Engaging with the 'local turn' in Post-Conflict States: A Critical Analysis of UN

Peacebuilding in Côte d'Ivoire and Libya.

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Abstract

The 'local turn' in peacebuilding represents a reorientation of the process to better integrate local actors in order to promote and facilitate agency and national ownership. Institutional capacity building, promotion of liberal democratic principles, and engagement with locals largely at the national elite level are the key features of the UN's peacebuilding agenda in post-conflict states. This essay is critical of the United Nations' (UN) engagement with the 'local' in its peacebuilding and development agenda. Such an approach presents a narrow focus on institutional level reforms to promote peacebuilding with a limited appreciation of the local context. The essay argues that inherent complexities exist among the different local actors based on significant social identifiers such as ethnicity and social stratification. It is therefore necessary to problematize the tendency for some practitioners and academics in the field of peacebuilding to create a homogenized portrayal of local actors and their interests in relation to the process of post-conflict reconstruction. The two cases of post-conflict states studied for analysis of UN reporting on peacebuilding are Côte d'Ivoire and Libya.

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Table of Contents

Introduction

This thesis analyzes the 'local turn' in the discourse and practice of peacebuilding in post-conflict states. The research presented in this essay is shaped by critiques of the dominant 'liberal peacebuilding paradigm', and the prescription of liberal democratic principles which are sometimes alien to the context in which they are applied (Richmond & Mitchell, 2011). The local turn can be seen as a recognition of the challenges of implementing the 'Responsibility to Protect' doctrine (RtoP) in practice, or at the very least a subsequent phase in the evolution of discussions surrounding international intervention. And yet as this thesis will show, the shift towards the local has been largely superficial and rhetorical on the part of international organizations such as the United Nations (UN).

National ownership and the local turn have gained prominence in the discourse and agenda of peacebuilding and development in post-conflict societies. This trend can be seen in the significant body of critical analysis and literature that exists in the academic field as well as the reports and priorities of the UN in relation to peacebuilding in the 21ˢᵗ century. An examination of the UN's key focus on Security Sector Reform (SSR), which is "a central component of the organization's peacebuilding and development agenda", highlights the importance placed on local ownership by stakeholders in the reconstruction of post-conflict states (United Nations, 2013, par. 63). The Secretary-General's 2013 report on SSR makes recommendations which aim to support "security sector reform by encouraging inclusive and sustainable national ownership"

4

(United Nations, 2013, par. 64). This points to the salience of investigating the local turn in peacebuilding and critiquing the UN's engagement with the local actors in post-conflict states.

In conducting such an investigation of the local turn, this essay will examine the relevant literature in the field of peacebuilding and situate its arguments in the critical segment of this literature to problematize the generalizations and assumptions of local actors' homogeneity perpetuated in attempts to engage with local populations in post-conflict societies. My argument in this thesis will be that these rebuilding efforts will have to involve more local ownership of the process and a greater integration by foreign stakeholders of local actors' diversity in order for development projects to attain legitimacy and long lasting results. I will argue that the liberal peacebuilding approach is too narrow and omits other salient factors beyond the structural deficiencies in failing states which lead to domestic conflicts, such as the policy prescriptions of external actors like the UN and the human agency of complex and heterogeneous local actors (Chandler, 2009; Mac Ginty;2012b). A deeper appreciation of the 'local' and its inherent complexities is required for the creation of viable, resilient solutions in these post-conflict societies.

The implementation of interventions by foreign actors to de-escalate conflicts in many weak and failing states, and subsequent peacebuilding agendas and policies have failed in many cases to create stability. According to conventional analyses, such instability has allowed these states to become breeding sites for the new threats to security, such as terrorism, ocean piracy,

and refugee crises, which have spread across the region and the globe. The prominent liberal peacebuilding agenda prescribed by the UN advocates liberal democratic principles, such as elections and the rule of law, as the general antidote to spur positive transformation in post-conflict states. Authors such as Julien Barbara (2008) and Roger Mac Ginty (2012a) are critical of the effectiveness of such policies to create stable and resilient states in the aftermath of conflicts. My research will engage in a critical analysis of the relevant literature to investigate the liberal institutionalist perspective on peacebuilding, which contends that conflicts in failing states largely stem from weak institutions. The dominant liberal institutionalist framework has been ineffective in assisting in the establishment of sustainable political institutions after interventions, which has contributed to the fragility of states that are highly dependent on foreign actors like the UN and non-governmental organizations (NGOs) (Barbara, 2008). This reality 'on the ground' demands that the gaps between the dominant liberal institutionalist framework and the sustainable reconstruction approach based on local ownership be filled, to ensure that peacebuilding efforts have a greater chance of success.

The thesis will begin with a discussion of the framework and relevant methodology used in the investigation of UN reporting on peacebuilding in post-conflict societies. This is followed by a review of the significant literature in the liberal and critical peacebuilding discourse. The case studies of Libya and Côte d'Ivoire as well as UN reporting in both contexts is then analyzed to draw attention to the largely rhetorical local turn in peacebuilding. The concluding

section then reiterates the importance of a deeper appreciation of the 'local' and its complexities for durable and sustainable peacebuilding programs.

Theoretical Framework and Methodology.

This thesis investigates the dominant practice of the 'liberal peace' in the context of post-conflict societies, and offers a critique of the limitations of such an approach for effective post-conflict reconstruction. The term 'liberal peace' refers to the "dominant Western form of peace-making and peace support" (Mac Ginty, 2008, p.139). The liberal peace project promoted by the UN, and other international stakeholders, has come under criticism in recent years from academics and practitioners in the field of peacebuilding and intervention (Chandler, 2013a; Richmond & Mitchell, 2011; Paffenholz, 2015). Critical analyses offered by authors such as David Chandler (2013a) contend that this disillusionment with the dominant security and peacebuilding paradigm has led to a transformation in approaches towards post-conflict states. This transformation seeks to challenge the "traditional agendas of power and placing the needs of the individual, not the states, at the centre of security discourses" (Chandler, 2012, p.214). Peacebuilding transformation has emerged in recent years as a shift towards the local actors and their ownership of the process to promote resilience and agency (Richmond & Mitchell, 2011; Paffenholz, 2015; Peterson, 2012).

Such a turn to the local is a laudable imperative for the peacebuilding agenda, however, it is important to also examine and problematize the dominant

understanding of the 'local' in the discourse and practice. In order to undertake such an investigation, this thesis adopts an analysis of the discourse in the field of peacebuilding with a specific focus on critical literature and problematizing the prominent conceptualization of the 'local'. This review of the relevant literature will be essential in examining the current reconstruction efforts in post-conflict societies, and the imperatives of foreign actors in these peacebuilding and state building programs. It will be followed by a case-study approach to draw attention to the implications and limitations of United Nations-led efforts in the actual post-conflict states of Libya and Côte d'Ivoire.

It is important to highlight the current gaps in the 'liberal peace' and critical peacebuilding discourse in relation to the 'local', and how this disconnect manifests in the implementation of actual policies and programs. In recent years, there has been a significant shift in the discourse on peacebuilding, commonly referred to as the 'local turn', which contends that local actors should be encouraged to 'own' and modify the peacebuilding process, which will ensure greater legitimacy and durability for reconciliation and rebuilding projects (Richmond & Mitchell, 2011). This thesis seeks to problematize the prominent understanding of the 'local' in the literature and practice within the field.

My work critiques the tendency of many stakeholders in the peacebuilding process to present an analysis of all local actors as overly homogeneous with little regard for the differences that may exist based on ethnicity, personal interests, social stratification among other local complexities. In order to provide a nuanced analysis of the policy priorities and prescriptions promoted by UN-led

peacebuilding efforts in my selected studies, I will engage with a select number of relevant authors, such as Thania Paffenholz and Mac Ginty, as well as key concepts from a niche section of the critical peacebuilding literature. It is necessary to interact with these "critiques of the critiques" to better understand the limitations of both the liberal and critical discourses on peacebuilding, particularly in relation to the integration of local actors in the process of post-conflict reconstruction and reconciliation (Peterson, 2012, p.9).

Mac Ginty's (2012a) arguments and position on the concepts of 'participation' and 'non-participation', in regards to local actors and how the progress of the peacebuilding process is measured by international stakeholders, are central to the analysis presented in this thesis. Mac Ginty (2012a) argues that promoting citizen participation in society is a major feature of the liberal peace 'script', which attempts to solve non-participation by removing barriers to improve the accessibility of institutions for local actors. This highlights the limitations of the dominant liberal peacebuilding to acknowledge the contextual complexities at play in heterogeneous non-Western, post-conflict societies, where the norms and social attitudes may in fact differ from those exported by the liberal peace. Mac Ginty (2012a) contends that non-participation is, in many instances, a form of agency exerted by local actors "that is not directly or consciously linked to public political processes" (p.172). Mac Ginty's arguments on these concepts in relation to the liberal peace project will be discussed in greater detail later in this thesis. Suffice it to say here that I will utilize these arguments about limited focus placed on non-participation in liberal

peacebuilding to draw attention to the priorities of the United Nations in post-conflict states.

The narratives and reporting of the UN in its mission reports and other key documents highlights its preoccupation with visible, and sometimes superficial, indicators of progress such as civil society activities, voter registration and turnout at elections. This bias towards readily quantifiable forms of participation can distort the actual representation of the situation faced by local actors on the ground, and the motivations for such actions (Mac Ginty, 2012a). It is necessary to evaluate these reports and narratives produced by the UN to determine the actual focus of the organization in peacebuilding. I will argue that the focus remains on institutional state-level capacity and liberal democratic principles as agents of transformation in post-conflict societies. This is a problematic approach primarily because it generally fails to appreciate the socio-economic context of these states, and disproportionately empowers local elites, who are co-opted into the liberal peacebuilding agenda.

My work engages with its selected case studies by investigating this problematic policy priority promoted by the UN, which in many instances benefits a privileged class of local elites at the expense of other classes of non-elites in society. Such an approach will highlight how the gaps in the discourse, imperatives and policy goals of reconstruction have adversely shaped real-world situations. The thesis will adopt a critical study and descriptive lens for analyzing and interpreting the results of the research on both case studies and the liberal peacebuilding agenda. Such an approach is in line with much of the literature on

intervention and peacebuilding, which narrates and explains the debates and developments within the field. The critical lens will be applied when interpreting the results from the case studies to determine to what extent the UN's emphasis on the 'local' translates into substantially different approaches in peacebuilding policies and programs as verified by UN reports on Libya and Côte d'Ivoire.

The choice of Côte d'Ivoire and Libya for the case studies in my thesis is based on the contemporary nature of the conflicts and interventions in both countries. Furthermore, these cases are significant in terms of the legacy of RtoP and its application in the context of UN peacekeeping missions since both missions were in part legitimized by claims that UN intervention without the consent of the national government was necessary in order to protect civilians given the host government's 'unwillingness' to do so (Bellamy & Williams, 2011). The legacy of RtoP in Côte d'Ivoire and Libya offers an interesting point of evaluation in terms of understanding the evolution of the peacekeeping discourse from one anchored in 'responsibility to protect' to one increasingly grounded in claims of 'local ownership'.

While no two interventions are the same, these African countries provide points for comparison and contrast on key issues, such as security, ethnic differences and struggle for political power among local elites, which sparked domestic conflicts among diverse factions. It is important to look at these case studies to gain an in-depth understanding of the historical background behind the domestic conflicts, and the efforts being implemented to rebuild and promote national reconciliation. Such an understanding of the different causes of conflict

is crucial in order to prevent a recurrence of violence or a return to a divisive and unequal status quo. My research of these case studies primarily aims to evaluate the multilateral efforts led by the UN, to rebuild these two post-conflict states, and highlight the gaps between the Western prescribed institutional framework policies and locally owned strategies which promote agency.

Côte d'Ivoire as a case study appears to be a model of relatively successful rebuilding and national reconciliation after close to a decade of conflict and civil war that divided the country (United Nations, 2015). Considerable gains have been made, particularly in the political and institutional realm of the state with the credible re-election of President Alassane Ouattara for a second and final term serving as a major landmark in the peacebuilding process. Multilateral efforts to restore stability and security in the country have been coordinated by the United Nations Operations in Côte d'Ivoire (UNOCI) since the passing of Security Council resolution 1548 in 2004. It will be useful to analyze the efforts undertaken by UNOCI to achieve their mandate over the past decade, especially with the expected formal withdrawal of the operation from the country in June 2017. In this context, 2016 was an important year for the "consolidation of the political dispensation" and other vital reforms such as SSR needed for a durable peacebuilding process in Côte d'Ivoire (United Nations, 2016c). This case study, with its relative success, therefore provides an interesting sample for investigating the liberal peacebuilding paradigm, and the importance of understanding the local context in crafting efficient strategies and frameworks.

Libya, the other case study, provides a unique comparison to the Ivorian case study, particularly given the presence of ethnic and class heterogeneity in both cases. I argue that this heterogeneity, and the complexity that arises from such differences, is largely underappreciated in the institutional policy prescriptions developed and implemented by international stakeholders with assistance from their local elite collaborators. It is also worth noting that the security and political landscape in Libya is much more volatile than that in Côte d'Ivoire, and remains largely unstable as a result of significant clashes between warring factions, and the presence of terrorist groups such as the Islamic State of Iraq and Levant (ISIL) (United Nations, 2016a). The key objective and priority of international actors in Libya continues to be the successful conclusion of the democratic transition process through the Libyan Political Agreement (United Nations, 2016b).

My research will consist of an investigation of key primary sources such as the reports and resolutions authored primarily by the UN with the goal of understanding the mandate and policy actions of international missions on the ground to facilitate national reconciliation and post-conflict reconstruction. These 'liberal peace narratives', although biased towards visible indicators of progress, provide valuable information on the peacebuilding programs and priorities in each case study. It is necessary to examine the language used in the UN missions' reporting of the situation to highlight the gap between the discourse and practice of peacebuilding. As a result, the thesis' analysis of the case studies will utilize the relevant literature on critical peacebuilding, particularly the

concepts of participation and non-participation to criticize the problematic nature of focusing solely on the institutional framework which is a prominent aspect of the liberal peacebuilding agenda in post-conflict societies. A review of the discourse on peacebuilding and intervention will provide useful insights into the role of liberal institutions in state building, and discovering how local agency can be promoted in the formulation and implementation of rebuilding strategies.

The key contribution of my research lies with the analysis of the contemporary nature of the discourse and practice of intervention and peacebuilding in the field of international relations. This thesis examines current trends and the evolution in the discourse since the introduction of RtoP to the current debates on integrating local ownership in the peacebuilding research. My research identifies the gap in the liberal peacebuilding agenda in relation to its overemphasis on institutional variables and programs such as SSR, constitutional amendments and electoral reform, with little attention paid to the agency of local actors in post-conflict societies. Building on the critiques presented in the critical peacebuilding literature, I argue that substantial local ownership of peacebuilding is a vital step in creating viable policy solutions.

This research differentiates itself from many others in the critical peacebuilding discourse by focusing on the heterogeneity of local actors based on significant social identifiers such as ethnicity and class interests. This differentiation serves to draw attention to the need not to create false dichotomies and categorizations of the stakeholders and actors in the peacebuilding process. The tendency to generalize and create rigid binaries

between the 'international' and the 'local' has plagued not only the liberal peace project, but also its critics within the critical liberal peacebuilding discourse (Paffenholz, 2015). Such binaries make it difficult to properly appreciate the complex power relations and differences of the primary actors in post-conflict societies.

Arguments about the need for a greater appreciation of local heterogeneity and complexities from the scholars in the critical peacebuilding discourse such as Mac Ginty and Paffenhoz are discussed further in the literature review section of this thesis. In engaging with the discourse on the local, it is necessary to avoid romanticizing and elevating these actors beyond their actual capabilities to the development of viable policy solutions (Abboud, 2017). Through an investigation of the UN's peacebuilding activities in the selected case studies, this thesis seeks to criticize the liberal peacebuilding preoccupation with institutional-level transformation, as well its interpretation and engagement with the local which is narrowly regulated to the elite level.

Literature Review

This thesis seeks to investigate the shortcomings and limitations of the liberal peacebuilding agenda promoted by the UN peacekeeping operations in the context of post-conflict states and societies. In order to do this, it is necessary to present the relevant schools of thought and changes in the discourse on humanitarian intervention and post-conflict reconstruction. This research is situated in the critical discourse on peacebuilding in post-conflict states and

argues that a more nuanced understanding of the heterogeneous nature of local actors is necessary to facilitate viable, resilient solutions.

This section reviews early discussions on liberal institution-led humanitarian intervention in the post- Cold War era and the subsequent shift towards hybridised models, which most often claimed to have as their goal developing more effective peacebuilding approaches in former conflict areas. These hybridised models aim to integrate the local into the peacebuilding agenda in post-conflict societies and promote greater local ownership of the process. The first phase of the literature that will be examined in this section focuses on the human security, humanitarian intervention and RtoP doctrine discourse that emerged after the Cold War ended towards the end of the 20th century. This is a useful starting point for the literature review because it provides relevant knowledge on the changes in the security and intervention discourse particularly in relation to the UN peacebuilding agenda in post-conflict states.

Human security emerged in the middle of the 1990s and was articulated in the United Nations Development Programme's (UNDP) *Human Development Report* which articulated the broad conception of 'freedom from fear' and 'freedom from want' in relation to security (de Larrinaga & Doucet, 2008; UNDP, 1994). For some authors, *human security* was proposed as an alternative security paradigm to the dominant focus on national and territorial security. de Larrinaga & Doucet (2008) contend that human security was often presented as being built upon a foundation of universal human rights and therefore developed "as an alternative to the traditional discourse of security- where security is understood

in strict military terms…" (p.523). According to the 2001 International Commission on Intervention and State Sovereignty (ICISS) report, "human security means the security of people – their physical safety, their economic and social well-being, respect for their dignity and worth as human beings, and the protection of their human rights and fundamental freedoms." (p.15). The institutionalization of the new human security discourse is exemplified by the prominence of the RtoP doctrine during this period after the Cold War.

According to many scholars, the end of the Cold War in the early 1990's led to a shift in the balance of power on the international stage. This, in turn, had adverse effects in many former satellite states of the superpower states. For some, these negative effects have largely manifested in the form of a rapid increase in the amount of internal state conflicts and mass atrocities in certain parts of the world. The wars and crimes against humanity within many of these states immediately became prominent among the threats being faced by an increasing globalized world in the 1990s. Humanitarian disasters and domestic conflicts in countries such as Somalia, Former Yugoslavia and Rwanda drew attention to the responsibilities that national governments have in relation to the security and well-being of their populations (United Nations, 2004).

In the backdrop of mass atrocities and genocides in such states there emerged a growing debate for a new intervention framework to be created, most notably in the context of ongoing discussions regarding reforms of UN peacekeeping operations. The doctrine that emerged from these debates was

called the 'Responsibility to Protect' (RtoP), and it was portrayed as a new way of understanding and implementing humanitarian intervention by actors under the auspices of the UN and other regional organizations (Evans & Sahnoun, 2002; Evans, 2009). Evans and Sahnoun were co-chairs of the Canadian-appointed RtoP commission which formulated the doctrine's ideas and concepts as a response to the questions and debates around intervention at the time. Evans describes the doctrine as simply turning "the notion of 'right to intervene' upside down" (2009, p.9). Such a description referred to the doctrine's emphasis on the collective responsibility of actors in the international arena, and not just Western powers, to react to atrocities and crimes against humanity.

The doctrine embodied the alternative ideas towards key concepts such as state sovereignty, responsibility and intervention. RtoP was a move away from the traditional 'Westphalian' understanding of sovereignty as an absolute right of the state over the people within its territory. The manner in which states treated their populations would now be recognized as a core responsibility associated with sovereignty. Ramesh Thakur (2007) describes the modern notion of sovereignty as being constrained by the state's responsibility to serve the citizens' interests and physical well-being. The new understanding of sovereignty limits this traditional 'right', and then adds the notion of a state's responsibility and duty towards the protection of its population.

In the report of the Secretary-General's High-level Panel on Threats, Challenges and Change, released in 2004, it was noted that within the international community there was a "growing recognition that the issue is…the

'responsibility to protect' of every State when it comes to people suffering from avoidable catastrophe" (United Nations, 2004, par.201). Endorsement for this modern iteration of responsibility within the international community can be further observed in notable documents such as the 2005 *World Summit Outcome Document*, in which states expressed support for and commitment to the RtoP doctrine (United Nations, 2005, par. 138-139). Intervention was also reimagined as the *collective responsibility* of other state actors to protect the population of another state, when said state is 'unwilling' or is 'unable' to effectively do so. Such a 'collective responsibility' would be geared towards at risk populations in states that are unable or unwilling to protect them.

RtoP was central in framing the agenda of the international community, notably in the context of the UN, when it came to post-Cold War discussion on the need for international intervention given the new political salience of internal conflicts. While this essay does not focus directly on RtoP, it sees the doctrine as a central component of the evolution of the 'liberal peacebuilding paradigm'. Many scholars and supporters of the responsibility to protect such as Evans (2009), Sahnoun (2002), and Bellamy (2015) applaud the important role that the doctrine has played in the discourse and implementation of international intervention over the past decade. It has also been argued that the doctrine has become an established UN norm and that, in the long-term, it has and will continue to contribute to the changing behaviours by many state actors in regards to intervention (Bellamy, 2015). Nevertheless, years after the doctrine was introduced there is still a high level of internal conflicts and crimes

against humanity in many failed and weak states such as Iraq, Libya and Syria. Radical terrorism and escalating refugee crises are considered to be prominent examples of the new global security threats in this decade. Furthermore, persistent underdevelopment remains a pertinent factor behind continued state weakness and resurgent violence (Barbara, 2008).

Furthermore, critics of this modern iteration of state sovereignty questioned the imperative and whether this norm of intervention will be deployed "only in weak and weakened states" or in all states without distinction" (Traub, 2009, p.74). Therefore, under the RtoP doctrine, it became necessary to define the scope and scale of 'security' especially as it related to legitimate reasons and imperatives for international interventions. Attempts to make normative prescriptions on this issue, and the subsequent course of action to be implemented, produced 'the narrow versus broad' debate within the field of humanitarian intervention. The 'broad' position in the discourse seeks to expand on the 'narrow' interpretation of intervention towards largely military actions to safeguard the physical security of individuals in conflict situations. In its implementation in conflict situations, RtoP employs a narrow interpretation of the broad values promoted in human security by focusing on state-centric solutions to insecurity (de Larrinaga & Doucet, 2008).

The broad position in the discourse contends that traditional realist security frameworks fail to properly represent and analyze the causes of weak and failed states, arguing that many other issues "arise outside the realm of conventional security analysis" to affect such states (Macarthur, 2008, p.424).

This argument that security is no longer solely a military matter marks a shift in the discourse on humanitarian intervention beyond just successful military actions towards structural and societal rebuilding. The shift in discourse is where this thesis' focus emanates and where the critique of the goals of the liberal peacebuilding framework espoused by international institutions in post-conflict states is located.

Human security helped shape the critical perspective of this thesis in regards to the current priorities and imperatives of the liberal institutionalist framework. Human security has served as a gateway to engaging with interdisciplinary approaches towards intervention and rebuilding in my preliminary investigation of the literature. This engagement provided an opportunity to better understand the neoliberal and institutional priorities that exist in the 'post-conflict development state' (Barbara, 2008). The second phase of the literature examined in this thesis brings to the foreground these questions about the imperatives of 'liberal interventionism' and the feasibility of imposing core liberal values such as democratic institutions, human rights and equality (Lu, 2007; Gheciu & Welsh, 2009; Barbara, 2008). This phase of the literature review moves beyond the legitimacy of humanitarian intervention in relation to sovereignty and focuses on the long-term effects of such interventions in creating peaceful societies.

This essay critically engages with the literature that focuses on rethinking neoliberal state building in the aftermath of foreign intervention to end conflicts and mass atrocities. The critical literature on this issue does not argue against

foreign interveners playing a role in the post-conflict reconstruction process, rather it problematizes the extent of this role in relation to local actors and the unintended negative consequences of employing this liberal institutionalist framework. It becomes useful to carefully consider the imperatives of interveners and the flaws of the 'transformation' rationale applied in the current framework. Such considerations come to bear on the analysis of the selected case studies as well as the UN's priorities in those cases.

The language of peacebuilding in the ICISS report as it relates to development involves plans to "encourage economic growth, the recreation of markets and sustainable development" (p.42). Such language and goals are problematic in the given context of developing countries emerging from violent conflicts, where extensive state intervention in the economy is traditionally the norm as well as necessary for stability, in some instances, and as such is directly opposed to neoliberal efforts to catalyze private sector investment (Barbara, 2008). Therefore, it becomes important to ask to what extent such market-based neoliberal policies can truly promote 'sustainable development' that equitably distributes economic and social benefits to all groups in society, not just those at the local elite level.

However, at this juncture it is also necessary to point out a weakness of Barbara's alternative paradigm in respect to applying alternative economic models such as the East Asian 'developmental state model' in the post-conflict context (2008). This developmental state model seeks to "build state capacity to intervene in the economy, to guide development, compensating for the failure

of growth led by private sector to materialise in many post-conflict countries"
(Barbara, 2008, p.307). I will argue that this paradigm shift will only serve to
perpetuate the failures of previous international attempts at promoting
development, by overly prioritizing the role of state institutional capacity.
Proposing a top-down style expansion of "institutional building" to improve the
capacity of local authorities to effectively cater for their citizens' needs shows
an incomplete understanding of the scope of the problems afflicting war-torn
societies as well as the tendency for 'elite capture' in such development
programs. Such an approach, while necessary and useful, requires
complementary policy solutions which promote 'grassroots' level local ownership
of the peacebuilding processes that is not as readily co-opted by local elites.

The importance of critical literature on this issue is that it draws attention
to liberal peacebuilding's false equation of a secure and stable neoliberal state
with peace in post-conflict communities, and that such values and processes can
be alien to the local context (Richmond & Mitchell, 2011). Authors who offer a
critical analysis such as Chandler portray the institutionalist perspective of state
building as a "reflection of the evasion of Western responsibility for others"
(2009, p.38). Responsibility, under the liberal institutionalist framework, is taken
away from the consequences of Western and external policy interventions. The
focus is instead placed on the structural constraints of local institutions such as
corruption and rigged elections as a means of understanding the causes of
conflict, along with potential solutions, in weak states (Chandler, 2009).

Furthermore, such a position promotes a lesser capacity for local actors' agency to overcome the aforementioned structural constraints by arguing that institutional contexts largely determine the outcomes in failing states. The liberal institutional approach is problematized in the discourse of post-conflict rebuilding by highlighting the dominant framework's role in undermining national ownership and creating so-called 'protectorate' states (Chandler,2009; MacArthur,2008). This 'ownership' dilemma highlights the asymmetric power wielded by foreigners and the tendency for interveners to supplant locals, or engage just a few elites, in decision-making (Zahar, 2005). Moreover, it signals the salience of local ownership in addressing the failures of previous international-led attempts at post-conflict reconstruction. This shift in the discourse placed a greater emphasis on models and solutions that include significant local input.

The third phase of the literature relevant to the research question of this thesis is found in the discourse on the importance of local ownership and 'hybridised' models in the peacebuilding process (Chandler, 2009; Chandler, 2013a; Paffenholz, 2015). The salience of the 'local turn' as a central point of focus in the literature for this research is reinforced by its movement to the foreground of contemporary peacebuilding discourse in recent years (Donais, 2015). However, I am acutely aware of the tendency of some researchers within the critical peacebuilding scholarship to idealize and romanticize the 'local' and vilify the 'international' when discussing the key actors in the peacebuilding process (Paffenholz, 2015). Such rigid divisions of the key actors prevent a

nuanced understanding of the dynamic in the peacebuilding process, and as such I will be critical of attempts to discuss the relevant groups to this discourse in binary terms (Paffenholz, 2015; Peterson, 2012). As a result, this essay will critically analyze this 'local turn' to present the potentials and limitations of adopting such an agenda both in academic research and policy actions in post-conflict states. This thesis will rely on a significant amount of this discourse to conduct an investigation into the rebuilding priorities and strategies of the United Nations in Côte d'Ivoire and Libya. Paffenholz's critical assessment of the local turn in peacebuilding will be essential to this thesis' goal of gaining a "more nuanced understanding of the actors involved in peace and state building" (2015, p.857).

The local turn in peacebuilding is a critical shift away from the foreign dominated peacemaking and state building in the liberal institutionalist framework (Paffenholz, 2015). This recent turn promotes the agency and role of local actors in the process, and its scholars advocate increased local ownership (Richmond & Mitchell, 2011). Authors within the current local turn discourse such as Mac Ginty and Richmond describe this new paradigm for peacebuilding "as a form of resistance against the dominant discourse and practice of the international peacebuilding project" (Paffenholz, 2015, p.859). Richmond and Mitchell contend that critical peacebuilding and the promotion of local agency arose from the 'gaps' and 'loopholes' created by the formulation and implementation of the liberal peacebuilding agenda in post-conflict societies (2011, p.328). The unintended consequences of the liberal agenda include

loopholes which benefit a few local elites as opposed to a greater majority of the population, while the prioritization of socio-economic development and liberal values projection fails to address poverty, ethnic rivalries and other root causes of intrastate violence and conflict.

To effectively engage with this discourse, it became necessary to examine and problematize the different understandings of the 'local' that exist in the literature. In this regard, Paffenholz's criticism of the homogenized portrayal of the local by some scholars in the discourse is a useful path towards a nuanced perspective of power relations between the groups of actors within the local context. Local actors are not homogeneous and can therefore either support or subvert the peace process within their societies in pursuit of their self-interests. According to Paffenholz, there are three levels of local actors in society, grassroots level; middle level; and elite level, which should be given equal importance in any peace agenda (Paffenholz, 2015, p. 860). In this regard, the approach to the local needed to be transformed beyond just the elite level towards seeing "people in the setting as resources, not recipients" (Chandler, 2013b, p.23). I argue that engagement with the local to facilitate feasible and resilient peacebuilding solutions requires a greater understanding of the inherent complexities among various levels of local actors.

At this juncture in the literature review, it will be helpful to briefly expand on Mac Ginty's (2012a) critique of the liberal peace transformation rationale in relation to the concepts of participation and non-participation to gain a deeper insight into the actions of diverse local actors in the post-conflict context. Mac

Ginty's (2012a) article is critical of the manner in which the actions of local actors are explained in relation to the liberal peace project, whether in terms of compliance or resistance. Such explanations are made possible largely by the rigid binaries and generalizations of key actors in the peacebuilding process which is problematized by several authors in the critical peacebuilding discourse (Mac Ginty, 2008; Paffenholz, 2015; Peterson, 2012). These homogenous depictions of the actors involved in the post-conflict context serve particular narratives and imperatives, particularly in terms of the policies and priorities of the peacebuilding process. Such a binary classification of both local and international actors masks the different motivations of the individuals who make up these groups by assuming a general convergence of interests within these false 'umbrella' identities ('the local' and 'the international'). These assumptions prevent the development of nuanced portrayals of the complexities involved with actors in the peacebuilding process, and the alternative policy solutions which can feasibly address these obstacles to peace and development   .

The liberal peace fixation with greater participation can be compared with parallel attempts in Western societies to address social issues such as inequality and racial discrimination (Mac Ginty, 2012a). These systemic barriers which exist in society are treated with superficial institutional changes such as domestic anti-discrimination legislations. Such strategies attempt to solve these complex socio-economic issues by making institutions more accessible to the marginalized, without a thorough engagement with the core complexities of race, ethnicity, and social class that exist in society (Mac Ginty, 2012a). These institutional

solutions to such multifaceted societal issues draws attention to the preoccupation of the liberal peace project with citizen participation, and the failure to sufficiently integrate power relations and the historical context of social groups in any given society. The dominant focus of the liberal peacebuilding agenda on institutional capacity building and open domestic market economies also creates barriers which inherently marginalize groups of actors (Mac Ginty, 2012, p. 170). This focus on the marketization of post-conflict state economies should be questioned for the status quo that it maintains and the groups which are excluded from gains of the peacebuilding process.

The rigidity of the access and opportunities provided by the peacebuilding process to the local actors ensures that their agency conforms to the dominant norms, with little or no space for those at the grassroots level to adequately challenge traditional power relations. It is now necessary to discuss Mac Ginty's (2012a) conceptualization of non-participation and how this has manifested in the local populations of this research's case studies. Mac Ginty refers to non-participation as "agency that is not directly or consciously linked to the public political processes" (2012a, p.172). This thesis avoids the analytical temptation of categorizing all manifestations of non-participation under resistance and compliance on the part of local actors who are the object of the liberal peace project. Instead this concept is used to draw attention to the inherent complexities associated in the context of many post-conflict societies, and the inadequacies of the liberal institutionalist prescriptions to address these socio-economic and cultural issues.

The diverse typology of non-participation, which Mac Ginty (2012a) divides into broad categories of 'voluntary' and 'involuntary', further exemplifies the different interests and concerns held by the heterogeneous local actors in post-conflict societies. The voluntary category of 'uninterested' individuals highlights the primary position of this thesis, which seeks to emphasize the dangers of generalizing the local experience. The presence of such uninterested individuals points to the everyday life activities that occur in post-conflict societies which are not always directly linked to conflict or the existing peacebuilding process. Mac Ginty contends that there is a "need to question hegemonic narratives that equate conflict-affected contexts with little other than the conflict" (2012a, p. 175). While further research may indeed need to be carried out in both case studies to determine the size of the group of 'uninterested' individuals and if membership in this category shows a permanent lack of interest in the political sphere, it does provide an insight into the nuance required when engaging with the local actors in developing viable peacebuilding policies and programs.

With this understanding that local actors are not merely objects of interventions to be acted on and that they have complex responses to prescribed policies, this thesis reviews the prescriptions that the critical peacebuilding discourse provides to address the failures of the liberal peace agenda. The discourse criticizes the traditional focus of liberal peacebuilding efforts on increasing institutional capacity at the national level. This institutional focus of the liberal peacebuilding agenda is illustrated by the host of programs such as SSR, electoral reforms and constitutional amendments which global governance

institutions and their national level partners initiate to promote peace and stability in post-conflict states. Scholars in the local turn admonish this institutional focus on state building and instead promote community-level practices which strengthen 'state-society relations' in these settings (Donais, 2015).

Investigating and evaluating specific cases of the 'bottom-up' and hybrid models (such as hybrid courts in Sierra Leone and *gacca* courts in Rwanda) proposed as potential alternatives by the dominant discourse in this literature is beyond the scope of this thesis; however, it is necessary to explore the potential limitations and contradictions that plague the normative understanding of the local turn in peacebuilding. This exercise will also allow for a review of the critiques of the dominant discourse of post-liberal peacebuilding, and in so doing provide a more nuanced conceptualization of 'the local' to be adopted in this thesis' analysis of selected case studies. The major criticisms of this discourse stem from a "tendency to homogenize practices and impacts of aid and to offer only critiques as opposed to alternatives" (Peterson, 2012, p.9). Such criticisms challenge researchers in the field to consider the dangers of generalized assumptions when engaging with the 'local'. Paffenholz contends that the main problem lies in the assumptions made about the dichotomy between the local and the international, which leads to a weaker understanding of the key actors in the peacebuilding process (2015, p.862).

These criticisms also extend to the concept of 'hybridity' which, as an alternative to the hegemonic liberal peacebuilding agenda, attempts to create

governance structures that merge international technical expertise with local values and attempts to generate greater legitimacy in the local context (Paffenholz, 2015; Peterson, 2012). Despite the hybridity debate being situated within the critical peacebuilding discourse, Paffenholz points to the irony of idealizing a concept which integrates the "obsolete liberal peace with local structures" (2015, p.863). Moreover, hybridity largely tends to rigidly define the two groups (the local and the international) with little regard for the different actors and imperatives within these categories (Peterson, 2012). These critiques of the categorization of groups under hybridity point to the limited ability of the concept as an analytical lens for investigating the merits of a shift towards the post-liberal agenda.

It is necessary to be mindful of the multiplicity of actors involved in this process and their capacity for agency and resistance to properly analyze the inherent power relations between local-level actors. In this regard, it is in fact prudent to consider whether hybridity, as a critical analytical tool, overlooks or downplays power relations and the different ways in which segments of the target population ('the local') interacts with international actors (Peterson, 2012). Hence another problematic aspect of these critical studies on the local turn is the minimal focus placed on contested power relations that exist between actors in these hybrid models. These considerations give rise to a similar set of critical questions posed to the liberal peacebuilding agenda about which actors benefit from these hybrid structures and whether an equitable distribution of peace dividends to all segments of the local population happens.

A final critique of hybridity which is relevant to this thesis stems from Peterson's (2012) discussion on the "progress narrative" and "the idea of resistance" associated with some of the discourse on the concept as well as its practical implications (p.17). This discussion ponders the role that hybridity can actually play as a challenge to liberal peacebuilding, particularly when co-opted by external actors to frame a narrative suitable to their own interests and gain greater legitimacy for their projects. This concern links back to earlier arguments in the literature about the evasion of Western responsibility by placing the failures of peacebuilding efforts on their local partners (Peterson, 2012). Also criticized is the tendency by scholars to frame the concept of 'resistance' with the international "as the sole object of resistance" (Paffenholz, 2015, p.865). Such arguments provide a transformative rationale for the hybrid models that is linked to an inadequate conception of the focus of local resistance in many post-conflict societies. It is important to note that the idea of resistance has an extensive literature which considers a range of forms in which resistance is manifested within the local context (Mac Ginty, 2012a; Chandler, 2013b; Paffenholz, 2015). However, a detailed analysis of this concept and how it affects the discourse on critical peacebuilding is beyond the scope of this thesis.

The review of the relevant body of literature in the field of peacebuilding and humanitarian intervention depicts a constant evolution of the ideas and discourse which dominate academic and policy debates. With this diversity in mind, this essay engages with the current peacebuilding practices investigated in the case studies to evaluate the connections between the UN peacebuilding

agenda and the dominant academic discourse in the literature. This evaluation will incorporate the cautions highlighted in the literature to developed a nuanced understanding of key actors and the unit of analysis selected in the thesis' framework. Through investigating the policy actions of UN missions in Libya and Côte d'Ivoire and informed by a review of the relevant literature, this thesis will now analyze the local turn in UN reporting on the peacebuilding agenda in post-conflict societies.

Case Studies

Keeping in mind that no two interventions are the same, my research will evaluate and comparatively analyze the current post-conflict reconstruction efforts in Côte d'Ivoire and Libya. Such an approach will provide useful insight into the practice of UN peacebuilding, and the mandate and priorities of these efforts in the target communities. This thesis seeks to reconcile the dominant approach in the peacebuilding literature with the efforts of the UN, which is the foremost international stakeholder in the process of humanitarian intervention and state building.

In conducting this investigation, this thesis will rely on Mac Ginty's (2012a) arguments on participation and non-participation in post-conflict societies discussed earlier to problematize the priorities of the UN-led peacebuilding process and the indicators used to measure progress in both cases. Participation, as a tool for the investigation of the cases, possesses significant utility with which to critique the preoccupation of the 'liberal script' with simplistic notions of

transformation (Mac Ginty, 2012a, p.179). To conduct this investigation of UN peacebuilding efforts and projects, it was necessary to focus on a tangible set of primary documents with which to use the relevant literature to criticize and evaluate. These documents included mission mandates, resolutions, and UN Secretary-General reports on each case. These documents provide considerable information on the situation in these states as well as insights into the operational and policy priorities of the UN.

However, before going into detail about the criticisms of the liberal peacebuilding agenda in the selected case studies, it is important to provide a brief overview of the situation in Côte d'Ivoire and Libya. The diversity of independent African states like Côte d'Ivoire and Libya necessitates an appreciation for the local context and historical legacy of colonialism in socio-economic and political relations to analyze conflicts as well as effective strategies for rebuilding (United Nations, 1998). Hence, this overview will serve as a background into an analysis of the success and failures of the liberal institutionalist framework in post-conflict reconstruction efforts. It also highlights the tensions between local actors which led to conflict in the first place and briefly discuss what, if any, substantial attempts have been made to address these core issues. Such issues include deep ethnic rivalries, identity politics and a general mistrust of local authorities by segments of the population (International Crisis Group, 2016).

Côte d'Ivoire

After several decades under one-party authoritarian rule of political and economic stability, relative to other neighbouring African states, Côte d'Ivoire became plagued with internal conflicts and economic downturn (Klaas, 2008). Following the death in 1993 of long-time ruler, Felix Houphouet-Boigny, ethnic tensions and power struggles to fill the leadership vacuum significantly contributed in the descent to a full-blown civil war in 2002, which split the country into northern and southern factions along religious and ethnic lines (Vines, 2011). Xenophobic and ethnic sentiments came to the foreground of clashes between the different groups in society and were prominently highlighted by the extremely divisive politics of *Ivorite,* which when codified into law disqualified individuals with non-Ivorian parents from running for political office (Political Instability Task Force, 2011). This brand of divisive politics coupled with selfish elite interests and a failing economy significantly fuelled the disintegration of a relative stable state into "one ridden with ethnic and regional divisions" (Klaas, 2008, p.118). The identity politics and tensions associated with the legacy of Ivorite continue to threaten current efforts aimed at national reconciliation and social cohesion in Côte d'Ivoire (United Nations, 2016c). Despite the multilateral efforts of regional and international actors such as the African Union (AU) and the UN to negotiate a peace agreement and power-sharing transitional government in 2007, the country once again descended into conflict with the 2010-2011 post-election violence.

The conflict began as a result of the decision of then incumbent President Laurent Gbagbo not to accept the results of the UN-certified free and fair elections held in November 2010. According to the results the incumbent president had lost to Alassane Ouattara, his main challenger and former prime minister. Gbagbo's decision to ignore these results and hold onto executive power garnered widespread condemnation from international observers as well as prominent regional actors such as the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) and the African Union (AU) (Bassett & Strauss, 2011). Violence erupted in 2011 with pro-Ouattara forces in the northern region marching towards the commercial capital of Abidjan to overthrow Gbagbo and his now illegitimate government. The estimated casualties of this conflict include about five hundred dead and over one million people displaced from their homes (Political Instability Task Force, 2011). Gbagbo was eventually arrested by pro-Ouattara forces and French special forces on 11 April 2011, which ended the four-month post-election conflict in Côte d'Ivoire (Bassett & Strauss, 2011).

This overview highlights the core issues such as ethnicity and local elite interests which led to conflict in Côte d'Ivoire while drawing attention to the inefficacy of interim liberal institutional framework policies of power-sharing transitional governments and entrenchment of democratic institutions to adequately tackle these root causes of conflict in the local context. I will now briefly discuss the UN country mission in Côte d'Ivoire, and current developments towards peacebuilding.

The United Nations Operation in Côte d'Ivoire (UNOCI) was established by UN Security Council resolution 1528 in February 2004 for an initial period of twelve months to monitor the ceasefire of armed groups and provide support to the Ivorian government in the implementation of the peace process (United Nations, 2004). The UNOCI mandate was recently updated by Security Council resolution 2226 in June 2015 to, among other things, protect civilians and provide political support to the Ivorian government as it addresses the root causes of conflict (United Nations, 2015).

The multilateral efforts coordinated through UNOCI to restore stability and security appears to be a model of relatively successful rebuilding and national reconciliation after close to a decade of conflict and civil war that divided the country (United Nations, 2015). Considerable gains have been made, particularly in the political and institutional realm of the state with the credible re-election of President Alassane Ouattara for a second and final term serving as a prominent milestone in the liberal peacebuilding process. The salience of this milestone in the liberal peacebuilding project is highlighted by a recent Secretary General report where it is claimed that "the successful conduct of the presidential election is the most powerful demonstration of progress made in Côte d'Ivoire" (United Nations, 2015, par. 89). I argue later on in this section that the dominant focus and priority of the UN in the country is the building up of the Ivorian government capacity and legitimacy in order to eventually take over from the UNOCI. While such a goal is laudable in establishing a stable national government with administrative capabilities, it is necessary to

problematize these liberal peace indicators of progress which fail to adequately engage with the 'local' beyond the elite and institutional level. This preoccupation with institutional capacity in the UN mission also brings into question how much the 'local turn' has affected peacebuilding projects and subsequent reporting of results by global governance institutions.

Libya

The security and political situation in Libya is considerably more volatile than in the context of Côte d'Ivoire. This substantial difference in local context between both cases provides a useful comparative platform with which to criticize the goals and priorities of the liberal peacebuilding agenda in post-conflict states. The starting point of the investigation into this case is the Libyan crisis of 2011, which was the first civil war that eventually led to the ousting of the Gaddafi regime. Years later, the crisis in Libya has deepened "as two rival governments compete for legitimacy, control of vital institutions, and international support" (Human Rights Watch, 2017).

The removal of the long-time Libyan leader and dictator by a Western-supported intervention to protect civilians is a contested issue in the policy field of humanitarian intervention (Gazzini, 2011). The motives behind this intervention in Libya and questions about whether or not there should have been one in the first place is beyond the scope of this thesis. However, it is necessary to appreciate the substantial vacuum created by the intervention, the exacerbated security concerns and the failures of subsequent attempts to restore

political stability in Libya. In this regard, this section briefly discusses the Libyan Political Agreement and the challenges faced by the both local and foreign actors to implement its key principles.

The Libyan Political Agreement was signed in Morocco in December 2015 with the primary goal of creating a consensual government along with capable state institutions that would be the vehicle to address the serious challenge of peacebuilding and national reconciliation (United Nations, 2015). A major proposal of this agreement was the creation of the Government of National Accord, a unity government, that has yet to be approved by the House of Representatives as regional divisions and polarization continue to be entrenched by local elite actors and their supporters (International Crisis Group, 2016). This negotiated power-sharing deal has not been fully implemented and threatens to further divide groups and stakeholders who are crucial to a cohesive national reconciliation process in Libya. The 2016 International Crisis Group report on the implementation of the agreement so far points out certain flaws which have deterred the peace process. These include the absence of a broader focus on security in the state beyond the capital of Tripoli; the contradictions of international actors' policy objectives; and the growth of regionalization in Libya (International Crisis Group, 2016).

Without further expanding on these issues, it becomes necessary for the international community to create solutions that engage with all relevant actors while paying attention to the needs and concerns of the diverse segments of the target population. It is essential to examine the efforts being made by the UN in

this regard by focusing on the organization's mission in Libya. The United Nations Support Mission in Libya (UNSMIL) is an integrated special political mission created by UN Security Council resolution 2009, and established in September 2011 to provide support to national authorities in their efforts to rebuild (United Nations, 2011). However, the volatility of the security situation on the ground in Libya has led to the UNSMIL's international staff being temporarily headquartered in Tunis, Tunisia (United Nations, 2016b). Therefore, it is necessary to mention that the ongoing conflict and fragile security situation, which is worsened by the presence of ISIL, has significantly affected the responses selected by UNSMIL to address the issues at the core of conflicts in the Libyan context.

A recent UN Secretary General report draws attention to the fact that the organization's priority "continues to be to successfully conclude the democratic transition process through the implementation of the Libyan Political Agreement (United Nations, 2016b, par.77). This report is laden with similar statements about the principal focus of UN efforts being geared towards facilitating the transitional period and the primary role of the Libyan leaders in such a process. The aforementioned difficulties associated with implementing this agreement along with the narrow approach adopted by stakeholders in the process presents a challenge towards the peacebuilding agenda being promoted in Libya. This thesis will now engage with an informed review of key concepts and positions in the relevant body of literature with the goal of offering a critical analysis of the

peacebuilding efforts promoted the UN in Libya and Côte d'Ivoire with the aim of highlighting the gaps between the academic literature and practice.

Measuring 'Progress' in the Peacebuilding Process

The heterogeneity of local actors in a post-conflict context cannot be underestimated or overlooked in attempts to incorporate local ownership into the peacebuilding and state building process. Complex power relations exist among different social groups at the local level based on social identifiers such as ethnicity and class (Paffenholz, 2015). A nuanced analysis of these complexities will prevent academics and practitioners in the field from falling into the trap of homogenizing, and even romanticizing, the 'local'. Keeping these complexities in mind, this thesis investigates the narratives and reporting of UN missions in the selected case studies to evaluate whether there has been a significant turn to the local, and which set of actors are being engaged with in the peacebuilding project. I will argue that institutional capacity building at the state level remains prominent in the peacebuilding priorities of the UN, and that its integration of the 'local' into the process is largely limited to groups of elites.

In order to evaluate the primary sources of this research, I engage with the arguments and concepts presented in Mac Ginty's (2012a) article on participation and non-participation in post-conflict societies. The centrality of his arguments to the analysis of the UN peacebuilding agenda stems from his criticisms of simplistic notions of transformation. The 'progress narrative' and indicators based largely on citizen participation need to be examined and

problematized with an deeper appreciation for the inherent power relations at play in the local context (Peterson, 2012). This investigation draws attention to the limitations and biases of the liberal peacebuilding reporting and its significant indicators of progress in post-conflict societies. It is important for stakeholders in the peacebuilding and development process to incorporate these complexities and diversity of local experiences into their analysis of the post-conflict context (Mac Ginty, 2012a).

The relevance of participation and non-participation in relation to the liberal progress indicators and imperatives is highlighted by the significance of both concepts in justifying liberal peace interventions (Mac Ginty, 2012a). It is therefore necessary to examine the role that these concepts play in the discourses on security, intervention and peacebuilding. The liberal peace preoccupation with citizen participation can be seen in the language used in UN missions in both Libya and Côte d'Ivoire as measurements for change and transformation in different sectors and institutions at the state level. In this manner, the liberal peace script's simplistic notions of transformation are presented as "a one-way transition from war to peace, from authoritarianism to democracy, from state-centric economy to an open economy […]" (Mac Ginty, 2012a, p.179). Such a narrow understanding of the transformation process in a complex post-conflict society highlights the liberal imperatives of the dominant peacebuilding agenda, and its inadequacies to effect change, in many instances, beyond the superficial level. Participation as a key indicator of progress for the liberal peace project tends to encompass these visibly tangible and superficial

level without a nuanced understanding of the context-specific complexities which may arise from ethnic or class differences.

This essay will now engage with these aforementioned complexities to better understand how participation and non-participation is manifested in the context of the selected case studies. At this juncture, it is worth noting the parallels that exist in both the context of Libya and Côte d'Ivoire regarding complex and diverse identities based on ethnicity and class divisions. This thesis criticizes the limited role that these heterogeneous identities have played in the dominant liberal peacebuilding agenda, and examines how the current priorities and policies of the UN fail to adequately address these systemic differences which can spark conflict in the not too distant future (International Crisis Group, 2016).

Building on Mac Ginty's (2012a) observations and arguments on the manifestations of non-participation discussed earlier in the thesis, it is useful to apply this concept to social issues of ethnicity and class differences (competing elite and non-elite interests). In Libya and Côte d'Ivoire, these were underlying issues that contributed to the eventual descent into conflict and also threaten the success of current peacebuilding efforts (International Crisis Group, 2016; United Nations, 2015). The situation in Côte d'Ivoire revolves around ethnic and cultural rivalries which over the past few decades were heightened by local elites, politicians and militia leaders to maintain power and pursue their own self-interests (Bassett & Strauss, 2011; Klaas, 2008; Political Instability Task Force, 2011; Vines, 2011). These divisive identity politics of *Ivorite* continue to

undercut the dividends of the political and social rebuilding efforts at various levels of society (United Nations, 2016c). The liberal peacebuilding solution to this ethnic discrimination has been largely standardized and institutional by facilitating legal amendments to remove the policy of *Ivorite* from the national constitution and electoral laws. Such an approach draws attention to the overemphasis on institutional level problem-solving and the tailoring of solutions that largely benefit the local elites, which have been previously mentioned as the key limitations of the liberal peace project. Therefore, even though codifying principles of anti-discrimination and equal opportunity for all citizens in the national constitution is commendable, such solutions are constrained and inadequately address underlying social sentiments and the marginalization of certain ethnic and social groups that occurs during the everyday activities of post-conflict societies.

The Libyan context also provides an example of these societal divisions based on region, social stratification and ethnicity. The Libyan Political Agreement which sought to provide a blueprint for creating a power-sharing government with institutional capacity is currently in jeopardy of falling apart in part because of growing regionalization and conflicts of interests between prominent parties (International Crisis Group, 2016). The next section of this thesis explores the gap between the UN's emphasis on the 'local' and its liberal peacebuilding agenda by analyzing how the organization's reporting on Côte d'Ivoire and Libya amounts to a superficial engagement with local populations.

UN Reporting on Case Studies

This section of the thesis will present examples of reporting on the selected case studies from the UN that will help draw attention to the priorities of the liberal peacebuilding agenda in post-conflict societies. Such an exercise will highlight instances in the reporting that point to the UN's overarching focus on institutional capacity-building at the state level and promoting liberal democratic principles in post-conflict societies. It is necessary to underscore that the exercise undertaken in this section of the thesis is not a comprehensive evaluation of the entire UN missions in Libya and Côte d'Ivoire, rather this section uses the research's primary sources to shed light on the underappreciation of the local and the plurality of actors that exist in the reporting on the mission. The language used in these documents provide examples of these simplistic notions of transformation and progress narratives problematized by authors such as Mac Ginty (2008, 2012a) and Paffenholz (2015) within the critical peacebuilding discourse.

As indicated earlier, Côte d'Ivoire provides a case of relative success in implementing the liberal peacebuilding agenda, and the sustained progress exhibited in this case study has led the Secretary-General to conclude that "the situation in Côte d'Ivoire no longer poses a threat to peace and stability in the region" (United Nations, 2016c, par. 82). Therefore, it will be useful to examine the priorities and strategies emphasized here by the UN that created such positive results. These prominent priorities and strategies can be observed from the language used in UN reports and documents such as Security Council

resolution 2226 which applauds "the progress being made in Côte d'Ivoire on the path of reconciliation, stability and economic recovery…" (United Nations, 2015, p.1). As such, prioritizing institutional capacity building through electoral reform; consensual governments and constitutional amendments remains a prominent feature in the mission reports and documents regarding peacebuilding initiatives in Côte d'Ivoire.

The focus on the institutional reforms, practices and a limited integration of the local in peacebuilding is highlighted in a 2016 UN Secretary-General report which characterised the recent re-election of President Alassane Ouattara as "an important milestone, whose achievement was attributable not least to the acceptance by most stakeholders of the transparency and credibility of the election" (United Nations, par. 22). Such a statement shows the focus on institutional capacity building at the level of the local elites that the UN's peacebuilding agenda seeks to promote in post-conflict societies. The report recognizes the acceptance of the electoral results by 'stakeholders' as a significant measure for the election's credibility. I argue that such a narrow focus fails to adequately integrate the entire plurality of the local in the consolidation of the political process beyond the institutional level. The focus on successfully conducting elections largely addresses elite concerns about power-sharing and control over resources with limited engagement for non-elite imperatives in relation to peacebuilding efforts.

Furthermore, Mac Ginty's (2012a) arguments on the liberal peace project's preoccupation with participation as a metric for progress comes to bear

in the language used to describe voter turnout in the presidential election. In his 2015 report, the Secretary-General commends the local population "who have demonstrated through their peaceful participation in the democratic process, that they have indeed turned the page on a tumultuous chapter in Ivorian history" (par.76). Although a credible election with minimal internal conflict in such a context is to be applauded, it is important to also consider whether the actors at the local level were sufficiently engaged in this process beyond voter registration and casting votes. Such a narrow understanding of the local extends beyond holding truly credible elections to the underlying social tensions between the local actors, that in some instances partly contributed to the initial conflict.

In the context of Côte d'Ivoire, such tensions arise from disruptive identity politics and the presence of a substantial migrant population within the country (Political Instability Task Force, 2011; Vines, 2011). The tensions from ethnic and religious identity has been exploited by some local elites to consolidate power and translated in the contentious politics of *Ivorite*, which legally disqualified individuals with non-Ivorian parents from seeking political office in the country (Political Instability Task Force, 2011; United Nations, 2015). The successful re-election of President Alassane Ouattara was contested by some disgruntled sections of the population who challenged the legality of his presidency on the grounds of "Ivorite" (United Nations, 2015, par. 78). Such division based on ethnic difference signals the difficult task that still lies ahead in the peacebuilding and reconciliation process, and the need for context-specific priorities and policies which integrate these complexities of the local.

The prominent solutions to these divisive issues advocated in UN documents and reports promote inclusive national reconciliation with a largely top-down focus. A recent Secretary-General report mentions the need for inclusive dialogue on a "shared sense of nation" (United Nations, 2016c, par. 75). This political dialogue for national reconciliation is considered to be headed in a positive direction because "the full membership of the Ivorian political class intends to play an active and constructive role in the electoral processes…" (United Nations, 2016c, par. 76). It is important to note that the report observes many of the structural obstacles to national reconciliation unique to the Ivorian context particularly "with respect to land tenure, nationality and identity" (United Nations, 2016c, par. 77).

Moving beyond the consolidation of the political process, the UN liberal peacebuilding agenda also focuses on economic factors in Côte d'Ivoire as key indicators of progress and development. The consolidation of an inclusive economic growth is periodically referenced in the reporting from country missions on the peacebuilding agenda, and can be seen in resolutions passed even during the conflict period in Côte d'Ivoire. For instance, Security Council resolution 1528 recommends that relevant stakeholders in the international community contribute to promoting "economic development in Côte d'Ivoire with a view to achieving long-term stability in Côte d'Ivoire and the whole subregion" (United Nations, 2004). This points to the limited notions of transformation and progress present in the dominant peacebuilding agenda which

seeks to consolidate institutional level targets such as economic development as the ultimate goal within post-conflict societies.

In the post-conflict context, macroeconomic growth is considered as "impressive progress" particularly with Côte d'Ivoire now having "the second-largest economy in West Africa" (United Nations, 2015, par.88). Such growth was as a result of "a reformed business environment, the implementation of a public investment programme and an increase in household incomes" (United Nations, 2015, par. 61). This insight into the economic situation in Côte d'Ivoire needs to be evaluated in terms of the actors who benefit from the aforementioned economic growth, and how that subsequently impacts the underlying local tensions in relation to a durable peacebuilding process. I argue that the economic and development strategies mentioned in the UN report (2015) signals the promotion of economic policies for a developing, post-conflict country which largely profits the local elites and international stakeholders involved in the process, with little regard for the concerns of other segments of the population. (par. 61-64)

In this regard, the recommended solutions rarely look beyond the state government, local elites and the UNOCI as agents capable of creating and facilitating viable local-oriented alternatives that can transform a fractured post-conflict society. In this context, the root causes of conflict in society cannot be adequately addressed with the largely institutional-based solutions offered by the UN liberal peacebuilding agenda. With these inadequacies and lack of a full appreciation for the plurality of the 'local', it becomes necessary to criticize the

UN's commitment to a true 'national ownership' of the peacebuilding process in Côte d'Ivoire as largely rhetorical and superficial, or at the very least limited to the governing elites. This superficial acknowledgement of engaging the local is seen in a recent Secretary-General report which urges the UNOCI to continue "facilitating nationally owned processes such as reconciliation and social cohesion as well as support institutional reforms" (United Nations, 2016c, par.50). Despite this commitment by the UN in to national ownership in relevant documents and reports, the establishment of feasible peacebuilding programs still requires a more nuanced integration of the local that transcends the elite level, institutional reforms that are currently promoted in Côte d'Ivoire.

In evaluating the peacebuilding efforts in Libya, it remains important to keep in mind the volatile security situation which hampers UN activities in the state. This high level of insecurity is reflected in the mandate of UNSMIL which according to Security Council resolution 2291 focuses on, among other things, the "support for securing uncontrolled arms and related materiel and countering its proliferation; and support to key Libyan institutions" (2016, p.2). The research scope of this thesis is constrained to a review of the UN reporting on Libya as it pertains to providing support to key political institutions particularly within the framework on the Libyan Political Agreement. The tenuous security situation in Libya complicates the context in a manner not seen in Côte d'Ivoire however, similarities in the language used in reporting peacebuilding activities can still be observed.

Similar to the Côte d'Ivoire situation, prioritizing consolidation of the political process is a central feature of UN liberal peacebuilding efforts in Libya. A section of the Secretary- General's report portrays this focus on the institutional capacity building seen in the previous case study by asserting that "at its core, the approach of the United Nations family in Libya must be driven by the needs and priorities of the Government of National Accord and, as a first step, the institutionalization of its authority in Tripoli" (United Nations, 2016b, par.89).

The prioritizing of institutional capacity building for stability and increased security in the country along with the centrality of the Libyan Political Agreement to these goals is further highlighted in a UN report where it is stated that the organization's overarching focus is on a transition to democracy "through the implementation of the Libyan Political Agreement" (2016b, par. 77). The report contends that effective consolidation of the nation's institutions and government sectors is needed in order to begin the transformation of Libya into "a modern, democratic State anchored in the rule of law and respect for human rights" (United Nations, 2016b, par.80). This transformation rationale, grounded in the export of liberal principles such as civic participation, is problematized by Mac Ginty (2012a) as one-dimensional notion which fails to adequately appreciate and engage the with the intricate complexities of the local. This rationale fails to take into account the diverse interests being pursued by various segments of the local populations, and the considerable consolidation

of influence among competing groups such as armed militias wielding illegitimate coercive power.

The UN's involvement in the political sphere also entails providing electoral support for the Libyan High Commission for National Elections by "planning activities focused primarily on strengthening the Commission's technical capacities" (United Nations, 2016b, par. 31). These activities were aimed at promoting state capacity and knowledge on electoral issues in preparation for future elections in the country. Such a priority is in line with the dominant peacebuilding agenda on promoting liberal values on democracy; civic participation and periodic elections. The provision of support is claimed to be based on national priorities which include "economic recovery, including strengthening the role of the private sector; inclusive governance at the national and local levels…" (United Nations, 2016b, par.60).

It is important to note at this juncture that challenges to this democratic transition exist in the form of "parallel institutions" which attempt "to assert authority despite their lack of legal status under the Libyan Political Agreement" (United Nations, 2016a, par. 5). The existence of diverse local actors claiming authority in regions of the country supports arguments proposed in this thesis that the 'local' as an entity consists of heterogeneous actors with different motivations and interests in relation to post-conflict peacebuilding. These diverse claims, in part, make it difficult to properly implement the agreement and to establish substantial institutional capacity which is central to the UN peacebuilding agenda.

These challenges have led to a concerted effort by the UN to engage with the local elite actors and leaders, with their claims to authority and coercive power, in order to implement the Libyan Political Agreement (International Crisis Group, 2016). The limited engagement with the local that is confined mainly to the elites is seen in the language of key documents which state that "the task of carrying the political process forward must therefore rest primarily with the leaders of Libya" (United Nations, 2016b, par.79). Asides from the fact that it is currently problematic to properly categorize any one set of actors as the 'leaders of Libya', this statement draws attention to the top-down and elite level focus of UN peacebuilding in relation to facilitating viable solutions to the present political crisis and institutional incapacity in this post-conflict context.

Conclusion

In the face of escalating domestic conflicts around the world, global governance institutions such as the UN, foreign states and other relevant stakeholders must reaffirm their commitment to safeguarding human security. These actors claim of being truly interested in alleviating the suffering of countless people, are called into question when they do not have a credible development framework for effectively completing the peacebuilding task in its entirety. This thesis has examined the relevant literature on intervention and peacebuilding, as well as the UN's reporting on selected case studies to problematize the lack of appreciation for the local in fostering sustainable

reconstruction in post-conflict states. A major argument highlighted throughout my work is that stakeholders who engage with the 'local turn' in peacebuilding required a nuanced understanding and portrayal of the local actors.

Based on an investigation of the selected case studies, this essay contends that the turn to the local has been largely superficial in the practice of peacebuilding despite the current prominence of the critical peacebuilding discourse in the academic literature. Despite the priority placed on national ownership in peacebuilding as seen in the language of UN reports and documents, the organization fails to sufficiently engage with the plurality of local actors involved in the process. The examination of the relevant literature and UN documents draws attention to the emphasis placed on institutional capacity building and liberal democratic principles with an addition of local elites in the liberal peacebuilding process. A major challenge to integrating the local stems from the focus on institutional level reforms which largely "reflect the host Government's primary role…" in the peacebuilding process (United Nations, 2013, p.2).

It is problematic to continue focusing on largely institutional solutions and frameworks to address the complexities inherent in many post-conflict societies. These complexities exist in the heterogeneity of local actors based on ethnicity, gender, social class and other group identities. Policy solutions which appreciate and incorporate this diverse understanding of local actors into the process of peacebuilding are required. Scholars and practitioners in the critical peacebuilding discourse also need to avoid homogenizing the key actors in these

peace projects- the 'international' and the 'local'- which promotes a falsely simplistic narrative of the power relations and imperatives (Paffenholz, 2015; Peterson, 2012).These complex power relations and differences within the 'local' need to be further analyzed in order to prescribe and implement feasible policy solutions in post-conflict societies such as Libya and Côte d'Ivoire.

Engaging in an in-depth analysis of the various complexities of the local in Côte d'Ivoire and Libya is beyond the scope of this thesis. What was offered in this essay remains illustrative rather than comprehensive. However, having been informed by a review of the critical peacebuilding literature, I contend that it is necessary to underscore the salience of these diverse local factors in future research and policy discussions on post-conflict societies. The heterogeneity and complexity of the local warrants more innovative and context-specific toolkits to integrate all local actors, not just the elite groups, as the principal subjects in the processes of peacebuilding and socio-economic development. Such a task is of vital importance, in part, because of the growing threats to global peace and security posed by unstable post-conflict states. It is therefore pertinent that debates and policy discussions moving forward address the crucial role that peacebuilding strategies which effectively integrate the 'local' can play in significantly reducing such threats and improving the lives of populations in such societies.

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