

Introduction

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This book brings together leading analysts of statebuilding to set out and engage with some of the key policies, practices and paradigms of international intervention to assist post-conflict reconstruction, democratisation and development. The context is the reconsideration of many assumptions about statebuilding policy and practices in the wake of the debacle of Iraq and ongoing problems in Afghanistan, Bosnia, Kosovo and other states subject to international statebuilding. Rather than being a regional survey or a policy-orientated ‘lessons learned’ book, this edited collection stands out as interested in the broader framing of policy goals, statebuilding practices and the paradigmatic consensus on the need for Western states and international institutions to be engaged in this policy area.

The essays contained in this collection are written by experts in the field, many of which were invited submissions to the *Journal of Intervention and Statebuilding*. They are written with the intention of opening up debate and critical discussion in this field at a time when many advocates of extending statebuilding intervention suggest that we have to accept that it will inevitably be contradictory and limited in its results because of the complex nature of the problems of non-Western states and societies. Part One engages with some of the key policy frameworks and conceptual issues raised by recent statebuilding interventions: those of ownership; understanding conflict; and the link between state failure and the war on terror. Part Two considers core statebuilding practices: economic reconstruction; the role of the military; and post-conflict police reform. Part Three reconsiders statebuilding paradigms more broadly: considering the reconstitution of states as a hybrid product of external and internal political factors; how the internationalisation of state institutions erases clear sovereign boundaries; and the broader liberal paradigm shaping intervention and statebuilding.

Introduction: Beyond ‘Managing Contradictions’

The discourse of statebuilding seems to be a peculiarly contradictory one. On the one hand, there is now an international consensus amongst leading Western states, international institutions, policy think tanks and non-governmental organisations that international statebuilding interventions are essential to address a wide range of problems emerging in many regions of the world; from the management of post-conflict peace processes and the protection of human rights, to the spread of international principles of good governance and the rule of law, right through to addressing problems of economic growth and poverty reduction. Statebuilding, understood as the rubric for a wide range of interventionist mechanisms – from military engagement to World Bank poverty reduction mechanisms – is increasingly touted as the ‘silver bullet’ solution to world problems. However, this consensus on the need for external statebuilding sits uneasily with the growing awareness that international statebuilding interventions appear to have fairly mixed and often severely limited results.

In the wake of the debacle of Iraq, the failure to stabilise Afghanistan, and indefinitely continued international administrations in Bosnia and Kosovo, the practice of international statebuilding has clearly failed to meet the expectations of its advocates. A policy-orientated collection *Making States Work* argues, from case study analysis, that the results should make a ‘humbling conclusion’ for international actors as ‘the key insight is that states cannot be made to work from the outside’ (Chesterman, Ignatieff and Thakur 2005a: 9). Building on the work of Simon Chesterman, in particular, it suggests that the stated aspirations and ideals of external social engineering - peace, development, democracy and good governance – are rarely met by the reality of policy practices, which are generally inconsistent, inadequate or inappropriate.

One response has been to argue that the international interveners have tried to do too much. This has been well captured in Merilee Grindle’s work, formulated for the World Bank, which suggests that frameworks for ‘good enough governance’ should replace the idealist and ever expanding lists of reforms demanded by international actors (2004; see also 2007). Similarly, Dominik Zaum argues that aspirations have to be trimmed in the understanding that international administrations are limited by the reality of their dependency on local institutions and local actors (2007). Other commentators and analysts have stressed the costs and commitments necessary for ambitious projects of social engineering, with James Dobbins and other

RAND report authors arguing that ‘the transformational objectives of interventions...should be sharply restrained’ (2007: 258; see also Ashdown 2007). However, it seems unlikely that calls for ‘international restraint’ will be heeded. Often those who argue that the international community has attempted to do too much suggest that the goals and aspirations are correct, but more planning and resources are necessary to ensure that these goals are met (Paris 2004; Dobbins et al 2007; Ashdown 2007).

An alternative approach, which seems to fit more with international institutional agendas, is that international interveners have been accused of trying to do too little. A recent book by two former World Bank and United Nations officials, Ashraf Ghani and Clare Lockhart, argues that: ‘Taken by surprise, we have rushed to address each problem without understanding the whole, using atavistic, haphazard, fragmented, and short-term responses that sometimes exacerbate the collection of problems we set out to fix.’ (2008: 5) They charge that by throwing troops or aid workers at failing and post-conflict states, the key questions of understanding and fixing functioning states have been pushed to one side. Instead they call for global networks of intervention and management of ‘forty to sixty states... [which are] teetering on the brink of implosion or have already collapsed’ (2008: 1) around compacts based on regulating their performance of ten key state functions. These authors also argue that extended international involvement is needed to engage with and galvanise the state’s citizens to ensure that state performance is adequately monitored and responsive, arguing that this framework facilitates ‘a citizen-based approach’ (2008: 7).

Whether the policy critics argue that previous policy-approaches tried to do too much or too little, there is a general consensus that much greater discussion and research is needed to assess the mechanisms and techniques of intervention and to improve the capacities for international coordination. Also, across both sides of the divide there is agreement on the need for people in the societies intervened in to take greater responsibility or ‘ownership’ in conjunction with external intervention. On the one hand, those who argue that the international community attempted to do too much stress that the local population’s involvement is vital for the sustainability and the legitimacy of the mission. On the other, those that argue that the international community has attempted to do too little often make similar arguments stressing the

need to do more to engage and transform the societies which are the object of these policy mechanisms.

This consensus, that international statebuilding intervention is necessary but not sufficient, tends to set the boundaries of the policy-orientated debate. Policy focus then becomes a question of how to reformulate the practices and techniques of statebuilding through further problematising the societies which are recipients of policy interventions. This entails much more complex and extended engagement on behalf of external actors and attention to consultation, education, civil society-building and the construction and training of political parties. At the same time as the remits of international actors and agencies are increased so the emphasis for success or failure is increasingly placed upon the societies intervened in (see Chandler 2006). The need to build a community of stakeholders in the societies intervened is the fall back to the failure of policy practices, leading to the conclusion that ‘international assistance may be necessary, but it is never sufficient’ to achieve statebuilding aspirations (Chesterman, Ignatieff and Thakur 2005b: 384).

The critique of these practices never extends to a broader critique of the assumptions behind international statebuilding – that ‘we’ have the knowledge and capacity to resolve ‘their’ problems. In fact, the problematisation of the recipients of statebuilding - on the basis that they are not taking on board their responsibilities for ownership - tends to reinforce the view that external actors are necessary to capacity-build and empower the citizens of states subject to statebuilding. In this way, despite the recognised lack of success of external statebuilding the agenda for external intervention under the rubric of statebuilding has continued to expand.

This approach of recognising the limits of statebuilding at the same time as extending the practices and remits of external actors has recently been well articulated by Roland Paris and Timothy Sisk in their summation of a collective research project on post-conflict statebuilding *Managing Contradictions* (2007). Here the problems of international statebuilding are held to be the product of ‘insufficient knowledge and analysis of the intrinsic tensions and contradictions of externally-assisted statebuilding’ (2007: 1). Rather than a ‘lessons learned’ approach building on individual case studies, the authors point to a series of ‘underlying dilemmas’ produced by the asymmetric power relations involved in the process of international statebuilding, where the drive to extend regulatory mandates inevitably creates

unintended consequences of dependency and compromises the goals of strengthening state institutions and legitimising them.

Paris and Sisk argue that these dilemmas are inherently unresolvable because they stem from ‘compelling but mutually conflicting imperatives’ (2007: 5). By this they imply that external intervention is necessary even though its outcomes are inadequate. This analysis is important because it suggests that no level of policy failure can deter policy-makers’ attachment to the paradigm of international statebuilding as the best way to meet policy concerns with conflict and development in non-Western states. Instead, they suggest the solution of continuation with the same policy practices but with greater awareness of the dilemmas involved. In fact, their primary recommendation is that external interveners undertake ‘dilemma analysis’ training to increase their awareness of the limits and unintended consequences of their actions (2007: 7). Although they caution against any ‘licence for complacency’ they suggest that international statebuilders should put less stress on ‘means-ends planning’ and recognise the level of ‘improvisation and “irrationality”’ involved in their task (2007: 7).

Whereas the framework of becoming aware of and managing the ‘contradictions’ or ‘dilemmas’ of statebuilding encourages the acceptance of the policy frameworks, practices and paradigms which currently exist, this edited collection attempts to open up the discussion. The contributions to the *Journal of Intervention and Statebuilding*, which have been selected here, share the desire to move beyond reproducing current frameworks and practices and the analytical conclusions range from the need to rethink some of the most fundamental assumptions behind current policy-frameworks and statebuilding practices to suggestions that the failure of statebuilding to meet the asserted aims of its proponents may be the result of the narrow statebuilding paradigm itself.

Statebuilding Policies

The three essays in this section of the book take a much closer look at three policy aims which are central to the current consensus on the prioritisation of international statebuilding as a means for fixing failed states. Firstly, Simon Chesterman analyses how the goal of local ownership or buy-in to the process is undermined by the asymmetries of power and the internationalisation of many aspects and key functions

of government. Secondly, Susan L. Woodward looks at recent research which challenges the policy aim of resolving the causes of conflict rather than dealing with the post-conflict realities on the ground. Thirdly, Aidan Hehir analyses the problems with the policy framework which prioritises international statebuilding on the basis of a connection between state ‘failure’ and the war and terror.

Simon Chesterman, in his essay on ‘Ownership in Theory and Practice’, suggests that when international actors talk about the ‘dilemma’ of developing and empowering local ownership at the same time as they maintain international control over the levers of power it is important to establish clarity in meaning. If international policy-makers seek to develop frameworks of the rule of law, rights protections and good governance prior to permitting democratic elections and full sovereign rights to local authorities (see, for example, Paris 2004) then it is very difficult to talk about local ownership in any meaningful way.

Chesterman traces the way the term ‘ownership’ has been degraded through its use by international actors, highlighting its rise to prominence through its use in multi-lateral development policy in the mid- and late-1990s as external conditionalities increased through the ‘holistic’ approach of the World Bank’s Comprehensive Development Framework. Here ‘ownership’ became an international policy aim, indicating the local elite’s acceptance of international agendas, rather than reflecting their decision-making autonomy or steps towards self-government. This ambiguity of meaning implied that local ‘ownership’ could be increased through much greater levels of international engagement in societies and political processes, rather than through a shift away from external involvement.

The clear implication is that talk about the need to develop a balance between local ‘ownership’ and external controls can easily become a framework for extending and blurring the nature of external regulation. Chesterman argues that the first step in addressing the dilemma of ownership is clarity, rather than evasion. When international actors talk about enhancing the ‘ownership’ of local citizens or representatives they should indicate the extent to which local people have power over decision-making and also state clearly the reasons for external actors restricting these powers.

In the second essay, Susan L. Woodward puts forward a similar plea for conceptual clarity rather than evasion when it comes to statebuilding policy frameworks. She focuses on one of the key justifications for extended international

mandates, that of the need to tackle the causes of conflict rather than just the symptoms. One of the main frameworks for understanding the lack of success of statebuilding interventions has been the claim that they have failed to understand or to tackle the root causes of conflict. She argues, firstly, that this has become a catch-all mantra, similar to the claims about the need to extend 'ownership' addressed by Chesterman in the previous chapter. While everyone can agree on the importance of 'root causes' at the rhetorical level, there is little agreement on what this might mean in practice. She charts the varieties of causal theories promoted by policy advisers, which proffer solutions in much the same way as sellers of snake oil remedies: with causes ranging from 'ancient hatreds' and elite manipulation of ethnic identities to rational choice analyses of opportunities to profit through violence.

Woodward suggests that not only are these theories of generic root causes contradictory but also that they are poorly grounded, with problems of data sets and methodology. More to the point, she argues that a focus on 'root causes' can be counterproductive. Particularly when it comes to post-conflict statebuilding, it is highly likely that there will be no agreement about the causes of the conflict. The contest over interpretations of a conflict will have been part and parcel of the conflict itself and the attempt to win external actors to support parties to the conflict. Focusing on causes inevitably seeks to cast the blame on one party or another and can be a barrier to stabilising the political environment. Attempts to build a sustainable peace depend not on an agreement about the causes of conflict but on a future-orientated consensus which can legitimate a new compromise between social and political forces.

The problematic consequences of the 'root causes' approach stem from the narrow understanding of conflict outside of its fluid social and political context. These approaches tend to privilege causes at the level of individual motivations and choices reversing the relations of causality. Woodward powerfully argues that individuals do not 'choose' violence; rather violence makes choices for individuals and forces them to act and to take sides. Once the socially transformative nature of war is understood then it is clear that the understanding of the specific concrete triggers of violence is very different from that of the underlying context. It is also clear that war transforms societies, changing the rural/urban balance, altering gender relations and transforming economic and political interests. What matters is the understanding of these changes and how stable political arrangements can be built on the basis of them. The

discussion of attempts to address alleged ‘causes’ needs to take into account the social and political realities of the present situation and provide justification in terms of how such a focus can be productive for building a sustainable peace.

In the third essay in this section, Aidan Hehir challenges the policy consensus that international statebuilding should be a front line policy priority in the war against terror. International intervention and statebuilding in Afghanistan and Iraq as part of the post-9/11 war on terror have proved to be disastrous; playing into the hands of America’s designated enemies, Iran and Al-Qaeda. As noted in the previous chapter, the policy agenda of international statebuilding has expanded on the basis of the search for ‘root causes’, yet the search for generic root causes has led to irrational policy outcomes. Globalised understandings of threats, removed from political and social contexts, appear to have made rational strategic policy-making impossible (Roy 2007; 6). Hehir argues that no ‘root cause’ approach has been more irrational than the one linking state failure and statebuilding with the war on terror.

Hehir highlights that the hypothesis that failed states breed terrorism is axiomatic in policy circles and that this hypothesis has led the US and other Western governments and international institutions to prioritise statebuilding interventions, yet there is little empirical evidence to support claims of a link between state failure and terrorism. He questions the validity of the generic concept of ‘state failure’ highlighting the divergent nature of the criteria used for ranking states, for example in the Failed States Index. While the monolithic conception of ‘failed states’ and their problems is disputable, one thing that is clear is that there is no correlative link between state failure and terrorism, with many states in the top rankings for failure having little or no terrorist activity and many states with low rankings (including Western powers such as Belgium, France, Italy, Spain, France, the UK and the US) having a high level of terrorist activity in terms of both the location of terrorist groups and terrorist incidents.

Not only is there no correlation between state failure and terrorism, Hehir convincingly argues that there is also no causal relation. Using Afghanistan and Sudan as examples where links with Al-Qaeda are held to be the result of state failure, he argues that these links were not due to the inability of governments to maintain security and law and order but because functioning governments offered support to bin Laden’s forces. While some states ranking high for state failure had links with international terrorism, Hehir argues this was not related to state failure per se but the

fact that in each case Islamic peoples were involved in conflicts, thereby attracting the involvement of self-proclaimed defenders of Islam. Statistical analysis which discounts the link between state failure and terrorism also indicates that intervention aimed at preventing terrorism through the extension of democracy and good governance makes little sense as deterritorialised terrorist groups, such as Al Qaeda are as likely to operate within democracies as non-democracies, with some commentators suggesting that liberal democracy facilitates the existence of terrorist organisations.

Statebuilding Practices

The three essays in this section analyse three key areas of statebuilding in practice and indicate the problems caused by the lack of clarity in policy implementation on the ground. Amitai Etzioni considers the problems with post-conflict reconstruction and highlights that international interveners often blur the morally and legally clear duties to reconstruct and stabilise society with a development agenda in which goals and policy-practices are less easy to coordinate or to manage, with counterproductive results. Kimberly Marten also argues for much greater clarity with regard to the policy practices of military intervention, suggesting that it is essential for interveners to consider the key roles which foreign militaries need to play and that these need to be carried out with adequate capacities. Thomas Muehlmann's essay on security sector reform focuses on the practical example of police reform in Bosnia and argues that external attempts to push through reform failed to appreciate that in post-conflict societies security sector reform is a political and not merely a technical question.

In his essay on reconstruction, focusing on the problems in Iraq, Amitai Etzioni argues that there was a lack of clarity over what international policy in the sphere of post-war reconstruction was designed to achieve. He notes that many leading policy advisers and academics argued that the task was not merely to restore a functioning economy in Iraq but to transform the Iraqi economy, political structures and society. He makes the point that the blurring of the meaning of reconstruction to include transformative development makes policy-making much less coherent. Whereas reconstruction presumes an end point at which external intervention is no longer necessary, equating reconstruction with economic development makes the goals and policy necessary to fulfil them increasingly vague and open-ended.

Etzioni argues that taking an ethical responsibility for the reconstruction of damage and deterioration caused by Western military action is very different from the assumption that: 'We owe it to Iraq to stay and try to make it work.' The view that the US should be held to the alleged Pottery Barn motto that: 'If you broke it, you own it' would be wrong ethically, pragmatically and legally. Ethically, states intervened in are not owed more development assistance than other nations with similar levels of need. Pragmatically, he argues, there is not only no established links between levels of development and security threats such as terrorism, but also little evidence that attempts by external powers to 'develop' other countries have any success. Legally, occupying powers, under the Hague and Geneva Conventions, have a duty to restore and ensure public order but not to transform society.

In Iraq, the ambiguous nature of the statebuilding reconstruction tasks meant that the US and its allies set about a wide range of tasks from attempting to restore vital services to retraining judges and civil servants and building civil society. Etzioni call this the 'scattergun approach', where the agenda is so unfocused few projects are actually completed or made use of and priorities are often discarded. He also highlights that many reconstruction projects were aimed at buying local support and loyalty in attempts to 'win hearts and minds'. These projects have clearly done little to ameliorate people's support for the insurgency. There is no evidence that small projects can have a lasting effect on either development or on people's view of the occupation forces. It would appear that the redefinition of reconstruction in the ambiguous terms of political and economic development facilitated ad hoc and opportunistic policy-practices, allowing the neglect or side-lining of key priorities such as basic infrastructure reconstruction.

Kimberly Marten's essay focuses on the role of the military in statebuilding interventions. She argues that the military have played a crucial role in statebuilding historically and that understanding the role of the domestic military in European statebuilding provides important insights into the key tasks for external military forces engaged in post-conflict statebuilding. She outlines three key tasks, traditionally performed by domestic forces, which need to be fulfilled by external military forces: the need to defend territory from external attack; the need to protect the security of citizens; and the need to enforce the rule of law enabling commerce and investment.

Importantly, Marten argues that these tasks should not be understood as purely technical but as inherently political. The military need to ensure that these three tasks

are prioritised to ensure that the statebuilding process has popular legitimacy. Focusing on security in this way ensures that the legitimacy of the intervention is judged on the basis of its capacity to meet the genuine needs of the population of the society which is subject to external interference. This provides an alternative to judging legitimacy from the perspective of the external interveners, who may focus on superficial achievements such as liberal constitutional frameworks or what is on the official statute book rather than whether the rule of law exists in reality. She argues that the US-led statebuilding mission in Iraq lacks popular legitimacy because it failed on all three levels: the protection of Iraqi borders; safeguarding public security; and enforcing a framework of law to enable economic revival.

These three tasks not only contribute to the legitimacy of the military intervention in the eyes of the local population, but the policy practice on the ground must be based on an understanding of what is seen as legitimate by this population. Questions of border protection, security and the enforceable law are highly political questions in themselves. Marten argues that external military forces are poorly trained to cope with the diverse contexts which statebuilding military forces have to deal with. At present, intervening forces find it difficult to deal with complex situations which involve aspects of both military and police engagement, tending either to withdraw or to use excessive force as a means of minimising casualties. Both these responses have done little to legitimise the role of foreign militaries.

Thomas Muehlmann's essay also emphasises the need to understand statebuilding policy practices as political rather than as addressing merely technical problems. His focus is upon the problems of externally-managed security sector reform, specifically examining the international community's approach to police reform in Bosnia-Herzegovina. He argues that reform was necessary from an administrative and technical perspective as, along with other aspects of the public sector, there was a high level of overstaffing and the police district boundaries corresponded to the political settlement at the end of the war rather than technical policing criteria. There was also concern that, while the United Nations International Police Task Force and the EU Police Monitoring Mission had improved efficiency and standards, there was still the problem of political influence over the police forces at a higher level.

Muehlmann highlights the problem that internationally-led attempts to reform the police were seen purely in technical terms as enforcing international norms,

without taking into account the political implications of these changes - which challenged the constitutional settlement, agreed at Dayton, at the end of the Bosnian war. Removing competencies over the police from Republika Srpska and enforcing inter-Entity police districts was a direct challenge to the federal make-up of the Bosnian state and therefore was highly contested. In the face of opposition, the international community, especially the High Representative Lord Ashdown, attempted to push through the reform agenda through linking police reform with EU membership negotiations. Rather than engage in debate and public discussion about constitutional changes, the international community attempted to coerce political leaders into accepting them.

The linking of police reform with EU membership requirements demonstrated the problematic nature of external actors trying to use international leverage to force through reforms which had little support within the societies concerned. Firstly, Ashdown was on a weak footing as many European states, such as Switzerland, Germany and Belgium, had similar federal police systems. This meant that international demands lacked legitimacy. Secondly, making police reform conditional for EU negotiations threatened EU-Bosnia relations. Muehlmann suggests that the best approach to policy development and implementation in this area would have been one which started from Bosnian realities, rather than basing reform proposals on external actors' technical and administrative visions, and then to engage the Bosnian parties in negotiations rather than seek to impose external reforms through coercive threats and fixed timetables.

Statebuilding Paradigms

The previous sections in this collection focus on the lack of clarity of broad strategic policy aims in statebuilding interventions – the problematic nature of understanding statebuilding as a framework for local ownership, solving the causes of conflicts, or for combating the war on terror - and in the lack of clarity of policy goals on the ground – the conflation of reconstruction with development, the lack of consideration of the role of foreign militaries, and the technical and administrative approach to political questions such as security sector reform. The three essays in this concluding section focus on the dominant conceptual paradigms through which statebuilding is understood and discussed. They suggest that views of external intervention resolving

internal problems do little to take forward the discussion of the limits of international intervention and statebuilding. David Roberts argues that discussion would be better focused on the hybrid results of external intervention which tend to construct societies which can be understood better in terms of the interplay of external and domestic factors. Graham Harrison develops an analysis of the sovereign frontier, understanding intervention less in terms of clear divisions between the external and internal and more as shaping a transnational zone of political contestation. Beate Jahn argues that the statebuilding framework echoes the teleological and hierarchical frameworks of previous liberal visions of the international sphere and, for this reason, inevitably produces outcomes which are destabilising.

David Roberts stresses that the statebuilding paradigm of Western interventionists bringing ‘democracy’ or ‘development’ to non-Western ‘Others’ reflects a post-colonial liberalising development agenda. This agenda is one which cannot succeed because its conception of the world is at odds with reality. He argues that external interveners cannot ‘democratise’ non-Western states in any meaningful way because these institutional frameworks reflect the experiences, histories and evolutions of their societies. Through analysing the impact of one of the oldest and most extensive experiments in international statebuilding, the United Nations Transitional Authority in Cambodia (UNTAC), Roberts suggests that rather than merely measuring the ‘success’ or ‘failure’ of international statebuilding against externally-established ‘norms’ or aspirations, it is more useful to analyse and understand the hybrid polities which emerge from this process.

He argues that a stable and viable Cambodian state emerged in response to international statebuilding intervention rather than as some purely passive result of external engagement. His study reveals that the Cambodian state is a hybrid polity preserving elements of pre-democratic systems (especially in rural areas) in combination with some of the rules and conventions which resulted from external programmes of democracy promotion, such as a multi-party system and regular elections. In this hybrid system it is clear that external intervention has done little to transform Cambodian society at the grass roots level, where traditional forms of decision-making evade the formal rule of law which is largely restricted to urban areas. Similarly, Roberts highlights that the introduction of new political and institutional mechanisms has done little to alter political elite approaches to power;

these new mechanisms have been used and manipulated by elites rather than transforming them.

The reasons for the limited and rather superficial impact of external statebuilding, according to Roberts, lie not so much in the fact that the wrong policies were pursued or that they were sequenced wrongly, but in the fact that policy-making in this area operated within paradigms that appeared to ignore the importance of structural factors shaping the operation of Cambodian society and its institutions. The legacies of structural factors are becoming more apparent the more international institutions seek to extend their remits of operation and to transform non-Western states. Where states already have a weak relationship to societies, which are less dominated by market relations and state regulation, it is unlikely that external statebuilding, with its institutional focus, will make much difference at a societal level. Rather than seeing these societies - which take on some aspects of Western governance but lack the structural capacity to fully reproduce Western frameworks - as 'illiberal democracies' or 'pseudo-democracies', thereby merely understanding them negatively against the Western 'model', Roberts suggests we seek to understand 'hybrid' polities as stable and effective states.

Graham Harrison's essay challenges the liberal paradigm of statebuilding bringing the interplay between the international actors and the domestic state recipients of statebuilding to the forefront. Harrison argues that African state sovereignty is an international construct, a product of the interaction of external actors and local and regional elites; it is not meaningful as a narrow juridical or political concept or a fixed boundary on the map. Sovereignty is a political interaction not a fixed condition and it therefore makes sense to understand it as a product of a set of political practices through which international actors and local actors interact, thus demarcating the zone of the sovereign frontier. This more fluid understanding of sovereignty allows statebuilding practices to be located in the framework of the long standing power relations and asymmetries which constitute them.

He argues that statebuilding in Africa should be analysed in the context of regulatory practices which have constructed the African state. The understanding of the African state and sovereignty has shifted as forms of Western regulation have changed. Harrison highlights the importance of the shift from frameworks of intervention in the 1980s - through the structural adjustment packages of the International Monetary Fund and the World Bank, which were premised on the

construction of a robust sovereignty where states undertook to be responsible for fulfilling the loan conditions - to the Comprehensive Development Framework of the late 1990s onwards. Here, robust sovereignty is replaced by statebuilding, focusing on improving African state-capacity through the process of 'ownership' of Poverty Reduction Strategies.

Harrison argues that through statebuilding and the emphasis on country ownership and partnership with international programmes, external intervention has become more routinised and extensive than under earlier structural adjustment programmes. He suggests that the level of external engagement within the African state means that the relationship between external statebuilders and domestic elites is not mediated through the formal boundaries of state sovereignty in the context of international relations but instead is negotiated within the institutions of the African state itself. In this context, it makes little sense to see statebuilding as a process whereby external actors intervene in or undermine the sovereignty of a non-Western state. The focus on practices rather than on external actors, interests and outcomes opens a new paradigmatic framework in which to understand and analyse international statebuilding which takes it out of the sharp dichotomies of the liberal framework of intervention and statebuilding.

Beate Jahn's essay concludes this collection with an understanding of why the liberal paradigm of statebuilding seems to have such a dominant influence over the policy-making and academic community. It is the development of an earlier article published in the *Journal of Intervention and Statebuilding* (Jahn 2007) which analysed the limits and discrediting of liberal modernisation theory in the Cold War. Here she argues that the post-Cold War democracy transition paradigm draws on and reproduces the failed assumptions of the Cold War modernisation paradigm, which similarly served to legitimise the external shaping of newly emerging states under US hegemony.

Jahn argues that international intervention in the form of statebuilding is the inevitable extension of the failed assumptions behind democratic transition and democracy promotion at the end of the Cold War. As with the modernisation paradigm there is the assumption that Western liberal capitalist states are the teleological end point of progress to which all states need to transition and that it is their failure to make this transition which is the cause of instability and security threats. This hierarchical vision of the world sees non-Western states as economically,

politically and culturally ‘backward’ and in need of external assistance to help them overcome their indigenous blockages to progress. This framework counterposes the interventionist ‘West’ to the intervened in ‘Rest’ in homogenising and mutually exclusive ways.

In drawing on the work of Roland Paris and others, Jahn disagrees with the conclusions that the failure of external statebuilding intervention needs to be met with new, improved, better coordinated, or more reflective approaches to how the West can statebuild the Rest. She argues instead that we should question the paradigm of statebuilding intervention that believes economic, political and social problems in the rest of the world can be fixed by programmes of good governance which then inevitably develop into longer term programmes of social, economic and political engineering by external ‘experts’. Jahn argues that these programmes of intervention inevitably problematise the states and societies intervened in and result in policies which are contradictory and destabilising. She suggests that rather than living with the ‘dilemmas’ and ‘contradictions’ of international statebuilding the paradigm of external statebuilding itself needs to be understood and critiqued.

Conclusion

The essays in the opening section all suggest that policy perspectives framing international statebuilding lack conceptual or strategic clarity. They suggest that the methods and goals of policy, and the mandates and responsibilities of external actors, have been blurred through ambiguous discussions of the importance of local ‘ownership’, the need to deal with the ‘root causes’ of conflict, or the link between state failure and terrorism. This lack of strategic clarity was also clear in the second group of essays dealing with practices on the ground. Whether the policy practices considered were those of post-conflict reconstruction, the use of foreign militaries or security sector reform, the essays highlighted the ad hoc and poorly framed views of how policy was to be implemented on the ground and how policy practices related to broader goals or objectives. In the third and final section, the essays suggest the need to rethink the broader paradigm of international statebuilding as a hierarchical projection of idealised Western norms on societies alleged to be in need of ‘development’ or ‘democratisation’. It would seem that the more statebuilding becomes seen as a ‘silver bullet’ for resolving the world’s problems the less clear the

framework is for legitimising this process and for guiding policy-making. If international interveners are not clear about the goals of their intervention or the means of achieving them then it is little surprise that strategic policy-making is becoming displaced by evasions which assert that the dilemmas and contradictions of policy-making in this area are something which we just have to learn to live with.

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