



Kosovo: Statebuilding Utopia and Reality

David Chandler

To cite this article: David Chandler (2019) Kosovo: Statebuilding Utopia and Reality, Journal of Intervention and Statebuilding, 13:5, 545-555, DOI: [10.1080/17502977.2019.1658565](https://doi.org/10.1080/17502977.2019.1658565)

To link to this article: <https://doi.org/10.1080/17502977.2019.1658565>



Published online: 13 Sep 2019.



Submit your article to this journal [↗](#)



Article views: 94



View related articles [↗](#)



View Crossmark data [↗](#)



Citing articles: 1 View citing articles [↗](#)



Kosovo: Statebuilding Utopia and Reality

David Chandler

School of Social Sciences, University of Westminster, London, UK

ABSTRACT

Twenty years of international statebuilding have made little impact on the ‘stateness’ of Kosovo. This article puts this failure in the broader context of the shift from the liberal internationalist assumptions of the late 1990s to the pragmatic realism of today. It does this through the lenses of E H Carr’s classic work *The Twenty Years’ Crisis*, UN policy thinking on the problematic assumptions of international statebuilding and the diagnoses in David Lake’s 2016 book *The Statebuilder’s Dilemma*, which sets out three pragmatic alternatives. The article concludes that all three of these alternatives can be seen in practice in Kosovo.

KEYWORDS

Statebuilding; Kosovo;
E H Carr; pragmatism; liberal
internationalism

Introduction

The installation of an international protectorate in Kosovo, in 1999, marked the high-point of confidence in the international statebuilding project. Twenty years on, Kosovo stands as a monument to the hubris of the promises and assumptions of externally-led projects of state formation. Even Kosovo’s ‘stateness’ is in doubt, with no consensus on the recognition of its sovereignty among European Union members and the international community similarly divided. The lack of clarity over Kosovo’s status is reflected in the complex mixture of international powers and agencies that co-produce its structures and institutions. Direct protectorate powers have become indirect under the auspices of the European Union Stabilization and Association Agreement (SAA) and the European Reform Agenda (ERA) but the European Rule of Law Mission in Kosovo (EULEX) still maintains some executive powers and the UN Mission in Kosovo (UNMIK) and the NATO-led Kosovo Force (KFOR) still play vital roles (European Commission 2018).

This short article reflects on the twenty years of international statebuilding, during which time the conception of statebuilding has been transformed from an idealist, liberal universal discourse to one that emphasises pragmatic and realist considerations. At its inception in the late 1990s, statebuilding was understood as a field of temporary external policy-intervention with the intention of transforming post-conflict or conflict-prone territories into sovereign authorities, capable of governing on the basis of liberal constitutional frameworks, market freedoms, democracy and the rule of law. Today, these transformative aspirations have been drastically scaled back, resulting in the current stasis, as pragmatic security and managerial concerns have taken centre stage.

The international statebuilding project in Kosovo appears emblematic of a broader international policy shift away from the liberal universal policy prescriptions of the 1990s. International statebuilding is to all intents and purposes no longer part of the international policy agenda: discredited not so much on the basis of individual cases of poor implementation or planning but through disillusionment with its underlying universal assumptions. The following sections seek to trace and analyse the understandings of this shift in three ways: through the lenses of E H Carr's classic work *The Twenty Years' Crisis*; UN policy thinking on the problematic assumptions of international statebuilding; and the diagnoses in David Lake's 2016 book *The Statebuilder's Dilemma*.

The twenty years' crisis

Set the task of analysing the twenty years' of international statebuilding since the end of the Kosovo war, it is useful to reflect upon EH Carr's classic work on international relations theory and inter-war history, *The Twenty Years' Crisis 1919–39: An Introduction to the Study of International Relations* (Carr [1939] 1981). Carr's book was originally intended to be titled 'Utopia and Reality' (Cox 2001, xi) (which the publishers found to be too abstract) indicating that the twenty years' crisis of the title was not merely about a series of problems or an on-going set of issues, but rather concerned a secular trend, a contestation between two approaches and a shift from one way of thinking to another: from an idealist, utopian, abstract, morality-based view of liberal universalism to a more strategic, pragmatic and interest-based 'science' of realism; starting from the world as it exists rather than how we would like it to be. The suggestion of the analysis here is that statebuilding is now understood as having taken a similar trajectory, starting off as a liberal (today most commentators would also say idealist or utopian) project and ending up in a 'realist' or pragmatist mode of resignation and disillusionment.

Carr himself had little at stake in this shift, apart from to highlight that it indicated the ideological nature of International Relations itself as a discrete body of thought, which he saw as merely a pseudo-discipline, aping other social sciences and designed to rationalise the exercise of power of dominant nations over weaker ones (Cox 2001, xiii). Likewise, there is little to celebrate in the end of liberal statebuilding as an international framework of problem-solving; the shift from a 'utopia' of externally engineered transformation to a 'reality' of pragmatism and monitoring from EU agencies keen to keep Kosovo at arms length (still excluded from visa liberalisation and a long way from formal EU integration). The shift in fortunes of international statebuilding in Kosovo – from the exaggerated, even hubristic, demands for transformation to an idealised liberal model under direct management of the UN and NATO to today's arms length management and mediated and indirect regulation through a host of often ad hoc international agencies – reflects broader trends of international intervention, where agencies often retreat to aerial drones and crowdsourced monitoring from afar (Lynch 2016; Pugliese 2016; Duffield 2019).

Carr's study started with the triumphalism of the United State's entry into international politics at the Versailles peace conference following the First World War and he clearly had little sympathy for the moral crusading liberal idealism in the cause of US interests, personified by US President Woodrow Wilson. The inter-war period of the *Twenty Years' Crisis*

was the story of the collapse of liberal international idealism, which was dealt a major blow by the world economic collapse of 1929 that rekindled open inter-imperialist rivalries, leading rapidly to the resumption of World War. The ‘twenty years’ crisis’ of international statebuilding does not have the drama on the world scale of the interwar period but holds some similarities to Carr’s story of disappointment and disillusionment in liberal internationalism driven by a ‘voluntarist’ moral idealism in the service of power politics. The repeat of a new internationalist moral moment with the end of the Cold War was also short-lived and contested and the new ‘realism’, that is the upshot of failures of the grand schemes of international intervention, can equally be seen as a sterile deterministic ‘codification of the status quo’.

However, there are, of course, major differences. Carr’s ‘twenty years’ crisis’ was driven by the breakdown of the fragile international order established with the League of Nations, damaged by US isolationism and the exclusion of major powers Germany and the Soviet Union. The auspices for success for international statebuilding, under a US, UN and NATO guided international order in the 1990s, seemed much more promising. Ironically, it was not international rivalries that undermined liberal interventionist dreams of international statebuilding as much as a crisis in the underpinning liberal assumptions of universality and political progress; undermined by a growing awareness of environmental and economic crises, complex interdependencies and global uncertainties. This retreat can be articulated in the words of Carr as ‘consistent realism’; a realism that ‘fails to provide any ground for purpose or meaningful action’ (Carr 1981, 86). The idealism of the 1990s may have evaporated but no positive vision has taken its place.

The ‘Hubris’ of liberal statebuilding

From the position of looking back from 2019, the initial assumptions of international statebuilding seem to have been the product of accident, of hubris and of a fundamental misunderstanding of the nature of peace, of politics and of the unintended consequences of external policy interventions. This did not seem to be the case in the late 1990s when the policy discourse of statebuilding was central to what was seen to be a new liberal international order, with the end of the Cold War division. In the closing years of the Cold War and into the early 1990s the UN began to extend post-conflict missions and peacekeeping mandates of ceasefire monitoring in ways which began to be openly political, interfering directly in civilian matters including constitutional, judicial and electoral reforms, for example, in the UN-led missions deployed in Namibia, Angola, El Salvador, Cambodia and Mozambique (see Doyle and Sambanis 2006).

With the end of the Cold War, there was a new sense of optimism regarding the international liberal order and the idea of statebuilding began to formalise with the UN Secretary-General’s *Agenda for Peace* report of 1992. Paragraph 17 of the report argued that while the state was the central institution: ‘The time of absolute and exclusive sovereignty, however, has passed; its theory was never matched by reality.’ (UN 1992) Paragraph 59 claimed, under the rubric of the new concept of ‘peacebuilding’, that the UN could have the authority to directly intervene in the political process providing ‘support for the transformation of deficient national structures and capabilities, and for the strengthening of new democratic institutions’.

The extension of international authority to intervene in the management of post-conflict statebuilding was reinforced in the Secretary-General's follow up position paper, the *Supplement to the Agenda for Peace*, in 1995. Here it was argued that international intervention must extend 'beyond military and humanitarian tasks and must include the promotion of national reconciliation and the re-establishment of effective government' (UN 1995, Para 13). In the position paper, under the section headed 'Post-Conflict Peace-Building', for the first time, the UN Secretary-General envisaged the possibility of new forms of UN temporary protectorates with the goal of statebuilding:

In a country ruined by war, resumption of such activities may initially have to be entrusted to, or at least coordinated by, a multifunctional peace-keeping operation, but as that operation succeeds in restoring normal conditions, the programmes, funds, offices and agencies can re-establish themselves and gradually take over responsibility from the peace-keepers, with the resident coordinator in due course assuming the coordination functions temporarily entrusted to the special representative of the Secretary-General. (UN 1995, Para 53)

The stage was set for the twenty years' of crisis the moment the Secretary-General's conception of statebuilding with the goal of liberal institution-building was fully implemented for the first time, following the post-war elections in Bosnia–Herzegovina, when the temporary international mandates were extended and civilian control over the peacebuilding process taken over by international appointees in February 1997. The hubris of the late 1990s reached its highpoint when the UN gave its formal imprint to the international protectorate in Kosovo in 1999. The Western Balkans were the crucible through which statebuilding was developed, tested and renegotiated and the confidence of the late 1990s quickly waned with the over extension of the belief in external responsibility for overseeing post-conflict political processes of reconstruction with the lack of a coherent 'exit strategy' in the Balkans and then the debacles of Afghanistan and Iraq.

Today, there is an emergent consensus over what has gone wrong with statebuilding over the last twenty years. In both policy-making and in academia there has been a reappraisal of the statebuilding paradigm; one which has sought to rationalise and to a certain extent excuse and legitimate the policy errors. It appears that the lesson being learned is the lesson of pragmatism, that peace cannot be exported as a set of policies, institutions and practices. That to do so, in the words of leading US scholar David Lake, is 'criminally stupid' (2016, ix) or 'astounding in its audacity' (2016, 197). Lake's monograph *The Statebuilder's Dilemma: On the Limits of Foreign Intervention* (published in late 2016) is a clear and representative example of the current acceptance of pragmatist approaches and serves here as a basis for discussing their implications.

Pragmatism could be understood as a 'realist' response to the liberal idealism of international statebuilding. According to Lake, the problematic is simple – statebuilding only came into existence as a liberal project with the end of the Cold War in 1990. Prior to then, the US and the Soviets were keen to support loyal regimes and there was no conception of statebuilding as the external promotion of liberal institutional frameworks.

Liberal statebuilding, beginning with the end of the Cold War, elevated the goal of building legitimate states and premised strategy on the belief that democracy and free markets would be sufficient to legitimate a government in the eyes of its people. (Lake 2016, 6)

It is worth quoting Lake's formulation of the problem:

The liberal model of statebuilding so widely applied in the post–Cold War period was not selected because it was a tried and true method. Rather, it was an ideology that fit an emerging academic paradigm on the positive role of limited political institutions that, in turn, reflected the euphoria of the “end of history” moment. Contrary to the prevailing wisdom, however, legitimacy is not inherent in institutions in general nor only in institutions with representative qualities. Institutions are not “strong” or accepted by society simply because they are institutions. This puts the proverbial cart before the horse ... This is the mistake of nearly all statebuilders in recent decades, and of all institutionalist scholars, who have placed inordinate faith in the legitimating power of democratic institutions ...

The arrogance behind this particular theory of politics, however, grew out of our own time. Given the world in 1991, as history was just ending, how could democracy, free markets, and limited but effective states not be “good things”—and why should all good things not go together? In the end, the model said more about the statebuilders than about statebuilding. (2016, 198)

We can see a simple inversion of liberal statebuilding understandings: exporting institutions and legal frameworks makes no sense and ignores the social basis of governing legitimacy – establishing hybrid orders where the state has no de facto purchase on society or further destabilising society by offering enrichment opportunities to elites, etc.

Here, Lake sets up the liberal statebuilding framework as an accident of the historical moment and liberal overconfidence in the 1990s. A policy blip that was always destined to fail – based as it was more on our naïve idealism than any understanding of the world. In the terminology of popular French social theorist Bruno Latour, it now appears that really ‘We Were Never Liberal Statebuilders’ (see Latour 1993). Statebuilding it seems was just an unfortunate and accidental mistake. This is both a problematic and apologetic or self-serving interpretation of the end of the statebuilding paradigm as will be considered below.

The end of statebuilding

In 2000, at the height of the United Nation's confidence in the transformation of the international agenda, in the *Report of the Panel on United Nations Peace Operations*, presented by the United Nation's Secretary-General, Section A, ‘Defining the elements of peace operations’, defined the new concept of statebuilding in these terms, as:

... activities undertaken on the far side of conflict to reassemble the foundations of peace and provide the tools for building on those foundations something that is more than just the absence of war. Thus, [state]building includes but is not limited to reintegrating former combatants into civilian society, strengthening the rule of law (for example, through training and restructuring of local police, and judicial and penal reform); improving respect for human rights through the monitoring, education and investigation of past and existing abuses; providing technical assistance for democratic development (including electoral assistance and support for free media); and promoting conflict resolution and reconciliation techniques. (UN 2000, 3)

The definition was kept open with a non-inclusive list of examples of international statebuilding responsibilities listed, covering a wide range of institutional capacity-building

measures covering everything from the legal and political system to education and health and welfare.

In 2019, statebuilding is no longer a term on the international agenda. Even the United Nations has shifted away from the use of this terminology. The UN's shift away from statebuilding, to much more flexible and pragmatic approaches, stems from a rejection of the interventionist approaches developed and popularised in the 1990s and now seen to be based on 'supply-driven templates and an overly technocratic focus on capitals and elites' and counterproductively increasing 'the risk of unintentionally exacerbating divisions' (UN 2015a, 12). In fact, the UN report of the advisory group of experts for the 2015 review of the United Nations Peacebuilding Architecture, went as far as to state that mistakes had resulted from no less than 'a generalized misunderstanding of the nature of peacebuilding' itself (UN 2015b, 7). Instead, pragmatism has increasingly become the order of the day with the call for 'more realistic and contextualized political strategies' (UN 2015a, 13).

Statebuilding has been eased off the policy agenda on the grounds that there is no longer the assumption of clarity in terms of problems or solutions, as the UN's High-level Independent Panel on Peace Operations review stated 'there is no linear path to peace' (UN 2015a, 18): 'complex linkages' and interconnections between actors and intervening agencies mean that the UN needs less focus on 'template mandates and missions' and instead more emphasis upon fluid and flexible 'situation-specific' strategies (UN 2015a, 23). The idea that external actors can either develop solutions or implement them on the ground has been undermined by the reality that 'conflicts have become more complex, increasingly fragmented and intractable' (UN 2015b, 7).

The UN no longer wants to set itself up as the external expert and manager of processes of transitional 'statebuilding' but rather seeks to increasingly situate itself as part of domestic processes of support and facilitation. This pragmatic approach, working with and through local processes:

... demands that United Nations personnel in the field engage with and relate to the people and communities they are asked to support. The legacy of the "white-SUV culture" must give way to a more human face that prioritizes closer interaction with local people to better understand their concerns, needs and aspirations. (UN 2015a, 30)

The UN has thus moved to distance itself from 'statebuilding' and towards stressing peace in status quo terms of sustainability and local legitimacy rather than as an externally-led transformation conforming to preconceived goals and attained through externally managed social and political engineering:

Peacebuilding is not State-building ... Countries emerging from conflict are not blank pages and their people are not "projects". They are the main agents of peace. However, the international approach is often based on generic models that ignore national realities ... Efforts to sustain peace must build upon [local] institutions and the resilience and reconciliation processes of local communities, and not undermine them ... When countries set out their priorities and they enjoy strong national support, they must be respected. Too often they are not. (UN 2015a, 48)

Statebuilding has been rejected by the UN because it has been understood to be too linear and too reductionist. Today it may be alleged that 'peacebuilding' is not 'statebuilding' but this has not always been the case and the two concepts seem to be intimately connected and are often used interchangeably, largely because the UN itself conceptualised

peacebuilding as the building or rebuilding of states. ‘Statebuilding as peacebuilding’ made a lot of easy assumptions that something that was broken could be easily fixed, returning societies to the status quo or establishing a new one on the basis of the liberal institutions of democracy, the rule of law and market efficiency. The focus upon liberal institutional frameworks was the cornerstone of statebuilding conceived as a liberal internationalist project. This project is now over.

Today, the UN argues that the focus on building liberal institutions was mistaken for two key reasons (UN 2015b, 17). Firstly, that rather than statebuilding occurring after conflict, problems have to be engaged with along an ‘arc’ or continuum, from prevention to reconstruction: sustaining peace is a complex process not a set of discrete linear stages, calling for different institutional operations and sets of expertise. Second, and relatedly, statebuilding had implied that peace could be built according to some universal set of policies to be implemented, rather than through engaging in complex, interrelated and cross-cutting policy concerns which are always going to be case specific, involving going beyond policy and expertise ‘silos’ in order to ‘unite the peace and security, human rights and development ‘pillars’ of the UN’ (UN 2015b, 8). In short, the policy space of what was called ‘statebuilding’ no longer exists as a distinct set of goals, techniques, practices and expertise, separate to UN activities put in a more holistic policy context of the UN’s Sustainable Development Goals (UN 2015b, 57). The ‘crisis’ of statebuilding seems to have been resolved through the development of a new pragmatist consensus.

The pragmatic apologia

Pragmatism, as a critique of statebuilding, problematises the idea of institution-building both from the ‘top-down’ and from the ‘bottom-up’. Pragmatic positions are critical both of the idea that international experts could develop institutional solutions that could just be exported or imposed by external actors and also of the idea that deeper social, economic or political external ‘engineering’ might enable liberal institutional frameworks to work without frictions. These ‘liberal’ framings assume that external actors can shape social and political processes and outcomes on the basis that power works in a linear or cause-and-effect manner (i.e. that certain policy interventions will lead to certain desirable results or outcomes). Pragmatist positions tend to resist the idea that there are pre-set or pre-packaged ‘off-the-peg’ solutions to universal or generalisable ‘problems’, instead problems should be grasped in their concrete and relational context. From a pragmatic perspective, Western interests in creating liberal democracies or ideological desires to spread liberal values therefore need to be tempered by a much greater appreciation of ‘realism’.

This ‘realist turn’ inverts the international statebuilding paradigm, starting from the problem rather than from the Western or international provision of ‘solutions’ or external goals. This inversion is powerfully expressed through the view that there is a paradox or contradiction at the heart of the statebuilding programme. The more there is an attempt to shape outcomes based on external interests or values the less likely it is to succeed: ‘... the greater the interests of the statebuilder in the target country, the less likely statebuilding is to succeed in building a legitimate state that can survive on its own into the indefinite future’ (Lake 2016, 2). The pragmatic paradox is interesting in that it is not just a critique of the limits and difficulties of exporting liberal institutions,

it also suggests that to do so is inherently problematic, making the situation worse. Lake argues that: ‘current practice reveals great faith in externally led social engineering’ (2016, 1):

The existing literature emphasizes getting national political institutions “right.” This emphasis recurs both at the deep level of politics, where observers and practitioners identify predatory institutions as the root evil, and at the surface, where analysts debate the proper strategy and tactics of statebuilding. This concentration on institutions implicitly accepts and is premised on a particular theory of state legitimation, one grounded in liberalism. Institutions are, no doubt, important. But in this focus the underlying social cleavages that undermine institutions and ultimately bring down states are ignored. (2016, 11)

In this, now consensual, critique, Lake echoes the current perspective of the UN, cited at the opening of this article, against the idea that external preferences or blueprints could be exported or imposed. The UN describes this externally-led or ‘top-down’ approach as a ‘template’ culture or the ‘the so-called “Christmas tree mandate” dilemma, where template language for many tasks routinely appears in mission mandates’ (UN 2015a, 60). The pragmatic paradox appears to be that the more ‘enthusiastic’ reformers are to transform other societies the more they risk unintentional consequences, which could be counterproductive. The pragmatic lesson is that ‘less can sometimes be more’: that peace can not in fact be built by good intentions of external do-gooders but needs to be understood in more ‘local’ and ‘organic’ ways. This shift towards the ‘pragmatic’ or the ‘organic’ is also prefigured in more critical policy and academic work which suggests that statebuilding is a complex organic process of self-organising adaptation and resilience. For example, Cedric de Coning, a leading policy analyst, concludes that:

... when international peace interventions try to engineer specific outcomes, they produce the opposite effect of that which sustaining peace aims to achieve; they generate on-going instability, dependence and fragility, because such interventions undermine self-organisation and thus resilience. A complexity-informed approach to self-sustainable peace suggests that peacebuilders limit their efforts to safeguarding, stimulating, facilitating and creating the space for societies to develop resilient capacities for self-organisation. (De Coning 2016, 167)

Thus, the pragmatic alternative seeks to move away from external or universal goals and looks for more ‘organic’ metrics that could serve as a guide instead, such as local ‘legitimacy’, starting with the existing social and political order rather than ‘universal’ views of desirable liberal institutional frameworks. It is important to focus on how the actually existing society works, rather than Western ideals. Pragmatism works with what there is rather than imposing liberal goals and aspirations. As Lake states:

My approach differs from the prevailing institutionalist view ... institutionalists are fundamentally liberals, in the classic sense of this term, who believe the legitimacy of the state follows from democracy and free markets ... [T]his liberal model of statebuilding is itself deeply flawed and has repeatedly failed to provide the legitimacy necessary for successful statebuilding ... legitimacy follows from social order, not the other way around as in the prevailing model. (2016, 17)

For this doyen of US policy-making academia, the pragmatist framing thus neatly inverts the ‘top-down’ and ‘liberal’ paradigm of international statebuilding. In what is now the established consensus on the death of the statebuilding moment, it is suggested that

intervention guided by liberal universalist understandings could only make conflict situations worse (see, for example, Etzioni 2016).

Despite the fact that existing conditions are far from ideal, the new consensus seems to be that, no matter how bad things are, international statebuilding interventions will fail to make a positive difference. Both policy-makers and radical critics increasingly agree that accepting the status quo can often be better than attempts at any positive transformation. Thus disillusionment with international intervention has been given coherence and even a positive spin by pragmatic and ‘organic’ approaches, which have strongly reinforced the potentially dangerous and self-satisfying understanding that ‘they’ are not ready for liberalism (see Chandler 2015a, 2015b). Thus even radical critiques of Western hubris and liberal certitude have been played out against the backdrop of ‘their’ unsuitability for modern liberal frameworks of governance.

The error of Western policymakers then becomes merely that of naivety and over confidence in ‘their’ capacities and abilities to be like ‘us’. This definitely softens the ‘critical’ blow and enables pragmatic approaches to salve Western policy consciences. Today it appears that the real ‘crime’ of international statebuilders is that of caring too much. As Lake put it: ‘The limits of external statebuilding are reached precisely when the statebuilder cares the most about the future policies of the failed state.’ (2016, 16) ‘Caring too much’ implies that statebuilders want to go too far and too quickly, in essence, attempting to short cut the ‘organic’ process of building sustainable peace.

The return of realism

The pragmatist critique of international statebuilding goals leaves three general policy options. Lake sets up the first option as that advocated by Stephen Krasner, of ‘good enough governance’, where the international community enforces a minimal set of rights standards and key international security threats are dealt with and stability was seen as more important than democracy (2016, 201). This perspective could be seen as pragmatism in its everyday usage and as a return to Cold War clientelist regimes:

This is the direction in which US policy, at least since Iraq, has been trending under President Obama: target individual terrorists and organizations but avoid large-scale interventions, even into such clearly failed states as Libya, and tolerate authoritarian leaders who promise stability, as with the military in Egypt after the coup against President Mohamed Morsi. (Lake 2016, 202)

The second option is that of a ‘neutral’ statebuilding intervention (2016, 203) where the concern is focused on building up organic processes of social formation. Interestingly, Lake suggests that this is a highly unlikely possibility as, even if there could be any ‘objective’ or ‘neutral’ ideal solution, a multi-lateral framework would still rely on ‘interested’ states, which would pervert any process to their own ends or would attract little international support (2016, 204). The ‘organic’ option, of working with the resources and capacities available rather than seeking to direct and shape policy processes, similarly takes statebuilding off the policy agenda, making statebuilding a marginal preoccupation of non-governmental agencies, concerned with community development and social welfare.

Lake’s preference is for the third option, which involves little direct international intervention, instead focusing on providing indirect institutional incentives while enabling a discursive framing of self-government and decision-making autonomy for the target state:

... focus instead on creating an international environment conducive to indigenous state formation. Through the use of carrots and sticks, states might shape incentives for fragile states by making access to the security and economic benefits of the Pax Americana, in general, or the European Union, in particular, contingent on domestic groups settling their differences, agreeing on a social order, and governing themselves effectively. (2016, 21)

It is noticeable that the only option of the three with the goal of supporting liberal statebuilding goals, formally the sine qua non of the statebuilding project, is one that does not involve any direct policy intervention in the states and societies concerned but rather governance from a distance. The two options that could be seen to be involved in domestic political processes only operated at the margins, either with a concern with international security threats and instability or with building community capacities: neither of these approaches aims at supporting liberal institutional frameworks of markets, democracy, rights and the rule of law.

Conclusion

Perhaps in considering the shifting nature of statebuilding over the last twenty years in Kosovo, all three of these pragmatic options can be seen to be in effect. Clientelist security concerns are evident in the NATO's KFOR presence of around 4,000 troops in two regional bases – Camp Bondsteel and Camp Villagio Italia – headquartered in Camp Film City, Pristina. NGO-led social or 'neutral' capacity-building takes place via international donor funding across the social sector, often coordinated between the European Union Office in Kosovo with major development agencies. While the key pragmatic mechanism is the arms length programme of 'indigenous state formation' through the 'carrots and sticks' of the long and complex provisions and processes of the European Union Stabilization and Association Agreement. In the turn to realist and pragmatist understandings, statebuilding as a major paradigm of international policy-making is doubly erased: firstly, in being reinterpreted as a momentary accident or misunderstanding; and, secondly, in discussions of alternatives that maintain little of the ambitious and transformative aspiration of previous doctrines.

Disclosure statement

No potential conflict of interest was reported by the author.

Notes on contributor

David Chandler is Professor of International Relations at the University of Westminster, London. He is the founding editor of the *Journal of Intervention and Statebuilding* and has published extensively in the area of post-conflict peacebuilding and statebuilding.

References

- Carr, E. H. 1981. *The Twenty Years' Crisis 1919–1939: An Introduction to the Study of International Relations*. Basingstoke: Palgrave.
- Chandler, D. 2015a. "Reconceptualising International Intervention: Statebuilding, 'Organic Processes' and the Limits of Causal Knowledge." *Journal of Intervention and Statebuilding* 9 (1): 70–88.

- Chandler, D. 2015b. ““Resilience and the “Everyday””: Beyond the Paradox of “Liberal Peace”.” *Review of International Studies* 41 (1): 27–48.
- Cox, M. 2001. “Introduction.” In *The Twenty Year’s Crisis 1919–1939: An Introduction to the Study of International Relations*, edited by E. H. Carr. Basingstoke: Palgrave pp.ix–lviii.
- De Coning, C. 2016. “From Peacebuilding to Sustaining Peace: Implications of Complexity for Resilience and Sustainability.” *Resilience: International Policies, Practices and Discourses* 4 (3): 166–181.
- Doyle, M., and N. Sambanis. 2006. *Making War and Building Peace: United Nations Peace Operations*. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press.
- Duffield, M. 2019. *Post-Humanitarianism: Governing Precarity in the Digital World*. Cambridge: Polity Press.
- Etzioni, A. 2016. “Back to Nation Building?” *Huffington Post*, March 30, 2016. https://www.huffingtonpost.com/aram-etzioni/back-to-nation-building_b_9576390.html.
- European Commission. 2018. *Kosovo 2018 Report: Commission Staff Working Document*. COM (2018)450 final. Strasbourg: European Commission.
- Lake, D. 2016. *The Statebuilder’s Dilemma: On the Limits of Foreign Intervention*. Ithaca: Cornell University Press.
- Latour, B. 1993. *We Have Never Been Modern*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press.
- Lynch, C. 2016. “How to Crowdfund the Syrian Cease-Fire.” *Foreign Policy*, March 23.
- Pugliese, D. 2016. “Traditional Peace-Keeping Not Enough to Maintain a Syrian Deal: UN Report Looks To Satellites, Crowdfunding.” *National Post*, February 9.
- United Nations. 1992. *An Agenda for Peace, Preventive Diplomacy, Peacemaking and Peace-Keeping: Report of the Secretary-General Pursuant to the Statement Adopted by the Summit Meeting of the Security Council on 31 January 1992*. New York: United Nations.
- United Nations. 1995. *Supplement to an Agenda for Peace: Position Paper of the Secretary-General on the Occasion of the Fiftieth Anniversary of the United Nations*. New York: United Nations.
- United Nations. 2000. *Brahimi Report, Report of the Panel on United Nations Peace Operations, United Nations General Assembly Security Council, 21 August*. New York: United Nations.
- United Nations. 2015a. *Uniting our Strengths for Peace: Politics, Partnership and People, Report of the High-Level Independent Panel on United Nations Peace Operations*. New York: United Nations.
- United Nations. 2015b. *The Challenge of Sustaining Peace, Report of the Advisory Group of Experts for the 2015 Review of the United Nations Peacebuilding Architecture*. New York: United Nations.