programmes introduced by liberal peacebuilding generally remove or constrain local agency as resistance in various often unintended ways. DDR and SSR removes weapons and concentrates them in the hands of armies. Marketisation removes protectionism making competition and so livelihoods very difficult for new post-conflict entrants in the market system. Democratisation focuses politics on the party system and its general and often nationalist agendas. Human rights supplant human needs. The rule of law endorses all of this and protects private property and may even entrench socio-economic inequality and a class system. International support, loans, grants,

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113. Foucault, 'What Is an Author?'

114. Dreyfus, *op. cit.*, 19.

115. This has certainly been very apparent in many of the field sites I have worked in myself over the years.

advice, companies, peacekeepers, agencies and NGOs are supposed to compensate for this removal of agency in these areas, and to focus on empowering civil society, citizens and the state to operate within their confines. This sleight of hand is what makes the everyday so important, and is what leads to the paradox of civil society and localised forms of peacebuilding becoming platforms for deep, local-local resistance, however marginal, and for the development of an agonism between the liberal and the local. On a positive note this may form the basis of a new social contract.

At the very least, considering the everyday in both IR and in peacebuilding praxis requires that rather than being policy driven, elite driven, externally driven and donor driven, that both are 'context driven'. Here, the repoliticisation and enabling of relatively autonomous agency necessary for democracy, rights, needs, justice and culture and identity may occur. Contextually driven approaches require an empathetic response between 'liberals' and 'locals' over their mutual and separate everyday norms, interests and lives. It requires a detailed and ethnographic, not just securitised, or institutional, or statistical or trend-based, understanding of each other's positions and contexts. It opens up the world of the local to IR, and to peacebuilding approaches, also perhaps re-energising an emancipatory notion of human security. It requires at the very most a thin version of the Habermasian approach to discourse theory on the part of those engaged in what they see as a liberal, cosmopolitan project,<sup>116</sup> but preferably an engagement with the less easily essentialisable offerings of Connolly on deterritorialisation, on the avoidance of othering and narcissistic difference, or on the reconstruction and pluralisation of exclusive communities as we learn from Anderson.<sup>117</sup> IR should 'stop operating on the assumption that observable diversity is but a veil over fundamentally similar processes',<sup>118</sup> where the state, peace and agency might be easily uncovered. The site of the everyday is probably not a place to reconstruct a single cosmopolitan everyday or to aspire to communitarian boundaries, but instead represents pluralities which meet, interact, integrate, react, resist, mediate and negotiate.

This means in fact that there are alternatives and significant modifications to the liberal agenda which are already intellectually available and empirically observable. Hybrid forms of liberalism have emerged in theory and practice, which are modified by their contact with the very local context that they claim does not exist, is mistaken or insignificant. This indicates a local-liberal or liberal-local hybrid is already emerging,

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116. Linklater, 'Dialogic Politics and the Civilising Process', 154; Connolly, *Identity/Difference*, 218.

117. Anderson, op. cit.

118. Patrick Chabal and Jean-Pascal Daloz, *Culture Troubles* (Chicago: Chicago University Press, 2006), 327.

constituting a shift towards a 'post-liberal peace'. Some of these might be seen to be relatively benevolent in terms of the ways in which they enable individual political agency, respect for rights and provide for needs. Others are much darker and driven by minority interests. This raises the question of whether the local and the liberal tend to repulse each other, meaning that the hybrid is inevitably based on internal contradictions, or whether they are attracted to each other, in which case hybridity is based on the production of new political cultures and institutional paradigms. Both can occur, and, indeed, have occurred from Cambodia to Afghanistan in recent peacebuilding operations.

### **Conclusion: The Infrapolitics of Peacebuilding**

Everyday engagements with peacebuilding around the world are often aimed at claiming autonomous agency at the local or national level. This indicates resistance and is often relatively hidden or very explicit, which can be seen from Timor Leste to Afghanistan. Often these resistances take place in the 'blind spots' of the liberal peace (caused by its problem-solving and epistemic frameworks), and framed as liberation discourses, either for community or national projects. They may well be marginal, but they are having a significant impact in that they are producing hybrid forms of peace, which are indicative of a post-liberal evolution.

One of the most interesting aspects of the 'post-liberal peace' is that it rescues and reunites both the liberal and the local. It does not aim to depoliticise the local or to remove politics from the international, but to highlight the evolving relations between them. Of course, liberalism is actually a form of customary political community, derived from the Western experience (i.e. the West's own 'local'). The liberal-local hybrid can represent a combination of very negative political practices (for example, rigorously determined liberal institutionalism and market development solutions with patriarchal, feudal, communal or sexist practices). It can be more positive in that it connects complementary practices related to self-determination and agency, democracy, human rights and needs, and a rule of law with customary social support networks, and customary forms of governance and political order. It can connect both negative and positive practices (meaning both the liberal and the local develop elements of attraction and rejection). Though the problem posed here might be that liberalism and customary forms of governance are mutually exclusive, empirical research suggests that this is not always the case. Liberalism, more specifically, is less likely to recognise the local, the contextual and customary order. Liberalism is more likely to actively marginalise the local than the local is to marginalise the liberal. This is partly due to the power-relations between liberalism and the local which inevitably favour liberal political orders. However, there is a mutual attraction between the liberal and the local, which in many conflict and

post-conflict zones is producing hybridity, perhaps because they indicate liberal aspirations or because their values and interests indicate mutual goals.

The liberal–local hybrid represents a long-term process of political evolution towards a post-liberal form via the everyday, which might be taken as a ‘post-conventional contextualism’.<sup>119</sup> This everyday is not a benign space, but a tense episteme requiring understanding and translation (not mapping, explaining or essentialising). Through this, other voices can attain agency and represent themselves – so that the subaltern may speak in and to IR, even if only to try to explain their predicament.<sup>120</sup> This is where the ‘infrapolitics’ of peacebuilding lie – and a relatively hidden realm of IR where culture, identity, agency and structure *from beneath* have a significant effect on its more visible mainstream dynamics such as the development of institutions and states.<sup>121</sup>

A post-liberal peace requires that international actors use a range of methods that enable local actors and the most marginalised to engage with a discussion of their own requirements for needs provision and their own understandings of rights, and institutions. What are often thought of as informal institutions, processes, law and modes of subsistence, as well as actors relatively insignificant in modern understandings of state formation, play a role in peacebuilding and the development of the state. In each context, this means that democracy and the formation of state institutions is at least partially determined and expressed by local voices expressing the full range of everyday issues and processes. This then takes the form of a negotiation between the range of local actors and international actors over the processes, institutions and aims of political organisation and mobilisation for peace.

It would see the coexistence and renegotiation of liberal versions of democracy, the rule of law, human rights, development and the market, all contained by the modern state with customary forms of governance. It would include the recognition of the dynamics of the everyday, from the needs of communities and citizens in subsistence and customary settings, of tradition, history and non-liberal identities, of customary law, hereditary and tribal institutions, different notions about the use and ownership of land and property, of the role of the state, market or community/collective in providing services and so forth. This is not to re-establish a juxtaposition between the liberal and the non-liberal, the modern and the traditional, but instead to see how the modern liberal peacebuilding project is modified by its subjects, whether they are liberal and modern or not. It enables an examination of the hidden capacity of supposedly weak and marginal actors to negotiate the supposedly hegemonic liberal

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119. S. Benhabib, *Situating the Self* (Cambridge: Polity, 1993).

120. Spivak, ‘Can the Subaltern Speak?’, 104.

121. I borrow this term from Scott, *Domination and the Arts of Resistance*, 183–4.

peacebuilding framework, through resistance, co-optation or acceptance, towards a more resonant and localised form of politics. Such forms of resistance denote local agency and capacity, and indeed political mobilisation and institutionalisation. These are based on contextual rather than merely international (read Western) actors, models, dynamics and experiences – and liberate all, including the discipline of IR.

A post-liberal form of peace may include the possibility of states or institutions emerging that are representative of a desire for the more equitable redistribution of wealth, of customary processes and non-rational forms of politics and society, including over land use and distribution, of collective rights as well as individual rights. It may also be indicative of a desire on the part of local stakeholders for international peacebuilding to play a facilitative rather than directive role, to allow the post-liberal peace to emerge in a range of spaces which internationals may not fully understand because of their lack of contextual knowledge. It may require them to respond more urgently to material deficiencies that destabilise day-to-day life, rather than their current focus on elites, governance, politicians and a business class housed within a formal state.

Institutions, and potentially states, designed in this more sensitive manner by local actors and facilitated by external actors, would make a much better job of shaping participation and rights, of democracy and inclusion, and be much more empowering than at present. They might also escape elite predation and corruption to a greater degree, and facilitate political mobilisation without a nationalist state project or gross inequality emerging as an unintended consequence of international intervention, statebuilding or development.

Peacebuilding as resistance represents a complex mix of international hegemony, local resistance, mimicry, agency and subversion.<sup>122</sup> Beyond governmentality and biopower/politics, beyond essentialised notions of culture and identity, lies a range of hybrid processes – the often marginal modification of hegemonic praxis by hitherto hidden local agencies. The everyday captures these dynamics and spaces where a new politics may emerge beyond the liberal peace. The infrapolitics of peacebuilding and the resultant local–liberal hybrid makes a post-liberal space for peace already a reality. In each context it may differ and in each it must negotiate the contradictions that arise in the often abrasive relationship between international understandings of the liberal peace, institutions and the liberal state, and local processes of politics. With further contextual research, deploying methodologies designed to enable and empower the local and the everyday, it may well transpire that a post-liberal peace might more fully recognise common and differing agencies

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122. Here, I note Pinar Bilgin's argument that even mimicry can disguise subtle forms of agency. Pinar Bilgin, 'Thinking Past Western IR', *Third World Quarterly* 29, no. 1 (2008): 6.

and capacities. It might do so without being an apologist for IR or for international or local actors' limitations, as a starting point for a more emancipatory form of peace than has so far emerged.

Here local-local agencies appear transnationally and share common aspirations for peace and respect mutual difference. They entail the realistic acknowledgement that the 'power' of liberal peacebuilding is inevitably fragmented. The infrapolitics of peacebuilding protects the weak and the hidden to a degree. A next step would be to ensure a better understanding of these developments so they do not simply reify the problematic political frameworks of modernity, local and international, which they are reshaping. The reinvention of IR and of peacebuilding entails a shift from international prescriptions to local resistance, to liberation, and so to emancipation. As Fanon argued, a critical consciousness is required that is 'freed from colonialism and forewarned of all attempts at mystification, inoculated against all national anthems'.<sup>123</sup>

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123. Frantz Fanon, *The Wretched of the Earth* (London: Penguin, 1967 [1963]), 147.